

SACRE (STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 6.15 PM

Committee Members Present

Group A

Christine Morgan	Free Church
Catherine Jinkerson	Free Church
Beth Rowland	Free Church
Anju Sharma	Hinduism
Shira Solomons	Judaism
Shahid Younis	Islam

Group B

Lisa Cornwell	Church of England
Linda Galpin	Church of England
Rev Philip Hobday	Church of England

Group C

Stephen Vegh	Chairperson Secondary RS Teacher
Julie Easton	Primary RE Teacher
Paris Finnegan	Primary RE Teacher
Philippa Chan	Primary Headteacher

Group D

David Hare	Wokingham Borough Councillor
Graham Howe	Wokingham Borough Councillor

Clerk to Sacre

Catharine Newport and Anne Coffey

LA Link / RE Advisor

Angela Hill

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed members, new member Paris Finnegan who will join Group C and guest Catharine Newport who will be taking over the role of Clerk. Emily Waddilove, LA Officer with responsibility for the SACRE, also attended to support the meeting. Apologies were received from Michael Freeman after the meeting.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Anne had emailed members requesting nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair and advised members that she had received no nominations. Stephen and Beth were willing to stand for re-election and all were in favour, so they were re-elected, Stephen as Chair and Beth as Vice-Chair.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting were approved, proposed by Beth, seconded by David.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising from the June 15th meeting were all listed on the agenda along with progress / outcomes as follows:

4.1 Members to let Catherine know of links with places of worship.

Catherine has not received any information from members regarding links with places of worship.

4.2 Catherine to investigate links on mindfulness, CBT etc.

Investigations are ongoing.

4.3 Anne to collate ideas from members and chat box to share at network meetings.

Ideas from members and the chat box were collated and shared. Emily said we would share any other ideas and pointed out that Catherine had provided lots of useful links for RE teachers, which have been shared via Education News and in emails to RE teachers. Stephen thanked Catherine for her hard work on producing these.

4.4 Anne to contact Stop Ecocide group and support the campaign

Anne had found problems with the Stop Ecocide online form requiring completion but in the last few days had finally received the certificate stating the SACRE's support for the Stop Ecocide campaign. It will be shared with members and publicised to NASACRE and schools.

4.5 Membership: Emily to publicise SACRE vacancies in Education News; Anne to distribute membership list; Stephen to follow up NQT interest.

Emily - arranged publicity in Education News and to RE teachers regarding SACRE vacancies. Julian Bushell also publicised the vacancies to the Secondary Federation, of which he is Chair. A response came from Paris Finnegan, who co-leads the curriculum at St Teresa's RC Primary School, and she has now joined Group C. Shira had also visited St Teresa's and spoken with Paris' colleague.

Anne - had distributed the membership list.

Stephen - had been in touch with NQTs but not heard back as they are all probably very busy at this time of year. He will contact them again.

Philip asked if Group C had to be teachers, as he has contacts at the Keys Academy Trust who he could approach; Stephen agreed it could be people involved in education. Beth is a school governor and offered to approach her school contacts.

4.6 Anne to distribute NASACRE resources to schools.

NASACRE resources have been distributed to schools.

4.7 Stephen to take resources platform idea to the SACRE Hub for discussion.

There was one hub meeting last term but hub meetings are on hold at present. The Westhill Project is still underway, but there are no decisions or discussions which require a meeting at present. Filming is complete.

Action: Stephen to take resources platform idea to next hub meeting.

5 AUTUMN TERM 2020: HOW ARE THINGS FOR WOKINGHAM SCHOOLS?

Emily thought that it would be helpful for the SACRE to have some information on the current situation in schools. There are challenges around staff and/or pupils having to self-isolate and schools have had to produce plans for remote learning, which has meant extra work for staff. The most recent data showed there are 37 cases of Covid19 in 22 educational settings.

Beth pointed out that there are many pupils in Wokingham with no access to information technology; for example, Waingels has 42 pupils with no access. Families living in poverty cannot afford devices. She would be grateful for any information on pupils in secondary or primary schools who do not have access. Shahid reported that the school where he is a governor had an issue with lack of IT equipment for pupils needing it but they eventually were able to meet the need via various grants and schemes, though it did take months. Emily explained that there is a government laptop scheme for disadvantaged pupils, but the devices available may not cover the needs of all pupils.

Action: Members to send information to Beth regarding IT provision for pupils.

Emily continued describing how schools have had to rearrange classrooms and work in bubbles; also how the timetables have been impacted, with staggered start/finish times, staggered lunchtimes and teachers needing to socially distance from colleagues. The second lockdown has also created more anxiety for staff and parents. Teachers are incredibly tired and Head Teachers are mindful of staff wellbeing. WBC holds weekly drop-ins for Head Teachers; Sal Thirlway (Assistant Director – Learning, Achievement & Partnerships) sends daily emails to Head Teachers and there is a series of round table sessions being held online. Emily asks that the SACRE be mindful of any work expected from schools in terms of RE and Collective Worship.

Stephen thanked Emily, saying that it was useful for the SACRE to bear in mind the welfare of school staff.

6 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND BUDGET

Angela reported that the SACRE was continuing to provide training free of charge and she had managed to continue with primary network meetings as planned. Next week's secondary RE training (Monday 16th November, 4pm – 6pm) will cover exam techniques. January's primary subject leader training (Thursday 21st January, 4pm – 5.30pm) will possibly partner with Reading and Bracknell and will also be free of charge to Wokingham schools.

