

Attendance

Ynys Môn / Anglesey Non Dafydd (ND)	Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Phil Lord (PL) Collete Owen (CO) Jennie Downes (JD)	Powys John Mitson (JM)	NAPfRVE Phil Lord (PL) Donna Graves (DG)
Blaenau Gwent Kathy Riddick (KR)	Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Vicky Barlow (VB) Trevor Dobson (TB)	Rhondda Cynon Taf Matthew Maidment (MM)	EFTRE Phil Lord (PL)
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Alice Parry (AP) Edward Evans (EE)	Gwynedd Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Donna Graves	Torfaen Hayley Jones (HJ)	Observers:
Caerffili/ Caerphilly Eifion ap Llwyd Dafydd (ELD)	Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Louise Brown (LB)	Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Tyler Saunders Marged Williams	WJEC Paul Morgan
Caerdydd / Cardiff	Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Rachel Samuel (RS)	Wrecsam / Wrexham Tania ap Siôn (TS) Libby Jones (LJ)	ESTYN
Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Gaynor Jones-Higgs (GJH)	Casnewydd / Newport	Rhys Evans	Welsh Government
Ceredigion Rhianydd James (RJ)			REC Kathy Riddick (KR) Libby Jones (LJ)
Conwy Phil Lord (PL) Roger Boon (RB)			Church in Wales
			Catholic Education Service
			Qualification Wales
			Interfaith Network
			ADEW
			Guest Speaker Jaimie Woodhouse
			Minutes (from recording) Jo Nicholls (JNI)
			Translator: Sioned Jones

Minutes of the meeting

1. Introduction and welcome

EE welcomed members to the summer meeting and thanked Anglesey LA and its SACRE for hosting today's meeting. EE welcomed Councillor Non Dafydd, Advisor and Chair of Anglesey SACRE who gave the following introduction [translated from Welsh]:

It is a privilege to host the WASACRE meeting. We are coming together with a commitment to foster the development of RVE in schools in Wales, recognising its fundamental role in fostering understanding of our moral purpose. As we start on this effort together, let us recognise the role of the LAs in ensuring the RVE curriculum meets the diverse needs of our communities and the experiences of all pupils in schools.

RVE in schools serves as a milestone for society that is inclusive, by engaging with difficult ethical questions, exploring different world views and respecting differences. Students have a valuable insight into different beliefs and values systems that form our world today. Having such knowledge leads understanding reduces prejudices and encourages meaningful dialogue between individuals from various backgrounds.

LAs are in a unique position to facilitate this journey, bridging between policy and practical operation. Our contributions are essential to make sure education continues to be dynamic and responding to the evolving needs for both learners and teachers.

Thank you to all of you for your commitment to this continuing journey. Your participation in this meeting shows your readiness to consider the development of this important aspect of education. I hope we can all take advantage of this opportunity to share ideas to inspire actions and to foster partnerships to strengthen education across Wales

Together we can build a brighter future for our students based on values, respect, understanding and responsibility.

EE thanked Non Dafydd.

2. Quiet reflection

EE led a reflection on peace and compassion and shared the story "Nothing More Than Nothing". EE concluded with a prayer for unity.

3. Apologies

Apologies received from Councillor Nia Jenkins (Neath Port Talbot), Councillor Rachel Buckler (Monmouthshire), Christopher Owens (WJEC), Michaela Benjamin (Estyn), Ellen Stock (WLGA), Emily Lloyd (Church in Wales). Vicky Barlow noted early departure.

4. Minutes of the last meeting, Zoom, (6th March 2025, Bridgend)

The minutes were reviewed and are to be amended as follows:

- Andrew Bennett should be listed under Carmarthenshire.
- "RE experts" changed to "RE advisors."
- "Sex education" amended to "sexuality education."

RS proposed and VB seconded that, with these amendments, the minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting held on 6th March 2025.

EE, the Chair, will sign the minutes to indicate that it is the final version and provide this signed copy to AP for filing

5. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting, (6th March 2025, Bridgend)

- No new matters arising outside the current meeting's agenda.
- RB mentioned that TaS's bilingual report didn't reach his SACRE.
- LJ confirmed it had been sent to all SACREs and will resend to RB.

6. NAPfRVE presentation

Jaimie Woodhouse (JW) thanked WASACRE and NAPfRVE for the privilege of speaking at this meeting. JW is a school speaker on Humanism and Sentientism.

