

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MONDAY, 6TH MARCH, 2017

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the 007A AND B - CIVIC OFFICE on MONDAY, 6TH MARCH, 2017, at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair – Reverend Tom McCready – Unitarian (Doncaster Interfaith)
Vice-Chair – Mr Bruce Gillham (Balby (Doncaster) Society of Friends)

Councillor Sue Knowles.

Mrs J Gessler, A Nicholson, Mrs M Sivaanbu, Ms J Stephenson and Mr B Teimoori.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nuala Fennelly and Councillor Majid Khan, and Ms S Norburn and Mr S Syed.

25 QUORUM

As there was no quorum present at the time specified on the summons, Members agreed to wait for five minutes in order to await the arrival of the Church of England representative (Group B).

Further to this meeting being inquorate for the second consecutive occasion, the Chair sought guidance from Officers as to whether the Church of England representative from Group B, had to be a person ‘in authority’ or a practising Anglican (a representative from the Anglican community). The Governance Officer, having referred to the Membership and Terms of Reference of SACRE, confirmed that whilst there was no specific reference that the representatives from the four Groups had to be a person of official standing, and in view of Officers not having the Regulations to hand at the meeting to confirm whether it was prescriptive in the Regulations, the Chair indicated that he would speak to Reverend David Stephens from the Church of England Diocese to secure a representative to attend future meetings.

Subsequently, as there was no Church of England representative present after the expiry of five minutes, the meeting was therefore, declared inquorate. However, it was agreed that the meeting continue on an informal basis and the recommendations be ratified at the next quorate meeting of SACRE.

26 INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Reverend Tom McCready welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee extended a warm welcome to Jonathan Sharp, Senior Education Standards and Effectiveness Officer, who was attending his first meeting of SACRE and had taken over Ralph Hedley’s

role. Jonathan gave a brief description of his background; a former Headteacher for 9 years having worked in a successful and outstanding school.

27 DECISION SUMMARY AND MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29TH NOVEMBER, 2016

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the inquorate SACRE meeting held on 29th November, 2016, be noted and approval of the minutes be deferred for ratification at the next quorate meeting.

28 MATTERS ARISING

Minute No. 20 – SACRE Briefing 12

In relation to the 'Tell Mama Annual report 2015 on Hate Crime', the Chair informed Members that a new Police Officer from South Yorkshire, Police Constable Alison Atkinson, had been recently appointed and was to be responsible for the coordination of responses to Hate Crime and would be attending one of the events that he had organised with the grant funding he had received.

29 MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

Further to the above Minute, the Committee received a document providing details of Members' attendance for the meetings held from November, 2015 to May 2016.

Representation from Group B: Church of England at SACRE meetings continued to be a concern. The Chair, Reverend Tom McCready, gave an undertaking to speak to Reverend David Stephens from the Church of England Diocese, to make enquiries as to the health of Ms Crowther and her non-attendance at SACRE meetings.

Councillor Knowles informed the Committee that this was her last meeting as a member of SACRE as she had not been selected to stand as a Labour candidate in the forth-coming Borough Council elections in May. The Chair and Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to Councillor Knowles for her contribution made to the work of the Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the document regarding Members attendance at meetings, be noted; and
- (2) Reverend Tom McCready contact Reverend David Stephens from the Church of England Diocese, regarding the health of Ms Crowther and speak to Reverend Stephens with regard to securing an Anglican representative to attend future meetings.

30 PREPARATION/WORKING PARTY FOR AGREED SYLLABUS 2018 (DOCUMENTS TO BE TABLED AT THE MEETING)

Members briefly discussed the work and processes involved in preparing for the Review and the establishment of a working party for an Agreed Syllabus 2018.

In light of the fact that the document to be tabled, had not been made available for the Committee's consideration at this meeting, and that the meeting was inquorate, it was RECOMMENDED that the Preparation/Working Party for Agreed Syllabus 2018, be deferred for consideration at the next quorate meeting of SACRE.

31 CHALLENGING RE CONFERENCE - ROTHERHAM

Members received details of the South Yorkshire RE Hub's Third Annual Day Conference 'Challenging RE Conference: Imagination, British Values, Thinking and Assessment' to be held in Rotherham on 14th March 2017.

