



**Cyfarfod Cymdeithas CYSAGau Cymru, Wrecsam, 7 July 2017
(10.30am – 3pm)**

**Wales Association of SACREs meeting, Wrexham, 7 July 2017
(10.30am – 3pm)**

Presenoldeb/Attendance

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Bethan James (BJ) Rheinallt Thomas (RT) Mefys Jones-Edwards (M J)</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Phil Lord (PL) Emrys Wynne (EW) Simon Cameron (SC)</p>	<p>Powys John Mitson (JM) Margaret Evitts (ME)</p>
<p>Blaenau Gwent Gill Vaisey (GV)</p>	<p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Phil Lord (PL) Roz Williams (RL)</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Paula Webber (PW)</p>
<p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans (EE) Vicky Thomas (VT)</p>	<p>Gwynedd Bethan James (BJ)</p>	<p>Abertawe / Swansea Alison Lewis (AL) Vicky Thomas (VT)</p>
<p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Vicky Thomas (VT) John Taylor (JT)</p>	<p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Vicky Thomas (VT) Ernie Galsworthy (EG)</p>	<p>Torfaen /Torfaen Vicky Thomas (VT)</p>
<p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Gill Vaisey (GV)</p>	<p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Gill Vaisey (GV)</p>	<p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Paula Webber (PW)</p>
<p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Mary Parry (MP)</p>	<p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot</p>	<p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Libby Jones (LJ) Tania ap Sion (TaS) Liz Davies (LD) Bhupinder Virdee-Lace (BV-L) Samantha Jesson (SJ) Martin Matthias (MM) Rev. James Harris (Rev. JH) Ruth Holden (RH)</p>
<p>Ceredigion Lyndon Lloyd MBE (LL)</p>	<p>Casnewydd / Newport Vicky Thomas (VT) Sally Northcott (SN)</p>	<p>Sylwedyddion / Observers Dr Farookh Jishi (Wrexham Muslim Association)</p>
<p>Conwy Phil Lord (PL)</p>	<p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire Mary Parry (MP)</p>	

Minutes

1. **Cyflwyniad a chroeso / Introduction and welcome**

Members enjoyed choir performances from Eyton VC School, Ysgol Penrhyn and St. Christopher's School. Members were welcomed to the Chamber by Cllr. John Pritchard, Mayor of Wrexham and Sam Jesson, Chair of Wrexham SACRE. They thanked the children for their performances. Sam Jesson noted that with the introduction of Successful Futures, it is an exciting, creative and innovative time for education. Phil Lord (PL) opened the meeting and also thanked the children for their performances. He expressed gratitude to Cllr. Pritchard and Sam Jesson for their welcome.

2. **Adfyfrio tawel / Quiet reflection**

PL led a quiet reflection upon the disaster at Grenfell Tower. He spoke about media reports of a catalogue of events leading up to the disaster. PL asked members to consider that what we say and what we do can have an impact on other people in good or in bad ways. He asked everyone working in SACREs and schools to think about how they can do little things to make a difference for the better.

3. **Ymddiheuriadau / Apologies**

Andrew Pearce, Dr Annette Daly, Neeta Baicher, Tudor Thomas, Sue Cave, Christine Abbas, Mathew Maidment, Alwen Roberts, Dafydd Trehearne, Cllr. P. A. Roberts, Rachel Samuel, Rachel Bendall, Pauline Smith, Manon Jones. Huw Stephens, Sharon Perry-Phillips, Leslie Francis. Helen Gibbon, Meinir Wynne Loader, Huw George, Marilyn Frazer.

4. **Cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd yng Nghaerfyrddin, 3 Mawrth 2017 / Minutes of meeting held in Monmouthshire, 3 March 2017**

With the exception of a few minor typing errors and a missing date on p.7 the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. Proposed by Vicky Thomas and seconded by Rheinalt Thomas

5. **Materion yn codi / Matters arising**

P.4 - matters arising p.10 – Edward Evans (EE) wrote to Kirsty Williams - Action completed.

P. 10. VT found no issue within the inspection report. She met with the Challenge Advisor. Caerphilly sent a letter and survey to all secondary schools and had 100% returns. It was pointed out that the issue of schools not fulfilling their statutory obligations in delivering RE is a wider problem. The survey revealed that some schools were delivering RE during thought for the day or registration. The local authority will write to schools to point out that this is not an appropriate vehicle for the delivery of RE.

p.14. Item 11.h. PW attended two study days at the University of Chester. These were geared toward teachers of A Level, but were not board specific. The aim was to give teachers a 'back to university experience' rather than providing CPD. Nevertheless, PW reported that the workshops provided very good CPD for teachers. The university hopes to provide further study days in the future.

