



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT BEDWAS HIGH SCHOOL, CAERPHILLY
ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor D.M. Gray – Chairman

Councillors:

D.G. Carter, Mrs A. Collins, Mrs R. Potter

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Mrs N. Boardman (NUT), Mrs D. Williams (NASUWT)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mr D. Brooks (Independent), Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church), Mrs J. Jones (Church in Wales)

Together with:

V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor), J. Lawrence (Assistant Director, Learning, Education and Inclusion), R. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.C.W. Bailie, J. Taylor and Miss H. Bartley (ATL), Mrs B. Davies (UCAC), Mrs K. Mathias (VALRETA), Mrs S. Rivers (ASCL), Mrs C. Thompson (NAHT), Captain R. Waters (Salvation Army)

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

The Chairman thanked Sue Rivers, Deputy Headteacher and SACRE Member, for allowing the Council to meet at Bedwas High School, despite being unable to attend herself. Special thanks were given to Leigh Pritchard, Head of Religious Education, for the warm welcome received, and to the Schools Catering Department for the lovely buffet.

The Chairman read a short poem by Helen Steiner Rice entitled "God Gave Man The Earth To Enjoy - Not To Destroy".

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that subject to noting that the next meeting will be held at the United Reformed Church, the minutes of the Caerphilly SACRE meeting, held on 9th June 2010 (minute nos. 1 - 6 on page nos. 1 - 15) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

3. Resilience Project (Minute No. 3)

Members were informed that a letter, with the appropriate flyer, had been sent to all schools advising them of the project.

4. Analysis of Inspection Reports (Spring 2009-2010) (Minute No. 6)

There was still uncertainty as to how the reports will be analysed in the future. This matter will be discussed at the Council's December meeting.

5. RE Festival, March 2011 (Minute No. 7)

Members were asked to note that a letter, with the relevant flyer, had been sent to all schools advising them of the festival.

6. WASACRE – Executive Voting for the Period 2010 – 2012 (Minute No. 12)

Members were advised that Caerphilly SACRE's nominations had been given and both Dafydd Treharne of Vale of Glamorgan and Mary Parry of Carmarthenshire had successfully been voted as Executive Members.

7. PRESENTATION ON LESSONS FROM AUSCHWITZ VISIT- 6TH FORM STUDENTS

The Chairman welcomed the Head of Religious Education, Leigh Pritchard, and six students who were to give a short presentation to convey to Members the impact upon them, following a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The pupils visited Auschwitz-Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps with other pupils in February 2008. The pupils all expressed a greater appreciation of Hitler's Germany and a better understanding of other cultures, following the visit. They felt very emotional when standing in the camps and found that seeing first hand the remnants of what remains of that camp and the horrors inflicted there, was a very sobering experience.

Members thanked the students for their presentations and a general discussion followed, together with a question and answer session. The pupils confirmed that although the visit was at times unpleasant, they believed children should not be sheltered from the facts, as they were necessary to fully appreciate the horrors that had occurred.

Members were advised that visits were made by sixth form students studying history and religious education. Upon their return, they attempted to inform others of their experience, but this could be difficult due to the complexity of emotions that emerged.

Ms. Pritchard stayed for the remainder of the meeting.

8. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2010 – 2011

Members discussed the proposed dates and venues within the report and agreed the availability of venues for forthcoming meetings. The schedule for future meetings is as follows:

- Monday, 6th December 2010 (2.00 pm) – United Reformed Church, Van Road, Caerphilly;
- Monday, 14th February 2011 (2.00 pm) – Cross Keys Methodist Church;
- Tuesday, 14th June 2011 (2.00 pm) – Ebbw Room, Penallta House, Tredomen Park.

9. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The report confirmed the current membership of the Council and advised Members of the difficulties in finding representatives to serve on the group from non-Christian religious denominations.

Members were informed that contact had been made with Mr Darren Ralph, the Development Officer of the Valleys Regional Equality Council (VALREC), who will be attending the Council's meeting in December to give a presentation on the work that VALREC do and how they raise awareness of the issues facing Religious Education today.

Members welcomed this presentation and noted the report, but asked that the term 'others' be amended to more accurately reflect Mrs Thomas and Mrs Lawrence's role. Officers agreed to determine a more suitable title outside the meeting.

10. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2009 –2010

The draft annual report from Caerphilly SACRE was presented, in which the activities of SACRE during the academic year 2009-2010 were outlined. It follows the guidelines laid down by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS).

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) that all references to the Local Education Authority be amended to read Local Authority; and
- (ii) that the date of the School Inspection Reports on page 8 be amended to read Spring 2008-2009.

11. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010 – 2013

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. It was hoped that the plan will give the Council a greater focus in forthcoming years. A general discussion followed, and it was agreed to note the content of the Development Plan.

12. INSET NEEDS AND PLANS 2010-2011

The report gave details of in-service training provided for Caerphilly schools during the academic year 2010-2011. 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 primary schools on "Sacred Spaces and Religious Education", scheduled for 1st October due to lack of uptake.

