

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 9 November 2023.

PRESENT: Mr S C Manion (Chairman), Mr M Baldock, Ms K Burke, Mrs J Grant, Ms G Hltch, Mr D Jeffrey, Miss M Paddison-Chapman, Mr J Paul, Ms Porteous and Ms H Williams.

PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Mrs M Lawson, Mr A Shepherd, Ms S Hamilton, Mrs A Goldstein, Mrs Cheema, Ms N Brownfield, Mrs B Naden and Mrs J Wigg.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P Smith-Orr (Consultant Advisor) and Mr J Clapson (Democratic Services Officer), Mr Bowen and Dr Smith (Virtually).

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

##### **89. Apologies for Absence/Substitutes**

*(Item 1)*

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Bostock, Ms Curtis, Mrs Elapatha, Ms Hawkes, Miss Pope and Ms Watson.

##### **90. Declarations of Interests**

*(Item 2)*

Mr Jeffrey declared that he was a member of the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education and was the Parish Secretary for a Catholic Church.

Mr Manion declared that he was a church warden and was the County representative on the Diocesan Board of Education.

##### **91. Election of Vice Chair and Appointment of Group A Spokesperson**

*(Item 3)*

It was agreed that the Vice Chair would be Mrs Paddison-Chapman.

Members of group A advised that Mrs Paddison-Chapman would be their spokesperson.

##### **92. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 15/6/23**

*(Item 4)*

RESOLVED that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting held on 15 June 2023.

### **93. Development Plans 2022-2023 and 2023-2024**

*(Item 5)*

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced both Development Plans. They detailed what actions had taken place and what was planned for the future. She encouraged those present to get in touch with any suggestions of actions that could be added to the 2023-24 Plan.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
  - Analysis of exam results were traditionally included in the Annual Report; however, the Department for Education (DfE) did not release the results data last year. It was possible that the results data may not be released again this year.
  - Items carried over from the previous years could be written in italics, this would make them more easily identifiable.
  - Ms Smith-Ore would work with course providers to offer training for school governors.
  - Although not relevant to the 2023-24 Plan, a footnote could be included as a reminder to allow plenty of time to prepare the 2028 Kent Syllabus.
  - The Collective Worship Guidance document should be reviewed regularly. This could be planned to avoid the period when the 2028 Kent Syllabus was being prepared.
  - Officers would confirm the arrangements to allow SACRE members to attend National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) training events.
3. RESOLVED that the 2022-23 and 2023-24 Development Plans were noted.

### **94. Budget Update**

*(Item 6)*

1. Mrs Smith-Orr presented the budget update.
2. During consideration of the item the following was noted:
  - It was expected that there would be some spend in Spring when a virtual event for RE co-ordinators would take place.
  - The inclusion of the previous year's budget figures in the report would help provide context and allow comparisons to be made.
  - Kent SACRE's budget compared favourably with other SACRE's. Some SACREs had no dedicated budget at all.
3. RESOLVED that the budget update was noted.

### **95. RE Advisor Verbal Update and Census Update**

*(Item 7)*

1. Mrs Smith-Orr provided an overview of the 2021 Census responses about religious belief. She highlighted that overall, more people identified themselves as having a religion than not in Kent; 46% of responders either did not wish to answer the question, or indicated that they did not identify 1. Mrs Smith-Orr provided an overview of the 2021 Census responses about religious belief. She highlighted that overall, more people identified themselves as religious than not religious in

Kent; 46% of responders either chose not to answer the question or indicated that they did not identify with any religion.

2. During consideration of the item, the following points were noted:
  - The Kent Syllabus was well matched to the faiths identified in the area through the 2021 Census.
  - Minority groups maybe underrepresented in the Census results as their response rates was often lower than other groups.
  - The Kent Syllabus was strong, and schools were legally required to teach Religious Education; however, there was concern that some schools did not give the subject enough priority. A lack of understanding of beliefs and world views could contribute to racism, antisemitism and a lack of respect for other people.
  - RE Today lesson plans were good, they included a wide spread of different beliefs and world views. Often beliefs and world views were not taught in isolation; instead, students looked at the similarities and differences between them.
  - There was a national shortage of specialist Religious Education teachers, these specialists could draw the subject out into the wider school curriculum which provided additional value.
  - Some academies followed the Kent Syllabus however, the exact number was unknown.
  - When a school became an academy, it was no longer maintained by the Local Authority and was not required to follow the Kent Syllabus. The Chair agreed to ask the Cabinet Member for Education to encourage schools to continue to follow the Kent Syllabus when they became academies.
  - The National Interfaith Website was a very good resource for teachers.
3. RESOLVED that the updates were noted.

## **96. Update on Local Network Groups**

*(Item 8)*

1. Mrs Smith-Orr said that she and Mrs Hawes held a network meeting for secondary school teachers during the summer term. There had been good discussions and another meeting would be held in the future. She added that the Local RE Co-ordinator Groups seemed to be gaining momentum; next term there would be a Kent-wide Network Group meeting that would include a discussion about how teachers found teaching the Kent Syllabus.
2. Ms Brownfield advised that she was planning a Local Network Group meeting on 14 November.
3. Mr Shephard said that the Thanet meetings had gone well and the number of people attending the meetings continued to increase. They discussed practices and shared experiences of what did and did not work. It was a great way of networking with other teachers.

## **97. WIRE Awards - Victoria Road Primary School**

*(Item 9)*

1. It was agreed that the submission was a good example of how to approach multifaith teaching. Mr Jeffrey and Dr Smith offered to present the award to the School.
2. A number of schools were in the process of collating evidence for submission. Schools could find details about how to apply for the award on the KELSI webpage.
3. RESOLVED that Victoria Road Primary School be awarded the WIRE award.

## **98. Films for Schools Update**

*(Item 10)*

1. Mr Clapson advised that he had looked further into the practicality of KCC hosting the films and it had become clear that there were some significant hurdles that would need to be overcome. Fortunately, the Canterbury Diocese agreed to continue to hold the films securely on behalf of SACRE. A note would be added to the KELSI website, directing teachers to contact Mrs Smith-Ore for a link to the films.
2. Mr Clapson displayed some publicly available educational films hosted by the NATRE, Pennine Learning, and some podcasts from REConnecting Lincolnshire. It was agreed that the resources could be helpful for teachers, and links to these resources would be added to the KELSI website.
3. It was important to be aware that there was a risk that the information on these websites could change at any time. The links would need to be regularly monitored to ensure they remained appropriate.
4. Mr Clapson agreed to send Mrs Grant a copy of the SACRE Films for School's consent form.
5. RESOLVED that the KELSI website be updated to direct teachers to contact Mrs Smith-Orr to access the Films for Schools, and updated to include links to the NATRE, Pennine Learning and REConnecting Lincolnshire resources.

## **99. Draft Annual Report 2022/23**

*(Item 11)*

1. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that the annual report would be submitted to NASACRE by the end of the year. She would be in contact with the Chair to review the draft document and include his introduction. The finalised Annual Report would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.
2. RESOLVED to note the update.

## **100. Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent**

*(Item 12)*

1. No other items were considered.