

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Wednesday 19 July 2023

PRESENT:

CLlr Tess Blight, CLlr Sue Dann, CLlr Chip Tofan, CLlr John Mahony, CLlr Tina Touhy, CLlr Sally Cresswell, Dr Judith Beckman (DJB), Sara Wells (SW), Claire Wills (CW), David Evans (DE), Father David Bailey (FDB), Claire Linden (CL), Mrs Muhunthiny Sivasothy (MS, Hindu Observer), Saranjit Kaur (SK, Sikh Observer), Charanjeet Singh (CS Sikh Observer)

Joined remotely: Katie Freeman (KF), Lesley Clark (LC), Nic Gibson (NG)

Officers: Ed Pawson (EP), Michael House (MH), Jim Barnicott (JB), Asif Siddique (AS)

The meeting started at 1.30pm and finished at 3.40pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

1. **Welcome - (JB)**
2. **Apologies - (JB)**
3. **AGM Section of Meeting (EP / MH)**
4. **Welcome to New Members (Chair)**
5. **Declarations of Interest (Chair)**
6. **Review of Previous Minutes (Chair)**
7. **Chair's Urgent Business (Chair)**
8. **Plymouth Agreed Syllabus (EP)**
9. **Local Authority Officer to SACRE Update (MH)**
10. **Ofsted Inspections Update (MH)**
11. **LTLRE & RE Hub Update (KF)**
12. **Updates From RE Advisor (EP)**
13. **Holocaust Memorial Day Update (LC)**
14. **Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity (SW)**
15. **Members Updates - (All)**
16. **AOB - (Chair)**
17. **Date and venue of next meeting (AS)**

1. Welcome – (JB)

JB welcomed members and the new members; Cllr Blight, Cllr Dann and FDB.

2. Apologies – (JB)

Annmarie Allchurch (AMA), Professor David Salter (PDS), Dr Catherine Bowness (DCB), Alex Parks (AP), Ms Gwen Hughes (MGH).

3. AGM Section of Meeting - (EP / MH)

- a) **Election of SACRE Chair:** Cllr Tess Blight was elected as a SACRE chair. Cllr Blight gave a brief introduction about herself. She has educational background (previously secondary school head teacher in East End of London). She has experience of being an advisory teacher and writing agreed syllabuses and being an RE expert in Newham in East London.
- b) **Vice Chair:** KF was elected as the Deputy Chair. She has previously chaired SACRE and has educational background. EP commented that KF's expertise will be helpful for the Agreed Syllabus. KF confirmed that she will continue to be on the working group for the agreed syllabus.
- c) **Review of Membership:** MH informed members that as part of the AGM each year they have to review membership with a possibility of electing leaders of each of the four houses. MH shared a PowerPoint presentation to go through the different groups. MH highlighted that we have some challenges around representation at the moment. He identified the gaps and some possible ideas going forward. MH highlighted that in Group A, there are 3 observers in the meeting today with a possibility of them joining at later date.

In Group B (the Church of England), EP will be going to step down. KF will stay in the group.

Group C is more complicated in some senses because the landscape around teachers, associations, unions etc. that is quite a fluid one. We need some of different associations of teachers representing unions too. MH highlighted that Father David Bailey was present in today's meeting.

In Group D, MH said goodbye to Councillor Mary Aspinall and Councillor Jonathan Dreaan and welcomed Cllr Sue Dann and Cllr Tess Blight.

MH highlighted the information available in the agenda pack regarding representation of different faiths and beliefs in the City. MH commented that when we look at things like that, we not only have to think about the different belief systems and communities that are in the city and the proportion of them, but also the beliefs and communities that our children are learning about through RE syllabus.

EP commented that there may some anomalies in the way how different groups have been classified in terms of falling into the correct groups e.g., Professor David Salter being in the Co-opted Representatives group.

CS introduced himself and SK as the potential Sikh representative along with MS as potential Hindu Representative. CS said that their inclusion in Plymouth SACRE will improve representation from all faiths and also help achieve a greater gender balance.

