

FLINTSHIRE SACRE COMMITTEE
10 FEBRUARY 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the SACRE Committee of Flintshire County Council held via webex on the 10 February 2021

IN ATTENDANCE:

Elected Members:

Cllr Chris Bithell (CB) (Chair)
Cllr Dave Mackie (DM)
Cllr Colin Legg (CL)
Cllr Paul Cunningham (PC)
Cllr Janet Axworthy (JA)

Education Representatives

Vicky Barlow (VB) – Senior Manager School Improvement
Claire Homard (CH) - Chief Officer Education & Youth

Church in Wales Representatives (St Asaph Diocese) - Marina Parsons
(Headteacher Trelawynd)

Roman Catholic Representatives -John Morgan (St Anthony's Catholic Primary School)

Presbyterian Church of Wales -Rev. Huw Powell Davies

Teacher Associations:

Primary Heads Federation - Simon Percy (Golftyn School)
Secondary RE Specialist -Lyn Oakes (Alun High School)
Primary Classroom Teachers- Amira Mattar (Westwood CP School)

Also in attendance- Kim Brookes, Senior Manager, Education & Youth (Clerk)

Cllr B welcomed colleagues to the first SACRE meeting to be held virtually and invited colleagues to introduce themselves.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Catherine McCormack; Cllr Ian Roberts; Gareth Jones

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: CODE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONDUCT

None declared

3. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of meeting held on 26 February 2020.
Proposed DM, seconded CB accepted as a true record.

Matters arising:

VB proposed that Ysgol Y Foel be invited to share their work at a future meeting. WASACRE meeting duly cancelled on the 17 March 2020 due to the pandemic.

4 **ANALYSIS OF ESTYN INSPECTION REPORTS**

VB referred to the report circulated with the agenda on the analysis of inspection reports published in autumn term 2019 and spring term 2020. Due to the pandemic Estyn have paused inspections in schools. She reported that Jayne Borthwick, Primary Adviser was working to encourage schools to share their good practice. Cllr B welcomed the report. In response to PC, VB confirmed that whilst Estyn are not allowed to inspect religious character she would look to share examples from all our church schools.

Action: VB to work with Diocese leads to share good practice from their schools. JM agreed to share example of work from his school.

5. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON WASACRE MEETING HELD ON 7TH OCTOBER 2020**

VB reported verbally that both spring and summer term meetings of WASACRE were cancelled in response to the coronavirus situation. The autumn term meeting was held online via the Microsoft Teams platform and the AGM was also held on the same day. This was the 25th year of WASACRE.

Key points arising from the Autumn term meeting:

- Discussion regarding the Framework for RE – see agenda item below
- Ongoing discussion with Wales Government (WG) regarding provision of specialist support and training for RE across Wales in preparation for the new Curriculum. At a meeting with WG and Officers of the WASACRE Executive on 18th June it was confirmed that there would be funding for a professional learning package for a suite of resources specifically for RE, plus training for all those involved in teaching RE and training of ITT students. The need for training for non-maintained settings specifically was also recognized. WASACRE has also agreed to fund a conference to train teachers in using the RVE Framework. Given the new circumstances, it was proposed that this would take place online.
- Information presented regarding adaptations proposed for GCSE and A Level Religious Studies examinations for summer 2021 – now superseded by the Minister's decision regarding Centre Determined Grades.
- Consideration being given to training for advisors and SACRE clerks and a suitable paragraph to be included in the revised SACRE handbook, as well as including a glossary covering terms pertaining to RE.
- It was noted that it had become evident that some teachers working in Wales are seeking advice from organisations that are based in England. It was recognised that WASACRE needs to raise its profile as an organisation and in turn ensure that teachers are aware of their local SACRE which can offer

them advice. The WASACRE Twitter account is being more frequently used and a Facebook page is being created. The new WASACRE website is also currently being constructed.

- AGM meeting **Election of Members to The Executive**; 20 SACREs sent in a voting return. These had been collated and verified by an independent person. Vice Chair – there were 3 nominations – Tania ap Sion elected. Executive Committee – the two successful nominations – Phil Lord and John Meredith.
- The next meeting is 23 March and we have up to three representatives from our SACRE who can attend. Members are asked to note that all papers from the meeting can be viewed at <http://www.wasacre.org.uk/meetings.html>.
- WASACRE and the National Advisory Panel for RE (NAPfRE) continue to communicate regularly about developments and future plans.

