

Minutes of the Meeting of the Bath and North East Somerset Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Tuesday 20th February, 7.00 – 9.00 pm
Online, via zoom

Attendance:

Committee A: Christian Denominations and other Religions

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| Jane O'Hara (Chair) | Baha'i Community | P |
| Andrew Avison | Free Churches Group (Salvation Army) | A |
| Ashish Rajhansha | Hindu Community | - |
| Dr Yuktेशwar Kumar (Vice-Chair) | Hindu Community | P |
| Iris Segall | Jewish Community | P |
| Sheikh Rashad Azami | Muslim Community | - |
| Julie Justin | Catholic Community | P |
| Rupert Kaye | Ecumenical: Ammerdown Community | A |

Committee B: Church of England

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| David Williams | Diocese of Bath and Wells | P |
| Patrick Haviland | St Mark's Church School | P |

Committee C: Teachers' Associations

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| Kevin Burnett (Vice-Chair) | National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) | P |
| Mary Patterson | Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) | P |
| Mark Quinn | Bath Spa University | P |
| Karen Miles | Higher Level Teaching Assistant, St Julian's Church | P |
| Katie Sharp (formerly Pilkington) | School (GMB) | A |
| | Two Rivers CE Primary (National Education Union) | |

Committee D: Local Authority

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| Olwyn Donnelly | Head of Education Commissioning | P |
| Cllr Eleanor Jackson | Councillor | A |

In attendance

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| Rebekah Guy | Clerk/Adviser | P |
| Julia Beckett | Proposed Humanist Rep | P |

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

| Item | Notes and resolutions | Action |
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| 1.1 | <p>Welcome to members</p> <p>JOH was acting as chair in this meeting, and she warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Julia Beckett (potential new member of Committee A). Apologies were received from EJ, AA, KS, RK and MP (arriving late)</p> | |
| 1.2 | <p>Public Discussion and Members' Declarations</p> <p>No members of the public were present. No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th October 2023</p> <p>JOH proposed the minutes as a correct record and seconded by KB. These were agreed by SACRE.</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collective Worship policy – see Item 4 - SACRE constitution agreed; additional review required - AR has completed hand-over to RG. Our thanks to AR for his support with this. - Website reviews - see item 8.1 - recommendations from Ofsted reports have been acted upon - WIRE award – actions completed, and see item 8.3 - SACRE resource centre - see item 9.2 - SACRE advice to LA - see item 5 - Board of Deputies letter to headteachers - AR sent letter out. RG has not received any feedback or questions from schools. RG will confirm what was sent out and send a copy to SACRE members | RG |
| 3.1 | <p>Membership: To review membership attendance, vacancies & DBS certificates</p> <p>The Attendance record was circulated, and SACRE discussed membership. It was noted that there is still no representative from the Buddhist and Sikh communities.</p> <p>Andrew Fraser has resigned with immediate effect from Committee B.</p> <p>Julia Beckett was introduced as a possible new member to serve on Committee A as a Humanist representative. Julia has recently moved to B&NES and Mark Caney lives in a different LA and therefore will be joining that SACRE. SACRE give their thanks to all that he did during his time with them.</p> <p>JB introduced herself. She has been a member of other SACREs for over 6 years, is an active school speaker and member of Humanists UK. She has already been into schools in our local area. She used to be a mathematics teacher and has experience in further education as well as being an education adviser.</p> <p>JB explained that her DBS needs to be updated for her new address.</p> <p>It was unanimously agreed that JB should be invited to sit on Committee A. RG to recommend to LA that JB join SACRE. JOH welcomed JB to SACRE.</p> | RG |