JW presented slides on Sentientism. A copy of the detailed presentation JW shared is to be circulated to the SACREs after this meeting. In summary:

- The word Sentientism is a modern worldview with ancient heritage worldviews, with echoes of themes from the Dharmic religions, the Abrahamic religions, Humanism and Veganism as a worldview too. It is a simple worldview summarised as evidence, reason and compassion for all sentient beings.
- Young people are concerned about diversity, discrimination and identity and deeply concerned about nature, environment and the climate. which is becoming more immediate with the impact of artificial intelligence and the implications for those technologies on the way we lead our lives. Sentientism worldview ties in with and resonates with many of those different themes and this is the context into which Sentientism fits as another non-religious worldview.
- It is a simple, radical, pluralistic philosophical platform.
- JW presented ideas on how to teach Sentientism in RVE and how it is aligned with the objectives for RVE as a subject. It can be addressed at every level, from 17/18-year-olds and university students down to early years.
- JW presented 4 lesson ideas.
- JW offered to help WASACRE further and his contact details are detailed on the slides.

EE thanked JW for his presentation.

7. Welsh Government [WG] matters

Usual termly meetings with Welsh Government (WG) colleagues

WASACRE officers met with Welsh Government colleagues, Alison Tom, Lloyd Hopkin and Guy DeLong-Smith on Monday 19th of May. Summary of meeting as follows:

- Discussion on the SACRE annual reports and the numbers received for 2023/24.
 - WG and WASACRE shared a list of the reports received. WG said that they would raise this with Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) in order to remind them of its legal duties regarding SACREs' Annual Reports.
 - WG confirmed that the reports are filed securely, and they are read and considered by appropriate colleagues in the Welsh Government Education Team. The reports are used to inform conversations in house. WG will consider providing summary reports in the future.
- WASACRE asked 'How does Welsh Government expect schools to provide mandatory RVE in year 10 and 11 from September 2025 without a designated qualification on offer, like the previous RS short course?'
 - WG responded that the LA should be involved in school improvement, and Adnodd is now set up and running and will support the development of resources. RVE has been identified as an area of priority.
- WASACRE asked 'If the skill suite and personal project are not designed to meet the mandatory requirement for RVE alone, what does WG suggest schools do, to ensure that they have covered the mandatory requirement for RVE from 2027?'
 - WG mentioned that schools should be avoiding everything being assessed. Welsh Government supports a more holistic approach in year 10 and 11. It is not just knowledge and skills but also dispositions and values that are important. WG recognise that schools are still in the mindset of qualifications and include things on the timetable that require reporting on and are still working to those current performance measures, which will change.
- There was also a discussion on whether the new performance measures will support the mandatory provision of RVE, and when is the consultation on this. LH said that he felt it is either out now, or it is coming soon. LH to report back to WASACRE on this.
- WASACRE asked if a decision had been made as to whether the Agored Cymru and Exploring Worldviews Qualifications will be available to schools in Wales for a September 2027 entry, because many schools are just starting this qualification in September 2025.
 - Subsequently WG have informed us that there is an appeal process happening for this qualification, as it was decided in May by Qualifications Wales that the Agored Cymru Exploring Worldviews would not be designated from September 2027. The final decision will be made by Qualifications Wales at the end of September, when schools will be informed. WASACRE knows

of a number of schools that have written letters to Agored Cymru in support of the qualification and that has been included in their appeal.

