

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held on Wednesday, 20 March 2024 at 4.30 pm at Portsmouth Changemaker Studios, Upper Second Floor, Portsmouth Guildhall, Guildhall Square PO1 2AB.

Present

Group A Representatives - One representative of each of the religions and other bodies listed in the constitution

Baptist - Geoff Wheeler (remote access)
Evangelical Church - Pastor Chris Thomas (remote access)
Muslim - Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dato (remote access)
Jewish – Michael Zeffertt
Quaker - sarah coote
United Reformed Church - Christine McMillan

Group B Representatives - Church of England

Revd Sam Duddles
Jane Kelly

Group C Representatives - Six teachers representing the various key stages and an association recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation.

Kari Laing - Post-16 Representative
Beth Smith - Secondary School Representative

Group D Representatives - Four representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority

Taki Jaffer (remote access)
Councillor Benedict Swann
Councillor Abdul Kadir

Co-opted members

Jessie Wilson - Council of Portsmouth Students representative
Beth - SACRE Representative for CoPS 2023/24
Jayden - Vice-Group Leader Equality Queens for CoPS 2023/24

Also in attendance:

Justine Ball, Professional Advisor
Chris May, Hampshire Secondary Teaching and Learning Adviser for RE
Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement, Portsmouth
Karen Martin, Local Democracy Officer, SACRE Clerk

1. Welcome and Introductions (AI 1)

Revd Sam Duddles, SACRE Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting which was being held in a hybrid format with some members in the room, and others joining remotely using the remote access platform, Microsoft Teams.

2. Apologies for Absence (AI 3)

Apologies had been received from Barbara Spiegelhalter, Humanist and Geoff Wade, Humanist nominated reserve Humanist (Group A) and Sue Bowen (Group B).

3. Moment for Quiet Reflection (AI 2)

The moment for quiet reflection was taken by Beth, SACRE representative from CoPS. The Revd Sam Duddles, SACRE Chair, thanked Beth for leading the moment of quiet reflection and invited members to ponder on her words.

4. Declaration of Members' Interests (AI 4)

There were none.

5. Election of Vice Chair of SACRE (AI 5)

A valid proposal nominating Kari Laing (Group C) as Vice Chair had been received. As this was the only valid nomination, no vote was required, and Kari Laing was duly elected Vice Chair of the Portsmouth SACRE for a further two year term.

RESOLVED to:

- a) **Elect Kari Laing (Group C) as Vice Chair of the Portsmouth for a two year term SACRE with immediate effect.**
- b) **Thank Kari Laing for her support to the Chair and the SACRE over the past two years.**

6. Minutes of the Previous meeting held on 1 November 2023 (AI 6)

Minute 39 - Date and venue of the next meeting and future meeting dates
- Michael Zeffertt (Group A) noted that he had made a representation about this matter at the last meeting and asked for a response. The Chair explained that a report on future meeting venues would be considered at Item 13 on the Agenda.

Minute 39 - Date and venue of the next meeting and future meeting dates
- It was noted that in paragraph 3, Christine McMillan's name had been misspelt.

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2023 as an accurate record, subject to the typographical error above.

Matters Arising from the minutes

The following updates from the previous minutes were noted:

Minute number 30 - Advice to schools - Ramadan - Revd Sam Duddles (Group A) informed the SACRE that she had met with Councillors Kadir and Shah. They had held a detailed discussion about provision of Ramadan in schools and best practice in following Ramadan in a school setting.

Debbie Anderson noted that the council's Ethnic Minority Advisory Service, provides information on Ramadan to schools.

Minute number 32 - SACRE Annual Report 2022-23 Update - Justine Ball confirmed that following its approval by the SACRE at the last meeting, it had been considered and noted by the Cabinet Member for Children Families and Education at her decision meeting which was held on 14 December 2023. Subsequently, it had been added to the SACRE page on the website and circulated to the Secretary of State for education, NASACRE and local stakeholders.

Minute number 34 - Withdrawals from RE and Collective Worship Survey 2024 - Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement, reported that it had been agreed to repeat the survey undertaken in 2023 and this was sent out just after Christmas and following reminder emails, 17 responses had been received. The data is being analysed and the results will be shared at the next SACRE Monitoring Group meeting.

Minute number 35 - SACRE Constitution Review Update - Justine Ball reported that as agreed at the last SACRE meeting, she is consulting on proposed amendments to the SACRE Constitution including its membership. It is aimed to bring a report to the next meeting in June.

Minute number 19 (14 June 2023) - Portsmouth Children's Safeguarding Partnership (PCSP) - The Clerk reminded members that the PCSP is aiming to appoint a representative from faith communities (other than Anglican diocese which is already represented) to its Main Board. Councillor Kadir (Group D) offered to follow-up with the PCSP direct, and it was agreed that no further action was required by the SACRE.

