

# The Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants



*Supporting and developing leadership in RE and collective worship*

## From the Chair...

The annual conference is a central feature of AREIAC's activities. This year's conference, entitled 'Leading and Inspiring Religion and Worldviews Education', took place in July at Leamington Spa. It was our second in-person conference since the pandemic, held over two days (Sunday to Monday).



One highlight of the Sunday was the immersive experience of visiting a gurdwara and Ahmadiyya mosque, gaining firsthand knowledge about the diversity of worldviews and the practical application of beliefs within Sikhi and Islam. These experiential encounters facilitated a deeper understanding of the religious practices, traditions, and values that shape the lives of millions worldwide.



Back at the Woodland Grange venue, the St Philip's Centre from Leicester delivered a compelling presentation, illustrating the engaging and inspiring interfaith work and education taking place in schools and other settings

On Monday, the keynote address by Paula Webber from Cardiff Metropolitan University was entitled 'Better Together: Co-creating Curriculum'. Paula emphasised the need and benefit of collaboration and cooperation and the benefits this had brought to the new Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) curriculum in Wales.

Linda Rudge and Tania ap Siôn, chairs of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and the Welsh Association of SACREs/SACs (WASCRE), brought us up to date with the work of SACREs and some of the challenges and opportunities faced.

Many delegates are actively involved in educational roles within schools and broader consultancy work in religious education. To address this, Justine Ball and Claire Ramalli led a seminar on developing consultancy knowledge and skills, drawing on the experience of many of us who have travelled that road and are still learning. This interactive session provided practical guidance and strategies to help participants navigate their combined roles effectively,





ensuring that their expertise positively impacts RE/RVE both within and beyond school environments.

There were twenty updates and 'Show and Tell' sessions covering a wide range of interesting and informative topics, along with ample opportunities for attendees to meet and network both in seminars and at the bar!

The gala dinner concluded with an amusing yet powerful after-dinner speech by Lat Blaylock, entitled "Ages Past and Years to Come." As ever, Lat managed to combine poignant facts and

anecdotes with amusing and humorous stories.

Yes, sometimes RE is confusing and complex. And that's just the structure, organisation and expectations, never mind the content! Some of that complexity is born from its historical context and legacy, some from diverse opinions of what RE is and what (and whom) it is for. But for all its faults and uncertainties, our quirky RE 'settlement' contributes more than we realise to human understanding, spiritual awareness, cohesion and, perhaps especially, resilience to hatred, division and despair.



Sometimes complexity and paradox are an inevitable consequence of being human. Recognising this gestates the positive virtue of compromise, of bringing things and people together. This is why it is so important to work to secure and improve this education and why the work of AREIAC, alongside our professional partners, is so critical.



*Alastair Ross*

## AREIAC website - accessing the members' resources



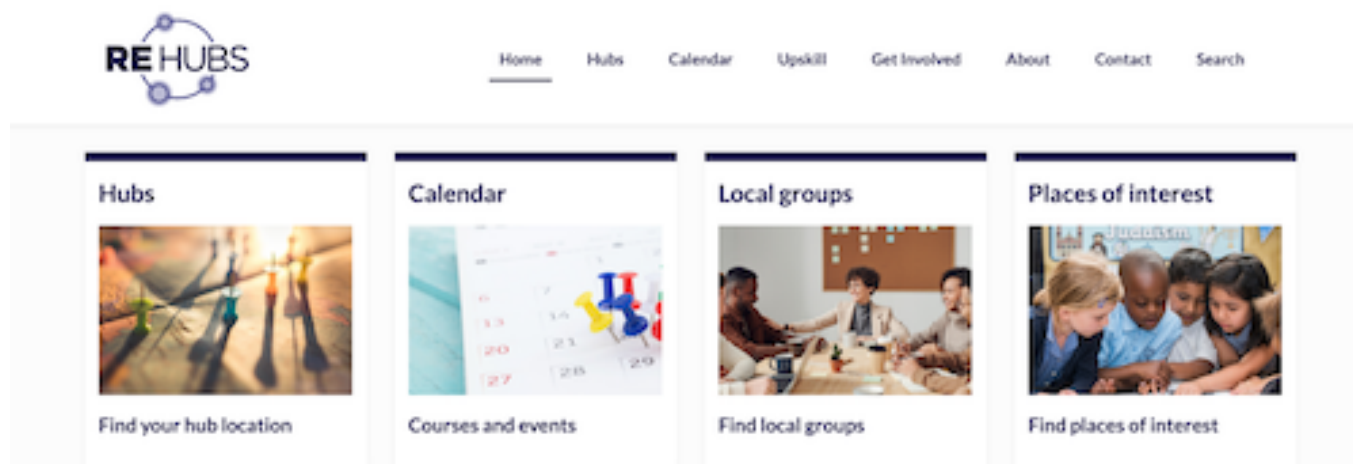
Thanks to those of you who have already signed up the new format on the website. The generic password has now been discontinued so if you have not then you need to register. You will see the 'log in' button on the top right-hand side of the website - if you click on this you will see where it says, "New to this site? Sign Up."

