

## LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

### Minutes of the Lewisham Agreed Syllabus Conference

The first part of which was held on **Thursday 23 February 2017 at 6.30pm** and the second part of which was held on **Tuesday 28 March 2017**

Both were held at Catford and Bromley Synagogue, 6 Crantock Road, London SE6 2QS

#### Present:

| REPRESENTING                         | NAME                                       | PRESENT ON 23 FEBRUARY | PRESENT ON 28 MARCH |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| Baha'i                               | Dr Mehdi Dabestani                         | ✓                      | Apologies           |
| Buddhism                             | David Hutchens                             | Apologies              | ✓                   |
| Free Church A o G                    | Pastor Nick Hughes                         | Apologies              | ✓                   |
| Free Church                          | Jeronne Rudder                             | ✓                      |                     |
| Free Church (Baptist)                | Rev Carol Bostridge                        | Apologies              | ✓                   |
| Free Churches (URC)                  | Rev Raymond Singh                          |                        |                     |
| Hinduism                             | Vallipuram Bala                            |                        | ✓                   |
| Humanism                             | :Luke Donnellan                            | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| Independent Evangelical              | Nigel Desborough                           |                        | Apologies           |
| Islam                                | Mohammed Barrie                            | ✓                      |                     |
| Islam                                | Sarwoar Ahmed                              |                        |                     |
| Judaism                              | Gerald Rose                                | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| Judaism                              | Joan Goldberg                              | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| Pentecostal                          | Juliet Campbell                            | ✓                      |                     |
| Pentecostal                          | Layo Afuape                                | Apologies              | Apologies           |
| Pentecostal                          | Cheryl Abbam                               | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| Roman Catholic                       | Rt. Rev Monsignor Nicholas Rethon          | ✓                      | From 8:07           |
| Sikhism                              | Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha                     | Apologies              | ✓                   |
| Diocesan Board                       | Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair)                 | LATE                   | Apologies           |
| CE Secondary Teacher                 | VACANT                                     |                        |                     |
| CE Primary Teacher                   | John Goodey                                | Apologies              | Apologies           |
| CE Governor                          | Gail Exon                                  |                        | Apologies           |
| CE Minister                          | Revd Juliet Donnelly ( <b>VICE CHAIR</b> ) | Apologies              | ✓                   |
| ATL                                  | Kim Knappett                               | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| NUT                                  | Karen Hansen                               | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| Academy/Free school                  | VACANT                                     |                        |                     |
| NUT                                  | Claire Adams                               |                        |                     |
| NAS/UWT                              | Pamela Phillips                            | Apologies              | ✓                   |
| Lewisham headteachers & deputies     | Judith Purkiss                             | ✓                      | Apologies           |
| Local Authority members              | Councillor Jacq Paschoud                   | ✓                      | Apologies           |
|                                      | Councillor David Britton ( <b>CHAIR</b> )  | ✓                      | ✓                   |
|                                      | Councillor Hilary Moore                    | Apologies              | Apologies           |
| School Governors – Primary           | Dinah Griffiths                            | Apologies              | Apologies           |
| School Governors – Secondary         | VACANT                                     |                        |                     |
| Executive Director of Education      | Kate Bond                                  | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| Other and Co-optees                  |  |                        |                     |
| Rastafarians                         |  |                        |                     |
| Young Mayor Team                     |  |                        |                     |
| <b>RE School Improvement Officer</b> | Denise Chaplin                             | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| SACRE clerk                          | Stephen Sealy                              | ✓                      | ✓                   |
| Guest                                | Judith Nweze                               | ✓                      | ✓                   |

*(Boxed sections in these minutes signify actions)*

#### PART ONE

The meeting began at 6.40pm.

#### 1 Welcome and introductions

Cllr Britton introduced Judith Nweze to the committee. All other committee members introduced themselves.

Apologies were accepted from the committee members indicated above.

Denise requested that all members bring the circulated documents to the next meeting, of which this meeting would effectively be the first half.

## **2 Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising not on the full agenda**

Joan commented that she had found the wedding issue made uncomfortable reading in the minutes of the previous meeting, feeling that it had got quite petty. She expressed concern that this distracted from the main issues.

(The meeting was adjourned at 6.45 for refreshments, and resumed at 6.50. Shaun arrived in this time.)

