

CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 2023

A HYBRID MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE, WATERDALE, DONCASTER DN1 3BU on THURSDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY, 2023, at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Mr Bob Kiddle (Humanism)
Vice-Chair - Councillor Glynis Smith

Councillors Sue Knowles and Tracey Moran, Danielle Heath, Pahani Kaur, Mr B Teimoori, Tara Moxon, Sally Faulkner, Harvey Kasin and Jugtinder Singh

Also in attendance

Lat Blaylock, RE Today consultant
Jane Reed, Head of Service Education

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jane Cox, Mrs M Sivaanbu, Vanessa Gregory and Amy Roddam

54 QUORUM OF MEETING

It was noted that there was not a quorum of Members in attendance at the meeting to hold an official meeting. However, it was agreed that the meeting would continue on an informal basis to consider the agenda, with all decisions formally ratified at the next quorate meeting of the Committee.

55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY

No declarations were reported at the meeting.

56 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH NOVEMBER, 2022

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a true record.

Matters Arising

Minute No 46 - The Chair encouraged all Members if they had not already done so to view all the useful tools and resources on the NASACRE website.

Minutes No 48 – Lat Blaylock reported that unfortunately the SEND event had been postponed.

Minute No 49 – Lat stated that whilst the turnout was low, the discussion went really well

Minute No 50 – Resource project on the agenda for discussion.

Minute No 51 – The Chair stated that the introduction of the “Whats App” Group was really welcomed and he would encourage others to join.

Minute No 52 – The Chair stated that this would be looked at on an on-going basis.

57 SACRE APPOINTMENT AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE - WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBER.

The Committee received a report which informed Members of the new appointment of Jugtinder Singh (Teacher Associations (NEU) to SACRE. The Chair and Committee welcomed Jugtinder to the Committee.

Also present was Jane Reed, Head of Service for Education who was attending for Stephanie Douglas. Jane stated that she had recently joined the Council and looked forward to working with the Committee.

AGREED that:-

- (1) The appointment of Jugtinder Singh – Teacher Associations (NEU) representative to SACRE be noted; and
- (2) The current Membership of SACRE as detailed at Appendix 1 be noted.

58 MEMBERSHIP 2021 CENSUS DATE - WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT DONCASTER. DO WE NEED TO REVISIT OUR MEMBERSHIP?

The Chair invited discussion on the membership of SACRE. He acknowledge that the composition of the Council and membership was something that officers were responsible to advise on. He referred to their being no Buddhist representative on SACRE. He stated that the numbers referred to in the census were for the country as a whole. It was suggested that Lat provide a list of the numbers to the next meeting.

Discussion also took place in regard to other representatives on the Board. It was noted that there was a vacancy for a Head Teacher representative and suggested that it may be worth speaking to a loyal attendees of the Primary Network Group to seek a representative.

59 THE RESOURCES PROJECT (VERSION 1.2 ATTACHED):- IS IT READY FOR PUBLICATION? ON THE DMBC WEBSITE AND BY E-MAIL TO SCHOOLS? EXTENSION TO MORE COMMUNITIES? IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF VISITS? TOO MUCH INFORMATION OR NOT ENOUGH?

The Chair provided an update with regard to the Doncaster Resources project and a copy of the document was open for discussion. He suggested that a copy of the document could be made available on the Councils website and a copy be forwarded by email to all schools with a view to extending the resources to more communities.

He sought Members views on when the document should be revisited in terms of updating and adding to it.

SACRE welcomed the document and felt it was a really good resource to have. It was suggested that the document should be amended once all information from interested parties had been received to see what the reaction had been. Lat stated that it had been mentioned at the Primary Network Group and they were keen for the document to be provided.

The Chair stated that he had started to contact secondary schools. However had not managed to take any further action on this. Jane Reed indicated that there was a database of email contact for schools, these would be collated and forwarded in order for a copy of the document to be forwarded to all schools, this would take place outside of the meeting.

It was agreed that it would be useful to know what contacts had been made with school, prior to the document being updated and published.

AGREED that

- (1) The resources project document be noted;
- (2) A copy of the document be forwarded to all schools for comment with a view to publishing on the Council's website.

