



Meeting of the Surrey SACRE

Date: Wednesday 14th January – Extraordinary Meeting Spring Term 2026

Time: 5.00-6.00pm

Venue – Church House Guildford

Hybrid Meeting - this meeting was recorded on Teams with AI transcript as part of minute taking.

Quorum required – 9 (at least 1 from each group). Meeting quorate 5.00pm.

Officers present x3 /Clerk x1 / Members Present 17 – Total 20 (Sarah Harris counts twice as officer & group A member)

Present: x

Officers x3 + Clerk:

Sarah Harris (Chair SHa) - Chair of SACRE

Rachel Boxer (RB) – Adviser to Surrey SACRE/RE Consultant

Matthew Rixson (MR) – SCC Asst Director for Edu Access, Quality & Improvement

Clerk: Liz Mitchell (LMI)- Diocesan Administrator & Clerk to SACRE

Group A x7: Jennie Johnson (JJ) - Chair of Group A, Sarah Harris (Chair SHa), Peter Ward (PW), Sadia Irfan (SI), Suha Rawhani SR), Raju Pandya (RP), Rashida Nasir (RN)

Group B x3: Jane Whittington – Chair of Group B (JW), Shaun Burns (SB), Fiona Foreman (FF) - online

Group C x3: Saima Saleh – Co Chair of Group B (SS) online, Sadia Nawaz (SN) online, Deborah Jackson (DJ)

Group D x4: Cllr Robert Hughes (RH), Cllr Louise Morales (LMO), Cllr Buddhi Weershinghe (BW), Cllr Chris Townsend (CT) – online

Item No.	SACRE Business meeting All papers for the meeting are emailed as attachments/links prior to meeting named by item number for ease of reference. Meeting convened at 5.00pm Meeting recorded on Teams for minuting purposes. No objections received from SACRE members.	Actions arising	
		By whom	By when
1.	Welcome and share food/formal Extraordinary meeting: Chair SHa opened formal Extraordinary meeting at 5.00pm following sharing food. Welcomed SACRE members in person and online.		
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence: Clerk LMI recorded apologies from - Officers - Jo Kenyon, Alex Tear Group A - Rev Allan Taylor, Susan Shoveller. No response from Patrick T and Inderjeet R Group B – Sarah Hutton Group C – Naomi Ezzard, Emma Johnston, Fiona Lewis Group D – Cllr Saj Hussain</p> <p>Decisions to be made by SACRE at Extraordinary Meeting: RB outlined rationale for Extraordinary meeting for SACRE members to discuss and vote to reach decision on 6 proposals: - amendment to Constitution to include Pentecostal Church in Group A - approve amended 2025-26 SACRE Development Plan - appoint 1 member from each group to SACRE SDP sub-committee - appoint 1 member from each group to School Partnering Visits sub-committee - recommendation to retain one Syllabus for the whole of Surrey across and beyond LGR - delay review of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus (statutory from 01.09.2029 or 01.09.2030)</p> <p>RB explained Groups to be put into break out rooms and confirmed each Group member has a single vote. Each Group required to reach consensus among its members for a unanimous vote. Clarified that only SACRE member without voting rights is EJ (Group C) who is a co-opted member.</p>		
3.	<p>Membership Updates – paper 3: Amendment to Surrey SACRE Constitution - Chair SHa outlined proposal to amend the Surrey SACRE Constitution to increase the number of Christian representatives in Group A to specifically include a Pentecostal member with voting rights.</p> <p>Rationale for Amendment - Chair SHa explained that the Pentecostal Church is one of the fastest growing denominations in Surrey and have expressed their interest in joining Surrey SACRE. This has prompted the proposal to increase the number of Christian representatives from five to six to</p>		

