

**HARROW SACRE**  
*(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)*  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 26 SEPTEMBER 2023**  
**Harrow Hub**

**Attendance**

**Group A**

\* Mercedes Afnan  
*A Ven Sumana Sramaner*  
*A Camilla Bath*  
\* Laura Thornton  
\* Karen Collier  
\* Vijay Hirani  
\* David Cryer  
*A Varsha Dodhia*  
*A Gill Ross*  
*A Doreen Samuel*  
*A Asad Omar*  
\* Paramjit Singh-Kohli  
\* Phiroza Gan-Kotwal

**Religious traditions and Christian churches**

Baha'i  
*Buddha Dhamma*  
Christian (Catholic)  
Christian (Catholic)  
Christian (Free Church Federal Council)  
Sanatan Dharma (Swaminarayan)  
Humanist (Harrow Humanists)  
Jain  
Jewish  
Jewish  
Muslim  
Sikh Dharm  
Zoroastrian

**Group B**

\* Mary Abbott  
\* Alison Stowe  
\* Revd James Power

**Church of England**

**Group C**

*A Fatema Rahemani*  
*A Heena Mistry*  
*A Elizabeth Boulter*  
\* Sayyeda-Maryam Jessa

**Teachers' Associations**

*NASUWT*  
*NAHT*  
*NEU*  
NEU

**Group D**

\* Cllr June Baxter 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. Members introduced themselves.

### 2. Apologies for absence

**RESOLVED:** To note apologies for absence from Varsha Dodhia, Ven Sumana Sramaner, Gill Ross, Doreen Samuels, Asad Omar, Camilla Bath, Fatema Rahemani, Heena Mistry, Elizabeth Boulter, Cllr Janet Mote and Cllr Ghazanfar Ali.

### Membership of the Committee

**Attendance:** Alison reminded members that attendance is important and if members miss three consecutive meetings without adequate reasons, they will be asked to reconsider their membership of the committee.

**Muslim representation:** the committee is still short of Muslim representatives; Fatema and Sayyeda have recommended Mohammed Dhattu to represent the Shia Muslims. He is a teacher at Whitefriars. Alison will follow this up.

**Action: Alison**

### Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 27 June 2023 (*previously circulated*)

p.2. Minute 8. Local and National updates

Local: Teachers' Network: para 1: ASC should be changed to AS.

With this amendment, the minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

### 4. Matters arising from the minutes

**There were no matters arising from the minutes not already covered on the agenda.**

### 5. DRO (Days of Religious Observance) (*previously circulated*)

Vivian thanked Arvind, Doreen and Sayyeda-Maryam for returning comments on the draft DRO. Members have until Saturday 30 September to make any further amendments. The DRO will be sent for publication on Monday 2 October as it is helpful to publish it as early in the academic year as possible as headteachers receive requests for leave of absence well in advance. It should be stressed that this document is for guidance only: the final decisions rest with individual headteachers. It is also not a

calendar of festivals as such but a guide to those festivals which require time off school.

## **6. Local and National updates**

### **Local**

#### **ASC update**

To be discussed in the ASC meeting following this meeting.

#### **Determinations in Harrow academies and LA schools**

While SACRE grants determinations to LA maintained schools, the DfE is responsible for determinations for academies. Alison wrote to the DfE over the summer to enquire how many academies in Harrow have been granted determinations. No academies have applied for determinations to date.

Currently four LA schools in Harrow have determinations; the most recently granted was to Vaughan school. SACRE worked with Vaughan on the preparation for this and will support any school seeking a determination.

#### **NASACRE Courses**

NASACRE runs a range of online courses. <https://nasacre.org.uk/training-and-support/> There is one for chairs and a free one for new members. Past courses can also be accessed online. Members should look at the list on the NASACRE website and contact Vivian if there are any they would like to attend. If a number of members are interested, it may be worth taking out a group subscription if the SACRE budget allows.

#### **RE-hubs.uk**

There is also a new website: <https://www.re-hubs.uk/> which provides information on resources, training and places to visit pertaining to RE. Still in its early stages, this promises to be a useful resource.

#### **Teachers' Network**

The Teachers' Network is working on a list of places of worship in Harrow and its environs which can be visited and also a list of speakers from different religions and worldviews who will visit schools. Alison asked members to let her know, if they had not done so already, if their places of worship could host school visits and if they provide speakers to schools.

### **National**

#### **Public examinations and RE**

The RE Council, NASACRE and NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) have reported a fall in entries for A and AS level RE. There is a shortage of RE teachers and these associations have joined together to lobby the government to improve recruitment. They will be represented at the upcoming party conferences and have asked SACRE members to write to their MPs and retweet tweets from the campaign to their own networks. They are seeking a teacher training bursary for RE and fairer allocation of resources.

Entries for GCSE RE remain constant; it is the seventh most popular subject.

## 7. News from Faith Groups relating to schools

There was no news from faith groups relating to schools.

## 8. Any Other Business

- **Brent Sikh Centre:** Paramjit has invited members to visit the Brent Sikh Centre, 241 Stag Lane, NW9 0EF <https://brentsikhcentre.org/>. This was arranged for 12:30 on Sunday 26 November. All SACRE members, partners and families are welcome.
- **Workforce data:** Alison is still reviewing this analysis of time spent on RE in schools. Deferred to the next meeting.
- **Humanist representation on SACREs:** Alison informed members that Kent Humanists sued Kent Council because there was no humanist representative on their SACRE. They won their case. Harrow is fortunate to have a long tradition of Humanist representation on Group A of its SACRE.
- **Address list:** Vivian circulated the list of addresses and contact details for members to check and update. This is a confidential document and not for general circulation.
- **South Asia Festival:** David informed members of this festival taking place at the Zoroastrian Centre on 19 November. It is organised by the Mayor's office and there will be music, dancing, yoga, etc. It is a drop-in event.

## 9. Future Dates:

Harrow SACRE:

- Wednesday 6 December 2023: this meeting will be held on Zoom.
- Wednesday 6 March 2024

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

**Signed:** (Chair)  
(Date)