

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 19th OCTOBER, 2021 AT 4.30 PM

VENUE: SUNDERLAND COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, BURDON ROAD

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor Dodds
Councillor Farthing
Councillor McKeith
Councillor Samuels
Councillor P. Smith

Christian and Other Denominations

Andrew Barron
Matt Moore

Church of England

Caroline Weir
Stuart Bain

Co-opted

Valerie Blackett

In Attendance

Cathryn Forbes, Specialist Officer
Paul Wood, Principal Governance Services Officer

As the meeting was inquorate, the following discussions could not be viewed as having been approved and therefore, could not be acted upon until approved at a future quorate meeting.

SAC150 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Natalie Fountain, Jo McShane, Chris May, Richard Cullen and Sara Gummerson.

SAC 151 Election of a Chairman and Vice Chairman

As the meeting was inquorate this item was deferred to the next meeting of the Council.

At this juncture, the current Chairman, Councillor Farthing wished to advise the Council that this was to be Stuart Bain's last meeting as he was retiring and she wished to pay tribute to Mr Bain for his work and contribution to the meetings over the years.

SAC152 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 23rd March, 2021

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2021 were a true record subject to the following amendments:-

Page 3 Paragraph 4 – Under R.E. Training – Mrs Forbes updated the Group over what had taken place over the year in delivering the Primary PHSCE and RE.

Page 4 Paragraph 2 – Hetton Lyons not Heton Lyons school.

SAC 153 Matters Arising

Mrs Forbes referred to a Collective Worship – Review of Agreed Syllabus and advised that there would need to be an item on a future agenda concerning this.

The Chairman informed the committee that NASACRE had launched a handbook which she had found very useful and she would share this link for those that were interested.

SAC154 New Agreed Syllabus Launch

Mrs Forbes updated the group on the progress of the preparations for the new Agreed Syllabus Launch day due to take place on Wednesday 3rd November 2021. There had currently been 69 schools registered to attend the launch, 7 Secondaries (even though these were Academies) and 62 Primary Schools, which was very pleasing to see such interest. However, due to the requirement to meet Health and Safety around Covid measures, it may be required to move the location of the launch day from the Bunny Hill Centre and discussions were being had with the Clarion Hotel in Boldon as a possible larger venue depending on finalised numbers.

Mrs Forbes advised that all SACRE members were invited to attend and would be a good show of support if they could. All Members were requested to contact Paul Wood in the first instance of their intent to attend and he would pass details onto the relevant Officers.

The Chairman commented that it was amazing to get such a response from the schools as we had struggled in the past and she wished to congratulate Mrs Forbes for her work on this.

The Chairman also commented that unfortunately she had a prior engagement on the launch day and she would have liked to attend but encouraged anyone who wished to attend to please do so.

SAC155 Annual Report

Mrs Forbes advised that NASACRE was delivering various training programmes this year, one of which was on Annual Reports. The Annual Report was a statutory requirement, but one which had not historically been enforced. However it appeared a rethink on this had been given lately and an updated format had been provided.

Mrs Forbes advised that the format and presentation was on the NASACRE website if Members wished to look at this. The Annual Report was due in December/January but other SACRE's had raised the issue that this didn't fit in with the diaired meetings/term time format. They were going back to the DfE to say that this was not the best time to publish Annual Reports but those dates still stood at present.

Mrs Forbes requested that Members look at the website and send her any thoughts on this so she could start collating the report. It was also possible that a SACRE meeting could be convened in December to discuss this, should the possibility of holding the meetings virtually/remotely be confirmed to facilitate a quorum.

The Chairman requested that Mr Wood circulate the NASACRE website login details for Members once again as the site was well worth visiting for the training elements.

The Chairman also commented that the Self Evaluation and Action Plan would also given the Council a framework/something to work to.

It was AGREED to note the update

SAC156 Faith & Belief Forum

Mrs Forbes advised of the Faith & Belief Form which had been funded by Colin St Gabriel, the open University and King's College London to look at R. E and World Views.

A survey had been circulated and this was a big shift forward on different belief systems with every world view considered and was much more accessible for people.

Mrs Forbes commented that the launch had been very interesting and gave the opportunity to view what other SACRE's were doing around Collective Worship. Mrs Forbes advised that the Annual Conference in May would be also be a useful event to find out from other SACRE's and urged Members to complete the survey if they could.

The Chairman requested that Mr Wood recirculate the survey.

Ms Blackett commented that she had enjoyed the zoom meeting much more than she had expected and had found the subject of building understanding and what to share very interesting

It was AGREED to note the update

SAC157 NASACRE Briefing & Training

Mrs Forbes updated the group on the latest NASCARE Briefing and Training and advised that this and all presentations were on the NASACRE website.

With regards to the National Conference, this would be taking place on the 23rd May in Birmingham with the Theme of Ambitious SACRE's so if Members wished to attend this, to let us know as it was worth it for the workshops and the opportunity to network.

Mrs Forbes raised the issue of online meetings and the positive effect on attendances during lockdown. It had been suggested as part of the NASACRE briefing that despite the SACRE having Councillors as part of the Membership, it was independent of the Local Authority therefore should not be bound by its rules around having to carry out the meetings in person.

It was requested that Mr Wood liaise with Legal to enquire if it would be possible to revert back to remote meetings to allow greater attendance and help in achieving a quorum for future meetings.

In relation to training programmes on the NASACRE website, Mrs Forbes informed the group that some of these did include a fee but advised that if Members let Mr Wood know in the first instance, he could pass on Members request to enrol on a particular training course and SACRE may be able to fund this out of it's budget.

Ms Weir wished to thank Mrs Forbes for all her work and referred to the issue raised of the national recommendation that an LA should allocate at least 2% of the CSSB to SACRE in order that SACRE can carry out their statutory duties. Ms Weir queried what SACRE could do to support and help the Council get this 2% funding formula to be applied.

Mrs Forbes advised that Mr Cullen would have been best placed to comment on this as he held the budget for SACRE but unfortunately could not be at this meeting.

The Chairman commented that she was to attend a Schools Forum meeting this week where they were looking at funding and the direct schools grant so she would pose this question there also.

Mr Bain commented that it was not unreasonable to ask for a breakdown of what the SACRE's current £12,000 budget was spent on and in order to ask for more we needed to have ambition and a clear need of what it was required for.

Mrs Forbes commented that the opportunity of providing bursaries to schools had been pursued but there had been difficulty in attracting applicants.

Ms Weir agreed that it was up to SACRE to provide an ambitious Development Plan as it was an exciting time for Sunderland with the soon to be launched new syllabus that could help us ride a wave and get more people signed up to the Council.

The Chairman requested that Mr Wood ask Mr Cullen to provide details of how the £12,000 budget had been spent historically.

The Chairman also commented that she hoped the new members had enjoyed the meeting and that it was an exciting time for Sunderland and the new agreed syllabus which was an opportunity for children to discuss things going on in the world and she hoped the launch was successful and provided a link to a good group of RE teachers.

Mrs Forbes commented that hopefully it would provide a connection with SACRE and teachers so that they could feed backwards and forwards. The Chairman commented that it was very important we received first hand feedback.

SCA158 Date and Time of the next meeting

Tuesday 22nd March, 2022 at 4.30pm

(Signed) Councillor L. Farthing,
Chairman