

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the Lewisham **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

which was open to the press and public and was held on
Wednesday 24th May 2017 at
Emmanuel Pentecostal Church, 374 Lee High Road, London SE12 8RS

These minutes were approved by the SACRE on: Monday 16 October 2017

Present:

REPRESENTING	NAME	PRESENT
Baha'i	Dr Mehdi Dabestani	
Buddhism	David Hutchens	✓
Free Church A o G	Pastor Nick Hughes	✓
Free Church	Jeronne Rudder	
Free Church (Baptist)	Rev Carol Bostridge	✓
Free Churches (URC)	Rev Raymond Singh	
Hinduism	Vallipuram Bala	Arr: c6.15pm
Humanism	James Dobson	
Humanism	:Luke Donnellan	✓
Independent Evangelical	Nigel Desborough	
Islam	Mohammed Barrie	
Islam	Sarwoar Ahmed	✓
Islam	Shakeel Begg	
Judaism	Gerald Rose	
Judaism	Joan Goldberg	✓
Pentecostal	Juliet Campbell	
Pentecostal	Layo Afuape	
Roman Catholic	Rt. Rev Monsignor Nicholas Rotherham	
Sikhism	Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha	Arr. 6.47pm
Diocesan Board	Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair)	✓
Secondary Teacher	VACANT	
Primary Teacher	John Goodey	
Governor	Gail Exon	
Minister	Revd Juliet Donnelly	✓
ATL	Kim Knappett	Arr. 6.42pm
NUT	Karen Hansen	✓
Academy/Free school	VACANT	
NUT	Claire Adams	✓
NAS/UWT	Pamela Phillips	✓
Lewisham headteachers and deputies	Judith Purkiss	✓
Local Authority members	Councillor Jacq Paschoud	
	Councillor David Britton	
	Councillor Hilary Moore	
School Governors - Primary	Dinah Griffiths (CHAIR)	
School Governors – Secondary	VACANT	
Executive Director of Education	Kate Bond	Arr 6.40pm
Other and Co-optees		
Sec RE		
Rastafarians	VACANT	
Young Mayor Team	c/o Katy Brown and Malcolm Ball	
PREVENT	Malcolm Gormlie	
RE School Improvement Officer	Denise Chaplin	✓
Minuting clerk	Stephen Sealy	✓

(Boxed sections in these minutes signify actions)

The meeting began at 6.35pm.

1a Welcome and introduction

After opening the meeting, the Acting Chair read out a statement inviting reflection on the tragedy that had occurred in Manchester two days prior. He commended the committee for the contribution they were making to understanding and combating the negativity of some of the communities affected by this tragedy. A minute's silence was held to allow the committee to either pray or reflect on this tragedy.

Kate Bond arrived at 6.40pm.

The Acting Chair advised that MS(***) was present as an observer and that consequent conversations would be held about his future representation at the meetings.

1b Apologies for absence

Joan Goldberg advised the committee of apologies (indicated on the table above).

Kym Knappett arrived at 6.42pm.

Juliet advised the group that Cllr Britten's wife had, sadly, passed away a couple of days prior.

The Deputy Chair expressed condolences on behalf of the committee.

1c Confirmation of order of items for the meeting

In acknowledging that some members had to leave the meeting early, it was agreed to move item 3 (The Big NASACRE Survey) to the bottom of the agenda, moving items 4 (Advice on Visits and Visitors to schools) and 6 (Responding to crises) to earlier positions.

2 Minutes of previous meeting held on 8th March at Trinity School

These minutes are to be amended to reflect that Kim had sent apologies.

Otherwise the minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting.

Denise advised that the guidance on Ramadan was circulated and was added to the RE page of Lewisham's website, as was the Constitution. Iman Shakeel's advice had also been uploaded onto Lewisham Islamic Centre's website.

Denise commended the Council's Lorraine Johnson, reporting that within 24 hours of Denise sending emails to her, they are uploaded onto Lewisham's website.

