

## Minutes of the meeting of the East Sussex SACRE, held on 17 June 2008

**Present:** Councillor J Garvican, Mrs S Thompson (RE consultant), Mr K Fossey (Buddhist Community), Mrs C Hughes (CfBT), Mr M Lloyd (C of E), Councillor M Lock, Councillor R Martin, Mr M Relf (New Churches), Mrs R Stutters (Baha'i Community), Dr B Vance (URC) Ruth Brinkman (Religious Society of Friends), Councillor Stogdon, Councillor Murphy.

**Also attended:** Mr Stan Fomatin (member of the public)

### Action

- i Talk by Sarah Harvey, Research Officer from Inform, on new religious movements.**
- ii** Sarah made a presentation on the work of Inform, an organisation founded in 1986 to prevent misunderstanding about new religious movements (NRMs) (those that have become popular in the West since 1945). Inform does not make a value judgement about NRMs, but records and researches any NRMs brought to its attention by others. Currently, the Inform database contains 807 NRMs, most of which are Christian.
- iii** Sarah stated that the NRM about which Inform has received the most enquiries is Scientology. Inform defines Scientology as a "Human Potential Movement" in the self-improvement tradition with an emphasis on the divine within. Sarah provided an overview of the main tenets of Scientology and outlined some of the controversies surrounding the faith. Sarah confirmed that the 'Scientology-linked organisations most likely to come into contact with schools were "ABLE" (social outreach) and "Narcannon International" (anti-drug/rehabilitation), both of which define themselves as secular. Sarah also drew the committee's attention to Greenfield School in East Sussex, a Scientologist independent school and explained the Scientologists' approach to learning/education. Sarah said that Inform were in the process of producing an information leaflet about Scientology and that she would provide SACRE with copies.
- iv** Councillor Garvican thanked Sarah for her most interesting and thought-provoking talk and confirmed that the subject would receive further consideration at future SACRE meetings.
- 1 Welcome and apologies for absence**
  - 1.1** Councillor Garvican extended a welcome to colleagues and to Mr Stan Tomatin (attending as a member of the public).
  - 1.2** Apologies for absence were received from Jill Bell (NUT), Pat Lock (C of E), Richard Saunders (C of E), Rev D Bastide (C of E), Mr B Devaux (NASUWT), Janet Otley (NAHT).
  - 1.3** Ruth Brinkman confirmed that she would be retiring from the committee.
- 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2007**
  - 2.1** The minutes were agreed as a correct record.
  - 2.2 Matters arising**
  - 2.3** None.

### **3 Susan Thompson – introduction**

- 3.1** Councillor Garvican introduced Susan Thompson, the new Religious Education (RE) Consultant and Adviser to SACRE.
- 3.2** Susan introduced herself to the committee. Susan joined East Sussex County Council in April 2008. She had been brought up and now lived in the local area and was a school Governor (Cuckfield, West Sussex). She had Bachelors and Masters degrees in Religious Education (RE) and had worked as an RE teacher and Head of RE (3, years). Further to this she spent two years with additional responsibilities as head of Humanities. She had experience as an exam marker (GCSE) and in sixth form education. She had also served on the executive of the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) for six years and had now been asked to remain as co-optive member for a further 3 years. In addition she is currently a Regional Subject Adviser, a role which will continue until March 2009.
- 3.3** The committee welcomed Susan to the East Sussex SACRE.

### **4 National and local update:**

#### **4.1 National update – including an update on Secondary teachers’ event**

- 4.1.1** Susan Thompson presented the “New Secondary Curriculum” and made the following clarifications:
- The September 2008 launch would cover Years 7, 8, 9.
  - The definition “Successful learner” included enjoyment of learning.
  - Pupil “voice” was a legal requirement and the students had been the first group to be consulted during the preparation for the new secondary curriculum.
- 4.1.2** Regarding the new RE curriculum, Susan confirmed that:
- There would be an increased focus on skills (workplace and functional) to help to equip children for the demands of society.
  - Teachers would need to keep in mind both SACRE requirements and national curriculum standards.
  - There would be a need to think wider than the usual examples, looking at other subject areas to link in/prevent repetition whilst keeping what is distinctive within the subject.
  - RE was the only subject area in which there had not been a reduction of content. There was a requirement to identify concepts within religions (rather than just what people in faith communities do).
  - There was a new requirement to explore the connections between RE and other subject areas. Susan expressed concern about a lack of trust between RE teachers and those of other disciplines (including reticence of other teaching staff in relation to working with RE teachers and RE teachers being very protective of their teaching time).
- 4.1.3** The committee recognised that the above would bring RE teaching in Secondary schools in line with what was taking place in Primary schools (making it more cohesive for pupils).
- 4.1.4** In regards to teaching responsible citizenship within RE, Councillor Lock expressed concern about interference of HM Government. Susan clarified that “responsible citizenship” was included across the whole curriculum

but the RE curriculum was still set locally by individual SACREs.