CW commented that proposed education representation is much better, but it will be even better to have Secondary schools too.

Cllr SC pointed out that there is no Secondary Schools representations and commented that it's a real worry especially when it will come to writing agreed syllabuses and all those things that would need expertise from Secondary Schools.

EP stated that we are not a balanced group, and this needs sorting.

DE pointed out that he was present at the last meeting as a representative of the Baptist group. He further enquired that why is further and higher education was on SACRE as according to his understanding, since 1992, now the further and higher education have been controlled by the local authority so what is their role on the SACRE.

EP commented that it is hugely important to be on these bodies because we are not a Local Authority body but we are here to advise the Local Authority, so it is very important that they remain part of SACRE and it is vital that we have best of thinkers, practitioners and people with knowledge.

EP also stated that AP is our Marjon's Church of England representative from HE but one more rep. may be needed in Group C as well, and another reason for Marjon being involved in the group is that they run events in the City. Last year we had the event where we had various different communities, various different representatives, and the press got together, and the universities were a big part of that. Also, Marjon is training our next generation of teachers that are going into our schools, so we were very lucky to have them.

KF highlighted that some of the names in different groups have not been attending SACRE for a while. She commented that perhaps there should be some clarity in the constitution on when and at what point do we de-register regular non-attendees from SACRE.

4. Welcome to new members (Chair)

Chair welcomed the new members (Cllr Blight and Cllr Dann and FDB) along with the three observers in group A.

5. Declarations of interest - All

None

6. Review of the previous minutes – Chair (Cllr TB)

Minutes agreed from the last meeting on 20 March 2023 by all members with the following amendment to reflect that;

On Page 26, para 6 and 7, replace Claire Wells with Sara Wells.

All actions were read out by MH and recorded as completed.

Actions from the current meeting

- (a) EP to check if Professor David Salter should be in the 'Co-opted Representatives' group or Group A
- (b) AS to take off Clair Linden from the SACRE distribution list
- (c) AS to share MH's and EP's presentation with SACRE members
- (d) EP to convene working group
- (e) EP is starting the process of the agreed syllabus conference.

- (f) CW to ask Secondary Schools' heads if they were interested to join SACRE
- (g) AS/ MH to circulate the online link for agreed syllabus
- (h) All to e-mail AS if they want to be on the agreed syllabus conference as well as those people who have already put themselves forward
- (i) Clair / MH to send over Ofsted report
- (j) EP to forward 'SACRE annual reports 2021 —2022' to AS for distribution to SACRE members
- (k) MH to invite the new chair and EP for a wash up meeting next Tuesday on 25/07/2023

7. Chairs Urgent Business – Chair

None

8. Plymouth Agreed Syllabus (EP)

An Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) needs to be set up to oversee the process of reviewing the Agreed Syllabus.

Here are some recommendations made by Devon and Torbay SACRE

- Introduce a new syllabus for Sept 2024
- Minimal shift from current syllabus
- More 'lesson-ready' resources
- Units to embody more diversity
- Units to reflect the local lived experience of people's religious and non- religious worldviews.
- Units to take a more fully worldviews approach
- Launch events to be planned for June 2024
- Teachers will need follow-up training

EP: SACRE produces or creates an agreed syllabus for RE in a local area. That is the statutory syllabus for maintained schools. Our syllabus is well used by both local authority schools and by academies right across Devon, Torbay, Cornwall and Plymouth. We share a common syllabus, which we introduced four years ago.

We have a duty as a group to review that syllabus for September 2024. Now we don't have to change the syllabus if we think that it's satisfactory but if there are good reasons we have to have reviewed it as a group and the SACRE can devolve the decision making or it can devolve work on that question to what's called an agreed syllabus conference, which is a focused task group for people with curriculum expertise (on people on who really understand about our curriculum). The decisions they make are then brought back to SACRE to agree.

The Syllabus conference needs to be set up and needs a member from each of the four groups. We will need to decide when we meet, but it will be soon, possibly next week, hopefully before the end of the first week in September, because we really do need to get make headway on this.

