

MINUTES OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thursday, 4 December 2014 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Mohammed Barrie, Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha, Gerald Rose, Kishan Manocha, David Hutchens, Paster Nick Hughes, Joan Goldberg, Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair), John Goodey, Gail Exon, Rev John Ackland, Dinah Griffiths (Chair) and Qamar Ahmed (substitute for Sue Tipler)

ALSO PRESENT: Denise Chaplin, Tao Fiq

Apologies for absence were received from: Sarwoar Ahmed, Fay Allen, Valletta Bayley, Cllr Paschoud

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

As Valletta had dislocated her shoulder shortly before the meeting, Shaun had agreed to take the notes at short notice.

Dinah welcomed all present to the meeting. In particular, Pastor Nick Hughes was welcomed as a new member of Group A, representing the Free Churches and Qamar Ahmed as a member of Group D, temporarily representing the Executive Director of Children and Young People in the LA.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising not on the full agenda

The minutes of the last meeting were **Agreed** as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

- **Under Membership Issues**, David Britton should read Gail Exon.

Matters Arising Not On the Full Agenda.

Item 2: Dinah Griffiths had tried to contact Turnham School. She will write a formal letter about the proposed change to the category.

Item 6: Thanks were expressed, particularly, to Denise and Kishan for their work on the SACRE constitution.

Item 7: Denise Chaplin had inquired as to who she should contact about the SACRE training development for new elected members. She stated that this third training session will have particular focus on local issues and would be held at the Civic Suite.

Action: Denise will confirm date, 22nd January and time 6.30pm, when a room has been confirmed available for the training event.

Cllr Paschoud expressed that she would attend. Dinah encouraged members to attend training as she advised it would be a good refresher for all SACRE members.

Item 9: Dinah aims to meet with Imam Shakeel, after Christmas, about the event for schools, working with young people and the wider local community at the mosque. The purpose of the event is to encourage engagement with various members of community and draft a plan on how we can all work more closely together in the future.

Denise stated that the secondary schools that she had met with recently are interested to know how the mosque deals with radicalisation; They are also concerned about the radicalisation of young people by extreme right wing groups such as the EDL. Those schools would be interested in attending the event and how lessons learnt could be related to other issues. She further stated that some parents were worried and need the support of SACRE as a Multifaith body involved in RE. Gurbakhsh also stated that SACRE needs to be neutral. Schools have a role to play in ensuring that pupils of all faiths understand the issues involved. Shaun also stated that it was very important that the New OFSTED Framework reflects faiths in general and is not one faith specific.

Action: Dinah Griffiths to talk to Imam Shakeel about concerns expressed.

Action: Working Party to be set up to plan event, members of SACRE requested to let Dinah know if interested in being a part of it.

Item 10: The Ramadan Advice to Schools 2015, was **Agreed**.

Action: Qamar and Denise will liaise on how to get the Ramadan Advice to Schools into Schools Bulletin for January 2015.

3. Confirmation of order of business for the meeting

Order fine. No urgent business.

4. SACRE Constitution

Shaun proposed an inclusion in the revised constitution as follows:

“Protect and support the South London MultiFaith and MultiCultural Resources Centre as a means of promoting effective Religious Education within the LA.”

“Roles and Functions: - Change “At the discretion of the Local Authority, the SACRE may“ to “The SACRE will”. This point to become (iii) and the later points to move down.

Appendix - Membership: - “Southwark Diocese” to read “The Diocese of Southwark.”

The committee **Agreed** to all additions to the constitution.

Action: Denise is currently in conversation with Troy, a member of the Local Authority's Legal Team, to check the validity of additions of the New Constitution.

Action: Denise to update as to whether the LA has adopted the New Constitution.

Membership letters

The process for contacting members whose attendance causes concern.

Draft letters were submitted to members and **Agreed**, along with process.

