

**WEST BERKSHIRE  
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2018**

**VENUE: ST NICOLAS CHURCH OF ENGLAND JUNIOR SCHOOL, LINK ROAD,  
NEWBURY, RG14 7LU**

**Present:**

**Group A – Other Faith Members**

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

**Group B – Faith Members**

Mrs Valerie Bolan (C of E)

**Group C – Teaching Association Members**

Mr Bernard Eggleton (NASUWT)

**Group D – WBC Councillors**

Councillor Pamela Bale (WBC)

**Also Present:** Ms Alison Harris (Independent Consultant) and Jo Watt (Appeals Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Billy Drummond (WBC), Councillor Sheila Ellison (WBC), Mrs Lucy Gallagher (Catholic), Keith Harvey (Head Teacher), Revd Mary Harwood (C of E), Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge (WBC), Ms Clare Nolan (NASUWT) and Mr Robin Sharples (C of E)

**47 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman (The Reverend David Taylor).

David Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the role of SACRE for those new members.

The Committee welcomed Mr Mark Landreth Smith from the Bridge Church who was in attendance as an observer.

**48 Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

**49 Membership update**

Jo Watt provided an update on the current membership of the West Berkshire SACRE. The committee noted the following changes per group:

**Group A – Other Faith Members**

- Mr Mobasshir Mushtaq had been appointed as the Muslim faith representative.
- Mrs Lucy Gallagher the Catholic faith representative would be attending meetings from the summer of 2018.

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## Group B – Faith Members

- Mrs Valerie Bolan had been appointed as a Church of England representative.

## Group C – Teaching Association Members

- Ms Clare Nolan (NASUWT) had resigned from the Committee as she was finding the timings of the meetings a problem alongside her other commitments. The Committee wished Clare well for the future.
- Mr Bernard Eggleton stated that whilst he was a retired teacher, he was still a member of the NASUWT and therefore he intended to remain on the West Berkshire SACRE in the capacity as a Teaching Association Member.
- The Reverend David Taylor said that he would approach Debbie Arden-Hunt, an RE teacher at John O'Gaunt school to see if she would be interested in joining the committee as a Teaching Association representative.

The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to have a Primary Teacher representative on the Committee to provide an alternative perspective. Alison Harris said that this might be something she could look into if it was possible to get a Primary Teachers network established in West Berkshire.

The Committee noted that there might be a possibility of Keith Harvey (Local Authority Advisor) changing roles on the committee to become a Teaching Association Member (see Item 8 – Budget) and this would ensure that Primary Teachers were represented. If Keith did change roles, a new representative from the Local Authority would need to take on the role of Local Authority representative.

### **Actions:**

**Jo Watt to pass on the thanks and best wishes of the committee to the Clare Nolan.**

**Jo Watt to speak to the Council's Education Department regarding the budget for Keith Harvey's role as the Local Authority Advisor and if a replacement could be found for Keith if he was to change roles.**

## **50 Feedback from Hub meeting held on 16th January 2018**

The Reverend David Taylor reported that he had attended the Hub meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in his capacity as the Chairman of the West Berkshire SACRE. It was noted that all the Berkshire SACREs had been represented at this meeting and the main focus had been the Pan Berkshire Agreed Syllabus Review 2018.

Alison Harris gave a short presentation which summarised the key points and changes to the new draft syllabus. The main points were:

- To remove the divide between Key Stages 1 and 2 to give the syllabus a Primary Section and give teachers more flexibility as to which religions to teach alongside Christianity and how to group them.

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- It was now mandatory to teach Islam by the end of Key Stage 2. Previously it was optional to teach Islam at this stage but it had been agreed that it should be compulsory. The committee noted that this fitted with a lot of other local syllabi and agreed it was very good practice.
- Key Stage 3 now had to include a secular worldview, probably Humanism.
- The new syllabus strongly encouraged the aim that all students should have access to RE teaching at GCSE level.
- Whilst the detail of assessment still needed to be considered, Alison Harris reported that the AT1 and AT2 structure would essentially remain but the language would acknowledge that used in the national framework.
- Each of the Berkshire SACREs would be looking at the draft syllabus and had been asked to give feedback before the next Hub meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The Hub would then ratify the draft syllabus at this meeting.
- Each SACRE would need to write their own Foreword for the revised syllabus and this would need to be signed off by the Chief Executive/Education Director of each Council and be sent to Jan Lever by email by 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018.
- The final version of the syllabus would then be available by the end of June 2018.

Having looked at the draft syllabus, the Committee was encouraged to give feedback. Mr Mushtaq said that under the 'Concepts' section on page 7 of the draft syllabus, the spelling of 'Din' in the Islam column was incorrect and should have been 'Deen'.

**Action: Jo Watt to report the correct spelling of 'Deen' back to Jan Lever in order for the draft document to be corrected.**

The Committee then gave consideration to a launch event for the new syllabus. The Committee agreed that a local West Berkshire launch was the best approach. It was agreed that the launch should be multi-faceted and in addition to providing a platform to launch the new syllabus it would be an ideal networking occasion and a chance to share good practice.

Having considered the timetable for the production of the final syllabus, the Committee agreed that the launch should take place on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 and be a twilight session held between 4.15 – 5.30 pm. The Reverend David Taylor very kindly offered the use of the Thatcham Baptist Church, free of charge for the event. The Committee thanked David and agreed this was an excellent venue as it was central to the District and had good parking facilities. Consideration would need to be given as to how to disseminate the new syllabus to the schools. It was felt that emailing a link to the new syllabus would provide the most cost effective solution.

