

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 20th JUNE, 2023 AT 4.30 PM

VENUE: BUNNY HILL CENTRE, HYLTON LANE, SUNDERLAND

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor Dodds
Councillor P. Smith

Christian and Other Denominations

Matt Moore
Tony Wortman
Elizabeth Wortman

Church of England

Amy Clarke
Caroline Weir

Teachers Association

Tracy Conway

In Attendance

Cathryn Forbes, Specialist Officer
Richard Cullen, Strategic Lead, School Improvement & Early Years
Paul Wood, Principal Governance Services Officer
Sara Gummerson, School Improvement Officer

SAC205 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Williams. Also apologies from David Whiting.

SAC206 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Clerk to the Council requested nominations for the role of Chair and Vice Chair respectively. Mrs Amy Clarke nominated Ms Caroline Weir for the role of Chair and this was seconded by Matt Moore. There being no further proposed nominees it was unanimously agreed that Ms Weir assume the role of Chair.

The Chair nominated Mrs Amy Clarke for the role of Vice-Chair and this was seconded by Mr Tony Wortman. There being no further proposed nominees it was unanimously agreed that Mrs Clarke assume the role of Vice - Chair.

SAC207 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 21st March, 2023

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2023 were a true record.

SAC 208 Matters Arising

Mr Wortman referred to Page 4 of the minutes and provided further details on the Srebrenica event. This would be taking place on Tuesday 11th July at 6.30pm at Sunderland Minster and had an extensive programme lined up with Choir/Violinist as well as a number of speakers. Mr Wortman advised that everyone was welcome to attend.

SAC209 SACRE Membership

The Assistant Director of Law & Governance submitted a report (copy attached) for Members of the Standing Advisory Council to review and approve the list of volunteers (listed in 3.1 of the report) onto its Membership.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

It was AGREED to approve the new volunteers listed in paragraph 3.1 of the report onto the Membership of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education.

SAC210 Review of SACRE Work September 2022 to now

Mrs Forbes addressed the Council advising that this was an opportunity to congratulate all who had taken part over the past year and to discuss what work had been done, what was achieved and to put this into the Annual Report. Items such as the Agreed Syllabus and the increase in Membership could be considered and Mrs Forbes enquired if there was anything else Members wished to raise.

Mr Wortman informed the Council of recent talks he had given at a number of schools, which had been well received and offered to provide further talks should any schools be interested.

The Chair suggested that an item be included on the RE Hub and that the training done on behalf of SACRE had been excellent. Mrs Forbes agreed, adding that RE Today training was worth highlighting and also that SACRE was now hopefully starting to be consistent in achieving a quorum now that we had welcomed new Members onto the Council.

Mrs Forbes added that a start had been made to look at a Development Plan (which was to be considered on this agenda) and two surveys had been carried out to obtain thoughts on meeting times/locations and also teachers' thoughts on the new syllabus.

Mrs Forbes commented that the Newsletters being circulated were informing of new events due to having links to the Interfaith Forum and such like so they were broadening their position further.

Mrs Forbes advised that she was happy to draft the Annual Report and bring this back to October's meeting for consideration.

Mr Cullen referred to the great amount of work Mrs Forbes had done and commented that this was most appreciated.

SAC211 Update on Development Plan

Mrs Forbes circulated the Sunderland SACRE Development Plan 2022-2025 along with the Sunderland SACRE SEF for Members' consideration advising that it covered to the period 2025 when the next agreed syllabus would be considered.

Mrs Forbes referred to discussions around Working Groups and the Plan looked to put details of who would lead and the timescales on these. It was discussed and agreed that Collective Worship was the main priority and that this needed a separate action plan and a working party to consider. Mrs Forbes added that if the Council accepted the documents these would be brought back in October for Members to give comment once they had time to fully consider its contents as it would always be updating as we progressed.

It was agreed that Mr Wood would circulate the Development Plan for Members that were not present at this meeting for their consideration.

Mr Wortman advised that he had visited the Youth Council and had been very impressed with the work that they were already doing and the presentation that they had provided. Mr Wortman suggested that they would be well worth inviting to this meeting and he would pass the contact details onto Officers.

The Chair thanked Mr Wortman for the details and commented that we would need to consider a specific reason and a clear objective in order to ask them to attend and to ensure that the Council made a good showing of Members so that their efforts were respected.

The Chair thanked Mrs Forbes for the amount of work and time given on this Plan and suggested that going forward it should not just be Officers and the Chair that populated this work and that it would be really great if all Members could be on board with this.

In response to the Chair's query over the surveys carried out and if there was a list of people that had indicated they were happy to be part of the suggested working groups, Mrs Forbes advised that the surveys had been anonymous but that most responders had said that they would be happy to be part of a working group if there was a clear direction/purpose to the groups.

The Chair commented that she was keen to keep this agenda on the move between the usual termly meetings and enquired about Members' thoughts on what the priority should be. It was agreed that Collective Worship was the biggest issue to address and expressions of interest were sought to form the working group on this. Mrs Clark and Ms Conway volunteered to be part of the group and it was agreed that all Members would be emailed by Mr Wood with the opportunity of joining.

Mr Wood advised of an upcoming training session provided by NASACRE for new Members and that he would email details to the Council. The Chair commented that she would like a standing item on the agenda for future meetings so people could discuss what NASACRE training they had been able to access.

Councillor P. Smith commented that people had many other functions and Boards that they attended which came with many training sessions so it may not be possible for some to partake in more sessions.

Mrs Clarke commented that those that could attend sessions however could only benefit the group in sharing their experiences.

The Chair clarified that she also had a full time job and other governor roles for example so it would just be a standing item to share any info/experiences and it was not expected that Members were mandated to do extra work/training.

SAC212 NASACRE Briefing

Mrs Forbes updated the group on the latest NASCARE Briefing and advised that there was little to report at this time and that new items would start to appear on the website imminently.

The Chair advised that she had attended the Annual Conference and would look to compile an update report for the next agenda.

SAC213 Newsletter – Call for Items

Mrs Forbes updated the Council on the RE Hubs which SACREs were able to sign up to and advised that details of this would be included in the Newsletter. Mr Wood was to email all Members with the links received from our RE Hub Lead.

It was also discussed and suggested that items on the Archbishops' Young Leader Awards, Spirited Arts Competition, RE Quality Mark and details of the Interfaith week along with the Srebrenica event be included in the newsletter.

SAC214 CPD Delivered for staff

Mrs Forbes updated the Council on recent training that had been provided and advised that these had been well attended. Ms Conway advised that she had found the thematic units session really useful in helping to plan and it would be good to see what came out of it at the end of the year.

Mrs Forbes commented that there had been lots of positivity around the curriculum and informed that the Chair was providing training on Understanding Christianity and Lat from RE Today was going to be providing further training at a number of sessions.

SCA215 Date and Time of the next meeting

The next meeting was to be held on Tuesday 17th October, 2022. Members discussed the benefits of both City Hall and Bunny Hill Centre as venues and it was the overall consensus that City Hall was the better suited venue as this was served better by public transport. Therefore it was:-

AGREED to hold future meetings at City Hall but the decision could be revisited in the future for those Members not in attendance.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting

(Signed) Caroline Weir,
Chair