



Cyfarfod Cymdeithas CYSAGau Cymru, Gwynedd
(Siambr Dafydd Orwig, Caernarfon), 19 Mehefin
2013 (10.30am – 3pm)

*Wales Association of SACREs meeting, Gwynedd
(Dafydd Orwig Chamber, Caernarfon), 19 June
2013 (10.30am – 3pm)*

<p>Ynys Môn / Anglesey Bethan James</p> <p>Blaenau Gwent Gill Vaisey</p> <p>Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / Bridgend Edward Evans Carys Pritchard</p> <p>Caerffili/ Caerphilly</p> <p>Caerdydd / Cardiff Carys Pritchard</p> <p>Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire Aled Jones Mary Parry</p> <p>Ceredigion Cyng. Lyndon Lloyd</p> <p>Conwy Phil Lord N.C. Richter</p>	<p>Sir Ddinbych / Denbighshire Phil Lord Martin Evans-Jones</p> <p>Sir y Fflint / Flintshire Phil Lord</p> <p>Gwynedd Bethan James Deian Evans WMMeredeth Ken Robinson</p> <p>Merthyr Tudful / Merthyr Tydfil Cllr Ernie Galsworth Carys Pritchard</p> <p>Sir Fynwy / Monmouthshire Gill Vaisey</p> <p>Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath and Port Talbot</p> <p>Casnewydd / Newport</p> <p>Sir Benfro / Pembrokeshire</p> <p>Powys John Mitson</p>	<p>Rhondda Cynon Taf Carys Pritchard</p> <p>Abertawe / Swansea</p> <p>Torfaen Helen Bevan</p> <p>Bro Morgannwg / Vale of Glamorgan Carys Pritchard</p> <p>Wrecsam / Wrexham Libby Jones Tania ap Siôn</p> <p>Sylwedyddion / Observers Ben Wigley REMW</p>
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Minutes

1. *Introduction and welcome.* Chair Edward Evans welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed Mr Selwyn Griffiths, past chair of Gwynedd County Council and current Chair of Gwynedd SACRE.

Mr Selwyn Griffiths thanked the Chair and welcomed members to Gwynedd, which he described as one of the most beautiful area of Wales. Mr Griffiths emphasised the commitment of Gwynedd County Council to conducting all business through the medium of Welsh. He also acknowledged the many different cultures around the area. A former teacher and now a councillor, Mr Griffiths thanked Bethan James for her hard work and commitment to Gwynedd SACRE as a Local Authority advisor and wished her well in her new role as a Systems Leader for GwE.

Director of Education for Gwynedd, Mr Dewi R Jones addressed members, reiterating the welcome of Councillor Griffiths. Mr Jones spoke of the change in attitudes to Religious Education referring back to when RE was often described as one of the 'Cinderella subjects', which had to fight for her place within the fields of Maths, science and languages, for example. He congratulated teachers, SACREs and WASACRE for their hard work, vision and commitment to the subject, adding that due to their enthusiasm, their ability to inspire children and their support for RE, this description has now disappeared.

Mr Jones referred to two publications in his address. The first was by Dr Barry Morgan of Bangor University (2013) "Thinking about how we will develop RE in the future" and the second was the Robert Hill report published by Welsh Government (18 June 2013). In summary, Mr Jones said that RE is much more than just information and emphasised the importance of Religious Education and the wealth of experiences pupils can have in a school, either in the classroom or the whole school, for example, pupils having time to reflect and think and consider other people's viewpoints. Mr Jones said that through Religious Education and collective worship we are allowing pupils to do this. He went on to say that teachers of RE are, and should continue to be, creative in their planning, and the way that they inspire children is a core part of that planning. Quoting from the Hill report, Mr Jones said, "behind all the changes the most important thing is the learning and experiences and the standard of the teaching. I think what happens in the classroom lasts forever and has to be done properly to have any influence on standards."

Mr Jones ended his address by thanking WASACRE and urged the continuation of the Association's commitment to Religious Education and Collective Worship in Wales.

