

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Tuesday, 9 June 2015, County Hall, Worcester - 2.00 pm

Minutes

Present:

Mrs L Thorne (Chairman), Mrs S Askin, Mr J Allison, Mr G Bounds, Mr C Giles, Mr I Hopwood, Dr J Lally, Mrs T Lister, Mr R Lunn, Mr N Mills, Mrs C Parker, Ms K Poole and Dr Y Stollard.

Also attended:

Barry Newton, Stephen Pett and Kate Griffiths.

524 Apologies and Declaration of Interests

Apologies were received from Stephanie Boulter and Ellie Hill.

There were no declarations of interest.

525 Chairman

Two nominations were received for the position of Chairman – Ian Hopwood and Lindsay Thorne.

Lindsay Thorne explained that she had been a member of SACRE for the last eight years as the Ba'hai representative. She was now retired but her working life had been spent in teaching; the last 15 years at Riverside School working with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Throughout her career she had worked with all age ranges. She was a member of the National Body for the Ba'hai faith and a member of the REC Council. She was also a trustee for Pershore Youth Centre.

Ian Hopwood had been a District Councillor for 12 years in Malvern and a County Councillor for 2 years. He worshipped at St Matthias Church of England Church in Malvern. He had been instrumental in gaining the necessary funding for the SACRE syllabus; and looking to the future as there was the possibility of working more closely with Herefordshire SACRE he felt the Chairs of both SACREs could work together at a political level to achieve the best outcome.

After a secret ballot Lindsay Thorne received 8 votes and Ian Hopwood 5.

RESOLVED that Lindsay Thorne be elected as Chairman of SACRE for the next two years.

526 Vice-Chairman

The constitution allowed for 2 Vice Chairman to be appointed a year apart so there would be continuity. It was proposed and agreed that one Chairman be appointed and in a year's time SACRE could decide whether they wished to appoint a further Vice Chairman.

Ian Hopwood was nominated for Vice Chairman and as there were no objections and no further nominations, was appointed.

RESOLVED that Ian Hopwood be appointed as Vice Chairman for a period of two years.

The Outgoing Chairman

The new Chairman wished to record her thanks to Ani Choesang who had been Chairman of Worcestershire SACRE for the previous two years. She had been committed and made a difference - working hard to promote RE and support teachers in the County.

527 Confirmation of the Minutes

The attendance details of the previous minutes had been incorrect but had been corrected on the website. Otherwise the minutes were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman asked about the Complaints procedure mentioned in the minutes and Barry Newton explained that the Legal Department had told him that the necessity for the procedure had been repealed even though the most recent Government toolkit had asked for it. Further investigation would take place and members would be informed of the outcome.

528 RE Conferences and Syllabus Launch

Stephen Pett showed the SACRE Members the printed version of the syllabus which was being distributed to schools. It was clarified that it had been agreed at the previous SACRE meeting that the syllabus would be available to all schools in Worcestershire without charge.

The members of SACRE who were teachers said the new syllabus was amazing. It could be picked up and used by teachers easily and would give them the confidence they needed to teach RE. It had moved on from what had been produced previously and was relevant to RE teaching today.

It was explained that Herefordshire SACRE were also in the process of launching the same syllabus, although it had been modified for Herefordshire as Worcestershire's had been modified to take into account middle schools.

