

# **The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)**

## **Minutes of Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011**

- Present:**
- Group A:**  
Shahid Younis, Kathy Turner, Dr Shira Lewin Solomons,
- Group B:**  
Jo Fageant, Rev. Stanton-Saringer, Rev. Lisa Cornwell
- Group C:**  
Sue Cresswell, Lesley Green, Hilary Winter, Kevin Price
- Group D**  
Beth Rowland (Vice Chairperson)
- In attendance:** Jan Lever, LA Consultant
- Clerk:** Anne Coffey – WBC
- Apologies**
- Group A**  
Anju Sharma
- Group D**  
Cllr Kate Haines
- Not Present:**
- Group A**  
Hardeep Singh Sahota  
Christine Morgan

### **1 WELCOME and APOLOGIES**

Michael Freeman, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Jan Lever, an independent consultant working on behalf of WBC, replacing Emily Waddilove, the LA Officer; and Anne Coffey, replacing Pat Horne as Clerk. Introductions were made. Apologies were received from Anju Sharma and Cllr Kate Haines.

Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson:

Michael Freeman and Beth Rowland stood down.

Shahid Younis proposed Michael Freeman be re-elected as Chairperson, Dr Shira Lewin Solomons seconded. Proposal accepted unanimously.

Kathy Turner proposed Beth Rowland be re-elected as Vice-Chairperson, Michael Freeman seconded. Proposal accepted unanimously.

### **2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2011**

The minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, were accepted as a true version.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING**

Under AOB, page 5: Shira has had difficulty obtaining a copy of the book. Michael suggested she email details to Anne, who will try to get one.

Under item 10, page 5, Feedback and Reports from SACRE members: Shahid apologised for being away at the beginning of Ramadan and was thus unable to organise the promised event.

Under item 12, page 5, Dates of next meetings: council meetings have not yet been set, so June 11<sup>th</sup> date is still provisional.

Michael advised that all documents will be issued electronically and then hard copies issued at meetings.

- I. **New Website Link – Jan.**

The proposal is to keep everyone up to date via a web link. WBC link is long, a search for 'Wokingham SACRE' will bring the WBC web page up. This part of WBC's website has now been renewed and documents will need updating.  
**ACTION** - Anne to send link out with minutes.
- II. **Membership – Michael**

Michael has not heard anything. Please advise him of anyone interested in membership. There are vacancies for Free Church, Roman Catholic, Buddhist and VOICE (small union) representatives. Michael will chase those not heard from.  
**ACTION** – Michael to chase those who have not responded.
- III. **Humanists - Michael**

Richie Thomson emailed Michael regarding not having a Humanist representative. A presentation given by a local Humanist was poor; Michael has spoken to one of their senior members in London and will contact Richie, but for now it can be put on hold as priority must be given to the syllabus.
- IV. **Display tour – Michael**

Helen Currie was commissioned to produce the RE trail. Part of her remit was to present it at churches, however Helen has suggested that we contact primary schools to see if they have used the display. Michael will liaise again with Helen, when Anne has emailed and received replies from primary schools. There is sufficient in the budget to cover Helen's costs.  
**ACTION** - Michael to advise Anne re emailing schools and wait for responses as cue to contact Helen again.
- V. **Development Plan - Jan**

The annual report is due by the end of December. Jan has been away, so has not been able to bring it to this meeting but will email it to members. She suggests that conference activities should be linked to the new syllabus. Everything is on track. The syllabus is expected to be implemented from September 2012.

  - a) Secondary RE Network – Sue  
Sue went to a meeting at Waingels organised by Stephen Vegh but it was cancelled and she has heard nothing since. She will email him.
  - b) Promoting school self-evaluation tool – Jan.  
The tool will be publicised via the termly newsletter and will be incorporated into any training. Michael commented on the need to think about developing SACREs; how to raise the SACRE profile and influence through legitimate channels.
- VI. Questionnaire responses for website – Michael

Jo has received responses which are now on the West. Berks website; she will put all updates on that site and send round the link. Anne to put the link on the WBC site.

**ACTIONS** – Jo to send link. Anne to put on WBC website.

VII. Diocese training sessions – Jo

Emily had three courses of an RE programme in the last two weeks which were successful. More to take place next term. Lesley praised the book. A CPF booklet has gone to all schools in Wokingham.

