

**NATIONAL BOARD OF RELIGIOUS  
INSPECTORS AND ADVISERS**



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Thursday 1 December 2022, Don Bosco House, Coleshill**

**THOSE PRESENT**

**President:** Rt Rev Philip Egan, Bishop of Portsmouth, member of the Bishops Conference  
Department for Catholic Education and Formation

**Chair:** Deborah Fox, Director of Education, Hexham and Newcastle

**Our Guests:** Dr Karen North & Mgr Desmond Seddon

**Arundel and Brighton:** Maria Cowler

**Association of Teachers of Catholic Religious Education (ATCRE):** Matthew Dell

**Birmingham:** Maggie Duggan, Rebecca Brolly, David Harris, Ben McCardle, Richard Smith

**Brentwood:** John Adams

**CAFOD:** Monica Conmee, Susan Kambalu

**Catholic Association of Teachers, Schools and Colleges (CATSC):** Caroline Healy, John Nish

**CES:** Jane Goring, Philip Robinson, Nancy Walbank

**Clifton:** Mary Cox

**East Anglia:** Andy Stone

**Hexham and Newcastle:** Chair & Claire Hetherington

**Jesuit Institute:** Maria Neal

**Liverpool:** Dcn Paul Mannings, Julie Rourke

**Mission Together:** Claire Colleran

**Northampton:** Sarah Barreto

**Shrewsbury:** Julia Cunningham

**Westminster:** Amanda Crowley, Trisha Hedley

**APOLOGIES**

**NBRIA Vice Chair:** Peter Ward

**Birmingham:** Canon Jonathan Veasey

**Board of Studies:** Bernard Stuart

**Cardiff:** Fr Bernard Sixtus

**CATSC:** John Lydon

**CES:** Paul Barber

**Clifton:** Sarah Adams

**Leeds:** David Quinn

**Liverpool:** Pat Peel

**Middlesbrough:** Kate Bailey

**Northampton:** Paul McHugh

**Nottingham:** Peter Giorgio, Fionuala Boucher, David Quinn

**Southwark:** Mark Nash

**Wrexham:** Wendy White, Colette Owen

### *Opening Liturgy*

Today's Liturgy and Prayer was prepared and shared by Maggie Duggan and the Birmingham Team.

### **Welcome:**

Bishop Philip focused on the theme of *Hope* as expressed in those final words from Matthew, 'Know that I am with you always!' May the Holy Spirit lead us forward!

Deborah in response thanked Bishop Philip on our behalf for his commitment to NBRIA. This is expressed through his attendance at everything including Executive meetings, AGMs and the NBRIA Conference, during which he led our pilgrimage to the Shrine of St Margaret Clitherow.

Deborah described the AGM as a valuable time for regular and associate members to be together. All are welcome!

### **Presentation to Mgr Des Seddon.**

Deborah expressed how fitting it was to have this time to commend Fr Des' thirty-seven years membership of NBRIA and how impossible it is to fully quantify all that he has undertaken and achieved. Deborah referred to the homily preached by Bishop John Rawsthorne at Des' Mass of Thanksgiving. He spoke of Des' servant leadership and the fact that he had, "The history of NBRIA on his head." Deborah spoke further about Des' impact on programmes of study, inspections, CCRS and Rainbows; his patience, kindness, humility, and the ability to rejoice in the truth. There was a personal appreciation of his friendship extended to other dioceses, and how he has touched the lives of so many.

In response Mgr Des referred to those thirty-seven years with love. He compared attendance at today's meeting with coming home. He commended all members with whom he has had the privilege to work. He assured us of continued prayer for those who are ill and others who have gone before us. Des expressed the hope for NBRIA to continue in its growth and development, urging us, "To keep it going!"

**Keynote Speaker:** Dr Karen North: Senior Lecturer, Programme Lead CCRS, Institute of Education, St Mary's University

*Dr Karen's presentation and notes have been circulated.*

**Following the keynote address, table discussion was based upon three questions**

- 1. What do we want for Catholic Young People Today?**
- 2. How do we measure success?**
- 3. What do you think is working?**

The following points emerged ...

- ◆ Engagement with parents,
- ◆ A need for the CSI to engage with home, school, and parish,
- ◆ Serious consideration about how schools can effectively serve our parishes,
- ◆ Opportunities for using Religious Education homework to engage with parents – a tool for dialogue,
- ◆ Continuing to develop our schools and parishes as privileged places for personal development,
- ◆ Ensuring teachers are the best of role models
- ◆ Effective training to ensure engagement between clergy and youth – an end to even perceived judgement,
- ◆ Just a raised question – What about attending Church weekly on a different day?
- ◆ Making our churches as welcoming as possible – the Eucharistic Teddy Bear was cited as one example of how to engage with our youngsters undertaking sacramental preparation,
- ◆ Getting people to become active in church
- ◆ The prayer of St Teresa of Avila can be appropriately applied to our role and our mission within the Church: *Christ has no body but yours ...*

Sarah Barreto offered our vote of thanks to Dr Karen. Indeed, the Church needs to see, to hear and offer a warm welcome. We need to be struck positively by a sense of belonging, so avoiding at all costs 'the undramatic limbo of non-belonging' (M.P, Gallagher SJ as cited today by Dr Karen). Our constant task with the young is to emphasise that they do belong! Picture the scene of a headteacher sat at the desk at Easter time. There is a knock at the door. A little head pops round door and says, " Mrs Joyce wants to know if you know where Jesus is." The headteacher spent some time composing a clever theologically significant answer for a year 5 class and as she was about to speak, a little voice from the corridor shouted out: "He's in the library changing his book!" They were practising for their Easter play and had lost their lead! Never assume you know what they are asking about. We are called to show them they belong by our witness and time for conversation. Dr Karen left us some robust and exciting challenges!

