

**17 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Councillors: Ms Nana Asante \* Mrs Anjana Patel  
\* Mrs Lurline Champagne

* Mrs M Besser	Councillor Asad Omar
Mr Z Baig	† Mr N Ransley
* Mr M Bishop	* Mrs G Ross
† Mrs N Desai	† Mr S Saddik
* Mrs P Gan-Kotwal	Mrs B Samuels
Ms S Gulamhussein	† Mr P Singh-Kohli
* Mrs M Hale	* Ms B Willson
Dr V Kapashi	
† Mr D Liversedge	

\* Mrs M Abbott                      † Mrs G Mercer

\* Ms B Pandya-Arepalli  
\* Ms N Parsons

\* Mrs A Stowe (Chairman)  
† Rev'd Dr S Thompson

**Mr J Dave**

\* Ms F Aldridge

\* Denotes Member present  
† Denotes apologies received

## PART II - MINUTES

141. **Opening Reflection:**  
Mrs Mary Hale opened the meeting with a spiritual reflection.
142. **Apologies for Absence:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Nana Asante, Mrs N Desai, Mr D Liversedge, Mrs G Mercer, Councillor Asad Omar, Mr N Ransley, Mr S Saddik, Mr P Singh Kohli and Rev Dr S Thompson.
143. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that Mr Singh Kohli attended the meeting as a Reserve Member for Mr P Singh Kohli.
144. **Declarations of Interest:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interest made by Members present in relation to the business to be transacted at this meeting.
145. **Minutes:**  
**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2008, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

146. **Matters Arising not appearing later in the Agenda:**  
Councillor Patel submitted 2 nominations for Hindu members of Group A SACRE members to fill vacancies within SACRE along with a nomination for a reserve member. Pat Stevens would follow up the nominations for the next meeting.
- RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.
147. **Report from the Harrow Student Advisory Board and Plans for the Formation and Development of the Harrow Youth Inter Faith Forum:**  
Dheemal Patel and Ravi Mistry reiterated the keenness expressed by members of the Harrow Student Advisory Board for establishing a Harrow Youth Inter Faith Forum. Members discussed attending the next meeting of the Student Advisory Board on 20 October 2008, for an item to on a project of make a film, "This is Harrow, the UK's most religiously diverse borough". In this film young people would explore aspects of their faiths and the way in which religion impacted upon young people. The launch of the film would provide a grand opening for the Harrow Youth Inter Faith Forum. It was confirmed that SACRE had funds of £5000 to launch the process. An application would be made for further funding in connection with community cohesion. Members agreed that young people's perspectives were key to good inter faith dialogue and the Youth Inter Faith Forum would play a significant part in the development of good community relations. It was suggested that Councillor Chris Mote should be involved in the plans. Nancy Parsons felt that the media department of St Dominic's Sixth Form College would be very interested to work with the young people in the production of the film. The idea was greeted with enthusiasm by other SACRE members.
- RESOLVED:** That Members of SACRE and Harrow Inter Faith Council attend the next meeting of the Student Advisory Board on 20 October 2008.
148. **Report of the Park High School Conference:**  
Members received a report from Gordana Capin on a successful sixth form conference on religion and philosophy, which took place at Park High School on 27 June 2008. It was reported that this was much appreciated by students. Members of SACRE and Harrow Inter Faith Council were thanked for their input into a number of workshops. The school would plan another conference next summer and would welcome contributions of inter-active workshops from SACRE, Harrow Inter Faith Council and faith communities.
- RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.
149. **Distribution of the Harrow Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2008 and Non-statutory Primary Units of Work:**  
Members received copies of the Harrow Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2008, with non-statutory units of work that had been received by all schools. Pat Stevens reported that electronic versions would be provided for the London Grid for Learning and Harrow Council websites so that the materials could be accessed by local faith communities and schools.
- RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.
150. **SACRE Advice on the Religious Needs of Pupils:**  
Alison Stowe introduced a guidance brochure containing information on the religious needs of pupils drawn from Harrow's faith communities, drawn up in consultation with Group A SACRE members. Members agreed that the guidance should be produced in 2 parts. The first section would include an overview chart that could be displayed to answer immediate queries. A companion booklet giving more detailed explanations and guidance would also be produced. Alison Stowe agreed to consider any further ideas or suggestions from Members of SACRE received by e-mail at [alison@thestowes.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:alison@thestowes.freeserve.co.uk). Farzana Aldridge suggested that Alison Stowe should use some of her "Advanced Skills Teacher" time to develop the guidance and that the two of them work together to progress the project.
- RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.
151. **Guidance on Authorised Absence for Pupils to fulfil Religious Obligations 2008-09:**  
Pat Stevens presented a draft copy of the Guidance on Authorised Absence for Pupils to fulfil Religious Obligations 2008-2009 to schools. This demonstrated occasions when parents / carers could request authorised absence for their children to attend religious observations when festivals fell during school hours. Members suggested some amendments to be taken into account before the list was published. It was stressed that schools needed to make the final decision regarding authorised absence

for religious observance in individual cases. The Shap calendar of religious festivals, September 2008 to December 2009 was distributed to members.

