

**PORTSMOUTH STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Wednesday 21 April 2010 at
3.30 pm at Redwood Park School, Wembley Grove, Portsmouth.

Present

GROUP A REPRESENTATIVES

Geoff Wheeler, Baptist Union
Mike Silvester, South Hampshire Humanists
Ruth Guyer, Judaism
Dr Ruth Richmond, Roman Catholic Church
Ms Renuka Vyas, Hinduism
Peter Davies, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical
Churches
Marilyn Leggatt, Salvation Army
Christine McMillan, United Reformed Church
Sue Vigar-Taylor, Buddhism
Ephrat Miller-Foroughi, Baha'i Faith

GROUP B REPRESENTATIVES

Lillian Weatherley, Church of England

GROUP C REPRESENTATIVES

Paula Withers, Secondary Teacher Representative
Patrick Quirke, Secondary Teacher Representative
Jill Parmee, Junior School Representative
Gemma Self, Early Years Representative
Beverley Millsom, Special School Representative

GROUP D REPRESENTATIVES

Taki Jaffer, PCC and Portsmouth Interfaith Forum
Councillor David Horne, PCC

CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES

Sue Ganter

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Georgina Mulhall, RE Advisor to Portsmouth SACRE
Teresa Deasy, Customer, Community and
Democratic Services, PCC

1 Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from the following – Councillors David Stephen Butler and Malcolm Hey; Sarah Hanley, Portsmouth College; David Lewis, The Religious Society of Friends; Trevor Reader, Church of England and Roger Bentote, Teachers' Liaison Panel.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held 18 November 2009 (AI 2)

(TAKE IN MINUTES)

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Matters Arising (AI 3)

(a) Minute No. 26 (c) – Youth Representation on the SACRE

Georgina Mulhall reported that she had contacted the Council of Portsmouth Students to suggest that they might like to nominate somebody to represent them on the Portsmouth SACRE.

ACTION

Peter Davies and Georgina Mulhall to work on an official letter to the Council of Portsmouth Students explaining the role of the SACRE and inviting them to nominate a representative to attend SACRE meetings for the start of the next academic year.

(b) Minute No. 27 – Response to questions on RE in Schools by Sarah McCarthy-Fry MP and Diana Johnson MP.

Lillian Weatherley referred to the RE guidance mentioned at the last meeting and that it had been stated that this guidance would be shelved. She updated the meeting saying that it had been decided not to shelve the RE guidance and that it had been issued in February.

(c) Minute No. 29 – Annual Report

Georgina Mulhall referred to the action note regarding the provision of data on Standards and Achievement for next year's Annual Report. She explained that she had spoken to Mike Johns, who had advised that this was sensitive data. However, he was happy for the Chair to meet with him in September to look at the data.

She added that the SACRE's Annual Report had been despatched to QCDA.

(d) Minute No. 38 – The Jewish Way of Life Exhibition Update

Ruth Guyer reported that meetings scheduled in January had been unable to take place due to the snow. Lillian Weatherley reported that she had not been able to attend the Isle of Wight SACRE meeting and she asked for Georgina Mulhall to forward details regarding the exhibition to her electronically. She

would then contact the Isle of Wight SACRE members to find out if they wanted to assist with the exhibition in Portsmouth.

4 School Visit Report (AI 5)

Peter Davies reported that he had arranged to visit Priory School with the co-operation from Paula Withers. He had participated in a Year 8 group's RE lesson. He had been very impressed with the level of work undertaken by the pupils and behaviour in the classroom. In his opinion, the class had been given a very difficult exam question to tackle and he had been very impressed with the way pupils had dealt with this question.

5 The Jewish Way of Life Exhibition Update (AI 6)

Ruth Guyer reported that a number of schools had responded to the invitation to visit the exhibition. 1,062 children had been signed up to visit the exhibition. She was very pleased with this level of response. However, there were still a few slots left and she asked SACRE members to let Gareth Brettell know if more schools wanted to go.

Ruth mentioned that the Haifa-Portsmouth Friendship Committee had suggested that it might be appropriate to produce a DVD of the Synagogue for inclusion in the pupils' packs. Ruth explained that she had found something which she had produced last year and had passed it to Gareth for inclusion in the school packs.

Ruth also mentioned that Richard Cooper had produced a leaflet on the history of the Jewish Community in Portsmouth. This leaflet would also be included in the packs for pupils and would be available at the exhibition. If any SACRE member would like a copy of this leaflet they were advised to contact Georgina Mulhall by email.

Hannah Ashleigh of the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition had provided a flyer template.

Prior to the official launch of the exhibition on 1 July a one-hour training session for stewards would take place at 4.30 pm. A teacher's inset course was also being provided at this time. The aim was to have two stewards per day and members of the Jewish community would be providing this service. However, volunteers were also requested from the SACRE.

