

# SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Date: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
(Draft Minutes)

Place: St Laurence & All Saints Church, Eastwoodbury Lane, Southend-on-Sea

**Present:** Mr K Ryan (Chairman)  
Councillors Betson and Evans  
Mr J Graham

**In Attendance:** J Dyson, F Neil, R Harris, K Christopher (RE Today) and Rev. Spencer

**Start/End Time:** 2.30pm/4.15pm

\*\*\*\* **Part I**

**1 Apologies and substitutions.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davidson, Davies, Ware-Lane and McGlone (no substitutes).

Apologies for absence were also received from Mr C Pegler, Mr M Buckley, Ms L Hopkinson and Mr I Pringle.

**2 Declarations of interest.**

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

**3 Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015**

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015, subject to minor amendments and corrections, be received and confirmed as a correct record.

**4 Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the Agenda**

4.1 Review of Membership (item 5 refers) – The SACRE discussed and undertook a further review of its current membership. It was AGREED in principle (as the meeting was not quorate) that those members who had not been in attendance in accordance with the SACRE constitution be removed.

The SACRE recognised the ongoing challenges in respect to filling the vacancies on the SACRE and it was AGREED in principle that Robert Harris, Frances Neil, Kevin Ryan and Janet Dyson meet to discuss appropriate way forward.

It was also suggested that the SACRE needs to have a higher profile with local communities and it would be worthwhile approaching the local faith groups and congregations to 'promote' and highlight the work of SACRE. This could lead to identifying local faith group representatives to fill the vacancies and encourage wider participation.

4.2 SACRE Annual Report (Item 8 refers) – Janet Dyson advised that the final version had been completed and sent to the Clerk and Jane Theadom for final submission to NASACRE and circulation to schools, etc. It was AGREED in principle that the Clerk follow up with the education department as to the current status of the Annual Report.

**5 Review of Membership**

This was discussed under Matters arising, Item 4 above.

## **6 Report from NASACRE AGM**

The SACRE noted that there had been some complications and a breakdown in communication in booking the NASACRE AGM and unfortunately Frances Neil and Kevin Ryan were unable to attend the AGM. The process of booking the AGM would take place much earlier to ensure appropriate attendance of the Southend SACRE.

Frances Neil made reference to a number of other SACRE annual events, such as Redbridge Annual SACRE lecture/conference, the London RE Hub conference/meeting, Islington which has similar issues to Southend's SACRE. It was noted that Frances Neil would look into the possibility of attending some other SACRE's to share good practice, etc. It was also suggested that if its possible a SACRE member could attend as well.

## **7 SACRE Self-Evaluation and Action Plan**

The SACRE discussed the need to prepare and undertake a Self-Evaluation to identify the gaps, inform the development of an action plan. The evaluation once completed would need to be reviewed annually. It was noted that the last self-evaluation was undertaken in 2006 and it was timely to undertake one, given the recent changes in RE nationally.

It was AGREED in principle that a new self-evaluation framework be adopted and that other SACRE's Self-Evaluations be looked at for good practice, etc. Essex SACRE would be a good starting point.

## **8 Update on Work with Schools**

The SACRE received an in-depth update on the current work taking place with schools around RE, summarised below:

- RE Today Teacher Training – 15 teachers had attended the teacher training funded by RE Today. The training covered a range of aspects including how to develop RE in their classrooms and supporting teachers subject knowledge of RE. The training also helped teachers identify their needs and gaps. The final session will take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 and a short report covering the training would be made available to the SACRE.
- Frances Neil had met with the Council's engagement team and a survey of RE, collective worship and SMSC will be carried out with all schools. The survey aims to identify the quality of training in schools and how well RE, collective worship and SMSC are being delivered. It was AGREED in principle that the draft survey is considered by the SACRE at its next meeting to agree the final version.
- Reference was made to the NATRE 'Respect for All' conference offered to Southend Schools via Frances Neil.
- Reference was made to OfSTED reports covering SMSC, collective worship. Frances Neil will compile a report for the next SACRE;
- NATRE/RE Today – there was funding available through NATRE/Re Today for the provision of teacher training in September 2016. To access funding a bid would need to be submitted by March 2016.
- A primary school / teacher network was being explored and should be set-up early in the autumn term 2015.
- To engage young people the possibility of inviting the Youth Council to set up a Youth SACRE was being explored.

The SACRE discussed the OfSTED criteria and framework for RE and collective worship.

It was emphasised that SACRE's role is to support and provide advice to schools on the provision of collective worship and ensure they are delivering against the DFE Guidelines in Circular 1/1994 . . Frances Neil informed SACRE that part of the survey already being planned included a request for schools to identify their RE Governor leads. School Governing Bodies will be contacted via the survey (above) to ask how collective worship, etc was being delivered / monitored and evaluated in schools. This was AGREED in principle.

SACRE also discussed the limited access to training for RE in early years. Frances Neil offered to speak to EYs Lead at SBC to investigate CPD needs.

Frances Neil introduced Kate Christopher from 'REToday' who is to support Frances with provision training for schools on British Values. *REToday's* programme in this area has been successfully 'rolled' out nationally. SACRE was pleased to have access to this high quality provision for schools in Southend.

### **National Developments in RE – GCSE/A-Level Changes**

The SACRE received an extract from the NATRE website which highlights the changes to the examination criteria for GCSE and A-level in RE.

The SACRE generally welcomed the changes recognising that they could revolutionise the teaching of RE.

### **Any other business**

(a) Education Representation at SACRE –With the announcement that Jane Theadom would be leaving the Council shortly, it was discussed and agreed that the Corporate Director for People, Simon Leftley, be approached to enquire whether an independent person could become the appointee to be the Director's Representative, in order to support and represent the Council's education department on SACRE. The SACRE members present nominated a specific person to be put forward, who had done the job previously. It was AGREED in principle that the Chairman writes to the Corporate Director for People with this suggestion.

(a)

(b) Janet Dyson – The SACRE noted with sadness that this would be Janet Dyson's last meeting for Southend SACRE. The SACRE expressed its deepest thanks and appreciation for all her work and support over the years.

## **8 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at 2pm. Possible venues suggested included St Michaels, Heycroft School and Edwards Hall.