



**Wales Association of SACREs meeting, at Cardiff
County Hall
Tuesday, 26th March 2019
10.30a.m. – 3.00p.m.**

Attendance

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Rheinallt Thomas</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Paula Webber (PW) Kathy Riddick (KD)</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward J. Evans (EE) Maggie Turford (MT) Alice Parry (AP)</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Paula Webber (PW) Janet Jones (JJ)</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Maggie Turford (MT) Gill James (GJ) Norma Mackai</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Helen Gibbon (HG)</p> <p>Ceredigion</p> <p>Conwy</p> <p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Ellie Chard (EC)</p>	<p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire</p> <p>Gwynedd</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Maggie Turford (MT) Ernie Goldsworthy (EG)</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Sir Paula Webber (PW)</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Hugh James (HJ) Rachel Samuel (RS) Peter Rees (PR)</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Paula Webber (PW) Huw Stephens (HS)</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</p> <p>Powys John Mitson (JM) Sian Fielding (SF)</p> <p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Maggie Turford (MT) Mathew Maidment (MM)</p>	<p>Abertawe / Swansea Jennifer Harding -Richard (JHT) Alison Lewis (AL)</p> <p>Torfaen Paula Webber (PW)</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Maggie Turford (MT) Ramez Delpak (RD)</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Libby Jones (LJ) Tania ap Sion (TaS)</p> <p>Sylwedyddion / Observers Rudolf Elliot Lockhart, REC Paul Morgan, MAGC Andrew Pearce, WJEC</p> <p>Cyflwynwyr/Presenters Nicky Hagedyck, EAS</p> <p>Minutes Gill Vaisey (GV)</p>
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Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction and welcome

Prior to the meeting members enjoyed a PowerPoint slide show from Moorland Primary School, Cardiff showing photographs of aspects of their good practice.

Cllr Dianne Rees, Lord Mayor of Cardiff welcomed everyone to County Hall, Cardiff and to the Local Authority. She referred to all that Cardiff has to celebrate and to her involvement as a former Cardiff SACRE member.

Chair of Cardiff SACRE, Cllr Sarah Merry, also welcomed members to Cardiff. She talked about her experience of being a member of SACRE as a County Councillor and the initial uncertainty of knowing what SACRE is about. However, in her experience, she has realised the importance of religious education and that SACREs should be meaningful in supporting children from many different religions and none within the community.

2. Quiet reflection

EE shared thoughts about being of faith or no faith and being appalled at the situation in New Zealand – the inhumanity of someone's actions towards a group of other people.

He referred to 50 Five-Minute Tales – stories he has used in Collective Worship in schools.

The Goblin and the Fairy – a shy goblin who had big ears and whom the fairy laughed at. However, the goblin showed her great kindness. The purpose of the story was to show that people should not be judged by outward appearance, or simply because they are different, e.g. colour, looks, beliefs, politics, etc., but to recognise each other as human beings.

EE invited members to reflect on creating a better world in which to live.

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Meirig Roberts (Welsh Government), Cllr Lacey (Newport SACRE), Cllr Lyndon Lloyd (Ceredigion), Vicky Barlow (Flintshire), Michelle Gosney (Estyn) and Tudor Thomas (who has resigned as chair of REMW but is still a member of MCC SACRE).

4. NAPfRE presentation: Nicky Hagendyk – The Humanities Area of Learning and Experience

Nicky Hagendyk is Chair of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience.

She talked about the wider reforms alongside the curriculum reform. She emphasised experience as being an important aspect of this new curriculum, it being a process backed up by the Four Purposes that should be fulfilled by the end of schooling.

She highlighted the new curriculum subjects within the new humanities AoLE – business studies and social studies. Practitioners are at the heart of writing the new curriculum and they have adopted a holistic approach with ‘What Matters’ statements at its core.

They are trying to achieve a balance between an interdisciplinary holistic approach whilst retaining the integrity of each specialist subject.

The new curriculum is likely to be less prescription and offer more autonomy for schools. Concepts, knowledge and skills will be behind the Four Purposes.

It will be published in April 2019 for feedback from teachers and other stakeholders. The content of the ‘What Matters’ will be part of the consultation. Nicky talked through each of the five statements of What Matters in Humanities.

