

BOROUGH OF SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (S.A.C.R.E.)

ANNUAL REPORT 2015 - 2016

CONTENTS:

Section 1	Chair's Introduction:	Mr. Kevin Ryan, Chair of SACRE
Section 2		Religious Education
Section 3		Locally Agreed Syllabus
Section 4		Collective Worship
Section 5		Links with other Agencies
Section 6		Other issues



Southend on Sea's 'Pier at Twilight'

*(Reproduced with permission of John Pye, SBC Volunteer,
taken from the 100 year-old Cliff Lift on Southend Seafront)*

Appendices

Appendix 1	Terms of Reference and Constitution
Appendix 2	Membership of Southend-on-Sea SACRE

1: INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR OF SACRE: KEVIN RYAN

Once again I am pleased to introduce the Annual Report on the work of the Southend-on-Sea SACRE. It has been an exciting time to be involved in Religious Education both locally and nationally.

The Borough' Agreed Syllabus, *Improving Learning Together in Religious Education*, is now well established within schools following its launch in 2013. Feedback from schools is largely positive with teachers reporting that they value the flexibility in the syllabus that enables them to plan and deliver RE that is relevant to the contexts of their schools. A borough wide survey of primary and secondary teachers and leaders of RE, designed and analysed by our RE Adviser, Frances Neil, has shown that a light touch review of the Syllabus involving teachers' input would be welcomed and will take place through 2016-17 through the locally-held RE Subject networks which Frances leads. The Agreed Syllabus sets out to develop a range of skills and ideas including, reflection, empathy, creativity and the ability to engage in investigation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis. The planned review will support SACRE's decisions when the Locally Agreed Syllabus is formally reviewed in 2018.

SACRE members believes that well-taught RE which can improve the wellbeing of all students and makes an important contribution to good community relations and to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. By exploring questions of identity and community and helping young people to gain a deeper understanding about themselves and others it also promoting British Values, a key focus of the Borough and the Department for Education.

It is good to see that the network groups for both primary and secondary teachers are flourishing following Frances' hard work maintaining contact with Lead Teachers, promptly answering their queries sent by email or raised at meetings, encouraging teachers to attend the networks, preparing good agendas, planning CPD and conferences and sharing resources, important updates and documents with network members.

SACRE funded teachers to attend high quality CPD and paid for a primary/secondary joint Pupil and Teacher Conference to take place during the year. Both are reported in full, later in this document.

As RE is a statutory requirement for all children in full time education, under the provision of the 1944 Education Act, part of the SACRE's responsibility is to support and monitor the provision of RE for all the Borough's pupils and students in full time education. The analysis of external in 2016 examination results, GCSE, AS Level and A Level, presented in this report (provided only recently by the DFE) highlight some changes from the 14-15 results. The analysis of examination results from summer term 2016 presented in this report highlights some considerable achievements by students and schools.

The revised GCSE, AS and A Level Religious Studies examination specifications, implemented from September 2016, hamper our ability to compare and track performance across year-groups and across schools beyond summer 2017. This is unfortunate as we believe much is being undertaken by RE Leads and schools to ensure student achievement is improved and those improvements are sustained through high quality teaching evidenced through the achievement of students in their RS examinations.

Governors are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that RE is delivered in accordance with statutory requirements. SACRE also encourages a strong Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural ethos to be evident within all our schools.

There continues to be a number of significant national reports published during the last year, all of which highlight the need for high quality training to enable teachers to teach RE that is engaging and effective. SACRE members have discussed and noted the issues raised in the reports and their implications for the Borough's schools.

I am taking this opportunity to thank Marilyn Larkin for her membership of and support for SACRE over the last 6 years. Her contributions to the RE in the borough has been highly regarded, not only through her work on SACRE, but as an excellent teacher and Lead Teacher in RE for many years within borough schools. I would also like to thank the Vice Chair of SACRE, Councillor Clive Pegler, who has also retired from SACRE. Clive was a dedicated, well-informed and supportive member of SACRE and we shall miss his contributions to our work.

This report provides an overview of RE in the Borough's schools and the work of SACRE. I commend it to you.