RT raised a concern over the protocol for sending out WASACRE minutes. He reminded WASACRE members that traditionally minutes would be received within two weeks of the meeting. The current process is that minutes are checked by the Chair and the Executive Committee for accuracy prior to being sent out because of the national status of WASACRE. Some SACREs need access to the minutes earlier as there are a wide range of dates for SACRE meetings and they are needed in advance of meetings. Welsh speakers expressed concern that they would have to read the minutes twice if they were initially sent out in English

with a translation to follow. There was a suggestion that the translator be given a date in advance. It was recognised that, as a first principle, there should be equality for both languages. A member suggested that the minutes should be written promptly as there was an honorarium paid to the secretary to do so. The role of the secretary and the honorarium were, therefore, discussed. GV raised the question of payment for the role of Secretary. JM reported that the honorarium paid to the secretary hasn't changed since WASACRE was established. Members discussed whether it might be necessary to have a minutes secretary or whether it would be necessary to review the honorarium? The standard and detail of the minutes were discussed and some members felt that it was important that the secretary have subject knowledge.

ACTIONS:-

- i.* Minutes should go out before the SACREs are going to meet.
- ii.* Executive meeting to discuss the honorarium paid to the secretary, the issue of translation into Welsh and to consider when Executive meetings are held in order to send WASACRE minutes to SACREs at the earliest opportunity. Minutes to be checked by the Chair and go out to SACREs before the Executive Meeting.

6. Cyflwyniad NAPfRE / NAPfRE presentation: *Supporting the new GCSE RS specification - The work of GwE Lead Practitioner's for Religious Studies – Mefys Jones– Lead Practitioner for Religious Education GwE.*

Mefys Jones presented on the progress of lead practitioners in N. Wales and their work to provide support for schools delivering the new GCSE specification. Mefys is a member of Anglesey SACRE and regional lead practitioner in N. Wales. The presentation included:

- a. The aim of the three RS Hubs in the north is to ensure consistency across the region and to support teachers. Three meetings were organised during the year. The initial meetings were used to unpack the specification. It had been difficult to access resources for the new GCSE as text books had not been made available in time.
- b. A questionnaire was distributed to identify teachers' concerns. They needed help in areas such as planning schemes of work, developing assessment material and marking of examination answers. Teachers wanted advice on resources and on the new humanist perspective within the specification. The sharing of resources was a main concern. Accessing Welsh resources was a particular problem as the textbook was initially only published in English. Mefys pointed out that the Buddhism A level course book had arrived a month after the examination. There was also a great concern that both the new GCSE and A Level had been introduced at the same time and that WJEC CPD meeting didn't take place until almost the end of the autumn term.
- c. Lead practitioners explored content that was similar in the old specification and identified what was new in order to consider which resources could be reused. Facebook and email were used for sharing information and uploading resources. Hwb was available, but had not been embedded everywhere. GWE is in the process of setting up a website to upload resources. The Save RE Facebook page had been a valuable resource. For teachers using the medium of English Eduqas resources were useful, but they needed to be translated into Welsh. Other resources included Bitesize, especially the video clips, and True Tube for religious and moral issues.
- d. A conference was held in Llandudno. The support from headteachers in releasing teachers for this event had been very welcome. Joy White attended to talk about assessment. Rob Grinter, a humanist, was present to talk to teachers about the humanist perspective.

- e. The third meeting brought everyone together to share resources and share ideas. The process throughout the year created the feeling that help was available. Links will continue. A bank of examination questions will be set up and teachers will moderate marking. All resources will be available on the website. There will be meetings with Lynda Maddock, WJEC subject officer, and with other lead practitioners from Wales.

Mefys thanked the dedicated teachers for their participation and collaboration. She acknowledged SACREs had supported the work of the lead practitioners.

Discussion following the presentation:

VT thanked Mefys for all the hard work and shared resources. Mefys was aware that some schools are delivering full course RS in one hour a week. She felt lucky that time is given to RE in her school. She expressed concern that teachers had been expected to create their own resources while waiting for the official resources to arrive. She said that the workload of teachers is massive. MP said that it had been a pleasure to listen to what Mefys had to say and that it was clear in ERW that there is a lack of material provided in Welsh. Mary expressed her gratitude for the translated resources being made available. Mefys said that they had written to Heads thanking them for releasing and supporting teachers. She informed WASACRE that there will be a conference for the whole of Wales on 23rd September. A WASACRE member thanked Welsh Government for providing the opportunities and funding for this work.

