

HARROW SACRE
(STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 8 OCTOBER 2024
7.30pm at Harrow Hub

Attendance

Group A

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

Religious traditions and Christian churches

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

Group B

* *Mary Abbott*
* *Alison Stowe*
* *Revd Mike Still*

Church of England

Group C

A Heena Mistry
A Elizabeth Boulter
* *Sayyeda-Maryam Jessa*
* *Sejal Kapadia*

Teachers' Associations

NAHT
NEU
NEU
NEU

Group D

* *Cllr June Baxter Conservative*
* *Cllr Janet Mote Conservative*
~ *Cllr Sasi Suresh Labour*

Local Authority

A Cllr Ramji Chauhan Conservative (reserve)
A Cllr Hitesh Karia Conservative (reserve)
* *Cllr Ghazanfar Ali Labour (reserve)*

Advisor to the SACRE

* *Lisa Kassapian (RE Advisor)*

Clerk

* *Vivian Wright (Clerk to SACRE)*

Observer

* *Shahid Khan from Harrow Central Mosque, prospective member*

** denotes presence*

A denotes absence with apologies

~ denotes absence without apologies

1. Welcome

Alison welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially new group C member Sejal Kapadia. Sanatana Dharma representative Arvind Premji Halai from the Swaminarayan Temple has been a full member of group A for some months but was unable to attend the last meeting.

Shahid Khan, member of the Harrow Central Mosque is considering becoming part of SACRE and is attending this evening's meeting as an observer.

2. Apologies for absence

RESOLVED: To note apologies for absence from Mercedes Afnan, Varsha Dodhia, Heena Mistry and Elizabeth Boulter.

Also absent: Camilla Bath, Muhammad Dato and Paramjit Singh-Kohli. Cllr Sasi Suresh was also absent, but Cllr Ghazanfar Ali was present at the meeting.

Fatema Rahemani representing the NASUWT is no longer a member of SACRE

Quorum

The meeting was quorate.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

This item was deferred from the last meeting which was not quorate.

Alison Stowe, seconded by Mary Abbott and David Cryer was nominated for the position of Chair.

David Cryer, seconded by Doreen Samuels, nominated himself for the position of Vice Chair.

There were no further nominations.

Alison Stowe was elected unanimously as Chair.

David Cryer was elected unanimously as Vice-Chair.

4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 25 June 2024 (*previously circulated*)

p. 3. Minute 7. New NASACRE Constitution and registration as a CIO

Line 1: SACRE should read NASACRE

p.3. Minute 8. NASACRE self-evaluation

3.a. The Review Process

Add "developing to established" after "survey or questionnaire".

With these corrections, the minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

p.3. Minute 7. New NASACRE Constitution and registration as a CIO

NASACRE's application for charitable status as a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) will make business easier for NASACRE especially in the areas of staffing, banking and organising the conference. Lisa reported back to Mike McMaster that members were supportive of the proposed changes and see this as a positive measure in particular to support the role of the executive and funding streams. Harrow SACRE views were fed back to Barnabas Consulting with thanks. NASACRE have been registering the legal status of NASACRE and the name has been formally accepted by Companies House.

p.4. Minute 9. Report back on Development meeting

Vivian contacted members of the Chairs' group, and they met via Zoom on 25 September to incorporate the Self Evaluation review into the Development Plan. Progress on part 2 of the SEF, "Promoting improvement in the standards, the quality of teaching and provision of RE", was delayed due to the absence of Group C representatives at the last SACRE meeting and at the Chairs' group meeting.

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

For further information on the minutes below, please see the *Harrow SACRE meeting presentation* attached to these minutes.

6. Report back from Meeting with MP

In response to a recommendation from NASACRE, Alison had written to her MP, Gareth Thomas, with our "asks for the next government" for "High quality RE for all children in all schools taught by well-qualified and trained teachers". Alison received a very positive reply and an invitation to meet. This meeting was also very positive. Alison talked about the funding of Harrow SACRE which is well below the national average. Gareth has written to Harrow Council and received confirmation that SACRE's budget 2024-2025 has increased by approx. £500 to £5488 (although these two events are probably unrelated). This budget has to cover clerking, membership subscriptions, conferences and SACRE Advisor time. The average SACRE budget is £11,000.

