

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
8 JULY 2010  
5.00 - 7.09 PM**



**Present:**

**Free Churches:**

Paula Ridgway  
Irene Robinson

**The Roman Catholic Church:**

Anne Gibbons  
Carol Nicholls

**Other Religions:**

Arfan Rashid, Muslim faith  
Joel Roszykiewicz, Buddhist faith  
Kusum Trikha, Hindu faith  
Dr Katharine Hadfield

**The Church of England:**

Gordon Anderson (Chairman)  
Maureen Beadsley  
David Fawcett  
Julie Mintern

**Associations Representing Teachers:**

Felicity Allen, NASUWT  
Colin Hickson, NUT  
Samantha Hunt, ATL  
Madeline Diver, Voice

**Bracknell Forest Council:**

Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker  
Councillor Alvin Finch  
Councillor Cliff Thompson

**Co-opted Members**

Rev Michael Bentley  
Dr Kathy Hadfield

**In Attendance:**

Chris Cowap, Partnership Development Officer, BFVA  
Jo Fageant, SACRE Associate Advisor  
Martin Surrell, Senior Advisor, Children, Young People and Learning  
Emma Silverton, Democratic Services Assistant

**142. Welcome and Apologies for Absence (prayer to be led by Dr Kathy Hadfield)**

Madeline Diver who was representing VOICE was welcomed to the meeting. VOICE was the new name for PAT.

The Chairman welcomed back the Senior Advisor, Children, Young People & Learning who had been on long-term sick leave. Introductions around the table followed.

Dr Kathy Hadfield opened the meeting with prayer. The Chairman thanked Dr Hadfield.

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Blatchford, Dorothy Hayes, Irene Robinson and Zvi Solomons.

**143. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2010 were agreed as a correct record subject to the addition of Irene Robinson in the list of those present and the removal of Kusum Trikha from the list of those present to that of apologies.

**144. Matters Arising not already on the agenda**

There were no matters arising.

**145. Faith and Belief Mapping in Bracknell Forest**

The Partnership Development Manager, Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action gave a presentation in respect of Bracknell Forest Faith and Belief in Action. The presentation gave details of the development of the Faith and Belief in Action project, key results from the questionnaire distributed to faith groups and future steps.

The Faith and Belief in Action project had been funded by Faiths in Action, sponsored by CLG and Equalities Across Central Berkshire, sponsored by Capacitybuilders. It was noted that both funds were due to end in March 2011.

The project aimed to bring together diverse faiths and beliefs to find common ground and a shared vision which would enhance the communities in Bracknell Forest. A mapping exercise of faith and beliefs in Bracknell Forest was undertaken to provide a snapshot of activities. 45 questionnaires were issued with 53.3% returned. Results showed that weekly attendance for worship was 6,125 with 106 faith and belief projects and activities taking place.

731 volunteers provided 2,067 hours of time a week. When calculated with the minimum wage this equated to £623, 407 of resource to the community per annum. If calculated with a more realistic wage of £10 per hour £1,075,00.00 of resource to the community. It was noted that this figure was likely to be significantly higher across the whole of Bracknell Forest as the survey had not covered all faith and belief groups. Groups who had not responded to the questionnaire would be contacted to see if a wider perspective could be gained.

On 9 March 2010 a Faith and Belief Conference was held which was attended by over 66 people from 18 faith and belief groups. The conference included speakers from other areas and received positive feedback from those who attended.

As a result of the conference a Faith and Belief Steering Group was established to look at the proposed actions and recommendations from the Faith and Belief in Action Project and to take forward any agreed work. The ultimate goal for the Steering Group was to develop a Faith and Belief Forum.

Interfaith Week was to take place in the week commencing 21 November 2010. Any suggestions for events that could be undertaken during this week were welcomed by the Partnership Development Manager.

The Council noted that the Bracknell Forest Cultural Partnership had requested that Dilip Ladwa and Madeline Diver represent and promote Faith and Belief on the partnership.

An Islamic Faith Seminar had been held at Bracknell Forest Council to raise awareness of the faith. The seminar had been very well attended and received positive feedback. Further events were to be planned for the future.

The results of the Faith and Belief in Action project did not reflect how many people regarded themselves as part of a particular faith in Bracknell forest. It was suggested that this could be an area of work for the Faith and Belief Forum to map.