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| 3.2 | <p>In the October 2023 meeting it was agreed that the elections for Chair and Vice Chair positions were brought together so all the officers could be elected together at the same meeting. JOH now proposed that YK remain as the second VC until then. This was agreed, and YK also agreed.</p> <p>A full election will be held next Autumn with a view to electing the Chair and both Vice-Chairs.</p> <p>SACRE members were all invited to consider whether they would be interested in Chair or VC positions and also who they would like to nominate.</p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SACRE approved Julia’s membership and welcomed her to the meeting. ● RG to nominate her to the local authority. ● RG to send Welcome Pack and Handbook to JB, and login details for NASACRE website. ● JB to apply for an up-to-date enhanced DBS certificate through Humanists UK. | <p>RG</p> <p>All</p> <p>RG</p> <p>JB</p> |
| 4 | <p>Discussion: Collective Worship Policy</p> <p>RG noted that the CW sub-committee (RG, KS, JJ) met again in February to begin to create a CW Policy based on the actions produced at the previous meeting (KM sent apologies). A first draft of this policy has been created. There are still some adjustments to be made to this draft policy and more time was needed to ensure this was done well. The sub-committee will feed back their thoughts to RG who will pull these together and produce a final draft in time for the next SACRE meeting in the summer. JB has also offered her input which will be appreciated.</p> <p>JJ noted the usefulness of the session in February and commented that KS contributed a lot to the meeting and the policy. Our thanks to her and all of the sub-committee.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft policy to be discussed within the CW sub-committee group and a final draft brought to the summer meeting ● JB to be invited to join group and give feedback on draft policy | <p>RG</p> <p>KS</p> <p>JJ</p> <p>KM</p> <p>JB</p> |
| 5 | <p>Communication between SACRE and the Local Authority</p> <p>This was a new item on the Agenda, and follows on from the NASACRE AGM 2023, which KB attended. It was suggested that a separate log of actions and communication between SACRE and the LA be created. This will show a clear picture of advice and actions given throughout the year and how these were put into place. The information from the Action Log throughout the year will feed into the SACRE Annual Report which should report on advice from SACRE submitted to the LA and how it was responded to.</p> <p>It was explained that the Action Log would show whether it was direct action by the LA, or whether the LA has gone back to SACRE to put that advice into action.</p> | |

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| | <p>KB noted that the Action Log will also be a key part of providing the evidence for the LA Commissioner of Services on the work of SACRE against the funding it has received (some of this funding is allocated to specific activities that were submitted to the Council in order to receive the additional funding last year)</p> <p>OD noted that there have been two FOI enquiries recently that OD has been able to contact RG about. RG to add these to the Action Log. OD thanked RG for her help with these enquiries.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Action Log would start from this meeting. RG will keep it updated and then share at the next SACRE meeting as appropriate. It will be a good evidence base to show how these issues/questions were resolved.</p> <p>JOH noted it would be important to have the date that any issue was first raised.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RG to create the Action Log showing communication between SACRE and LA which will be updated after each meeting and as required in the interim ● RG to add the FOI requests to the log ● RG or OD to bring up any queries/questions under this standing item at SACRE meetings | <p>RG OD</p> |
| 6.1 | <p>SACRE Management</p> <p><u>Finance Statement</u></p> <p>RG had circulated the finance statement (Bath & North East Somerset SACRE Budget: Financial Year 2023-2024), which showed the current balance remaining for this year (to end March 2024) as £5088.50.</p> <p>RG noted that it would be beneficial to look at the headings and amounts in the financial statement for next year to ensure that they match with the Development Plan more closely (e.g. an extra column on left hand side 1a,b etc. corresponding with the Development Plan numbering).</p> <p>JOH queried the £750 left for organising an antisemitism event (item 7). RG explained that it has not been possible to organise in the time scale. The idea was to use the money for hiring a room, catering and expenses etc. RG asked if the balance could be taken into next year so that there is sufficient time to organise an event that will be beneficial for teachers, and OD agreed this would be possible, so we can carry it forward to the next budget.</p> <p>MQ explained that the Holocaust Education Trust has supported events at Bath Spa University for the last couple of years (HET is largely free, just expenses paid). It was noted that 2025 is the 80 years memorial so this may be good timing (January is normally quieter for teachers and possibly for Bath Spa). IS reminded us that last time it was focused on primary in the morning, secondary in the afternoon, and University students joined as well. However the University already has something in place so students would probably not take part.</p> | |

