

## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

Wednesday, 21 June 2017

**2.00 pm**

Kingston Centre, Fairway, Stafford ST16 3TW

John Tradewell  
Director of Strategy, Governance and Change  
13 June 2017

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### **A G E N D A**

1. **Apologies**
2. **Welcome to New Members**
3. **Declaration of Any other Business**
4. **Minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 8 February 2017** (Pages 1 - 14)
5. **Update on Key Issues** (Pages 15 - 28)  
  
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
6. **Tell MAMA Update** (Pages 29 - 34)  
  
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
7. **Westhill/NASACRE Award** (Pages 35 - 42)  
  
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities
8. **Religions are not Monoliths** (Pages 43 - 52)



Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

9. **NASACRE Update** (Pages 53 - 54)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

10. **NASACRE and the Interfaith Network** (Pages 55 - 60)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

11. **Applications for Variation of Practice** (Pages 61 - 62)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

12. **SACRE Annual Report** (Pages 63 - 64)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

13. **SACRE Budget 2017-18** (Pages 65 - 66)

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

14. **AOB**

15. **Date of next meeting**

The next SACRE meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 8 November 2017, 2.00 pm, at The Kingston Centre, Stafford.

#### **Membership**

Linda Goodwin	Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal (Vice-Chairman)
Andrea Hopkins	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf (Chairman)
Mrs J Grundy	Dr Laow Panyasiri
Margaret Crossland	Mohamed Parekh
Paul Moseley	Sam Phillips
Sam Kirwan	Ian Lawson
Julie Thompson (Co-Optee)	Lauren Nicholson Ward
Sonia Andjelkovic	Claire Shaw
Diana Cutler	Mark Cooper
Tajinder Singh	Bernard Peters
Paul Lewis	Mark Sutton
G Devadason	Syed Hussain





**MINUTES**

**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Meeting - 8 February 2017**

Present: **Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf**

Linda Goodwin, Andrea Hopkins, Sam Kirwan, Julie Thompson (Co-Optee), Sonia Andjelkovic, Diana Cutler, Dr Laow Panyasiri, Sam Phillips, Peter Davies, Caroline Wood and Ian Lawson

Apologies for absence: Mrs J Grundy, Paul Moseley, Emma Jardine-Phillips, Muhammad Parekh, Terry Finn, David Williams, Lauren Nicholson Ward, Mark Cooper and Claire Shaw

Also in attendance - Julie Roberts

**PART ONE**

**24. Minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 9 November 2016**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the SACRE meeting held on 9 November 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**25. Update on Key Issues**

The SACRE received an update on key issues that had occurred since their last meeting, including:

- a) An independent Commission had been established by the Religious Education Council (REC) to make wide-ranging recommendations in relation to Religious Education (RE) in schools. The Commission had been asked by the REC to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE in all primary schools, secondary schools and further education colleges in England. More information about the Commission, including its membership, could be found on the REC website.

NASACRE was an important member body of the REC and had urged member SACREs to send any recommendations, suggestions, etc. to the Chair. The deadline for submissions was the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and therefore a submission had been sent on SACREs behalf. The Chairman went through the “Call for Evidence” questionnaire and outlined the responses which were sent to the Commission. In relation to a question on resources being available for teachers to learn about other faiths, Dr. Laow Panyasiri pointed out that his Buddhist Temple received regular requests for schools to visit. However, it was a cause for concern that teachers often had no knowledge or understanding of the Buddhist faith. Dr Laow asked if there was anything the SACRE could do to address this. The Chairman suggested that he could work with Dr. Laow and Emma Jardine-Phillips on this issue, and perhaps Emma could feed this into the courses which she delivered to schools.

- b) NASACRE were now accepting bookings for the NASACRE Conference and AGM 2017 on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at the York Hilton Hotel in York. Speakers would include Dr. Joyce Miller and Professor Aaqil Ahmed.

- c) New guidance on assessment in RE had been published by Dave Francis, Lead Consultant, RE:ONLINE following a summit held at Culham St. Gabriel's. This new guidance was created for RE curriculum planners. Whilst this guidance had arrived too late for Staffordshire SACRE to take account of, it should be remembered that it was non statutory. It was however positive to note that the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus reflected the new guidance as both were based on age related expectations.
- d) The Chairman had recently been contacted by Deborah Weston from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) who was enquiring about Staffordshire's Syllabus requirement at Key Stage 4. NATRE were preparing two test cases against schools elsewhere in England alleged to be non-compliant. In the light of judgements from these cases, SACRE may wish to consider adopting a more pro-active role in relation to issues of non-compliance within the County.

**RESOLVED** – That the update on key issues be noted.

## **26. Tell MAMA Update**

At their meeting in November 2016 Members had considered the findings of the Tell MAMA Annual Report, which highlighted hate crime against Muslims in the UK. The report, entitled "The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred", looked at where Muslims reported hate crime against them. Amongst other findings it identified that 11% of attacks were in places of education, and the report commented that it was important that headteachers, teachers and safeguarding leads in schools were trained to deal with Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate. The SACRE had therefore decided to ask the Local Authority what measures were in place in light of the report to deal with these issues. The Chairman read out the response which he had received from the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Environment. Members expressed their disappointment at the perfunctory nature of the response, and requested that they have sight of the Chairman's original letter, the response, and the subsequent follow up email from the Chairman. The SACRE was keen to work with the County Council and contribute to its work in the wider community on this issue. Consequently members needed to be aware of the details of any policies which were in place, and requested that the Chairman pursue this matter further.

**RESOLVED** – That the Chairman contact the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Environment for more detailed clarification of the measures which the local authority had in place to deal with Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate.

## **27. Agreed Syllabus Launch Event**

An event had been held on 31 January 2017 at Entrust Headquarters to officially launch the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2016. It had been well attended by representatives of a range of schools, a number of SACRE members, and the Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills. There were artefact stands representing various faiths, presentations and quizzes. Those who had attended agreed that it had been a success and a real celebration of the Syllabus. It had been particularly pleasing to have a group of children from St. Dominic's High School in Brewood attend the event to share their experience and views of RE in the classroom.

**RESOLVED** – That the success of the launch of the Agreed Syllabus be noted.

## **28. NASACRE Update**

The Chairman reminded members of the conference in Birmingham on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 being run jointly by NASACRE and the Association of RE Inspectors, Advisors and Consultants (AREIAC), on the topic of “Religions are not Monoliths” considering how to explore and cover diversity in Christianity and Islam in the classroom.

**RESOLVED** – That the oral update by the Chairman be noted.

## **29. The Accord Award**

As agreed at their meeting in November 2016, members were informed that the Chairman had submitted an application for an Accord Award on behalf of Staffordshire SACRE (Appendix 1). The application revealed an in-depth picture of the work and achievements of Staffordshire SACRE. Regrettably this was not placed by the judges in this year’s Inclusivity Award. However, the judges did view Staffordshire as a serious candidate and were grateful for the efforts gone to in applying for the Award, and the efforts that the SACRE was making. The nomination drew particular praise for:

- the production of separate guidance given for special schools;
- the wide range of SACRE representatives; and
- the letters of praise which SACRE sends to high performing and letters of advice to low performing schools.

The Chairman reported that the Accord organisation had subsequently asked if it could quote Staffordshire SACRE’s Award submission in Accord’s own response to the RES’s Commission on RE.

**RESOLVED** – That the comments of the Accord Inclusivity Award judges be noted.

## **30. The Big NASACRE Survey**

Members were informed that a research survey was being conducted by the NASACRE Chairman, Paul Smalley, who was also a senior lecturer in RE at Edge Hill University. In order for NASACRE to be able to represent the views of its member SACREs at a national level, including to the REC and other policymakers, it was important that NASACRE try to develop as full an understanding as possible of the views of all SACRE members. Data from the survey would be anonymised before being discussed with the NASACRE Executive and being used to inform policymakers about the strengths, views and hopes of SACREs across the country. It was also hoped that the results of this research would be published more widely in suitable journals to inform the wider RE community.

Members had group discussions on responses to some of the key questions in the survey, and then shared and agreed these with the wider group. The Chairman undertook to complete the survey in full in consultation with the RE Consultant, Emma Jardine-Phillips.

**RESOLVED** – That the Big NASACRE Survey be completed and returned by the Chairman, on behalf of the Staffordshire SACRE.

### **31. Applications for Variation of Practice**

There were none on this occasion.

### **32. GCSE Results 2016**

SACRE received a statistical analysis of the standards achieved in GCSE and GCE Advanced Level Religious Studies by pupils examined in the summer of 2016. In accordance with the SACRE remit, the analysis of GCSE and A Level results only took account of local authority maintained schools, and the Chairman pointed out that the number of schools had reduced owing to schools having converted to Academies.

Overall, both national results and Staffordshire's results for GCSE Religious Studies in 2016 were broadly in line with overall results achieved in 2015. Results for all pupils showed that pupils in Staffordshire achieved slightly below the national average at grades A\*-C but in line with the national average for A\*-G. It was important to take note of the number of pupils on roll versus the number of entries. This gave an insight into the provision that different schools had in place for pupils at Key Stage 4.

Both national results and Staffordshire's results for A Level Religious Studies in 2016 were also broadly in line with overall results achieved in 2015. Results for all pupils showed that pupils in Staffordshire achieved slightly below the national average at grades A\*-B, but broadly in line with the national average for A\*-E. It was noted that the number of entries per school was small, but that this was not unexpected at Key Stage 5 for which examination courses would be optional.

SACRE requested that letters of congratulations be sent to those schools whose pupils had achieved commendably above the national average results for those achieving A\*-C grades in GCSE RE. They agreed that letters should also be sent to those high achieving schools at A level.

**RESOLVED** – That:

- a) The report be received; and
- b) Letters of congratulations be sent to the schools whose pupils achieved results above the national average in GCSE and A Level Religious Studies.

### **33. AOB**

The Chairman informed members that this would be the last meeting which County Councillor Peter Davies would attend, as he would not be standing again in the County Council Elections in May. He thanked Mr. Davies for his contribution to the work of the SACRE and said that it had been greatly appreciated throughout his 12 years as a member. On behalf of SACRE he wished Mr. Davies all the best for the future.



