

**WEST BERKSHIRE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, 6 JUNE 2023**

VENUE: NEWBURY MOSQUE, 33 POUND STREET, NEWBURY, RG14 6AE

Present:

Group A – Other Faiths Members

Mobasshir Mushtaq (Muslim) and Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church)

Group B – Church of England Members

Val Bolan (Church of England) and Mary Stagg (Church of England)

Group C – Teaching Association Members

Amanda Bedding (NEU) and Chris Ward (NEU)

Group D – WBC Councillors

Councillor Paul Dick and Councillor Billy Drummond

Also Present: Rose Carberry (Local Authority Advisor), David Rees (Consultant) and Jack Karimi (Clerk)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Clare Hawkins (NASUWT), Dilip Ladwa (Hindu), Roseanna Obsiye (NASUWT), Rabbi Zvi Solomons (Jewish) and Councillor Tony Vickers

73 Membership

Welcome to new Group D Members

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Paul Dick to SACRE. It was noted that there was a vacancy within Group D which would be filled by either Councillor Clive Taylor, or reallocated proportionally among the political parties.

Group B Members

Val Bolan reported that she had contacted four potential Church of England Members who had each declined. The Chairman requested that SACRE contact potential Church of England Members.

Local Authority Advisor

The Chairman queried the appointment of a Local Authority Advisor with Rose Carberry. Rose Carberry responded that Kate House had had to stand down from the role, and that a new headteacher would be sought in time for September. Rose Carberry noted that a church school had recently received an Ofsted inspection and so had more capacity, so the headteacher could be contacted.

74 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2023 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

75 Actions

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The Chairman noted that he had not yet asked each SACRE Member to contact schools about their arrangements for Collective Worship.

The Chairman additionally noted that he and David Rees had been tasked with contacting other SACREs for advice regarding Collective Worship.

David Rees noted that he had contacted the SACREs he had worked with, and each did not have a clear picture of what they intended to do regarding Collective Worship. Some SACREs were waiting for further clarification from either central government or the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), whereas Bournemouth and Christchurch SACREs had published a document setting out what Collective Worship was. Each SACRE was additionally struggling to contact schools.

The Chairman asked Councillor Paul Dick what his experience was from being Headteacher of Kennet School. Councillor Dick responded that sending forms would not be received as well as being contacted and spoken to directly, although schools would always be hesitant to respond.

The Chairman asked Mary Stagg what her experience was from being a primary school teacher. Mary Stagg responded that it had changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, from being a daily occurrence to being less common and typically over Zoom. The format of the assemblies would incorporate a number of faiths and stories, but had become increasingly PSHE-led.

The Chairman stated that the main concern was ensuring that SACRE was fulfilling its role.

Amanda Bedding noted that assemblies had become less common at Calcot Junior School since the Covid-19 pandemic, and was held three times a week in the hall. As hers was a diverse school, it was largely focused on the PSHE aspect.

Rose Carberry noted that she could send out an email to schools noting that they will be contacted by SACRE and what to expect.

Councillor Dick added that many secondary schools have no religious teachers willing to hold assemblies, and that for them it was a question of having the right resources and support. Councillor Dick noted that parents had the right to withdraw their child from religious education and so many schools had to strike a balance that was more focused towards the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) aspect. Mary Stagg concurred that schools needed better resources.

It was agreed that the Chairman would task Members of SACRE with contacting primary schools regarding Collective Worship, and contact the secondary schools himself. The allocation of the primary schools would take into account the wards represented by Group D Members.

76 Equality & Diversity (David Taylor)

The item was not discussed.

77 SACRE Overview 2023 (David Taylor)

The Chairman pointed Members towards the SACRE Overview, which set out the purpose of SACRE and the committee's main role. The main task was to produce a new syllabus, which had been put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, a key role was to attend the Berkshire Hub, which was where a significant amount of work that SACRE undertook was.

78 2023-24 Action Plan (David Rees)

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David Rees presented the 2023-24 Action Plan, which contained the core business actions (Section A), as well as the work to support RE teachers (Section B) and to support the work of the Berkshire Hub (Section C).

David Rees assured SACRE that a number of SACREs were having difficulty with recruiting new Members (Action 1), specifically when finding Church of England or Roman Catholic representatives. David Rees noted that NASACRE was providing additional resources to SACREs, and their relationship with NASACRE was good, although he was unable to attend the Annual Conference.

