

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
The Salvation Army Citadel High Road Romford
14 July 2015 (6.30 - 8.10 pm)**

**Representing other
Christian and religious
denominations
(Group A)**

Dr John Lester
Mrs Jenny Fox
Mrs Christine Seymour
Saddhabhaya
Mr John Smailes
Mr Om Dhir
Mrs Pamela Coles

**Representing the
Church of England
(Group B)**

Mrs Susan Freeman

**Representing the
Teaching
Profession
(Group C)**

Ms Linda Munday

**Representing the
Local Authority
Councillors
(Group D)**

Cllr Jason Frost
Cllr Dilip Patel

Ms Michelle Wain representing Hsis in the absence of a Primary Advisor was also present.

Members of SACRE were welcomed to the Citadel by Mrs Fox who introduced Liz Hall who as the Family Officer for the London North East Division had a great deal of experience provided those present with a vivid and lively overview of where the Salvation Army had come from, what its aims and objectives were now and the practical application of Faith in its involvement in society locally, nationally and around the world. Members were informed that the Salvation Army had been in existence for 150 years and came into being after its founding members had been expelled from the Methodist movement. From those beginnings it spread across the country and now had an active presence in 127 countries around the world.

The Salvation Army was best known for its tireless and dedicated involvement with those who were struggling at the lower (some would say “lowest” end of society) and in this country its work was synonymous with work with the destitute, those suffering from alcohol and drug abuse and the homeless. Whilst this was very much the public face of the movement, it had an impact at all levels and still referred to its founder – William Booth’s – original precepts which still formed the basis of the Soldier’s Covenant.

At the end of her enthusiastic and informative presentation Mrs Fox introduced Ella Goldsmith and a group of youngsters from the junior choir who provided those in the room with two lovely worship songs which were greatly enjoyed by members.

On behalf of SACRE, the Chairman thanked Mrs Fox and those who had taken part in providing such an informative and pleasant introduction and, having shown their appreciation, SACRE members were invited to partake of an inviting buffet before being escorted from the foyer upstairs to a pleasant meeting-room where it could conduct its formal business.

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - IF ANY, TO RECEIVE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gillian Ford, Joshua Chapman, June Alexander and Wendy Brice-Thompson; Mr Kevin Walsh, Mr Kamal Siddiqui, Mr Tariq Mahmood and Mrs Stephanie Ellner

28 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from that meeting.

29 UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Primary Update

1 Networks

Members were informed that a primary network event held at St Ursula's Junior school on 28 April 2015 had focused on the contribution of RE to British values and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) education. There were 26 attendees present. Kate Christopher from RE Today led the session. Future Network dates had been set for 1 October 2015, 26 January and 27 April 2016.

2 Islam workshops

The SMSC/EMA (Ethnic Minority Achievement) advisor from Hsis attended workshops and an assembly for pupils run by Imran Kotwal of Living Islam, who offered pupil workshops and teacher training on understanding Islam, also in St Ursula's Infants and Junior schools. The sessions had been excellent and that pupils were highly engaged. A future session was planned for November.

3 Other developments

The EMA advisor would also be visiting a school in Northbury, noted for its excellent practice in understanding religious and cultural needs within a British context. The national standards for RE had now been added to the Hsis website for schools.

Secondary Update

The following report before SACRE (and the one following) had been a collaborative exercise between Daniel Hugill and Kirsty Fanning. Mrs Fanning was present to answer any questions from members.

Members were informed that the previous informal meetings between teachers from mostly secondary - but some primary schools as well - had progressed into the formal creation of 'The London RE Hub'.

Andy Lewis, from the Sacred Heart of Mary Girls' School, along with Deborah Weston and lots of other helpers organised the Hub's first RE Conference on Saturday, 28 April. It was a sell-out and featured lots of passionate teachers and speakers running sessions for others to attend. The Ismaili Centre in Kensington generously hosted the event and it created much positive feedback on social media.

Members were informed that during the coming academic year, there would hopefully be some network meetings for RE teachers as part of the Teaching School model for CPD in Havering. Hall Mead School in Upminster had been the designated a "teaching school" from September 2014 and was looking to expand and develop next year. This could include the first SLE (Specialist Leader of Education) for RE, who would then be available to help other schools and facilitate training and networks.

30 **NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

1. Teacher Supply and Bursary

Members were informed that as a direct consequence of the removal of the bursary for teacher training places in RE and the reduction in the number of places available on PGCE university based courses and Graduate Teacher Programmes, RE was now officially a shortage subject once again.

