

## LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

### Minutes of the Lewisham SACRE

which was open to the press and public and was held on  
Wednesday 5 March 2019

At Olive Tree Nursery, 363-365 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6NZ

**These minutes were approved by the SACRE on: 16 May 2019**

GROUP	REPRESENTING	NAME	PRESENT
A	Baha'i	Afonso Veiga	APOLOGIES
A	Buddhism	David Hutchens	✓
A	Free Church A o G	Pastor Nick Hughes (Chair)	✓
A	Free Church	Leanne Rudder (substitute)	
A	Free Church (Baptist)	(Vacant)	
A	Free Churches (URC)	Rev Raymond Singh	✓
A	Hinduism	Vallipuram Bala	
A	Hinduism	Narmadha Saravanan	
A	Hinduism	Mrs Sri	
A	Humanism	Hester Brown	✓
A	Independent Evangelical	Nigel Desborough	
A	Independent Evangelical	Ray Brown (substitute)	
A	Islam	Nadia Ali	✓
A	Islam	Khadijah Knight	✓
A	Judaism	Gerald Rose	✓
A	Judaism	Joan Goldberg	✓
A	Judaism	Rev David Rome (substitute)	
A	Pentecostal	Layo Afuape	APOLOGIES
A	Pentecostal	Cheryl Abbam (substitute)	✓
A	Roman Catholic	Rt Rev Monsignor Nicholas Rotherham	✓
A	Sikhism	(Vacant)	
B	The CoE - Southwark Diocesan Board of Education	Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair)	APOLOGIES
B	The Church of England - Secondary teacher	(Vacant)	
B	The Church of England - Primary teacher	Karen Hansen	APOLOGIES
B	The Church of England - Governor	(Vacant)	
B	The Church of England - Minister	Paul Wynter	
C	NEU	Kim Knappett	✓
C	NEU	Kim Griffiths	
C	Academy/Free school	(Vacant)	
C	NEU	(Vacant)	
C	NAS/UWT	Mandy Keeble	
C	Lewisham Headteachers and deputies	Judith Purkiss	
D	Local Authority member	Councillor Jacq Paschoud	✓
D	Local Authority member	Councillor Tauseef Anwar	✓
D	Local Authority member	Councillor Hilary Moore	✓
D	School Governors - Primary 1/2	Isaac Sackey (shared place)	
D	School Governors - Primary 2/2	VACANT	
D	School Governors - Secondary	Adelere Adedeji	
D	Representative of the Executive Director of Education	Angela Scattergood	✓
Other	Primary Teacher	Judith Nweze	
	Rastafarians	(Vacant)	
	Young Mayor Team	c/o Katy Brown and Malcolm Ball	
	Also Present	Gwenton Sloely	✓
	Also Present	Imam Shakeel Begg	✓
	RE School Improvement Officer	Denise Chaplin	✓
	Minuting clerk	Stephen Sealy	✓

*(Boxed sections in these minutes signify actions, and underlined sections signify decisions)*

The meeting began at 6.45pm.

The Chair explained the late start was due to him waiting for enough members to attend to make the meeting quorate. He acknowledged that much of the meeting wasn't expected to be about decision making.

#### **1a Welcomes and introductions**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and welcomed particularly Gwenton Sloley as an invited guest.

#### **1b Apologies for absence**

Denise read out the apologies as indicated on the attendance list on Page 1.

Cllr Paschoud questioned if she'd attended the previous SACRE meeting and it was confirmed that she had. The minutes if the previous meeting will be amended accordingly.

#### **1c Confirmation of order of items for the meeting.**

In order to enable Gwenton Sloely to attend a second appointment, the Chair requested that item point 7 be tabled first. The committee duly agreed.

### **7 Presentation of Fusion Gang Intervention Initiative - SACRE Chair**

The Chair contextualised the presentation by reminding the committee that in the previous meeting the committee had suggested a presentation by Fusion on their work in the borough would be of interest and relevance.

The Chair introduced Gwenton Sloely from Crying Sons, an organisation that works with boys and men caught in the cycle of gangs and serious violence. The organisation had been funded by the Home Office to work with faith groups in local communities to deliver training and awareness of the problems of knife crime and to help those communities broker intervention responses.

