

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 5 July 2010 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor WU Attfield, Revd. P. Barlow, Mr. P. Bowen, Mrs S Bryant, Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins, Ani-La Choesang, Councillor Brig P Jones CBE, Mrs G Jutle, Ms. K. Mayglothling, Mrs S McCamley, Sr. D. O'Donnell and Ms C Wolfe

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Mrs M Ault; Mrs L Barker; and Mrs A Daniel.

38. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

39. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 15 March 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman reported that a two day multi-faith event had been held at the Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School and he congratulated Peter Bowen and all concerned on organising such a successful event which had been well attended.

40. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions were received.

41. SACRE MEMBERSHIP

SACRE considered its membership.

Church of England Member

The Chairman reported that Mr Tony Leach, Director of Education for the Church of England Diocesan Board of Education, had resigned on health grounds. The Clerk's representative reported that SACRE's best wishes had already been forwarded to Mr Leach.

SACRE noted that Ms T Gregory, nominated substitute for Mr T Leach, had left the Diocesan Board of Education.

SACRE noted that Mrs Sheila Bryant had been nominated by the Diocese to replace Mr Leach on Committee B and that the local authority had approved the nomination. SACRE welcomed Mrs Bryant to the meeting.

Buddhist Member

On considering nominations for new membership the Chairman reported that the Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang, who was a senior nun within the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism, had been nominated as the member for the Buddhist faith on Committee A. SACRE agreed the nomination and noted that the local authority had approved the nomination. SACRE welcomed Ani-La Choesang to the meeting.

Special Education Teaching Member

The Chairman further reported that following the resignation of Mrs J Brown the local authority proposed that Ms D Vickress (Barrs Court Special School) become the member for special education teaching on Committee C. SACRE agreed the appointment of Ms D Vickress to Committee C.

42. SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2010 - UPDATE

SACRE received an update on the organisation of the SACRE Annual Conference.

The Interim Lead Officer reported that to date only 13 places had been confirmed and that only half were fee paying delegates. Due to the financial position the annual conference had to break even, which currently it was far from doing, and she sought the views of SACRE.

SACRE debated: whether to postpone the conference or amalgamate it into the new Agreed Syllabus launch; the optimum time period in the school year for teachers to attend; the inspiration the conference had on teachers at the beginning of the school year and the possibility of using a different venue.

Head Teacher members commented that they would remind their colleagues about the importance of the conference either in writing or at the next HASH meeting.

RESOLVED: That following consultation with the Chairman the decision whether to proceed with the Annual Conference, and if so at what venue, be left with Interim Lead Officer.

43. OFSTED PUBLICATION 'TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION'

The publication by Ofsted 'Transforming Religious Education' was brought to SACRE's attention.

The Consultant for RE reported that on 6 June 2010 Ofsted had published their report, the full version of which was available from the Ofsted web site.

The report evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of religious education provision in primary and secondary schools and discussed the key issues at the heart of RE teaching today. The report was principally based on evidence from visits to 94 primary and 89 secondary schools in England between 2006–2009. None of which had been in Herefordshire. The report also contained a number of recommendations for the Department for Education; the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (OfQual); local authorities, SACRES and schools.

The Consultant for RE highlighted that the report had positive elements concerning examination rates; cohesion and personal development and RE lessons. However, it also highlighted a lack of clarity in both teacher training and syllabuses and teacher competences to plan RE lessons.

Of particular relevance to SACRE was the recommendation:

Local authorities, in partnership with their SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference should:

- Ensure that the work of SACRE and ASC has good access to subject expertise to enable them to support schools effectively in promoting high quality RE;
- Ensure that high quality professional development in RE is available to their schools and encourage them to make the most of these opportunities to improve the quality of RE teaching;
- Ensure that agreed syllabuses and related advice:
 - Offer guidance about the systematic use of enquiry skills in RE to enable schools to plan the subject in a more coherent and rigorous way
 - Provide greater clarity about the use of concepts and the definition of progress in RE;
 - Include guidance to schools about ways of incorporating RE within more innovative and creative approaches to curriculum planning.

In noting the report SACRE questioned whether any of the concerns could be addressed by the SACRE Annual Conference.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and, if thought appropriate, issues of concern be incorporated into the SACRE Annual Conference 2010.

The meeting ended at 2.46 pm

CHAIRMAN