

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Minutes of the Lewisham SACRE meeting

which was open to the press and public and was held on
Thursday 28 September 2023

At Catford Community Church, The Point, 401 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6NZ.

These minutes were approved by the SACRE on: 2023.

GROUP	REPRESENTING	NAME	PRESENT
A	Baha'i	Vacant	
A	Buddhism	David Hutchens	Ap
A	Free Church (Assemblies of God)	Pastor Nick Hughes (Chair	y
A	Free Church (Baptist)	Vacant	
A	Free Churches (URC)	Vacant	
A	Hinduism	Sharmila Manoharan	y
A	Hinduism	Vallipuram Bala	y
A	Humanism	Jennifer Sutherland	y
A	Humanism	John Turner	y
A	Independent Evangelical	Elizabeth Maxted	y
A	Islam	Imam Ashraf	Ap
A	Islam	Imam Sabir	y
A	Judaism	Gerald Rose	y
A	Judaism	Joan Goldberg	Late Ap
A	Pentecostal	Layo Afuape	Late Ap
A	Pentecostal Layo's Substitute	Cheryl Abbam	
A	Pentecostal Substitute	Br Ogbu Olu	
A	Roman Catholic	Rt. Rev. Monsignor Nicholas Rotherham	y
A	Sikhism	Vacant	
B	CofE Diocesan Board of Education Diocesan RE Adviser (Primary)	Shaun Burns (Deputy Chair)	y
B	Church of England Primary teacher	Karen Hansen	y
B	Church of England Secondary teacher	David Osborne	
B	Church of England Minister/Governor	Vacant	
B	The Church of England	Ms Gwen Carney	y
C	Academy/Free School	Vacant	
C	Lewisham Headteachers & Deputies	Vacant	
C	NAS/UWT	Korkor Burnett	y
C	NEU	Kim Knappett (ASC Chair)	y

C	NEU	Simon Cardy	Ap
C	NEU	Sian Blackwood-Carlyle	y
C	NEU	Janey Joaovel	y
D	Director of Education	Angela Scattergood	Ap
D	Substitute for Angela Scattergood	Ruth Griffith	
D	LA members	Cllr Jacq Paschoud	Ap
D	LA members	Cllr Liz Johnston-Franklin	y
D	LA members	Cllr Aliya Sheikh	y
D	School Governors (Primary)	Caroline O Kalu	
D	School Governors (Secondary)	Vacant	
D	Substitute for Angela Scattergood	Anthony Doudle	y
OTHER	PREVENT (associate for consultation)	Martin Gormlie	
OTHER	Primary teacher	Judith Nweze	
OTHER	Rastafarian (co-optee)	Vacant	
OTHER	RE School Improvement Officer	Denise Chaplin	y
OTHER	Young Mayor Team	Katy Brown	
OTHER	Young Mayor Team	Nicholas Gunner	y
OTHER	SACRE Clerk	Stephen Sealy	y

Boxed text signifies action to be taken, while underlined text signifies decisions that had been made.

The meeting began at 6.40pm.

1 WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS.

Kim welcomed all the to The Point, the community space for Catford Community Church where she is one of the leaders, summarising the activities for which the space is used. She explained that refreshments had been laid on by the NEU. The Chair requested Kim express the committee's gratitude for this.

The Chair introduced himself and thanked attendees for their commitment to SACRE. He recalled the student recently killed in Croydon and said that much of what the committee does is aimed at helping young people navigate life, recognising also that what the committee shapes in the borough can impact a generation in a powerful way.

1A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

These are noted in the above table.

The Chair reminded members to provide substitutes if they're regularly unable to attend.

1B CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF ITEMS FOR THE MEETING.

The order of items for the meeting was agreed.

1C MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Denise said that the number of new members was probably the largest recorded in a single meeting and she encouraged those who hadn't yet completed the NASACRE induction training to do so, adding that the next NASACRE event would be held in May 2024.

She added that she was awaiting confirmation of a new Baha'i representative.

2 Minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held in June 2023 at Emmanuel Church

These were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda

Denise reported that she and Kim had met with the Young Mayor's Advisors at the start of the summer holiday. The young people hadn't been familiar with the work of the committee, but the census and constitution were discussed in the meeting.

Nick G reported that he had also discussed SACRE with the young people later who considered the term 'Religious Education' to be an unhelpfully restrictive term for the subject. They reported that the subject in many schools was taught by teachers who weren't RE specialists and suggested some schools' apathy about the subject. The young people from schools with a religious character considered the subject important whilst about 90% of the others present considered it a side issue in their education. They had also expressed a lack of knowledge on what multifaith assemblies were. He summarised that the reaction was therefore mixed, with some questioning why RE was taught in schools at all. The size of the group was around 25,

Kim reported that the young people obviously cared a lot about being part of Lewisham and that, although confused about RE, they remembered more of being taught the subject in primary school. They saw the value in knowing about others' faiths and beliefs and understanding and respecting difference. They also appeared to have been taught more 'dry, factual' information rather than having 'real', impactful experiences.

