

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1st February 2021



ATTENDEES

NAME	INITIALS	ORGANISATION
GROUP A		
Elizabeth Jenkerson	EJ	Baha'I
Steve Deadman	SD	The Roman Catholic Church
Ruth Gill	RG	The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
GROUP B		
Richard Wharton	RW	The Church of England
Rev. Duncan Jennings	DJ	The Church of England
Rev. Tony Palmer	TP	The Church of England
Liz Allen	LA	Deputy Head Bitterne CoE Primary School
GROUP C		
<i>No attendees</i>		
GROUP D		
Councillor Kataria	Cllr K	Southampton City Council
Councillor James Baillie	Cllr B	Southampton City Council
Kate Martin	KM	Group D Substitute
OTHERS (NON-VOTING)		
Alison Philpott	AP	Southampton City Council
Mary Wallbank	MW	South Hampshire Humanists
Sam Jordan	SJ	The Church of England
Matt Gwyn	MG	Southampton City Mission
IN ATTENDANCE		
Martin Ball		Southampton City Council
Aine Rand		Southampton City Council
Gavin Muncaster		Southampton City Council

APOLOGIES

NAME	INITIALS	ORGANISATION
GROUP A		
Chris Davis MBE		The Baptists
GROUP B		
GROUP C		
Jackie Meering		National Education Union (NEU)
Sian Carr		National Association of Headteachers (NAHT)
GROUP D		
Councillor Matt Bunday		Southampton City Council (Swaythling Ward)
Councillor Valerie Laurent		Southampton City Council (Harefield Ward)

1 WELCOME and APOLOGIES

AP highlighted that two new Group B members have joined SACRE, Liz Allen, who is the Deputy Head of Bitterne CoE Primary School and Reverend Tony Palmer. AP noted that Sam Jordan is also present, who was previously a Church of England representative at Southampton SACRE. SJ explained that she is working for a Christian organisation as a National Project Lead supporting churches to support their communities. SJ will be part of the Co-Opted Group going forward.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR

This SACRE was not quorate, therefore an election of the Chair could not take place.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (November 2020) AND MATTERS ARISING

To agree the minutes from November 2020 meeting and review any matters arising

MW stated that the minutes incorrectly recorded the Humanists UK as the British Humanists Society and that the application is being made to cover all non-religious people to be included in SACRE.

4 REVIEW OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND DETERMINATION PROCESS

Draft discussion paper regarding update to Determination process to be circulated to members (attached) and link to two current guidance documents an update affects

<https://www.youngsouthampton.org/images/03.17.27515-sacre-new.pdf>

<https://www.youngsouthampton.org/images/scc-collective-worship.pdf>

AP highlighted that the document attached is the most up to date draft of the guidance, however it needs to be updated. The main difference that has not been included previously is the that the process for an academy school to apply for a determination is different to a maintained school. AP noted that there is still a duty for a SACRE to grant a determination, but only for schools that are maintained, therefore an academy schools needs to follow a different process. AP included in the document that Southampton SACRE would like to be informed if an academy school is granted a determination. AP noted that there has only been one query in the 7 years that she has been involved in SACRE.

AP highlighted that applications can only be made by the headteacher of the school and the school must consult the school's governing body. The reason for this is so the headteacher will be aligned with the governing body of the school. Also, it gives the parents the opportunity to have their views heard.

SD noted that the guidance could include that having consulted the governing body, the parents and the senior leadership team should be consulted as the governing body is responsible for the overall strategy of the school. AP amended the document to "seek the views of all parents/guardians and staff".

AP highlighted that there is nothing in the guidance that states how long a consultation should be. LA stated that it is useful to have a time limit from the school's perspective to ensure that they are aware of the timeframe. EJ queried how practical it would be for larger schools to have the same timeframe as a smaller one. LA stated that 6 weeks may be ambitious as the governors need enough time to discuss this in the meetings to approve it, as well as with

parents and staff. AP amended the document to state “there is no set time period for any consultation to be taking place, but SACRE would recommend that this would be over the period of one term”.