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| | <p>JOH suggested that RG and KB organise an event for next January 2025. MQ happy to liaise regarding a venue. Other SACRE members to contact RG if they would be happy to help with this.</p> <p>WIRE travel funding of £1000.00 to be carried over into next year also (item 6).</p> <p>Plans are in place for Agreed Syllabus updates (item 11)</p> <p>Another school is booked in for a visit 8th March, others contacted to offer support (item 3, also see previous minutes)</p> <p>JOH queried items 4 and 5 and RG explained the situation regarding previous invoices (they had not been paid). JOH proposed that the overspend of £87.50 (item 4) should come out of the £100 (item 5) which will not be used (see discussion agenda item 9.2) and this was agreed.</p> <p>KB question for KM - 'Are there any other costs that would be helpful to be included for the WIRE award rather than just for travel?' KM explained that they had incurred costs for their Stations of the Cross event but that her school would have done that anyway. But it is possible that it might hold other schools back.</p> <p>IS commented that this grant has been there for a few years. SACRE will give a certain amount but SACRE needs to agree how much. RG explained other SACREs offer 50% of transport costs or £200 per school.</p> <p>MP asked if this was only for LA schools or if academies could apply. OD confirmed this could be for both. SACRE agreed to offer £200 for 5 schools towards their transport costs.</p> <p>KB noted the total should be £14375 – at bottom of sheet and in heading</p> | |
| 6.2 | <p><u>Development Plan</u></p> <p>RG had circulated the Bath & North East Somerset SACRE Development Plan 2023-24, and it was agreed that the finance statement itemisation should match the Development Plan.</p> <p>KB asked OD does anything else need noting in minutes. eg. the £3000 for school support, CPD etc. OD explained the Action Log (see item 5) would be the solution to that. RG to add a school advice support column or perhaps as a separate spread sheet page in the log</p> | |
| 6.3 | <p><u>Annual Report</u></p> <p>JOH mentioned that the exam results were now on the report which was good. RG thanked OD for her support with this.</p> <p>PH noted errors with results for Beechen Cliff and Oldfield, and the St Mark's percentages in bullet points are wrong. RG to check and resend.</p> <p>KB – re pg4 inviting RE leads to join. Does RG have all RE leads now? Has OD invited them? KB asked OD for clarification as to whether schools have been formally invited. OD explained that this is a difficult job. OD suggested a newsletter. OD noted that most schools are under MATs not the LA so will probably not have much impact. JOH suggested that it went onto the Action Log.</p> | |

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| | <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RG to ensure Development Plan and Finance Statement for next year match ● RG to make final adjustments to Annual Report and Finance Statement ● RG add actions to the Action Log | |
| 7 | <p>Discussion: National Content Standard</p> <p>RG explained that a new document the 'National Content Standard' was published in October, and she circulated a summary covering main points. The document builds upon various documents over the last few years, including the CORE(2018) and the Ofsted Research Review (2021). It also takes into account the expansion of academies across the country. It sets out a vision for RE moving forwards and a variety of proposals to ensure high quality RE. This is intended to be used alongside existing agreed syllabus, and is not replacing any legal requirements. It is a useful document for SACRE to be aware of as well as for schools, syllabus writers etc. The intention is to provide guidance and ensure high standards.</p> <p>RG provided an explanation of the 'National Content Standard' for teachers at the recent CPD session.</p> <p>RG suggested perhaps unpicking one section a time at each SACRE meeting.</p> <p>JOH wondered if a working party might be useful to look at this so that we are prepared for the next agreed syllabus review and so that it is not left until the last minute.</p> <p>KB asked if there is likely to be a new document. RG explained that there might be changes to this document but it is unlikely to be a brand new document. KB suggested that RG give an overview of key sections at each SACRE meeting so that all of SACRE are up to date with how things are progressing, all SACRE members are aware of the importance and the national picture for RE.</p> <p>DW agrees with KB. He thinks this is a good way to keep a handle on this. RG to keep as an agenda item.</p> <p>PH asked about the implications of this regarding GCSE exam content. The exam content and NCS currently do not match. RG agreed that this is something many secondary schools have agreed upon. PH and RG to meet to discuss this and possible implications as well as how to give our feedback on this.</p> <p>KB asked RG to feedback to NASACRE. JOH asked if we can feedback to REC. RG agreed to feedback to NASACRE and REC following discussion with PH.</p> <p>JOH wondered if a group of teachers should look at the NCS. MP commented that it would be good to do this at LTLRE meetings rather than creating something extra.</p> <p>JOH thanked RG for providing a summary of this document and for her work on this so far.</p> | |

