

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES of the meeting held at the Nottingham Liberal Synagogue, Sherwood, NG5 4BP, on 22 November 2018 from 4.30 pm - 6.10 pm

GROUP A – Representatives of religious / faith denominations (13)

Present	Bishop James Stapleton	African Caribbean Churches
-	No representative	Assemblies of God
-	No representative	Baptist
Apologies	Krishna Dasi	Hindu
Present	Chris Richards	Humanist
Present	Hafiz M Muntazir	Islam
-	No representative	Jewish
Present	John Heard	Methodist
Present	Caroline Mackeith	Quaker
Absent	Eddy Walton	Roman Catholic
Absent	Martin Bennett	Salvation Army
Present	Rav Kalsi	Sikhism
-	No representative	United Reformed Church

GROUP B - Church of England representatives (6)

Present	Jill Edmonds	South Wilford
Apologies	Debs Hunt	Crossteach Education Charity
Absent	Jane Lewis	Southwell & Nottingham Diocese
Absent	Alison Rowe	Bluecoat Wollaton
-	Vacancy	
-	Vacancy	

GROUP C - Teacher representatives (6)

Apologies	Yasmin Khaliq	Middleton Primary
Absent	Kirsty Lacey	Bluecoat Academy
Absent	Ralph Surman	National Education Union
Present	David Wand	UNISON
Absent	Caroline White	Victoria Academy
-	Vacancy	

GROUP D - City Councillor representatives (6)

Present	David Mellen (Chair)
Absent	Ilyas Aziz
Apologies	Mohammed Ibrahim
Apologies	Patience Ifediora
Apologies	Neghat Khan
Apologies	Marcia Watson

Also present

Mark Leavesley	- Governance Officer (Nottm City Council)
Heidi Shewell-Cooper	- Lead Officer for SACRE
John Dexter	- Director of Education (Nottm City Council)
Ahmed Peerbhai	- Observer (Green Academy Trust)

10 WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Mellen, welcomed attendees to the meeting and informed them that due to requirements of section 9 of the Constitution, the meeting is inquorate, meaning that no decisions can be taken, although the meeting can continue on an informal basis.

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Group A: Krishna Dasi (Hindu)

Group B: Debs Hunt (Crossteach)

Group C: Yasmin Khaliq (Middleton Primary)

Group D: Councillors Ibrahim, Ifediora, Khan and Watson

12 INTRODUCTION TO THE SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich introduced herself and informed members of the history of the Nottingham Liberal Synagogue (NLS) and Judaism in general. The main points were as follows:

- a) she was born in Minsk, Belarus, moved to London in 2004 and then became the full-time Rabbi at NLS in 2009;
- b) the NLS (formerly Nottingham Progressive Jewish Congregation) was founded in 1965, moving into the current building in 1972;
- c) NLS practices liberal, not orthodox, Judaism, meaning women play an equal part, hence her being the Rabbi;
- d) May 2019 will see the 4th anniversary of the 'Salaam Shalom Kitchen', a partnership between NLS and Muslim charity Himmah, and which provides a hot meal and company every Wednesday for those suffering food poverty, asylum seekers, refugees, those with mental health issues and the elderly and isolated;
- e) the 'kitchen' recently won the 'Liberal Judaism' Mitzvah Day 365 award;
- f) NLS works with the local community, on issues such as domestic violence, across all faiths, not just Jewish;
- g) NLS has 5 Torah (Holy Book) - the Austerlitz Scroll, the Kamenice Scroll, the Swiss Scroll, the Derby Scroll and the Small Scroll;
- h) during summer 2018, a trip to the Czech Republic was undertaken by the Rabbi and 36 young people from the community, including visits to Slavkov (formerly Austerlitz) and Kamenice nad Lipou to visit the sites of temples previously holding the Torah.

Those present thanked Rabbi Sakhnovich for her informative introduction to NLS and Judaism.

13 MINUTES / MATTERS ARISING

Those present noted the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 and that there were no matters arising.