Kevin Ryan, Chair, SACRE, Southend on Sea Borough Council
26th January 2017

2. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

2.1 STANDARDS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The SACRE continues to fulfil its responsibility to monitor standards and quality in RE (Religious Education) Collective Worship and spiritual development. Examination results at GCSE, A/S and A level are monitored and reported to SACRE as part of the Borough's overall monitoring and evaluation of standards.

2.2 Analysis of GCSE, AS and 'A' level results for 2016

There are again some extremely impressive achievements in RS at GCSE, AS and A level examinations which reflect the continued high quality of teaching. School entry policies for full GCSE Religious Studies (RS) differ from school to school, depending on the arrangements for statutory RE within the Key Stage 4 curriculum and the provision of RS within the school's AS and 'A' Level examination option choices.

Nine out of 12 Southend schools entered students for GCSE RS (Full Course) and two further Schools entered almost 100% of their students in to either the Full or Short GCSE Course. There were no entries from Futures Community College, Chase or Belfairs Academies in 2016. This situation would bear investigation in case those schools are in breach of their statutory requirements, or if external factors are involved, with which SACRE could offer support. It is to be celebrated, however, that four schools entered close to 100% of students for the full GCSE in 2016, compared with three doing so in 2015.

Cohort numbers ranged from 11 students (just 5.64%) at Cecil Jones College from a NOR of 195, to 149 out of a cohort of 152 at St Thomas More High, although the school's Catholicity will obviously have been a positive influence on subject availability and choice, as in St Bernard's High School, where 100% of the cohort were also entered.

The comments on achievement that follow will clearly be affected by the overall patterns of entry which vary considerably between schools. The selective nature of four of the schools/academies skew the borough's figures somewhat and therefore comparisons between schools must be considered with this in mind. Students also transfer to different schools for 6th Form so tracking of cohorts from GCSE to GCE AS / A level examinations, is not possible.

2.21 Achievement at GSCE Religious Studies **GCSE Full Course**

- 49% of students sat a GCSE course in Religious Studies which is slightly above the national figure of 44%
- Overall 82% of those pupils achieved A*-C grades at GSCE, which is well above the national figure for all schools of 71.5% and 99% achieved A* - G grades which is above the national figures of 97.8%.
- Four schools, exceeded the national picture significantly with 100% of students achieving A*-C grades.
- Passes at A*- G from 98.3% - 100% achieved **by all schools**, which is an average across all schools of 99.4%, this, again, is slightly above the national average of 97.8% and is to be celebrated
- Students from six schools including non-selective Shoeburyness High achieved 100% in A*-G grades with students from two further schools achieving 98.6% and 97.3% which is to be celebrated
- Almost all students entered by Cecil Jones achieved A*-C grades, but the small cohort skews the percentages due to the 'weighting' for each student to be less impressive at 90% their achievement should not be underestimated and is solely due to small numbers entered
- Achievement at the higher grades (A*/A) for GCSE RS, at 42.5% (A* @17.6+ A @ 24.9) is particularly good being significantly above the corresponding national figures of 29.6% (A* @10.6% + A@ 19.0%). These are also above A*+A results for 2015
- These figures for A*/A grades are equalled at Shoeburyness High and exceeded, significantly so, by three of the four 'selective' schools/academies where 100% of students achieved A*/A grades, albeit in a cohorts of 25% of student Numbers on Role (NOR)
- The non-selective school Eastwood Academy is again notable for entering almost the entire cohort of students of 147 with 75.7% of students achieving A*- C grades, which is above the figure for the national average of 71.5%
- St Thomas More and St Bernard's High Schools who also entered almost entire cohorts and students' results exceeded the national scores for A-G grades, with 97.3% and 100%, respectively
- It is disappointing that Belfair's Academy whose student achieved impressive results in 2015 (a pass rate of 85% at A*- C grades: 100% on A*-G) did not enter any students into RS GCSE Short or Full Course.

Governing Bodies will generally want to satisfy themselves that:

- the statutory requirements for schools to provide Religious Education for **all** students are being met at Key Stage 3 and 4.

