

**PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Wednesday 5th of March 2008 at
4.30pm at King Richard School, Allaway Avenue, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth.

Present

Group A Representatives

Celia Axton, Roman Catholic Church
Geoff Wheeler, Baptist Union
Ruth Guyer, Judaism
Peter Davies, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical
Churches
Marilyn Leggett, The Salvation Army
Christine McMillan, United Reformed Church
Syed Aminul Haque, Islam
Ephrat Miller-Foroughi, Bahá'í Faith

Group B Representatives

Brian Hay, Church of England
The Venerable Trevor Reader, Church of England

Group C Representatives

Gill Parmee, Teacher Representative
Alison Spittles, Teacher Representative
Georgina Mulhall, Teacher Representatives

Group D Representatives

Councillor Malcolm Hey
Taki Jaffer, PCC Representative
Councillor David Horne (in the Chair)

Co-opted Representatives

John Lance, South Hampshire Humanists
Sue Ganter, Interfusion
Kieran Anderson, Interfusion

Officers in Attendance

Mike Johns, General Advisor, Children, Families &
Learning Directorate, PCC
Teresa Deasy, Democratic Services, PCC
June Nancarrow, RE Teacher, King Richard School
Reverend Keith Foster, School Chaplain, King Richard
School

1 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Roger Bentote, David Lewis, Terry Carter, Annette Wright, Patrick Quirke, Councillor David Stephen Butler, Moses Tutesigensi and Lillian Weatherley.

2 Welcome and Introduction

June Nancarrow of King Richard School welcomed the SACRE members to this meeting held at her school. She explained that she had been a teacher at the school for eight years and was the Head of RE. She explained that there were no other RE teachers in the school but other subject teachers assisted her in teaching RE. She explained that she followed the "Living Difference" syllabus and used Ed Excel for Key Stage 4. This year fewer pupils were opting for RE. For this reason she had adapted a scheme for Key Stage 3 entitled "designed for living". Keith Foster had written two modules out of a total of eight modules. The pupils appeared to relate very well to this concept. She added that at this school less than one percent of children came from ethnic minority communities and therefore it was difficult for them to relate to different religions in their everyday life.

Georgie Mulhall commented that "Living Difference" was concept based and it was therefore more engaging for pupils. June Nancarrow commented that it was more difficult for non-RE staff to use and, as she had mentioned, RE was often taught by other teachers e.g. humanity teachers and therefore, the concept based element could be lost. Keith Foster added that the key element of "designed for living" was that it was broad based bringing in biblical/ scriptural characters such as Noah and Abraham etc.

Georgie Mulhall asked whether this syllabus embraced a pluralist society. Keith Foster explained that it was a two year course similar to GCSE and it used modern culture icons, for example, The Simpsons to help relate to the Jewish character.

3 Election of SACRE Vice-Chair (AI 2)

Teresa Deasy explained that, following the resignation of the previous Vice-Chair, a vacancy had existed for some months. It had been hoped to fill the vacancy at the last meeting. However, this meeting was not quorate due to the absence of all the Group B Representatives. The Chair asked for nominations to the position of Vice-Chair. As there were no nominations, Peter Davies offered to take on the position and he was proposed by Councillor Malcolm Hey and seconded by Celia Axton.

The SACRE members voted in their respective groups: A, B, C and D and Peter Davies was unanimously elected to the position of Vice-Chair.

4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th November 2007 (AI 3)

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- a) With reference to Minute No. 26 the last sentence in the last paragraph before the action note should read as follows “she wondered whether it would be appropriate to reconvene this group, as there was the risk of breaching confidentiality when mentioning performance at RE.”
- b) In Minute No. 31(c) on page 24 the spelling of Clive Erricker’s surname be corrected.

5 Matters Arising (AI 3)

(a) Minute Number 25c – Teacher Representatives on SACRE

Mike Johns reported that he had written again to all teachers to request another teacher representative for the SACRE, but he had not received any replies to date. June Nancarrow added that she was giving some thought to becoming a teacher representative.

(b) Minutes Number 26 – SACRE Annual Report

Mike Johns advised that he had not yet written to congratulate RE teachers on the improved GCSE results for RE. He added that he would do so as soon as possible.

ACTION Mike Johns to write to RE teachers.

