



# Barnet Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 5pm

Virtual Meeting

## MINUTES

### Constitution and Attendance

| <b>GROUP A:</b><br>Christian denominations other than the Church of England and principal religions represented in Great Britain | Present/Apologies /Absent | <b>GROUP B:</b><br>Church of England      | Present/Apologies /Absent |
|--|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Mrs Vicky Golestaneh (Baha'i)  | Present                   | Ms Sue Watts (London Diocese)             | Present                   |
| Ajantha Tennakoon (Buddhist)   | Absent                    | Rev Robin Sims-Williams (London Diocese)  | Present                   |
| Mrs Catherine Salinger (Free Churches)   | Apologies                 | Maria Constantinou (Diocese of St Albans) | Apologies                 |
| Mrs Mary Karaolis (attending on behalf of Very Revd AC Damiano: Greek Orthodox Church)   | Present                   | Anthony David (Diocese of London)         | Apologies                 |
| Mr Sury Khatri (Hindu)   | Present                   | Lisa Bonfield                             | Present                   |

|  |                                      |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Mrs Veena Bedi (Hindu)   | Absent                               |  |                                      |
| Dr Mukal Shah (Jain)   | Absent                               |  |                                      |
| Vacancy (Jain)   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Rabbi Mark Goldsmith (Jewish)  | Absent                               |  |                                      |
| Vacancy (Jewish)   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Vacancy (Sikh)   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Vacancy (Sikh)   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Nicola Santamaria (Roman Catholic)   | Present                              |  |                                      |
| Norah Flatley (Roman Catholic)   | Absent                               |  |                                      |
| Vacancy (Salvation Army)   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Vacancy (Salvation Army)   |                                      |  |                                      |
| Mr Mark Leach (Methodist)  | Absent                               |  |                                      |
| Mr Martin Wellings (Methodist)   | Present                              |  |                                      |
| Nuzhat Akhtar (Muslim)   | Absent                               |  |                                      |
| Gohar Akhtar (Muslim)  | Absent                               |  |                                      |
| Panos Fellas (Humanist)  | Apologies                            |  |                                      |
| <b>GROUP C:<br/>Teachers Associations,<br/>including representation from<br/>Academy Schools</b> | <b>Present/Apologies<br/>/Absent</b> | <b>GROUP D:<br/>Local Authority,<br/>including elected<br/>Councillors LA</b>  | <b>Present/Apologies<br/>/Absent</b> |
| Mr Kevin McSharry (Chairman & ASCL)  | Present                              | Agnes Slocombe (L.A.)  | Present                              |
| Vacancy  |                                      | Cllr Humayune. Khalick   | Absent                               |
| Vacancy  |                                      | Cllr Danny Rich  | Absent                               |
| Dr Alan Shaw (NAHT)  | Present                              | Cllr Lachhya Bahadur Gurung  | Absent                               |
| Ms Sandra Teacher  | Apologies                            | Cllr.Linda Lusingu   | Absent                               |
| Sally Giovanelli (Danegrove Primary School)  | Present                              | Cllr.Nagus Narenthira  | Present                              |
| Jack Robertson (NEU)   | Present                              | Cllr Ella Rose   | Absent                               |
|  |                                      | Cllr Joshua Conway   | Absent                               |
| <b>Other</b>   |                                      | <b>Co-opted non-voting members</b>   |                                      |
| Maria Gabrielczyk – Clerk  | In attendance                        | Jan McGuire<br>Independent RE<br>Advisor to Barnet<br>SACRE                    | Present                              |
|  |                                      | Mr Neil Marlow<br>Chief Executive and<br>Director of Education<br>and Learning | Present                              |
| Ruth Marx  | Present                              | Jennifer Brodtkin  | Present                              |
| Sophie Taparis   | Present                              | Reuben Thompstone  | Absent                               |

**Observer:** Mishell Sullivan

### 1. Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the SACRE meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from: SandraTeacher, Maria Constantinou, Panos Fellas, Anthony David and Kate Salinger.

## **2. Membership and welcome**

The Chair informed that Anthony David had stepped down. The Chair thanked Anthony for his contribution and support to the Barnet SACRE.

The Chair asked everyone to introduce themselves.

## **3. Minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Dr. Alan Shaw informed that he was marked down as absent when he had sent his apologies. The Clerk will correct this.

Subject to the above amendment the minutes of the previous meeting were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

### **Matters arising**

The actions from the previous meeting were all completed.

## **4. SACRE involvement locally**

Jan informed that Livingstone Primary School had an Ofsted inspection. They had a shallow deep dive in RE. It was not the main subject that was being inspected. The RE Lead had attended some previous CPD sessions that were run by Jan. She fed back how delighted she was that the CPD helped in her confidence with Ofsted.

## **5. RE statutory responsibilities including:**

### **ASC: Agreed Syllabus: Update**

Jan updated SACRE on the formal ASC Agreed Syllabus progress. The Agreed Syllabus and formation of the ASC should take place every 5 years.