6. **TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUPPORTING FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PREPARATION FOR CURRICULUM WALES 2022**

VB provided a verbal update concerning the ongoing work by WASACRE and NAPfRE considering and responding to the developments relating directly to RE within the new curriculum for Wales. Representatives from the WASACRE Executive Committee met with Welsh Government colleagues and others on a number of occasions throughout last year. Welsh Government colleagues have also attended WASACRE and WASACRE Executive meetings, and have given updates on progress.

Welsh Government colleagues assured the Executive that the draft framework would be published in autumn 2020. At the WASACRE meeting in October, NAPfRE Chair reported that she had last worked on the Framework in June 2020 at which point she felt it was ready for circulation to SACREs. The document was then passed to the legal department in WG. VB reported that it was still to be established when it will be shared with SACREs and confirm its subsequent publication date.

The intention was for the document to be produced in collaboration with SACREs so that they can feel shared ownership of the document and embrace its adoption as the Local Authority's agreed Syllabus. SACREs should have opportunity to respond to the document before it is published in its final form.

WASACRE agreed to write to WG to state its disappointment that the Framework has still not been published. WASACRE noted the need however to recognise and acknowledge the additional challenges and time pressures that WG personnel are currently facing as they are currently required to work on other issues in relation to responding to the pandemic.

Since then, the Executive have had a meeting in December with WG colleagues who assured them it would be released in January. However, this has not yet

happened. The Executive have now been invited to a further meeting with WG next week. The document has been officially edited by curriculum editors so hopefully as we move towards Easter there will be a draft document ready to share with SACREs.

It was proposed and agreed that this group should be given an opportunity to respond to the draft document via a special meeting and report back to the June SACRE meeting.

Action: additional meeting to be convened by VB, date to be confirmed.

JA joined the meeting 16.25pm

7. **DISTANCE LEARNING**

Cllr B welcomed the efforts of schools at this time and enquired how religious and moral education had continued. VB advised that the basic curriculum requirements for Wales, and associated assessment arrangements for schools and non-maintained nursery settings, have been amended as part of the Coronavirus Act 2020, subject to monthly reviews. Schools must make all reasonable endeavours to fulfil their curriculum duties. There has been no detailed analysis of individual subjects across schools but GwE have worked with schools to look at blended learning and provided reports to Education Scrutiny Committee.

VB advised that this means schools should do everything they reasonably can to teach to the full curriculum duties. If after taking all reasonable steps schools have not fulfilled their curriculum requirements then they will be considered to have met their legislative duties.

WG operational guidance states with particular reference to Collective Worship that “Groups should be kept apart, meaning that schools should avoid gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group”.

Schools across Wales have developed a ‘Blended Learning’ approach to teaching and learning to accommodate pupils who are learning in different environments – at home or at school due to the pandemic. The four consortia and Estyn have produced models of blended learning. RE Learning Networks are also working on material and resources have been shared on Hwb. There is now an emphasis on producing quality resources to promote the best practice in RE as well as on progression, since this continues to be a necessary model of learning. There are also examples of RE in the Estyn and Consortia Blended Learning guidance document.

Schools were holding virtual assemblies for classes, year group and even whole school when in school last term. More challenging with remote learning.

Cllr B enquired how schools have approached wellbeing of children. SP advised that in his school they have recorded assemblies via SeeSaw for parents and pupils on wellbeing and RE related, with weekly activities that families can take together. LO reported that the Diocese have produced really good supporting resources which can be shared at school or at home and cited the Xmas celebrations which were shared virtually. JC reported that he had received good advice from the GWe RE Challenge Adviser and his school had built a church from lego.

VB reported that some schools are still delivering assemblies online and producing resources for pupils; e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day and Children's Mental Health Week. WASACRE have produced some guidance for schools.

HPD welcomed how schools have been using the resources and advised that resources were available from the Presbyterian Church Wales bilingually. He reported that unfortunately an officer from the Scripture Union Trust had been made redundant it had become a role for churches together to support children and families.

WASACRE agreed to a small working party to produce a paper on supporting schools with Collective Worship during the Coronavirus crisis, which was published in early July and shared with SACREs. This document is available bilingually on the WASACRE website www.wasacre.org.uk. The Executive has also considered the value of the working party producing a similar paper for RE during the Coronavirus Crisis;

There are also a wide range of resources being added to the WJEC digital website to assist teachers with blended learning.

Cllr B was encouraged by the work shown especially during the time when pupils were out of school. CH also acknowledged the tremendous work of schools in supporting wellbeing of children which is a vital part of the blended learning offer.

8. **CORRESPONDENCE**

None received.

9. **FUTURE MEETINGS**

Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 16 June 2021 at 4 pm via webex

Meeting ended 16.55pm