- the overall proportion of students being entered for any accreditation in RS at GCSE is appropriate given the number of students on role in the Borough (NOR) is declared as 2053 and number of entries (NOE) is declared as just 727.
- that school websites state the school's arrangements for teaching RE, whether or not the school / academy follows the local agreed syllabus or stating which other such syllabus it follows:
 - In their curriculum information school websites, in general, secondary schools include only a minimal mention, if any, of RE provision for KS 3 students and for KS 4 students who are not following RS examination syllabi.
 - Generally if secondary schools do mention RS it is as part of their examination syllabi
- that, while good teaching is being received by a small percentage of a school's cohort perhaps more students could be encouraged to choose RS as an option:
 - To take advantage of this good teaching
 - understandably, some learners will not be entered for examinations in RS for a variety of reasons, however, SACRE should satisfy itself that all learners' entitlement to receive Religious Education is being met at Key Stages 3 – 5

2.22 GCSE Short Course in Religious Studies

Three selective schools entered students for the GCSE Short Course and their students results were impressive with 100% pass rate (A* - D) achieved by students. The GCSE Short Courses are no longer counted in a school's accountability measures, i.e. the A*-C GCSE pass rate. Therefore many schools will be phasing out short courses.

2.23 Achievement at GCE Advanced Level in Religious Studies

GCE AS Level Religious Studies examinations:

- Achievement in AS Level in the borough's schools was very good, being well above the national levels, with 33% achieving an A grade and 31% achieving a B grade, compared with national figures of 20.4% and 24.6%, respectively
 - Thus, achievement in the borough's schools across grades A-B at 63.8% was also well above national figures of 45%
- Achievement in grades A-E at 93.7% was just above national figures of 92.7%
- In 2016, the same nine schools entered students for AS Level RS, as in 2015, although cohort sizes in five of these schools were smaller in 2016 than in 2015.

GCE 'A' Level Religious Studies examinations:

There is a very positive picture for A Level across the borough. Nine schools entered students for A Level RS, a total of 149 students. The number of students in the cohorts varied from 5 to 30 and the number of student entries rose both locally and nationally.

- Overall, students in Southend schools achieved above the national figure at A*/A grades with 28.2% achieving this compared with the national figure of 24.1%.
- Similarly, 57% students achieved A* - B grades, compared with national scores of 54%.
- In seven out of nine schools 100% of students achieved A*- E grades, including the small cohorts of the non-selective schools: Belfairs Academy and both Cecil Jones and Shoeburyness High School, which both entered much larger cohorts than in 2015.
- Seven schools achieved a pass rate of 100% but included within that figure 28.2% achieved a pass at 'A* - A grade which above the national figure of 24.1%
- At Southend High School for Boys, in a cohort of 19 students, 89.5% achieved grades A*- B, Westcliff High school for Girls 88.9% achieved A*-B grades and Westcliff High School for Boys achieved 83.3% achieved grades A*-B, all of which were significantly above the national figure of 54.4%.
- A*- B grades exceeded national figures in six of the nine schools including St Bernard's and Southend High for Girls.
- Belfairs and Cecil Jones Academies are to be congratulated for providing A Level examination courses, successfully, for very small cohorts.

Governors should consider the following points:

- Where number of students entered for GCE A level was small (and smaller than their cohort) e.g. Belfairs, Cecil Jones, Futures, what provision is made for meeting the statutory requirements to teach RE to **all** pupils?
 - This question applies in **all** the schools where the GCE cohort is less than the full cohort of students in that particular year.
 - There is no Religious Education provision stated on the websites of **most** secondary schools in the Borough

2.3 COMPLAINTS CONCERNING RE

No formal complaints were made about religious education under the local statutory complaints procedure during 2015 - 16.

2.4 WITHDRAWAL FROM RE

There are no figures provided from schools in respect of withdrawal from Religious Education within the responses to the borough-wide survey of schools undertaken in 2015 – 16.

3.0 AGREED SYLLABUS for RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Borough's Agreed Syllabus has been in place since its launch in September 2013 and is used in all non-faith primary schools and academies and the majority of secondary schools and academies for Key Stage 3.

During the academic year 2015 – 2016 information gathered via the survey of all the Borough’s schools and continuing consultations and discussions with Lead Teachers attending the RE Networks, indicated that teachers and schools continue to be pleased with and to use the Local Syllabus.