Denise acknowledged changes to the minutes that Layo had emailed her directly.

Subject to these changes the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

## **3 Timescale for the syllabus review**

Cllr Britton advised that the agreed syllabus needed to be approved by the Council, advising a completion deadline of Christmas 2017 for submission to the last meeting of the Council in February 2018 and to the preceding Executive Committee.

He advised that, in light of this, the committee was unable to go over points it had already discussed and that anything that was agreed in the minutes wouldn't be revisited until time for formal Agreement.

He reminded the committee of the meeting end time and advised that this was the first half of a two-meeting agenda, the second half of which would be arranged to take place before the end of term.

He stated his intention of KS1 and KS2 being approved by the committee by Easter, with KS3 to be worked on in the summer.

He advised that Denise will circulate a draft proposal (which Denise clarified as a consultation rather than a fait accompli) for Secondary School to be presented to the committee by the beginning of the autumn term.

Cllr Britton added that in the autumn term the committee would look at KS4 and Post-16.

Tuesday 28 March was agreed as the date of the next meeting, with a venue in Lewisham yet to be confirmed.

## **3 Early Years Materials**

Denise advised that Early Years materials had been sent to all Early Years settings and schools. No changes have come back. Denise advised that this could be agreed formally tonight, commenting that this formal voting method was illustrative for the process of Agreeing the other documentation.

Luke suggested that "faiths or beliefs" replace "faith" which Kate acknowledged should be changed in the headings and other instances throughout the document. With that approval

by the membership, the committee split into its four groups to Agree the Early Years agreed syllabus and returned the following:

Judith, for Group A: Agreed.

Shaun for Group B: Agreed.

Karen for Group C: Agreed.

Cllr Paschoud for Group D: Agreed.

### **3 Tasks to be undertaken between meetings**

#### **1. Faith specific statutory content KS 1 & 2**

The Chair suggested the committee focus on KS1 in this meeting.

Denise advised that there are sections on the faiths (not faiths/beliefs) in KS1.

She advised that homework for committee members representing these faiths was to review these sections. She noted that Christianity may need rewording to reflect its nuances given how many denominations within Christianity were reflected in the committee.

She advised that the documents focused on what the different denominations within each faith shared, rather than their differences.

In particular, Denise requested the following:

Baha'i: Supply information

Christianity: Review whether the information is representative of the broad Christian experience in the borough

Humanism: Look over what she has drafted

She encouraged teachers to get involved with the religious groups also.

The Chair requested Luke and Dr Dabestani to send their proposals to him, Kate and Denise for these to be input. Denise committed to email as well as send via hardcopy the faith specific information to them.

Denise confirmed that the information she had already sent Gerald was the information he was being asked to review.

Luke proposed that the syllabus should include comparative units on humanism for it to be comprehensive. The Chair advised that he and Luke would discuss this after the meeting.

Gerald requested that future documents be sent in an editable format.

#### Unit: The Natural World

Denise explained that this was the first RE unit in KS1 and that the purpose for its placement was because children of different faiths and beliefs begin their post-EYFS learning in KS1. This has a ricochet effect in the second half of the autumn term with the focus on Christmas and Jesus. As the creation account is shared by Christianity and Judaism and has similarities with the Islamic account, it made sense to have this in one unit, giving teachers a reference point with the concept of 'God' in these faiths for their Christmas activity.

The unit also offers an opportunity to look at the natural world, and for children to talk about what they think. It views creation in context of stewardship of the world.

Shaun added that being taught in the first term, it was also well-timed to fit in with the Harvest festival.

The Chair suggested a change to the third paragraph in Session 5; “.. humans should not be drawn or reproduced” as this can be misleading.

Kate commended the unit felt very balanced, easily accessible for teachers, and conducive to helping a child to understand that there are people of different faiths.

She added that the approach within the meeting needs to be about agreeing core principles as, given the number of committee members, there wasn't necessarily the capacity to discuss exact wording. Individuals should then go away to consider if there is anything that they massively disagree with from the context of their view/window on the world and email in any points to raise.

She alluded to a school she had visited that morning which was welcoming for children of all faiths, and encouraged further discussion in the meeting along that vein.

Shaun agreed, and proposed that Food bank and environmental charities be mentioned in Session 3.

Kate suggested that Denise speak to St Mary Magdalene, the school she visited, as they had used the significantly 21<sup>st</sup> century story of someone who had been trafficked to share these issues and discuss the challenges.