60 NASACRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE - MONDAY, 22 MAY 2023 - 10.30 AM - 15.30 PM, FISHMONGERS HALL, LONDON (MAXIMUM 2 MEMBERS PER SACRE AT £120 PER DELEGATE + TRAVEL).

The Chair asked members if they wished to attend the NASACRE Annual Conference, he indicated that he would be happy to attend. If anybody was interested in attending they were to get in touch with him outside of the meeting.

In terms of any expenses to and from the conference, Jane Reed advised that this would be something she would need to discuss with Stephanie Douglas outside of the meeting and confirm at a later date if expenses would be paid for by the Council.

61 NASACRE ONLINE TRAINING: 21 FEBRUARY 2023, (4.00PM - 5.30PM) - 'BEING AN EFFECTIVE SACRE CLERK'. 14 MARCH 2023, (7.00 PM - 8.30 PM) - 'SO, YOU'VE JOINED YOUR LOCAL SACRE...'

The Chair sought Members interest with regard to the on-line training facilitated by NASACRE. If anyone was interested they could find the information on the NASACRE website and anyone was able to attend.

62 NATIONAL UPDATE FOR SACRE'S SPRING TERM 2023 - LAT BLAYLOCK.

Lat Blaylock, advisor to SACRE, presented an update from RE Today, which outlined the key issues nationally at the present time.

Points of interest to note included the following:-

- From a survey carried out, 67% of people appreciated the presence of religious education. It was also noted that those children who undertake the study of RE as a GCSE are more likely to do well in other subjects;
- In regard to the Westminster Debate, it was noted that it was against Government recommendations to have less than 60 minutes of RE taught in schools, some of the schools were within Doncaster and action was required;
- Theos Report – interesting references within the report
- New2RE – This is a new offer for teachers. It was advised that there are many classes with teachers that are specialists in other studies and not RE;
- Inclusive Judaism – Lat re-iterated the range of classroom resources available to schools to encourage inclusivity and diversity
- Free webinars for Primary and Secondary ECTs – Early Career Teachers were offered a number of courses and webinars, providing the chance to talk to more experienced teachers giving advice on classroom strategies.

Following the update, the Chair sought comments from the Committee.

Firstly, the Chair commented that he was shocked by the number of children who were withdrawn from RE lessons in school. Lat stated that some children are withdrawn but parents are happy for them to sit at the back of the room and complete other subjects. He also stated that there was comprehensive guidance available to parents within the RE Syllabus which explains what their child would be learning. It was suggested that it may be worth inviting some parents into schools to provide further information and guidance and explain what their child would be learning which may avoid or minimise withdrawals.

Discussion took place around introducing an exemplar model. It was advised that SACRE have an agreed syllabus and whilst guidance could be built into future training policy, Lat advised that he would be hesitant on using an exemplar model or policy.

A query was made as to why children were being withdrawn and whether teachers should be asking why. It was noted that RE studies should not be looked at as children practicing religion but learning about different faiths. It was suggested that some parents may be afraid of the subject and whether it could be influencing their child.

All members agreed that it could be worth sending further information out to parents on the subject of RE, highlighting that the child would not be learning religion in practice just providing their child with knowledge of other faiths and beliefs. Jugtinder Singh stated that her school had sent out a letter to parents previously which could be shared with Committee, this would hopefully show religion in a more positive light.

AGREED that the RE Today National Report for the spring term be noted

63 WESTHILL AWARDS - UP TO £4,000 FOR PROJECTS WHICH ENGAGE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND PROVIDE COMPELLING LEARNING EXPERIENCES. SEE ATTACHED FOR IDEAS THAT HAVE WON A WESTHILL AWARDS IN THE PAST.

The Chair introduced the item which advised SACRE on Westhill Awards. He stated that this was an opportunity to apply for funding of £4,000 for projects which engage school children and provide compelling learning experiences.

He presented an example of a project as follows:-

- Involving children/students coming together with leaders of religions and world views with the aim at producing dialogue and mutual understanding of religion and breaking down prejudices and accepting other people's view points.

Lat advised that this would be an excellent project and had experience of working with SACRE's on such projects. He pointed out that the funding could pay for teacher cover and learning resources and would volunteer to assist with an application. He went on to advise that money had not been awarded to Doncaster before and Westhills were always looking for new applicants.

