

PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Wednesday 15 November 2006 at
4.30 pm in Conference Room B, Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

Group A Representatives

Celia Axton, Roman Catholic Church
Geoff Wheeler, Baptist Union
Julius Klein, Judaism
David Lewis, The Religious Society of Friends
Peter Davies, The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
Ted Parker, Salvation Army
Reverend Beryl Wright, Methodist Church
Christine McMillan, United Reformed Church
Mohammed Riyami, Islam
Mrs Ephrat Miller-Foroughi, Baha'i Faith

Group B Representative

Brian Hay, Church of England

Group C Representatives

Ros Griffiths
Georgina Mulhall
Patrick Quirke

Group D Representatives

Councillor David Horne
Councillor Darron Phillips
Councillor Malcolm Hey
Councillor Hugh Mason

Co-opted Representative

Terry Carter, Retired RE Teacher/Deputy Headteacher
John Lance, South Hampshire Humanists
Sue Ganter, Interfusion - Portsmouth Youth Diversity Forum
Moses Tutesigensi, Interfusion - Portsmouth Youth Diversity Forum
Kieran Anderson, Interfusion - Portsmouth Youth Diversity Forum

Officers in Attendance

Clive Erricker, County Inspector for RE,
Hampshire Area Education Service
Judith Lowndes, General Inspector for RE,
Hampshire Area Education Office
Mike Johns, General Adviser, Secondary Strategy Team, PCC
Teresa Deasy, Democratic Services, PCC

21 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from the Venerable Dr Trevor Reader, Roger Bentote, Alison Spittles.

22 Minutes - 21 June 2006 (AI 3)

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2006 be agreed as a correct record.

23 Matters Arising (AI 3)

(a) Minute No 13 - Peter Davies

Ted Parker referred to mention at the last meeting of Peter Davies' ill health. On behalf of the SACRE, the Chair welcomed Mr Davies to this meeting and wished him continued good health.

(b) Minute No 17 - Implementation of the Agreed Syllabus

With reference to action point No 1, Patrick Quirke reported that a review of "Living Difference" was being carried out by secondary teachers, and when it was completed details would be put on the Learning Network.

(c) Minute No 19(a) - Bishop Kenneth Stevenson

Brian Hay reported that Bishop Stevenson had undergone a further course of chemotherapy treatment during the summer. A successful bone marrow donor had been identified and the bishop would be having the first course of treatment in December, but he would be unlikely to be back in action until some time after Easter.

(d) Minute No 18 - Portsmouth Youth Inter-Faith Forum

On behalf of the Portsmouth Youth Inter-Faith Forum, now called Interfusion, Sue Ganter expressed her thanks to SACRE for the money donated to the Forum.

24 Chair's Communications (AI 11)

The Chair referred to the letter from Hampshire County Council regarding Hampshire RE curriculum newsletters, which was circulated with the agenda. Mike Johns reported that he had been informed by Judith Lowndes that Hampshire County Council had now given access to the Hampshire RE Network to all schools in Portsmouth.

Patrick Quirke mentioned that some schools had reported problems in accessing the Hampshire Network. Clive explained that this issue was due to incorrect inputting of the password and user names, and had since been resolved.

25 NASACRE Conference

Clive Erricker reported that an invitation had been received from NASACRE for representatives of the Portsmouth SACRE to attend the NASACRE conference in London, which was held on 1 November. As the Chair was unable to attend, Clive reported that he and Georgina Mulhall had represented Portsmouth at the conference. The theme of the conference was “Strong SACREs, Good RE” and it was part of NASACRE’s ongoing drive to ensure that all SACREs were supported. The three main topics covered by the conference were as follows

1. The National Framework for RE supported by the National Strategy for RE - Clive reported that a strategy would be devised and would have to be approved by Lord Adonis before being put into practice.
2. The Monitoring of Self-Evaluation of RE in Schools - this SACRE duty now replaced the Ofsted reporting system. The SACRE representatives at the conference discussed in group sessions how evaluation was carried out in their SACREs. It was agreed that self-evaluation was a very difficult process to monitor. The success of a SACRE’s monitoring depended very much on its relationship with its local authority, for example, SACREs which enjoyed a good relationship with their local authority were better able to carry out effective monitoring. Clive commented that among the representatives at the conference there was a range of practice from very little self-evaluation at one end of the scale to, being able to carry out new roles such as monitoring and the social cohesion role, at the other end of the scale.
3. SACRE Self-Evaluation - in group session, representatives shared information and materials on work done to date.

