Haringey Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
Minutes of the meeting of 11 September 2025 at 5:00pm
Held in person at Hornsey School for Girls, Inderwick Road, London, N8 9JF

MEMBERSHIP

Group A: Christian denominations other than Church of England, and principal religions represented in Great Britain

James Chiriyankandath (JC), **Chair**	Unitarian
Stephen Agilinko (SA)	Baptist Churches
Norman Bacrac (NB)*	Humanist
Panos Fellas (PF)*	Humanist
Hasret Bozdogan (HB)	Alevi Cultural Centre
Ali Osoy (AO)	Alevi Cultural Centre
Dr S Kajansivakumaran (SK)*	Chair of Shakthivel Hindu Association
Bibi Khan (BK)*	Islamic Community
James Lane (JL)*	Roman Catholic Church
Tonye Philemon (TP)	The Peace Alliance and Pentecostal Churches
Judith Prinsley (JP)	Board of Deputies of British Jews

Group B: Church of England

Eddie Griffiths (EG)	Lay Church of England member
Helen Spiby-Vann (HSV)	London Diocesan Board of Schools

Group C: Teachers' Associations, including representation from Academy Schools

Glenford Johnson (GJ), **Vice-Chair**	Teacher, Hornsey School for Girls
Hanaa Mohabeer (HM)	Teacher, Hornsey School for Girls

Group D: Local Authority, including elected councillors

Ibrahim Ali (IA)*	Councillor
Cathy Brennan (CB)*	Councillor
Makbule Gunes (MG)*	Councillor
Fay Jackson (FJ)	HEP Advisor
Anna Lawton (AL)	Councillor
Alessandra Rossetti (AR)*	Councillor

Co-opted non-voting members

Jan McGuire (JMcG)	Independent RE Advisor to Haringey SACRE

Also in attendance

Christine Hatt (CH)	HEP Clerk

** Asterisk denotes absence. For the meeting to be quorate, at least one member from each of Groups A, B, C and D must be present.*

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 JC welcomed everyone to this first Haringey SACRE meeting of the 2025-26 academic year and introduced himself as the Chair of the group.

1.2 JC led the group in a moment of silent contemplation.

1.3 Apologies had been received from AR, BK, MG, NB and PF. CB, IA, JL and SK were also absent. JP had advised that she would be late and arrived at 6:25pm.

1.4 JC noted that the meeting was quorate, as at least one representative of Groups A, B, C and D (see list on page 1) was present.

1.5 Minutes of the Last Meeting (5 June 2025)
The minutes of the last meeting (5 June 2025) had been circulated to all Haringey SACRE members in advance. They were **approved** unanimously.

1.6 Matters Arising
The Matters Arising were discussed as follows:

NEW ACTIONS FROM 5 JUNE 2025 MEETING

Agenda item	Action	Person responsible
1.5 (1)	Ensure future SACRE agendas refer to Moment of Contemplation, not Reflection. **11.09.25:** This was the wording used on today's agenda and would be the same for all future meetings. **CLOSED.**	CH
1.5 (2)	Amend the 14 November 2024 minutes to include HSV's comment. **11.09.25: COMPLETED AND CLOSED.**	CH
4.11	Try again to get more responses to the syllabus survey. **11.09.25:** FJ said the survey would be sent out again next week or the week after. She would keep members informed. **CARRIED FORWARD.**	FJ
5.1	Look at the speaker training available via the RE Hubs website. **11.09.25:** HB had not known how to access the training. JC will send her a direct link, so this action can be removed. **CLOSED.**	HB

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 27 MARCH 2025

Agenda item	Action	Person responsible
3.2	Ask HSV to update SACRE members on the 13 March NASACRE meeting that she attended at the 5 June SACRE meeting. **05.06.25:** There was no time for this. **CARRIED FORWARD. 11.09.25:** HSV gave a brief report on the meeting's main points. NASACRE was now a charity so could apply for more grants. Individual SACREs were asked to check their details in the national directory. Richmond SACRE was continuing to follow up on NASACRE's 2021 'Still Standing' report about how to expand and organise SACRE membership. Ideas about how to encourage people to join and attend included providing food and asking councils to mention SACREs in their newsletters. Finally, attendees talked about the usefulness of RE data that shows how many statutory hours of RE children in different areas must study. **COMPLETED AND CLOSED.**	JMcG

