

HARROW SACRE
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 9 OCTOBER 2018

Attendance

Group A

- * Mercedes Afnan
- + *Ven Sumana Sramaner*
- * Bob Dawson
- * Neville Ransley
- * Carolyn O'Brien
- A Ciara O'Flaherty*
- * Vijay Hirani
- * David Cryer
- * Varsha Dodhia
- * Gill Ross
- * Doreen Samuels
- * Zafar Khalid
- * Asad Omar
- * Tahir Hashmi
- * Paramjit Singh-Kohli
- * Phiroza Gan-Kotwal

Religious traditions and Christian churches

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

Group B

- * Mary Abbott
- * Revd Kate Blake
- * Revd James Power

Church of England

Group C

- * Alison Stowe (Chair)
- * Teri-Louise O'Brien
- Vacancy

Teachers' Associations

Group D

- * Cllr Camilla Bath Conservative (Vice Chair)
- A Cllr Ghazanfar Ali Labour*
- * Cllr Peymana Assad Labour

Local Authority

- * Cllr Simon Brown Labour (attending for Cllr Ghazanfar Ali)
- Cllr Dr Lesline Lewinson Conservative (reserve)*
- Cllr Angella Murphy-Strachan Labour (reserve)*

Advisor to the SACRE

- * Lesley Prior (Advisor to Harrow SACRE)

Clerk

- * Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)

* denotes presence

A denotes absence with apologies

~ denotes absence without apologies

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Alison welcomed new members, Bob Dawson, representing the Free Church Federal Council, Tahir Hashmi, representing the Harrow Central Mosque and Carolyn O'Brien, representing the Catholic Church.

RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence from Cllr Ghazanfar Ali and Ciara O'Flaherty. Cllr Simon Brown was attending on behalf of Cllr Ghazanfar Ali.

Ven Sumaner Sramaner was also absent. No apologies had been received.

2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 28th June 2018 (*previously circulated*)

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

p.2. Item 3. Matters arising from the Minutes

(p.2. item 3. Matters arising from the minutes)

SACRE membership

New Muslim representative: Zafar Khalid has found a new representative from Harrow Mosque: Tahir Hashmi who is present this evening.

New Teacher representative: Alison reported that there may be a new teacher representative.

(p.4. Item 4. Monitoring of syllabus and website)

see Item 5 below.

(p. 5. Item 8. Progress on determinations) **Glebe school**

Alison has not received any paperwork for Glebe school's determination.

see also item 9 below.

There were no further matters arising that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda

4. NASACRE News

Guidance on the right to withdraw: Lesley explained that schools sometimes struggle with parents' right to withdraw their children from RE and Collective worship. SACRE colleagues in Wales have produced some useful guidance. When Alison next sends out information for schools on behalf of Harrow SACRE, she will include a reference to this guidance; it is hoped that Harrow SACRE will purchase at least one copy, so that this advice can be shared with schools.

Interfaith Week 11-18 November

NASACRE is promoting Interfaith week. Lesley has also mentioned this in her Newsletter for primary schools and included some links to useful resources. This year Interfaith Week coincides with the centenary of the end of World War I. *See also item 12 below for what is happening locally.*

Peace education

The Quakers have put together some materials for schools on peace education and conflict resolution.

NASACRE AGM, 22 May 2019

This year, the AGM takes place in Manchester. Gill Ross volunteered to attend. Alison explained that if Gill contacts Patrick O'Dwyer and Pravina Ladhu at the Civic Centre, they will be able to arrange her ticket and pay for her fare from the SACRE budget.

5. Monitoring of syllabus and website

Patrick O'Dwyer has included an item about SACRE's website monitoring in the Bulletin that goes to all schools. Lesley has also created a Newsletter for RE coordinators in primary schools and this has been sent out. She has also put together a list of events which may be of interest to SACRE members as well as schools.

Alison has sent a link to primary schools about collecting data and asked all schools to post links to their RE syllabus on their websites.

Exemplar letter

Lesley has drafted a letter that is gentler in tone than the template provided by NASACRE. David Cryer has also drafted a letter combining an outline of SACRE's remit with a request for information from schools about their RE syllabus. It was agreed that Lesley, Alison and David would work on these letters and combine them into a single letter to send to schools.

Action: Lesley Prior, Alison Stowe and David Cryer

At the meeting of 22 March 2018, Members undertook to monitor the following school websites:

Teri-Louise O'Brien: Norbury, St John Fisher and Woodlands.

Mary Abbott: Cedars and Pinner Park.

Ciara O'Flaherty: Pinner Wood, Alexandra, Salvatorian and St Theresa's.

Alison Stowe: St George's (with Camilla Bath), Priestmead, St John's and Krishna Avanti

Manju Radia: Newton Farm.

Gil Ross: Marlborough and Whitefriars.

Doreen Samuels: Moriah.

Mercedes Afnan: West Lodge.

Neville Ransley: St Bernadette's, St Anselm's and Sacred Heart.

Zafar Khalid: Glebe.

David Cryer: Elmgrove, Hatch End High

Sumaner Sramaner: Whitmore (with Lesley Prior).

Lesley has also picked up on research done by other RE bodies and for the March meeting, she circulated data showing the allocation of time to RE in secondary schools. Gathering data from Primary Schools is more difficult because subjects are less differentiated. Even in Secondary Schools it can be complicated by the fact that RE is sometimes subsumed into other subjects such as Philosophy and Ethics. James Power informed members that at Harrow School, RE has been rebranded as Theology and Philosophy.

6. Conferences

- **AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants) Conference, Bristol, 2-3 July**
Lesley attended the AREIAC conference. The conference theme was "REflecting plurality in RE". Keynote speakers were Professor Bob Jackson, Professor Denise Cush and Dr Farid Panjwami. Lesley found two sessions particularly interesting:
 - Slave Trade in Bristol: this session explored religious links to the anti-slavery movement and included John Wesley's words on the evils of slavery.
 - Rastafarian beliefs: this session, given by a member of the Rastafarian community, was very interesting. Members are not aware of a significant Rastafarian community in Harrow. There used to be a Rastafarian SACRE member but she is no longer a member of the committee.
- **20:20 RE – Practical Policy, Powerful Knowledge, Crewe, 13-14 Oct**
This conference is for teachers of RE. SACRE members can also attend. Further information can be found on the website:
<https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/20-20-RE/>
- **Strictly RE, 26 January 2019, Park Inn, Heathrow.** Full cost £175.

This one day event for teachers is organised by NATRE. More information can be found at <https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2019/>

7. Annual Report 2017-18 (*draft report previously circulated*)

The Annual Report is a statutory duty of every SACRE. It is a review of what the committee has discussed over the past academic year. This is published on the NASACRE website and copies are sent to the DfE, local schools, governors and Harrow Council's Education Committee. Lesley has used the previous format and explained that the areas printed in red are the ones that need updating. On p. 2 the report needs to include the number of schools and whether they are academies. Alison needs to add a foreword. Lesley thanked Vivian for her excellent minutes which make compiling the report much easier. Vivian has also updated the membership list. The report also includes examination results from local schools. Patrick O'Dwyer will add these when they become available in November.

Lesley will bring the completed report to the December meeting for members to ratify.

Agenda item for 11 December 2018

8. Days of Religious Observance (*updated edition previously circulated*)

Alison explained that an email arrived on the first day of the holidays to say that a test case was going forward about whether pupils could take 9 days off for the Muslim festival of Ashura. The verdict ruled that if a religious body instructs its members to take a certain number of days, then the members are legally entitled to this time off. The LA took legal advice which came to the same conclusion and the legal department has revised the *Guidance on Days of Religious Observance* to reflect this ruling. As the festival falls in early September it could be very disruptive for pupils to take 9 days off school at this time. On the other hand, observant Jewish children who are not at Jewish schools also miss a similar number of days at the beginning of the autumn term. Helping the children catch up can be extra work for teachers, but pupils often do well as a result and they and their families are very grateful. It is not known how many children will take this time off but it is thought that there will not be very many. Ashura is a learning festival so families are expected to attend the Mosque and find out more about their religion.

Varsha informed the meeting that Jains also have festivals lasting 9 days; from what authority would they seek the advice on whether they were entitled to take these days off? Alison explained that it is complex issue and depends on tradition and level of practice. Harrow sought legal advice on this issue and SACRE must abide by this.

Vivian has also updated the list to include dates for 2019. Members approved the updated list of Days of Religious Observance with extra guidance on the festival of Ashura. Vivian will send this to Paddy to post on the Harrow SACRE website.

Action: Vivian Wright

9. Determinations

Alison has included a reminder in the Schools' Bulletin encouraging schools to renew their determinations.

Application from Marlborough School

Alison has contacted Marlborough pointing out the need to reference the governors' minutes.

Guidance on determinations

Lesley will speak about determinations at the next Head Teachers' meeting on 15 November at Bentley Priory.

List of determinations

Mike Bishop and Alison have found a list of determinations. This has been circulated but as some members could not open the attachment, Vivian will send this again as a PDF.

Action: Vivian Wright

The list goes up to 2011 so the information may be out of date, but it is a useful starting point. Obviously all the determinations listed have lapsed. A member commented that a

very valuable part of SACRE's work is to ask schools to attend SACRE meetings with presentations on their collective worship.

If an Infant and Junior School have merged, they will need to apply for a new determination. It may be that as separate schools, they applied at the same time so their renewal dates will coincide but they will need to apply as a single school.

If schools have become academies, their determinations will automatically lapse and they should apply to the DfE for a new determination. The procedures at the DfE are not absolutely clear but Lesley is working to clarify this.

The question arises whether SACRE should support academies. Members felt that Harrow SACRE should support academies.

Lesley will check the position regarding multi-academy trusts with the DfE; she thought that each school would need to apply for its own determination as catchment areas vary so greatly even within a few miles of each other.

Action: Lesley Prior

10. Commission on RE: Final Report

Lesley has provided an executive summary of the main points of the report. This time last year Harrow responded to the consultation. The final report came out in September with a series of recommendations. Whether these recommendations are actually realised depends on

- Changes in statutory legislation
- Finance

In the present political climate neither of these is likely to be forthcoming so these recommendations have no legal status. The recommendations include:

- Changing the name of RE to "Religion and World View";
- Replacing the locally agreed syllabus with a national entitlement;
- Changing the role of SACRES in consequence of this;
- Removing the right to withdraw from RE.

There are no time frames for the implementation of these recommendations. Lesley will draft a paragraph for the schools' bulletin to remind schools that the recommendations of the report have no legal status.

Action: Lesley Prior

11. Link to Woodhead/Clark:

The recommendations of this report are similar to the Commission on RE. They include:

- Changing the name of RE to "Religion, Belief and Values"
- Replacing the locally agreed syllabus with a curriculum set by the Secretary of State
- Removing of right to withdraw from RE.

These recommendations also have no legal status.

Although these recommendations are not very positive for SACREs, Lesley felt that as long as RE was being debated, it would not be ignored or forgotten.

The National Association of SACREs also discussed:

- **Wales:** the RE Commission report only applies to England: Wales has been left out of this debate but SACREs exists in Wales, so what happens to them?
- **Collective Worship:** the RE commission confined its remit to RE and has not addressed the issue of Collective Worship: SACREs have responsibility for Collective Worship, so what will happen to Collective Worship and what will be SACRE's role in this respect? When done properly, Collective Worship can

greatly enhance the life of a school and it would be a loss if Collective Worship was swept away as “collateral damage” if the recommendations were to be implemented.

12. News from Faith Groups pertinent to schools

- **Interfaith Activities:** Varsha reported on Harrow Interfaith activities. More information can be found on their website.: <http://www.harrowinterfaith.org/index.html>
- **Mosaic community:** Gill reported on the activities of the Mosaic community. More information can be found on their website: <https://choosemosaic.org/>

13. Any Other Business

- **RE Leaders meeting dates:** Lesley thanked Alison, Teri-Louise and Mary for their work on developing schemes of learning based on the new syllabus. She went on to tell members that at the three upcoming RE Co-ordinators meetings, the group would like to focus on the faiths included in the Harrow syllabus that are not so well known. These are Baha'i, Jain and Zoroastrian. The representatives of these faiths present at the meeting, Mercedes Afnan, Varsha Dodhia and Phiroza Gan-Kotwal agreed to join the RE coordinators and deliver a session each. The running order will be:
 - 6 November: Mercedes
 - 5 March: Varsha
 - 27 June: Phiroza
- **RE definitions:** this is a useful APP which defines key words in different faith traditions and also provides a pronunciation guide.
- **Pat Stevens:** Pat Stevens, who was Harrow SACRE's advisor for many years, is in hospital. Alison collected good wishes from members which she will include in a card to send to Pat Stevens.

Action: Alison Stowe

- **Jewish New Year:** to celebrate Jewish New Year, Gill and Doreen have brought some cakes and dried apple for members to enjoy.
- **Neville Ransley:** this is Neville Ransley's last meeting. He has been a SACRE member for 13 years. Alison thanked him for his contributions and expressed her appreciation of his work on behalf of the Catholic faith. She presented him with a card signed by members. Neville expressed his admiration for the work of SACRE.

There were no further items of any other business

11. Future Dates:

- Future dates 2018-19
 - Tuesday 11 December 2018
 - Tuesday 19 March 2019
 - Thursday 27 June 2019
- Future dates 2019-20
 - Tuesday 15 October
 - Tuesday 10 December
 - Tuesday 24 March

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.10pm

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)