On a separate matter, David Taylor reported that the 'Understanding Christianity' resource (produced by the Oxford Diocese) was now available for £30 rather than the usual price of £250.

**Action: Jo Watt to email the details of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to all West Berkshire Primary Schools.**

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**51 GCSE Religious Studies Results 2017**

The Committee gave consideration to the RE GCSE results previously circulated by Keith Harvey. The information gave a breakdown of the GCSE results for 2017 across the West Berkshire Secondary Schools.

The Committee noted that the teaching of RE at GCSE level varied greatly across the schools, with some schools making RE compulsory at GCSE and others only offering RE as an option.

**52 RE provision in West Berkshire Schools - years 10-13**

Following the discussion regarding the 2017 GCSE results, the Reverend David Taylor circulated information showing the RE provision of each Secondary School between years 10 and 13.

As noted previously, the provision of RE at GCSE level varied between the schools. However, at sixth form level the provision of RE teaching was markedly reduced, with some schools not offering RE at A level.

As Chairman of the West Berkshire SACRE, the Reverend David Taylor said that it was the responsibility of the SACRE to strongly encourage schools to take part in RE provision in years 12-13 (sixth form). David added that he would personally continue to try to build relationships with the Secondary Schools with a view to increasing the provision of RE teaching amongst sixth form students.

David Taylor also mentioned that the Ranelagh School in Bracknell was extremely proactive in teaching RE in years 12-13 and he was going to invite their Head of RE to come and speak to the Committee about the school's approach.

**Action: The Reverend David Taylor to invite the Head of RE from Ranelagh School to attend a future meeting.**

**53 Budget 2018/2019**

Keith Harvey had reported in writing that he had not yet had confirmation from West Berkshire Council of the proposed budget for 2018/2019. It was noted that if the budget for 2018/19 was similar to that for 2017/18 then there would be no budget provision for R.E. Trails (see Item 9) or to pay for Keith Harvey in his role as Local Authority Advisor.

Keith Harvey had suggested that if there was no budget provision to cover his role then it may be best for him to step down.

*Post meeting note – The Local Authority has confirmed that they were unaware that Keith Harvey was not being paid for his role and that they would pay the costs for the forthcoming year. It was also confirmed that the sum of £250 was included for one co-ordinator/network meeting in the proposed budget for 2018/19. There was no additional budget available to support additional network meetings.*

The Committee agreed that if possible, they would like to support termly network meetings for the Primary Schools similar to those held by other Berkshire unitary authorities. The Committee noted that if the budget for 2018/19 was similar to that for 2017/18 then there was £350 available for a Spring 2018 co-ordinator meeting. It was agreed that this money could be used to cover the costs of the new syllabus launch on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.

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Alison Harris said that a further two Primary network meetings would cost £300 per meeting which represented a half day fee for a Jan Lever co-ordinator to prepare and attend. Any other costs such as venue and refreshments would incur an additional cost.

The Committee acknowledged that it was very late in the annual budget process but asked that the SACRE budget holder in the Education Department of the Local Authority be asked if additional funding could be made available to cover the cost of Keith Harvey's role and to fund two Primary network meetings.

**Action: Jo Watt to contact the Elaine Ricks-Neale, School Improvement Officer regarding the SACRE budget situation.**

In response to a question regarding the budget line for the annual contribution for joint syllabus (£1.7k), Alison Harris explained that this was such a large amount as the syllabus was being reviewed in 2017/18 for launch in 2018. As the syllabus was only reviewed once every five years, this budget line would not be included again until the next review.

### **54 RE Trails**

The Committee noted that the West Berkshire SACRE had been buying into the R.E. Trails website. However, Keith Harvey had provided a written update in his absence and it was noted that St Nicolas Church of England Junior School had paid for the current year which had cost £168 for the year. Keith was unsure as to how much the site was being used and if any cheaper options were available. It was noted that the site represented a lot of work that had been put in overtime but in the current economic climate, it seemed unwise to pay for something that was not being used or could be hosted in a different way.

David Taylor reported that he had contacted Media Pictures Limited who hosted the website to ascertain the level of website usage but he had been unable to access the link they had sent through. Jo Watt confirmed that she had also not been able to access the information.

Given that the Committee did not have any details of the proposed SACRE budget for 2018/19 or how much the R.E. Trails website was being used, they were not in a position to make a decision regarding the future use of this website.

### **55 Annual report - update on progress**

Alison Harris referred to the draft Annual SACRE Report 2016-2017 that she had previously circulated and asked for any comments. The Committee noted that the report would be considered by the annual meeting of West Berkshire Council on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

The Committee agreed that the attendance records of the SACRE members should be included in the report.

**Action: Alison Harris to finalise the SACRE report and send it to Jo Watt for consideration by Annual Council on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018.**

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**56 Any Other Business**

The Committee noted that COINS (Christian Outreach in Newbury Schools) would be happy to attend the next meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and make a presentation on their role. The Committee agreed that the presentation should give an overview on their work and the schools that they covered.

Alison Harris suggested that the organisers could be asked if they would like to be included in the 'Crossing the Bridges' project.

**Action: Jo Watt to contact COINS to outline the requirements for their presentation on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and to ask if they would like to take part in the Crossing the Bridges project.**

**57 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 4.15 pm at the West Berkshire Council Offices.