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(SACRE) STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2011

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Present:

Group A –

Christian Denominations

Mrs Gail Ratcliffe (Items 1-7)

Other religions

Priti Dave (Items 1-7)

Group B – Church of England

Tony Blackshaw and Joyce Johnson

Group C – Teachers

Jackie Meeting and David Parrott

Group D – Members of the Council

Councillors Daunt (Chair), Parnell and Dr Paffey

Others – Non-Voting

Chris Robinson and Chris Davis

Also in attendance:

Taz Curtis, Children's Services and Learning

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Councillor Daunt be appointed as Chair for the 2011/12 Municipal Year and that David Vane, Buddhist (Group A member) be appointed Vice-Chair for the 2011/2012 Municipal Year, subject to his agreement as he was not present at the meeting.

2. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for coming. Taz Curtis was introduced to the SACRE meeting as the replacement SACRE Advisor for Sue Langdon who had now left the Authority.

Apologies were received from:-

Group A Peter Howard

Group B Chris Pritchard

Group C Ellen Humphries and Ruth Evans

Others Sian Roberts

3. **STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair reported that the SACRE Annual report would be submitted at the next meeting.

4. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING**

It was noted there was a typographical error in the spelling of Kate Martin. It was requested that attendance at the meeting was recorded in groups in the minutes.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011 be approved and signed as a correct record. (Copy of the minutes circulated with the agenda and appended to the signed minutes).

Matters arising

Any other business, page 4: It was asked whether the Coalition Government would decommission religious education as a statutory school subject. It appeared there had been mixed messages as to the Governments position on this issue.

**RESOLVED** that the Chair write to Michael Grove seeking an update on whether religious education would be decommissioned as a statutory subject in schools.

5. **FEEDBACK AND UPDATES ON EVENTS**

Priti Dave reported that the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Walk organised by the Southampton Council of Faiths had been held on 12 June. It was attended by over 70 people which was very good considering the heavy rain on the day.

Councillor Parnell reported that there was an Active Street Pastor organisation which was a new initiative and would come into force from September 2011. It was noted that Cantell and Upper Shirley High Secondary Schools had been requested to become involved.

6. **SHARING EFFECTIVE PRACTICE ACROSS THE CITY**

The Chair presented a DVD which was based on a Question Time approach at Upper Shirley High School.

SACRE welcomed the DVD and the approach that had been taken to put together topical discussion points and which could be used as a basis for developing good practice models in the future. It was noted that the questions from the young people were well thought out and that the Panelists were unaware of the questions beforehand. Given that the Panelists were not professional concern was raised as to whether some of the answers represented faith or personal views/ judgements and whether the young people were protected to a point and not receiving the full information as there were disagreeing views. This did not necessarily come across, therefore questioning the real value of the exercise.

SACRE concluded that the DVD was a welcomed shared resource and would be interested to hear at a future meeting how this had been shared across other schools in the City.

7. **BIG SOCIETY/SOCIAL COHESION**

SACRE members received a presentation from Tom Pascoe, Communities Integration Manager, Communities Team regarding the Big Society and Social Cohesion.

The core business of the Communities Team was to deal with the Big Society, Engagement of Volunteers and Grants to voluntary organisations. The promotion of volunteering was the core aspect of the Big Society work.

Tom reported that cohesion and the big society had changed significantly in the last 6-8 years in Southampton. This was partly due to European immigration and asylum seekers. Faith in schools therefore needed to change and reflect the make up of the City.

There was discussion around the Big Society and that opportunities would need to be investigated and promoted. The work was not that different to that what was already happening but just under a new heading, therefore there was a need to ensure that everyone understood and worked together to promote the Big Society agenda.

8. **RATIFICATION OF SACRE CONSTITUTION**

The meeting was no longer quorate and therefore it was not possible to ratify the SACRE constitution. This item would therefore be deferred to the next SACRE meeting.

9. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The meeting dates for 2011/12 were noted as:

- Monday, 17 October 2011
- Monday, 5 March 2012
- Monday 11 June 2012

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Taz Curtis reported that she had received an email from the Deputy Headteacher of Maytree Infant School advising that they were seeking an exemption from religious worship given the high percentage of non Christians in the school. SACRE expressed some concern at the request for the exemption given the importance of collective worship and suggested that they liaise with other schools in similar situations to see how they deal with the issue before any final decisions were made.