His organisation had delivered this training in Lewisham in 2017 and from it was birthed a local community group now titled 'Fusion: Arise and Go'.

Gwenton outlined the challenges currently being faced by communities like Lewisham with the high incidences of knife violence and fatalities as well as the associated crimes of burglary that accompany such crime. As a multi-faith community group, Fusion is attempting to engage these communities of young people – victims, perpetrators, and parents/guardians - who often come from a faith background, to provided signposting, support and intervention.

*At this point Imam Shakeel arrived.*

Gwenton outlined some of his own faith background and heritage influences that have helped spur his passion and commitment to help people caught on these cycles of violence. He had observed that the majority of people in gangs had a faith background, which had led him to engage faith communities to help formulate a response.

Gwenton outlined that:-

- Lewisham had the second largest youth population after Croydon.
- Many young people who were convicted and sent to prison turned to their faith for support
- That the investigation of one murder was calculated as costing £1.7million.
- That Fusion's aims included following up on young people after their release to give ongoing support from a multi-faith context.

A number of questions and observations were raised by colleagues, clarifying Gwenton's consultancy role with Fusion; his role as a trainer/educator in the area of young people and violent crime; his former post with Lewisham as an Outreach Consultant.

*At this point Cllr Hilary Moore arrived.*

There was some good discussion about

- how faith played a significant role in the lives of young people
- how young people would begin to challenge or move away from their faith around the ages of 11-13 onwards,
- young people saw themselves engaging in 'bad behaviour', and did not want to associate with the 'clean' when they were involved with what they perceived as 'dirty'
- Music styles and subject played an important part of this context.
- The behaviour of young people often equated to hiding and a sense of not wanting to be watched,
- How faith communities could often become judgmental instead of giving hope,
- That faith communities should shoulder some of the blame at the way young people feel.
- that faith leaders need to do more to address some of these problems.
- That this wasn't a race issue, but more poverty and expulsion from school issues.
- That if young people can stay in school until they're 16, that was considered a positive result.

*At this point Cllr Tauseef and Kim left.*

Gwenton responding to a question advised:

- that the initiative had been funded by the office of the Mayor of London and aimed to link directly with existing multi-faith groups.
- He had a vision for a drop-in surgery for all faith groups.
- Encouraged greater engagement with social media
- Questioned why there was so little youth representation in the groups
- Reiterated how pivotal speaking to his own grandmother had been in allowing him to realise where he had come from, emphasising the value in often just having simple conversations with people.

Further discussion revealed:

- The training and awareness programme had brought a sea change in thinking about this involved with gang and knife crime.
- that alot of young people have links with Rastafarians but without a knowledge of the faith.
- that Gwenton had reached out to the Tamil community and had offered also to visit them in their base.

Gwenton drew the meeting's attention to a new church called SPAC nation specifically aimed at reaching young people, especially young men who have/are involved in gangs.

Angela advised

- that there had also been a wider response to these issues in the council, and a strategy devised.
- For further information, colleagues could contact Geeta Subramaniam at the Council.
- That contextual safeguarding was being done at a Local Authority level, whereby young people are considered in the context of their friends rather than their family.

*At this point Imam Shakeel left the meeting.*

Further discussion from the floor outlined:

- that faith groups can be particularly good, although not exclusively so, at asserting that one is good enough on their own.
- that Humanists say that they are about upholding dignity and that everyone is special and important.
- that everyone who attends the South East Humanist group is active in at least one social justice organisations
- that many of those dependent on drugs are responding to pain.

The Chair commended the sharing of information.

Colleagues reported that

- the mosque had hosted a 'visit the mosque' day on the previous Sunday at which some people spoke about what the mosque meant to them.
- A white woman in her 50s explained what a load it had taken off her mind, with her son being welcomed having attended the mosque at a low point in this life.
- that there is no easy solution to the problems of gang and knife crime
- that the young generation won't talk with parents about key matters because of the fear of being 'judged'.
- That the behaviour of these children is often rooted in not getting the grades that the school wants them to.

