

DRAFFT / DRAFT

**Cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd yn Nhy Brynmenyn,
Penybont ar 13 Mawrth 2009 / *Minutes of meeting held at
Brynmenyn House, Bridgend on 13 March 2009***

Yn Bresennol / Present

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Eurfryn Davies Bethan James Rheinallt Thomas</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Gill Vaisey</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Megan Inglesant Allan Jones Carys Thomas Richard Landy Edward Evans</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly Michael Gray Christine Thompson David Brooks Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Caroline Neudegg Martin Rawle</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Helen Gibbon Mary Parry</p> <p>Ceredigion Mary Parry Vaughan Salisbury</p> <p>Conwy Eirian Pierce</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Mairwenna B Lloyd Brian Huw Jones</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Nigel Steele-Mortimer</p> <p>Gwynedd Bethan James Aeron M Jones W M Meredith</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Carys Thomas</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Gill Vaisey Sue Cave</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot Jen Malcolm</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport Vicky Thomas Sally Northcott David Hando</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</p>	<p>Powys</p> <p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Carys Thomas</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Torfaen Vicky Thomas</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Gill Vaisey</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Vicky Barlow Tania ap Siôn</p> <p>Sylwedyddion / Observers Leslie J Francis (St Mary's Centre) Peter Privett (Godly Play) Ceri Weatherall (Estyn) Lynda Maddock (Trinity College / WNCRE) Tudor Thomas (WJEC) Mike Strange (Christianity Unpacked)</p>
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Minutes of the meeting held at Brynmenyn House, Bridgend, 13 March 2009 (Welsh version to follow)

1. Introduction and welcome Vice Chair, Michael Gray opened the meeting due to the Chair's delayed arrival. The Mayor of Bridgend warmly welcomed members to the meeting. She observed that this was an important time for religious education in Wales with the appearance of new Agreed Syllabi and was grateful for the supporting guidance being produced. The Vice Chair thanked the Mayor for her welcome and offered best wishes for her term of office.

2. Quiet reflection The Chair offered Red Nose Day as the subject for quiet reflection. This year the themes highlighted included: malaria; education; maternal health; and mental health. Members were invited to make contributions to Red Nose Day over lunch. A total of £103 was raised which the Chair would donate directly to the Red Nose Day appeal through a bank.

The Chair offered a second reflection about the sad news of the death of Archdeacon John Lewis, and paid tribute to his valuable contribution to religious education and to the Church. A written tribute by Dafydd Treharne, former RE Adviser for South Glamorgan, was circulated to members.

3. Apologies: Christine Abbas, Paul Brown, Gavin Craigen, Marilyn Frazer, Fred Gilmore, Joyce Howells, Morfudd Jones, Meinir Loader, Lyndon Lloyd, Margaret Pead, Eldon Phillips, B Price, Julie Pugh, Nicholas Richter, Sali Roberts, Tegid Roberts, John Rogers, Richard Thomas, Jane Ward.

4. Minutes of the meeting held at Cwmbran on 7 November 2008 The Chair offered a few details to be included in the minutes. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters arising (a) Page 3 – Estyn forum meeting. Rheinallt Thomas attended the meeting and distributed copies of a full report to members. The Chair thanked Rheinallt Thomas for attending the meeting and for writing the detailed report.

(b) Page 3 – The collective worship issue with regard to *Yr Athro* had been resolved. The Chair informed members that the new Editor had agreed to take appropriate steps to correct the misinformation provided by the article in question.

(c) Page 3 – The Chair informed members that Sali Roberts would take on the role of editor for the spring edition of *RE News*. Geraint Davies, editor of the first edition of *RE News* published by the Bangor University and TUC collaboration, would be absent from work until the summer due to illness. The Chair offered spare copies of *RE News* to members. It was hoped that the spring edition of the magazine would be available in April.

(d) Page 11 – There was some concern about whether the Post-16 resources for religious education produced for the Post-16 conference on 4 October 2008 had been

posted out to schools in south Wales. Members were informed that Enid Griffiths, DCELLS, was aware of the problem and was working to resolve it.