(c) Minute Number 28 – Membership Review

Teresa Deasy referred to the proposal at the last meeting for the humanist representative to be included as a member of Group A, thus allowing him to participate in voting at meetings. She explained that the SACRE had been unable to make a decision on this matter, as the meeting was not quorate due to the absence of all the Group B members. Since the meeting Teresa reported that she had contacted all the Group B representatives to seek their views on classification of the humanist representative. A letter had been received from Brian Hay, representing Group B, indicating their approval to the recommendation to include the humanist representative in Group A. She circulated a copy of the letter to all members at the meeting.

(TAKE IN LETTER FROM THE SACRE GROUP B REPRESENTATIVES)

It was therefore now appropriate for the humanist representative, Mr John Lance, to be formally recorded as a member of Group A.

As a further action note with reference to this minute, Teresa Deasy reported that she had written to Ted Parker, regarding his resignation from the SACRE as Vice-Chair and thanked him for his service to the SACRE over the years. She had also requested that the Salvation Army nominate a new representative and this new representative, Miss Marilyn Leggett, was present at today's meeting. The Chair extended a welcome to Miss Leggett on behalf of all SACRE members.

(d) Minute Number 29 - Interfusion

With regard to the query as to the possibility of the SACRE be able to fund Interfusion, Mike Johns commented that he would be happy to support funding in relation to the five areas for development in the 2008/9 SACRE action plan, as outlined at agenda item 6. However, he suggested that it was a matter for SACRE to receive bids from organisations and to decide accordingly. He suggested that this matter could be discussed under the SACRE budget item on the agenda.

(e) Minute Number 25b – The Revised Constitution for Portsmouth SACRE

Councillor Hey referred to the revised constitution asking whether the matter of the ownership of SACRE had been clarified. Mike Johns explained that it was the local authority's responsibility, in accordance with Circular 192 of Education Act, to set up a SACRE and the wording of the constitution with regard to the decisions made by SACRE had been changed to reflect Councillor Hey's and other SACRE members' views.

6 SACRE Annual Report (AI 4)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Mike Johns commented that he had completed the annual report and had circulated a copy to all groups on the SACRE asking for their comments. Unfortunately, there had not been much time for members to respond before the deadline for the report to be sent to QCA on behalf of the SACRE. As no feedback had been received from SACRE members, he had assumed that they were happy with the report and had forwarded it QCA.

He explained that the new style of reporting to QCA was a very useful format in that it provided for regular updates. He added that completing the form for the first time had been a lengthy procedure and some sections had been difficult to populate. He mentioned difficulties in filling in the section on community cohesion, adding that his comments were very general. Taki Jaffer recommended that, in future, Mike could contact PRENO for more information.

Alison Spittles enquired about quality assurance visits. Mike Johns explained that link advisers should be liaising with headteachers on this matter. He added that only one OFSTED report for Portsmouth Schools had made any mention of RE teaching.

John Lance suggested that a glossary of acronyms might be a good inclusion in future reports. Mike Johns agreed to take this on board for the next annual report.

Celia Axton mentioned section 48 reports with regard to faith schools, which were validated by their own faith groups. She asked whether it would be appropriate for Church of England and Roman Catholic schools to forward these reports to the local authority. Mike Johns advised that these reports were written for the diocese and not for the local authority.

Ruth Guyer referred to the section on external training and enquired whether such training could be made available to her. Mike Johns advised that he had recently learned at a NASACRE meeting that funding was available for training. NASACRE had a website and he suggested that members had a look to find out what training was available.

RESOLVED that the annual SACRE report be noted.

7 SACRE Budget (AI 5)

Mike Johns reported that the SACRE budget currently stood at £4,500. The annual budget allocation was £3,000; but in recent years a surplus had been accumulated. A number of outstanding costs requiring payment before the end of April were the production distribution of the SACRE directory for 2008/09, membership of NASACRE and other organisations. This would leave a surplus of approximately £3,000 needing to be allocated before the end of March. He added that the SACRE budget for 2008/09 would need to take account of the costs of revising the agreed syllabus.

Ruth Guyer put in a bid for funding. She drew SACRE members' attention to the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition, which she had recently seen in Hackney. The organisers of this exhibition were more than willing to bring it to Portsmouth and the projected cost would be between £850 and £1,500, depending on the level of support from the local Jewish community. A suitable venue with space and parking was needed and she suggested one of the boathouses in the Dockyard. Ruth explained that the Jewish community in Portsmouth is very small and there is therefore little opportunity for children and young people to find out more about the Jewish faith. The exhibition was aimed primarily at school children and usually lasted about 5 school days.

