

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 Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 13 March 2012.

PRESENT: Mrs N Younosi (Vice-Chairman), Ms K Burke, Mrs S Clark, Rabbi C Cohen, Mrs V Corbyn, Mrs C Elapatha, Mrs J Grant, Mrs H Jones, Miss T Kelvie, Miss S Malone, Mr S C Manion, Mrs T Martin, Mrs M McDowall, Mr M J Northey, Mr S Platnauer, Miss S Shaw, Mr R Tyson, Mr N Utton and Miss J Webb

ALSO PRESENT: Prof R J Norman

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Membership

(Item 1)

(1) Election of Chairman

(1.1) It was noted there were two strong candidates for the post of Chairman after the resignation of Mr John Viner:-

- (i) Mrs P Martin, proposer Miss S Shaw, seconder Ms K Burke
- (ii) Mr S Manion, proposer Mr M Northey, seconder Mr G Gibbens

(1.2) The Four SACRE Groups broke to discuss how they wished the Convenors to indicate their vote and the results were as follows:-

- (i) Group 1 Mr Manion
- (ii) Group 2 Mrs Martin
- (iii) Group 3 Mrs Martin
- (iv) Group 4 Mr Manion

(1.3) The 2-2 tie result would be communicated to Mr M Whiting, Cabinet Member for Education Learning and Skills for him to confirm the Authorities preferred appointment. The Clerk would inform both candidates of the decision and then email SACRE members with the result.

(1.4) Mrs Martin asked for clarification about the criteria Mr Whiting would use to make his decision. Mr Foster replied that he would take account of the candidate's statements and act in the best interest of SACRE.

(1.5) The Clerk advised that the guidance in Circular 1/94 regarding the appointment of Chair was being followed (section 115) It was noted there had never been more than one candidate for ratification by the Authority.

(1.6) Mr Viner

Mrs Younosi commented that it had been previous practice to mark the departure of the Chairman by having a collection towards a small gift of appreciation and arranging a meal for a small group. It was agreed members would contact the Clerk at the close of the meeting, there were no contributions.

(2). Resignation of Fr Gus Kinnane

(2.1) To note the resignation of Fr Gus Kinnane, Roman Catholic representative on Group 1. Members of the Group wished to record their appreciation for the invaluable support he had given the group and the substantial contribution he had made to the work of SACRE as a whole. It was agreed Mr Foster would write to Fr Gus.

(2.2) The clerk would contact Bishop John Hine regarding an RC replacement.

(2.3) Mrs Younosi was hopeful of filling the vacancy for a Sikh member and Mr Foster was pursuing the Hindu vacancy, but was not optimistic about the outcome.

(2.4) ASPECT

Mr Foster reported that there had been an approach by ASPECT, an organisation representing the voice of educational improvement and children's services professionals, requesting representation on SACRE.

(2.5) Members of the steering Group had considered the request and concluded that ASPECT's remit was too far removed from SACRE's brief and Mr Foster would write to their General Secretary and explain it would not be appropriate.

2. Minutes

(Item 4)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2011 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising

The Minutes of the Final Conference to produce and recommend the Agreed Syllabus for RE held on the 9 November 2011 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

It was suggested the easiest way to access them on the web was to type Kent SACRE in the Google search engine.

3. Development Plan

(Item 5)

(1) Mrs Martin advised that progress on a complete re-write had been halted until the appointment of the new Chair and the preferred format was known. She suggested that a working group be appointed to consider the notion of a Kent Youth SACRE and the following members volunteered:-

- (i) Mr Manion
- (ii) Mrs Younosi
- (iii) Ms Burke
- (iv) Mr Tyson
- (v) Plus Mrs Martin (facilitator)

(2) Mrs Younosi commented there would be financial implications and Mrs Corbyn advised that bids for Youth SACRE's had been invited by the Westhill Awards up until 20 April. Mr Foster agreed to follow up enquiries with NASACRE to establish if funding was available and if so submit a letter of intent.

4. Budget Issues including payments to Academies

(Item 6)

(1) Mrs Palmer reported that although the budget had not been confirmed, funding was expected to continue at the same level.

(2) Agreement had been reached for the continuation of Mr Fosters services for a further year.