#### **34. Date of Next Meeting**

That the next SACRE meeting be held on 28 June 2017, 2.00 pm, at The Kingston Centre, Stafford.

**Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf  
Chairman**

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Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.





believing in children, learning together

## Inclusive SACREs Award nomination form

### 1. Contact details:

<b>SACRE name:</b>	Staffordshire SACRE
<b>Name and position of main contact for the Award:</b>	
<b>Main contact's telephone number and email address:</b>	
<b>Name and email of SACRE Chair (if different from above):</b>	Michael Metcalf: prebmetcalf@hotmail.com
<b>Name and contact email of RE advisors, clerks or local authority staff/ officers that currently actively support the SACRE:</b>	Emma Jardine-Phillips (as above)  Roberts, Julie (Clerk to SACRE) julie.roberts@staffordshire.gov.uk

### 2. SACRE details:

Please provide the information listed below by either including a relevant hyperlink or indicating that the document is to be attached by email with this completed form.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Copy of the current syllabus, and any accompanying guidance:</b>	
<b>Copy of the SACRE constitution, along with any standing orders:</b>	
<b>Link to SACRE website (if exists):</b>	
<b>Link to last annual report:</b>	

<sup>1</sup> If only a paper copy can be submitted, please post it to the Accord Coalition at Unit A, 39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB.

Please list the current membership of your committees A, B, C and D, or any members who are co-opted or attend regularly as an observer, and indicate for which party, tradition or interest group(s) they each represent. Feel free to also indicate any known vacancies.

**Committee A:**

<p><b>Committee A: Christian &amp; other religious denominations</b></p>	<p>Hifsa Haroon-Iqbal          Muhammad Parekh          G. Devadason          Pramaha Laow Panyasiri          Sam Phillips          Margaret Crossland          Ann Hewetson          Tajinder Singh          Diane Cutler          Paul Lewis          Paul Moseley          Susan Devereux</p>
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**Committee B:**

<p><b>Committee B: Church of England</b></p>	<p>Sue Blackmore          Colin Hopkins          Michael Metcalf          Jayne Grundy          Rosemary Woodward</p>
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**Committee C:**

<p><b>Committee C: Teacher Associations</b></p>	<p>Sonia Andjelkovic          Mick Dwyer          Sam Kirwan</p>
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**Committee D:**

	<b>Terry Finn</b> <b>Peter Davies</b> <b>Ian Lawson</b> <b>David Williams</b> <b>Caroline Wood</b>
<b>Co-opted:</b>	
	<b>Julie Thompson</b> <b>Julia Almond</b>
<b>Observers:</b>	

### **3. SACRE remit and resources:** (no more than 250 words)

Please describe – in no more than 225 words – the characteristics of the area the SACRE covers and the number of schools that are currently required to adhere to its syllabus. This is also an opportunity to describe the access to subject expertise and the level of material support the SACRE receives, including from the local authority.

Staffordshire is a vast County with a diverse mix of over 400 schools (approximately 200 schools are required to use the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus). Located in the heart of England, Staffordshire is home to approximately 838,000 people. Approximately 75% of the area of the county is rural but only about 25% of the population live in rural areas. The most authoritative ethnicity figures are from the Census and the black and minority ethnic (BME) population of Staffordshire in 2011 represented 6.4%. This is below the UK average and the West Midlands regional average. Staffordshire SACRE is well supported by Staffordshire County council...

Staffordshire has access to a Specialist RE Consultant

#### **4. Implementation of being an inclusive SACRE:** (no more than 850 words)

This is the most important section. The judges recognise there are many competing expectations and demands placed upon the subject. However they are especially interested in the way that the SACRE have sought to boost inclusion, community cohesion, mutual understanding and mutual respect between those of different religions and non-religious worldviews. Please provide specific examples of how these aims are met. It is also recommended to set out at least one innovative approach that has been particularly important or successful. Judges will be interested to find out how the Agreed Syllabus directly advances these aims, but other areas of the SACRE's work that could prove of interest include:

- building a relationship with local schools that are not required to follow the syllabus and forging partnerships with other agencies (such as local academy chains, multi-academy chains and faith school sponsors, or higher or further education providers)
- urging the local authority to ensure that the membership of the SACRE and Agreed Syllabus Conference is diverse and representative, including of the non-religious
- considering the views of pupils, or developing a Youth SACRE or RE Ambassador programme
- support and guidance to schools on making assemblies and/or provision for SMSC development more inclusive
- creative use of Collective Worship determinations
- the production or commissioning of extra resources for teachers, such as with lesson or curriculum planning (please also submit these in digital copy - they will be treated with confidence and only shared amongst the judging panel)
- organising training for Governors or helping tackle gaps training and Career Professional Development for teachers
- developing support and research networks
- celebrating successes by pupils and schools

- identifying an area of the SACRE's weakness and acting upon it
- targeted help to individual schools
- ideas and help for schools to advance their legal duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty<sup>2</sup> and requirement to promote British Values and community cohesion

The Award judges are also interested in the provision of high quality RE more generally, so please consider drawing upon examples that highlight how the SACRE has helped in achieving this. Examples might include:

- new ways of working to alleviate the impact of local authority funding restraints
- sharing ideas and concerns with central government
- ensuring continuity, coherence and sustained learning for pupils moving between primary and secondary phases,
- promoting provision for short course or full RS GCSE and A level

- Academies represented on SACRE include CCET academies and many schools in Staffs are not part of academy chains so forging that relationship higher up has been a challenge. The relationship with individual academies is strong, academies are regularly represented at RE training and development events and regularly request advice from the advisor to sacre regarding teaching and learning.
- Yes examples of humanism and NSU
- SACRE had a strong and well supported youth SACRE up until 2 years ago. There have been changes in the local set up in terms of local authority funding and due to this and the involvement of a private organisation, the closure of council buildings which hosted youth SACRE meetings regularly, the closure of the local University Campus etc. the youth SACRE has had to be placed on hold. There are plans in place to look to how this can be re-started in the coming year. The plans relate to an application for a NATRE award. Events in the past included 3 meetings a year of the youth SACRE, an annual student conference, visits to faith buildings and reporting back to schools via an annual youth SACRE report. Evidence for all of these initiatives is available upon request.
- Extra resources for teachers can be provided (send copies of materials to Michael)
- Governors in staffordshire receive regular updates on RE. They have been kept well informed of the development of the new syllabus, training has been provided by Emma and Mary at the termly Governors briefings (can provide evidence of the governor reports that get sent out) The advisor to SACRE regularly visits schools were requested to provide whole school CPD sessions on aspects of RE, effective teaching and learning, and its relationship to wider curriculum initiatives. Recently the BLNC (a group of affiliated schools within Tamworth) and also the Pirehill cluster of schools (located in stone) have identified gaps in

<sup>2</sup> The Public Sector Equality Duty was created by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and came into force in 2011. It requires all public bodies and those carrying out public functions to have due regard when carrying out their activities to helping eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people.  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

their RE training and provision and arranged for a termly training session for all RE coordinators.

- Letters to schools relating to examination results. SACRE affirms the good things that are happening
- SACRE is regularly represented at friends of faith and also NASACRE conferences, AREIAC conferences etc. information is fed back at SACRE meetings to ensure that information is cascaded to all
- Whole school training sessions were provided to all schools, headteachers and governors were invited to attend – focus was British values and a large part of the session was about how this could be facilitated effectively in schools. The role of RE was a key part of this training.
- Current work around the tell MAMA report
- The syllabus requires schools to have a GCSE/examination syllabus at KS4



**5: Evaluation and planning for the future:** (no more than 200 words)

Where has the SACRE's work and implementation of its approach been most successful, and why? What lessons were learned? In what way was the SACRE's approach improved as a result? What are major barriers to further improvement, and how might they be overcome? Have any ideas and recommendations be made for the next Agreed Syllabus Conference?

Please return the completed nomination to [paul@accordcoalition.org.uk](mailto:paul@accordcoalition.org.uk)

If you wish to submit further external or supplementary evidence for consideration by the judges, please consider including appropriate web links in this form. If you only have information as a hard copy then please consider scanning and uploading it online.



## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017**

### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities An Update on Key Issues**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

#### **2 Summary**

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters which have either been raised at previous SACRE meetings and which have moved forward, or matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

#### **3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

#### **4 Background**

4.1 Since the summer term meeting of the SACRE there have been developments in a number of areas which had previously been agenda items for SACRE or which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on these key developments.

#### **5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

#### **6 Financial implications**

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere, or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

**Contact Officer**  
**Telephone number:**

**Emma Jardine-Phillips**  
**07805 692573**

## **Manchester Arena Attack - Statement from the Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and Moderators of the IFN Faith Communities Forum**

A response to the Manchester Arena attack is attached for members to read. The interfaith network has also provided information and guidance for the wider community:

Looking After One Another: the safety and security of our faith communities.

The document provides short guidelines for faith community organisations working together to respond to inter-community tensions and to attacks, or the threat of attacks, on places of worship or other faith community property. This document is available for members to read online: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities>

### **The Great Get Together**

On 22 February, the Jo Cox Foundation launched The Great Get Together to commemorate the murder of the MP as a way of bringing communities together to build better community cohesion. The events took place over the weekend of 17 -18 June 2017. Were any SACRE members involved/have experiences to share?

### **Religion or belief: dress codes and religious symbols**

In March, the European Court of Justice advised the Belgian government that companies, and in this case G4S, could have a policy that forbade the wearing of religious symbols in the work place. The Court recognized that companies had a right to project a neutral image and that they were within their rights to have policies which upheld that right. This was not deemed to be discriminatory. The advice can be used by judges in EU member states to inform decisions that they make where it has alleged discrimination has taken place, direct or indirect.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has stated: 'Following a ruling from the Court of Justice of the European Union, employers can ban staff from wearing visible religious symbols, but must have a relevant policy in place before doing so.'

### **Religious dress and schools**

The Department for Education, based on case law here, is quite clear that schools in England can determine their own dress codes and that they should do this in consultation with parents. It is not expected that this will change. What may be affected is the right of staff to wear religious dress in school, where a school wished to project a 'neutral' image.

### **SACREs and the ruling**

SACREs may be asked for advice on this matter, especially where there are no interfaith groups that might be consulted. SACREs are advised to look closely at the Equality and Human Rights Commission website for the latest advice from them.