As part of the development plan, the SACRE is always looking for its members to increase their engagement with schools and Angela extended an invitation to all members to attend the training sessions and network meetings. David asked about visiting schools during the pandemic but Stephen explained that all training is currently online and members can definitely attend those sessions.

Julie reported that their Vicar had 'visited' their school remotely using Teams.

Shira explained that her business was visiting schools, which was now done on Zoom and works really well.

Emily gave a budget update. The SACRE total spend up to the end of October was £1,719 out of the £6,800 budget. Angela has still to submit an invoice for this term and almost all the remaining funds are allocated in the plan. Some things have cost less because of remote working, (no refreshments or travel expenses), but there is a small additional cost of £40 for webcasting the meeting, which has to be publicly available as it is a statutory meeting. The budget has remained the same for several years and is quite small in terms

of Council spending. Emily expects the budget allocation to be the same for the next financial year.

7 FEEDBACK FROM TEACHER NETWORKS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

There has been just one primary network meeting, which was in the summer term. Originally planned for June 23rd, it did not take place until July 6th but teachers were sent a resource pack of materials for discussing at the meeting.

The autumn primary network meeting will be held on Tuesday December 1st, focussing on subject knowledge. SACRE members are welcome to attend.

8 NATIONAL UPDATES RELATING TO EDUCATION AND RE

There have been several changes to Angela's planned national updates, in relation to the pandemic, so updated items of national information will be circulated after the meeting. Angela mentioned the NATRE 'Spirited Arts' competition which she thought maybe the SACRE could promote to local schools. It has interesting themes for students to engage with, e.g. we have far more in common than that which divides us.

GCSE results – it has been an anomalous year because of Covid19 and its impact on exams, with a very small decline in entries for RS GCSE courses. More information is in the handout. There are a number of resources to engage teachers with, e.g. NATRE and RE Today are launching a project to tackle racism, as part of RE lessons. Part of the project is enabling 60 RE teachers of mixed ethnicities and different community members to share their experiences. RE Today has worked on this project with the Free Churches Group. It is called 'Anti-Racist RE'.

News of next year's exams is changing on a daily basis. At the moment assessment arrangements for AS and A level RE remain the same. No firm decisions have been made about dates for exams and no schedule has been published yet.

The government has said that the curriculum must be broad and balanced and RE must be taught. All GCSE subjects are to be followed as before the pandemic; Nick Gibbs, MP Minister for Schools has said that RE is compulsory. There has been an increase in trainee secondary teachers of RE.

RE Today continues producing materials for socially distanced and self-isolating RE students. These are from several providers, not just from RE Today or NATRE. There will be a national training event 'Strictly RE' in January. Keynote speakers include the Chief Inspector of RE. Teachers will be able to dip in and out of sessions. Details are available in the handout to be circulated.

The Inspiring RE conference will be at Milton Keynes on April 21st ; it is £60 per delegate and could be live!

9 NASACRE UPDATES

There was no NASACRE AGM this year because of the pandemic but an EGM is to be held soon.

10 SACRE PROJECTS

Stephen reminded members of the Westhill project, which involves teachers being filmed at places of worship asking religious leaders questions from the RE revised syllabus. He enthused that it will be a very good quality resource.

11 ANNUAL REPORT

The draft annual report for 2019-20 had been emailed to members for review. Angela noticed some amendments to make, namely to point out that the SACRE usually meets once each term but that the spring meeting was missed because of the pandemic. Also it needs mentioning that the SACRE has been working to find a Buddhist representative and to co-opt a Humanist or non-faith member.

Emily explained that it is not appropriate to include the GCSE results this year as they will not be comparable to other years, because of the pandemic.

The draft report will be formatted and shared widely once finalised.

12 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Next meetings (online depending on Covid) are:

Monday March 1st, 2021.

Monday June 14th, 2021 (depending on WBC meetings)

13 AOB

Angela - NASACRE: the NASACRE EGM replaces the cancelled AGM. The SACRE is welcome to send delegates to the Zoom meeting on Tuesday 17th November. If anyone is interested in attending, please let Anne know asap. NASACRE will also be holding elections: if anyone is interested in the 6 year post (2 years as Vice-Chair, 2 as Chair, 2 as outgoing Chair), please let Angela know asap. Pen portraits and statements of what you can bring to the post are needed by Friday 13th.

Emily – mini-project: Last year a working party of teachers and LA staff worked on a document looking at all foundation subjects and what key concepts children need to understand in those subjects by the time they finish year 6 in order to be ready for the curriculum in Year 7. In the original document, RE was missing. Emily has been discussing this with Angela and they suggest that the spring primary network meeting is opened to secondary RS teachers, when there could be cross-phase discussion about what key concepts, based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus, children need to understand by the end of year 6. SACRE members can let Emily know of any suggestions and are welcome to be involved. Stephen commented that it sounded exciting and encouraged members to offer support.

Action: SACRE members to let Emily know of any ideas or support.

Anne retiring:

Stephen gave a heartfelt speech thanking Anne for all her hard work as SACRE Clerk over the last ten years, saying that he was sure the previous Chair would echo his praise. Anne thanked Stephen for his kind words and said she was very sad to go and would miss everyone. Stephen expressed his disappointment that because of the pandemic it was not possible to have a farewell celebration but he informed Anne that there was a card and gift which Emily would send to her, (which Anne had not expected in the current lockdown circumstances).

The meeting finished at 19:15.

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