

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education meeting held by video conference on Wednesday 26 June 2024 at 10am.

PRESENT

Representing Denbighshire County Council - Councillors Ellie Chard, Ann Davies, and Emrys Wynne.

Representing Religious Denominations - Collette Owen

Representing Teacher Associations – Sarah Griffiths

ALSO PRESENT

RE Advisor (PL), Principal Education Manager (JB), Welsh National Centre for Religious Education Officer (Dr JA) and Committee Administrators (NH and RTJ [Zoom Host])

SILENT REFLECTION

The meeting began with a few minutes' silent reflection.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Jennie Downes, Leah Crimes, Susan Williams, Jennifer Harding-Richards and Councillors Gill German and Delyth Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Ellie Chard declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 7 as she was a governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa.

Councillor Emrys Wynne declared a Personal Interest in agenda item 7 as he was a governor at Ysgol Bryhyffryd and Ysgol Borthyn.

3. URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items of an urgent nature had been raised with the Chair prior to the commencement of the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education meeting held on the 22 February 2024 were submitted. It was:

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 22 February 2024 be received and approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

5. WELSH NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dr Joshua Andrews from Bangor University guided Members through a presentation on the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education.

The Centre was relaunched in 2022 with the mission to offer free academic expertise and pedagogical support for the teaching of religious education. The centre focused on Philosophy, Religion and Ethics with a target audience of Teachers and students from Primary School and PGCE level courses.

The centre offered key activities including –

- Workshops
- Revision sessions
- CPD (continuing Professional Development) events.

Members were given information on the accomplishments of the centre within the last 12 months which included –

- **Artifact Boxes:** 10 religion- specific artifact boxes for teaching major world religions were created and were available for loan to schools.
- **A-Level Revision Sessions:** An in-house A-Level revision session for students in Anglesey and Gwynedd was organised including sessions for students in Carmarthenshire at Sir Gar College.
- **CPD Training:** CPD training was provided for teachers on teaching Buddhism and Hinduism.
- **Online Sessions:** Online sessions were hosted from October 2023 to January 2024 for GCSE and A-Level students and teachers, exploring the relevance of Philosophy, Ethics, and Religion in contemporary society.
- **Summer School:** An online Summer School was conducted in July 2023 with 15 lectures being provided to introduce students to university level topics in Philosophy, Ethics and Religion.
- **Holocaust Pedagogy:** A panel was hosted on the Holocaust pedagogy and an online talk from a Holocaust survivor for secondary schools was held.

Members were informed of ongoing projects including revision sessions, the National Launch of revision guides, Peace Lessons and CPD events.

Information was given on the New Projects the centre had begun which included –

- GCSE Revision Videos: A series of short GCSE revision videos titled `A Topic in Ten` would cover different aspects of the WJEC GCSE syllabus.
- Philosophy Podcast: A podcast on A-Level Philosophy of Religious and Ethics was being developed, focusing on the WJEC A-Level syllabus and featured discussions with academics.
- Subject Knowledge Enhancement Courses: Online Courses aimed at PGCE students were being developed. These were also available to all teachers to enhance subject knowledge.

The Chair thanked Dr Andrews for his presentation and questions were welcomed from members.

Members sought clarity on children from different backgrounds being integrated with different religions when they first started High School. Dr Andrews explained that each school had a syllabus that was devised locally which would incorporate the religious beliefs within the community. Many schools had requested sessions from the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education on specific topics.

Members discussed the Summer School that was held and questioned whether different sessions could be held over numerous weeks in the Summer Holidays. Dr Andrews explained that the Summer School was completely free to attend, sessions were held online to enable a greater attendance. Additional sessions could be a possibility, and this would be taken to the Board for further discussion and consideration.

Members expressed their appreciation to Dr Andrews for the valuable resources the centre offered, particularly the artifact boxes and questioned if there was a website in which schools could request to loan them from. Dr Andrews stated that there was a website and that the artifact boxes were loaned to schools using rota system.

Members questioned if the use of the resources offered from the centre could also be offered to colleagues in Primary Schools. Dr Andrews welcomed the idea and would take the idea to the next Board meeting for consideration.

Dr Andrews thanked members for their comments and feedback.

The Chair thanked Dr Andrews for his presentation and for attending the meeting and welcomed working in partnership in the future.

RESOLVED: *that the presentation on the Welsh National Centre For Religious Education be received and noted.*

6. RE HUBS

Unfortunately, Jennifer Harding gave her apologies for the meeting. An agenda item on RE Hubs would be brought to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education in Autumn 2024.

RESOLVED: *that the agenda, item RE Hubs be deferred to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education meeting in Autumn 2024.*

7. ANALYSIS OF INSPECTION REPORTS

The RE Advisor gave a brief overview of the Analysis of Inspection Reports for Denbighshire SACRE.

The analysis was for inspection reports published between 7 June 2023 and 1 May 2024.

With Members reading the reports prior to the meeting the RE Advisor asked for any questions or comments relating to them.

Members commented that the inspection reports were very positive, and it was pleasing to read encouraging comments on Well-Being and Attitudes to Learning and Care, Support and Guidance.

RESOLVED: *that the Analysis of Inspection Reports be received and noted.*

8. WASACRE

The representative for Religious Denominations was unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Ellie Chard gave a brief update on their behalf.

The Conference Day held at Wrexham University on June 13 2024 provided a great networking opportunity for all those involved in RVE. An inspirational address was given by Professor Graham Donaldson, who spoke about the scale of educational reform, this was necessary in response to new and growing expectations around the purpose of education. The discussion centred on the needs of a rapidly changing society and new conceptions of knowledge. Looking to a world where artificial intelligence dominates and a more fluid and global job market. Digital skills continue to progress rapidly and there was a real need for learners to be equipped with the integral skills of creativity and critical thinking needed to adapt and evolve new lifelong learning.

There was an address by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Lynne Neagle and also from the Bishop of Llandaff, who held the CinW portfolio for Education both gave strong support to WASACRE.

The workshops and seminars were available before the conference day, on the day and would continue online into September, exploring planning of critical, objective pluralistic RVE from Early Years to primary & into secondary settings.

On Conference Day teachers from across Wales gave insight into the journey they had been making in RVE and there were many examples of creative pedagogy shared.

The WASACRE AGM was held at the end of the Conference Day. Thanks were given to the hard work of all involved in organising the conference, and the host LA Wrexham. The next WASACRE Executive meeting was scheduled for the 2 October 2024 with the new Chair Revd Edward J Evans.

RESOLVED: *that the WASACRE update be noted.*

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Denbighshire SACRE would be held on 15 October 2024.

Meeting concluded at 11.10am