

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

4 November 2015

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Committee Members Present: Carole Jones (Chairman), Councillor Carol Melvin, Councillor John Morse, Councillor Robin Sansarpuri, Gail Butler, Angela Lount, Amir Ahmed, Naseem Bint Amir, Jasvir Singh Rayat, Robert Harwood, Mary Coulthurst and Elenor Paul.</p> <p>Also Present: Duncan Struthers (Advisor to SACRE) and Richard Cawley.</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Jon Pitt (Democratic Services Officer / Clerk to SACRE).</p>
10.	<p>CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT (<i>Agenda Item</i>)</p> <p>The HSACRE Meeting commenced at 7:30 pm.</p> <p>Carole Jones, Vice Chairman, announced that the Chairman of HSACRE, Revd. Daniel Norris had resigned as Chairman with immediate effect. Consequently, an item had been included on the agenda for the election of a new Chairman and Vice Chairman.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the current Vice Chairman would Chair the meeting until the appointment of a new Chairman was confirmed.</p>
11.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. Peter Money, with Cllr. Robin Sansarpuri substituting, from Cllr. Susan O'Brien and also from Lil Osborn.</p>
12.	<p>TO AGREE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2015 (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>In relation to the NSACRE meeting update included in the minutes, Duncan Struthers, Advisor to SACRE, explained that there had been discussion at the meeting regarding whether a national R.E Syllabus might be introduced and what the role would be for local SACREs in the event that this happened. It was not yet known when such a decision was likely to be taken.</p> <p>In relation to the Hayes Carnival item included in the minutes, the Advisor noted that he had brought artwork from the junior art competition to the SACRE meeting, which Members were welcome to view.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2015 were agreed to be accurate.

13.	<p>HSACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2014 (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Duncan Struthers, Advisor to SACRE, introduced the 2014 Annual Report. This was the 23rd Annual Report of the Hillingdon SACRE. It was noted that the HSACRE logo on the front cover of the report dated from a competition held 20 years ago. The logo had been designed by a then eight year old pupil from the north of the Borough and it was pleasing to see that it was still in use.</p> <p>The Members of Hillingdon SACRE agreed the Annual Report 2014 as presented.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 2014 HSACRE Annual Report be agreed as presented. 2. Arrangements be made for the Annual Report to be submitted to NSACRE.
14.	<p>FEEDBACK ON JUNIOR ART COMPETITION (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Duncan Struthers, Advisor to HSACRE, provided feedback on the junior art competition and confirmed that he had brought the winners to the meeting for Members to view. Children had enjoyed participating in the competition. It was suggested that, in future, the competition could be promoted at after school groups. Following initial discussion about the possibility of displaying entries at Hillingdon Library, arrangements were now being put in place to instead display them at Botwell Library. The Chairman suggested that entries could be displayed at a variety of libraries, while another HSACRE Member suggested that they could be displayed at Uxbridge Station.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Advisor to further investigate the public display of entries from the Junior Art Competition.
15.	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Following a short discussion, it was proposed and seconded that Carole Jones be appointed as Chairman of HSCARE.</p> <p>It was agreed that the appointment of a Vice-Chairman would be deferred until a future meeting.</p> <p>Members, including the new Chairman, gave thanks for the work of former chairman, Daniel Norris.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carole Jones be appointed as Chairman of HSACRE.
16.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS (<i>Agenda Item</i>)</p> <p>16.1 - Hillingdon Interfaith Network AGM</p> <p>A flyer was circulated to the HSACRE Members present in relation to the Annual General Meeting of the Hillingdon Interfaith Network. This was due to be held on Thursday 26 November at Hillingdon Park Baptist Church. An Interfaith event would also be held at Swakeleys School on the same day, which Members were welcome to attend, subject to confirming their attendance to the Advisor. The school event started at Midday, with lunch to be provided.</p>

