



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT BEULAH BAPTIST CHAPEL, THOMAS STREET,
ABERTRIDWR ON THURSDAY, 21ST JUNE 2012 AT 2.00 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Taylor – Chairman (Presiding)

Councillors:

Mrs. G.D. Oliver, Mrs. M.E. Sargent

Representing Teacher Organisations:

Miss B. Davies (UCAC), Ms Sue Rivers (ASCL)

Representing Religious Organisations:

Mrs E. Hawthorn (United Reformed Church)

Together with:

V. Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor) K. Cole (Interim Manager Learning, Education and Inclusion) and R.J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.G. Carter, W. David, D.M. Gray and teacher representative Miss H. Bartley (ATL)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. TO APPOINT A CHAIRPERSON

Councillor D.M. Gray was appointed Chairman for the period up to the next County Borough elections.

3. TO APPOINT A VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Councillor J. Taylor was appointed Vice-Chairman for the period up to the next County Borough elections.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Caerphilly SACRE meeting held on 20th February 2012 (minute nos. 1- 9, on page nos. 1-5), be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS, 2012 - 2013

Members discussed the dates given within the report and proposed suitable venues for forthcoming meetings. The schedule for future meetings was agreed as follows:

- Tuesday, 2nd October 2012
- Wednesday, 12th December 2012
- Thursday, 28th February 2013
- Monday, 10th June 2013

Members suggested that the meetings be held, subject to the host's agreement/venue availability, at the following locations:

- Cwmaber Infants School
- Phillipstown Primary School
- Salvation Army
- Cwmcarn High School, alternatively Lewis School

It was agreed that the clerk to SACRE contact the proposed hosts to arrange future meetings, and hold rooms in Penallta House, Tredomen in reserve. Mrs V. Thomas confirmed she would arrange a secondary school to host.

6. SACRE MEMBERSHIP: UPDATE AND HUMANIST REQUEST

Members were informed of a number of recent changes to the membership of Caerphilly SACRE -

1. Ms Sue Rivers (ASCL representative) was to retire and Ms Helen Marsh, the Assistant Head Teacher at Bedwas High School was to be her replacement.
2. Captain Richard Waters (Salvation Army) was to retire and be replaced by Lieutenant Carl Di-Palma, with effect from July 2012.
3. Ms Kathy Mathias had resigned and VALRETA had ceased to exist. Therefore a vacancy for a voluntary organisation now existed upon the Council.
4. Note was made that following Mr David Brooks's (Independent) retirement a vacancy still existed for a Free Church Member. Members noted that the vacancy could be for any Free Church such as Methodist, Baptist or Independent. Mrs V. Thomas agreed to give the clerk to SACRE the contact details for Geraint Hopkins of Cytun to find a replacement.

In addition, Members were reminded of a request by the Humanist Association to Welsh SACREs to be appointed as a member of the Council. As the request had been sent to all SACREs, guidance had been sought from WASACRE, who had contacted the Welsh Government (WG) to confirm current legislation on this matter. A response had now been received and Members were advised that Section 390 – Constitution of advisory councils, of

the Education Act 1996 excluded the Humanist Association from appointment as a member with voting rights. A copy of Section 390 was appended. However, it was a matter for each SACRE, in accordance with its own Constitution, to determine whether to accept the Association as a Co-Opted Member.

Members discussed the report and considered co-option of the Humanist Association. It was noted that Caerphilly SACRE already had two Co-Opted groups and as such no vacancy currently existed. Members also stressed the need for any group wishing to be co-opted to present a pen portrait stating what it could bring to the Council. Each application would then be considered on its own merits.

Members agreed that:

- (1) the clerk to SACRE write to Members leaving the Council to thank them for their contributions;
- (2) the clerk to SACRE write to new Members to welcome them to the Council;
- (3) the clerk to SACRE contact the appropriate people or organisations to ensure vacant places are filled;
- (4) that the clerk to SACRE respond to the request from the Humanist Association for representation by informing them of the information from WG and that there are two co-opted places on Caerphilly SACRE and these are currently filled; and
- (5) that the clerk to SACRE review previous minutes and the Caerphilly SACRE Constitution to confirm it is up to date and relevant.

7. ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS, AUTUMN 2011 – SPRING 2012

The report and appendix informed Members of the outcomes of the analysis of inspection reports for the period Autumn 2011 – Spring 2012 for primary and secondary schools. Members were asked to note that all inspections were now short ones and that under the new inspection framework, Estyn only reported on instances where the school did not comply with statutory requirements. This made it challenging to review RE, except in instances where the school failed to fulfil its requirements.