Denise advised that Dinah Griffith has now resigned as Governor which means she can no longer sit on the SACRE committee as a representative of schools.

Gurbakhsh arrived at 6.47pm.

The Acting Chair advised that the SACRE wasn't represented at the NASACRE National Conference.

4 Advice on visits and visitors to schools.

Kate advised the committee that every school is required to have an Events and Visits Co-ordinator to comply with safeguarding demands. The Council recommends Wide Horizons, whose remit includes training on risk assessments.

She reported that there was a current emphasis within the local authority on health and safety as well as safeguarding, and forecast that as schools get to grips with their requirements they will become more demanding about the places they wish to visit.

She advised that schools may ask faith leaders whose venues they wish to visit for Health and Safety policies and risk assessments

Kate referenced a recent widely reported-on theme ride accident and advised that accident and RIDDOR reporting are requirements for schools. Where the H&S Executive carry out investigations they will ask to see the H&S Policy.

Kate invited leaders with venues to obtain training on this if this was needed.

Carol advised that, prior to in-depth training, she'd like to receive generic information on the requirements, to which Kate suggested that she then source appropriate advice.

In response to Carol's desire to know what schools are looking for, Kate suggested that Wide Horizons attend a meeting to advise. She suggested that Carol access their website (by typing 'Wide Horizons' in to the search engine).

Kym advised that most venues would have their own H&S policy and risk assessment, but advised that venues would also be tweaking existing risk assessments for appropriateness to groups visiting the venues.

Judith offered to circulate her school's Education Visits policy.

Sarwoar queried if the local authority provided free advice to places of worship. Kate expressed her doubts that Wide Horizons were best placed to advise on these places, but emphasised their value for generic advice, i.e. for issues such as access and egress, fire, legionella etc.

The Acting Chair suggested that the group contact Wide Horizons to deliver training to the committee.

Denise advised that sometimes parents are uncomfortable with their children visiting places of worship, a situation which teachers have to 'work their way through'. The idea of visitors who come to the school to share their belief/religious customs (re Ramadan or Holocaust Memorial Day) can be equally uncomfortable.

She advised that NASCARE are currently working with the Department of Education on this theme and related aspects such as safeguarding.

She commented that, as a local authority that encourages visits with religious communities, Lewisham's online SACRE resource wasn't current in relation to safeguarding.

Kate added that schools also had to factor in negative press coverage, reputational factors and appropriateness, and how such visits were perceived, meaning that a liberal approach where different experiences are encouraged isn't always welcome.

The Acting Chair reiterated that the guidance being worked on was dually to assist schools and those visiting them, while Denise added that one of NASACRE's desires was ensuring that learners learn about real people in their communities and for Learning Outside the Classroom to continue to grow, strongly encouraging visits to places of worship.

Gurbakhsh sought clarity over the relevance of visits to art galleries and concerts to SACRE. He also suggested that the Local Authority make a list of key venues in the borough, marking them as safe and checking with the venue leaders that they can provide a safe environment and would like school visits. He suggested this may be a more efficient method, clarifying that this suggestion was for faith venues and wasn't cross-curricular.

Kate advised that the council was unable to do this. She explained that it had neither the funding nor time resources to do this but also that, as the agencies responsible for the children, schools' responsibilities extended to undertaking their own personalised assessments. She explained that she was principally helping the committee to understand the increasing pressure on schools.

Joan reiterated the value of guidance, commenting that she felt in the dark about this with regards to the Jewish venues.

Kym advised that any building open to the public would have a Public Liability Insurance Certificate which would have required the completion of a risk assessment. She suggested that Wide Horizons be asked for guidance and exemplars which the organisations would then tweak to apply to their respective environments.

Kate reported that she was meeting Wide Horizons on Tuesday 30 May.

