CCYSAGauC
Cymdeithas Cynghorau Ymgynghorol Sefydlog ar Addysg Grefyddol Cymru
WASACRE
Wales Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education

WASACRE Summer Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, 24 June 2026
9.30 – 12:30
Hosted by Conwy SAC, virtual via Zoom
Chaired by Edward Evans
35 participants including special guest, Anna Silver, and SAC representatives across Wales

Attendance

Ynys Môn / *Anglesey* Phil Lord (PL) **Blaenau Gwent** Kathy Riddick (KR) **Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / *Bridgend*** Edward Evans (EE) Alice Parry (AP) **Caerffili/ *Caerphilly***) Eifion ap Llwyd Dafydd (ELD) **Caerdydd / *Cardiff*** Corinne Hainsworth (CH) **Sir Gaerfyrddin / *Carmarthenshire*** Jennifer Harding-Richards (JHR) **Ceredigion** Anne Uruska (AU) Rhianydd James (RJ) **Conwy** Phil Lord (PL) Dr Lowry Brown (LB) Roger Boon (RB) Josh Andrews (JA)	**Sir Ddinbych / *Denbighshire*** Phil Lord (PL) Jennie Downes (JD) **Sir y Fflint / *Flintshire*** Lyn Oakes (LO) **Gwynedd /** **Merthyr Tudful / *Merthyr Tydfil*** Donna Graves (DG) **Sir Fynwy / *Monmouthshire*** Louise Brown (LB) Rachel Buckler (RB) Clare Werrett (CW) **Castell-nedd Port Talbot /*Neath and Port Talbot*** Rachel Samuel (RS) **Casnewydd / *Newport*** **Powys** John Mitson (JM) Caroline Davies (CD)	**Rhondda Cynon Taf** Donna Graves (DG) Alison Lee **Torfaen** Hayley Jones (HJ) **Bro Morgannwg / *Vale of Glamorgan*** Kathy Riddick (KR) **Wrecsam / *Wrexham*** Tania ap Siôn (TS) Libby Jones (LJ) **CSC** Donna Graves (DG) **EAS** Hayley Jones (HJ) **NAPfRVE** Phil Lord (PL) Donna Graves *(DG)* **EFTRE** Phil Lord (PL) **REC** Kathy Riddick (KR)	***Observers*** **WJEC** Chris Owens (CO) **ESTYN** Michelle Gosney (MG) **Church in Wales** Lisa Taylor (LT) **Catholic Education Service** **WLGA** Elin Stock (ES) **Qualification Wales (QW)** Oliver Stacey (OS) **Special guests:** Anna Silver (AS) - Board of Deputies of British Jews **Translator:** Sioned Jones (SJ) Rhys Evans Sarah McErlaine Cllr Sue Shotter Maddie Saraireh

Minutes of the meeting

1. **Introduction and Welcome**

The Chair, Edward Evans, opened the meeting and introduced Dr. Lowri Brown, Chief Education Officer, who welcomed attendees, emphasised the importance of high-quality RVE across Wales and highlighted the collaborative work on implementing the agreed syllabi for RVE across Wales. Roger Boon, the outgoing Chair of Conwy SACRE, reflected on his time in the role and highlighted a range of issues from the lack of qualified RVE specialist teachers in Wales to the perceived lack of explicit RVE content in the new syllabus offer. The meeting included a moment of quiet reflection led by Edward Evans.

2. **Quiet Reflection**

Edward Evans offered reflections on making positive changes in the world and the importance of individual action. He also shared a Universal Statement for Peace.

3. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Vicky Barlow and Councillor Nia Jenkins.

4. **Minutes of the Last Meeting (19 March 2026)**

The minutes from the March 19th meeting were accepted after being prepared using AI by RS and LJ.

Decision: Minutes approved following amendments.

ACTION: EE to sign minutes and LJ to file

5. **Matters Arising**

No separate matters arising beyond those addressed within agenda items.

6. **NAPfRVE Presentation**

Presenter: Anna Silver - The Board of Deputies of British Jews

AS presented new Welsh-language resources for teaching Judaism, including an updated Jewish Living Experience Exhibition with 18 banners and 8 artifact boxes now available in Welsh, and a Welsh version of the Jewish Living Online website. The exhibition can be transported around Wales and is currently stored at Cardiff United Synagogue, while the online resource will be fully functional by September. AS also offered to share a comprehensive resource list and invited teachers to join monthly Q&A sessions for support with Judaism education.