### **The ruling and Brexit**

It is not clear what will happen to such a ruling when the UK leaves the EU in just under

two years. The European Court of Justice is an EU institution, as opposed to the European Court of Human Rights which is a Council of Europe Institution, and there will be some adjustment made in terms of its impact on UK law when the UK leaves the EU.





## NEWS RELEASE

23 May 2017

### **Manchester Arena Attack - Statement from the Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and Moderators of the IFN Faith Communities Forum**

Our thoughts and prayers are with those who lost their lives or were injured in last night's terrorist murders at the Manchester Arena, as they are with their families, all others affected and those responding with assistance.

We deplore and condemn this wanton, brutal and cowardly taking of the lives of young and old.

Let us stand together to oppose terrorism and the ideologies that promote it. Let us also uphold and strengthen the unity of our society and work to ensure that it is a positive and harmonious one where all children and young people can grow up safely and without fear.

It is vital that we all – of every age and background - work to build bridges and positive relationships and to enable difficult issues to be addressed and worked on – always seeking to avoid the use of violence to resolve issues.

We know that each time a terrorist attack occurs, groups within society become the target of abuse or even attack because of terrorist actions which claim, or are perceived by some, as having a link to them. We must stand, likewise, against this. An attack on one is an attack on all.

We remember at this time, in this context, particularly the many in the Greater Manchester area working for good relations.

The Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and Moderators of the IFN Faith Communities Forum

## Notes for editors

1. Press queries to Inter Faith Network: tel 020 7730 0410; email [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)
2. The Inter Faith Network for the UK [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) was founded in 1987 to advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain and to promote good relations between people of different faiths in this country. It works with its member bodies and others to carry out these aims.
3. Member bodies of the Inter Faith Network include: national faith community representative bodies; national, regional and local inter faith bodies; and academic institutions and educational bodies concerned with inter faith issues. A list of member bodies can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/members>.
4. A copy of this statement can be found at <http://interfaith.org.uk/resources/statements-and-messages> and a copy of IFN's statement making policy at [https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Policy\\_on\\_making\\_of\\_statements.pdf](https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Policy_on_making_of_statements.pdf)
5. IFN's recently issued guidance, Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities published in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the National Fire Chiefs' Council can be found at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/press-release-looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-fait>  
That document contains guidance on responding jointly to attacks on places of worship; working for calm at times of tension; and working to build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations. It contains material about how and where to report hate incidents, cyber-attacks, and actual or suspected terrorist activity; where to find information on strengthening the security of buildings; and where to find information about working to build – and strengthen – good inter faith relations locally.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK  
2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7730 0410 Email: [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)  
Registered charity no. 1068934  
Company limited by guarantee no. 3443823. Registered in England.



# Looking after one another



**The safety and security of our  
faith communities**

- Respond jointly – an attack on one is an attack on all
- Calm in times of tension
- Build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations

# The safety and security of our faith communities

In general, the UK is a place where there are good inter faith relations and where there is respect for the traditions of different faiths and for the beliefs and practices of different communities and for their places of worship.

In times of tension, however, faith communities may find themselves vulnerable in a number of ways. Those who are visibly identifiable as members of a faith may sometimes be verbally or physically harassed or attacked. Hatred or suspicion of a particular faith may be incited. Or the cause may be mindless vandalism. Places of worship, community burial sites and religious symbols may be defaced, damaged or destroyed or precious artefacts stolen. In such situations there needs to be a firm response by the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the public and the faith communities themselves.

As faith communities we appreciate the vigilance and support of the public services such as Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and of the public at difficult times and note the many positive ways that organisations are working for community safety at national and local level.

We, as faith communities, also have a role in responding to emergency situations and to inter-community tensions, both as individual communities and – very importantly – together. In our shared society we are deeply interconnected. An attack on one is an attack on all.

These short guidelines have been produced by the Inter Faith Network for the UK, in consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Home Office, the National Fire Chiefs' Council and the National Police Chiefs' Council, to assist in responding together as communities to increase our safety and security.

## • Respond jointly – an attack on one is an attack on all

Some attacks, or threats of attack, appear linked to racist or religious hatred or are designed to stir this up. We believe that it is vital for faith community organisations and places of worship to respond jointly and to show solidarity. Some ways to do this are:

- **At a time of tension or following an attack use pre-agreed communication routes**, such as WhatsApp, and email or telephone for mutual support and assistance. Check with your local police force that your place of worship or other faith based premises are part of such a network.
- **Report any attacks directly to the police**, either in person, by phone or online (details under Resources).
- **Go together as faith leaders of different faiths** to visit any faith community property that has been attacked or is under threat.
- **Take action as members of local faith communities** – of a kind agreed with the faith community directly affected – in support of a place of worship or faith based premises which has been attacked or vandalised. For example, work with local inter faith groups and others to arrange clean up teams to go and assist if buildings have been defaced or damaged and the community in question would like help in this way.
- **Meet as faith communities with Police, representatives of the Fire and Rescue Service, the local authority and members of the community safety partnership** to discuss and implement appropriate measures to provide reassurance for the community or communities affected.
- **When reporting an attack or hate incident to the police be clear if it was, in your opinion, motivated by hostility based on faith** (or indeed any other personal characteristic). This includes any instance where it is believed that someone has been attacked in the

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mistaken belief that they belong to a community that the attacker is targeting. Offences, including criminal damage and assault, can attract higher sentences if the convicted person demonstrates, or is shown to have been motivated by, hostility based on faith.

- **Find ways also to offer support where attacks are ‘virtual’**, taking the form of hostile comments on the internet or, in rare cases, through hacking of websites.
- **Agree and issue joint statements** in response to attacks or crisis situations to support the affected community and defuse tensions (but only if the victims/community wish this).
- **Where appropriate, in particularly serious circumstances, hold events such as vigils** for people to come together to pray, each in their own tradition, be together in silence, or to share and listen together.
- **Use social media and contact the local media** to give publicity to the joint efforts of faith communities to support each other and respond jointly to the situation. It is important that we get the message across about faith communities responding in solidarity. People of non-religious beliefs who are not members of faith traditions may also offer support and this, too, is important to highlight.
- **Lastly, ‘Don’t wait for hate’**. We need always to challenge misperceptions or misrepresentations of one another – ill-informed stereotyping is damaging to us all. Nip misunderstanding in the bud and replace it with understanding and good relations. More about this can be found in the inter faith relations section under Resources below.

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## • Calm in times of tension

Problems of the kind discussed here can be the result of a range of factors from racism to social exclusion. They are rarely the fault of faith communities. Sometimes, however, situations can unintentionally be exacerbated by comments from within our faith communities as rumours spread about the likely culprits or perpetrators at times of tension or attack. In such circumstances, it is important to respond with care. Trusted members of communities can help calm some situations and lessen the likelihood of inter community misunderstanding. Swift and well thought through social media messages are also important. It is important to:

- **Check out the accuracy of stories** with trusted contacts in other communities and ensure that inaccurate rumours do not spread.
- **Do as we would be done by** – if people in our own communities have been involved in disrespectful or dangerous behaviour towards members of other communities, make it clear within the community and more widely that this is not acceptable and not condoned by the community.
- **In the event of distorted or misleading interpretations of other faiths** which may be contributing to tensions, tackle these as strongly as we defend the appropriate use of the symbols and beliefs of our own faith.
- **Be very careful in the language used** – avoid generalised, exaggerated or simplistic expressions about other faiths or groups which can cause or inflame tension.
- **Ensure that our members are regularly reminded of the importance of good community relations** and give community recognition to the peacemakers and bridge builders.

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## • Build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations

Joint responses to inter community tensions or attacks on community properties or individuals are most effective if they are built on an existing process of strengthening communications and building trust. It is important to:

- **Create strong and positive relationships** within and between faith communities, as well as the wider community.
- **Build long-term personal relationships** between leaders of our diverse faith communities.
- **Develop connections between congregations** of different local places of worship, providing opportunities for members to meet one another, to learn about their different faiths and to encourage personal friendships.
- **Encourage all members of our faith communities to engage** positively and respectfully with each other.
- **Ensure that local inter faith structures are strong**, have active involvement from senior figures of all the local faith communities and are adequately resourced and also encourage our members to be involved in their work.
- **Help develop and run programmes** to promote better understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs – and, in particular, between young people of different backgrounds.
- **Use opportunities like Inter Faith Week** and Mitzvah Day, Sadaqa Day and Sewa Day to highlight this engagement for the common good.
- **Provide training about how to respond to prejudice** and also how to report hate incidents – for example doing a joint training session with other local faith groups or organisations working with other protected groups.
- **Hold a meeting for members of local faith community organisations** to share their knowledge and experience of building security issues.
- **Establish regular meetings with police and local authorities** to keep relevant issues under review and develop partnerships for joint practical action.
- **Maintain awareness of key guidance** on issues such as security for places of worship.
- **Develop a communications strategy** – being clear about what we might want to say if problems arise and who might carry the messages both within and beyond the local faith communities (for example through co-ordinated sermons, social media and local newspapers and radio).
- **Don't under-estimate your contribution** – our partners such as the emergency services may be stretched during times of tension. The help of faith communities could be vital.

# Resources

## Reporting hate incidents

Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences, but those that do become hate crimes. Hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. They can be committed against a person or property and may include verbal abuse, physical abuse, attacks on premises or online abuse. A victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted. In fact, anyone could be a victim of a hate crime.

Any form of hate incident can be reported to the bodies listed below.

### The police

There are four ways of reporting hate incidents to the police, in person, in writing, by telephone and or on-line.

#### By telephone

In all parts of the UK victims of hate crime are encouraged to report all instances of hate crime to the police in person or by calling 101. In an emergency call 999.

#### In person

You can approach a police officer, a police community support officer or visit a police station to report a hate incident.

#### In writing

You can write to your local police constabulary or force by letter or email to tell them about a hate incident. There is a form that can help you to do this on the True Vision website (see below).

#### Via the internet

The UK government's preferred reporting website is True Vision. Through this you can report hate incidents of any kind. When you do so, the information is conveyed directly to your local police force:

- All English police forces

- Police Scotland
- The Police Service for Northern Ireland
- The Welsh Police/Heddlu forces(bilingual)
- The States of Jersey Police and the Isle of Man Police Service.

