

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held on Thursday, 12 November 2020 at 4.00 pm as a virtual meeting.

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair) (Group D)

Group A - sarah coote, Elizabeth Jenkerson, Christine McMillan, Pastor Chris Thomas

Group B - Sue Bowen, Jane Kelly, Revd Sam Duddles (Vice Chair)

Group C - Sandra Gibb, Aasha Small, Ali Beechurst

Group D - Councillor Tom Coles, Maria Cole, Taki Jaffer
Patricia Hannam & Lisa Gallacher

1. Welcome and Introductions (AI 1)

Councillor Horton, as Chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

2. Apologies for Absence (AI 2)

Apologies had been received from Debbie Anderson, John Mills, Helen Reeder, Debbie Lucas and Sheikh Fazle Abbas Datoo.

3. Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 3)

Reverend Sam Duddles led the moment for quiet reflection and read the words from the first recitative of Handels Messiah where he stretches out the word 'comfort'. The need for comfort is ever growing during this pandemic and the way we comfort others in our grief is challenging; we should take time to listen to the words of comfort.

4. Declaration of Members' Interest (AI 4)

Elizabeth Jenkerson made her standard declaration that she is on the West Hill Panel that judges grants for SACREs.

5. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 20 November 2019 (AI 5)

It was noted that there were three brief corrections to the minutes:

Minute 49 - should refer to the '**SACRE** Directory'

Minute 50 - the resolution should read: 'SACRE received the monitoring group's **report**, as updated at the meeting, and noted the findings'.

Minute 56 - should read 'withdrawal from collective **worship**'

RESOLVED - subject to the above corrections the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 were approved.

6. Matters Arising from the minutes of 20 November 2019 (AI 6)

There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda

7. Membership update (AI 7)

Patricia Hannam explained that SACRE is seeking members from particular communities to populate group A and it would be good to do this in time for the next meeting. It was very important that Group A is well populated with the full representation of the communities that exist within Portsmouth.

Patricia would contact the Portsmouth Catholic Diocese again to seek a Roman Catholic representative and the Board of Deputies for a Jewish Representative.

A Sikh representative was yet to be found and Taki Jaffer said he could approach the Sikh communities that he was aware of to see if anyone is interested in joining the SACRE.

8. Brief updates or notification of items to be brought to a future meeting (AI 8)

Maria Cole said that at a previous meeting she had mentioned SACRE used to have a faith directory which was updated every few years. She had managed to find a few but due to the current restrictions had not managed to bring to a meeting. She felt that SACRE needed to consider whether these will be reviewed at some stage. Patricia Hannam said SACRE's can do things particular to the locality and this could be something that Portsmouth SACRE want to specifically look at. The Chair thought this was a sensible idea.

Christine McMillan said she had a copy of the 2011/12 directory which she was happy to send to Patricia and Revd Duddles added that there is also the Interfaith Forum.

It was agreed that Maria and Patricia would meet virtually along with Christine and Sam to look at the directories with a view to bring a report back to the next meeting. Taki Jaffer said this was a good idea but would have to be careful how this is published due to GDPR rules.

9. Monitoring Group Report (AI 9)

Patricia Hannam, as Professional Adviser, presented her report summarising the discussions of the Monitoring Sub Group which had been held on 22 October 2020.

One of the suggestions from the group was that it would be useful for the SACRE to produce some guidance to the LA schools as to what their websites should show with regard to the Agreed Syllabus. It was felt that schools would probably welcome some guidance. Patricia had spoken to Jane Kelly and Justine Ball who are going to meet to begin to put something together, and this would be brought to the next Monitoring Sub Group.

The monitoring report was noted.

10. National and local updates on Religious Education (AI 10)

Patricia Hannam presented the report and advised the following:

- i) The Religious Education Council are now taking forward discussions on whether the subject should change its name and SACRE are engaging with this conversation. At some point the SACRE will need to make a decision at how take this forward. This is an interesting and important discussion.

In response to a question from Chris Thomas regarding the direction of travel on the Worldviews project, Patricia said there is a report she could send a link to that was considered by Theos, a national organisation when they met two weeks ago. Broadly this will mean either this will be a way of opening up the subject to include more, not just religion. The other view is that rather than this meaning additional material, it is a way of re-orientating the subject much closer to the lived experience of a human life. If the second view is the chosen direction she felt that they have scope to deal with that within the agreed syllabus. She did not envisage a change in the law anytime soon but it was important to continue these conversations.

- ii) National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) - As the Annual AGM had been cancelled due to Covid-19 there would be a virtual Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on Tuesday 17th November 10-12am. Reverend Sam Duddles advised she would be interested in attending the meeting. The clerk would alert NASACRE of this tomorrow. Elizabeth Jenkerson would be attending this meeting on behalf of Hampshire County Council.

