



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE CHAPEL, WATFORD ROAD, CAERPHILLY
ON THURSDAY, 25TH SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 2.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.M. Gray - Chairman
Councillor J. Taylor - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs R. Potter, J. Taylor

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Ms C. Cook (NASUWT), Mrs S. John (UCAC), Ms K. Mathias (VALRETA), Mrs C. Thompson (NAHT)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mr D. Brooks (Independent), Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church), Captain R. Waters (Salvation Army)

Together with:

V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor), K. Cole (School Effectiveness Advisor), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.G. Hibbert, Mrs D. Price. Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs N. Boardman (NUT), Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales), Mrs J. Lawrence (Assistant Director, Learning, Education and Leisure)

1. WELCOME

The Chairman thanked Mr D. Brooks for arranging for the Committee to meet at The Chapel and the hospitality received.

Mr D. Brooks informed members of the Chapel's history: It was the first chapel built in the Caerphilly area (in 1739). Its sister church was built shortly afterwards in Groeswen. The Chapel enjoyed some successful years, leading to the enlargement of the building, but a period of decline followed. It has enjoyed the services of several influential ministers and for the last 50 years has been an independent church.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the beginning or during the meeting.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the following minutes be approved as correct records and signed by the chairman.

Caerphilly SACRE held on 2nd June 2008 (minute nos. 1 - 16 on page nos. 1 - 5).

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Minute No. 6, Analysis of Inspection Reports (Spring 2007 - Spring 2008)

Members were asked to note a new Headteacher had been appointed at Pontllanfriath Comprehensive, and the school would be contacted shortly to offer assistance.

4.2 Minute No. 13, Membership Update

It was noted a replacement Association of School and College Leaders representative was still outstanding. In Mrs J. Lawrence's absence, Mrs R. Thomas agreed to request an update for the next meeting.

5. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2008-2009

Members discussed the dates and venues within the report and confirmed the availability of school buildings for forthcoming meetings. The schedule for future meetings was agreed as follows:

- Wednesday, 10th December 2008 at 2.00 p.m. - Hendre Junior School, Trecenydd;
- Tuesday, 24th February 2009 at 2.00 p.m. - Penallta House, Ystrad Mynach; and
- Monday, 8th June 2009 at 2.00 p.m. - Park Primary, Bargoed.

6. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Members welcomed Captain Richard Waters to his first meeting of Caerphilly SACRE.

Officers advised that Mrs N. Boardman (NUT), had recently taken adoption leave for nine months. She would continue to receive all paperwork in regard to the committee during her absence.

The current membership of the committee was noted and the need for a replacement Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) representative was agreed. Members discussed the possibility of having a member from a non-Christian faith. Officers commented that attempts had been made in previous years, but to no avail. Members were asked if they knew anyone suitable and were encouraged to find a nominee.

7. CAERPHILLY SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2007-2008

The draft annual report from Caerphilly SACRE was presented, in which the activities of SACRE during the academic year 2007-2008 were outlined. It follows the guidelines laid down by the former Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS).

Members reviewed the document and were asked for any comments and to confirm the accuracy of its contents.

Members noted and approved the report, that would be now be sent to DCELLS, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) each new section to start on a fresh page;
- (ii) blank pages to be removed;
- (iii) punctuation to be corrected in paragraph 4.3; and
- (iv) appendix 7 to be updated following changes to academic establishments.

8. CAERPHILLY SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008-2010

The report set out Caerphilly SACRE's Development Plan, which aims to ensure that current and future developments are identified.

The plans hope to promote and support the following:

- the raising of the standards of pupils' attainment in religious education;
- improvement in the provision of religious education;
- an increase in the number of pupils following external examinations in religious education and religious studies at GCSE and A/AS Level; and
- the highest quality provision of collective worship.

Members were asked to note that whilst some items within the plan were ongoing, there had been new additions, which were highlighted. A general discussion followed, and it was agreed to note the content of the Development Plan.

9. INSET NEEDS AND PLANS 2008-2009

The report gave details of in service training provided for Caerphilly schools during the academic year 2008-2009. The aim of the training was to promote and support:

- the raising of the standards of pupils' attainment in religious education; and
- the highest quality provision of religious education.