Sarwoar expressed the value of having a list of places of worship however Kate reiterated venues' responsibility in ensuring that they were safe.

Denise advised that the Prevent office had produced a sheet about safeguarding with regard to repelling extremism.

She further advised that if the committee sought to organise training, the borough deans should be consulted as the issue extended beyond SACRE. She committed to pursue this in Kate's upcoming meeting

Carol advised that she was on the borough dene and so would progress this through that connection also.

The Acting Chair cautioned against the use of an approach that would 'put off' the smaller faith committees.

Nick questioned whether this was about the SACRE acting as the repository for this information or whether it should be cascaded to members' organisations.

Kate responded that any action couldn't invalidate the responsibilities of the venues' organisations. She suggested that committee members ask their appropriate colleagues to show them their policies and risk assessments and also to find out where they got their advice from.

She added that Wide Horizons could facilitate two half-day sessions if required.

Gurbakhsh commented that local authorities were deflecting their responsibilities as they were so badly funded. He opined that having forty schools carry out separate risk assessment was a waste of resource when the authority could do it once. He asked whether the council would be asked to investigate if a child was injured.

Kate responded that the school and the organisation would be asked, and the H&S Executive would investigate.

The Acting Chair advised that the SACRE's responsibilities mirror that of the authority's in terms of providing support and guidance.

Carol advised that schools also make pre-visits to venues as situations change year on year.

Sarwoar reiterated Gurbakhsh's view that the council could provide a list of reputable places to visit. However, Kate responded that what is reputable to one organisation wouldn't necessarily be considered so for another, summarising that it wasn't for the council to decide.

The Acting Chair added that the agreed syllabus could be used to suggest places to visit.

Denise encouraged all to look at the Wide Horizons' website which would enable schools to answer confidently when asked about visits.

Anecdotes were recounted of incidents on school visits in the period before the strengthening of Health and Safety frameworks.

The Acting Chair proposed that the group revisit this in later meetings but encouraged the committee to maintain its agreed focus on why visits were so important.

5 Multifaith centre resources

Referring to document 'The South London Multifaith & Multicultural Resources Centre Resources', Denise reported that some resources had moved since she had last reported on this; namely from R? and Eglinton to Mary Magdalene. She advised that the future placement of resources would depend on the committee devising a plan and added that a further meeting was required, suggesting this take place in July.

She also reported how, when resources were moved to Safehaven homes, the expected length of their stay was a maximum of two years.

The Acting Chair added that the issues were for the Multifaith steering group to address and bring to the meeting.

He then invited committee members to bring any suggestions to the next meeting, and thanked Denise for the production of a comprehensive, useful report.

6 Responding to Crises

The Acting Chair introduced the document entitled 'Looking after each other'.

Denise reported that it was on the Lewisham website, having been there for 18/19 months.

She reported that while there are elements of the document that she was happy with (recognising the Appendix as very sound) it was not yet a finite document.

She suggested that the reference to Drummer Lee Rigby be omitted to avoid the constant revision of the introduction whenever a tragedy of this sort occurs.

She recounted watching the panel on Loose Women discuss how one tells young children about tragedies that involve young people.

The Acting Chair asked the teachers how the Manchester tragedy has been addressed in schools.

Kate responded that guidance had been provided in the Schools Mailing.

Juliet reported that her school had held an emergency response workshop.

Kym reported that colleagues had accessed their risk assessment and that discussion had provoked questions like 'how do you identify safe people?', thus creating a forward-thinking conversation.

Gurbakhsh commented on the confused nature of the situation with members of the public randomly trying to locate lost relatives/friends. He expressed his hope that review of this situation would lead to a joined-up system with improved procedures and useful guidance.

The Acting Chair remarked on the importance of not underestimating that children would hear about these events and of giving them a safe space to talk about it.

Kate reported that the council was obligated to carry out emergency planning exercises and to have rest centres designated.

