

# Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday 13 November 2013

## PRESENT:

Councillors Drean and Singh

Mrs Alison Bradley, Ms Penny Burnside, Mr Martin Edmonds, Ms Katie Freeman, Mr Pete Grainger, Mr Jamie Haselden, Mrs Liz Hill, Ms Helena Mitchell, Mrs Pam Shelmerdine, Mrs Alison Sturgeon.

Co-opted Representatives: Father G Carpenter and Dr Clare Hamon

Apologies for absence: Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Gordon and Dr Mahony Catherine Bowness, Reverend Cryer, Barry Good, Gwen Hughes, Anna Kelly, Ben Kerr, Caroline McVicker, Dr Jatindra Saha, Cathy Slow, Dr Wintersgill.

Also in attendance: Mr Jonathan Marshall (RE Advisor), Lynn Young and Helen Rickman (Democratic Support Officers).

The meeting started at 9.30 am and finished at 12.15 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 14. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, confirmed that Cathy Slow had been appointed as Chair, and Councillor Mrs Aspinall as Vice Chair. Agreed that in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Councillor Singh is appointed as Chair for this meeting only.

## 15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

## 16. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

## 17. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2013 are confirmed as a correct record.

## 18. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The chair welcomed Alison Sturgeon to her inaugural SACRE meeting, and advised that Reverend Gordon Cryer, also a new member, was unable to attend.

19. **UPDATES ON SACRE ISSUES**

**(i) Humanist Representation**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, provided an update on the issue of Humanist representation on SACRE.

Members were advised that -

- (a) following on from the previous meeting, Jonathan had sought advice from NASACRE, and informed members that –
  - some SACREs had co-opted a Humanist representative;
  - some SACREs had a Humanist on Group A;
  - some SACREs had no Humanist representation;
- (b) a Humanist was unable to join Group A unless the wording of the membership criteria changed, as it stated Group A was a 'religious group';
- (c) legal advice was required to change the wording of the membership criteria;
- (d) the decision made at the previous meeting on 17 July 2013 not to allow a humanist representative in Group A was in line with national advice;
- (e) the issue could be re-visited at a later date if required by members;
- (f) there was no intention to change the make up of the four groups as this would require a change in the law;
- (g) further information on the Humanist issue was available on the NASACRE website (FAQs – Humanist). The log-in details for NASACRE were provided;

Following a discussion, members raised the following points -

- (h) not all religious groups in Plymouth were represented on SACRE;
- (i) Group A had a good mix of religions and views;
- (j) all religions and belief systems were made to feel welcome at SACRE.

Agreed that the Democratic Support Officer would obtain information regarding the breakdown of religions of Plymouth's population from the last Census.

**(ii) Holocaust Memorial Day Plans**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, provided members with information on plans for the 2014 Holocaust Memorial Day.

Members were informed that -

- (a) Holocaust Memorial Day 2014 was Monday 27 January 2014;
- (b) Plymouth SACRE and the Centre for Faiths were hosting a Memorial Day in the Roland Levinsky building, Plymouth University, to which a number of groups had been invited – including the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender and Gypsy Roma groups;
- (c) schools were encouraged to participate in the event at Plymouth University;
- (d) all faiths were welcome to attend the event at Plymouth University;
- (e) a civic reflection was being held in the English Garden at Mount Edgumbe on Tuesday 28 January at 12.30pm, which the Lord Mayor was attending (this is now Sunday 26 January at 2.30pm, see below);

Father Gregory subsequently advised members that -

- (f) the civic reflection conflicted with the inauguration of the new Roman Catholic Bishop on Tuesday 28 January at 2pm, an event to which the Lord Mayor had been invited.

Agreed that –

- (1) Jonathan Marshall would e-mail information regarding the civic reflection on 28 January to SACRE members;
- (2) Jonathan Marshall would confirm the date and time of the civic reflection with the Lord Mayor's office.

**(iii) The South West SACRE Conference in March 2014**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, advised members that there was some confusion as to the correct date of the South West SACRE Conference 2014.

Agreed that Jonathan Marshall would confirm the correct date of the South West SACRE Conference 2014 and e-mail the information to SACRE members.

**(iv) Launch of Collective Worship Resources**

Liz Hill provided an update on the Collective Worship Resource Launch.

Members were informed that -

- (a) an excellent resource pack had been produced;
- (b) the launch of the Collective Worship Resource at Hyde Park Infants School had been well attended, and a high number of packs were handed out to visitors;

- (c) the Collective Worship Resource pack would be brought to the next meeting for members to view;
- (d) it is hoped that a Collective Worship Resource pack for Secondary schools could be produced at a later date, if required.

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, asked members to advise him of any projects for SACRE to consider and which would help develop RE.

**(v) LearnTeachLead**

Katie Freeman provided an update on LearnTeachLead.

