

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 22ND MARCH, 2022 AT 4.30 PM

VENUE: SUNDERLAND COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL, PLATER WAY

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor Dodds
Councillor Farthing

Church of England

Caroline Weir

Co-opted

Valerie Blackett

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
Louise Ridings, Prospective Member – Teachers Association

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.

SAC159 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors McKeith, Samuels and P. Smith. Andrew Barron, Matt Moore and Jo McShane

SAC160 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 19th October, 2021

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2021 were a true record

SAC 161 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

SAC162 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 and to consider and approve the reappointment of those Members of SACRE whose Membership was due to expire (listed within 3.2 of the report).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

As the meeting was inquorate, the report could not be approved but general discussion was given to it and Ms Louise Ridings, one of the potential new Members, representing the Teachers Association was in attendance and was welcomed to SACRE.

Mrs Blackett proposed that as a Humanist that she could be moved to Category A and voting rights be given. Paul Wood advised that earlier legal advice given had confirmed that Humanists were to be considered as Co-opted Members but acknowledged that some time had passed since this advice was given and he would seek guidance if the situation had changed since.

Mrs Blackett advised that a number of Councils had since taken this route and she would forward on such instances.

Ms Weir queried what was being done in terms of networking to obtain new Members from other faiths. It was advised that efforts were continually made to obtain representation from the various faith groups from both the Chairman and the Clerk but unfortunately it continued to be the case that most requests were left unsuccessful and there did not appear to be a strong interest of people coming forward.

The report was noted and would be brought back to the next meeting for ratification.

SAC163 Proposal to Change the SACRE Constitution

The Assistant Director of Law & Governance submitted a report (copy attached) for Members of the Standing Advisory Council to discuss and approve the amendment of its Constitution in relation to Quorums and the minimum requirement of representatives needed in order to achieve a quorum.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

As the meeting was inquorate, the report could not be approved but general discussion was given to it.

Mrs Forbes queried if Members could send in written agreeance upon viewing papers for instances such as approval of the Annual Report etc, should they be unavailable to attend the meeting in person. Mr Wood advised that he would seek further clarification on this.

Ms Weir commented that she was not comfortable with the proposed change to the constitution and that it would not be applicable for the Agreed Syllabus Conference. Mrs Forbes confirmed that the change would not apply to the Agreed Syllabus Conference and that the wording of the Constitution may need to be tightened up to reflect this

With regards to achieving a quorum, discussion was had about the ability to have the meetings remotely over Microsoft Teams, and that this would aide with greater attendance. It was highlighted that other Councils were still holding meetings remotely after the removal of covid restrictions. It was agreed that Legal be contacted with the instances of this and further guidance to be sought.

The report was noted and would be brought back to the next meeting for deliberation.

SAC164 SACRE Annual Report

Mrs Forbes circulated the new SACRE Annual Report Framework that NASACRE were to conduct a national analysis of Annual Reports, along with a copy of the proposed Sunderland SACRE Annual Report for the Council's consideration before being submitted.

Consideration was given to the Annual Report and it was agreed that despite the meeting being inquorate, the Annual Report be submitted to NASACRE in order to meet the deadline and to acknowledge the time spent on pulling this together by Mrs Forbes.

It was AGREED to submit the Annual Report to NASACRE

SAC165 Work Programme

A copy of the new proposed work programme for future meetings was circulated with proposed standing agenda items and preparatory work included for discussion and any possible additions.

Ms Weir thanked Mrs Forbes for her efforts and commented that it was important the Chair and Vice Chair when appointed, meet to discuss the way forward outside of the meetings and that in terms of Action Plans it wasn't just for Mrs Forbes to do.

Mrs Forbes requested Members to review what had been done over the year and to think about possible content for the Newsletters.

Mrs Weir commented that the autumn agenda was quite heavy and suggested that the SACRE self-evaluation tool item be considered in the Summer term. Mrs Forbes agreed and advised that she would send the information out in time for the Summer meeting.

SAC166 NASACRE Briefing

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

The briefing covered - the new website, which the current password circulated was still valid for and the new details would be provided once they became available.

- Ambitious SACRE's Conference – there was an online option for this and if Members were interested to contact Mr Wood in the first instance so he could forward on to the relevant officer.

- Teaching School Hubs

-AREIAC Annual Conference – there was a charge for this and details were on the site

SAC167 Newsletter Items

Mrs Forbes requested consideration of any items for the next newsletter

Ms Blackett advised that she would forward on the link in relation to the Humanist website about teaching resources.

Suggestions were made with regards to the Arts Competitions and the Chairman also suggested that space be given advising that SACRE was looking for new Members.

SCA168 Any Other Business

Mrs Forbes updated the group on the Launch of the new Agreed Syllabus, subsequent training courses and upcoming opportunities, adding that they had received plenty of positive feedback.

Ms Ridings commented that the training had been very good, very professional and was quite inspiring to see so many people online.

Ms Ridings commented that she believed the launch worked better online and the information in the new syllabus was amazing.

The Chairman advised that the feedback from the school in which she was a governor of had been very exciting and she certainly picked up on the enthusiasm for the new syllabus. The Chairman also commented that she was pleased the response to it had been so positive when so much time had been given to consider the options.

Ms Weir thanked Mrs Forbes for her work on this and enquired if there was any SACRE budget available with regards to Networks and peer support. Mr Cullen advised that they had just appointed two colleagues and it was expected that in September they could see some form of provision.

Mrs Forbes also advised the group that she had been contacted by Aiden Gillespie at Northumbria University for input in relation to a new Masters Degree in Religious Education being formed. Mr Gillespie was due to come up with a programme.

SCA169 Date and Time of the next meeting

Dates and times to be confirmed at Annual Council

(Signed) Councillor L. Farthing,
Chairman