



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the RUTLAND SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)** held via Zoom on Tuesday, 6th July, 2021 at 4.30 pm

PRESENT:

GROUP A – Representatives of faiths (other than Church of England) and world views	
Mr A Hull	Humanists UK
Mr G Singh	The Sikh Faith

GROUP B – Church of England Representatives	
Rev P Holmes	Peterborough Diocese
Rev J McWhirter	Peterborough Diocese

GROUP C – Teacher Representatives	
Mrs M Davis	National Association of Head Teachers

GROUP D – Local Education Authority Representatives	
Cllr R Powell	Rutland County Councillor
Cllr L Stephenson	Rutland County Councillor

Local Education Authority Officers	
Mrs A Fitton	SACRE/RE Advisor, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Rutland
Mrs Joanna Morley	Interim Governance Manager
Ms L Papworth	Education Development Lead, RCC

APOLOGIES:

Mrs Megan Davis	National Association of Head Teachers
Mr Andreas Menzies	Roman Catholic Church

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Megan Davis and Mr Andreas Menzies.

2 A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

The committee undertook a moment for reflection.

3 RECORD OF MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2021 were considered and agreed as a true record of the proceedings.

4 MATTERS ARISING

It was agreed that matters arising from the minutes would be addressed during items later on the agenda.

5 REPORT FROM NASACRE CONFERENCE

The Chair and the Revd James McWhirter provided a verbal update following her attendance at the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education Annual Conference.

It was highlighted that there were various national and local public bodies and other sources of authority on the provision of religious education, all of whom were clearly dedicated to working collectively. It was noted that conferences such as NASACRE with up to date presentations and workshops was a useful way of setting the agendas of SACREs.

During subsequent discussions, it was agreed that it was very important that religious education be promoted in order to be equally viewed among other subjects, and conference had provided useful examples of how RE could be better delivered and promoted. However, it was also noted that it was difficult to articulate the benefits of studying religious education compared to other subjects and the target-based culture in education was a possible factor in the lower take-up of religious education as a subject.

6 ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Chair provided a progress update on the development of an Annual Report for 2020/21. It was suggested and agreed to extend the remit of the current report to end of August, in order for future Annual Reports to be based on the academic year with the aim to provide a clearer image of progression made.

7 SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020-22

The Council considered the SACRE Development Plan for 2020-22 and no comments or issues were raised.

8 OFSTED REPORT MAY 2021

Mrs Amanda Fitton, SACRE and Religious Education Advisor, provided a verbal update and presentation on a recent Ofsted research publication regarding the provision religious education. It was highlighted that Ofsted intended to publish a report on the quality of religious education provided in schools, and this would cover both the curriculums and the practical delivery of religious education.

During subsequent discussions it was confirmed that schools were being encouraged to actively review their curriculums in light of the upcoming inspections and Mrs Fitton offered to provide contacts to schools in Rutland who wished to see various ways this was being done in other counties.

9 TRAINING AND NETWORK MEETINGS

Mrs Amanda Fitton, SACRE and Religious Education Advisor, provided a verbal update on the current training and network meetings taking place.

It was highlighted that the current training programme in Rutland had been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic and it was agreed that a resumption of training was a priority. It was also suggested that network meetings had been experiencing low attendance due to fatigue across the sector.

10 MONITORING OF RE IN SCHOOLS

Mrs Elizabeth Papworth, Education Development Lead, provided a verbal update on the monitoring of RE in schools.

Following the previous meeting direct feedback and requests for support had been sought from Rutland's primary schools and 9 of the 17 had responded with positive responses, including the drawing together of various resources to form the Rutland Learning Trust. It was highlighted that many schools had faced significant disruptions due to the impact of COVID-19 and variations in class sizes. It was also noted that a local school had expressed an interest in joining SACRE and it was agreed that this would be considered at a future meeting.

11 AGREED SYLLABUS FROM SEPTEMBER 2023

Mrs Amanda Fitton, SACRE and Religious Education Advisor, set out the next steps for SACRE regarding the agreed syllabus for religious education from September 2023. Several options for the syllabus were included in the agenda and presented for consideration and it was suggested that Rutland continue to co-operate with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on a syllabus having previously worked together alongside Northamptonshire.

In response to questions, Mrs Fitton confirmed she would be inviting local schools in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to share their opinions on the options at an upcoming network meeting and intended to undertake similar action for Rutland.

Members of the Committee spoke in favour of option 2 based on the lower potential costs in addition to the potential benefits of option 3. It was acknowledged that surveying the needs of local schools and research into the costings and resources required for all options would help the Council come to an evidence-based conclusion on the best way forward.

It was agreed that Mrs Fitton and Mrs Papworth would undertake this work on behalf of the Rutland SACRE alongside partner authorities and an item at a later meeting would enable SACRE to agree a position.

The Revd Peter Holmes then led a discussion on world views having read the book *Reforming RE: Power And Knowledge In A Worldviews Curriculum* as recommended by Mrs Amanda Fitton. Revd Holmes highlighted the Commission on Religious Education's eight recommendation, that of a legal amendment to SACREs into Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews, with a more inclusive composition and a wider remit.

Thanks were expressed by the Council to Revd Holmes for his work on the subject matter, it was noted that any changes to the legal requirements for SACRE membership and voting would require primary legislation and therefore Revd Holmes advised Members to remain informed and aware of the views and trends in this area. It was also noted that the provision of religious education was grounded as an academic subject based on empirical evidence and history. It was also put forward that another viewpoint was that religious education might shift towards the teaching of values rather than specific religions.

12 ANY URGENT BUSINESS

Mrs Amanda Fitton drew Members attention to a recently circulated government document concerning the recovery of curriculum subjects and particularly the provisions relating to religious attention.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 12 October 2021.

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 6.14 pm.

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