

The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

Minutes of the Meeting on 24th February, 2014

- Present:**
- Group A:** Anju Sharma, Kathy Turner,
 - Group B:**
Jo Fageant
 - Group C:**
Sue Cresswell, Lesley Green, Hilary Winter, Stephen Vegh, Michael Freeman
 - Group D**
Cllr David Lee
- In attendance:** Jan Lever, LA Consultant
Anne Coffey – Clerk for WBC
- Apologies:**
- Group A**
Christine Morgan
 - Group B**
Lisa Cornwell
 - Group D**
Beth Rowland
- Not present:** Shahid Younis, Dr Shira Lewin Solomons, Sukdhev Bansal, Daniel Thompson
- Guests:** Anne Andrews, Christine Leigh, Sally Keenlyside

1) WELCOME and APOLOGIES

Michael welcomed everyone, including new member Cllr David Lee (Leader of Wokingham Borough Council). Apologies were received from Lisa Cornwell, Beth Rowland and Christine Morgan. Members introduced themselves: Anne Andrews from the Diocese of Oxford was present as an observer; Christine Leigh, Administration Team Leader from WBC was present to observe the clerk's role; Sally Keenlyside from Sonning CoE Primary School was present to give a presentation.

2) MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 11th MEETING

The Chairman proposed that the Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting; all agreed.

3) MATTERS ARISING

(a) Progress report regarding Humanist Appendix for New Revised Syllabus

Michael reported that nothing had been heard from Daniel, despite Anne emailing Daniel and the Secretary at Windsor & Maidenhead NUT, where he was recently Campaigns Officer. Michael will ask a contact at the Reading SACRE if he knows anything of Daniel's whereabouts.

ACTION: Michael to contact Reading SACRE re Daniel.

(b) Teachers CPD day: This took place November 12th, the day after the last SACRE meeting. Twenty primary teachers from Reading and Wokingham visited a synagogue, a gurdwara and the Buddhist centre, increasing their RE subject knowledge and inspiring them with ideas for pupil trips to places of worship. It was not possible to include the Hindu temple on this occasion but another day to visit places of worship is planned for the autumn, again jointly with Reading teachers. Christian churches were not a priority for the first visit as teachers felt more familiar with Christian venues and wanted to visit places of which they had less knowledge. Feedback was very positive. Jan arranged for photographs to be taken and a CD of the day was produced, of which copies had been sent to every primary school. It will also be uploaded to the RE web-pages on the Wokingham Schools Hub. Hilary thought that the Piggott primary feeder school had not received one – Anne to check. Stephen asked if secondary schools could have copies; Jan thought there may be a few spares. Jo suggested the Salvation Army in Reading as a venue to visit; Michael reminded members that the RE Trail covers Wokingham Christian locations; it is also accessible on the RE web-pages of the Wokingham Schools Hub - <http://wsh.wokingham.gov.uk/learning-and-teaching/religious-education/teaching-materials/religious-education-trail> Catherine mentioned the Easter Experience at the Baptist Church, which hundreds of children from eight local schools will be attending. Jan can publicise to teachers who have provided email addresses to her at network meetings and Anne can arrange for information to go in Education News.

ACTION: Anne to check if Piggott feeder school received CD.

ACTION: Catherine to send Anne details of Easter Experience.

- (c) Schools not attending network meetings:** Jan now has a list of Wokingham Primary schools that shows which schools have attended network meetings. They are usually well attended (20-30 teachers) and of the 49 schools there are only 16 which have not had a teacher attend. All schools within the Borough are invited.
- (d) Response to ‘A Review of RE in England’:** Michael had not received any responses to this October document which was emailed to members and discussed at the November meeting. Jo referred to the NASACRE briefing (about writing an agreed syllabus) and warned that if we are to work on the next agreed syllabus as a pan-Berkshire task, it would involve an enormous consultation and leaving it until 2017 would be too late.
- (e) Waingels Inset Day faith workshop:** this is taking place on Friday and several members of the SACRE are attending. Stephen informed members that there would be a speaker from [RE Today](#) and a visit from the [Beatbox Vicar](#), as well as an opportunity for members to talk to teachers. Twenty Wokingham teachers and a handful from other authorities are attending.
- (f) SACRE budget:** Jan liaises with Emily Waddilove (a WBC staff member who holds the SACRE budget) before each SACRE meeting, in order to update budget information. Jan distributed draft budget sheets. By the end of March there will be a balance of £202.52 remaining which cannot be carried over but can be allocated to a specific project.
- (g) SACRE publicity flyer for schools:** Jan passed round an initial draft version of a flyer. The intention is to send hard copies to all schools and upload to the SACRE webpage. People will be able to contact the clerk if they wish to communicate with a member listed. Hilary, as Chair of the Secondary

