

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At a virtual meeting of the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** on Wednesday, 8 July 2020 at 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor W Daley
Chairman, in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

Crosby, B

Campbell, D

TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS REPRESENTATIVES

Duffield, A
Nicholls, T

Walton, Mrs S

CHURCH OF ENGLAND REPRESENTATIVES

None Present

REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER CHURCHES & FAITHS

Cousin, Mrs J
Van Der Velde, Mrs D

Marley, Rev E H

CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES (Observers)

None Present

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Cookson, D

Norris, Mrs K G

Commissioner for Secondary
Education
Democratic Services Officer

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ch.'s Initials.....

Apologies were received from Mrs E Bainbridge and Ms C Naylor.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education held on 5 February 2020, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman subject to the addition of apologies for absence from Mrs S Walton.

36. AN UPDATE OF CONTACTS WITH SCHOOLS AND TRAINING PROVISION

Mr Dave Cookson, Commissioner for Secondary Education, advised SACRE members there had been no recent contact with schools around any religious education or collective worship issues. Since Covid-19 lockdown schools had been open to fewer children and work had not been curriculum based. Contact was expected to begin again in September.

In response to a question Mr Cookson said, although there would be changes and limitations to teaching from September, it was expected that the teaching of religious education would recommence at that time.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

37. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE NEWSLETTER

Due to the Covid-19 situation, a SACRE newsletter had not been published this term. It was hoped that the next edition would be published in December 2020 and Members were asked to send any contents for inclusion to Mr Cookson by the end of October. Mr Cookson confirmed that he would send out reminders to schools.

In response to a request from Mrs Van der Velde, it was agreed that December's newsletter would ask schools to observe holocaust memorial day in January and advise them to look at the HMDT website.

Mrs Walton queried whether statutory recommendations would be suspended for collective worship. In response Mr Cookson said, that in line with the current direction, assemblies and collective worship as traditionally carried out in schools was not taking place and he was unaware of any planned changes. He would, however, seek guidance from the DfE and advise SACRE accordingly.

RESOLVED that the position be noted and Mr Cookson follow up the issues raised.

38. NASACRE ISSUES

Ch.'s Initials.....

The NASACRE Newsletter – SACRE News

Members received the NASACRE Briefing No. 25, for information (a copy of the briefing has been filed with the signed minutes as Appendix A).

The Chair noted the appointment of the new HMI Inspector, Leading on RE, Dr Richard Kueh.

RESOLVED that the NASACRE Briefing No. 25 be received.

39. SCHOOLS UPDATE

As schools had been open for a much smaller number of pupils, and had not been teaching the full curriculum, it was likely that RE provision had been minimal since lockdown and changes were unlikely in the next few weeks. From September the first priority would be the mental health and wellbeing of pupils but there was an expectation from Central Government and the Local Authority that schools would do as much as possible to return to the curriculum model.

Discussion took place about the range of online learning portals available and their RE content.

From September conversations would be held with head teachers to ensure the statutory function was being met and RE provision made. Members would be updated in due course.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

40. AGREED SYLLABUS

The agreed syllabus would come to the end of its life in September 2021. A request was being made for a number of people to begin the process of reviewing the current syllabus, making amendments to it and agreeing any changes. Publication of the new syllabus would be around May half term to allow sufficient time for schools to look at the changes made and make their provision for September 2021. This was a vital piece of work in order to provide young people with high quality Religious Education.

In response to a question as to whether the scope of the Working Group could be extended to include key individuals from schools, Mr Cookson clarified that, although some volunteers would need to be members of SACRE, there was no reason why not and this would be encouraged. Mrs Van Der Velde agreed and emphasised the importance of having members of primary, secondary and special schools involved.

Members were invited to contact Mr Cookson after the meeting should they be interested in being part of the Working Group.

Ch.'s Initials.....

A request was made for a list of all SACRE members to be circulated to members of the committee in advance of the next meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the position be noted; and
- (ii) a list of SACRE members be circulated to members of the committee.

41. NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE ACTION PLAN JANUARY 2019 TO DECEMBER 2021

Members were requested to monitor the Northumberland SACRE Action Plan January 2019 to December 2021 (a copy of which has been filed with the signed minutes as Appendix B).

Reference was made to the Collective Worship Policy Guidelines which were last updated in 2006. Before Phil Andre's departure he had reviewed the guidelines and considered them fit for purpose, however, Mr Cookson requested that this be endorsed by the committee and said he would circulate the document to members for feedback.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

42. CONSULTANT UPDATE

Phil Andre had retired from his position as part time RE consultant at the end of March. A job description for his replacement had been circulated through the newsletter and conversations held with head teachers but no expressions of interest had been received. Other avenues would be explored, however, there was a possibility that a replacement would not be found by the start of the next academic year as there was a relatively small number of people who could fill the role. Members were asked to pass on Mr Cookson's contact details if they knew of anyone suitable who may be interested. If no replacement was in place by September, Mr Cookson would step in on a temporary basis and take advice on any technical RE issues from SACRE members.

The Chair asked if a job specification for the role could be shared with SACRE members to circulate through their networks. He also referred to the Voluntary Organisations North East (VONE) website that regularly published vacancies for board members, trustees and charity directors and suggested it may be worth advertising on their opportunities board which covered the whole of the North East.

In addition Mrs Van Der Velde suggested that Mr Cookson should liaise with Karenza Passmore at the RE Resources Centre who had a number of contacts.

RESOLVED that the position be noted and suggestions followed up.

Ch.'s Initials.....

43. URGENT BUSINESS

Mrs Van Der Velde referred to visits to places of worship for teachers which had been cancelled in March. She said these had been well subscribed and she hoped the visits could be rescheduled for the Spring of 2021. Mr Cookson confirmed that, all being well, it was planned to carry these out in March 2021.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to head teachers, teachers, teaching support staff, cleaners, caretakers and all those involved in keeping schools operating throughout this difficult time and wished to put on record his thanks for the excellent support given by the central team of Northumberland County Council.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

44. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings were scheduled for 18 November 2020 and 3 February 2021 at 4:00 pm. Hopefully the next meeting would be held collectively but if that was not possible it would be another virtual meeting.

RESOLVED that the information above be noted.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE : _____

Ch.'s Initials.....