Members were then given a presentation by year 8 pupils from Ysgol Syr Hugh Owen, Caernarfon. The pupils shared what they had been doing in RE that term. They began by explaining the topic, which was 'Fundamental questions about Islam'. Initially pupils had worked on a variety of tasks about the Five Pillars of Islam, including Muslim pilgrimage and Ramadan. They had worked in groups in class to create different ways of learning about Ramadan and gave a demonstration of some of these, which included a word association game and a rap that they performed. Pupils also linked their unit of work to the skills they had developed during their learning.

Chair Edward Evans thanked the pupils and linked their work with the current situation in Britain.

2. *Quiet reflection.* The Chair shared an excerpt from his favourite book 'Wind in the Willows' and asked members to consider their own responses to the reflection.
3. *Apologies.* Meinir Loader and Helen Gibbon. Leslie Francis, Brian Rogers and Dafydd Treharne and Rameez Delpack, Gavin Craigen, Rheinallt Thomas, Vicky Thomas, Cllr Arwel Roberts, Christine Abbas, Sue Cave, Huw Edwards, Huw George, Jenny Garrard.
4. *Minutes of meeting held in Newport, 22 March 201.* The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
5. *NAPfRE presentation: Phil Lord REQM*

Phil Lord updated members on the development of the RE Quality Mark for a specifically Welsh context. Using a PowerPoint presentation, he summarised the themes of the RE Quality Mark. He emphasised that the RE Council for England and Wales, the Culham and St Gabriel's Trust, and the National Society are all supportive in the development of the Quality Mark. PL felt that it was important that the RE Quality Mark should also be available to schools in Wales and has been working with Mary Myatt to place it within a Welsh context and format. There has been a pilot in which four schools took part. REQM has been set up to:

1. Raise the profile of RE in schools.
2. Celebrate a commitment to excellence in RE.
3. Enable dissemination for measuring, planning and developing the quality of RE teaching and learning.
4. Encourage schools to increase the range and quality of teaching and learning in RE to improve standards.
5. Provide a structure and framework for dioceses and SACREs to map high quality RE.

PL summarised the main messages in relation to the REQM:

- It is a good starting point for schools and RE departments, which can use it a tool for professional development for themselves or other departments in school.
- It helps to identify good schools and the sharing of good practice across schools.

PL had worked with Tania ap Sion and the WASACRE Executive in amending the English criteria for the REQM for a Welsh context. Teachers from the schools that had piloted the REQM also provided members with detailed and positive feedback in relation to their experiences.

PL asked WASACRE members if they would consider the Association funding the translation of documents (approx. £500.00) and publicising the quality mark through the 22 SACREs. The Chair commented on the importance of the translation of the documents and Treasurer John Mitson confirmed that WASACRE was in a position to fund this. Members agreed that funding for translation should be provided. PL said that he would be presenting to the AREAC conference on 1 July 2013 and Mary Myatt will be delivering training on 7 October 2013 for Assessors in Wales. It is important to have trained assessors in

Wales who are familiar with the Welsh context and also to have Welsh-medium assessors.

The Chair confirmed with PL that it had been piloted in North Wales and the cost for applying for the REQM assessment would be £450.00 per school. PL also confirmed that the award lasts for 3 years and schools would need to re-apply after that period, hopefully for a higher award.

Carys Pritchard (Systems Leader for South Central Consortia) thanked PL and the schools for sharing their experiences. It was clear that the schools had benefited from this and that it was not perceived as an extra burden. She said that it was important to emphasise that schools would appreciate the benefit of help with Self Evaluation and Welsh-medium documents would be welcomed. CP also pointed out the need for the Welsh quality mark to be clearly labelled on the website for Welsh schools. Gill Vaisey asked about schools who could not afford to pay for the process, and in response PL confirmed that all the documents would be free on the REQM website for schools to assess themselves without having to pay to go through the process formally with an assessor. However, if they did want to be awarded the quality mark, payment would be needed.

A Ceredigion member suggested that local SACREs could draw the schools' attention to the REQM and promote it. The link to be shared with individual schools is www.reqm.org. Bethan James suggested that this could be a good format for SACREs to use themselves when monitoring RE and perhaps SACREs should be discussing this at their local meetings. The Chair thanked Phil Lord and the teachers involved in the Pilot for their presentation and hard work.