- The HE cuts were discussed and WASACRE asked, what is WG doing to address the cuts in Theology and Religious Studies at Cardiff University, and the impact of redundancies on the BA Education and PGC courses at Cardiff Met, which obviously will both have a direct impact on specialism in RVE and the future generations of learners.
 - Welsh Government stated it has no authority over universities and no say in decisions made regarding the programs. WG has developed a new professional learning body called Adnodd, who are responsible for developing professional learning resources for practitioners in Wales and WG mentioned again that RVE has been identified by this body as a priority area. They have also a new Welsh Government body called [Medr](#), it is a mixture of Welsh words for skill and ability. It's a WG sponsored body overseeing post 16 education and research in Wales, which became operational in August 2024.
 - WG will make some inquiries as to who is leading on the overview of subject demand, provision and distribution in HE in Wales within Medr and will report back. This work is likely to consider where interventions might be required to ensure the continuation of strategically important subject areas, which obviously we have stressed that RVE is one.
- There was also an update on the IT project that WASACRE was working on with Kevin Palmer's team and Max. This project was delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. WASACRE have been given the contact details of the new Deputy Director of School Practitioner division, Chris Warner.
- The final agenda item was the implications of the middle tier review on SACREs and SACs and RVE advisors, particularly in LAs, who have no current dedicated advisor, and those that have been pulled out of the new regional service, which has now been implemented around Wales.
 - WG said that they envisage more informal partnerships being forged to support all aspects of the curriculum. Welsh Government would be concerned if there was not capacity for RVE support or SACRE support within each local authority.
- MM: Has WASACRE contacted Qualifications Wales (QW) and WJEC regarding the Agored Cymru course? Is there anything else we can do to try and support this course? I am starting it this year, and it seems a good alternative to the GCSE in terms of the flexibility and the content. A qualification is useful to motivate pupils.
- LJ: WASACRE met with qualification Wales in April 2025, and RS is to update the Committee later in the meeting. QW sees it as a change of culture for teachers, and it's also a change of culture for learners and parents to think of new ways to motivate learners without that qualification, which is a challenge for schools. WASACRE certainly take on board that a qualification is a good motivator for learners, but maybe not all learners.
- RB: Conway shared similar concerns with QW. RB shared QW's response with Sam Rowlands, the local North Wales assembly member, who in turn had a meeting with Lynn Neagle. There were some inconsistencies in the feedback from QW and Lynn Neagle.

ACTION: RB to share all correspondence with WASACRE by email to LJ.

Response from Cabinet Secretary Lynne Neagle

EE reported the following:

The letter sent to LN was circulated to all SACREs prior to the meeting.

The letter contained the following questions:

- What steps is the Welsh Government taking to support and monitor delivery of mandatory RVE?
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure that schools are complying with the statutory requirements of the curriculum and assessment Wales Act in relation to RVE?
- How is Welsh Government supporting the professional development of existing and future RVE teachers?
- What is the role of SACs going forward?

EE read out the response from LN. the full response was circulated with the agenda papers. LN thanked WASACRE for its continued support in helping schools deliver RVE. LN recognised the importance of WASACRE and SACs in supporting schools to meet legislative requirements.

EE mentioned the important of WASACRE's regular meetings with WG and how appreciative WG are of WASACRE and SACRE's roles.

8. WASACRE supported research - The Teacher Voice Project: RVE in the Curriculum for Wales
TaS: A survey reminder with links and QR codes was included in the agenda papers.
The Teacher Voice Survey for RVE is closing in just under three weeks. It has been open since the end of January, and it closes on the 22nd of July with several reminders having been sent. At the last stage to receive as many responses as possible. It is open to all involved in the teaching of our RVE in 3 to 16 schools or settings - nursery, secondary, special and PRU.
TAS asked all SACRE members to promote this survey using the links and QR codes. A particular request for responses required from teachers at Welsh medium schools.

9. University cuts

LJ mentioned that because of the Staff cuts and the closures of schools within Welsh Universities, WASACRE has written to Cardiff Metropolitan to put forward its position and support and emphasised the need for RVE expertise for the Secondary RE PGCE, Primary PGCE and the BA in Primary Education. A similar letter will be sent to Cardiff University.

WASACRE plans to continue working with WG on finding solutions to address and reduce the potential negative impact of these decisions on learners.

WASACRE has already contributed to developing a project plan with Kevin Palmer's Team.

There are ongoing discussions between WASACRE and WG colleagues to consider the pipeline into secondary schools, improving incentive schemes, enhance professional learning for specialists, campaigns and other innovative ways to ensure that all learners have an optimised access to experts in RVE.

As mentioned previously, Adnodd who are responsible for developing professional learning resources for practitioners in Wales have said that RVE has been identified by the body as a priority area and there is the new body, Medr, that will be responsible for funding and regulating the tertiary education and research sector in Wales.

The RE Council for England and Wales was also concerned and held a meeting (19th June 2025) of its member bodies and organisations who are in Wales or have an interest in Wales. As the Wales Advisor to the REC, LJ, encouraged member body representatives of the REC to recognise Wales as an equal partner and offer support in a way that was appropriate and respectful, remembering that education in Wales is devolved, no matter how similar our issues may appear to be. The outcome of that meeting, in short, was that the REC will write an open letter about the impact of these cuts on RVE.

