

## LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

### Minutes of the Lewisham Agreed Syllabus Conference

which was open to the press and public and was held on  
Wednesday 8 November 2017 at

at The Council Chamber, Lewisham Civic Suite, Catford Road, Catford SE6 4RU

#### These minutes were approved by the SACRE on:

#### 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 (substitute)	
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	APOLOGIES
A	Islam	Nadia Ali	✓
A	Islam	Khadijah Knight	APOLOGIES
A	Judaism	Gerald Rose	✓
A	Judaism	Joan Goldberg	APOLOGIES
A	Pentecostal	Layo Afuape	✓ - Left for another meeting at 7.30pm
A	Pentecostal	Cheryl Abbam (substitute)	
A	Roman Catholic	Rt. Rev Monsignor Nicholas Rothon	APOLOGIES
A	Sikhism	Gurbakhsh Singh Garcha	✓
B	Diocesan Board	Shaun Burns	APOLOGIES
B	Minister	Revd Juliet Donnelly	✓
C	Secondary Teacher	Steven Gallears	APOLOGIES
C	Primary Teacher	John Goodey	
C	Primary Teacher	Judith Nweze	
C	C of E Governor	(Vacant)	
C	NEU - ATL	Kim Knappett	✓
C	NEU - NUT	Karen Hansen	✓
C	Academy/Free school	VACANT	
C	NEU - NUT	Claire Adams	
C	NAS/UWT	Pamela Phillips	APOLOGIES
C	Lewisham headteachers and deputies	Judith Purkiss	
D	Local Authority member	Councillor Jacq Paschoud	✓
D	Local Authority member	Councillor David Britton (CHAIR)	✓
D	Local Authority member	Councillor Hilary Moore	✓
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	✓
D	Executive Director of Education's	Kate Bond	✓
<b>Other and Co-optees</b>			
	Rastafarians	VACANT	
	Young Mayor Team	c/o Katy Brown and Malcolm Ball	
	Also Present		
	Also Present		
	<b>RE School Improvement Officer</b>	Denise Chaplin	✓
	Minuting clerk	Stephen Sealy	✓

*(Boxed sections in these minutes signify actions, and underlined sections signify decisions)*

The meeting began at 6.37pm.

The Chair confirmed that the committee was quorate.

### **1a Welcome, apologies for absence and membership update**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

He stated that he had read the draft minutes of the recent SACRE meeting, which he had been unable to attend and acknowledged the discussions about conduct and management of the ASC meetings as echoing his thoughts.

He acknowledged that Humanism in the Agreed Syllabus is a national topic, but suggested that in the ASC work a compromise had been reached that represented a considerable advance on the previous situation for Humanism.

He said that speed of progress in agreeing the new syllabus was important.

The chair stated that a code of conduct wasn't necessary as one already exists in the Terms of Standing Orders that apply to all council meetings and that he hadn't imposed all of these standing orders for the ASC in favour of allowing the debates on Humanism.

However, he proposed that the Standing Orders would be used in the meeting so that from now on unless a speaker was moving a motion or proposing a report, they would be restricted to five minutes' talking time in meetings. Additionally, a speaker could only speak once in the course of that debate. The Chair's decision would be final and he can only be interrupted with his permission.

Denise asked that the term 'moving a point of order' be explained, to which Gurbakhsh responded that one would simply say "Point of order, chair".

Kate responded that the spirit of conversations in the previous SACRE meeting had been about respect, equality, openness and collaborative working together. She felt that the Chair's response was quite didactic and imposing. She reiterated that this was a group whose members worked together and helped each other to understand. She stated that she recognised the Standing Orders of the council but expressed the view that they may not apply.

Kate added that in the previous SACRE meeting people had spoken about not being listened to; she felt that this concern may not be addressed in strict adherence to the Standing Orders.

Adelere introduced himself and expressed the view that all be given the opportunity to speak out.

The Chair responded that he was imposing these rules as the committee was now up against the clock. He explained that this meeting was not about debating but rather voting. He added that while he had deliberately not imposed the council's Standing Orders, he now dared not allow pre-resolved issues to be raised again or for the business to overrun the time allotted to it.

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

She introduced Molly as the new Baha'i member that had been appointed earlier that day, and added that three new Governors had joined the committee with Adelere attending his first meeting.