Luke advised that the first unit should make children are aware of the many different stories of the beginning of the world.

Alluding to a child who couldn't wait to take her to the school's space area, Kate suggested that a sentence about the Big Bang would be welcome in this section also.

One member suggested that the word 'story' not be used when 'belief' was meant as she thought this may have a belittling effect.

Cllr Paschoud replied that she didn't have an issue with the word 'story' given the fact that it's also used to describe factual events, but stated that the scientific versus religious issue was probably too philosophical for – and thus not suited for – young children.

Denise suggested that a note be added for teachers to encourage all children to share what they believe.

Cllr Paschoud added that there were a large number of creation stories, some from religious backgrounds and some not. Cllr Britton added that there were three different creation accounts in the Bible.

Luke commented that if children's sharing of their own stories was the only opportunity for them to hear other creation stories, this would be too restrictive. He added that at five years of age, his daughter was able to understand these different stories. Someone asked what purpose would be served by including a range of different stories as this might confuse children.

Denise asked at what age the big bang was taught in science and was told Year 6.

Luke expressed his dissatisfaction at the risk of children being told about these faiths at the age of 5 but other worldviews only in year 6.

Judith responded that the words 'danger' and 'risk' as used by Luke troubled her. She added that these were suggested guidelines only, which allowed for differentiation. Using the example of children with SEN in a classroom, she commented that the guidelines couldn't philosophise, and that rather than an inaccessible and bulky document, the text should simply be stating what groups believe.

Denise agreed with Judith's point, adding that there would be sufficient diversity in the classroom.

Judith added that the view that children may have five years' less knowledge of a particular belief was irrelevant as the guidance was not intended to indoctrinate.

Shaun suggested that the committee refocus on the whole unit without getting hung up on any particular session.

Luke clarified his position as not arguing that all of the different views should be explained in the unit but rather that teachers should be encouraged to account for the diversity of these views.

The Chair drew attention to the introductory 'What this unit contains' section.

Kym reasoned that a busy teacher looking at a 40 sessions a year wouldn't pore over this and expressed a concern that the more words are added, the fewer words would be read.

Kate suggested that the word 'some' (in the sentence "Throughout this unit pupils are introduced to the belief that whilst some people believe the world was a wonderful accident..." be italicised.

Denise suggested that Luke add a Humanist book to the books of suggested reading on the back page. Councillor Britton further suggested that this list be extended to include other faiths and beliefs.

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| Denise noted an amendment to be made on the right hand column of Session 1 ( <i>Denise to supply details</i> ) |
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It was decided that the word 'artistically' should follow "...humans should not be drawn or..." in the third paragraph of Session 5.

The Chair summarised the committee's agreement that no more changes be made to this unit.

### Unit: Weddings

Denise requested that the members who were engaged in the discussions about the wedding unit, review it.

The Chair concluded that the committee's position at the end of the previous meeting's discussion on weddings was to revert to the original unit.

Denise reports that she had changed the unit to include what happens in a Humanist wedding.

The Chair suggests that a summary of a Baha'i wedding be included also.

Denise asked whether they should be asking teachers to group children and decide what weddings to cover.

Kate commented that there was no such thing as a Buddhist wedding but requested that Dr Dabestani submit some text about Baha'i weddings.

Denise explained that all pupils in the class would do the first and the last sections.

With regard to Session 5d, the Chair questioned if there was a difference between Humanist ceremonies and civil weddings, to which Luke responded that there was. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Kym suggested that that question applied to most of the faiths/beliefs not just the Humanist one.

With regard to Session 6, Kate questioned whether this assumed that ceremonies aren't shared with many people.

Shaun suggested that the question 'Why are weddings in place of worship shared with many people' should omit the word 'many'. He also suggested that same-sex marriage be included.

Gerald advised that some people may just have witnesses in a church but that Jewish ceremonies can be held anywhere.

Joan suggested that an improvement to this question was 'Why are weddings in places of worship usually shared?'

Denise explained that this question was initially focused on sharing the wedding experience with family and one's faith family.

Gerald questioned whether this question was referring to religious weddings, adding that the "where" was irrelevant.

Denise commented that this is about a celebration *beyond* close friends and family.

The Chair proposed 'Why may weddings in places of worship be shared?' as an alternative.