1. Developing an enquiring mind enables learners to explore and investigate the world, past, present and future, for themselves.
2. Events and human experiences are complex and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways.
3. Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by physical processes and human actions.
4. Human societies are complex and diverse and areas shaped by human action and beliefs.
5. Informed self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity and are able to take considered ethical and sustainable actions.

Each statement is not to be seen in isolation – a unit of work might be linked with two or three of the statements.

All of the subjects within humanities can be explored through any of the What Matters statements.

Central to the curriculum is progression in terms of knowledge, conceptual understanding, ability to work with sources, etc.

There has been expert input and consultation nationally and internationally.

The curriculum is to be published on 30th April for consultation and feedback. The time frame for the consultation will be from April 30th until the beginning of September.

In response to questions raised, Nicky advised that teachers from all across Wales have been involved in the writing of the wider curriculum and will also be in the writing of the RE Framework.

The curriculum in England has also been considered alongside curricular from a variety of other countries.

Members queried how the cost is being met for introducing these changes in schools. A member suggested that WG must put the finances in place to fully back the implementation of the new curriculum.

The final will be published in January 2020 and therefore training would follow once the curriculum has been agreed and finalised.

Need to consider how WASACRE will manage its feedback on the consultation. Should the Executive respond on behalf of WASACRE or should a WASACRE members' working group be established?

Action: The Executive to compose a response to the draft on behalf of WASACRE

5. Withdrawal from RE Survey

PW referred to the results of the withdrawal from RE questionnaire and looked at the findings.

This information might inform discussions and the WASACRE response to the WG White Paper question of whether the right of withdrawal should be removed.

GV reported that she had been concerned about a few of the findings of the survey. Firstly, that it suggests that some schools still do not make the distinction between Collective Worship and RE. The survey had specifically referred to curriculum RE only and yet some responses referred to Collective Worship.

In addition, there was evidence of a lack of understanding of the correct nature of curriculum Religious Education as in some cases responses referred to the withdrawal of pupils from prayers and singing hymns and also visiting a church to take part in celebrations – none of which should be occurring in curriculum-based RE.

GV also stated her concern about the number of parents (12) partially withdrawing their pupils from learning about Islam. This seems to suggest a prejudice against that particular religion.

HS suggested that it is essential that when the new curriculum is drawn up it promotes objective, critical and pluralistic RE to ensure that parents do not feel the need to withdraw their children.

RL shared his insights regarding a possible legal challenge – if someone who is from a faith has been involved in the curriculum development then it would be deemed that that curriculum cannot be objective. Likewise, if a teacher has a faith background, it could be suggested that they are not able to be objective in their teaching.

Action: suggest to SACREs that they look at their local findings from the withdrawal survey and take any appropriate action.

(GV advised that some SACREs had collated their own results whereas others had sent in individual school responses in which case collation had been done by herself and details will be sent to those SACREs).

6. To consider and respond to the Welsh Government white paper

EE talked through the paper and its proposals.

The WASACRE Executive response was tabled and shared with members. It was noted that they had not come to a conclusion about the removal of the right of withdrawal from RE.

The NAPRE response was tabled and shared with members. LJ noted that the NAPfRE response differs in some areas to the WASACRE response in that NAPfRE would want the right of withdrawal to be removed but reiterates the need therefore for training to be put in place to ensure all teachers and schools ensure objectivity in their teaching and provision.

NAPfRE also suggests that sixth form RE should be retained and colleges should also be subject to providing RE.

HS also suggests that 16 – 19 year olds need to have religious education in light of current world issues and attitudes.

KR suggested that if teachers are teaching purely educationally objective RE then there is no need for the right of withdrawal however, where there is faith based denominational RE then there is a need for the right of withdrawal.

PW suggested that we need to ensure that the provision is as it should be and then there is no reason for a right of withdrawal.

GV noted that we need to make a distinction from Agreed Syllabus RE and faith denominational RE and supports the point made by KR.

It was suggested that we need to take the stance that we assume and expect that RE will be taught appropriately and reinforce this expectation.

RT has made his own response which is closer to the NAPfRE view than the WASACRE view and believes that we must ensure that RE is appropriate for all and we need confidence in our teachers to teach the subject in a professional way. He also agrees with the need for sixth form students to receive RE.