AGREED that a sub-committee be formed comprising of Jugtinder Singh and Tara Moxon, assisted by Lat in putting an application forward.

64 DELTA ACADEMIES TRUST PROGRESSION DOCUMENT (ATTACHED). DO WE FEEL THE KNOWLEDGE IS ACCURATE? IS THERE ANYTHING THAT NEEDS ADDING? IS THE PROGRESSION, RIGHT? IS THERE ANYTHING THAT NEEDS CHANGING?

The Chair sought comments with regard to the Delta Academies Trust Progression document.

Tara Moxon, wished to point out that in the interest of declarations, she was from a Delta Trust School. However, this information had been collated at a higher level.

Lat advised SACRE that whilst the information was interesting, in his professional opinion he would advise SACRE to note the document only. He stated that SACRE have an agreed syllabus which explains RE Studies in much more detail and whilst the information is of interest, the document was not complete and doesn't advise on teaching and learning.

AGREED to note the Delta Academies Trust Progression document.

65 NASACRE AWARDS - MOST ACTIVE MEMBER AND/OR MEMBER WHO HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. DO WE HAVE ANY NOMINATIONS?

The Chair sought comments from SACRE with regard to nominations and whether SACRE wished to nominate anyone for an award.

Whilst there were no nominations put forward, the Chair stated that if anyone would like to nominate anybody in the future to get in touch with him for further discussion.

66 WIDENING INVOLVEMENT - INVITING VISITORS TO OUR MEETINGS: HEADTEACHERS, RE TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND LEADERS OF FAITH/WORLD VIEW COMMUNITIES. MEETING IN PLACES OF WORSHIP AND/OR SCHOOLS. VISITING SCHOOLS AS SACRE MEMBERS. IDEAS?

The Chair sought Members views on widening involvement and inviting visitors to such as head teachers, RE teachers, students or leaders of faiths to SACRE meetings to share their knowledge and experience of their roles.

Members agreed that this would be a good idea and the Chair would look to take this task on board.

Tara Moxon NEU representative stated that she would be happy to share with SACRE what her school does in terms of RE.

A suggestion was put forward to hold SACRE meetings in other venues such as a school or a place of worship. It was advised that there would be the requirement to have hybrid facilities available for those members who were unable to attend physically and as SACRE was a public meeting there would be a requirement to provide public access. It was agreed that this be looked at for a future meeting.

AGREED that Tara Moxon present to SACRE a brief (10 mins) outline of what was taught in terms of RE at her school at the next SACRE meeting.

67 DONCASTER SACRE ANNUAL REPORT (TEMPLATE ATTACHED) - SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY 31ST MARCH 2023.

The Chair introduced the item, stating that SACRE are required to produce an Annual Report. A template had been produced to help with the completion of the report.

AGREED that the Vice-Chair, Councillor Glynis Smith in consultation with Lat would undertake the task of producing the report.

The Chair stated that there were also links on the NASACRE Website of published Annual Reports would help with completion.

68 CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN RE/WORLD VIEWS EDUCATION - THE ROTHERHAM SACRE PROJECT.

The Chair commented that some SACRE's celebrate excellence and go into schools to present awards, he asked whether this was something Doncaster SACRE would be interested in.

Lat provided Members with an example from Gloucestershire. He stated that schools were presented with certificates for a particular project as a mark of quality of excellence. He also advised that schools can be awarded RE Quality Mark. However schools are required to pay for this and whilst some SACRE's provide a subsidy, it was not clear if Doncaster would be able to offer that in light of the current budget position.

Jugtinder Singh wished to highlight to SACRE that she was looking at applying for RE Quality Mark for her school. The Chair offered to attend the school to provide support and discuss the application. He also offered this to any school which was something to keep in mind.

69 WORKPLAN UPDATE.

The Chair invited comments with regard to the work plan and whether any member wished to add any items.

Lat stated that whilst there had been success in engaging teachers for the Primary Network Group, he wished that this year priority should be given to finding teachers to attend a Secondary Network Group.

The Chair and Members agreed this a way forward but also stated that if there was anything further to add to the work of the Committee then Members are to come forward with those items.

70 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.

AGREED that the next meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education be held on Thursday, 6th July, 2023 in the Civic Chamber, Civic Office at 4.30 p.m.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____