		<p>There was a discussion around the distribution of the syllabus packs. All schools would be emailed an electronic version and those schools who had attended the conferences had been given one hard copy of the syllabus but Children's Services explained that they did not have the budget or staff to post the remaining packs to schools. They suggested a letter be sent requesting schools to pick up their copy. No other documents were posted to schools as everything was sent electronically. Members asked if it was possible to have a list of clusters or pyramids so the packs could be distributed to groups of schools but it was explained that clusters and schools working together were changing and so it was only practical to work off one master list of individual schools.</p> <p>Conferences for primary and middle schools were held on 21 and 22 May and the feedback received was distributed. Most teachers rated the conferences as good or excellent</p> <p>RE Today suggested running a further conference on 13 November for schools who had not been able to attend the initial dates. This would not be at a cost to SACRE because schools would pay for their attendance and RE Today would be able to advertise their additional schemes of work</p> <p>RESOLVED that SACRE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) investigate whether they could afford to pay for the syllabus packs to be sent to all schools, otherwise schools would be sent an email encouraging them to pick up a syllabus, b) supported the proposal that RE Today run a further launch conference on 13 November 2015.
529	National Association of SACREs	<p>The invoice for the NASACRE annual subscription had been received. It was explained that NASACRE was the National body promoting the work of SACREs. SACRE Members confirmed that they believed it was a benefit to remain a member of NASACRE.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Worcestershire SACRE confirmed that they wished to remain a member of NASACRE.</p>
530	Proposal to Work more Closely with Herefordshire SACRE	<p>Worcestershire SACRE already shared an advisor from RE Today and it was appreciated that joint conferences to support teachers could be a good idea but SACRE were unsure how further joint working could be of benefit.</p> <p>The Chairman informed the meeting that the Ani</p>

		<p>Choesang had arranged a meeting with the Chairman of Hereford SACRE to discuss ideas. The Chairman confirmed that she would attend the meeting and feedback the ideas to SACRE members.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Chairman meet with the Chairman of Herefordshire SACRE to pursue any benefits of increased joint working.</p>
531	RE and Collective Worship - LA Complaints procedure	<p>As dealt with under Agenda Item 4 – Barry Newton would confirm if the procedure was needed under the new regulations and inform members.</p>
532	Funding Strategy Group	<p>No actions had been taken by the strategy group. The Chairman was aware that money was available from the Westhill Awards but they were looking for new ideas for projects which worked with Communities.</p> <p>Members pointed out that it was important to identify what the money would be used for, there needed to be a benefit for teachers in Worcestershire rather than just an aim of gaining money.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Tracey Lister and Norman Mills put together ideas which could be used for a funding proposal.</p>
533	National RE News	<p>Stephen Pett provided a report at the meeting showing that the numbers of pupils taking the short course had fallen by 70% between 2009 and 2015. Overall there had been a fall of 20% in pupils taking the full or short course. NATRE claimed this was due to government policies which did not include RE in the English Baccalaureate and only including full GCSEs in the average point score. Lots of schools only allowed 1 hour a week for the full course and from 2017 the course would be more rigorous so numbers were likely to fall further.</p> <p>The APPG on RE was in the process of appointing a new Chairman and other MPs should be encouraged to join the group. Complaints had been sent to the Education Funding Agency about the fall in numbers of pupils and the fact that some schools were not doing any RE but no action had been taken.</p> <p>NATRE News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATREs annual survey on RE in Secondary

		<p>Schools was available and teachers were urged to complete it,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new campaign to train RE Teachers had been launched called Beyond the Ordinary, • A guidance document on visits and visitors to schools was available on their website. <p>The new specifications for GCSE and A level were currently being developed and should be approved by Ofqual in August 2015.</p>
534	The Future of SACRE	<p>Barry Newton explained that the Council's Cabinet papers had just been published and Babcock Training had been identified as the preferred provider to take on Learning and Achievement. There was a 'cooling off' period until the end of June and then TUPE arrangements would be considered until the contact was due to begin on 1 October 2015.</p> <p>SACRE was a statutory function but the responsibility for it would go with the rest of Learning and Achievement to the new provider. Barry had completed a process map for how SACRE was organised at present so that the new provider was aware of what was expected. The new provider would be assessed against certain outcomes but they would probably be wide outcomes such as the number of 'good' schools in the county rather than being specifically concerned with SACRE or RE.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the update be noted and any further updates be passed to SACRE members before the next meeting.</p>
535	Future Events 2015/16	<p>As mentioned there would be a further conference organised by RE Today in November to launch the Agreed Syllabus. Network meetings would also be organised. Other future events would depend if further funding could be found.</p>
536	Members Updates	<p>None.</p>
537	Future Meeting Dates	<p>The next meeting would be held on: Wednesday 21 October 2015 at County Hall Worcester.</p>

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm

Chairman