Great progress has been made with the Agreed Syllabus and the team are keeping to the set deadlines. They are basing the work on Ann Taves six Big Questions: the six threads Reality, Origins, Knowledge, Situation, Goal and Path. The team is working on those six questions with Ann Taves herself, who is based in California.

The questions focus on the 4-19yr age group. The aim is to provide teachers with tools, theory and academic work so pupils can start on their sequential journey from age 4 to 19. The six summaries are the backbone of the work being produced in response to the questions. The slides have been approved by Ann Taves and can be put in the ASC and launched in June. The syllabus is at the stage where it can be presented in the community.

David Robertson from the OU is helping with proofreading the material. Jack, Tim and Ruth send him units for his edits and comments. Both Sally and Sophia are covering the primary syllabus and are trying to get all the units finished to get them through the editing process.

There will be a soft launch in June for Headteachers, faith groups, etc via the Eventbrite booking system. The whole team will present in some way either via video or in person.

Publication in electronic format is the preference of teachers. It will be a Word/PowerPoint style presentation and it can be sold to other boroughs as it has all been paid for by Barnet.

Sally and Sophia are working on the primary syllabus and turning the questions into something younger pupils can study. Some concepts are hard and writing for younger pupils is difficult. There are just two more units to finish. Sally and Sophia meet regularly several times during the week and share their research. The syllabus has been a learning curve for both of them and they have learned a lot. They are working to meet the deadlines. Both Sally and Sophia were awarded the Farmington Scholarship for studying Ann Taves.

Jack and Ruth are covering the secondary syllabus, which they are enjoying, with the focus being on supporting both teachers and students. They like Ann Taves's approach as it answers basic questions, and is very accessible. Three units have been completed. It is designed with robust academic foundations, which will help teachers implement it and will get teacher buy-in. The syllabus will be a great success.

**Q.** Will there be a consultation before the June launch?

**A.** The SACRE community, Headteachers and RE leads will be involved in the final process. SACRE need to have some way of agreeing the ASC. It can be done either electronically or voted through.

Jan informed that 2010 guidance recommends RE should ideally be 5% of the time on the curriculum. This is about one hour a week. Whilst this is a recommendation it is not the law. The ASC has gone with the legal suggestion.

**Q.** How do you know what religions are to be covered?

**A.** Teachers look at the demographics and also look at the religions coming through the school and then choose. A broad base as possible needs to be selected.

Final Council/Cabinet approval is needed. The Council needs to ratify and sign the syllabus off and then it will go to the DfE for signing off. It is a smooth but rigorous process. Jan and Neil will arrange to meet to discuss when the syllabus can go to Cabinet. **ACTION: JMcG/NM.**

**Q.** What is the timeline of events? Do you aim to start teaching in September?

**A.** In the original timeline it was hoped to start teaching in September 2025, prior to this will be a period of training of teachers and invite them for CPD sessions to support schools with implementing the curriculum before they start teaching.

It was agreed that Jen and Jan would get dates in the diary for Headteacher meetings to get their RE input. **ACTION: JB/JMcG**

**Q.** When this is completed, will there be a digital version? Are we going to copyright it? Will it be marketable?

**A.** Yes, we need to think about all these things and a Working Party will be formed for the marketing on how the materials are put into packages. One document will be the basic syllabus and will be a free document to all Barnet borough schools. The powerpoint version would not be available free of charge, there would be a charge for this as it would be a good training resource. Some materials can be in the form of free tasters, whereas the remainder of units would be behind a wall as they are paid for by Barnet. It needs to be decided with the LA how much would be free. Any SACRE member with marketing or publication skills would be warmly welcomed.

**Q.** Will you choose schools to pilot this syllabus?

**A.** We are trialling the syllabus with the writing teachers through the schools. We are currently going through the process of feedback. Additionally when the syllabus is in the

majority of schools they will feedback. CPD sessions of one per term, are being planned on how curriculum planning can be supported. Lesson plans will be provided to help the teachers with the process.

**Q.** Is there a process of checking with religious authorities that they are happy with what is in the syllabus?

**A.** SACRE members will be used to help with the process. Teachers and organisations will assist with the content, to make sure that trusted websites are being used. Eg. The Jewish Museum and The Board of Deputies are both trusted sites.

Dr. Alan Shaw was happy to look over the Jewish curriculum and Nicola Santamaria offered to look at the Catholic curriculum.

**Q.** Would the syllabus be published on the Council website?

**A.** It is good practice to publish it for everyone to view it. Some LA do not do that, but hold back materials eg. user friendly documents for schools.

**Q.** Would it be appropriate to bring it to the schools forum meeting?

**A.** No, as the schools forum just discuss school finances. There is a primary and secondary Headteachers forum and it can be presented there.

