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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
Town Hall Main Road Romford
11 March 2014 (7.10 - 7.40 pm)**

<u>Representing other Christian and religious denominations (Group A)</u>	<u>Representing the Church of England (Group B)</u>	<u>Representing the Teaching Profession (Group C)</u>	<u>Representing the Local Authority Councillors (Group D)</u>
Mrs Christine Seymour (Vice Chair)	Mrs Susan Freeman	Mr Nick Hills	Pam Light
Mrs Pamela Coles	Revd. Adrian McConaughie	Ms Linda Munday	Paul Rochford
Mr Kamal Siddiqui			
Mrs Jenny Fox			
Mr Sansar Narwal			
Pastor Aloysius Peter			
Mr John Smailes			
Mr Tariq Mahmood [NEW]			
+Dr B Beheshtri			

Councillor Wendy Brice-Thompson (co-optee), and Mrs Judith Payne (HSIS – Primary Advisor) were also present.

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman took the Chair.

Members were reminded of the action to be taken in an emergency.

91 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & NEW OR SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gillian Ford, Dr John Lester (+Dr B Beheshtri substituted), Mr Kevin Walsh, Mrs Anne Masters, Mr Om Dhir, Saddhabhaya, Mrs Dawn Ladbrook, Mrs Stephanie Ellner, Mr Nasir Mubashar and Mr Daniel Hugill (Secondary Advisor)

The Chairman welcomed Mr Tariq Mahmood who was attending his first SACRE as a representative of the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre (Sunni Muslims) in Waterloo Road Romford. There were no visitors or observers present.

92 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman. A minor amendment was requested to clarify Minute 85 (Primary report). There were no further matters arising.

93 **UPDATE ON SCHOOL ACTIVITY**

Primary:

Mrs Payne reported that Seven Primary school to school partnerships had been established since September 2013 funded by the schools' own de-delegated budgets and quality assured by Local Authority officers. These partnerships were based on a coaching cycle for improving the quality of teaching by the sharing of good practice. As the coaching was based on generic good practice, it was anticipated that this work would have an impact on improving the teaching of RE in Primary schools.

Mrs Payne added that an evaluation form had been devised to ensure that comments and views were captured and fed back in order that the content and provision of future events and guidance could be tailored to need and quality monitored and maintained

During 2013-2014, the usual termly network meetings with Primary RE Co-ordinators had been replaced by workshops in support of the agreed syllabus review and a day's conference for students and RE Co-ordinators across Primary and Secondary Phases.

Secondary:

Mr Hugill had submitted the following written report:

The secondary Havering RE teachers' group had now met twice. The group currently represented Coopers' Coborn, Hall Mead, Sacred Heart, Campion, Frances Bardsley, and Mulberry School (Tower Hamlets). At its most recent meeting it had a representative from Sutton Primary School. The group was aiming to organise a "TeachMeet" style meeting in the autumn term. This would aim to attract teachers from East London boroughs and neighbouring counties. More details would follow before the summer meeting of SACRE. He concluded by saying that he was very excited by these local developments.

94 **NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Mr Hugill's written report was that:

1: Teacher Supply & Bursaries

NATRE had been working with other RE organisations (the RE Council and Culham St Gabriel's) to try and get bursaries restated for trainee RE teachers. This had involved press campaigns, lobbying of Ministers at DfE, and working with civil servants. He provided several links to web-pages for Members to pursue.

2: Progress Measure and Best 8

NATRE had put together a paper for use by Secondary Heads of RE to help convince Head teachers to enter the whole cohort for Full Course GCSEs. It focused on the new progress measure in the league tables (Best 8).

NATRE said that:

“At the start of the new calendar year, many schools begin to turn their attention to planning their curriculum for the next academic year. The fact that from 2014 the short course no longer counts towards the performance measures, even though it remains an accredited GCSE qualification for pupils, has put some provision for RS at risk. It is NATRE's position that short course remains a valuable means of accrediting pupils' learning at key stage 4. This article suggests however, that in many schools around the country, full course RS for all might be a serious and viable option which is in the best interests of both the pupils and the school as a whole.”