7. **Cyflwyniad WASACRE/WASACRE presentation:** Religious Education from a European perspective. – Phil Lord

PL has had the privilege to work with EFTRE, who meet once a year to discuss RE issues across Europe. PL sits on the Executive committee of EFTRE which is open to all countries in the Council of Europe, the 47 member states who have signed the Convention of Human Rights of the European Court of Human Rights. PL has been surprised at how different countries approach RE. Some teach from a phenomenological viewpoint, but in Europe RE is generally confessional and one religion is generally taught. One of the benefits of RE is to bring about tolerance and understanding of others. In 2009 a study on the way religion is presented across Europe was carried out. Whether confessional or non-confessional, RE is a good driver for tolerance and community cohesion. However, the Council of Europe felt that a move towards a multi-religious approach would be better in order to bring communities together. In 2014 the Council of Europe published the *Signposts* document to bring commonality in RE. The European Forum for the Teachers of RE put teaching packs together with a focus upon multi-cultural aspects of RE.

PL gave an overview of RE in Finland and Austria. He had visited primary and secondary schools in Finland where RE is generally of the Lutheran tradition but is non-confessional. Parents can request RE in their own tradition. Secondary school teachers are required to have a Master's Degree and are given a lot of respect as professionals. All advice on RE comes through the Church and is faith based. Early years education is about play and there is no formal transition between pre and statutory schooling. PL observed a secondary school exploring Lutheran History. Teachers set the activity and pupils got on with it. They knew what they had to do. Independent learning was clearly evident in the high school. Phil talked about the demographics of Austria in comparison to Wales. He referred to a video about RE across Europe which can be found on the EFTRE website (<http://www.eftre.net/>). RE in Austria is compulsory and confessional Roman Catholic, but schools have to provide Protestant education to those who request it. In addition Phil visited an Islamic RE training centre. More pupils are now opting out of confessional RE and those that do so are offered Ethics lessons instead. Denise Cush was in attendance at the conference talking about the religious landscape in Europe. She also spoke about how restrictive it is to teach just one religion. The purpose of RE differs depending upon where you are in Europe. One of the purposes of RE in UK including Wales is to create opportunities for multiculturalism and diversity. PL suggested that we need to have these discussions when designing new curriculum.

Questions:

GV had also attended the EFtRE conference and reported that although RE in Europe was confessional RE pupils would still learn about other faiths as well.

8. Diweddariadau/Updates:

i. Canllawiau ar Reoli Hawl Tynnu'n ôl o Addysg Grefyddol/ *Guidance on Managing the Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education.*

GV reported that the document was finished but has been for translation. GV had sent the translated document to RT to proofread. RT said that the content drew him in and that the translation was excellent.

ii. Materion Llywodraeth Cymru / *Welsh Government matters –*

PW reported that the RE planning meeting on 27/3/17 to discuss the development to the new Humanities Curriculum had been very positive. WASACRE and NAPfRE representatives raised concerns with Welsh Government about RE being left out of the curriculum at Foundation Phase during the last curriculum review and that it is important to avoid the same things happening this time. They raised the issue of the right of withdrawal from RE and suggested that RE needed to be identifiable in the curriculum if legislation on withdrawal is to remain. Welsh Government requested a copy of the WASACRE withdrawal document to help them identify issues that this could raise. Manon Jones produced a timeline to show how the planning of the Humanities AoLE would develop over the academic year and so that regular meetings with WASACRE/NAPfRE could be scheduled. Welsh Government requested information on the procedure for commissioning work from WASACRE. Welsh Government expressed an interest in commissioning a paper from WASACRE on how 'What is Good RE?' fits with the work pioneers were doing. The pioneers would be looking at a number of approaches, including the approach of the Big Ideas Science model. WASACRE/NAPfRE representatives were invited to attend a Humanities pioneer group workshop to contribute to discussions about the group's proposals regarding the scope and structure of the Humanities AoLE from an RE perspective. Representatives raised the issue of assessment and the concern that the new GCSE specifications did not seem to align with Donaldson's Successful Futures. Welsh Government confirmed that Qualifications Wales would be involved throughout the process of developing the new curriculum. Curriculum developments will be shared via a newsletter to SACREs which will be sent from WG to SACRE clerks. SACREs will be able to then respond to the Newsletter by email to Manon Jones. Paula Webber as Secretary to WASACRE is to be copied into responses.

MP said that the pioneers were currently working on strand 2 of curriculum development. WASACRE/NAPfRE representatives have attended meetings with teachers from pioneer schools. This group have been discussing a common way forward. Once this is officially decided WASACRE representatives will receive the agreed proposals. Planning on the way ahead will carry on over the summer period. In September Strand 3 will look at the content of the Humanities AoLE.

