

**HARROW SACRE**  
**(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS**  
**EDUCATION)**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 23 NOVEMBER 2010**

**Attendance:**

**GROUP A - Religious traditions and Christian Churches**

~ <i>Mr Zia Baig</i>	~ <i>Miss Fatema Rahemani</i>
* Mrs Martha Besser (Vice Chair)	A Mr Neville Ransley
* Mr Mike Bishop	* Mrs Gill Ross
* Dr Julie Crow	* Mrs Doreen Samuels
A Mrs Niru Desai	A <i>Mr Paramjit Singh-Kohli (Mr</i>
* Mrs Phiroza Gan-Kotwal (arrived 7.55)	<i>Jaswani Singh Jasopa reserving)</i>
* Mr Vijay Hirani	<i>Ven Sumana Sramaner</i>
~ <i>Dr Vinod Kapashi</i>	~ <i>Ms Beverley Wilson</i>
~ <i>Councillor Asad Omar</i>	

**GROUP B - Church of England**

A Mrs Mary Abbott	* Rev'd. Matthew Stone
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**GROUP C – Teachers' Associations**

* Ms Bhavita Pandya	* Mrs Manju Radia
A Ms Nancy Parsons	* Mrs Alison Stowe (Chair)

**GROUP D – Local Authority**

Councillors:	* Camilla Bath
* Nana Asante (arrived 7.50)	* Nizam Ismail
~ <i>Lurline Champagnie</i>	
A <i>Bill Philips (Reserve)</i>	

Co-opted Members:

Seconded from the Harrow Student Advisory Board: vacancies

\* denotes *presence*

A denotes *absence*

~ denotes *absence without apologies*

**15. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**16. Apologies for Absence:**

**RESOLVED:** To note apologies for absence from Mrs Niru Desai, Mr Neville Ransley, Mrs Mary Abbott and Ms Nancy Parsons. Cllr Bill Philips had a council meeting.

The following members were absent without apologies: Mr Zia Baig, Miss Fatema Rahemani, Cllr Lurline Champagnie, Ven Sumana Sramaner, Mrs Beverley Wilson, Cllr Asad Omar and Dr Vinod Kapashi.

**17. Membership:**

Mr Jaswani Singh Jasopa was reserving for Mr Paramjit Singh-Kohli Ms Heena Modi and the Revd Giles Pinnock have resigned from the committee.

The Clerk asked members present to check and update the email list tabled at the meeting.

The Chairs' group proposed the following: that a member of the committee who missed three consecutive meetings without sending apologies should automatically be disqualified from the committee. A member of the committee who missed three consecutive meetings with apologies should be approached by the Chair with a view to re-establishing regular attendance, or finding a replacement. It was the role of the LA Senior Officer to seek appropriate representation, from faith groups and teachers' associations, to fill gaps on SACRE.

This was agreed.

**18. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd June 2010:**

The following corrections were noted:

p.1. top of the page: Spellings of names: Barth *should be* Bath *and throughout* Saddak *should be* Saddik

p.2. last paragraph: insert "be" between "to" and "relevant"

p.4. second to last line: "used" should be "use"

**RESOLVED: THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE 2010, HAVING BEEN CIRCULATED AND TAKEN AS READ, WERE, WITH THE CORRECTIONS LISTED ABOVE, SIGNED AS A CORRECT RECORD**

**19. Matters arising from the minutes not included elsewhere on the agenda:**

**8. Determinations:**

*At this point, 7.50pm, Cllr Nana Asante arrived and Mrs Phiroza Gan Kotwal arrived five minutes later.*

In the discussion about determinations Rachel Bowerman explained that while the Committee is reviewing its policy on collective worship, she has not been

actively encouraging schools to seek determinations; those schools previously reminded that their determination will soon cease to be valid (determinations are granted for a maximum of five years) have been advised that there is no expectation that they must seek a new determination in order to deliver collective worship. However, it remains the statutory duty of SACRE to receive and make a decision on any application for a determination which is submitted by a Harrow school.

The first step in revising its policy and guidance is for SACRE members to visit schools and observe acts of worship. Rachel Bowerman will share with the Chair's group model acts of collective worship which are in line with legal requirements, inclusive of the family backgrounds of pupils and which contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC).

If SACRE decides to continue to encourage its schools to apply for determinations, the guidance and proformas, particularly the request for information about the proportions of faith groups in the school community, should be re-drafted.

