



**Cyfarfod Cymdeithas CYSAGau Cymru, Torfaen
(Canolfan Byw Egnïol, Pont-y-pŵl), 26 Tachwedd 2014
(10.30am – 3pm)**

***Wales Association of SACREs meeting, Torfaen (Pontypool
Active Living Centre, Pontypool), 26 November 2014
(10.30am – 3pm)***

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Bethan James Rheinallt Thomas</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Gill Vaisey Elizabeth Arthur</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Vicky Thomas Eryl Williams</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Mary Parry</p> <p>Ceredigion</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 Y Cyngh./ Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Gill Vaisey Sharon Perry Phillips Sue Cave Neeta Singh Baicher Soam Sharma</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Rachel Samuel</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Vicky Thomas Huw Stephens Neeta Singh Baicher Sally Northcott Amanda B. Davies Soam Sharma</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire Huw George</p> <p>Powys John Mitson</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Torfaen /Torfaen Vicky Thomas Margaret Oelmann Marilyn Frazer Paul Cameron Ian Thomas Helen Bevan Ken Jacobs Ruth Frost</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Ramez Delpak</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Tania ap Sion Libby Jones</p> <p>Sylwedyddion / Observers Tudor Thomas (CBAC/WJEC) Andrew Pearce (CBAC/WJEC) Eldon Phillips (REMW)</p>
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Minutes

1. Cyflwyniad a chroeso / *Introduction and welcome*

Chair, Tania ap Sion, introduced the Chief Executive Officer of Torfaen County Council, Alison Ward and thanked her on behalf of WASACRE for hosting the meeting.

Alison Ward welcomed members to Pontypool and thanked the Choir who sang during the arrival of members and guests to the meeting. She commented how good it was to see young people committed to the arts. Alison Ward went on to thank members of Torfaen SACRE and teachers and pupils for the work in religious education in Torfaen schools. Thanks were also given to the SACRE Clerk for Torfaen, Debbie Cummings for the huge amount of work that she put into the organising the meeting. Alison Ward wished members an enjoyable meeting and expressed her hope that all present would contribute in order to make it worthwhile. It was acknowledged that RE is in a different position than other subjects and that it is the responsibility of each Local Authority to ensure RE is taught well and that effective support is there for teachers and pupils. Members were assured that Torfaen Local Authority takes this responsibility very seriously and that RE greatly enriches the life of all pupils. Members were reminded that in this time of austerity it is important to develop moral values, which is something that RE helps to do. Alison Ward officially welcomed WASACRE on behalf of Torfaen SACRE and applauded the work that WASACRE has recently been involved in with regard to the current Curriculum review in Wales and its meeting with Professor Donaldson who is leading the review. She finished by pointing out that even though Local Authorities in Wales are facing difficult financial situations the national agenda needs to be continued and as SACREs we can help to do that. WASACRE was thanked for its work and achievements.

Tania ap Sion thanked Alison Ward and the Deputy Mayor, Ken Jacobs and Head of Education in Torfaen who were present at the beginning of the meeting, and echoed thanks to the Choir of St Albans and the displays of work from Torfaen schools. Tania ap Sion also extended an official welcome to Eldon Phillips representing REMW as REMW's new Chair.

2. Adfyfyrion tawel / *Quiet reflection*

The Chair led members in a quiet reflection.

3. Ymddiheuriadau / *Apologies*

Fiona Thomas, Gavin Craigen, Jen Malcolm, Miriam Amlyn, Wyn Meredith, Cllr Michael Gray, Rachel Thomas, Margaret Evitts, Christine Robinson, Leslie Francis, Helen Gibbon, Meinir Loader.

4. Cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ym Mhowys, 2 Gorffennaf 2014 / *Minutes of meeting held in Powys, 2 July 2014*

Minutes were accepted as a correct record. Proposed by Rheinallt Thomas and seconded by Phil Lord.

5. Materion yn codi / Matters arising

P2. Item 4. Tania ap Sion confirmed that the link from the WASACRE website to *RENews* will be created and this is in the process of being done. Gill Vaisey raised the concern that the link from Google to the English *RENews* page is not working. Libby Jones will email Rachel Thomas about this.

