

## Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

### Tuesday, 4 October 2016, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

#### Minutes

#### Present:

Mrs Lindsay Thorne (Chairman), Mr Ian Hopwood (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Charlotte Betteridge, Ms Stephanie Boulter, Mr Graham Bounds, Mr Chris Giles, Ms Ellie Hill, Mrs Tasnim Khawaja, Mr Robin C Lunn, Mrs Christine Parker.

#### Also attended:

Kate Griffiths, Barry Newton and Stephen Pett.

#### **562 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

The Chairman welcomed Charlotte Betteridge to her first meeting. Charlotte was representing NASUWT and had previously taught RE in schools in Redditch for 11 years.

Apologies for absence had been received from Sue Askin, Tracey Lister and Yvonne Stollard.

#### **563 Declaration of Interests**

None

#### **564 Confirmation of the Minutes**

Members wished for the following amendments to be made to the minutes:

Minute 553 – The RE Commission was just beginning rather than half way through considering the position of SACREs.

Minute 560 – It was clarified that according to the constitution Members could be removed from SACRE if they did not attend 3 consecutive meetings this would only occur if no pertinent reason was given.

The minutes were otherwise accepted to be an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

#### **565 Excellent RE Hub Leaders Project**

Stephen Pett confirmed that the Hub Leaders Project would involve 3.5 days of training for excellent teachers – 5 teachers from community schools and 5 from church schools. The training would begin in February which was later than planned due to current training being rolled out by the Diocese.

The Hub Leaders project was a collaboration between SACRE, the Diocese and the University with funding from Culham St Gabriels. The University had recently

appointed a secondary RE team member who would be involved in assessing the quality of the model with the aim of being able to roll out the project to other areas and perhaps also present it at future conferences.

Between the training days which would be spread over a number of weeks, the teachers would be expected to set up network meetings with other RE teachers and form hubs. The aim of the system was that the hubs would be sustainable after the training excellent RE would be spread to other schools.

Steph Boulter explained that the training that had been rolled out by the Diocese was their Understanding Christianity resource and the Diocese were currently 'training the trainers'. They had reached 77 out of 100 church schools and were hoping to reach more by next summer. There had been positive feedback so far and it was noted that the training may be extended to other faiths in future.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- a) **Supported the Excellent RE Hub Leaders project; and**
- b) **Would be interested in learning about the schools who were involved and attending the training.**

**566 Special RE Conference**

The timetable for the Special RE Conference was distributed. The Conference was to be held at Puckrup Hall, Tewkesbury on 11 October, for teachers from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Swindon and Bristol. The conference would support teachers to meet the needs of their pupils and promote their personal development. The special RE Conference took place around every 18 months.

**RESOLVED that SACRE noted the information regarding the special RE conference.**

**567 Summer Conferences 2017**

The Primary RE Conferences had taken place in June this year and a suggested outline for the conferences to be held in June 2017 was circulated. There would be a conference in Worcester on 19 June and one in Hereford on 20 June so teachers could attend whichever was most convenient.

The planned timetable was designed to help teachers prepare pupils for life and learning about different religions as well as giving teachers more confidence. A

speakers' corner would be included and would hopefully involve the teachers who were hub leaders.

Members were asked if they had any comments or suggestions for improvements for the proposed timetable at the conference and members made the following suggestions:

- Swop days were being introduced between Evesham schools and Birmingham schools so that areas with little diversity could experience what it was like to have pupils with a variety of religions,
- Practical objects used for worship in different religions were a good way to start discussions, as were persona dolls,
- The speakers' corner was thought to be a good idea as it gave practical ideas that had been used in the classroom and proved successful,
- Teachers would appreciate hand-outs which could be taken back to school,
- Members felt the conferences would be good for trainee teachers as well as those already in schools, and
- they were also pleased to see that middle schools were included,

A new member who had been an RE Teacher admitted that she had not previously heard of these conferences however it was clarified that information was sent to schools but was perhaps not getting any further than the school office.

Feedback from the Secondary Conference was distributed. The number of attendees had been low in 2016 – perhaps due to a conference run by South Bromsgrove High School - so it had been proposed that RE Today work with South Bromsgrove for a joint conference in 2017. The conference would offer support to teachers with the increased demands of teaching GCSE RE.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- a) Appreciated the work done by RE Today to organise the conferences; and**
- b) Agreed with the proposed content for 2017.**

**568 Update from Babcock**

Barry Newton informed the Council that he was retiring at the end of October. He did not yet know who would be

**569 Membership Update**

his replacement or who would have responsibility for SACRE.