Federation, offered to make it an agenda item and distribute flyers at the Federation's next meeting in the summer. Lesley offered to do the same at the Primary Heads meeting in June. Anju suggested that the remaining SACRE funds be used to produce a high-quality glossy flyer. David suggested that Wokingham councillors need to be made more aware of the SACRE and offered a 15-20 minute slot before a council meeting to inform them.

ACTION: Anne to check for suitable dates for a council pre-meeting.

- (h) Replacement for Maurice:** Jo reported that Fr. Richard Lamy (Rector of St Paul's Church) wants Fr. Patrick King to fill the current Group B place vacated by Maurice. The Diocese will nominate him and the clerk will be informed, then WBC will appoint him, hopefully in time for him to attend the next meeting.

ACTION: Anne to check who should send invitation letter to new members.

- (i) Annual report and foreword:** this was completed at the end of last year. It was emailed to members and uploaded to the SACRE webpage. David pointed out that Christianity was not mentioned in the report; Jo explained that the annual report detailed what the SACRE had done last year and that the trip to other places of worship was one of the major activities that had taken place. David advised that it could be perceived negatively by councillors if presented to them at a meeting. Michael added that his reason for inviting a Wokingham CofE representative to join the SACRE was to increase the liaison between local Christian churches, schools and the SACRE.

- (j) Fundraising harp concert:** members had been informed and this had taken place.

4) PRESENTATION BY SALLY KEENLYSIDE (SONNING CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL)

Sally gave a delightful presentation about a school trip to Salisbury Cathedral. Photos of the day had been taken, showing the various activities in which the children participated and from which they learned a great deal, e.g. processing in costumes, following an animal trail and making clay gargoyles. The children were asked a question, 'How do Christians show commitment to God at Salisbury Cathedral?' and gave thoughtful answers. They were very impressed by the cathedral and enjoyed work back at school based on their day; for example, literacy and art were covered by recounting the day itself and creating gargoyles. On behalf of the group, Michael thanked Sally for a very interesting presentation and Jan expressed what a real pleasure it had been. Sally then left the meeting.

ACTION: Michael to write a letter of thanks to Sonning CoE Primary School.

5) OFSTED: RELEASING THE POTENTIAL – NASACRE PRESS RELEASE

Michael encouraged everyone to read the Ofsted report. It does not address the funding of RE teaching. Jo said that some RE departments had closed down; they were dependent on government quotas and it is a very complex picture. Stephen ascertained that no schools in Wokingham are designated as teacher-training schools for RE. Discussion took place about how RE is not the only subject affected; most effort is going into Maths and English as they affect the final Ofsted judgment of a school. Ofsted inspectors have recently been briefed to investigate if RE requirements are being met; they do have to make a judgment on the pupils' social,

moral, cultural and spiritual development, which is published in their reports. Some schools are still falling foul of the law on collective worship.

6) R.E. COUNCIL REPORT – NASACRE BRIEFING PAPER:

This was covered when discussing 3) d.

7) DEVELOPMENT PLAN: Jan gave out copies of the draft development plan for the SACRE. Regarding 1. in the Actions column under B/C. (which are now combined) Jan suggested that she will ask at the Waingels day on Friday whether the secondary schools want to continue holding network meetings, as these have not been as well attended as the primary ones. She will wait to hear what is required before finalising the plan. Members agreed to fund the secondary conference again next year. Jan emphasised once more that the network meetings are open to SACRE members. The summer meeting will focus on assessment and teachers will be asked to bring work with an Easter focus. Action 4. (B/C) is a new suggestion, to pick up and support primary subject leaders new to RE. The development plan as it stands will match the budget figures. Lesley pointed out that there is not always time for release time to attend monitoring sessions. Stephen suggested that primary RE teachers could visit RE lessons in secondary schools. Jo thought maybe someone like Alan Brine (Ofsted's subject specialist adviser for RE) could be brought in to observe RE lessons, as support. Michael proposed that the development plan was accepted; all agreed.