Discussion from members also raised the following issues:

SACREs will have to adopt the new curriculum if there is no change in legislation. There may not be a need to change the legislation; however, changes to legislation could be positive as well as negative. Change could also support good RE. It was positive that WASACRE was able to work together with Welsh Government in order to develop a curriculum that works for RE.

iii. RE stakeholder meeting 12/4/17

A concern was raised that the term Religious Education would be removed from the new curriculum and that RE would be absorbed with the Humanities completely. PL said that

Manon did not confirm or discount this, however RE skills would certainly need to be identifiable within the new curriculum.

Humanities AOLE group meeting 02/05/17- Report by BJ. MP and BJ attended the meeting of teachers from pioneer schools in Wrexham as observers. The teachers were at the beginning of the process and were asked to 'define humanities.' They also looked at the current curriculum, content and skills and discussed whether there were aspects worth keeping. Teachers were also invited to identify the major things pupils needed to know by the time they reached the age of 16. This approach has developed from Science Big Ideas. So teachers were asking - What are the major Big Ideas for RE? What is important in RE and how can we share these ideas?

- iv. **New Curriculum Stakeholder meeting 24/5/17** – PL reported that assessment procedures currently create competition that is detrimental to the child. Problems arise when students want to transfer schools. If they are not attaining assessment grades Headteachers sometimes don't want them in the school. PL reported that with the development of the Donaldson Successful Futures curriculum the eyes of the world are looking at Wales. He explained that no education system in the world has changed this significantly. Therefore, Welsh Government wants to get this right. PL felt that Manon Jones and Steve Davies were sincere in wanting to create an inclusive, teacher led, bottom up system. VT commented that it is, therefore, important it is to have Manon Jones present at WASACRE meetings.
- v. **Meeting with Estyn 05/06/17** - VT reported that the meeting had been requested by WASACRE and NAPfRE and that four HMI had attended. She said that the meeting had been positive and mutually beneficial. Representatives enquired about the thematic review of RE. There will be a specific report produced by three HMI and one peer inspector. Mark Champion will have an editing role. Between twenty and twenty-one schools will be included and visits to schools will be made. The focus will be upon standards and provision; assessment; links with the community (community cohesion) and staffing of RE. The team will also look at preparation for the Four Purposes as well as transition between Primary and Secondary. If the inspectors see non-fulfilment of the statutory requirements for RE they will definitely take it up with the school. Upon WASACRE representative's suggestion, Estyn officers agreed to consider whether provision at Foundation Phase appropriately lays the foundation for work at KS2. Additionally, there will be a review of the Foundation Phase and at the suggestion of WASACRE representatives, Estyn officers agreed to ensure that RE will be included in that review alongside other areas of learning. WASACRE was asked to let Estyn know of schools that have good practice in RE.

Representatives explained how monitoring of RE was conducted by SACREs in order to fulfil their monitoring role and that it was becoming more difficult now to get evidence to provide a baseline on RE in schools especially with System Leaders having little or no responsibility for subjects e.g. RE. They discussed the importance of Estyn reports in this process. It was noted that there are more instances of inspectors noting in primary school reports, fulfilment or non fulfilment of statutory requirements for RE, than there were in secondary schools reports. Estyn officers confirmed that the same criteria for primary and secondary should be followed and thanked the delegation for bringing this to their attention and agreed they will look more closely at this issue.

Issues at KS4 were also discussed, including timetables being squeezed due to the Welsh Baccalaureate. Schools find they have insufficient time available to meet requirements of the agreed syllabus. Representatives enquired whether there was a way that Estyn and WASACRE could work together to halt this diminishing status of RE.

Estyn suggested that individual Advisers/ SACREs or LAs can 'tip them off' to good practice in schools or refer to schools which are not following statutory requirements. The delegation and Estyn also felt that really it was the place of the LA to inform Estyn of this in their LA Report before a school is inspected. In reality, Estyn's experience has led to an acceptance

that LAs are unlikely to identify schools in this way as it does compromise good working relationships with schools. GV suggested this was an area of real concern and a dilemma which should be given further consideration.

Representatives asked whether through the new Inspection Framework Estyn reports would continue to give qualitative statements in terms of SMSC. It was confirmed that this was the case. It was also noted that the new Framework will have an additional focus in different schools and that RE may be the focus in some schools.

Discussion with Estyn also included the role of RE in promoting community cohesion. WASACRE raised its concerns about withdrawal from RE sometimes being linked to reasons of prejudice. Estyn informed WASACRE that Mark Campion is heading up reporting on Prevent.

