

# The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)

## Minutes of the Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2014

**Present:**           **Group A:** Sukhdev Bansal, Catherine Jinkerson, Christine Morgan, Anju Sharma, Kathy Turner, Shahid Younis

**Group B:**  
Rev Lisa Cornwell, Jo Fageant, Rev Patrick King

**Group C:**  
Sue Cresswell, Michael Freeman, Lesley Green, Stephen Vegh, Hilary Winter

**Group D**  
Cllr Beth Rowland

**In attendance:** Jan Lever, LA Consultant  
Anne Coffey – Clerk for WBC

**Apologies:**       **Group A**  
Dr Shira Lewin Solomons

**Not present:**    **Group D**  
Cllr David Lee

### 1) WELCOME and APOLOGIES

Michael welcomed everyone, including new member Rev Patrick King from St Paul's Church, Wokingham. Apologies had been received from Shira Lewin Solomons and guest speaker Rabbi Zvi Solomons.

### 2) MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24th MEETING

Christine advised the clerk that in 16) (d), the Wokingham Area Schools Christian Worker Trust (WASCWT) had been renamed [Soulscape](#). The Chairman proposed that the Minutes with this amendment were accepted as a true record of the meeting; all agreed. **ACTION: Anne to amend the Minutes as required.**

### 3) MATTERS ARISING

(a) **Charvil Primary School (Piggott feeder school)** – Jan had sent the CPD CD after the previous SACRE meeting.

(b) **Details of Easter Experience** Catherine reported that this had happened before Easter, when 8 primary schools attended the event organised by the Baptist Church. The event takes place over 3 days. Anju suggested Jan could publicise the next event at a network meeting; Jan agreed to do so at the 24<sup>th</sup> September meeting and Anne can arrange for information to go in Education News. Catherine will find out contact details.

**ACTION: Catherine to send Anne/Jan contact details for next Easter Experience in time for September network meeting.**

(c) **Dates for council meeting:** Anne ascertained that there will be a council meeting on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July at which Michael and Jan can give a presentation about the SACRE but we have to wait for agreement for this from the new mayor

(who will be announced at the annual meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June). Hilary mentioned that there is a meeting next week to discuss the secondary Head-teachers meeting at which Michael may give a presentation.

- (d) Inviting new members (including Buddhist):** The SACRE Chairman is responsible for inviting new members to join the SACRE; Anne has contacted a local Buddhist group for details of who to invite to represent Buddhism but has had no reply as yet.

**ACTION: Anne to follow up**

- (e) Letter of thanks to Sonning CofE Primary School:** Michael explained that he was going to write a letter thanking Sally Keenlyside for her presentation but discovered that Jan had already done so. Lesley said she had shared the letter with governors. Michael reported that at the NASACRE AGM he had described Sonning's visit to Salisbury Cathedral and several delegates said they had not thought of visiting it. Michael suggested that the images of the visit could go on the SACRE website; Lesley can liaise with Anne. Jan spoke of the annual [Hockerill/NATRE Prize for Innovation in RE Teaching](#); she had informed Sally, who has applied for the award.

**ACTION: Lesley to liaise with Anne regarding images for the SACRE web page.**

- (f) Joint SACREs conference:** This is on the agenda – Jo and Jan will talk about the June 25<sup>th</sup> conference.

- (g) SACRE publicity flyer:** Jan passed round an updated draft version of a flyer which will be sent to all schools and uploaded to the SACRE webpage. People will be able to contact the clerk if they wish to communicate with members listed on the flyer. Michael explained that the placement of the images had been carefully considered. Patrick asked that his title be changed from Father to Reverend. Anju suggested that there could be a specific SACRE email address for incoming enquiries. Creation of the flyer was prompted by the lack of awareness about the SACRE. Michael said that no-one has used the RE Trail; also, few governors had read the Governor Digest (containing RE guidance for governors). Jo suggested amendments to some text regarding faith schools, which she passed to Anne during the meeting.

**ACTION: Anne to investigate setting up a generic mailbox.**

**ACTION: Anne to pass amendments to Emily for WBC printers.**

- (h) Wessex joint SACRE meeting:** Jan attends the Wessex meeting on behalf of several SACREs. The main issue was regarding collaboration and regional hubs for SACREs. It is probable that some SACREs will form a hub with Hampshire at the centre, charging £90 for the first year to cover collaborating and discussing needs. Jan will keep in touch with progress there. A Berkshire hub would be relevant for Wokingham SACRE.

