

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**5 JUNE 2007**

Representatives of the LEA

Councillors:	* Ms Nana Asante	* Mrs Anjana Patel
	* Mrs Lurline Champagnie	

Representatives of Christian and Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

* Mrs M Besser (Chairman)	Mrs S Lynn
* Zia Baig	† Councillor Asad Omar
* Mr M Bishop	Mrs S Panjwani
* Mrs N Desai	* Mr N Ramsley
* Mrs P Gan-Kotwal	Rabbi D Roselaar
* Mrs M Hale	Prof H Singh
* Dr V Kapashi	† Mr P Singh-Kohli
* Mr D Liversedge	

Representatives of the Church of England

* Mrs M Abbott	Rev'd S Pothen
Dr K Pinching	

Representatives of Teachers

* Mrs S Mistry	* Mrs A Stowe
† Ms B Pandya-Arepalli	† Rev'd Dr S Thompson
* Mrs R Shakar	

Co-opted Members

Mr J Dave	* Ms P Stevens
Mr M Shah	

Adviser to the Council, Nominated by the Corporate Director, Children's Services

† Mr P O'Dwyer

\* Denotes Member present

† Denotes apologies received

Also in attendance at the meeting:

- Ms Jasbinder Baddhan (Harrow Council Race Hate Crime Co-ordinator)
- Paul Evans (Inspector for Partnerships, Harrow Police)
- Mark Tomlinson (Street Pastor Co-ordinator for Sutton)
- Councillor Navin Shah

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL**

**PART II - MINUTES**

55. **Appointment of Chairman:**

**RESOLVED:** That Mrs Martha Besser be appointed Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for the Municipal Year 2007/08.

56. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

**RESOLVED:** That Mrs Alison Stowe be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education for the Municipal Year 2007/08.

57. **Membership:**

Nomination forms had been issued in order for the membership of SACRE to be confirmed for the Municipal Year 2007/08.

**RESOLVED:** That forms not returned at the meeting be forwarded to Pat Stevens by 29 June 2007.

58. **Apologies for Absence:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Asad Omar, Mr Patrick O'Dwyer, Mrs Bavita Pandya-Arepalli, Mr Paramjit Singh Kohli and the Reverend Dr Stephen Thompson.

59. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

60. **Declarations of Interest:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interest was declared:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
Pat Stevens	Pat Stevens declared a personal interest in that she was the Religious Education Consultant to Harrow Council.

61. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 March 2007:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2007 be deferred until printed in the Council Bound Minute Volume.

62. **Matters Arising**(a) **Contacts with London SACREs:**

Pat Stevens reported that a letter had been received from the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), inviting the Chairs and Advisers of London SACREs to NASACRE's first London Regional Seminar at City Hall on Wednesday 11 July 2007 from 11.15 am to 4.15 pm.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) Alison Stowe and Pat Stevens attend the seminar, but if either were unable to go, they nominate other SACRE members to attend in their place;

(2) Harrow SACRE be pro-active in inviting neighbouring SACRE members to its functions, for example the SACRE showcase for Councillors.

(b) **SACRE showcase for Councillors:**

Members agreed with suggested plans that the event should include:

- an overview of Harrow's range of beliefs and philosophies;
- an explanation of the role, membership and make-up of Harrow SACRE;
- an insight into Harrow's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and associated schemes of work;
- an exhibition of children's work, including pupil presentations;
- the opportunity for Councillors and visitors to ask questions of an inter-faith panel comprising members of SACRE and representatives of Christian and other religious denominations and faiths.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel negotiate a date for the showcase at the Managers' meeting and inform Pat Stevens;

(2) a Working Party consisting of Alison Stowe, Patrick O'Dwyer, Pat Stevens and Shruti Mistry meet to organise the event and seek advice from the Member Development Team via Aileen Beaumont.

(c) **SACRE Constitution:**

Members had scrutinised the copy of the revised constitution, which was circulated following discussion at the SACRE meeting of 8 March 2007. Mike Bishop led further discussion on three items:

1. **Pupil Representation.**

It was agreed that section 2, Group D, Consultants and officers, item 4 should read: "Pupil representatives will be encouraged to attend

SACRE meetings. Two student representatives will be seconded from the Harrow Council Advisory Group”.

