

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in the Salvation Army Corps and Community Centre 74-80 Union Street Maidstone ME14 1ED on Wednesday, 27 June 2012.

PRESENT: Mr S C Manion (Chairman), Ms K Burke, Mrs S Clark, Rabbi C Cohen, Mrs V Corbyn, Mrs P Fairchild, Mrs J Grant, Miss T Kelvie, Miss S Malone, Mrs T Martin, Mr M J Northey, Mr M Papadopoulos, Mr S Platnauer, Mrs V Thornewell, Mrs J Wigg, Miss J Webb and Mrs N Younosi

ALSO PRESENT: , Mr T Clarke, Mr P Henderson & Prof R Norman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Foster (Consultant), Mrs S Rogers (Director of Communication) and Mrs C Wade (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

8. Membership

(Item 1)

(1) To note the appointment of Mr S Manion as SACRE Chairman following ratification from Mr M Whiting. Mr Manion thanked Mrs Younosi (Vice-Chairman) for taking the Chair prior to his appointment.

(2) To note the renewed appointments of Miss T Kelvie and Miss E Pope, co-opted members to Group 3 (Teacher Associations) Members unanimously agreed their expertise as ATS's and representatives of the secondary Academy sector was invaluable.

9. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed Mr T Clarke, Chairman of Medway SACRE, and Mr P Henderson, Lay Minister as observers to the meeting.

10. Minutes

(Item 4)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2012 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

11. Matters Arising

Minute 3(5) Development Plan

(1) It was Agreed paragraph (2) should start at the beginning of the second sentence and paragraph (2) would become paragraph (3) (Minutes 13.3.12 need changing)

Minute 4 (6) Budget issues including payments to Academies

(2) Mr Foster reported that no members working in Academies had notified him of any specific difficulties and confirmed he understood that Mrs Rogers had written to all Academies to request teachers continue to be released to attend.

(3) Mr Foster agreed to follow up with Mrs Rogers.

Minute 5 Update (4) NASACRE AGM

(4) Mrs Martin advised she had been unable to attend the AGM and Mrs Younosi had attended in her place. A summary of the Keynote speakers address had been circulated with the papers.

12. Budget Issues

(Item 5)

(1) Mr Foster reported that the budget had been reduced for 2012/13 from £7k to £5k. The previous year's spend was £3,500, an underspend of 50%. He agreed to investigate the possibility of clawing back the lost funds. Emma Stone, ELS was now looking after the budget, it was noted that there would no longer be an Officer from ELS in attendance at meetings.

(2) SACRE members expressed grave concern at the recent lack of a written Budget report in the papers and were appalled at the lack of communication which had resulted in the underspend, when there were ongoing projects which could have been funded within the budget if the financial position had been known.

(3) Mr Foster reminded members that the revised Syllabus had been created and published at no cost to the budget, since it was policy to use electronic distribution.

(4) Teacher members were very dissatisfied with the general circulation to Headteachers via the e-bulletin, as they did not personally receive the information they needed and had difficulty accessing it. Ms Burke stated the preferred method would be direct to RE teachers.

(5) Following further debate and in order to ensure that there would never be a repeat of such an unsatisfactory situation, Mr Manion and Mr Foster agreed that accurate budget figures would be produced and available at all future meetings.

13. Youth SACRE

(Item 6)

Westhill Awards-Youth SACRE bids

(1) Mr Foster had submitted a letter of intent to NASACRE. The theme of the bid was Harmony, the aim being to convene a Conference for young people via schools in the autumn and link it in with National Interfaith week in Mid November 2012. The bid had been unsuccessful.

(2) Mrs Martin advised that Mr Tyson had agreed to replace her as Convenor for the Kent SACRE working group and outline plans had been considered via email, dependent on funds becoming available from Westhill. It was noted members had wrongly believed that there were no other funds available.

(3) Mr Platnauer directed members to the Lancashire SACRE website and the resume of their Youth SACRE.

(4) Mrs Corbyn suggested savings could be made by using school venues etc and if members deemed the Youth SACRE a worthy project SACRE should use its own budget.

14. Draft Constitution

(Item 7)

(1) Mr Foster explained that the Steering Group had considered the difficulties of the recent election of Chairmen and concluded it was time for the 2009 Constitution to be reviewed.

(2) He suggested that for Chairman's election only the Council could adopt the system used by many SACRE's across the Country, allowing a free, one member/one vote, thus alleviating the split vote outcome, with no provision for a casting vote.

(3) However, after debate members could not reach a consensus, taking into account the inequality of numbers in the four groups and what method would be used if there were multiple candidates.

(4) The method of election for Vice-Chairman also needed to be considered and written in. Mrs Martin felt there were issues of succession planning which needed to be addressed and it should be noted Circular 1/94 was guidance-not statute.

(5) Mr Foster underlined a number of sections which appeared to need clarification and he agreed to remove the word "preamble", look at the Vision Statement, and possibly the use of more inclusive language.

(6) (A) Membership. Mr Foster agreed to remove reference to the County Council four year cycle and under failure to attend two consecutive meetings, replace the word "will" with "may" be deemed as ceasing to represent the appointing body.

(7) Members debated the requirement to notify their appointing body if they were absent from meetings, and the clerk advised that substitutes could attend.