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| | <p>JOH noted that towards the end of the document there is information on what schools need to publish. This could be used for the next website review, including the wording.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RG to add as a standing agenda item ● PH and RG to meet to discuss GCSE implications and feedback to NASACRE & REC ● MP to facilitate discussion at LTLRE hub meeting and feedback to RG | <p>RG PH MP</p> |
| 8.1 | <p>Website Review of schools</p> <p>RG circulated the results of the recent survey of 19 schools for our annual check of websites. She noted that the website reviews were largely positive, particularly for Abbot Alphege, Farmborough, Longvernal, High Littleton and Beechen Cliff. Overall, there was a slight trend of lack of evidence of CW and not including information about the right to withdraw.</p> <p>KB proposed this for the Action Log: RG to advise LA, LA may well suggest RG carry this out. OD confirmed that LA do want to be kept in the loop. RG might say 'having spoken to LA...' YK commented that he agreed with KB. PH commented that the Annual Report comments on working relationships etc and he suggested that it would be better to speak to schools directly in order to build better relationships. KB agreed and said that part of the website review process was the right for schools to first comment on what SACRE members had found (as they might have missed something / not seen something that was there) BEFORE any letters were drafted and actions discussed with LA. It was important that the LA have the agreement as to the next steps outlined in any draft letters as they might have additional information on schools or might feel they are best to handle any potentially sensitive situation. RG and OD to communicate with each other to ensure supportive relationships are built with schools and decide upon the next steps together, once schools have had the 'right to reply' from initial website review findings</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RG to send out a letter to Head Teachers with initial feedback from the reviews (red, green and amber letters) and offer Head Teachers the right to comment on these findings and ensure they are accurate ● RG to discuss all website reviews with OD once feedback from schools had been received (or not) and decide upon which letters to send where and by whom ● If any schools still identified as 'red' schools, RG and OD to decide who sends letter – which will include an offer of support ● RG to provide generic support and advice on including information about the right to withdraw and evidence of CW, to all schools included in this year's review ● Suggest to 'green' schools that they apply for WIRE award | <p>RG</p> <p>RG OD RG & OD RG RG</p> |
| 8.2 | <p>Summary of Ofsted reports</p> <p>A report on the 8 Ofsted inspections since the last meeting had been circulated. All the schools received 'good' grades with one rated 'outstanding'. It is possible that RE was a deep dive at one school where it was noted that some pupils were able to recall knowledge and others were not. There is no or very little mention of RE or CW in the other reports.</p> | |

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| | <p>There was some discussion of the results, and it was noted that the results for Church school inspections, which do look at RE, could provide additional information about some schools. It was noted that Ofsted do not usually look at RE specifically.</p> <p>RG explained her recommendations about which schools to offer further support to and which to suggest they think about the WIRE award, and to consider creating progression documents as part of development of agreed syllabus materials. SACRE agreed the recommendations in the report.</p> <p>KB suggested changing some wording in the report to SACRE on Ofsted Monitoring: under 'Purpose of Report', to: <i>To highlight any areas where SACRE may wish to advise the LA that support should be offered to schools</i></p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once Ofsted monitoring complete, SACRE to agree on advice to LA which may include: Acting on recommendations to approach schools to think about the Wire Award and support to be offered to schools as named under 'recommendations' in the report. RG to follow up on any agreed actions with LA ● RG to prepare progression document as part of AS materials ● RG to change wording under 'purpose of report' for next SACRE report on Ofsted Monitoring | <p>RG</p> <p>RG & OD</p> <p>RG</p> |
| 8.3 | <p>Wire Award: update</p> <p>RG presented one more school with the Wire Award: Farrington Gurney CE Primary. The children spoke enthusiastically about their experiences in RE and the visitors/events that had happened.</p> <p>The £1000 budget can be used to support schools to cover some of the Wire Award transport costs. A form has been created for schools to apply for this. SACRE agreed to offer £200 for 5 schools. (See item 6)</p> <p>RG has encouraged schools visited to consider applying for the WIRE award. 3 schools have said that they are interested in applying in the future.</p> <p>Information on the WIRE award was also included in the newsletter and an email has been sent out.</p> <p>MP noted that it is also advertised at LTLRE Hub meetings.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RG and MP to continue to promote WIRE award | <p>RG MP</p> |
| 8.4 | <p>Feedback from NASACRE Annual Conference 2023 (KB)</p> <p>KB attended last year's annual conference and notes were circulated at the time. However, as some points were considered more important for discussion and emphasis, KB was asked to go over those points again.</p> | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strengths of SACREs and what can be done to ensure their role is relevant (MAT links and what matters to CEOs in our local area). RG to liaise with OD on CEO contact - correlation between the schools that do RE and do as a core area and the increase in progress 8 scores - work of SACRE and how is it promoted, interfaith dialogue groups etc. - Annual report analysis, LAs across country to be more proactive. Our thanks to OD for being so proactive. SACRE is an advisory council and we should hold the LA to account based on what we have advised and the actions that were then carried out. Collective decisions are important not just adviser decisions. <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KB to send his notes to RG to circulate to all | <p>KB RG</p> |
| 9.1 | <p>Regional and local developments: Learn, Teach, Lead RE</p> <p>MP reported on activities.</p> <p>Three meetings per year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online (Sept) ● In person (Jan) - Bath Mosque. We aim to do this at a place of worship or a place of religious significance. This year we went to Bath Islamic centre. Very well attended, around 40 teachers, more or less an even split between primary and secondary. We were made to feel very welcome and had an excellent tour. Also talked about potential school visits. (1 class at a time.) ● The last is online (June) <p>Really encouraging to see high levels of engagement.</p> <p>RG noted thanks to MP and Paul Marvin (Primary Hub Leader) for all of their hard work and for organising and creating enthusiasm for RE within the local area.</p> <p>JOH asked about how schools find out about these meetings. MP explained how the email list has been built over time and more recently by working with MATs to encourage attendance and working together – where possible having MAT RE Lead meetings on same day and time as LTLRE</p> | |
| 9.2 | <p>Regional and local developments: SACRE Resource Centre</p> <p>JOH and Rob Jenkinson met to look at the RE resources stored at Saltford Primary School. It was noted that some of the resources are looking very tired. Although £100 from SACRE has been earmarked for buying new items, this would not be enough to update them. It was also noted that the resources have only been loaned out 6 times over the past 3 years (usually one religion at a time).</p> <p>JOH recommended that we do not put any more money into these resources, and suggested two options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - let Saltford Primary School keep the resources for their own use - contact those schools that have loaned in the past and see if they are interested | |

