



Title of meeting: Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Date of meeting: 20 March 2024

Subject: SACRE meetings through the year

Report by: Justine Ball Hampshire County Inspector for RE and History

1 Purpose of report: The purpose of this report is to summarise the views of Portsmouth SACRE members on venues for meeting and to make suggestions for this going forward.

2 Recommendations:

That SACRE notes the report and approves the recommendations which are:

- that the SACRE continues to meet in a variety of venues during the year and to promote the work of SACRE across the Local Authority, schools and colleges and different faith and belief groups.
- If there is a talk or a tour of the venue, this takes place at 4.00 pm prior to the meeting starting at 4.30 pm.
- Where possible, a Teams link will be offered to an individual if they cannot attend in person.

3 Executive Summary:

This report seeks to update and inform SACRE of the views of members about where the SACRE should meet and how presentations and tours of meeting venues might be arranged for SACRE in future.

4 Background:

At the last SACRE meeting in November 2023, a suggestion was made that neutral venues for SACRE meetings be considered going forward. During discussion, other members of the SACRE felt that it was important for members to visit different places of worship, schools and colleges, venues with no faith links and Council offices to experience alternative perspectives. The chair of SACRE commented that the SACRE actively encouraged schools to visit places of religion and that it was best practice for the SACRE membership to be open to such visits. SACRE members were asked to send in their views following the meeting.

5 Views of SACRE members:

A large number of SACRE members responded (10 in total) and all wished to continue the custom and practice of meeting in a variety of places, including places of worship, council offices and venues with no faith links, and schools and colleges in Portsmouth, seeing this as an important part of SACRE's role. A summary of members' reasoning here was:



- it enhances members' knowledge and understanding of places of worship of faiths other than their own
 - through conversations with members of the faith community hosting the meeting and observations at the place of worship it helps to gain a deeper appreciation of the religious practices
 - the meeting provides a persuasive reason for visiting places of worship of other faiths than one's own. Ordinarily in busy schedules people may not easily find the time or convenience to do so on their own. It is an added value for experiences of SACRE members
 - To promote the work of SACRE to a wider audience
 - NASACRE encourages holding SACRE meetings in schools or local places of worship ([20-ideas-for-SACREs.pdf \(nasacre.org.uk\)](#))
- 6** A few members suggested that a tour and talk about the venue be held separately to the main SACRE meeting, to ensure this did not take time away from the main SACRE meeting. For example, holding a tour and talk at 4 pm before the meeting starts at 4.30 pm. This had been done in previous years and therefore could be done again going forward.
- 7** It was also suggested that if possible, the opportunity to attend a SACRE meeting remotely via MS Teams be considered if the venue or circumstances make the meeting difficult for a member to attend.
- 8** In conclusion, it is proposed that the SACRE continues to meet in a variety of venues during the year and to promote the work of SACRE across the Local Authority, schools and colleges and different faith and belief groups including those of no faith. It is also proposed that if there is a talk or a tour of the venue, this takes place at 4 pm prior to the meeting starting at 4.30 pm. Where possible, a Teams link will be offered to an individual if they cannot attend in person.