She added that Jim *** was offering an Emergency planning SLA for schools which would include guidance on occurrences such as dealing with mentally unstable visitors to schools.

The Acting Chair added that schools were required to have Critical Incident plans.

Carol remarked that she considered the document really good but that she would like to review the Christian texts as she felt there were more appropriate ones.

The Acting Chair expressed his desire for the different communities to contribute.

Denise requested that the committee email any changes to her. The Acting Chair added that members should ask their communities what they think should be added to the document.

Denise remarked that she had seen racist and challenging responses to the Manchester tragedy and encouraged the committee and teachers to be mindful of particular faith groups facing a difficult time because of this event.

Kate reminded the committee that Natasha Orumbe was the council's safeguarding lead, and stressed the importance of e-safety.

Gurbakhsh was commending of Appendix A, which he considered very useful.

Kate added that the television programme Newsround was fantastic for reporting on such events in a child-friendly way.

Denise reiterated the importance of as many groups as possible getting to read the 'Looking after each other' document.

Gurbakhsh suggested that Sergeant John Bliddell was a good means of accessing the borough's network of Multifaith groups???

Denise requested that members respond to emails she sends about meetings solely to her, rather than replying 'to all'.

7 Information Exchange

Gurbakhsh reported that approximately 330 people had participated in the Multifaith walk event, which included a sit-down meal. He commended its organisation, adding that it drew a record number of participants.

Carol read out a statement about the Manchester incident in which 22 people died and 57 injured, and committed to forward this to Denise.

It was reported that the Peace Walk was a great event attracting people of different beliefs/persuasions and different ages.

Carol reports that her group had jointly contributed to the purchase of placards which they displayed and, while no impression was given that they shared the same views, they demonstrated respect for each other and lit candles together.

Gurbakhsh added that a fourteen year old boy gave a speech which he felt was superb
Carol added that children were at the centre of all of the events, including the lighting of the candles.

Joan remarked that she had been unable to attend but strongly advocated the event.

She also reported that an annual walk by cadets commemorating the historical torpedoing of HMS Hood (from which there were only two survivors) from the synagogue to the garden of remembrance was scheduled for the following weekend.

3 The Big NASACRE Survey

Denise referred to the NASACRE Chair's report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

She reported that the committee was one of only thirty-four committees who had submitted the survey by the preferred deadline.

The committee discussed the report as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the agreed syllabus being a national one.

Denise reported that of the 35% of committees that favoured a national syllabus, all of them felt that it should be mandatory for all schools, with no opt-outs and regardless of the type of school, but all with a significant local component.

Denise highlighted the fact that 75% of committees reported that their SACRE monitors the compliance and quality of RE provision in the schools in their areas

She added that a final analysis would be available at a later date, remarking that its intention was to see how the national/local issue is viewed.

The Acting Chair asked if there would be a London analysis, to which Denise replied that she didn't know as the personnel working on the report were doing so in their own time.

Gurbakhsh commented that the last sentence on page 3 was interesting in view of the statutory obligation of access to specialist RE advisers.

Kate remarked how fortunate Lewisham was to have Denise, given this national position, Gurbakhsh adding that the council had had to fight hard for this.

8a Training for SACRE members – date and venue to be agreed.

Denise reported that she has asked Raymond Singh for a venue.

She advised that the training welcomes all and sets the framework for how the SACRE operates.

Carol (???) suggested that Nigel Desborough may be worth asking as his organisation owns a shop ('Here for good') on Sydenham High Street, with good parking, the ability to accommodate 20, and access to the internet and a projector.
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8b Next SACRE meeting: Wednesday 6th July – venue required

It was agreed that there would be no meeting in July, but a reminder of the ASC meeting on 27 June at the Redeemed Church, 2nd floor of Capital House was issued.

Denise suggested that instead of July's meeting, an executive meeting with the clerk be held.

Kate thanked Nick for the impressive provision of food.

The meeting closed.