SACRE representatives were invited to a meeting of the Harrow Student Advisory Group to be held at 4.00 pm on Monday 25 June 2007 at Harrow Teachers' Centre to talk to the students about SACRE and to invite their participation. Mary Abbott, Zia Baig, Niru Desai and Mary Hale expressed interest in attending the meeting. Pat Stevens would contact them with details of the meeting. In addition it was agreed that there would be a regular agenda item to enable pupils from a variety of schools to present to SACRE projects and activities that they have carried out during RE lessons.

SACRE members affirmed their pleasure in the future involvement of young people in SACRE and looked forward to hearing their views on how religious education and collective worship might be developed.

2. Review of the Agreed Syllabus

Mike Bishop pointed out that section 7 item 4, contravened a clause in the 1996 Education Act, which stated that Group D, comprising Local Authority representatives, may not require a review of the agreed syllabus.

The Group D representatives strongly expressed the view that Group D should be able to require an agreed syllabus review, if appropriate, along with Groups A, B and C. It was agreed that SACRE would seek advice on this point from Legal Services, as well as seeking legal advice on the clarity of wording of SACRE's revised constitution.

3. Nominating Groups for SACRE members

It was agreed that the title of the document to accompany the constitution should be “Some suggested nominating groups for SACRE members”, rather than “Range of nominating groups for SACRE members”.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

(d) Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and Scheme of Work:

Pat Stevens reported that the revised Harrow Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education with its detailed introduction to Harrow faiths and philosophies and illustrations of the religious life of Harrow was being prepared for electronic publication and printing. The development of the accompanying non-statutory units of work was underway.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

(e) Baha'i materials and resource packs for schools:

Martha Besser reported that taking into account diminished funding possibilities from Harrow Council for the development of resource packs for schools, the Baha'i community had reduced the content of the Baha'i packs to materials that would be particularly valuable for schools. This would bring the cost of packs for all schools to £2,490. The Baha'is agreed to fund a third of this amount.

Councillor Navin Shah joined the meeting to inform members that education was an important item on the Jain agenda and that the Institute of Jainology was in the final stages of preparation of a primary Jain resource pack. This would be available shortly for members to examine and it was hoped that the Jain pack would be available for launch in the near future. The Jains would fund a substantial part of the venture.

Members welcomed the coming availability of Baha'i and Jain packs and thanked these faiths for their hard work in developing the materials. Teacher members confirmed the pressing need for the resources.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the above be noted;

(2) that, in addition to the Baha'i subsidy, SACRE would contribute £500 towards the packs and schools would be asked to contribute the remainder of the cost, about £17 per school; and

(3) to proceed with contacting schools and ordering the Baha'i packs.

63. **Report from the Multi-Agency Forum regarding the Proposed Street Warden Scheme:**

Jasbinder Baddhan, Harrow Council's Race Hate Crime Coordinator introduced Paul Evans, Inspector for Partnerships, Harrow Police and Mark Tomlinson, Street Pastor Coordinator for Sutton.

Mark Tomlinson explained his role as a Street Pastor in the London Borough of Sutton, which statistically had the lowest crime rate in London, yet a high fear of crime. The Sutton Street Pastors, who were all Christian ministers, worked closely with the police. Wearing a recognisable uniform with a logo, they were visible in the streets as people who cared and listened. The scheme came under the umbrella of the Ascension Trust and received funding from the police, local council, businesses and churches. Although Mark was also involved with the Sutton Partnership and the Faith and Belief Forum, the Street Pastor scheme was seen in Sutton as a Christian project. Other faiths were aware of the scheme and were supportive of its aims. Further details of the Sutton scheme could be accessed through [www.streetpastors.org](http://www.streetpastors.org).