The presentation received positive feedback from attendees including RS who praised the quality of the Welsh language content. Several participants requested to be added to AS's mailing list and expressed interest in school visits, with AL offering to coordinate school visits across Wales including upcoming visits to Cardiff, Newport, and Neath/Port Talbot areas. The group discussed promoting Jewish representation on SACRE committees and potential future events, including AL's plans to organise a teacher visit day at the synagogue.

ACTION:

- AS to send her presentation to Libby for onward distribution.
- LJ to circulate presentation link and related resources to all SACRE clerks and, including contact details for follow-up.
- AL to continue to coordinate and offer school visits using the Jewish Living Experience Exhibition and inform interested parties of future events for teachers.

7. Welsh Government Matters

Welsh Government updates were provided by LJ covering the recent meeting on 17-6-26

Persons present:

- WASACRE – Edward Evans, Rachel Samuel, Tania ap Sion and Libby Jones
- Welsh Government –Claire Habberfield and Angharad Thomas-Richards

Angharad has an overarching role in WG - Interim Head of Humanities and ex History teacher with RE as second subject. Sam Clutton has now left the Humanities team.

Discussion points included:

- Parents' and Carers' Guidance on RVE – update
- The Collective Worship Guidance Review – update
- Findings from Estyn's Cross-Cutting Theme Report on Humanities
- RVE / Humanities recruitment and retention crisis and related issues
- Teacher workload relating to the new GCSE
- SACRE Annual Reports review
- The Teacher Voice project

Decisions included: WG colleagues to keep WASACRE Officers updated on all discussion points and arrange future meetings dates in advance as well as extending the offer of ad hoc meetings when necessary.

ACTION:

- LJ to keep in regular contact with CH (WG) for further updates

8. Estyn Annual Report – Humanities Cross-cutting theme

Presentation by Michelle Gosney from Estyn on the Annual Report Humanities Cross-Cutting Theme.

MG presented findings from the curriculum review highlighting weaknesses in humanities education, particularly in planning, subject balance, and development of specific skills across different educational phases. The review showed that while primary schools generally recognise cross-curricular value, they often lack progression in disciplinary skills, and history tends to dominate at the expense of geography and RVE. In secondary schools, the integrated approach to humanities sometimes lacks coherence, and there's an increasing trend of staff teaching outside their subject specialism due to recruitment issues and curriculum models. Key concerns included insufficient professional learning for teachers, limited curriculum time for RVE, and underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic groups in curriculum

content. Effective leadership was identified as a decisive factor in strong humanities provision, with leaders needing to ensure sufficient curriculum planning time, invest in staff professional learning, and use firsthand evidence to evaluate impact. The discussion revealed that while schools have flexibility to choose between humanities or subject-specific teaching approaches, the current findings reflect expected outcomes of the curriculum redesign, particularly regarding the challenges of non-specialist teaching and subject knowledge development.

ACTION:
- MG to send the Estyn Humanities Thematic Report presentation to LJ for distribution to SACREs and relevant parties.

9. Teacher Voice Project (WASACRE-supported Research)

TaS provided an update on the Teacher Voice Project report, explaining that while the full report was delayed due to the time-consuming process of analysing qualitative data, a shorter PowerPoint presentation was already available through local SACREs. TaS referred to the WASACRE webinar (25 March 2026) presenting initial findings from the survey ahead of the final report.

ACTION:
- Send the shorter Teacher Voice Project voiceover PowerPoint directly to LB (and any other relevant parties) for use prior to upcoming meetings.

10. AULRE and WASACRE Joint Conference Day in Cardiff

Rachel reported on plans for AULRE and WASACRE to hold a joint Conference Day in Cardiff in early September. However, she was still awaiting confirmation of the location from Mark Bryant.

ACTION:
- RS to chase Mark Bryant for confirmation of the location for the joint AULRE / WASACRE conference day and update members via SACREs when information is received.

11. Qualifications

OS provided updates on qualifications relevant to RVE, including the Skills for Life and Work qualifications in Wave Three, which are being developed by five awarding bodies with specifications to be published in September. He discussed feedback from the GCSE religious studies practitioner group regarding content challenges, assessment issues, and potential quick wins such as extending NEA submission deadlines and making briefs valid for two years. The group also addressed concerns about the lack of qualifications for high-achieving students and the absence of a short course option, with OS agreeing to feed these back to the executive team.

ACTIONS:
- OS to check and confirm whether schools can mix and match units from different awarding bodies for the new Skills for Life and Work qualifications, and report back to LJ.
- OS to take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the impact of new qualifications on schools without specialist teachers.

