



Cyfarfod Cymdeithas CYSAG au Cymru,
Wales Association of SACREs meeting, Carmarthenshire

ITEM 13

Attendance

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| <p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Bethan James Rheinallt A. Thomas</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Gill Vaisey</p> <p>Pen-y-bontar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Vicky Thomas John Taylor Enfys Hawthorn Janet Jones</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Gill Vaisey Janet Jones</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Mary Parry</p> <p>Ceredigion Alwen Roberts</p> <p>Conwy Phil Lord Nicholas Richter</p> | <p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Phil Lord</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Phil Lord</p> <p>Gwynedd Bethan James</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Gill Vaisey</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Vicky Thomas Huw Stephens</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire Mary Parry</p> | <p>Powys John Mitson Margaret Evitts</p> <p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Paula Webber Mathew Maidment</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea Vicky Thomas Brinley Jones Alison Lewis</p> <p>Torfaen /Torfaen Vicky Thomas Daniel Foster</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Paula Webber Dafydd Treharne</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Samantha Jesson Ruth Holden</p> <p>Sylwedyddion / Observers Emlyn Doyle (Cyngor Sir Fâr?) Tudor Thomas (REMW) Kathy Riddick (Wales Humanists) Vaughan Salisbury (CYSAG Ceredigion) Jean Lewis (Cyngor Sir Gâr CYSAG CAERFYRDDIN) Gwyneth Thomas (Cyngor Sir Gâr CYSAG CAERFYRDDIN)</p> |
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Minutes

1. Introduction and welcome

Chair of WASACRE, Phil Lord, welcomed members to Carmarthenshire. The Leader of the Council, Emlyn Doyle, welcomed WASACRE to the Council Chamber. Members enjoyed the performance of the choir from Ysgol Gynradd Llangennech. Emlyn Doyle shared his support for SACREs and recognised the importance of WASACRE and of RE in Wales in a climate of educational change. He acknowledged that Carmarthenshire takes RE seriously and ensures a holistic education, which aims to develop empathy, tolerance and respect. As such it employs a Challenge Advisor to provide training and practical help to implement effective RE.

2. Quiet reflection

PL led a reflection, asking members to consider the need to work towards unity within communities. RE is in a position to remind people of this responsibility.

3. Apologies

Libby Jones, Jen Malcom, Tania ap Sion, Leslie Francis, Ernie Galsworthy, Sally Northcott

4. NAPfRE presentation

Headteacher, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Myrddin presented on collective worship in the secondary school. Assemblies are organised so that all pupils have the opportunity to participate in and deliver a daily act of collective worship. They share ideas and celebrate success as well as reflect. During questions the Headteacher was thanked by a WASACRE member who had previously been a teacher at the school. PL expressed WASACRE's thanks and reflected that newly built secondary schools have no communal space and would, therefore, find it difficult to develop a sense of community via bringing all pupils in a school together.

Comments included the positive contribution collective Worship could make to a pupil's experience in a secondary school and the good practice that could be shared from the presentation provided by Bro Myrddin.

5. Minutes of meeting held in Rhyl, 23 June 2016

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Huw Stephens and seconded by Edward Evans.

6. Matters Arising. VT said the new GCSE had been approved and was on WJEC website. She informed WASACRE that concerns had been raised at SACREs that there were training issues as there was an increase in content and more emphasis on textual concepts. Dan Foster – Head teacher representing Torfaen SACRE expressed concern that the cost of training by the WJEC has risen rapidly. Schools are finding this difficult because of financial constraints. Tudor Thomas agreed but said that training for new specifications was free. He said schools are on tight budgets and that representation is needed to WJEC suggesting that it carries a responsibility for schools in Wales in particular as it is the sole Examination Board in Wales. The WJEC are offering one free training place for all schools on four dates during this academic year.

ACTION: PL agreed to find the link to RE Ideas on the Peniarth website. Copies going back as far as 2000 have been made available by REMW. Every SACRE Clarke should have a copy of the list of RE Ideas publications to share with SACREs.

P 4. Item 4. The reply was sent to Lynda and LJ maintained email contact with WJEC regarding this issue. However, the letter to QW was not sent due to the Specification being accredited during the Autumn term.

P4. Item 5 Humanists on SACRE – Kathy Riddick from Humanists Wales has been invited to attend the Carmarthenshire meeting following a letter she sent to WASACRE highlighting this issue.