3.1 TEACHER TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL, MORAL, SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

Ben Madison, an experienced RE teacher/head of department continued to support the secondary RE network, which met termly with good numbers attending throughout the year. The number of teachers who attended the Primary Network in 2015 – 16, led by Frances Neil, increased throughout the year. Membership of the Teachers’ networks has resulted in a core-group of teachers who either attend each term’s meeting or share attendance with a member of their departmental team or who keep contact with the adviser for ongoing support and guidance.

SACRE funded a group of primary and secondary RE Lead Teachers and SACRE members to attend the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) “Strictly RE” Teachers’ Conference in London, to develop our teaching skills further, share good practice and ideas and build our awareness of national initiatives. It is heartening to experience the dedication and professionalism of teachers in our Borough who gave up their Saturday to attend such excellent Continuing Professional Development opportunities.

Southend’s RE Advisor, by Frances Neil, worked hard to organise and coordinate the trip and encourage so many of the Borough’s lead teachers to attend.



Marilyn Larkin (right) in a workshop with Fiona Moss (from RE Today)

3.2 SACRE funded a Conference entitled “Respect for All Pupils of Southend”.

The conference was led by Julia Diamond-Conway and Kate Christopher from *RE Today* and involved primary pupils from Years 5 and 6 working with secondary students from Years 7 and 8. This was also a CPD opportunity for teachers of RE who observed Kate and Julia’s question and answer approach.



Julia (Left) and Kate (right) with an attentive audience of 90 pupils and students from Southend schools.

All present were immensely proud of the pupils, students and staff of Southend's schools as the children's RE knowledge, debating and discussion skills, their cooperative working, and behaviour were exemplary. They maintained their attention spans for the whole day and produced some outstanding work and, equally as important, they and their teachers made friends across schools and the different phases of education. Teachers were also able to meet Lead RE colleagues from other schools and other phases of education, some for the first time.



The conference was a very successful event and included a group of 10 schools seeking enhanced Healthy Schools Accreditation through the Healthy Schools Partnership. SACRE's Chair, Kevin Ryan, and member Marilyn Larkin, attended to share in this exciting day. Over 90 pupils and students from a number of primary and secondary schools in the borough and their teachers attended the day.

The children worked together in mixed age groups, with Yr. 7 and 8 students supporting the Yr. 5 and 6 pupils during the activities.

Lisa Holloway (SBC Healthy Schools Partnership) and pupils listen thoughtfully and attentively during the Respect for All Conference

The benefits of the day were not confined to the subject matter of respect, and celebration of diversity and zero-tolerance of bullying and racism. It brought benefits for transition between primary and secondary schools for both pupils and their teachers. Lisa Holloway filmed the event to show at the Healthy Schools Partnership's Accreditation meetings where it was very positively received and all

the schools were successful in receiving their accreditation. Lisa attended a SACRE meeting where the film was also shown to members and she shared the positive outcomes for all involved.



Lyn Campbell (pictured right) and Nicky Howard (pictured left) attended with their Yr. 6 pupils.

Nicky Howard, of Temple Sutton Primary School said:

This is such a good opportunity to meet teachers from the schools our children move to in their Yr. 7. As a Year 6 teacher it's been so good to be able to spend time with colleagues from the secondary schools and to get to know each other and share our views and have time to discuss the differences in the RE curriculum.

Nicky followed this work with a similar pupil conference at her own school to which she invited parents and other members of staff. The head teacher of a primary school commented upon the quietness throughout the conference room as the children and students of different ages worked together in small groups to represent their work upon 'our respect for others' in a craft-based activity. One could have 'heard a pin drop' as they all planned and made items to represent their learning from the morning's more conventional debate and discussion sessions.

