

**HARROW SACRE**  
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 27 JUNE 2023**  
Harrow Hub

**Attendance**

**Group A**

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

**Religious traditions and Christian churches**

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

**Group B**

\* Mary Abbott  
\* Alison Stowe  
A 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*  
A *Cllr Sasi Suresh Labour*

**Local Authority**

A *Cllr David Ashton Conservative (reserve)*  
A *Cllr Hitesh Karia Conservative (reserve)*  
\* *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**

A *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.

### **2. Election Chair and Vice Chair**

**The Clerk chaired this part of the meeting.**

**Chair:** there were two nominations:

Paramjit Singh-Kohli was nominated by himself and seconded by Vijay Hirani

Alison Stowe was nominated by herself and seconded by Gill Ross

**Alison Stowe was elected as chair in a secret ballot.**

**Alison then resumed chairing the meeting**

#### **Vice-Chair**

Camilla Bath was nominated by Phiroza Gan-Kotwal and seconded by Mary Abbott

There were no other nominations.

**Camilla Bath was elected as Vice-Chair**

### **3. Apologies for absence**

**RESOLVED:** To note apologies for absence from Ven Sumaner Sramaner, Laura Thornton, Doreen Samuels, Asad Omar, Rev James Power, Fatema Rahemani, Heena Mistry, Elizabeth Boulter, Cllr Sasi Suresh, Cllr Janet Mote and Arvind Halai.

Mercedes Afnan and Cllr June Baxter were also absent.

#### **Membership of the Committee**

Laura Thornton has joined the committee as a Catholic representative and Sayyeda Maryam has joined as a teacher representative.

#### **Quorum**

**The meeting was quorate.**

### **4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 1 March 2023 (previously circulated)**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

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

#### **9. News from Faith Groups relating to schools:**

**Judaism:** Gill reported that the Mosaic Jewish Community Building is now open for visits.

**Resources for Schools:** Vijay asked if there has been any progress on compiling the list of resources and contacts. Alison replied that this project is still in progress; she and Heena are working on this list.

## 6. **ASC update**

To be discussed in the ASC meeting following from this meeting.

## 7. **Annual Report 2021-22**

The Annual Report has been completed and can be found on the NASACRE website.

## 8. **Local and National updates**

### **Local**

**Teachers' Network:** Mary reported that the Teachers' Network group has met to review the AS. The assessment group has met twice. Mary has worked on the Early Years section and other members of the group have covered other parts of the syllabus. Teachers have been very positive about the AS.

Sumaner has reviewed Key Stages 3-5. Another secondary school teacher from a Harrow academy would be a useful addition to the SACRE committee. *(See also Role of SACREs below)*

**National** *(As there was no facility for PowerPoint, Lisa tabled a paper copy of her presentation on the NASACRE conference; this is also circulated with these minutes)*

**NASACRE Conference** 22 May 2023 at the Fishmongers' Hall in London  
Lisa introduced her summary and took members through each slide drawing attention to the following:

**Pearl Anniversary:** it is the thirtieth anniversary of NASACRE and this conference drew on themes of reflection and memories.

**The next 30 years:** Dr Kathryn Wright gave a keynote address: "An education in religion and world views – the next 30 years?". NASACRE has four functions:

- **Strengthening**
- **Supporting**
- **Representing**
- **Celebrating**

**Role of SACREs in the emerging educational landscape** was the title of the second keynote address by the Rt Hon Charles Clarke. Strengths include:

- **Occupying the moral high ground**
- **Demonstrating a physical manifestation of multifaith society**
- **Being a locally based force for social cohesion.**

Tensions occur in the areas of:

- Finances and resources
- Variable capacity
- Building community cohesion
- Clear definition of their roles

- Need for faiths to think, argue and promote themselves.

The Rt Hon Charles Clarke recommended having a MAT link on local SACREs (see also Teachers' Network above)

**National Analysis of National Reports** by Dr David Hampshire: there are 153 SACREs throughout the country. The report analysing SACRE annual reports 2019-2022 revealed that 28 submitted a report in all of these three years, 37 in two of the years, 35 once and 53 not at all. Key question, how will the DfE hold these 53 SACREs to account?

Key point to consider, SACREs should report on how the LA responded to advise given by SACRE during the year and the impact of the response.

### Online training

Mary had attended a follow up online seminar and she mentioned the wide range of courses available from NASACRE. Also recommended are the Culham St Gabriel's Trust, the Farmington Institute of Christian Studies and the new work done by the British Library supporting Religions and Worldviews for Years 5 and 6.

## 9. News from Faith Groups relating to schools

- **Humanism:** David is available to visit schools.
- **Sikh Dharm:** Paramjit has attended a reception at Windsor with the King. The Sikh community has been very active in distributing meals to needy families. These are available for anyone in need.
- **Jain:** Yoga is being taught at the Avanti school to help manage stress.
- **Islam:** Ghazanfar is still trying to recruit another representative from Harrow Central Mosque. The Mosque is very active in the distribution of food from the food banks in Harrow. There is a great need for this service even in a relatively prosperous borough like Harrow.
- **Zoroastrian:** Phiroza asked if SACRE was running any trips or activities. Alison said that the pandemic and difficulty of arranging meetings had meant that visits and activities were in abeyance but that this is an area for development in the future.

## 10. Any Other Business

- **Swarminarayan celebrations 18-26 April:** these have now taken place: Patrick O'Dwyer, Director of Education, wrote to schools to make them aware of SACRE guidance in which our representatives had asked for a sympathetic approach to be taken towards requests for leave in connection with these celebrations. Mr O'Dwyer also made it clear, as SACRE does, that it is the headteacher's decision to approve absences and that the LA would support schools in accordance with existing school attendance policies.
- **Community Meeting 7 July at 1.00pm:** further details from David.
- **Dharmic religions:** Paramjit explained that the use of the suffix "-ism" to describe the Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh faiths is no longer appropriate. These religions should be denoted by the term "Dharm" or "Dharma". This will be discussed in more detail at the ASC meeting following from this meeting.

- **Diversity in Harrow:** Varsha reflected that the AS should reflect Harrow's diverse faith traditions. Lisa has taken some notes to incorporate this further into the AS.
- **Referring questions forward:** in answer to a question, Lisa explained that although she serves all members of the SACRE committee, she is often obliged to refer questions to Alison; this is because she is currently working to develop the Agreed Syllabus within a set number of days. The time she can devote to Harrow SACRE is limited due to budgetary constraints.

## **11. Future Dates:**

Harrow SACRE:

- Tuesday 26 September 2023
- Wednesday 6 December 2023
- Wednesday 6 March 2024

**These dates were agreed**

**This part of the meeting closed at 8.30pm It was followed by an ASC meeting**

**Signed:**

**(Chair)**

**(Date)**