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| | <p>JOH recommended to SACRE that Salford Primary keep the resources and use them themselves. JJ agreed that this was an excellent idea. They have been looking after them, would use them and know the resources. IS also agreed that the resources should stay where they are, some schools might still contact him to use them. KB suggested checking with Rob that he was happy with that and there was some discussion on how we update the website.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SACRE to bring contract to an end ● JOH to contact Rob to check that he is happy with the above ● MP to add this to website once wording agreed with Rob and JOH | <p>OD/RG JOH MP</p> |
| 9.3 | <p>Regional and local developments: (Update from the Diocese of Bath and Wells)</p> <p>CPD opportunities</p> <p>RE conference Adam Robertson April 22nd - Challenging, relevant and diverse RE, Flourish House Wells, more information on Diocese website</p> <p>School leaders and Parish Partners Conference March 14 and 15 (second day is a repeat) Spiritual Leadership within schools with Margaret James and Paul Rudsby, more information on Diocese website</p> <p>Still 3 B&NES schools that have not had their SIAMS inspections yet. 1 school will be inspected next week. Other 2 will be within this academic year. The schools are aware of this. They will be given a week's notice.</p> <p>DW will be retiring at the end of the year with another 2 colleagues at the Diocese. There are job vacancies on the website at the moment (and the Deputy Director's role includes working with SACREs in the Diocese). Significant change at the Diocese. JOH asked if the next meeting will be DW's last meeting. DW will attend summer meeting and possibly the autumn meeting if no one is in place yet. DW was thanked for all of his support for SACRE over the last 16 years.</p> | <p>DW</p> |
| 9.4 | <p>Regional and local developments: Updates from the Bath Interfaith Group (IFG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Interfaith Week in November - spiritual journey with live music ● 15th November - panel zoom addressing questions around 'Why interfaith?' ● November - peace vigils ● January - Holocaust Memorial Day (organised in collaboration with the LA Equalities Team) ● February - Mayor of Bath Multifaith Event, several different religions addressing the theme 'The people of Bath, the beating heart of the city' ● other peace vigils have also happened ● Bath IFG AGM will be on 29th Feb <p>Actions</p> <p>RG will circulate any events. JOH to check that RG is on the email distribution list</p> | <p>JOH RG</p> |
| 10 | <p>Date and Venue for Next Meetings</p> | <p>MQ</p> |

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| | Tuesday 25 th June 2024, 7pm – 9pm - In person, Bath Spa University (MQ to book room) Meeting for October to be arranged - Wednesday 16th October suggested | |
| 11 | AOB none | |