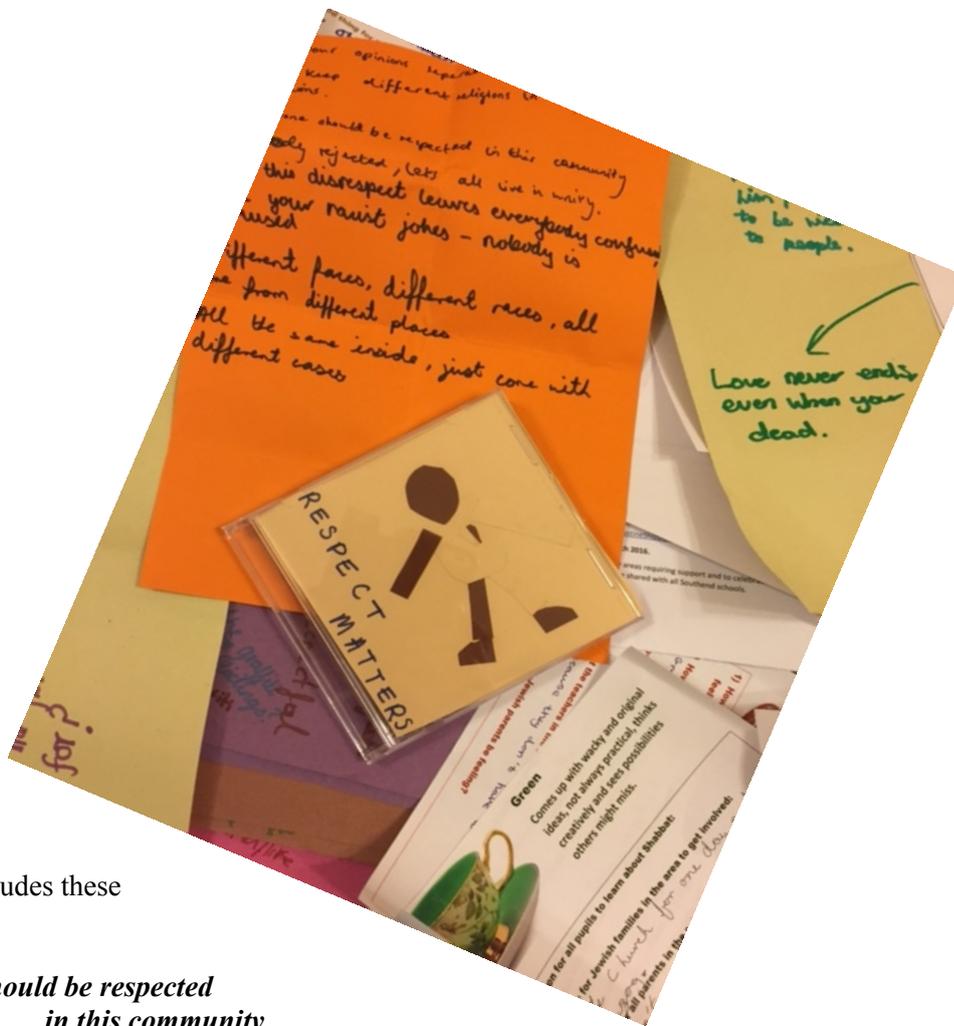
Lyn Campbell, Edwards Hall Primary School, reflected on the benefits of transition, as well as the RE learned:

Some of my pupils have met Yr 7s and Yr 8s from the schools they are hoping to attend next year and this has broken down barriers and fears they have about going there. They feel much happier that they know someone in the playground and might see a friendly face especially in their first days.

A Year 6 pupil said he'd had "a fantastic day" his friends agreed nodding their approval, adding excitedly:

"we got to make things in RE and discuss those things we find hard (to understand) – about people who are different to us and think and know different things. It helps us to understand each other – y'know – in the playground – in the street – how we're just the same and need to look after each other."

Some pupils composed and sang a "rap" and designed a very imaginative CD cover for their song (below).



The “rap” includes these lines:

*“Everyone should be respected
in this community
Nobody rejected; let’s all live in unity.”*

Continuing Professional Development through Teacher Networks

Specialist advice and support is available for schools through training sessions held during the Primary and Secondary termly network meetings. These are affiliated to NATREs “Local RE Groups Network”.

