

All Members of the Reading Standing  
Advisory Council on Religious Education

Our Ref: n:\sacre\agendas\150616  
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4 June 2015

Your contact is: **Richard Woodford - Committee Services**

NOTICE OF MEETING - READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION -  
16 JUNE 2015

A meeting of the Reading SACRE will be held on **Tuesday 16 June 2015 at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading.**

The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA

	<u>PAGE NO</u>
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	-
2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR	-
3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR	-
4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2015	1
5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	
6. NASACRE AGM AND CONFERENCE 21 MAY 2015 - FEEDBACK	5
7. SOUTH CENTRAL RE HUB	Verbal Report

8. PAN-BERKSHIRE RE HUB
  - (a) SACRE Conference 15 June 2015 - 'Crossing the Bridges' 10
  - (b) Crossing the Bridges Project: Launch, Event for Faith Communities 29 June 2015 Verbal Report
9. DRAFT READING SACRE ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET 2015-16 11
10. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:
  - 25 November 2015
  - 1 March 2016

READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINUTES -  
2 MARCH 2015

**Present:**

Rabbi Zvi Solomons (Chair)	Jewish Faith (Group A)
Jo Fageant	Church of England (Group B)
Robin Sharples	Church of England (Group B)
Anne Cheeseman	Church of England (Group B)
Vera Bodman	NUT (Group C)
Councillor Ballsdon	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor Ennis	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Councillor O'Connell	Reading Borough Council (Group D)

**Also in Attendance:**

David Rees	RE Consultant
Richard Woodford	Reading Borough Council

**Apologies:**

Ashok Khare	Hindu Faith (Group A)
Michael Freeman	ATL (Group C)
Councillor Khan	Reading Borough Council (Group D)
Jan Lever	RE Consultant

**1. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

Further to Minute 10 (a) of the last meeting, Holocaust Memorial Day, the Chair reported that he had spoken to the Head of Reading School who wanted Reading schools to do something to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2016.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

**3. RE UPDATES**

**AGREED:** That the item be deferred to the next meeting.

**4. ANNUAL REPORT**

Jan Lever submitted a copy of the SACRE Annual Report 2014. The report had been compiled by Jan and David Rees and included a foreword by the Chair and information on the awareness campaign, teacher network meetings, the secondary RE conference, the second training day on location and the Pan-Berkshire Hub.

**AGREED:** That Jan Lever and David Rees be thanked for their work on the SACRE Annual Report 2014.

READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINUTES -  
2 MARCH 2015

**5. SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND BUDGET**

Jan Lever submitted a copy of the Development Plan for the period April 2014 to March 2015.

David Rees reported that everyone who had attended the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days in the previous two years had found the experience useful and were keen for it to continue. Reading was well placed to hold these days as it had a wide range of places to visit in a relatively small area.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

**6. PRIMARY TEACHER NETWORK MEETING**

Jan Lever submitted a copy of the notes from the Primary Teacher Network meeting that had taken place on 2 February 2015.

A number of issues had been discussed including assessment, how to help improve RE in school, diocesan support, utilising the local area, examples of good practice and RE in the media.

David Rees reported that it continued to be increasingly difficult to get people to attend and at the meeting all but one of the teachers had only recently been appointed as RE coordinator.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

**7. SECONDARY TEACHER CONFERENCE**

**AGREED:** That the item be deferred to the next meeting.

**8. PAN BERKSHIRE RE HUB**

Jo Fageant tabled a copy of the RE Regional Expression of Interest form that would be submitted to Culham St Gabriel's on behalf of the six Berkshire SACREs to apply for resources to develop a training seminar for volunteers from faith communities who hosted visits to places of worship. The session would be run twice a year, once in east and west Berkshire and invitations would go to a range of faith communities across Berkshire. Members of Groups A and B from each of the six participating SACREs would take part so they could develop along with other visit hosts as leaders with expertise and vision in supporting school visits. They would also have a role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of visits.