Kate Bond furthered, 'Why do some people choose to get married?'

Judith asked if the session was about religious or faith weddings, to which Denise explained that this is looking at the sharing of the experience with other members of the faith family.

Jeronne suggested "Why are religious weddings shared with other people?"

Gerald advised that weddings in faith settings were open to others, and suggested 'Why are weddings in places of worship shared with others?' as an improvement.

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| Mohammed questioned why Islam wasn't mentioned in the unit, in response to which Denise asked him to submit a page of information for teachers for inclusion |
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## Unit: Who am I?/Belonging

Cllr Paschoud requested that the family tree be omitted.

Denise remarked that teachers do not use family trees anymore but that its inclusion as an example was useful.

With regard to Session 1, Kate suggested that the learning objective “Understand the importance of belonging to a group” be extended to include “and that individuals can belong to different groups”.

Judith further suggested that the word “group” be replaced with “group or groups”.

It was also suggested that the “should” in the third paragraph of the Session 2 suggested teaching activities be changed to “could”.

Cllr Paschoud remarked how she had witnessed the misery and enormous unhappiness that activities like this could cause to adopted children.

Luke referred to a cartoon on the Stonewall website and agreed to send a link to Denise for inclusion in this unit. He suggested that the ‘pre-drawn family tree’ be pluralised.

The Chair requested the committee review the remaining KS1 and KS2 units, directing any feedback on any issues to Denise. He advised that if no feedback was received, an assumption will be made that there were no issues.

He advised that all reference to family trees be deleted.

Kate reminded that committee that ‘Faiths and beliefs’ will replace religions.

Denise requested that the committee read the ‘Peace’ unit, reading it especially for the meaning behind it. She asked that the committee consider the prevalence of dissent/‘unpeace’ since the unit was written and asked whether there was a need for the unit to specifically address this.

Kate added that there was also a point to be made about the gang conflict in the local community.

The Chair closed the meeting by reminding the committee members to email Denise with their comments by 20 March.

## **PART TWO**

The meeting began at 6.40pm.

### **1 Welcome and introductions**

The Vice Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Denise advised that the minutes to the meeting on 23 February (of which this was being treated as a second part) had been typed and amended but that these would be combined with the minutes of the present meeting before being sent out to members.

She advised that the Chair wants to proceed with the secondary part of the syllabus after Easter and had asked her to write to secondary schools about this, including an outline he has prepared for Key Stage 3. This has been sent to all secondary departments in the LA.

She reminded members that before Christmas a meeting was held at the Hindu Temple to discuss KS3. The representatives of three authorities present spoke about the issues of KS3 with regard to the differing lengths of the programme. Cllr Britton had then produced a draft for teachers to 'shoot at', based on the units discussed at this meeting.

Denise added that she'd produced a letterhead (which she presented) to reinforce the point that the document was a letter.

She welcomed the committee members to any further meetings.

Denise advised that the Chair's intention was to complete the considerations of the Primary phase during this meeting paving the way for consideration of the larger KS3 phase.

She thanked all those who had sent her comments (Bala et al) and committed to make further contact regarding these on a one to one basis.

She emphasised the need for the Christian denominations to go through these units and to check that they're happy that the breadth of Christianity within the borough is reflected.

#### Unit: Right and wrong

Karen asked why Hinduism wasn't on the first page.

Denise responded that the intention was to not confuse the pupils. Christianity was present in all units; other beliefs were mentioned in just some units.

Luke commented that he'd like to see a Humanist example of reasons for right and wrong, and cited the story of a starfish being thrown back into the sea as a good example. He added that the initial section about the reasons for being good to others was rule-heavy and suggested that a humanist focus on consequences rather than rules would be welcome.

The Vice Chair asked the committee what they thought about this.

Luke added that this approach would inform young people that one can judge good or wrong without religion.

Kate felt, from visiting many schools, that right and wrong could be linked to the school's declared ethos.

Denise added that this also fits with British values.

At 6.55 Cllr Britton arrived and assumed the position of Chair.

Luke added that he perceived the initial section as introducing right and wrong leading directly into rules.

Denise replied that the unit wasn't taught like this. She explained that four sessions out of this unit were about how society functions, with reference to Biblical text such as the Good Samaritan and the Ten Commandments. However sources of authority in all faiths are



important guides when people have choices to make, and it is important that pupils learn about these.

