

North Yorkshire County Council

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the remote meeting held on Wednesday, 20th October, 2021 commencing at 4.00 pm.

Group A: Christian Denominations and such other religious denominations as, in the Authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area:

Helen Sellers (Baptist) Professor John Adams (Humanist), Sian Henderson (Methodist), Bill Kimberling (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) and Mohinder Singh Chana (Sikh)

Group B: Church of England: Reverend Simone Bennett and, Philippa Boulding (Diocese of York)

Group C: Teachers Associations: Tara Askew and Stuart Anslow

Group D: Local Authority: County Councillors Robert Heseltine, Patrick Mulligan and Annabel Wilkinson

Officers present: Adrian Clarke (Principal Education Advisor - Support), Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager), Steve Loach (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Heather Russell (Senior Educational Advisor) and Olivia Seymour (Professional Religious Education Adviser)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

258 Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Resolved –

That Helen Sellers (Baptist) be appointed Chair of the North Yorkshire SACRE for a twelve month period.

It was noted that there had been no nominations for Vice-Chairman received at this stage, therefore, the appointment would be deferred for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

259 Welcome and Announcements

For the benefit of any members of the public or the media viewing the broadcast, the Chair advised that the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education is a Statutory Committee established by the Local Authority.

She added that its main function is to advise and support the Local Authority on matters related to religious education for schools that follow the locally Agreed Syllabus and on Collective Worship.

Four groups are represented on SACRE:-

- Group A – Christian Denominations and such other religious denominations that reflect the principal religious traditions in the area
- Group B – The Church of England

- Group C – Teacher and Head Teacher Associations
- Group D – The Local Authority

The Constitution for the Committee provides that each Group should elect a Chair at the start of the School Year to report its decisions to SACRE on those occasions when we vote in our groups. In view of that the Groups undertook a discussion and the following appointments were received:-

Group A - Bill Kimberling (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints)
 Group B - Philippa Boulding (Diocese of York)
 Group C - Tara Askew
 Group D – County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson

The Chair stated that this meeting had been postponed from September in order to identify new teacher representatives for Group C, following the resignations in July of Judy Clark, due to retirement from teaching; and Rosemary Laverack, due to an increased level of responsibility, and therefore workload, from September.

The Chair also welcomed new Committee Member – Stuart Anslow of Water Street Community Primary School (Head Teacher Association Representative – Group C).

260 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from County Councillor Janet Jefferson, Nasr Moussa Emam (Muslim), Chris Devanny (Catholic), Sarah Leach (Buddhist) and Gill Simpson (Diocese of Leeds).

261 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

262 Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd June 2021 and any matters arising

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Matter arising

Min. No. 253: Development Plan

The Chair noted that the minute stated that a report relating to the funding of SACRE would be submitted to this meeting, however, this would now be provided via a verbal report.

Min. No. 256: Dates of meetings for the School Year, 2021/2022

The February Meeting would now take place on Tuesday 1st February 2022.

Consideration was being given to commence all subsequent meetings at 4pm to take account of the work commitments of Members, with Members invited to contact the Clerk with any comments in respect of this.

263 Report of the Professional Religious Education Adviser, Olivia Seymour

Considered –

A report by the Report of the Professional Religious Education Adviser, Olivia Seymour, informing Members of work undertaken since the previous Meeting of SACRE and of national updates in Religious Education.

The report provided details on the following issues:-

- Training
- Monitoring of RE
- British public values an understanding of worldviews and role of RE
- Regional training for Schools through LTLRE and NATRE Regional Ambassador role
- Inter Faith Week 2021
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Muslim Council of Britain Visit My Mosque resource

Olivia Seymour highlighted the following in relation to the report:-

- An update on the delivery of training would be provided during a presentation to the Committee later in the meeting. A timetable was being developed, with Senior Leaders providing their input, and training would be provided on a themed basis. There was a good interest in the proposed events at Primary level, but further work was required in encouraging participation at a Secondary level.
- Support was required for the OFSTED review to ensure that the take up for that could be developed appropriately.
- Details obtained from the questionnaire circulated to schools in respect of the monitoring of RE would be shared with the Committee at the December meeting as the circulation had been delayed until this term.

The following issue was raised in relation to the presentation:-

- In respect of the proposed Inter Faith Week it was noted that there were insufficient available resources for this to take place in November, as planned. Further consideration would be given as to when this will now take place and SACRE members would be utilised to help develop the event.

RESOLVED –

That the report and updates be noted.

