

HARROW SACRE
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 1 MARCH 2023
Via Zoom

Attendance

Group A

* Mercedes Afnan
* Ven Sumana Sramaner
* Ciara O'Flaherty
* Camilla Bath

* Karen Collier
* Vijay Hirani
* David Cryer
* Varsha Dodhia
A Gill Ross
A Doreen Samuels
A Asad Omar
* Paramjit Singh-Kohli
A Phiroza Gan-Kotwal

Religious traditions and Christian churches

Baha'i
Buddhist
Christian (Catholic) (last meeting)
Christian (Catholic) (replacing Diana Ohene)
Christian (Free Church Federal Council)
Hindu (Swaminarayan)
Humanist (Harrow Humanists)
Jain
Jewish
Jewish
Muslim
Sikh
Zoroastrian

Group B

* Mary Abbott
* Alison Stowe
* Revd James Power

Church of England

Group C

* Fatema Rahemani
* Heena Mistry
* Elizabeth Boulter

Teachers' Associations

NASUWT
NAHT
NEU

Group D

A Cllr Salim Chowdhury Conservative
A Cllr Janet Mote Conservative
* Cllr Sasi Suresh *Labour*

Local Authority

A Cllr David Ashton Conservative (reserve)
A Cllr Hitesh Karia Conservative (reserve)
A Cllr Ghazanfar Ali Labour (reserve)

Advisor to the SACRE

A Lesley Prior (Advisor to Harrow SACRE) on long term leave of absence due to ill health
* Lisa Kassapian (RE Advisor)

Clerk

*Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)

Observers

*Arvind Halai from the Swaminarayan temple on Kenton Road

* *denotes presence*

A *denotes absence with apologies*

~ *denotes absence without apologies*

1. Welcome

Alison welcomed everyone to the meeting. She extended a special welcome to Lisa Kassapian who is standing in for Lesley. Lesley is away on long term leave of absence to undergo chemotherapy. Lisa introduced herself. She runs her own company called Breathe RE, offering RE training and consultancy. She has spent 18 years as RE advisor for Hertfordshire SACRE and is now assisting with the Agreed Syllabus revisions for Harrow SACRE while Lesley is away.

2. Election Vice Chair (*deferred from last meeting*)

The committee was delighted to welcome Camilla as a Catholic representative to replace Diana Ohene. She has served for many years on the committee as a Councillor representative and we are pleased that she is able to continue in this new capacity. Camilla outlined her credentials to take on this role.

Camilla was then elected unanimously as Vice-Chair.

3. Apologies for absence

RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence from Gill Ross, Doreen Samuels, Asad Omar, Phiroza Gan-Kotwal, Cllr Janet Mote and Cllr Salim Chowdhury.

Membership of the Committee

Zafar Khalid and Mohammed Amar are no longer members of this committee. Replacements are being sought.

Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 December 2022 (*previously circulated*)

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

7. NASACRE:

Training: Alison is following up on money for training

NASACRE conference: Mary Abbott will attend the conference as representative of Harrow SACRE.

9. Annual Report:

Lesley has written the Annual Report: there are a few more items to add. Alison will liaise with Paddy about these; she will also contact NASACRE to explain the current situation.

Action: Alison

Last year's Annual Report has now been posted on Harrow SACRE website.

6. ASC update

Further work will be carried out on the ASC at the ASC meeting following immediately from this one. The Teachers have met and made good progress on working through the action points and Alison has passed this on to Lisa.

7. Annual Report 2021-22

As noted above under Matters Arising, the Annual report is almost complete.

8. National updates

- **2021 Census data** (*previously circulated*): David reported that the census data reflects broad trends but no major differences from the 2011 Census apart from a significant growth in the Muslim population. At the moment, Harrow SACRE has only one Muslim representative in group A although Fatima is also well qualified to represent Islam in addition to being a teacher representative. She will make an approach to the Islamic school with a view to appointing another Muslim representative.

Action: Fatima

- **National developments in Education since the last ASC**

Lisa gave a very clear account of national developments in education since the last ASC. The overall picture conveys a shortage of RE teachers, lack of training (the government has missed its recruitment target for 9 out of 10 years), insufficient allocation of time and lack of funding. Despite this, parental regard for RE remains high. We hope that the launch of the updated AS will stimulate greater interest in RE and professional development and that in Harrow at least, some of these issues can be addressed in order to create a more positive scenario than the national situation.

