

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
Cambridgeshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)  
at Cambridge Professional Development Centre on  
Thursday 2 February 2017, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm**

**Present:** Aga Cahn, Amanda Fitton (SACRE Adviser), Cathy Michell, Daniel Bennett, Dennis Johnson, Ged McHale, Jag Srai, Julia Ewans, Julia Whittle (on behalf of Becky Ford), Kerri McCourty (Clerk), Rajnikant Shah, Rebecca Smith, Shahla Suleiman, Dr Shirley Hall, Tony Orgee (Chair) and Virginia Barnes

**Apologies:** Revd Debbie Noonan, Fr Dragos Herescu, Cllr Ed Cearns, Janet Scott, Liz Bassett, Moira Middleton, Raymond Mitchell and Tony Reynolds

**Absent:** Cllr Paul Sales

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**TO**

This meeting was quorate.

Due to traffic conditions, the meeting started at 13:40 to allow more time for members to arrive. Cllr Tony Orgee (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed Ged McHale, Dennis Johnson, Jag Srai who are all now members of the committee following satisfactory references. Tony Orgee also welcomed Julia Whittle (who was representing Becky Ford) to the meeting.

**2. Apologies**

**Clerk**

The SACRE Clerk informed those present that apologies had been received from Revd Debbie Noonan, Fr Dragos Herescu, Cllr Ed Cearns, Janet Scott, Liz Bassett, Moira Middleton, Raymond Mitchell and Tony Reynolds.

All apologies were read out and accepted by the committee.

**3. Minutes of 20 October 2016 and matters arising not elsewhere on agenda**

**Chair**

SACRE members checked the minutes of the last meeting for accuracy.

The minutes were subsequently signed by Cllr Tony Orgee (Chair).

In regard to matters arising, there were a few items brought to the committee's attention:

Understanding Christianity

Shirley Hall updated members that schools were still booking onto the course. There are currently 69 booked to attend and are mainly church schools with only 10 being

non-church schools. Shirley is running the course in groups of around 20. The first course was completed 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017.

#### Faith Direct Event

Amanda Fitton thanked Dennis Johnson and other members of SACRE for their work on the event and informed the committee that ultimately the event was cancelled. Amanda explained to the committee that the schools who cancelled last minute had been contacted and followed up as to reasons why.

#### Questionnaire for Agreed Syllabus

In regard to matters arising Amanda has not constructed a questionnaire for teachers regarding features of the Agreed Syllabus due to time constraints but will construct the questionnaire when possible.

**Action:** Amanda Fitton to construct questionnaire on the Agreed Syllabus.

**AF**

#### Position of SACRE

In regard to the Clerk seeking clarification from the DfE on the government's position on the future of SACREs, the Clerk was advised by Helen Manley (Senior Adviser: Curriculum, Teaching and Leadership) not to write to the DfE.

Julia Ewans met the Chair of the RE Council who proposed that the role of SACREs would be alive and around for quite a while.

### **4. Correspondence**

**KM**

The SACRE Clerk informed the committee that there had been some correspondence since the last meeting:

#### Fr Dragos Herescu resignation

The SACRE Clerk informed members that she had received a letter of resignation from Fr Dragos who represented the Orthodox community. Fr Dragos explained in his email that increased work commitments meant that he could not properly dedicate time to SACRE.

**Action:** Clerk to send Fr Dragos a 'Thank you' letter on behalf of SACRE.

**KM**

#### Cllr Ed Cearns

The SACRE Clerk had received an email from Ed's assistant explaining that Ed was undergoing a serious operation and would therefore be unavailable to attend the SACRE meeting. The SACRE Clerk circulated a 'Get Well Soon' card for members to sign.

**Action:** Clerk to send 'Get Well Soon' card to Ed Cearns.

**KM**

### 2017 Accord Inclusivity Award

In December 2016 the SACRE Clerk applied for the 2017 Accord Inclusivity Award on behalf of Cambridgeshire SACRE. Although Cambridgeshire SACRE were unsuccessful in their application, the judges for the award drew praise in particular for:

- the emphasis on interfaith work at Key Stage 3 in the syllabus
- the Collective Worship guidance's recommendation on marking non-Christian festivals
- the cross-Agreed Syllabus Conference working, and the pooling of resources with neighbouring SACREs
- the number of academies still following the syllabus
- the guidance for schools on LGBTQ issues

It was held that Cambridgeshire SACRE was a serious contender for the award but just fell short.

