

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Monday 15 November 2021

PRESENT:

Katie Freeman, in the Chair.
Councillor Mrs Mary Aspinall, Vice Chair
Councillor Margaret Corvid, Councillor Jonathan Drean and Councillor Rebecca Smith.

Co-opted Representatives: Annmarie Allchurch, Dr Judith Beckman and Lesley Clark.

Apologies for absence: Claire Linden, Sara Wells, Ed Pawson, Dr Catherine Bowness

Also in attendance: Michael House (Education Advisor), Hannah Whiting (Senior Support and Research Assistant)

The meeting started at 1.00pm and finished at 2.40pm.

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.

Declarations of interest

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

Minutes

Minutes agreed from last meeting on 22 March 2021 by Lesley Clark, seconded by Ann-Marie Allchurch with adjustment to Lesley's surname to 'Clark' on 35.

Chairs Urgent Business

No urgent business was raised by the Chair.

Welcome to New Members

Chair welcomed new members Councillor Margaret Corvid and Councillor Rebecca Smith.

Recruitment of new members and updates

Michael House explained that current vacancies in Group A are Baptist, Methodist (chase), United Reformed Church, Hindu, Islamic.

Lesley Clark will ask contacts to try and find a new Greek Orthodox member.

Chair and Michael House to look at constitution and possibility of moving Greek Orthodox into Membership Group A.

Chair hopes to welcome Jen Sanga from the Buddhist community at the next meeting.

Chair informed the group there is ongoing recruitment for a new Imam in Plymouth and once this is complete, they will represent in the Islamic seat.

Chair explained that whilst Marjon's is currently an empty seat she hopes to be able to welcome a new member at the next meeting.

Emma Butler has retired from her previous job role but would like to continue with SACRE. Chair to provide Hannah Whiting with new contact email.

Chair informed members that Liz Hill will continue on SACRE as a co-opted member, leaving the NAHT vacant.

Councillor Mary Aspinall proposes that Ann-Marie Allchurch would move from NATRE to NAHT member, seconded by Chair.

Michael House explained there are current vacancies in Group C for NASUWT, NATRE, UCU, Special Schools, Voice, PASH and ATL.

Chair explained that the NUT member is Gwen Hughes but she has not attended a meeting in a long time. Michael House to speak to Gwen Hughes and confirm she would still like to continue as a member.

Chair informed members that PASH and ATL no longer exist.

Chair to approach headteacher at Plympton Academy before next meeting to fill one position.

Michael House to approach a member of staff at Longcause School to fill the Special Schools seat.

With regards to Group D, Councillor Mary Aspinall will find out if Councillor Margaret Corvid is replacing Councillor Ian Tuffin or Councillor Jonny Morris.

Councillor Mary Aspinall will speak to Councillor John Mahony about his interest in joining.

Michael House explained that in the Co-opted Group, RE Consultant and Plymouth Association of Governors seats were vacant.

Chair thanked Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity and Jonathan Marshall for their support in increasing membership.

Councillor Mary Aspinall to enquire with the monitoring officer whether a serving Councillor can sit in a group other than Group D.

Local and national development updates

Chair informed members that NASACRE are having their RE conference virtually in January 2022 over two days.

Annmarie Allchurch provided an update on the Learn Teach Lead conference that was held in October with a wide range of speakers on RE and people finding their faith. The 'Nobody Stands Nowhere' video was very good and informative and will be used widely in other settings. This includes St Andrew's CE Primary School, where there will be a 'World Views Day' and there will be a display of pupils work on this. Chair asked if some examples of this work could be shared at the next SACRE meeting. Annmarie Allchurch confirmed this would be done.

Chair gave an update on the RE Hub. It is really busy with guest speakers this year including a researcher approach and a speaker looking into views within Islam. Schools are sending different representatives each time so the ideas spread across the school, rather than just going through one member of staff. There are projects looking into a World Views curriculum. There will be a session on World Views led by Chair and Ed Pawson will present from a Secondary perspective.

Chair informed members that Plymouth is one of 5 cities for the 5 cities project, bringing together members of the media, teachers and faith groups for conversations with the aim of breaking down barriers and looking at understanding diversity and different points of view. Chair is on a panel that will be discussing British Values.

Chair to connect Jonathan Marshall to Lesley Clark. Jonathan Marshall has poetry, written post war about the holocaust and he has managed to remove the copyright for some activities and discussion for local children for use in schools. The children will need to think about the meaning of the poems and then begin to write their own poetry. Chair hopes that between herself, Jonathan Marshall and Lesley Clark, they are get this utilised in schools.

Chair gave an update that the Church of England has released information about collective worship and how to make it more inclusive. A bill has gone through the House of Lords to look at collective worship in primary schools. Chair proposes that SACRE look at providing training for school staff about what collective worship is and what it looks like in practice. Chair to update at next meeting.

Annmarie Allchurch explained that in her school of St Andrews CE Primary School, that collective worship has been carried out, even with COVID19 restrictions, by approaching it on a Key Stage and/or class basis. This happens 3 times a week.

Chair explained that contacts have said COVID19 seems to be the reasons collective worship has not come back into schools, and some schools do not understand the clear differences between assemblies and collective worship.

Councillor Mary Aspinall explained that it would be a good time to contact schools and provide advice on collective worship on a class by class basis to ensure schools can carry it out whilst staying safe. SACRE must do this and ensure it has done its part to evidence in the case of an OFSTED inspection.

Michael House explained that he produces a health and wellbeing education briefing

newsletter, next going out on the 4 December, collective worship and compliance around religious education is going to be in there.

SACRE Procedures and Constitution

Michael House and Chair to have a working party with Lesley Clark to review the current SACRE constitution.

Members asked to send feedback to SACRE@plymouth.gov.uk on the constitution and structure/houses within two weeks of the minutes being received by 8 December 2021. Hannah Whiting to share minutes of meeting on or before 24/11/21. Michael House, LC and Chair to then organise a meeting.

Election of next Chair

Chair and Vice Chair agree to remain in their positions until the scheduled July 2022 SACRE meeting.

Any members who are interested in becoming Chair to speak to current chair before scheduled March 2022 meeting.

Working group to look at formalising an outgoing Chair attends meetings alongside new chair for a year, to support.

Non-Compliant schools

Michael House informed members that there was no update on Non-Compliance from Plymouth High School for Girls (PHSG). Any conversations that have been had have been responded to with statements about the difficulty of compliance during COVID19.

Chair asks for previous letter to be adjusted and re-sent and the schools academy trust to be contacted, as they should have a policy on collective worship. Chair to seek advice on this from Deborah Western through NATRE and send a copy of a revised letter to Michael House to send shortly.

Vice Chair suggests herself, Chair and Michael House meet early in the Spring Term to discuss any response and the way forward, perhaps contacting the DfE.

Updates from members

Michael House explained in Ed Pawson's absence that the South West SACRE Conference is due to be held on 28 February 2022. It is not clear yet whether this will be a virtual or face-to-face event, due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic. Michael House and Hannah Whiting to email details out to members when there is more information.

Lesley Clark asked for dates of rest of meetings for SACRE next year, Hannah Whiting and Vice Chair to speak to Democratic Support about this and Hannah Whiting will confirm dates with members as soon as possible.

Any other business

None.

Date and venue of next meeting

1PM Monday 7 March 2022. Warspite Room, Council House.