

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the Lewisham Agreed Syllabus Conference

which was open to the press and public and was held on
Wednesday 16 January 2018

At Catford and Bromley Synagogue, 6 Crantock Road, SE6 2QS

These minutes were approved by the ASC on: 22 March 2018

Present:

GROUP	REPRESENTING	NAME	PRESENT
A	Baha'i	Molly Ballard	✓
A	Buddhism	David Hutchens	✓
A	Free Church A o G	Pastor Nick Hughes	APOLOGIES
A	Free Church	Jeronne Rudder	
A	Free Church (Baptist)	(Vacant)	
A	Free Churches (URC)	Rev Raymond Singh	
A	Hinduism	Vallipuram Bala	
A	Hinduism	Narmadha Saravanan	✓
A	Humanism	Luke Donnellan	✓
A	Independent Evangelical	Nigel Desborough	✓
A	Islam	Nadia Ali	✓ - Left for another meeting at 7.30pm
A	Islam	Khadijah Knight	✓
A	Judaism	Gerald Rose	✓
A	Judaism	Joan Goldberg	✓
A	Pentecostal	Layo Afuape	✓
A	Pentecostal	Cheryl Abbam	
A	Roman Catholic	Rt. Rev Monsignor Nicholas Rotherham	✓
A	Sikhism	Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha	
B	The Church of England - Diocesan Board	Shaun Burns (Acting Chair)	✓
B	The Church of England – Secondary teacher	Steven Gallears	APOLOGIES
B	The Church of England – Primary teacher	Vacant	
B	The Church of England - Governor	Vacant	
B	The Church of England - Minister	Revd Juliet Donnelly	APOLOGIES
C	NEU - ATL	Kim Knappett	✓
C	NEU - NUT	Karen Hansen	✓
C	Academy/Free school	VACANT	
C	NEU - NUT	Claire Adams	APOLOGIES
C	NAS/UWT	Pamela Phillips	✓
C	Lewisham headteachers and deputies	Judith Purkiss	
D	Local Authority member	Councillor Jacq Paschoud	APOLOGIES
D	Local Authority member	Councillor Hilary Moore	APOLOGIES
D	School Governors – Primary 1/2	Isaac Sackey (shared place)	
D	School Governors – Primary 2/2	Lynda De Marquet (shared place)	✓
D	School Governors - Secondary	Adelere Adedeji	APOLOGIES
D	Executive Director of Education	Kate Bond	✓
Other and Co-optees			
	Primary Teacher	Judith Nweze	✓
	Rastafarians	VACANT	
	Young Mayor Team	c/o Katy Brown and Malcolm Ball	
	Also Present		
	Also Present		
	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 6.35pm.

1a and 1b Welcome, and apologies for absence and membership update

The Acting Chair confirmed that this was an ASC rather than SACRE meeting and thanked Gerald and Joan for hosting it.

Karen reported the apologies received (as listed on page 1).

1c Membership update

Denise reported that two Church of England vacancies remained.

2 Election of a new Chair for the ASC

The Acting Chair invited nominations for the position of Chair.

Khadijah nominated Kim.

Kim confirmed that she was happy to stand.

Nigel seconded the nomination.

In the absence of any other nominations for this position, the Acting Chair confirmed that Kim had unanimously been voted in as the Chair.

The Acting Chair invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair, reporting that Juliet had communicated her willingness to remain in this position.

Karen seconded this nomination.

In the absence of any other nominations for this position, the Acting Chair confirmed that Juliet had unanimously been voted in as the Vice Chair.

The Acting Chair passed the meeting to the new Chair.

3a Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 November 2017 at the Civic Suite

Denise apologised for the inclusion of the tracked changes in the circulated minutes.

Luke advised that in the second paragraph of the 4th agenda point the words 'disagree' and 'agree' should be exchanged.

3b Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda

The Chair invited the committee to identify any matters arising from the minutes.

