

Latest news and updates from NASACRE

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National Association of
Standing Advisory Councils
on Religious Education

SACRE BRIEFING

Issue: 31

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Welcome and Update from the Chair

Sometimes we all need to take a breath - and I had to do that when I looked at this *Briefing*. Sometimes it's important not to say too much - and I need to be brief for this *Briefing*.

Your NASACRE Executive Committee has been working as hard as ever to keep members' interests and agendas at the forefront of strategic developments and practical support. Our current CPD programme for members is revealing the wealth of expertise in SACREs across England, and the importance of partnerships and joined up thinking across the UK - and globally. What really matters has surely become a focus and a poignant question for us all. The beating heart of any enterprise in education has surely to be the constant RE factor - what does it mean 'to be'.

We are looking for like-minded, but curious and confident, individuals to join our Executive Committee team, and I invite anyone who might be thinking to take this step, to book into our session on 30th March to meet members of the current committee. If you can't be there, please have a chat to me on chair@nasacre.org.uk.

Specifically, one of the key roles to be filled is that of Vice Chair - we have been without one since I was catapulted into the Chair two years ago but colleagues have been there to step in. I'm happy to stay on (circumstances permitting) for two years more in order to work with any SACRE colleague elected to this vital role. I can offer warm support and the shared expertise and enthusiasm of a great team.

Vice Chairs usually become Chairs under NASACRE's constitution - and then help out as Executive Assistant, but none of this is set in stone (constitutions can be changed and/or interpreted) and the main consideration is your suitability for a role that requires:

- a sound working knowledge of SACREs and their statutory responsibilities
- some experience of the complexities of the world of RE and collective worship
- the support and nomination of your SACRE
- continued support of your SACRE over 2-6 years
- confidence to speak (with guidance) at national events and organisations
- working knowledge of NASACRE's mission, aims and objectives
- the patience and humour to deal with the Chair and to stand in when required at meetings, events and in preparing correspondence.

Please come and join us - you will be welcomed!

We mustn't forget to congratulate our Admin Officer, Marie, on the birth of Kiara in February. Marie is managing to juggle her NASACRE duties alongside new-Mum duties, for which we are most grateful. Thank you so much, Marie! Sterling work!

REC Worldviews Project

NASACRE is a named partner organisation in this project managed by the RE Council of England and Wales, and funded by the Templeton Foundation. Four members of the Exec attended briefing meetings this month and we recommend that SACREs and local advisers look at the details, if you are interested in submitting an expression of interest (EoI) with local schools and other partners. Successful EoIs will be taken forward to the tendering stage of the work. There will be three successful teams invited to write exemplar curriculum frameworks for RE.

Please see <https://bit.ly/REC0122>

You are most welcome to ask further questions for clarification - write to info@religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk.

The REC looks forward to receiving EOIs **by 31 March at the latest**.

New website

We continue to work on our new website which was not - for all sorts of reasons - quite ready to go live in December, as we had hoped it would be.

We are now expecting to launch it at our AGM. We'll alert all SACREs as soon as we are live, sending the new password for Subscriber Content to all paid-up SACREs.

Conference 2022 - Ambitious SACREs

23 May 2022 at the Macdonald Burlington Hotel, Birmingham

<https://www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/burlington>

After two years of being unable to meet face to face, we are delighted that we shall finally be able to hold our conference in Birmingham and catch up with colleagues and friends – old and new! The Burlington Hotel has kindly held our booking over from 2020 and has been most helpful throughout this challenging period. We are confident the staff will provide a warm welcome and make us feel safe and cared for throughout our stay.

Whilst we do hope that many of you will be able to join us for this year's NASACRE AGM & Conference in person, we also offer an online audio option for our theme **Ambitious SACREs**.

Programme:

Click [here](#) to view the programme.

Venue:

Macdonald Burlington Hotel in the centre of Birmingham is found amid the stunning architecture of the city's beautiful New Street, just a 2 min walk from Birmingham New Street Station (literally across the street). Now fully air conditioned with modern amenities and free WiFi.

Travel:

Located near the A38(M), off M6(J6), postcode B2 4JQ for satellite navigation systems. There are no car parking facilities at the hotel for guests, however the hotel has concessionary rates for 2 parks in the city centre (further details on the hotel website). There is a charge for bringing a car into Birmingham.

Cost:

All delegates who pay to attend Conference, either in person or virtually, will have access to their choice of 2 workshops which will take place online in June.

Face to face

Subscribed SACRE: £95 per person

Non-subscribed SACRE: £120 per person

Virtual

Listen live and/or later to recordings of the 3 keynotes and AGM via Zoom (may be in addition to a f2f delegate):

Subscribed SACRE:

£40 via Zoom for one delegate

£60 for two delegates

£80 for 3+ delegates

Non-subscribed SACRE: £70 per person

Conference bookings will be open on Friday 18th March. To book your place, visit the [Conference and AGM 2022](#) page of the website. An invoice will then be sent to your LA for payment.

Elections

At the AGM we hope to elect a Vice Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary and two Executive Committee members.

NASACRE is looking for SACRE members who can offer skills either in project management, or IT skills relevant to the delivery of online training and working with our website manager. Their SACREs should be clear that they have a good skill match before approving their nominations.