These are some of the recommendations that have come up so far, both through the survey, which is to say something the teachers have contributed to, and also that Devon and Torbay SACREs have been considering. So we need to introduce new Syllabus by 2024 and the view is that we don't want to delay. The view coming through strongly from teachers is that we don't want to shift dramatically. Four years ago, we made quite a dramatic shift. The previous syllabus (service) really was not fit for purpose. It dated back to the early 2000s and has been reviewed and brought back in different but in a very similar format. We made a big shift in 2019 and most teachers are saying we like what we've got. It works very well.

We're just embedding it. We don't want to shift that dramatically because it's a lot of work and so there is no good reason to make a big shift.

Teachers want a set of PowerPoints to teach the syllabus rather than a big document from which to do their own planning (with units to embody more diversity, units to reflect the local experience of people's religious and non-religious worldviews). The Agreed Syllabus Conference will be a small group which will address these issues and then feedback in in November to the next SACRE meeting.

Currently, the syllabus gives national examples, but it doesn't get very local. Units need to take a more fully world views approach and then the recommendations that the syllabus is finished and ready to go into schools for launch events next June with follow up training offered in 2024-2025.

We received 53 responses to the survey. Vast number (98%) of people are using the syllabus. Of the people polled and who responded, the syllabus is being used and being valued. A lot of our teachers who are participating are accessing support from a variety of places. Plymouth training doesn't seem to be that strong there, but Plymouth teachers often come. LTLRE lead groups is strong. 41 of the respondents, (77%), In other words, asking for a lesson ready PowerPoints. So, there has been a shift over the last five years in curriculum.

38 respondents said they wanted more detail on assessment. 35 people said they wanted more materials on making the subject more local. This comes out quite strongly and then people want more support on how to use the syllabus and more information on how to develop it and clear lesson plans.

It seems overwhelming that teachers like the existing syllabus. We've worked along with Torbay and Devon SACRE historically and with Cornwall SACRE, with a combined service across the whole area. It does make a lot of sense to do that because we can then train and create resources together.

SACRE needs to make its own decisions because we are the governing body for Plymouth schools and we're working in partnership with other schools, but we need to make the best decisions for Plymouth schools and its pupils. So, there's a lot of things to consider that we need to come to agreement by November. The aim is to get the revised syllabus written by February to be printed by May.

KF: I really like the syllabus. Where people get frustrated with it, I think they see it as it should come as a package with everything, every lesson written out, and ready to go. I think they missed the point of the syllabus. So, the syllabus is to outline the content of which you'll teach, and then you need to adapt that yourself to make it into what you teach in your classrooms. I think where things have gone well in the City, people have engaged with the RE hub. They've engaged with the training opportunities.

That would put on by SACRE and I think they understand that they have made it their own, and unfortunately, I guess that some teachers might say it's fortunately we have a lot of schemes of work in other subjects. There are a lot of schemes that schools can buy in that have lessons ready to go with printable resources, with PowerPoints and schools are getting comfortable with that. They're feeling like because Ofsted are driving a knowledge rich curriculum, they feel uncomfortable about selecting the key knowledge themselves.

The knowledge in which their pupils need to acquire by the end of primary and so what they feel really comfortable with is to get lesson plans and PowerPoints that are prewritten for them and they deliver the content and the national picture. Obviously, that's tricky because you have agreed syllabus which might be different in different areas. Some local areas will have the same and some won't and so schools are unable to buy in these packaged deals.

Hubs have been working really hard to support teachers, to feel more confident and to raise their level of subject expertise. We also have the slight issue in primary schools, particularly the subject lead for RE is likely to be in their third, fourth year of teaching. They do it for a while and then they get given something like English and Maths and they leave it for the next person to do. And so, it's really rare to do what's schools like mine done, and let your subject lead in RE for a long period of time and learn more and develop more within that subject. We have to be aware that we need to be supporting not only the teachers we've got at the moment, but also the ones that are coming up through the school ready to take on this leadership role. That might be just for a couple of years and so as NATRE we have kind of resisted writing materials; we know that Academies can select their own curriculum.