The next meeting of the Faith and Belief Steering Group was to be held on 14 July 2010. It was agreed that Reverend Michael Bentley would attend the Faith and Belief Steering Group as the representative of Bracknell Forest SACRE.

The Chairman thanked The Partnership Development Officer for the presentation.

**146. The role and responsibility of SACRE**

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education noted the information relating to the role and responsibility of a SACRE.

**147. SACRE membership matters**

The Chairman thanked all members for their continued support and work on the SACRE and reported that 26 out of 27 positions on the Standing Advisory Council were filled. It was noted that there was currently a vacancy for a representative from the Secondary Heads Association.

The Chairman was pleased to present certificates for completion of the NASACRE Training for SACRE membership to Carol Nicholls and Arfan Rashid and congratulated them on their achievement. Rani Bilkhu had also completed the training but was not present at the meeting.

The Standing Advisory Council noted that no further training courses were planned by NASACRE however the training resources were available on CD to all SACREs.

SACRE considered a request by the British Humanist Association for Group A membership of the Bracknell Forest SACRE. It was noted that the request letter had been supported by a letter from the British Humanist Association.

The Standing Advisory Council noted that a change in constitution which would be required to alter the membership of the SACRE would need to be agreed with Bracknell Forest Council, as SACRE was a statutory body convened and administered by Local Authorities.

The SACRE Associate Advisor explained that although the supporting letter mentioned a recent change to guidance on SACREs and membership, there had been no change in the law relating to SACRE membership. Under the current legislation it would be difficult to justify a Humanist representative in Group A on the SACRE.

It was suggested that a representative on the SACRE representing the view of all non-religious people would be too broad an area for a representative to cover.

The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education agreed that it could not support the request to allocate a Group A position for a representative of the British Humanist Association on the Bracknell Forest SACRE.

It was suggested that a representative from the Humanist Association could be considered as a co-opted member however this would need further investigation as the number of members of SACRE would need to be limited to ensure the focus of the group was not lost.

It was agreed that the Standing Advisory Council would receive a report at its next meeting from the SACRE Associate Advisor and the Senior Advisor, Children, Young People and Learning on the numbers of co-optees on other SACREs.

#### **148. RE Resources**

The Standing Advisory Council noted that religious education displays had been created by Harmans Water Primary School, Kennel Lane School and Warfield Primary School, using a selection of resources available at the Easthampstead Park Mansion Education Centre.

During the academic year 2009/10 sessions had been run which were open to all RE teachers to help them develop their knowledge of the religious artefacts which were available at the Education Centre.

Disappointment was expressed in regard to the limited number of schools which had taken the opportunity to use the religious artefacts available. It was noted that whilst the availability of the artefacts was well known to the schools and included in the teaching notes on the Council's website, it was the schools' choice and decision about whether to use them as part of their religious education provision.

It was noted that some schools, particularly secondary schools, had their own collections of religious artefacts. There had been a change in the system of obtaining the artefacts as where they had previously been delivered to schools they now required collecting. It was thought that this could be a reason for the low take up.

It was suggested that links between RE resources and community cohesion should be considered. SACRE agreed that a letter would be written and sent to all primary schools in the borough by the Secondary Advisor and signed by the Chairman on behalf of SACRE promoting the use of the religious artefacts. Members were welcome to submit suggestions for wording and uses of the different artefacts to the Secondary Advisor.

#### **149. Transforming Religious Education**

The Standing Advisory Council received the Ofsted Report on Religious Education in Schools 2006-09. The report evaluated the strengths and challenges for improvement in the future of religious education (RE) in primary and secondary schools and discussed the key issues in RE teaching and learning at present. The report was principally based in evidence from visits to 94 primary and 89 secondary schools in England between 2006 and 2009.

SACRE noted that the points raised in the report may be things that should be considered when reviewing the locally agreed syllabus.

The report expressed that where RE was less successful teachers did not have a clear understanding of the overarching aims of RE. The report suggested that the most successful RE was based on enquiry based learning. It was suggested that clarity on this should be investigated in the Bracknell Forest syllabus.