LJ asked for any questions/comments:

GJH: As a Christian chaplain at Swansea University, my role is currently at risk of redundancy. Please be aware that faith teams are being impacted, as well as academic departments.

JD: Very concerning as the roll out of the curriculum is only just impacting on secondary education, and obviously further education is part of that narrative.

RB: Very concerning and proposed to contact Sam Rowland.

KR: If there are no new teachers coming through, the subject is going to suffer greatly. The REC held a meeting specifically about this subject and the impact on Wales. There is also the concern that if we end up recruiting teachers from England to fill RVE positions they won't be trained to the new curriculum or have the language skills.

The REC's open letter to the education minister is to be signed by all interested parties and shows there is an overwhelming joint concern.

It is vital that WASACRE contacts Senedd, because whilst the Senedd doesn't have oversight or control of the universities, it does control bursaries and the level of importance that they put on the subject.

We can ask for Senedd members to put together an end of day debate. There are lots of things that we can do to engage with Senedd members from the faith cross party group and wider. I would like to be involved in helping with the strategy for engaging with the Senedd.

PL: Suggested in any correspondence that there has been considerable work conducted on RVE and more impetus is needed for it to work. The effort and energy to rollout this new curriculum could be undone by external forces that are not connected with the RVE, but that relate to school governance or decisions that are made outside of the school.

ACTION: WASACRE Exec Officers to discuss and decide on a plan of action regarding approaching the Senedd member and the Senedd itself.

10. Qualifications

Meeting with Oliver Stacey (29-4-25)

RS gave the following update: [Translated from Welsh]:

WASACRE met with Qualification Wales (QW) representatives Oliver Stacey and Laura Williams. The following topics were discussed:

- 1) The Agored Cymru qualification – Exploring world Views which runs until 2027.

QW said it had a high profile and how popular it was. But there is a period of recognising if it is suitable or has duplicated content. QW have until the end of September to decide whether this qualification will continue after 2027. An appeal has gone in from WG plus letters of support from WASACRE, NAPfRVE and schools. Notification at the end of September.

QW referred to the Pearson entry level qualification, QW are considering this as a possible qualification that could be used for English medium Catholic schools, if Pearson wanted to make an application.

- 2) The role of, and the rights of WASACRE to see the draft specification for the skills unit.

A number of assessments boards will be looking at qualifications such as WJEC and Agored Cymru plus other stakeholders such as WASACRE will be talking directly to the assessment boards. WJEC and Agored Cymru are advertising for people to sit on the steering groups. WASACRE has been added to the directory of stakeholders which is shared with the assessment boards.

- 3) Are there specific experts to create these units and how many subject specialists have been on the group?

QW mentioned that some assessment boards have already advertised for input for the new standards e.g. Agored Cymru are looking for people to work with them. Some subject experts available, there is a steering group but not subject experts. OS confirmed because of the importance of RVE, the units will be given thorough attention, as a mandatory subject to 16.

QW mentioned it has approvals team working with skills suite. Every unit is to be available by Sept 2026. Some units to be published if ready before others. WASACRE raised concerns as this could have a negative impact for those skills being released at a later date.

June Jenkins will be leading on the qualifications.

It was a beneficial meeting to gain a better understanding. Further meetings to be held as these qualifications are developed.

RB: Skills suite is crucial to the future of RVE at Key Stage Four, does the kind of structure of consultation enable expert input into that process?

RS: WASACRE are part of this directory of 'go to' people to contact for the developers of the qualification. Qualifications Wales has recognised that there is a need to look more closely at the intended development of those three specific units above others. It is difficult, as no one has been appointed to write these qualifications yet.

PL: PL is on a panel of experts that will be looking through the bids and steering them. PL won't be offering support to individual bodies because that will be a conflict of interest, but he will be able to see what is submitted and provide advice to Qualifications Wales.

RS: Must be mindful of two things 1) It is not designed to cover all RVE requirements and 2) It is down to all individual schools what, if any, of the skills suites they offer their learners. This is something to notify advisors to schools and LAs, that there is a push required to look at the value of those three units, to encourage take up.

