

Minutes of a Meeting of the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) held in the Holyrood Academy (Upper Site), Zembard Lane, Chard TA20 1JL, on Wednesday, 28 June 2023 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Tessa Munt (Interim Chair)

Niel Apps	Rhona Burfield
Leonard Daniels (on-line)	Eleanor Delaney
Pauline Dodds (on-line)	Pat Ebdon
Penny Jerrard	Mike Keogh
Cllr Tim Kerley	Shell Sullivan
Jessica Witchell (on-line)	

Officers in attendance:

Alison Jeffrey	Angela Cox
Kate Daunton	Jamie Jackson
Amelia Walker	

Other Members present remotely:

Cllr Sarah Wakefield

1 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

Apologies for absence were received from Jude Clements, Pauline Dodds, Liz Payne-Amadi, Hazel Prior-Sankey and Jessica Witchell.

It was noted that Leonard Daniels, Pauline Dodds and Jessica Witchell joined the meeting on-line.

2 Membership and Welcomes - Agenda Item 2

The Interim Chair welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made by all

present in person and on-line.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 3

The Interim Chair invited comments on the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting held on 08 March 2023. The following corrections were made:

- Correct the spelling of Councillor Tim Kerley's name.
- Page 2 – Niel Apps advised that legislation stated that associations which represented teachers should be sought to be nominating organisations to join SACRE.
- Page 2 (Minute 5 - SACRE Annual Report 22-23) – Kate Daunton corrected the second paragraph to read that “Three groups in a variety of settings including a large MAT are trialling these nationally.” Not for the LA.
- It was noted the action to check the NASACRE guidance for the re-election process was now included within the Constitution.
- The dates of future meetings at the end of the minutes were incorrect. Should read Wednesday 20 September 2023 and Wednesday 13 March 2024.

4 Public Questions - Agenda Item 4

There were no members of the public present.

5 Constitution - Agenda Item 5

Alison Jeffrey reported that following the last meeting, consultation had taken place on the SACRE Constitution and it was suggested that:-

- The executive be made up of one Chair and two Vice-Chairs.
- There could be multiple representatives from Christian groups in Group A including separate Evangelical & Baptist representatives but only named representatives could vote.
- It was agreed to separate the Jewish, Sikh & Hindu positions in Group A due to national demographics rather than just local ones at to allow more representatives to be involved.
- The final draft of the Constitution following the consultation was shared prior to the meeting.

During discussion, it was noted that:-

- The membership was included in the pack and currently the Catholic, Methodist, Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu positions are all vacant.

- The Chair and Vice-Chair must be from different parts of the SACRE structure.
- A vote was required to agree to adopt the Constitution following the consultation and there would be one vote per Group.
- There were very few Jewish students identified in Somerset. Nevertheless, Judaism was a central basis for the Christian and Islamic faiths.
- Guidance suggested looking at the faiths within Somerset and Group A comprised those faiths which feature within Somerset. However the wider national faiths should also be considered.
- The order of faiths should be listed more neutrally, i.e. alphabetically.
- All the faiths listed in Group A are able to vote but in order to be quorate, there must be one member identified as from a Christian faith and one member identified from another faith present.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was unanimously agreed to accept the Constitution with the amendment proposed at Agenda item 7.

6 Future Meeting Format - Agenda Item 6

Alison Jeffrey advised that the future meeting format had been consulted upon and the results were 40% face to face, 40% on-line and 20% hybrid therefore to represent everyone, the future format would be hybrid to be as inclusive as possible. The future meeting times consultation had been inconclusive.

The next meeting on 20 September would be on-line only to enable break-out rooms for each group to discuss the election of the future Chair and Vice-Chairs.

In future there would be refreshments and networking from 2.00pm and the meetings would start at 2.30pm and close by 4.30pm. Wednesdays were the preferred meeting day.

7 Voting Process for Chair - Agenda Item 7

Kate Daunton clarified that at the next meeting on 20 September (which would be held on-line) there would be votes for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chairs. A candidate could self-nominate themselves or could nominate another candidate. Nominations must be submitted by 01 August 2023 and they required a proposer, seconder and also the agreement of the person nominated.

Nomination forms would be sent out from 03 July 2023 and there would be opportunity at the meeting to discuss the nominations within each group. The result of the vote would be announced that day if the meeting was quorate.

During discussion it was clarified that the Chair and two Vice-Chairs should be from three of each of the four groups. It was also requested that role descriptions for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair be circulated to all.

Action: Officers to amend the Constitution at 9.1 to read “Local Authority Committee” not “Council”. Also to clarify that the Chair and two Vice-Chairs would be elected from three of each of the four Groups and that role descriptions would be circulated after the meeting.

8 Agreed Syllabus Curriculum - Agenda Item 8

Kate Daunton invited discussion on the Agreed Syllabus Conference to be taken forward to the next meeting on 20 September and whether the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus for RE needed to be reviewed. It requires review every 5 years and the last review had been conducted in 2019. This would be an opportunity to look at what was going well, what was not going well and why. It was also an opportunity to identify changes required and implement them, involve teachers, and decide if the new Local Authority Agreed Syllabus be an electronic document or published.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- It would be sensible to reconnect with other surrounding Local Authorities for advice and support.
- Cumbria has just completed their review and it would be good to see the draft book from the REC which would be published the next year.
- Bristol, North Somerset and BANES are all using the same syllabus and they revised and published their ‘Awareness Mystery Value 22’ the previous year so it would not be possible to join their revision.
- It may be possible to invite a representative from one of the neighbouring authorities to discuss their process, content and how it was working for them.

