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# **S.A.C.R.E. - STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

**24/06/2025**

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## **Attendance:**

**Councillors:** Menna Baines, Meryl Roberts, Dewi Jones, Paul Rowlinson, Anne Lloyd-Jones, Elin Walker Jones and Jina Gwyrfa.

## **Others:**

**Christian and Other Faiths and Non-religious Philosophical Convictions:** Nick Sissons (The Methodist Church) and Bethan Jones (The Union of Welsh Independents)

**Teachers:** Miriam A. Amlyn (NAS/UWT).

**Officers:** Buddug Mair Huws (Assistant Resources Officer and SACRE Clerk), Phil Lord (Independent Adviser) and Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

## **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Item 7:** Jennie Downes

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

IT WAS RESOLVED to elect Councillor Menna Baines as Chair of the Committee for the year 2025/26.

### **2. VICE-CHAIR**

IT WAS RESOLVED to elect Councillor Meryl Roberts as Vice-chair of the Committee for the year 2025/26.

### **3. PRAYER OR QUIET REFLECTION**

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Councillor Paul Rowlinson.

### **4. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:

- Gwern ap Rhisiart (Head of Education)
- Eurfryn Davies (The Baptist Union of Wales)
- Jean Owen (Bahá'í Faith)
- Nathan Abrams (Judaism)
- Councillor John Pughe Roberts

Phil Lord was welcomed as a member to the Committee, as an Independent Adviser. Buddug Mair Huws was thanked for her excellent work on this Committee over the last two years.

### **5. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Councillor Anne Lloyd-Jones declared a personal interest as she was a member of Ysgol Pen-y-Bryn's Governing Body, although she did not believe that this made her prejudicial.

## **6. URGENT ITEMS**

None to note.

## **7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 4 February 2025, as a true record, noting one correction.

## **8. MATTERS ARISING**

It was resolved to accept the Annual Report 2024/25, noting one correction.

## **9. TRANSLATING THE UNTRANSLATABLE**

The item was presented by Jennie Downes (Post-graduate Student) on Translating the Untranslatable. The presentation was an exploration of how to shed light on spiritual development in the Humanities Area of Learning through the Cynefin lens, with a particular focus on learning within Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE).

During the presentation, the following main headings were discussed:

- An introduction to and brief background of the research into Cynefin.
- A look at Welsh legislation and the Curriculum for Wales.
- Trying to understand the question: How can learners (Progression Steps 1 to 3), through engagement with Cynefin, be supported to respond to the spiritual element in their learning within RVE?
- Scope of the research on Cynefin.
- Applying Cynefin in curricular practice.
- More in-depth research focusing on the Welsh Bible.
- Further research into the curriculum review and global context.
- Spirituality and Religion, Values and Ethics.
- The Global Focus within the Curriculum for Wales.

To close, the following findings were taken from the research:

- The need for a 'safe' learning environment to be able to explore the challenging concepts of RVE, whilst acknowledging and valuing spiritual progression.
- That the Welsh Bible and its translations could be used as an authentic context for learning across the curriculum in Wales.

- That it was important to develop a culture of acknowledging and valuing the emerging practices in RVE.
- That further research was needed on the narrative and Cynefin, which would be explored during the next stage of the research.

She was thanked for the presentation.

A question was asked as to how best the findings of the research could be shared with schools and how to convert the research into resources for teaching the curriculum. In response, it was noted that the Bible Society had created a small resource based on the research focusing on local history, which was a positive starting point. It was noted that there would be an opportunity to share the presentation with schools and that she was happy to do so personally. The importance of ensuring that schools explored their own history and local stories when discussing Cynefin and the research was emphasised. It was noted that Dr Gareth Evans-Jones at Bangor University had presented the research within the University, and that the next steps involved publishing the research in a journal in November.

A question was raised about whether the tension between the concept of being connected to a place and being over-connected had been explored in the research and, if not, whether any other research was known to have explored this area. In response, a personal interest was expressed in stories and narratives and the way that they are passed down from one generation to the next and from one culture to the other. She noted that she intended to carry out further research into this area.

