

Minutes of a meeting held at Cwmbran Stadium, Torfaen on 17th November 2006

1. Quiet Reflection

The Chair invited members to join a few moments of reflection on 'children in need'. He recalled the scriptural injunction that *'the poor are always with us and not to harden heart or head against them - true religion is to look after orphans and those in need.*

2. Introduction and welcome

The Chair thanked Torfaen SACRE for arranging the wonderful welcome, he commented that 'it was the best welcome he had experienced in his memory of attending WASACRE'. He gave special thanks to the children of Coed Eva Junior School for their orchestra and choir and to the staff who had accompanied them.

Lynne Milward – Head of Community Participation in Torfaen welcomed us to the Stadium and introduced Her Worship the Mayor of Torfaen, Councillor Mary Barnett. The Mayor spoke of her pleasure in welcoming us to Torfaen and of the great diversity to be found within the eastern valley from Blaenafon – a place with Industrial Heritage Status – to Pontypool home of the old art of Japanware and on to Cwmbran the not so 'new town'. The Authority spread out into Ponthir where it meets the edge of Newport Authority. She wished us well in our work and spoke of Torfaen translating as 'rock breaker' a task not dissimilar to the work of WASACRE in breaking new ground in the world of Religious Education.

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The Head Boy and Head Girl of Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw read the Millennium Scroll Prayer. A copy was presented to each person present. The Mayor explained that the prayer was created by the late Revd. Dr. Glyndwr Harris -, well known to members of WASACRE, the prayer had been read at WAG and at the Installation of Dr. Rowan Williams as Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. Harris had been instrumental in arranging the Journey of Hope Exhibition, part of which had been recreated for us and members were invited to take time to look around it. The Chair thanked the Mayor for her warm welcome and for the gift of the prayer scroll and also thanked and commended James and Mari on their reading of the prayer.

The Chair asked for any items for the after lunch 'showcase' to be notified to him before the lunch break.

The Chair reported that copies of the Report of the Special conference held at Llandrindod Wells in May were ready and each SACRE was asked to take their copies away after signing for them. The Chair informed members that the next meeting of WASACRE will begin at 10.00 for 10.30 to allow adequate time to look at the Consultation document from DELLS.

3. Apologies

Christine Abbas, Bethan Evans, Cynghorydd Lyndon Lloyd, Cllr Fred Gilmore, Cllr Selwyn Griffiths, Philip Williams, Alan Jones, Canon Denison, Sue Thomas, Cllr J. Rogers, Alan Clarke,

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held at

Caernarfon on 23rd June 2006 were accepted as a true record of that meeting. Proposed by Cllr.M.Gray, seconded by Fr.Ieuan.

5. Matters Arising

The Chair reported that a letter had been received from Paul Morgan (Estyn) thanking us for our good wishes and also a letter from Susan Lewis confirming his replacement as Mr.Gareth Wyn Jones.

6. Correspondence

The list of correspondence for the period 29th June - 14th October 2006 was received. The Secretary notified the following additions :- Powys Annual Report, National Curriculum Assessment Arrangements KS2 and KS3 - Consultation (this was given to the Chair to respond).

7. NAPfRE Presentation: NGfL project through GTCW Funding by Mary Parry and Gavin Craigen.

The Chair was handed to Mr.Vaughan Salisbury for the duration of this presentation.

Mr.Craigen explained how the Grant had been spent and the make up of the working groups. A Secondary group in North Wales coordinated by Gavin Craigen and Bethan James, and a Primary group in South and West Wales coordinated by Mary Parry and Carys Thomas. The presentation brought us up to date with the materials produced, some of which are already on the NGfL website. GTCW money is for the professional development of teachers and the resources came from this development. Almost all are bilingual, however GTCW funding does not include the cost of translation.

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This resulted in collaboration with ESIS, some translation undertaken by the teachers, and also by REM Wales. The teachers gained tremendously from the experience of working together and improved their individual ICT skills.

A list of the projects undertaken was distributed (attached to these minutes). Mrs.Parry shared a video of the Genesis Creation story (images with words and sound). This project had been scheduled for 2½ days work, it took much longer with the teachers giving their own time. The project on St.David was shown as a Power Point presentation for use with the interactive whiteboard. An LSA at one of the teacher's schools helped with the drawings. Mrs.Parry shared some affirming quotes from the teachers that reiterated the development of skills experienced by them all.

Mr.Craigen introduced a Secondary project – Iman Centre, Conwy. This will be useful for schools that do not have an Islamic building near to them. This project is a Powerpoint presentation for the interactive whiteboard and includes an interview with a Muslim boy. The second Secondary project shown was St.Winifrede's Well. This includes various tab options for history, photo gallery, prayer, and teacher's notes. The projects will be available for individuals to download from the NGfL website as they are not password protected.

