

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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2018
VENUE: THATCHAM BAPTIST CHURCH**

Present:

Group A – Other Faiths Members

Penny Judge (Thatcham Baptist Church) and Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church)

Group B – Church of England Members

Val Bolan, Revd Mary Harwood and Mary Stagg

Group D – WBC Councillors

Councillor Sheila Ellison (WBC)

Also Present: Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Alison Harris (Independent Consultant) and Keith Harvey (Head Teacher)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Pamela Bale (WBC), Councillor Billy Drummond (WBC), Mr Bernard Eggleton (NASUWT) and Ms Clare Nolan (NASUWT)

1 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2018/19

RESOLVED that Reverend David Taylor be elected as Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the 2018/19 Academic Year.

RESOLVED that Bernard Eggleton be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the 2018/19 Academic Year.

David Taylor drew attention to a recent positive ATL article in relation to the teaching of Religious Education (RE) in schools. It recognised the importance of retaining RE as a school subject and made a case for Religion and Worldviews to be taught.

2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to noting that Keith Harvey was present at the meeting.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Ramadan Briefing Paper – it was noted that a discussion would be scheduled for the next meeting in relation to the fact that Ramadan coincided with the dates for sitting exams.

Action: agenda item for the next meeting on 6 March 2019.

4 Update on Membership (David Taylor)

SACRE noted the following membership changes:

- Mary Stagg appointed as a Church of England representative. David Taylor commented that Mrs Stagg provided a primary school perspective.
- Alison Harris announced that the Jan Lever Education Consultancy and Training (JLECT) contract would not be renewed for the SACREs in Berkshire. Alison would therefore be stepping down from her role as Independent Consultant to West

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Berkshire SACRE. However, David Rees, who already supported Reading's SACRE, was willing to take over this role and both Alison and David would attend the next meeting as part of their handover.

- Keith Harvey explained that he was seeking a replacement for himself as Headteacher representative and was liaising with Rachel Manley, Headteacher of Yattendon CE Primary School. Rachel was very knowledgeable of RE and interested in taking on this role. Keith would advise on this if/when confirmed and would ensure a full handover was provided.
- Mary Harwood announced that this would be her last West Berkshire SACRE meeting before she retired in December. She had spoken to the Reverend Mark Bennet to ensure a replacement representative was appointed.

Reverend Taylor, together with all SACRE members present, took the opportunity to give thanks to Mary for all her hard work with West Berkshire's SACRE over the past nine years. He would make contact with Reverend Bennett to confirm her replacement.

Actions:

- **Keith Harvey to advise on any change to the Headteacher representative on SACRE.**
- **Reverend Taylor to make contact with Reverend Bennet to confirm a replacement representative for the Church of England Diocese.**

5 Review of the Agreed Syllabus Launch on 03 July 2018 (Alison Harris)

Alison Harris provided an update following the syllabus launch on 3 July 2018. This was a successful event with much positive feedback received from the teachers present. Approximately 70 representatives were in attendance. The majority of schools already used Discovery RE.

Keith Harvey agreed it was a well received event.

David Taylor thanked all involved for their efforts in the syllabus launch.

6 Network Meetings (Alison Harris and David Taylor)

Primary RE Network

Alison Harris advised that the latest Primary Network meeting was attended by 16 representatives. Those present had a varying range of expertise and the meeting afforded a useful opportunity for colleagues to share knowledge and ideas, and work through key questions highlighted by the syllabus. Further meeting dates would be confirmed.

Penny Judge agreed this was a useful informal meeting.

David Taylor was pleased to see that this work had got started.

Keith Harvey asked that the e-mail circulation list for these meetings be confirmed to ensure all representatives were aware of these meeting dates. Stephen Chard would check this point, he believed that the Primary Headteachers circulation list would have been used.

(Keith Harvey left the meeting at 4.45pm).

Secondary RE Network

David Taylor stated that this was an area requiring further work to ensure a fuller representation of secondary schools. Only Trinity, Little Heath and St Bartholomew's Schools were in attendance at the last meeting.

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Action: Stephen Chard to confirm the e-mail circulation list for the Primary RE Network.

7 Update on Budget and Action Plan (Alison Harris)

Alison Harris presented the revised SACRE budget for 2018/19. The 2018/19 budget was fully allocated and allowed for two Primary and two Secondary Network meetings.

A proposed SACRE budget and action plan was then tabled for 2019/20. It was assumed that the 2019/20 budget would be in line with the 2018/19 sum, i.e. £4,840, although it was proposed to be allocated differently for some services.

David Taylor queried when this sum would be finalised. Stephen Chard explained that ultimately, the Council's budget for 2019/20 was scheduled to be signed off in March 2019, however that was the end of a lengthy approval process. Stephen would confirm the process and deadline dates.

SACRE then worked through the proposed 2019/20 action plan and associated budget requirements.

A. Core Business: Collective Worship

SACRE felt that greater consistency needed to be established on this point and agreed it was important to invite someone from COINS (Christian Outreach in Newbury Schools) to provide a presentation about good practice in collective worship (on the action plan for the 2019 Summer Term).

Mary Harwood felt that Robin Sharples would be a useful link for this work.