At the conclusion of the debate a vote was taken as to whether to begin an ASC review and this was agreed. Officers will bring a proposal to the September meeting around next steps.

ACTION:

That officers start on a proposal for the Agreed Syllabus Conference and present it to the next meeting on 20 September 2023.

9 Update from RE Advisor - Agenda Item 9

Shell Sullivan provided a comprehensive update to the Committee. Her comments included:-

- Following interviews with 4 strong candidates, Rebekah Guy had been appointed as the new Primary RE Adviser for Somerset and she would take up the appointment from September 2023.
- A day was planned for Primary RE leads as part of Somerset partnership at the Blue School and it was led by Leanne Merley and Sarah Sabey.
- There will be a Curriculum Symposium on Friday 24 November at Holyrood School, including Gillian Georgiou, Dawn Cox, Alice Thomas, and Sophie Smith. They will deliver information on the REC projects and be looking at reviewing the syllabus. It is hoped this will attract a lot of RE teachers. All SACRE members are welcome to attend as well.
- The Leadership Programme continued into year 2 and has been very helpful in supporting networking across the county's schools and influencing work with SACRE. Rebekah is now an LTRE Hub Leader, and this will strengthen the work across Somerset.
- Somerset was the second worst county for GCSE entries so there is a great deal of work to be done to improve this.
- Shell was part of the RE Today Tourer Panel and an article on work with year 7 would be in the September issue RE Today.
- Shell was appointed as ITT Development Curriculum teacher for RE teacher trainees. She will be writing the curriculum over the summer for SWIFT for delivery at the Colyton Academy Trust from September 2023. It is important that Somerset is part of developing the SWIFT curriculum for the South West programme.
- There had only been 3 RE trainees over the last few years where previously there had been 24 or 25. Nationally there had been a big push to recruit RE teacher trainees.
- RE Hubs are now on-line. These are a collection of all the RE Hubs which are on-line. The blogs give a great insight to what is happening across the country.
- There is to be a newsletter published at the beginning of each term which will be interactive and circulated to SACRE members.

Kate Daunton thanked Pauline Dodds for joining on-line to assist with the Primary RE Adviser appointment.

Amelia Walker advised that there were a series of steering groups taking forward the Education Strategy. The Thriving Schools steering group had decided to focus on school attendance and one of the threads from this was a curriculum which would draw students into schools. This was an opportunity to think about the curriculum

and make it exciting to be in the classroom every day. There was an opportunity for RE to be at the heart of this through the work Shell has done and to revitalise networks. There was also an opportunity for SACRE to be part of this. If RE could draw students into school then it could be a path to University and teaching in the future.

10 Update from Diocese - Agenda Item 10

Pauline Dodds provided an update from the Diocese of Bath & Wells. Her comments included:

- The report focussed on the number of science reports which mentioned RE and the positive comments which the Church schools had received.
- RE was part of the Diocese's work with schools.
- The annual RE Conference had been held on 28 March with 50 RE leaders attending. The Diocese also covered BANES and North Somerset areas.
- The Diocese had secured Adam Robinson, part of the RE Today team, to lead the Conference the next year.
- The SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) had recently graded the Somerset schools and academies. 73 were currently graded Good at their last SIAMS inspection, 34 graded Excellent (previously outstanding), 9 graded Requires Improvement (previously Satisfactory). The two which were pending were graded Good. They covered all aspects of science inspection, not just RE.
- There was a new science framework and there would be a different inspection from 2023.
- The curriculum review was needed as some of the exemplar links were out of date.

Pauline concluded by mentioning that previous minutes referred to Katie Freeman attending SACRE to give a 'World Views' approach. It was agreed that she would be invited to the meeting to be held on 13 March 2024.

11 Date of Next Meeting - Agenda Item 11

The future meeting dates were confirmed as starting at 2.30pm on 20 September 2023 and 13 March 2024.

12 Close - Agenda Item 12

The meeting closed at 3.15pm and it was suggested to take the Committee's views to formulate future objectives for the syllabus. During discussion the following

points were made:-

- A syllabus to inspire teachers who are not confident in teaching RE.
- Attendance at RE classes. Depart from the syllabus to tempt children back into the classroom at secondary school level. For non-specialist teachers to take a philosophical debate and be free with ideas and let them express their thoughts.
- A philosophy based curriculum.
- Teaching methodology. P4C is very structured. We tried to integrate it into the Somerset curriculum as a way of setting up debate & discussion which both students and Ofsted love.
- Students want a fun and unstructured debate.
- There are a series of weekend classes in philosophy for students.
- A good syllabus must include some methodology and where to find the skills to deliver a class.
- The 'World Views' approach has made teaching challenging and it can be interpreted for a multi-disciplinary approach.
- The History of Ideas approach seeks commonalities between religions and is more philosophy based.
- Look at the work done by the RE Council.
- It is not enough to have a list of topics and objectives – there needs to be a detailed structure with stages and activities to support non-RE teachers to deliver an RE lesson.
- Concepts within religion – a version of Big Ideas
- The hinterland gets the non-specialists. Provide them with the facilitating knowledge that they don't have as a non-specialist to enable them to relate this knowledge to RE.
- We need to inspire the teachers to inspire the students.
- Link RE to other subjects being taught so they fit together.

(The meeting ended at 4.00 pm)

.....

CHAIR