Jonathan Sharp advised that he was unable to attend the conference due to a prior engagement. He reported that he had been contacted by Vanessa Gregory who had advised that the invitation Flyer to the Challenging RE Conference had been forwarded to all Doncaster schools on two occasions; the last being on 14th February and to date, there had been a limited response from RE teachers to attend the Conference. He advised that due to the limited number of confirmed attendees, it was doubtful whether the conference would take place. It was felt that the low take up was possibly due to lack of funding. The Vice-Chair, Bruce Gillham, confirmed that whilst he was happy to attend the Conference, he commented that as SACRE was looking to involve pupils more directly in the work of SACRE, felt that it would be beneficial for a teacher representative to attend the Conference to explore the situation with people in the whole of South Yorkshire. Therefore, the Vice-Chair asked Jonathan Sharp to explore whether it would be possible for the local authority to fund the attendance of Alison Nicholson at the Conference. Subsequently, the Chair, Reverend McCready, proposed that he was willing to make a contribution towards half of the cost to the Conference on the understanding that the local authority would match his contribution. Jonathan Sharp suggested that he would speak to the Chair on this issue outside of the meeting.

In addition, the Chair requested that Alison Nicholson to diarise her attendance at the "Meet Your Muslim Neighbour" event at Doncaster College on Monday, 27th March, 2017, commencing at 6.00 pm, which was open to all Members of SACRE to attend.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) Jonathan Sharp contact Vanessa Gregory to ascertain the number of RE teachers who had confirmed their attendance and as to whether the Conference was still going to proceed;
- (2) Jonathan Sharp to explore whether the Local Authority was willing to provide match funding to facilitate teacher attendance at the Conference; and
- (3) The Chair agreed to make a contribution from grant funding towards the costs to fund a teacher to attend the Conference, subject to the Local Authority matching this contribution.

32 NASACE AGM - 16 MAY, 2017 YORK: PREPARING FOR LIFE IN BRITAIN TODAY: THE CONTRIBUTION OF RE

The Committee received details of the NASACE Conference and AGM 'Preparing for Life in Britain Today: the Contribution of RE', to be held in York on 16th May 2017.

In view of a decision being required imminently for a Member to attend the Conference, which would take place before the next scheduled meeting of SACRE, the Chair sought the Committee's approval to attend the Conference on 16th May 2017. The Group agreed that in the circumstances, the Chair attend the Conference to be ratified at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the Chair Reverend Tom McCready to attend the NASACE Conference and AGM to be held on 16th May 2017, which was to be ratified at the next meeting.

33 INFORMATION EXCHANGE

(a) Newsletter Working Party

Jonathan Sharp sought clarity from Members regarding the preparatory work to be undertaken for the E-Newsletter. Members of SACRE were asked to submit any ideas or suggestions of items for inclusion in the Summer Term SACRE E-Newsletter, which was expected to be published in June.

During discussion on the content of the newsletter, it was suggested that the newsletter be adapted to meet the relevant target audience i.e. primary, secondary, free schools and Academies. Members felt that teachers should be encouraged to write short informative articles and include issues that were to impact upon young people. In addition, it was suggested that the newsletter could include a learning piece, informing schools about different religious festivals and forthcoming events. Members emphasised the importance of the newsletter and spoke of the need to highlight in the Newsletter the importance of RE and for schools to understand the role and purpose of SACRE.

The Vice-Chair, Bruce Gillham, agreed to meet with Jonathan Sharp at the Civic Office prior to the next meeting, to provide assistance in putting the newsletter together. The Chair confirmed that he was also happy to contribute material for the newsletter.

RECOMMENDED that Jonathan Sharp and the Vice-Chair Bruce Gillham meet to discuss the preparation and content of the newsletter.

(b) Building Outreach Capacity

Members were asked to consider looking at ways to build outreach capacity in schools. The Vice-Chair, Bruce Gillham, referred to a successful model adopted by the Group two years previously, which had involved Members of SACRE visiting a primary schools in the Borough, introducing children to the six different faiths. Members expressed their enthusiasm for this model to be offered to all schools in the Borough on a regular basis. It was agreed that Jonathan Sharp, Senior Education Standards and Effectiveness Officer explore the feasibility of putting arrangements in place, for an offer to be made to both primary and secondary schools, for Members of SACRE to visit the schools and that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of SACRE.

The Chair suggested that it would be beneficial to highlight this particular model of good practice at the Challenging RE Conference on 14th March, 2017. It was

also suggested that an article on this initiative be included in the Summer Term E-Newsletter sent out to schools in order to promote the role and work of SACRE.

