

Minutes of a Meeting of the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) held in the Broughton House, Blackbrook Park Ave, Taunton, TA1 2PR, on Wednesday, 13th March 2024 at 2.30pm

Present:

Niel Apps (Chair)	Shell Sullivan
Eleanor Delaney (Vice-Chair)	Rebekah Guy
Cllr Frances Nicholson	Mary Lockwood
Rhona Burfield	Bernardo Kerr
Bernardo Kerr	Mark Caney

Officers in attendance:

Jamie Jackson
Josh Barrett
Pippa Triffitt

Other Members present remotely:

Cllr Sarah Wakefield	Jessica Witchell
Cllr Tim Kerley	Leonard Daniels
Pauline Dodds	Pat Ebdon

24 Welcome/Apologies for Absence/Quoracy - Agenda Item 1

The Chair welcomed all the attendees to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Alison Jeffery (Vice-Chair), Penny Jerrard, and Kate Daunton.

25 Introductions - Agenda Item 2

The Chair invited the committee members to introduce themselves in turn.

Niel Apps – the Chair of SACRE and an RE teacher. Niel believed RE was an important way of helping children to understand and engage with a wide range of

world perspectives and beliefs. It was important that education did not just prepare children for exams, but also taught them morals and a sense of right and wrong.

Eleanor Delaney – a Vice-Chair of SACRE, an RE teacher, and representative for the Pentecostal Christian group. Eleanor believed that RE was an important part of the school curriculum and was keen to help improve its value in schools across Somerset.

Mary Lockwood – the Head of RE at a Sixth Form College in Somerset. Mary believed RE was an important way of discussing world issues with children and encouraging them to be independent thinkers.

Frances Nicholson – an elected member for Somerset Council. Frances was previously involved with Children's Services and was an active member of her local parish church. RE provided a crucial space for children to have open discussions about big ideas and encouraged them to appreciate the beliefs of others.

Rhona Burfield – a former RE teacher. Rhona spent 35 years living and raising her family in Malaysia, which she believed provided her children with invaluable experience in appreciating other cultures and beliefs.

Bernardo Kerr – an RE teacher and a member of the Bahá'í community. Bernardo supported the emerging view that RE should investigate world views and the realities of adhering to religious beliefs.

Mark Caney – the Humanist representative on SACRE. Mark became interested in the Humanist philosophy a few years beforehand as his beliefs aligned with Humanism's openness to others' ways of life.

Shell Sullivan – the Secondary RE Advisor and Head of RE at Holyrood Academy. Shell advocated the world-views approach and worked to examine and improve the pedagogy behind the teaching of RE in schools.

Rebekah Guy – the Primary RE Advisory. Rebekah also advocated the world-views approach and was eager to see improvements made to the way RE was taught.

Jamie Jackson – a Scrutiny Manager within the Democratic Services team at Somerset Council and the Lead Officer for SACRE

Josh Barrett – a Senior Democratic Services Officer from Somerset Council. Josh was joining as an observer as part of his training.

Pippa Triffitt – a Democratic Services Officer from Somerset Council and the Clerk for SACRE.

Pauline Dodds – the Diocesan Schools Advisor for Bath and Wells. Pauline had worked with different Church Schools and previously taught in primary schools in Somerset and BANES.

Sarah Wakefield – an elected member for Somerset Council. Sarah was recently appointed as the Associate Lead Member for Adults and Health and was a Christian who attended her local church. She was interested in seeing the RE curriculum broadened and in learning how effectively RE was taught across Somerset.

Tim Kerley – an elected member for Somerset Council. Tim was a former History teacher and came from a secular background and was interested in the role of multiculturalism in society and in understanding others' beliefs.

Jessica Witchell – the Learning Manager at Wells Cathedral. Jessica advocated using places of worship as school trip destinations to help broaden their world view.

Leonard Daniels – the Jewish representative on SACRE. Leonard had spent 7 years studying theology and had led Hebrew classes for many communities as one of the leading voices for Jews in Somerset.

Pat Ebdon – the Quaker representative on Somerset. Pat believed children should be taught about Quakerism in schools and advocated how it encouraged individuals to think for themselves.

26 Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 20th September 2023 - Agenda Item 3

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Shell and Rebekah suggested that SACRE should aim to fill the vacancies in the committee membership within the next year and offered to visit the relevant groups. Shell also suggested that members of religious groups could be invited to attend SACRE meetings to share their experiences of practicing their religious beliefs in Somerset and to provide accounts for school children to read.

It was noted that the membership list required editing, as Rhona Burfield was the representative for the Congregational Church, rather than the Baptist Church.

The committee agreed to remove the sub-titles 'Baptist' and 'Evangelical', leaving

the Representative Group name as 'Other Christian Denomination'.

The committee agreed to accept the co-option of Bernardo Kerr as the representative for the Bahá'í community on SACRE.