**4. REPORT FROM NASACRE**

The subject was daunting but the speaker gave a positive outlook, reinforcing the importance of RE. The message was strong despite many issues. SACREs were advised to keep focused and not become complacent. Shira asked what powers SACREs have regarding the curriculum. Discussion followed about who assesses exams and how accountable the curriculum is and to whom. Michael agreed to investigate and let everyone know. 7:15 Beth left the meeting.

**ACTION** – MF to find out which body deals with RE exam assessment.

**5. BUDGET UPDATE**

The current budget looks similar to previously but will look very different next time. Wokingham teachers have attended working groups, which has necessitated supply cover, affecting the budget.

Michael informed the meeting that there is £550 budgeted for Helen Currie.:

**6. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS – Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012; June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012 (tbc)**

Feb 6<sup>th</sup> is ok but June meeting is still to be confirmed as council meetings for summer have not yet been set. Date will be confirmed at February meeting.

**7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None declared.

The SACRE business part of the meeting closed at 7:30pm.

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## **PART B OF THE MEETING: REVISED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE – Jo Fageant**

Jo clarified that she is not a member of the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

- A costed process had been put forward which began in spring by questionnaires being sent to schools. Responses were collated and are available on the West Berkshire LA website. At the conference there was a suggestion that Chairpersons meet in early September to lay down key principles and open a debate, along with a working party of teachers.
- Wokingham teachers were represented at all working parties except for KS1. Some suggestions discussed were not new – they appear in some questionnaire responses.
- Bracknell Forest had commissioned Jo to write a paper, which was used. KS1 teachers were critical, so some parts were changed. KS2 teachers continued the process and further refinements were made. All was based on the existing document.
- Teachers did not want much changed. There was a desire for a ‘thinner’ syllabus, but much discussion took place as some KS1/KS2 teachers also wanted more detail.
- From page 27 onwards, the colour-coded questions are expanded; the lighter shades cover religions other than the compulsory ones. This format provides a ‘thinner’ syllabus but keeps the detail. The difference between what is compulsory and what is optional is much clearer. The layout offers the core religions with appendices. The statutory details will stay the same but appendices can be developed.
- A question to address is what format to use for presentation, e.g. print, CD, web?
- Shira expressed concern that a focus on main religions could reduce attention on others. Jo gave reassurance that schools have to take into account religions of the students passing through the school.
- KS3 teachers had complained about schemes of work in their schools which were simply inherited from previous teachers. WBC has not provided RE training courses since 2006 and currently there is no RE school improvement person – most SIP roles have disappeared. If KS3 teachers ignore the syllabus they may have problems with the national curriculum review as it may be content-based.
- Michael noted that academies can have more freedom in RE but there are still some ties.
- Jo explained the three sections of Believing, Behaving and Belonging.
- Post-16 (sixth-form) stays the same, minimum of 6 hours per year with suggested themes.
- The introduction has been amended and improved and the chart on page 21 has been significantly improved.
- Jo distributed a paper on using the syllabus to plan RE in schools. Level descriptors are nationally agreed. A working party from the RE community is currently reviewing. The flow diagram shows the steps a teacher must go through. Guidance on devising these kinds of questions has to include training, though WBC has no one to manage this. Hilary suggested going via the Secondary Federation for training; Lesley suggested the primaries could use clusters. Jan pointed out that there is a willingness in WBC to support RE; Shahid suggested writing to Children’s Services about training. It was agreed that Michael should write in December.

**ACTION** – Jan/Michael/Anne to meet regarding a letter to Children’s Services, which Michael will sign on behalf of SACRE group.

- Shira suggested it might be useful to put questions on belief versus behaviour; Jan advised that there are such questions in the revised version, which all should be pleased with. Once agreed, the new syllabus has to be agreed by the relevant committee in the council.
- By the end of KS2, pupils must be starting to understand some of the similarities and differences between *and* within religions.
- The list of concepts could cause argument on what is included in a specific religion’s list. There will be a meeting with faith communities in spring to look at their items and key aspects; teachers have already looked at methodology and teaching. A letter or email will go out before the meeting to SACRE A and B members for suggestions.
- Shahid mentioned that within Berkshire SACREs, there has been discussion; Muslim groups want to suggest changes. They could meet up beforehand.
- Jo will email the web address to everyone.

**ACTION** – Jo to email web address.

- Jo has reported everything achieved so far. The process is ongoing and all present expressed support.

Michael thanked Jo and Jan for good work done and Jo’s comprehensive explanation.

The next meeting will be on Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> and again the SACRE agenda will be compressed to allow for discussion of the syllabus.

The second part of the meeting closed at 8:52pm.