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

152. **SACRE Showcase, 18 November 2008:**

Pat Stevens reported on the outline of arrangements, which were as follows:

- From 1 September 2008, schools would be invited to take part in a SACRE Showcase religious education competition, submitting a school project on any part of the RE curriculum. Judging would be in three classes:

1. Foundation Stage and First School;
2. Middle School; and
3. High School.

The entries would be delivered to the Teachers' Centre by Wednesday 22 October 2008. Invitations would be sent to Councillors, SACRE members, members of faith communities and members of neighbouring SACREs.

- On Monday 3 November 2008, Harrow SACRE members would be invited to Harrow Teachers' Centre between 2.00 pm and 7.00 pm to cast their votes in the judging of the competition.
- The main event would take place on 18 November 2008 at the Civic Centre, beginning with refreshments and perusal of the exhibition of school projects at 7.00 pm in the Members Lounge. This would be followed at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber by a collective reflection by young people and an overview of Harrow's faiths and philosophies. An introduction to Harrow SACRE, a brief look at the Harrow Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2008, as well as a presentation of their projects by the winning schools would also be on the agenda. The showcase would end with an inter faith question time, featuring SACRE members.

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

153. **Request for Pupils to Withdraw from Aspects of the Religious Education Curriculum:**

It was reported that some schools had expressed anxiety that a small number of parents were selecting parts of the Religious Education curriculum for their children to study. Pat Stevens explained that parents / carers could legally request their children to be withdrawn from some or all of the RE curriculum, although in Harrow very few parents / carers chose this path. SACRE would monitor the situation in discussions with schools, where parents could be given the opportunity to sample religious education in an educational, rather than a confessional framework. SACRE had an important role to play in the Community Cohesion agenda together with schools and Governing Bodies who should be advised on ways of valuing diversity and encouraging respect and understanding of Harrow's diverse religious communities.

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

154. **Formation of the Harrow Inter Faith Centre:**

Pat Stevens reported that following the closure of the Harrow Teachers' Centre library, SACRE had been actively seeking premises to establish a specialist faith study centre to provide an administrative centre for Harrow Inter Faith Council. This was being conducted in conjunction with local faith communities.

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

155. **Determinations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no determinations for discussion at this meeting.

156. **News from Harrow Inter - Faith Council:**

Mary Hale, reported on the celebrations in March 2009, associated with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Harrow Inter Faith Council. This was one of the oldest local inter faith groups in the country. A day of celebration and interest would be prepared for 29 March 2009 at the Zoroastrian Centre. Schools would be requested to encourage pupils to be involved in the production of a commemorative tapestry. Harrow Council had offered to provide accommodation and printing, however, funding for the celebration had not yet been secured.

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

157. **News from Faith Communities:**

Members received news of events among the faith communities from members as follows:

- Mary Hale advised SACRE Members that the Buddhist Temple in Kingsbury would celebrate the centenary of Buddhism in Britain through an event at Brent Town Hall on 28 September 2008 (Mary Hale).
- Mike Bishop confirmed that Trinity Church in Hindes Road would be developing new buildings that would be open to the community.
- Phiroza Gan-Kotwal, reported that the Zoroastrian Centre would be open to the public on 20 September 2008 as part of the national "Open House" weekend.
- Councillor Patel reported on the many Hindu festivals soon to be celebrated in Harrow. This would begin with Navaratri and continue with Durga Puja, Dussehra and Diwali.
- Members were advised by Nancy Parsons that an exhibition by the Anne Frank Trust would be hosted by St Dominic's Sixth Form College. This would be open to all members of the public. Ten St Dominic's students had been working as Anne Frank Ambassadors.
- The Government Equalities Office would organise an event, based on women in public life to take place on 21 November between 9.30 am - 2.00 pm in conjunction with a Black and Minority Ethnic meeting. This event would aim to highlight the role of women.

It was suggested that Harrow SACRE should co-ordinate information about faith and inter faith events and forward these to the Harrow Council's Communications Department for publicity purposes.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) a card be sent to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the newly opened Krishna Avanti Primary School to congratulate them on their opening and to welcome them into the community of Harrow schools;

(2) the report be noted.

158. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

- A letter was read out to SACRE Members from Navin Shah, pledging his support to SACRE as a London Assembly member.
- Cllr Asante sent the Black History Month report 2007, with an invitation to SACRE members to support Black History Month, October 2008 in Harrow Council.
- Mr Don Liversedge provided information on a project to build resilience to violent extremism, together with some materials on Humanism.

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

159. **Date of the Next Meeting:**

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the next two meetings of SACRE be held on Tuesday 2 December 2008 and Thursday 12 March 2009;

(2) Pat Stevens would liaise with Democratic Services to vary the meeting dates of SACRE in the schedule for the 2009-2010 Municipal Year.

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

(Signed) MRS A STOWE  
Chairman