

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (KENT)

MINUTES of a SACRE meeting held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 9 November 2011.

PRESENT: Mrs N Younosi (Acting Chair), Mr G K Gibbens, Ms K Burke, Rabbi C Cohen, Mrs V Corbyn, Mrs P Fairchild, Mrs J Grant, Mrs J Hoyle (substitute for Mrs R Walters), Miss T Kelvie, Miss S Malone, Mrs T Martin, Mr M Papadopoulos, Mr S Platnauer, Miss E Pope, Miss S Shaw, Mrs V Thornewell, Mr R Tyson, Mr N Utton, Miss J A Webb, Mrs J Wigg, Mr S C Manion and Mr M J Northey

IN ATTENDANCE: Allan Foster (Consultant), Tracy Palmer (Business Support Officer), John Truman (Kent Challenge Lead Adviser (Swale)) and Carol Wade (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

18. Membership

- (i) to note the resignation of Mr J Viner (Chair) Group 2 C of E (Rochester), Mr G Singh-Gill Group 1 (Sikhism), Mrs J Thompson Group 2 C of E (Rochester) and Ms S Kendall-Seatter, Group 2 C of E (Canterbury)
- (ii) to note the appointment of Mrs J Wigg, Group 1 (Salvation Army), Miss R Walters and Mrs H Jones Group 2 C of E (Rochester)
- (iii) to note the transfer of Mrs VE Corbyn, Group 2 C of E from Canterbury to Rochester Diocese and Miss S Shaw to Canterbury Diocese from Co-opted
- (iv) the appointment of Mrs V E Corbyn as Convenor for Group 2 following the resignation of Ms Kendall-Seatter

Mr John Viner

Members wished to record a huge vote of thanks for John's outstanding commitment in his role of SACRE Chair since his appointment in 2008. Mr Foster specifically paid tribute to his invaluable steer and insight through education. A number of members had contacted John to express their individual thanks and regret at his departure. Members signed a card sending best wishes and thanks.

Nomination for new Chair

Members were invited to let the Clerk have nominations by email or post by 31 December 2011. If necessary a vote would be taken at the March 2012 SACRE and nomination put forward to the County Council Cabinet member for approval.

Fr Gus

Miss Malone reported Fr Gus was convalescing after serious surgery and would update the clerk on his progress.

19. Minutes of 8 June 2011 and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2011 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Minute 6(1) Early Day Motion

Mrs J Grant advised that Mrs H Grant MP Maidstone and Weald had given her support.

Minute 12 Overview of National and Local Developments –AST's

Ms Burke had received an email confirming that funding for AST's had been extended for a further year to 2013.

20. Development Plan: Version 7:2

(1) Mrs Martin advised that at the last development plan Steering group meeting it had been agreed that since the QCDA method no longer existed it was time to restructure the Plan and start afresh, the focus to be evidencing actions.

(2) Mrs Younosi asked members to pass any lengthy comments to the Clerk.

(3) Members voiced concern about the negativity surrounding monitoring and compliance of RE in schools. Mr Foster agreed to raise with Mrs Rogers (Head of Standards and School Improvement) on SACRE's behalf, ways to ensure compliance with the law in the deliverance of RE in all schools.

(It was noted that under Advice to schools, the CE Dioceses and CCCU had offered training to church and community schools, and despite glossy brochures and invitations to attend, there had been no take up by LA Schools).

(4) Mr Foster would forcibly follow his previous requests with Mrs Rogers to link these courses to kenttrustweb.

21. Budget Issues

Mrs Palmer had nothing to report.

22. Westhill Awards

(1) It was reported the results of the 2010/11 awards had been published on the NASACRE website. No Kent school projects had been successful.

(2) Miss Kelvie was disappointed that despite spending a lot of time on her bid, she had received no acknowledgement whatsoever.

23. Annual Report

Mr Foster presented the Draft Annual report which was approved by members. The final version would be forwarded to NASACRE, presented to the KCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee and published on the SACRE web pages www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/ask8/ask8.

Appendix 2-Membership of SACRE

Mr Foster advised efforts were ongoing in trying to fill vacant positions. It was suggested holding the June 2012 meeting at the Gurdwara, Gravesend might open dialogue with the Sikh community.

