

Summer 2013 newsletter



www.recentres.org.uk

Chair and acting Treasurer:

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Letter from the chair:

I hope this finds you and your RE Centres faring well?

These are certainly challenging times and hopefully you are able to identify ways of publicising the benefits of your Centre's unique services and expertise.

This letter comes with a request ... or two! Since our Treasurer Ron Upton's illness and Fauzia Ali's departure to concentrate on teaching, I have been acting treasurer and membership secretary. If you are able to help to lighten the load, I would be most grateful to hear from you.

This has meant that the usual summer conference has not taken place, which is a pity. However, if you have ideas for a small meeting in the autumn – or even a whole group meeting during the spring or summer 2014 - please do get in touch. Together we can make it happen!

My thanks to Ken Johnson for his considerable assistance on the newsletter and support for me, and Dave Mohan for his ongoing help maintaining our website.

As you know, the Federation is a member of the [RE Council](#); Chris Boxley and I represent FREC at biannual meetings. Chris recently attended a REC meeting and his notes follow in this newsletter – if you have any queries, please ask.

It is that time of year when FREC subscription is due – just £10 per centre, which helps to cover the Federation's subscription to the RE Council. A separate letter for your accounts department follows with this newsletter. If you need to make a case for continuing your Centre's subscription, please consider these two benefits:

- membership of the REC and through it involvement with national developments of religious education, including new programmes of study - a mechanism for having our voice heard, and
- networking and mutual support which many of us who are lone workers reap from FREC.

Keep in touch

Lydia

Notes on RE Council meeting 9 May 2013 and subsequent national developments

REC website: <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/>



The Federation of RE Centres' representatives on the REC are

- Lydia Revett (re.centre@hants.gov.uk) and
- Chris Boxley (boxley@talktalk.net)

- Minutes of three previous meetings checked and confirmed. Audited accounts accepted
- Application for membership from *Barnabas in Schools* and *Cambridge Muslim College* approved. New REC membership criteria received
- **Company Secretary's report** – quick review of all the different committees; Council's financial position not sustainable in the long term unless it can secure significant funding, difficult decision would have to be made in next 12 months to secure the future of the REC. The matter of member groups paying a subscription was discussed. Free accommodation found at offices of International law firm Ashurst LLP at least until 2014. Current Government matters still having detrimental effect on RE. Brian Gates thanked for paving the way for an archive of material from the 40 years of the Council to be housed in London University's Institute of Education. Following difficulties at REC's developing website being subject to malware attack from Russia the contractors were unable to continue – new contractor appointed. [Website now up and running – do visit it](#). Ask the question – *What does your organisation do specifically with relation to RE?* then submit item for the website.
- Proactive session led by [Three Faiths Forum](#) and [Face to Faith](#) on how to stimulate and improve skills of young people in talking to each other about faith matters.

- **Chairman's report from John Keast** – emphasis on the difficulties of sustaining the strength of RE in the current government climate. Have a look at [John Keast's blog](#).
- **The subject review** was discussed, examining a working paper that looks at the purpose of the study, its aims and attainment targets and a summary of steering group responses. Each group's responses were reported on and collected for further use. Since the meeting on 9 May and further to Lydia's email of 10 June, the draft programme of study was open for public consultation until Friday 5 July 2013. This important consultation is about the proposed programme of study for religious education as part of the RE Subject Review. This is intended to provide documentation for RE which can stand in parallel to the material for National Curriculum subjects following the government's review.
- **Election results** – Dave Francis, Rosemary Rivett, Sandra Teacher elected to REC Board
- **Next meetings** - Thursday 7 November 2013, Wednesday 7 May 2014 and Thursday 6 November 2014



