**Minutes of the Meeting of the Bath and North East Somerset Council**

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**Held at Bath Spa University**

**on Wednesday 16th October 2019, 7.00 – 9.00 pm**

**Attendance:**

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| **Committee A: Christian Denominations and other Religions** |
| Jane O'Hara  | Baha'i Community (Chair) | P |
| Mary Read | Catholic Community | P |
| Andrew Avison | Free Churches Group (Salvation Army) | P |
| Narada Das | Hindu Community - ISKCON | P |
| Iris Segall | Jewish Community | P |
| Imam Mohammed Gamal | Muslim Community | A |
| Gagan Deep Singh | Sikh Community | - |
| Tim Powell | Unitarian Community | - |
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| **Committee B: Church of England** |
| Tony Bradley |  | P |
| David Williams  | (Vice-Chair) | A |
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| **Committee C: Teachers’ Associations** |
| Kevin Burnett | National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) | P |
| Wendy Ilderton | Chew Valley Secondary School | - |
| Mary Patterson | Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) | P |
| Mark Quinn | Bath Spa University | P |
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| **Committee D: Local Authority** |
| Cllr Eleanor Jackson |  | A |
| Yukteshwar Kumar  | (Vice-Chair) | P |
|  |  |  |
| **In attendance** |
| Dave Francis | Clerk/Associate Adviser | P |
| Lindsey Thompson | National Education Union (NEU) | P |

