

**Minutes of a Meeting of the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) held at Broughton House, Taunton, on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:**

**Group A**

Rhona Burfield  
Mark Caney  
Leonard Daniels  
Eleanor Delaney  
Pat Ebdon

**Group B**

Louise Jenkins  
Penny Jerrard  
Jessica Witchell (virtual)

**Group C**

Niel Apps (Chair)  
Mary Lockwood

**Group D**

Cllr Frances Nicholson  
Cllr Tim Kerley  
Alison Jeffery (Vice-Chair)

**Additional attendees:**

Bernie Kerr (co-opted)  
Rebekah Guy (virtual)  
Jamie Jackson (SC)  
Pippa Triffitt (SC)

Lee Willment (SC)  
Lynn Cutler (GLADE)  
Liz Johnson-Idan (GLADE)

**48 Welcome and Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1**

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Cllr Sarah Wakefield and Shell Sullivan.

**49 Membership Update - Agenda Item 2**

The Chair welcomed Louise Jenkins, the new educational representative on SACRE nominated by the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

**50 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 3**

It was noted that Bernie Kerr's surname on Page 4 of the agenda pack required an extra 'r'.

It was agreed the meeting start time would remain as 2pm.

The minutes were otherwise approved as an accurate record.

**51 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

None.

**52 Worldview of a SACRE Member - Agenda Item 5**

The Chair invited Rebekah Guy, Primary RE Advisor, to give an overview of her faith.

Rebekah informed the committee that she grew up attending a Methodist Church and was active in her church community. After graduating, she travelled around Latin America and experienced its prominent Catholic religious culture, which proved instrumental in broadening her worldview. She visited a colonial church that housed a painting of the Last Supper which showed guinea pig being served instead of bread. The difference between this interpretation and the story she had learnt growing up demonstrated the diversity of worldviews that occur within a single religion. Rebekah currently attends a Baptist church and also works at Bristol Cathedral.

The Chair thanked Rebekah for her contribution.

**53 The Work of GLADE - Agenda Item 6**

The Chair invited Lynn Cutler, GLADE Programme Director, and Liz Johnson-Idan, an Interfaith & Belief Worker, to present the item.

Lynn informed the committee that GLADE was an acronym for Global Learning and Development Education. GLADE and its interfaith network sought to make connections between the different worldviews in Somerset and those of people around the world. The organisation supported schools and communities to help make Somerset a welcoming place for all through the five principles of People, Place, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. The organisation also had online resources for teachers to use and held events for teachers around the county every year, including workshops; some of the topics had included curriculum ideas, interfaith and belief boxes, and religious artefacts. They were starting to draft ideas for training sessions for both teachers and students to develop the interfaith dialogue and provide opportunities to consider how to respond to situations that challenged one's own values.

Liz informed the committee that GLADE were marking the 80-year anniversary of the end of the Holocaust in 2025 with a project entitled 'Eighty Candles for Eighty Years'. An intricate candle holder made from willow had been commissioned and would be taken to schools, libraries, and other organisations across Somerset. GLADE were also recording lullabies in different languages as a symbol of peace and hope for the future.

Alison advised the committee that the GLADE representatives were partners of

SACRE and encouraged the members to consider what could be cultivated from the partnership. The Chair suggested that the representatives were invited to the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) meetings to support the design and resourcing of Somerset's new RE syllabus.

**Action:**

- 1. The Clerk to send Lynn Cutler and Liz Johnson-Idan the invitation to the next ASC meeting.**

**54 ASC Update - Agenda Item 7**

The Chair invited Rebekah Guy to provide the update on the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Rebekah informed the committee that the ASC committee was due to meet on 18<sup>th</sup> September. She and Shell Sullivan were also due to meet with SACRE representatives from Coventry and Warwickshire on 17<sup>th</sup> September to seek their approval to use their syllabus as a template for Somerset SACRE's new syllabus.

**55 RE Advisors Update - Agenda Item 8**

The Chair invited Rebekah Guy to provide the RE Advisor's update.

Rebekah informed the committee that both she and Shell Sullivan had attended the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisors, and Consultant's (AREIAC) national conference. The conference encouraged networking between individuals in the RE sphere and provided a platform to learn about other SACRE and ASC committees in the country.

