

Torbay SACRE Meeting – Minutes

Date: Wednesday 17 June 2026

Location: Banking Hall / MS Teams

Clerk: Louise Willmott

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all attendees, both in person and online.

Apologies received from:

- Laura Kendell
 - Katie Burns
 - Angela Sumner
 - Liz Kilkelly
 - Niki Boone
-

2. Attendance

Present (partial list based on meeting record):

- Chair (Jeremy Roberts)
- Bill Becher
- Ed Pawson
- Cllr Nick Bye
- Laura Twamley
- Louise Willmott (Clerk)
- Sharon Luck
- Sheila Gewolb
- Belinda Twiggs
- Claire Bird
- Lyndsay Thomas
- Maia Miller
- Martin Brook
- Jeremy Skelton
- Lisa Robillard Webb
- Councillor Nick Bye
- Belinda Twiggs
- Sharon Luck
- Kim Moore Cullen

(Note: transcript confirms participation but does not provide a complete formal register)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.
There were no matters arising or corrections raised.

4. Urgent Items

No urgent items were identified for inclusion.

5. SACRE Membership Update

- New member **Sharon Luck** was welcomed as a representative of the Muslim community.
 - Sharon outlined her work delivering school visits, supporting understanding of Islam and addressing Islamophobia.
 - The value of lived experience in education was highlighted.
 - Current vacancies remain, including:
 - Christian representative
 - Hindu representative
-

6. Educating Ourselves – Member Input (Judaism)

Sheila Gewolb presented on her work delivering Judaism education in schools. Key points included:

- Use of **interactive and experiential learning** (artefacts, food, Hebrew texts).
- Importance of **challenging misconceptions and prejudice**.
- Children demonstrate strong curiosity and openness, particularly at primary level.
- Personal experiences were shared regarding **antisemitism and safety concerns**, contrasted with positive school environments.
- Emphasis placed on **lived experience rather than theological expertise** when engaging pupils.

Discussion highlighted:

- The importance of joint visits (e.g. Muslim and Jewish representatives together).
- The role of RE in tackling discrimination and fostering inclusion.

7. Curriculum and Assessment Review Update

Ed Pawson provided an update:

- Work on a **national curriculum model for RE** has been submitted to the Department for Education.
- The process remains at an early stage, with multiple legislative steps required.
- There is no confirmation yet that RE will become a national curriculum subject.
- Updated GCSE and A-level specifications are planned, with:
 - GCSE teaching from 2030
 - A-level updates to follow later

Concerns raised:

- Significant shortage of specialist RE teachers.
- Approximately 50% of secondary RE is taught by non-specialists.

8. School Monitoring and Ofsted Reports

- Two recent primary Ofsted reports showed strong emphasis on:
 - Character development
 - Community engagement
 - Cultural understanding
- RE is often referenced under **personal development**, rather than curriculum quality.
- New Ofsted framework provides less subject-specific evaluation.

Additional points:

- 2 Primary schools inspected: -
 - Torre School, congratulations to Laura Kendell
 - Furzeham
 - Recent secondary inspections (Brixham College and Torquay Boys' Grammar) noted for future review.
-

Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE) Update

General Activity

- Strong engagement across Torbay and South Devon hub meetings.
- Planning underway for October 2026 conference.
- Work progressing to align Oak National Academy resources with the agreed syllabus.

Funding Position

A detailed discussion took place regarding funding arrangements for Learn, Teach, Lead RE, highlighting a lack of clarity and potential shortfall:

- Historically, SACREs (including Torbay) have contributed financially to support the training and development of hub leaders.
- Torbay SACRE previously agreed to contribute funding; however, there is now uncertainty about the source of this funding.
- Current arrangements mean advisory services are commissioned through Devon, raising the question of whether LTLRE funding:
 - should be included within that contract, or
 - requires separate financial contribution from Torbay Council.
- It was confirmed that:
 - This issue has not yet been resolved.
 - Learn, Teach, Lead RE is currently experiencing a funding pressure/shortfall as a result.
 - A formal discussion with the Local Authority is required to clarify responsibility.
- Advice has been sought from the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), which confirmed that:
 - Local authorities have a duty to support SACRE work appropriately.
 - If necessary, concerns could be escalated to the Department for Education, although local resolution is preferred.
- It was agreed that this issue requires urgent escalation and resolution to ensure sustainability of the LTLRE network.

10. Regional and National Developments

Teacher Recruitment:

- Applications for RE teacher training have significantly fallen following removal of bursaries.
- SACRE agreed to write to the Secretary of State requesting reinstatement of bursaries.

RE Policy and Guidance:

- RE must remain:
 - Objective
 - Critical
 - Pluralistic
- Importance of maintaining balanced teaching of Christianity and other beliefs emphasised.

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB):

- Example shared of pupil advocacy (Mandir proposal in Plymouth).
 - Encouragement for RE to move beyond knowledge to social action.
-

11. Conference Feedback

- South West SACRE conference and NASACRE conference attended.
 - Key message:
 - RE plays a critical role in **social cohesion, identity and community understanding**.
 - Emphasis on lived experience contributors to enhance classroom learning.
-

12. Local Government Reorganisation

- Expected announcement before mid-July.
 - Limited anticipated impact on Torbay SACRE structure, though Devon arrangements may change.
 - Risk noted nationally that SACRE functions can be overlooked during reorganisation.
-

13. Date of Next Meeting

- Wednesday 5 November 2026
-

Actions

- **Clerk (Louise):** Record note to contact Niki Boone regarding membership status.
- **Ed Pawson:**
 - Circulate NASACRE infographic to all members.
 - Follow up with Ofsted report updates (Brixham and Torquay Boys' Grammar) for next meeting.
 - Draft and submit letter to Secretary of State requesting reinstatement of RE bursaries.
- **Chair / LA Officer:** Arrange discussion with Hannah Baker regarding Learn, Teach, Lead funding arrangements.
- **Ed Pawson / Belinda Twiggs:** Progress mapping of Oak Academy resources to agreed syllabus.
- **Ed Pawson:** Explore opportunities for joint school visits involving different faith representatives (e.g. Jewish and Muslim).
- **All Members:** Promote October 2026 RE conference to schools and networks.