RE today contacted me recently about the syllabus. They like what we've done with that syllabus. We are Devon school, but obviously using the same curriculum as Plymouth. We've been writing lesson plans and PowerPoints for syllabus for two days a week for the last term. People can access that through a particular level of NATRE membership. So, for example, schools in Plymouth could say if we stuck with this agreed syllabus, we could access these materials and we could teach them from your plans. But I've made a really big push that I want these plans and these resources and PowerPoints to be editable so that teachers can use them as they are or they can add in their own information.

So that's kind of going on to support schools if we choose to go with the same agreed syllabus. I think something for SACRE to be aware of is that we've got a lot of very tired, rung out teachers and that's particularly because of COVID. So you think that we've had this agreed syllabus for X amount of years but the reality of this is that schools have been teaching the syllabus face to face for 18 months. What we don't want to do is to terrify teachers and say we are changing all the curriculum because when you look at what Ofsted are looking for is this highly developed curriculum with really strong knowledge and teachers have worked really hard to do that with this agreed syllabus. If we throw it out, I'm sure we're not going to be wanting to throw it out but if we throw it out, you're going to have a lot of very scared, worried, overworked and pressured teachers. So, I think that there are edits as we've seen from EP's data that we do need to make and we do need to update, and we need to localise it. I think the localization nature of it is really important, but we need to do it in a way that's calm, consistent and careful. That's not going to make teachers feel like they got another thing to do. My warning is, let's think about those teachers and those leaders in classrooms. Let's make sure that our children are getting high level content and knowledge, but also that we're keeping our teachers safe.

CIlr TB: EP or AS to share a copy of the agreed syllabus or an online link to the agreed syllabus with SACRE members.

CIlr SC: Quite a lot of ex-teachers are in the meeting today and there is an anxiety of wanting to have resources that you can use on interactive whiteboards. There seems to be the issue of resources, assessment, vocabulary, subject knowledge and not massively changing the agreed syllabus. But we could actually have hubs or easily accessible stuff that could be fed to the teachers so that they have got a whole range of resources which were actually going to hopefully inspire confidence. The subject leaders for RE didn't necessarily stay as subject leaders for RE for any particular length of time, particularly if that's in primary school, some way in which we can perhaps disseminate that information out effectively to schools so that it is not just perhaps through one person. We should be able to accommodate both an RE lead and an additional lead so that there's some succession planning. It is natural to feel anxious when a teacher has to teach something, and they don't think they have the subject knowledge.

CIlr SD: I'm coming from a completely different angle and a completely other tangent, and in my role as Lord Mayor last year, one of the things I saw was the presence of multi faiths that we have

across the City. Some of the interesting things I have heard today and the syllabus about having more local knowledge and local case studies, I think it's really, really important, especially when you know as a non-teaching professional I was going into schools, so that's my first comment. My second comment is from a young person who did RE in one of the schools who I worked with last year and that young person didn't realise just how much you can access different faiths, different celebrations in the City and didn't even realise that Plymouth had their own Street Pastors. So, I think having that local connection and trying to build on that is really important.

CW: It is really pleasing to hear that the curriculum works for primary, but it really doesn't for special schools and certainly not my special school. When I write my curriculum, I have to look at what you've written for early years and perhaps for year one because that's where my children are functioning. I go beyond that. They won't get it. Therefore, if I just do that, they don't get the breadth. I have to take the ethos and the values and use my knowledge and skill set. But I think I'm the only special head teacher with specialist knowledge. But I think there is a need and it's just very difficult. I can use my knowledge and my skills set to adapt using the ethos and the values within the agreed syllabus to know what to teach. I don't think there's enough in there for somebody who doesn't have my subject knowledge.