7.2	Compare attendance at past in-person and online SACRE meetings. **05.06.25:** There was no time for this. **CARRIED FORWARD. 11.09.25:** FJ said that, historically, attendance via Zoom was better. However, members tend to be more engaged and proactive if they meet face to face, so there was a good argument for having three, or even all four, of Haringey SACRE's meetings in person every year. AL asked if it would be possible to put this suggestion to members in a direct way. All the members present stated their preference, but it was decided a short survey should be sent to every member so that all could express their view and members present today had more time to consider. **ACTION:** CH. **CARRIED FORWARD.**	**FJ/CH**

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 14 NOVEMBER 2024

Agenda item	Action	Person responsible
2.3	Follow up Freedom of Information request with LBH. **27.03.25:** HSV was not present at today's meeting so could not provide an update. **CARRIED FORWARD. 05.06.25:** There was no time for this. **CARRIED FORWARD. 11.09.25:** This matter was not discussed. **CARRIED FORWARD.**	**HSV**

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 6 JUNE AND 12 SEPTEMBER 2024

Agenda item	Action	Person responsible
	N/A	

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 16 NOVEMBER 2023

Agenda item	Action	Person responsible
6.2	Ask LBH to put a HEP/SACRE link on its website. **21.03.24: CARRIED FORWARD. 06.06.24:** CB said she would pick this matter up with LBH. FJ to email her the details. **CARRIED FORWARD. 12.09.24** It had still not been possible to arrange this. IA said he would pick up this action and report back at the 14 November SACRE meeting. **CARRIED FORWARD. 14.11.24:** Ongoing - see agenda item 6.1. **CARRIED FORWARD. 27.03.25:** IA said that he had now been able to speak to the right person. He had learned there was a new digital team and they would put an appropriate link on the website 'imminently'. IA will chase them on Tuesday (01.04.25). FJ said she had also spoken to LBH about this. There was already a link on the site, but it was out of date. The old information should be removed when the new link was inserted. IA said that was the plan. He would copy FJ and the other SACRE councillors into his email. **CARRIED FORWARD. 05.06.25:** IA was not at today's meeting to give an update. **CARRIED FORWARD. 11.09.25:** FJ said the situation had not changed. There was a SACRE link on the council website, but it was out of date. IA was dealing with the matter but was not present today to give an update. **CARRIED FORWARD.**	**FJ/IA**

2. SACRE INVOLVEMENT LOCALLY

2.1 JC asked if members had any local news relevant to SACRE they would like to share.

2025 RE examinations

GJ said that local RE students had achieved outstanding results in their exams. However, the grade boundaries had moved, and he believed that the scripts had not been marked accurately. In his view, this was particularly true of answers relating to Christianity.

JC asked whether there was an appeals process that GJ could access. GJ said that he would be contacting the relevant exam board, Edexcel.

JMcG said she would share GJ's insights nationally. GJ noted that experienced RE teachers used to mark exams, but the pay is so low, and the work involves so much time staring at screens, that large numbers have opted out. The new markers are often poor. He added that one paper contested by the London Academy of Excellence in Tottenham (LAET) had recently been re-marked, resulting in the allocation of 29 extra marks.

FJ said that the exam boards should be training markers and quality-assuring their work. This was a big issue, but it needed to be raised by schools, not local authorities.

Work with the Alevi Centre

AL said she had very much enjoyed the SACRE meeting and event at the Wood Green Alevi Centre on 5 June. She would like SACRE to organise more events of this type, so that members could learn about other religions directly from their members. HSV agreed.

JC said such events did not have to be at the same time as SACRE meetings. Members could make their own arrangements to visit and/or speak at appropriate venues. FJ said she and GJ had visited several synagogues and churches on this basis.

GJ noted he and FJ had made these visits before Covid intervened. Perhaps the group could re-start the practice and visit another venue for one meeting each year. HB supported this idea. AO said SACRE members were always welcome at the Alevi Centre.

3. SACRE AND HARINGEY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP (HEP)/ LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY (LBH)

3.1 FJ brought the meeting up to date on the progress of the Westhill 'Living Voices' project. She explained that the funding would be sent to Haringey Education Partnership (HEP). HEP would then be responsible for ensuring the money was spent as specified in the original breakdown that JMcG had supplied.

3.2 Returning to the subject of exams, FJ said that HEP usually received both borough and national data. She hoped to have it by the time of SACRE's 13 November meeting.

3.3 FJ informed the meeting that James Page, HEP's Chief Executive, had been invited to join the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) initiative as an advisor. This group was dedicated to raising student achievement, and it was excellent that Haringey would be represented and contributing.

4. NATIONAL AND LOCAL UPDATE: RE STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 JMcG explained that Ruth Marx (RM) was joining the meeting online from France. RM would be supporting the Westhill 'Living Voices' Project by directing the interview videos.

JMcG next talked members through the presentation she had circulated.