ACTION

Clive Erricker and Georgina Mulhall to report back at the next meeting.

Clive Erricker went on to report that the Hampshire SACRE had requested a meeting with Mark Chater, of QCA, to discuss the relationship between the agreed syllabus and the national framework. It had been a very useful meeting and a very lively discussion had taken place between Mr Chater and the teachers present regarding the comparison between the national framework and the agreed syllabus. Mr Chater was impressed with the way teachers had taken ownership of “Living Difference”.

Clive Erricker further reported that he had organised a training day the previous Friday for teachers in the London Borough of Westminster on the implementation of "Living Difference". He reported that the training day had been very successful. The training had been arranged because the City of Westminster's SACRE had been very impressed with the syllabus, Living Difference and have bought it for their schools.

26 Portsmouth Youth Inter-Faith Forum (AI 4)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Sue Ganter referred to the report, stating that the telephone contact number quoted on the first page of the report was incorrect. She referred members to the correct contact details at the end of the report.

Since the last meeting, the Portsmouth Youth Inter-Faith Forum had decided to re-name the group, "Interfusion – Portsmouth Youth Diversity Forum". The group had also adopted a new logo (see Appendix 1 of the report) and had purchased polo shirts and balloons imprinted with the new logo.

Sue introduced Interfusion's two representatives on the SACRE - Moses Tutesigensi and Kieran Anderson.

Sue Ganter reported that she had put in a bid for funding for the Forum from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and was hopeful of obtaining a grant. She added that other bids would be made.

In addition to the activities outlined in the report circulated with the agenda, Sue reported that the Interfusion group had played an active part in the Cenotaph commemorations the previous weekend.

Sue referred to future events in which the group were taking part. They would be sending a team to represent Interfusion at the Global Peace and Unity event, organised by Islam Channel at the Excel Centre in London on 25-26 November.

In reply to a question from Councillor Hugh Mason regarding funding and costs, Sue commented that the £27,650 grant for the current year was adequate for the Forum's activity. For the next year they would be looking for a grant of £24,640 from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and were hoping to obtain further funding from other sources.

In reply to a question from Councillor Malcolm Hey regarding the membership numbers, Sue Ganter reported that there were 10-11 members on the executive committee and a further dozen members who had signed up.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

27 GCSE Results 2006 (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Clive Erricker referred to the report and commented that this year's results had not been as good as in previous years. However, referring to the figures for the short course, he congratulated Miltoncross for achieving a result of 72%, well above the national average.

Geoff Wheeler drew SACRE members' attention to the table for the residual analysis short course in the appendix to the report. He questioned whether the figure for adjusted LEA/National Residual for 2006 and asked whether the figure of 0.16 for girls should in fact be -0.16. This correction was agreed.

Ted Parker drew members' attention to the full course, and commented that almost half the students were from St Edmund's School. Therefore, the RE statistics for Portsmouth were extremely dependent on good results from St Edmund's. He commented on the declining standard of results for RE at GCSE for the rest of the city's schools and questioned whether this was an issue that SACRE would wish to address. A discussion then followed on ways of addressing variability in GCSE performance in RE across city schools.

Celia Axton referred to the problem of recruitment and retention of RE teachers and commented that this was also a problem for St Edmund's School. Mike Johns referred to the fact that for a restricted period of time, RE had been taught by non-specialists at the City of Portsmouth Boys' School, as they had been unable to recruit RE teachers. However, two teachers had since been recruited who were able to deliver a full RE programme.

Ros Griffiths and Patrick Quirke made the point that some more formal support system for RE secondary school teachers should be available.

Kieran Anderson enquired whether there were any channels to provide for direct student feedback to SACRE on GCSE results and RE teaching in general. The Chair asked officers to give consideration to this suggestion.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

28 Report from the Monitoring Sub-Group: Summary of Findings from Ofsted Reports 2005-6 (AI 6)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Judith Lowndes reported that only three schools had been visited during the previous year under the old Ofsted framework. The results of the visits were in the report.