To use this way of reporting, simply follow the instructions on the home page:  
<http://www.report-it.org.uk/home>

True Vision also has a webpage that signposts victims of hate crime, or those who know someone who is or has been a victim, to organisations that can help. The webpage is regularly updated and can be found by going to: [www.report-it.org.uk/organisations\\_that\\_can\\_help](http://www.report-it.org.uk/organisations_that_can_help)

### Other routes of reporting

There are also a number of third party reporting routes such as those listed below. If you report a hate incident to these the details will automatically be provided to the Police.

- Stop Hate UK: <http://www.stophateuk.org/report-hate-crime/>
- The Community Security Trust, through which anti-Semitic hate and attacks on those perceived to be Jewish can be reported.  
Emergency numbers: London (24 hours) – 0800 032 3263, Manchester (24 Hours) – 0800 980 0668. Non-emergency: London (office hours) 020 8457 9999 and Manchester (office hours) 0161 792 6666 and <https://cst.org.uk/antisemitism/report-antisemitism>
- TellMAMA (Measuring Anti Muslim Attacks) TellMAMA records and report hate incidents aimed at Muslims in the UK, including those perceived to be Muslims. The numbers cover the whole of the UK.  
Telephone: 0800 456 1226, SMS: 0115 707 0007, WhatsApp: 0734 184 6086. E-mail: [info@tellmamauk.org](mailto:info@tellmamauk.org) <http://tellmamauk.org/>
- On the True Vision website there are dedicated pages for Christian, Hindu and Sikh communities to report hate crime.

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## Cyber-attacks

To report a cyber attack, visit:

<https://staysafeonline.org/business-safe-online/report-cyber-attacks>

You can also report attacks through your local police station.

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## Potential or actual terrorist activity

If you suspect someone is involved in terrorism, contact the police or ring the Anti-Terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321. You can remain anonymous.

If you see suspicious activity or find material promoting terrorism or extremism you can report it at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/terrorism-national-emergency/reporting-suspected-terrorism> This can be done anonymously.

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## Practical pointers on strengthening security

There are a number of UK wide websites that will help you review your security:

- <https://www.police.uk/crime-prevention-advice>
- [www.stoparsonuk.org](http://www.stoparsonuk.org)
- Each police force area of the UK has Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSA) from whom you can request business security guidance, or information on Projects Revise, Griffin or Argus:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-support-for-businesses-and-communities/working-with-counter-terrorism-security-advisers> These resources include:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-protective-security-advice-for-places-of-worship>

Some other resources to help faith community bodies with the security of their places of worship are:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/crime-prevention>

It is important that you have appropriate internet security software in place. For further advice you can consult:

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/crime-threats/cyber-crime>

It is important to check these websites regularly as the information and advice is updated from time to time. However, you should do all that you can to improve your security using the existing guidance even if you know new guidance is to be published.

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## Creating and strengthening good inter faith relations locally

Taking part in initiatives which promote greater understanding and work to counteract prejudice and hatred is an important step in working to stem hate crime.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between people of different faiths in the UK. It links around 200 organisations including: national representative bodies from the different faith communities; national, regional and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies. It provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs; advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues; publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors; fosters inter faith cooperation on social issues; and holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together. <http://www.interfaith.org.uk>

To find a local inter faith group in the UK, use the Inter Faith Network's locator webpage:  
[www.interfaith.org.uk/locator](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/locator)

If there is no existing group in your area you may want to set up a local inter faith body. For guidance follow this link to setting up and maintaining inter faith initiatives:  
[www.interfaith.org.uk/LIFGuide](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/LIFGuide)

For information about Inter Faith Week and how to take part, visit [www.interfaithweek.org](http://www.interfaithweek.org)

The  
Inter Faith  
Network  
for the  
United Kingdom

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is grateful to the bodies that have assisted in development of these updated guidelines and in particular to the Department for Communities and Local Government whose support towards IFN's work helped enable the work on these. The publication is issued in partnership with the bodies below:



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Inter Faith Network for the UK,  
2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH

020 7730 0410

[ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)

[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

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**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education  
21st June 2017  
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and  
Communities  
Tell MAMA update**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To consider any issues arising from the Tell MAMA item raised at the 9<sup>th</sup> November SACRE meeting. <https://tellmamauk.org/geography-anti-muslim-hatred-2015-tell-mama-annual-report/>

**2 Summary**

- 2.1 The Tell MAMA Annual Report was launched in Parliament on 29th June this year. It highlights hate crime against Muslims in the UK. The report, entitled: The Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred, looked at where Muslims reported hate crime against them. A number of interesting things were revealed:

- The majority of hate crimes were directed at women who were visibly Muslim
- The majority were perpetrated by white males
- The majority occurred on or near an A Road or transport hub

- 2.2 11% of attacks were in places of education. In relation to this, one of the comments in the report is: It is important that headteachers, teachers, and safeguarding leads in schools are trained to deal with Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate (page 29).

- 2.3 SACRE decided to ask the local authority what further action is being taken considering the report.

**3 Recommendation**

- 3.1 That members hear from Alison Johnson/Deb Barnes, Inclusion and Wellbeing Teacher Consultants, who will share information relating to procedures followed in Staffordshire when schools' report racist incidents.
- 3.2 That members read the response provided by Gill Heath, Cabinet Member for Communities and the Environment.

**4 Background**

- 4.1 No further response has been made.

**5 Equal Opportunities**

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications

**Contact Officer:** Emma Jardine-Phillips  
**Telephone number:** 07805 692573



**Gill Heath**  
**Cabinet Member for Communities and the Environment**

2 Staffordshire Place  
Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH  
Telephone: (01785) 854661  
E-mail: [gill.heath@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:gill.heath@staffordshire.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.staffordshire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk)

To:- Mr Michael Metcalf, via email

My Ref: GH-12/CM

Your Ref:

Date: 11 April 2017

Dear Michael

I am writing in response to your recent email, which followed on from your letter to Mr Adams.

I would like to thank you for SACREs interest in Staffordshire County Council's approach to responding towards and tackling religiously motivated hate crimes and other religiously motivated incidents.

I have endeavoured to respond to each of the questions that you raised in your original letter:

**What current County initiatives are there to address anti-Muslim hatred?**

Staffordshire County Council contributes to the local partnership approach to tackling hate crime and we are involved with the two Staffordshire hate crime partnerships (CNS in the north of the county, and CACH across the rest of Staffordshire). Between them, they provide coverage across the county offering casework support, advice and guidance to victims of hate crime and incidents. In addition to providing support for individuals, the hate crime partnerships deliver training to professionals, run workshops within schools and other community settings, attend events to connect with marginalised communities, offer advice, support and guidance to partner organisations and co-ordinate partnership meetings to share best practice.

While the County Council remains committed to working with partners to tackle hate crime, due to financial challenges, we will unfortunately be unable to sustain funding for the partnerships at current levels and our budget for this work has reduced for 2017/18. This

reduction in funding makes the partnership approach even more vital, to ensure that we are utilising limited resources effectively.

Moving forward, we are working closely with Staffordshire Police and other partners (including district and borough councils) to further improve the partnership working around this issue and ensure that all key agencies are effectively contributing to tackling hate crime in Staffordshire.

Specifically in relation to schools, Staffordshire County Council commission Entrust to provide support to schools. This support is provided from the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) and the Personal Development, Health and Wellbeing team. They assist schools to encourage tolerance and good relationships within settings related to different faiths, gender, race, SEND, sexuality, lifestyle and any other perceived difference in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This is a high priority and is at the heart of much of Entrust's work. Some examples of their activity in relation to this agenda include:

- Development of a curriculum resource called 'Difference and Diversity'. A version of this has been developed for KS1-3 and Special Schools.
- Development of a Primary PSHE Scheme of work which encourages, amongst other related themes, schools to focus on positive relationships and anti-bullying, including a substantial Anti-Bullying Pledge Scheme.
- Direct work with students who may be newly arrived in the UK from other countries who need support around English language acquisition and cultural differences. Entrust support schools as pupils arrive and then take re-referrals for any pupils that schools feel concerned about from an academic or social point of view.
- A variety of interactive exhibitions, which includes an Islam exhibition. This involves members of Entrust staff working in a school with classes to break down stereotypes and increase awareness of the religion. This exhibition is extremely well received by schools and often delivered by members of the team who are Muslim and are able to answer questions and increase understanding. We also deliver a similar experience called 'The woman in black' which explores other stereotypes around Islam.
- Consultancy, support and training for refugees and asylum seeking children and work with Staffordshire's Virtual School for Looked After Children and Communities e.g. to ensure the educational support is in place for the Syrian refugee families who have been housed in Staffordshire.

**Are schools required to report incidents of racism/religious hate crime to the local authority and/or other agencies? If so what happens with the information submitted?**

Schools are no longer required to provide information about discriminatory incidents as they occur. Instead schools are now sent an annual survey to ask them for basic details which Entrust collate and analyse.



However, schools are encouraged to contact the MEAS team when a discriminatory incident has occurred, if they require support. The referral is followed up with an offer of support and signposting to other agencies such as the local hate crime partnerships, as appropriate.

In addition, the hate crime partnerships or other agencies contact Entrust to follow up any concerns they have identified with a school which may indicate a need for wider PSHE input.

### **What advice is given to schools on how to respond to such incidents?**

Schools are able to seek advice and guidance on a range of safeguarding issues via the Education Safeguarding Advice Service (ESAS). This dedicated telephone line acts as the single route for education safeguarding advice, which does not require a referral to First Response. This can include advice and guidance in relation to discriminatory incidents. Schools are also able to access advice via Entrust, and this will include guidance in relation to their duties under the Equality Act, as well as a discussion of the incident and any consequences for individuals and changes in organisation or curriculum which might prevent any further incidents.

### **What are the local authority, and schools within the authority's remit, doing to ensure that Muslim pupils are kept safe?**

Staffordshire County Council and schools across the county are keen to ensure that all pupils are kept safe, including those from diverse religious backgrounds. We recognise the need for vigilance around any potential Islamophobia as well as other incidents motivated by hate and discrimination.

