

**NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

At the meeting of the **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)** held at Conference Room 2 - County Hall on Wednesday, 28 June 2023 at 4.00 pm.

**PRESENT**

C. Seymour  
Chair – in the Chair

**COUNCILLORS**

L. Bowman

N. Morphet

**TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS REPRESENTATIVES**

T. Nicholls

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND REPRESENTATIVES**

P. Rusby

**REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER CHURCHES & FAITHS**

Rev. E.H. Marley  
Dr. J. Miller

J. Simpson  
D. Van-Der-Velde

**OBSERVERS**

C. Curtis – Mowbray Primary School  
C. Dixon – Slaley First School

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

D. Cookson  
R. Little

Head of School Improvement  
Assistant Democratic Services Officer

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## 1 MEMBERSHIP

Committee members noted that there had been new members invited to join SACRE: J. Simpson representing Free Churches and N. Vyas representing Hinduism.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

**RESOLVED** that it be noted that Councillor Seymour was appointed as Chair for 2023-24 by Council at their meeting on 17 May 2023.

## 3 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

D. Van-Der-Velde was nominated as Vice-Chair by T. Marley, this was seconded by C. Dixon, a vote was taken, and it was unanimous.

**RESOLVED** that D. Van-Der-Velde was elected as Vice-Chair for 2023-24 year.

## 4 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from C. Hudson, R. Cant, N. Vyas and C. Weir.

## 5 MINUTES

J. Miller noted that the NASACRE AGM took place in May and not March.

Members noted that minute 25 should have read "Councillor Morphet explained that he was interested in the project that Bristol SACRE has completed using their Westhill Award and building on the City of Leister's engagement with peacebuilding and that he would be happy to support Northumberland SACRE to apply for a Westhill Award to complete something similar in Northumberland. Members agreed to add it onto the action plan for the next academic year."

D. Van-Der-Velde enquired as to whether the planning for Holocaust Memorial Day 2024 had started and noted that planning began very late for Holocaust Memorial Day 2023, and it had been difficult to involve schools at short notice. D. Cookson confirmed that planning would start in September 2023.

Councillor Morphet enquired if the new syllabus event went ahead after Easter, it was confirmed that the first of two events had taken place, where staff in schools were invited to attend County Hall to meet with C. Weir to plan and develop the new syllabus in their respective schools.

D. Cookson explained to members that accuracy of the workforce data had been

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investigated and suggested to members that it should be looked into again in September when the schools would have started for the new academic year and would be added to the November meeting agenda along with exam results, science data in VC schools and OFSTED data.

J. Miller noted that SACRE did not meet in February.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Northumberland Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), held on Wednesday, 9 November 2022 as circulated, were confirmed as a true record.

## 6 **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

J. Miller advised that they were involved in the committee discussing the RE Quality Mark and assessing what was good practice in RE.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 7 **AN UPDATE OF CONTACTS WITH SCHOOLS AND TRAINING PROVISION**

D. Cookson updated members on what C. Weir – RE Consultant had completed since the last meeting.

The Regional Hubs Kitemark accreditation had gone out to SACRE representatives, members were urged to complete the training. P. Rusby, D. Van-Der-Velde and J. Miller had completed the training and had gained their Kitemark accreditation.

C. Weir had been supporting schools with the transition into the new syllabus and was planning to run further “Understanding Christianity” courses in July and in Autumn 2023. Meetings with RE leads had been successful in Otterburn Primary School and James Calvert Spence College, Bellingham Primary School, Corbridge Middle School, and Seghill First School were to be planned in the new academic year.

C. Weir had attended the “Collective Worship” webinar from NASACRE, an RE Today webinar teaching Buddhism to KS3 and a Holocaust Education Trust webinar teaching about The Holocaust.

D. Van-Der-Velde advised that the Board of Deputies of British Jews had set up meeting for Jewish SACRE members which had been very helpful, and a number of those members had received the Kitemark accreditation for their area.