KF: Assessment of vocabulary has been going on with the RE hub and we have worked on assessment. A lot of people are asking for a vocabulary progression sheets at the moment. So that's another thing that's going on and being developed and those will all come with these classroom ready resources. I'm really pleased to hear CW's comments and completely agree that it's not good enough for special needs schools, and we really need to look at that. There has been some work going on nationally where we're looking at sort of not specific agreed syllabuses, but like how an RE curriculum might look in a special school. But we know that different special schools have got different designations in terms of the needs that they support and so looking at how we can cater for the breadth of those needs and those different schools. And we've got some great work going on with Sarah Payne, who's one of our executives, who works in a special school. I can provide some details. We need to be looking at specifically for Plymouth. I can also give you some details of a national group that's meeting as a working party together.

LC: I was at a conference recently and I was appalled to hear that when primary school teachers are now being trained, they're probably only have about 3 hours worth of RE training in their course. So, no wonder they feel worried about teaching the subject when they get into school, so they do need all the support that's possible. Also, as a Catholic representative. I have to tell you that the Catholic bishops of England and Wales have just published a new RE directory, which is mandatory for all Catholic schools to start following the teaching of RE. So, although you'll be producing the agreed syllabus, Catholic schools will not be able to participate in it because our teaching will be assessed on our new directory (Section 48 inspections), which focus on RE and Catholic life.

SW: The centre plays a big part in rolling out the syllabus to the schools locally and we also felt the change in 2019 in syllabus. Our speakers have worked really hard to complement the curriculum with the sessions that they offer. I feel that it would be really good if we could be involved in the decision making around any changes and see what we could offer in relation to bringing that local context to the agreed syllabus.

CW: Out of the seven special schools in Plymouth three would fit with the levels the children in our school mainly are functioning at. The other four would be able to just tweak the agreed syllabus very easily. I am happy to share what I've done to develop our curriculum to fit with the ethos and what's in the agreed syllabus.

SW, DJB, KW, Cllr SC and Cllr TB put themselves forward to be involved with Agreed Syllabus working group. If anyone is interested, they can inform EP or AS by email.

9. Local Authority Officer to SACRE Update (MH)

SACRE Budget Position – 2022/2023 (to 5th of July 2023)

Annual resources: £13105 (£12000 + £1105)

In-Year spend: £225 (NASACRE subscription + supply Cover - chair)

Planned / expected Spend

- One-Off Claims expected (Supply Cover) TBC
- Proposed RE Professional Advisor to SACRE Role (£6K annual or 2K per Term)
- RE Conference (Member Attendance TBC)

Balance to Date: As of 20/03/2023 (>£12K)

Michael also presented GCSE Data (2022) on religious studies. (*Data included within SACRE Members Pack*)

Michael also presented religious studies A-level data – 2022 (*Data included within SACRE Members Pack*).

Local Authority facilitation of SACRE – Action Plan

Michael reviewed the Action Plan (included within SACRE Members Pack) and took questions for the group.

10. Ofsted Inspections Update (MH)

‘OFSTED Inspections Update’ included within the ‘Local Authority Officer to SACRE Update’, within the meeting pack.

Michael referred to the report in the agenda pack that contains information on Ofsted inspection updates on schools. MH highlighted that there is a reporting lag and recent inspections may not be included on the figures.

MH informed that 10 Plymouth schools were inspected Spring/Summer Term 2023. In one of those schools RE is referred to as an area of development, 3 schools have been mentioned positively and 6 have not been mentioned at all. 5 of them are Primary, 4 are Secondary schools and one is Special. MH clarified that the grades shown on the report depicts the overall school grade not RE grades. Members noted ‘Deep Dive’ comments on Plymstock School.

11. LTLRE and RE Hub Update - KF

As LTLRE lead KF informed that they continued to meet online and have met three times this year. They normally meet six times a year and it's been down to content and also dates that people can meet. In the last meeting they looked at some of the census data and how they could use those tools that come with the census areas in the classroom. They also shared information on subject knowledge and had quite a few teachers this year going to conference in October. In previous years we've had more teachers that have come from Cornwall, Torbay and Devon. So, it's been great to see more Plymouth teachers there, thanks to EP. A teacher from All Saints Academy is going to be joining in the autumn term. The person from All Saints and will be meeting her over the holidays to put together dates and timings and things for the next meeting. KF further informed that they are really looking forward to doing some work, particularly surrounding transition because they know that secondary school teachers receive pupils from all over the City who have had different experiences of RE.