Our safeguarding policies and processes are intended to keep all youngsters safe and all schools are made aware of their responsibilities in adhering to these. Governing bodies must provide a safe environment and take action to identify and protect any children or young people who are at risk of significant harm. Schools are required to promote safe practice and challenge unsafe practice; to ensure that staff receive the necessary training for their roles; and to work in partnership with other agencies providing services for children and young people.

In relation to the wider safeguarding agenda, Staffordshire County Council and district and borough councils across Staffordshire have used Home Office Prevent funding to commission Entrust to develop a resource for schools. This resource includes a focus on British Values and the Prevent agenda, and provides an opportunity for schools to challenge unhelpful stereotypes around extremism and terrorism, while supporting young people in protecting themselves against the negative influences of radicalisation.

I hope that my response gives you assurance that Staffordshire County Council has taken a proactive approach to responding to religiously motivated hate crime and incidents, as well as to broader issues of inclusion, cohesion and safeguarding.



In terms of the County Council, co-ordination of activity in relation to hate crime sits within community safety and Michael Harrison, Commissioner for Families & Communities has overall lead for this area of work. Progress in relation to this work is reported to the Staffordshire Safer & Stronger Communities Strategy Group (the partnership board which holds statutory responsibility for community safety in the County).

If you have any suggestions about how SACRE can support this activity, you may wish to link in with Becky Murphy, a member of Michael Harrison's team. Becky can be contacted on [becky.murphy@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:becky.murphy@staffordshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01785 854428.

Yours sincerely



**Gill Heath**  
**Cabinet Member for Communities and the Environment**



**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**  
**8<sup>th</sup> February 2017**  
**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People**  
**Westhill/NASACRE Award winners**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To share with members the outcome of the Staffordshire SACRE bid for a Westhill/NASACRE Award.

**2 Summary**

2.1 Westhill/NASACRE Awards encourage schools to engage with diversity through projects which will generate compelling learning experiences in RE for young people, relevant to today's context.

2.2 Each year grants of up to £4,000 have been awarded to support suitable projects submitted by schools through their SACREs.

2.3 The Awards develop creative engagement among young people and build up a bank of ideas and good practice for others to use in their own ventures, to the benefit of their locality and society more generally.

**3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

**4 Background**

4.1 Staffordshire SACRE applied for a Westhill/NASACRE award early in 2017.

4.2 Emma Jardine-Phillips, Sam Phillips and Sam Kirwan liaised to create the details of the project entitled **Explore, Engage, Reflect**.

4.3 The application was successful and Staffordshire SACRE has been awarded £2,725 to complete the project outlined.

4.4 The project outline is attached.

**5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

6.1 Expenses incurred will be met from the SACRE budget.

**Contact Officer:** Emma Jardine-Phillips  
**Telephone number:** 07805 692573

## “Exploring, Engaging, Reflecting”: embedding the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus in RE

### Rationale

In July 2016 the new Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus in Religious Education was adopted by the County Council for use from September 2016; the Syllabus had an official launch in January 2017. During the current academic year (2016-17) numerous launch events have been held for subject leaders, so that schools should be fully compliant with the new Syllabus by September 2017. Feedback from schools on the new Syllabus has already been very positive. The county contains almost 400 state-funded schools, well over half of which are still funded through the county and will therefore be using the new Syllabus – say around 235 schools. It is expected that many academies in the county will also be transferring to the new Syllabus.

The Syllabus affirms that the role of RE is to foster in each pupil a growing level of religious literacy, through three complementary aims, encapsulated as Exploring, Engaging, Reflecting. The first two of these correspond to the standard themes of “Learning about” and “Learning from” religion. The third aim is innovatory and radical: it calls for pupils to “acquire a growing range of the social, spiritual and emotional skills and dispositions appropriate to living well in a religiously plural and open society, by reflecting on the reality of religious diversity and on the issues raised by living in a diverse world”.

While this aspiration relates realistically to the demographic situation in the country as a whole, the population in Staffordshire is markedly less diverse than that of neighbouring authorities, of the region, and of England, both in religious variety and in numerical presence. The statistics given in the Appendix reveal and present certain challenges for teachers as they work to bring the third aim “to life” in the classroom, and so enable their pupils to have the opportunity and experience of engaging in and reflecting on religious diversity.

Staffordshire SACRE was particularly mindful of these statistics during the creation of its new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. There was a deliberate intention to ensure that despite the limited diversity in the county, Staffordshire’s pupils would be both required and supported to understand more fully and reflect on the religious diversity of our nation. Staffordshire SACRE is seeking to support and empower schools to fulfil the requirements of the third aim through the creation of a face to faith experience entitled ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’. In seeking to draw pupils out of their comfort zones into engaging with the reality of diversity, the new Staffordshire RE Agreed Syllabus will help to shape future generations.

### The project: Explore, Engage, Reflect

Staffordshire SACRE is applying for a Westhill/NASACRE award of £4000 in order to offer Staffordshire pupils an interfaith encounter that supports and promotes the syllabus aims. The intention is to provide a compelling learning experience with a firm foundation for schools to build upon. Specifically Staffordshire SACRE intends to:

- Set up an interfaith experience called ‘Explore Engage, Reflect’ which will make six visits across the county of Staffordshire. ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’ will have a Christian and Muslim focus and the experience will be led by adherents to the faiths who are skilled in the field of education. The experience will take the form of a morning encounter with Christianity and an afternoon encounter with Islam. It will be designed to be fully interactive with pupils **exploring** artefacts, images and text; **engaging** with key questions relevant to the faiths in question; and **reflecting** on what it means to live your faith within England through a real opportunity for dialogue.



- 6 schools will be selected to host ‘Explore Engage, Reflect’ and, dependent on school size, either a whole school or an entire key stage will fully benefit from the experience. Pupils will visit the experience in small groups enabling the opportunity for thorough investigation and meaningful exploration and dialogue. A resource pack of preparation and follow up materials will be provided to support host schools to get the maximum benefit from the experience.
- A legacy resource will be created to support schools and equip them to meet the requirements of the third syllabus aim. It will act as a guide for schools wishing to put together their own interfaith experience in school. The resource will be made available to all Staffordshire schools as a supporting document for the syllabus.
- School staff experiencing ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’ would be encouraged to attend their local NATRE group to present the professional development opportunities they benefitted from by hosting the experience.
- The local press and County Councillors will be invited to experience ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’. A follow up article will also be written for RE Today magazine.

Staffordshire SACRE believes that this project will:

- Promote dialogue between the young people of Staffordshire and give them an opportunity to explore the religions around them.
- Provide capacity for extended community impact through encouraging schools to meet and work together and to engage meaningfully with the religious communities around them.
- Provide a CPD opportunity for subject leaders both on the day and at future NATRE meetings.
- Meet a specific need within Staffordshire. The nature of Staffordshire means that it is often difficult for schools to deliver interfaith experiences for their pupils. Staffordshire SACRE will connect schools with organisations that are ongoing and can support with this aim both during and after the event.
- Empower schools to produce interfaith events in the future through a legacy document that will support schools to plan future events successfully
- Be sustainable. The sustainability of ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’ long term is important and the two organisations we plan to involve are sustainable and their work can be developed.
- Focus on widening participation and reach where appropriate and possible. The experience will be offered to schools where there will be maximum impact so schools, for example basing ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’ in schools that are already working collaboratively or where it would help them to work collaboratively in the future.

### **Delivery of “Explore, Engage, Reflect”**

- The Youth Net will be commissioned to deliver the Christian based content for ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’. The Youth Net is a Stafford based Christian charity whose leader Sam Phillips is a member of SACRE (Committee A, Free Church). It exists to:
  - Support and resource churches in their delivery of excellent children’s, youth and schools work;
  - Support and resource schools in their delivery of an excellent RE and SMSC curriculum;
  - Network, encourage and equip children’s, youth and schools’ workers;
  - Deliver excellent children’s, youth and schools work;
  - Support children and young people to flourish spiritually, emotionally, educationally and socially.

- Waheeda Qureshi and Mohammed Fahim, members of The Linguistic and Cultural Mediator (LCM) team at Entrust, will be commissioned to deliver the Muslim content for ‘Explore, Engage, Reflect’. Entrust works in partnership with Staffordshire schools, academy trusts and the county to provide specialist support, ensuring every child and young person:
  - receives a good education;
  - is in a safe and healthy environment;
  - and is given expert guidance to realise their full potential.
  
- Emma Jardine-Phillips, Education Consultant, County RE Adviser and Advanced Skills Teacher in RE will be commissioned to oversee the project and create the legacy resource.

The Westhill/NASACRE Awards 20-17-18

At its meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2017, the Awards Panel proposed the following Awards:

Buckinghamshire SACRE	£3,000*	(Tristram Jenkins)
Newham SACRE	£4,000	(Elizabeth Jenkerson)
North Yorkshire SACRE	£2,725*	(Michael Metcalf)
Shropshire SACRE	£3,550	(Naomi Anstice)
Staffordshire SACRE	£2,725*	(Nasr Moussa Emam)
Suffolk SACRE	£4,000	(Michael Metcalf)
Total	<u>£20,000</u>	

\*Indicates the amount of the Award is less than the sum originally applied for.

Names in brackets are the suggested NASACRE liaison and support links.



22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

To: SACRE Chairs, Clerks, Advisers, Project Managers

Dear colleagues,

The Westhill/NASACRE Awards 2017-18

You may already have heard that your SACRE has been partially successful in its application for a Westhill/NASACRE Award for 2015-16. While the outcome of your application may be less satisfactory than you had hoped, we trust you will accept our sincere congratulations on receiving an Award, and our best wishes for the success of your SACRE's project.

At its meeting in April, the Awards Panel identified three "front runners" for an Award. The Panel then faced an unusually difficult decision in trying to differentiate between three other applications judged to be next in line for the funds still available. After consulting with the SACREs involved, the Panel decided to offer each SACRE a smaller amount than they had requested for their project, on the understanding that the project could and would still go ahead successfully after any necessary adjustments had been made. The Panel will therefore wish to be advised, in due course, as to how these projects will now be re-shaped, or additionally funded from other sources.