14 CORRESPONDENCE TO / FROM MEMBERS

Heidi Shewell-Cooper reported that a letter had been sent to Reverend Andy Morris (Bulwell - CofE representative) in respect of attendance, to which no response had been received (see 'Membership update', minute 20 below).

15 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT SECONDARY LEVEL

John Dexter, Director of Education, Nottingham City Council, informed members of the current position in respect of religious education at secondary level. The main points were as follows:

- a) last year, of approximately 2,500 pupils, 843 (34%) took RE as a GCSE subject;
- b) currently there are only 4 schools (Bluecoat Aspley & Wollaton, Emmanuel and Trinity) teaching the full GCSE KS4 RE curriculum and entering a majority of their year 11 pupils in exams;
- c) the majority of schools only have 10-15 pupils taking RE at exam level;
- d) 8 schools do not teach RE at all;
- e) one of the main factors for the reduction in numbers is that RE is no longer a mandatory subject (as parents can withdraw their child from lessons) and, as a result, most RE teachers only have one class per week and are teaching other subjects the majority of the time.

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- f) RE should be considered a platform for children to discuss ethical / moral issues, not just for religious discussion;
- g) the community should be 'educated' to show that RE is also about community cohesion etc, not just about 'becoming a priest or a vicar';
- h) changing the name from RE to something encompassing may help to get youngsters engaged with the subject.

Those present thanked Mr Dexter for the informative presentation and noted the content.

16 PRIMARY RE NETWORK - UPDATE

Heidi Shewell-Cooper provided an update on the most recent Primary Subject Leader Network, held on 05 November 2018 at the RS Resource Centre, The Vine, Hyson Green.

12 teachers from across the City took part in activities related to the offer from the RS Centre, as well as having input from Jane Lewis, RE Advisor, Southwell and Nottingham Anglican Diocese. This group is supported by the Nottingham Schools Trust, but is open to any primary maintained school or academy in the City. It will meet once per term and future sessions will include assessment and progression, as well as curriculum planning.

Those present noted the update.

17 UNDERGROUND STORY

John Heard, Methodist representative, informed the SACRE of 'Underground Story', and stated the following:

- a) it is a new translation of the New Testament, undertaken over the last four years by a group of scholars from Durham, Cambridge and Oxford Universities, aimed at 9-13 year-olds;
- b) it is accurate to the original text, but in a language today's young people will more readily understand;
- c) the scholars are seeking input from teachers and students and comments should be forwarded to the writer at brian.d.brown@durham.ac.uk;
- d) the scholars are also looking for 600 schools to pilot the 'Story' and any schools interested should contact Mr Heard at jdheard@gmail.com.

Those present noted the information and contact details for the author.

18 COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REPORT

Heidi Shewell-Cooper reported that the Commission on Religious Education final report 'Religion and World Views: The Way Forward - A national plan for RE' was attached to the agenda for information and, although 'final', it is a live document.

Those present noted the report and suggested that Ms Shewell-Cooper considers inviting the universities in Nottingham to attend future meetings.

19 CONSTITUTION / TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mark Leavesley, SACRE Clerk, presented a revised SACRE Constitution, which updated that created in 2007, bringing it in line with current requirements, and also reflecting changes in the religious make-up of Nottingham.

Those present noted the revised Constitution.

20 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Heidi Shewell-Cooper reported the following:

- a) in light of there being no response to her letter (see minute 14 above), as per section 4.7 of the Constitution, Reverend Morris has ceased to hold office and is no longer considered a representative on SACRE;

- b) representatives Reverend Annabel Copeland (Bluecoat Academy - CofE) and Asima Qureshi (Dunkirk Academy - Teacher) have both resigned from SACRE.

Those present noted the amendments to the membership.

21 SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Rav Kalsi, Sikh representative, presented the SACRE Annual Report 2017-18, which detailed work undertaken during 2017/18 and plans for SACRE going forward.

Those present noted the Annual Report.

22 NASACRE / NATRE UPDATES

Those present noted the update from Heidi Shewell-Cooper.

23 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Those present requested that Heidi Shewell-Cooper, in consultation with the Chair, considers organising dates / venues for meetings to be held during the municipal year 2019/20, and inform representatives accordingly.