**It was agreed that the Chair's group will establish a time line for the revision of SACRE's policy on determinations.**

**Action: Chair's group**

**Members of the Committee should give their names to the Clerk if they are interested in a visit to monitor acts of collective worship.**

**Action: members of the Committee**

In response to a question from a member from the Sikh community, as to whether there was a common form of words for a prayer that would be inclusive, the Chair explained that Harrow has produced a "Guide to Worship" which contains some suggestions for this very purpose.

Rachel Bowerman suggested that as part of the process, she would plan some monitoring visits to schools; she would also draft a policy, ready for the next meeting, which clarifies the legal situation. It is important to differentiate between the requirements of the Education Reform Act which are statutory requirements and the DfE guidance in circular 1/94. She reminded members that the Ofsted Evaluation Schedule and Framework now have a different emphasis and that, while it remains the duty of the Governing Body to ensure that there is a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, an inspector's observation of collective worship was more likely to be evaluating its contribution to SMSC and to community cohesion, than whether it was "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character."

Action: Rachel Bowerman

## **20. SACRE Monitoring Standards and Quality of Provision for RE in Harrow Schools**

### ***Business Items: Improving standards in religious education and collective worship***

#### **a) Religious Education and Self-Evaluation**

### **Rachel Bowerman reported on her consultation with Secondary School Subject Leaders.**

Those who attended the consultation meeting were unanimously in favour of being asked to report to SACRE. They felt that it promoted the importance of their subject and the standard format, following the SEF headings, was considered a good idea. They agreed that the toolkit was useful, but would welcome further support, particularly paired monitoring activities and a model completed SEF. They felt that some of the headings, although related to the generic SEF, were repetitive and should be merged.

As members may be aware, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, has confirmed that the common summative evaluation form (the Ofsted SEF) is to be withdrawn with effect from September 2011 ; however, it is clear that schools will continue to be expected to manage their self evaluation and that this is most likely to be focused upon the headings of any new Ofsted inspection framework.

**Rachel Bowerman also reported on her consultation with Primary Subject Leaders.** They, too, were positive and felt that the RE SEF would help them to develop leadership and management skills. Like the Secondary School Subject leaders, they felt that it would be useful to have someone to help them complete the SEF and to provide a model completed SEF.

Rachel Bowerman still has to consult with Head Teachers. She is also hoping to find schools that would be prepared to present their RE self-evaluation at the next SACRE meeting.

## **21. SACRE Annual Report**

Rachel Bowerman asked members of the committee to take this report away to read and feed back comments by email, letter or phone to be incorporated into the final document.

Action: Members of the Committee: feedback to be sent by 3 December.  
Clerk to circulate report to absent members.

Rachel Bowerman explained that she has not named the two schools featured in section 1 of the report. They constituted such a small sample that it was unfair to single them out in a document that would be published nationally. However, SACRE members would know these two schools and have experienced their presentations.

There were two notable omissions from the report: public examination results and the budget. Rachel Bowerman had only that day received the raw data relating to GCSE and A / A2 results : it will be processed and incorporated into the report.

Rachel Bowerman added that the budget and expenditure are similar to previous years.

The Committee agreed that this information could be included in the report, without the report coming back to the committee.

## **22. SACRE Leadership and Management**

### **SACRE Chair's group**

#### **Report of Chairs' Group Meeting held on 3 November 2010**

### **a) Action Taken on Halal Meat**

Alison Stowe reported on the action taken on complaints received in schools about the provision of halal meat. Members have in their papers for the meeting copies of the letter sent out to schools and SACRE's guidance document, "Faith Matters in Harrow". It appears that Caterhouse, the company who provides hot meals for many of the schools in Harrow, has agreed to provide all options (halal, non-halal and vegetarian) on all days. It seems likely that Harrisons, the other main service provider in this area, will follow suit. It was agreed that this is the best solution.

It is clear that this issue is not entirely straightforward, because much meat exported from New Zealand is halal by default, but not clearly labelled. Mr Paramjit Singh-Kohli has undertaken to update the guidance in "Faith Matters" and this will come to the committee on completion.

#### **Action: Mr Paramjit Singh-Kohli**

The Chair indicated that "Faith Matters" needs updating as a whole. Rachel Bowerman provided two recent examples where more detailed guidance was required.

In a local primary school, a teacher had prepared a worksheet which included a line drawing apparently representing the prophet Mohammed. Muslim pupils had explained to the teacher that Muslims would find it offensive to see images portraying the prophets and this is echoed in the SACRE guidance. However, the guidance should be extended, to advise teachers that it is not therefore respectful or educationally appropriate to use any materials in the teaching of Islam which attempt to portray the prophets. Pictures of Jesus, originating from the Christian tradition, may of course be used for teaching about Christian beliefs about Jesus but should be carefully put into context for Muslim pupils.