Cllr Moore reported that she has worked in several boroughs in Further Education, dealing with those from 14 years of age to, currently, 79 years of age. Her establishment works a lot with excluded children in Tottenham/Enfield. The behaviour of these children is often rooted in not getting the grades that the school wants them to. The College has attracted money

from the Young Londoners Fund, with the Mayor of London's office providing funding. Its young people are studying for their GCSEs but there are other support activities taking place. The College of North London has received a moderate amount of money linked to its partnership with faith communities in the borough. It has brought a lot of people in, in doing so creating an environment that young people consider to be a safe one, with support provided as soon as one "steps through the door". Everyone is valued, but this is because a lot of effort is made, and money appropriated to make this happen. Of a cohort of 160 students the college has only lost three.

She added that staff have to have a mindset that they're achieving something, and there also needs to be a co-ordinated response; she commented that there was a Safer Neighbourhood team meeting the following day. She affirmed that there was a low dropout because each student was known.

## **2 Membership update**

Denise reported on vacancies in the membership. There are still 2 Church of England vacancies as well as one each for Sikhism and the Baptist community. She added that there had been a long-standing Rastafarian co-optee vacancy but committed to speak to Raymond outside of the meeting.

## **3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 5 December 2018**

Denise reminded the committee that these minutes couldn't be signed off, and also that the 'minutes' currently being taken were technically notes of an inquorate meeting rather than minutes.

The Chair added that the committee could still comment on these though.

Hester commended the minute-taker for the quality of the minutes.

## **4 Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

### **4A LETTERS SENT BY THE CHAIR**

Denise reported that, as she hadn't heard back from Ade, she would refer the case back to the Lewisham Governors Association which was his nominating body.

### **4B COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Denise reported that as none of the SACRE members had contacted her about this after the last meeting, she assumed that everyone was happy with the existing guidance and Determinations procedure. She added that the new Lewisham website was 'up and running' and committed to taking steps to have the documents uploaded on the site.

She added that the syllabus had been transferred to the new site also (whose look she commended), albeit without the images.

Denise commented that she needed to find out how content was added and said that she would continue to pursue conversation with the web team and to speak with Angela about it.
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## **5 SACRE revised constitution**

As background to this item, Denise reminded the SACRE that they had discussed this in 2018; SACRE had been approached by the Ahmadi community and following a discussion and vote they had been offered a place on the committee. The Ahmadi community had then withdrawn their interest, so Denise had since revised the constitution again, also removing references to the NUT and ATL from it, replacing with NEU.

She suggested that a quorate committee wasn't needed to agree this and committed to forward this onto Troy of the Council's legal team if all were happy.
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SACRE members indicated that they were happy with this revision.

### **6A GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE RE COUNCIL'S COMMISSION ON RE FINAL REPORT**

### **6B HOW THIS AFFECTS SACRE**

Denise referred to the letter sent by Damian Hinds which effectively said 'thank you but we won't be committing money along that route'. She added that he does say that RE is important however. The response was along the vein that the committee had expected, given Government's preoccupation with Brexit. She advised the committee to "watch this space" for further developments. She acknowledged that the Commission was attempting to instigate action but communicated the importance of following the route that the Government wanted.

## **8 Holocaust Memorial Feedback**

Gerald reported that this event had experienced some developments. The venue had returned to the Broadway theatre, partly because this was a better location for the activities but also because there were other equally important strands to the memorial besides the Sunday afternoon event. Lewisham has commissioned the theatre company to work with schools and the Sunday serves as a culmination of this work.

A play of Rachel Levy's experiences has come from these events, with Mark Cutter of Small Nose Theatre team editing film of Rachel Levy presenting in school to produce a play to be delivered in schools, with the aim of extending this to schools throughout London.

He added that the Holocaust Memorial Day isn't just about the Jews of the 1930s-40s Holocaust but also recognition of more recent genocide that is still being carried out in the world.

He reported that the organising committee hadn't yet had a follow-up meeting but that a production had been staged in the studio theatre for Rachel's family and members of the synagogue. Regrettably the Mayor was unable to attend.

He announced that Cllr Pauline Morrison has now resigned from the Committee and will be replaced by the Mayor.

