

**READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINUTES -  
3 FEBRUARY 2011**

**Present:**

Mustafa Chaudhary	Islam (Group A)
Rabbi Zvi Solomons (Chair)	Jewish Faith (Group A)
Jo Fageant	Church of England (Group B)
Margaret Elcock	Church of England (Group B)
Vera Bodman	NUT (Group C)
Councillor Ballsdon	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor C Harris	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor Janjua	Reading Borough Council (Group D)

**Also in Attendance:**

David McKnight	Berkshire Humanists
Jan Lever	RE Consultant
Richard Woodford	Reading Borough Council

**Apologies:**

Maureen Meatcher	RC Diocese of Portsmouth (Group A)
Kelsang Loten	Buddhism (Group A)
Councillor Livingston	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor Eden	Reading Borough Council (Group D)

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

Further to Minute 2 of the last meeting, Matters Arising - SACRE Newsletter, the SACRE agreed to make a payment to the Diocese of Oxford for the SACRE Newsletter that had been produced by Jo Fageant; Jan Lever suggested that details about the on-line self evaluation tool (Minute 9 of the last meeting refers) should be included in the Newsletter.

Further to Minute 3 of the last meeting, SACRE Constitution and membership, the Chair suggested that the SACRE should invite the new Bishop of Reading, [the Rt Revd Andrew Proud], to become a member of the SACRE as a Church of England Representative. He also said that Hindu and Sikh representatives should be sought to fill current vacant positions.

Further to Minute 9 of the last meeting, Draft SACRE Development Plan, Jo Fageant informed the SACRE that the Reading University teacher training programme included a maximum of two hours tuition relating to Religious Education (RE) during the whole duration of the course and that the tuition was currently provided by Jo herself.

**AGREED:**

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- (1) The position be noted;
- (2) That the Chair write to the new Bishop of Reading inviting him to become a member of the SACRE;
- (3) That payment for the SACRE Newsletter be made to the Diocese of Oxford and the Newsletter include details of the on-line self evaluation tool.

**3. ANNUAL REPORT**

Further to Minute 7 of the last meeting Jan Lever submitted an updated copy of the draft Annual SACRE Report for the academic year 2009-2010. A copy of the Chairman's Forward was tabled at the meeting.

**AGREED:** That the draft Annual Report 2009-2010 be approved.

**4. CONSTITUTION**

Further to Minute 3 of the meeting held on 4 February 2010, a copy of the SACRE Constitution was submitted to the meeting.

The SACRE discussed the Constitution and the Chair suggested that a letter be written to the academy schools in the Borough inviting one of them to become a co-opted member of the SACRE.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the SACRE Constitution be noted;
- (2) That the Chair write to the academy schools in the Borough inviting one of them to become a co-opted member of the SACRE.

**5. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010/11**

Further to Minute 9 of the last meeting, Jan Lever submitted an updated copy of the SACRE Development Plan.

Jan explained that the Development Plan had been updated and priority had been given to those things that were of greatest importance in terms of what schools had said they needed most help with, what was manageable and what could be delivered. The Development Plan set out the SACRE's statutory obligations and forthcoming priorities and on-going initiatives. Jan highlighted a number of actions that had been detailed in the Plan including the following:

- Schools had asked for a list of recommended visitors that could go into schools to help with RE lessons;
- The termly Newsletter would form the minimum requirement to keep schools up to date about RE as there was no RE adviser in the authority;

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- The Annual RE conference would require a lot of planning and schools could be encouraged to contribute to the cost of holding the conference in order to make it financially viable/self funding and it was suggested that an application could be made to NASACRE for a grant to fund the conference;
- The cost of providing everything that had been detailed on the Development Plan had been estimated to be just over £5,000 not taking into account the possibility of schools contributing to the cost of the conference and possible grant funding.

The SACRE discussed the Development Plan and the main points raised were as follows:

- The Chair suggested that all schools in the Borough and in Berkshire, including independent schools, should be approached to see if they were interested in supporting the RE Conference and how many people they would like to send to the event. The cost of the Conference could then be calculated and included in the budget; Jan told the SACRE that charges for the Conference would need to be in line with the authority's service level agreements and procedures;
- It was suggested that a Sub-Group should be formed to consider the theme of the conference;
- As the Council would soon set its budget for the 2011/12 Municipal Year it was suggested that the SACRE needed to confirm its proposed budget within the coming week;
- Jan informed the SACRE that the cost of the Agreed Syllabus Review would be in the region of £2,700 and would need to be included in the proposed budget.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the draft development plan be approved;
- (2) That a sub-group be set up to include the Chair, Vice Chair, Jan Lever and Councillor Ballsdon to consider the theme of the SACRE Conference;
- (3) That Jan Lever finalise the SACRE proposed budget for the 2011/12 Municipal Year and forward details to the Chair.

**6. INTERFAITH GROUP REPORT ON SOCIAL INCLUSION**

Jan Lever informed the members of the SACRE that Saran Griffin, Chair of the Committee of the Reading Interfaith Group, had said that she would be happy to attend a meeting of the SACRE in order to contribute to the discussion on social inclusion.