- 4.1.5** Regarding cultural elements of the RE curriculum, Susan confirmed that:
- Technology and the increasingly global dimension of life would enable children to link with schools elsewhere in the world.
  - Pupils were already studying the different forms of some faiths, meeting people who practice those faiths and discussing what they do/believe. This also had an effect on parents etc, increasing levels of mutual understanding and social cohesion.
- 4.1.6** Susan also confirmed that a lot of work had been done by the regional subject advisers on case studies exemplifying with the new curriculum; the results of much of it were available on the National Association of RE Teachers' website.
- 4.1.7** Councillor Murphy queried whether the RE teacher's own religion would effect the way they taught the subject and observed that there was a need to ensure that RE was inclusive to all children. Connie Hughes confirmed that the training of RE teachers in East Sussex would ensure equality across the board for all children.
- 4.1.8** Susan expressed concern that there was a danger of RE being marginalised in school curricula. There was a need to have specialist RE teachers within schools to act as a champion for RE to prevent it from being written out of the timetable. It was observed that RE was the responsibility of school governors.
- 4.1.9** Councillor Garvican thanked Susan for her presentation and observed that a number of questions had been clarified. Connie Hughes confirmed that Susan had already met with the Key stage 3 key subject adviser.

## **4.2 Local update – schools' self-evaluation in RE**

- 4.2.1** Councillor Garvican drew the committee's attention to reports concerning Bexhill High School and St. Mary's School, Horam. The committee noted the reports for information.

## **5 Report of NASACRE AGM**

- 5.1** Martin Lloyd presented a report on the NASACRE Annual General Meeting (including the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Ofsted papers circulated at the meeting on 8 May 2008). Martin Lloyd and Rebecca Stutters attended AGM on behalf of East Sussex SACRE.
- 5.2** Martin drew the committee's attention to a £50,000 grant to NASACRE from HM Government to undertake a recruitment programme to SACREs (especially for representatives from the minority communities). The South East region was part of the first tranche (April 2008 – March 2009). The grant was intended to cover training costs (including courses, travel and school visits). The national co-ordinator would contact individual SACREs about the money. The majority of projects which had received rewards from NASACRE involved work with children and young people. Martin commented that, although the level of funding awarded to each project listed in the report was not mentioned, he felt that the awards would be quite small and that most of the funding for the projects would have been received from local SACRE budgets. Rebecca commented that

it would be important to maintain the same level of spending as last year (as the value of grants available would otherwise depreciate).

- 5.3** Ofsted report: Martin confirmed that there was a strong focus towards community cohesion with the use of RE as an important contributor. Ofsted was trying to identify the current conditions of RE teaching in schools but had found that there was currently a lot less information available than under the old Section 10 system. Martin drew attention to the 2008 HM Inspectorate (HMI) RE Conference (report point 6). Martin also drew attention to the 2007 HMI RE event (report point 7, "Personalising Learning in RE") and confirmed that the Government minister would be launching the RE provisions in October 2009.
- 5.4** Humanism: Martin confirmed that Humanism would be re-examined (as a faith) at NASACRE and a humanist was now a member of the group.
- 5.5** Martin confirmed that a lot of concern had been expressed at the NASACRE AGM that worship was not being looked at the meeting. It was agreed that the aim of RE was give every child a balanced view of religion (including faiths other than their own) and that there was a difference between the understanding of religions and of personal beliefs; this made worship as a subject difficult.  
**Action:** Councillor Lock to put forward the theme of "worship" for discussion with the Youth Council.
- 5.6** The 2009 NASACRE AGM would take place on 5 June in Birmingham.