Denise suggested that the choice of name would be irrelevant if the delivery of the subject was not engaging.

She reported that she'd told them that the agreed syllabus would soon be reviewed and that the young people's input was sought, in the hope of the syllabus being engaging and exciting. Whether to give a full place to the Young Mayor's advisers was also discussed.

Nick advised that the decision was pending and was, ultimately, for Lewisham Council to decide.

Denise commented that Nick G's place was assured, but that the committee desired for the young people to be engaged and not necessarily expecting Nick to speak on their behalf. She expressed her desire for the young people to have a permanent place on the committee.

Anthony expressed his willingness to speak to Ruth about this but emphasised the importance of the committee meeting young people at their safe space rather than expecting them to attend meetings.

In response to Nick G seeking clarification on the commitment for full membership, Denise advised that it was attendance respecting their expertise as representatives of their generation in the schools – and giving time for asking specific questions related to their interest group.

Denise expressed her intention for SACRE to return to holding their meetings in a variety of places of worship, to which teachers would also be invited to meet the community before the SACRE meeting to also familiarise themselves with the space and suggested the young advisors may want to attend these.

Nick G advised that if young people were to attend meetings, the agenda points pertaining to them should be scheduled first, after which they could leave the meeting.

Shaun advised that the young people be encouraged to express their voice to the Mayor, at their schools and in other forms of governance.

Nick G questioned if SACRE attends schools to which Denise advised that the committee communicated with schools, but that this was at adult level.

Janey proposed the community held sessions at schools, with a positive spin put on how questions are asked.

Cllr Sheikh advised that she was passionate about the continuation of RE but that while engaging with the Young Mayor's team was desirable, the development of the curriculum should be formulated in the same way as for other subjects, with young people helping to shape how it's taught rather than its content. She suggested the committee should have the tools to decide the syllabus.

Anthony emphasised the importance of listening to the lived experience of the young people, but that good professional development for teachers was important, citing the adage that those who remember more, learn more.

Shaun advised that OfSTED inspectors had been asked to carry out more deep dives in RE.

Gerald Rose advised that he visited schools to deliver talks on his faith, primarily to primary schools. He suggested that an increase in visits of personnel like him could advance the cause and would also take the pressure off disinterested teachers.

He asked if any action could be taken to promote visits to secondary schools, recounting how, by setting up a synagogue and arranging a Shabbat evening in primary schools, he had made the experience interactive and engaging.

Elizabeth added that parents are often invited into primary schools to do this also, but that more links between primary and secondary schools would benefit secondary schools.

Cllr Liz emphasised how invaluable the student voice was, adding that the key aspect of teaching RE was focussing on the person, not just the 'religious' part.

With regard to RE being delivered by appropriately qualified staff, Denise said that SACRE didn't know where gaps in schools were, but that the committee had undertaken a school website trawl to review delivery.

Gerald reported a lack of progress on the matter referred to in the previous minutes regarding using the DBS service.

Anthony suggested that schools have the choice to use the update service, but committed to progress this matter and respond to Gerald outside of the meeting.

4 Lewisham SACRE Constitution review

(This item followed agenda point 7.)

In view of the discussion on the Young Mayor's team, Denise proposed that the constitution for the SACRE stay the way it was after amends made in the previous meetings and committed to send it through to Lewisham's Governance team as it formed part of the larger Lewisham Constitution.

5 Lewisham SACRE's Collective Worship Guidance

This was agreed by the committee as a satisfactory final draft.

6 NASACRE AGM – Feedback from members who attended

Kim reported that networking with members from other SACREs was beneficial. However, she rued the missed opportunity to meet with co-members after the official events to discuss how the training could be applied to the local SACRE. She suggested a Lewisham meeting after future events would be advantageous.

Denise reiterated the significance of the advice from the Rt Hon Charles Clarke that members engage with local politicians, elected members and MPs.

She commented that the organisation and management of the conference had faced significant challenges, as the lead organiser was taken seriously ill shortly before the meeting and the venue's lack of previous experience hosting a similar event meant the spaces used were not helpful, for example lighting was poor. The venue also implemented additional security procedures in view of their previous terrorist security incident at Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge.

Shaun had considered the event to be positive and valuable. He summarised the key theme of Charles Clarke's message as urging members to be alert about the future of SACREs, ensuring that SACREs retain a role regardless of the political landscape, noting how this linked to Nick Gunner's previous appeal regarding the youth voice and Shaun's suggestion that young people use their voice to raise the place of RE to politicians.

Denise encouraged SACRE members to read about Charles Clarke's presentation in the latest NASACRE Briefing.

Denise added that whatever the future in relation to changing the legal framework for RE, SACRE's aim was to be able to hand over RE in its best possible position to whoever would inherit responsibility for it **if and** when the need arose.