Carol expressed her agreement with Kate's suggestion of building on the school's value system.

Joan remarked that by the time children attend school they know right and wrong.

Denise added that not all schools would teach this, but that those needing to work on their collaborative contribution would.

The Chair commented that he had taught Hindu prayers without declaring that they were Hindu, opining that the religion needn't be stated where its message or values were still appropriate.

Gurbakhsh commented that the intention wasn't to frighten children but to explain that there are better ways of living with each other.

Denise suggested that some stories could be referenced in the Resources section at the front.

Luke commented that he felt this was the most appropriate unit to reference Humanism.

David countered with his view that Humanism was all-pervasive in society anyway.

Luke disagreed with this, explaining that Humanism wasn't merely a general perception of right and wrong but that there are clear thoughts within a humanist approach to this.

The Chair apologised for his lateness but advised that the progress of the meeting shouldn't be jeopardised by the domination (of the discussions) by any one group/belief.

Denise suggested that a Humanist (?) story be included, possibly at the back of the document.

Karen, as a KS1 teacher, commended the document, as did Pamela.

### KS3 letter and proposals.

The Chair called for a vote for the group to agree in principle that KS3 be split into eight units; two for Christianity, one for each of the other five main faiths, and the eighth split between Baha'i and Humanism.

Denise added the question of whether the committee was happy for this in principle to be discussed with teachers.

This was generally accepted among the committee members.

### Unit: Food

Denise introduced this as being another optional unit.

She explained that teachers teach three out of four optional units, adding that 'The Natural World' was a mandatory unit.

Carol opined that The Last Supper wasn't a good example for inclusion in this unit as it fundamentally wasn't about food but was about a deeper issue.

Gerald replied that, from a Jewish perspective, its inclusion is a good idea as it shows a link between the two religions. He added that all parts of the meal have significance and remarked that it also links to the Passover meal and its significance.

Denise commented that there was within the syllabus a mandatory half term focus about the Passover. Also that the Eucharist is revisited later in the syllabus.

The Chair suggested that swapping the order of these two subjects may be an improvement.

Denise remarked that the unit wasn't as much about the food per se as it was about the sharing of the food.

The Chair agreed that the Last Supper represented an issue separate from food, rather being about sacrament. He suggested the unit's title be changed to Food and Worship.

Gurbakhsh suggested that this unit was dually about the nutritional value of food and the part that food plays in different faiths; he remarked on the relationship between faith and food. He commented that there were three pillars in Sikhism: living honestly, remembering God and sharing food.

Carol suggested 'Sharing food' as a title.

The Chair remarked on the importance of the sharing of the kola nut in African traditions, which Judith added was the first thing shared with guests in one's house. The Chair explained that its significance was peace.

The Chair asked the committee if they were happy that the unit incorporate these changes (including the change of title to 'Sharing Food').

The committee agreed.

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| Denise advised that the revised document would be brought to the final meeting. |
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The Chair expressed his intention for KS1 and KS2 to be approved by the next meeting.

### Unit: Peace

Denise questioned if Martin Luther King was an outdated inclusion, to which the Chair reminded her that the film Selma had only recently been released.

Kate questioned if the Northern Ireland reference lacked relevance.

Denise commented that the Brexit situation may make such references more complex.

Kim remarked that this unit could be taught in any year of KS2.

Judith commented that suggesting the years that these units should be taught in would serve as useful guidance. Denise responded that teachers would place these where they thought convenient within their individual scheme of work, and that encouraged them to own the units.

Karen suggested that the RE subject leader should decide at which point the units would be taught.

Kate suggested that, in the spirit of diversity, she had researched female peace leaders, and suggested that encouraging children to research their own peace leader was a good idea.

The Chair remarked that Northern Ireland women of peace would be a good theme to research.

He requested that the film Selma be added to the list of resources.

Gurbakhsh suggested that the title 'Peace' be renamed 'Peace keeping', which Kate expressed support for, adding that some schools used approaches like restorative justice and commenting that this heading reflected the question, 'how do we make peace?'

Kim added that it builds on the concept of right and wrong.

Gurbakhsh elaborated that themes such as peace of mind and solitude can be difficult for children to grasp.

Denise commented that some of these themes were in Section 1 and 2 alongside a concern that rewriting the unit was an extra three weeks' work.