Denise reported that she had asked NASACRE executive to clarify the issue of reporting on group decisions with regard to agreeing the syllabus. The decision of the group was considered just that; a group decision carried by the majority. There was no provision for

recording individuals' votes in opposition to their group's vote. Additionally, all groups must agree each item for it to be agreed. The recording of the votes should adhere to this advice.

Kate suggested having two records of the meeting; one as advised and the other with the minuted level of detail.

The Chair advised the clerk to redact in the minutes any references to comments made in the group voting.

Denise added that upon the presentation of the units, groups would have a further opportunity to disagree with the units but still this would be a group, rather than individual, representation.

Luke sought clarity that there was no provision for the recording of an individual's expression of disagreement. Denise affirmed that there wasn't such a provision.

SYLLABUS PROGRESS DOCUMENT

Denise reported that the document evidenced that progress had been made, adding that some groups still needed to make amendments, with Narmadha wanting to review the Hinduism unit as she had doubts about its reflection of the practice of the local community.

The Chair requested that Denise re-circulate the text that had been agreed.

PROGRESS WITH DESIGN PHASE OF THE SYLLABUS

Denise reported that she was in the process of discussing whether the syllabus would just be available online or available on a portable storage device also. She advised that its location on the web was another discussion that Kate was engaged in. She advised that after font and style changes were applied, the document (which was projected on-screen to the committee) may extend to more pages, and committed to check the extra text.

Kate welcomed any committee members volunteering to proof-read any group's submission that they had a particular interest in, suggesting that Denise adds an extra 'proof-reading' column to next meeting's register. She reminded the committee that as the syllabus would be principally located online, changes could easily be made after it was published.

Denise questioned if the idea that errors were intentionally woven into Turkish prayer mats was a myth. Khadijah responded that this was an Iranian tradition.

Gerald advised that each faith/view should proofread their text for accuracy, as this responsibility lay with the faith/view. However, he added that someone who is relatively unfamiliar with the faith/view should also proofread the text as they'll possess an objectivity that the authors wouldn't.

The Chair clarified that the text that the groups had agreed differed from what the Communications team were working on. She requested that Denise send out the KS1 and 2 units to allow faith groups to check these by the next meeting, suggesting that the committee members who weren't in a faith group connect to one.

4 Adoption of the SACRE's Code of Conduct

This was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

5 Formal Agreement of final Primary elements of the Agreed Syllabus

WHO AM I?

Denise remarked that this agenda point had 'slipped through the net' of the last meeting.

In response to a question by Khadijah, the Chair clarified that the syllabus comprised faith units and thematic units which this unit sat alongside. This was an optional unit.

Shaun advised that the family tree was out of date and suggested that the image be deleted. Kim added that the Royal family tree would still be referred to, given its profile, but that no diagram would be included.

The committee signalled their happiness with the 'Who Am I' unit.

Denise advised that for the next week's meeting, the committee should split into their groups.

Narmadha committed to make vocabulary changes to her unit, returning the amended text next week.

Luke advised that the word 'Humanism' was emboldened to match the styling of the other faiths/worldviews.

(6 Support for the Agreed Syllabus – Hinduism was deferred until later in the meeting)

7 Key Stage 3 – for agreement

The Chair reported that she had brought the Christianity unit.

It was clarified that the documents for Sikhism and Buddhism were two-sided, while Humanism was one-sided.

SIKHISM

Denise reported that, although Gurbakhsh wasn't present, the two of them had looked at what currently existed and thought about how they'd split the content into the main and optional unit, with Gurbakhsh making changes as appropriate.

She clarified that the 'One God' sheet was the compulsory unit, with 'Beliefs about life and death' being the optional one.

Gerald sought clarity on the accuracy of the headings (as he'd experienced difficulties in accessing his emails) and remarked that the headings differed between the Buddhism and Sikhism units.

Kate commended the question that prompted one to compare the different faiths' positions as this connected to history, politics and current affairs.