Regarding how a decision will be made, AP read from the guidance that once an application is received a sub-group of SARE members will hold a pre-meeting before the next SACRE meeting. The meeting would have to have a representative from each group, a co-opted member, and AP. Regarding if the Chair should be present at the pre-meeting, LA mentioned that the Chair should not attend in the event that the schools wishes to complain about the SACRE sub-group. DJ suggested that the Chair does not attend the pre-meeting but is aware that there is a request and when the pre-meeting is taking place. AP amended the document to reflect what was discussed.

AP noted that in the guidance, there is not an inclusion of what the escalation would be if the determination is not granted. AP explained that a complaint would go to the Local Authority and AP will include this in the document. AP noted that this document will be submitted to the legal team after amendments are agreed. Legal will return the document with any feedback.

It is suggested that a representative from the faith in which the application is being made to be included in the sub-group. AP recommended that a representative can be invited or consulted if needed.

RW queried who inspects the worship at the school once the application is granted, AP explained that it is her understanding that an annual update would take place for the continuing relevance of the determination and monitoring visits would be carried out as usual.

AP shared the document for attendees to review the changes made during this meeting and members agreed for it to be submitted to legal for review. All changes were agreed and AP thanked the members for their input.

5 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT VERBAL UPDATE (PROFESSIONAL ADVISER)

Members confirmed that they had viewed the annual report and there were no questions regarding it. AP stated that the document is a final draft, subject to a final proof read.

MG noted that he should be in the Co-opted members list as he was co-opted before July 2020.

6 DISCUSSION REGARDING PAPER PUBLISHED BY THEOS ON WORLDVIEWS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – LINK ATTACHED

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>

AP noted that if there are any thoughts around the Theos, it would be helpful to receive them in writing.

7 STANDARD ITEM FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL/NATIONAL EVENTS FROM ALL MEMBERS

EJ explained that there have been meetings of SACRE's from the South West of England for many years. The following meeting is on the 1st of March 2021 online, it is £20 per person, and it is for half a day. AP noted that there is funding for 3 people to attend. EJ stated that if any of the members are interested, to let AP know.

EJ explained that the NASACRE AGM is scheduled for the 24th of May 2021. It is not confirmed if it will be online, but it is likely that it will be. EJ requested that she is informed if any members have suggestions on any workshops.

8 AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE UPDATE (VERBAL REPORT FROM PROFESSIONAL ADVISER)

AP explained that there have been initial discussions regarding the syllabus with colleagues from Hampshire, Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, and some London Boroughs. There have been challenges regarding consultations due to COVID-19, but there is hope that consultation with staff can be done before the Easter Holidays, appreciating that teachers are very stretched currently. AP explained that she could put a preliminary date in for the week commencing 22nd March 2021 for the conference. Once the consultation is done, there will be more progress in to looking at the content of the syllabus. AP noted that it would be helpful for SACRE members to have a separate or joint consultation with the teachers. AP will set up the Teams link and circulate it to SACRE members. AP will also set up a feedback session for SACRE members.

10 AOB (NOTIFIED TO PROFESSIONAL ADVISER OR ACTING CHAIR AT LEAST THREE WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

Update regarding the Humanist Application to Southampton SACRE:

MW updated that there was a follow up on the representations of Humanist or non-religious people on Southampton SACRE. It was heard at a council meeting in November 2020 for a formal decision. There was advice from the Southampton Legal Team that the Councillors felt obliged not to admit Humanist or non-religious people at this stage. The reason for this was the threat of a legal challenge. MW noted that the next step would be for a judicial review, but the legal department responded asking why a legal challenge is being brought forward during a pandemic. MW noted that this process was started two years ago, and the timing has been down to the Local Authority and not the group making the application. MW stated that there has been mutual agreement between the Humanist group and the Local Authority to delay the legal process until November 2021.

AP noted that in the November 2020 SACRE, it was offered for Southampton City Council to write to the Department of Education (DfE) and asked MW if this would be something that would be helpful. MW stated that there would be no harm in this, however from the replies from the DfE, they have stated that they are civil servants and will not make a legal decision.

MW stated that she will forward the reply from the DfE to AP and EJ to circulate to other members.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND NOTIFIED AOB

Date: 7th June 2021 **Time:** 16:00 **Venue:** TBC