264 Report of the Local Authority - Adrian Clarke, Principal Education Adviser (Support)

Considered –

A report by Adrian Clarke, which updated Members on developments from the Local Authority's perspective highlighting the following:-

- Communication and resourcing
- Training
- Support for Senior Leaders and Governors
- Monitoring of RE and the Agreed Syllabus
- Ofsted inspections
- New SACRE Annual Report Framework

Adrian Clarke highlighted the following in relation to the report:-

- He and Heather Russell had worked with Olivia Seymour on a range of issues to support SACRE which is a large project.
- Communication with schools is carried out via the Red Bag or the CYPs website with a great deal of information available in respect of RE and collective worship. Wider issues are also covered on the NYCC website.
- Training would continue to be provided via MS Teams until directed otherwise in view of a continued awareness of the pandemic. It was also allowing for an enhanced involvement with training sessions particularly for secondary schools.
- Olivia Seymour will be working with the School Improvement Team after half term. The School Improvement Team have increased the number of days they will be in school which will allow a more in-depth analysis of schools to be undertaken, which will include RE provision. He noted that RE was within 7 of the 8 priorities for schools and details could be found in the pay section of the CYPs website, for schools.
- OFSTED inspections had recommenced, however, at this stage there had been no reports published, and these would be fed back into subsequent meetings.
- The Annual Report would take on a new format than previously and a draft of the Report would be provided to the December meeting of the Committee. The Chair reassured Members that an initial draft of the Annual Report would be circulated to them prior to the December meeting, allowing them time to consider and comment on the report before this was formally considered. Details of the new format and information that would be included were outlined. It was noted that, as this was the inaugural Annual Report in this format, the DfE had allowed additional time for this to be produced but, in future, statutory deadlines would need to be met. The reports would be analysed by the DfE to determine the role of SACRE in monitoring and supporting schools in the delivery of RE and Collective Worship, for each Local Authority area.

The following issues were raised in relation to the presentation:-

A Member, highlighting the questionnaire circulated to schools, asked whether this identified those using the syllabus for the teaching of RE, and those that were not, and why. He considered that there would be some systematic basis to the data collected to determine the value of the syllabus. In response it was stated that the questionnaire was being used as a starting point to provide a clearer picture of how schools are delivering RE and the next steps required in relation to this. It was important that details of who was using the syllabus as professional guidance for the delivery of RE were obtained. The syllabus provided the relevant structures for monitoring and the legal responsibilities in terms of RE, and the information obtained allowed SACRE to reflect on how this was being used, alongside the relevant monitoring systems. It was noted that the syllabus was available on the CYPs website and was part of the subscription service offered to schools.

Members welcomed the new template for the Annual Report as it provided much more detail on collective worship and how schools were addressing their legal responsibilities. It was noted, however, that there was no comparison data for the financial information that would be provided. In terms of the financial information it was noted that this would be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee as it was not yet in a position to be considered, due to the need to

separate individual costs and officers' time. It would also need to be determined how the annual budget is proportionally allocated alongside the 5 yearly review of the syllabus.

RESOLVED –

That the report and updates be noted.

265 Work Programme -

Considered –

A report by Daniel Harry – Manager, Democratic Service and Scrutiny. He highlighted the following:-

Details of the rolling Work Programme for the next 12 months, highlighting the statutory issues covered by the Committee, were provided in an Appendix to the report. Members of the Committee could suggest items to be included in the Work Programme, going forward, and these should be sent to the Clerk, Patrick Duffy, initially, to allow consideration as to how these are scheduled in.

Members thanked Patrick Duffy for his development of the Work Programme.

RESOLVED –

That the Work Programme be included as an Agenda Item at each meeting and used as a framework for meetings, going forward, with any suggested additional items sent to the Clerk, initially, for consideration of their inclusion in the Work Programme.

266 Chair's Report (Verbal Report)

Considered:-

The Chair stated that there was little to report to the Committee and noted that there was no correspondence on this occasion.

She welcomed the developments taking place with SACRE and the increased participation by Members of the Committee, which had been assisted by the switch to virtual meetings during the pandemic. She noted that Group C of the Committee was currently under transition and expected to welcome the new Members of that Group shortly. She considered that the connection with schools should be beginning to return to face-to-face as this was beneficial in getting details across and for two-way communication.

NOTED.

267 Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 7th December 2021 at 4.00 p.m.

Details of the current position regarding meetings was provided. The full County Council were to undertake a review at their meeting on 17th November where the format of meetings, going forward, would be considered. It was considered that it was unlikely that there would be a full, immediate return to face-to-face meetings at this stage, particularly with COVID levels still high. Currently, with health and safety issues taken account of, there was very limited capacity to hold face-to face meetings at County Hall.

Members highlighted the following in relation to this issue:-

- A Member considered that the remote meetings were not as effective as the face-to-face meetings in terms of the dynamics and interaction of the Committee, but recognised the issues around health and safety.
- A Member stated that it would be difficult to attend face-to-face meetings currently, due to work commitments.
- Issues around safety and travel were outlined by another Member who considered that remote meetings should continue for the time being. It was also suggested that carbon reduction should be taken account of when deciding how to move forward on this matter. It was also suggested that the quality of the meetings was as effective as face-to-face meetings.

The Chair suggested that members be provided with an update following the County Council meeting on 17th November, and the format for the next meeting be decided at that stage.

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the Committee be held on Tuesday 7th December 2021 at 4pm using a format to be decided following the County Council meeting on 17th November.

The meeting concluded at 5.05 pm.