The Learn Teach Lead RE (LTLRE) conference took place in Bristol in June; two hub leaders and five teaches from Somerset attended. There were several speakers from across the country and the work undertaken by Bristol University in tandem with a group of teachers was shared. Mary Lockwood advised the committee that she had also attended and praised the conference and its academic lectures.

Both Rebekah and Shell also attended Devon's Agreed Syllabus Launch.

The school library services provided the SACRE boxes which were an excellent resource for schools. Alison explained that they were delivered directly to the schools, and agreed to find out how many SACRE boxes there were.

**Action:**

- 1. Alison Jeffery to investigate how many SACRE boxes there are.**

**56 Finalising SACRE's Draft Constitution - Agenda Item 9**

The Chair presented SACRE's Draft Constitution and requested any final comments from the committee members before the Constitution was submitted to Somerset

Council for formal adoption.

The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion:

- The committee members supported the retention of points 4.5, 5.2, and 5.3 relating to attendance and voting.
- Regarding point 5.4, the committee members raised concerns that the presence of two members from each Group required for quoracy often prevented voting from taking place. However, it was also noted that removing this rule could encourage further non-attendance. The hybrid format of the meetings should make it easier for quoracy to be reached for every meeting.
- It was noted that the item on which a vote was required could be deferred if the committee was not quorate. It was suggested that the committee could still make recommendations rather than decisions in this case. However, it was highlighted that point 5.1 determined that SACRE was an advisory board only, and therefore could not make decisions; votes taken by the committee were to record its position on a matter on which it was advising the Local Authority only.
- It was suggested that the overarching regulations were reviewed to see whether the quoracy requirements could be amended to account for the total number of individuals present, rather than the number within each Group.
- If the current quoracy requirement of a certain number of individuals from each Group was retained, it was suggested that Group A at least should have two committee members present due to the breadth of worldviews it contained.
- Regarding point 5.5, it was suggested that the opportunity for Groups to discuss the matter prior to voting was an important aspect to retain. If point 5.4 was changed, it would affect point 5.5. However, point 5.5 and the preferred hybrid meeting format were difficult to reconcile.
- Committee members suggested point 6.1 was amended to allow co-opted members to serve four-year terms.
- It was highlighted that point 10.2 would need to be amended to reflect the hybrid format of the meetings, if the regulations allowed for this.
- It was suggested that this item could be deferred to allow the regulations to be reviewed; however, it was noted that deferral until December meant the SACRE Constitution would not be formalised in Somerset Council's Constitution until mid-2025 at the earliest.
- The committee members therefore suggested that the Chair and Vice-Chair liaised with the relevant Officers to ensure that the regulations were being followed. Once amended, the committee members could provide

feedback by a designated date to prevent a delay in formalising the Constitution.

**Action:**

- 1. Chair and Vice-Chair to liaise with the relevant Officers to review the regulations and finalise the draft Constitution and request feedback from the SACRE committee members by a designated date.**

**57 Budget Update - Agenda Item 10**

The Chair invited Alison Jeffery to provide an update on the SACRE budget.

Alison advised the committee that the original SACRE allocation for £15,000 had been doubled to £30,000 to cover both SACRE and ASC. This was an annual allocation and renewal next year was expected. It helped to cover the salaries for the RE Advisors, the contract for GLADE, and other operational costs, such as the SACRE boxes.

Alison offered to bring an update to the next meeting of the spend to date, along with a spend projection for the rest of the financial year. This would help to determine whether there would be any funding that needed to be rolled over to the next financial year.

Leonard Daniels and Jessica Witchell informed the committee of the work of the Somerset Anne Frank Youth Awards (SAFYA) and suggested that SACRE could financially support the charity.

**Action:**

- 1. Leonard Daniels and Jessica Witchell to discuss a donation to SAFYA with Alison Jeffery.**

**58 Date of the Next Meeting - Agenda Item 11**

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm at Broughton House.

The Chair requested a volunteer to give their worldview at the next meeting in December; Bernie Kerr volunteered.

**(The meeting ended at 3:23pm).**

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**CHAIR**