

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

TUESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 2016

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the 007A AND B - CIVIC OFFICE on TUESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 2016, at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair – Reverend Tom McCready – Unitarian (Doncaster Interfaith)

Vice-Chair – Mr Bruce Gillham (Balby (Doncaster) Society of Friends)

Councillors James Hart and Sue Knowles

Mrs J Gessler, Ms J Stephenson, Mr S Syed, Mr B Teimoori, Mrs P Cassidy and Mr R Hedley.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nuala Fennelly and Majid Khan, Mr R Iball, Ms S Norburn, Mary Sivaanbu, Ms J Crowther, Mr M McGuigan and Mr T Griffiths.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

No declarations were reported at the meeting.

16 PRE-MEETING ITEM

The Chair, Reverend Tom McCready presented a brief report in relation to his attendance at the NASACRE AGM in London on the 17th May, 2016. He stated that he found the meeting was very informative, encouraging and a worthwhile event. It was noted that 50% of those eligible SACRE's were in attendance.

The Keynote speakers were Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss and Professor Adam Dinham. He stated that he had participated in discussions with other attendees and reported that following those conversations there were questions that the Committee could consider which were as follows:-

1. At the primary school level pupils do not only learn about different beliefs, cultures and traditions from their parents and their teachers: they learn from each other. Is there an effective way to acknowledge and encourage this?
2. At the secondary, F.E. and H.E. level, R.E and Religious Studies are not just about differing beliefs and practices but about using the world's religions and wisdom traditions to frame serious ethical and philosophical questions? and
3. There is still considerable resistance among some members of some faith groups to have more engagement with other faith groups, even though all the

main leaders of the faith groups encourage engagement on terms of friendship and respect. How do we address this? Is it part of our job to address this?

The Chair presented Members with a response submitted by the Vice-Chair Mr Bruce Gillham which highlighted a proposal for facilitating involving pupils directly in resourcing the Moral Curriculum.

Members were asked to consider the following:-

Launching and funding, from slim resources, a pupil-centred media competition, for example by encouraging the production of:

- Video interview tapes of analysis and investigations of moral questions, with staff and pupil inputs;
- Production of short plays intended for specific purposes and covering the key dimensions of moral decision-making within a multi-faith and multi-cultural context;
- Written compilations of wise sayings from the under 16's designed to support creative approaches to the fostering of moral and ethical issues in school;
- Guidance notes for government from pupils about the place of moral education in the school system

It was noted that all of these ideas could be explored but not necessarily presented in conjunction with religious standpoints or designed for distribution and dissemination via mobile phones, Facebook, Twitter as well as more conventional dissemination via school usage and existing networks.

Members were advised that such materials would be expected to generate energetic debate and rational thinking about community relations and good behaviour.

Members welcomed the proposal made by Bruce and felt that it would be beneficial to first look at ways in which engagement can be made with pupils without the requirement funding. It was suggested that a proposal for funding could be made through West Hill. It was noted that there had only been 1 other SACRE that had received funding which was 6 years ago. Members recognised the importance of early engagement with pupils and if more people were to see the work of SACRE more responses would be received.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- (1) the paper presented by the Chair on his attendance at NASACRE AGM be noted
- (2) the response and proposal presented by Bruce Gillham be supported and a further detailed presentation on the proposals be submitted to a future meeting

17 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH MAY, 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th May, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18 ANNUAL REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE.

Members discussed the Membership and Attendance of SACRE and highlighted their concerns regarding inquorate meetings. It was suggested that the importance be reiterated to members stating that there needed to be at least 1 representative from each Committee in order for the meetings to be declared quorate and decisions being made. It was also suggested that if a member had not attended 3 consecutive meetings a letter be sent to them seeking their views on whether they still wished to be a Member of SACRE.

The Chair, Reverend McCready reported that the new Minister Adam Priestly may want to attend SACRE as a representative from The Church of England. He stated that he would contact Reverend David Stephens to seek a response.

A suggestion of inviting pupils from a 6th form level who were undertaking studies such as ethics and were perhaps keen to engage with SACRE could be invited to attend future meetings and whether any links could be made with the Youth Council. Members highlighted the importance of engaging with young people at an early stage.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- (1) the report on Membership and attendance be noted;
- (2) a review be undertaken on the Membership and Attendance and a report be submitted to a future meeting;
- (3) a reminder be added to the agenda regarding the importance of member attendance to ensure a quorum is obtained; and
- (4) a Review of the Constitution and Terms of Reference be undertaken and a report be submitted to a future meeting.

