

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**6 September 2022**

PRESENT: Karen Butler (Chairman), Barbara Meaney (Vice-Chairman), Michael Gammage, Ravinder Singh Zandu, Chris Sayers, Darcy Chesterfield-Terry, Saghir Ahmed, Ila Gangotra, Hilary Harris, Anthony Lewis, Clare Roberts, Dai Prendiville, Councillor Donna Stimson, Councillor Julian Sharpe and Councillor Shamsul Shelim

Also in attendance: Councillor John Baldwin

Officers in attendance: Clive Haines, Anne Andrews and Mark Beeley

**ACTION**

**1 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Barbara Meaney proposed that Karen Butler was Chairman of SACRE for the 2022/23 academic year. This was seconded by Michael Gammage.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Karen Butler was elected Chairman of SACRE for the 2022/23 academic year.**

Michael Gammage proposed that Barbara Meaney was Vice Chairman of SACRE for the 2022/23 academic year. This was seconded by Hilary Harris.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Barbara Meaney was elected Vice Chairman of SACRE for the 2022/23 academic year.**

**2 Welcome**

The new Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

**3 Apologies For Absence**

An apology for absence had been received from Thomas Kingsley-Jones.

**4 Minutes Of Meeting on 30/06/22**

Anne Andrews said that there was an action from the previous meeting to consider the best way forward for SACRE, she suggested that this could be done effectively under the NASACRE self-assessment tool agenda item.

Councillor Baldwin said that there was an action for him to liaise with recruitment for SACRE Members. He asked for some guidance offline on who was eligible to join SACRE.

Anne Andrews confirmed that she was happy to help with this.

**ACTION – Councillor Baldwin to liaise with Anne Andrews about which vacancies needed to be filled and the requirements for new members to join SACRE.**

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.**

## 5 Opening Reflection

Darcy Chesterfield-Terry provided a reflection on the changing of the seasons, as the Christian calendar looked towards harvest.

## 6 Matters arising and approve wording of letter to KS1 schools

The Chairman said that the letter was planned to go out to KS1 school headteachers, asking them to nominate teachers who could join SACRE. There were also vacancies for primary and secondary headteachers, along with an academy headteacher.

Clare Roberts asked what was meant by KS1, did this include primary schools and infant schools that taught KS1.

The Chairman assumed that it would be sent to all schools which taught KS1.

Anne Andrews added that as the letter was requesting for secondary headteachers, it would go out to all schools.

Councillor Baldwin said that he was not keen on the wording “as you will know”, he felt it sounded patronising. He also suggested that the word “keen” could be removed.

Clare Roberts agreed with these comments, she said that it could put some teachers off from applying. She asked if the representatives needed to be the RE or collective worship leader, as had been stated in the letter.

The Chairman said that the amendments suggested could be made before the letter was circulated to schools.

**ACTION – Anne Andrews to make amendments to the letter, incorporating the comments made by Councillor Baldwin and Clare Roberts.**

## 7 Membership Update

The Chairman asked if Anne Andrews had any success in recruiting someone to fill the vacancy on Group B, representing the Church of England.

Anne Andrews confirmed that she had written to the Area Dean and the Assistant Area Dean but had received no response. She asked if Darcy Chesterfield-Terry was able to enquire about a response.

Darcy Chesterfield-Terry clarified that he was part of the Burnham and Slough Deanery.

Barbara Meaney said that Reverend Sally came into St Edwards, she would try and raise this with her.

The Chairman said that Clive Haines had also tried to find a headteacher representative, unfortunately the person nominated was unable to attend evening meetings.

Clive Haines, Deputy Director for Education, said that he would go back to BASH shortly and try to fill the headteacher vacancies.

Councillor Sharpe asked if Clive Haines had tried any of the schools in the

south of the borough.

Clive Haines confirmed that this was incorporated by BASH, it consisted of headteachers from all secondary schools.

Mark Beeley said that Kings Church International had been in contact to know if there were still vacancies for the Free Church positions, they would be undertaking a fresh search to find a representative.

## **8 NASACRE Briefing and training dates**

The Chairman said that a comprehensive list of training dates provided by NASACRE had been included in the agenda.

