

Minutes of the meeting of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held in Conference Room 1, Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Friday 17 November 2023 at 2.00 pm

Board members present in person, voting:

Lou Barker (Vice-Chairperson)	Secondary school teacher representative
Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang (Chairperson)	Buddhist
Peter Fawcett	Roman Catholic, Archdiocese of Cardiff
Councillor Justine Peberdy	
Ruth Stanier	The Quaker Faith
Councillor John Stone	
Tracy Westlake	Primary school teacher representative

Others present in person:

Jatinderpal Loyal	Sikh representative	
Henry Merricks-Murgatroyd	Democratic Services Officer	
Stephen Pett	Consultant to SACRE	
Ian Sockett	Business Intelligence Officer	Children and Young People
	Education Analysis	

66. WELCOME AND THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Lama Choesang welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and presented the thought for the day.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Jonathan Nicholas, Mark Harrington, Alison Naylor, and Geoff Sallis.

68. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Ian Sockett substituted for Alison Naylor.

69. MINUTES

The Chair noted that the application process for the West Hill awards opens in Autumn 2024 and requested that this be added to the November 2024 meeting's agenda.

The Chair expressed her disappointment by the lack of support from the council with regard to the running of SACRE.

Ian Sockett said he would follow up on the 'National SACRE updates' action that was assigned at the last meeting.

Ruth Stanier proposed that the minutes be approved. Cllr John Stone seconded.

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2023 were unanimously approved.

70. RESPONSE TO WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

No questions were received from members of the public.

71. FINANCES

The Chair noted that the contract with RE Today was renewed and that each term Stephen Pett (RE Today advisor) must have a meeting each term regarding the contract arrangements.

Councillor Justine Peberdy suggested that this could be because there needs to be a minimum level of accountability behind the allocation of funding to RE Today.

The Chair added that she felt sidelined, and that the chairperson should be involved in the discussion with RE Today and the council.

Councillor Stone agreed that the chairperson should be involved in the discussion so that they can put forward the SACRE point of view.

Councillor Peberdy noted that she would look to find out more information about this situation.

The Chair suggested that there could be a regular item added to the SACRE meeting agendas to assess the performance of RE Today with the wider membership of the committee.

With regard to the SACRE budget, the Chair stated that the budget is £1,000 less than it was previously and there needs to be enough money to pay for the RE syllabus. In order to be allocated more funding, the Chair added that a business case would need to be submitted.

Stephen Pett requested that an agreed syllabus conference be scheduled for before the next meeting SACRE in March.

The Chair added that Malcolm Green needs to be approached soon about the fact that the March meeting is going to be the start of the syllabus update.

Peter Fawcett asked whether it was possible to apply for a one-off amount of money for the syllabus specifically rather than an extra £1,000 per year.

The Chair clarified that it was the council's preference to have an amount of funding per year rather than one larger amount of money.

The Chair added that the current license runs out in Summer 2025 and there will not be a syllabus in place thereafter. It is a national requirement that the syllabus is reviewed every five years.

Action: Councillor Peberdy to contact Malcolm Green about for the funding for SACRE and the RE syllabus.

72. ANNUAL SACRE REPORT DISCUSSION

Stephen Pett noted that it is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report and is traditionally done by the local authority. It is a collection of information that is recorded in the minutes of previous SACRE meetings. There are some gaps that need to be

addressed before final publication including, for example, GCSE and A-Level results which are provided by the local authority.

Ian Sockett noted that he was able to get 2022 results and the 2023 results when they become available.

Stephen Pett asked when the 2023 results will be available.

Ian Sockett responded that they should be available within the next month.

The Chair asked for an item to be added to the next agenda in March on how we can support our schools in RE including a discussion on primary and secondary, in particular, and special schools if there is an opportunity to do so.

73. SCHOOL WORKFORCE DATA

Stephen Pett referred to the school workforce data in the agenda pack and noted that the information is provided by NATRE who put in a FOI request to the DfE who provide the data about what RE/philosophy is taught in schools. The data provides awareness about RE in schools for Herefordshire SACRE and more action needs to be done by some schools to input data to increase awareness further.

Lou Barker asked if there was any possibility of sending out a questionnaire to schools to fill in workforce data.

The Chair asked Lou Barker if she could look into the prospect of sending a questionnaire to do this. Lou Barker said she would look to do this.

Stephen Pett added that he would be happy to assist Lou Barker.