5. *Correspondence.* Libby Jones read out the response from Leighton Andrews regarding the current Curriculum Review in Wales. The consultation for the Review will be out some time in September 2013 and it was agreed that the WASACRE Executive Committee will respond to the consultation on behalf of WASACRE due to the time constraints of the next main meeting being moved to the same day as the conference.

7. *Up-dates:*

Estyn Thematic Review.

An update was provided by Mary Parry. The report was published on the previous day (18.6.13) and is available on the Estyn website. Three inspectors looked at statutory Religious Education in key stages 3 and 4 in 22 schools across Wales. This consisted of one day in each school. One lesson in KS3 (year 9) and one lesson in KS4 (year 10) were observed. Inspectors looked at documentation, schemes of work, planning, and talked to Heads of Department and 10 pupils from KS3 and 10 pupils from KS4 with a questionnaire. One of the headlines of this report is that RE is a more popular subject than any subject that is not a core subject. This is encouraging and highlights the positive attitude of the pupils towards Religious Education. One of the main messages was that pupils saw the value of the subject in their lives and that they felt that RE would help them. Mark Campion will be speaking about the report in more detail at the conference.

There were six recommendations for schools and two for the Welsh Government. For schools, these related to:

- Boys' achievement

- Offering an examination qualification for core RE to raise standards
- Teacher assessment at KS3
- More challenging tasks for pupils to achieve higher levels
- Curriculum, staffing and timetabling arrangements to enable pupils to make progress from KS3 to KS4
- Strengthening Self Evaluation

For Welsh Government, these related to:

- Opportunities for CPD
- Publishing data for RE

Some points raised by members were: Is raising boys' achievement an RE only issue? There are strong links between RE and Literacy and therefore it may be a subject more popular with girls. More could be done to improve standards with boys. The syllabus content may be key to raising boys' interest and achievement in RE.

It was encouraging to see the report in the Western Mail relating to the Estyn Thematic Review. The status of RE has increased on the whole. In terms of responding appropriately to particular aspects of the Estyn Review, research is needed to understand properly some of the results.

It was agreed that WASACRE would circulate the Estyn Thematic Review report to SACREs so that they have a copy and can also circulate the report to schools. A copy would also be placed on the WASACRE website.

Welsh Government review of SACRE annual report.

An update was provided by Tania ap Sion. The process relating to the Welsh Government Review of SACRE reports has been discussed in many Executive meetings over the past few years. The current review document covers 3 three years of annual reports. It is a requirement that SACREs submit their annual reports to Welsh Government and it is these submitted documents that inform the content of the review. The review document has been shared in draft format with the Executive and advisors, who have provided useful feedback to Welsh Government. We do not know as yet when it will be published officially.

The draft review document reflects a very positive and helpful view of SACREs in Wales and their areas of work. It highlights an awareness of the significant contribution of SACREs to Religious Education and Collective Worship. There has been recognition of the changing situation in Wales and how this will affect SACREs. The main recommendations to SACREs are to continue to do what they are doing in order to raise standards and to support schools, monitor schools and provide advice about teaching methods, etc to their Local Authorities, and to have in place an evaluation process. The report also talks about the importance of ensuring that Collective Worship takes place according to legal requirements. There is emphasis on SACREs supporting Local Authorities with the Self Evaluation process. There are a number of connections between this review and the Estyn Thematic Review, for example, boys' achievement strategies and the use of examination results and the purposeful use of data. Finally, SACREs should report on the effectiveness of the advice and support given in relation to Collective Worship. It was agreed that this is

an important document despite the age of the information within it. There is a great deal in the report that SACREs can usefully discuss. As soon as the document is published, WASACRE will make it available to SACREs so that they can respond to it.

WASACRE Conference

The forthcoming WASACRE Conference was noted, taking place on 10 October 2013.

8. Report from the Executive Committee held on 16 May 2013

Members received the summary of the Executive meeting with their papers.

9. A.O.B.

There was no other business.

10. Date for next meeting.

Autumn 2013

The next WASACRE meeting will now take place on the day of the WASACRE Conference on Thursday, 10 October 2013 (The Conference will finish at 3.30pm and a short WASACRE meeting will take place from 3.45-4.45pm). Papers for the meeting will be circulated to members by their local SACRE.