Georgina Mulhall reported that she had built up a good working relationship with Gareth Brettell at the City Museum and Ruth Guyer with regard to the organisation of this exhibition. The plans for the exhibition were progressing extremely well. Georgina mentioned that she had been in contact with the RE Advisor to Hampshire County Council who was very supportive and was very keen for Hampshire schools to be invited to attend.

Finally, Ruth Guyer mentioned that the Rabbi of Portsmouth was offering his full support to this exhibition and would be holding a special service at the Synagogue on Saturday, 3 July at 10.00 am to link in to start of the exhibition. She extended an invitation to all SACRE members and members of the Haifa-Portsmouth Friendship Link Committee.

6 Agreed Syllabus Update (AI 7)

Georgina Mulhall reported that she had met with Clive Ericker and Judith Lowndes. QCDA had asked all SACREs to publish their agreed syllabuses in January. With regard to the “Living Difference” syllabus, it was a question of enhancing rather than changing the syllabus. For the first time it had been decided to produce the syllabus on a disk rather than a hard copy. This would not only reduce production costs but would also enable more material to be made available.

In reply to a question from Sue Ganter regarding including Humanism in the document, Georgina explained that the weighting given to the topics presented in the document did not depend on the number of pages but rather on key concepts. She added that the Humanist community locally were happy with what was being provided in the syllabus.

A meeting of the Steering Group would be held on 25th June and this would be an opportunity to check the material for the revised syllabus.

ACTION

Lillian Weatherley to advise Judith Lowndes to submit the draft revised agreed syllabus to the Church of England community before finalising.

7 QCDA/NASACRE Conference on the Primary Curriculum and Implications for RE held on 24 March 2010 (AI 8)

Georgina Mulhall reported that she had attended this conference on behalf of the Portsmouth SACRE. Judith Lowndes of Hampshire SACRE had attended as had Lillian Weatherley in her capacity as Church of England representative on various SACREs. Georgina commented that she had left the conference feeling extremely positive about what the Portsmouth SACRE was doing. It appeared that the Primary curriculum was very much in line with “Living Difference”, i.e. it appeared to be more concept driven.

8 Civic Service at the Synagogue (AI 8)

Peter Davies advised that he had attended the annual Civic Service as a SACRE representative along with Georgina Mulhall and Teresa Deasy. They had received an excellent welcome, which had included delicious snacks which were served after the service. Taki Jaffer mentioned that he had represented the Portsmouth Interfaith Forum at the service. Taki added that the Imam of the Wessex Jamaat Mosque in Wickham had also attended. The intention was to have a Civic Service at the new mosque as soon as it was built.

9 SACRE’s Local Networking Meeting held on 22 March

Georgina Mulhall reported that she was very pleased with the way the Portsmouth SACRE had been working with this networking group. The group meetings were well attended, very enthusiastic and working well together. The group had benefited from Hampshire County Council’s willingness to share RE material. As a point of interest, Georgina mentioned that Gareth

Brettell had included all the local networking group members to the guest list for the launch of the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition.

Lillian Weatherley added that this group was the first in the South of England to set up a networking group and had made very good progress.

Georgina Mulhall advised that in March 2011 there would be a National RE week. She asked SACRE members to give some thought to activities which could be included in this RE week. She suggested a video conferencing between Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth SACREs.

ACTION

Teresa Deasy to ensure that The National RE Week would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Lillian Weatherley advised that 2011 would also mark the 200th anniversary of the National Society of the Church of England. 2011 would also see the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible.

10 Update on the GCSE Conference (AI 11)

Georgina Mulhall reported that this year's conference would be held at South Downs College on 20 July. She was awaiting further information from Hampshire County Council.

Sue Ganter reminded members that in the past Portsmouth RE teachers had organised this event. The initiative for the conference had come from the Portsmouth SACRE and Portsmouth teachers had been proud to host the event. Recently, Hampshire County Council had taken over the organisation.

It was suggested that the responsibility for organising the conference could rotate amongst the authorities of the SACRE Networking meetings. Paula Withers agreed to be the Portsmouth RE teacher contact for the conference.

ACTION

Georgina Mulhall agreed to ensure that the conference organiser makes contact with Paula Withers.

11 RE Twilights (AI 12)

Georgina Mulhall reported that the next RE Twilight would be held on Wednesday 9 June at 4.00 pm at the Dame Judith Professional Centre. She added that representatives of the Jewish, Islamic and Christian faiths had all contributed to previous Twilight sessions. Therefore, she appealed for representatives from groups other than the three mentioned to let her know if they would be interested in taking part in the Twilights.