- OS to take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the capping of the new Level 2 Skills for Life qualifications and the lack of provision for higher-attaining students in absence of a short course GCSE in Religious Studies

12. Report of Executive Committee (13 May 2026)

The meeting covered several updates and discussions. Most of the items on the agenda are on this agenda, including WG meetings and usual updates. Correspondence shared in item 14.

EE announced that SACREs will no longer exist from September 2026, and after discussion at the Executive meeting, the decision was made to retain the name WASACRE. Rachel Buckler and others endorsed the decision after a thorough discussion.

13. Updates

Updates from NAPfRVE, WJEC, REC, EFTRE, and Local matters / enquiries were presented in written form for the first time, with participants generally agreeing this approach was beneficial. Additional information included:

- NAPfRVE:

The recent meeting discussed several key topics related to RVE and current issues. PL presented materials created by NAPfRE members using Estyn resources from the Humanities Cross-Cutting Theme report relating to Self-evaluation and school improvement. These resources had been rewritten from an RVE perspective and shared with All RVE Advisers for use with local schools. PL invited SACREs to contact him with any questions or comments.

14. Correspondence

- Cultivating Deeper Inter-Disciplinary Dialogue – Cardiff Metropolitan University and Christchurch Canterbury University

Tania updated the group on the "Cultivating Deeper Interdisciplinary Dialogue" project, explaining that it had been modified to include recorded webinars rather than in-person teacher engagement, and that she had personally contributed a webinar titled "Being Shaped by Place, Prayer, Living with Nature and the Sacred."

- Freedom of Information (FOI) requests affecting schools in Wales

TaS reported on correspondence with Bangor University regarding their FOI request, which caused disruption to schools, and recommended concluding the correspondence with a thank-you response.

Libby presented guidance that WASACRE created to help SACRE advisors address FOI requests from the National Secular Society, which included clarification on questions about religious education and visitor policies.

The group agreed to send a final thank-you letter to Bangor University to close that correspondence and discussed the possibility of engaging with Welsh Government regarding governing bodies' role in FOI responses.

ACTION:

- TaS to draft and send a final response to Bangor University, thanking them for their response and making observations, to close correspondence regarding the FOI request.
- Resend the FOI guidance document to RB (Conwy) and Corinne Hainsworth (Cardiff).
- Write to Welsh Government (or coordinate with WASACRE officers) to ensure that the review of governing bodies includes explicit reference to governors' statutory duty regarding RVE and consideration of FOI responsibilities.

15. Any Other Business

No other business

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for November 10th, hosted by Ceredigion (online).

Summary of Key Actions

Actions	**Person**
Sign minutes and file	EE (WE) and LJ (WE)
• Send presentation to for onward distribution. • Circulate presentation link and related resources to all SACRE clerks and, including contact details for follow-up. • continue to coordinate and offer school visits using the Jewish Living Experience Exhibition and inform interested parties of future events for teachers.	AS(BoDBJ) LJ (WE) AL (RCT)
Keep in regular contact with CH (WG) for further updates	LJ (WE)
Send the Estyn Humanities Thematic Report presentation for distribution to SACREs and relevant parties.	MG (E) and LJ (WE)
Send the shorter Teacher Voice Project voiceover PowerPoint directly to LB (and any other relevant parties) for use prior to upcoming meetings.	LJ (WE)
Chase Mark Bryant for confirmation of the location for the joint AULRE / WASACRE conference day and update members via SACREs when information is received.	RS (WE)
• Check and confirm whether schools can mix and match units from different awarding bodies for the new Skills for Life and Work qualifications, and report back to LJ. • Take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the impact of new qualifications on schools without specialist teachers. • Take back to Qualifications Wales the concerns raised about the capping of the new Level 2 Skills for Life qualifications and the lack of provision for higher-attaining students in absence of a short course GCSE in Religious Studies	OS (QW) OS (QW) OS (QW)
• Draft and send a final response to Bangor University, thanking them for their response and making observations, to close correspondence regarding the FOI request.	TaS (WE)

• Resend the FOI guidance document to RB (Conwy) and Corinne Hainsworth (Cardiff). • Write to Welsh Government (or coordinate with WASACRE officers) to ensure that the review of governing bodies includes explicit reference to governors' statutory duty regarding RVE and consideration of FOI responsibilities.	LJ (WE) KR (WE)

WASACRE Executive (WE)