Elizabeth Jenkerson added that there will be reports from two

different SACREs that have Westhill grants and they would be talking about their projects which would be interesting.

- iii) South Central SACRE hub meeting on 16 November 10-12am
Revd Sam Duddles said she was happy to attend this virtual meeting. Jane Kelly advised she would also be attending this meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) that SACRE notes the report**
- (2) That Revd Sam Duddles is booked to attend the NASACRE EGM on 17th November 2020.**
- (3) That Revd Sam Duddles is booked to attend the South Central SACRE hub meeting on 16th November 2020.**

11. Determinations Policy (AI 11)

Patricia Hannam, as Professional Adviser to SACRE, introduced this item, explaining the proposal to agree a Determinations Policy. If the SACRE were in agreement with the policy, this would be published on the Portsmouth City Council website.

Although the group that had expressed an interest in November did not meet together, Patricia had met with the three people to discuss the policy in advance of the meeting today. The policy had also gone to the Portsmouth legal team to check its legalities.

In response to a question Patricia explained that the policy only applies to local authority non faith schools and the application has to come from the headteacher. When drafting the policy she had checked the policy widely across the country to ensure consistency with other SACRE's.

A 10 minute adjournment was held, which allowed the 4 groups to be able to discuss how they would wish to vote, with arrangements in place for a spokesperson for each group to feed back.

When the meeting was re-adjourned the following votes were relayed:

- Group A (faith groups) via Elizabeth Jenkerson - in favour
- Group B (Church of England) via Revd Sam Duddles - in favour
- Group C (teaching representatives) via Aasha Small - in favour
- Group D (Portsmouth City Council representatives) via Cllr Horton, in favour

SACRE members wished to thank Patricia for the through approach to working through this policy.

RESOLVED That SACRE agree to adopt the procedures for Determinations and place this on the Portsmouth City Council website.

12. Annual report 2019/20 (AI 12)

The draft annual report was circulated with the agenda and Patricia gave a brief summary of the report. She added that the action plan should have been redeveloped during the last 12 months. This had not happened due to the COVID situation and one of the recommendations was that a small group might be interested to work with Patricia on the action plan. This would be brought to the next meeting for adoption.

Discussion took place regarding the composition of SACRE as listed on page 2 of the annual report, where it listed that the SACRE should comprise 15 members of other religious groups. It was felt that in order for transparency it might be better to list the faiths because there may be others that will become well represented in Portsmouth in the future. Patricia said that the composition of Group A is determined by law. Upon checking the SACRE Constitution it was noted that there is no limit on the number of Group A representatives. The Portsmouth SACRE Constitution states for Group A that 'representatives of Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area'. Patricia said she would amend this line in the annual report to be in line with the SACRE Constitution.

- **ACTION.**

It was agreed it would be helpful to have an update on the Constitution at the next meeting particularly as there were some new members to SACRE.

Patricia clarified that the SACRE Constitution operates within the LA so the City Council is cognisant of the SACRE Constitution. Portsmouth City Council has devolved responsibility for determining membership of SACRE to SACRE. Therefore if an application for membership from a group, it would be up to SACRE to determine the application or not and this was included in the Constitution last time.

In response to a further question it was confirmed that SACRE allows for one representative from Shia Islam and one from Sunni Islam.

Chris Thomas said it would be useful to know how many schools are offering religious studies and what percentage are coming from each school. Patricia said that a small number of schools are entering a small number of children across the authority, however they do achieve fairly well against the national results. This does remain a concern of SACRE that there are a number of schools not entering any pupils for GCSE. SACRE has tried a number of ways to raise this with headteachers. There is one LA non faith secondary school in the city and SACRE are working well with that school. Most secondary schools in the area are academies therefore SACRE does not have any jurisdiction. It was suggested that as a way forward, SACRE ask that the monitoring group address this explicitly when they meet in the New Year to think of some suggestions.

RESOLVED

(1) That the Portsmouth SACRE Annual Report, as amended, be received and forwarded to the relevant national and local bodies.

(2) That SACRE convenes a small group to develop a new 3 year action plan 2021-2023. Jane Kelly, Sam Duddles and Elizabeth Jenkerson agreed to be part of this group.

(3) That the SACRE Monitoring Sub Group discuss ways of improving numbers of pupils entering the Religious Studies GCSE examination at their next meeting.

13. Date and venue of the next meeting (AI 13)

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday 3 March 2021, starting at 4:00pm. The spring meeting will most likely be held virtually.

The Chair wished to thank Sandra Gibb on behalf of all the SACRE members who was stepping down from SACRE due to her other commitments. Sandra had been on SACRE for about 10 years and had given a great deal of time to it. Everyone wished her well and gave their thanks.

The Chair also advised that Elizabeth Jenkerson was re-applying for her role on NASACRE for another term which was a really positive thing for Portsmouth SACRE.

The meeting concluded at 5.20 pm.

Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair of SACRE