(3) Academies

Ms Burke reported that a number of members would have difficulty securing release from school to attend meetings if supply cover was no longer paid to teachers working in Academies. This would impact on both Union and Non-Union members.

(4) Mrs Rogers advised she would write to the Headteachers of all affected members and follow up with a visit if necessary. It was agreed the letter would refer to the valuable contribution made by the staff member and request that they continue to be released to fulfil the attendance requirements.

(5) Mr Foster had emailed all SACRE colleagues working in Academies and hoped it would be possible to negotiate release with headteachers. He requested any members having difficulty contact him direct

(6) Mrs Martin suggested evening meetings would be a possible solution, but Ms Burke commented this would raise child care issues and Mr Northey felt a daytime meeting helped raise the profile of the important work achieved by the Council.

5. Update

(Item 7)

(1) Mr Foster would continue to work with KCC colleagues in the School Improvement Service to identify issues, including non compliance and report back to SACRE meetings. He advised that the new Ofsted framework limited time subject coverage and would be inspected. It would be possible to identify if spiritual, moral social and cultural development was being addressed.

(2) NATRE and the RE Council had contacted the new Chief Inspector –Sir M Wilshire regarding the framework and ask for clarification about how Inspectors would report on schools not making appropriate provision. It was not known if they had received a reply.

(3) Mrs Rogers reported that a Kent Special School was currently being Inspected and would await the finding with interest. She advised that there was typically one RE subject inspection per academic year in Kent.

(4) *NASACRE AGM 23 May 2012, London*

It was agreed Mrs Martin and Mr Manion would represent Kent at the NASACRE AGM where the key note speakers would include Bob Jackson and Lat Blaylock.

(5) There were no nominations for the forthcoming election of NASACRE Officers

(6) *St Gabriel's weekend for RE Teachers – 29 and 30 Sept 2012, Wokefield Park, Reading.*

Ms Shaw had previously attended the event and thoroughly recommended it for RE teachers to attend.

(7) Mr Foster agreed to publicise on the e-bulletin, commenting that it was a free event and members would not be eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses.

(8) *Update by Mrs Rogers*

Mrs Rogers advised that the restructuring of ELS was ongoing and Mr Patrick Leeson was now in post. It was agreed he would be invited to speak at the November SACRE or subsequent meeting.

(9) *EduKent*

Mrs Rogers reported funds had been secured to cover the cost of the 15 staff in the School Improvement Division and the challenge was how to best utilise the service. A procurement framework had been established inviting tenders to provide support to Kent schools. Some 45 applications had been returned.

6. Meeting Dates

(Item 9)

SACRE

Wed 27 June 2012-Salvation Army Hall, Union Street Maidstone

No car parking provided, pay and reclaim on expenses

Wed 21 November 2012-County Hall

Briefing Dates

Tues 8 May 2012 –The Study Oakwood House

Mon 15 October 2012 – The Study Oakwood House

4th Annual Lecture-Wednesday 9 May, County Hall Maidstone

Twilight –light refreshments 6pm

Speaker Mr Michael Poole (sponsored by the Montgomery Trust)

Issues in Science and Religion with Special reference to Christianity.

Mr Foster agreed to publicise the event on the e-bulletin which was open to other SACRE's. After a show of hands 4 people indicated they wished to attend and members debated the value of holding the event if expected numbers were so low.

Miss Kelvie suggested school 6th form students would benefit from attendance and Mr Foster would write to Headteachers and Heads of RE inviting RE teachers and their 6th form pupils. He would Advise Mr Poole of the audience profile.

Members discussed the difficulties of effective communication with RE teachers, which Mr Foster agreed was an ongoing problem.

7. Member Presentation - Mrs N Younosi - Haj

(Item 11)

(1) Mrs Younosi was thanked for giving an amusing and informative account of her journey to Haj in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Mrs Younosi explained that she was in a position to make the trip because she was free of any prohibitive conditions ie not in debt, no longer responsible for anyone, in good health and not a burden. She had felt totally inspired by the visit and concluded her account by leaving members with the following thought "I am one of all this, and all this is one of me."

(2) Future Speakers

Prof R Norman volunteered to speak at a future meeting and Mrs Younosi suggested it would be interesting to invite the Baha'i member to speak in due course.