P5: Item 5 – Incerts: GV informed members that LJ had requested a statement from Welsh Government that we could use to inform Incerts that the level descriptions contained within agreed syllabuses are statutory. However, the response from Welsh Government did not address the original question. NAPfRE suggest we should go back to the original legislation which states that the Agreed Syllabuses are statutory and, therefore, the Levels within them are statutory. Rheinallt Thomas said officers in the Assembly are aware that it is the right of every SACRE to adopt the National Framework, but that this can only be done legally at a local level by individual SACREs, not at a national level. He also said Welsh Government must go forward carefully if RE is placed within humanities as RE has to be determined locally. GV proposed that WASACRE should make a second request to WG for a statement on the status of an agreed syllabus.

P6. Welsh Baccalaureate – A discussion was held on the consequences of not delivering statutory RE, which isn't just an issue at Key Stage 4. There is a local responsibility to ensure the Agreed Syllabus is being implemented. It was noted that some Pioneer Schools are confused as to the status of the Agreed Syllabus. WASACRE were told that this was discussed at the NAPfRE meeting. Some SACREs intend to write to schools reminding them of the obligation to follow the Agreed Syllabus. It was felt that there should be a consistent message sent out by SACREs across Wales.

Action: VT has written letters from her SACREs to schools reminding them of their statutory requirements and has agreed to share this with NAPfRE members so that they and their SACREs can consider whether to they should write something similar to their schools.

GV raised the issue that only 70 responses were received to the Welsh Bacc Survey and asked whether WASACRE would follow this up to get a fuller picture. Monmouthshire SACRE felt it worthwhile to get broader picture of what is happening across Wales, expressing concern about schools that had not responded to the survey. Dan Foster asked whether a misunderstanding of the statutory nature of an agreed syllabus could mean that Pioneer Schools could be acting illegally. The letters from SACREs would help in reminding them of the statutory nature of the Agreed Syllabus. Local Authority Officers sit on SACRE and they should be the link to schools. A teacher representative said that he is aware that one school in his LA is not complying with its statutory obligation for RE because of the Welsh Baccalaureate. This could be a slippery slope and SACREs have to act on it. PL reminded members that they have been advised by Welsh Government of the process for dealing with schools that are not complying and that SACREs should be following that. Tudor Thomas raised concern that due to the changes in GCSE specifications, the content has become heavier and that is worrying for the RE community in Wales as schools may now only deliver token RE.

It was agreed that WASACRE would not re-send the survey to schools but that each SACRE should follow-up with their own schools and feedback to WASACRE. MM suggested that SACREs should try to ensure that the survey goes directly to heads of department and not the school secretary or the headteacher.

7. Presentation - Support for schools in delivering the new GCSE specification for Religious Studies and the role of Lead Practitioners

Presented by Tonia Antinarzi who is seconded to ERW as Leader of Learning of Non-Core subjects. Tonia's responsibility is to work with lead practitioners to establish networks and to establish support for the non core subjects. Lead practitioners for RE have set up in each of the regions. They are working to create resources to support the implementation of the new WJEC GCSE and are beginning to share information and resources via Hwb. Resources will be translated into Welsh and Quality Assured. Lead practitioners are keen to hear from classroom teachers who would like to work together to create resources. A SACRE rep raised concerns that increased content of the new specification could mean that that grades may not be as high if they are expected to deliver GCSE Religious Studies in an hour a week. VT asked whether there was an intention to share resources wider to other consortia. Tonia affirmed this and said that links are already being made with EAS in Newport. Alison Lewis, a Lead Practitioner, highlighted the difficulty in getting schools to use Hwb but said that the resources are there if they want access them. Tonia said that the launch of Lead Practitioners was on 21st Oct and they have already made a lot of progress. A member asked if there had been involvement from SACREs in this process. Tonia confirmed this and is interested in hearing from schools with strong RE departments, especially Welsh language schools. Tonia will share the details of the lead practitioners for RE with WASACRE. Lead practitioners have written to all schools in the area to draw attention to the work they are doing. They are conducting a survey to map strengths.

