

It was reported that the council's constitution (paragraph 2.9.21 refers) identified that 'Other than for the Roman Catholic and Free Church representatives, the representatives should, as far as possible, be nominated by the appropriate local faith group.' It was proposed that the appropriate groups would be approached directly for nominations initially and, if there were any remaining vacancies, SACRE members would be asked to utilise their networks to identify other potential nominees.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Vice-Chairperson in the Chair.

Action 1: That the clerk write to the appropriate groups to seek nominations for representatives for vacant SACRE positions.

28. WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No written questions had been received.

29. HEREFORDSHIRE SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

Further to the discussion at the last meeting ([minute 17](#) refers), the revised SACRE annual report 2024/25 was received; this has been updated to include the Chair's foreword, updates from the Diocese of Hereford, minor amendments made at the last meeting, and Appendix 3: Herefordshire examination results.

Resolved: That the SACRE Annual Report 2024/25 be agreed.

Action 2: That the SACRE Annual Report 2024/25 be circulated electronically to relevant individuals and bodies, as identified in Appendix 2.

30. LOCAL RE AWARD

Further to the discussion at the last meeting ([minute 20](#) refers), it was noted that a sub-group of SACRE would meet remotely on Friday 27 March 2026 to consider the details for a local RE award scheme for schools.

Stephen Pett commented on the potential for a bronze award initially, requiring evidence of the completion of three activities. It was noted that silver and gold awards could be developed subsequently, requiring evidence of the completion of further activities, plus demonstration of the consequential impacts on practice and on pupil responses. It was suggested that the scheme could be launched at the primary RE conference.

The key points of the discussion included:

- i. The potential to present certificates to schools during assemblies, and to publicise the awards at the annual conferences and through the local authority bulletin for schools, Spotlight. It was suggested that a copy of Spotlight be circulated to SACRE members for information.
- ii. The need to update the document 'A Guide to People and Places: Supporting RE and experiencing faith in Herefordshire schools' and for this to be made available to schools. It was suggested that the document be circulated to SACRE members initially to identify necessary revisions. The Vice-Chairperson offered to contact those identified to confirm their continued willingness to undertake visits to schools.

Resolved: That the sub-group of SACRE be delegated to confirm the details for a local RE award scheme.

- Action 3: That the following be circulated to SACRE members:
- a copy of the Spotlight bulletin for information; and
 - 'A Guide to People and Places...' to identify necessary revisions.

31. THREE COUNTIES SECONDARY RE CONFERENCE

Stephen Pett outlined arrangements for the Three Counties Secondary RE Conference to be held on Tuesday 30 June 2026, including sessions on: 'Going beyond the proof text at GCSE'; 'Winning commitment for GCSE RS'; 'Raising achievement at GCSE'; 'News and resource updates'; and 'TeachMeet'.

SACRE members endorsed the conference programme, particularly the focus on GCSE and the opportunities to explore practical strategies to recruit and support students, especially boys. A comment was made about the challenges to recruit and retain specialist RE teachers.

Resolved: That the arrangements for the Secondary RE Conference be noted.

32. HEREFORDSHIRE PRIMARY RE CONFERENCE 2026

Stephen Pett outlined provisional arrangements for the Primary RE Conference to be held in July 2026, including sessions on: 'Disciplinary knowledge / ways of knowing in RE'; 'Green religion: case studies on caring for the Earth'; 'Bringing diverse, authentic voices into the classroom'; and 'Build vocabulary, empower learning in RE (and everywhere else)'.

Comments from SACRE members included: the push to embed oracy and enhance vocabulary knowledge across the curriculum; further to disciplinary knowledge / ways of knowing, it was suggested that the approach to assessment be explored; with reference to 'Green religion', attention was drawn to '[EcoJudaism - Our Faith In The Planet \(link\)](#)'

Resolved: That the arrangements for the Primary RE Conference be noted.

33. NATIONAL RE UPDATES

Stephen Pett introduced the National RE Updates from RE Today, Spring 2026 for Herefordshire SACRE.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

Further to the update at the last meeting ([minute 21](#) refers), about the [Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report \(link\)](#), it was reported that an Expert Advisory Group was in place and key reference groups had been established. Following extensive engagement activity, it was expected that draft programmes of study for RE would be submitted soon to the Secretary of State. Notwithstanding the potential for complications during subsequent consultation and legislative phases, it was noted that the sector was largely positive about the developments.

Comments were made by SACRE members about the potential for the teaching of a diverse range of religions and worldviews in more schools, and the importance of using appropriate terminology. It was reported that the next phase may include the development of exemplar materials to support the delivery of the National Curriculum.

National Association of Standing Advisory Councils (NASACRE)

Attention was drawn to the NASACRE training session 'So, you've joined your local SACRE...' to be held on 25 June 2026.

It was reported that NASACRE was campaigning to safeguard a role for local SACREs in National Curriculum RE provision.

UK Supreme Court Rules in RE and Worship in Northern Ireland Schools

Stephen Pett outlined the key findings of the judgment that were relevant to schools in England, including that RE must be 'objective, critical, and pluralistic', and the right of withdrawal was a legal right for parents.

It was noted that parents did not have to meet any criteria before a withdrawal request was granted, consequently schools may need to enhance prospectuses to explain the subject more thoroughly and to consider what alternative provision could be put in place.

The Vice-Chairperson suggested that [National RE Updates for SACRE \(link\)](#) could be shared with local schools.

Resolved: That the National RE Updates, Spring 2026 be noted.

34. ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

SACRE members were invited to contribute verbal updates on religious education matters in Herefordshire, the key points included:

1. Tracy Westlake commented on recent contacts from schools and efforts to signpost them to relevant resources, and re-iterated the value of exploring oracy and vocabulary matters at the primary RE conference.
2. Carolyn Ault commented on a visit to a local school.
3. Councillor Peberdy suggested that consideration could be given to a briefing for councillors on RE in Herefordshire, particularly in view of developments arising from the Curriculum and Assessment Review, perhaps following the local government elections in May 2027. It was also suggested that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People could be invited to attend SACRE annually.

Action 4: That the council be invited to consider opportunities to engage with councillors about RE matters in the county.

35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting was noted: [Monday 22 June 2026, 10.00 am.](#)

SACRE was invited to consider options for meeting dates in 2026/27. It was suggested that a poll be circulated to explore date and time preferences for meetings in November 2026, March 2027, and June/July 2027.

Action 5: That a poll be circulated to SACRE participants to identify optimal availability for meeting dates in 2026/27.

The meeting ended at 11.05 am

Chairperson