

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 9th October 2018 (7.15pm – 8.45pm)
At the Shree Ghanapathy Temple, SW19**

Present Group A – Christian, Other Faiths & Beliefs

Saleem Sheikh (SS) Vice Chair – Islam
Mike Freedman (MF) – Judaism
Audrey King (AK) – Humanists UK
Geetha Maheshwaran (GM) – Hinduism
Ajaib Singh Bahra (ASB) -Sikhism

Group B – Church of England

Jane Savill (JS)

Group C – Teacher Associations

Not represented

Group D – Local Authority

Cllr Laxmi Attawar (LA)
Cllr Mike Brunt (MB)

LA Adviser

Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (EF) – Merton Head of School Improvement

Others

David Hurst (DH)– as an observer from the Catholic Church (Sacred Heart)
Elizabeth Nassé (EN) Clerk

MB thanked GM for organising the venue and for hosting the meeting.

ITEM		ACTION
1	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u> Apologies for absence were received from: Waleed Ahmad - Ahmadiyya Muslim Association Debra Beale - NUT Maria Keenan - NAHT Councillor Hayley Ormrod - LA Marcus Cooper – C of E Andrew Williams – C of E Keith Shipman – Merton Education Inclusion Manager</p>	
2	<p><u>Introductions</u> MB introduced himself as Chair and SS as Vice Chair. All attendees introduced themselves and David Hurst was welcomed as an observer and possible new member. The meeting was not quorate.</p>	
3	<p><u>SACRE membership admin</u> DH explained that he was attending the meeting to gain a better understanding of SACRE and to consider whether he would like to join as the representative for the Catholic church. SS reported that he had contacted P.Lom at the Buddhist temple, but he had not yet suggested a possible representative. SS agreed to try again to contact someone from the Baiha'i faith community; all acknowledged that this may be difficult. All agreed that SACRE meetings should be scheduled so that there are no clashes with Council meetings; EN will continue to advise the Council of SACRE meeting dates. AK reported that she had met two possible Buddhist reps at the Merton College Faith Fair and suggested trying to establish links with them.</p>	
	<p>Actions: EN to clarify the status of Mark Yelland (ATL) and establish whether suggestions for a replacement teachers' union rep should be sought. SS to follow up Buddhist and Baiha'i faith representation.</p>	EN/SS
4	<p><u>Minutes of the last SACRE meeting 10th July 2018</u> The minutes were agreed with a correction the spelling of GM's name. As the meeting was not quorate all agreed that the minutes should be approved and signed at the next meeting.</p>	
5	<p><u>Matters arising from the last meeting:-</u> Reference in previous minutes in brackets; actions to be carried forward and new actions in bold.</p> <p>(Item 3) KS will advise SACRE members of RE Coordinators meeting dates via EN. Done – see item 7.</p> <p>(Item 5) KS to check whether a congratulatory (SIAMS) letter has been sent. If so, a similar one to Holy Trinity should be sent. If not, letters should be sent from SACRE (signed by MB). Post meeting note - these have been progressed and are awaiting final signatures before sending.</p>	

MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM	ACTION
<p>(Item 5) To develop questions that are structured to give useful feedback and form the basis of discussion with primary and secondary RE coordinators. Done. See item 7.</p>	
<p>(Item 5) MB reported that now the new Mayor had been elected he would follow this up (thank you to Peter Kendrick). Done. MB reported that he had agreed that Peter Kendrick will be thanked at an afternoon tea with the Mayor. SACRE members will be invited to join.</p>	MB
<p>(Item 6) MC to share SIAMS/Diocesan related material at the next SACRE meeting and circulate via EN prior to the meeting. Material circulated but to be added as an agenda item for next SACRE meeting.</p>	EN/MC
<p>(Item 7) MF to send material that the synagogue uses for supporting and evaluating school visits to EN for circulating. Done - see item 6.</p>	
<p>(Item 7) SACRE members to feed back on school visits at next SACRE meeting. See item 6.</p>	
<p>(Item 9) KS to set up a meeting with Ursuline and AW for further discussion with secondary RE leads. KS to discuss a faith dialogue project with primary RE leads and possibly link with Roehampton students, once undergraduate school placements have been assigned. Discussed in item 8.</p>	
<p>6 <u>Schools' experiences of visiting local places of worship – feedback from schools and discussion of materials shared by Mike Freedman.</u> Members reported that they had not had any school visits since the last meeting. MF talked through the three school visit documents that had been circulated prior to the meeting. MF explained that the forms had been developed with experience over time; the list of basic facts about Judaism provided a framework for the visits and were useful for both teachers and pupils. MF added that he now sends the forms out well in advance, so that schools have time to prepare. The forms include basic house-keeping information and it is made clear that pupils will not be expected to take part in worship. An outline risk assessment is also included to help teachers – this is a live document and includes dietary information and information about allergens. Members discussed the use of photography and the implications of schools publishing images on-line. Settings may need to consider how they manage this. MF explained that schools were encouraged to complete evaluation forms before they left the Synagogue. DH asked what age groups the visits were suitable for, what was the optimum size of the visiting groups and how many visits the Synagogue had. MF replied that the visits were generally aimed at 7-11 year olds and that different types of visits were needed for older pupils. The optimum size is about 30 children and no more than 50. Last year visits had taken place during 33 weeks of the school year, with up to 3 visits per week; in total 2048 children and 300 adults had taken part over the year. MF commented that many children were confused about different faiths and the distinctiveness of them; settings should be prepared to answer any questions and be able to discuss the reasons for distinctiveness. GM reported that the Hindu temple hosts visits for children as young as 3, as many of</p>	

MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM

ACTION

the experiences can be sensory; e.g. smells, looking at animals, dressing up. The temple also hosts visits from university students. GM added that the temple receives around 3000 students per year, many of whom are from Surrey.

MB asked whether there is much feedback from pupils.

MF explained that it was difficult to get much hard evidence from pupils but their feedback gave a feeling for whether or not they had enjoyed the visit. MB suggested that a pupil form could ask what a pupil had enjoyed most, one thing they'd learnt and one thing they'd like to know more about.

GM explained that they sometimes ask schools to produce posters of their visits for displaying in the temple. GM added that she asks teachers to share what parts of the syllabus they want to cover before a visit takes place.

All agreed that the documents were very useful and well structured and would help make visits as successful as possible. MF confirmed that he was happy for the materials to be shared. AK suggested that similar templates should be included in the SACRE directory of services or the agreed syllabus. Members discussed the best ways of doing this. MB thanked MF for his input and suggested that members should contact MF if they think that anything else should be included in the documents.

GM gave members copies of materials that she hands out on school visits and recommended the organisation Hinduism Today www.hinduismtoday.com as a useful resource.

7 SACRE support for RE teachers

MB reported on an email update from Keith Shipman:

Dates: SACRE members noted that an RE Coordinators meeting took place at Christ Church on 9th October and that the next one is scheduled for Tuesday 27th November. This will be held at the Morden Islamic Centre and is being run by the Muslim Women of Merton (MWM). In the spring term Equaliteach will run a session at the Chaucer Centre on RE and British values. Members discussed two options for the summer term and GM offered to host a KS 2 session at the Hindu temple.

Action: JS offered to liaise with Penny Smith-Orr on times and dates for the spring and summer term meetings and advise GM/EN. EN to circulate dates to members when confirmed. EF will report back to KS.

JS/EN/EF

Feedback: EF confirmed that there was no further feedback from RE Coordinators meetings yet.

Analysis of impact of the agreed syllabus: MB reported that KS had sent out questions to all Secondary RE leads and had only had two replies (both positive). Feedback will be further reviewed once more replies have been received. All noted that more pupils are now studying RE at GCSE; recognition of its value is growing. EF/JS confirmed that the GCSE syllabus was generally structured around the comparison of two religions, although other religious were also covered. GM added that the Hindu temple taught GCSE and A' Level students Hinduism using common topics like morality and ethics. JS advised members that the new syllabus was now more focussed on theology and texts.

8 Future SACRE projects – a faith dialogue project

MERTON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ITEM

ACTION

MB reported from KS's email that Merton were planning to host 'Faith in Us' and 'Agents for Change' events over the next year. The projects will be discussed more at the next meeting.

9 **Any other business**

MF reported that the Jewish community were running two events in Interfaith week (November) and SACRE members were welcome to attend. MF further reported that a group from the Synagogue were sponsoring a Syrian family to resettle in the UK. Members discussed how other community groups were doing the same and all noted that Merton Council had been very supportive of the resettling scheme (possible contact, John Dimmer).

Action DH to forward details of an upcoming Citizen Merton event to support groups engaging with the resettling scheme.

DH

11 **Dates of next meetings**

The dates for the next SACRE meetings are;
7.15pm, Tuesday 12th February 2019.
7.15pm, Tuesday 9th July 2019.

MB suggested using the newly renovated Chapter House, Merantum Way. If this is not possible JS suggested Christ Church as an option.



Chair of Merton SACRE.....

date...12/2/19.....