Harrow SACRE members voiced their support of the scheme and asked if such a scheme would be viable in Harrow. Jasbinder Baddhan explained that plans were underway for a scheme to operate in Harrow. Members felt that Harrow's record in inter-faith relations could well lead to a multi-faith street pastor scheme. The visitors were thanked for their presentation.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

64. **Report from NASACRE Conference:**

Phiroza Gan-Kotwal handed documentation from the conference to the Chairman and agreed to inform members of proceedings once she had received the minutes. It was agreed that further information would be distributed.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

65. **SACRE Report 2006:**

Pat Stevens distributed copies of the report for Members to read outside of the meeting. Mike Bishop suggested that SACRE should write to the high schools to congratulate them on their continued good achievements at GCSE and AS levels.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

66. **Determinations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no determination renewals for discussion at the meeting.

67. **SACRE Advice on the Religious Needs of Pupils:**

Pat Stevens stressed the pressing need for SACRE to discuss and produce guidelines for the religious needs of pupils in schools. Headteachers and Governors looked to SACRE as a respected body, which could provide balanced, well-considered advice to bring cohesion of practice across the Borough. There were urgent questions from schools, particularly about clothing worn by Muslim pupils and issues relating to Swaminarayan pupils removing beads for physical education, which schools classed as jewellery.

**RESOLVED:** That a working party led by Alison Stowe meet at 1.00 pm on 20 September 2007 at the Civic Centre to begin work on the guidance, and it be noted that Martha Besser (Baha'i), Mary Hale (Buddhist), Niru Desai (Hindu), Phiroza Gan-Kotwal (Zoroastrian), Vinod Kapashi (Jain) and Zia Baig (Muslim) had volunteered to join the working party and others would be welcome.

68. **Multi-Faith Calendars for Schools:**

Pat Stevens reminded members that each year SACRE purchased the SHAP Calendar of Religious Festivals for Schools. Mahendra Hirani had worked with a world focus on a Multi Faiths Festivals calendar, which took a detailed scholarly approach to explanations of the festivals. Copies of the calendar running from January 2008 – April 2009 would retail at £12.50.

**RESOLVED:** (1) To continue supplying the SHAP calendar to First and Middle Schools, and to order copies of Mr Hirani's calendar for high schools, colleges and the Teachers' Centre;

(2) that there should be a joint order from SACRE and Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel to include educational establishments, libraries, the Civic Centre and community centres.

69. **News from Organisations on which Harrow SACRE has Representation and from Faith Communities:**

- Harrow Council was congratulated on its very successful Baisakhi celebration at the Civic Centre.
- On behalf of Harrow Inter Faith Council, Mary Hale and Martha Besser distributed a detailed report of the successful conference run for Harrow high schools.
- A film by Al Gore on climate change would be shown at Harrow Baptist Church at 8.00 pm on Sunday 10 June and Kol Chai Jewish Community was giving a presentation on Thursday 28 June by the Director of the Meridian Project, with a view to developing a cohesive approach to energy saving by all of Harrow's faith communities. Further details could be obtained by Rabbi Michael Hilton on 020 8906 8241. SACRE members would be most welcome at these events.
- It was noted that Under One Sky would be held on Sunday 8 July 2007 and a pan London inter-faith event, "Thursday's Child" would run at the West Ham Memorial Recreation ground during the weekend 7/ 8 July 2007.

Vinod Kapashi gave notice of a touring World Congress of Faiths exhibition and asked if a venue might be found for it in Harrow. The Harrow Museum and Heritage Centre was recommended as an ideal venue.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the above be noted;

(2) Vinod Kapashi liaise with Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel early next year to identify a venue in Harrow for the touring World Congress of Faiths exhibition.

70. **Dates and Venues of Next Meetings:**

SACRE meetings for the rest of the Municipal Year 2007-2008 would be held on Wednesday 19 September 2007, Wednesday 5 December 2007 and Wednesday 12 March 2008. It was agreed to hold meetings at the Civic Centre but to arrange visits to additional places of worship.

Harrow Inter Faith Council would invite SACRE members to join them on their future programme of visits. It was agreed that Pat Stevens would write to the priest of St John Fisher Church to thank him, Neville Ransley and the congregation for their kind hospitality for the meeting on 8 March 2007.

**RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.45 pm)

(Signed) MRS M BESSER  
Chairman