

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 12 March 2025.

PRESENT: Mr S C Manion (Chairman), Miss C Bostock, Mr S Bowen, Ms N Brownfield, Ms K Burke, Ms J Hawkins, Ms G Hltch, Mr D Jeffrey, Lawson, Lilley (Substitute for Ms H Williams), Mrs B Naden, Miss M Paddison-Chapman, Mr J Paul, Mr John Philpott, Ms Porteous, Ralph and Mrs J Wigg

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P Smith-Orr (Consultant Advisor) and Mr J Clapson (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Membership

It was noted that Dr Ruth Smith, who joined the SACRE towards the end of 2023, had stepped down from the role due to ill health. All present expressed their gratitude to Dr Smith for her contribution and offered her their best wishes.

1. Apologies for Absence/Substitutes

(Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Pope, Ms Williams who was substituted by Mr Lilley, Ms Hamilton, Mrs Goldstein and Ms Curtis.

2. Declarations of Interests

(Item 2)

The Chair declared that he sat on the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 5.11.24

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2024 were correctly recorded, and that they be signed by the Chair.

4. RE Advisor Verbal Update

(Item 4)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr provided her update.

2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:

- The planned date in June for the secondary school RE Co-Ordinators meeting clashed with another event. Mrs Smith-Orr would liaise with Ms Pope and Ms Hawkes about an alternative date.

- A Humanist speaker could be booked for schools and other community groups through the Humanist UK website.
- Monitoring RE and collective worship in schools.
 - Around 15 schools would be allocated to each member of the SACRE. They would look on the school's websites for information about the syllabus, the time allotted for RE study, and collective worship.
 - Ms Ralph offered to assess schools in the Canterbury area, and Ms Hitch offered to assess schools in the Rochester area.
 - It was felt that it would not be appropriate for elected Members to carry out the assessment until after the County elections in May.
 - Following the assessment, schools would receive a letter from the Chair with feedback and suggestions. This could also be a good opportunity to promote the work of SACRE and the WIRE award.
- Funding for Inter Faith Week UK had been withdrawn by Government, however, due to its popularity, events had continued to take place each November. A Government consultation on future support was underway and the findings were due to be announced in the Summer.
- Mrs Cheema advised that she did a walk as part of Inter Faith Week. It offered an excellent opportunity to learn about practices in other places of worship, and highlighted commonality of themes between faiths. She offered to invite the SACRE members to join her this year.
- Inter Faith Week would be held from 9 November to 16 November in 2025.

3. RESOLVED that the update was noted.

5. Verbal Update on Local Network Groups (Item 5)

1. Ms Brownfield advised that her last meeting, held in September, had been successful. During the meeting they heard from Picture News about their offer for collective worship. She advised that a virtual meeting was scheduled at the end of March and there would be an in person meeting in June.

2. RESOLVED to note the update.

6. NASACRE 2024-25 virtual training programme (Item 6)

1. Mr Clapson provided the SACRE with a brief overview of the training material available on the NASACRE website.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
 - SACRE had subscribed to the NASACRE Virtual Training Package for the last two years that ran from September to August. The package cost the SACRE around £50 per year.
 - Members could attend all virtual training sessions for free and could access the materials from previously held sessions through the NASACRE website.
 - SACRE members were also able to view training materials from the 2023/24 year, following a request for access.
 - Mr Clapson offered to re-circulate the log in details following the meeting.

3. RESOLVED to note the update.

7. 2025 NASACRE Conference (Item 7)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that the Conference was scheduled to take place in Stratford Town Hall, London on 19 May 2025.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
 - There were up to five places available to the SACRE.
 - Mrs Smith-Orr, Mrs Cheema and Mrs Burke registered their interest in attending.
 - Members of the SACRE were asked to contact Mr Clapson as soon as possible after the meeting if they wished to attend the Conference.
 - Mr Clapson would contact NASACRE and the finance department to facilitate the bookings.
3. RESOLVED to note the Conference details and to authorise the Democratic Services Officer to facilitate the booking of the Conference for the SACRE members who wished to attend.

8. The WIRE Awards (Item 8)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the item noting that there were a number of schools who has shown an interest and were preparing their submissions for the Award.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
 - Miss Paddison would present the Award to Holy Trinity & St. John's Church of England Primary School on Wednesday 19 March, during their collective worship.
 - Mrs Burke advised that her school had agreed to work towards the Award. This would be led by one of her colleagues to avoid any conflict of interest.
3. RESOLVED:
 - a) To note the presentations of the award to Westlands Primary School in Sittingbourne, and Holy Trinity & St. John's Church of England Primary School.
 - b) To thank Mrs Wigg and Miss Paddison for presenting the awards on behalf of the SACRE.

9. Development Plan 24/25 (Item 9)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the item.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
 - The exam results had been received in January and were included in the Annual Report. The submission deadline for the Annual Report was delayed until 31 March 2025 to allow the inclusion of exam results.
 - Some schools appeared to be missing from the list of exam results. Ms Smith-Orr offered to investigate any omissions.
 - Mrs Smith-Orr completed and submitted the SACRE's response to the Government consultation on the inclusion of RE on the national curriculum.

- It was suggested that Ofsted would need to assess RE provision more thoroughly if it was included on the national curriculum.
- Ofsted were currently consulting on their assessment and inspection framework. Members of the SACRE could respond to the consultation and Mr Clapson offered to circulate the link after the meeting.
- SACRE members were encouraged to contact Mrs Smith-Orr if they had any additions to the Development Plan.

3. RESOLVED that the update was noted.

10. Budget Update

(Item 10)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the Budget.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
 - Consideration could be given to purchasing an expanded unit from RE Today that could be used by secondary schools.
 - Basic membership of NATRE was available for £15 per year. This provided access to some of the online materials and would be a good way of keeping up to date.
 - Mr Clapson offered to arrange for basic membership of NATRE for those who felt they would benefit from the service.
3. RESOLVED to note the update and to authorise the Democratic Services Officer to organise basic NATRE membership for those members who felt they would benefit from it.

11. Submission of the Annual Report 2023/24

(Item 11)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the item.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
 - The Report was presented to the Children's Young People and Education Cabinet Committee and had been submitted the NASACRE. It would be sent to The Department for Education after the meeting.
 - Future reports should detail what the membership vacancies were.
3. RESOLVED that the update was noted.

12. Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

(Item 12)

Future meeting date – Canterbury Cathedral 10 June 2025, 10am

1. Miss Paddison advised that she had made enquires and found that the Community Room at Canterbury Cathedral was available for the next meeting.
2. SACRE members were encouraged to attend the meeting in person, as the virtual attendance option could not be guaranteed when meeting outside of the Council offices.

3. RESOLVED that the Democratic Services Officer was authorised to progress with the booking of the Community Room at Canterbury Cathedral for the 10 June 2025.