HS reiterated the need to challenge LAs on the lack of professional advisory services to support RE.

RL highlighted that the point that concerns him is the European Convention of Human Rights and he thinks there has never been a case where it is found that the RE is objective and pluralistic and therefore if the right of withdrawal is withdrawn this could lead to a succession of cases taken to court.

As a 'straw poll' (not an official vote on behalf of SACREs), there was a unanimous show of hands from people in the room in favour of the right of withdrawal being removed.

There was also unanimous support for making RE statutory for nursery children from the age of 3.

The removal of Sixth form RE received a mixed response.

WASACRE extended its thanks to both the WASACRE executive members and NAPfRE members for submitting their responses.

Action: PW to send an additional response to Welsh Government endorsing the response made by the Executive and adding further comments on the views of those present at the meeting.

7. Update on the RE Supporting Framework

LJ reported that WG has fully funded a group to hold regular meetings to develop a Supporting Framework to sit alongside the new curriculum. The group is made up of RE teachers, teachers from Pioneer Schools, NAPfRE members, WASACRE, REC, WJEC, and Estyn representing all areas of Wales and all age ranges and Welsh and English medium.

As it is not yet known whether the right of withdrawal will be removed, the Framework needs to be written so that RE is clearly identifiable.

It is hoped that a draft will be published by January 2020. It needs to be ready by July in order to go through translation and initial consultation.

PW reported on the thinking behind the production of the RE Framework and what it might look like as an addition to the curriculum What Matters statements. This Framework might then be adopted by each LA as their Agreed Syllabus.

RT suggested that the RE Framework must be written in a way that it is accessible to non-educationalists and will be accepted and adopted by Agreed Syllabus Conferences.

8. Professional RE support for SACREs

EE reported that a response had now been received from Kirsty Williams in respect of the letter WASACRE had sent to her regarding Professional Support for RE and the revision of Circular 10/94. In her response KW outlined the arrangements that had been put in place for meetings between WASACRE officers and WG personnel and that, together with her officials, she was considering matters relating to 10/94.

LJ reported on the crisis situation in relation to the lack of specialist support for RE to SACREs since five specialists within a short time period had been removed for their posts. It was noted that only LJ and PW remain as RE specialist advisers.

LJ reminded members that NAPfRE and WASACRE had written to Directors of Education to request information in relation to who provides their professional support to SACREs.

Responses varied as per the minutes of the last meeting. LJ and PW met with all 22 Directors of Education and reminded them about their legal duties in relation to RE and SACREs and alerted them to the varied specialist support across Wales. They highlighted that the inconsistency of specialist support is not fair as it has an impact on the pupils who are at the end of the process. They highlighted the need for professional learning support and therefore there needs to be specialist RE support to LAs and SACREs.

They also presented the roles and responsibilities / example job description of a SACRE adviser to ensure the Directors realise the extent of the role and that for instance, a teacher with a full time position cannot possibly take on this additional work.

The Directors were asked to investigate and establish who is providing support - whether it is the LA or the Consortium. They need to consider having specialist RE advisers to support their SACREs. All 22 directors were willing to engage in the conversation with LJ and PW and / or take this back to their consortia.

RT highlighted that there are RE specialists available but they are not being deployed by LAs to support RE and SACREs e.g. Bethan James and Phil Lord in GWE and Cary Thomas in CSC plus Gill Vaisey as an independent consultant.

Action: LJ and PW to continue to dialogue with Directors and feedback to WASACRE.

9. Professional Learning for RE

PW and LJ attended a meeting with Kevin Palmer to discuss the professional learning support needed in light of RE and the new curriculum. They have been invited to produce a document outlining the areas of training required to support the implementation of the new curriculum. NAPfRE will be considering this and presenting a paper to KP.

10. Up-dates:

1. LJ reported that NAPfRE was well attended yesterday with thirteen members. She outlined the items of their agenda.
2. REC – RL reported that the REC had responded to the White Paper. He advised that there is continued interest from Government and Westminster in the Commission on RE Report but no action is being taken at present.

Elections for board members to join the REC will take place on May 16th. There are two seats available. Nominations are eligible from authorised representatives and need to be received a month in advance. Successful candidates will serve a three-year term from 1st September, 2019

Tania, Paula and Gill are WASACRE nominated representatives on the REC.

