
**S.A.C.R.E. - STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
10/02/21**

Present: Councillor Paul J. Rowlinson (Chair)

Gwynedd Council Members: Councillors Menna Baines, Judith Humphreys and Selwyn Griffiths

Christians and Other Faiths: Eirian Bradley Roberts (The Catholic Church), Eurfryn Davies (Union of Welsh Baptists), Dashu (Buddhism)

Teachers: Miriam Amlyn (NASUWT), Cathryn Davey (UCAC)

Officers: Buddug Mair Huws (Assistant Education Improvement Officer and SACRE Clerk), Einir Rh. Davies (Member Support Officer) and Natalie Ll. Jones (Member Support Officer)

The Chair confirmed that although a number of apologies had been received, there was a quorum.

1. PRAYER

The meeting was commenced with a prayer by Mr Eurfryn Davies.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllr Dewi Roberts, Heledd Jones (NEU), Anest G. Frazer (Church in Wales), Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department), Cemlyn R. Williams (Cabinet Member for Education) and Sion Huws (Legal Section)

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

4. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

5. MINUTES

The Chair confirmed and signed the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 11 November 2020, as a true record.

6. INVITATION FROM WASACRE

Reference was made to the invitation from WASACRE for up to four members of Gwynedd SACRE to attend their virtual Spring Conference on 23 March 2021.

Resolved:

To accept the nominations to attend the conference;
Dashu
Councillor Paul Rowlinson
Eurfryn Davies

Councillor Selwyn Griffiths

7. SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS

Concern was noted that no Annual Report had been completed for the period 2018-2019 or 2019-20 although it was a statutory requirement.

Resolved:

To accept the situation, but to encourage the Assistant Education Improvement Officer and SACRE Clerk to contact Bethan James urgently to move the matter forward.

8. RESPONSE FROM BANGOR UNIVERSITY REGARDING THE FUTURE OF RE

The Group was reminded that concern had been raised at the last meeting about the future of RE at Bangor University, and that the Chair had written to the University to note this concern. The response was shared with SACRE and it was considered that it would be beneficial to invite a lecturer from the Department to give a presentation on the challenges stemming from the new curriculum.

Resolved:

To accept the report and write to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, inviting a lecturer from the University to attend the next SACRE meeting to give a presentation on the challenges facing Religious Education within the new Curriculum within the humanities.

9. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Group was reminded about the letter that had been received from WASACRE regarding collective worship while schools were closed. It was noted that collective worship was an important part of school life, but that teachers should not be placed under additional pressures during this difficult period. It was reported WASACRE's letter offered relevant resources and ideas. The Chair noted that SACRE had a duty to monitor collective worship, and that consideration should be given to whether there was anything else that SACRE could do to help.

Reference was made to the experiences of Committee members, and it was noted that schools were by now finding their feet, but they were under great pressure in relation to GCSE. However, now might be an appropriate time to promote normality. It was noted that perhaps there was already a platform in place to enable teachers to respond to this? It was noted that some agencies had already created resources locally that could possibly assist others? Concern was noted about the amount of time spent by pupils on screen, and that a live service would create excessive additional strain. It was emphasised that the last thing that SACRE wished was to create additional strain and pressure.

Reference was also made to the availability of virtual services, and it was enquired whether a virtual link could be sent to one service, which could then be made available to all schools? This would reduce the burden on teachers and would enable access to various religions at the same time. Reference was made to one school where the local Minister had prepared a service for a specific time, such as Christmas, although safety matters would have to be considered before allowing a Minister to physically attend the school.

Resolved:

To accept the report and note that many resources were available - not only the resources referred to by WASACRE, but also within the local community. It was agreed to gather all the points of contact before sending a reminder letter to the schools, highlighting these resources, and encouraging them to consider collective worship.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 10.30 a.m.

CHAIR