Spring Term 2014

The WASACRE meeting will take place on March 27th 2014 at Ty Penallta, Caerphilly.

11. The Chair thanked Gwynedd County Council and SACRE for hosting the meeting and thanked in particular the following people: Ken Robinson, Selwyn Griffiths, Director of Education for Gwynedd, Bethan James, Translators, and all Members.

WASACRE Annual General Meeting minutes, 19 June 2013

1. *Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in Wrexham, 26 June 2012 .*
The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.
2. *Matters Arising.*
There were no matters arising.
3. *WASACRE Report for 2012-2013.*
The Chair presented the annual report to members. It was confirmed that the period it covers is Summer 2012, Autumn 2012 and Spring 2013. The report was accepted by members. The report will be circulated to SACREs.
4. *Treasurer's Report.*
Treasurer John Mitson presented the report and pointed out that the main source of income for the Association is from subscriptions. To date all subscriptions, apart from one, had been received from the SACREs. Spending is higher this year due to the KS3 training offered by WASACRE in association with the consortia. Also, expenses are higher this year due to translation services and expenses from last year being included in this year's accounts. During the year, expenditure exceeded income by £1469.31. However, at the end of the financial year, three subscriptions had not been received and, if they had been paid at that point, this would have reduced the overspend in year by £1224.00, leaving an overspend in year of £245.31. This compares with an under spend in year in 2011/2012 of £3384.66. The financial year commenced with a balance of £18812.88 and ended with a balance of £17343.57. The finances of WASACRE, therefore, remain in a very healthy condition, although they represent a reduction on the position at the end of 2011/2012 by £1469.31. WASACRE is, therefore, in a strong position to fund its planned activities that support SACREs and schools.

It was recommended that subscriptions for the current financial year should rise by 2.08%, which raises subs to £418.00 per SACRE. This was accepted by members and all members present agreed to maintain the expenses amounts. Phil Lord noted that WASACRE pays for Reflections in RE News but some authorities did not have access as they do not pay for RE News. John Mitson, Treasurer confirmed that SACREs still have copies of Reflections that they can share with those authorities. Tania ap Sion pointed to the Executive minutes with regard to RE News and the meeting that took place between WASACRE, RE News and REMW. A positive initial discussion had taken place and members would be kept abreast of any developments.

John Mitson asked for the accounts to be accepted. Members accepted the accounts and the Chair thanked John Mitson for a clear and succinct report and his work throughout the year.

5. *Outgoing Chair's comments*
Chair, Edward Evans thanked members for the opportunity and privilege of being Chair. He believes that the one thing that gives stability to people is religion and the more we can promote understanding of religious diversity the better. Edward said that he is happy that he can be a part of that. The Chair proposed that the Vice Chair, Tania ap Sion move to position of Chair.
6. *Election of Chairman*
Vice Chair, Tania ap Sion, took the position of Chair. She thanked Edward Evans for his commitment and work on behalf of WASACRE over the past two years.

She emphasized the privilege of being able to serve as Chair to the Association and recognized the challenging times ahead where WASACRE would have an important and creative role to play.

7. *Election of Vice-Chair*

Gavin Craigen was elected to the position of Vice Chair to the association.

8. *Election of members to the Executive*

The Chair emphasised that it had been very heartening to see so many SACRE members willing to put their names forward to sit on the Executive Committee. It reflects positively on perceptions of WASACRE and its work. The following appointments have been made:

Mark Brown (Executive member, Conwy SACRE)

Mary Parry (Executive member, Carmarthenshire SACRE)

For the third position on the Executive Committee, there was a tie between Cllr Michael Gray (Caerphilly SACRE) and Revd Roy Watson (Blaenau Gwent SACRE). With members' permission WASACRE will ask SACREs to vote again on just those two candidates by email. Libby Jones will arrange this with SACREs. Members agreed to this and Edward Evans proposed that we look at the constitution on this matter for future reference.

9. *A.O.B.* There was no other business.

10. *Date of next meeting.* Details of the next AGM in June 2014 will be circulated when a decision is made. The Chair thanked Gwynedd County Council and SACRE for hosting the meeting and thanked in particular the following people: Ken Robinson, Selwyn Griffiths, Director of Education for Gwynedd, Bethan James, Translators, and all Members.