

HARROW SACRE
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 6 DECEMBER 2023
Via Zoom

Attendance
Group A

* Mercedes Afnan
A Ven Sumana Sramaner
~ Camilla Bath
* Laura Thornton
A Karen Collier
A Vijay Hirani
* David Cryer
* Varsha Dodhia
* Gill Ross
* Doreen Samuels
A Muhammad Datoo
A 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

A Mary Abbott
* Alison Stowe
* Revd James Power *until 7.30*

Church of England

Group C

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

Teachers' Associations

NASUWT
NAHT
NEU
NEU

Group D

* Cllr June Baxter Conservative
* Cllr Janet Mote Conservative
* 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

* 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. **Apologies for absence**

RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence from Ven Sumana Sramaner, Vijay Hirani, Karen Collier, Muhammad Dato, Paramjit Singh Kohli, Mary Abbott, Heena Mistry, Fatema Rahmenan and Sayyeda-Mariam Jessa.
Camilla Bath was also absent.

Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 September 2023** (*previously circulated*)

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes**

p. 2. Minute 2. Muslim representation: Muhammad Dato has been recruited to represent the Shia Muslims but was only able to arrive just at the end of the meeting.

Members look forward to meeting him next time.

p.2. Minute 6. NASACRE courses: Harrow SACRE has now paid a subscription which allows members to attend NASACRE courses. Lisa and Alison have attended "How may SACREs effectively monitor schools?" Heena and Alison have attended "Collective Worship".

Vivian will recirculate the flyer.

Action: Vivian

p.3. Minute 8:

Visit to Brent Sikh Centre *see 11 below.*

South Asia festival: *see 8 below.*

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

5. **Annual report 2022-23** (*previously circulated*)

Most of the year was devoted to the revision of the Agreed Syllabus and this has now been accomplished. SACRE can move forward to develop its monitoring role. **Alison asked members to read through the Annual Report and contact her with any additions or amendments by 14 December.**

Action: Members

6. **Development Plan** (*workplan previously circulated and shared on screen with illustrative slides: the slides are attached to these minutes*)

- **Christianity in Schools**

Lisa explained that, in response to criticisms about the way Christianity is taught in schools, the Church of England launched a very comprehensive resource called “Understanding Christianity”. This focuses on depth rather than breadth. Harrow has a group of teachers who meet and communicate regularly to network and share resources, Alison recommended that SACRE should support its teachers by investing in this resource. Lisa is an accredited “Understanding Christianity” trainer and a substantial subsidy is available for community schools. This reduces the cost by £150 to £60 per resource.

Doreen asked if the resource will actually be used given its size and scope. Alison explained that schools will use parts of it.

Varsha asked if academies will use it. Alison explained that it will be rolled out in community primary schools initially.

Alison will seek funding from the LA.

Action: Alison

- **School Websites review** (*website monitoring template for primary schools shared on screen*)

Lisa and Alison have compiled a list of community primary schools and members will be allocated 1-2 schools each to monitor for RE and Collective Worship.

This work will form part of the workplan which in turn can be developed into a one/two-year costed development plan.

NASACRE provides supportive documentation including a self-evaluation toolkit. This will be the focus of the March meeting. **Lisa and Alison will take this forward and Vivian will ensure that schools are allocated to members.**

Action: Alison, Lisa and Vivian

7. **Constitution and membership in the light of the 2021 Census**

Alison and Lisa explained that the 2021 Census shows how much the demographic of Harrow has changed since 2011. The Hindu population is higher than average and the number of Muslims has increased substantially. Lisa shared an engaging graphic of this using different coloured jelly babies to show the ratios of the different faith traditions. SACRE membership should reflect these changes by recruiting more Hindu and Muslim members.

8. **Local and National updates**

Local

ASC launch 19 October 2023 (*photographs of the event shared on screen*)

Alison reported that this had been very successful and congratulated Lisa on her work in preparing the syllabus for publication. The event

was hosted by Cannon Lane Primary School. There were some group activities designed to remind teachers of the Statutory Framework and help them move forward in planning and assessing RE. Feedback has been very positive.

Training for RE teachers: Lisa ran some training for teachers on 28 November. Elizabeth reported on this: it was hosted by her school, St John's CE Primary and was designed to support subject leaders in implementing the new AS. It was a very enjoyable and useful session. The next teachers' session will be on 21 February 2024, hosted by Marlborough Primary School.

Interfaith Week 12-19 November 2023

David reported back on a very impressive and eventful Interfaith Week. His notes incorporated below:

- **Harrow Interfaith, 15 visits and events**
 1. Remembrance Sunday
 2. St Panteleimon Greek Orthodox Church, Kenton
 1. Service and dinner, Archbishop of Cyprus
 3. St Mary's, Harrow on the Hill, the borough church
 1. Peace chapel service
 4. Harrow Central Mosque
 1. Interfaith discussion
 5. Sri Swaminarayan Mandir, Kenton
 6. Siddhashram Shakti Centre, Wealdstone
 7. Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, Willesden, Brent
 1. Conference of London Interfaith Chairs
 2. "Empowering Youth Voices"
 8. Sri Saddhatissa International Buddhist Centre, Kingsbury
 9. Brent Sikh Centre Gurdwara
 10. Mahavir Foundation Jain Derasar
 11. Jain World Peace Centre
 1. interfaith discussion
 12. Mitzvah Day activity at Mosaic Jewish Community, Stanmore
 13. Kol Chai Synagogue, Hatch End
 1. Interfaith service
 14. Volunteering London Community Kitchen, Wealdstone
 15. South East Asian Cultural Event, Exhibition of all faiths and beliefs

National (*Illustrative slides shared on screen and attached to these minutes*)

Campaign to restore bursaries for training RE teachers

Lisa reported on this campaign which has been partially successful, in that bursaries have been restored but they are still below what was hoped for.

RE recruitment is likely to fall short by approximately 60% of the target which will result in a number of courses becoming no longer viable. The rigorous programme requested in the latest Ofsted report cannot

be delivered and the government continues to support RE more by rhetoric than financial backing. It is a challenging situation.

Ofsted report 2022-23

RE is mentioned as a subject failing to meet statutory requirements. Teaching is described as “poor quality and not fit for purpose leaving pupils ill-equipped for some of the complexities of contemporary society.”

We hope this is not the case in Harrow where we have a very dedicated and resourceful group of RE teachers.

9. Ofsted “deep dive” into RE, 10-11 October 2023

Heena had been going to report back on her “deep dive” into RE but was unable to attend this evening. Instead, Alison read out a written report which is attached to these minutes.

10. News from Faith Groups relating to schools

In an address to the Deanery Synod, Alison encouraged churches to host visits from schools.

There was no further news from faith groups relating to schools.

11. Any Other Business

- **Lesley Prior:** SACRE joined in sending Lesley their very best wishes for Christmas. Alison will pass on this message. She told members that Lesley’s treatment is going better than expected and she greatly appreciates messages and good wishes from colleagues.
- **Visit to Brent Sikh Centre:** this has been rescheduled for **Sunday 4 February with an earlier start of 11.30am**. Full details will be circulated.
- **Doodle Polls:** It has been suggested that doodle polls and similar survey tools might be useful for recording attendance and apologies and for surveying schools. David will advise.

12. Future Dates:

Harrow SACRE:

- Wednesday 6 March 2024 at Harrow Hub (subject to the availability of Power Point facilities)
- Wednesday 26 June 2024 (subject to confirmation when council dates are known)

Teacher training:

- Wednesday 21 February at Marlborough Primary School

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

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