Anne Andrews said that an unlimited number of people could attend the training sessions, as SACRE had paid for the training package. Anyone interested needed to let Mark Beeley know so that they could be sent the link. Anne Andrews added that the sessions were well run and those that were running the sessions were experienced NASACRE executive members. It was also a good way to meet people from other SACREs and all sessions would take place via Zoom.

The Chairman said that she hoped to attend the session on 'how to effectively use teacher and pupil voice in your SACRE', this linked up with thinking about how to develop the forward plan and the NASACRE self-evaluation tool kit. She encouraged Members to attend some of the sessions that were being offered.

## **9 Feedback from Teachers**

Barbara Meaney said that term had started at the beginning of the week, with all pupils returning after the summer holiday. It could be difficult in the first week to ensure that pupils were able to quickly adapt back to having a schedule and routine.

Clare Roberts said that there was a positive feeling at school, it was hoped that the impact from Covid which was significant in schools last year would not be repeated this academic year. A couple of teaching assistants had left the school at the end of last term and they had not yet been replaced due to the budgetary constraints.

The Chairman asked if Clare Roberts could give some context to her school.

Clare Roberts explained that Cheapside School was a one form primary school, from Reception through to Year 6. The school was located in Cheapside, in Ascot.

Dai Prendiville said that students were back in school at Desborough for their first day, it was the first time that RE had been taught at the school for a long time. Students and colleagues were looking forward to the subject being back on the teaching curriculum.

The Chairman said that there had been a letter sent from SACRE to Desborough in the past, as it had been noted that RE was not being taught. She added that it was fantastic to hear of the changes which had been made.

Ravinder Singh informed Members that two schools had recently visited Maidenhead Gurdwara, other schools were also interested in visiting soon.

Clive Haines commented on the support and welcome which schools in the borough had provided to Ukraine refugees. The majority of schools had taken in refugees.

Councillor Sharpe said that it would be interesting to hear how the Ukrainian children had been progressing at school and if it had an impact on teaching.

Anne Andrews suggested that as SACRE had written to Desborough asking for them to consider teaching RE, it would be worth sending a follow up letter thanking them for the changes that had been made and to wish them well with the roll out of RE across the key stages at the school.

**ACTION – The Chairman to send out a letter to Desborough College, recognising the changes that had been made.**

Councillor Stimson said it was important that the community did not leave those in need behind, particularly in the current economic climate.

The Chairman said it was important that what was known about need was shared, the whole borough was represented through SACRE and issues impacting on education could be discussed to see what could be done.

Ila Gangotra suggested that the Headteacher of Desborough College could be invited to join SACRE, to fill one of the Headteacher vacancies.

The Chairman said that the letter could be sent to the school first, she was mindful that Dai was already a representative on SACRE from Desborough. It would be ideal to have as many different schools represented as possible.

Councillor Baldwin echoed the comments made by Councillor Stimson, winter would be very difficult for many people and faith groups and schools could come together to help.

## **10 Draft Annual Report 2021/22 for approval**

The Chairman said that SACRE had aimed to do something with collective worship through its forward plan, no monitoring of collective worship had taken place. SACRE would need to find a way around this, as it had a requirement to advise the local authority.

Anne Andrews said that collective worship would be similar across all SACREs. Church schools had support and training through the diocese. As Ofsted reports came through, information could be gathered from the reports about the impact of personal development, which was often what collective worship aimed to promote.

Clare Roberts noted that one of the NASACRE training sessions was about collective worship, she was planning to attend and could feedback to SACRE after this had taken place.

Councillor Baldwin felt that as leaders in the community, councillors had a responsibility to spread a wider understanding of religious observance and the benefits of collective worship, particularly if it was something that everyone could participate in.

Anne Andrews said that the RE newsletter included an article on what was meant by collective worship.

The Chairman asked if everyone received a copy of the newsletter.

Anne Andrews said that it had been circulated with the agenda and was sent out to schools through Elaine Norstrom. There were usually three a year and they were distributed close to the beginning of each school term.

Councillor Baldwin asked if the newsletter could be included as part of the Members Update, which was a weekly email sent out to all Councillors.

