

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 on Thursday, 15 June 2023.

PRESENT: Mr Manion (Chairman), Ms Burke, Mr Jeffrey, Ms Hawkes, Mrs Paddison-Chapman and Mr Paul.

PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Ms Brownfield, Mr Baldock, Miss Walters, Mrs Wigg, Ms Ralph, Mrs Elapatha, Mrs Lawson, Ms Hamilton, Miss Bostock.

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Smith-Orr (Consultant Advisor), Mr Clapson (Democratic Services Officer) and Miss Reynolds (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

78. Apologies for Absence/Substitutes

(Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Goldstein, Mrs Grant, Mrs Duncombe, Miss Pope, Mr Shepherd, Ms Naden, Mrs Cheema and Mr Chambers.

79. Declarations of Interests

(Item 2)

Mr Jeffrey declared that he was a member of the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education.

80. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 2 March 2023

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2023 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chair.

81. Membership

(Item 4)

1. The Chair advised that Mrs Younosi had retired from the position of Vice-Chair and as a Member of the Statutory Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Members joined the Chair in expressing their thanks to Mrs Younosi for her work and dedication to the SACRE. A new Vice-Chair would be appointed at the next meeting.

2. A warm welcome was extended to Mr Baldock and Mr Jeffrey who were new SACRE Members.

3. In response to a question about membership vacancies, it was noted that the appointing bodies were contacted periodically throughout the year when vacancies arose. Members were reminded that the membership of Group A was determined to allow for appropriate religious groups within the local authority area. KCC would review the SACRE Membership arrangements on a regular basis and bring forward future decisions when any substantive changes were required. Mrs Smith-Orr offered to provide Members with a presentation on the recently published census data for Kent that would show the different beliefs held by people in Kent.

82. Budget Update

(Item 5)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr presented the budget update; she noted that costs had stabilised so far in 2023/24, after there were additional costs in 2022/23 when the new syllabus was introduced. Additionally, the cost of holding meetings had reduced as they were often hosted as hybrid meetings in the Council Chamber.

2. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that the budget was considered to be sufficient, but welcomed any suggestions that could raise funds. She advised however, that networking and training events were usually offered free of charge to encourage attendance.

3. RESOLVED that the budget update be noted.

83. Development Plan 2022/23 Update

(Item 6)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the Development Plan 2022/23 noting that some activities were complete, and some were still ongoing. During the presentation of the item it was noted that:

- Work to support for collective worship was ongoing. It was difficult to monitor when collective worship took place in schools, and it was often not mentioned on school websites. There was a collective worship best practice document available for schools to access.
- The WIRE award was going well.
- Schools were sent a digital copy of the new syllabus in November 2022, however requests for copies were still being received at a frequency of around once per week.

2. In response to questions and comments from Members the following points were noted:

- The law required every school to do collective worship each day, however it was very difficult to monitor if this was being done. The Chair had sent a letter to all schools to remind them of this requirement.
- If Ofsted inspectors wished access the current syllabus from an independent source, they could be directed to the Kent Education Learning and Skills Information (KELSI) website.

- RE Today would not allow the syllabus to be paced on a public website, although schools were sent a summary document that could be put on their websites.
- Since the COVID 19 pandemic, the Department for Education (DfE) had ceased to share exam results with councils. The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) had met with the DfE about this issue because the results were historically included in the SACRE Annual Report.
- In the past Ofsted had not penalised schools who were found not to be doing collective worship however, it was noted that since Easter, Ofsted had conducted a deep dive into RE and British values at seven schools outside of Kent.
- Officers would email the Guidance on Collective Worship document to the SACRE Members and indicate where it could be found on the KELSI website.
- Mrs Smith-Orr asked Members to get in touch if they had any items that they wished to be considered for inclusion on the Development Plan 2023-24.

84. RE Advisor - Verbal Update

(Item 7)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr provided her update that covered the following topics:

- She had attended the first Thanet RE Coordinators Network meeting which was held on Zoom. The second meeting was recently held in person; Mr Shepherd and Mrs Paddison-Chapman led these meetings, and Mrs Paddison-Chapman said that the second meeting went very well.
- Mrs Smith-Orr would try and attend the Secondary School Teachers' Network meeting on 20.6.23. Collective worship would be one of the topics discussed. Mrs Lawson offered to help raise awareness of the meeting, by using her position as a member of the Association of Kent Headteachers to share details of the meeting with other headteachers.
- It was encouraging that there had been a flurry of interest in the WIRE award. Volunteers would be sought after the meeting to present certificates to the schools that had recently achieved the award.
- Continuous Personal Development training for Primary School RE Coordinators would be held in the Autumn via Zoom. The session would look at how to make British values more visible and offer some general help and support.

85. WIRE Award

(Item 8)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr brought Members attention to the two school submissions in the agenda and advised that a third had been submitted after the agenda had been published. The third submission would be circulated to Members for consideration after the meeting. She added that it was very encouraging to receive three in one term.

2. Members considered the submissions in the agenda and made the following comments:

- Both submissions looked good and were comprehensive.

- It seemed that the WIRE award was becoming increasingly popular; some schools may consider the WIRE award an alternative to the RE Quality Mark that had a cost of £500.
- One school used a link to submit evidence. This worked well, and it was agreed that a note be added on the form to encourage other schools to use links when providing evidence.
- Schools should be encouraged to showcase their certificate and promote the achievement on their website, newsletters, and social media platforms; this would help to establish the importance of the award and raise the profile of religious education.
- Mrs Smith-Orr would create a Kent WIRE logo that schools could use on their letterheads.
- The number of schools who achieved the award would be published in the Annual Report. It could raise the profile of the award further, if the list of schools who had achieved the award was published in one of the Association of Kent Headteachers' bulletins.
- There was training available for places of worship to help prepare them for school visits, this training was free of charge. Mrs Smith-Orr asked to be sent contact details for places of worship and offered to get feedback about school visits. She would also create a list of places of worship that teachers could use when planning visits.

3. RESOLVED that the WIRE award be awarded to Park Way Primary School and Leeds and Broomfields Primary School.

4. POST MEETING NOTE:

Following the circulation of their submission to SACRE Members by email, Members RESOLVED that the WIRE award be awarded to Sheldwich Primary School.

86. NASACRE Conference May 2023 - Feedback

(Item 9)

1. The Chair advised that he had attended the NASACRE Conference in May and updated Members as follows:

- Dr Wright, Chief Executive of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, was the first keynote speaker. She spoke about supporting innovation, celebrating an education of religion and world views, and the importance of freedom of education and belief. She also considered how to link with multi academy trusts.
- Mr Clarke was the second keynote speaker and discussed the opportunities and strengths of community cohesion, and partnerships with others.
- Dr Hampshire provided some analysis of the SACRE Annual Reports, he noted that only 28 of the SACRE's had submitted a report every year for the last three years, and that 69 reports had been submitted last year.
- Other discussion points included the importance of offering hybrid meetings, and the impact Group D Members could have on the success of the SACRE by holding the Local Authority to account.

2. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that there was some NASACRE online training available to SACRE Members. Officers would circulate the password link to allow Members to access the webpage.

87. Films for Schools

(Item 10)

Miss Reynolds advised Members that she had confirmed that the films could be hosted by Kent County Council (KCC) on an existing Vimeo site. This would be free of charge however, KCC would require the completion of consent forms for those people featuring in the films before the project could be progressed. Consent forms would be sent to Ms Burke and Mrs Smith-Orr to arrange for completion.

88. Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

(Item 11)

No other items were considered.