

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

25 FEBRUARY 2013

PRESENT: Michael Gammage (Chairman) (Baha'i Community of Maidenhead), Councillor Natasha Airey, Louise Ceska (BASH), Hilary Harris (Judaism Representative), Fiona Smith (NUT Representative) and Councillor Eileen Quick.

Officers in attendance: Karen Butler, Jo Fageant and Simon Wright.

ACTION

1 Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman

As there were no representatives from Group B present, it was agreed that a Chairman would be appointed for the meeting only. The appointment of the Chairman and Vice Chairman for the academic year would therefore take place at the next meeting when membership and constitution matters had been fully resolved.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Michael Gammage be appointed as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest

There were no apologies for absence received.

3 Minutes

Members approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 October 2012.

4 Matters Arising

The Chairman outlined the actions arising from the previous meeting and sought an update in respect of progress:

Minute No. 5 - It was confirmed that responses were still awaited in respect of representation on SACRE from the Hindu community, Methodist Church, NASUWT, Catholic Church and Church of England. It was noted that interest had been expressed by the Kings Church International, Windsor to be a Free Churches representative. It was agreed that the Clerk would co-ordinate interest and write to the relevant individuals and organisations.

**Simon
Wright**

Minute No. 8 – Karen Butler gave an update regarding the RE Quality Mark Conference.

Hilary Harris reported that a Mitzvah Day had been held in November 2012 and had involved shared activities, food and discussion with other faiths. The event was charitable and included food collections and was an international initiative with a further event being held in November 2013. The forum expressed their support and that it could be a catalyst for more collaborative working between churches.

Jo Fageant advised that she would forward details of forthcoming courses to Karen Butler to forward to RBWM RE Co-ordinators. Councillor Quick sought clarification regarding independent faith schools. Karen Butler advised that it was possible there could be resource issues, as she would be leaving the authority at the end of March and RBWM systems were focused on maintained schools. Councilor Airey suggested that if it could be done then it could open up new avenues, facilities and views. Jo Fageant suggested that as the courses were organised by the Diocese they may be able to help with administration.

**Karen
Butler/ Jo
Fageant**

Minute No. 9 – Karen Butler indicated that a couple of issues needed resolving by Jo Fageant before the annual Report could be finalised for circulation.

Jo Fageant

Minute No. 10 – Jo Fageant reported that work on the contact list was ongoing. Hilary Harris advised that the synagogue had a co-ordinator who could make arrangements as necessary. Jo Fageant emphasized the need to have generic contact details, email addresses and telephone numbers where possible as personal information tended to change more regularly. The importance of regular updates was also highlighted to ensure information was up to date.

Jo Fageant

5 Constitution/Membership Update

The Forum noted that the membership issues had been largely agreed under the matters arising item. Jo Fageant then circulated the current constitution and membership document for SACRE including comments on aspects that needed consideration. The forum was reminded that the constitution was based around the original Berks SACRE document.

It was suggested that:

- A membership period of four years should be introduced
- Relevant changes should be made to the wording to reflect that it covered the Borough only.
- The definition and membership of the Groups should be updated.
- Under the procedure section Clause 4 should be included in more detail to clarify the voting process.

Jo Fageant clarified for representatives that the Duties and Powers were set down in law and it was acknowledged that these had not changed in respect of SACREs in line with other changes in local government structures.

The forum agreed that it would be beneficial to update the wording to reflect that it related to the Borough only. A number of other typographical errors were also identified.

Jo Fageant then outlined the groupings and explained that specific rules/legislation were in place as to how these were defined. It was indicated that it could reflect the percentage of each faith in the community although it was not clear how the current breakdown had been achieved. Jo Fageant suggested that a more equitable approach would be to use a clause relating to the membership reflecting the locally agreed RE syllabus. Hilary Harris suggested that this could allow wider representation. Jo Fageant advised that there would still be an element of control over membership as there would need to be direct links to the syllabus. The Forum agreed that this approach should be adopted.

The Forum considered the Group C nominations and that some of the associations had changed their name or were no longer relevant. It was agreed that SHA should be replaced by Berkshire Association of Secondary Heads (BASH) and PAT should be replaced by the VOICE Trade Union.

Councillor Quick asked about the position on Academies representation. Jo Fageant reminded representatives that SACRE only had a role for maintained schools and whilst partnership working was encouraged SACRE had no influence in this regard. It was acknowledged as an ongoing issue.

Councillor Airey referred to the voting procedure and quorum for meetings. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to include the wording of Clause 4 as shown in the relevant legislation to clarify the situation. Councillor Airey suggested that if the membership issues could be resolved the SACRE could gain more momentum and voting/quorum problems would not be so prevalent.

The Chairman then summarised the discussion and it was agreed that the suggestions made by Jo Fageant be incorporated into a revised constitution for consideration by Council. It was agreed that the procedure for approval of the document would need to be clarified.

**Jo Fageant/
Simon
Wright**

6 Budget Update

Members received details of the latest budget position. Karen Butler advised that a majority of the budget had now been spent and highlighted a couple of areas where there could be an underspend.

Jo Fageant suggested that there may be the possibility of using some funding towards a countywide event in June 2013 to coincide with the three yearly OFSTED report on RE in schools. An Inspector had indicated his willingness to give a presentation and talk through issues with delegates. The estimated cost for such an event was approximately £250 per SACRE. A number of representatives expressed support for this initiative as previous ones had been very beneficial.

Karen Butler clarified, in response to Councillor Airey, that the adviser/clerical support was a recharge.

The Panel then noted the Budget position and expressed support for an event in June 2013.

Jo Fageant

7 Forward Plan - Where to from here?

Members discussed the future focus on the group, now that the syllabus had been launched.

Councillor Quick suggested that engagement with schools and pupils should be a key aim. Mike Gammage asked representatives to consider the best way for SACRE to promote what schools wanted.

Fiona Smith highlighted that independent learning was a key a major initiative in schools and had been very successful as it gave pupils a chance to undertake projects away from the curriculum. A number of examples were given of what had been achieved. It was suggested that this could be linked to the work of SACRE if possible. Representatives agreed this could be examined further.

Louise Ceska referred to the success of the film festival that had previously been held and that a similar event would be positive if possible. Karen Butler confirmed that the budget for next year was likely to be similar but raised some concern regarding capacity to organise such an event. Jo Fageant suggested that SACRE needed to take a lead role in the organisation of any event.

Mike Gammage suggested that it may be better to look at an event in 2014 and discuss ideas and options at the next meeting. The forum agreed to this suggestion.

**Simon
Wright**

8 NASACRE AGM

Jo Fageant reported that the NASACRE AGM would be held on 23rd May 2013 and this year was the twentieth anniversary. It was indicated that the programme would focus on challenges for SACREs. There would be fewer keynote speakers thus giving more opportunity for delegates to network and discuss issues together. Details would be circulated in due course.

9 Dates of Future Meetings

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 10th June 2013.

Simon Wright reported that dates for the forthcoming year would need to be approved and he would circulate details.

**Simon
Wright**

10 Any Other Business

Mike Gammage thanked Karen Butler for her hard work in supporting the SACRE and wished her luck for the future. Mike Gammage expressed the hope that Karen may continue to be involved in the work of SACRE in some way. The representatives present associated themselves with the best wishes of the Chairman.

The meeting, which began at 6.05pm, ended at 7.30pm