#### **4) PRESENTATION BY STEPHEN VEGH (WAINGELS COLLEGE)**

Stephen gave an interesting presentation about the secondary RE Conference Day hosted by Waingels College on 28<sup>th</sup> February. The whole day was well received and the faith discussions were very good. Wokingham had an inset day which made it easier for staff to attend; some private schools sent delegates. RE Today consultant Stephen Pett was one of the speakers. There was a session around literacy and a 'carousel' session with faith representatives (no Islam or Judaism representatives, but students stood in for Islam). Delegates felt they would have liked more time in this session. There was also a session from the Beatbox Vicar, showing a different way to approach RE. Evaluation was provided by Gill Waller (Secondary Federation),

showing 94% of delegates (15 of 16) rated the day as excellent or good. The event will be held again next year. Michael thanked Stephen and commented what a marvellous day it had been; he had praised Stephen at the NASACRE AGM and passed on Stephen's details. There is increasing discussion about the place of RE and that it should be a part of the core curriculum. Stephen advised that he will be running a 6<sup>th</sup> form day in July and would like to pass on details.

**ACTION: Stephen to provide details of 6<sup>th</sup> form day.**

**5) FEEDBACK:**

**a) NASACRE AGM (22/5):** Michael and Jan showed members the presentation they had given and described how they created it in the form of a story – a journey in 10 steps (steps 11 onwards in the future). Michael urged members to read the online Ofsted reports on RE, 2010 and 2013. ESAG (Expert Subject Advisory Group), set up in 2014, quickly dropped the 'S' to become EAG. The spring edition of the WBC Governor Digest gives guidance on RE for governors and is available on the WBC website at <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools/governors/digest> Good RE co-ordinators are needed in primary schools. Michael had informed NASACRE delegates that our RE Trail failed but that the next step – the syllabus – was praised everywhere. Jo mentioned that most faith schools in Oxfordshire are using the same syllabus. Michael told how Wokingham SACRE is showing WBC that it is giving good value for money and receives good support from WBC. There is still work to be done; it is reported to SACRE that there are yet RE Co-ordinators who have not heard of SACRE. The AGM was much better than the last one attended (2012) and was very good considering SACRE members are all volunteers, including those on the Executive of NASACRE. There was an inspiring speaker at the NASACRE AGM - Stephen Lloyd, Chairman of an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for RE. Michael expressed his gratitude to all members for their support and contributions to progress. Sussex SACRE has asked to visit if they can.

**b) PRIMARY NETWORK MEETING (19/5):** Jan supervised a network meeting on May 19 at Shinfield St Mary's Junior School, which once again was well attended and very positive. Staff looked at assessment and brought in children's work; it was effectively a moderation exercise, familiarisation with assessing RE. Jan was pleased to receive unsolicited emails a few days later, thanking her for the session. Jan has given Emily Waddilove (WBC SACRE budget holder) a list of schools which have not yet attended a network meeting. Emily will pass to her School Improvement colleagues to mention in their visits to those schools. Jan met with Emily this afternoon and it was agreed that future network meetings will be publicised on the schools' hub and booked via Anne. Detailed information can also go in Education News.

**ACTION: Anne to set up meetings on WBC booking system and publicise in Education News, on Wokingham Schools' Hub and on the SACRE web page.**

**6) NATIONAL PICTURE – MANCHESTER ATL CONFERENCE:** (moved from 9) on the agenda). As a member of the Berkshire ATL (Association of Teachers and Lecturers) Committee, Michael was invited to attend the ATL National Conference at Manchester in April. As a representative of Wokingham and Reading SACREs, Michael, and an RE teacher from the Wirral, put forward a motion that RE should have specialist teachers. Despite another delegate speaking in opposition (which Michael countered), the vote was 100% in favour. (NASACRE became aware of this and Michael received a round of applause at their AGM.) Michael would like to invite local MPs to a SACRE meeting and urge them to support the APPG. Local MPs are John Redwood, Theresa May and Rob Wilson.

**ACTION: Michael to write to MPs.**

**7) FEEDBACK – Michael and Jan’s presentation to Wokingham Chairs of Governors’ meeting 14/5:** Michael and Jan showed the presentation which they had given, which had been well received by governors. The draft SACRE flyers were distributed in the delegate packs. Michael had stressed to governors the importance of their being aware of REC, the APPG and EAG and the importance of the revised syllabus but it came to light at the Chairs of Governors’ meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May that few governors have read the Governor Digest (the spring edition contains guidance for governors regarding RE).