This letter is necessarily a formal communication. However, we trust that alongside the formalities of the Award arrangements NASACRE will be able to offer your project encouragement and support of a more informal kind, through liaison with a member of the Awards Panel (see names on the attached schedule). Please expect the liaison member to make an initial contact with your Project Manager before the end of this school term.

The briefing notes circulated with the Award Application Form will have advised you that the release of the Award money is linked to a sequence of "trigger" conditions. These conditions must be met before each tranche can be paid out. The process has been designed to establish a firm commitment to begin and complete the project within the stated terms and conditions, to provide clear and convincing financial accountability from all parties, and to establish a strong link between the project and the dedicated Westhill website page for the Awards.

Please therefore expect to receive in the next few weeks a number of documents for completion and signing. I would be grateful if these could be dealt with expeditiously. For our part, we will aim to ensure that all is in hand for the first payments to be released on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

With all good wishes and sincere regards,

Michael



**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education  
21st June 2017  
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and  
Communities  
Religions are not Monoliths**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To share information about the joint AREIAC NASACRE conference

**2 Summary**

2.1 AREIAC and NASACRE plan a joint annual one day conference on a specific theme.

**3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members receive the report and note its contents.

**4 Background**

4.1 Emma Jardine-Phillips attended the joint AREIAC NASACRE conference entitled 'Religions are not Monoliths' in Birmingham on the 6<sup>th</sup> March.

4.2 A summary of the event is attached.

**5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications

**Contact Officer:** Emma Jardine-Phillips  
**Telephone number:** 07805 692573

The Religions are not Monoliths conference, held jointly with AREIAC in March, was held at the Ibis Hotel in Birmingham.

Delegates received a warm welcome from Lesley Prior and Jane Brook and thanked Dilwyn Hunt for his work in organising the event.

The first speaker was Dr Abdullah Trevathan. Dr Trevathan discussed 'Islam beyond the Monolith: a more nuanced understanding. To be Monolithic is to be inflexible in viewpoint and Dr Trevathan spoke about the differences between Classical and Modernist Islam and the difficulties that each may present for the believer and society. Dr Trevathan is currently a Senior Lecturer in Education at Roehampton University and has been widely published. He was also Headteacher of the Islamia Primary School, the first state funded VA Muslim School in the UK from 1998 to 2006.

The Revd Dr Robert Paul Reiss spoke next. He spoke about Liberal Christianity: Exploring Credible Belief. He spoke of the challenges to Christianity including the influence of science and the importance and interpretation of biblical texts. Revd Dr Reiss is the author of 'Sceptical Christianity' which considers the main reasons behind people's religious scepticism and posits the question: What can plausibly be believed today?

In the context of the current educational climate (British Values and Prevent) much of what was discussed at the conference was enlightening and also simplified my understanding of what is a huge issue. In terms of RE it made me think about the best approaches to take in the classroom to ensure that religion is more about personable/human experience and not just about ritual buildings, books etc.

Evaluations were excellent and it is hoped that the collaboration between NASACRE and AREIAC will continue and other similar joint events will take place in the future.

Summaries of the presentations by the two keynote speakers, Dr Abdullah Trevathan and Bob Reiss, have been prepared by Dilwyn Hunt.



At the joint NASACRE / AEREIAC Conference on Mon 6 Mar 2017 'Religions are not Monoliths' we were treated to two valuably informative keynote presentations provided by Dr Abdullah Trevathan talking about 'classical' Islam in contrast to 'modernist' Islam and the Revd Robert Reiss talking about 'liberal' Christianity. As a taster of what was said extracts from Dr Abdullah Trevathan's presentation are provided below.

### Dr Abdullah Trevathan on 'classical' Islam

"What is suggested in the conference title sub-heading is based on a dichotomy between 'liberal' and 'conservative' wings of different religions. That is perfectly understandable. I'm not sure that works when it applies to the Muslim case. It is very confusing I think for outsiders so I'll try and shed a little bit of light on that. What we have here is the 'classical' vs. the 'modernist' position."



Dr Abdullah Trevathan  
The Director of Al-Akhawayn  
School in Morocco

"I've mentioned 'classical' several times already. I need to specify what I mean. The 'classical' position is the position of accumulated wisdom of over fourteen hundred years by various schools of thought, which I'm sure you've heard of. There is the 'Madhab' which is the accumulated thought and interpretation of both the Qur'an and also the Hadith. It is the 'classical' position which has the flexibility, the intelligence, and the adaptability to be functional in the Muslim world and it is this aspect of Islam where it is possible to have dialogue with other people of faith or not."

"The 'modernist' position, I'm talking here in the historical sense, is something that developed something like 250 years ago in different movements that developed in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and India which were reformist movements. Reform within Islam is actually not a concept because we



will see that the application of principles are constantly updating the situation. So the idea that Islam has deviated and that stricter interpretation of Muslim laws, not Muslim belief or mysticism but strict adherence to Muslim laws was accentuated. We will go a little more into that later. It is the 'modernist' tendency that you are finding all over the world."

"The confusing thing is that we tend to think, or the outside tends to think of the 'classic' position as being traditionalist. They are the people who are situated in out dated modes of thought, etc, etc., those who declare those who leave Islam as apostates, you know, Isis in the minds of many are people who are implementing a medieval perception of Islam. Whereas in fact it is the other way round. It is actually the 'modernists' who are taking on very inappropriate perspectives. The 'classical' has been able to, because it is classic, it has been able to adapt to the situation and where

it hasn't it has failed and is replaced by something else but not in terms of reform movements. My own particular position so you know, the Sunni 'classical' orthodoxy but also the Shia 'classical' orthodoxy. I don't think I have the wherewithal to put forward facts and ideas from within that tradition but much of what I say here will be applicable in general terms also to the Shia 'classical' orthodoxy. Also Shi'ism has not had the same 'modernist' tendencies within their ranks so it is not quite the same."

"Within the Muslim world the three main areas of contention where all the problems came from - we can actually link it to a particular battle, the Battle of Siffin in 657CE twenty-five years after the death of the Prophet when a group of people departed from the ranks of Ali. Ali was the cousin of the Prophet. From this came an interpretation of Islam which was anyone who sinned once was out of Islam forever and their 'blood was halal' was the chilling phrase they used. They are called the 'Khawarij' meaning the 'people who left'. The Khawarij tendencies are still alive today and they tend to hold a literal interpretation of the Qur'an."



The Battle of Siffin

At the Battle of Siffin fought on the 26 July 657CE troops led by Caliph Ali ibn Abu Talib clashed with troops led by Muawiyah.

"From the Khawarij emerged the main areas of contention, the first of which arose within what is called is called 'aqidah' which means or doctrine. A good example of this is an argument which has continued throughout the ages, 'Does God have a face or a hand?' as various verses in the Qur'an refer to this, for example, 'Wherever you turn there is the face of God' (Qur'an 2:115) and 'The Hand of Allah is above their hands' (Qur'an 48:10). So the question is 'Does God have a face?' The Khawarij's literal interpretation of this is that if the Qur'an says he has a hand – he literally has a hand. The 'classical' interpretation of this is, God meant whatever he meant and it is not for us to question. It is an imponderable fact – let's leave it alone. This has caused intense ramifications which reverberate around lots of areas of theology.

A second one is 'madhab' which are the schools of thought. There are four schools of thought in the Sunni world we have Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali. The Khawarij's tendency or the 'modernist'



The 'modernist' tendency is that there should be no intermediary between the Qur'an, or the message of God

tendency is that there should be no intermediary between the Qur'an, or the message of God. It is up to the individual to interpret it as they interpret it. Whereas, the 'classic' schools of thought apply a different methodology. This sometimes requires people with large amounts of information and the 'X' factor as they say, a great deal of wisdom. I will explain why later. There is also the madhab of no madhab, the school of no school.

The last but not the least is the nature of the Prophet. The 'modernists' insist upon the complete humanity of the Prophet. That he was only special by dint of having been chosen by God. Whereas the 'classical' position was that his nature was majestic and that he was 'insan al-Kamil', the perfect, balanced human being. Whether that was a result of having been chosen by Allah or whether that was a result of nurture or nature is another thing altogether. This again has major ramifications, for instance, the 'modernists' tendency would be to say 'No' everybody is the same, everybody is sinful or not. Some people may be better than others but that is no reason to go and visit the tombs or graves of saints. So each one of three areas have reverberations in other areas."

"So one of the methodologies of the 'classical' position is that it requires the application of principles to different situations. There is the concept of 'maslaha' in traditional jurisprudence. Maslaha refers to situations wherein something can be silly, or ridiculous, or absurd to apply a ruling or a principle in a particular context.

Maslaha is used a lot within traditional 'classical' jurisprudence. The object of the matter is to orientate people towards divine consciousness. It is not to follow rules or regulations all the time. The 'modernist' position is the uniform application of rules to all situations. Sometimes these rules are placed out of historical contexts, say Bagdad four hundred years ago and applied to every single situation that is encountered, which causes enormous problems. There is no maslaha there, only the application of the rule. Whereas the 'classical' position is the application of principles which sometimes has different outcomes. For instance the ruling of apostasy out of Bagdad four hundred years ago was that if someone went out and claimed to have left Islam it was incumbent on the governor to execute. But that just makes no sense whatsoever so in the modern British context, or even in modern Iraq, or anywhere in the world I can think of at the moment. So if you are insisting on a law which brings Islam into disrepute, if the rule is applied and it brings Islam into disrepute it can be laid aside, this is maslaha. "



Imam Abu Hanifa 699-767CE  
Founder of the Hanafi school of law, he introduced analogical reasoning (qiyas) and juristic discretion (istihsan) as permissible tools for making a legal judgement



At the joint NASACRE / AEREIAC Conference on Mon 6 Mar 2017 'Religions are not Monoliths' we were treated to two valuably informative keynote presentations provided by the Revd Robert Reiss talking about 'liberal' Christianity and Dr Abdullah Trevathan talking about 'classical' Islam. As a taster of what was said extracts from Bob Reiss' presentation are provided below.