Trevor Reader added that the Isle of Wight had held this exhibition a couple of years ago and it had been very successful. The Anglican community had supported it and the Jewish community both on the Isle of Wight and in Portsmouth and Southampton had been given a boost by the event.

Georgina Mulhall commented that it might be expensive to mount this exhibition and also to transport children to such an event. School transport was a problem and there were also logistical problems of schools sharing coaches. So she was not sure how many pupils would realistically be able to access such an exhibition.

Kieran Anderson commented that he did not believe this was a good use of the SACRE's funds.

Teresa Deasy advised that recently the city council's Haifa – Portsmouth Friendship Link Committee had explored the possibilities of staging the Anne Frank exhibition in Portsmouth but had been reluctantly obliged to abandon the idea due to the cost of staging the event and hiring a venue. Councillor Hey suggested that this type of exhibition, which was not as expensive to stage as the Anne Frank exhibition, might be the type of event which the Haifa Committee could offer support. Sue Ganter suggested that such an exhibition might be held in a school. However, she was concerned that the SACRE should be seen to be supporting a particular religion advised members to consider this as a start of a commitment to promoting exhibitions of all faiths covered by the SACRE.

SACRE members agreed to explore the cost of the exhibition, possible venues and information from schools. It was also agreed to investigate the possibility of obtaining funding from the Haifa-Portsmouth Friendship Link Committee.

ACTION Teresa Deasy to make further investigations.

Mike Johns explained that the SACRE budget should be spent primarily on items 1 to 5 outlined in the SACRE action plan.

RESOLVED that the SACRE note the current budget.

8 SACRE Action Plan (AI 6)

Members discussed the SACRE action plan.

RESOLVED that SACRE support improving resources to support teaching and learning as a major focus for support in 2008/09.

9 RE Resources for Portsmouth Schools (AI 7)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Georgie Mulhall explained the proposals to obtain RE resources for Portsmouth schools, as set out in her report. Currently, RE teachers were struggling to finance RE, often on a budget of as little as £50 per annum. Realistically RE was not a priority subject for headteachers.

She had decided to address the problem of RE resources and had met with Bryony Kelly, Portsmouth Museum Education Officer, to discuss the possibility of Portsmouth Museum facilitating the loan of RE artefacts/ resources for use by Portsmouth schools. She had agreed with Bryony that if the SACRE were able to provide resources, the museum would provide storage facilities and would also collect and distribute them. To purchase the resources the initial costs would be £40 for primary schools and £60 for secondary schools. There would also be an annual charge in the region of £30 to £40 to schools to cover the museum's administration costs and replacement of damaged artefacts.

Mike Johns suggested that the project could be launched on the 2nd of June with support from SACRE. It was suggested that the project be commenced with primary schools and be extended to secondary schools once it was on a firm financial footing.

Mike Johns explained that he had discussed this project with Clive Erricker, as Portsmouth schools had a service level agreement with Hampshire County Council to use their resources. However, these resources were used very infrequently due to the travel costs etc. SACRE members discussed the proposal and were in general agreement that it was a good idea. Ruth Guyer suggested writing to the warden of the synagogue requesting Jewish artefacts. She believed that there were a number of Jewish artefacts in existence and members of the Jewish community might have such items available and would be willing to donate them. Taki Jaffer offered his advice on the storage and respectful handling of Muslim artefacts.

RESOLVED that a minimum budget of £2,000 be allocated to this project to be administered on SACRE's behalf by Georgina Mulhall.

10 Review of Agreed Syllabus

Mike Johns advised the SACRE that it would be necessary in 2009 to conduct a review of the agreed syllabus, as this was a legal requirement. He had recently met with Clive Erricker, the Hampshire County RE Advisor, who had put together a proposal to employ an independent consultant to visit and collect information from schools relating to RE. Hampshire County Council was proposing to spend £10,000 on this project. He suggested that the Portsmouth SACRE should spend £2,000 from this year's budget and a further £1,000 from next year's budget in order to buy into this project. The consultant employed to visit and collect information would contact four schools in Portsmouth, one infant, one junior, one primary and one secondary.

Taki Jaffer questioned the logic of only approaching four schools in Portsmouth and asked how these four would be chosen. Mike explained that the feedback from the four Portsmouth schools would be included with the feedback from 30 schools in the greater Hampshire area and would prove very useful information. As to how the schools would be chosen, those schools currently active in the RE network would be approached. In response to a question from Kieran Anderson, he confirmed that the consultant would be talking to pupils as well as staff.