B. Core Business: Religious Education

Termly primary and secondary network meetings proposed in the action plan. However, only a single secondary network meeting was in the proposed budget and £300 was allocated towards this meeting (an increase from £250 per meeting in 2018/19). The potential to hold a second meeting would be explored within the existing budget.

C. SACRE Internal

Activity included: filling membership vacancies; attendance at SACRE meetings and network meetings; and production of annual report.

D. Pan-Berkshire Hub

Contribution to the Pan-Berkshire SACRE Hub noted.

It was proposed that £105 be budgeted for the NASACRE membership fee. However, attendance at the NASACRE conference could not be afforded.

David Taylor highlighted that £250 was proposed to help meet the cost of travel expenses for SACRE members visiting schools. He felt that teachers needed assistance with implementing the RE syllabus and he proposed that SACRE members/other key contacts make contact with schools, particularly non-faith schools, to offer this assistance. David Taylor felt that this was an important part of the role of SACRE, but acknowledged that finding the time to do so could be a limiting factor.

Alison Harris explained that guidance would continue to be provided to subject leaders at network meetings. She also felt it would be a useful approach for an interested school to host a future SACRE meeting. This would help to form linkages and enable greater engagement with that particular school. Theale Green School and The Willink School were suggested.

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Actions:

- SACRE agreed the 2019/20 outline budget for submitting to West Berkshire Council for approval.
- Stephen Chard to confirm the process and deadline dates for signing off the 2019/20 SACRE budget.
- David Taylor to explore whether the budget envelope could be revised to accommodate two secondary network meetings in 2019/20.

8 Notes from Summer Visits to Schools (David Taylor)

SACRE noted the report produced following visits made to Secondary School RE departments during the Summer of 2018. All secondary schools with the exception of Denefield and John O'Gaunt had been visited.

9 Sixth Form Provision (David Taylor)

SACRE noted the approved list of speakers for GCSE and sixth form days.

David Taylor referred to the letter that had been received from the Minister of State for School Standards in response to his letter relating to gaining greater support for the teaching of RE in secondary schools. The Minister confirmed that RE was compulsory for all pupils, including those in sixth form. The letter suggested that SACRE could, in the first instance, make contact with any schools who were not complying with the locally agreed syllabus to remind them of their legal duty and ask for confirmation that the schools had taken action to meet it.

This linked to the specialist input that had been highlighted as a need at Park House School. As a result, a Year 12 RE Day was being planned for February 2019.

SACRE members gave thanks to David Taylor for taking this forward with the Minister which helped to achieve the above action for Park House.

10 Annual Report (David Taylor)

David Taylor presented the draft Annual SACRE Report 2017/18, which was approved subject to the following amendments:

Membership – first paragraph, first sentence: Revd Mary Harwood stood down as chair in November 2017 after **seven** years' service.

The Hub – second paragraph to be removed as SACRE was not a member of NASACRE (the National Association of SACREs) in 2017/18.

Action: the report, subject to making these amendments, would be published on the Council's website.

11 Updates from Hub and JLECT (Alison Harris)

Alison Harris provided an update from the Hub and JLECT. The Hub syllabus was launched in 2017/18.

She explained that, as noted in the annual report, Jan Lever (JLECT) had stood down as Chair of the Hub. David Rees (Independent Consultant) and Anne Andrews (Oxford Diocese) would replace Jan as joint chairs of the Hub.

A focus for the Hub was to raise the profile of the Discovery RE tool 'Crossing the Bridges'. A key purpose of which was to help establish links with places of worship in relation to taking children to visit them or to invite speakers into RE lessons. Linked to this, Anne would be inviting teachers to join a teacher focus group to encourage teacher engagement. It would also be a focus of network meetings.

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SACREs were being encouraged to nominate a member to be the link person for 'Crossing the Bridges' and a communications representative. Volunteers were sought.

(Councillor Sheila Ellison left the meeting at 5.25pm).

Penny Judge commented that the scope for rolling out 'Crossing the Bridges' was limited in West Berkshire. There was greater potential for visits to different places of worship in Reading and Maidenhead, but such visits would incur some costs, i.e. travel expenses.

Mary Harwood suggested that funding bids could be submitted to the Newbury and Thatcham Trust to help subsidise costs. The potential to do so should be highlighted with eligible schools. She would also highlight this with Reverend Mark Bennet at the next Diocesan meeting.

The deadline for nominating a 'Crossing the Bridges' representative was 13 April 2018. A decision would therefore be made at the next meeting.

In terms of the communications representative, this person would be responsible for tasks including circulating information and maintaining the website. This was a task previously undertaken by Jo Watt, therefore Stephen Chard would discuss this requirement with her successor Janet Giddings.

Actions:

- **A 'Crossing the Bridges' representative would be appointed at the next SACRE meeting.**
- **Stephen Chard would discuss with Janet Giddings the potential to fulfil the role of communications representative.**

12 Spring and Summer Term Meetings

Future SACRE meeting dates were confirmed as:

Wednesday 6 March 2019 at 4.15pm. David Taylor would explore whether the meeting could be held at Theale Green School. Alison Harris would invite David Rees to this meeting.

Tuesday 11 June 2019 at 4.15pm. Venue to be confirmed.

Primary RE Network meeting confirmed as:

Wednesday 6 February 2019, 4-5.30pm at Thatcham Baptist Church.

13 Any Other Business

None raised.