Alison has also been told by the Council that SACRE's budget is underspent, which she found surprising. She has discussed funding with Paddy O'Dwyer. Councillors will check that the budget is ring-fenced and also that SACRE does receive the recommended 2% of the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) and CSSB (Central Schools Services Block) funds.

These can be used by SACRE to further the Council's wider objectives like the promotion of Equality and Diversity

Action: Councillors

SACRE is a statutory body, and the AS is one of its statutory responsibilities. Harrow SACRE's spend on last year's AS was £5,000, well below the average spend of £10,000. While this may have been due in part to the fact that it was not a major overhaul, nevertheless, it required a

great deal of work and Lisa worked well beyond her contracted hours in order to complete it.

The Council should be aware that SACREs have a “bulge” year every 5 years when the AS comes up for review. With so many changes to RE in the pipeline, the next AS review is likely to be a “root and branch” overhaul requiring three years’ lead in. The year following the revision of the AS is also likely to require additional funding so that the AS can be introduced and embedded in schools.

7. Development Plan and Chair’s meeting 25 September (*Development plan previously circulated*)

Harrow’s five key development priorities are:

1. To ensure the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

Termly meetings for RE teachers and training session at St John’s CE school on “Understanding Christianity”.

2. To raise the standards and quality of the teaching and learning in Religious Education within Harrow

At SACRE meetings, members had worked in their groups on the SACRE toolkit. As mentioned in “Matters Arising” above, progress on this section was incomplete due to lack of representation by Group C members. This will go to the December meeting and a section of the SEF will be a standing agenda item in the future.

Item for next and future agendas

Survey in schools: Doreen Samuels suggested that when a survey is carried out in schools, a fuller picture of RE provision would be obtained by visiting the RE subject leader or inviting them to make a presentation at a SACRE meeting.

List of local speakers: Doreen also suggested compiling a list of local speakers who are willing to visit schools.

Improved contact with academies: Sejal Kapadia suggested a WhatsApp group like the one used with great success by the Primary school RE leaders. Sumana also indicated that Secondary School RE Leaders have subject meetings. Vivian will find out the name of the RE lead at Nower Hill who is the RE co-ordinator for Harrow secondary schools.

Action Vivian

3. To ensure that SACRE contributes to the wider *social and racial harmony/ equality and diversity* agenda in Harrow

See minutes 8 and 9 below for plans for Interfaith Week, HMD and the completion of the Dates of Religious Observance Guidance for head teachers.

4. To ensure that Harrow SACRE is effectively managed and has good partnerships with the LA and other key stakeholders

Meetings arranged at different venues: summer term 2024 at All Saints CE Church in Harrow Weald, December meeting 2024 at the Mosaic Centre in Stanmore, summer term 2025 at Swaminarayan temple in Kenton. It has

been suggested that SACRE could reduce the number of meetings to three a year, as the December meeting was brought in to review the Annual Report which had to be submitted by December 31. The deadline now can be up to March 31. There will be a December meeting this year.

5. To fulfil SACREs responsibility for the provision and practice of collective worship

More attention will be given to this in the next development plan. Meanwhile, SACRE will review determination orders. Lisa outlined the determination process and Alison presented on the current application process. At present two schools are renewing their applications:

- Norbury Primary school: will be making a presentation at the next SACRE meeting.

Item for next agenda

- Glebe Primary School: Alison is visiting the school in November. Hopefully, they will be making a presentation at the next SACRE meeting.

Alison reported that both schools are taking the process very seriously and working hard on their applications.

8. Plans for Harrow Interfaith in November and HMD 2025

David reported on plans for Harrow Interfaith. As last year, there will be many events to celebrate Harrow's diverse community. When the programme is ready, he will send it to Vivian to circulate.

Action: David and Vivian

Members should also note Holocaust Memorial Day 2025. There will be an event on 28 January next year at Harrow Arts Centre on the theme, "For a Better Future". The 2025 commemoration is a significant year as it marks the 80th anniversary of the [liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau](#) and the [30th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia](#). Members will receive further details in order to attend.

Action: David and Vivian

9. DROs: final review

Alison and Vivian asked members to take a final look at the DROs for 2024-25, as there had been a number of mistakes in the Jewish calendar, Vivian will recirculate with a reminder.

Action: Vivian

10. Local and National updates

Local

- **Review determination orders:** see minute 7, development plan priority 5, above.
- **Understanding Christianity** a comprehensive resource produced under the auspices of RE Today has been nominated as a finalist for the Christian Funders Forum Showcase. Training for the use of this resource will take place for Harrow RE Subject Leaders on 16th October 2024.

National

- **Summer of change:** UK riots and political change. RE professional bodies have been lobbying at the annual political party conferences. The

Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) and the National Association for Teachers of RE (NATRE) have now called on the new Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson MP, to introduce a National Plan for RE that provides a fair allocation of resources and prioritises the subject as part of Labour's plans to recruit more specialist teachers.

- **Talking to children about controversial issues:** this is a commercial package, designed to help teachers talk to children about controversial issues, such as the situation in the Middle East. Members will look at their resources online. Alison recommended keeping an open-minded and objective approach.
- **Training resources:** Lisa reminded members that NASACRE and RE Hubs have an excellent range of online resources. There is a webinar, "In Conversation with NASACRE", well worth attending. David will attend this on 21 November 2024 and Mary on 20 March 2025.

RE Hubs have a wonderful training session for speakers in schools. Mercedes has attended this. Attendees receive an RE Kitemark. www.re-hubs.uk

NASACRE webinars: SACRE members can attend any of the free NASACRE webinars. The updated flyer is attached to these minutes.

Please tell Vivian if you attend any online sessions.

- **Farmington Fellowships:** Lisa and Alison explained the Farmington Institute fellowships which allow teachers to take some time off to pursue a line of research. They have personally benefitted from these. Further information can be found here: <https://farmington.ac.uk/re-teachers/> and <https://farmington.ac.uk/headteachers/> in addition there is a leaflet attached to these minutes.

11. News from Faith Groups relating to schools

None.

12. Any Other Business

- **Paddy's card:** members signed Paddy's retirement card.
- **Memorial tree:** Alison will investigate costs of planting a memorial tree for Lesley. https://sponsor.treesforstreets.org/scheme/sponsor-a-dedication-memorial-tree-in-a-harrow-park?source_provider=
- **Address list:** members updated the address list.

There were no further items of any other business.

13. Future dates

Chairs' Group: Monday 2.00pm end November (date tbc) via Zoom. Mary and Sejal will attend to draft the questionnaire for schools.

Understanding Christianity: Wednesday 16 October 2024, 9.15am - 3.15pm

Venue: St John's CE School

Harrow RE Subject Leaders network group: Times: 13:00 – 15.00

27th November 2024 @ Grange Primary School

26th February 2025 @ Marlborough Primary School

18th June 2025 @ Stag Lane Primary School

SACRE dates for 2024-5

Weds 4 December 2024 Mosaic Centre <https://choosemosaic.org/>
(Gill will investigate the possibility of a hybrid meeting, Vivian will get directions and public transport links to put on the next agenda.)

For security purposes, it is important to confirm your attendance at this meeting.

Weds 5 March 2025

Summer term date: to be set by the council in March: This will be at the Swaminarayan Temple <https://www.sksst.org/> on a Thursday in June.

Alison thanked everyone for attending and managing to find their way into the building!

The meeting closed at 9.08 pm.

Signed:

(Chair)

(Date)

See next page for list of attachments and future agenda items

Attachments:

Harrow SACRE meeting presentation

Updated flyer for NASACRE training courses.

Farmington Scholarship leaflet

The Future of RE

Future Agenda items:

Applications for determinations – presentation from Norbury Primary School (1st on agenda) and hopefully, Glebe Primary School

Annual report

HMD 2025

Development Plan: SEF section 2: Standards and Quality of Teaching – monitoring survey for schools