3. EFTRE conference Dublin

GV reported that the European Forum for Teachers of RE Conference will take place in Dublin on 28th - 31st August, 2019 and anyone is welcome to attend. GV will be attending on behalf of WASACRE as their representative. There is an extension conference in Belfast from 31st – 2nd September. Details have been sent to all SACRE Clerks.

4. REMW

Paul Morgan is now attending WASACRE replacing Tudor Thomas. The future of REMW is unclear due to being short of membership and also funding. Discussion will be held in April which will focus on whether there may be an opportunity to rebuild and create an organisation for those interested in RE but who are not eligible to attend meetings such as WASACRE.

5. AREIAC 1st and 2nd July

GV reported that the Association of RE Advisers, Inspectors, and Consultants is holding its summer conference at the Village Hotel, Hyde, near Manchester on 1st and 2nd July. The title and theme is RE Leadership In A New World. Everyone interested in RE is invited and should contact Gill Vaisey who is conference organiser.

Action: Details will be sent to SACRE Clerks.

11. WASACRE Website

EE highlighted the issues surrounding the current website and talked about the possibility of having a new website created.

EE asked the members to reflect on what is required of the WASACRE website.

He reported that the Executive had received several suggested costed “packages” for the building and supporting of a new web site. The Exec had agreed to recommend to the full meeting that a quote of £1100 for a “build and three year contract” be accepted. He outlined what was included in this offer.

KR in her Exec role as website officer, has investigated various possibilities and the above is favourable in terms of costs.

Action: Members agreed to support the creation of a new website. **12. Report of the Executive Committee Meeting held 6th February 2019**

EE gave a verbal report of the Executive meeting, much of which had been already covered in this meeting.

13. The Effective SACRE

PW referred to a past presentation based on making an effective SACRE and suggested that this is something to which we should return. Caerphilly SACRE is going to co-opt two youth members to hear pupil voices. This is one example of good practice that could be shared.

Action: Agenda this for a future meeting – autumn 2019.

14. Minutes of meeting held in Llantwit Major on 20 November 2018

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting subject to the following:
Add Huw Stevens to attendance. Correction to spelling - Helen Bebb
Page 16 correction to spelling - Alwen Roberts, Ceredigion.

15. Matters arising

None

16. Correspondence

REC Elections

EFTRE flyer for conference

Interfaith Network regarding New Zealand attack

Vale of Glamorgan SACRE asking whether two teachers could job share an executive committee position and take turns to attend meetings. Following discussion, it was noted that there is nothing in WASACRE's Constitution that would preclude such an arrangement and so it was agreed to accept this proposal.

17. Show and tell

Not covered.

18. Any other business

AOB. EE advised members of an incident that had occurred prior to the start of the meeting. A member of the public (who had previously been on a SACRE committee but is no longer a serving member of that committee) had arrived at County Hall wanting to attend the WASACRE meeting. She stated that two of her County Council colleagues who sat on Monmouthshire SACRE had asked her to represent them as they could not attend. She was informed that WASACRE meetings are not open to the public and therefore she was not entitled to attend. The person concerned stated that she was going to lodge a complaint against EE and PW who had both explained that she was not entitled to attend the WASACRE meeting.

EE advised members present that it is improper for SACRE members to act as individuals and in this case to have asked someone who is not a member of their SACRE to stand in for them was not permissible. EE reminded members that when they attend WASACRE they do so as representatives of their respective SACRE and not as individuals.

Members present expressed their full support for the advice that EE and PW gave to the person in question. They also fully agreed that members attending WASACRE meetings represent their SACREs and not themselves.

19. Date for next meeting: Summer 2019 – Conwy 28th June 2019

EE gave thanks to all involved in the meeting with special thanks to:

The Lord Mayor of Cardiff; Cllr Sarah Merry, Chair Cardiff SACRE; Louise Broom, Clerk, Cardiff SACRE; Maggie Turford, Professional Support to Cardiff SACRE; Nicky Hagendyk, Presenter, EAS Regional Lead for the Humanities AoLE; Alaw Hughes, Translator; Cardiff SACRE members and County Councillors.