In September 2014, the Government announced that it was rectifying this by reinstating a bursary of up to £9000 per RE trainee teacher for 2015/16. Members were directed to:

<https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk/bursaries-and-funding>

for up-to-date information.

In response to the shortage in RE trainees and teachers, the REC and NATRE had launched "***Beyond the Ordinary***" a new campaign to find extraordinary individuals who had what it took to train to become RE teachers. This could be followed-up at:

<http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/re-teaching-beyond-the-ordinary/>

2. GCSE and A Level reform

The consultation on GCSE Religious Studies reform had closed in January and following this a draft content was published by the DoE. There would be a considerable impact on the study programme for students in future once the changes had been implemented.

3. Social Media/Twitter

The online community of RE teachers, providers and interested parties continued to grow and provided great networking, publicity and CPD opportunities. NATRE continued to host via Twitter a monthly #rechatuk, with pre-notified topics being discussed, and all invited to comment and share.

4. NATRE Secondary Survey

NATRE had launched its annual survey on RE in secondary schools in England and urged all those who taught RE to complete it. The responses would provide NATRE with invaluable details to inform its on-going campaign to secure the place of RE in the curriculum in all types of schools in the face of significant challenges from changes in the curriculum.

5. Impact of Government Policy on GCSE RS

This report - conducted by NATRE - showed the impact that government policy was having on the GCSE entry patterns for short and full course Religious Studies.

Two elements of government policy had been described as having 'unintended negative consequences for Religious Education'. The first of these was the English Baccalaureate introduced in 2010. The second decision was to change the method by which a school's average point score was calculated. From 2014, only full GCSEs could count in the calculation.

Members were directed to the following website if they wished to read the full report:

<http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/Impact%20of%20government%20policy%20on%20GCSE%20RS%20270515.pdf>

6. Thinking Days

In March and April 2015, 25 leading RE practitioners were brought together for 'RE Thinking Days', organised by [Culham St Gabriel's Trust](#) and facilitated by Peter Batty. Members could find links to the reports at: <http://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/re-thinking-days-2015/>

7. A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools

June saw the launch of the report "*A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools*" written by Professor Linda Woodhead and the Right Honourable Charles Clarke. It contained wide-ranging proposals regarding the future of RE that would be of great interest to SACRE. Members were informed that the full report could be found at:

<http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>.

31 UPDATE ON THE JOINT AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE WITH REDBRIDGE

Deborah Weston, on behalf of the team working on the Joint Syllabus had been invited to the meeting to provide members with an update reported that the Joint Syllabus had been adopted in general by representatives of both Havering & Redbridge SACRE's at a meeting held at the Salvation Army Citadel, High Road, Romford on Monday 29 June.

Members were informed that the draft Syllabus would need completion (with the addition of pictures, changes to text and the addition of schemes of work and other editorial changes), but essentially, no further substantive changes could be made. Mrs Weston appealed for any pictures which members considered illustrative to be forwarded to her for inclusion.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Weston for all her –and the teams’ – hard work in getting the Syllabus to its current state and this was echoed by members present. Thanks were also given to Mrs Payne for all the assistance she had provided. The Chairman then read the foreword which would be used for the Syllabus and this was approved by members.

There followed some general discussion about various styles for the syllabi already being used by other authorities and the one used by Havering’s neighbour – Barking and Dagenham (which had a jigsaw front-piece) was considered particularly interesting.

32 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A member asked whether anyone was aware that Havering’s libraries appeared to be purging books which were ten years old. This was considered to be somewhat short-sighted as a good number of older books were excellent reference works. It was reported that Gidea Park Library had Christian books but none for other faiths or religions.

The Chairman asked whether SACRE should invest in some pamphlets for the Week of Prayer for World Peace (October). They were priced at £35 for 50 or £50 for 100 copies and could be distributed to schools across the borough as teachers found them useful as a resource. This suggestion was not, however, supported by members.

33 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The clerk apologised to those present for having to move the suggested date for the Autumn Term’s meeting from the 22nd October to the 21st but explained that this had been necessary because there were no rooms of a suitable size available on that Thursday. This had not been apparent when the date was agreed.

Members were invited to think ahead to the Spring Term and it was suggested that a date could be arranged for mid-March (Easter 2016 being the end of the month).

Chairman