

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

At the meeting of the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** held at Council Chamber, County Hall on Wednesday, 13 July 2022 at 4.00 pm.

**PRESENT**

D. Van-Der-Valde  
Vice-Chair, in the Chair.

**COUNCILLORS**

L. Bowman  
T. Thorne

N. Morphet

**TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS REPRESENTATIVES**

R. Cant  
T. Nicholls

C. Curtis

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND REPRESENTATIVES**

C. Hudson

P. Rusby

**REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER CHURCHES & FAITHS**

Dr J. Miller

**OBSERVERS**

C. Dixon

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

D. Cookson  
R. Little  
C. Weir

Head of School Improvement  
Assistant Democratic Services  
Officer  
RE Consultant

Ch.'s Initials.....

## 1 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

In the absence of Cllr G. Renner-Thompson (Chair), members of the SACRE committee were asked to take item 5 first in order that a vice-chair could be elected and take the Chair.

Councillor Thorne nominated D. Van der Velde, which was seconded by Councillor Bowman, this was agreed by the committee.

**RESOLVED** that D. Van Der Velde was elected as Vice-Chair.

*D. Van Der Velde (Vice-chair), in the chair.*

## 2 MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Membership and Terms of Reference for the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), as agreed at Full Council on 4 May 2022 were provided for information.

R. Little – SACRE Clerk, explained that emails had been sent to the National Bodies for various religions to find new SACRE members in February 2022 and follow up emails in June 2022, but there had been no responses.

**RESOLVED** that the information was noted.

## 3 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Dr J. Miller raised a point of order about the agenda stating “Election of Chair” when the committee do not elect the chair, with the chair being appointed by Full Council each year in May.

**RESOLVED** that the appointment of Councillor G Renner-Thompson as Chair was noted.

## 4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor G. Renner-Thompson, A. Duffield, Rev. E.H. Marley and S. Dearlove.

## 5 MINUTES

C. Weir – RE Consultant, asked the committee if they would like to plan for Holocaust Memorial Day as the next meeting was planned for November 2022. D.

Ch.’s Initials.....

Cookson explained that this was organised by Democratic Services and that he would ask for them to keep him informed so he could invite SACRE members.

Dr J. Miller asked whether S. Dearlove was a full member of SACRE and no longer a co-opted representative, it was confirmed that the decision was agreed by Full Council in May 2022.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Northumberland Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), held on Wednesday, 2 February 2022 as circulated, were confirmed as a true record.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Northumberland Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), Agreed Syllabus Conference, held on Wednesday, 6 April 2022 as circulated, were confirmed as a true record.

## 6 **AN UPDATE OF CONTACTS WITH SCHOOLS AND TRAINING PROVISION**

C. Weir – RE Consultant, explained that she had been focusing on the launch of the new syllabus with schools and she would go into further detail later on in the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 7 **FEEDBACK ON THE AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE LAUNCH**

C. Weir – RE Consultant, explained to the committee that the launch day had been a success and she had spoken with schools who had the opportunity to look behind the scenes of the syllabus and also discussed with teachers the role of SACRE and they were invited to join the committee.

Key points in the syllabus were highlighted to schools along with teaching and learning approaches which would be utilised in the classrooms. First and primary schools were then separated from middle, and secondary schools to go into more details of the new syllabus and how to put it into practice and get the best out of it, including deep dives into subject leadership. RE Today brought along some resources for schools to buy into schemes of work for additional support. D. Cookson – Head of School Improvement and C. Weir – RE Consultant explained that they were looking into completing training on the new syllabus with schools in the Autumn term.

Feedback from teachers at the launch was positive, with comments including how well described the objectives were, how condensed the units were and how the syllabus looked more streamlined.

Almost 100 schools attended the launch day and were provided with a hard copy of the syllabus and schools which did not attend had been emailed and asked to collect a hard copy of the syllabus before the end of the term. D. Cookson explained that himself and C. Weir would support all schools who would like to attend, for the planning of the new syllabus for full successful implementation in September 2023.