There was as yet no information regarding the funding for SACRE for 2017/18 However he would ensure that outstanding amounts for RE Today, the Hub Leaders project and NASACE were sorted before he left.

At present Babcock did not offer any support to schools who had achieved good or better Ofsted ratings and in future it was likely that most schools would become academies so it was unclear what input the Local Authority, through its contract with Babcock, would have in schools.

Members felt that it was important that all the available money be used to help schools become sustainable in future so it was proposed that the remainder of SACREs funds after paying its NASACRE membership be paid to RE Today for the Excellent RE Hub Leaders project and any associated training that was necessary. All SACRE members present agreed to the suggestion.

It was suggested that it would be useful to have a SACRE meeting in early February 2017 so that it could take place before the end of the financial year; the 1 or 2 February 2017 were proposed.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- a) **Thanked Barry Newton for his hard work and support of SACRE;**
- b) **Agreed that SACRE should continue as a member of NASACRE and pay the membership fee; and**
- c) **That any remaining money should be used towards furthering the Excellent RE Hub Leaders Project.**

Tasnim Khawaja gave a brief overview of the report on 'The Geography of anti-Muslim hatred in 2015.

- The majority of hate crimes were directed at women by white men and were often close to main roads. There were not any more incidents in deprived areas than anywhere else,
- Safeguarding leads and teachers needed to be aware of these issues and taught how to deal with them
- NASACRE wondered whether SACREs should consider the report in full and ask their Local Authority what they plan to do with it,

- There was also a question over the effectiveness of teaching about Islam and community cohesion.

SACRE members were concerned about how Worcestershire teachers were being prepared to teach the refugees who were beginning to arrive in Worcestershire who were vulnerable and from various religions. The University had a refugee team who went to Calais to help teach younger children. A group was also being organised to help older children. Bromsgrove and Redditch had a volunteer group to welcome refugees and it was suggested the group could work with the University.

It was agreed that a question could be asked at Council regarding the numbers of young refugees and how schools were preparing for their arrival.

**RESOLVED that SACRE:**

- a) Encourage a question to be asked at the next Council meeting regarding preparations regarding refugees;**
- b) An update report from Tasnim Khawaja and Ellie Hill would be received at the next meeting.**

**570 National RE Update**

GCSE - An RE news update was distributed. The numbers taking the full course GCSE RS in 2016 saw a slight rise but numbers taking the short course in GCSE RS declined by 17.7%. Overall there were 355,356 entries for GCSE RS which was a decline of 4.1% from 2015.

The numbers of schools making no entries for any RS qualification was increasing. NATRE had found that 30% of community schools and 40% of academies without a religious character were failing to meet their legal or contractual agreements to provide religious education.

A-Level – The number of entries had increased by 6.8% on 2015 to 24,966. A 124% increase since 2003 was more than any other arts subject.

Commission on RE – Was looking at the purposes and scope of RE and identifying high quality RE provision.

NATRE and the REC were working on proposals to ensure that all schools fulfil their RE requirement.

NEW2RE – Limited places were left for 3 years funded support and training for secondary NQTs. Schools were

required to pay £120 but received around £1000 worth of support. Members had heard of NQTs who had been persuaded to stay in the teaching profession because of that support.

**RESOLVED that SACRE noted this update.**

**571 Feedback from Members**

None

**572 Any Other Business**

NASACRE were consulting on their revised constitution. Members received copies of the existing and new constitutions and agreed that the proposed constitution was similar to the previous version, with more information regarding the roles of the Honorary Officers and the Executive Committee. Committee members were therefore happy to endorse the proposed constitution.

**RESOLVED that Worcestershire SACRE agree to the Chairman responding to NASACRE stating their agreement to the new constitution.**

**573 Future Meeting Dates**

The meeting dates for 2017 were:

- 8 March 2017
- 9 June 2017
- 3 October 2017

However it was decided the spring meeting should be moved to 1 or 2 February 2017.

The meeting ended at 4.00pm

Chairman .....