RECOMMENDED that a scoping report exploring the proposal for Members of SACRE to visit schools in the Borough, be submitted for consideration and ratification at the next meeting of SACRE.

- (c) Grant of £4000 for a project bringing Christians and Muslims together (as noted at the end of Rev Tom's Chair's introduction in the draft SACRE Annual Report).

The Chair reported that he had been successful in securing a grant of £4,000 from the Common Good Fund for a project bringing Muslims and Christians together in support of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Chair outlined the various planned events on how the grant money was to be spent which included:-

- "Meet your Muslim Neighbour" - Monday, 27th March, to be held at the Waterfront Restaurant, Doncaster College at 6.00pm. Members were informed that this event had arisen out of people's mis-understanding of Muslim and Hallal food and Hallal slaughtering. This event had received support from the Muslim community. 50-60 people had been invited to attend, including speakers from the Muslim faith. The Chair encouraged all Members of the Committee to attend in particular, an invitation was extended to Alison Nicholson. He added that Doncaster College was his first choice as the preferred venue for the event, in order to engage with college students who would be providing the catering and would learn about Hallal catering at the same time. In conjunction with this event, it was reported that a colleague of the Chair would be attending the event to provide cultural training on understanding Islam to college staff who had also been invited to attend.

Jonathan Sharp confirmed that he was to attend this event at Doncaster College on 27th March. Jonathan's attendance was welcomed by the Chair.

- "Multi faith Vegetarian Dinner" on St. George's Day, Sunday, 23rd April 2017, at 6.00 pm. The Chair reported that the Vice-Chair, Bruce Gillham, was to attend this event and if any other Members of the Committee wished to come along, there were some places available. Invitations had been extended to the Civic Mayor and his wife, Bishop Peter and Police Constable Alison Atkinson.

The Chair advised that there would be no events involving food and music during Ramadan due to poor attendance of people last year.

- Benefit Concert of "Songs of Freedom and Justice" on Sunday, 14th May, 2017 for refugees and asylum seekers.
- "African Drum Workshop" on Wednesday, 24th May, 2017
- Muslim Festival "Eid in the Park", hosted by a group of young Muslims.

The Chair advised that he would provide Jonathan Sharp with full details of the dates and times, in order to invite SACRE Members to the events. Jonathan agreed to communicate this information to Members via email.

RECOMMENDED that Jonathan Sharp to send details of the dates and times of all of the events to Members of SACRE via email.

34 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

AGREED that the public and press be excluded from the remainder of proceedings of the meeting, as the reports contained exempt and confidential information.

35 DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Members received and noted for information, the draft SACRE Annual report for 2015/2016.

Members welcomed the report and it was agreed that thanks be conveyed to Pat Cassidy for her efforts in compiling a very useful and extensive piece of work.

The Chair indicated that he would invite Pat Cassidy to attend one of the forth-coming SACRE events.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) that the draft SACRE Annual Report 2015/16, presented to Members for information, be received and noted; and
- (2) the Committee's thanks be conveyed to Pat Cassidy for her efforts in compiling a very useful and extensive piece of work.

36 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Vice-Chair, Bruce Gillham, commented that Pat Cassidy who had since left the authority, had been a valuable resource to the work of SACRE, having a wealth of knowledge and experience. Therefore, he felt that it would be useful for the Group to be provided with a list of SACRE Members and Officer contact details, including telephone numbers, in order for the Vice-Chair to speak to Pat and Officers in an advisory capacity and to facilitate inter-Member communication. Whilst this was welcomed by some Members, concerns were raised with regard to confidentiality, data protection and the security of people's personal information. It was agreed that Jonathan Sharp would speak to Susan French to provide Members of SACRE with a list of email contact addresses.

RECOMMENDED that SACRE be provided with a list of SACRE Members email addresses.

Minute No. 16 - Pre Meeting Item

Further to the above Minute of the last meeting, the Vice-Chair, Bruce Gillham, advised that he was intending to apply for grant funding for the next Academic Year to facilitate the development of pupil involvement in resourcing the Moral Curriculum and

if Members were supportive of this approach, he would bring back the proposal to the Committee in due course. This was welcomed by Members.

37 DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF SUMMER TERM MEETING

RECOMMENDED that the next meeting of SACRE be scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 6th June, 2017, in Meeting Room 7a and b Civic Office, Waterdale, commencing at 4.00 p.m.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____