As a result of this schools were asked, and they subsequently agreed, to complete self-assessments to be used in conjunction with the inspection reports to monitor performance. In addition, liaison with the school's Link Advisors would highlight any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Members discussed the report at length, particularly in regard to alternative methods of monitoring and they raised concerns in relation to Estyn's recommendation to Heolddu Comprehensive School. Ms K. Cole advised she had been working with the school to make improvements and this was progressing well. It was agreed that a progress report would be brought before the Council to review.

Members noted that otherwise, all schools inspected were meeting the legal requirements and they agreed that:

- (1) the clerk to SACRE request a copy of Heolddu Comprehensive School's action plan, to show how they intend to address the recommendation in the report to fulfil their duty to meet statutory requirements for acts of collective worship; and
- (2) the clerk to SACRE send copies of Estyn's Supplementary Guidance on Collective Worship in Schools and the WASACRE Guidance on Collective Worship in Schools (when endorsed by WASACRE) to the school.

8. EXAMINATION RESULTS: UPDATE ON SHORT COURSE AND ENTRY LEVEL

The report informed Members of the examination results and levels analysis data for 2011 for GCSE Short Course (Specification B) Religious Studies 2011 and Religious Education / Religious Studies Entry Level Qualification 2011.

Members reviewed the analysis of examination results and the main findings were discussed, in particular reference was made to the reduced entry numbers for short courses and the lower results at the top grades A*-A and A*-C.

9. INSET ATTENDANCE, AUTUMN 2011- SPRING 2012

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

Members noted the healthy levels of attendance at various course and that one course had to be cancelled. Mrs V. Thomas confirmed there was a high focus on literacy in the course programme and future courses would be announced in September.

10. SOUTH EAST CONSORTIA: ORAL UPDATE

Members were informed that the Welsh Government are seeking development of school improvement services on a consortia basis. The key driver of the proposed South East Wales Consortium (made up of the five councils : Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) is to raise standards of attainment in the region's schools, further and faster.

Members received confirmation that Caerphilly SACRE would continue to function as a separate body but ESIS would disappear. ESIS staff would revert to the home local authority, while Estyn would remain unchanged.

Mrs V. Thomas commented that there would be a need to review the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education next year and with the anticipated collaborations, this could include input from teachers from the five local authorities. Any produced document would however be published with the Caerphilly corporate logo.

Members thanked Mrs Thomas and welcomed further updates at future meetings.

11. WASACRE'S GUIDANCE ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Members reviewed the WASACRE's Guidance on Collective Worship dated May 2012, which had been developed to support schools in delivering effective and educationally meaningful collective worship.

Mrs V. Thomas highlighted the various sections within the document and the benefits the document would bring to any school. In addition, Members were advised that case studies of actual schools in Wales would be available to review on the WASACRE website.

Members suggested that WASACRE ratify the document and it was agreed that the clerk to SACRE send the Guidance on Collective Worship (once endorsed by WASACRE) to all schools within the County Borough.

12. WASACRE - FEEDBACK FROM MEETING HELD ON 30TH MARCH 2012 AT ABERAERON, CEREDIGION

Copies of the finalised minutes of WASACRE's meeting held on 30th March 2012 in Aberaeron were distributed to all parties present.

Members reviewed the minutes and Mrs V. Thomas gave a verbal report on particular items of interest to the Council.

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

13. WASACRE - REPRESENTATION AT NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be held on 26th June 2012 at the Conwy Business Centre, Junction Way, Llandudno Junction. Caerphilly SACRE's representatives were agreed as Councillor D.M. Gray and Mrs V. Thomas.

Members were advised that the clerk to SACRE had received the agenda papers, should anyone wish to review these or attend the meeting.

14. WASACRE - EXECUTIVE VOTING FOR THE PERIOD 2012 - 2013

Following confirmation of Councillor D.M. Gray's preferred nominees (sent to the clerk to SACRE by e'mail on 14th June 2012), Members discussed the nominations for WASACRE Executive Membership.

The Council agreed to vote for Rheinallt A. Thomas (Anglesey) and Phil Lord (Denbighshire) in the role of Executive Members at WASACRE's meeting on 26th June 2012.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 2nd October 2012 at 2.00 p.m. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 3.05 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 Tuesday, 2nd October 2012, they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN