

**MINUTES of the meeting of Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) held at The Council Chamber - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 17 November 2017 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor J Stone (Chairman)

**Councillors:** Mr Ault, Linda Barker, Venerable Tsuiltrim Tenzin Choesang, Councillor Harvey Jonathan Nicholas, Anna Nugent and Alison Taylor

**In attendance:** Lisa Fraser (Lead Officer), Stephen Pett (RE Today) and Matthew Evans (Democratic Services)

**1. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Ault, Councillor McEvelly and Ms Tong.

**2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)**

Mr Ault attended the meeting as a substitute for Mrs Ault.

**3. MINUTES**

SACRE noted two minor amendments to wording in the minutes and a correction to the year provided for the dates of the peace service. The service would take place in Hereford in 2018 and in Worcester in 2019. The signed version of the minutes contained the changes above.

**Resolved: That, subject to the changes outlined above, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2008, be approved and signed as a correct record.**

**4. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

None

**5. UPDATES TO THE HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONSTITUTION**

The Chairman introduced the changes to SACRE's constitution and explained that the changes had been prompted by the revision to Herefordshire Council's constitution in May 2017. The changes included a provision for members of SACRE to elect a chairman, a procedure which was likely to first occur after the local elections in 2019, and an update to the title of the Clerk of SACRE.

SACRE agreed the changes to the constitution as set out in appendix 1 to the

report.

**Resolved: that SCARE approves the suggested changes to its constitution.**

6. **PLANS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2018**

SACRE considered a report concerning feedback from the primary and secondary conferences in 2017 and preparation for the conferences in 2018. The Chairman introduced the item and thanked Whitecross School for hosting the event. The conferences were commended for their content but it was acknowledged that attendance would need to improve for the conferences in 2018.

SACRE considered how attendance could be improved and the following suggestions were proposed:

- Holding the conferences in after school hours, after 3.00 p.m. was suggested to avoid the need for cover for teachers in attendance;
- It was debated whether the Summer term was the best term in which to hold the conferences. After due consideration it was felt that the Summer term was the appropriate term as it was timed to take place ahead of the new school year; the conferences in 2018 were scheduled for 19 June.
- A further suggestion concerning the timings of the conferences involved the events taking place during twilight hours.
- It was agreed that the primary conference would take place during the afternoon at a session to begin at 1.00 p.m. and end at 5.00 p.m.
- A question regarding the new timings of the session would be included as part of the assessment at the conferences.
- As part of the conference it was suggested that a 'state of the nation' address was included in the programme to allow for national updates to be provided to attendees.

It was confirmed that the proposed programme for the secondary conferences in 2018 would be finalised in December 2017 when it would be circulated to SACRE.

SACRE agreed that, to attempt to resolve the issue of low attendance at the conferences, the primary conference in 2018 should take place in the afternoon.

**Resolved: It was agreed that the primary conference in 2018 should be timed to take place in the afternoon.**

7. **DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR SEPTEMBER 2016 TO JULY 2017**

SACRE considered its annual report for 2016/17. Stephen Pett, religious education consultant, introduced the report and explained that the format had been customised for Herefordshire SACRE and once finalised the report would be sent to the national association of SACREs.

SACRE made the points below in the debate that followed:

- The report should be circulated more widely to schools and councillors.
- It was requested that the report was featured in Spotlight, circulated to teachers; and
- The report should be included in the ward member update.

**Resolved: that SACRE approves the annual report and agrees it is circulated to teachers through Spotlight and circulated to elected members of Herefordshire Council through the ward member update.**

8. **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXAMINATION RESULTS 2017**

SACRE received a presentation regarding the RE examination results 2017, copy of presentation attached to the signed minutes. Lisa Fraser, Head of Learning and Achievement, introduced the report and explained that the number of entrants for GCSE RE had decreased in 2017 with fewer schools offering the subject.

SACRE considered the following points in the debate that followed:

- Some schools offered humanities which included elements of RE, it was confirmed that Fairfield would run an RE GCSE course in 2018;
- Attainment in the exams was broadly the same as the previous year;
- The decrease in the number of students undertaking GCSE RE in Herefordshire was consistent with national trends; and
- Of the 16 secondary schools in Herefordshire six were not offering the GCSE course. It was suggested that SACRE should consider the reasons why schools were not offering the course at a future meeting.

**Resolved – that SACRE notes the RE examination result for 2017.**

9. **GUIDE - VISITS AND VISITORS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - UPDATE**

SACRE noted that work had not been completed on the guide for visits and visitors and the update guidance would be presented to the next meeting.

10. **PREVENTING TERRORISM AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM - THE LOCAL PICTURE**

SACRE received a presentation regarding the prevent strategy in Herefordshire which was a national initiative to address and counter extremist ideology. Neville Meredith, Community Cohesion Officer spoke to SACRE on work undertaken locally.

SACRE raised the points below in the debate that followed:

- Antipathy towards migrant workers and the travelling community was felt to exist in Herefordshire and the influence of the far right locally was raised;
- It was agreed that the provision of RE helped to increase tolerance and understanding in local communities. It was important that RE continued

- in schools to contribute towards community cohesion; and
- New guidance from the Church of England entitled, 'Valuing all God's children' sought to challenge homophobic abuse.

**Resolved – that SACRE notes the presentation regarding the prevent strategy in Herefordshire.**

**11. UPDATE ON ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN RE**

SACRE received an update from Mr Pett on recent developments in RE. Mr Pett informed SACRE that the interim report of the Commission on RE had been published. Mr Pett urged SACRE to contribute representations to the consultation which closed on 8 December. An element of the report of the Commission concerned a suggestion for a national syllabus for RE. SACRE commented that this would punish those areas which had established good syllabuses and there was a preference for a localised approach. A link to the online feedback page would be circulated to members of SACRE following the meeting.

**12. CATHEDRAL PEACE SERVICE 2018**

SACRE was updated on arrangements for the Peace Service 2018 by Ani-la Choesang. Volunteers were sought to go into local schools and talk about 'What peace means to you?' There was an intention to involve children in the arrangements for the service next year.

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

SACRE was informed that the date of the next meeting was 16 March 2018. An item concerning the membership of SACRE was requested for the agenda.

The meeting ended at 16:24

**Chairman**