11. EFTRE Conferences

The conference is held every three years and is in Budapest this year. WASACRE have invited teachers to apply for a bursary to attend. Two teachers have applied and have been successful in their application.

WASACRE is pleased to be able to sponsor the RVE teachers. The teachers will report back to WASACRE on their visit.

PL, EFTRE representative, will also be attending and encourages the members to read the program published on the EFTRE website and to read the fascinating country reports.

PL has suggested to WASACRE to consider Wales as the location for the 2028 conference. EFTRE works in partnership with the host country. The host will have a greater percentage of presenters and EFTRE encourages teachers to present. Suggested a potential for a European project looking at Cynefin around Europe. EFTRE will meet as a board at the end of the 2025 conference.

EE: PL mentioned this at the last Exec. meeting in May, and questions were raised. The Exec. will return to this subject at the next meeting, after further information received post EFTRE conference.

12. Report by the Executive Committee held on 14-5-25

TaS: Most matters are being covered on today's agenda.

It was noted that the response to the conference day had been positive. Numerous requests have been received for further online seminars, similar to the WASACRE pre and post conference seminars last year.

The Executive are keen to follow up on the success of the conference in the next school year. A small working group has been formed to generate some initial ideas for further discussion, which will be shared in due course.

13. Updates

• CBAC / WJEC (Christopher Owens)

CO was unable to attend and sent a brief written update which RS read out to the members. Update as follows:

It is a very busy time for the board with exam season, the summer series for A level, AS and GCSEs are taking place. Exams have been sat and marking in process. For GCSE religious studies entries, all units had entries in both English and Welsh medium, the only religion that didn't have an entry, and this has been the case for a number of years, is Sikhism. For the autumn term, there are professional learning events scheduled. It will be online professional learning, and it will focus primarily on the NEA for unit two. No date has been scheduled yet. The first teaching of the new GCSE will be September 2025 with first examining of the unit two NEA and the exam paper units in the summer of 2026.

• REC (Kathy Riddick)

KR gave the following update:

As previously mentioned, REC are writing an open letter to the education minister and will share with WASACRE.

REC has been occupied with the curriculum review in England. Sarah Lane Court, who is chair of the REC has been presenting to the Education Committee in England about the state of RE problems. REC are recommending a national exemplar framework and waiting to see how the curriculum review develops. The output from that and the decisions about how they are going to move forward with that curriculum review are due in the autumn.

There is a board meeting this afternoon,

• PYCAG / NAPfRVE (Phil Lord)

PL gave the following update:

With the natural cycle of chairs moving on and vice chairs taking on the new role. I've taken on the role as chair for NAPfRVE for the foreseeable future, Paula Webber has stepped down from the role, and DG has stepped into the role of Vice Chair.

In our last meeting, we discussed many of the issues being covered today. NAPfRVE wrote a letter to the Vice Chancellor of Cardiff University regarding the cuts and closures and was sent on 9th June 2025. NAPfRVE have requested that the university explore the potential consequences of what the cuts and closures might mean, whether they have any concerns, and what would they do about it? There has been no response, so the letter will be resent next week.

Annual reports were discussed and how would a good annual report look, awaiting guidance from Welsh Government.

NAPfRVE have offered support to WJEC regarding its conversations on the skills suite. Conscious that NAPfRVE do not want to favour certain organisations. If there are other organisations that people know that will be looking to bid for those skills suites, please let PL know. WJEC are meeting next week, and NAPfRVE is represented at these meetings.

NAPfRVE are trying to produce valuable support letters for the world of RVE through 'RVE coffee'. There is a meeting in a fortnight's time to look at progression in RVE with a view to provide guidance and support material on this subject.

EE congratulated PL and DG for taking on the role of chair and vice chair respectively, and WASACRE looks forward to continuing the relationship between NAPfRVE and WASACRE.

- **Estyn (Gwawr Meirion)**
No update available
- **Materion lleol / ymholiadau / Local matters / enquiries**
No enquiries received on local matters.

14. Correspondence

- All correspondence has been dealt with in this meeting.

15. Any other business (to be agreed in advance of the meeting with the Chair)

- No AOB

16. Date for next meeting (AGM) – via zoom, hosted by The Vale of Glamorgan on Wed 19th November 2025

Meeting ended at 12.20pm.

DRAFT