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

| **Item** | **Notes and resolutions** | **Action** |
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|  | **Welcome to members (Agenda item 1)**JOH, in the Chair, welcomed members to the meeting, including Lindsey Thompson, attending for the National Education Union (NEU). Apologies were noted as listed above. |  |
|  | **Public Discussion and Members’ Declarations (Agenda items 2, 3)**No members of the public were present. No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made. |  |
|  | **Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2019 (Agenda items 4.1, 4.2)**KB asked about the Local Advisory Network (LAN) pilot project. DF said there was definitely going to be funding for this and he intended to put a bid in on behalf of Bath & North East Somerset when bids were open.The following amendments were requested:p.5 at the bottom - Change MP to MR.p.7 Change text to ‘Sharing the FUTURE in hope’ not ‘Faiths’.With these amendments the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.JOH proposed they be accepted, ND seconded, and then all approved. |  |
|  | **Membership and elections (Agenda item 5)**DF said that he had received a resignation letter from Kerry Huggins, the NASUWT representative. He had written to Kerry expressing regret that she had decided to leave, but thanking her very much for her contribution to the work of SACRE over the years. We have also received a resignation note for Rashad Azami. Imam Mohammed had also said that he could not really attend meetings owing to other commitments. Efforts were being made to recruit replacements. RA did indicate he is willing to remain a contact for any school visits etc. MQ knows the chaplain at UWE who may be prepared to join SACRE and he undertook to make contact.We then had elections for Chair and Vice-Chair, as they had reached the end of their three year term. JOH was proposed for Chair by YK and IS seconded. JOH was duly elected, unopposed, as Chair for the next three years. For Vice-Chair, JOH proposed ND. This was seconded by IS, and he was then elected, unopposed, for the next three years. We thanked the previous Vice-Chair, YK, for his service. The 2nd Vice-Chair’s post would be up for election at this time next year. In the meantime, DW would continue in post.Members then voted to recommend Lindsey Thompson (LT) as the new National Education Union (NEU) representative. DF reported that vacancies remained for representatives of Buddhist and Humanist communities, as well as one more member of the Church of England. All members were requested to consider any of their contacts who might fill these vacancies and pass on possible names to DF. DF also reported that he had written to Humanists UK about recruiting a new Humanist representative. DF undertook to check WI and TP’s attendance records as they had not contacted him about this evening’s meeting.JOH and DF noted that our LA officer, Tom Morrison, had taken up a position with the Bath & Wells MAT. SACRE wished him well and thanked him for his service and support for SACRE. DF said that another LA officer would be taking Tom’s place as the main contact with the School Improvement Service, but we were waiting to see who that would be. | All members MQ, DF |
|  | **SACRE Management: Finance Statement (Agenda item 6.1)**DF circulated the latest SACRE Finance Statement and noted the items of spending so far. He reported that the funded initiatives to support primary and secondary schools included his visits to schools and the Holocaust Education Trust training set for Wednesday 15th January. This would be organised jointly with Bath Spa University. So far he had visited two primary schools, Shoscombe and St Julian’s, and had further visits to Chandag Juniors and Norton Hill Secondary School in the pipeline. In response to TB’s query that academies shouldn’t get extra funding as they had already left local authority control, we noted that SACRE has a responsibility to monitor all schools and academies in the area but that no additional grants were being awarded to schools.DF said that the latest copies of the RE Today magazine along with a new publication on Assessment in RE were now in the Resources Centre at Saltford School and that JOH would deliver the latest curriculum booklet on ‘Jewish People’.JOH said she had visited the Centre and noted that some resources were probably in need of refreshment but we should not spend any more at the moment. IS added that resources on Judaism were in a reasonable condition. TB noted that Articles of Faith were ceasing to trade and that items were up for sale – DF had noted this in the bulletin to schools. | JOH, DF |
|  | **SACRE Management: Development Plan for 2019-20 (Agenda item 6.2)**DF proposed to use some of the contingency fund to support the preparation of a bid to NASACRE for a Westhill Award to fund a project to develop some materials for the classroom that explored different faith and belief community representatives’ ideas on some controversial issues such as climate change action and euthanasia; this would contribute to new Agreed Syllabus review by providing more material for making RE relate to ‘live issues’ in the world today. Deadline for bids for 2020-21 is 31st March 2020. DF will circulate the draft proposal.MR suggested developing lessons to do with Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and LGBT+ issues. MP suggested that LTLRE groups could prove useful in supporting such a project. KB noted the law coming in about RSE and this could support SACRE’s bid.DF noted that money was reserved for attendance at the South-West SACREs annual conference. This was likely to be on Monday 2nd March 2020. JOH suggested that ND attends and he agreed. DF asked that other members contact him if they would also like to attend.DF reported that the overall amount in the SACRE budget had been reduced by 13% in the recent cuts to LA budgets. This followed the 11% cut from the previous year. He noted that the Schools Minister had stated that he expected local authorities to fund SACREs adequately to perform their duties and that the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) was recommending that at least 2% of the Central Schools Service Block (CSSB) Grant should be allocated to SACRE. In Bath and North East Somerset this was calculated to be 1.4%. He noted that with Agreed Syllabus Review due in 2021 we would need additional funding in the next two to three years to manage a successful review and implementation of any new materials. He hoped that EJ and YK might be able to support this as appropriate in any forthcoming Council meetings. | EJ, YK, DF |
|  | **SACRE Management: introduction of Widening Inclusivity in Religious Education (WIRE) awards for B&NES schools (Agenda item 6.3)**IS explained that the Award was started in South Gloucestershire and she had worked with KB, MR, JOH and DF to adapt the document to fit our schools and requirements. There was a presentation at Dillington conference last year and permission was given for other SACREs to make use of the South Gloucestershire materials. The Bath & North East Somerset version has now gone out to schools. MP also advertised it through the LTLRE meeting. DF would also promote it at his meetings with schools. YK asked about deadlines and IS said the Award could be applied for within any school year, and there were no deadlines. She also noted that more work needed to be done to produce actual certificates for successful schools. MR asked if there was a way of finding out whether we were getting the message across. MP said there might be a need to clarify the difference between the WIRE Award and the REQM. KB wondered whether the WIRE Award could qualify towards the REQM or Research for RE. DF said we could make sure that schools know that the WIRE Award could contribute to the new REQM criteria.MR recommended a personal approach to teachers. JOH suggested that we all do this whenever we have the opportunity.YK wondered whether we could offer funds to support school visits, but DF reported that there were insufficient funds this year. KB wondered if there were aspects of the REQM that we could include in the criteria for the WIRE Award that were not so costly.  | All members JOH, IS, KB, MP, DF |
|  | **SACRE Management: Discussion: Proposal for SACRE to support implementation of Relationships and Sex Education (Agenda item 6.4)**JOH introduced a discussion on this proposal that appeared to have come from a question asked in Parliament by Stephen Timms. Did we want to ‘liaise with local communities’ concerning Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)? JOH was not sure at all how this would work. There had been issues with some parents from religious communities being unhappy with what was being taught in RSE. IS noted that a faith representative was not necessarily a representative of all perspectives in their faith community. LT understood that each school was responsible for what was taught, so we would have to deal with a lot of schools and individuals.[YK had to leave at this point.]MR said that she had been working on personal and sex relationships education in B&NES for many years and noted that there will be a statutory curriculum to be followed. IS noted that parents currently had a right to withdraw their children. MR said that there may be an issue in clarifying what is expected for some community groups. Governors and parents would have to sign up to what is being provided. She wondered if a new RE syllabus might include information on connections between RE and RSE.KB suggested that we could send a letter to Nick Gibb, the Schools Minister, asking for clarification about what and WHEN things should be taught. He thought that the current lack of guidance was not fair on schools: SACREs and everyone needed to know what was being proposed and what faith groups thought about it. He also noted that it was not just Muslim groups, who were concerned; there are also Christian groups who had expressed opposition to the teaching of some aspects of the proposed RSE programme.MR noted that a lot of upset had been caused through lack of understanding. KB noted that schools made decisions based on knowledge of their children and their families. The problem was individual sensitivities, but SACRE’s role might be to say what has to be done and then offering a safe space for people to comment and for us to pass their comments on.TB said we couldn’t support what we didn’t know: SACRE knows about RE, but it’s a big question as to whether we can support RSE at all. IF RSE is to be encouraged – who is training the teachers? It’s beyond SACRE. MQ wondered if it was really SACRE’s role to be involved in training in this area. JOH noted that we do have a possible way into religious communities, but we would need to be clear about what is being taught and when / to which age group, in order to have an informed conversation with any concerned parents. TB wondered whether we could put advice on our website in relation to RSE, but this appeared to go well beyond SACRE’s current remit. MP said we could not support implementation of RSE as it is a different subject from RE. DF suggested we could watch and be alert to what the communities whom we represent are saying and feed information back to SACRE for consideration.KB thought that Nick Gibb appeared to have understood that there was a religious dimension to this issue and was looking to see where support might be offered. | All members DF |
|  | **Agreed Syllabus: Developments for the new Agreed Syllabus and website (Agenda items 7.1, 7.2, 7.3)**Members were informed that the new guidance on teaching about Jihad had now been added to the SACRE website. Schools had been informed of its availability in the Associate Adviser’s recent bulletin.DF and MQ informed members about the forthcoming training being led by the Holocaust Education Trust (HET) taking place on 15th January 2020 at Bath Spa University. MQ had booked a room and SACRE members were welcome to attend.MQ said that students at Bath Spa were being invited to attend: RE (5), History (16) and Geography (12). He undertook to liaise with DF about the programme for the day.MR and MP wondered whether sixth form students might be encouraged to attend, but MQ thought this would involve another level of difficulty regarding CRB checks and additional health and safety and child protection responsibilities. LT said that over 18s might be permitted; some 18 year olds had taken part in preparation for and visits to Auschwitz, for example. DF undertook to send a reminder to schools about the training event but thought that it should be restricted to teachers for this year as this is how the event had already been advertised. He would also circulate details to SACRE members.Members then engaged in a discussion about planning for the next Agreed Syllabus Review, due in 2021. DF said that there were significant developments to take into account, especially in relation to the Understanding Christianity (UC) resource and the recommendations of the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) for a new national entitlement to Religion and Worldviews (R&Ws). MR noted that our current syllabus is good and includes local material and enquiry-based and flexible programmes. TB agreed and thought we could build upon it. MP said that UC was being used in schools and we should take account of it. KB noted that it was a resource not a syllabus and DF agreed that schools should be helped to make connections from the Agreed Syllabus rather than the other way round.MR noted the importance of ensuring that pupils knew about the diversity within Christianity, which is perhaps not adequately covered in UC. TB wondered if the sum set aside for launch events was sufficient and that perhaps more could be requested. MP said that it would be good for the local LTLRE group to be involved and TB said that he would also be interested in being a member of any working group. SACRE approved DF’s schedule in principle. | DF, MQ  |
|  | **Standards in RE and collective worship (Agenda item 8.1, 8.2)**DF informed members that guidance for improving school website information on RE, collective worship and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development had now been added to the SACRE website. Schools had been informed of its availability in the Associate Adviser’s recent bulletin.Members had been provided with a copy of the draft Annual Report, which would be completed once the analysis of examination results had been done. KB noted that we could add information from SIAMS reports and other LA information to the report. DF said that he would ask DW if there was any information that could be included from the perspective of the Diocese of Bath & Wells. When the Report was complete it would be sent to members for approval. | All membersDF, DW |
|  | **Regional and local developments: Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) (Agenda item 9.1) and the SACRE website (Agenda item 9.2)**MP noted that there had been an LTLRE hub meeting in September. Around 6 came last time. Pat Warmsley from Humanists UK gave a presentation. MR said that the steering group had got finance for two more years and could run another conference next year. Training of hub leaders would also continue.MP also noted that information about the NATRE Primary 1000 project had been added to DF’s schools bulletin and that the SACRE website had been updated with new guidance as already mentioned in this meeting. | All members MR, DF |
|  | **Regional and local developments: SACRE Resource Centre (Agenda item 9.3)**JOH said that this item had already been pretty much covered in the meeting already. |  |
|  | **Regional and local developments: Updates from the Diocese of Bath and Wells (Agenda item 9.4)**As DW was not present, there was no update for this item. | DW |
|  | **Regional and local developments: Updates from the Bath Interfaith Group (Agenda item 9.5)**JOH reported on the ’75 Memorial Flames’ idea to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD). Schools could use this as an activity in the classroom then send their designs to the Equality Team who could then make a display for the actual HMD event. Deadline for submissions is 20th December 2019. MP said she could include information about this in her next email to LTLRE group. The HMD commemoration will take place on 27th January 2020 at 5.30 pm, in the Alkmaar Room, Guildhall, Bath. JOH reminded members of the Sukkot Party being held at Ammerdown on 20th October, and that there was a Diwali Party at Beechen Cliff school on 19th October. She added that on 30th October there would be a celebration to commemorate 200 years since the birth of the Báb, the Herald of the Bahá’i Faith.She also reported that during Interfaith Week (10th - 17th November) on the 12th November, there would be an event where five different Hindus would be talking about their faith from different perspectives.Details of these events to be circulated to all SACRE members by DF. | DF, JOH |
|  | **National developments: (Agenda items 10.1, 10.2)**The latest NASACRE briefing had been circulated with the papers before the meeting. | All members  |
|  | **Date and Venue for Next Meetings (Agenda item 11)**The next meetings would be held at Bath Spa University on Wednesday 5th Feb, Thursday 2nd July and Wednesday 14th October 2020. | All membersDF  |
|  | **Other Business (Agenda item 12)**There was no other business. |  |