



## **All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education**

### **Minutes of the parliamentary meeting to discuss the report launch of RE: The Truth Unmasked on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013 in Dining Room B, 4 – 6 pm**

#### **PRESENT**

**MEMBERS** – Stephen Lloyd MP, Jim Dobbin MP, Bishop of Oxford, Bishop of Coventry, Mike Crockart MP, Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Sir Bob Russell MP, Sir Tony Cunningham MP, Assistant from Edward Leigh's office, Assistant from Philip Davies's office

**OTHERS** – Dr Barbara Wintersgill, Ian Wintersgill, Dr Hugo Whately, Dr Mark Chater, Deborah Weston, Tanya McCormack, Mike Castelli, Alan Brine, Linda Whitworth, Professor John Howson, Dr Priscilla Chadwick, Derek Humphrey, Juliet Lyal, Neera Vyas, Mark Shepstone, Jenny Earp, Zoe Keens, Dr Janet Orchard, John Keast OBE, Jeremy Taylor MBE, Peter Ward, Sharon Artley, Professor Linda Woodhead,

**SECRETARIAT** – Benjamin Waldmann, Paul Bristow, Dr Sarah Smalley, Sophie Agrotis

#### **1. INTRODUCTION FROM STEPHEN LLOYD MP - CHAIR**

- New changes – danger of RE slipping down the ladder
- MP's value importance of RE
- An issue of misunderstanding
- The need for evidence on the issue
- Stephen's own passion – stop misinformation on the subject, otherwise there will be trouble in the longer term

#### **2. BISHOP OF OXFORD – MEMBER OF APPG**

- Chair, Church of England National Society for Religious Education
- RE crucial to understanding the world we live in
- RE creates community cohesion
- Being a statutory subject is not on its own enough to protect the subject
- Negligence
- Evidence on RE is crucial

### **3. JULIET LYAL – PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER**

- Teachers need proper tools and training to teach effectively
- Lack of professional training
- Too many non-specialist teachers in RE
- Teachers need knowledge of the subject to be able to pass on knowledge as well as teaching respect
- Learning from specialist subject leaders is crucial
- There is a need for real results after this report

### **4. DR HUGO WHATELY – SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER**

- Filling in for Daniel Hugill – secondary school teacher
- Importance of day conferences – learning
- Importance of the subject and engagement
- Need for continuing professional development
- RE can be an issue of postcode lottery
- The level of funding is a strong issue
- Most adults struggle to have meaningful and well informed conversations on religion – teachers need to know what they are talking about and where they should go to get more knowledge and incite
- Teachers need to be supported and well trained to become RE specialists

### **5. DR JANET ORCHARD**

- Project managing the RE review
- Importance of the report and the data within
- Lack of subject expertise
- Need for subject specialism even at a primary level
- A lot of poor quality discussion in the public sphere on the subject. There is a need to raise standards for RE and be aware of its effect on democracy
- There is a need to have bottom up tactics as well as top down. Both crucial

### **6. JOHN KEAST OBE – CHAIR OF THE REC**

- Thanked MPs, those that attended and those that helped with the report
- Significance of report – first report for first ever APPG on the subject
- Step forward for RE

- Importance of MPs – community representatives driving forward this important subject
- Other important aspects include: ‘RethinkRE’ campaign, Ofqual report in April, Ofsted report May, summer publication of GCSE and A levels and the effect of the English Baccalaureate
- Issues of English Baccalaureate remain, despite the Secretary of State widening the curriculum
- RE still marginalised
- October – RE Council’s subject review to be published
- Issues of RE Council funding
- Report effective as part of a bigger objective
- 40<sup>th</sup> year of RE Council
- Make or break year for RE and RE Council
- Need to work together and with policy makers and stakeholders

## **7. STEPHEN LLOYD MP – CLOSING REMARKS**

- Important year for all
- Crucial to use report and influence in all areas such as teachers, parents, MPs
- Parliamentary perspective – will follow up with written questions, Prime Minister’s Questions and adjournment debate in Commons and Lords
- Need for people to write to national and regional press to explain what is happening and why it is important – now have the report to back up what they say
- Need to be collaborative and reasonable

There being no further business the meeting terminated.

Feedback on the minutes – please send to Benjamin Waldmann at [benjamin@pbpoliticalconsulting.com](mailto:benjamin@pbpoliticalconsulting.com)