19 NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR SACRE

Members were informed that there may be some changes with regard to the arrangements for SACRE. It was noted that SACRE no longer had a clerk who was responsible for SACRE following a re-organisation within the Local Authority directorate. Whilst some support was being provided, it would not be to the extent of what it used to be.

Members expressed their comments and concerns and felt that further clarity needed to be sought on what the Local Authority see as the new arrangement for the future of SACRE.

It was noted that nobody wanted to see SACRE to be disbanded and felt that whilst there were significant challenges ahead, it was clear that SACRE could rise to that challenge. Members were also advised that members also have access to NASACRE which would provide a lot of support material. It was also advised that Doncaster SACRE were much better than neighbouring SACRE's.

RECOMMENDED that further clarity be sought from the Local Authority on the new arrangements for SACRE following recent resource changes and a report be submitted to a future meeting.

20 SACRE BRIEFING 12

Members had received a copy of the SACRE Briefing paper and were invited to make comments. Discussion took place in relation to new password details for SACRE members and who would be responsible for providing these. It was suggested that prior to this matter being addressed at the next meeting, further discussions take place outside of the meeting to clarify roles and responsibilities.

The Chair, Reverend McCready stated that he would also like to share and provide a brief report to the Muslim/Christian Faith Group highlighting the information within the Tell Mama Annual Report 2015 on hate crime requesting their views. A report with their responses would be submitted to the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- (1) the briefing be noted;
- (2) clarity be sought prior to the next meeting on who was responsible for members log-in's/passwords; and
- (3) a report highlighting responses regarding the Tell Mama Annual Report on hate crime be submitted to the next meeting

21 NATRE PRIMARY SURVEY FINDINGS

The Committee considered a paper which presented an analysis of data gathered from a questionnaire on primary religious education conducted by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).

The report identified key findings from the survey which were as follows:-

1. How suitable is primary teachers' training and preparation to teach RE?
2. How well supported are subject leaders of RE?
3. What issues were causing teachers of RE concern; and
4. What issues help or hinder the effective delivery of RE

A further detailed breakdown of the survey questions were also presented within pages 29-39 of the report.

Members were invited to make comments. It was noted that the findings didn't highlight anything new and were similar to what Members already knew. Members were of the view that there didn't seem to be any commitment from some teachers towards Religious Education particularly at primary school level. It was noted that more specialised teachers of Religious Education were within High Schools. Members were also advised that Teacher training was not providing people with the skills or confidence to deliver the RE subject.

The Chair asked whether he was able to share the information within a report to the Muslim/Christian Faith Group. In response, Pat Cassidy stated that this would not be a problem but to ensure that the information was referenced appropriately.

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

22 INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The Committee received a copy of the Religious Education and Collective Worship E-Newsletter which had been forwarded to all schools.

The Chair, Rev Tom McCready announced to Members 2 forthcoming events which were as follows:-

- 1-7 February 2017 International Interfaith Harmony Week. He stated that the event would be a festival of minority faiths and he would be contacting people and asking for their participation.
- Refugee week 3rd week in June 2017. He pointed out that this event would also fall within Ramadan and it was suggested that there would be a week of prayer and following the end of Ramadan people would be invited to celebrate cultural diversity.

In addition, Mr S Syed brought to the Members attention his recent visit to Israel and the places he had visited. He stated that the trip was very worthwhile and urged others to attend if they were able to do so.

RECOMMENDED that the E-Newsletter and comments made by Members be noted.

23 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

It was recommended that the following items be placed on future agendas:-

- (1) Review of Membership and Attendance;
- (2) Review of the Constitution and Terms of Reference;
- (3) A presentation on the proposals for facilitating involving pupils directly in resourcing the Moral Curriculum;
- (3) Draft SACRE Annual Report 2015-2016 for approval;
- (4) Review of the Local Agreed Syllabus; and
- (5) Presentation Humanism Website.

24 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED that the next meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) be scheduled for Monday 6th March, 2017 in Room 7a&b Civic Office at 4.00 p.m.

CHAIR:_____

DATE:_____