The Chair asked for the questionnaire to be brought to the committee in March to be agreed and then sent out.

Action: Lou Barker to work on a questionnaire to bring back to the committee in March for review and approval before being sent out to secondary schools.

74. SACRE CONSTITUTION

The Chair asked the clerk to follow up with John Coleman on the status of SACRE in the Herefordshire Council constitution.

Councillor Peberdy asked about the quoracy rules of SACRE and referred to the fact that all representative groups need to be represented for business to be transacted or be ratified at the following SACRE meeting.

The Chair clarified that this applied to this meeting as the vote on the new Chair could not go ahead because of no Church of England representatives being present.

75. EVALUATIONS ON PRIMARY CONFERENCE 2023

Stephen Pett gave a brief overview of the Herefordshire Primary RE conference evaluations held in 2023.

The Chair asked Lou Barker if she could thank the head teacher of Bishop's Bluecoat School for hosting the conference on behalf of SACRE.

Stephen Pett expressed his thanks to Tracy Westlake and Adam Robertson (RE Today) for their support in presenting at the conference.

76. PROPOSED OUTLINE ON SECONDARY CONFERENCE 2024

Stephen Pett presented a brief overview of the proposed Secondary RE Conference to be held on Tuesday 25th June 2024.

The Chair commented that it is important to ensure that faiths other than Christianity and Islam are represented.

Lou Barker expressed her support for the Secondary Conference at this stage in its draft form.

Stephen Pett asked the Chair if she wanted Buddhism to be represented at the next conference in 2024.

The Chair responded that she was happy for Buddhism to be represented in 2025 if that helps.

Stephen Pett confirmed that this would be helpful as he does not have data on young Buddhists as opposed to other faiths. It was requested that if there could be a reminder at the SACRE meeting around November 2024 for the addition of Buddhism to the 2025 Secondary Conference agenda.

Action: To remind Stephen Pett to add Buddhism to the proposed agenda for the 2025 Secondary Conference agenda at the SACRE meeting in November 2024.

77. PROPOSED OUTLINE ON PRIMARY CONFERENCE 2024

Stephen Pett stated the prospect of holding another Primary RE conference in July 2024 and added that a date and venue would need to be agreed, in addition to themes and topics for various sessions including something on planning a curriculum for mixed-age classes and more on multi-disciplinary approaches as well as a request from the Chair on something on Buddhism. Stephen Pett also suggested the possibility of presenting the next syllabus, after the following SACRE meeting in March, at the conference.

The Chair raised potential venues for the conference including potentially Whitecross High School, Hereford Academy, or the Bluecoat School.

Tracy Westlake mentioned that the Hereford Academy is a viable option after GCSEs are finished.

The Chair asked who from SACRE would be happy to approach the Hereford Academy.

Tracy Westlake confirmed that she would be willing to do this.

Jatinderpal Loyal noted that for primary level students, it would be worth having a thematic approach covering issues such as climate change and family units and having a number of people from different faiths to discuss these issues and how they impact them. 'Faith in action' was referenced as an example in which real life experiences were covered by different faith representatives.

The Chair suggested Buddhism, Bahai and Sikhs and asked who else should be covered.

The committee suggested Islam should also be included.

The Chair asked members for their thoughts on dates to hold the conference. Lou Barker responded that the end of June/early July would be ideal after GCSEs are held.

Stephen Pett proposed Monday 1st July or Thursday 4th July 2024 would be the most suitable dates, at this stage, to hold the conference, subject to venue.

78. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Chair told the committee that, in the absence of Church of England representatives, someone can be voted in for the next meeting in March. Geoff Sallis is happy to chair the next meeting in March.

Lou Barker added that she is happy to put herself forward to be vice-chair.

The Board approved unanimously for Geoff Sallis to be acting Chair at the next meeting in March.

Action: To decide at the next meeting in March the position of Chair.

79. NATIONAL SACRE NEWS UPDATE

Stephen Pett presented a brief overview of the National SACRE news.

80. AOB

Tracy Westlake added that at primary level, at the last network meeting with 32 schools present, there was a focus on multi-disciplinary lenses and what this means at a primary and early-years level, and 11 different schools requested further support. In addition, Tracy Westlake requested that if anyone wants to support this work then they should approach her.

Action: To include an item on teacher support (network meetings) to be presented by Tracy Westlake on the SACRE meeting agenda in March.

81. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is 15th March 2024, 14:00-17:00.

The meeting ended at 4.24 pm

Chairperson