An Estyn representative suggested that there was a need for teachers to have training about religions from meeting with faith representatives. GV referred to one LA which is currently planning this type of training opportunity. We will consider how widely this could be shared and whether this could be facilitated by WASACRE and if there are any funding streams available.

PL acknowledged that it is good that WASACRE has a positive relationship with Estyn.

ACTION: To discuss funding of training at the next Executive Meeting.

9. **Adroddiad ar gyfarfod y Pwyllgor Gwaith a gynhaliwyd ar Mai 19, 2017/ Report from the Executive Committee held on 19 May 2017**

WASACRE members received the draft report from the Executive Committee Meeting.

P2. Protocol for people doing work for WASACRE. WASACRE will publish the intention of commissioning on the Website. PL explained the commissioning process. Copyright was also discussed. This process is to be passed in Autumn Executive meeting.

Training opportunities will be discussed in the Autumn meeting of the Executive Committee.

WASACRE received correspondence from Christine Abbas which was discussed in the Executive meeting. PL has sent a response, and a discussion ensued. There is a growing concern that religious groups that were once included in the creation of an agreed syllabus are increasingly feeling marginalised. GV suggested that this could be something discussed by the executive.

PL informed members that the WASACRE Website – will be on the autumn agenda. RT raised the issue that not all documents commissioned by WASACRE were on the Website.

Action: The whereabouts of the missing documents will be investigated.

10. **Gohebiaeth /Correspondence**

- i. WASACE received a request from the Education Workforce Committee for a member to apply to sit on the committee. They have until 21 July to apply.
- ii. Interfaith Network UK – advertising events. SACREs will receive this in the future. Interfaith week is 12-19th November.
- iii. WASACRE received a request for information from Alun Charles, the co-ordinator of a church magazine in Carmarthenshire, concerning withdrawals from collective worship in Wales.

It was also noted that Edward Evans is currently writing a paper concerning collective worship for discussion at the next Executive Committee meeting.

ACTION: PL to phone Alun Charles.

- iv. Correspondence from Annette Daly giving her apologies and expressing concern about Humanist representation on SACREs. Officers noted that this issue has been discussed in recent meetings of WASACRE and the legal situation remains the same.

11. U.F.A. / A.O.B.

- i. 'Show and Tell' - GV spoke about her new book, *Puddles and the St Francis Service*, which is currently with the printer. This resource is appropriate for Animal Welfare Sunday on 8th October. Gill has been matching RE with the Foundation Phase Areas of Learning and popular topics or themes. Electronic classroom resources have now been added. Additionally, Gill is vetting and selecting non-fiction books because she has found inaccuracies and misinformation within some published books. She is concerned that non-specialists might not be aware of these errors. Therefore, Gill will be putting the vetted resources onto her website. GV enquired whether we could reinstate Show and Tell as a regular feature of WASACRE meetings.
- ii. Humanists for UK have put on a free course for teachers in London. AL has contacted them to ask whether there can be a conference organized in Wales.

12. Dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf Dydd Gwener 10 Tachwedd, 2017 / Date for next meeting:

Autumn Meeting - Bridgend - Friday 10th November, 2017. Civic Centre. Bridgend

Spring Meeting – Swansea - March 9th Civic Centre in Swansea.

The Annual general Meeting of WASACRE

Elections

Gill Vaisey (Monmouthshire SACRE) was elected as Vice Chair

Alison Lewis (Swansea SACRE) and Tania ap Sion were elected as Executive members.

Financial report

An overview of the finances of WASACRE was given by the Treasurer, John Mitson. Attached as an Appendix to his report was the audited Statement of Accounts for the 2016/2017 financial year

At the end of the financial year, subscriptions from all 22 SACREs had been received.

Although the finances are in a healthy state there are to be some significant outgoing over the next year.

- Sufficient resources need to be available to meet the ongoing costs of WASACRE activities, including meeting expenses, secretarial costs, officers' expenses, officers' honoraria and subscriptions.
- Sufficient resources need to be available to meet the costs of further All Wales events, such as the National Conference, held in October 2013, and to enable it to become involved in other initiatives for the support of Religious Education and Collective Worship across Wales such as the provision of further training and preparation of publications.
- There are likely to be significant costs incurred in publishing the finalised withdrawal and RE document and designing a house style for future publications.
- The sum of £319.80 has been paid for support of the WASACRE website.

In the light of the above, and the decision at the 2001 Annual General Meeting, that, in future, the subscription to WASACRE be increased in line with inflation.

RECOMMENDED

*That the annual subscription per SACRE for membership of WASACRE during the 2017/2018 financial year be set at **£443.00**, which represents an uplift of 1% on the 2016/2017 subscription.*