### Abbey College Gold RE Quality Mark Award

It was brought to the Adviser's attention that a secondary academy in Cambridgeshire had been awarded the Gold RE Quality Mark Award. On behalf of Cambridgeshire SACRE, the Clerk had sent a 'Congratulations' letter to both the Headteacher and the RE Coordinator in January 2017.

## **5. Agreed Syllabus Conference**

**AF/JE**

In December 2016, members from Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Northamptonshire SACRE convened as the Agreed Syllabus Conference. It is a joint Agreed Syllabus Conference that has developed innovative ways of working to reduce cost and increase efficiency.

### **5.1 Minutes from the ASC meeting on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

The minutes from the first ASC meeting were included in the members' meeting packs and circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

During the meeting Julia Ewans from Cambridgeshire SACRE was elected as Chair.

Examples of good Agreed Syllabus were considered at the meeting to get a scope for how the joint Agreed Syllabus should be developed.

Amanda Fitton still needs to get figures of makeup of religions in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Northamptonshire.

**Action:** Amanda Fitton to find out composition of religions in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Northamptonshire.

**AF**

## 5.2 ASC report from the Chair

Julia Ewans (Chair of the ASC) compiled a document reporting the position of Cambridgeshire SACRE and the revision of the Agreed Syllabus. In her report, Julia summarised the main concerns Cambridgeshire SACRE had when joining with Peterborough and Northamptonshire for a joint ASC and how these concerns were discussed at the extraordinary SACRE meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

Julia and Amanda then discussed that members from Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Northamptonshire met on 5<sup>th</sup> December where they convened as the joint ASC.

Two working parties were set up, one considering the assessment guidelines for the revised Agreed Syllabus and the other to develop the framework of the Agreed Syllabus. The framework working party are due to meet on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

Amanda is organising the assessment working party comprised of primary and secondary teachers. The assessment will bring together ideas of good practice and then consider the curriculum.

The joint ASC means that new ways of working have to be put in place such as google docs and skype meetings.

Schools have volunteered from Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Northamptonshire who are willing to trial the new Agreed Syllabus.

It was discussed that the new syllabus needed to be flexible and not prescriptive but Aga Cahn noted that not all RE teachers have RE speciality knowledge and may not feel comfortable with such a flexible curriculum. Therefore it is important to those working on the revised Agreed Syllabus to ensure that support is provided to all teachers.

The new thematic approach to the syllabus will compare the religions. Jag Srani questioned whether resources need to be approved by faith members before the syllabus is published. Amanda encouraged members to send over any good resources that should be included in the new syllabus and circulated to teachers.

**Action:** SACRE Clerk to email assessment guidelines to SACRE members.

**KM**

## 5.3 Working Party Volunteers

Amanda and Julia asked whether Cambridgeshire SACRE members would like to volunteer to join the working parties for the revised Agreed Syllabus.

Shirley Hall expressed an interest and will go to the next ASC meeting so that she can be involved in the curriculum working party.

## **5.4 Meeting Dates**

**KM**

The next ASC meeting is taking place on Monday 27 February 2017 at Stanton House in Huntingdon from 17:00.

## **6. Training Update**

**AF**

Amanda updated members on her training that she is providing for RE teachers. In November Amanda ran a Using IT in RE course which was well attended and it encouraged teachers to incorporate IT and apps into the RE curriculum to help engage students.

The primary RE networks were really well attended in November with another round taking place in March that will focus on assessment.

A colleague from Bristol University is coming to do work with Cambridgeshire teachers to encourage dialogue with RE and both Amanda and Shirley Hall will be working with her on this.

In January 2017, the RE for the non-specialist course ran to support teachers without speciality knowledge to interact with RE in a creative and informative way.

The next course set to run in March 2017 is Exploring Judaism. This is a topic based training with Jo Elijah who will be teaching the knowledge of Judaism and Amanda will be focusing on the pedagogy.

Amanda had a meeting with the Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service (CREDS) to propose a potential Islamic topic course in the summer term.

Aga Cahn and Shahla Suleiman commented that their organisations have had a flurry of schools contacting them for visits and consultancies and the demand has risen in the last few months. Cathy Michell questioned whether this was because of the change in the GCSE curriculum and its focus on two religions.

