

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at Committee Room 1, Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford HR1 2HX on Friday 18 November 2016 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Carolyn Ault, Linda Barker, MT McEvilly, Anna Nugent, Sr. Denise O'Donnell and Miss A Taylor

Officers: John Coleman, Alison Naylor and Stephen Pett

The meeting started 14:12.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang, Cllr EPJ Harvey, Lisa Fraser and Hannah Tong.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

None.

3. MINUTES

It was noted that Stephen Petts and Lisa Fraser's names were missing from the attendees list, they were in fact present. Reference to Vice Chair should be removed and replaced with Cllr Harvey and Cllr McEvilly. Michelle Williams should be corrected to Melissa Williams.

Resolved: That, subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

None.

Chairman update

The Chair noted that due to lower than expected attendance, SACRE would not be quorate for this meeting. Some decisions may need to be deferred until the March meeting.

SACRE members noted information on appointing future Chairs. Existing procedures of agreeing new Chairs will remain in place whereby SACRE members nominate a Chair. Once agreed, the decision will be put forward for Council ratification.

5. PLANS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2017

SACRE noted a verbal report from the Chairman highlighting the primary school RE conference at Whitecross School did not go ahead due to disappointing levels of interest. The Worcestershire conference did go ahead and was a great success.

The 2017 conferences will be in Worcestershire and Herefordshire. During the discussions the following points were made.

- It was positive to see the feedback from delegates – 85% of attendees stated that the conference in Worcester was excellent, with 15% saying it was good. Other observations highlighted the value of networking and mentoring opportunities.
- To ensure healthy attendance at future conferences, promotional fliers should make clear that the agenda builds on past conference themes and is relevant to current Religious Education (RE) teaching in schools. Sending dates out early, alongside a targeted communications campaign, particularly toward schools not contacted before, will help ensure good attendance.
- Future conferences will be themed around 'Preparing Pupils for Life' in a multi-faith modern Britain – at primary school level. This content is driven by previous year's feedback; preventing violent extremism, tolerance and respect. At secondary school level, the theme will focus on challenge, rigour and engagement in RE teaching. It will bring together faith experts to network and discuss new resources to support RE, Religious Scripture and second religions at GCSE level.
- A third SACRE primary survey is planned to assess the impact of the new syllabus. By using the same questions from previous surveys year on year comparisons can be assessed.

Resolved:

- a) **That the report be noted; and**
- b) **SACRE members undertake targeted communications activity to generate healthy interest and attendance at future conferences. A list of schools not previously contacted will be circulated to SACRE members.**
- c) **Contact information on speakers from a range of faiths should be added to the SACRE web-page**
- d) **A the third survey will be undertaken and include one additional question exploring the quality of teaching and learning around religious studies**

6. DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR SEPTEMBER 2015 TO JULY 2016

SACRE noted the draft annual report for the academic year, September 2015 to July 2016.

Resolved: That

- a) **The report be noted; and**

- b) **SACRE members formally agree the report at the next meeting when the membership will be quorate.**

7. RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR 2016

SACRE received a report on the religious studies results for 2016 from the lead officer. During the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- A positive approach, by letter, should be made to local schools, acknowledging and celebrating the improvement in examination results. It should encourage those not teaching or entering students in to RE exams to do more to meet the requirements of the syllabus.

Resolved: That

- a) **The report be noted; and**
- b) **SACRE write to schools to remind them of their statutory duties in regard to RE.**

8. UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 2016

SACRE received a verbal report on the United Nations International Day of Peace, 2016 at Hereford Cathedral. It was noted that it was a very moving service, with very good attendance. It is likely that the next meeting will be in Worcester, 2017. SACRE members are encouraged to suggest individuals to be invited to the event.

Resolved:

- a) **That the report be noted.**

9. UPDATE ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN RE

SACRE received a report updating members on national RE initiatives and updates.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- A major new project with project materials has been launched. It is a substantial pack of teaching approaches, helping to respond to the view that RE is quite poorly taught. About 2000 schools are using this training nationally. It is based on eight mainstream Christian contexts. It has units for early years all the way through to Key Stage 3 (KS3). It is described as a 'game changer' and SACRE members should be promoting it as much as possible.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

10. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Friday 17 March 2017