(e) Page 11 - RE Council for England and Wales. Tania ap Siôn was willing to represent WASACRE on the RE Council. The Chair also asked Gill Vaisey to consider whether she would be able to be the second WASACRE representative on the Council.

6. Correspondence

- (a) E-mail from Brian Gates with regard to situation in England and guidance on the Circular.
- (b) Jerusalem Trust: invitation to schools to apply for grants to purchase resources on Christianity.

7. Arrangements and election of new officers The Chair explained that due to the changes taking place at Trinity and within the ITET sector in Wales, he would be stepping down as Chair of WASACRE. He was grateful to the Vice Chair, Michael Gray for his willingness to take on the role of Chair in the summer. Therefore, in the summer term meeting of WASACRE, elections would take place to appoint a new Vice Chair as well as two members of the WASACRE Executive Committee.

8. Presentation by Tudor Thomas: New GCSE Religious Studies Specifications Tudor, Thomas, RS Officer/Principal Manager for WJEC, presented the two new WJEC specifications for GCSE to members: Specification A and Specification B options A and B. Teaching for these specifications would begin in September 2009, with the first assessment in the summer of 2010. He explained that these changes were introduced in order to respond to: DCELLS/QCA requirements; the non-statutory frameworks for Wales and England; the community cohesion focus in England; the end of coursework; and teacher feedback. The content of the specifications and combinations permitted were outlined, and the format of the examination papers described. WJEC support for the new specifications included regional support advisors, the WJEC website, training, and schemes of work. Figures show that religious studies is one of the fastest growing subjects at KS4 and A-level in terms of take-up.

Questions from members included the reason for the omission of Buddhism which is a popular religion to study at A-level, and the omission of 'biblical studies' units. In both cases, poor uptake at GCSE level was cited as a significant determining factor.

Members received a handout of the PowerPoint presentation.

9. Presentation by Peter Privett: Godly Play Peter Privett introduced the origins of Godly play, explained what Godly play was, and invited members to participate in a short Godly Play story. Godly play has emerged from a Church base and not a school base. However, considerable interest in Godly Play has been expressed by primary schools recently who have wanted to use it. Godly Play helps teachers to realise the

‘learning from religion’ aspect of RE. In an RE context, twenty years ago, John Hull’s ‘Gift to the Child’ material was based on Godly Play, but focused on different religions.

Background: Godly Play is based on Maria Montessori’s philosophy of teaching, and has been shaped and influenced by Sofia Cavalletti, Jerome Berryman, and Rebecca Nye. Children quickly learn to shut out the whole notion of spirituality as a result to the negative responses from others experienced at an early age. Godly play aims to reopen this area with young people. Godly Play places the child at the centre of learning and deals with big existential questions which are explored through play and story. This is done through: creating a safe place (in terms of physical environment and relationships between adults and children); building community (prior to teaching the children); offering religious language (e.g. artefacts); and then making meaning (which is done yourself as a community).

A typical outline for a Godly Play session was provided, and included how to create a sacred space and build community before the session as well as the main components of the session itself. These main components included: welcome; story; wondering about the story; work time; feast; and blessing. Stillness throughout was encouraged and children’s responses should never be controlled or directed by adults present. Members participated in a short example of a story about the Nativity.

Many schools have requested opportunities to explore how Godly Play could be used in the classroom, and if SACREs were interested, a Godly Play introduction day could be prepared for teachers.

10. Presentation by Mike Strange: Christianity Unpacked *Christianity Unpacked* is a very large resource of three CDs, where are aimed at key stage 2 pupils and lower key stage 3 pupils. It is available through the medium of English and Welsh. Members were shown examples of the content, for example, ‘Key Teachings of Jesus: forgiveness’, which illustrated the multi-media presentation and various approaches taken to exploring the topics.

Free copies of the resources were being distributed to schools through their local SACREs. Mike Strange thanked members for their help in making this distribution possible. He also offered to come and speak at LEA training events, if requested.