Ben Madison led the secondary and Frances Neil led primary RE Networks and shared with RE Lead Teachers, the following:

- Regular NATRE Local Group Power Point presentations, Newsletters, and resources
- Details of the RE “Webchat” Program (a question and answer/ ideas sharing broadcast in which any teacher can participate)
- Information of local and national importance (such as circulating the RE Survey, information about the RE Curriculum and Ofsted updates)
- Details of discussion points (such as examination reforms and legalities surrounding curriculum provision)
- Resources that are available such as details of visiting speakers / places of interest and worship to visit
- Details of Continuing Professional Development and training opportunities, such as the Holocaust Memorial Education Trust training days, NATRE training events
- An opportunity to share ideas, resources and teaching points

4.0 COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

4.1 MONITORING

SACRE has highlighted the need to monitor provision of RE within schools for pupils not studying RE at GCSE and GCE Level and the provision and quality of collective worship in schools within the Borough. Frances Neil has attended worship in two of the borough's primary schools and found standards to be high and pupils attentive and interested. In both schools the daily worship was well-planned and supportive of the borough's aims for respect, promoting British Values and celebrating diversity.

4.2 TRAINING

There has been no training for schools on collective worship during the year.

4.3 DETERMINATIONS

There were no applications for determinations to alter the character of collective worship for all or some pupils in a particular school during 2015-16.

4.4 COMPLAINTS CONCERNING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

No formal complaints were made about collective worship under the local statutory complaints procedure during 2015-16.

5 LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

5.1 NATIONAL

Southend SACRE is a member of the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE). Frances Neil is a member of NATRE and the Association of RE Inspectors, Assessors and Consultants (ARIAC). SACRE has been delighted to have been supported by NATRE and *REToday*, whose National Adviser, Kate Christopher, has attended SACRE meetings as an observer and many of the RE networks to support them in their work. SACRE has also been supported by The South Essex Teaching School Alliance (SETSAs) who have provided accommodation and refreshments for the termly RE network meetings.

Nicky Howard, a local Primary teacher, from Temple Sutton Primary School has contributed an article for *RE Today*, a national magazine for RE teachers.

5.2 LOCAL

During the year SACRE meetings have been held at local schools and places of worship. Meetings in schools have included contributions from the pupils and teaching staff followed by opportunities for members of SACRE to discuss the provision for RE and collective worship. Members of SACRE were treated to a walk round Edwards Hall Primary School, led by pupils in Year six, accompanied by their TA, who read their excellent poems showing their thoughts and fears about being a refugee and showed their recent RE work which had been displayed in the school's main corridor.

In the same school SACRE members visited the Foundation Stage / Early Years setting and enjoyed a question and answer session with very articulate and enthusiastic five-year-old pupils who, supported teachers and teacher assistants, excitedly shared their RE work and classroom display.

As detailed above SACRE also linked with the Borough's 'Healthy Schools Partnership' and their Difference and Diversity Group meetings of which Frances Neil attended regularly. The 'Healthy

Schools' Lead has attended SACRE and spoken of the programme for schools applying for 'Healthy Schools' Enhanced Accreditation who attended the "Respect for All Pupils of Southend" Conference as part of their 'evidence base' for the application process. There is more detail about this event in the previous pages of the report. SACRE is grateful to Leigh Road Baptist Church for providing the venue for the Respect for All Conference.

6 OTHER ISSUES

6.1 BUDGET

The Local Authority has delegated a reasonable sum of money to SACRE to enable the group to function independently and effectively. The funds are allocated carefully to support SACRE to meet and continue its work effectively. Expenditure included clerking, national association affiliation fees and incidental expenses, for example, venue costs.

As previously discussed during the 15-16 academic year SACRE funded the following:

- places for teachers, including the Chair of SACRE, Kevin Ryan, a member of SACRE, Marilyn Larkin and the adviser to attend the excellent National Conference, held by NATRE, in January 2016.
- other CPD opportunities through the RE networks, described above, aimed at supporting student and pupil achievement in the borough's schools.
- the "Respect for All" RE Pupil and Teacher RE conference led by RE Today which was held at Leigh Road Baptist Church which proved to be a very successful choice as a venue.

6.2 ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP of SACRE

It is pleasing to report that some historical membership issues have been successfully resolved during the year and members' attendance at SACRE meetings was again consistent and supportive. SACRE was pleased to welcome new members at the beginning of the year.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSTITUTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF SOUTHEND SACRE FOR 2015-16