(8) Co-Option. The method for the appointment of co-opted members needed to be clarified and consideration be given to their voting status.

(9) Miss Webb raised a question about why the Church of England were 6 members classified in Group(2) and Mrs Martin explained this was because they had a statutory responsibility to educate children in church schools. This prompted a discussion about SACRE membership reflecting the principal religious traditions in Kent and the use of out of date Census data.

(10) (B) Proceedings. Specific resources be amended to reflect recent staffing changes. Update the statement regarding each group having a single vote.

(11) Rabbi Cohen stated care needed to be taken in the wording of the document to avoid a constitutional requirement which was incumbent on another ie The Local Authority.

(12) Mr Foster agreed to refer the draft constitution back to the Steering group and present an amended version to the next meeting. The clerk reminded members that the document would need to be referred to the Authorities Legal team and The Selection and Member Services Committee before adoption.

15. Development Plan / Steering Group Report

(Item 8)

(1) Mr Foster presented the Development Plan and members debated its effectiveness.

(2) Mr Platnauer recommended Kent follow the Lancashire model website to try and improve the quality of what was available about RE on kenttrustweb to aid teachers. Mr Foster said teachers should access the Kent Agreed Syllabus for this information.

(3) Mr Platnauer had also discovered that Manchester SACRE had run a poetry competition in Manchester Cathedral, which had probably raised their profile and that of RE. He would send the link to Mr Foster for discussion by the Steering group. Mr Foster advised that he had encouraged the sharing of best practice in schools, which could include lessons plans, but had limited success.

(4) Members debated the value of publishing Lesson Plans on the web, possibly by employing somebody to write them on behalf of SACRE? Mr Foster cautioned there were limited resources and his time was finite.

(5) It was noted the previous Plan had time scales to measure the success criterion against and it was agreed this would benefit from being more defined with achievable aims.

(6) Mrs Corbyn advised that the Medway Church schools had regular networking groups for primary teachers and it was a positive way of monitoring website usage. She suggested the Consultants time could be used in a similar way.

(7) It was agreed a working party would be appointed to look at access to the website with the aim of enhancing the access/provision of RE.

The following members volunteered;-

- (i) Mr Manion
- (ii) Mr Papadopoulos
- (iii) Mr Platnauer
- (iv) Church of England group member to be notified.

16. Overview of National and Local Developments

(Item 9)

All Party Focus Group

(1) Mr Foster advised members that an All Party Focus Group of MP's had met in June and had been well supported by NASACRE, NATRE, AREIAC and other RE bodies.

(2) The group intended to meet three times a year and he urged members to contact their local MP and encourage attendance. Mr Manion asked if there were any Kent PM's on the group and Mr Foster replied he had not seen the membership.

RE Council

(3) Mr Foster reported the RE Council had carried out a scoping exercise on the curriculum review and its initial findings could be viewed on the REC website.

(4) NASACRE

“ about your RE “ flyer to Academies and free schools

Mr Foster agreed to adapt the flyer which had been circulated to members and add it to the kenttrustweb.

New Ofsted Framework –Sept 2012

(5) This would be implemented in schools from Sept 2012, the key feature was to identify if SMSCD was inadequate and standards reached. Mr Foster would discuss with Mrs Rogers the need for SACRE to be notified of the outcomes of school Inspections.

Wolf Report 2014

(6) Mrs Martin was concerned at the lack of information not to be included in the published data. She considered this would further undermine the status of RE. Members also expressed concern at the recent announcement by Mr Gove in regard to the impact on RE of the possible changes to the exam system for Key Stages 4 and 5.

(7) Advanced Skills Teachers(AST)

(8) Miss Kelvie reported she had only been deployed to work in schools falling below the floor targets in Terms 5 and 6, it had been very slow prior to this. Ms Burke had received no work at all from Kent this year. It was agreed the three AST's would meet early 2013 to review the situation, but requested that there be better

communication now between SACRE, The Consultant and the management of the AST scheme in order to achieve much needed support to failing schools.

17. Meeting Dates

(Item 10)

SACRE

Wed 21 Nov 2012 – County Hall

Thurs 7 March 2013 – County Hall

Wed 26 June 2013 – Gravesend?

Tues 19 Nov 2013 – County Hall

Briefing Dates

Mon 15 Oct 2012

Mon 4 Feb 2013

Mon 20 May 2013

Mon 21 Oct 2013

Venue: Oakwood House, Maidstone

Future Speakers

It was noted Prof Norman was willing to give a presentation at the Nov 2012 meeting if Mr Leeson was unavailable to attend.

18. Medway SACRE Chairman- Mr T Clarke

Mr Manion invited Mr Clarke to give a brief overview of his role as SACRE Chairman in Medway during the past two years. Mr Clark advised that Rev Ian Hartland was employed as their Adviser in an authority one fifth the size of Kent with 120 schools.

19. Member Presentation Mrs J Wigg - Salvation Army

(Item 12)

Mr Manion thanked Mrs Wigg for her kind hospitality and she in turn gave a lively and informative brief overview of the history of the Salvation Army and its adaptation/relevance to the modern world. She invited questions and was pleased to share her enthusiasm for her living faith.