Members noted the content of the report, and the cancellation of the training for secondary schools on "Basic Skills through Geography, History and RE", scheduled for 18th November 2008.

10. ATTENDANCE LEVELS FOR INSET 2007-2008

The report informed Members of attendance levels at INSET courses from local authorities.

Members noted the healthy levels of attendance at various courses. They were particularly pleased that the course relating to the implementation of the revised agreed syllabus for RE was very well attended at both primary and secondary schools.

11. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2009

Members were reminded of the annual event, Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), that takes place on 27th January. Each year concentrates on a particular theme, with 2008 being "Imagine ... remember, reflect, react" and 2009 being "Stand Up to Hatred".

Schools are encouraged to participate in HMD in order to remember the victims of the Holocaust and more recent genocides, with the aid of materials produced by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. It was recognised that English schools automatically receive these materials, whereas Welsh schools need to request them. A number of SACRE's (including Caerphilly) wrote to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to voice disappointment at this practice, but received an unsatisfactory response. WASACRE are now to write to WAG on SACREs' behalf.

As part of HMD, a number of pupils visit Auschwitz and Birkenau Concentration Camps each year. The Trust believes it is important that young people attend to know what happened, and gain first hand experience of the camps' conditions. A number of Welsh schools visited Auschwitz in 2008 with five schools and a college from Caerphilly in attendance. The WAG has yet to decide if funds will be made available for 2009 and WASACRE are to write to WAG on this matter also.

Members discussed the possibility of pupils, from the 2008 visit, giving Caerphilly SACRE a presentation on their trip to advise of the impact it had upon them. However, it was acknowledged a number of the pupils may have left school now. It was agreed to contact the six schools/colleges involved to invite the students (if still in school) who visited Auschwitz, to attend the meeting of the committee on Tuesday, 24th February 2009.

In closing, Members discussed the distribution of the materials to schools and its suitability to varying age ranges. Members agreed some of the topics could be inappropriate for younger children, so teachers would need to extract suitable elements, however all would be suitable for secondary schools.

Members noted the report and agreed the following:

- (i) to write to schools reminding them of HMD and ask them to commemorate it in some way;
- (ii) to circulate the Holocaust Memorial Day Pack to secondary schools and SACRE Members;
- (iii) to write to primary schools, referring to the Holocaust Memorial Day Pack;
- (iv) to encourage schools to take up the opportunity to take part in the Lessons from Auschwitz project; and
- (v) to invite pupils who visited Auschwitz to February's meeting.

12. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM AGM MEETING ON 26TH JUNE 2008 AT MOLD

Members reviewed a summary of the meeting of WASACRE held on 26th June 2008 at Mold, Flintshire, whilst Mrs V. Thomas gave a verbal report on particular items of interest to the Committee.

Mrs V. Thomas also made reference to a letter recently received from the secretariat of WASCRE regarding poor attendance figures. WASACRE had asked to ensure a full compliment of SACRE representatives attended its meetings in the future.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Thomas for her feedback from the meeting.

13. WASACRE - REPRESENTATION AT NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 7th November 2008 at Cwmbran. Caerphilly SACRE's representatives were agreed as Mrs V. Thomas and Councillor D.M. Gray. Other Members interested in attending were Ms K. Mathias, Mrs C. Thompson, Captain R. Waters, Mr D. Brooks and Councillor J. Taylor. It was agreed these Members would contact Mrs R. Thomas after the meeting to confirm their availability.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) University of Wales, Bangor (June and July 2008). Members noted the changes in sponsorship;
- (2) AQA – Exp08 Presentation and Launch Meetings (19th August 2008). Members noted the correspondence received;
- (3) PleaseConvinceMe (July and August 2008). Members noted the correspondence received;
- (4) The Church in Wales Education Review, Consultation (September 2008). Members noted the correspondence received and agreed no response would be sent;
- (5) Religious Education Movement Wales – Annual Report 2007/2008. Members noted a copy is available from the resource centre at Penallta House, Tredomen Park; and
- (6) RE News, Summer 2008, No. 81. Members noted the correspondence circulated at the meeting.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at Hendre Junior School, Trecenydd at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 10th December 2008.

The meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.

Approved as a correct record, and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2008, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN