

MINUTES

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 9 November 2016

Present: **Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf**

Linda Goodwin, Andrea Hopkins, Mrs J Grundy, Margaret Crossland, Sam Kirwan, Diana Cutler, Mohamed Parekh, Sam Phillips, Sue Blackmore, Caroline Wood, Ian Lawson and Lauren Nicholson Ward

Apologies for absence: Julie Thompson, Sonia Andjelkovic, Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal, Dr Laow Panyasiri, Rosemary Woodward, Peter Davies, Terry Finn and David Williams

Also in attendance - Emma Jardine-Phillips and Julie Roberts

PART ONE

11. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Nominations had been received for Rev Preb Michael Metcalf and Hifsa Haroon Iqbal to be elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. No further nominations were received and it was:

RESOLVED – That Rev Preb Michael Metcalf and Hifsa Haroon Iqbal be elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively for the ensuing year.

12. Welcome to New Members

The Chairman welcomed Andrea Hopkins, Salvation Army representative, Linda Goodwin, NUT representative and Lauren Nicholson-Ward, Church of England representative, to the SACRE.

13. Minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 6 July 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 6 July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

14. Minutes of the Agreed Syllabus Conference held on 6 July 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Agreed Syllabus Conference held on 6 July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

15. Update on Key Issues

The SACRE received an update on key issues that had occurred since their last meeting, including:

- a) A report had been produced by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on RE as a result of enquiring into Religious Literacy. Many of the notable points within “Improving Religious Literacy” were reflected well within the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE. Ten of the report’s recommendations related to RE and many of these were concerned with ensuring that RE was taught to a consistent standard of excellence by specialist or properly prepared teachers who had good access to continuing professional development.
- b) In a bid to halt any confusion surrounding the need to include both religious and non-religious views in religious studies, the DFE had issued some clear advice. Members considered the guidance note in full.
- c) An Independent Commission had been established by the Religious Education Council (REC) to make wide-ranging recommendations in relation to RE in schools. NASACRE is an important member of the REC and was encouraging member SACREs to include a discussion about the Commission on future agendas.
- d) Members were encouraged to follow both NASACRE and Entrust on Twitter for news, ideas and updates.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the update on key issues be noted; and
- b) That, in the light of the APPG report, and the results of the annual survey on RE provision in Staffordshire considered at the meeting in July, an item on the training of staff delivering RE in schools be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

16. NASACRE Update

The Chairman gave an update on recent NASACRE events, including:

- a) The NASACRE Annual Meeting was to take place on 16 May 2017 at the Hilton Hotel in York and the speaker was Joyce Miller;
- b) A joint conference was to be held with AREIAC in Birmingham on 6 March 2017;
- c) The next round of awards were being announced by the Westhill Foundation, the deadline for submission of applications was the end of March 2017;
- d) A colloquium on Citizenship, Religion, Philosophy and Values in Education had sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Education to urge the Government to promote Citizenship, RE and PSHE in order to build respectful schools and Societies in post-Brexit Britain; and
- e) The Chairman tabled copies of the proposed revised NASACRE Constitution for members’ consideration and views. It was agreed that the response to NASACRE should be that the Staffordshire SACRE was broadly in support of the changes.

RESOLVED – That the oral update by the Chairman be noted.

17. Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015

The Tell MAMA Annual Report was launched in Parliament on 29 June and highlights hate crime against Muslims in the UK. "The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred" looked at where Muslims reported hate crime against them. Some key points emerged:

- The majority of hate crimes were directed at women who were visibly Muslim;
- The majority were perpetrated by white males; and
- The majority occurred on or near an A Road or transport hub.

Of particular concern to SACRE was that 11% of attacks were in places of education. The report commented that it was important that headteachers, teachers, and safeguarding leads in schools were trained to deal with Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate.

Members were informed that many of the notable points relating to education were reflected well within the aims of the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus, through which schools are given a steer to include Islam within their programme of study.

Members agreed that they would like clarification on any issues which were being experienced in Staffordshire and what actions were being taken to ensure that Muslim pupils are kept safe. To this end, they agreed that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Ellis, should be invited to a future meeting to speak to SACRE about this issue in schools. SACRE also requested that a letter be sent to the LA for information on any initiatives that were taking place to help tackle the issues raised in the report.

RESOLVED – That the Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to a future meeting, to inform SACRE of Staffordshire's position on hate crime in schools and how it is addressed.

18. The Revised Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2016

The revised Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus was freely available to all schools on the Entrust RE website. Feedback had been positive and the uptake of a series of introductory training sessions for schools had been high. It was possible that the Syllabus would be adopted by other SACREs. Members agreed that it was important that the Syllabus be given an official launch, although there were concerns around funding owing to the current spending controls. It was agreed that the possibility of a launch in the New Year be investigated by the Chairman, Emma Jardine-Phillips and the Finance Team at the County Council. A costing would be put together for a drop-in session between 2 – 5 pm, with a speaker and a list of signposting details to resources to take away.

RESOLVED – That funding for an official launch of the revised Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus be investigated.

19. SACRE Annual Report

SACREs are required to produce an annual report of their work. This report would be distributed electronically to NASACRE and headteachers of all schools in the County, and would be available to teacher associations and local faith communities via the

Entrust website. SACRE were requested to read and approve the report prior to general distribution.

RESOLVED – That the report be emailed to members and any comments and/or amendments be submitted to Emma Jardine-Phillips by the end of November.

20. Accord Award

The 2017 Accord Inclusivity Award was seeking to reward those SACREs who work hardest in their area towards boosting the growth of inclusion, cohesion and mutual understanding between those of different religions and beliefs.

Members had group discussions on their work and achievements in this area to decide whether Staffordshire SACRE should complete an application form, paying particular attention to the guidance set out in the application form. In considering the guidance members expressed disappointment about the number of activities listed which SACRE was no longer involved with owing to budgetary constraints.

RESOLVED – That an application be made for an Accord Award.

21. Applications for Variation of Practice

There were none on this occasion.

22. SACRE Budget

SACRE received a breakdown of the current SACRE budget for the financial year 2016 – 2017. The balance remaining was £5,705.00.

RESOLVED – That the budget details be noted.

23. Date of next meeting

RESOLVED – That the next SACRE meeting be held on 8 February 2017, 2.00 pm, at The Kingston Centre, Stafford.

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Chairman**

Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.