Shaun reported that the charitable organisation Culham St Gabriel's is a funding source that SACREs can access. Denise added that the Westhill grant are another source of possible SACRE funding and that there were accessible online webinars about this.

7 Key Stage 4 Update

(This followed agenda point 3)

Anthony explained that he had been in post since the start of September 2023 and now replaced Sandra Roberts on SACRE as Angela Scattergood's substitute. Giles, his secondary school improvement colleague, had met with secondary schools individually last term, after talking with Sandra and Denise, to discuss curriculum issues including RE, on SACRE's request. Many of the schools that offered RE GCSEs had reported high grades, but not all students had been entered and the low number of schools taking up the subject for GCSE was an issue.

One of these schools had requested more support.

Anthony reported that he had visited the curriculum section of all of the secondary school websites earlier that day, noting that only two contained references to the Agreed Syllabus.

He felt a pertinent theme of the SACRE was about re-engaging its role, adding it was important for the committee to take schools with it on its journey. One of the two Prendergast Schools had linked to the Agreed Syllabus and he suggested that a minimum request for all the websites should be a link to the Agreed Syllabus.

Denise acknowledged that it had taken a while for the current syllabus to be operational due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and any revision of the syllabus would take time to be processed and agreed. She was concerned that the leadership of some schools may not appreciate that the agreed syllabus is statutory.

Anthony proposed that the network meetings be reinstated. Nick had already offered to host a Primary network; Denise asked Korkor/Janey if they could host a secondary network meeting each.

Anthony informed that he could ensure that information on these events were uploaded to the Services for Schools website once dates and times were arranged and agreed.

Denise committed to send through details to enable him to do so.

As the Secondary Leadership Forum was also imminent, he committed to mention this subject there.

The Chair expressed his concern for non-specialist teachers filling in for RE. Denise advised that teachers in schools without a religious foundation were legally permitted to withdraw from teaching RE if they chose not to teach it.

8 Moving RE and Multi-Cultural Resources from the Renewal site to Lewisham – feedback and consideration of further dates to complete the task

Denise reported that she had emailed Renewal requesting dates to avoid for the next session of organising the resources. For the benefit of the new members she summarised that the closure of the South London MultiFaith and MultiCultural Resources Centre, which Lewisham Council had previously operated, meant that its resources had been dispersed to several places, one of which is the Renewal site. The committee is working to return these resources to Lewisham and in a Summer visit to the Renewal centre, members had

organised about a third of the residual resources. She suggested a maximum of two more visits would be necessary, with the end goal being to reduce the volume of resources held to those with topical relevance and then host an open session for schools to take any resources that they desired.

She committed to circulate the dates when she has been informed of these.

Shaun added that as custodians of these resources, it was the committee's moral responsibility to look after these resources and make them available to Lewisham schools.

Denise said that any members wanting a wooden plan chest, glass fronted cabinet, coffee table and/or two chairs should contact SACRE to find out how to arrange collection of these.

She committed to take photos of the residual resources and circulate them via the briefing.

Kim advised that rubbish can be deposited by Lewisham residents in the Landmann Way Reuse and Recycling Centre which is in the vicinity of the Renewal centre.

9 Information Exchange & AOB

9A NASACRE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Denise reminded members that all members could access any of the available (Zoom) training events.

Shaun reported that Bishop Karowei, who was the Bishop of Woolwich, one of the three Episcopal Areas of the Diocese of Southwark, and a Lewisham resident of great faith, had died a few weeks previously and his funeral had been held earlier in the day.

On the prompt of Denise, Gerald advised that he hadn't received any updates on the 2024 Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), referencing uncertainty over the Mayor's involvement in this event. He summarised that prior to the Covid lockdowns, a professional theatre group developed in Lewisham were commissioned to hold HMD sessions with schools, taking lessons from the Holocaust experience to encourage positive interpersonal relationships and culminating in an event usually held on the Sunday nearest 27 January (the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz). The Jewish community was hoping to revive these sessions.

Denise expressed the intention of the committee not to hamper or confuse the organisation of the event, but advised that Anthony and herself would alert schools about the availability of HMD resources.

Cllr Liz committed to contact Damian, the Mayor of Lewisham, and Brenda, on behalf of the SACRE about the importance of Damian's role in relation to the HMD activities, stressing the importance of Denise to proceed with notifying schools of this.

Shaun advised that the theme of the 2024 HMD event was 'Fragility of Freedom'.

Imam Sabir reported that some Muslim pupils had experienced inaccessibility of Halal meals in schools, which Anthony committed to look into.

Gerald advised that he had attended training sessions for personnel visiting schools, through the RE Hubs. He explained that the Jewish Board of Deputies had organised a session for Jewish SACRE representatives which any visitors to schools could now access.

Bala reported that January was Tamil Heritage Month and thanked Lewisham Council for its contribution in enabling this. He committed to share more details about this in the next meeting.

10 Dates of future meetings and venues already agreed

(There were no changes to the published dates.)

The meeting ended at 8.00pm.