BJ said that lead practitioners in North Wales have been getting organised and preparing resources. She asked whether they are doubling up on the work in Wales and whether they would benefit from working with colleagues across Wales. Tonia said that she sees her job as coordinating links with other consortia. A member asked who would be Quality Assuring. Tonia said that whilst the WJEC can't endorse the work they were able to check that they were on the right track. They would also be using teachers in the area and Mary Parry as the Advisor. Everything should be ready by the end of June. Tonia will follow up those who aren't involved. MM asked when the GCSE books would be made available. He highlighted the issue that the books only cover 3 religions Christianity, Judaism and Islam. VT agreed that there was an issue that there are no resources for Eastern Religions. Tonia said that the whole course was being mapped out and that it has covered all religions. PL said that there will be a presentation from a lead practitioner in summer WASACRE meeting and we look forward to an update and the end of the process.

8. Updates:

Update: Curriculum Review – BJ said that many of the schools are trying to imagine what the Donaldson Curriculum will look like. Pioneer schools are hoping that by January Step 2 will begin and they will develop models for their Areas of Learning and Experience across Wales. BJ informed WASACRE that Phil Lord, Libby Jones and Gill Vaisey had represented WASACRE at regular Stakeholders' meetings with Welsh Government to discuss the new curriculum. There is also a meeting to be held with officers of the Welsh Government on 14th December. The role of WASACRE in the curriculum review process will be discussed.

A member highlighted a concern about the slow progress in the development of the new curriculum and said that Welsh Government has not given any suggestion of what the curriculum will look like. It was brought to the attention of WASACRE that some schools are under impression they don't have to follow the Agreed Syllabus. BJ also raised the issue of lack of time for teacher training on what good RE is. This is especially important to non-specialists. BJ suggested that we need to scrutinise the contribution of the pioneer schools and would welcome having an input into that. NAPfRE are preparing a document entitled "What is Good RE" to share with schools and are meeting before the end of term to finish this. Members of WASACRE are informed of the progress of the new curriculum and regularly feed back to members.

WASACRE have had correspondence from Carmarthenshire SACRE raising concerns about what RE will look like in the new curriculum and what the role of SACRE will be.

WASACRE have a meeting with The Minister for Education on 2nd March 2017 and will pose a question around the status of the Agreed Syllabus.

A member spoke about the concerns of the Presbyterian Church about the uncertainty of what is happening. They have sent a letter to Carmarthenshire SACRE and WASACRE as well as to Kirsty Williams because they are concerned about how Christianity will be taught in the new curriculum. RT suggested that Church Schools might find it difficult to become part of this curriculum and that the Church in Wales and the Roman Catholic Church should use its links to the Welsh Government to discuss this.

PL asked how RE would work if it is based in the humanities curriculum and suggested that it is important to keep a watching brief on that.

Update: Guidance on Managing the Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education. GV said that the document is now out for consultation with a variety of organisations, faith representatives and educationalists. She is delighted with the support and positive tone in which the document is being received. The document was initially produced in response to a headteacher, but the document has evolved and is now for parents, teachers and all parties. GV shared the document with colleagues in England at the REC Conference and there had been lots of interest. The document will go to a graphic designer for professional design and printing. Translation is needed but it should be available in the Summer Term.

Update on REC

GV said that Rudy Lockhart, CEO of REC, has been actively talking to MPs to ensure they understand what RE is. REC reps attended Party Political Conferences for the Labour and Conservative Parties to raise the profile of RE and to build good relationships with MPs. It was suggested that local SACREs should be informing their local politicians about standards achieved in GCSE locally as this is something they will care about.

REQM have a new manager, Linda Rudge.

There is a minimum subscription for REC of £250 but the average being given is £370.

There was a presentation on new resources at the conference.

1. Understanding Christianity Project: The National Society aim to raise standards in the teaching of Christianity following a survey which highlighted inadequacies. A resource and two day training package has been created for teachers who will be provided the pack of resources at the end of the course. They are training people to deliver the courses and GV will be attending.
2. Understanding Humanism: The Humanist Association has created a website with excellent resources for moral and social education as well as RE. They are hoping to translate all resources into Welsh.
3. The Board of Deputies of British Jews has produced a book to support Judaism GCSE Religious Studies: The Definitive Resource by Clive Lawton to help teachers with the quality of education on Judaism.

Update: EFTRE – PL attended the conference in August. The conference discussed what RE looks like across Europe and most countries take a confessional approach. There was discussion about how students are seen as commodities for economic growth with documentation from systems across Europe showing a move away from wellbeing and holistic and spiritual approaches.

PL will attend the Exec meeting of EFTRE next week in Finland.

Update: Welsh Government contact meeting - WASACRE are keeping in contact with WG via regular meetings. The next meeting is in December. Discussions have included 10/94 and the Agreed Syllabus. There has also been discussion on the Welsh Bacc and the new curriculum.