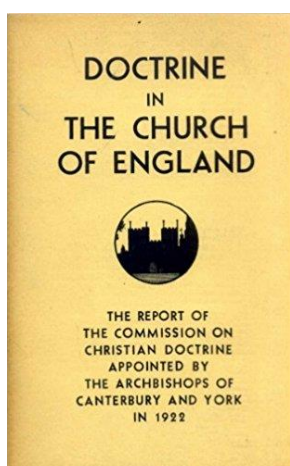
### Revd Bob Reiss on Liberal Christianity

"At its best I think the Church of England has always wanted to be in serious conversation with the intellectual life of the country. And that was certainly manifest in the Cambridge theology faculty when I studied there. So I mean by liberal Christianity an understanding Christianity that takes full account of other areas of knowledge and which tries to develop an understanding of the Christian faith that can engage seriously and thoughtfully with other intellectual disciplines and which doesn't merely retreat into its own intellectual comfort zone. I have to say I think liberal Christianity is not especially popular within the Church of England at the moment. But none the less that is what I feel committed to."



Revd. Robert Reiss  
Author of '*Sceptical Christian - Exploring Credible Belief*'

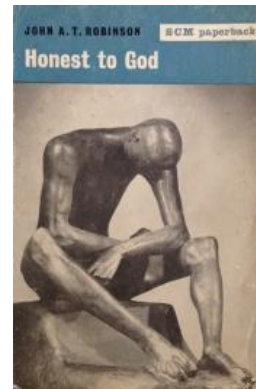
"So my professional experience of nearly fifty years has been within the Church of England where certainly there was much thought and public debate about what constitutes credible belief, although some moves towards that can certainly be found in the later parts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well. Some notable examples from the 20<sup>th</sup> century would include the following: there is the work of a body known as '*The Churchmen's Union for the Advancement of Liberal Religious Thought*' which was founded originally at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but then renamed as '*The Modern Churchmen's Union*' in 1928 and in 2010 it is now called '*Modern Church*' no doubt because its chair is a woman. It is a good and interesting body and it still thrives.



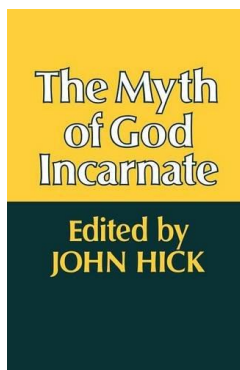
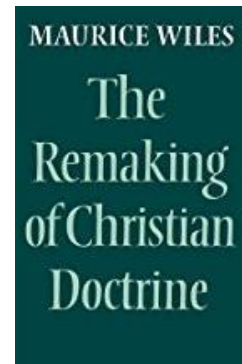
Then there was a thing called '*The Commission on Christian Doctrine*' which was established in 1922 but finally reported in 1938 under the chairmanship of William Temple who for much of that time of his chairmanship was the Archbishop of York but who then moved to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. That commission was certainly not a narrow liberal exercise as there were a very wide range of views within its membership. But it did recognise and acknowledge as being legitimate and permissible within the Church of England theological views a number of which could certainly be described as liberal at the time. And I shall give some examples of that later on. Then in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were a number of reports from what was essentially its successor a body known as '*The Doctrine Commission*' and some of those reports

were even on such fundamental questions as 'What does it mean to believe in God?' And certainly there were a number of points of views in many of those reports which again could have been described and were described as being liberal.

And then of course there were various books written by individual clergy which caused widespread discussion when they were published. They were of course a lot of them but amongst those published in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century I would include the following; *'Honest to God'* published in 1963 written by the then Bishop of Woolwich John Robinson was one of the best-selling theological books of all time. Much of the interest in that stemmed from an article written by the Bishop in the Observer the week before publication where a sub editor had given it the headline, 'Our image of God must go'. It and the book caused a furore. I read the book in one evening and late into the night at the age of twenty fairly shortly after it was published and I found it utterly liberating. Here was someone, and a bishop to boot, who was raising all the questions and more that I was wondering about at the time. Of course, I had no idea then that ten years later I would be appointed a chaplain at my old Cambridge college Trinity by which time John Robinson had moved there to become Dean of Chapel. So I got to know him very well over the next five years. He incidentally preferred the word 'radical' to 'liberal' in the sense that he wanted to examine the roots of theology but the results of what he said would again certainly be described by many at the time as 'liberal'.



Then in 1974 Maurice Wiles who was Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford had published a book called *'The remaking of Christian Doctrine'*, among other things suggested that the description of the Incarnation was not the only way of looking at the significance of Jesus. It too caused quite a stir. And then three years later Geoffrey Lampe who was the Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge also published a book called 'God As Spirit' which covered a related theme to Wiles' book and also occasioned much discussion although more in academic circles than Wiles' book which went to a wider audience than that.



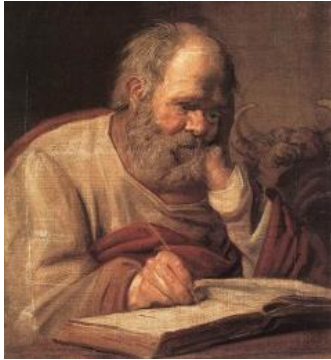
Then in that same year 1977 *'The myth of God Incarnate'* written by a number of distinguished theologians and edited by John Hick who was Professor of Theology here in Birmingham was published. It too caused a stir. And then of course later in the century there were the public statements and writings of Bishop David Jenkins the Bishop of Durham for ten years until 1994 and who actually died only last years. So a liberal interpretation of Christianity has certainly been a major part of the life of the Church for a good deal longer than I have been ordained."

"A second ground for scepticism arose out of what was called biblical criticism which started even as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century and which has developed strongly over the years since then. That process simply believed that we should apply to the biblical text the same sort of critical processes that we would apply to any other historical document which was really about trying to set the various biblical writings in their context – where, when, by whom and why were they written. But they obviously raised questions about how they were then to be interpreted particularly in the very difficult cultural circumstances of later centuries. One mistake which is still too often made in my judgement is to assume the gospel writers were in some way like



Johann Gottfried Eichhorn  
One of the founders of 18<sup>th</sup> century biblical criticism

21<sup>st</sup> century historians that were trying to give an accurate account of what actually happened. But a careful examination of the gospels shows that actually they were not necessarily accurate history but four very different reactions to the life of Jesus each made with a particular theological purpose of the different gospel writers. Take for example one of the things mentioned in the



Did Luke remove the words because he wanted to emphasize Jesus' commitment to the financially poor?

beatitudes. A classic example of what I'm talking about would be the statement of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, 'Blessed are you poor for yours is the Kingdom of God'. In St Mathews' Gospel it says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven'.

Did Matthew add 'in spirit' because the Church he knew were wondering about its wealthy members and they wanted to make the words of Jesus even applicable to the wealthy or did Luke remove the words because he wanted to emphasize Jesus' commitment to the financially poor? We simply don't know. Such uncertainty about the original meaning is actually present in many of the gospels and in the sayings and actions of Jesus of course makes searching for the meaning fascinating. But it also raises very big questions about interpreting the New Testament."





**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**21st June 2017**

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities  
NASACRE Update**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present members of SACRE with a brief update on key issues that have developed or arisen since the last meeting of SACRE.

**2 Summary**

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a brief report on a number of key issues. These are matters on which it is appropriate to brief members of SACRE.

**3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and note the contents

**4 Background**

4.1 NASACRE is the national body of SACRE's. National meetings are held to which members of SACRE are invited and encouraged to attend. Issues are discussed which have local or national importance for RE.

4.2 Members will be briefed on any key developments including 'Preparing for Life in Britain today: the contribution of RE' in York on the 16<sup>th</sup> May.

**5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

6.1 Financial implications may be raised by individual items. These have been dealt with elsewhere, or will be raised at future meetings of SACRE.

**Contact Officer**  
**Telephone number:**

**Emma Jardine-Phillips**  
**07805 692573**



## **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**21st June 2017**

### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities NASACRE and the Interfaith Network**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present the SACRE with a discussion paper related to the Big NASACRE Survey.

#### **2 Summary**

2.1 NASACRE is in membership with the IFN in the Educational and Academic Bodies section. Members in this category, which includes WASACRE, meet at least once a year ([click here for details](#)). NASACRE also has the opportunity to take part in the consultations undertaken by the IFN and to inform and shape its policies towards education and Religious Education.

#### **3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE read the report and note its contents.

#### **4 Background**

4.1 Part of IFN (UK)'s remit is to promote a better understanding of RE and its website publications under the heading EDUCATION, includes a page on RE across the UK, what is expected of different sorts of schools and a page on understanding SACREs. In this way IFN is attempting to promote better religious literacy. Resources for schools are freely available.

4.2 Michael Metcalf has helpfully produced some reflections for NASACRE members on the IFN, NASACRE and what we can learn from their respective histories. More especially he looks to the future with a real sense of optimism at what NASACRE, SACREs and IFN can achieve in partnership. His reflections are attached.

#### **5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

#### **6 Financial implications**

6.1 Financial implications are indicated in the budget account.

**Contact Officer:** Emma Jardine-Phillips  
**Telephone number:** 07805 692573



## The Inter Faith Network (UK) and NASACRE

In their separate contexts and roles, the Inter Faith Network(UK) and NASACRE have each sought to engage positively and constructively with the increasing religious diversity of our society. Both organisations have origins in the growing awareness from the 1960s onwards that the country was becoming religiously (and ethnically) more diverse through the migration into the UK of significant numbers of people from non-Christian faith communities, a trend which has continued down to the present day. The implications of these changes have been quite profound, and reactions to them among existing UK citizens have predictably been very mixed, ranging from benign, but perhaps rather patronising and naïve liberal inclusiveness to defiant xenophobic hostility.

By the 1980s, local interfaith groups had been forming across the country, and RE in schools had become a battleground between 'Christianity-only' traditionalists and 'multi-faith' progressives. In 1987, the national Inter Faith Network(UK) was formally constituted, and in 1988 the landmark Education Reform Act was passed. This Act not only established SACREs as statutory bodies, but also redefined the role and content of RE in a formula which still governs RE in state schools, requiring all new RE syllabuses to recognise and study other principal faiths alongside Christianity. Following a series of informal SACRE Forums in the wake of the 1988 Act, NASACRE itself was formally launched in 1993.

