

National Association of SACREs

AGM 2021: Secretary's Report

Our NASACRE 2020-21 Executive:

Officers: Linda Rudge (Acting Chair/Chair), Michael Metcalf (Treasurer), Sue Holmes (Secretary) and Paul Smalley (Executive Assistant)

Members: Claire Clinton, Roy Galley, Sheila Gewolb, Alex Klein, Emily Norman, Sukaina Manji

Co-opted: Denise Chaplin, Elizabeth Jenkerson, Lesley Prior

In a year like no other in the NASACRE Executive's collective experience, COVID demanded that we all adapted and adopted new ways of working. Our planned 2020 **Authority in RE** conference programme was postponed lock, stock and barrel until May 2021. There were no new nominations for the Executive Committee and those completing their term of office were renominated by their respective SACREs, so in the absence of the AGM in May, the majority continued in their existing roles. The exceptions were Paul Smalley who stood down as Chair, having (more than) completed his term of office! Linda Rudge was nominated for and took over the Vice-Chair's role, but a few days after he'd assumed the role of Chair as planned, Robert Morgan resigned for personal reasons. So Linda was persuaded by the rest of the Executive to become Acting Chair. Without an AGM, it was decided to hold an online EGM in November so that the Chair's appointment could be properly confirmed. At the EGM we welcomed Sukaina Manji, nominated by Peterborough SACRE to fill one of the vacant Exec positions. But the role of Vice Chair is still open; this could cause us problems moving forward in 2022, when Linda is due to step down...

Your Exec team has had to find new ways of working together in what has become a more complex workload over the past year. The last time Exec members met physically was in February 2020, since when all NASACRE business has been conducted remotely. To cover the workload, Exec members have held shorter virtual meetings but more frequently - June, October, September, December, February and April. When the first lockdown began, some stepped up to the mark and generously adapted teachers' support materials they were crafting for their own SACRE, for NASACRE to send to members. Regular termly editions of *SACRE Briefing* continue to support and keep those members updated with the world of RE, as some SACREs have hardly been able to meet at all. We have noticed an increase in the number of questions and queries from members over this time, and kept in regular touch with DfE advice, when some have challenged the legality of virtual SACRE meetings.

Unable to meet in person, Exec members have been shuffling responsibilities to contribute to streamlined working groups which are meeting across the year. Some have worked on a new format for SACRE annual reports, some in partnership with other organisations such as the DfE, the Inter Faith Network, on Collective Worship with AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants), and funded by Culham on the recommendations of the REC's 2018 CoRE report. NASACRE sent out a FOI request to all LAs last November. The number of responses was extraordinarily high and elicited some very useful information about SACRE funding, which is just published in a NASACRE report to coincide with our 2021 conference; SACREs will definitely want to take notice!

In planning our first online Conference and AGM, we have taken out an extended NASACRE Zoom subscription to accommodate delegates in webinar-style. In theory we should now be able to welcome more delegates than ever and at a bargain price! The 2021 Birmingham Conference and AGM will be held in 2022 – we'll surely be meeting in person by then!

As we come to the end of a challenging year, Emily Norman steps down from the Exec to focus on her other work; we must thank Emily for her contributions to NASACRE, including responsibility for the collation of SACRE *Briefing* for a while. We should also say a big thank-you to Marie Cooper for continuing to provide a consistently high standard of paid admin support. We hope we may now have found a future Treasurer, as Saquat begins to shadow Michael, from whom he will eventually take over, if all goes to plan!

We trust that everyone has stayed well throughout the last year and will do so in the year ahead, now we're all getting 'jabbed up'. Please tell us how your SACRE is coping and managing its workload in COVID times and how you prepare to move forward, as we all adjust to what will become the 'new normal'.

Sue Holmes