

Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 10th July, 2023 at 10.00 am in
Committee Room 'D' - The Henry Bolingbroke Room, County Hall, Preston**

Attendees

Representative Groups - Committee Members

Mr Peter Martin, (Chair) (Representing the Teacher Associations)

County Councillor Anne Cheetham, (Representing Lancashire County Council)

County Councillor Stewart Jones, (Representing Lancashire County Council)

Mr Ben McMullan (Representing the Roman Catholic Church)

County Councillor Yousuf Motala, (Representing Lancashire County Council)

Joan O'Rourke, (Representing the Church of England)

Kelsang Pagpa, (Representing Buddhism)

Moulana Adil Tagari, (Representing Islam)

John Wilson, (Representing the Church of England)

Francis Williams, (Representing Lancashire County Council)

Co-opted Members

Kathleen Cooper, (Representing the LASGB)

Observers

Keith Pennington, (Representing Humanists)

Officers

Mrs Alison Lloyd, School Improvement Service

Dave Gorman, Legal and Democratic Services

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Rebekah Ackroyd, Malcolm Craig, Lisa Fenton, Helen Sage and Harsha Shukla.

The Clerk reported that notification had been received of the resignation of Khalid Ibrahim, representing Islam, and that he had been replaced by Moulana Adil Tagari who was welcomed to his first meeting. Notification had also been received of the resignation of Helen Sage, representing the Church of England, with effect from her retirement from the Diocese of Blackburn Board of Education on 31 July 2023.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 April 2023

The Chair drew the attention of Members to the following, covered in the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April:

- A possible replacement for Rabbi Robert Ash had been identified in discussion with the Board of Deputies of British Jews.
- It was unfortunate that the meeting had been poorly attended, and had actually been inquorate, as those Members not present had missed the excellent presentations given by the RE Subject Leaders who had attended.
- Many Members had still not submitted Member Profiles to Ben McMullen as had been previously agreed and despite several reminders. It was noted that it would be helpful for these to be completed and available to be uploaded to the website in the next few weeks.

3. Increasing the Profile, Attendance and Engagement of SACRE Members

The Chair referred to the letter he had sent to all SACRE Members on 8 June 2023 outlining some of the recent issues around attendance, vacancies, active contributions and outstanding Member Profiles.

It was noted that appointing organisations and authorities where there were longstanding vacancies, and where representatives had not attended for some time, needed to be contacted to clarify/confirm current intentions. It was further noted that the SACRE's Terms of Reference did specify that "following non-attendance of a member at three consecutive meetings without apology, the SACRE will recommend to the LA that a replacement nomination be sought from the relevant nominating body" and that this provision needed to be enforced more robustly.

Alison Lloyd, Special Support Adviser, School Improvement Service, highlighted her concerns that individuals who had not attended for a significant period of time and from whom there was no contact, were receiving information which was sometimes confidential and sensitive.

SACRE Members highlighted some of the issues and barriers which might contribute to the poor attendance in the last few years. These included changed expectations following COVID-19 and the increased use of virtual attendance; the days and times of meetings no longer being convenient to the majority; the difficulty and inability of school based staff to attend meetings during the day; and public transport issues for those reliant on that mode of transport, particularly in a county as large and geographically far-flung as Lancashire. It was also noted that, whilst it was not currently a significant issue in Lancashire, the Academisation of schools would also impact on the work and relevance of the SACRE in the longer term.

Many SACREs met in the evenings or late afternoons, e.g. from 4pm onwards but, certainly in Lancashire, there had always been an acceptance that SACRE was important enough to meet during the day.

It was suggested and agreed that letters of congratulation be sent to the recently appointed Anglican Bishops of Bolton and Blackburn as an opportunity to raise the profile of the SACRE and the importance of the work undertaken.

4. Report of the SACRE Officer

Alison Lloyd presented the SACRE Officer's report and made specific reference/updates to the following:

- Four applications had now been received as part of the recruitment round for a primary consultant for which interviews would be held on 19 July.
- Alison Lloyd would be visiting Wigan Council on 20 September as Wigan had decided to 'buy into' the Lancashire syllabus.
- The SACRE Development Plan would be considered at the SACRE meeting on 2 October.
- John Wilson suggested that the Collective Worship Workshop for teachers also be extended to include headteachers, in particular those recently appointed.
- Possible projects for the SACRE to consider and take forward, e.g. a series of local, Lancashire, VLOGs (video logs), possibly drawing on support/input from Building Bridges.

5. British Library - Units of Work to Support the Use of SACRED Texts

Alison Lloyd presented an online British Library resource which consisted of a range of teaching resources relating to sacred texts.

As an example, Alison Lloyd worked through a Key Stage 2 Unit of Work relating to Buddhism.

SACRE Members agreed that this was a really good and useful resource and it was suggested that it should be highlighted and recommended as a useful resource in the next RE newsletter to schools.

6. NASACRE Annual Conference Update

The Chair updated SACRE Members on the recent NASACRE Annual Conference which he had attended in London on 22 May with Alison Lloyd.

The theme of this year's conference was 'Celebrating 30 Years: SACREs for the Future' and keynote speakers included Dr Kathryn Wright, Chief Executive of Culham St Gabriel's Trust, on 'An education in religion and worldviews - the next 30 years?', Charles Clarke, former MP and Government Minister, on 'The role of SACREs in the emerging educational landscape' and Dr David Hampshire, former Chair of NASACRE, who gave a national analysis of SACRE annual reports.

Issues arising from the above included a significant number of SACREs, some 50, had not submitted an annual report for 2021/22 to the Department for Education, despite it being a statutory requirement; and the importance of continued lobbying and profile raising of education in general, and religious education in particular, with local and national politicians. On this point, Francis Williams noted that many politicians did not know the difference between religious education and religious instruction.

7. Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Governor Services Team Attendance at the 2 October Meeting

The Chair reported that, following a request made at a meeting of the county council's Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee on 10 May, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, together with representatives of the Governor Services Team, would attend the next meeting of SACRE on 2 October. County Councillor Anne Cheetham, who was present at the meeting as a member of the Scrutiny Committee, gave some background to the request and it was likely that the Governor Services Team would be highlighting, in particular, the role of Foundation Governors. Linking back to the previous discussion around raising the profile of the SACRE, the presence of the Cabinet Member, County Councillor Jayne Rear, was to be welcomed.

8. Members' News (including Feedback from Training and Development Undertaken)

Kathleen Cooper and County Councillor Anne Cheetham referred to training recently undertaken which had been of benefit in their roles as SACRE Members.

9. Observers' Contributions

Keith Pennington reported on an Assembly on Humanism which he had undertaken at a primary school in Skelmersdale followed by a question and answer session with some of the year groups. Keith Pennington would also provide some further information in due course on his involvement, as a Pastor at the University of Central Lancashire, with Interfaith Week which was taking place in November.

10. Correspondence

The correspondence which had been circulated since the last meeting was noted.

Kathleen Cooper notified Members of the recent death of County Councillor Keith Iddon, Chairman of the County Council, and a former Lancashire County Council representative on the SACRE. The Chair expressed the condolences of the SACRE to the late County Councillor Iddon's family.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Lancashire SACRE would be held at 10.00am on Monday 2 October 2023 in Committee Room 'C', County Hall, Preston.

Paul Bond
Clerk to the SACRE

County Hall
Preston