

MINUTES of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday 13 July 2012 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

Councillor CNH Attwood, Mrs L Barker, Councillor EMK Chave, Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang, Mrs G Jutle, Rev DT Meachem and Sr. D. O'Donnell

Officers: Ms J Tinsley, Lead Officer to SACRE; Mr S Pett, RE Consultant; Mr P James, Democratic Services Officer.

106. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs C Ault; Reverend P Barlow; Mrs S Catlow-Hawkins; Ms K Mayglothing; Miss A Taylor, and Mrs C Wolfe.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Committee B (Church of England) was unrepresented and therefore the meeting would proceed on an advisory basis.

107. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Mr GW Ault substituted for Mrs C Ault and Mr J Brown substituted for Ms C Wolfe.

108. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held 19 March 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

109. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

110. CHANGE OF LEAD OFFICER TO SACRE

SACRE noted that following changes to work allocation Mrs Wendy Boulter, Senior Secondary School Improvement Advisor had now handed over the role of Lead Officer to SACRE to Ms Judith Tinsley, School Improvement Advisor.

While Mrs Boulter hadn't been Lead Officer to SACRE for very long SACRE thanked Mrs Boulter for her valuable contribution to the work of SACRE and to Religious Education in the County schools.

SACRE welcomed Ms Tinsley to the role of Lead Officer to SACRE.

111. REPORT ON THE SACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012

SACRE were informed of the outcomes from the SACRE Annual Conference 2012 held at Hereford Academy on 26 June.

The Chairman reported there had been a positive response to the Annual Conference with the meditation session adding an important time of reflection. The Key Note speaker Alan Brine, MHI, on the theme of 'What takes RE from Good To Outstanding' had been excellent and it had been good to have delegates from Shropshire in attendance. He also thanked Lat Blaylock, Fiona Moss and Stephen Pett for their workshop sessions and Stephen for his work in organising the conference.

The Consultant for RE reported that income from attendance had only just made the event viable. He thanked the Hereford Academy for accommodating the event and for supplying lunch. He also thanked the SACRE members who attended for their assistance. He circulated a breakdown of the event evaluation forms and SACRE were delighted to note that delegates had scored the overall value of the conference as 68% excellent, 32% good.

The evaluation also included comments on the conference which included a number of suggestions or requests for future support which would be fed into the future work of SACRE or taken up with schools.

RESOLVED: That the report on the SACRE 2012 Conference be noted.

112. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN RE

SACRE received an update on national initiatives in Religious Education.

The Consultant for RE presented an overview of the following national initiatives:

- In the wake of the 2011 campaign to include RE in the E-Baccalaureate (E-Bac) the inaugural meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group had been held on 11 June. The Group, Chaired by Stephen Lloyd MP, comprised of 25 Members of Parliament and 5 members of the Lords with a view to support the provision of RE in education. The work of the Group would be supported by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.
- A second survey on the impact of the E-Bac had been commissioned by NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) and was available via their website. The Consultant for RE requested that secondary schools members bring the survey to the attention of their members.
- Information had been released in June on the National Curriculum Review. The focus would be on knowledge and this had similarities with the current National Curriculum. Effectively exams would be the driver for the curriculum lower down the school. In a way this reflected the 'Back to basics' 1950s-style of schooling. This could mean that 'levels' will be replaced by end of year statements.
- National Review of RE – following the omission from the National Curriculum Review, the REC had set up a parallel review of the subject. It was noted that the DfE had not opposed this parallel review. The Review is being led by Dr Janet Orchard, University of Bristol, with the expert panel (chaired by Dr Bill Gent, University of Warwick) interviewing witnesses and compiling a report with recommendations in October/November covering: the aims of RE; RE curriculum; good practice in RE, and qualifications and achievement in RE. The review holds no statutory force but it may lead to something akin to the Non-statutory National Framework.

SACRE noted that due to government procedural reasons neither of the local MPs were part of the All Party Parliamentary Group. The Chairman offered to write to both MPs to make them aware of SACRE and seek their views on RE in education.

SACRE was made aware of a publication 'The Church School of the Future Review' which may impact on RE teaching and Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development in schools.

SACRE also received a brief report on the RE Quality Mark pilot scheme set up to establish a national quality mark for RE which was aimed at raising the profile of RE in schools and would also serve to help celebrate a commitment to excellence in Religious Education. A number of local authorities had been involved in the pilot which was now being evaluated.

RESOLVED: That

- a) **The national initiatives in RE be noted;**
- b) **The Chairman write to both the local MPs to make them aware of SACRE and seek their views on RE in education;**
- c) **The Clerk circulate copies of the publication 'The Church School of the Future Review' for members information.**

113. NASACRE - REGIONAL & NATIONAL ISSUES

SACRE received an update on regional and national issues from the NASACRE representative.

The Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang reported:

- That the Minister for Education had requested examples of excellent RE in schools. Information should be submitted in the form of a short report and sent to REC before October. She confirmed that this was not part of the National Review of RE.
- The NASACRE website would be updated to make it easier to use.
- Information could be submitted to NASACRE for inclusion in the quarterly e-publication 'SACRE News'.
- She had compiled a list of commonly used acronyms used in Education/RE which she was happy to share.
- She referred to a recent report on the web concerning a review of collective worship in schools which made an interesting read. SACRE noted that it was still a requirement that all registered pupils attending maintained schools should take part in daily collective worship unless the parent had exercised the right of withdrawal. How this was monitored was the question. The Lead Officer reported that observing collective worship was a part of the Ofsted inspection, however, the resultant Ofsted report didn't usually mention anything unless there was a major problem. The new Ofsted inspection report style may make monitoring easier.
- NASACRE were proposing to organise a regional conference in Birmingham, possibly in Spring 2013, and were interested to hear about best practice in RE. Depending on the cost per delegate she suggested it may be possible to collaborate with Worcestershire SACRE to send a number of delegates by coach.
- She was happy to receive any questions for referral to NASACRE.

RESOLVED : That the report be noted

114. SYLLABUS TRAINING FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS

The Consultant for RE reported that unfortunately the joint training event with Gloucestershire SACRE at Tewksbury for special schools had had to be postponed. He reported that the event would now be held on 16 October and that almost all special schools had indicated that they could send a delegate.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

115. FUTURE SUPPORT TO RE TEACHERS

SACRE were invited to consider ideas for supporting RE teachers in 2012/13, including the 2013 SACRE Conference, themes for network group and developing resources.

As reported in an earlier agenda item the 2012 Annual Conference had been a success and the meeting considered a number of possible venues for the 2013 conference e.g. Whitecross High School; 6th Form College; Royal National College for the Blind, or in Malvern, however, the availability of conference space, break out rooms and car parking would need to be taken into consideration.

The Consultant for RE suggested holding the conference during the week 17 June which, while a week earlier than this years, he suggested teachers should be available as exams should have been completed. The date was obviously subject to venue and key speaker availability. The theme for the conference should: engage teachers; encourage teachers to make connections; provide practical support and help; direct to resources; and instil enthusiasm.

SACRE were informed about how Gloucestershire SACRE had run a 'Grill a SACRE Rep' event for secondary schools which had involved a range of faith representatives answering a number of important ethical questions from their faiths point of view. The Consultant for RE highlighted that a number of practical issues would need to be considered before such an event could be held. A number of members expressed an interest in being involved.

The Lead Officer commented that ideas for the 2013 Conference would be discussed with teachers.

In relation to developing resources SACRE noted the limited resources to undertake development work.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and officers be requested to progress arrangements for a 2013 SACRE Conference.

116. ONLINE RESOURCES FOR RE

SACRE considered ways of making resources available to Herefordshire schools.

The Lead Officer reported that she would be meeting with the Council's Website Manager concerning the moving of web content from the Children's & Young Peoples web site to the main Herefordshire Council website.

Questions were asked concerning possible use of Wikis and virtual learning platforms and whether links could be included to various faith web sites.

The Lead Officer reported that once up and running information about the website would be circulated to all schools.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

117. SACRE 2012/13 BUDGET

SACRE received information on the 2012/13 budget for SACRE.

The Lead Officer reported that in common with many council budgets this year's SACRE budget had been reduced. It would be used to support the work of SACRE and RE in schools. In accordance with the Council's budget process she would need to submit a business case in the autumn in support of retaining the current level of budget for 2013/14.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

118. SACRE MEMBERSHIP

SACRE considered its membership.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that initial discussions had been held with a representative from the local Muslim community. The Muslim community were now considering whether to put forward a nomination to serve on SACRE.

The Chairman reported that since the last meeting of SACRE correspondence had been entered into with a representative of the Welsh Marches Humanists concerning the invitation to address SACRE and the possibility of SACRE considering co-opting a Humanist representative.

The representative had expressed reservations about the need to 'explain their point of view to a panel' and being 'disenfranchised when it comes to subsequent policy decisions' as a co-opted member would be a non-voting position.

The Consultant for RE commented that there seemed to be a difference of views within the British Humanist Association concerning their representation at SACREs and whether Humanists represented people who no longer had a religious affiliation.

RESOLVED: that without prejudicing any future decision of SACRE, the Chairman invite the representative of the Welsh Marches Humanists to attend a future meeting.

119. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

SACRE noted the next meeting would be held at 2.00pm on Tuesday 27 November 2012 at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.

The meeting ended at 3.42 pm

CHAIRMAN