## **AGM BUSINESS**

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS TO NBRIA EXECUTIVE, 2023-2025:**

**Chair of NBRIA:** There was one nomination for Deborah Fox (Hexham and Newcastle) proposed by Kate Bailey (Middlesbrough) and seconded by Julie Rourke (Liverpool). Deborah was duly elected.

**Treasurer of NBRIA:** There was one nomination for Maggie Duggan (Birmingham) proposed by Ben McCardle (Birmingham) and seconded by Pat Peel (Liverpool). Maggie was duly elected.

### **ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

The Executive has met three times this year. The main items for discussion have been the NBRIA conference, the position regarding the NBRIA constitution, the RED, the National Framework for CSI, and the Directory for Prayer and Liturgy.

There has been substantial input from NBRIA members on the revised Religious Education Directory (RED) through regular meeting of the primary and secondary professional groups. This expertise has made a significant contribution to the project. Members of the Catholic Project will be using the RED content as a basis for adaptation and replacement of primary and secondary resource materials.

NBRIA member have been strategically involved in all areas of the new National Framework for Catholic School Inspection including the writing of the framework and handbook, as well as the development and delivery of training and materials. Again, this has been a significant contribution.

We had a successful conference in March in York. We had the opportunity to discuss in detail the constitution which has led to the draft constitution being presented for discussion and agreement at the AGM. At the conference we also had rich and useful sessions on the Directory for Prayer and Liturgy led by Fr Peter McGrail and Martin Foster which increased our knowledge and understanding. It was very heartening to know that the authors listened to our feedback and appreciated the opportunity to have dialogue with members of NBRIA.

All of the above work shows the importance of NBRIA as an organisation. At the heart of working on national initiatives in association with Bishops Conference and the CES.

### **NBRIA PROFESSIONAL AND ASSOCIATE GROUP REPORTS**

We are so grateful for the reports received and circulated in advance of the meeting, namely those of CAFOD, CATSC, Mission Together, Secondary Advisers, Primary Advisers and NBRIA Finance. The report from ATCRE was received and circulated today. On behalf of ATCRE, Matthew Dell thanks members of their support. There were no other matters arising from these reports.

### **NBRIA Constitution (Led by the Chair)**

The draft of the proposed constitution had been circulated prior to the AGM and was available today in hard copy. This document is the result of much work steered by Paul Barber

and his frequent consultations with Deborah Fox and Peter Ward. There has also been almost two years of wider consultation with members, together with a substantial presentation and feedback at the 2022 NBRIA Conference.

The Constitution is about inspectors and advisers, which can be likened to the *two lungs* of NBRIA. On p6 there are specific references to advisers and to associates. On p14 there is coverage of elected officers. There is noteworthy reference to elected trustees from the newly designated regions and hubs rather than the former usage of the term *Province Representative*. We are confident that the structure of the document recognizes the reality of in which we work. As a CIO whilst we are highly unlikely to ever need to borrow money, yet there is coverage of terms of liability.

NBRIA appears to be the logical home for CSI inspectors whose membership can form its own guild within NBRIA. Our very name includes Inspectors. Historically we were established for inspectors. A significant number of inspectors are also advisers.

One member was concerned that an annual personal subscription currently at the rate of £30 per member could be discouraging particularly in the current financial climate. What are members getting for their money? Wider discussion followed. Clearly, we have an annual fee for all members which helps defray costs. Whilst there was no definitive conclusion on this matter, there was lively discussion.

In conclusion members were asked if there was any objection to our accepting this draft as our NBRIA Constitution. There were no objections. Therefore, the revised 2022 NBRIA Constitution has been duly accepted.

### **Other Business**

- The Treasurer appealed for outstanding NBRIA annual subscriptions for 2022 to be settled as soon as possible.
- The Chair reminded everyone about our 2023 NBRIA Conference. The date is below. We already have our required thirty expression of interest that will hopefully become confirmed acceptances, with spaces for a few more! The programme is now being prepared and everyone will be kept informed.

### **TWO DATES FOR 2023:**

- **NBRIA Annual Conference:** Palazzola, Monday/Friday 27- 31 March
- **NBRIA AGM:** Thursday 7 December, Don Bosco House, Coleshill

### **Our Thanks**

The Chair thanked all present for today's highly successful meeting. Appreciation was expressed to members of Executive for its secretarial, financial administration and over-arching support. Again, heartfelt thanks were offered on behalf of everyone for the welcome and hospitality provided by the all the team at Don Bosco House. Their Prayer and Liturgy was uplifting. They look after us so well!

*Closing Prayer and Departures*