In addition, we have Academies in the City that are choosing to do different things. We also have schools where that at times RE can fall off the curriculum and we are also aware that some schools are doing things really well. So, we really want to gather those people together so that secondary and primary teachers can have conversations about RE in Year six and throughout the primary phase going into secondary.

For example, Hele's school has said that because we have more units on Hindu Dharma within this agreed syllabus, the children were coming up with such strong knowledge into Year seven of Hindu Dharma that they were actually having to change their curriculum in Year 7, but they could only do that because they'd had those conversations with us as primary practitioners. The conference is October 13th. We had a training day for LTLRE hub leaders to put together ideas for the conference.

EP added that he and KF ran a SW hub. KF elaborated that money for the funding for the teachers has been given to larger teachers' school groups and the money for the SW group has gone to Swift Teaching School Alliance. KF informed that they weren't really sure what and how things were going to work out because all the other subjects have hubs too. Swift have contacted EP to say that they would like to set up a swift hub. But, schools have to be members of SWIFT to attend, whereas their LTLRE are open to anybody and because they do some of them remotely, they get people from across the country. Therefore, EP and she started running a Swift teaching school hub which is 3 times a year. They have just set the date for those, if people want them they could share those with the group and it's just really nice to have a real cross faith element of schools in local areas, but they're quite diverse in terms of where they are and who they can work with and at different stages. They had some really fruitful conversations in the primary schools and EP had the same in secondary schools.

CW commented that as she is now chair of Special School Association of Heads. They will be meeting with primary and secondary Heads soon and she will be happy to ask secondary Heads if they were interested to join SACRE.

An annual conference has been planned for October 2023, at the St Mellion Conference Centre. This conference is to be addressed by Lat Blaylock, bookings are now open.

Hub leaders training took place on 7th July 2023.

Plymouth RE Hub has had a number of well-received meetings this year. The new SWIFT hub has been very successful.

We are pleased to announce that a new secondary hub leader has recently been appointed in Plymouth.

12. Updates From RE Advisor (EP)

EP shared a presentation on 'SACRE annual reports 2021-2022' depicting the lessons learned and main findings. This is a report that has come from NASACRE yesterday about the way SACRE create their annual reports. One of SACRE's statutory duties is to work with schools and in order to advise the LA. SACRE have to write a report about that. David Hampshire who used to be the advisor in Cornwall has done some research on this. There are approximately 150 SACREs in the country, 72 submitted reports in 2022. This is 16 more than 2020. In 2022 this figure was similar to that submitted in 2021 and would indicate that the main course for not submitting report last year was COVID which continued to have an impact on the function of SACREs. Some SACRE's had issues with membership and vacancies.

ED highlighted that we need more teachers on SACRE from all types of schools in Plymouth for their valuable input.

One of the main influences on a SACRE's work was its relationship with the Local Authority. Reports indicate that the level of support for a SACRE was proportionate to the importance of religion and belief in the local authority area.

Where SACREs covered more rural areas the importance of Church of England diocese and its schools was more likely to be evident. This led to reporting on standards of RE and collective worship through a scrutiny of SIAMS reports. At least one SACRE was served by a scrutiny of SIAMS reports. At least one SACRE was served by a diocesan officer and others received reports from diocesan officers.

It was clear that SACREs took their work seriously and were trying their best to support RE, if not always collective worship, in the schools in the Local Authority. This could lead to a series of conflations in reporting. This should be addressed if SACREs are to show their impact and focus on areas of improvement.

In many areas SACREs also work in collaboration with other SACREs, especially in the area of Agreed Syllabus development, implementation and training. Links with external bodies such as NASACRE remain important as does their trialling and supporting of national initiatives to support RE in schools such as REQM and WIRE.