16.2 - Time off for religious observance

There was a discussion about how HSACRE could support schools in relation to pupils taking time off school for religious observance. This was problematic for schools because even when such absence was authorised, it impacted negatively on the school's attendance statistics. The Eid Festival had had a significant impact on many schools in the Borough. It was noted that pupils could be given time off without it affecting attendance figures as long as they were present for morning and afternoon registration. It was considered that this could offer a practical solution for Divali, but not for Eid due to the latter requiring observance early in the day. It was noted that in Leeds / Bradford some schools granted a holiday for the whole school during Eid. This approach was seen as being unfair on pupils from other faiths in multi-faith schools. A Member stated that some schools in Ealing created holidays for particular festivals where there were a significant number of followers of that faith within the school. It was suggested that discussion could be undertaken with Ealing with regard to how this worked in practice.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The Advisor to SACRE to write to schools to clarify the situation with regard to time off for religious observance.**

16.3 - Advice to Schools

A Member raised a recent issue where a parent had complained about their five year old daughter being expected to change in front of other children. It was questioned what role HSACRE could take in such cases. The Advisor confirmed that HSACRE could provide advice to schools on such issues and advice was provided on a number of issues each year. The most common approach was to propose a meeting of the relevant parties.

16.4 - Future Meeting Venues

It had previously been agreed that some meetings of HSACRE would take place at faith venues, rather than at the Civic Centre. It was provisionally agreed that the June 2016 meeting would take place at Hayes Muslim Centre.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Arrangements to be made for the June 2016 meeting of HSACRE to be held at Hayes Muslim Centre.**

16.5 - Support for RE Teachers

A Member said that RE Co-ordinators often felt overwhelmed and asked whether HSACRE was able to provide support. It was also questioned whether there was scope to organise an annual Borough wide RE co-ordinators meeting and for it to be supported by HSACRE.

An HSCARE Member questioned whether the vacancies listed in the 2014 Annual Report had been filled. The current clerk advised that the report reflected vacancies during 2014 and that the previous clerk had worked to fill vacancies, although some remained. This work would be continued.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Advisor to SACRE to investigate the possibility of holding an annual meeting for RE co-ordinators.

16.6 Other actions agreed

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Clerk to SACRE to work with the Advisor to fill current vacancies on HSACRE.
2. Fiona Gibbs, the Council's Stronger Communities Manager, to be invited to the next meeting to talk about the Prevent Counter Terrorism Strategy.

The HSACRE Meeting finished at 8:40 pm.

17. **AGREED SYLLABUS QUESTIONNAIRE - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting commenced at 8:40 pm.

17.1 - Feedback on Agreed Syllabus Conference Questionnaire

Jon Pitt, Clerk to SACRE, introduced the summary of responses that had been received in relation to the Agreed Syllabus Conference questionnaire. This had been circulated to schools across the Borough in order to assist HSACRE to determine whether a review of the existing RE syllabus should be undertaken.

The response to the survey had been disappointing, with only 12 schools in the Borough having responded. The responses received suggested that schools in the Borough felt that the current syllabus reflected their needs, with only one respondent suggesting that a full review of the syllabus should be undertaken. However, given the low response, Members could not be certain that this was representative of all schools in the Borough.

Some Members felt that the survey should be sent as hard copy to all schools in Hillingdon. It was also suggested that that the survey could be shared with school governors. Following discussion, it was agreed that as an alternative, the survey would be presented to the Heads of RE meeting and to the Primary Schools Forum.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Agreed Syllabus questionnaire would be presented to the Secondary Heads of RE meeting and to the Primary Schools Forum.

17.2 - Review of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus

In relation to the possibility of undertaking a review of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus, it was agreed that the 'Faith and Values' section of the current syllabus for each of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 would be circulated to Members for comment and proposed revision. Two HSACRE Members, Naseem Bint Amir and Robert Harwood, would subsequently meet with the Chairman and Advisor to discuss these proposals.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The 'Faith and Values' section of the current syllabus for each of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 would be circulated to Members for comment and revisions to be proposed. Two HSACRE Members, Naseem Bint Amir and Robert Harwood, would subsequently meet with the Chairman and Advisor to discuss these proposals.
2. Two teachers from local schools who had expressed an interest in being involved in any review undertaken of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus would be formally invited to become Members of HSACRE.

17.3 - Support for RE Co-ordinators

It was also discussed whether there was a need for RE to be made more relevant to alternative traditions and world views and whether the focus of HSACRE should be more on how to provide support to school and RE teachers than on a review of the syllabus.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Advisor to investigate how best to engage with the Primary RE Co-ordinators.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference meeting finished at 9:25 pm.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.35 pm, closed at 9.25 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Jon Pitt on 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.