4.2 *NASACRE webinars*
JMcG informed members that the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) was holding a webinar on 17 September. This event was intended particularly for new SACRE members, but NASACRE held a range of free webinars across the year. Members could find out more on the organisation's website.

4.3 *'Living Voices' Project*
JMcG highlighted again the £7,000 funding received for the 'Living Voices' project. The work would formally start in October, but planning was already under way. Before this evening's full meeting, she had held a pre-meeting with HB and Alevism experts Dr Celia Jenkins (CJ) and Dr Umit Cetin (UC) of the University of Westminster. (CJ and UC had also attended the 5 June meeting at the Alevi Centre.) Their discussions had been very productive, and they now had a plan for taking the project forward.

JMcG explained that RM was a National RE Adviser, the Vice-Chair of the Association of RE Advisers, Inspectors and Consultants (AREIAC) and a writer for Oak National Academy resources. She had a track record of creating successful video projects. RM said she was excited to be involved in the Alevism project.

4.4 *Contacting MPs*
JMcG again encouraged SACRE members to write to their MPs in support of high-quality RE teaching in schools. James Page of HEP had suggested engaging with the four Haringey MPs direct. These are:

Bambos Charalambous, Labour MP for Southgate and Wood Green
Catherine West, Labour MP for Hornsey and Friern Barnet
David Lammy, Labour MP for Tottenham and Deputy Prime Minister
Tulip Siddiq, Labour MP for Hampstead and Highgate

HB informed members that Bambos Charalambous represents Alevism in parliament.

JMcG said she was considering whether to launch the 'Living Voices' project in June 2026 and to invite all four local MPs.

4.5 *Theos Think Tank Letter*
JMcG said she had circulated an open letter sent to the press by the Theos Think Tank on 14 August, the day A level results came out. It highlights the closure of many Theology/ Religious Studies courses and trainings – there would soon be only 21 higher education centres in England offering these subjects – and asks the government to reverse this trend. SACRE members could reference this in their letters to MPs if they wished.

JMcG underlined that having so few people trained in Theology would make it harder for schools to find RE teachers. Theology was also useful because it gave students the opportunity to consider some of today's most important issues, such as the ethics of AI.

4.6 *Inter-faith Week*
JMcG informed the meeting that the 2025 Inter-faith Week was from 9 to 16 November. She encouraged members to think about what they could offer schools during this time.

Could they, for example, hold an open day at their place of worship? There is a list of event ideas on the Inter-faith Week website – the link is in JMcG's presentation document.

4.7 *Dangoor Award*
JMcG informed the meeting that she had put Haringey forward for this year's Dangoor Award, which is sponsored by the Faith and Belief Forum. She hoped the borough would win the award for its persistence in pursuing the 'Living Voices' project to promote Alevism. She had had to make three separate applications.

4.8 *RE Hubs*
JMcG again reminded the meeting about the RE Hubs website. Through this site, any member can book training that will enable them to become a voluntary, approved speaker about their faith in schools. Talks can be given in person or online.

4.9 *Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)*
JMcG explained she had worked on the Haringey ASC over the summer. The four main steps of the process are shown in her presentation. The first two are already complete.

JMcG is continuing conversations about syllabus content with teachers she meets in training sessions. She is also looking at data about religious affiliation from the 2021 census to ensure the syllabus reflects this. This data shows the growth in the number of Alevis in the UK and, as members knew, the new syllabus would take this into account.

RM outlined the process she would use for interviews, with Alevis and others. She would have a Zoom call with each person individually first, then send them the questions that she planned to ask. Next, she would record and edit the interview. The edited version would be sent to each participant so that they could check it.

RM added that interviews of children would generally be carried out in person by one of her colleagues, although they could be done online if that was appropriate.

RM noted that members of Haringey SACRE could be interviewed for the project if they wished. JMcG confirmed that, while the project would focus on the Alevi community, the aim was also to include local people of other faiths and none.

HSV asked what questions RM or her colleagues would ask. JMcG said all the questions would be linked to the Awareness, Mystery, Value (AMV) syllabus. This has six areas of enquiry, as shown on page 15 of her presentation. Ofsted will check the new syllabus against these areas. RM said all interviewees were usually asked the same questions.

JMcG underlined that the questions were in part determined by legal requirements. They had not yet been written, as the project funding did not formally start until October. She would share the script with SACRE members once it was ready.

HSV said that it was her understanding SACRE was in the process of developing the new syllabus, which was not yet fixed. She had been emailing JMcG with suggestions for syllabus changes for some time. When would it be possible to discuss these?

JMcG said that financial constraints limited what changes could be made. HSV replied that the resources she had suggested were readily available and free. She had not understood that the new syllabus content had already been decided.

