

From: Jack Bacon <Jack.Bacon@westsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 10:19 AM
To: Wendy Saunders <wendy.saunders@westsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: WEST SUSSEX SACRE

Hi Wendy – the below is just FYI at this stage.

Kind Regards,
Jack

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From: Tony Kershaw <tony.kershaw@westsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 February 2023 13:02
To: Katherine Delamora <katherine.delamora@westsussex.gov.uk>; Jack Bacon <Jack.Bacon@westsussex.gov.uk>
Cc: Charles Gauntlett <charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: WEST SUSSEX SACRE

In relation to the request for an appointment to the West Sussex SACRE from the Church of Scientology we would need to arrange for the request to be presented to the Cabinet Member. It is not a matter for SACRE to consider and so does not need to be referred to in the forthcoming meeting. We should however make the chairman of SACRE aware of the request and the planned response and action.

The contact from the Church of Scientology should be invited to make the request formal by explaining the governance of the organisation – where authority sits for taking decisions about how the Church should be represented through other organisations and confirmation of how this nomination has arisen – i.e. to confirm that this is a formal request from the body itself.

The request should then be supported by information about the place and role the church has in the community of West Sussex and its role in particular with regard to education and young people in the area.

Finally it should be invited to explain its reasons for seeking membership of SACRE.

The Council's adviser on religious education should be consulted to advise once the request has been formalised and substantiated.

The text below provides some guidance on how the request is considered, taken from the recent report on appointments.

All appointments to SACRE should be dependent on the local authority's opinion as to whether such a representative would help ensure that the relevant traditions in the local authority's area are appropriately reflected in Committee A. As set out below this should not be confined to organised

faith-based groups but other recognised belief systems with an identifiable level of adherence or membership within the local community such as to make the group relevant for the work of SACRE.

It is not the practice to consult SACRE members on the nominations by other bodies seeking representation as the responsibility for such appointments falls to the County Council but officer advice will be sought to assist in providing context for the request in terms of the role and responsibilities of SACRE. An Ofsted report recently produced on the teaching of RE includes a consistent referral to both religious and non-religious views and traditions. For example, 'Ideally, pupils will build 'personal knowledge' through rich substantive content that links the 'life world' of religious and non-religious traditions to the developing 'life world' of pupils' or, when discussing the importance of the three types of knowledge pupils need in RE, 'first, 'substantive' knowledge: knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions; second, 'ways of knowing': pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion; third, 'personal knowledge': pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study'.

In relation to the wider legal considerations which the County Council will take into account, in discharging its educational functions the Council owes parents and pupils, a positive duty to respect their religious and philosophical convictions having regard among other things to local conditions and, in particular, the preponderance in its area of particular religious views, and their place in the tradition of the country. It may legitimately give priority to the imparting of knowledge of one religion above others, where that religion is practised or adhered to by a majority in society but it also has a duty to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner and must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious beliefs and must avoid discrimination between religions and beliefs, discharging its duties from a standpoint of neutrality and impartiality.

Human Rights legislation and the provisions which it incorporates do not distinguish between faith-based and other recognised belief systems in terms of the rights afforded and the duty to uphold and protect them. Article 9 ECHR states that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes the freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. Associated case law confirms that non-religious and religious belief systems should be treated the same.

Tony

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