

CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CALDERDALE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Minutes of SACRE Meeting (AGM)
Tuesday 17 June 2025
5.30 pm – Virtual Meeting

Members in attendance:

Committee A

Representing Other Denominations & Faiths	Ms Katie Jennings (KJ)
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Committee B

Representing the Church of England	Ms Shelagh Hirst (SH) (Chair) Ms Helen Lever (HL) Ms Janet Lapthorne (JL) Ms Patricia Boyd (PB)
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Committee C

Teachers/Unions	Mr Mark Sharp (MS) Ms Ruth Walker (RW) Ms Helen Crowther (HC)
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Committee D

Representing Calderdale Council	Cllr Brenda Monteith (BM) Cllr Dot Foster (DF) Cllr Israr Ahmed (IA)
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In attendance

Mrs Debby Simpson – Clerk (DS) Mr Prashant Kumar (PK) (Part) Mr Ed Marks (EM)

Quorum for the meeting is 1 representative from each of the 4 Committees

FORMAL BUSINESS

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made due to guests being invited to the meeting.

Members were asked if anyone objected to the meeting being recorded. There were no objections.

Apologies had been received from Robert Fox

The Clerk informed members that unfortunately Kate Dearden MP had emailed 5 minutes before the meeting to say that herself and Joshua Fenton-Glynn had to be in Chambers for the next few hours and therefore wouldn't be able to attend the meeting. She also apologised for the late notification of this.

At this point it was also discussed that Committee A were short of members which made it difficult to be quorate. KJ was also a practising Catholic and was prepared to move from representing Committee C to Committee A until more Catholic representatives were found. Members agreed to this.

2. Election of Chair

SH had sent in a nomination to carry on as Chair. No other nominations had been received. Members were happy for SH to continue for a further year.

3. Election of Vice Chair

SH nominated MS to continue as Vice Chair. MS was happy to carry on for the next year. Members were happy to agree this.

4. Election of Group Chairs and Vice Chairs for groups, A, B, C and D

It was agreed as in previous years that these will be called upon only if needed as there were very few occasions when a Chair would be needed.

SH said that last year they had started looking at a Steering Group that consisted of the Chair, Vice Chair and a member of each Committee. The Steering Group would also be clerked when necessary. The Terms of Reference for the Steering Group was to look at some of the requirements that needed action in between meetings – for example last year we looked at the final version of the Annual Report before it went to the DfE. The next meeting is likely to be in the Autumn Term to look at Self Evaluation.

Previously only SH, MS and DF had attended so there was no-one from Committee A. This was due to MS and SH covering Committee B and C but ideally it should be one person from each Committee plus the Chair and Vice Chair.

After discussion it was agreed that HC (Committee C) would join the Steering Group and DF would continue to represent Committee D. **ACTION: SH would send out an email to other members not present to see if anyone would come forward from Committees A and B.**

5. Membership Review

Members had been provided with a list of attendance over the past year and this was discussed in detail. **ACTION: DAS to write to the following members who were not present at this meeting and had not attended a meeting over the last year to inform them that if they did not attend the next meeting they would no longer be on SACRE: MS, JA, SB.**

It was noted that elected members who are appointed by the Council can send substitutes should they not be able to attend.

SKH noted that at the recent NASACRE AGM Conference it was suggested/ recommended that re Committee A had more than 1 representative for each faith in order a) accommodate different sects/sections within each faith and b) to increase the pool of representatives to enable quorate meetings. It was agreed to recruit more faith representatives asap through our links with the Interfaith Council and Sail Suleman, Cohesion and Equality Officer (Hate Crime Reduction)

GENERAL SACRE BUSINESS

a) RE in the National Curriculum/Raising the profile of Religious Education (RE) both Locally and Nationally – discussion with Members of Parliament

As discussed at the beginning of the meeting SH explained that this item needed to be deferred as no MP's could be present.

Members discussed the options available to hold a meeting again. The meeting needed to be held before the date the Bill started to go through. **ACTION: SH to check what this date is.**

It was agreed that the best way would be to hold a face-to-face meeting and possibly with Kirklees SACRE, either on a Friday when MPs are not in Parliament or during recess. If it was held with Kirklees it would also allow more MPs to attend. The meeting would be a one item meeting and be an extra SACRE meeting. **ACTION: SH to liaise with Mark James, Chair of Kirklees to see if this is possible.**

It was noted that although members were disappointed that there were no MPs they understood there was nothing they could do about it but thanked SH for all the hard work she had put in to try and arrange this meeting.

At this point PK left the meeting.

b) Minutes of previous meeting held 11 March 2025

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

SH thanked DAS for the extensive notes taken at the meeting that highlighted what a really good meeting it was which was presented by specialist RE teachers Jake Womack and Melissa Wells from Todmorden High School. Both teachers and pupils had shown how enthused they were about the subject with some pupils stating how it had changed their lives as they looked at

things differently now. SH said that if the MPs had come to this meeting she would have recommended to them to go visit the school to see how RE works there.

As an aside SH mentioned the workshop she attended at the NASACRE conference about the RE Quality Mark. She had informed them that in Calderdale one school had recently received the Gold Quality Mark and that we also provide a SACRE Quality Mark which is on the same lines as a Bronze Quality Mark. This helps us monitor what a school provides for RE and also encourages school to go for the National Quality Mark in RE. They were then showing a video about Quality Mark and how it enthused people but unfortunately it didn't work. When SH saw it on an IPAD – it was actually Jake at Tod High so SH had shared the information from the SACRE meeting presentation with members of the workshop.

c) Matters Arising

Website Information: SH had agreed that she would do the last few website checks but due to other matters taking precedence and the fact that she had also had an operation, she had not been able to complete this. However this would be completed by the end of term. **ACTION: SH to complete final website checks.**

Father Michael Quinn: Due to the Interfaith meeting being very close to SH's operation she was unable to attend the meeting. KJ had now become a Catholic Representative but SH will still speak to Father Michael at the next meeting. **ACTION: SH to speak Father Michael Quinn re Catholic representation on SACRE.**

Safeguarding Policy: SH had contacted NASACRE regarding a Safeguarding Policy who had confirmed that should a safeguarding issue occur then SACRE would follow the Safeguarding Policy of their LA. The would get this by contacting the Clerk to SACRE.

d) Confidential Item - Update from Jemima Flintoff – Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion

Due to the confidentiality of this item it has been completed as a separate minute.