

National Association of SACREs

Secretary's Report, May 2025

Our NASACRE Executive 2024-25:

Officers (6):

Denise Chaplin (Co-Chair), Bill Moore (Co-Chair), Paul Smalley (Co-Chair), Linda Rudge (Assistant to the Chair), Sue Holmes (Secretary), Saquat Ali (Treasurer)

Members (6):

Anne Andrews, Jo Backus, Sheila Gewolb, Catherine Hughes, Manjit Kaur, Sukaina Manji

Co-opted (1): *Claire Clinton*

Admin: *Marie Cooper*

Webmaster: *Matthew Tullett*

Our NASACRE Executive Committee met formally twice each term over the last year, and all the meetings were online, with none in person, thereby continuing to keep expenses to a minimum, and allowing members to attend for as long they are able - from any location! In between, there have been frequent conversations and catch-ups for various sub-groups and task groups, responding to current events and keeping up the momentum of the ongoing workload. For the first time in our history, NASACRE has the novelty of 3 Co-Chairs doing a 'job share' and overseeing everything!

In May 2025, we hold our first *ANNUAL* General Meeting for 2 years! The transition to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status has taken an inordinate amount of time and energy. When we started the process nearly 3 years ago, we really didn't know what we were letting ourselves in for! Many of you will have been in York last year when our consultant Mike McMaster took us through the changes we were proposing and the rationale behind them. He helped us to put together our new 25-page Constitution to replace the old 2-page one, which we'd been told in no uncertain terms was not fit for purpose! Oh, how the world has changed in the last 32 years since NASACRE was founded as the association to join up all the SACREs in England. It took several attempts (and tweaks!) to get the new Constitution - modelled on the Charity Commissioners template - through all the checks and balances, and it wasn't until March 2025 that we were informed that we finally met the CC criteria and could be registered as Charity No. 1212494 with just the one main charitable aim:

NASACRE's object is the advancement of education through the development of religious education and collective worship in schools and communities in England, with, through and alongside Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs)...

Now we come to the exciting bit - the electing our new trustees, so that NASACRE can motor forward with its new identity. There are several Exec members who have been waiting for 2 years or more to “stand down at the next AGM”, and in the meantime they have together clocked up several more years of extended service to the association – many more than they first signed up for! Exec members voluntarily offer their own free time, expertise and skills to serve NASACRE, and we owe everyone a huge debt of thanks for their commitment and everything they’ve given.

The new 2025-26 Exec of up to 12 trustees will continue to work in 3 strategic sub-groups - development, communications and conference. Their immediate job is to revise and update our NASACRE Development Plan and upgrade it for our CIO status. With that, we are able to access additional funding to further support SACREs. We can now employ an Executive Officer to take some of the strain off the officers and promote further links with professional partners. We might consider providing other forms of training, or extend our ultra-successful webinar programme and the regional meetings with RE Hub Leads, thereby maximising opportunities for discussion, support and sharing. The main thing is that we want to be as open as we can to members’ suggestions and concerns, so this is where we need ideas from the SACREs, and trust that you will engage with us in shaping NASACRE for the future.

The great news is that the vast majority of SACREs in England are now paid-up members of NASACRE. In 2024-25 we have a total of 137 SACREs subscribed, out of a total of ~150 across the country. That is certainly the most that I have worked with in my time as Secretary and it bodes very well for our future! Thanks to our excellent Admin Officer Marie - often the first port of call when you contact us - who has kept tabs on such stats over the years.

The good news is that we can now finish other long-delayed projects, like the revision of *The SACRE Handbook*. We can focus on taking active steps to address the findings of David Hampshire’s excellent national analyses of recent Annual SACRE Reports, and recommending to you, our members, how you can better support RE in your local schools. We have kept up our key regular strategic partnership meetings with DfE officials, worked with other partners such as the REC, and collaborated with The Faith & Belief Forum to ensure that something of the excellent work of the Inter Faith Network is preserved for the future.

So NASACRE moves on, entering a new phase with a brand-new identity! Let’s raise a toast to successful SACREs in the years ahead. Whatever happens to RE (or religion and worldviews), whether or not the subject becomes part of the national curriculum, we all know the value of local people supporting quality religious education in shaping diverse communities for the future. That’s why we’re here!

Sue Holmes