

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

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 8 JULY 2025**

**VENUE: THE WILLINK, SCHOOL LANE, BURGHFIELD COMMON, READING,
BERKSHIRE, RG7 3XJ**

Present:

Group A – Other Faiths Members

Robin Launder (Humanism), Mobasshir Mushtaq (Muslim), Rabbi Zvi Solomons (Jewish) and Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church)

Group B – Church of England Members

Revd Angela Brennan (St Mary's Church) and Mary Stagg (Church of England)

Group C – Teaching Association Members

Amanda Bedding (NEU), Melanie Higgs (WBPFA) and Chris Ward (NEU)

Group D – WBC Councillors

Councillor Jeremy Cottam, Councillor Paul Dick and Councillor Clive Taylor

Also Present: Thomas Radbourne (Clerk), Simon Burgess, Bill Moore (Professional Advisor to Slough SACRE)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Billy Drummond and Dilip Ladwa (Hindu)

Absent: Roseanna Obsiye (NASUWT)

1 Intro to RE at the Willink School - RE Dept.

The Chairman introduced members of SACRE and Bill Moore the Professional Advisor to Slough SACRE who was in attendance.

Chris Ward welcomed members to The Willink School and handed over to Simon Burgess who gave a comprehensive overview on RE at The Willink. The overview included information on the topics covered from Key Stage 3 through to Sixth Form.

Simon Burgess was asked a number of questions, and responded as follows:

- There were two dedicated RE rooms at The Willink
- RE staff were a mix of subject specialists and non-specialists.
- Collective worship policy was broadly Christian in character but inclusive of other traditions.
- There was a prayer room available for Muslim students, especially during Ramadan/Eid.
- Trips for RE were limited due to logistical challenges, although a number of enrichment opportunities were noted, such as potential visits to Sikh Gurdwara.

Councillor Paul Dick joined the meeting at 16:34

Rose Carberry joined the meeting at 16:37

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Angela Brennan joined the meeting at 16:43

Members supported the work of The Willink School in its delivery of RE.

2 Membership - Thomas R

The Clerk gave an update on the membership of SACRE and noted that David Rees had resigned as the Professional Advisor, and Councillor Tony Vickers had resigned and had been replaced by Councillor Jeremy Cottam.

It was noted that Roseanna Obsiye was on extended leave, and an alternative teaching representative may be needed from a teaching association.

There were only two Church of England representatives on the SACRE. Additional members would be sought from the Church of England.

David Taylor announced that he would resign as Chairman of SACRE following passage of the Agreed Syllabus and noted that there would be an election for Chairman and Vice-Chairman at the next meeting.

3 Minutes of last meeting and actions - Thomas R

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2025 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Action: Follow up required on Constitution clarity regarding quorum.

4 SACRE Code of Conduct - David T

The Chairman with the consent of the SACRE, moved the SACRE Code of Conduct to the next meeting.

5 Report on Syllabus Training Event - Amanda B

Amanda Bedding gave an update on the Syllabus Training event which took place in May 2025 and noted that attendees had fed back that it had been an informative event and had given clarity on how to use the syllabus.

Members were supportive of the conference and the use and availability of additional resources that would be provided in the new syllabus.

Mobasshir Mushtaq joined the meeting at 16:59.

6 Agreed Syllabus Conference (Reopened) - David T

The Chairman introduced the report, which had been developed by an independent examiner.

Although a question was raised regarding the impartiality of the independent examiner, members were generally supportive of the report.

The Chairman introduced the Wokingham syllabus and noted the differences between the pan-Berkshire and the Wokingham syllabuses, and noted the concerns raised by members.

Members asked that agenda items and addendums be published with the main agenda at least five clear working days before the meeting.

Members were informed that Slough SACRE would consider accepting the Wokingham Syllabus at the next meeting in July, and Bracknell Forest were debating similar syllabus changes.

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Members felt that the additional materials included in the pan-Berkshire syllabus should be included in the Wokingham Syllabus.

Members considered that certain content had been put in as supplemental in order for teachers to balance what was needed for their students.

Members were informed of the proposed amendments to the Wokingham Syllabus and received a summary of ideas as noted in the supplemental agenda appendix, Recommendations for Revision of the Pan-Berkshire Syllabus, July 2025.

Members noted the concerns raised that Judaism may be overlooked after Key Stage 1, and that there should be an emphasis on teaching Judaism through a Jewish lens, not only via Christian/Islamic perspectives.

Members debated the issues highlighted in the syllabus and resolved to amend the Wokingham syllabus with the following items:

- All support materials included in the pan-Berkshire Syllabus would be included in the Wokingham Syllabus.
- All references to “faith” would be amended to “faith/belief”.

Members felt that teachers were in need of guidance regarding the new syllabus and believed that publishing a draft syllabus would enable them to start planning lessons.

Members agreed to push the decision of the new syllabus to the next SACRE meeting.

7 Equality & Diversity - David T

No items were raised under Equality & Diversity.

8 Any Other Business

No items were raised under Any Other Business.

9 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be 21 October 2025 and would take place at Thatcham Baptist Church.

10 Exclusion of Press and Public

11 Support for Individual Schools - David T

No items were raised under Support for Individual Schools