The Chair expressed his hope that the Ahmadi representative would be in attendance soon, although Denise reported some difficulty in the progress of communicating with them.

### **1a Minutes of the previous meeting held on September at the Civic Suite**

The Chair reported that the record of his having proposed the motion that the statutory compulsory content should have an additional unit of Humanism (first underlined section on page 7) was inaccurate, and that Luke had proposed this motion. He also mentioned that Shaun was inaccurately titled the Deputy Chair in the list of those present.

Luke added that the word "non-religious" should precede "worldview" in the second paragraph on page 6.

He added that the word "Humanism" should be replaced by "the number of members of Humanism UK" in paragraph 9 on page 6 (beginning "Luke replied that 60-70,000...").

Subject to these changes, the minutes were unanimously accepted as a correct record of the meeting.

### **3 Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

Kate requested to report on International Women's Day at the end of the meeting.

Isaac reported that he had agreed to represent Lewisham at the NASACRE conference on the RE Council's Commission on RE's report in late November, and requested that any members with concerns or comments they wished to be represented forward these to Denise so that they could be forwarded to him.
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### **4 Formal Agreement of Elements of the Agreed Syllabus**

The committee separated into its groups to facilitate in-group discussion and voting.

Luke questioned if, when voting, one could disagree on each separate unit but agree the syllabus as a whole. He also asked if one would record an objection outside of the group voting structure.

The Chair responded that the voting structure was one of (group) collective responsibility. He added that if an individual strongly wanted an issue recorded, they could ask the clerk to minute the objection.

Denise clarified that for a point to be agreed, all four groups needed to agree it and that if any group didn't agree they could propose an amendment.

Luke asked if his disapproval could be recorded in the event of the rest of his group agreeing a motion, as otherwise there would be no evidence of his disapproval.

The Chair advised that the number of votes within a group could be recorded but that there was no precedent of recording more than this.

Denise expressed the view that she found it hurtful that Luke was considering disapproval even before the voting process had commenced. Luke responded that his position had been made known in previous discussions.

The Chair brought an end to this discussion and reiterated the ruling he had made.

At 7pm Cllr Paschoud arrived.

The groups discussed the elements of the Agreed Syllabus for thirty minutes in their groups with a view to voting 'For' (in agreement with the element) or 'Against' (not in agreement with it) when the groups re-joined the meeting.

The results of the vote follow:

Element	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Result	Comments
Aims of RE	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
Diagram for the introduction	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	Group C agreed this in principle but felt it needed further development.
EYFS	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
Updated KS 1 & 2 Overview	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
KS 1 & 2 Faith sections – Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	Group A noted that it should be clear that the arrow applies to all faiths not just Judaism.
Right and Wrong	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
Sharing Food	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
Weddings	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
The Natural World	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
Peace	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
The journey of life and death	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	
Understanding faith and belief in Lewisham	FOR (6-1)	FOR (1-0)	FOR (3-0)	FOR (6-0)	FOR (unanimous)	

Gurbakhsh commented that for The Natural World the idea of multiplicity of universes might be added to the Sikhism section.

Denise responded that whilst this section represented a way of looking at some shared beliefs it was about total responsibility. She explained that the approach of the learning was looking at Abrahamic creation stories and then using those to look at humans' stewardship of, and total responsibility for, the planet.

She added that none of the other faiths' creation accounts are included in this unit, which is for very young pupils, and that the following terms would be a better location for this, commenting that that was why the other faiths were represented in this way also.

The Chair reminded Molly that a KS3 Baha'i unit was needed also.

Denise added that Baha'i input was needed on the Journey of Life and Death, and that input from several faiths was needed for Understanding Faith and Belief in Lewisham.

Kim reported that the Christianity group had contributed to this, to which Denise responded that the outline had been agreed but work was still needed on the supporting documentation.

Luke reported that he had sent his contribution to both Carol and Denise.

Denise suggested she and Luke had an e-correspondence.

## **5 Key Stage 3 - overview**

Denise commended the Christianity group, they had done considerable work on this Key Stage. Kim responded that she hadn't realised that the content needed to fit into the existing six headings.

Denise advised that everyone's content needed to be appropriated to the six box grid that she had circulated.

Kim committed to do this and circulate the revised documentation among the Christianity group.