The report suggested that fewer units of work in bigger blocks of time meant that children were better able to engage and become involved with RE topics.

The report recommended that Local Authorities in partnership with SACREs and agreed syllabus conferences should ensure the work of SACREs had good access to subject expertise to effectively support schools, ensure high quality professional development was available to schools and ensure that agreed syllabuses offered guidance and clarity on key concepts and a definition of progression in RE.

It was noted that the evidence from the report was collected from a relatively small sample of schools and did not necessarily reflect the situation in Bracknell Forest schools. One Bracknell Forest School had been included in the list of schools inspected. Reference to SACREs in the report came from the perspective of teachers as SACREs were not consulted for the report.

#### **150. The monitoring of RE and CW in Bracknell Forest Schools**

Due to the Secondary Advisor having been away on long term sick leave no progress had been made on the monitoring of RE and CW in Bracknell Forest Schools. As previously agreed both monitoring systems would be tried as it was most practical to consider both options. It was agreed that an update would be prepared for the next SACRE meeting which outlined preferred options.

It was suggested that the Secondary RE Teachers Group could be consulted on the monitoring systems.

It was reported that the online monitoring tool was currently being piloted and would be nationally available from September 2010.

#### **151. The NASACRE Annual General Meeting**

A full written report had been provided for SACRE members by Jo Fageant. It was noted that no member of the Bracknell Forest SACRE attended the NASACRE AGM held in London on 12 May 2010 as the date of the meeting was not circulated to the SACRE. It was suggested that NASACRE should be given the contact details of the Bracknell Forest SACRE Chairman to prevent this occurring again in the future. It was agreed that the Secondary Advisor would confirm that the membership fees had been paid to NASACRE for 2010/11.

SACRE had a copy of the CD of SACRE training which was available for members to have a look at. It was agreed that 5 further copies of the CD would be purchased from NASACRE.

It was reported that March 2011 would be a national celebration of RE. It was agreed that this would be promoted to the schools as it would raise the profile of RE. It was agreed that a small working party would draft a promotion letter which would be sent on behalf of the SACRE to all Bracknell Forest Schools. SACRE agreed that the

event would be advertised in the RE newsletter written by the SACRE Associate Advisor.

**152. Berkshire Joint SACREs' Conference feedback**

SACRE received feedback from the SACRE Associate Advisor on the Berkshire Joint SACREs' Conference held on 15 June 2010.

It was reported that overall attendance had been lower than in previous years and not all the Bracknell Forest slots had been filled. A discussion had taken place about whether the conferences in their present format still provided good value for money as attendance was often low and some SACREs did not appear to take forward issues addressed at the conferences.

It was suggested that the formal conferences could take place on a biennial or triennial basis and that other more informal sessions which offered opportunities to discuss and share ideas could be held in addition to the conferences.

It was suggested that a training day using the resources set out in the NASACRE CD could be organised for all 6 or a smaller number of SACREs in Berkshire. It was reported that Wokingham SACRE had volunteered to lead on this event if the other Berkshire SACREs were in agreement. Wokingham SACRE had also volunteered to take the lead on providing training for special school RE teachers for Berkshire.

RE trails had been discussed at the conference. It was suggested that this could be incorporated into the March 2011 celebration of RE with schools researching the trails in villages across Bracknell Forest which could be developed into an exhibition.

**153. The next Locally Agreed Syllabus review**

It was reported that the next Locally Agreed Syllabus review must begin before the end of the Summer 2011 term. West Berkshire SACRE had offered to take the lead on a review with the support of the other SACREs in Berkshire and required a response from each SACRE by 1 December 2010.

It was reported that the SACRE budget had been reduced by 50% which meant that the way the review of the locally agreed syllabus was funded would need to be reviewed.

It was agreed that Bracknell Forest SACRE would be delighted to contribute towards a joint review of the Locally Agreed Syllabus which would be led by West Berkshire SACRE.

**154. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**155. Dates of Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Bracknell Forest SACRE would take place on Wednesday 10 November 2010.

Other dates proposed were:

- Wednesday 9 March 2011 - Council Chamber
- Thursday 7 July 2011 - Teacher Centre

- Thursday 10 November 2010 - Council Chamber

All would be subject to the usual meeting rooms being available.

**CHAIRMAN**