

13 RELIGIONS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Report By: Committee Administrator (Scrutiny)

Purpose

1. To present an information report on the outcome of the 2001 Census in relation to Religions in Herefordshire as at 2001 and to consider the membership of SACRE.

Census Statistics

2. Over the years, SACRE have occasionally enquired as to the range of religions present the County. Following release by the Office for National Statistics of the 2001 Census information, I attach at Appendix 1 the statistics I have obtained which indicate the Religions in the County of Herefordshire.
3. These statistics show that the largest proportion of people who completed the census form put Christian (79%). 'Religion Not Stated' accounts for 7.7% with 'Other' accounting for 0.7%. The next recognised religion is Buddhism with 347 persons (0.2%).

SACRE Membership

4. At its meeting in March 2002, SACRE felt "it was important to receive presentations from other religious groups not represented on the SACRE in order to understand the wider view. Such non-Christian groups would include Buddhists and Hindus. Members agreed to decide at a later date on a possible revision to the membership of the Council".
5. In the light of the information presented relating to Religions in Herefordshire, SACRE may wish to consider the composition of Committee A. Currently Committee A is comprised of 1 representative of the Roman Catholic faith, 1 representative of the Free Church and 1 representative for Other Faiths. This was established when in April, 1998 the Herefordshire Councils Education Committee approved the SACRE constitution (Appendix 2)
6. Should SACRE consider increasing the membership of Committee A, then regard would have to be taken of the SACRE constitution and Circular DFE 1/94 (par.103) which defines Committee A as 'Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations, the number of whose representatives shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the committee's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area.
7. Paragraph 110 of the Circular states that 'it is the LEA who appoints the members of the five Committees or groups described in paragraph 103. However, I am sure that the LEA would give serious consideration to any change SACRE wished to make to its membership.

8. The LEA would however have to take into consideration:
 - a. Paragraph 111 - that the numbers of representatives of each denomination and religion reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the local area, and;
 - b. paragraph 112 - an LEA may wish to take into account any records of the religious affiliation of members of the local community.
9. Members will however remember that on any question to be decided the representative groups (Committees A, B, C and D) each have a single vote.
10. An alternative to appointing a full member could be to appoint a Co-opted non-voting member. It should also be noted that a Co-opted member cannot be a member of an Agreed Syllabus Conference, which is a separate body specifically constituted to consider revisions to the Agreed Syllabus.

RECOMMENDATION

- THAT (a) the report be noted and the religious composition of Herefordshire be taken into account for future planning and;**
- (b) SACRE consider whether to recommend to the LEA any change to the membership of Committee A.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- DfE Circular 1/94

Religions in Herefordshire 2001

Source: Census 2001, Office for National Statistics

All people**People stating religion as:**

	All people	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religions	No religion	Religion not stated
Herefordshire	174,871	138,165	347	105	130	174	63	447	21,950	13,490
<i>Proportions</i>		79.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	12.6%	7.7%

THE HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONSTITUTION**Introduction**

1. Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires The Herefordshire LEA to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), **to advise them on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship**. This constitution sets out the main functions of the SACRE membership, the voting arrangements and the rules for the conduct of business.
2. SACRE's main function is to advise the LEA upon matters connected with religious worship in County Schools and with the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the LEA may refer to the SACRE or as the LEA may see fit.
3. SACRE can also require the LEA to review its current agreed syllabus, and must consider applications made by a headteacher that the requirement for collective worship in County Schools to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character shall not apply to the collective worship provided for some or all of the pupils at that particular school.
4. The broad role of SACRE, therefore, is to support the effective provision of Religious Education and collective worship in schools.

Membership

5. Under Section 390(4) of the Education Act 1996, the SACRE must include persons appointed by the LEA to represent respectively -
 - A. such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the LEA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area (not including persons to represent the Church of England);
 - B. the Church of England;
 - C. such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the LEA, ought, having regard to the circumstances of the area, to be represented;
 - D. the LEA.
6. The SACRE may also include co-opted members.
7. In accordance with the requirements of Section 390(4), the membership of the SACRE for Herefordshire comprises -

Group (A)	One Roman Catholic representative (nominated by the Roman Catholic hierarchy) One free Church representative (nominated by Churches together in Herefordshire) One representative of other faiths
Group (B)	Three Church of England representatives (nominated in consultation with the Diocesan Education Authority)

SACRE

- Group (C) Three Teachers' representatives, with one drawn from each of the primary, secondary and special education sectors (nominated through recommendation of recognised Teacher Associations) and one Co-opted Member
- Group (D) Three Herefordshire Council members as Local Education Authority representatives
8. The number of members appointed to any representative group to represent each denomination or religion required to be represented shall, so far as is consistent with the efficient discharge of the group's function, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the County.
9. The members of SACRE, who have not been co-opted themselves, may co-opt a person, and a person so co-opted shall hold office on such terms as may be determined by the members co-opting them. When considering using their powers of co-option, the members of SACRE should bear in mind the range of Christian denominations and world faiths in the County.
10. Any member of SACRE may at any time resign his/her office.
11. Any member of SACRE unable to attend a meeting may appoint a named substitute to attend in his/her place.

Voting Arrangements

12. On any question to be decided by SACRE, only the representative groups on SACRE shall be entitled to vote, and each such group shall have a single vote.

Conduct of Business

13. Subject to the requirement of the voting arrangements above, SACRE and, in relation to any question falling to be decided by members of SACRE of any particular category, the members of that category may regulate their own proceedings.
14. The validity of proceedings of SACRE or of the members of SACRE of any particular category shall not be affected:-
- (a) by a vacancy in the office of any member of SACRE required by sub-section 4 of Section 390; or
- (b) on the ground that a member of SACRE appointed to represent any religion, denomination or association does not at the time of the proceedings represent the denomination or associations in question.
15. The representative groups on SACRE, other than that consisting of persons appointed to represent the LEA, may at any time require a review of any agreed syllabus for the time being adopted by The Herefordshire Council.
16. Meetings of SACRE may be convened at the request of the Chairman or any one of the Groups.
17. No business shall be transacted at the meeting unless all representative groups are represented at that meeting.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

18. The Chairman of SACRE is appointed by The Herefordshire Council. In the absence of the Chairman from a meeting, a Chairman pro tem shall be appointed from amongst the LEA representatives there present.

Secretary

19. The Director of Support Services of The Herefordshire Council shall be the Secretary of SACRE.

Rights of Press and Public to attend meetings

20. In accordance with the statutory requirements of the Education Act 1996 and associated regulations, the press and public will be entitled to attend meetings of the Council, but may be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items containing information capable of being treated as exempt information if meetings of SACRE were meetings of a local Authority. At the beginning of each meeting, for up to half an hour, members of the public will have an opportunity to receive answers to any pre-received written questions they have submitted to the Secretary.