

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

19 November 2019

PRESENT: Richard Rhodes, Chris Sayers, Michael Gammage (Chairman), Karen Butler (Vice-Chairman), Saghir Ahmed, Louise Ceska, Rev Margaret Dudley, Deborah Firth, Ila Gangotra, Hilary Harris, Barbara Meaney, Ravinder Singh Zandu, Anthony Lewis, Darvey Chesterfield-Terry and Councillor Donna Stimson.

Officers in attendance: Mark Beeley, Shilpa Manek and Anne Andrews.

ACTION

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves.

2 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for 19-20

The clerk informed members that a new Chairman and Vice Chairman would need to be appointed for the rest of the municipal year.

Councillor Stimpson nominated Michael Gammage, which was seconded by Ila Gangotra and unanimously agreed by other members.

RESOLVED – That Michael Gammage was confirmed as Chairman of SACRE for 2019-20.

Louise Ceska nominated Karen Butler to be Vice Chairman, which was seconded by Barbara Meaney and unanimously agreed by other members.

RESOLVED – That Karen Butler was confirmed as the Vice Chairman of SACRE for 2019-20.

3 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Reverend Sally Lynch and Clive Haines.

4 Minutes of Meeting on 16/07/19

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2019 were agreed, providing a few amendments:

- Anne Andrews was added to the list of people in attendance at the meeting
- Changing of the wording in item 7 to clarify that Altwood had previously received an “outstanding rating when inspected by SIAMS”.

All matters arising were resolved.

Once the minutes had been approved, Saghir Ahmed gave a reflection.

5 Membership Update

The Chairman explained that at the last meeting there had been agreement to

invite a representative from the Humanist community. He had asked Windsor Humanists, and Anthony Lewis was interested in being part of the SACRE membership.

Anthony Lewis introduced himself and gave members an insight into who he was and how he got into Humanism. He said that he had been into schools and spoken at events, including being on BBC Radio Berkshire. Humanism was about treating others how you wanted to be treated and their methodology involved using science and reason to explore the world. Humanists put faith in human reasoning and do not rely on the metaphysical.

Anthony Lewis said that Secularism, which was a branch of Humanism, was more of a political movement and followed the five British values; belief in democracy, freedom of expression, mutual respect and tolerance. There was freedom of all religions or no religions, with no favoured theology. However, the political movement aspect was the biggest difference.

ACTION – SACRE members voted to co-opt Anthony Lewis as a Humanist representative.

The Chairman thanked Anthony Lewis and introduced Farther Darcy Chesterfield-Terry and Richard Rhodes to the meeting, who had both also recently joined SACRE as members.

It was asked what was happening with the appointment of a representative from the Baptist Church, which the Chairman confirmed was still vacant.

Councillor Stimpson raised the possibility of having other councillors attend SACRE.

The Chairman informed members about the Commission on Faith Education, which had spent two years trying to discover what the future of RE in schools would look like. He explained that he recently attended a meeting of the Religious Education Council, where there was unanimous support for the report and the findings presented.

Anne Andrews followed up on this and said that some schools had already begun to implement certain aspects of the report. She believed that RE would rise up the agenda of schools and there would be significant change at grassroots level.

6 Budget Update

This item was deferred to the next meeting due to Clive Haines being unable to attend.

7 Feedback from Hub meeting and update on Westhill project

Karen Butler gave members an update on the above titled item. At the last meeting, there was discussion around the Westhill bid, money which would benefit schools and give them the opportunity to invite speakers to come in. There was also a discussion about filming, and possibly giving students the opportunity to be part of interviews. The next hub meeting would take place next week, in which there would be a discussion of the first filming session which took place at Maidenhead Synagogue. She was impressed when she saw the video.

Anne Andrews said that the filming was done by a former RE teacher, who was now a professional film maker, and that they would like to use it as a teaching

material. There would be around 6 films which would be spread across the area with different religious venues hosting each film.

ACTION – Anne Andrews to send link of video so that members could watch it.

8 Feedback for RE meetings

Anne Andrews said that there had recently been a ‘Teach Meet’, where the quality of ideas discussed was very good. They looked at techniques to get children to remember things and ensure effective revision. She confirmed that she would look to organise another one next term.

9 Initial GCSE/A level results

The Chairman said that results had not yet been released, but would be circulated to members once they had been.

ACTION – Clive Haines to circulate results to members.

10 Feedback from Ofsted reports

The Chairman explained that any reports of interest to SACRE would be discussed at the meeting.

Anne Andrews said that there had been some examples of schools nationally that needed improvement due to not meeting the requirements for RE. However, RE was becoming more of a focus for Ofsted and the numbers attending RE network meetings was going up, which was good to see.

11 Feedback from SIAMS

Karen Butler said that members should look at SIAMS reports, and that a number of schools in the borough had received good reports that should be known about and acknowledged.

Anne Andrews commented that she knew of one school where RE was the only thing that stopped the school from being ‘inadequate’, as it did not have a vision that staff could talk about.

The Chairman said that SIAMS reports would be good to read in advance of meetings so that they could be discussed.

12 Draft of Annual Report

Anne Andrews informed members that she had been back through previous minutes to ensure she had not missed anything.

The Chairman asked whether councillors who were previously part of SACRE had written to the Prime Minister, as was discussed at a previous meeting. Anne Andrews said that SACRE encouraged them to but was not aware of any response.

The Chairman informed members to pass on any comments of the Annual Report by email, after which it would be finalised and submitted by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Anne Andrews, and would not be on the next

agenda.

The email newsletter was discussed, which was a useful resource. Any contributions to the newsletter would be gratefully received.

13 Dates of Future Meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting of SACRE would take place at Maidenhead Gurdwara, which would be organised by Ravinder Singh Zandu.

The meeting would take place on Tuesday 17th March 2020, starting at 6pm. There would potentially be an opportunity to go on a tour of the Gurdwara before the meeting, details of this would be circulated nearer the time.

ACTION – Ravinder Singh Zandu to organise the venue for the next meeting, with Darcy Chesterfield-Terry providing the reflection.

Members thanked Hilary Harris for organising the meeting at Maidenhead Synagogue and Karen Butler for providing food and refreshments.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, ended at 7.20 pm