Mr. Salisbury thanked Mrs.Parry and Mr.Craigen for both presentations and their work in setting up the project.

Mr.Craigen resumed the Chair.

8. Report from the Executive Committee

A Report of the Executive Meeting held at Llandrindod Wells on 16th October had been circulated with the minutes. The Chair drew attention to the following items:

- Database of names and addresses for WASACRE mailing. Despite several attempts to update this information via SACRE Clerks, the labels remain out of date. A copy of the labels was shown and members were asked to look at them and amend as necessary.

• Samaritan's Purse - The Chair read pertinent points from a letter that he had received from Barbara Hills, Dancer Care - Samaritan's Purse. The four main points were:

1. *Operation Christmas Child delivers these gifts to children across the globe - without regard for nationality, race, religion or political background. Indeed the whole programme is one that - on the giving and receiving ends - is open to people from all walks of life, faith, race and ethnic background, and where the gifts are delivered on the basis of need only.*
2. *Every year OCC delivers shoebox gifts to millions of needy children, requiring nothing from them, their families, or communities in return.*
3. *The gifts are delivered through partner organizations in the recipient countries who are consistently involved in providing aid on a year-round basis to many children who receive the gifts, and who make informed and culturally sensitive decisions about the context in which the gifts and leaflets are distributed.*

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4. We make every effort to ensure that those who make up the shoeboxes for this project are aware that we are a Christian organization by including a copy of our mission statement on all publicity, thus giving everyone the opportunity to decide whether or not to take part voluntarily in the programme.

The letter also addressed the issue of Christian literature being included in the boxes. *No evangelical or religious literature is ever put into the boxes that are sent out from the UK – and this has been the case since the programme started in 1990.*

Members agreed that the letter answered the concerns that had been raised.

- The Chair reported that he had sent a letter to the SACREs drawing attention to the need for working together. No response as yet.
- The Chair reported that he had sent a letter top DELLS enquiring if RE would be included in any familiarization process and as to whether WASACRE can be included. No response as yet.
- The Minister's Office had responded to the request for a date for the annual meeting with her and members of the Executive. No date will be set until after the May elections.
- Better Schools Funding – The Chair distributed copies of excerpts from Better Schools Fund 2007 – 2008 (Circular No: 20/2006). The Chair led

members through the criteria pointing out where RE could be included. A letter had been sent to The Minister thanking her that responding to the National Curriculum Review, and thinking and learning skills had been included. Graham Davies responded that the final submissions date had already passed. The Chair responded that we should be making bids for the next round. Vaughan Salisbury felt that there was scope within Activity 2 - Iath Pwr Mewn Ysgolion (a) Raising standards across Key Stages (b) Extending pupil opportunities to practice and experience Welsh. The Chair asked that whoever receives the next information keeps him informed as it is not always available on the website.

- Special conference – the final version was to be taken away from the meeting. The Chair thanked the editorial committee for their hard work. The Chair asked the SACREs to respond to the Report.
- The Constitution – to go to the next Executive meeting
- Draft minutes – the Secretary sends these to all SACREs before the minutes are agreed by the Executive. There still seems to be a problem with receipt by some SACREs.
- Attendance – the Secretary had collated the attendance at WASACRE. The Chair reminded members that the three constituent groups should attend the meetings, three plus the Adviser. It would be good if

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teacher representation could be increased and he asked LEA's to support their attendance by addressing supply costs. Cyng.E.Davies expressed concern as to the lack of LEA representation at the meetings, especially evident at Torfaen where the 'near' SACREs are not represented by their LEA members. He also felt that some continuity of attendees was important.

9. **Recommendations from the Special Conference** (attached)
SACREs are asked to discuss and respond. The Chair commended DELLS on the Conference and had written to thank them. The Chair highlighted that this was the first opportunity for all SACREs to work together and that we are happy to work together. There is a need to revisit RE in the Welsh Baccalaureate and to ensure that the signposting continues. Mrs.M.Lloyd and Mr.K.Davies had attended a presentation on WB with NUT and had reminded them of past issues. Mr.R.Thomas, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, had taken up these issues with Mr.K.Davies. WASACRE will send a letter to WJEC asking to see a copy of the specification and to ask for reassurance that further signposting will occur.

- 10 **Showcase:**
- Ms.G.Vaisey introduced her books and characters in the Puddles series. The new book 'Puddles lends a paw' was explained. Order forms were distributed

• Mr.R.Thomas spoke of the RE Movement Wales and the recent publications of and RE Ideas. These have recently been published in Welsh with the second series to be launched during November. Available from RE Services Today – Birmingham. Leaflets were distributed.

• Mr.R.Thomas informed members that REMW Council has agreed to translate into English 2 books on Famous People in Wales.

• Mr. G. Davies distributed copies of a booklet produced by Cardiff on 'The Use of Visitors in Religious Education and Collective Worship'.