Members were informed that -

- (a) a national RE Quality Mark had been developed and was awarded to schools who satisfied certain criteria based on excellent RE - the award was graded as Bronze, Silver and Gold;
- (b) no school in the South West had yet been awarded the RE Mark;
- (c) the cost of the RE Mark was £475 per school and was thought to be off putting;
- (d) Hyde Park Infants School was looking at working alongside another school to obtain the RE Mark;
- (e) Hyde Park Infants School did not have sufficient funds to proceed with the award;

In response to Members' questions, members were informed that –

- (f) SACRE was able to contribute some money towards the RE Quality Mark scheme if sufficient interest was generated from the members;
- (g) there was the possibility that Hyde Park Infants School was able to link in with a secondary school (Marine Academy Plymouth and All Saints Academy Plymouth both expressed an interest) for the scheme;
- (h) there was the possibility that a discount could be obtained if enough schools were interested in gaining the award;
- (i) there was the possibility of obtaining finance from other sources to fund the award;
- (j) some schools were wary of applying for the award as they thought were unable to achieve the set criteria;
- (k) it was important that secondary schools became involved in the

scheme.

Agreed that –

- (1) the SACRE budget would be added to the next agenda;
- (2) the Collective Worship Resource pack would be brought to the next meeting for members to view;
- (3) the RE Advisor and Katie Freeman would discuss the REQM issue further.

20. **TO CONSIDER THE SACRE ANNUAL REPORT (TO FOLLOW) AND RECEIVE A REPORT ON RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR SUMMER 2013**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, discussed the SACRE Annual Report.

Members were informed that –

- (a) the SACRE Annual Report was a draft version only;
- (b) 2013 examination results for RE had shown an improvement on 2012. The results were –
  - GCSE Full Course – 66.7% A\*-C;
  - GCSE Short Course – 52% A\*-C;
  - A Level – 100% A\*-C;
  - AS Level – 90% A-E;

Members raised the following points –

- (c) the numbers opting for RS GCSE continued to fluctuate;
- (d) the new University Technical College (UTC) would be included in future analysis of results;
- (e) conferences were taking place around the country to discuss the new RE syllabus;
- (f) it was likely there would be a shortfall of RE teachers in the future.

Agreed that –

- (1) members would advise Jonathan Marshall of any amendments to the SACRE Annual Report;
- (2) Jonathan Marshall would send the amended SACRE Annual Report to the heads of the four groups for final approval;

- (3) the Democratic Support Officer would update the list of SACRE members 2012-2013 in the Annual Report.

(Alison Bradley left the meeting at the end of this item)

21. **PLANNING TOWARDS A PLYMOUTH DIMENSION TO THE REVISED RE SYLLABUS**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, discussed the following three reports –

- the All Party Parliamentary Group for RE – The Truth Unmasked (March 2013);
- the recent Ofsted Religious Education report; Realising the Potential (October 2013) and the Religious Education Council;
- A Review of Religious Education in England (launched in London 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013).

Members were advised that –

- (a) there was a lack of specialist teachers of RE, particularly at primary level;
- (b) in nearly 40% of schools there was a lack of CPD for RE teachers;

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, circulated a document which condensed the information contained in the above three documents.

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, referred to minute 9 of 17 July 2013, Towards a Plymouth RE Syllabus.

Members were advised that -

- (c) SACRE members were advised to work with colleagues in Devon and Torbay on the new RE syllabus by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). This needs to be officially agreed;
- (d) a Plymouth dimension to be developed so that the new RE syllabus illustrated the unique story of Plymouth;
- (e) Plymouth had a predominantly Christian population, which is diverse, however many other faiths were also represented;
- (f) churches were potentially a classroom for children;
- (g) the Revised Syllabus needed to draw on existing resources that were available around the city to enable young people to realise that they belong to a diverse community.

Agreed unanimously that the head of each group is invited to attend the Devon SACRE meeting on Wednesday 27 November 2013 at Buckfast Education Centre to form the ASC.

22. **CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVE FOR AMBITIOUS PLYMOUTH**

SACRE members were informed that the membership of Group A was to consider nominating and appointing a member of their group to act as a non-statutory co-opted representative to sit on Plymouth City Council's Ambitious Plymouth scrutiny panel.

Following a discussion, those members of Group A who were present advised that they were unable to nominate a member of their group, but unanimously agreed to nominate Dr Clare Hamon, co-opted representative, to act as a non-statutory co-opted representative to sit on Plymouth City Council's Ambitious Plymouth scrutiny panel.

Agreed that the Democratic Support Officer would advise the Chair of the Ambitious Plymouth scrutiny panel of Group A's decision to nominate Dr Clare Hamon, co-opted representative, to act as a non-statutory co-opted representative to sit on Ambitious Plymouth scrutiny panel.

23. **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, informed members that the date of the next meeting was Monday 10 March 2014. The meeting was likely to last all day due to the amount of business to be covered.

Agreed that Jonathan Marshall, RE Advisor, would inform SACRE members of the location of the next meeting once known.

Under this item Pete Grainger was thanked for his hospitality, and it was noted that his students had been very welcoming, and their behaviour had been exemplary.

24. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.