Denise acknowledged that the headings Luke had used differed from the standard six. Luke explained his reason was the same as that expressed by Kim.

Denise offered the rationale for the six headings in the previous syllabus, citing a National document of 1993. She explained that the six headings were adopted to help in organising the specific content as previously different faiths had used different headings. She added that a consequence of using standard headings was that some faiths would have much content in some boxes and very little in others. However this helped teachers wishing to adopt a more thematic approach to consider similarities.

Luke commented that the initial document predated the recent inclusion of Humanism as a belief nationally.

Denise expressed the view that these headings could still be applied to Humanism.

Kim expressed her concern on the value of the overview to teachers, who she thought would be unlikely to spend time engaging with it.

Denise clarified that the single page comprised the overview for each of the units.

Kate suggested that all groups use the same coversheet but engage in an e-communication with Denise to supplement the coversheet. She made a motion that this be the approach taken.

The Chair seconded this motion, reiterating the agreement made in the previous meeting for a very short agreed syllabus with additional information in the supplementary folder.

The Chair further suggested that the ASC remains in existence to oversee this supplementary documentation, possibly through the use of a sub-committee.

David H asked whether the supplementary information needed to be approved by the committee, to which the chair responded that they didn't.

Kim sought clarity on the coversheets being located in one folder and the supplementary information in another, in response to which Kate emphasised that the supplementary folder would be an electronic virtual folder, containing hyperlinks for easy addition and access.

Gerald advised that he had divided the Judaism but was unsure that the split reflected the time available to teach it and requested that a secondary teacher review this.

Kim added that the group had been asked for four units and have devised four six-week units, splitting the other unit and bolting it onto the existing four units as appropriate.

Denise acknowledged that the challenge was reforming existing units so that they still appeared as coherent units in their new manifestation. She suggested that groups may need to reword some of these units, adding that the retention of intellectual integrity wasn't easy but was worth doing.

The Chair asked if the committee if there were any secondary teachers among them and, as a retired teacher, volunteered to look at the units requiring a secondary teacher's guidance.

Gurbakhsh commented that the units would be tested in schools and that teachers would offer their verdict on them.

Kate suggested e-communication between key individuals about what the organising categories might look like, and then that these proposals are tabled at the next meeting.

This was unanimously agreed.

Kim added that faith groups needed to know what the headings are before beginning work on them.

The Chair suggested that this point be suspended until agenda point 6 was discussed.

## **6 Work between meetings**

## 6.1 TO CONSIDER HOW CHANGES CAN BE MADE TO REMAINING KS3 SYLLABUS MATERIALS

This had been already discussed.

## 6.2 NEW UNIT OUTLINES

Denise reported that these had been agreed at the last meeting.

## 6.3 SIXTH FORM SYLLABUS

Denise reported that Sid Hughes is working with sixth form curriculum managers about producing an outline of ways forward for sixth form RE. Both he and Denise are part-time, which has slightly hampered the progress of this work. She reported that they were considering may be an annual conference as part of the sixth form provision to which both local and national politicians would be invited. Sid could forward a bid to NASACRE to financially support this.

She acknowledged that a focus was on identifying methods that the people involved may find useful, even if this was through an annual borough event.

She conceded that she had been hoping for more progress but schools were very busy.

Kate expressed the need to exercise caution with regard to the sixth form, as responsibility for the sixth form lies with the governors. She commented that while it would be lovely for the council to be involved, any funding issues would be for the sixth form and its governors to resolve.

She remarked that as the group of sixth form colleges was a small one, they should be encouraged to work together more, and signalled her willingness to be involved in this.

Denise commented that Prendergast was voluntary aided, and the Chair added that Colleges were exempt from following the syllabus.

Gurbakhsh commented that every year Lewisham College holds a religious education day on which information stalls are manned and visitors given opportunities to have their questions about the respective faiths answered.

Denise reported that she had discussed with Sid the ethical issues, which she added could be addressed without religion at all, but stated that their emphasis would be on including the religious perspective of this. She acknowledged that looking at any contemporary conflict, for example between two faiths, could be done in a political/economic way, but reported that the discussion with Sid was about approaching this from a religious standpoint.

Denise remarked on the acoustic difficulties of the room and asked if another venue could be used for the meetings. Gurbakhsh and Gerald agreed it was very difficult to hear in these rooms.