Since then, the two organisations have led separate but overlapping lives, in a rapidly evolving and shifting public arena. NASACRE became a member of the IFN(UK) soon after its own launch, finding an apparently natural home for itself in the IFN's Educational & Academic membership category. However, NASACRE is "*sui generis*"; it is not really comparable to anything else in the RE or interfaith worlds, and its unique nature, importance and potential contribution are to some degree muffled and misrepresented by its being included in this membership category alongside academic RS departments and professional RE bodies. Nevertheless, NASACRE has played a key role in some significant developments within and beyond the IFN.

### **The break-up of the normal way of doing things**

Both the IFN and NASACRE began their lives under a consensus as to which religions or religious groups deserved to be recognised and related to. The IFN's constitution specified six major religious traditions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism) and three minor religious traditions (Baha'i, Jainism and Zoroastrianism). In the case of NASACRE, SACREs were subject to the guidance for RE given in the 1988 Act, which referred to "Christianity and the other principal religions" represented in the country. These 'other religions' were never spelt out, but it was universally accepted that they were the same as those in the IFN's Big Six.

For many years, there became an established pattern of engagement between the larger religious groups, until cracks began to appear in the edifice through challenges from two different quarters. On the one hand, Humanists began a determined and astute campaign to achieve recognition and parity for Humanism and other secular stances in the field of religious affairs, deploying human rights legislation to this end. On the other hand, smaller religious groups that were excluded from the big conversations began to make their voices and claims increasingly heard and difficult to ignore. These groups included additional religious denominations independent of the normative six (or nine in the IFN's longer list) and also offshoots of the larger religions which were sometimes

regarded as heretical or breakaway movements and therefore subject to anathematisation by the mainstream group in question.

By design or good fortune, the legislation for SACREs contained a mechanism which enabled them to respond to these pressures more readily than the IFN, so that SACREs -and NASACRE - found themselves at the sharp end of developments, and took the lead in recognising additional groups. A SACRE's religious membership is not precisely defined in law; it is to be determined by the local authority, having regard to local as well as national circumstances. Moreover, SACREs can co-opt non-voting members who may otherwise speak and contribute freely. Through this flexibility, Pagans, Humanists, Druids, Mormons, Spiritualists and others began to appear in various SACREs around the country. (The inclusion of Humanists has not been without controversy; it is still a matter of dispute in places.)

In contrast, the IFN had no room for manoeuvre constitutionally. After a torrid period of sniping at the establishment by disaffected representatives on behalf of excluded groups, the IFN set about a strategic review of its aims, objectives and constitution, a review which would have been undertaken anyway in preparation for the IFN's Silver Jubilee, but which was given added urgency by the challenges to the established membership. Arising from this review (to which NASACRE contributed significantly) the IFN has revised its constitution so as to provide a channel by which additional religious groups could become members. However, the process is seen by some as laborious and slow, reluctant rather than welcoming. Unlike SACREs, the process does not yet allow for explicit Humanist representation.

The loss of status for the Big Six can be linked more widely to the loss of the social status for the Church of England, and for Christianity in general – as seen in the 2011 Census. Whereas the default position for an ordinary citizen in the past would have been 'Church of England/Christian' if they were nothing else, the default position now is that of having no professed religious identity at all. This is not the same as someone being avowedly atheistic, but it does represent a seismic shift in the public context. It is a shift by which no one ideology or faith now has the right or the power to exclude or to look down on any other. This is an uneasy equilibrium; individuals and groups still have to find ways of co-existing and collaborating with those they have habitually found abhorrent, if they are to move forward together inclusively.

### **The local scene**

At the local level, SACREs and local interfaith groups exist side by side, often relating to the same faith communities and serving the same local populations, but having different roles, remits and categories of membership. Outside the world of schools and education (sometimes even within that world) SACREs are largely invisible, and their existence and activity are largely not known and not understood. Nevertheless, by their composition they have an inter-faith character, and their work involves them in engaging with inter-faith issues and negotiating multi-faith RE syllabuses with local faith community representatives. Questions therefore are bound to arise - and have arisen - around how local inter-faith groups and local SACREs relate to each other.

Recognising the need to explore this situation, the IFN and NASACRE carried out an important survey exercise in 2008-9 culminating in a joint seminar *Working Together for Understanding and Community Cohesion*. Contexts, opportunities and experiences varied widely across the country,

but some general themes and recommendations emerged: better mutual understanding and awareness between SACREs and local inter-faith groups, better communications and sharing of information, support for each other's initiatives, and mounting joint projects. The collective wisdom contained in the seminar's report is still massively relevant, and is worth revisiting regularly, by both SACREs and local inter-faith groups, and at a national level as well as locally.

Since 2009, however, there has been a general decline in the buoyancy and capacity of the SACRE world through financial squeezes imposed on local authorities, as a result of which many SACREs have lost or reduced the services of an RE adviser, much or all of their budget and/or the administrative support from the local authority. SACREs have had to focus on fulfilling their core responsibilities and using their limited capacities as shrewdly and creatively as possible. In spite of these constraints, SACREs as a whole remain very much 'in business' and frequently have been able to sustain good collaborative relations with local inter-faith groups.

### **Including young people**

Pupils at school are very much the ultimate 'consumers' of the work carried out by SACREs and by NASACRE, but it is inevitable that the membership of SACREs and of NASACRE should be made up entirely of adults, and often older adults at that. Keeping pupils in mind is therefore a priority for SACREs as they carry out their statutory tasks and engage in formal meetings. In the past, SACREs have been able to sponsor various initiatives involving pupils: RE Youth Forums, Youth Councils, RE Conferences, Youth SACREs, Young Faith Ambassadors, 'Pupil Voice' consultative groups and the like. The programme of Westhill/NASACRE Awards to SACREs for projects with schools has enabled many such commendable developments to get off the ground. Some of this good work goes on.

In the inter-faith context, the 2002 Young People's Faith Forum arranged as part of the Queen's Golden Jubilee, proved a major stimulus in prompting the emergence of various groups involving young people as inter-faith practitioners in their own right. One might comment that in earlier years there had perhaps been a tendency to perceive inter-faith engagement as being exclusively for adults who had acquired a depth of life-experience and maturity. This perception needed to be challenged, not least because many young people were already responding to inter-faith situations in their daily lives. A notable event took place when the IFN linked its launch of InterFaith Week 2014 with a celebration of interfaith activity developed by and with young people: *Young Voices, Young Agents for Change*.

Both NASACRE and the IFN have sought to be inclusive towards young people at their high profile Annual Meetings, through showcasing examples of projects and of good practice. Such arrangements are desirable but not always practicable, and time is often at a premium in these meetings. The challenge in our organisations, to be inclusive towards young people, remains.

### **Looking ahead**

The relationship between NASACRE and the IFN has been both fruitful and necessary, in the context of an evolving religious diversity in our society and of an increasing concern to promote community cohesion. Both organisations have faced hard challenges in recent years, and the ongoing squeeze on government funding will have serious implications for both bodies. A further

factor for SACREs and NASACRE is the government's stated policy to turn all state schools into academies. On the face of it, this would ultimately leave SACREs - and perforce NASACRE - without a role or a rationale for existing. However, this is not the whole story.

SACREs have emerged from the initial shock of government cuts and academisation with a renewed determination to continue serving the schools and pupils in their locality, promoting excellence in the delivery of religious education, and working collaboratively with local faith communities, for as long as they are able. They are being actively supported and championed in this by NASACRE. In the short term this shared resolve will prevail. In the longer term, SACREs and NASACRE will be keeping a watchful eye on developments and will look to find the most constructive ways of feeding their unique experience and expertise into the mix, and of participating in the processes of change.

Flowing from the radical formula of the 1988 Education Act, all pupils in state-funded schools have been gaining insight into a range of religions and belief systems for nearly three decades. This is a major contribution to the inter-faith arena, whether or not it leads to any structured inter-faith dialogue, as such, in later Key Stages. This contribution will continue; it is vital that it is recognised as such and properly affirmed and supported. NASACRE's partnership with the IFN is part of this ongoing dynamic. The two organisations will maintain their symbiotic existence, sharing, stimulating, celebrating, helping with their respective members to shape the future of our society.

Revd. Preb. Michael Metcalf



**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education  
21st June 2017  
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and  
Communities  
Applications for variation of practice**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To consider any applications for variation of practice to religious education and or collective worship.

**2 Summary**

2.1 Upon receipt of a written application from a Headteacher of a county school SACRE should determine whether it is appropriate to disapply the requirement for broadly Christian collective worship and/or make amendments to the way the Agreed Syllabus is followed in the case of that school.

**3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE are updated on any new developments in this area.

**4 Background**

4.1 No applications have been received at this time.

**5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications

**Contact Officer:** Emma Jardine-Phillips  
**Telephone number:** 07805 692573



**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education  
21st June 2017  
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and  
Communities  
SACRE Annual Report**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To present SACRE members with an opportunity to analyse their works and events of the past academic year.

**2 Summary**

2.1 Members of SACRE will receive a completed annual report at their next meeting.

**3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report and share/document their ideas.

**4 Background**

4.1 The SACRE Annual Report is completed annually to capture the work of SACRE over the previous 12 months. The report is presented to SCC and also sent to NASACRE.

**5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications

**Contact Officer:** Emma Jardine-Phillips  
**Telephone number:** 07805 692573



**Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

**21st June 2017**

**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities  
SACRE Budget 2017 - 2018**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To advise members of SACRE of the current budget position

**2 Summary**

2.1 A breakdown of the SACRE budget to date for the financial year 2016 - 2017 to date will be presented at the meeting.

**3 Recommendation**

3.1 That members of SACRE receive the report

**4 Background**

4.1 A budget has been made available to support the work of SACRE during the financial year 2017 – 2018 as approved by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of People.

4.2 The budget is held by Staffordshire County Council. Claire Oswald is the budget administrator [claire.oswald@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:claire.oswald@staffordshire.gov.uk). Whilst invoices are being paid it has been challenging to determine an up to date picture of the budget.

4.3 SACRE members may wish to discuss priorities with regard to spending the remaining budget.

4.4 Budget allocated: £

**5 Equal Opportunities**

5.1 This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on equal opportunities.

**6 Financial implications**

6.1 Financial implications are indicated in the budget account.

**Contact Officer:  
Telephone number:**

**Emma Jardine-Phillips  
07805 692573**

