

**Harrow Sacre**  
*(Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education)*  
**Minutes of the meeting held via Video Conferencing**  
**on 10 December 2020**

**Attendance**

**Group A**

\* Mercedes Afnan  
*A Ven Sumana Sramaner*  
\* Bob Dawson  
\* Diana Ohene  
~ *Ciara O'Flaherty*  
\* Vijay Hirani  
\* David Cryer  
*A Varsha Dodhia*  
*A Gill Ross*  
*A Doreen Samuels*  
~ *Zafar Khalid*

*A Asad Omar*  
~ *Tahir Hashmi*

\* Mohammed Amar

\* Paramjit Singh-Kohli  
\* Phiroza Gan-Kotwal

**Group B**

*A Mary Abbott*  
\* Revd Kate Blake  
*A Revd James Power*

**Group C**

\* Alison Stowe (Chair)  
~ *Teri-Louise O'Brien*  
\* Fatema Rahemani

**Group D**

\* Cllr Camilla Bath Conservative (Vice Chair)  
\* Cllr Ghazanfar Ali Labour  
\* Cllr Angella Murphy-Strachan Labour

*Cllr Dr Lesline Lewinson Conservative (reserve)*  
\* Cllr Simon Brown Labour (reserve) *for part of the meeting*  
Vacancy Labour (reserve)

**Advisor to the SACRE**

\* Lesley Prior (Advisor to Harrow SACRE)

**Religious traditions and Christian churches**

Baha'i  
Buddhist  
Christian (Free Church Federal Council)  
Christian (Catholic)  
Christian (Catholic)  
Hindu (Swaminarayan)  
Humanist (Harrow Humanists)  
Jain  
Jewish  
Jewish  
Muslim (representing Harrow Central Mosque)  
Muslim  
Muslim (representing Harrow Central Mosque)  
Muslim (representing Harrow Central Mosque)  
Sikh  
Zoroastrian

**Church of England**

**Teachers' Associations**

**Local Authority**

## **Clerk**

\* Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)

## **Visitor**

\* Taskeen Jaffer, Faith Lead at Hujjat Primary School

*\* denotes presence*

*A denotes absence with apologies*

*~ denotes absence without apologies*

### **1. Welcome**

Alison welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Taskeen Jaffer, Faith Lead at Hujjat Primary School. Taskeen is attending as an observer. Hujjat Primary school is an Islamic faith school; it welcomes pupils from all branches of Islam and also children of other faiths or none.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

**RESOLVED:** To note apologies for absence from Ven Sumana Sramaner, Varsha Dodhia, Gill Ross, Doreen Samuels, Asad Omar, Mary Abbott and the Revd James Power.

Kate Blake would be late.

The meeting was inquorate until she arrived: any decisions would be delayed until she joined the meeting.

The following members were also absent:

Group A: Ciara O'Flaherty, Zafar Khalid and Tahir Hashmi.

No apologies had been received.

### **3. Order of the agenda**

An additional item on the Census 2021 was taken after Matters arising.

### **4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 September 2020 (previously circulated)**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

### **5. Matters arising from the minutes**

**p.2. Item 3. Virtual meetings:** the meeting was publicised through the Harrow Newsletter: Taskeen Zaffer is attending this evening as a result of this publicity. The agenda for the meeting was also posted on the SACRE website in advance of the meeting.

**pp.2-3. Item 7. Local and national updates**

**NASACRE EGM:** *see item 5 below.*

**p.4. Item 11. Annual report:** *see item 9 below.*

## 6. Census 2021

Simon Brown introduced this item. He is working with local organisations on behalf of the Office of National Statistics to publicise the Census in 2021 and ensure that people know how important it is to participate. The Census takes place on 21 March 2021. It will be largely digital but paper copies will be available for those who need them.

The Census is important because many funding and resource decisions are made on the basis of these statistics.

Simon can reassure anyone who may have concerns about how their data is used: it will be kept very securely.

Simon can provide copy for anyone connected with local organisations and faith groups to publish in their newsletters. He is also providing information to schools as the Office for National Statistics has a Census Schools' programme.