After this, the next resource to appear would be aimed at secondary schools. Mike Strange also drew attention to the RE: Quest website which had a great deal of new material (for example, the virtual tour of St David’s Cathedral and the growth of the key stage 3 resources). In addition, the website always included a seasonal aspect reflecting the Church year.

Members expressed their appreciation of the Welsh version of the resource and the resource’s contribution to Thinking Skills.

11. Showcase of RE resources (a) Gill Vaisy made available the new books@press catalogue to members and drew attention to the new resources (these were presented in greater depth at the previous WASACRE meeting). It was possible for books@press to supply in bulk in large packs and advisers were asked to take these to sell to schools.

(b) Rheinallt Thomas drew attention to the resources of REMW included on a leaflet received by members (these were presented in greater depth in the previous WASACRE meeting). He also offered advisers a 'sale or return' option, if advisers wanted sets of resources to sell to schools. The resource, *RE ideas* was again highlighted as well as information relating to the benefits of LEA subscription to REMW.

(c) Tania ap Siôn informed members that the English version of the *World Faiths Today: Teachers' Handbook* was now published. She reminded members that this key stage 2 storybook series was included in Denize Morris' (Subject Officer for RE, DCELLS) presentation in the last WASACRE meeting which focused on Welsh Assembly Government support materials for religious education in the new curriculum. She also drew attention to the interactive CD ROM, *Jewish Way of Life* produced by The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Pears Foundation. Members received a copy of the CD ROM to take back to their SACREs. Individuals were able to order copies of the CD ROM from the supporting Jewish Way of Life website, while Tania ap Siôn would e-mail all clerks to SACRE details about how LEAs/SACREs could order free multiple copies to distribute to their schools. *Jewish Way of Life* is appropriate for KS2 and KS3 pupils.

12. Report from the Executive Committee meeting held on 2 March, 2009

Members received a handout summarising the Executive meeting. The Chair drew attention to: (a) point 5 concerning the meeting between WASACRE representatives and the Minister of Education on 25 November 2009, and members received a handout detailing the outcomes of that meeting (b) the WASACRE guidance to schools on collective worship legislation Post-16 included in the papers for the meeting.

13. Meeting with Brian Gibbons, Minister for Equality and Social Justice. Leslie Francis reported on the meeting between WASACRE representatives and Brian Gibbons, Minister for Equality and Social Justice, 10 March 2009. The meeting with Brian Gibbons arose as one of the outcomes of WASACRE's annual meeting with the Minister of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in November 2008, and was facilitated by DCELLS. Overall, the meeting was useful for developing greater understanding of the nature and role of religious education and for generating three practical outcomes. (a) With the agreement of the Minister of Education, a representative from the Department of Equality and Social Justice would make a presentation to WASACRE. WASACRE would write to the Minister of Education requesting support for this initiative. (b) WASACRE was invited to respond to the

Community Cohesion consultation document from an RE perspective (c) In principle, Brian Gibbons supported the notion of exploring ways in which his department, DCELLS, and WASACRE could work together in the future and supported its inclusion on the agenda of the next meeting between WASACRE representatives and the Minister of Education. Members received a handout summarising these outcomes.

Mairwenna Lloyd thanked WASACRE representatives for enabling such initiatives which raised further the profile of WASACRE with the Welsh Assembly Government.

14. A.O.B. (a) The Chair referred to the major changes taking place in ITET provision in Wales, and highlighted the need to monitor this area next year.

(b) Rheinallt Thomas thanked the authors of the WASACRE guidance on collective worship at Post-16 document, and urged individual SACREs to focus on this matter with their schools.

(c) The Chair extended his thanks to: Michael Gray who stood in as Chair for the first part of the meeting; Richard Landy, Deputy Director of Education for Bridgend; the Mayor; Jane Thatcher, Clerk to Bridgend SACRE; Carys Thomas, RE Advisor; and Garmon Davies, translator.

Date of next meeting: 24 June 2009, Wild Pheasant Hotel, Llangollen