P4. Item 5. Updates- REC representation. We are currently looking at WASACRE representation at board level on the RE Council for England and Wales and this needs to be clarified. Eldon Philips was at the last REC meeting and a report was on the agenda from Wales but not given. Libby Jones has contacted REC to clarify this representation so that we can move forward. Tudor Thomas (WJEC) said that it is very important to have representation from WASACRE so that we can keep REC informed of developments and opinions in Wales, because the REC is the main influence in England on RE in schools.

P4. Reinstatement of meeting with the Minister for Education and Skills. Vicky Thomas raised this as an important issue and one that must be pursued. It is important that we keep it on the agenda as we have achieved a great deal as a result of this annual meeting in the past, for example, the Estyn Thematic Review and the 6th Form Holocaust trip.

P6. (d) Training. Bethan James, Chair of NAPfRE confirmed that the group is looking at different models for training. The main discussion at the NAPfRE meeting on the preceding day was how to respond to the agreed syllabus review. We have agreed to meet in February following the Donaldson Report publication, so that we can work out what the needs are in relation to this.

The venue for next meeting was confirmed as the Orangery at Margam Park in Neath Port Talbot.

6. Diweddariadau/Up-dates

Tudor Thomas- WJEC

Tudor Thomas drew members' attention to a stakeholders' meeting on Thursday, 27 November 2014, which Welsh Government had asked WJEC to convene. The meeting would discuss changes in the RS examinations and would involve members of different faith bodies, higher education and WASACRE. Tania ap Sion would be attending on behalf of WASACRE.

The current picture is complex in England and Wales where there is a split in the curriculum. First teaching 2016 in England will be changed at all levels and Wales will follow suit.

The England review is out for consultation and Welsh Government will adopt the changes as in England. However, in England the AS and A2 will be stand-alone qualifications whereas in Wales AS will still feed into A2. There will be no exam in January in England or Wales. With GCSE RS in England the main change is that students must study two different religions in order to avoid a narrow study. Humanism may also appear and there is a possibility that the British Humanist Association will lobby for this.

Wales will have more freedom than England. Wales can either adopt the English model and change completely, or just slightly change the existing WJEC model in order to update it. Mark Champion from Estyn spoke at the WASACRE conference (October 2013) about the RS GCSE being very good/ popular and worthwhile/successful. Wales will also be able to continue the modular route instead of having to move towards linear exams like England. WJEC will have to decide if they are going to enforce the study of two religions like England.

Members were encouraged to feed their views to Tudor, Andrew Pearce and/or Tania ap Sion in time for the meeting the next day and were told that there would be a broader consultation in the near future.

Chair, Tania ap Sion thanked Tudor for his update. A discussion ensued regarding Humanism and issues surrounding the study of two different religions. Members agreed that we need a syllabus that serves the pupils well and prepares them for their future life in a multi-cultural society. Tudor Thomas felt confident that the standards at GCSE level in Wales are comparable to England. Four hundred schools in England follow the WJEC RS Specifications, so there is a demand for them and they are valued. RS results in Wales are also very high and this is something that we should be proud of. He felt that Wales is in a position to cherry pick the best of the changes from England. Vicky Thomas commented that Wales designed the Short Course that was taken up by England and Wales, and we must not lose sight of the importance of the contemporary society aspect of the current specification. The proposed changes in England have less focus on this. A Monmouthshire teacher commented that by entering students for the linear examinations it allows for the full development of the pupils' subject knowledge and skills. Pupils who achieve a B in year 10 could achieve an A* in year 11. Tudor Thomas responded by saying that WJEC would always push for pupil/teacher choice. Parents value provision now and it is important to listen.

Phil Lord noted that the England consultation closes on 29 December 2014. As there would be no SACRE meetings before then, it is important for individuals to respond to the consultation.

Neeta Singh Baicher commented that we would welcome all major religions to be taught in schools. Pupils would not get that broader perspective if only one religion were studied.

7. Cyflwyniadau / *Presentations:*

NAPfRE: Cyflwyniad gan CBAC – Beth mae'r data yn dysgu i ni / *A presentation by WJEC- What does the data tell us?*

Andrew Pearce shared with members the WJEC Religious Studies data feedback for GCSE, AS and A2. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available on the WASACRE website for members to view. Members present were pleased to note that the Religious Studies results were very good and some members felt that the flexibility with entries should be retained in order to retain a pupil-centred qualification process in the future.

Vicky Thomas asked whether some schools are now moving from Religious Studies short course to Religious Studies full course in the same lesson time in order to improve the schools' capped points scores and is this because the results have been so good? Andrew Pearce confirmed that the Religious Studies full course is more important to schools with regard to statistics and also helps students in achieving their Welsh Baccalaureate qualification. Andrew Pearce went on to say that in schools where more time is being sought for maths and science, at the risk of losing Key Stage 4 RE, teachers can argue that full course Religious Studies results are valuable and higher than other non-core subjects, but need less time to achieve than others. GCSE Religious Studies can help with easing timetabling difficulties with the new curriculum changes, count towards statistics and help pupils to achieve the Welsh Baccalaureate. Andrew urged members to take the presentation back to their own SACREs and use it to compare with the Religious Studies results in their own local authorities.

CYSAG Sir Fynwy / *Monmouthshire SACRE: Celebrating RE Transition Project (year 6 pupils)*

Members of Monmouthshire SACRE described their part in this successful Transition event where pupils from year 6 and year 11 were involved in a variety of workshops, delivered by different faith group representatives, which allowed pupils to learn about and experience a number of different faiths in a fun and dynamic way. A copy of the presentation is available on the WASACRE website for members to view, and to share with their SACREs as an example of the kind of work SACREs could do to support RE in their local schools.

NAPfRE: CYSAGau a'r trefniadau consortia (adborth) / *SACREs and consortia arrangements (feedback)*

Members of NAPfRE, Bethan James, Gill Vaisey, Vicky Thomas, Mary Parry, Phil Lord and Libby Jones presented some of the feedback received from WASACRE members from their involvement in the NAPfRE activity at the last meeting. Members were asked to present the questions from this activity to their own SACREs and to feedback their

own answers to Libby Jones. The presentation is also available on the WASACRE website for members to view and the questions are below:

1. How can members contribute to the work of SACREs?
2. How can we ensure regular attendance from the 3 groups and co-opted members?
3. How could you persuade people to become a SACRE member?
4. How can we monitor RE and CW?
5. How can we support schools to deliver good RE and CW?
6. How can we ensure that Local Authorities support the function of SACREs giving them sufficient money/funding?

8. Adroddiad ar gyfarfod y Pwyllgor Gwaith a gynhaliwyd ar 26 Medi 2014 / *Report from the Executive Committee held on 26 September 2014*

The Chair commented that this shows the considerable work that the Executive does for WASACRE.

9. Gohebiaeth / *Correspondence*

None in addition to what has already been included.

10. U.F.A. / *A.O.B.*

Professor Leslie Francis requested that attention be drawn to a survey (received by members at the meeting), concerning 16-18 year old students across Europe, religion and human rights. This survey would continue to help build our body of data on and for young people in Wales. Professor Francis invites those who know or have access to any 6th formers who may be willing to participate in this study to let Libby Jones (WASACRE Secretary) know. The survey is open to all 6th formers, not just those studying RS.

11. Dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf / *Date for next meeting: 6 Mawrth 2015 (Castell-Nedd) / 6 March 2015, Neath Port Talbot. The Orangery, Margam.*

Dyddiadau cyfarfodydd yn y dyfodol / *Future meeting dates: 25 Mehefin 2015 (Sir y Fflint, yn cynnwys AGM) / 25 June 2015 (Flintshire, includes AGM); 25 Tachwedd 2015 (Blaenau Gwent) / 25 November 2015 (Blaenau Gwent)*

Tania ap Sion gave thanks to Debbie Cummings and Vicky Thomas, Stephan the translator, all our presenters, and WASACRE members for their contributions.