Actions:

- i. Withdrawals from RE and Collective Worship Survey Results 2024 will be brought to the next SACRE meeting (June 2024) - Justine Ball and Debbie Anderson***
- ii. SACRE Constitution Review report will be brought to the next meeting (June 2024) - Justine Ball***

7. Council of Portsmouth Students (CoPS) (AI 7)

Jessi Wilson (Co-opted member SACRE), Beth (CoPS SACRE representative) and Jayden (CoPS Vice Group Leader for Equality Queens) presented an introduction to the ambitions and work of this year's CoPS and explained that its main priorities would comprise action groups:

- Equality and diversity (Equality Queens)
- Crime, facilities, community (Investigators)
- Mental health and neurodiversity (Mental Mentos)
- Education, careers and life skills (The Education Nation)
- Ecological and environmental (Tree Huggers)

They also informed the SACRE that they were planning to conduct a survey and that there would be a section on faith, spirituality, belief and non-belief among young people.

It was agreed that Kari Laing (Group C), Debbie Anderson, Justine Ball and Chris May would provide feedback on the survey.

RESOLVED - to thank the CoPS representatives for their presentation.

Actions:

- i. Provide feedback on the survey - Kari Laing (Group C), Debbie Anderson, Justine Ball and Chris May.***

8. Interfaith Week 2024 (AI 8)

The Chair reminded the SACRE that Inter Faith Week will take place 10-17 November 2024 and that at its last meeting SACRE (Minute number 39) agreed to discuss it further at this meeting. Revd Sam Duddles explained that she felt Interfaith Week offered a good opportunity for teachers and students to experience different faiths and, potentially, to help fill the Interfaith void in Portsmouth. Several members of SACRE contributed their thoughts about taking this forward.

RESOLVED to:

- a) Agree that developing an event or events for Interfaith week would be a positive way to support RE and Collective Worship in schools.**
- b) Establish a working group to develop ideas and make arrangements for an Interfaith Week 2024 event/ events in Portsmouth.**

Actions:

- i. Members willing to serve on a working group to support this initiative would email the Chair, Clerk and Professional Advisor - all members of SACRE***
- ii. Contact Gloucester about interfaith event to find out more - Jane Kelly***

Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dattoo (Group A) left the meeting to attend the Mosque.

9. School Website Monitoring Update (AI 9)

Justine Ball, Professional Advisor informed the SACRE that at its meeting on 28 March 2023 (Minute number 7) the SACRE had agreed to revisit this project in the Spring of 2024. She explained that this was a good exercise and a lot of positive information about RE was available on many websites and many also referenced progression. Justine Ball commented that she felt it would be useful to repeat the activity in the summer term and she did not believe it would be onerous in terms of time commitment.

RESOLVED to -

- a) **Note the update provided by the Professional Advisor.**
- b) **Agree to repeat the School Website Monitoring exercise in the summer term.**

Actions:

- i. ***School Website Monitoring survey will be repeated in the summer term - Debbie Anderson, Revd Sam Duddles, Kari Laing, Taki Jaffer and Justine Ball.***

10. SACRE Membership and Member Training report (AI 10)

Justine Ball, Professional Advisor introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. She informed members that the report updates SACRE regarding its membership, training and other opportunities for the membership.

Justine Ball reported that she had attended longstanding Group A member Elizabeth Jenkerson's funeral in February and noted that there was a vacancy arising in Group C following Rachel Osborne's resignation in March 2024. Justine Ball informed the SACRE that a nomination for a Salvation Army member had been received and an induction process would be followed.

The Clerk provided further information relating to other vacancies as follows:

Group A Baha'i Faith - Justine Ball will approach the national Baha'i organisation;

The Roman Catholic faith - Portsmouth Diocese has been approached;

Buddhist - the Buddhist Society has been approached;

Hindu - the Hindu Education Board has been approached; and
Islam - to be discussed as part of constitution review.

Group B CofE representative - Jane Kelly (Group C) has made enquiries and a piece has gone out in the Diocesan mailing, but no response has been received so far.

Group C Primary Headteacher representative - Debbie Anderson has identified a headteacher of a Catholic Primary school and will provide details to the Clerk for follow up; and

Early Years representative - Debbie Anderson had approached an Early Years Advisory Teacher and the Clerk had followed up with additional information. Further follow-up needed.

Justine Ball drew members attention to the attendance record set out in the report. The Clerk informed the SACRE that in relation to the non-attendance emails sent recently (following unexplained absences from three or more consecutive meetings), there had been no responses to date.

Justine Ball offered her thanks to Karen Martin, Clerk, for her efforts to fill the vacancies.

In relation to training, Justine Ball noted that there had been very good take up of the various training opportunities offered by NASACRE and attendees offered feedback on the sessions they had attended.