Newly elected members often shadow an 'experienced hand' on the Executive and take their role over gradually.

Download further details and nomination forms [here](#).

Wednesday 30 March 7-8pm - Meet the Exec!

NASACRE is offering a Zoom session for SACRE members to find out a little more about the different roles for which we seek nominations in our upcoming elections. So please advertise it to your SACRE members if they may be interested in standing for election to our Exec.

Please [contact Marie](#) to register for the Zoom link.

Annual Reports

Please remember to submit your SACRE's Annual Report to [us](#) and to the [DfE](#).

Contact details for your Clerk and your Chair

NASACRE needs to have contact details for Clerks, Advisers, LA officers and Chairs to ensure that information gets to the right people.

Other national bodies make use of [NASACRE's list of SACRE contacts](#) for getting in touch with your SACRE, e.g. faith organisations, the DfE and the REC. As the first meetings of the calendar year often bring changes to personnel, please ensure that you keep the details that NASACRE holds for your SACRE up to date. Please send your amendments to admin@nasacre.org.uk.

Parliamentary Roundtable Call for a National Plan

MEDIA RELEASE from NATRE

A Parliamentary Roundtable was held to discuss the future of religious education (RE) in schools. In March, MPs and Peers met with students, parents, academics and subject leaders over concern that RE in schools is being both underfunded and undervalued.

Attendees, including some SACRE members, spoke of the subject's unique ability to

provide time for young people to discuss and debate their own beliefs around issues in theology, philosophy and ethics, as well as religious and non-religious worldviews.

The discussion also focused on concerns over the future of RE. Deborah Weston OBE, spoke of the urgent need for a National Plan for RE. No central government money has been spent on the subject in the last five years and 22 per cent of schools are not fulfilling their legal requirement to teach it.

MPs supported action, reiterating their support for the subject and the need to invest in high quality provision. There was consensus among the MPs in attendance for the need for a cross-party commitment to provide proper funding and support for RE in their upcoming manifestos.

The press release is available to read on the [NATRE website](#)

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

Since the roundtable, several attendees have already used a template letter to write to the Education Select Committee to ask about plans for an inquiry into RE in Schools.

If SACREs would like a copy of this template letter to allow members to ask their local MPs to do the same, please email deborah@retoday.org.uk.

The RE Policy Unit hopes that this sort of inquiry could be a first step towards a National Plan for RE.

SACREs and Teaching School Hubs

Does your SACRE have links with your local Teaching School Hub? Do SACRE members know where your local hub is?

Here is a link to a [short briefing paper](#) on the website of the Religious Education Council which sets out some of the ways in which the RE (religion and worldviews) community can support Teaching School Hubs (TSHs). This includes providing subject-specific knowledge of policy about the subject, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and opportunities for teachers to engage with educational theory and research.

There is a good rationale for SACREs to connect to and support their local TSH:

- SACREs are statutory bodies and are government funded to (amongst other duties) advise "... on methods of teaching, choice of teaching material and

provision of teacher training" in their area. This sits centrally within the work of TSHs.

- As TSHs provide ITT, including for Primary teachers who all need to reach subject-specific standards in RE, a TSH should welcome engagement with local SACREs.

SACREs should find out about and seek to make links with their local provider, in order to support the delivery of quality RE.

NASACRE's Online Training Programme

Our next **training session** will be **7-8pm, 15 March:**

Self-evaluation of your SACRE

This session will update Chairs, Vice Chairs and SACRE Advisers on the newly refreshed **NASACRE self-evaluation toolkit** (available to subscribing SACREs) and how SACRE can use it to create and progress your development plan.

Free to all SACREs.

Westhill Awards

Over the last sixteen years, the Westhill/NASACRE Awards have successfully given SACREs opportunities to enhance their capacity to generate high quality experiences in RE (or collective worship) for their schools.

NASACRE is now encouraging and inviting individual SACREs (or SACREs in partnership) to apply for a Westhill/NASACRE Award for 2022-23. Awards of up to £4,000 may be applied for via the **application form** on our website.

Projects should offer school pupils the opportunity to engage in compelling learning experiences in RE (or collective worship), within the broad theme of "education into diversity", understood as diversity across the spectrum of faiths and worldviews.

Any SACRE wishing to submit an application is strongly advised to look at the **revised** briefing notes which accompany the online application form.

For queries, advice or further information, please contact **Michael Metcalf**, the convenor of the Awards Panel.

Closing date: 31 March 2022

AREIAC Annual Conference, 4 & 5 July in Coventry

Plurality in Religion and Worldviews: Exploring Lived Traditions

Featuring a range of speakers, this conference may be of interest to the teacher members of your SACRE, as delegates will explore some less familiar worldviews and meet a range of faith representatives.

For full details, look at the [AREIAC website](#)

Items for your next agenda

- Book places for your SACRE members on relevant online training events
- Agree who will attend the Annual Conference and how; submit applications
- Consider nominating someone to NASACRE Exec, as there are various opportunities to serve ([see Elections item above](#))
- Consider applying for a NASACRE/Westhill Award
- Check that we have your most recent contacts on our [website](#)
- Submit your Annual Report
- Find out about your local Teaching School Hub and consider ways for SACRE to make links.



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