



All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 9th July

Portcullis House, Committee Room S, 4pm – 4.55pm

PRESENT

MEMBERS – Stephen Lloyd MP (Chair), Baroness Brinton (Vice-Chair), Mary Glendon MP (Vice Chair), Lord Singh, Jim Dobbin MP

SECRETARIAT - Benjamin Waldmann, William O'Brien, Jeremy Taylor, Sarah Smalley, John Keast

OTHERS – Mark Chater, Sophie Agrotis, Jonathon Ward (assistant to Stephen Lloyd MP)

APOLOGIES - Mike Crockart, Luciana Berger, Alison McGovern, Mike Gapes, Paul Murphy, Graham Jones, Fiona Bruce, David Burrowes, Bob Blackman, Caroline Nokes, Annette Brooke, Anna Soubry, Jeremy Lefroy, Seema Malhotra, the Bishop of Oxford

1. PRELIMINARIES

Stephen Lloyd welcomed members to the second AGM of the APPG on RE. He also addressed John Keast, Chair of the RE Council, and thanked John for his support in running the APPG and in guiding the RE community through difficult times for the subject and wished him well in his retirement.

2. MINUTES OF 2013 AGM

Members accepted the Minutes of the 2013 AGM as an accurate record of the meeting of 8th July 2014. There were no matters arising not otherwise on the agenda.

3. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Baroness Brinton nominated Stephen to be re-elected as Chair, seconded by Lord Singh. Stephen nominated Jim Dobbin, Fiona Bruce, Baroness Brinton, Mary Glendon and Mike Crockart as Vice-Chairs, seconded by Lord Singh. All were elected unopposed. Stephen also nominated Lord Singh as Secretary to the APPG, seconded by Baroness Brinton. Lord Singh was duly elected.

4. REVIEW OF APPG ACTIVITIES 2013-2014

Sarah Smalley presented a report of activities over the past fifteen months. These included:

- The first APPG report – *RE: The Truth Unmasked* based on an inquiry into the supply and support for teachers of RE including their professional development.
- Stephen Lloyd's second Early Day Motion (272) on RE in June 2013, which was signed by 38 MPs.
- The second APPG inquiry and report: *RE's contribution to good community relations*. This had been a short report with a positive message about RE following an inquiry led by Dr Joyce Miller.

There was some discussion around the 'RE: The Truth Unmasked' and the implications of this report in the year following its publication. The situation appeared to have worsened rather than improved in the period since the report came out.

5. PLANS FOR PARTY CONFERENCES

Jeremy Taylor (Chair of the RE PR Group) presented plans for the party conferences. The aim was to engage with the different parties in the run-up to the election and would in each case include an exhibition stand with staff including RE teachers and a breakfast time fringe debate on religious education. Party members who signed the pledges on RE at conferences would also be offered the opportunity to visit a constituency school in order to update their experience of what good RE looks like in a school which takes the subject seriously

6. ACTIVITY PLAN FOR 2014-2015

Due to the forthcoming election in 2015, there would not be a major inquiry or initiative during this period. There were two proposed activities: (1) inviting more APPG members to ask parliamentary questions on RE matters and (2) making further contact with the education team in each party.

7. RE PR GROUP PRIORITIES FOR 2014-2015

The RE PR Group priorities were closely linked to the party conferences and the APPG work. There would also be a push to engage with school leaders and governors through a presence at their annual conferences and articles in their publications. .

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dates for the 2014-2015 APPG meetings would be set by consultation via e-mail. The secretariat would also work on a package for the new intake of MPs who might want to join the APPG.