12 RE Resources Update (AI 13)

Georgina Mulhall reported that she had exceeded her £300 budget by £36.00 but had been able to make up the deficit with revenue from people signing up to the RE boxes. She had made up three additional boxes to support

community cohesion in schools. The three boxes contained artefacts from Asia, Africa and India and they would be launched at the next Twilight session. She added that she would bring the resources catalogue to the next meeting for distribution to members.

Taki Jaffer mentioned that he had access to many ethnic groups via the Portsmouth Interfaith Forum and this would provide him with an opportunity to obtain artefacts from different groups. He offered his assistance to Georgina, which was gratefully accepted.

13 NASACRE Conference for New and Inexperienced SACRE Members (AI 14)

Dr Ruth Richmond, the new RE representative on the SACRE, introduced herself to this her first meeting at the Portsmouth SACRE. Her appointment had coincided with an opportunity to attend a conference organised by NASACRE on 10 February for new SACRE members. She reported that she had found the conference very useful and very interesting as she had not previously been aware of the extent of the SACRE's function in the Local Authority sector. She had not read the "agreed syllabus" prior to attending the conference but had since had a look at it and had been subsequently very impressed. She added that in the private sector where she was teaching they did not follow the "agreed syllabus". She highlighted the following key concepts learnt at the conference: -

- 1, Every child matters – how SACRE and RE can contribute
2. The requirement to ensure 5% of education being allocated to the teaching of RE to be preserved – there was a lot of talk about PHSE and Citizenship and how RE in many schools was being incorporated into these subjects which tended to dilute its importance.
3. Being a member of a SACRE means that SACRE members identify what makes for good RE teaching. She had learnt that SACREs meet three times per year and had obtained information about the level of commitment and involvement required.
4. Collective worship – being based on broadly Christian values. She returned to her own school and stated that since attending the conference she had highlighted to the Headteacher the fact that at her school they were not holding the once per day collective worship sessions.

Lillian Weatherley pointed out that it was a legal requirement that every child in the country must attend a daily collective worship session.

Ruth Richmond added that her Headmaster had been very encouraging towards her with regard to the SACRE and had been generous enough to give her time to attend the conference, which was well attended. She added that she was very grateful for the training received.

Lillian Weatherley suggested that it might be appropriate for her to get together with Ruth to discuss the teaching of RE in the private school sector.

Patrick Quirke commented that his Headteacher had been very supportive towards the teaching of RE in the school. All GCSE pupils at Miltoncross take the short RE course.

14 Attendance at SACRE Meetings (AI 15)

The Chair commented on the good attendance at this meeting. He suggested that if a SACRE member had problems attending a meeting it would be appropriate to send a deputy. Sue Ganter suggested that it might be appropriate for the Clerk to send a covering letter when sending out the agenda asking members to advise her if they were unable to attend and suggesting that they appoint a deputy. It was also suggested that the letter should quote the non-attendance clause in the SACRE Constitution.

15 Any Other Business (AI 16)

(a) Resignation of Humanist Member, John Lance

Teresa Deasy reported that John Lance, who had been a pro-active member of the SACRE and had represented the Humanist community for a number of years, had retired due to ill health. Mr Mike Silvester had replaced him.

ACTION

Teresa Deasy to write a letter to Mr Lance on behalf of the SACRE to thank him for his contribution as a member over the years.

(b) Time of Reflection at Start of Meetings

Ephrat Miller suggested that it might be appropriate to begin SACRE meetings with a few moments of quiet reflection. Lillian Weatherley mentioned that this was the practice at other SACREs that she attended. SACRE members agreed to this suggestion Ephrat offered to lead on this at the next meeting.

ACTION

Teresa Deasy to agenda “Moments for Reflection” to be led by Ephrat Miller for the next meeting.

(c) RE Non-Statutory Guidance

Lillian Weatherley reported that this guidance, despite its strange title, provided very good guidance for SACRE members.

ACTION

Teresa Deasy to download the guidance from the website and circulate it to SACRE members.

(d) Caribbean Islands’ Association Fair on the Seafront

Taki Jaffer reporter that the Caribbean Islands' Association would be holding a fair on the seafront on 24 July in co-operation with the Lions Club. PRENO would also be supporting this event. Taki advised members requiring more information about the fair to contact him.

16 Dates for Next Meetings (AI 17)

The following dates were noted for future meetings: -

- Wednesday 23 June 2010 at 4.00 pm at the Training Centre, City of Portsmouth Girls' School
- Wednesday 17 November 2010 at 4.00 pm in the Civic Offices.

The meeting closed at 5.20 pm and SACRE members expressed their thanks to Beverley Millsom for organising this very successful meeting at Redwood Park School.

TD/CB
1610421m
21 May 2010