BUDDHISM

David clarified that the 'Highlights' page was the compulsory unit. He conceded that he had considered the exercise of allocating the content among the six boxes fairly arbitrary and that this was reflected in the allocated text. He added that he wished to provide supplementary material.

Kate suggested that references to resources be handled differently. She reported that Humanism was including a link to an external site to host the material, while an alternative solution was simply inserting a link to the document(s). She expressed the preference for the content being hosted externally.

HUMANISM

Luke added that there would be a link to resources at the bottom of the Humanism text, and that teachers could search for content by key words on this website.

The Chair commented that Christianity had four compulsory and one optional unit, circulating the two documents 'Key Stage 3 – Christianity' and 'Possible Units for KS3 Christianity'.

Denise questioned why the concept of the Trinity was optional. Monsignor Rotherham replied that there were factions within Christianity, such as the Unitarians, that don't believe in the Trinity.

Kate suggested that the Christianity group meeting prior to the next meeting to review this, suggesting also that the question frame the unit, rather than the content (???)

Denise advised that each unit needs to have specific questions that relate to that unit.

The Chair noted that this was agreed upon.

Denise remarked that there may be very strong teaching questions for each unit that would lead teachers to delve deeper, particularly for more able students.

Kate reminded the committee of the useful 'KISS' mantra.

Shaun voiced support for the questions being key to the unit, and added that he thought the Trinity should form part of the compulsory unit.

The Chair recognised that something would have to be omitted from the compulsory unit to accommodate this and committed to work on this with the Christianity group by email.

Kate suggested that the next meeting be split into two parts; a plenary session followed by a meeting of the Christianity group.

Denise reminded the committee that the meeting following next week's meeting would be on 22 March.

Khadijah suggested that the headers for the second row should be questions in the same way that the headers for the top row are.

Denise questioned if David could write a question for the unit.

The Chair expressed her view that each box being headed by a question works for one-unit pages, but that it wouldn't work for Christianity.

Khadijah questioned why Christianity didn't have a separate page for each of its units to which the Chair replied that she was happy to fit her content into the boxes but that there would be some boxes with no content in them.

Denise suggested that each bullet point needed something to 'unpack' it.

The Chair remarked that the work on the units was developed from the previous syllabus which fit on one side of paper.

Kate remarked that as a teacher she would have found a single page of A4 structured in a consistent way helpful. The questions that she'd need to build her lesson plan would also be of help.

She encouraged the Christianity group to develop it further, noting that she was happy to delay the next step while they do this.

Monsignor Rthon commented that this constituted a process of discovery for teachers and that it equated to work for them which the syllabus was providing pointers for.

Denise commented that teachers and governors may want to join the discussions of the Christianity group even if they're not representing a faith group in the committee.

After a brief discussion, the Chair suggested that the following meeting would start at 6.30 after which the Christianity group could meet.

Shaun advised that he wouldn't be present for next week's meeting.

At this point Nadia left the meeting.

The Chair noted that Islam, Judaism and Hinduism would all be looked at next week.

Molly requested that Denise email anything she needed to work on to include Baha'i to her as soon as possible.
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Kate stated that she was available to meet in the latter half of February if this was required.

Denise reminded Luke that he had been asked to lead on non-religious worldviews.

Kate reminded the committee that the text needn't be all encompassing but rather a starting point.

Luke committed to draft text for the group to discuss, with Denise suggesting Thursday 25 for an initial draft.

Denise suggested that Kate lead on Philosophy and ethics, given her background in this area and invited members to volunteer for smaller world religions.

Khadijah questioned if the Lewisham census shed any light on this, but the view was expressed that it didn't.

Denise suggested that discussion of the last two units was deferred until the March meeting.

Kim asked whether previous versions of these units were available, to which Denise replied that parts of Creation and Origins were available but not the others.

8.2 Sixth Form syllabus

Denise reported that she and Sid were meeting tomorrow.

She explained that RE teachers in the Sixth Form were generally not sufficiently knowledgeable about their statutory responsibilities, and expressed concern that students in Sixth Forms across the borough weren't being provided with an adequate level of challenge.