SACREs continue to support schools and communities, in some areas, beyond their statutory remit and this shows how valued they are as providing something unique within a Local Authority. A number of SACREs reported how they made links with local inter faith and belief forums.

EP stated that Plymouth report will be sent to DfE and NASACRE in Autumn 2023.

EP also shared the results of 'RE Syllabus Review Survey 2023'. Please see the attached 'Plymouth SACRE meeting 19 July 2023' presentation for details. EP highlighted the LTLRE is making a positive impact in schools in relation to RE training, engagement and advice. There is a national RE website that contains very helpful information. This needs sharing with Plymouth SACRE. SW commented that are already using this website to advertise their services and can offer training across the country.

EP also shared census data from 2021 showing that the percentage of people with no religion is going up and further elaborated on this subject. EP also shared recommendations from The Bloom Review which says that Government should consider methods for improving the teaching of faith literacy and RE, with a view to cultivating a more inclusive society where people of all backgrounds are able to engage in debate about the different faiths and beliefs that shape society.

EP also shared research by Henry Jackson Society raising concerns centred around Hinduism being taught through an Abrahamic faith lens, affording inappropriate weight to 'gods' and misunderstanding the key concepts.

EP shared that recently there has been a landmark High Court win for a Humanist who has successfully challenged his LA's refusal to admit him to the SACRE education committee. The Court ruled that Humanist should be on LA's SACRE as a full member. EP informed that Plymouth has already have a Humanist member on Plymouth SACRE.

EP also shared some comments from NASACRE Patron, Charles Clarke (former Secretary of State for Education) in the NASACRE Conference held in May 2023 regarding the role of SACREs in the emerging educational landscape. Charles raised two important points:

- SACREs make an important contribution to stronger, more coherent communities

- SACREs are important Local Authority institutions. They bring people together in a unique way

13. Holocaust Memorial Day Update (LC)

LC informed that because of all the uncertainty with the teachers' strikes, it was difficult to plan things, but it all seems to have settled now. It might be best to tie HMD it in with the Holocaust Day in the next academic year rather than try and do it in the remaining time of this term.

Cllr SC stated that in the past, we always used to have a very big contingent of children involved in Holocaust Memorial Day, she was talking to Sarah last week when the new Vice Chancellor was inaugurated at Marjon that we should do something related to and connected to that memorial and the tree that's there for Anne Frank. Perhaps we could do a special bouquet or similar and not just remembering Anne, but also about remembering her elder sister as well, because there's been so much that's happened in the world. Children have been really badly affected and have taken some of the worst experiences that could possibly children have been exposed to.

Also in regard to the timings for Holocaust Memorial Day, because of the school holidays, we agreed previously that before summer 2023 we should be having a plan to put out to schools about what we've been doing in September and then in September starting that piece of work to give people enough time. Every year we don't start this early enough and it is a bit late now to be discussing it but if we leave this till September to plan, we will not be able to roll forward quickly enough to put it in place in time for the next Holocaust Memorial Day. Cllr SC also queries who is responsible?

LC replied that she planned the idea of the poetry, but this has not happened. LC said she is quite happy to take part in the plans, but don't have access to school database because she is no longer a teacher and would need some help from someone in education. If we are going to do a celebration by this tree, we will have to go through procedures with Plymouth City Council. Previously we had to go through countless forms to arrange to get permission to walk up there with a procession. So there's an awful lot involved in it and she did not have the time to do that but will be happy to be a part of a group to do it.

MH commented that with regards to the contacts in schools, perhaps RE hub and KF could get involved with because she's got all of the contacts of the RE leads in the schools and he will support from Plymouth City Council.

DJB commented that when she first came to Plymouth around 11 years ago, she arrived in January just in time for HMD. Jonathan Marshall was in charge, and he organised wonderful things. Schools were involved, they did it all sorts of amazing things. We need to have somebody take his place and to actually be in charge.