At this point, 6pm Trevor Reader and Taki Jaffer left the meeting.

Geoff Wheeler asked whether Southampton City Council was buying into this project. Mike Johns reported that Southampton had initiated another review with regard to primary schools and that Clive Erricker was in the process of approaching Southampton with regard to his project. Councillor Hey proposed that this project be supported and suggested that a figure of £100 be made available for Interfusion.

This was agreed by the SACRE.

11 NASACRE Conference (AI 8)

Mike Johns reported on this conference, which he had attended on behalf of SACRE together with members of Interfusion. The conference was attended by a considerable number of delegates. The delegates were very impressed with the work of Interfusion and this group had a very positive influence on the conference. On behalf of the SACRE he expressed his thanks to Interfusion for their valuable contribution.

Mike Johns referred to a speech by Jim Knight (attached with the agenda).

(TAKE IN SPEECH BY JIM KNIGHT)

He referred to the national review of RE and the fact that the government was looking into the possibility of a national syllabus for RE across all key stages. Circular 194 had been issued giving guidance on the act of collective worship and announced the intention to conduct a review on this matter with schools.

SACRE members noted the report and expressed their thanks to Mike Johns and to Interfusion for attending on their behalf.

12 Interfusion (AI 9)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Sue Ganter commented that Portsmouth had fielded the only three delegates under the age of 20 at the NASACRE conference. She referred to her report on the activities of Interfusion which had taken place between November 2007 and February 2008.

She reported that Interfusion would very shortly have to change their premises. They were currently renting space and administrative support from the Anglican diocese. However, the trustees had recently asked Interfusion to find a new home. They were in the process of looking for new accommodation and were consulting young people. She commented that there was a need to find a more community based rather than a faith based venue.

Sue explained that, as usual, Interfusion were having to look for funding. She asked for SACRE's approval for Interfusion to put in a bid to NASACRE for £5,000. She advised that the bid was likely to be successful because of the high opinion on the work of the Portsmouth Interfusion group among NASACRE members. Interfusion was looked upon by NASACRE as an example of good practice to other local authorities.

Celia Axton commended Interfusion for their contribution to the NASACRE conference. She added that St Edmund's School had been very interested in the health conference organised by Interfusion but, unfortunately, the school had not be able to participate as it was a very busy time for them.

SACRE members agreed to the proposal that Interfusion should apply for funding from NASACRE.

13 Any Other Business (AI 10)

(a) Faith Together 2008 Conference

Mike Johns reported that information had been forwarded to all SACRE members about this conference which would be taking place on Monday 7 April at the University of Surrey in Guildford. Sue Vigar-Taylor and Taki Jaffer had volunteered to attend on behalf of the SACRE.

RESOLVED that SACRE support the attendance of Sue Vigar-Taylor and Taki Jaffer at this conference and to provide travel costs for them.

(b) Resignation of Julius Klein (former Jewish representative on SACRE)

Ruth Guyer mentioned that she was replacing Julius Klein as the Jewish representative on the SACRE. She commented on the work which Julius had undertaken over the years for the Portsmouth SACRE. Members agreed that it would be appropriate to write and thank Julius for his work with the SACRE.

ACTION Teresa Deasy to write to Julius Klein on behalf of the Portsmouth SACRE.

(c) Term Times Magazine

Mike Johns advised that he had written an article for Term Times and it would be appearing in a future addition of the magazine. He suggested that the article would be further embellished with pictures. Sue Ganter offered to provide some photographs of Interfusion's activities. Mike also asked for any other photographs to be submitted for inclusion.

14 Date of Next Meeting (AI 11)

Teresa Deasy reported that the next meeting would be held at 4.30pm on Wednesday the 18th of June 2008 and, in accordance with SACRE's agreed schedule of meetings, this meeting should be held at a faith venue. Ephrat Miller-Foroughi offered to host an information session and presentation on the Bahá'í Faith for the next meeting. She explained that Bahá'í worshippers normally worship in each other's houses as there was no local venue for the faith. Therefore she suggested that she could host the meeting at the Civic Offices. This was agreed by SACRE members.

ACTION Teresa Deasy to arrange a venue in the Civic Offices for the next meeting of the Portsmouth SACRE.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm.

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