This should be a quick and simple process:

1. Click on Sign Up
2. Add an email (please use the email you use for your AREIAC membership)
3. Create a password (we do not store this)
4. Tick the "I'm not a robot box"
5. Click on "Sign Up"

You will then be able to use this email and password access to the restructured pages of the site. If you have any issues please contact Paul **HOPKINS** (webmeister) at [web@areaiac.org.uk](mailto:web@areaiac.org.uk)

## Regional RE HUBs Update



<https://www.re-hubs.uk/>

**Claire Clinton:** Lead Director RE Hubs for England and Wales ([rehubsdirector@regionalrehubs.co.uk](mailto:rehubsdirector@regionalrehubs.co.uk))

The RE Hubs website is now live. Found at [www.re-hubs.uk](http://www.re-hubs.uk), the website is a freely available one-stop shop that seeks to help teachers and members of the Religious Education / Religion, Values & Ethics / Religion & Worldviews (RE/RVE/R&W) community find resources, CPD, inspiration, visitors and where to go out on visits and events.

The website is being kept up to date by the RE Hubs team, which is made up of RE teachers and experts from across England and Wales, specialising in their local area.

The newly developed website has for the first time a calendar for England & Wales for all stakeholders to advertise events taking place. If you are running an event in your area, you can use this page to upload information to the Yorkshire and Humber events page. You also have opportunity to highlight if it is open to teachers beyond your area.

Schools will be able to locate and contact school speakers and places of interest for school visits in your local area. Those represented on the website have gone through training run by the RE hubs team each month receiving a kite-mark from the RE-Hubs project. We continue to run training each month so please do continue to encourage SACRE members, places of worship and other partners in your area to consider signing up to the training and have the opportunity to feature on the website. School speakers can find dates and sign up here and places of interest can sign up here

For the first time, in one central place, a teacher can find local group meetings that are taking place in their area and make contact with those who run these groups. Thank you again for registering your group for the website.

Finally, the 'Upskill' tab has a wealth of free resources and contacts useful to all those in the RE/RVE/R&W eco-system from the latest news and blogs to podcasts – the website links you directly.

The Specific Aims identified by the RE Hubs steering group are:

- To improve communication between teachers, professional development and resource providers, and research communities,
- To improve connections and interactions between different parts of the RE/RVE/R&W Eco-System
- To be an information exchange to increase accessibility for all teachers to local and regional professional development and research,
- To enable teachers to teach with greater confidence through their access to the support, knowledge, training and resources available in their region,
- To create a sustainable long-term model for future provision.

RE Hubs seeks to build relationships with advisers, dioceses, universities, SACREs, LAs, governors, MATs, teaching school hubs and more. The steering committee, with representatives from RE organisations AREIAC, AULRE, NASACRE, NATRE, REC and TRS-UK, are dedicated to this collaborative working approach. This project is supported by a number of funders, to whom we are grateful for their investment at the start of this key infrastructure programme for all those working in and supporting RE/RVE/R&W, and facilitated by RE Today.

## News from the REC

Read the latest news on the REC website:

[www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk](http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk)

The REC has a brand new logo to mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Attendees at an event marking the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales heard from students, teachers and faith and belief leaders who spoke of the academic skills and knowledge the subject provides young people in helping them to take their place in modern Britain.

Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England, has spoken of the 'safe space' offered by good RE teaching in schools, remarking that it is "the one place in the curriculum" where young people can discuss "important and exciting philosophical, religious and moral conundrums in safe spaces".

Religious education continues to be a popular subject in schools. Over the last five years entries to Religious Studies GCSE have stood around an average of 250,000 with entries to the full course GCSE rising by 30% over the last decade.

Despite its popularity, many schools offer little or no RE provision. A recent data review by the National Association of Teachers of RE found that around 500 secondary schools in year 11 offer no RE provision. There is also a problem with specialism in schools, with a recent parliamentary question revealing that half of secondary RE teachers spend most of their timetable delivering another subject.

Dame Rachel de Souza said: "Children have told me that they want school to be the place where they can learn about life skills, relationships and how to set themselves up for the future. The RE curriculum is the one place that children can learn these important things. It provides children with a chance to understand more



about the world, other cultures and religions, and also about themselves. RE helps us understand the different faiths and communities which make up modern Britain and crucially, RE is a place where these young people can discuss important and exciting philosophical, religious and moral conundrums in safe spaces.”

An RE teacher recruitment campaign, **#Beyond the Ordinary**, is currently underway to attract the next generation of RE teachers. It has called for applicants from a variety of backgrounds, stressing the ability of the subject to help young people answer the big questions in life.

## Religion Media Centre

<https://religionmediacentre.org.uk>



Factsheet: Humanism  
December 21, 2022



Factsheet: Atheism  
December 21, 2022



Explainer: R20 - Global religion at the G20  
November 2, 2022



Faith-friendly policies improve workplaces, companies tell No 10  
July 11, 2023

An independent and impartial body designed to support journalists cover religion and belief across the world but is also a great resource for teachers and anyone interested in religion and worldviews. Check out the range of factsheets in the resources section.

## Updates from Culham St Gabriel Trust

Need help with recruiting teachers for RE?

Check out the briefing paper produced to support #BeyondTheOrdinary teacher recruitment campaign.

<https://www.cstg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/02/FINAL-Shortage-of-RE-Specialist-Teachers-2-23.pdf>

## #REchatUK

To join in, follow us on Twitter at NATREupdate and use and use the hashtag #REchatUK in your tweets.

- 4 September 2023 - Teaching and learning from an RE perspective
- 2 October 2023 – Using art and architecture in RE
- 6 November 2023 – RE and the climate crisis
- 4 December 2023 – Encounters with lived religion

**#REchatUK** is hosted by the NATRE Executives and takes place on the first Monday of each month from 8 pm until 9 pm on Twitter: <https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/rechatuk>

## Updates from the Culham St. Gabriel's Trust

### The 2023 / 24 Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

The 2023-24 calendar will be available in eCal format from mid-July and in the printed A2 wall chart format from mid-August. The price will be held more the 10th year at £4 for the eCal £6 for the wall chart or £10 for both. For more details see:

[www.shapworkingparty.org.uk](http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk)

The best and most reliable calendar and essential addition to any RE department, staffroom or the advisors' or consultants' office.

## Interfaith Week 12-19th November, 2023

The Aims of the week are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

1. More information at: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk>
2. Enquiries about the Week: IFN office: 020 7730 0410. Interviews available,
3. The hashtag for social media is #InterFaithWeek,
4. Inter Faith Week social media accounts can be found at: [www.twitter.com/IFWeek](https://www.twitter.com/IFWeek), [www.facebook.com/ifweek](https://www.facebook.com/ifweek), [www.instagram.com/IFWeek](https://www.instagram.com/IFWeek) and [www.linkedin.com/showcase/ifweek/](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/ifweek/),
5. Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN), a charity which has been working since 1987 to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK,
6. IFN works in consultation with the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum and the Inter-faith Council for Wales / Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru in relation to the Week in those nations,
7. Scottish Interfaith Week, which has run since 2004, is led by Interfaith Scotland ([www.interfaithscotland.org/](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/)). It has its own dedicated website at: <https://www.scottishinterfaithweek.org/>
8. The final Sunday of Inter Faith Week is also Mitzvah Day, a Jewish-led day of social action involving people of all faiths and none working together in their local communities. <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/>  
Each year, many 'Inter Faith Mitzvah Day' activities take place to jointly mark Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day.