

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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 Tuesday, 5 November 2024.

PRESENT: Mr S C Manion (Chairman), Mr S Bowen, Ms N Brownfield, Ms K Burke, Mrs A Goldstein, Ms S Hamilton, Ms F Hawkes, Ms G Hltch, Mr D Jeffrey, Mrs B Naden, Miss M Paddison-Chapman, Ms N Ralph, Mr A Shepherd, Mr A Sinha, Dr R Smith and Mrs J Wigg.

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

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Apologies for Absence/Substitutes

(Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Elapatha, Ms Cheema, Mr Philpott, Ms Porteous, Ms Williams, Mrs Lawson, Mr Paul, Miss Pope and Ms Curtis.

2. Declarations of Interests

(Item 2)

There were no declarations of interests.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 19.3.24

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2024 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chair.

4. Development Plans 2023-2024 and 2024-2025

(Item 4)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the Plans, advising that the 2023-24 Plan looked back at what had been achieved, and the 2024-25 Plan looked forward over the year to come.
2. During consideration of the item, the following points were noted:
 - The Plan was a live document that would be updated throughout the year, and Members were encouraged to come forward with suggested updates
 - Efforts were underway to obtain the 2024 exam results. They used to be circulated by the Department for Education (DfE) before the Covid 19 pandemic. It was suggested that Mrs Hamilton, Deputy Cabinet Member for Skills and Education, or Mrs Hammond the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, maybe able to assist in obtaining the

information. Once received the 2023-24 Plan would be updated and the results would be included in the Annual Report.

- A response to the DfE's call for evidence for the current Curriculum and Assessment Review would be added to the Plan, and could be an item for consideration at a future SACRE meeting.
- It was a statutory requirement for schools to conduct collective worship every day however, effective monitoring of this was difficult.
- Schools may have information on their websites about collective worship and information for parents who do not want their children to be involved in collective worship.
- SACRE Members would conduct a desk top review of collective worship in schools through analysis of school websites. The Chair would write to schools to remind them of their statutory duty in instances where collective worship was not apparent.

3. RESOLVED that the 2023-24 Plan and 2024-25 Plan were noted, and that a review of collective worship within schools be undertaken.

5. RE Advisor Verbal Update

(Item 5)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr provided her update.

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

- The number of requests from schools for the Kent Syllabus had significantly reduced.
- NASACRE has asked for comments on the DfE's Call for Evidence for the current Curriculum and Assessment Review. Members would receive further details following the meeting and were encouraged to respond to Mrs Smith-Orr with their comments that would be collated into a response from the Kent SACRE

3. RESOLVED that the update was noted and that Kent SACRE would respond to the DfE's Call for Evidence Review.

6. Budget Update

(Item 6)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the Budget.

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

- If there was sufficient budget available, RE Today could be used to provide some collective worship resources for schools.
- Previously enquires about providing schools with a copy of the RE Today magazine had indicated that it would cost around £10,000.

3. RESOLVED that the update was noted.

7. Update on Local Network Groups

(Item 7)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr noted that there were now a couple of network groups in place that were running very successfully.
2. During consideration of the item it was noted that:
 - Mr Shepherd advised that his group met three times a year, normally for around an hour each time. The sessions were mainly attended by RE teachers from local primary schools and they were an excellent way to network, talk about visits and offer each other advice.
 - Ms Brownfield shared that her group had met three times via Zoom as this was felt to be most convenient for those attending. They had a representative from Picture News at their last meeting who spoke about connecting worship to world events.
 - Thanks were offered to everyone involved in supporting and running the local network groups.
3. RESOLVED to note the update.

8. Update following the Kent Teachers Events 30 September and 15 October.
(Item 8)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr introduced the item and said that unfortunately the secondary school network event, held on 15 October, was not very well attended.
2. During consideration of the item, the following points were noted:
 - Although the secondary school event was not very well attended there was some very good discussion.
 - It was felt that the timing of the secondary school event had not encouraged attendance. Another event was provisionally scheduled for 26 June 2025 because events held around this time in the past had been well attended.
 - Future events could have a specific focus, such as non-religious world views with a guest speaker from Humanism UK. This had received very good feedback in the past.
 - Sessions could be held online from 4pm to 6pm. Consideration should be given to holding online primary and secondary school events in the Spring.
 - People needed a good reason to get them to travel to attend in person meetings.
 - Kent SACRE could look to get an exhibitors stand at the Kent Association of Leaders Conference in Autumn 2025. It could be a good use of budget and enhance the profile of Kent SACRE with school leaders.
3. RESOLVED to note the update and endorse:
 - a. Investigation into obtaining an exhibition stand at the 2025 Kent Association of Leaders Conference.
 - b. Investigation into holding two online networking meetings (one for primary schools and one for secondary schools), in the spring, to hear from a representative of Humanism UK.
 - c. Consideration of a conference in the 2025 summer term.

9. The WIRE Awards
(Item 9)

1. During consideration of the item the following points were noted:

- It was good that so many year groups had participated in the submission.
- Mrs Wigg offered to present the award to the school.
- There were potentially four more submissions being prepared by schools.
- Members could claim back the cost of purchasing a frame for the award. This should be done through the SACRE clerk.

2. RESOLVED that Westlands Primary School be awarded the Wire award.

10. Draft Annual Report 2023/24

(Item 10)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr presented the draft Annual Report that was largely complete except for the inclusion of the Chair's forward, and exam results that would have been included as an appendix in the past.
2. The Chair noted that Kent SACRE was in the minority of SACREs who have consistently submitted their annual report on time. Thanks were offered to Mrs Smith-Orr for her efforts in producing the annual report and her support throughout the year.
3. RESOLVED that the Draft Annual Report 2023/24 was noted.

11. Monitoring RE in schools

(Item 11)

1. Mrs Smith-Orr advised that she would get in touch with Mrs McInnes, Director of Education, and copy in Mrs Hamilton and Mrs Hammond, to obtain a list of schools for the school collective worship review and a copy of the exam results.

12. Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

(Item 12)

1. There were no other items at the Chairman felt were urgent.

13. Future Meeting Dates

(Item 13)

1. It was noted that the next meetings were scheduled for:
 - 12.3.25, 10am, Darent Room, Sessions House
 - 10.6.25, 10am, Venue TBC