	<p>accommodate a Pentecostal member.</p> <p>RB shared the Surrey SACRE Constitution document (paper 3) on screen and highlighted changes made. JJ highlighted discrepancy in Group A 'Other Christian Denominations' under Islam. RB amended from one to two members.</p> <p>Nomination and voting process: AT noted the Royal Surrey County Hospital is currently acting as the nominating body for the new Pentecostal representative but this could change in the future. New Pentecostal representative would be formally presented and observe the next Spring SACRE meeting on 11.03.2026 then be formally voted in at the Summer SACRE meeting on 01.07.2026.</p> <p>Nominating bodies – all SACRE members to confirm that the nominating bodies are correct in the Constitution.</p> <p>Voting Item: approve amendment to Constitution to include Pentecostal Church in Group A.</p> <p>Formal Voting: <i>During the breakout sessions, the four Groups discussed the inclusion of the Pentecostal Church in Group A. Confirmed later as a unanimous decision across all four Groups.</i></p>	<p>SACRE</p> <p>SACRE</p>	<p>Mar 26</p> <p>14.01.26</p>
4.	<p>SACRE Development Plan (SDP) – papers 4.1 & 4.2:</p> <p>a) Updates to 2025-26 SDP - RB presented the revised SDP on screen highlighting changes and new priorities as discussed at last Autumn SACRE meeting on 05.11.2025. RB explained as a formality SACRE needs to vote to approve the revised task priorities for 2025-26 identified and amended by SDP sub-committee on behalf of the SACRE.</p> <p>RB clarified that the next SDP would cover two years instead of three 2026-28, due to anticipated curriculum and local government changes. A new SDP sub-committee was convened as part of this meeting.</p> <p>Key Amendments and Priorities: RB highlighted the changes the sub-committee made: Priority 3 (Page 11) - the provision of extra resources to help schools. Priority 8 (Page 12) - ongoing efforts to identify which schools are or are not using the agreed syllabus and how best to get the statutory information from schools. Priority 11 (Page 13) - the introduction of partnering visits to schools to observe inclusive worship.</p> <p>Data Collection Challenges: SACRE members discussed ongoing challenges in data collection from schools and school engagement. SACRE considered alternative methods while continuing conversations with Surrey CC to find effective solutions.</p> <p>Voting items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to approve the amended SDP 2025-26. - to appoint at least one member per Group to School Partnering Visits sub-committee. - to appoint at least one member per Group to SDP subcommittee for next 2 year plan cycle. <p>Formal Voting and Volunteer Selection: <i>During the breakout sessions the four Groups voted on approving amended 2025-26 SDP which confirmed later as a unanimous decision across all four Groups. Several members across the four Groups volunteered for the two subcommittees on SDP and Partnering Visits with scheduling of meetings to be coordinated based on availability.</i></p> <p>b) SACRE Proposals re Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Syllabus Review Extension (paper 4.3): Chair SHa referred to paper 4.3 presented on screen regarding LGR and implications for Surrey SACRE. Proposal to recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to recommend to retain a single SACRE and syllabus for Surrey. - delay the Surrey syllabus review to 2030 to accommodate ongoing changes. <p>SACRE members reached consensus despite the upcoming LGR of SCC into two unitary authorities it is preferable to maintain a single SACRE and one Agreed Surrey Syllabus for the foreseeable</p>	<p>SACRE</p> <p>SACRE</p> <p>SACRE</p>	<p>14.01.26</p> <p>14.01.26</p> <p>14.01.26</p>

