

## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

Minutes of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in COUNCIL CHAMBER, RUSSELL HOUSE, CHURTON ROAD, RHYL on Friday, 13 October 2017 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Representing Denbighshire County Council**

Councillors Ellie Chard, Tony Thomas and Emrys Wynne

#### **Representing Religious Denominations**

Mr. Simon Cameron, Rev. B H Jones and Rev. Martin Evans-Jones

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Challenge Advisor for GwE (PL) and Committee Administrator (SJ)

### **SILENT REFLECTION**

The meeting began with a few minutes silent reflection.

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#### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Dominic Oakes and Councillor Tony Flynn

#### **2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

Nominations were sought for a member to serve as the Committee's Chair for the ensuing term. Simon Cameron was nominated by members to Chair. No other nominations were received and it was therefore;

**RESOLVED** that Simon Cameron be appointed as the SACRE Committee's Chair.

#### **3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

Nominations were sought for a member to serve as the committee's Vice-Chair for the ensuing term. Councillor Tony Thomas nominated Councillor Ellie Chard, seconded by Rev. B Jones. No other nominations were received and it was therefore;

**RESOLVED**, that Councillor Ellie Chard be appointed as the SACRE committees Vice-Chair.

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest.

#### **5 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chair declared that he intended to include for discussion the following matter which required urgent attention –

Estyn Questionnaire to SACRE

It was agreed to consider the matter following the main business item.

#### **6 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) meeting held on 5 July 2017 (previously circulated) were submitted.

Rev. Martin Evans-Jones asked for an update with regard to textbooks for the new specifications for GCSE examinations. In response to the concern the Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) informed members that an English textbook had been made available from the start of the summer term but as yet no Welsh version.

***RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on the 5 July 2017 be received and approved as a correct record.*

#### **7 SACRE DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) referred to the previously circulated report and explained that rather than discuss the contents of the report, the Committee's role was to agree that it was an accurate reflection of what had been considered over the course of the previous year. To that end the CA guided members through the report.

Concerns were raised by members concerning resources and training. The Committee discussed the potential to provide training sessions for schools and discussed ways of making schools aware of resources available to them.

***RESOLVED**, that the annual report be received and its contents noted.*

#### **8 ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS**

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) submitted a report (previously circulated) which provided an analysis of Estyn Inspection reports published in the summer term.

The CA explained that presented were the findings of the inspections that took place at 2 schools. Inspections had been carried out at Ysgol Y Parc Infants and Bodfari C.P. School, details relating to each of the respective schools had been included in the report and were summarised by the CA. The CA explained that both inspections had used the new inspection framework to report their findings.

The Chair praised the Inspection report regarding Ysgol y Parc stating he was pleased to read the positive remarks.

**RESOLVED**, that the report be received and the contents noted.

## **9 ESTYN QUESTIONNAIRE TO SACRE**

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) introduced the item informing members that he had been in receipt of a questionnaire from Estyn which had required the attention of SACRE members.

The CA went through the questionnaire with members and noted concern and comments raised.

The following points were raised

- The availability of teachers able to attend SACRE meetings. Members felt that teachers were unable to attend meetings as schools were unable to release teachers from their teaching duties.
- Making schools aware of the resources that were available for them. Members discussed good lines of communication to let schools know about available information and resources to hand to aid in Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The Chair suggested a newsletter be established to send to schools with information that was available to them.
- Members were concerned that some schools may not have specialist teachers educating students. Members felt that GCSE and A-Level curriculum required a teacher that was educated and specialised in Religious Education.
- Concerns that Religious Studies as a subject was not being offered to students as a GCSE choice and the subject was being incorporated in other subject areas

The Chair thanked members for their contribution and discussion around the Estyn questionnaire. The CA and the Chair informed members they would collate the points raised and fully answer the questionnaire.

**RESOLVED**, that the report be received and responses to the Estyn questionnaire noted.

## **10 RESPONSE FROM SACRE'S LETTER TO SCHOOLS**

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) introduced the report (previously circulated) informing members of the response from letters sent to schools on behalf of SACRE, reminding them of the statutory nature of the agreed syllabus.

The CA explained that a good response from primary schools had been received. The CA hoped the letter had provided a reminder to schools that Religious Education formed part of the basic curriculum.

The letter that was sent to Secondary and Special Schools detailed the requirements of key stage 4 Religious Education.

The CA informed the committee that from the responses most of key stage 4 Religious Education was being taught by specialist teaching staff. From the responses the CA disclosed that within a number of Secondary schools Religious Education is being taught through the Welsh Baccalaureate subject.

Members asked for further understanding and explanation as to why Religious Studies is being taught through another subject and requested a further letter be sent to school for explanation.

The Chair thanked the CA for the report and welcomed further response from Denbighshire Schools.

***RESOLVED***, that the report be received and its contents noted. A letter to be sent to Secondary Schools asking for further explanation as to why Religious Studies is being taught through different subjects.

## **11 GOVERNMENT MATTERS**

The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) introduced the report (previously circulated) informing members of letters that had been sent to the Welsh Government and the correspondence received.

The CA explained that two letters had been sent to the Welsh Government regarding SACRE's concerns about Collective Worship in Schools and the new GCSE specification.

The CA explained that a brief correspondence had been received regarding the letter concerning collective worship. Details within the letter were brief and did not expand on the concerns raised by SACRE members. The CA explained that SACRE would be able to feedback and monitor the development of Collective Worship. The CA at present said no response had been received by Welsh Government regarding the new GCSE specification.

***RESOLVED***, that the report be received and its contents noted.

## **12 SACRE AND SCHOOL TO SCHOOL COLLABORATION**

The Challenge advisor for GwE (CA) asked members to agree to defer the item until the next meeting to allow more time for the CA to gather information to present to members.

***RESOLVED***, that the agenda item be deferred until the SACRE committee meeting on 5 February 2018.

## **13 WASACRE**

The minutes of the Wales Association of SACRE's (WASACRE) held at Wrexham on the 7 July 2017 (Previously circulated) were submitted for members information. The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) thanked Councillor Emrys Wynne for his attendance at the last WASACRE meeting.

Information was provided (previously circulated) updating members of the curriculum reform process. The document informed members of the current work and future stages in the curriculum reform. The Challenge Advisor for GwE (CA) stated the importance of SACRE's comments on the work to date.

The CA informed members the next meeting of WASACRE was on the 10 November and was to be held in Bridgend.

**RESOLVED, that**

- I. The minutes of the minutes of the WASACRE meeting held on 7 July 2017 be received and noted*
- II. The update report on the new curriculum from Welsh Government be received and its contents noted*
- III. The Chair and CA would attend the next WASACRE meeting on 10 November and extended the invitation to all members.*

**14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Denbighshire SACRE had been scheduled for Monday 5 February 2018. Councillor Tony Thomas volunteered to contact local schools in the attempt to hold the meeting in a school.

**The meeting concluded at 12:00 p.m.**