Given that the original New Testament had been written in Greek, not Aramaic, a question was asked as to what impact this had had. In response, it was noted that William Morgan had worked from the original Greek scriptures, not from the Aramaic translation. An opinion was expressed that William Morgan's work was incredible, and that the Welsh translation of the Bible had a much deeper meaning as a result.

It was noted that there was a need to distinguish between different translations of the Bible - those that tried to keep to an authentic translation and those that attempted a commentary by paraphrasing the text. It was further noted that there were probably differences in how the same meaning was conveyed between the Welsh Bible and English Bible. It was noted that studying this within the context of RE was extremely interesting and a valuable lesson for learners.

It was noted that the presentation had been extremely interesting. It was noted that the hope was to integrate this research on Cynefin into schools' lessons on the 'bro' (community) theme.

It was decided that a copy of the presentation by Jennie Downes would be sent to RVE/RE teachers in Gwynedd.

## **10. ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS**

The inspection reports were accepted.

It was asked whether every school conducted a morning assembly. In response, it was noted that Estyn would draw attention to any school not meeting the legal requirement for collective worship if they were to report back on that in their report. It was noted that Estyn only reported any failure to meet the legal requirement, rather than when a school did meet the requirement.

It was explained that several schools conducted a morning collective worship session in registration classes, and an assembly on a weekly basis. It was further noted that collective worship, in some instances, was in the form of reflection rather than worship and that the messages shared aligned with the beliefs of several religions such as kindness and respect.

## **11. CONTENT OF SACRE ANNUAL REPORTS**

The SACRE annual reports were accepted.

It was highlighted that a presentation from the last WASACRE meeting could be found on page 22 onwards. It was noted that WASACRE was seeking the views of SACREs on which recommendations to put forward to the Welsh Government in relation to the content of annual reports. It was elaborated that the presentation highlighted the opinion that the guidelines for the content of reports were indefinite, dated and retrospective.

Committee Members were asked whether they had an opinion on the suitability of the current method of producing the annual report and its content. Members were further asked whether an action plan for moving forwards should become part of the annual report.

It was agreed that it was important to include a summary of what had been, however that an agreed aim was needed for reporting back in the annual reports to lead to more positive change in future.

## **12. RVE/RE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YEAR 10 AND 11**

Phil Lord presented the item and highlighted the following main points:

- That the presentation had been prepared with the aim of helping teachers and leaders to understand how Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) fitted into the wider curriculum, and what was legally required to be delivered to learners within the area (especially in year 10/11).
- That the presentation focused on how schools could deliver Religion, Values and Ethics to learners beyond GCSE.
- That several changes had been made to the Curriculum for Wales in relation to RVE, namely that:
  - There was a need to include religious and non-religious philosophical convictions.
  - There was no longer a right to withdraw from RVE.
  - There was no requirement to deliver RVE to post-16 pupils.
- RVE promoted not only informed but compassionate and tolerant learners.
- There was a legal requirement to deliver RVE to learners aged 3 to 16.
- The curriculum covered elements of spiritual development in several forms, such as towards others, personally, in the community, towards the natural world, through creativity and by considering meaning and purpose.
- There were seven RVE lenses to use to develop knowledge.
- There were several ways of delivering RVE to learners.
- Agored Cymru qualifications would end in 2027 and be replaced with a *'Skills Suite' qualification*.
- Uptake on the GCSE RVE Short Course had fallen, with uptake on the long course remaining stable.
- There was concern regarding work pressure on GCSE RVE teachers.

- There were different requirements regarding RVE in private/faith schools and plans in public schools.
- There were Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary approaches to RVE delivery, but that there was criticism of the latter with the risk of the differences between the individual disciplines being lost.

It was suggested that the Authority should discuss with Phil Lord the intention of offering training to Gwynedd Headteachers on this matter.

### **13. WASACRE**

- The minutes of the last meeting of the Association, held on 6 March 2025, were accepted as a true record.
- A letter to Lynn Neagle MS, Cabinet Secretary for Education was noted.

The meeting commenced at 3.40pm and concluded at 5:15pm.

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**CHAIR**