• Denize Morris –DELLS spoke of the commissioning of Collective Worship resources to use with the interactive whiteboard. She shared some of the clips with members ('Spirituality Today' : 'Owain Glyndwr'; 'Llangollen Eisteddfod') A full script accompanies each presentation. There will be 50 presentations and a contract for a further 50 is being followed up. DELLS is also commissioning Foundation Phase material – KS2 books – KS3 Thinking Skills, and archived material from the BBC. She asked SACREs to recommend teachers who can write good quality materials – a small fee is available.

11 Presentation : CYTUN – The Inter Faith Forum and the Inter Faith Project by The Revd.Aled Edwards – Chief Executive CYTUN and Brigid

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Bowen – Officer for Inter Faith Project. The Revd Aled Edwards was introduced to WASACRE and The Chair extended congratulations on his appointment as Chief executive to CYTUN and also as Wales Commissioner for Racial Equality. Apologies were given for Brigid Bowen whose car had broken down en-route. CYTUN is going through a period of change, it used to be a place of dialogue that strove towards organised unity of Christian churches in Wales. Now it serves 12 Churches and has become a place where it serves those communities and has become more outcome based.

Just after the planes crashed into the twin towers in New York, Rhodri Morgan decided to meet with faith leaders, the outcome was the formation of the Inter Faith Council for Wales.

Amongst the Christian representatives are the Archbishop of Wales, the Archbishop for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cardiff and the General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance. There are also representatives from the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Bahai communities. At present there is debate over Humanist representation. Some faith communities are not represented e.g. Unitarians, Mormons and Jehovah Witness.

The Council is a place where faith communities meet to discuss faith but it also retains the twice yearly meetings with Rhodri Morgan et. al. for robust dialogue. This is where

faith communities will do their lobbying on faith issues and are now moving towards a process where if there are concerns with Government they will be taken forward. There are plans to create regional meetings. There is a need to be properly briefed to take full advantage of the process. Wales is undergoing a period of change with elections in May and the fear is that unless WASACRE is proactive and efficient the vacuum will be filled by ignorance of our existence, the faith communities need to be heard.

Under the Equality Act 2006 this will be the first time that a new body – Commission for Equality of Human Rights will be formed. It will concern itself with race, gender, equality, disability rights, age, sexual orientation and religion. This is a huge remit and there is potential for a clash between faith communities and the secular agenda. Wales will appoint a Commissioner and there will be a Wales Committee, this is a new challenge for all of us.

Brigid Bowen joined the meeting and explained that she will be part of the forming of the new Constitution. She will be setting up an interfaith network for Wales and is employed by CYTUN as project Worker until March. Every region needs access to one of the six forums:- Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, South West, North East and North West. More formal groups will talk to the Interfaith Council and will ensure geographic representation. More information is available from

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www.interfaithwales.org

Brigid is willing to talk to groups or SACREs her direct email address is info@interfaithwales.org. She is working on links with Higher Education with a degree course offered at Trinity College, Carmarthen. A pilot day will be held at Atlantic College in January for young people from all faith backgrounds, the beginning of a Youth Forum.

The Chair thanked both Aled and Brigid for their interesting and informative presentation and urged members to visit the website.

12 Any Other Business

- **RE Council for England and Wales.** A website is to be set up with links to all partnership organizations and a link in Welsh has been agreed. WASACRE is asked to provide two pages of text, the translation cost will be paid by WASACRE. Proposed by Mr.R.Thomas seconded by FR.Ieuan. A meeting in Wales is proposed in May 2007, WASACRE will pay for the venue. Proposed Cllr.M.Gray seconded Mr.H.Evans.
- **DELLS** – Denize Morris spoke of the removal of KS3 tests for core subjects and explained an innovative project where pilot schools are producing portfolios to show exemplification of levels. The information will help teachers to be secure in

assessment. A verification team will visit schools to ensure that internal arrangements are secure in agreeing standards. The idea of a kite mark award is being discussed. The foundation subjects are now on board including RE. Members were asked to support the work. Proposed Mr.H.Evans seconded Cllr.M.Gray.

- **DELLS – commissioning materials** – Please send suggestions to Denise and also identify teachers who could contribute to the work.

13 Date of next meetings

23rd March 2007 – Haverfordwest - Pembrokeshire
(starting at 10.00 for 10.30)
28th June 2007 Llandrindod Wells – Powys
9th November 2007 – Ebbw Vale – Blaenau Gwent

The Chair thanked Torfaen for the excellent arrangements and for their hospitality in hosting the day. Special thanks were given to Debbie Cummings (SACRE Clerk to Torfaen) for her work in coordinating the welcome choir, orchestra, scrolls and the exhibition. Thanks were given to all concerned including the translator, Nerys.