Karen advised that the units didn't need rewriting but rather that the people mentioned should be added to the list.

Gurbakhsh added that the names already present on the list were valid.

Denise suggested that a session C be added whereby children would find out about peace makers.

Kate proposed the alternative of these additional questions simply being added to the current sessions.

The Chair suggested that Rosa Parks be added alongside Martin Luther King.

Karen suggested the inclusion of a list of people for the teachers/pupils to choose from.

The Chair requested the committee to provide Denise with a list of relevant books, films and other useful resources to be referenced in the document.

Gerald recounted how, when children come to the synagogue, he has greeted them with the word 'Shalom', while Muslims use the word 'Salaam'. He explained that the visitors were greeted in peace and that the main religions were religions of peace, even if individuals may not be,

He suggested that teachers could start this unit by saying the word 'Peace'.

Gurbakhsh suggested that children may question this, referring to armies, missiles and such like.

The Pakistani activist Malala was mentioned, although the Chair opined that she was connected more with the female education campaign than peace.

Gurbaksh argued that her message was that, even if shot in the head, one shouldn't give up and that violence wasn't an appropriate response to this.

Denise wondered whether that was about resilience, rather than peace.

The Chair concluded that the title of the unit had been changed to 'Peace making'.

#### Unit: Journey of life and death

Kate remarked that the resources at the end of this unit were excellent. She added that Year 6 was an optimal time for this unit as children would be experiencing loss themselves as they moved to secondary school.

Carol questioned how teachers answer when pupils ask "Well, what happens if I don't believe?" in relation to being told that Christians believe that believers go to heaven.

Denise reported that that scenario happens in the classroom a lot, which often leads to the question, "What do you believe?" She commented that hell and damnation are not mentioned, thus avoiding opening a 'can of worms'.

The Chair suggested that a more likely scenario was when one says that they attend church and believe they will go to heaven to which a child responds, "Well, my (late) dad had never been to church. Where did he go?"

He suggested that a teacher could respond by talking about the mercy of God.

Denise suggested that most teachers wouldn't as most are not believers. She explained that in the previous syllabus these issues were on specific faith sections and most teachers wouldn't teach about it as it encourages difficult questions. This underlined, she reasoned, the need of a script. So in the previous syllabus review a lot of time had been spent crafting this unit.

She reported that St Christopher's and several teachers had feedback positively about this unit.

Kate suggested the inclusion of a reminder to children to ask for help should they need it (with regard to the themes this unit deals with) and that a list of helpful services like CAMHS could be signposted to.

Denise suggested that Kaleidoscope or the Hospice might have text that would be useful for inclusion.

Kate suggested that Denise emailed Warwick for information on the referral procedure to children's mental health services.

Luke informed Denise that he had sent through his comments on this, suggesting changes to sessions 4 and 5 which refer to the Humanism website.

Denise queried how many Humanists were in the borough. Luke replied that it was in certainly the 100s but that there was no reliable local data. National data reports that 6% of the population identify as 'humanist'.

Kate expressed support for the additions representing how non-religious people may deal with this.

Juliet commented that humanist funerals were on the increase.

The Chair stated that Luke was making a spurious link between humanism and atheism. Several committee members expressed that this wasn't the case.

Carol expressed the view that, in this unit, the word 'humanism' was appropriate as people would have heard that term used in respect of funerals. Juliet concurred that there was a strong case for using the word 'humanism' in this context.

At this time, Carol left the meeting.

Denise recounted how, having attended a humanist funeral with a Muslim friend, the friend had expressed distress at the missing sense of hope. She asked the humanists if this was managed differently in other humanist funerals and wondered how the unit could ensure a positive note.

Luke explained that humanist funerals were celebrations of the life lived but acknowledged that the person was gone. He conceded that in all faiths or beliefs one would encounter different types of funerals.

Kate remarked that the concept of hope after death meant nothing to her. She conceded that everyone would have a different perspective on funerals and emphasised the importance of everyone valuing the different views non-judgmentally.

Denise said that the celebration of life needed to be highlighted, adding that the unit deals with feelings of grief, as these are common human experiences even for those who have a faith believing that the deceased has moved on to a better place.

Gurbakhsh remarked that he had attended a humanist funeral at which the officiator had said that although the person had gone, he lived on in his loved ones' memories.