SW commented that PCFCD still get involved in the civic ceremony for the Holocaust Memorial Day each year and work with community council to arrange that each year. But here we're talking about something in addition with schools. There was always a pot of money for us to able to do that previously in Jonathan Marshall's days. Unfortunately, that hasn't been available for quite some time now. PCFCD would be very happy to support in whichever way we can. We also have an active list of our coordinators as well and we will be very happy to help with that. As Katie said previously though, it changes on a regular basis.

Cllr JM pointed out that it's a Saturday next January, which might not be so good from school point of view, but actually does give an opportunity perhaps to open it to a wider number of people than normally come during the week.

14. Plymouth Centre for Faith and Cultural Diversity - SW

SW informed that they have had some staffing changes. They've lost Clair Linden their Education Officer, so she needs to be taken off the SACRE distribution list. In September PCFCD is looking to recruit to that post.

SW did not have figures with her for this term in relation to the sessions they've booked but it's been a quieter term and it always is their quietest term for several reasons mostly that schools are involved in winding down into this term rather than building up. PCFCD have still done a huge number of visits out to places of worship and speakers going into schools. SW can still provide the figures if needed.

In the last meeting we were having a discussion about some residual money left in the budget for the last financial year and PCFCD was asked to put in a bid to SACRE for potential use of that money. PCFCD identified that in the last financial year there were 39 Plymouth Schools (24 of which were Primary 10 Secondary and 5 Special schools) had chosen not to subscribe to PCFCD in that financial year. Of those schools, thirty schools actually never visited either Piety Islamic Centre or Plymouth Synagogue. A proposal was put into SACRE to work with some or all of those schools depending on the funding available to be able to offer them the opportunity to take a group of their students to either the Islamic Centre or the Synagogue, to allow those students to have that experience.

SW is in dialogue with those schools so that they could try and enhance their RE provision going forward as well. SW had emailed that proposal over to MH and to Councillor Aspinall at the time but she will forward again if necessary and if that's still able to be considered. PCFCD are very willing in the autumn term to start working on that if it's approved. There are several options but the Centre may not be able to offer 20/30 schools visit to PIETY or Synagogue with 70 children but they may be to look at the remaining schools in the next financial year and have a rolling programme potentially. For this option it will be £4200.

MH informed that in agenda packs we had the budget position for SACRE and it was confirmed very recently that we have £12,000 plus the £1105 for this year. There are some small amounts of money going out for subscription to SACRE, and we're going to take the enhanced option of that to allow all of our members to have online training throughout the year and obviously we now have a RE advisor as well. When we look at those things, this leaves SACRE with about £5000 left for that particular year. But what has developed since then is that we now start to look towards the financing of the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Agreed syllabus conference is also an extraordinary cost so whilst that falls within the £12,000 plus the £1105, there may be some wriggle room.

15. Members Updates – All

MH informed the group that there is information in the Agenda Pack regarding how members can claim expenses. He stated that everybody in the room (excluding people that work for the City Council) is able to claim expenses. The form requires creditor's information, personal and bank details. This information needs providing just once and thereafter the appropriate form can be sent with receipts and evidence etc. This can be forwarded to MH, and in case someone had any queries MH is happy to receive them by email directly.

CS enquired when they would be accepted as faith representatives and what will be the process to follow. MH replied that as Sikh and Hindu reps. are observing SACRE today it would be in the next meeting for them to come and say a little bit more about themselves and then the group would take a view on that.

EP commented that we definitely need more diversity in the group and the presence from the Sikh and Hindu reps. today and their willingness to participate is appreciated. EP stated suggested that Sikh and Hindu reps to come in the next meeting to give their input.

SW highlighted that Cllr JM is actually one of their faith speakers currently along with many others and it will be good to have a conversation about having more representatives and faith speakers from other faith groups.

16. Any Other Business – Chair

EP asked the members to leave comments for a 'Thank You' card being arranged by KF.

MH read out the actions from the current meeting for checking accuracy.

17. Date and venue of next meeting - AS

1:30pm Tuesday 7 November 2023, Warspite Room, Council House.