Kate suggested that Laurence House may be appropriate. The Chair reminded the committee that this venue had been chosen due to difficulty finding other locations at the 'last minute'.

## 4 Formal Agreement of Elements of the Agreed Syllabus - RESUMED

Making reference to the 'Key Stage 3 – Sikhism' document, Denise explained that in previous times information was arranged under the six headings (in bold), and offered the rationale for this.

She acknowledged that 'Expressions of Worship and Spirituality' would be a problematic unit for Humanism but asked if Luke could fit his content into these units. Luke responded that he had changed 'Expression of Worship and Spirituality' to 'Expressions of Life'.

The Chair suggested 'Expressions of worship and spirituality or life'.

Denise commented that she couldn't see how life was 'expressed'.

Kim stated that it was acceptable to have an empty box, which the Chair also endorsed. She requested that, having explained the six headings, Denise send these explanations to the faith groups.

Luke added that his preference would be for all boxes to contain content.

Denise emphasised the point that the boxes are not lessons, and that teachers shouldn't be looking at them in this way.

Kate questioned if having the six themes expressed as questions, and not boxed, would be an improvement, e.g. 'How do I express my beliefs?', 'How do these influence my values/relationships?' etc. Luke expressed that he'd be happy with this approach.

Denise opined that just a single line could very easily substantiate an hour's lesson on Humanism ceremonies.

Kim commented that the questions and guidance need to be with faith groups within the next few days. She suggested that some guidance on how many lessons these topics would fit into should be included also which would minimise some of the difficulty of matching content to teaching time.

Molly commented that the overview sheet was a curriculum of sorts and cautioned against too much content being included.

The Chair responded that the words 'Prune and select according to classes' age and aptitude' could be displayed at the top of each page.

Kate committed to having an e-conversation with Denise tomorrow to agree the questions.

She suggested that a sentence suggesting how the units are organised into lessons as well as a link to further information could be included on the back of the page.

Denise reported that teachers had said that they didn't want the committee to tell them how to organise the lessons and expressed her concern that going from teachers exercising autonomy to them being told what to do felt like a retrograde step.

Kate conceded to just agree the questions and have those sent out.

## **7 (OVERLOOKED IN THE NUMBERING OF THE MINUTES)**

## 8 Design and production update

Kate reported that she and Denise had met with the Comms team who have committed to provide design/production support, particularly for the first five or six pages.

She added that the rest of the document will need to be made navigable (from a website point of view) and able to be easily added to online.

The Chair added that the production team can now be asked to produce volumes of the documents.

He added that the list of committee members needed to include all those who had served on the committee at any point since the beginning of the syllabus project.

Kate reported on the upcoming International Women's Day celebrations in March 2018, referring the celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage and recent events such as the Weinstein scandal, and reiterating the importance of democracy.

She encouraged the committee to access 'push for progress' / '#internationalwomensday' to engage in the online activity about the event, citing a metaphor of spreading a packet of flower seeds to cultivate flowers.

She asked the committee to think how they may want to mark or celebrate the day within their faith communities, inviting them to contact Katie Brown or Malcom Bull if they wanted to be part of the council's gathering for this event.

## 9 Dates of future meetings

Kate stressed the importance of committee members attending the upcoming meetings prepared, and suggested a need for two meetings in quick succession.

The Chair suggested Thursday 7 December.

Kate suggested that all relevant information be circulated by the end of November, after which groups could then circulate the feedback within the respective groups, with the group leader having any necessary conversations with those submitting feedback and acting on this as appropriate.

Kim commented that, while for Humanism this would be easy, the complexity of the Christianity task made this more difficult.

Kate summarised the following schedule:

30 November	Content circulated by each author to their groups
7 December	Groups respond to group leader with any comments/feedback
3 January	Author redrafts and re-circulates content
	Denise then sends group finalised content to the committee
16 January	Committee meets
Following week	Committee meets

David reminded the group to be disciplined in its email communication, employing appropriate email etiquette, to which Denise added that content should stay within one's faith group until the group had agreed it. She acknowledged that there had been debates in the

past where faiths had drafted text that other faiths had considered insensitive to their own, and stated that the process needs to allow the space to make these responses.

Kim requested that a list of who is in each group be circulated, which Denise committed to do over the weekend.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.