The paper focused on the new progress measure in the league tables (Best 8). The paper could be found at:

<http://www.natre.org.uk/news.php>

3: All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for RE

The APPG on RE was chaired by Stephen Lloyd MP, Liberal Democrat for Eastbourne. The Group had been running an inquiry focussing on 'the contribution of RE to good community relations'. The Inquiry had been split into three sections which concentrated on schools, communities and society respectively. Following three oral evidence sessions and submissions from across the country, Stephen Lloyd MP would be hosting an event to celebrate the publication and launch of the report. The launch will be at the House of Commons on the 17th March 2014.

4: Exam Reform

The reform of GCSE and A-levels was now under-way following a meeting between RE professionals, exam boards, DfE, Ofqual and other interested parties. There was likely to be a consultation over the summer and members of SACREE were urged to “keep an eye out for this”.

5: NATRE #REChatUK

An online RE chat on Twitter was taking place monthly. Mr Hugill provided the following details for any member who wished to join the “Twitter chat”:

#REchatUK took place on Monday 3 March 2014 8 - 9pm. If you missed it and want to catch up on the discussion on 'Teaching difficult and sensitive issues in RE' you can see it [here](#)

Thanks to those who contributed. Do take a look and please consider taking part next month: Monday 7th April 8 - 9pm.

If you have any suggestions as to what next month's topic should be please send a tweet to [@NATREupdate](#)

Like beekeeping, religious education is best when it's controversial

In conclusion, Mr Hugill's report informed members that: Guardian Education recently interviewed him for an article on Religious Education. In the article he had suggested that RE was best when it was controversial. It also drew parallels with one of his other interests - beekeeping. Members were informed that the article could be found by following the link below:

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jan/16/teaching-religious-education-beekeeping>

95 **UPDATE ON THE JOINT AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE WITH REDBRIDGE**

Mrs Payne reported that an initial meeting had taken place in the Town Hall on 12 December last. It had been a good meeting attended by both Academies and Maintained schools. SACRE members from both Havering and Redbridge had been encouraged to attend and the Chairman – Dr Lester – had been present.

Progress had been made in producing an overview of what the new Syllabus ought to address and a launch date of September 2014 had been proposed (so there was a tight time-scale to get all the necessary work done and approved by both SACRE's). The RE Today advisors Fiona Moss and Deborah Weston would be undertaking most of the preparation and drafting of the Syllabus for both SACRE's to review. Their work will be closely guided by the teacher working party.

Humanism would be included within the Syllabus. It was proposed for inclusion in the KS2 programme of study and this would continue into KS3 as part of the "World Views" programme. The exact wording of this proposal was to be considered at the next meeting.

So far, a total of 29 schools had registered their interest and each school would provide six representatives to explore learning from religion with older student mentors while the RE co-ordinators have training from the RE Today tutors.

Members expressed their approval and several asked for notice of the next meeting, which Mrs Payne said that she would pass to the clerk to forward to them. A member also asked whether minutes of these meetings could also be circulated and this was also promised.

96 THE ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

Members were invited to comment on the content of the draft Annual Report before them. Mrs Payne said she could provide some text for the photographs in the report. There were no other comments and the Report was accepted unanimously. Councillor Rochford (Cabinet Member for Children and Learning) would be presenting the Report to Council on 26 March.

97 UPDATE ON THE MICHAEL EDWARDS AWARD

Mrs Coles informed SACRE that because of traffic problems, she had been late in getting to the Sacred Heart of Mary on the day of the presentation. Dr Lester was at the school, but as she had the trophy, it could not be presented in front of the whole school and Assembly had finished by the time she arrived. The Head teacher was, however, delighted to receive the award on behalf of the staff and the Head girl on behalf of pupils.

Mrs Payne informed members that the pro-forma and award application had already been sent to Primary, Special and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) for them to register an interest. The deadline was the end of May – in good time for the summer meeting and she hoped that there would be a good response for members to choose from this year.

98 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Tariq Mahmood introduced himself to those present. He was a pharmacist and Vice-President of the Havering Islamic Cultural Centre which was situated in Waterloo Road in Romford.

99 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Clerk reported that he had been hoping to hear from Mr Hugill about confirmation of a venue for the summer meeting, but that he had not had a response to his e-mail. He added that the dates for the summer meeting had to be between the end of June and early July and asked members to note the 3rd, 8th and 10th July and he would confirm to them as soon as possible the venue and preferred date.

Chairman

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