**ACTION – Mark Beeley to add SACRE newsletter to the Members Update.**

Anne Andrews added that RE network meetings over the course of the year had been included as part of the newsletter, this would hopefully help to increase the number of attendees.

Councillor Sharpe asked if a copy of the newsletter could be circulated to all SACRE Members.

He was informed that the newsletter had been circulated as part of the agenda pack.

SACRE approved the annual report, this was subject to GCSE and A Level results being published and ratified. It was likely that this would be available around February 2023 and the report would come back to SACRE for a final check before being sent off.

## **11 Draft Newsletter for final review**

This was discussed as part of the annual report 2021/22 agenda item.

The Chairman passed on her thanks to Anne Andrews on behalf of all teachers for the way that she brought information together in a concise form, she felt that the newsletter was a great resource.

## **12 Budget Update**

SACRE had a budget of £6,260, with £1,115 having been spent so far. The professional fee invoice had not yet been received, therefore this also needed to be taken into account. After this had been taken, Clive Haines predicted that there would be between £2,000 and £2,200 left in the budget for SACRE.

Anne Andrews said that she had requested that invoices were raised before the start of the financial year, she would chase this again.

**ACTION – Anne Andrews to check that an invoice had been sent to RBWM.**

The Chairman asked if the fee from the Hub had been taken. She was informed that it had been.

## **13 Pan-Berkshire Hub Update**

The latest Hub meeting had taken place the previous day on 5<sup>th</sup> September. Anne Andrews said that the 'real people, real faiths' films had been discussed, a Buddhist film would be created at Reading Priory. There were also plans for a Bahai and Romanian Orthodox film to be created, while the Humanist film

was currently being edited. The Hub also talked about the syllabus review. A document would be circulated to all faith representatives on SACRE, considering what were the core concepts pupils needed to explore in the various faiths. A decision could then be made about the extent to which the current syllabus provided good coverage. Anne Andrews added that the local authority needed to consider what additional funding could be considered for the syllabus review and if this funding would be time limited. There was concern about launching a full syllabus review when schools and RE were still in a state of flux. However, there was a legal obligation to carry out the syllabus review.

Barbara Meaney commented on the 'real people, real faiths' films, she had seen them highlighted on the NATRE monthly newsletter for August, which hopefully raised the profile of the films.

Councillor Baldwin informed the meeting that he needed to leave, he thanked Saghir Ahmed for an enjoyable open day which had recently been held at the Mosque.

#### **14 Ofsted/SIAMS Reports**

Clive Haines explained that there had not been many Ofsted reports since the last meeting, reports did not have significant detail. Link advisors could ask for more detail in subject areas at the feedback session.

Anne Andrews said that the only SIAMS inspection to take place in RBWM over the last academic year was at Churchmead School, who received an 'excellent' rating. There was a list of schools that were expected to receive a SIAMS inspection in the current academic year.

#### **15 Work through section one of the NASACRE SEF - on SACRE's relationship with the LA**

The meeting took the self-assessment tool and looked at each area of the first section of the tool, which considered SACRE's relationship with the local authority. For each section of the tool, Members could rate SACRE as either requiring improvement, developing, established or advanced.

*How well supported and resourced is SACRE, by the LA exercising its statutory responsibilities?*

Michael Gammage felt that SACRE was somewhere between developing and established.

Barbara Meaney said that the score should be between established and advanced. She felt that SACRE was well supported by a subject specialist, representatives and an officer from the local authority attended meetings.

Ravinder Singh said that he felt SACRE was established in this area, however funds were an issue as had been highlighted as part of the forward plan.

The Chairman agreed that she believed SACRE was more established than advanced, she was aware that the local authority officer had a number of responsibilities and commitments which meant that he could not always attend every meeting. Ofsted reports were now a lot less detailed which made it difficult for SACRE to fulfil one of its functions, which was to advise the local authority. The Chairman therefore made the point that the relationship with the

local authority was not as strong as it could be, there was room for improvement.

Barbara Meaney said that she had been in a meeting with Richard Kueh, who had mentioned that there had been very few 'deep dives' into RE from Ofsted reports as they did not have the staff available.

*How purposeful, inclusive, representative and effective are SACRE meetings?*

Michael Gammage judged SACRE to be established in this area, although there had been little focus on the quality of collective worship being offered.