She reported that she and Sid had been engaging for the last term and were prepared to develop this together if there wasn't enough engagement from others.

She reported that they had spoken about organising a mayor's debate which children would attend and would likely interest teachers by 'ticking several of their boxes'. If this is developed, a bid would be made for funding through the NASACRE's Westhill award.

She added that Sid had also written to Professor Adam Dinham at Goldsmith with the suggestion of them working with his dept.

She committed to update the group next week after meeting with Sid.

Shaun reported that the Church of England hosts a Key Stage 5 panel in the Cathedral annually. He suggested that Denise engage with Lewisham Southwark College adding, in response to her comment that the College doesn't deliver RE courses, that this may encourage them to engage with RE in the future.

9 Syllabus Launch

Kate invited members to form a working group for the launch of the syllabus, explaining that this would entail meeting twice or thrice providing answers to questions such as 'What would the launch involve?', 'Will there be a speaker?', 'Where will it take place?', 'Should the Mayor open the event?' and 'What refreshments should be provided?'. An early meeting would be required with further meetings later.

She commented that it would be advantageous if teachers were represented in this group.

Expressions of interest were made by Karen, Judith, Kim, Shaun and Layo and it was acknowledged that Denise and Kate would necessarily remain involved on the periphery.

Denise clarified that there would be a budget for this event.

6 Support for the Agreed Syllabus – Hinduism

Narmadha reported that Director Catherine Parry had secured funding to develop a project called Made in Lewisham, based in the Horniman Museum.

She explained that there were two version of Diwali in Tamil Society, and that Catherine was working with the Tamil community to discover stories of their heritage – religious or not – in order to build a digital library. This would be accessible to the syllabus.

Narmadha was requesting that teachers assist her, particularly with a view to creating content that could support the syllabus.

Kim requested that members contact Denise if they wished to engage in this.

Denise reported that she had met with Catherine the previous week and had sent her the 'Understanding faith in Lewisham' outline. She expressed the view that the content Catherine is compiling would be considerably useful for the syllabus,

She reported that the funding Catherine had secured was notably limited. She recounted that they had spoken about how Hindus celebrate life events, noting that despite Tamil Hindu community celebrations differing from the way Northern Indian Hindus celebrated, the focus of the fascinating project was the local practice of Hinduism.

She commented that a lot of audio had been catalogued but that there weren't many transcripts of this. She had suggested that longer recording be segmented for easier access. She added that it was this type of conversation that Catherine was hoping to engage teachers in.

Any Other Business

Gerald circulated the 'Power of Words Holocaust Memorial Day' flyer. He reported that as the National Holocaust Memorial Day was on Saturday, the synagogue was inviting visitors to a short service to commemorate the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. He noted that this wasn't a memorial as the Jewish community do not mourn on the Sabbath.

He requested that members email him if they wished to attend.

Kate circulated the Wide Horizons flyer, suggesting that the 27 February could also be used by the committee if extra time was needed to sign off ASC text.

She clarified that booking would be on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Denise committed to circulate an electronic version of the flyer.

Kate commented that the training would be useful for people 'higher up' in the respective organisations.

Gerald added that there was an interfaith group meeting on 29 January 2018.

Denise advised that there would be a cost implication were Wide Horizons required to run a follow-on event.

Gerald suggested that contact is made with the group if the number of bookings exceeds 40 so that this could be appropriately managed.

The Chair reminded the group that the next ASC meeting would be in the same venue as this meeting, commencing at 6.30pm.

Denise committed to send members the existing text and to create a short agenda, commenting that the mailout would only be electronic.

Isaac, Lynda, Judith all expressed interest in joining the Christianity group with further interest expressed on behalf of Isaac and Claire Adams noted as a possibility. Pamela requested that she remain in the email group.

The Chair requested a five-minute meeting with the Christianity group immediately after the meeting.

The meeting ended.

Draft