**8) DISCUSSION IN PREPARATION FOR JOINT SACRES CONFERENCE:** (moved from 6) on the agenda) Jo commented that [Culham St Gabriels](#) had sent out invitations for expressions of interest in forming regional hubs for RE. There is £2,000 available for a further bid. If the pilots are successful there could be more funding to support regional work in RE. Consideration is needed as to whether small unitary authorities will want to remain independent or join others. There are various possibilities and the whole landscape of RE could be changed. If SACREs are not involved, other groups/partnerships will be formed. The RE syllabus will need revising in the future; this was done successfully pan-Berkshire so a regional Berkshire hub could be a possibility. There is a lot of uncertainty around so now is the time to have the conversation and look at the opportunities. Delegates should look at the [Culham St Gabriel paperwork](#) and develop a vision now. Jo and Jan will be running the joint conference and looking at options but no decision can be made until suggestions have been taken back to the SACREs. The November meeting is a long way off so it was suggested that Chairs of SACREs could be delegated to meet sooner. Anju queried the funding for hubs; Jo explained that it would be for projects and would include partners such as universities. Hilary pointed out that the government has undermined the power of local authorities and schools are looking to other partnerships already; so the future of SACREs is debatable. Jo reminded members that although there has been a joint conference for many years the only thing to come out of it up until now has been the revised syllabus. Now is the time to seize the opportunity to develop a vision which engages everyone. We need to be in at the beginning. Anju pointed out that the projects Wokingham SACRE has done so far show that we can offer a vision; she agreed that sharing and partnerships are the way forward, having just come from a UNISON meeting where that was seen as the future. Jo suggested Wokingham would be best linking with Berkshire SACREs rather than Hampshire, which has a different syllabus. Michael commented that divergence might lead to a breakdown of unity. A Pan-Berkshire hub could emphasise unity and localism. He asked Jo and Jan to prepare a written document for members to consider and encouraged all to attend the conference which will be at Easthampstead Park on Wednesday June 25, 6pm for 6:30pm – 9pm, buffet provided. Jo asked that members let her know asap if they plan to attend as she needs conference numbers next week.

**ACTION: All to read Culham St Gabriel RE Regional Strategy Pilot**

**ACTION: All to advise Jo if attending the joint conference.**

**9) DEVELOPMENT PLAN:** (moved from 8) on agenda). Jan talked us through the plan and said we had done all the things scheduled so far. The network meetings are a bridge between the SACRE and schools and she encouraged members to attend. The update on the budget showed that we were £111 overspent but the achievements were good. The budget is less this year so we need to be careful with expenditure. It was suggested that meetings could be held in schools to save on costs. WBC has covered the cost of the flyer as it was less than expected.

**ACTION: Anne to investigate schools as venue for next SACRE meeting.**

- 10) **GUEST SPEAKER: ZVI SOLOMONS:** Unfortunately, Rabbi Solomons was unable to attend, so this has been held over to a future meeting.
- 11) **NEWS FROM MEMBERS:** (moved from 11) on agenda)
- Michael drew attention to the SACRE calendar on the [SACRE](#) webpage.
  - Catherine informed the group of a leaflet from the charity [Hope](#) regarding [WW1 information](#) linking RE and History. Michael asked her to send Anne a link to the website. A replica edition of the active service John's Gospel has also been reissued for use by schools and WW1 remembrance events.  
***ACTION: Catherine to send link to Anne.***
  - Anju informed members of an Interfaith forum, 'Ladies and Faith' to be held at the Gurdwara Community Centre on London Road, 1:30pm, Sunday June 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- 12) **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS: Monday 10<sup>TH</sup> November 2014; Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015 (tbc).**
- 13) **AOB:**
- (a) **Faiths and Food: What should a school do if a child eats at school food forbidden by its religion?** Michael wants the following note minuted and thus on public record;
- (i) The rules regarding food endorsed and forbidden by different religions and how these rules should be followed by schools, do NOT fall within the remit of the SACRE. This matter is entirely the responsibility of the schools to exercise, properly informed by parents.
  - (ii) No member of the SACRE should offer any advice on these matters. If members of SACRE are approached then they should refer the enquirers to the Clerk of the SACRE who will inform the enquirers to whom they should speak.
  - (iii) Therefore it would be helpful if the LA would provide the Clerk to the SACRE with a nominated LA employee who can take any such enquiries, IF they occur.  
***ACTION: Michael to write to Emily Waddilove.***
- (b) **Humanism:** The Wokingham SACRE has made efforts over several years to co-opt a Humanist representative. The first representative gave a presentation which was poorly received. More recently, Daniel Thompson was recommended and after giving a presentation and answering questions from the group, was co-opted to the SACRE on condition he undertook a task, namely providing a Humanist appendix for the revised syllabus. Daniel was officially accepted at the 2012 November meeting. He attended the 2013 February and June meetings but no subsequent meetings. Unfortunately he sent no apology for non-attendance, did not respond to emails and did not complete the task. Michael discovered that he had moved to London. There was discussion about the benefit of co-opting a Humanist and the efforts that have already been made; Shahid thought it important to recognise that many students attend non-religious weddings and funerals. Michael asked members if we should pursue the co-option of a Humanist representative; it was agreed that it could be a shared task across Berkshire. Michael will inform Richy Thomson, regional Humanist adviser. (BHA's Faith Schools and Education Campaigner).  
***ACTION: Michael to write to Richy Thompson re Humanist representative.***
- (c) **Paganism:** Anne had contacted the Pagan Federation who had kindly provided figures for local membership. There were 127 people in Wokingham who reported themselves pagan in the 2011 census.

**(d) Farewells:** Michael told members that Hilary was retiring and thus leaving the SACRE. He thanked her for her many wonderful contributions to meetings and her dry sense of humour. He presented her with a card signed by all present and a farewell gift (kindly arranged by Sue) of a jasmine tree in a planter, and an attractive bag containing an apple selection. Hilary thanked everyone and said she would find someone to take her place.

The meeting closed at 9pm..