Judith referred to the discontinuation of the Monitoring Sub-Group and suggested that this group could be resurrected with the task of looking at GCSE results, as this was a matter of concern to the SACRE.

Clive Erricker commented that the task of monitoring RE teaching in Portsmouth schools did not necessarily have to be undertaken by the former Monitoring Sub-Group, a new sub-group could be established to carry out this task. However this group would need to be clear about its objectives. Mike Johns made the point that there was a need for a mechanism to consult young people and this could be done via the Keele survey. In this way, a small group incorporating pupil involvement could be convened to address issues such as GCSE results.

After some discussion, it was agreed that officers would investigate the setting up of a sub-group to monitor RE teaching. Officers would also look at ways of involving input from young people in this group.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

29 SACRE Annual Report (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Judith Lowndes referred to the report and, in particular, the SACRE Development Plan at Appendix 5. She stated that a new format for the SACRE annual report would be introduced from next year. Therefore this was the last report in the current format. Mike Johns commented that, as from next April, a new annual report mechanism would be introduced and a number of minor amendments were suggested. Judith Lowndes was asked to amend the report.

RESOLVED that the report be approved as amended.

30 Portsmouth RE Conference (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Clive Erricker reported that this conference was an example of good practice. Patrick Quirke had taken over the organisation this year and had invited neighbouring Hampshire schools. The conference had been held at South Downs College, which was a larger venue. More students had therefore been able to attend. Interfusion had been involved in the conference and Kieran, Dominic and Sue had led discussion groups after a planned speaker could not turn up at the last minute.

Patrick Quirke had agreed to organise next year's conference and he would be working with the Head of RE from Cowplain Secondary School on the arrangements. Clive commented that this event was growing in strength.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

31 Review of the Constitution for SACRE (AI 9)

(TAKE IN REVISED CONSTITUTION AND REPORT)

Mike Johns reported that he had updated the constitution and had consulted the Legal Services Department in order to ensure legality of the revised document.

Ted Parker highlighted the error in the title pointing out that the full title was Standing Advisory **Council** for Religious Education and that this title should be consistent throughout the constitution. This amendment was agreed. Ted also suggested putting a date on the constitution and this was also agreed. He also suggested that the description of the membership of Group A as set out in paragraph 3 of the constitution should be as set out in the SACRE members' handbook. He pointed out that in the SACRE members' handbook it was stated that membership of SACRE was defined by law and therefore this was how it should be set out in the constitution. Members also agreed to this suggestion.

RESOLVED that the officers make the necessary amendments and bring the revised constitution to the next meeting for approval.

32 Calendar of Meetings 2007 (AI 10)

Members discussed the venues for meetings to be held in 2007. The following dates and venues were agreed:

- the March meeting to be held on **Thursday 8 March** (instead of Wednesday 7 March, as stated on the agenda) at Somerspark Primary School.
- The June meeting to be held on Wednesday 20 June 2007 at United Reformed Church, Milton Road.
- The November meeting to be held on Wednesday 14 November 2007 in Conference Room B, Civic Offices, Portsmouth.

ACTION

- 1) **Georgina Mulhall to confirm arrangements with the headteacher at Somerspark Primary School and Teresa Deasy.**
- 2) **Teresa Deasy to liaise with Christine McMillan regarding the arrangements for meeting at the United Reformed Church.**

33 Any Other Business

(a) Withdrawal of Support from Hampshire County RE Inspector

Councillor Hey drew members' attention to the fact that a decision had been made not to fund support from the Hampshire County RE Inspector's Office with effect from March 2007. Members expressed their thanks to Clive Erricker and Judith Lowndes for the support they had given to the Portsmouth SACRE and it was agreed that the Chair should write to the Executive Member for Education expressing their concern regarding the withdrawal of funding to support the work of Clive and Judith after March 2007.

ACTION

Teresa Deasy to arrange for Mike Johns and the Chair to meet to draft a letter to the Executive Member for Education along the lines mentioned above.

(b) Islam Talk/Presentation to Schools

Mohammed Riyami referred to the unfavourable publicity in the media regarding Islam. As a representative of the Islamic religion, he offered to visit any school in Portsmouth to speak to pupils about Islam.

The meeting concluded at 6.15 pm.

TMD/DMF
20 November 2006
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