Lisa will forward some links to Vivian so that members can follow up these issues in more detail,

Action: Lisa

- **Online training**

NASACRE offers a range of excellent on line courses: upcoming course include effective clerking and determinations.

9. News from Faith Groups relating to schools

- **Jain:** Varsha has represented Jainism at a Junior Assembly at Longfield.
- **Judaism:** the Mosaic Jewish Community building is now open on Stanmore Hill and in the early stages of making a home in the wider community of Stanmore. It houses three denominations, Liberal, Masorti and Reform and has a Community Development Rabbi, who is organising visits into the building and into schools.
- **Hinduism:** Swaminarayan parents have been requesting special leave of absence to attend an important celebration from Tuesday 18 – Wednesday 26 April celebrating 200 years of Shree Narnarayandev; these requests have met with a mixed response from head teachers. Alison explained that although head teachers were asked to look sympathetically on such requests in the Days of Religious Observance Guidance, this document is for guidance only and the ultimate decision is down to each head teacher.
- **Resources for Schools:** at the last meeting, members discussed compiling a list of resources for schools which would include places of worship that can be visited (or museums containing objects of religious interest), both locally and nationally; names of local contacts could be included where known. Heena again put in a plea for such a list. Alison asked the faith representatives and the C of E representatives to send their suggestions to her and she would collate the list.

Action: faith representatives, C of E representatives and Alison

10. Any Other Business

- **Farewell to Ciara:** this is Ciara's's last meeting. She is resigning owing to the pressure of family and work commitments. Alison thanked her for her service to Harrow SACRE.

11. Future Dates:

- Monday 27 March: Lisa and Alison to meet
- Thursday 27 April: RE Leaders meeting
-

Harrow SACRE:

- Tuesday 27 June 2023 followed by ASC meeting:
- Tuesday 26 September 2023
- Wednesday 6 December 2023
- Wednesday 6 March 2024

These dates were agreed

This part of the meeting closed at 8.10pm It was followed by an ASC meeting

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)

HARROW AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

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1. Feedback from RE Teachers Network meeting

Alison reported back from the RE Teachers network meeting in January. Teachers had compared the Harrow ASC with the Hounslow syllabus: Lesley has advised that it is possible to draw on this with proper attribution. Teachers commented on the syllabus. Alison thanked David for attending this meeting.

For the next part of the meeting, the committee was divided into break-out rooms:

- Break-out room 1: teacher representatives and C of E representatives;
Look at the aims.
- Break-out room 2: faith representatives and councillors.
Look at the faith descriptions in the “Religions and Worldviews” section and update in the light of the new Census information.

2. Report Back

Mary reported back from Room 1. Lisa highlighted the discussion to refine the aims and update the focus on learning about and learning. The group discussed wording to replace ‘tolerance’ and to use ‘critically’ instead of ‘seriously’. Mary will send revised wording to Alison.

Action: Mary

Alison reported back from Room 2. She explained changes required for page 4 ‘Religion in Harrow’. Lisa explained how some language has changed since the last syllabus, for instance “sacred texts” has replaced “special texts”. Members fully supported this change. There was a discussion regarding the naming of the Dharmic religions and the use of the phrase ‘worldview traditions’. There was some ambivalence about whether the syllabus should open with the aims and statutory requirements instead of with the faith descriptions as in the previous syllabus. Members like the present opening which gives such a positive portrayal of Harrow’s diversity; on the other hand, they were willing to adopt the change if this made the syllabus more accessible to teachers’ requirements.

Alison and Lisa are meeting on 27 March: they will make a decision about the order of the syllabus and incorporate the revisions that have been agreed.

Members should email any suggestions to Alison by 20th March.

Action: Members

3. Future Dates:

- **Tuesday 27 June following the SACRE committee**

4. Closing remarks

- Alison thanked Lisa for her input and everyone for attending and negotiating the technology. Lisa thanked everyone for welcoming her and being so supportive.
- Alison will arrange a card and flowers for Lesley; she asked members to email any messages they would like included in the card.

Action: Members and Alison

The Meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)