RESOLVED - that the SACRE:

- a) **Acknowledged and gave thanks for the contribution Elizabeth Jenkerson (Group A) made to SACREs at a national, regional and Portsmouth level over several decades.**
- b) **Noted that Rachael Osborne, Primary Headteacher representative (Group C) resigned on 1 March 2024, that it conveys its thanks to her for her significant contribution to the Portsmouth SACRE in recent years and asked the Authority to seek a replacement Group C representative.**
- c) **Noted the membership vacancies set out in paragraph 4 of this report and that the Authority has approached relevant nominating bodies with a view to appointing additional members.**
- d) **Noted that the SACRE has subscribed to NASACRE for the current academic year, that this allows members to attend its training sessions (set out in Appendix B to this report) free of charge and that members should take advantage of opportunity.**

Actions:

- i. Clerk to send Salvation Army nominee information about the SACRE and arrange for an informal meeting between the nominee and the Chair and Vice Chair of the SACRE.***
- ii. Continue to work with nominating bodies about finding representatives to join Group A (Clerk and Justine Ball), Group B (Jane Kelly) and Group C (Debbie Anderson and Clerk).***

11. SACRE Monitoring Group Report (AI 11)

Chris May, Hampshire Secondary Teaching and Learning Adviser for RE, introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda.

Chris May reported Monitoring Group had received updates on professional RE education and monitoring the effectiveness of RE and an update on results from the GCSE examination series in 2023. He explained the GCSE entries were down but there were positives to be seen in the results achieved. Visits to primary schools by the Professional Advisors were continuing although the two secondary schools in the city have RE specialist teachers and are therefore less needful of support. Chris May noted that the long awaited RE subject review by Ofsted had still not been published and that although comments by Amanada Spielman have been generally gloomy, when mentioned in local school inspections, RE generates positive comments.

Taki Jaffer and Councillor Asghar Kadir (Group D) left the meeting.

RESOLVED - that the SACRE noted the findings of the Monitoring Group meeting.

12. SACRE National and Local RE Matters report (AI 12)

Chris May, Hampshire Secondary Teaching and Learning Adviser for RE, introduced the report which had been circulated with the agenda. Justine Ball, Professional Advisor added that the RE Hubs speaker training is excellent, provides speakers with lots of advice and expertise and that those attending the Interfaith Week event may wish to take part in the training.

RESOLVED - that the SACRE noted the report.

13. Venues for future meetings (AI 13)

Justine Ball, SACRE Professional Advisor, introduced the report which summarised the views of Portsmouth SACRE members on venues for meetings suggestions for future meetings. Ten detailed responses had been received and were unanimous in their view that the established custom and practice of meeting in places of worship, council offices and places with no faith links and schools should continue. She added that the responses felt that such visits enhanced members knowledge and understanding, helped promote SACRE to a wider audience and she noted that NASACRE also supports meetings out and about in the community. It was recommended that voluntary visits or tours should take place before the meeting and that where possible, remote access (such as via Teams) should be offered.

RESOLVED - that the SACRE noted the report and approved the recommendations as follows:

- a) **That the SACRE continues to meet in a variety of venues during the year to promote the work of SACRE across the Local Authority, schools and colleges and different faith and belief groups.**
- b) **If there is a talk or a tour of the venue, this takes place at 4.00pm prior to the meeting starting at 4.30pm.**

- c) **Where possible, a Teams link will be offered to an individual if they cannot attend in person.**

14. NASACRE Conference - Monday 20 May 2024 (AI 14)

The Chair, Revd Sam Duddles, noted that the NASACRE Conference is due to be held on Monday 20 May 2024 at the Hilton, York or online and that its theme this year is 'How can SACREs support high quality RE and Collective Worship?'. The conference will be followed by two workshops which will be delivered online in June 2024.

In response to a question about payment or a contribution towards expenses, Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement noted that the SACRE has an Allowances and Expenses Policy, and this would determine payment of claims.

RESOLVED - to note the arrangements for the NASACRE Conference.

Actions:

- i. SACRE members to contact the Clerk if they wish to attend in person or online.***

15. Dates of future meetings (AI 15)

RESOLVED - to agree that the next meeting will take place at 4.30pm on Wednesday 12 June 2024 at St Swithun's Catholic Primary School.

The SACRE noted that dates for future dates (venues to be confirmed):

- Wednesday 6 November 2024
- Wednesday 12 March 2025
- Wednesday 2 July 2025
- Wednesday 12 November 2025

All meetings will take place at 4.30pm. Any tour or talk will take place at 4.00pm and details will be notified in advance. If no venue is available, meetings will take place remotely on Teams.

The meeting concluded at 5.59 pm.

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Chair of SACRE