5. Membership Update

Resignations were received from:

Group D: Lorna Trodd, due to school commitments. Lorna will be greatly missed, and was a very faithful supporter of SACRE. Members are very sad to lose her. Dinah Griffiths stated that she would be welcome back any time.

Group B: Angie Arnell, due to her responsibilities as a carer and school pressures. Angie was one of the original members of Lewisham SACRE, and served as the Vice Chair of SACRE for a while. She has asked to be kept informed about Holocaust Memorial Day and Interfaith Walks.

SACRE members acknowledged and appreciated both their contributions to Lewisham SACRE over the years.

It was **Agreed** that Dinah would send Angie and Lorna Thank You cards from SACRE.

It was **Agreed** that the Nominating Bodies will be asked to nominate replacements.

Membership Record Sheet needs to show:

- Gerald as being present at last meeting;
- Rev John Ackland as giving apologies;

Symbols need to read:

- A - "Denotes apologies received;"
- 0 - "Denotes no apologies received."

The Record of Attendance to be displayed in future SACRE Annual Reports.

6. Multifaith Centre Update

Dinah had written to Jordana Malik to ask for an update on progress of the new home for the MFMC. She reported that Jordana's response indicated that there was not much progress because of building issues. As they are still referring to

MFMC as the “Library.” Dinah had advised Jordana that the centre is far more than a library and asked that Jordana correct this. Jordana had responded with apologies and agreed to use the term ‘Multifaith Centre’ in future. Jordana’s response stated that she entirely agreed and would keep it as Multifaith Centre in future. The committee endorsed this point and thanked Dinah for her quick and important action. Dinah stated that she was keen and had asked Jordana to attend the next SACRE meeting with a further update. Denise asked Qamar to help to find out who the liaison contact person was for Renewal within the Council.

5.1 The MultiFaith Centre Steering Group to meet and discuss.

Gerald found it disappointing that no schools had borrowed Jewish resources temporarily housed at the synagogue. However, he is using the resources when schools visit the Synagogue and when he visits schools. Denise informed committee members that St Mary Magdalene’s School in Greenwich is using the resources that they are temporarily housing.

Action: Gerald and Joan will review ways to publicise the use of Jewish and Holocaust resources that are currently held in the synagogue, after Hanukah and Christmas.

7. DfE Teacher Standards 2013: an RE exemplification

The Religious Education Council & National Association of Teachers of RE designed a support tool to help individuals interpret the DfE Teacher Standards in relation to RE. Religious Education Subject Leaders could talk through, section by section, to evaluate what an RE classroom should could and does look like.

Dinah enquired as to whether the tool had been used in SACRE training sessions. Denise responded that it hadn’t as there had been little time, but she may cover it in the next session. She stated that it would be useful because it identifies what good RE looks like in a classroom. It would form part of on-going SACRE development. Shaun stated that he had used it when training teachers, non-specialists plus RE Subject Leaders and he was impressed with the tool. Joan advised that colleagues should be careful of language “RE classroom”, as she believed it could be taken as just relevant for secondary schools. Denise maintained that it was an effective tool as it challenged and encouraged the user to probe different faiths. John added that it was about whole-school approach to faiths and no-faith and how they should be equally respected in schools. Problems usually occur much less, when RE is part of the whole school ethos. If the school is doing positive proactive things in community, fears based on ignorance are less likely to occur. Dinah said that the tool was very helpful and thought provoking. Rev John felt it would be helpful for any teacher in any subject when students raise issues of all beliefs no beliefs. Schools could be encouraged to use it to aid discussion related to RE and also in PSHE Staff Meetings. Shaun stated that it definitely needs to be used in INSET Staff meetings and when a

school is talking about RE. John agreed that training plus staff meetings with LA (and SDBE for C of E Schools). Gerald stated that he liked the document considering the number of schools where there are no teachers trained for RE, it would be very useful for them.

Action: SACRE agenda item for future - to come back as bigger item for discussion.

It was **Agreed** that the audit tool would be distributed to schools.