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**AGREED:** That Sarah Griffin, Chair of the Committee of the Reading Interfaith Group, be invited to attend the next meeting of the SACRE to contribute to the discussion on social inclusion.

**7. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION VISITORS TO SCHOOLS**

The SACRE discussed visitors going into schools who could take part in RE lessons to enhance learning opportunities and a number of points were raised including the following:

- The Interfaith Group and Faith Forum could be asked for a list of people who could visit schools;
- Volunteers would need to be able to communicate with children to ensure a high quality of provision and the need for training was discussed;
- It was suggested that a briefing paper could be produced for teachers on how best to use speakers;
- The Chair suggested that contact details for the Chair and Vice Chair should be included in the SACRE Newsletter for any schools that wished to arrange a visit to their school by someone from a faith community or organisation relevant to the RE curriculum.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That contact details for the Chair and Vice Chair be included in the SACRE Newsletter for any schools that wanted to arrange a visit to their school by someone from a faith community or organisation relevant to the RE curriculum.

**8. AGREED SYLLABUS REVIEW**

Jo Fageant informed the SACRE that costings for the production of the Syllabus had been sent to each of the six Berkshire authorities and that she was now waiting to see if each authority would agree to contribute towards the cost of its production. If any authority was unable to contribute then the cost of producing the Syllabus would increase for the remaining authorities.

Jo tabled a copy of a questionnaire that would be sent to all schools that aimed at gathering information about the current syllabus and would influence the new syllabus. The results of the survey would be presented to SACREs at their summer 2011 meetings or at the Joint SACREs Conference that would be held in June 2011 prior to the establishment of the Agreed Syllabus Conference in autumn 2011. Completed surveys would need to be returned in early May 2011 so that analysis could be carried out before the Joint SACREs Conference; combined results for all six authorities would be produced as well as results for each authority individually.

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The SACRE discussed the questionnaire and it was agreed that it should be sent to schools with the SACRE Newsletter either in the current or next term.

**AGREED:** That the Agreed Syllabus questionnaire be sent to schools with the SACRE Newsletter either in the current or next term.

**9. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The SACRE considered the Future Work Programme.

**10. OTHER BUSINESS**

**(a) RE Consultant**

The Chair suggested that a request be made to the authority to retain the services of Jan Lever as consultant to the SACRE after April 2011.

**(b) NASACRE Annual General Meeting**

The Chair reminded the members of the SACRE that the NASACRE Annual General Meeting would be held on 11 May 2011 in Birmingham and said that he would like to attend. Richard Woodford also informed the members of the Forum that Maureen Meatcher had expressed an interest in attending the meeting as a representative of the Reading SACRE.

**(c) Whose RE is it Anyway ?**

Jo Fageant informed the SACRE that the NASACRE would be holding a free one day conference on 31 March 2011 entitled 'Whose RE is it Anyway ?'. The Chair requested that he attend the conference on behalf of the SACRE.

**(d) NASACRE/Westhill Awards**

Jo Fageant informed the SACRE that the closing date to apply for the NASACRE/Westhill awards was 31 March 2011 and that awards of up to £5,000 were available. The SACRE agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair and Jan Lever put together an application for a NASACRE/Westhill award.

**(e) Outside the Box**

The Chair informed the SACRE that the Reading Museum Outside the Box scheme included 38 loan boxes on religious themes and suggested that the November 2011 meeting of the SACRE could be held at the Townhall where a primary school teacher could be presented with one of the boxes. It was also suggested that details of the project should be included in the SACRE Newsletter.

**(f) RE in the English Baccalaureate**

Jo Fageant informed the SACRE that RE had not been included in the English Baccalaureate and that she would keep the SACRE informed of any changes or developments at future meetings. The SACRE agreed that the Chair should write to

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the Borough's MPs and the Secretary of State for Education regarding the omission of RE from the Baccalaureate.

**(g) June 2011 meeting of SACRE**

Further to Minute 4 of the last meeting, How can SACRE best Support Schools, the Chair suggested that the next meeting of the SACRE should be held at Reading School.

**AGREED:**

- (1) That the Chair make a request to the authority to retain Jan Lever as consultant to the SACRE after April 2011;
- (2) That the Chair and Maureen Meatcher attend the annual general meeting of the NASACRE on 11 May 2011;
- (3) That the Chair attend the NASACRE one day conference "Whose RE is it Anyway?" on 31 March 2011;
- (4) That the Chair, Vice Chair and Jan Lever put together an application for a NASACRE/Westhill award;
- (5) That the November 2011 meeting of the SACRE be held at the Townhall and include the presentation of a loan box on a religious theme to a primary school teacher;
- (6) That details of the Outside the Box project be included in the SACRE Newsletter;
- (7) That the Chair write to the Borough's MPs and the Secretary of State for Education regarding the omission of RE from the English Baccalaureate;
- (8) That the Chair arrange for the next meeting of the SACRE to be held at Reading School, once the date had been agreed.

**11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the dates of the meetings in the 2010/11 Municipal Year would be sent out as soon as the diary for the next Municipal Year had been agreed.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.00 pm)