

**NASACRE Annual General Meeting held at Methodist Central Hall,  
Westminster  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014**

**Keynote Address by Stephen Lloyd, MP**, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on RE.

He explained the history of his involvement in RE, the work of the APPG (such as their reports on teacher training and now on community cohesion), his view of the importance of RE (the most important things for him being to take on misinformation about religions and beliefs and improve community relations) and the lobbying going on around the subject in the run-up to the election next year. 'If we do not teach our children about all the world's religions by trained teachers we are going to hell in a handcart'.

Stephen encouraged SACREs to ask their local MPs to join the APPG even if they have already done this if MPs have not done so. In the Q&A many people raised the issue of SACRE being under-resourced (he suggested SACREs write to their MPs and ask them to get a briefing from him so that he can get them to tell the local authority to better support its SACRE). Other questions included whether there is a strategy to deal with negative media, having sufficiently qualified teachers, the importance of the child, and issues brought on by Academisation.

**Business Meeting:**

The formal papers from the AGM are available on the NASACRE website at <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/agm/annual-general-meeting-2014/agm-2014-papers>. In the NASACRE Chair Lesley Prior's address she talked again about local authorities not supporting SACREs, and explained she had written to the Government about it only to not get any support from them either. She encouraged SACREs to get MPs to talk locally about the importance of RE. She also discussed the RE Council's RE Subject Review and the issues around the supply of teachers.

**Rising to the Challenge: There were 10 SACRE seminars showcasing effective practice. Information from these will be found on the NASACRE website**

***Redbridge: 'Ambassadors of Faith and Belief'***

*Delivered by Julia Diamond, Redbridge teacher SACRE member and Colin Whitehead, Headteacher, Newbury Park Primary School*

'Ambassadors of Faith and Belief' is a scheme in the London Borough of Redbridge which involves volunteers from local sixth forms supporting the

delivery of RE. The sixth formers work with younger pupils, giving presentations on their own beliefs and how these play a part in their daily lives. This project was devised by Redbridge SACRE to meet the needs of both their primary and secondary schools. It provides good quality faith and belief visitors for the primary schools to bring RE 'to life' for primary pupils whilst creating volunteering opportunities and the development of key skills at secondary level. An important aspect of the scheme is the opportunities for interfaith, intergenerational dialogue that it provides. A training programme for the sixth formers has been evaluated and Redbridge are willing to help/ encourage other SACREs to pursue this work.

**'Re SACREs' – reflections from John Keast:** This address was given by Helen Harrison, Vice Chair of the RE Council, as John is unwell. She spoke about her experience in this role and on Lancashire SACRE. She talked about the REC's aims, vision and five year strategic plan. She discussed the Subject Review and Curriculum Framework. Helen explained that the DfE has through the REC has now convened an expert advisory group, much as it has with national curriculum subjects. She also discussed how the REC is leading on the GCSE and A Level subject criteria review, a task given to it by the DfE and working with Ofqual and the awarding organisations. She talked more generally about the REC's work with the DfE and the regional hubs and the issues caused by Academisation.

**Westhill/NASACRE Awards: Report and announcement of 2014/15 awards:** Seven SACREs applied for awards and five got them: Cheshire West, Luton, Nottinghamshire, Sheffield and Suffolk

**Feedback and final thoughts: How we make a difference - Lesley Prior:** Lesley outlined 20 suggestions for SACREs that she had gathered over the course of the meeting. These will be on the NASACRE website and included contacting MPs to get them to join the APPG on RE; encouraging schools to apply for the RE Quality Mark; engaging with Academies and Free Schools; getting the council's Lead Member /scrutiny committee to consider and respond to the SACRE's annual report; hold SACRE meetings in schools, possibly with teacher training attached; approach governors / the LA and / or ultimately the Secretary of State if schools are not providing RE or are being unhelpful; develop a working relationship with the local Interfaith group; link to post 16 and / or Teach Training establishments and find out if there are any RE specialist leaders of education (SLEs) locally through the National College for Teaching and Leadership, as they could be good SACRE recruits (whether in maintained schools or Academies).