The Chairman added that it came back to the core issue of SACRE not being aware of what was happening in schools. She had read Buckinghamshire's syllabus and noted that they had made it very clear what the priorities were for schools in the area in relation to RE and collective worship.

*To what extent is the membership of SACRE able to fulfil SACRE's purpose?*

Ravinder Singh suggested that SACRE was established, there was a good and diverse membership although there had been some difficulties in recruiting representatives for some vacancies.

Anne Andrews picked up on the comments in the tool document around induction training for new SACRE Members, this was something which could be added to the forward plan for consideration. Alternatively, the training could be something for the Hub to consider as the turnover of Members each year was not usually significant.

*How effective are the priorities and actions identified by SACRE in improving the experience of pupils in schools?*

Ravinder Singh said that SACRE was between developing and established. The forward plan developed had linked in with the priorities and actions which SACRE had identified, although the funding that was available was not used.

The Chairman felt that Anne Andrews had summarised the issue well in the annual report, there was no link between the work of SACRE and the local authority's improvement plan. She did not recall the development plan of the authority being brought to SACRE, it was therefore fair to say that SACRE should be rated as developing in this area.

**ACTION – Mark Beeley to link the RBWM Corporate Plan in the minutes of the meeting.**

The [RBWM Corporate Plan](#) had been adopted in November 2021 and set out the priorities and objectives of the council over the next five years.

Anne Andrews suggested that the development plan could be formed around each of the five sections of the self-assessment tool, SACRE could then determine which one should be considered at the next meeting in December.

*How well informed is SACRE in order to be able to advise the LA appropriately?*

The Chairman said that there was some exam data and information on national initiatives, but there was limited exam data provided.

Ravinder Singh agreed with these comments, he felt that the rating should be developing as the information which SACRE received was limited and therefore it was unable to act as the 'critical friend'.

Michael Gammage said that this was particularly the case with collective worship, where there was a significant blind spot.

*What partnerships does the SACRE have with key local and national stakeholders, and what quality are these?*

Ravinder Singh suggested that SACRE was developing, there were links with local faith groups. However, there was still a limited ability for SACRE Members to get into schools and see how they were teaching RE.

The Chairman suggested that some Members of SACRE had attended the NASACRE AGM along with other training opportunities.

Michael Gammage said that collective worship was again the issue.

Anne Andrews commented on the premise that SACRE representatives were supported by their national body. She was not aware of how much support representatives actually received.

Hilary Harris said that she had been to meetings of the Jewish SACRE and that there were links and support available.

Michael Gammage shared a similar experience with the Bahai community.

Anthony Lewis said that Humanists UK organised a meeting twice a year for representatives on SACREs.

Barbara Meaney said that SACRE could run a competition for pupils, a previous example had been for pupils to submit a short film. Ideas like this could allow SACRE to gain a feel for what pupils experienced when learning about RE.

*How effectively is SACRE encouraging academies etc to see themselves also as stakeholders in their local area, specifically by devising ways in which an academies presence is incorporated into SACRE itself?*

The Chairman said that there was the opportunity to network with academies through Clive Haines.

Anne Andrews noted that SACRE was currently looking to recruit an academy representative, there had also been representatives from academies in the past.

Ravinder Singh said that SACRE was established in this area, there had been a good relationship with academies in the past.

The Chairman said that the points raised during the discussion on this item



could be used to develop a forward plan, in a similar format to the last forward plan which had been developed.

Hilary Harris suggested that it could be raised at a Hub meeting, to see if there were other SACREs that were in a similar position.

The Chairman considered which area of the self-assessment tool SACRE could consider at its next meeting.

Anne Andrews said looking at the syllabus review section would help SACRE as it looked forward to the local agreed syllabus review, particularly with the document due to be circulated to faith representatives shortly.

## **16 Any Other Business**

There was no other business to discuss.

## **17 Dates Of Future Meetings**

The Chairman said it would be great to hold some future meetings in schools, it was planned that three meetings a year would be held in person with one being held entirely virtually. She said that she would contact various SACRE Members over the next few months to see where meetings could be hosted.

The next meeting was due to take place on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022, starting at 6pm and would be held via Zoom.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 8.00 pm