He added that he had been asked by a Yiddish school to host a day with its year 6 students, adding that the theme of the Kinder transport is used for primary schools and the Rachel story for older students.

Joan reported that Mark had expressed an interest in re-thinking the event as it had become rather formulaic.

Denise asked if there was an emphasis placed on spurring the viewers to fight current evils, to which Joan responded that the event was not taking that extra step but was focussing on educating. Denise suggested that the further step was taken to challenge young people about how they can contribute to stopping these evils spreading.

Joan remarked that the amount of work that Mark does is unbelievable, with Gerald adding that after experiencing two children fighting at an event at a Primary School in Deptford, he considered how he could incorporate the theme of dealing with conflict into the production.

Denise reiterated her concern that the event was just retrospective and highlighted the importance of communicating that evil can happen anywhere, and thus turning the attention to the present and in doing so challenging children and the wider community. She added that he may not have recognised the value of a plenary session after the children had split into groups.

Gerald reported that, prior to Holocaust Memorial Day events, the group have a launch, which is, effectively, a dress rehearsal, and suggested that committee members should be invited to this. He added that this year's launch had been quite late - in January rather than November,

## **9 Holding schools to account as per the latest NASACRE Briefing**

The Chair commented that he felt this was important.

Denise reported that is working on obtaining the validated data from last year and committed to table this when she receives it.
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She commented that this provides an opportunity to ask what RE is being taught when pupils aren't being entered for these exams and suggested that the SACRE needed to discuss the steps in the Briefing if schools are not providing the statutory curriculum.

She reminded colleagues that the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary group on RE had said that RE is important in schools in the context of finding out about faiths and diversity and combatting attacks on religions and beliefs.

Cllr Paschoud reported that she had been in a conversation with a Humanist who had been upset about the compulsory nature of RE and offended about the use of the word prayer. She stressed the importance of parents not being proselytised or of prayer being used in this way.

Denise asked if she was suggesting that SACRE pen a letter to communicate this, which Cllr Paschoud defined as encouraging the importance of RE as having a theoretical rather than proselytising intention. Angela suggested that communication on the website would be more appropriate than a letter.

Hester suggested that SACRE in Lewisham may want to communicate its inclusive nature in the borough but that there were differences among other boroughs.

At this point Cllr Paschoud left.

## **11 Information Exchange and AOB**

One member reported that she had attended a conference in Reading on loneliness in which it was declared that evidence suggests loneliness is actually experienced more by those in middle-age than old-age. The conference challenged delegates to think of intergenerational work, with £13 million in funding available to be allocated in grants.

Denise reported that she had encountered some intergenerational work whereby young people share accommodation with old people but expressed concern that it didn't necessarily break down the barriers that young people may have with their own generation.

### **8.30 Next SACRE meeting: tba**

Denise reported that the SACRE and ASC executive would meet with to set up a program of meeting dates. She commented on the difficulty of finding dates that satisfied everyone's availability.

She reported that 18 March would be the date on which Councillors are ratified, so suggested the end of March for this meeting.

She noted that David Hutchens cannot meet on Mondays, while the committee doesn't meet on Fridays either.

*At this point Monsignor Rotheron left.*

Khadijah thanked the committee for attending the meeting but reported that it would be the last time it would meet at Olive Tree Nursery as the school was due to close at the end of July. She appealed to the committee members to let her know if they knew of any possible suitable buildings which were suitable for about 120 children with outside space, which would enable the Muslim school to start again as an independent school. She reported that parents of current students wanted to keep the children together.

Ray suggested that he speak to Khadijah after the meeting.

The committee voiced their sadness at hearing this news.

Angela committed to contact the school.

Khadijah said she'd forward the Vice Chair and Chair of Governors' details to Angela.

She added that the venue was multipurpose but not fit for the purpose of the school; which has made the situation difficult. She added that the school had progressed from an Ofsted rating of Adequate to Good in most areas, and that the school would want a new location within the borough. She reported that the school was currently canvassing parents, some of whom will home-school with others looking for places elsewhere and others moving into mainstream education.



The Chair thanked Khadijah for sharing this and for allowing the Committee to share the school's space.

At 8.25 the meeting ended.