	<p>future, citing efficiency and continuity for schools.</p> <p>Unified SACRE: Group D members supported recommended proposal to maintain SACRE structure in short term to help alleviate impact of workload for SCC officers and members during shadow authority and past vesting date. Referred to differing experiences in Berkshire and Cumbria.</p> <p>SACRE members discussed the complexities of hosting shared services including budget allocations and delivery of eg. SEND resources which may support the need for one authority to act as host. However, SACRE members recognised that future changes may necessitate a review of this arrangement.</p> <p>MR clarified ultimately not Surrey SACRE’s decision. General model of ‘shared services’ might be for one of the authorities to host service eg. SACRE where things are not disaggregated.</p> <p>RB reassured SACRE members with ATe in conversation with SCC to work through the contractual arrangements and practicalities going forward. SCC recognising SACRE are delivering a statutory function which need to be able to continue doing.</p> <p>One Agreed Surrey Syllabus and extension of syllabus review: RB outlined in recent contract meeting with ATe and SCC keen to hear voice of the SACRE Groups particularly regarding keeping one Agreed Surrey RE Syllabus and an extension of revising the Syllabus.</p> <p>RB explained Agreed Surrey RE Syllabus due for revision between 2027/28 but due to LGR and potential implications of national Curriculum Assessment Review proposing SACRE recommends delaying the Syllabus review to be statutory from 01.09.2029 or 01.09.2030. Allows time for the effects of LGR and national curriculum changes to become clear, and avoid unnecessary time and expenditure being spent on premature revisions.</p> <p>JWT highlighted that schools have not yet completed a full cycle under the current syllabus and that further changes would be disruptive during a period of significant transition. Would push for review longer than 2 years to help teachers navigate reorganisation.</p> <p>Discussion by SACRE members about legal perspective of Syllabus review process, extra funding that SCC may be required to plan for, consideration of impact of syllabus review on schools and how CAR may shape time scales of decisions going forward.</p> <p>Voting items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - keeping one Agreed Surrey RE Syllabus - extension of Agreed Surrey RE Syllabus revision period by 2 years to be statutory from 01.09.2029 or 01.09.2030. <p>Formal Voting: During the breakout sessions and using paper 4.3 as basis for discussion, the four Groups voted on keeping one Agreed Surrey RE Syllabus and extension of the Agreed Syllabus review period which confirmed later as a unanimous decision across all four Groups.</p>	SACRE	14.01.26
5.	<p>Partnering Visits: See notes in item 4.</p>		
6.	<p>Curriculum and Assessment Review (paper 6): RB shared paper 6 on screen bringing together collective information across various bodies regarding the national Curriculum and Religious Education Review (CAR). RB asked PW to comment. PW outlined the focus has been on the potential inclusion of RE in the national curriculum and highlighted two key things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Expert Advisory Group is due to provide recommendations by 31.03.2026, which will clarify whether RE will become part of the national curriculum. - the EBacc has gone and a new assessment model has been introduced which is probably better off for RE studies at GCSE. 		

	<p>Consultation and Representation: PW advised no requirement for Surrey SACRE to formally respond as discussed at Autumn SACRE meeting. Recommended contributing to the national review through various organisations including NASACRE, AERIAC and the Religious Education Council (REC). Also encouraged SACRE members to check their own organisations' denominational involvement/nominating bodies and unions to ensure adequately represented.</p> <p>Denominational Education Concerns: SACRE members discussed the challenge of accommodating denominational religious education within a national framework. PW noted Vanessa Ogden has given assurance that there is no intention to change the law regarding denominational education.</p> <p>SACRE members discussed inclusivity and curriculum balance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the need for RE to be objective, pluralistic and critical to ensure that both religious and non-religious worldviews are represented. - denominational schools to continue to meet Ofsted requirements for a balanced curriculum. - important everybody is 'on the same page' to continue the good work we are doing. - issue about the control of RE and government understanding critical objective of local determination going forward. - value of use of SACRE model. - need clear principles across the board if RE becomes part of a national curriculum. 	SACRE	March 26
7.	SACRE Training Needs – agreement to follow up at Spring SACRE meeting on 11.03.2026.	SACRE	March 26
8.	<p>Breakout Sessions and Formal Voting: RB shared document on screen with six proposals for discussion as listed in agenda item 2 to be voted on within Groups in breakout sessions.</p> <p>17:40 - each SACRE committee group put in separate breakout rooms for 15 minute discussion to decide majority decisions on six proposals.</p> <p>RB, Clerk and MR stepped out to neutral space.</p> <p><i>CT left meeting at 18:00.</i></p> <p>18.08 – extended time following some technical challenges with breakout rooms. All four Groups brought back to main meeting room and Chair SHa reconvened full meeting.</p> <p>Each Group Chair reported back majority decisions made in break-out sessions: Group A – All seven members in person in break out room Willow. Chair JJ reported: Proposals 1-4 unanimously voted to agree. <i>Comment to note on proposal 3 delay review to 1st Sept 2030 unless appropriate to do sooner.</i> Proposal 5 five members volunteered to be on SDP sub-committee – PW, SHa, SR, RN, and SI. Proposal 6 six members volunteered to be on Partnering visits sub-committee – JJ, PW, SHa, SR, SI and RP.</p> <p>Group B – JWT and SB in person in break out room Cypress with FF online. Chair JWT reported: Proposals 1-4 unanimously voted to agree. <i>Comments asked to note - on proposal 2 in SDP SCC SACRE contract due to end Aug 2026 and felt that SACRE should have some representation into the contract negotiations.</i> <i>On proposal 3 delay curriculum review to 1st September 2030.</i> Proposal 5 one member volunteered to be on SDP sub-committee – JWT. Proposal 6 three members volunteered to be on Partnering visits sub-committee – JWT, SHu and FF.</p> <p>Group C – DJ in person in break out room Myrtle with SS and SN online. DJ reported for Chair SS: Proposals 1-4 unanimously voted to agree. <i>Comments asked to note -on proposal 3 delay curriculum review to 1st September 2030.</i></p>		