ACTIONS:

- 1. Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy to investigate filling the vacancies in the SACRE membership.**
- 2. Alison Jeffery to edit the membership list to show Rhona Burfield as the Congregational Church representative and to remove the sub-titles of 'Baptist' and 'Evangelical' from the Other Christian Denomination group.**

27 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

The Chair advised that no public questions had been submitted within the stated timeframe.

28 Budget Report Update - Agenda Item 5

The committee agreed to defer this agenda item to the next meeting.

29 ASC Membership - Agenda Item 6

The Chair invited Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy to present the item.

Shell informed the committee that the ASC pre-meeting was taking place the following week and that the main ASC meeting was scheduled for 24th April. The meeting would discuss the ASC membership. It was noted that being a member of SACRE did not provide automatic membership on ASC. The committee members were encouraged to submit their expressions of interest in membership to Shell.

Pauline Dodds informed the committee that she had put Louise Jenkins forward as a member for ASC but had not received confirmation of this.

Cllr Frances Nicholson requested clarification on the purpose of the ASC meeting. Shell advised the committee that the RE syllabus required reviewing and revising every five years, therefore the ASC meeting would plan how to go forward with this. Their suggestions would then come to SACRE for discussion. The review for the next update in five years' time would likely start next year.

Rhona Burfield requested clarification on whether she had been confirmed as a member of ASC.

Bernardo Kerr asked whether all ASC members were expected to attend the pre-meeting. Shell informed the committee that only the relevant individuals attended to plan the agenda.

ACTIONS:

- 1. Alison Jeffery to confirm the ASC membership, contact Louise Jenkins and Pauline Dodds regarding ASC membership, and reissue the invites to the confirmed members.**

30 Faith and Belief Worker - Agenda Item 7

The Chair invited Shell Sullivan to speak on the item.

Shell informed the committee that Somerset Council had awarded GLADE Centre with funding to develop the work of the Somerset Interfaith & Belief Network. She had met with the interfaith worker along with the LA representatives and encouraged the SACRE members to support the role.

Pauline asked whether the GLADE representative would be liaising with the Diocese as part of her role. As an associate of GLADE, Jessica offered to introduce Pauline to the representative.

The committee agreed to defer the vote on this item to the next meeting.

ACTIONS:

- 1. Jessica Witchell to introduce Pauline Dodds to the interfaith worker.**

31 Symposium/Newsletter/Website Update from RE Advisors - Agenda Item 8

The Chair invited Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy to present the item.

The Curriculum Symposium was held on 24th September 2023 at Holyrood Academy. The event succeeded in forming and cementing networks between RE teachers and leaders at both the primary and secondary levels. The idea of transitioning from a world religions approach to a world views approach was well received. It was hoped the ASC would help to make this idea a reality going forward.

It was noted that Bernardo and Mary both attended the symposium and gave positive feedback.

Rebekah informed the committee that the new Somerset SACRE website was in place, but the old website had not yet been taken down.

ACTIONS:

- 1. Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy to investigate redirecting the previous SACRE website to the new website.**
- 2. Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy to request editing permissions for the new website.**

32 Annual SACRE Report - Agenda Item 9

The Chair invited Shell Sullivan and Rebekah Guy to present the Report.

Rebekah advised the committee that the Report summarised the activities of SACRE over the previous year. These included the SACRE resource boxes, the Learn Teach Lead RE hubs, and the Curriculum Symposium.

Shell indicated the graphs in the Report and the efforts of schools to increase the numbers of students taking RE qualifications at the secondary level. It was hoped improvements to RE at the primary level would assist in this endeavour.

33 RE Advisors Update - Agenda Item 10

Shell and Rebekah advised the committee that their update had been covered in the preceding agenda items.

34 Diocesan Report - Agenda Item 11

The Chair invited Pauline Dodds to present the item.

Pauline informed the committee that the Statutory Inspections of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) was an additional inspection to Ofsted for Church Schools. Ofsted did not always comment on RE within these schools because of this, resulting in the Local Authority data being slightly skewed. There had been fourteen inspections since September 2023, with no school being judged as not living out

their foundation as a church school. It was hoped that Ofsted would mirror the SIAMS approach to inspections.

The Diocese continued to support RE hubs, such as those associated with LTLRE, and was looking to more individuals to lead them. The hubs had a strong presence in urban areas, but more were needed in the more rural areas of Somerset.

Pauline encouraged committee members to attend the RE Conference in Wells on 22nd April, as indicated in the Report.

35 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 12

No other matters were raised.

36 Date of the Next Meeting - Agenda Item 13

The date and location for the next SACRE committee meeting was to be confirmed.

The Chair confirmed that the next ASC meeting was scheduled for 24th April 2024 at 1.30pm. The location was to be confirmed.

ACTIONS:

- 1. The Chair to confirm the date and location of the next SACRE meeting with Alison Jeffery and the clerk.**

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CHAIR