24. Kent Youth SACRE

Following an inspirational presentation by the Newham Youth SACRE at the NASACRE AGM, Kent SACRE felt it would like to engage young people in its work and members agreed to write this into the development Plan.

25. Overview of National and Local Developments

Update re-Structures and Development –Mr J Truman- Kent Challenge Lead Adviser (Substitute for Mrs S Rogers)

(1) Mr Truman gave a visual presentation entitled Kent Challenge-making Improvement happen. He explained there was a Ministerial thrust to improving standards in schools and if standards were not met there would be forceful moves towards imposing Academy status.

(2) The church group commented it had investigated the legal position regarding the Sec. of State imposing Academy status on church schools, and it clearly remained a contentious issue.

(3) Mr Truman explained the purpose of Kent Challenge was to challenge and support schools to demonstrate and accelerate their capacity to achieve and sustain attainment and progress above the national floor standards and medians.

(4) Statistics of underperformance were highlighted and Members viewed a slide emphasising the numbers of Kent schools in category 1 to 4 indicating vulnerable/below floor standard schools.

(5) He commented the LA was careful how/if it published the information-as it was paramount to protect the reputation of the schools and the effect on the local community.

(6) The method of achieving its Kent challenge aims was by developing and implementing a leadership strategy for Kent leaders at all levels and increasing the potential of partners such as NCSL, CCU and development of internal EduKent and external partners.

(7) He concluded by saying that if schools did not make the expected progress the following actions would be considered ; - serve warning Notice, Interim Executive Board, changes to leadership structure, federation or amalgamation or conversion to Academy.

(8) Members noted Mr Patrick Conrad was the interim Education service manager for EduKent, responsible for the training arm within KCC.

(9) It was suggested Mr Patrick Leeson, new Corporate Director –ELS be invited to attend SACRE and advise members about the emerging EduKent.

(10) It was agreed the clerk would circulate copies of the slides with the next Agenda.

EBacc

Mr Foster reported that the Early Day Motion had fallen and RE was not included in the English Bacc. SACRE needed to continue its battle.

London and SE Regional SACRE's -13 October 2011.

Mr Foster had attended the meeting which had the theme, Fulfilling responsibilities for RE and CW in Uncertain times. It had commenced with a tour of the London Sivan Kovil temple. Mr Foster would pass on Kent SACRE's details in the hope of enlisting a Hindu representative for the faith group vacancy. Mr John Keast (Chair REC) spoke about the need for a strategic plan for the future of RE and engaging national bodies in trying to raise the profile of RE. Mr Bruce Gill (Chair NASACRE) had closed the meeting with the Topic of Onwards and Upwards. Clerk to circulate notes with next Agenda.

Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)

The body had been set up by the Dept. for Education to monitor Academies and ensure they operated in accordance with their funding agreement. Mr Foster advised members that the YPLA would look into complaints about the non-compliance of the provision of RE in Academies if they were made aware.

26. Dates of Future SACRE Meetings

SACRE

Tues.13 March 2012 –Darent, County Hall
w/comm. 11 June 2012 – Gravesend Gurdwara?

4th Annual Lecture

8 or 9 May 2012 – Speaker and Venue tbc (Mr Michael Poole – Montgomery Trust – issues in Science & Religion with Special Reference to Christianity.

Briefing/Steering Group

Mon.13 February 2012 - **amended to Tues 7 Feb 2012**

Tues 8 May 2012

Mon.15 October 2012

Venue-The Study, Oakwood House

It was agreed all four Group Convenors be invited to attend future Chair's briefing/steering group meetings and members noted the change of date in February 2012.

27. Member Presentation - Mr N Utton - Creatively Interpreting the Kent Agreed Syllabus

(1) Mr Utton, Headteacher of Bromstone primary school, Broadstairs both informed and entertained members with his visual presentation about how Bromstone had developed its teaching methodology from Hampshire's "Living Difference". In essence RE was taught for three weeks a year, one week each two terms with a focus on a different aspect of the Kent Agreed Syllabus. He emphasised the children loved RE weeks and enjoyed the activities involving visits, speakers and discussion. He quoted from his positive Ofsted report (March 2011) and enthusiastically urged SACRE to consider the concept in its next re-write of the Agreed syllabus.

(2) The Clerk agreed to circulate the presentation with the next Agenda and Mrs Younosi thanked Mr Utton for his inspirational talk.