It was agreed that a bibliography of resources would make a useful appendix to the booklet.

'Faith Matters' should also be amended to give guidance on ways of managing parental requests for withdrawal from National Curriculum subjects (such as drama, music or art) on grounds of faith. Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that any guidance or response to schools, should confirm that children have an entitlement to the national curriculum and that in law the right of withdrawal applies only to RE and the non-statutory elements of sex education. However, the guidance could also recommend starting points for meeting the needs of parents and encouragement for reviewing schemes of work to promote inclusion and challenge stereotyping and negative images.

### **b) Proposed future funding for SACRE**

Rachel Bowerman introduced this item. Budget cuts taking place throughout LAs nationally, are bound to impact on SACREs. In response to this, Harrow LA has introduced a consultative document proposing a "Harrow Schools Improvement Partnership." The key word here is "partnership" which describes the new funding arrangements and governance of any future school improvement team, the role, functions and scope of which would be

determined by its school partners. While little remained of a statutory role in school improvement, the LA remained additionally committed to a minimal core provision. As part of this core, Rachel Bowerman was pleased to report that the LA is committing £7500 to SACRE activities. This reflected the Council's commitment to quality provision for religious education in the most religiously diverse borough.

The LA is currently awaiting an initial response from schools before developing the scheme further.

## **23. National RE Month (March 2011)**

Rachel Bowerman referred members to pp17-18 of the meeting papers. This is an advertisement for RE month published by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.

Harrow has been asked to contribute to national celebrations through the Zoroastrian Centre. Four local schools will go on educational visits and prepare presentations on this to be shown in March. Bhavita Pandya will be advising schools and helping them to prepare, working with Pat Stevens. Rachel Bowerman regretted that Malcolm Deboo from the Zoroastrian Centre was unable to come and give a presentation this evening, but she will keep the committee updated on developments.

The Chair will send a reminder to schools and ask what planned events they have for RE month and if they would like to make a presentation to SACRE.

Those who represent faith groups on the committee agreed that Rachel Bowerman could give their contact details to schools to do a talk or activity in schools.

The idea of a SACRE showcase was discussed and the Chairs' group will take this forward.

Action: Chairs Group

## **24. Reports from SACRE Partners**

### **Information items: improving SACRE's effectiveness**

- a) **Harrow Inter Faith Council:** Martha Besser reported on celebrations held as part of National Interfaith Week (this week). There was an event at the Civic Centre tomorrow at 7.00pm. All were welcome. Students and teachers from Park School will be taking part and there will be a presentation and a panel discussion. In town, at St Etheburga's Church near Liverpool Street Station, there is an event called "Sea of Stories" in which storytellers from different faith traditions will be taking part.
- b) **Faith Communities:**
  - Mrs Doreen Samuels informed the Committee of a Limmud (Learning) Day taking place on 27 March next year. This day is an offshoot of an annual conference held around Christmas, and, by a happy coincidence, it falls within National RE month. The day is suitable for all ages and is characterised by breadth of learning through music, text and art and so accessible to all. It takes place at

Heathfield School. Further information can be obtained from Mrs Doreen Samuels.

- Mr Mike Bishop informed members that street pastors - an initiative discussed at previous meetings – are now in place. They are working on Friday and Saturday nights in Harrow and parts of Wealdstone.
- Mrs Gill Ross reported that Marlborough School had taken part in a celebration of Eid at the Civic Centre.
- Cllr Nana Asante informed members that on 8 March 2011 (Shrove Tuesday) Harrow would become a Fair Trade Borough.
- Mrs Gill Ross informed members of a Jewish initiative for protection against violence towards women. She wondered if the Chairs' Group might look at promoting the education pack and enable SACRE to be proactive in supporting this initiative. Cllr Nana Asante added that "White Ribbon Day" is next Friday. The Chairs' Group agreed to look at this.

**Action: Chairs Group**

**c) Harrow Hate Crime Forum**

The Chair has received no communications from the Harrow Hate Crime Forum.

**25. Any other Business**

In response to a question from Mrs Gan-Kotwal, Rachel Bowerman explained that she has been on compassionate leave and this was why the meeting planned for earlier this term had been cancelled.

**26. Dates of Future SACRE Meetings:**

Mark Doherty at the Civic Centre has identified the following dates which are not scheduled for council meetings:

**Spring Term 2011: 2 March (apologies from Cllr Nana Asante)**

**Summer Term 2011: 14 June**

**Autumn Term: 2011: 19 September**

**29 November**

**Spring Term 2012: 7 March**

**Could members please note these dates in their diaries. Action: all members**

(Note: The Meeting closed at 9.15pm).