HSV asked the meeting if they were happy with what children were learning about Christianity in statutory RE time. SA said he had not looked closely at this, but he and other Christians should do so. JMcG explained that an ASC is to determine the framework all schools must follow. It is not legally about providing lesson plans, resources and detailed content. FJ said this framework was in the agreed syllabus.

HSV said she felt there were 'huge gaps' and lots of voices were not represented. She had loved the THEOS video, which emphasised the need to hear these different voices. A major gap related to the sanctity of life. The materials now used do not explain that many people consider life sacred or present pro-life views on abortion.

JC said members had agreed to continue with the AMV syllabus, with some adaptations. It was not possible to make substantial changes. It was also important the syllabus reflect different views of what being pro-life means, within Christianity and other faiths. National syllabuses try to provide non-sectarian packages and support communal harmony.

HSV replied that members had agreed the syllabus could be changed to better include and represent Alevism. She proposed that Christian members of SACRE get together to review the parts of the syllabus where pro-life views could be better represented as well.

JC asked JMcG what scope there was for this. JMcG said the legal requirement was to comply with the decision SACRE members had already made. The syllabus could not be substantially edited, but it could be adapted to reflect national changes, hence the Alevism additions. She would show members all the amendments made once they were ready.

HSV asked other SACRE members if she was alone in wanting more about the sanctity of life in the AMV syllabus. It could go in Section D, Identity, Diversity and Belonging. SA said Section A, Beliefs, Teachings and Sources, might be a better place. All Christians believed in the sanctity of life. HSV said she thought all religions taught this. JC said interpretations were different. There was no time to discuss the detail at this meeting.

GJ explained that the sanctity of life and related topics were covered in detail in KS4. JMcG underlined that all subjects in the syllabus, and supporting resources, had to be age appropriate. There was an important distinction between syllabus and resources. There can be only limited changes to the syllabus now, but resources can be developed. Members should note also that RM would interview people of many faiths.

JMcG added that she had provided the 2021 census data on religious affiliation in Haringey on page 18 of her presentation. This had been used to make the new syllabus plan relevant to the borough context. The plan was shown in the table on page 19.

4.10 *Haringey and Ealing Collaboration*

JMcG said Haringey and Ealing had agreed to collaborate on syllabus revision. As noted at the 5 June meeting, this would let them pool resources and so benefit both boroughs.

JC said members had approved the collaboration on 5 June. What was the request this time? JMcG said she simply needed the meeting's approval to continue to the next stage. Members unanimously **approved** the continuation of the RE syllabus work in conjunction with Ealing. HSV added that her approval came with the caveat that the doors were not closed to updating the resources used. JMcG confirmed that this was the case.

5. ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MEMBERS

5.1 JMcG had hoped to facilitate a discussion about how SACRE members could be more involved with the group's wider work, both in relation to the Agreed Syllabus Conference work and otherwise. Unfortunately, there was no time for this.

CH said she would add a question to the brief survey she was sending out about meeting arrangements (see 1.6, Matters Arising, 27 March 2025, 7.2). This would allow members to choose from a possible list of tasks to undertake.

ACTION: CH to add a question about additional tasks to the survey already agreed.

HB said it would be helpful if JMcG could provide a timetable for the tasks. FJ said she and JMcG needed first to get a clearer picture of what SACRE members were willing to do. They could then make a list of volunteers and contact people as opportunities arose.

JC underlined that members should be realistic about how much time they could offer. This would allow JMcG and FJ to plan as accurately as possible.

6. AOB

6.1 FJ informed members that the London Diocesan Board for Schools had nominated someone to replace Sally Moore. He would attend the next meeting as an observer.

A potential governor representative to serve on Haringey SACRE had also been identified. He would likewise attend on 13 November as an observer.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.1 **Thursday 13 November 2025 at 5pm**, online.

The meeting ended at 6.51pm.

SIGNED: **DATE:**

Actions are listed on the following pages.

NEW ACTIONS FROM TODAY'S MEETING

Agenda item	Action	Person responsible
1.6	Create and circulate a survey asking SACRE members about their preferred meeting arrangements.	CH
5.1	Include a question in the survey about members' willingness to participate in a range of other SACRE-related tasks.	CH

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 5 JUNE 2025

Agenda item	Action	Person responsible
4.11	Try again to get more responses to the syllabus survey. **11.09.25:** FJ said the survey would be sent out again next week or the week after. She would keep members informed. **CARRIED FORWARD.**	FJ

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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 14 NOVEMBER 2024

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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS FROM 16 NOVEMBER 2023

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