### **Barnet SACRE Annual Report**

SACRE members **approved** the Annual Report.

The Clerk will share the Annual Report with the DfE, NASACRE and Barnet Council.

**ACTION: MG**

## **6. Collective Worship statutory responsibilities including:**

Jan informed that she is waiting for guidance on CW which is coming from NASACRE and AREIAC.

Jan reported that no formal complaints or withdrawals have been brought to the attention of SACRE. Anything that does come up is handled and resolved quickly to avoid escalation.

The NASACRE AGM is taking place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in York. Places are available if any SACRE member would like to attend. Please contact Jan or Maria. **ACTION: All SACRE Members**

## **7. Links with other bodies**

The Barnet SACRE has good links nationally and locally with the Diocese/Interfaith /NASACRE/REC/AREIAC and NATRE and regional Hubs.

Jan informed that there is a lot happening nationally. NASACRE are running webinars and training sessions. SACRE members are encouraged to attend where possible. The Barnet SACRE is affiliated to NATRE and has access to websites and training sessions. There are also resources available for teachers on the NATRE site.

There is ongoing lobbying of AREIAC to be in conversation with Ofsted with regards to RE inspections. There RE Hub Lead Stacey Burman is offering training for SACRE members who would like to be a speaker and go into schools.

The REC has produced a new National Content Standard for RE. It is a useful starting point for good practice for RE and it is being used in Barnet to see what is wanted in the ASC.

The Ofsted RE Annual Review is publicly available, but few people get sent it. The status of foundation subjects has improved, but in too many primary and secondary schools the RE received is of poor quality. This can be seen in the Ofsted Annual Report for 2023.

**Q.** Is this assessment on just community schools and faith schools?

**A.** It did not say faith schools. It would be non-faith and community schools as SIAMs covers the faith schools and VA schools. The Ofsted report highlights that there is a lack of deep teaching and deep knowledge. This is not a criticism of the teachers, but of 'stakeholders' funding and training. Additional support and training is needed to raise the profile of the subject.

Jan informed that RE is a statutory responsibility and by law it must be offered in schools and SACRE needs to monitor that this is happening.

RETAPEA – This is an OU international project, supported by SACRE, in which Bishop Douglas School participated in. The project has finished, but the resources are outstanding. The event was attended by Kevin and Jan.

There is a Peace Vigil taking place with many religious leaders attending. Dr. Alan Shaw will be attending with a 50 strong choir of pupils from three faith schools. The event is an Interfaith Festival in Hampstead Garden Suburb on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at St. Jude's.

#### **8. Borough of Barnet/ BEL's: SACRE's own arrangements (statutory responsibilities) including:**

Neil informed SACRE members of the challenges that schools are facing. Budgets for schools are tight and they are struggling on the funding allocated to them. This is having an impact on staffing and resources.

Work has been done with schools and support provided with regard to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Schools have dealt with the issue well and they all feel supported by Barnet and also by the police. Clearly there are continuing tensions. Jewish and Muslim groups have met.

The Ofsted Annual Report has been shared across all schools with regard to RE. Appendix A provides a contextual background of the ethnic groups and shows the population becoming more diverse. GCSE RE in Barnet stands at 80% of Barnet students achieving grade 4 or above.

There have been few Ofsteds shared since the last meeting and there were no deep dives in RE.

The new syllabus will be welcome, as it will refresh RE in Barnet. Once it is launched SACRE will monitor it, to see if schools are following the new syllabus and the quality of impact.

#### **9. Borough of Barnet/ BEL's: SACRE's own arrangements (statutory responsibilities) including:**

The next SACRE meeting was to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 in person in the Town Hall Committee Room 1. However, this coincides with Shavuot. The Clerk will speak to Dr. Alan Shaw to find out a suitable date. **ACTION: MG**

There will be awards for schools and teachers. The Kevin McSharry award will go to a primary school teacher and pupil and a secondary school teacher and student for their outstanding contribution in RE in Barnet. There will be a SACRE group formed to look and decide on the winners of these categories. The school awards are for any school and not just community schools.

#### **10. AOB**

Ruth (ASC member-and co-opted temporary member of SACRE) spoke about the work she has done, looking into RE in Tower Hamlets having been awarded a grant from Cullen St Gabriel's. She has proposed a similar project that would be co-managed with Jan. The new video project will support the Ann Taves work specifically. She proposes to interview people in Barnet on their life, religion, world view and day to day living. Ruth and Jan are thinking of applying for more funding, so that this can be done in Barnet. The focus for Barnet would be for primary schools and to reach as many people as possible to share their own world views with the children. Ruth and Jan asked for Barnet SACRE's blessing to proceed with this funding submission. This was granted. **ACTION: JM/RM**

#### **11. FUTURE DATES**

##### **Meeting dates for 2023-2024**

- In person meeting date and venue to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm

Chair of Barnet SACRE: .....

Date: .....