Other items of RE news

- [RE:ONLINE website](#) has been relaunched – a brilliant resource!
- [NATRE's](#) 2013 survey of secondary schools is now open, to gain an update on the situation regarding RE in secondary schools in England - please encourage your secondary contacts to take a few minutes to complete the online survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ImpactonRE2013> by **26 July 2013**.
- **Art in Heaven competition 2013** - part of NATRE's *Spirited Arts* strategy for more creative RE. Deadline for entries **31 July 2013**.
- **APPG for RE** The APPG is continuing to champion RE at the parliamentary level; Stephen Lloyd has put up a new [Early Day Motion](#) which is attracting strong support.
- **Phase 3 of the Review**. Lat Blaylock has been appointed as a Specialist Writer to develop the final programme of study for RE.
- [Culham St Gabriel's](#) have expanded the 3forRE scheme enabling teachers & teaching assistants to apply for funding to help them gain an MA qualification with an RE focus. More details of the scheme can be found at: <http://www.cstg.org.uk/grants/3forre/>
- [The Oxford Foundation Publications](#) is offering a number of publications which are free to download and will be of use to RE teachers. These are available on the [Oxford Foundation website](#).

News from our Member Centres



Karenza writes..... Onwards and Upwards

After 18 months of Review, things are settling down again but there is still so much to do!

The stock and the membership has never been as robust as they are now but, as with most Centres, we struggle financially to make ends meet. We are celebrating the progress we've made over the last year but trying to control the frustration that inevitably arises when there are things that you want to do and insufficient capacity to do them at the speed you'd like!

That said we are currently in the middle of:

- developing brand new original resources for Christianity and Islam (more news when the wraps come off).
- renewing and strengthening the strong and mutually beneficial relationships with many of our user groups that have been neglected in recent years
- looking forward to supporting the new joint-diocesan RE Syllabus about to be launched in July
- creating 'faith walks' for Durham (our first and taking place on the 30th July) and Newcastle (in progress) which we hope will become established RE Trails.
- developing our new website (brighter, shinier and more interactive) and trying to cope with managing our connections via Twitter and Facebook.

We're working on the principle that if it isn't broken don't fix it but if it's limping along consider how can we make it go a little better. Incremental change has been the key to lots of recent wins but with two sites and 8 part time staff communication can sometimes be a challenge and we've had a few interesting 'Faulty Towers' type confusions!

We'd love to be able to share our Centres with anyone who's interested (additional eyes and comments are always welcome) so please do call in if you are ever near us when on your travels.



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The work of the Centre continues in difficult times for the subject but we have continued to support and develop the Faith Experience dimension of our work, which keeps the Centre afloat. Accompanied by a member of the Buddhist Community we worked interactively with the Foundation level children of a school, introducing them to Buddhism.



Not stepping on creatures



Offerings of prayer beads



Their footprints around the Wheel

“ The children, although young (3/4 year olds) were very engaged with the variety of activities on offer. Recall of different activities / songs/stories helped to consolidate learning. I liked the fact that we are able to carry on some of the activities after the morning ‘experience’”

“An excellent chance for children to be fully immersed in an experience of the unknown.”

We have also developed workshops on festivals with a primary school and helped a school run a successful Holi Day. We have also been involved with a Diversity Day for year 8 children in a school as well as assisting in planning and developing RE days in schools. The Centre was asked to deliver an act of worship in a school, bringing together their work on Hinduism.

The comments we received on this were:-

“All children gained an insight in what it is like to be a Hindu”

“We felt it worked really well as a whole school assembly. The whole school was engaged in the experience and the variety of activities kept the children interested throughout”

We have accepted invitations to attend conferences and to be part of the market place for such events which has drawn interest. The Centre has also been involved with new school networks of RE teachers in the County as well as being involved in organising a Post 16 RE Revision conference with the University of Nottingham Theology Department , St John’s College and the County SACRE.

We have continued our work with the Nottingham Inter Faith Council, the County SACRE and have continued to have been hosted by Bluecoat Academy. During the academic year we have been in 17 schools /academies with over 2,250 young people.

Ken Johnson