Lesley added that councils make use of Census information to determine the membership of their local SACREs. When will the information about religious affiliations be available? Simon explained that the information from this Census should be available more quickly than previously owing to the electronic nature of the data. He estimated that data would be available after a year from census day. SACRE members often refer to the census when talking about religious affiliations in Harrow.

Simon will send brief details and a community handbook for Vivian to circulate to members. The handbook has more detailed information and contains FAQs. It also includes Simon's contact details. The LA is very supportive and has set up a Census Steering group. More information can be found on the Census website: <https://census.gov.uk/>.

Alison thanked Simon for attending the meeting to share this information.

## 7. Local and National updates

### National

**Annual reports:** NASACRE is reviewing the structure of Annual Reports. If all SACREs work from the same template, it will be possible to analyse the content of annual reports. It would also enable NASACRE to share examples of good practice and identify SACREs in need of support.

SACREs are required to send their Annual Reports to the DfE. SACREs only cover LA schools so NASACRE is raising the question of how to gather information from Academies and Free Schools and whether they should also be required to produce annual reports.

**Collective Worship:** there is an initiative to consider Collective Worship which is sometimes considered the poor relation to RE as professional organisations do not consider it within their remit.

NASACRE is very conscious of its responsibilities towards Collective Worship and the Association of Religious Advisors and Consultants (ARIAC) (<https://www.arei.org.uk/>) also includes Collective Worship in its remit.

During the pandemic, Collective Worship may have been neglected although it is apparent that in some cases it gained renewed importance as it provides space to consider the profound questions raised by the crisis. Schools are also placing

more emphasis on mental health and well-being where Collective Worship can also make a positive contribution.

**Other national initiatives** have been paused for the present.

**EGM:** NASACRE held an Emergency General Meeting online. At this meeting the appointment of the new Chair, Linda Rudge, was formally approved. Alison attended the EGM: she reported that there were excellent presentations from schools who were recipients of Westhill Funding Awards. The Awards had enabled these schools to focus on parts of their agreed syllabus and produce some excellent schemes of work. There were examples of excellent pedagogy and overall it was a very heartening meeting.

**AGM:** the next AGM will be held in May 2021 and will also be online. It is hoped that representatives from Harrow SACRE will be able to attend. Participants will be able to save on travel costs although there will still be a fee for the event to cover technical support, etc.

## **Local**

**Meetings of the Primary network of RE teachers:** at the behest of the council these meetings were scheduled to take place between 13:30 and 15:30 so that teachers could attend within the school day and would not have to sacrifice their free time. However, many teachers found it difficult to be released during the school day and requested that the meetings should be after school. The twilight sessions have now been reinstated.

**Equality and diversity:** the most recent meetings have focused on the theme of equality and diversity which chimes well with the BLM movement and Black History week.

The Newsletter will continue: it is circulated to teachers but available to SACRE members on request. Lesley hopes to publish two newsletters a term.

Q. What form does the focus on Equality and Diversity take? Lesley explained that the principles of good practice in RE produced by the Runnymede Trust (<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/>) were used as the basis. Diana mentioned that she carries out Equalities training for schools; training towards Family School Quality Awards is also available for schools..

## **8. Collective Worship Policy (previously circulated)**

In the summer of 2019, Alison met a group of teachers to talk through the previous Collective Worship policy. Alison and Lesley have also met on Zoom when Lesley was able to draw comparisons with other Collective Worship policies. As the law hasn't changed since 1994, the essence of the policy still stands but it needs refreshing. In the current economic climate it will not be possible to produce a glossy publication.

Lesley felt that there is renewed interest in collective worship; Ealing and Westminster are also refreshing their policies.

The updated policy will need to:

- be available online;
- set out the legal requirements;
- give practical examples;

- include FAQs;
- include a section on how to apply for a determinations with examples of relevant documentation;
- contain guidance for community schools whether or not they have a determination.

SACRE's role is to advise the LA on RE and Collective Worship and Collective Worship is an area where support is vitally needed as teachers have no training in this area.

Q. To what extent are secondary schools involved in contributing to the Collective Worship policy? Lesley explained that secondary schools have not been involved so far but they are also required by law to hold acts of collective worship. Such acts are often held as part of a thought for the day within a tutor period. The policy would include examples of collective worship for a secondary school.

Alison ran a training course on collective worship but as there is only one secondary school in Harrow that is still maintained by the LA, the emphasis was on the primary sector. However, free schools and academies are also required to hold acts of collective worship. There are plenty of resources for assemblies but assemblies are not the same as acts of collective worship and are not required by law.

**Members should read the Collective Worship document that has already been circulated and send comments to Alison by the end of January.**

**Members**

Alison and Lesley will then draft the policy and post it on the website with a link in the Harrow newsletter. At the next meeting members can discuss the policy and also whether photographs should be used.

**Lesley and Alison  
Item for next agenda**

*At this point (8.15 pm) Kate Blake arrived.*

## **9. Determinations:**

### **Vaughan School**

Alison had been in touch with Karen Jones, the Head Teacher of Vaughan. Schools are under a lot of pressure at the moment but Karen is aware that the determination is pending. Fortunately, the school held its meeting with parents before the lockdown. Karen will take the application forward in January.

## **10. Annual Report (Chair's report previously circulated)**

In her report Alison paid tribute to the enthusiasm and commitment of RE teachers in Harrow. They have worked hard during lock down to produce more excellent lesson plans and schemes of work.

Alison also mentioned collective worship; some schools held collective worship on Zoom. It is important to recognize that collective worship is not the responsibility of the RE coordinator; ultimately it is the responsibility of the head teacher.

Harrow SACRE is also lucky to have the support of Paddy O'Dwyer; he supports SACRE members in their excellent work.

Alison also stressed the importance of Lesley's invaluable contribution as SACRE's LA advisor. Vivian is also a useful member of the team. Members pointed out a few literals and Alison corrected these.

The Annual report has to be sent to NASACRE, the LA, the DfE and schools.

Lesley is still waiting for the results of public examinations to include in the report. Some SACREs have included the grades students received this year even though they had not sat the exams. Others decided not to include the results.

Q. How different are the results this year? Lesley explained that anecdotal evidence suggests that grades may be inflated this year. Members felt that the results should be included but it was not necessary to include too much discussion of the results.

Alison will chase Paddy for the results. It is not known why he hasn't received them yet.

**Alison**

Academies and free schools are no longer under the remit of the LA, so their results are not included; they are however, still funded by public money, so there is a case for including their results.

#### **11. Priorities for the Year ahead**

- **Collective Worship Policy;**
  - **Supporting Vaughan in its determination;**
  - **Reviewing the Agreed Syllabus:** the AS should be reviewed every five years so this should be on the agenda for the autumn. To expand the syllabus so it included schemes of work for every age a group would be a massive task: Diana suggested that to proceed by exemplification would be a more manageable approach. This could be done through a working party.
- Q. Does SACRE have responsibility for schemes of work for faith schools? Lesley explained that faith schools make their own provision and follow what the authorities in their faith tradition require. They can choose SACRE materials if they wish and their RE teachers sometime attend the network meetings. However, the AS is more diverse than a faith school syllabus which must reflect its own faith tradition.

#### **12. News from Faith Groups relating to schools**

- **Sikhism:** Paramjit is holding chaplaincy services for schools that need prayers for Sikhs.
- **Hinduism:** Vijay Hirani informed members that Jay Lakhani, the founder of the Hindu Academy in London has passed away suddenly. Vijay will be attending his funeral. Alison asked Vijay to pass on condolences on behalf of SACRE.

#### **13. Any Other Business**

- **Freedom of Information request:** Alison explained that Paddy is handling a FoI request for information about funding for SACREs.

**14. Future Dates:**

- **Tuesday 9 March**

**The meeting closed at 9.00 pm**

**Signed:**

**(Chair)**

**(Date)**