Jag Srani also commented on the rising demand for engagement from the schools as the Sikh temple in Cambridge has up to 3 requests a week for visits. Ofsted and its focus on SMSC could also be driving the interest from schools.

It was agreed that the capacity to deliver is now becoming a concern.

## **7. Annual Report 2015-2016**

**AF**

Prior to the meeting, the Clerk emailed all members asking them to consider what could be included in the Annual Report 2015-2016.

At the meeting Amanda asked members what should be included and the following ideas were contributed :

- Stonewall Interfaith Event attended by Ed Cearns
- Training report for 2015-2016
- Representation on the committee was working towards being filled

A draft version of the Annual Report will be sent to members for comment towards the end of February.

**Action:** KM to send draft report to SACRE members once constructed.

**KM**

## **8. SACRE Development Plan**

**AF**

The SACRE development plan needed to be updated as the stipulated date was 2013-2014. The development plan was too ambitious and needed to be reviewed.

SACRE members went over a draft version of the development plan at the last SACRE meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016. It was decided that, as it is a duty of SACRE to monitor the standards and provision of RE, the development plan should be more reflective of this duty.

A revised version of the development plan was in the members' meeting packs. Amanda made the proposed changes to the development plan and asked members for comments.

Rebecca Smith noted that objective 1's success criteria needed to be reworded.

**Action:** Amanda Fitton to amend the wording of objective 1's success criteria.

**AF**

## **9. Cambridgeshire SACRE working parties**

**AF**

While some SACRE members are involved in the ASC, the Adviser thought that it would be a good idea for the remaining members to form working parties that are related to the objectives of the development plan. Amanda asked members what they would like to work on during this coming year.

### **9.1 Visitors document**

**AF**

The Cambridgeshire Religious Education Advisory team receive many queries from schools asking for places to visit or for visitors to come into schools. SACRE should have a living document that can be sent to schools with this information. In the members' meeting packs a proposed visitors template was included that can be filled in by members with information of visiting establishments.

All visitors and resources should be supported by faith members and should be representative of all of the county, not just Cambridge.

A working party was set up to develop the visitors document, the members included:

- Aga Cahn
- Cathy Michell
- Virginia Barnes

- Shahla Suleiman
- Julia Ewans

A guidance document needs to be created for visitors so that they know what to expect when going into a school.

**Action:** SACRE Clerk to send visitors document to SACRE members.

**Action:** SACRE members to fill in template and send back to Clerk.

**KM**

**ALL**

The document will need to be updated regularly.

## **10. NASACRE AGM 2017**

**AF**

The NASACRE AGM will be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> May in York. Amanda Fitton asked members who would like to accompany Amanda to the meeting but suggested that the SACRE Clerk as she deals with a lot of the queries that come to the RE.SACRE inbox. It was decided that Amanda and Kerri will attend the AGM on 16<sup>th</sup> May.

## **11. AOB**

**ALL**

### Resignation of Tony Orgee

During the break Tony Orgee notified members that he will cease to be a county councillor from May and therefore cannot continue to sit on SACRE and thus must resign as Chair. Amanda Fitton thanked Tony on behalf of SACRE for being a very efficient and diplomatic Chair for the last 16 years. A card that had been signed was presented to Tony along with a cake.

Tony thanked all of the Advisers and Clerks for the work that they have done to support SACRE. Tony also thanked SACRE members for working cooperatively together. At the next meeting, SACRE will need to vote for a new Chair and Vice Chair.

**Action:** KM to add elections as an item on the next agenda.

**KM**

### Engaging with Secondary Schools

Amanda Fitton asked members to go away and think of ways to engage with secondary schools before next meeting.

**Action:** All SACRE members to come up with innovative ways to engage with secondary schools.

**ALL**

### Faith Direct Event

SACRE Clerk and Dennis Johnson decided that they would try to run the Faith Direct Event again this year.

**Action:** SACRE Clerk and Dennis Johnson to meet up and plan Faith Direct Event.

**KM/DJ**

**Next Meeting**

**Formal Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 13:30-16:30 at Cambridge Professional Development Centre.

**Working Party Meeting**

The next ASC meeting will take place on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017, 17:00-19:00 at Stanton House in Huntingdon.

The meeting closed at 16:00

Signed: ..... Date: .....