Annual reports issue – This issue is still unresolved and WASACRE will be pushing for WG to maintain its current responsibility to collate the reports as per 10/94. WASACRE will be kept up-dated on progress.

9. Report from the Executive Committee Minutes from meeting –

P1 Action 1 - Letter to Kirsty Williams.

Edward Evans has written to Welsh Government to ask whether changing the law with regards to Religious Education in England would have an impact in Wales. – What are the residual powers of Westminster? The response received did not adequately address the question and he would therefore write again, this time directly to Kirsty Williams.

REC subscription – PL advised that as a small organisation WASACRE was entitled to pay a reduced subscription to REC and this would be £99.

Lead Practitioners - There will be a presentation updating us on the work done in the Summer meeting.

PL said that WASACRE is pleased to see John Mitson is still able to attend and that WASACRE will still draw upon his skills.

The next Executive is meeting next on the **1st Feb.**

10. Correspondence

1. Letter from Neeter Baicher – about the book *Unsung* by Dr Darminder Singh Chada raising awareness and paying tribute to the Sikh soldiers to the British Empire.
2. Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary of Education agreed to a meeting with WASACRE on Thursday 2nd March, 2017 as a result of the request for a meeting LJ sent.
3. Pam Evans, CEO of Peace Mala, wrote informing WASACRE about the Peace Mala at Llandaff Cathedral on Thursday 20th July, 2017
4. Correspondence with Kathy Riddick, Development Officer, Wales Humanists discussing the place of Humanists in SACRE. Kathy Riddick was invited to attend WASACRE as an observer in order to begin a positive dialogue between the two associations. Kathy was in attendance in the meeting and explained that the Humanist Society wanted non-religious views represented alongside religious views as well as a positive relationship with SACREs. Kathy informed WASACRE that the Humanist Society has school speakers available across Wales. Edward Evans said that a Humanist had faithfully attended and made a valuable contribution to Bridgend SACRE for number of years. However, he reminded WASACRE that we are bound by circular 10/94 and therefore, non-religious belief systems can only be co-opted members and this is still the legal position. PL said that this is an issue for Welsh Government. Kathy Riddick said that the Humanist Society has written to Welsh Government on this issue.

11. A.O.B.

Tania and Leslie have published materials on the St Mary's Website and reminded WASACRE of the A Level journal So far there have been 10 issues with over 40 articles published. There are two new Foundation Phase resources available for free from the St Mary's Centre website. The 'Exploring Why' series and 'Exploring Our World' series are available from <http://www.st-marys-centre.org.uk/resoruces>

A Level resources for the new curriculum -MP raised the issue of this need, suggesting that we might seek funding for lead teachers to create resources to share in the same way lead practitioners are working on resources for GCSE. She suggested WASACRE and/or the REMW might consider funding this work. TT suggested that the WJEC have a role to play in this. He said that there are textbooks available written by chief examiners. The WJEC is a benefactor and they need to benefit from it and could perhaps act as a coordinator. BJ said that there are new GCSE and A level and groups working together voluntarily. She would be interested in other groups working together in a more formal sense providing a network of sharing good practice who are able to produce resources which is fully endorsed by WJEC. Someone would need to manage this. PL asked who their employer would be. A member suggested using the Hwb to share resources. It was suggested that two or

three teachers could coordinate it. JM discussed the financial issues and suggested that it would be difficult for WASACRE to fund this alone and would need to work with others. GV suggested asking REMW if they could also provide some funding and that we might also think about asking other organisations to help. RT said the residual balances of REMW do not match that of WASACRE but that this could be discussed in the next meeting of REMW.

TT felt strongly that as the WJEC is a profit making organisation and it is their product that they should be key players.

WASACRE voted that it would like to see this investigated further as speed is of the essence.

WASACRE minutes – RT brought it to the attention of WASACRE that old WASACRE minutes are not stored on the website. He suggested that it is important that the reports of the previous conferences are on the website and that with modern technology it would be easy to do this. **Action: PL is to look into is situation.**

PL informed WASACRE that Jen Malcom is retiring. He thanked her for her contribution to WASACRE and expressed best wishes for her retirement and for the future.

12. Date for next meeting: 3rd March 2017, Monmouthshire. Venue: County Hall, Usk.

Future meeting dates:

- Summer 2017, Wrexham
- Autumn 2017, Bridgend
- Spring 2018, Swansea