13. THE NATIONAL RE FESTIVAL MARCH 2011

Members were reminded of the forthcoming month long RE Festival to be held in March 2011, organised by the RE Council for England and Wales. The aim of the festival is to celebrate RE and to raise the profile of the subject on a local and national level. Ideas and guidance for activities will be produced by the RE Council.

Members were asked to note that since the last meeting of the Council, a letter with the relevant flyer, had been sent to all schools advising them of the festival and the accompanying website www.celebratingre.org, that was set up to promote the festival. The RE festival also provides the perfect opportunity for schools to develop and strengthen links with their local community and to encourage and develop community cohesion.

An additional paper was circulated at the meeting, updating Members on the RE Festival and activities that were to take place. Members noted that there was to be over twenty competitions and a series of open house visits to places of worship. Most entries to competitions need to be in by 31st January and prizes range from money awards to classroom resources. WASARE has also sponsored a national competition with a prize of £200. Details of all competitions can be found at the website, www.celebratingre.org/index.php/competitions.

Mrs V. Thomas and Mrs J. Lawrence had met to discuss a range of ideas for local promotion. The library service had also been included in discussions. The need for schools to publicise their activities was raised.

Headteachers will be updated accordingly and to help curriculum leaders make the necessary arrangements, Mrs V. Thomas advised there is to be a co-ordination meeting in ESIS's building, Tŷ Dysgu, Treforest on 11th November. A letter will be sent to all schools confirming this. Whilst initial plans have started, the main focus on events will be from the start of the spring term. To launch the RE festival, at WASACRE's meeting of 2nd March additional SACRE representatives will be invited to attend and pupils will perform. This may also be linked with the National Eisteddfod.

A Member suggested that Caerphilly Council of Churches be informed, as they will be in a position to advise all churches in the county borough of the planned activities. Another Member informed the Council that this had already been reported at their Summer meeting.

Members welcomed the proposals but gave concern that, due to other commitments a deadline for January 2011 would not allow sufficient time for students to apply to the competitions.

Members noted the contents of the report and agreed to mailshot all schools to remind them of the RE festival taking place in March 2011 and the related competitions.

14. REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – ESTYN

The report informed Members of updated guidance for inspectors from Estyn. Schools have already been advised of the changes identified in the document.

The guidance document has been updated to take into account the following two changes:

1. **New inspection framework** that in all inspections in non-denominational schools, inspectors must report on instances where the school does not comply with the statutory requirements and;
2. **Changes to legislation** in regard to collective worship at Post 16 in schools that states that pupils in the sixth form, since February 2009, have the right to excuse themselves from acts of collective worship.

Members of SACRE noted the 'Supplementary Guidance on Inspecting Collective Worship' and agreed that the document be sent to all schools in the LA.

15. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2011

Members were informed of the annual Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), to be held on Thursday, 27th January 2011. Each year concentrates on a particular theme, with 2011 being "Untold Stories".

Schools are encouraged to participate in HMD in order to remember the victims of the Holocaust and more recent genocides. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust produces materials specific to the theme and these free educational resources (containing material suitable from primary to post 16 students) is available online at www.hmd.org.uk. The resources had to be requested by the school(s) and any organisations that did commemorate the day are invited to inform the Welsh Assembly, so that their activity can be recorded and acknowledged.

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; and
- (ii) to advise schools of the resources available via the HMD Trust website.

16. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM MEETING ON 24TH JUNE 2010 AT WREXHAM

Members reviewed a summary of the meeting of WASACRE held on 24th June 2010 in Wrexham, whilst Mrs V. Thomas gave a verbal report on particular items of interest to the Committee.

In particular, Members were advised of the presentation given by Gavin Craigen, Executive Director of the new St Giles Centre for Religious Education and Faith Development in Wrexham. Members were also informed that WASACRE discussed recent correspondence received from the Religious Education Movement Wales (REMW). The correspondence had been discussed at February's meeting of the Council; and WASACRE were in agreement that such correspondence was counterproductive.

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

17. WASACRE - REPRESENTATION AT NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on 26th November 2010 at Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Caerphilly. Caerphilly SACRE's representatives were agreed as Councillor D.M. Gray, Mrs V. Thomas and Mr D. Brooks. It was confirmed that as Caerphilly was hosting the meeting, all Members were invited to attend.

Any additional Members wishing to attend were asked to advise the Committee Services Officer in good time to allow for catering arrangements.

18. CORRESPONDENCE

- (1) Caerphilly County Borough Council Community Cohesion Forum; Members discussed the invitation for a representative from SACRE to attend regular participation forum meetings. The Council agreed to nominate Janet Jones to attend, due to her experience as both a school teacher and religious representative.
- (2) Diversity Equality Educational Portal Site; Members noted the correspondence received.
- (3) The Wonder Project; Members noted the correspondence received.

In closing, Members of the Council commented that the majority of correspondence listed on this part of the agenda (as with other meetings), had already sent directly to schools and they raised concerns that by placing the correspondence on the agenda, it appeared to have been endorsed by the Council. It was agreed that in future, such contact will receive a response advising them, where appropriate, to contact CCBC schools direct and the correspondence will be removed from the agenda.

The meeting closed at 3:15 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 Monday, 6th December 2010, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN