

WALSALL COUNCIL

*STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION*

MONDAY 10 JULY 2006

REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

1.0 **Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to consider amendments to the Constitution in relation to representation on the Council.

2.0 **Recommendation**

2.1 That Council consider whether the membership of SACRE is representative of the faiths within the Borough and consider whether any amendments to the Constitution is required.

3.0 **Financial Implications**

3.1 Within budget - N/A.

4.0 **Legal Implications**

4.1 Legal Services consulted - No.

The Local Authority has a duty to establish SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference in accordance with the Education Reform Act, 1988.

5.0 **Report Detail**

5.1 Legislation and guidance governing SACRE identifies Group A as:-

Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations, the number of whose representatives shall, 'so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the Committee's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area'.

Constitution is attached as Appendix A.

CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

Background Papers: None

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GE/DC
June, 2006

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

CONSTITUTION

(i) Terms of Reference

1. “To advise the Authority upon such matters connected with Religious Education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the Authority may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit...” (Education Reform Act 11.1a).
2. In particular the advice must cover “methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers” (Education Reform Act 11.2).
3. “...In each year to publish a report as outlined in (Education Reform Act 11.10).”
4. When appropriate to require the Authority (on a vote of three groups representing the Church of England, other faiths, and Teachers’ Associations) to review the agreed syllabus by convening a statutory conference for this purpose (Education Reform Act 11.7 and 11.8).
5. In accordance with Education Reform Act Section 12, on receipt of an application, to make a determination about whether the requirement for mainly Christian collective worship is appropriate in that county school.
6. To receive reports on any complaints made under the Authority’s complaints procedure (Education Reform Act Section 23) which relate to worship or Religious Education and to provide advice about such cases to the Authority and Governing Bodies.
7. To draw up and periodically review guidelines for the regulation of its business.

(ii) Membership

- (a) L.E.A. representation - 7 Members – to be politically balanced; the representatives to be appointed by Council;
- (b) Teacher representation - 6 Members to be nominated by the N.U.T., N.A.S.U.W.T., A.T.L., N.A.H.T., S.H.A. and P.A.T.;
- (c) Church of England representation - 5 Members nominated by the Lichfield Diocesan Education Council;

- (d) Christian and other religious faiths - 20 Members - 8 by the Walsall Council of Churches: 2 by the Evangelical Churches Group and 10 by the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu Groups.

(iii) Quorum

The quorum for meetings will be one quarter of the voting members.

(iv) Terms of Office and Removal from Office

Appointments shall be for a period of four years commencing 1st June 1989.

The Authority may remove Members if, in its opinion, they cease to be representative of the Bodies to which they were appointed.

A Member may resign at any time.

Where a Member, without consent, has failed to attend S.A.C.R.E. meetings for a continuous period of twelve months, S.A.C.R.E. may recommend to the Authority the removal of that Member.

Where a representative resigns or is removed, the Authority will take immediate steps to seek a replacement.

(v) Voting

In the interests of achieving consensus, the S.A.C.R.E. should only take a vote of the four groups in order to make a formal record of the decision or if there are opposing views.

Where the Council is required to reach a decision each representative group shall have a single vote.

In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

The representative groups other than that consisting of persons appointed to represent the Authority, may at any time require the Authority to set up a review of an Agreed Syllabus for the time being adopted by the Authority. Each group entitled to vote (i.e. excluding the group representing the Authority) shall have one vote.

(vi) Chairmanship

The Chairman/Vice-Chairman will be elected by S.A.C.R.E. at its first meeting in the Municipal Year.

(vii) Proceedings

Except where stated otherwise, the proceedings of S.A.C.R.E., or any particular category of any representative Members or any Group or Working Party, will be regulated by the Group concerned.

At the Annual meeting, each Group shall elect a spokesperson who shall also act as Chair of the Group if necessary. The spokesperson must allow all Members of the Group to express an opinion and to vote. A record of this vote shall be reported to the full meeting but the single vote of the group must be cast in favour of the simple majority of the group. In the case of a tied vote the whole group vote must be presented as an abstention.

(viii) Sub-Groups and Working Parties

S.A.C.R.E. may appoint Members to Working Parties which may include non-members with expertise to contribute. The terms of reference of a Working Party will involve exploratory work rather than decision making. The composition of a Working Party will normally include members from all groups.

There shall be a permanent sub-group of S.A.C.R.E. able to give immediate guidance to officers (especially the Religious Education Adviser) and to deal with urgent business between meetings. This sub-group shall consist of the Chairperson and the spokesperson of each of the three groups other than the one to which the Chairperson belongs. Members may meet or consult informally by letter or telephone.

(xi) Observers

In addition to an Administrative Officer or Officers appointed by the Authority to clerk meetings, there may be in attendance a Humanities Inspector, an appropriate Advisory Teacher for Religious Education or other persons on the staff of the Director of Education, each of whom may speak but not vote.

It will be open to S.A.C.R.E. to invite other persons of expertise or other interests to attend on an occasional basis. Such persons shall have power to speak but not to vote.

(x) Place and Time of Meetings

Unless decided otherwise meetings shall take place in the Council House and will commence at 6.00 p.m.

(xi) Frequency of Meetings

S.A.C.R.E. shall hold at least two meetings each year. The meeting held in the Autumn term shall agree an annual report covering the previous school year which will be submitted to the Cabinet and then published.

(xii) Constitutional Change

The Authority may alter this constitution subject to the terms of the national legislation at any time but will usually consult S.A.C.R.E. before doing so.

(xiii) Validity of Proceedings

The validity of proceedings of the Council or of the Members of the Council of any particular category shall not be affected:-

- (a) By a vacancy in the office of any Member of the Council;
- (b) On the ground that a Member of the Council appointed to represent any denomination or associations does not at the time of the proceedings represent the denomination or associations in question.

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**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Mander Hall,
Hamilton House, London, on Thursday 4th May 2006 (unconfirmed)**

1 Present

Barking & Dagenham (Marjorie Hawes); Barnet (Mrs Anna Sallnow); Barnsley (John Feasby, Zena Connolly); Bexley (Mrs Videya Misra); Birmingham (Yann Lovelock, Raymond Rowe); Bolton (Elizabeth Collins); Bracknell Forest (David Fawcett, Nasir Sabir); Bradford (Joyce Miller); Brent LB (Mr Josh Kutchinsky); Brighton & Hove (Mrs Christine Fitton); Bristol (Mrs Enid Western, Mrs Sue Thompson); Buckinghamshire (Mr Bill Moore, Mr Richard Winston); Calderdale (Mrs Irene Harford); Cambridgeshire (Mrs Cathy Michell); Cheshire (Councillor Shirley Harris; Rev Jane Brooke); Cornwall (Mr Rick Lee, Mrs Bonnie Rockley); Coventry (Richard Green); Cumbria (Mr Richard Cox); Devon (Tricia Martin, Jeannette Gill, Graham Langtree, Martin Holst); Doncaster (Mrs Barbara Upton, Mrs Dorothy Atkins); Dorset (Dave Symmons); Dudley (Mr Dilwyn Hunt, Mrs Junaid Bhatti, Mr Ghulam Rasool); East Sussex (Charlotte Gravestock); Enfield (Rachel Bowerman); Hackney (Mr Karl D'Cruz); Hampshire (Clive Erricker, Judith Lowndes); Haringey (Jenny Stonhold); Herefordshire (Bridget Knight); Harrow LB (Mrs Gan-Kotwal, Mrs M Abbott); Hounslow (Steve Line); Isle of Wight (Mrs Louise Southwell); Kent (Miss Tanya Kelvie, Mr Rupert Bristow); Kingston-upon-Hull (Marilyn Cowling); Kingston-upon-Thames (Mr Bob Shaw); Lambeth (Christabel McLean); Lancashire (Mr Kelsang Pagpa, County Councillor Francis Williams); Leeds (Liz Guild); Leicester City (Fiona Moss); Lewisham (Denise Chaplin, Cathy Davie); Liverpool (Dot Bygroves); Manchester (Veronica Voiels); Medway (John Keast); Merton (Mr Saleem Sheikh); Newham (Steve Wilson); Norfolk (Shirley Buxton); North Lincolnshire (Marian Toyne); North Somerset (Sylvia Best); Oxfordshire (Sue Scott, Katherine Wedell); Peterborough (Councillor David Over); Plymouth (Ms T Griffiths); Rutland (Philip Davies); Sandwell (Mrs Christine Christie); Sefton (Peter Middleton); Shropshire (Mr Tristram Jenkins); Solihull (Phil Leivers, Betty Richmond); Somerset (Tracey Khodabandehloo, Mike Keogh, Robin Kanarek); Southampton (Eric Gower); South Gloucestershire (Derek Jay); St Helens (Patricia Anne Robinson); Stockton-on-Tees (Mrs M Fleming); Stoke-on-Trent (Philip Such); Sunderland (Colin Short); Sutton (David Crispin, Mr Leslie Bracken); Thurrock (Jack Misra); Trafford (Henry Guterman); Wakefield (Pat Kilbane); Walsall (Mrs M Gibbons, Rev A Bateman, Mr L Pathan, Rev Brian Powell); Warwickshire (Ross Caws); West Berkshire (Jo Fageant); Westminster (Peter Wood); Wirral (Canon Paul Robinson); Wolverhampton (Sehdev Bismal); York (Mick Phythian); Mrs Julie Grove.

Also in attendance: Dr Mark Chater (QCA)

Keynote Speaker: Mick Waters, Director Curriculum Division QCA

Apologies for absence:

Bristol Diocesan Board of Education (Catherine Coster); Hammersmith and Fulham (Eleanor Allen); Plymouth (Jonathon Marshall); Walsall (Janet Boden); Worcestershire (David Morphy and Sue Fitzjohn); Norwich (Marian Agombar); Barbara Wintersgill HMI and from executive members: Manjit Kaur; Michael Metcalf and Geoff Teece.

2 Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 19th April 2005

Mr Josh Kutchinsky (Brent) pointed out that he had attended and, with this one correction, it was agreed that these were a true record:

Proposed: Sue Scott (Oxfordshire)

Seconded: Shirley Harris (Cheshire)

3 Matters arising on the minutes

There were none that were not covered in the main agenda.

4 Chair's report

Jane Brooke's report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, was accepted. There were no questions. JB drew attention to the liaison service offered by the NASACRE executive through Robin Kanarek. Irene Harford expressed the appreciation of Calderdale SACRE for the support RK had given.

5 Treasurer's report

In the absence of the treasurer, his report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, was accepted and commended by its proposer for its clarity.

Proposed: Colin Short (Sunderland)

Seconded: Liz Guild (Leeds)

SACRE monitoring

The secretary explained the background to a proposal to support SACRE monitoring. Since the new inspection arrangements, SACREs have to find alternative sources of evidence to support their monitoring and many SACREs have recommended use of the self-evaluation in RE toolkit to their schools. There is now a draft questionnaire based on the self-evaluation schedule that could be used to collect data about RE from schools. A proposal from Culham, shared with delegates at the December forum in Bristol, offers an analysis of schools' responses. Individual SACREs would receive a confidential analysis of their schools' responses and a summary analysis would be available to NASACRE, but it was estimated that it would cost £5000 per annum to administer. Since the forum, NASACRE had been trying to survey SACRE reactions in order to ascertain if the project would be viable and views expressed to date have been mixed. This issue would be on the agenda for buzz groups later and the executive would welcome feedback.

It is possible this activity might be included in the plans for a National RE Strategy (NRES), a key aspect of which is capacity building for SACREs. The executive of NASACRE is already planning to meet with John Keast, vice chair of the RE Council, to discuss planning for the NRES.

A number of points were made:

- Tanya Kelvie (Kent) commented on the importance of raising the profile of SACRE; the National Framework (NFRE) has gone down well and a national strategy would be good for RE;
- Irene Halford (Calderdale) expressed concerns that this might be presented as a requirement when it is not and raised the issue of the quality of the questionnaire;
- Bill Moore (Buckinghamshire) asked about timescale;
- John Keast (Medway) emphasised the importance of SACREs monitoring what is happening with their agreed syllabuses in schools and the data from schools would help a SACRE to support its schools. He also underlined that the letter to REC from the DfES specified support for the work of SACREs, so there is no agenda to disenfranchise local determination;
- Jane Brooke (Cheshire) reported that the subject leader in each school being inspected routinely sends the dept's SEF to SACRE;
- Steve Wilson (Newham) asked if this was the same as the Ofsted/QCA self-evaluation document for SACREs;
- Mick Phythian (York) said SACRE had tried to obtain information from schools, but without success and the backing of a national strategy might help;
- Josh Kutchinsky (Brent) highlighted the crucial need for a good specialist RE adviser and talked about building partnerships with schools, sharing with the meeting materials produced by his SACRE which he was happy to share on the NASACRE website.

7 Elections

Elections were held for three places on the executive and Karl d'Cruz, Robin Kanarek and Debbie Tibbey were duly elected. The other candidates were thanked for allowing their names to go forward.

8 Young People's Faith Forum

Tristram Jenkins spoke of the privilege of overseeing the YPFF projects with Robin Kanarek. He welcomed updates from two of the successful 2005/06 bids: Bristol and Kingston-upon-Hull with East Riding.

RK introduced the first speaker, Enid Weston, Chair of Bristol SACRE, who began by saying how delighted they were to receive the award. Their project was to help improve cultural and racial harmony among young people, particularly Y10 students in five inner city schools where the work was done. They had support from the LA Equalities Unit. A consultant was appointed, a questionnaire designed and sent to all students and responses analysed. Acting on the issues raised from the survey, a conference was held on 'Unity and Diversity', to which speakers from faith communities contributed and five olive trees were ceremoniously planted. The day ended with presentations from the students and a drumming workshop. Difficulties with school closures as a result of the

UNISON day of action meant one school had to withdraw, but all the others attended and it had been a great success and the pupils resolved to make it a regular event. RK thanked EW and added her own congratulations on a day she had also greatly enjoyed.

TJ introduced Marilyn Cowling, reporting on behalf of Kingston-upon-Hull with East Riding SACREs. She talked about the 'Faith to Faith' project and showed a video presentation made by students who had enthusiastically chosen a focus on racism with a strapline: 'Stamp it out!' With a rap commentary written by a student, the images were shot in two local places of worship: a Synagogue and a Buddhist Centre. The video finished with the question: 'Where shall we meet next time?'

TJ thanked MC and commended the work of both projects. He also invited update reports from the other successful SACREs: Hounslow, Portsmouth and Solihull.

All the SACREs submitting 2006/07 bids were thanked for their hard work; twenty bids had been received and the panel had met on 27th April to make the decision, which was difficult because of the quality of the bids. The five successful bids were announced: Blackburn with Darwen, Kirklees, Newham, Surrey and Tameside. These SACREs were warmly congratulated and everyone was thanked for their creative energies.

9 News From QCA

Dr Mark Chater, newly appointed RE Consultant at QCA was welcomed to the meeting. He introduced himself and spoke about his, and QCA's, priorities for RE. At present, the KS3 curriculum is being reviewed and MC is determined to keep RE in the process, although little will change for the subject because of the recent development of the non-statutory NFRE; there will, however, be an addition in the form of 'big ideas' for RE. RE's contribution to the 14-19 review, including its contribution to vocational courses and the re-evaluation of 'A' level criteria, is on the agenda. MC is committed to supporting SACREs and is looking into the machinery for communicating with them; he is interested in the impact of the non-statutory NFRE and in self-evaluation for SACREs; he issued a plea for the submission of annual reports. The other issues to which he made reference included spirituality across the curriculum; QCA's discussion forum on line; faith schools and the inclusion and respect agenda and training and recruitment of RE teachers. He invited contact from SACRE members and gave the meeting his email address: chaterm@qca.org.uk

10 OfSTED subject inspections

Barbara Wintersgill HMI was unable to attend the meeting, but sent a report on subject inspections in RE. These are conducted annually in 30 primary and 30 secondary schools. Each year, the inspections have a specific focus, most recently the effective use of discussion to promote learning; the analysis of those findings are still being analysed. The outcomes of the previous focus on boys' achievement were that boys generally enjoy RE but do not achieve as well as girls; they underachieve when teaching is didactic, preferring active, varied tasks, discussion and resources with a strong visual emphasis; like girls, they dislike worksheets and note-taking but are less tolerant than girls.

Later this year, Ofsted will publish a long report on RE, entitled *RE for the 21st Century*. This will consider priorities for the subject in the light of evidence from Ofsted. In

preparation for this, inspections will focus on the impact of the non-statutory NFRE and schools in Lancashire, North East Lincolnshire, Bournemouth, Dorset, Southwark and Cornwall will be visited.

Following the tabling of this report, Rick Lee, Cornwall SACRE and a member of the NASACRE executive, reported to the meeting on his experience of undergoing an Ofsted subject inspection in his school. He spoke of the importance of preparation, especially given the short notice of the visit. The intensive, one day's visit included scrutiny of subject documentation and pupils' work, observation of two lessons, interviews with pupils and with the Head of RE. The findings, which RL outlined for the meeting, were given orally at the end of the day and in writing ten days later. RL was thanked for his account which was felt to be very valuable to SACRE members seeking to support their schools in similar circumstances.

11 AOB

There was one item, a concern raised by Francis Williams, Vice Chair of Lancashire SACRE, about the conscience clause felt by his members to be an anachronism. Because of time constraints, this item was added to the list of questions for the next part of the meeting.

12 Discussion

Delegates moved into ten small groups for informal discussion about the proposal for SACRE monitoring and other issues. These were analysed and reported separately.

13 Keynote Address

The AGM keynote address: *Changes to the curriculum and the place of RE*, was given by Mick Waters, Director Curriculum Division at QCA. It was an excellent presentation, full of warmth and humour, and offering a new and welcome approach to curriculum design. The address was very well received and much appreciated.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm

Signed as a true record.....

Date.....