**Clr  
Lock**

## **6 Forward planning**

- 6.1** Susan Thompson provided the following updates:
- A copy of a book that includes contributions from Charlotte Gravestock (the previous Adviser to SACRE) would be ordered, as part of evidence of the SACRE's work.
  - Tom Newbold (Secondary Education PGCE Lecturer, Brighton University) had been invited to talk at the October SACRE meeting.
  - Susan had invited the Quicken Trust to provide a speaker to the February 2009 SACRE meeting.
- 6.2** Susan presented the Development Plan.
- 6.3** Summer 2008: SACRE award. Susan confirmed that the award was in place but that no applications had been received yet this year. Susan would continue to work with teachers to promote the award. It was observed that the award helped to raise the profile of RE in schools; participation helped schools to complete their self-evaluations and assisted SACRE in keeping touch with the "grass roots."
- 6.4** Autumn 2008: It was agreed that the development of the Faith Directory for schools was very desirable and that Inform should be included both as a contact and within the prologue of the directory.  
**Action:**
- 6.5** Spring 2009: Multi-faith day. Connie Hughes commented that there would be a cost issue involving logistical support and training. There was a SACRE budget (£3,500) but this would not cover the venue costs; there

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<p>would therefore be a need to approach the schools for some money. It was agreed that this event had a strong community cohesion aspect. It was agreed that this event could draw on the SACRE fund for part of its costs. Councillor Garvican confirmed that SACRE would not be able to cover the cost of providing any supply teachers.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Susan Thompson to identify venue costs, e-mail CPD function in regards to the cost and produce the event costing.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Councillors to lobby for any possible additional funds for the event.</p>	<p>ST</p> <p>Clrs</p>
<p><b>6.6</b> It was observed that the SACRE annual budget had not been increased during the previous five years. It was agreed that there was a need to re-examine funding levels for the 2009/10 budget.</p>	
<p><b>6.7</b> Autumn 2008: Joint SACRE event – Susan confirmed that a joint SACRE event between Brighton &amp; Hove SACRE, East Sussex SACRE and West Sussex SACRE would be taking place at the Moulsecomb Development Centre, Brighton on 26 September 2008 (12.30 pm lunch, 1 pm start).</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Clerk to send out joining instructions (and map) by e-mail.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Clerk to send out reminder one week before.</p>	
<p><b>6.8</b> Spring 2009: Student links to SACRE. Susan proposed the establishment of a “Youth SACRE” to obtain opinions and feedback from students (which would also help to monitor RE teaching in schools). Other SACREs, such as Lancashire SACRE, already had these in place. The idea was approved, as it fitted with the Every Child Matters agenda.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Susan Thompson to contact cross-county youth fora.</p>	<p>ST</p>
<p><b>6.9</b> Summer 2009 (next development plan): Susan suggested that the SACRE conference could be held in Summer (in place of one of the Autumn SACRE awareness events). The conference would feature a keynote speaker followed by workshops; the focus would be on creative and spiritual RE. The committee approved the event.</p>	
<p><b>6.10</b> New RE Syllabus: Susan proposed that the implementation of the new agreed RE syllabus should be postponed until 2011 to allow more time to identify what was taking place within HM Government’s Primary Review. Susan suggested that this would enable SACRE to get in line with the results of the Primary Review whilst maintaining its independence. It was observed that Circular 1/94 would be reviewed in October 2009. Susan confirmed that SACRE had until March 2009 to set up the preliminary work. The committee agreed the revised timetable.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Susan Thompson to write to Matt Dunkley regarding money, as this cost was not included in the SACRE budget.</p>	<p>ST</p>
<p><b>7</b> <b>SACRE meeting dates, 2008-09</b></p>	
<p><b>7.1</b> The following meeting dates were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 23 October 2008, pm, Uckfield Civic Centre</li> <li>• Wednesday 4 February 2009, pm, County Hall</li> <li>• Tuesday 16 June 2009, pm, St Mary’s House, Eastbourne</li> </ul>	
<p><b>7.2</b> It was agreed that a letter should be sent out to each member of SACRE for them to reaffirm, specifically, their commitment to the SACRE committee. It was agreed that where no reply was received, it should be</p>	

treated as a resignation and a replacement should be sought.

**Action: Letter to be drafted by clerk for Susan to read and then forwarded to Councillor Garvican for approval.**

Clerk

- 7.3 Martin Lloyd suggested that the problem of school staff being unable to attend SACRE meetings might be addressed by moving the meeting from the daytime to a “twilight slot.” It was agreed that this proposal should be placed on the next meeting’s agenda for discussion (if that meeting was quorate).

**Action: To put discussion on timings on to the next agenda.**

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8 Any other business

8.1 New Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness:

Councillor Lock observed that Councillor David Elkin had been appointed as the new Lead Member for Learning and School Effectiveness. It was agreed that Councillor Elkin should be invited to the next SACRE meeting

**Action: Clerk to write to Councillor Elkin, Susan to view draft prior to sending.**

Clerk