	<p>Proposal 5 one member volunteered to be on SDP sub-committee – SS dependent on workload with support from DJ and SN if required. Proposal 6 three members volunteered to be on Partnering visits sub-committee – DJ, SS and SN.</p> <p>Group D – RH, LMo and BW in person in break out room Oak with CT online. Chair RH reported: Proposals 1-4 unanimously voted to agree. Proposal 5 one member volunteered to be on SDP sub-committee dependent on workload – RH. Proposal 6 three members volunteered to be on Partnering visits sub-committee – BW, CT and LMo dependent on dates/availability.</p> <p>Confirmation of Decisions: All four Groups reported unanimous agreement on the six key proposals. RB retained hard copy of proposal agreements from each Group Chair for record-keeping and follow-up.</p>		
9.	<p>Close and Follow-up tasks: Chair SHa thanked RB and Clerk for work done, thanked all members for attending both in person and online, and for members for bringing food to share. All wished SB a happy birthday!</p> <p>Partnering Visits to Schools: RB to contact the volunteers for the partnering visits subcommittee, propose suitable dates based on availability and location, and coordinate the first school visit.</p> <p>Development Plan Subcommittee Coordination: RB and Chair SHa to convene subcommittee for SDP Planning to include one member from each SACRE Group</p> <p>Spring and Summer SACRE Meetings: Clerk LMi to send calendar invites for Spring (11th March) and Summer (1st July) SACRE meetings to all members.</p> <p>Distribution of Meeting Minutes: Clerk LMi to resend the minutes from the last Autumn SACRE meeting on 5th November with minutes of Extraordinary meeting in due course for review and approval at Spring SACRE meeting.</p> <p>Suggestion to postpone 11th March meeting to after 31st March when Expert Advisory Group is due to provide recommendations by. PW commented if appropriate government will consult after this – agreed Spring SACRE date to go ahead as planned on 11th March.</p> <p>Extraordinary meeting closed at 18:20pm.</p>	<p>RB</p> <p>RB</p> <p>Clerk LMi</p> <p>Clerk LMi</p>	<p>Feb 2026</p> <p>Mar 26</p> <p>Feb 2026</p> <p>Feb 2026</p>

The meeting closed at 18:12pm

Signature: _____ Approved by Surrey SACRE Committee / *S Harris* (Chair) _____ Date: ____11.03.2026____

Minutes to be circulated to: SACRE Committee, Local Authority SACRE Officers, Diocese and being also published in the public domain via cofeguildford.org.uk

Summary of Actions at 14.01.26: **Action** to complete / **Action** – completed

Item	Action on	By whom	By when
3.	Constitution Voting Item: approve amendment to Constitution to include Pentecostal Church in Group A. Nominating bodies – all SACRE members to confirm that the nominating bodies are correct in the Constitution.	SACRE SACRE	14.01.26 March 26
4.	SDP Voting items: - to approve the amended SDP 2025-26. - to appoint at least one member per Group to School Partnering Visits sub-committee. - to appoint at least one member per Group to SDP subcommittee for next 2 year plan cycle LGR and Approved Syllabus Voting items: - to recommend to retain a single SACRE and one Agreed Surrey RE Syllabus. - extension of Agreed Surrey RE Syllabus revision period by 2 years to be statutory from 01.09.2029 or 01.09.2030.	SACRE SACRE	14.01.26 14.01.26
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9.	Distribution of Meeting Minutes: Clerk LMi to resend the minutes from the last Autumn SACRE meeting on 5 th November with minutes of Extraordinary meeting 14 th January in due course for review and approval at Spring SACRE meeting on 11 th March.	Clerk LMi	Feb 26

Initials: Chair SHa – Sarah Harris / RB – Rachel Boxer / Clerk LMi– Liz Mitchell