Ch.'s Initials.....

D. Cookson – Head of School Improvement, explained that localised units had been discussed in Agreed Syllabus Conference meetings, however there had been insufficient committee members who attended the planned day to action this, but he would be happy to try again if committee members would attend.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 8 **SCHOOL WORKFORCE DATA**

Dr. J. Miller explained to the committee the background to the data, why and how it was collected and the role SACRE has on monitoring workforce data provided by secondary schools via the DFE. She did advise however, the data collected on the report was significantly out of date.

Committee members discussed the data briefly including; the percentage decrease of RE teaching hours in schools, and whether SACRE would investigate the schools that showed 0 hours or a decrease in hours.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 9 **NASACRE ISSUES**

A copy of Issue 31 was provided in the agenda packs for members to view, a further issue had been released since the publication of the agenda and had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The committee discussed Teaching School Hubs and suggested inviting R. Taylor to observe and partake in a future SACRE meeting.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 10 **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2022 REPORT CARD**

C. Weir – RE Consultant, introduced this report to the committee, explaining that it was released in May 2022 and showed information on Religious Education at a national level.

*A small adjournment was announced to give members the opportunity to discuss the report in groups.*

It was explained to members that Religious Education was not part of the national curriculum and the funding for the subject did not come from central government, but local authorities. Councillors of the committee were asked to speak to the Portfolio holder for Children’s Services to lobby for further funding for Religious Education.

C. Weir – RE consultant, explained that “insufficient professional development for teachers of RE” and “Gaps in teacher subject knowledge” was something that she

Ch.’s Initials.....

would like to work with schools on in the next academic year, including a programme of training off the back of the Agreed Syllabus launch.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 11 **REVIEW OF NASACRE CONFERENCE AND TRAINING EVENTS**

**A)** C. Weir – RE Consultant, directed members to the report attached to the agenda item in their agendas and gave a brief overview of the report. It was noted that members were able to download a free version of the draft handbook on world views.

### **B)**

C. Weir – RE Consultant explained that a number of training opportunities had been offered to SACRE members and that all members have been given the opportunity to attend. Verbal feedback from those training sessions from members were positive and helpful. Members were encouraged to attend further training sessions in September.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 12 **SACRE SUB-COMMITTEE**

Dr. J. Miller explained that there had been three quorate meetings of the sub-committee, in which the viability of SACRE was discussed. A report had been prepared and added to the agenda, which members were given the opportunity to discuss the recommendations from the sub-committee for future SACRE meetings.

D. Cookson - Head of School Improvement, explained that item 5 on the recommendation list may depend on the policy of the council to allow hybrid meetings but would add an action on the action plan for the Chair of SACRE to investigate further.

C. Curtis asked whether meetings could be on different days and times and noted that Wednesdays are not always viable for teaching staff.

Members thanked Dr. J. Miller for the report and unanimously agreed for the recommendations to be added to the SACRE action plan.

**RESOLVED** that this was agreed.

## 13 **NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE ACTION PLAN SEPTEMBER 2021 TO AUGUST 2023**

D. Cookson - Head of School Improvement, gave a verbal update on the SACRE Action Plan and explained that the recommendations from the sub-committee would become the plan for the next action plan.

Ch.'s Initials.....

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

14 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Dr. J. Miller requested for the dates of the meeting to be provided further in advance and for the summer meeting to be brought forward to May as there was a long gap between the meeting in February and the meeting in July.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

15 **URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)**

C. Weir – RE Consultant explained that schools had approached her and asked whether members of faiths were able to visit and talk to schools about their world views to which: C. Hudson, Dr. J. Miller, P. Rusby and D. Van Der Velde volunteered. Cllr Morphet explained that he would also ask S. Dearlove following the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

Ch.'s Initials.....