8) A 'PRACTICE CODE' FOR TEACHERS OF R.E.:

Michael had asked everyone to look at this. It might come up on Friday at the inset day. Jan said it would be on the agenda for the summer network meetings.

9) SACRE REGIONAL HUBS:

Michael informed the group that he will put a proposal forward in summer for creating a regional SACRE 'hub'. Each LA has to have its own SACRE but he suggested we invite the Chairs from other Berkshire SACREs to a meeting where discussions could take place, with the aim of increasing efficiency and mutual support. Jo pointed out that Berkshire SACREs hold a shared annual conference and have worked together before. There is no theme for the next conference, so forming a hub could be the focus for all delegates. David compared the idea to how the six Berkshire authorities have tried to work in a similar way, but he suggested starting with one or two working together, not all six. Jo noted that there is a precedent, i.e. the agreed syllabus. All SACREs could come together and devise projects that could be allocated to specific SACREs, then all could reconvene and share results. Jan and Jo will provide the format for the evening, which would take place at Easthampstead Park, the most central location. Jo will investigate dates. Reading SACRE meeting is next week, others are soon; an event could be organised quite quickly.

ACTION: Jo and Jan to confer and plan the Berkshire SACREs conference around the theme of joint co-operation.

ACTION: Jo and Jan to investigate possible dates.

10) SCHOOL GOVERNORS – RESPONSIBILITIES

Information and guidance from the [Religious Education Council](#) for governing bodies of primary and secondary schools regarding:-

- their legal responsibilities
- the importance of RE
- staffing

- support and recommendations

has been sent out in the Governor Digest, which goes to school governors. Hilary advised the group that the Secondary Federation has termly meetings with the Chairs of Governing Bodies and she could raise it with them.

ACTION: Hilary to raise awareness of governor responsibilities at the Secondary Federation meeting with Chairs of Governors.

11) FARMINGTON FELLOWSHIPS: although the deadline for this has passed (end of January), Jan said that teachers do know about it as she informs them at network meetings each year.

12) WESSEX JOINT SACRE MEETINGS:

The next one is March 13. Jan started attending as a Wiltshire representative and has found it useful to find out what is going on in other areas. A key agenda item at the last meeting was regional hubs and it will probably be on the next agenda, too. Jan will report back.

ACTION: Jan to report back on next Wessex joint SACRE meeting.

13) WESTHILL AWARDS

SACREs are offered the opportunity to bid for funding. Jan asked members if we should apply.

ACTION: members to email Anne within 8 working days with ideas for projects to submit for funding.

14) NEWS FROM MEMBERS:

Michael suggested that Stephen give a presentation about the Waingels faith workshop at the next meeting.

ACTION: Stephen to prepare a presentation about the Waingels faith workshop.

15) DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS: Monday June 2nd, Monday November 10th.
Future dates to be advised at the next meeting.

16) AOB:

(a) Faiths and Food: What do you do when mistakes are made? Anju explained that a child had been given food at school which was in opposition to the family's religious beliefs and the parents were causing a fuss. She had been wondering what the other faith representatives could offer in the way of information as to whether there are any reparatory actions which could be taken in an instance of this sort. Discussion followed but unfortunately the representatives from some of the other faiths were not present. David suggested that the SACRE could only offer guidance. Anju asked that we return to the subject at the next meeting when other faith members should be present. Michael suggested that the Multi-faith Forum might be a better place to raise the issue.

(b) NASACRE AGM: NASACRE has asked for SACREs to promote specific good works at the AGM with a presentation. Michael will contact NASACRE to propose that he and Jan give a presentation. Michael also wants to invite Rabbi Zvi Solomons (Chair of Reading SACRE) to the next SACRE meeting.

ACTION: Michael to contact NASACRE before March 31st deadline and advise them he will give a presentation at the AGM.

ACTION: Michael to invite Rabbi Zvi Solomons to the next SACRE meeting.

(c) Paganism: this has been held over to the next meeting.

- (d) Christine Morgan had asked if the SACRE would like a representative from Soulscape (previously known as the Wokingham Area Schools Christian Worker Trust), which currently helps with RE at Emmbrook, to speak to the SACRE about the work of the trust. All agreed.

The meeting closed at 8:48pm.