David Rees noted that Action 6 would be fulfilled soon, and was a rolling five-year obligation. There were a number of resources and formats to consult when monitoring and reviewing the syllabus.

David Rees noted that there were two primary network events, and a secondary network event, although the format was different. Primary network events were run by David Rees, whereas secondary network events were more independent and collaborative in nature.

Councillor Paul Dick asked whether SACRE Members could receive the termly newsletter. David Rees responded that he regularly sent it to SACRE Members, and invited them to contribute items.

79 **2023-24 Budget (David Taylor)**

The Chairman reported that the 2023-24 Budget had been increased to £5,000 from £4,840 the previous year. The additional £160 had not yet been allocated, and the Hub contribution had been formally separated from the remainder of the Budget.

Val Bolan proposed that SACRE consider what to do with the additional £160, noting that Clare Hawkins may have an idea.

The Chairman noted that his request to the Council for £5,000 to review the syllabus had been accepted.

The Chairman raised the NSACARE membership fee. David Rees responded that the resources were useful and the Audit tool had been used by a number of schools.

SACRE agreed the Budget for 2023-24. SACRE would consider what to do with the additional £160.

80 **Schools**

10.1. Secondary and Primary Networks

Amanda Bedding reported that she was the Network Lead for the Berkshire Leadership Development Programme (BLDP) and was in contact with around 15 schools to discuss issues and share resources. The syllabus had been raised, as well as the newsletter. Schools asked for feedback from the networks, and raised that they were pleased to be linked to SACRE through Amanda Bedding. Amanda Bedding noted that she was supporting Denefield School, Little Heath School and the Willink School.

David Rees reported that he had held a networking event on 9 May, with the next on 28 June. David Rees noted that there was a regular attendance at the events, but work was being undertaken to extend that pool, and the events were now being recorded to widen participation. David Rees noted that assessment was a regularly raised issue, with no right model being proposed by Ofsted.

The Chairman stated that he hoped that the networks were being expanded as schools were contacted. David Rees responded that he would be happy for his contact details to be passed on to new schools.

10.2. Support for Individual Schools

The Chairman asked whether Councillor Billy Drummond would be willing to take on working with Park House School, which was not teaching RE. Councillor Drummond agreed.

The Chairman reported that he had visited John O'Gaunt School that day, which was struggling without an RE teacher.

The Chairman noted that schools were aware of their obligations, but were finding it difficult to work out a model.

10.3. Contacting RE Leads in Primary Schools

The Chairman asked SACRE to ascertain primary schools' RE Leads when contacting them.

81 Newsletter (David Rees)

David Rees introduced the Spring 2023 Newsletter, noting that the newsletter went out on the second week of each term.

82 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 31 October 2023, on Zoom.

Tuesday 20 February 2024, *venue TBD*.

Tuesday 14 May 2024, *venue TBD*.

83 Any Other Business

No additional business was raised.

84 Agreed Syllabus Conference (David Rees)

The Chairman opened the Agreed Syllabus Conference, noting that West Berkshire had adopted a very short syllabus five years ago after a period of having a longer one. David Rees noted that from his discussions at the Berkshire Hub, the preference was for a slightly longer and more detailed one, with further supporting documents for teachers.

David Rees set out that the options were between a number of different syllabus models, and the issue of who would be tasked with writing one needed to be addressed. Consultants could be tasked with writing a basic, statutory syllabus, or one could be purchased from a company such as RE Today. David Rees stated that he would not recommend the RE Today model, and instead proposed writing it. Ann Andrews, who ran the Berkshire Hub and had written the previous syllabus, was not able to do it again.

Councillor Billy Drummond asked how much it would cost to have somebody write it. David Rees responded that it depended on what type of syllabus SACRE asked for. David Rees highlighted BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) Council, which had commissioned a consultant, Jan Leamer, to write the syllabus. Val Bolan noted that she had highlighted the BCP model as a good idea at the previous meeting, and that it would help make it easier for Berkshire SACREs to coordinate. David Rees noted that there were a number of other consultants who could write a syllabus, but that he thought that the BCP syllabus could work for Berkshire. Val Bolan proposed that the BCP Council model be looked at.

It was agreed that David Rees would circulate the BCP Council syllabus for consideration.