At this time, Revd Nicholas Rotherham arrived.

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| The Chair requested that the 'Lion King' (and particular the song 'The Circle of Life') be added to the resource list. |
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Kate remarked that many family films have messages that are pertinent to this unit.

Gurbakhsh added, speaking as a scientist, that people live on in the genes of their offspring.

Kate requested that it be noted that the committee was a good example, particularly to children in the borough, of different groups adding value, noting that she couldn't have had this experience in Blackburn.

### Bridging Unit: Rules and Responsibilities

Denise introduced the background to the bridging units with reference to the work undertaken by Brunel University. She explained that Lewisham schools' arrangement of split years had led to the inception of 2 primary bridging units in the borough. However, as secondary schools no longer teach the second half of the unit, the bridging unit has lost its purpose.

She presented to the committee the alternatives of either keeping one of the two units, or keeping neither. She explained that the Greenwich Agreed Syllabus contains an 'Understanding faith in Greenwich' unit instead whereby teachers promote the research of faith characteristics and history in the borough and suggested something similar about Lewisham could replace the unit.

Kate was positive about this idea.

Denise added that the outline wouldn't be set and that it would be well-timed for after pupils had sat their SATS. She commented on how much had changed in the borough in a mere 100 years with some of the borough's large churches not in existence then.

Joan added that this unit also represented a mature undertaking for the pupils.

Denise advised that backing documents would be needed, on which Kim elaborated, mentioning that a new Year 6 teacher to the borough, for example, would struggle without some 'starting-points'.

Kate added that it would have implications for the members sat around the table, who'd have a need to ensure that their websites (as the obvious initial go-to sources) were updated.

The Chair advised that Lewisham has a 'Faith in Lewisham' policy that would need to be referred to.

Gurbakhsh added that it would be useful for researchers to access the rules of political parties or trade unions as faiths have comparable systems.

Denise committed to rework the outline of this unit, emailing this to the committee members. She requested that in the meantime they consider which resources can be mentioned.

The Chair proposed a vote for the transition unit replacing this vacancy.

Luke suggested that a Humanism unit replace the other unit, but Denise advised that unfortunately there was capacity for only one unit.

The results of the vote follow:

Group A: Unanimous agreement.

Group B: Unanimous agreement.

Group C: Three of four voted in favour, one abstained

Group D: Unanimous agreement.

Gerald commented that teachers in primary schools tend not to talk to each other about sharing resources and highlighted the need for this information to be shared appropriately.

Denise proposed that subject leaders be encouraged to disseminate the information when she delivers the training on the syllabus.

Luke expressed the view that humanism should be a compulsory unit like the six main faiths, stating that he had requested this in each Agreed Syllabus Meeting but on each occasion been deferred. He expressed dissatisfaction that as Humanism was only mentioned in optional units a pupil could complete the full syllabus without once encountering Humanism.

The Chair asked for the committee's view on this.

Denise reported that the curriculum allowed four-and-a-half terms over six years in KS1 and KS2 for the main faiths to be studied.

Juliet proposed that this be discussed in a further meeting, while the Chair expressed concern with the prospect of being entangled in this discussion.

Denise computed that the breakdown of units(?) was Christianity (9), Buddhism (4), Hinduism (4), Islam (4), Judaism (4), Sikhism (4), the Natural World (1), Optional units (3), Life/Death, Peace (1) and the 'old' transition (1). She concluded that if Humanism were to be included, it would have to replace a Christianity unit, reasoning that all of the five main faiths were well represented in the borough.

Luke stated that he thought Humanism was well represented also.

Kate referenced the fact that the subject of the committee was religious education.

Luke replied that many in religious circles acknowledged that the subject wasn't just about religion.

With regard to Humanism's inclusion in the syllabus, the Chair suggested that "half a loaf was better than no bread", referencing what he considered was Humanism's battle forcing itself into the RE agenda. He added that Humanism was expressed in every other curriculum area.

Luke disagreed with this.

The Chair reported that he was getting advice from Lewisham's Legal Department on this matter and stated that, given the possibility of the matter proceeding to court, he wasn't prepared to discuss the role of Humanism on the agenda any further.

## **8 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting was agreed for Tuesday 27 June. Capitol House is the likely venue (to be confirmed) with Nick's church as the second, back-up choice of venue.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.