8. Standards in Lewisham Schools

Denise reported that she had yet to receive the definitive Results from summer 2014 public examinations. The Local Authority have not sent the data on Short Courses despite the fact that students had entered, because as it is not being measured by DfE, no data has been sent to Las from DfE. Qamar Ahmed said we may need to go to schools for information. Denise responded that she had been trying to get the data since September 2014. Been to a few schools but some have proven hard to reach. Denise stated that it was really important, that the committee received reliable data this year. She would possibly approach the RE Council to see if someone there could chase someone up in the DfE. Short Course counts as local measure. In answer to a question how can we get data. Denise responded that it would be very difficult. However, by the next SACRE meeting, she would try to have overall data. Dinah advised that the results were a measure of where RE stands in whole curriculum. In answer to another question, how much is it considered a valid subject area? Denise responded that a long course was more valid than the short courses.

9. Consultation on GCSE and A level reform

The DfE is seeking views on the revised subject content for GCSE and A Level Religious Studies for teaching from 2016. This is the final consultation on subject content. It was explained that RE consultation is longer than other subjects because of the complexity of the debate about faith content. The British Humanist Association has queried the lack of reference to Humanism in the document. Shaun stated there had been concerns regarding the narrowness of the faith study proposed. He went on to state that the proposal is for Christianity and Catholic Christianity to be studied as two different world religions. If KS4 and KS5 become narrow, has implications for what is taught at primary level and KS3. Kishan Manocha will be submitting a response of behalf of Baha'i community. Joan stated that the study of two faiths feels like a backward step. John enquired as to who was responsible for such decisions. Denise advised that it was OFQUAL & DfE.

10. Any Other Business and Information Exchange

Holocaust Memorial Day?

Gerald and Joan stated that Holocaust Memorial Day was the direct responsibility of the schools. Schools are encouraged to select a day and produce their own Assembly; the hope is that all schools will choose the same day at the same time. Representatives from the religious community plus Holocaust Memorial Day will make themselves available to attend and support them. Instead of the previous service in Synagogue & Theatre performance, this year's Production will be at Rivoli Ballroom. Transformed back to 1930's people will be taken through the experience. Small groups of pupils will perform because very small stage. Theme for primary schools: - The Kindertransport. Leone Siegel DVD into schools. Rachel Levi – Holocaust Survivor from Auchstwitz, DVD for sec schools.

The main event will take place on Sunday 25th. January 2015. Free tickets will be available from Derek Johnson. Hope schools will be involved. John G: - His schools haven't received any information. Schools need to hear about such events early. How is this being publicised?

Gurbakhsh enquired as to who had suggested the ballroom rather than the theatre? He was advised that Cllr Pauline Morrison had proposed it. Gurbakhsh expressed his concern as the ballroom had less capacity than the theatre. He was worried about those who may want to attend not obtaining access. Joan assured Mr Garcha that everyone who had attended previously will be able to fit into the Rivoli Ballroom. However, further stated that it was meant to be a community event for the whole community, and we were trying to attract new people. Gerald stated that this Holocaust Memorial Day will be the 70th. Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. 70 candles will be lit across the country. Lewisham's bid to host one of the 70 specially-designed candles to mark the 70th anniversary, been successful. There will the lighting of one of the candles at the end, Rachel's story, which will be part of the national event.

11. SACRE Development

There will be training.

12. To consider dates

Tuesday 3rd. February 2015 - Catford and Bromley Synagogue

Thursday 16th. April 2015 - Childeric Primary School?

11.1 Agreed Syllabus Conference:

The conference couldn't be considered as Fay, (Chair of ASC,) had sent her apologies for this meeting. Dinah thanked the Lewisham Islamic Centre for their kind hospitality shown to SACRE in hosting the meeting and for the refreshments that they offered.

The meeting finished at 8:00.p.m.

SACRE members were then invited to observe Evening Prayers at the Mosque and then have a tour of the Islamic Centre.