C. Weir had also attended the AGM in May where there were two Keynote speakers; Dr **Kathryn Wright and Rt Hon Charles Clarke and a further speaker, Dr David Hampshire who discussed the analysis on SACRES Annual Reports.**

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

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## 8 RELIGIOUS CENSUS DATA

Members viewed the religious percentages of Northumberland compared to National figures and noted that Northumberland data had been relatively stable over the last 10 years.

It was clarified that whilst a person may identify as a certain religion they might not be an active practicing member in that community.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

## 9 RE HUBS UPDATE

D. Cookson explained to members that RE Hubs had now been set up and would provide schools with further resources, views and expertise on religious education.

Members expressed that they would like to invite the North East RE Hub to the next meeting to deliver a presentation and would be added to the November agenda.

**RESOLVED** that a presentation from the North East RE Hub would be added to the November SACRE agenda.

## 10 GOOD PRACTICE IN RE

Members noted that R. Cant – Craggside C of E Primary School, had submitted her apologies for the meeting and would not be producing her presentation at this meeting but it would be an agenda item for a future meeting.

C. Curtis – Mowbray Primary School circulated a handout to members detailing how Mowbray Primary School provides RE to their pupils and explaining that their vision for RE was “To give children the skills and tools to be able to identify, describe, explain and analyse a range of beliefs and concepts so that they can recognise, appreciate and appraise the ways in which people put their beliefs into action in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world: in order to evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts, respond thoughtfully and respect while being able to challenge the ideas of others and have their ideas challenged so that they can articulate their beliefs, values and commitments while developing their self-awareness.”

It was noted since the release of the new syllabus, teaching in RE had improved and teachers were able to follow a structured curriculum, however, it might take a few years for all the benefits of the new syllabus to be seen.

Members thanked C. Curtis for her presentation.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

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11 **DRAFT REC HANDBOOK**

12 **SACRE SELF-EVALUATION TOOL**

Members noted that SACRE self-assessment tool section 2 would be discussed by D. Cookson, Councillor Morphet, C. Weir, and C. Curtis and they would report back to the next meeting in November 2023.

**RESOLVED** that section 2 of the SACRE self-assessment would be added to the agenda and discussed at the November meeting.

13 **NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE ACTION PLAN**

D. Cookson gave a brief overview of SACRE's action plan and informed members of the actions that had been completed and those that remained outstanding.

J. Miller explained for action 15 that SACRE was set up by law and was independent from the Local Authority but had to be supported by the Local Authority and there were some differences in understanding in each Local Authority.

Following advice from NASACRE, it was determined that the conversations should take place at local level. Members noted that questions of clarification would be sent to the legal department of Northumberland County Council regarding how they interpret the relationship between the Local Authority and Northumberland SACRE.

A working group was to be formed to look at SACREs constitution, to ensure that Northumberland SACRE was following the constitution and that it was fit for purpose and a report would be provided to the next SACRE for members to discuss further.

The working group members were noted as J. Miller, T. Marley, D. Van-Der-Velde and Councillor C Seymour.

**Resolved** that this was noted.

14 **NORTHUMBERLAND SACRE NEWSLETTER AND RESOURCES WEBSITE**

Members were reminded of the website link:  
[northumberlandeducation.co.uk/SACRE](http://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/SACRE)

D. Cookson thanked members of the committee that submitted information for the site.

**RESOVLED** that this was noted.

15 **TRAINING AVAILABLE TO SACRE**

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D. Cookson reminded members that Northumberland SACRE buy into the all the CPD NASACRE training for members to attend. Training would be circulated to members via email once the 2023-24 training schedule was confirmed by NASACRE.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education would be held on Wednesday, 8 November 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Further Dates:

Wednesday, 7 February 2024

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

17 **NASACRE ISSUES - ISSUE 35**

D. Cookson explained there was no specific item in Issue 35 to discuss and it was for members to note only.

**RESOLVED** that this was noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

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