Jo explained that the Chairs of the six Berkshire SACREs had agreed to use some of their budget allocation for 2015/16 to put together a programme of visits to places of worship and to use the RE Coordinator meeting in the summer term 2015 to agree how the visits could be made as effective as possible. It had been suggested that it would be helpful to train people who would be hosting visits, as teachers would be more confident in taking part in the visits if they knew the person hosting had been trained and this formed the basis of the Culham St Gabriel bid. It had been assumed that the members of Group A would be actively involved to either

READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINUTES -  
2 MARCH 2015

act as hosts or suggest possible hosts. Teachers and hosts would then be invited to the Joint SACREs Conference in June 2015.

Jo explained that the bid was in the process of being submitted to Culham St Gabriel's and suggested that if the bid was not successful then the six SACREs could contribute towards the estimated £2,000 cost of the project.

Jo also informed the SACRE that shared booking documents might be developed that would ask for details of what the learning intention of the visit would be and would include a feedback form to highlight things that could be covered in the future.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

#### 9. WESSEX RE HUB

Jan Lever submitted a copy of the notes from the South Central/Wessex Hub meeting that had taken place on 9 February 2015.

The notes detailed the Wessex bid to Culham St Gabriel's that would involve setting up research projects using Southampton University and in particular would fund masters accreditation for existing teachers. Three core things had been agreed, as follows:

**Setting up a research and reading group** - The research project for teachers would involve the use of outside speakers who would cover different topics and approaches.

**Networking** - The aim would be to improve leadership of RE across the region.

**Subject knowledge and booster ideas** - Areas of need included becoming an RE specialist and providing training on the new GCSE specifications.

The SACRE discussed the proposed bid and questioned how it would translate to improving the teaching of children.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

#### 10. JO FAGEANT - FAREWELL AND THANKS

The Chair paid tribute to Jo Fageant who was retiring after sixteen years as either consultant or member of the SACRE. He thanked her for her knowledge, advice and passion for RE and said that the SACRE had gained an enormous amount from her involvement.

The SACRE presented Jo with a card and gift as appreciation of her work over the years.

**AGREED:** That Jo Fageant be thanked for her work with the SACRE.

**READING STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINUTES -  
2 MARCH 2015**

**11. OTHER BUSINESS**

**(a) Jewish Festival of Purim**

The Chair informed the SACRE that the Jewish Festival of Purim would take place from sunset on 4 March 2015 ending at nightfall on 5 March 2015 and would be celebrated at the Reading Synagogue. Members of the SACRE would be welcome to attend.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

**12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Tuesday 16 June 2015

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.15 pm).

**Item 1: Keynote speech from Charles Clarke**

(This has been recorded and will be put on the website).

Stated that he is not a man of faith but that he believes faith and religion are important. Feels the Govt do not understand the role of faith in national life.

Has authored a book with Linda Woodhead to be published regarding the relationship of RE within schools. Asks questions to challenge the current position.

**1. Is 1944 legislation framework still relevant today?**

Challenges of very changed religious picture in this country. Far more diverse, even amongst the faiths the forms of practice can be different. Also the schools system has changed, role of local authority has lessened and there are new types of schools. Does the current statutory framework really promote RE in schools? If it is successful then why is there O/S practice in some schools and a complete lack of clarity and resources in others?

If you look at any news item either in UK or round the world, in the top ten stories there will always be something influenced by religion - the subject has never been more important. Without it, it is difficult to understand the world, let alone come to your own decisions about your own ideas and beliefs. Need to understand because religion can worry and concern as well as illuminate and inspire.

**2. Should RE be a statutory requirement?**

RE not part of national curriculum because the people in government were concerned about the right to withdraw. Parallel to but not part of the curriculum. Must remain required - it would be damaging for it to disappear.

But should it be part of the national curriculum? It would not be right to align an agreed syllabus with maths and English curricula.

**3. What should the subject be called?**

In 1944 it was called RI because the church had a major role in education and instruction was carried out. This led to the right to withdraw. Scotland call it religious and moral education because lots of questions have a moral or philosophical edge. Could lead to huge issues if you start to reconsider the name but CC feels it should be bigger than just religion.

**4. Should it continue to be KS1-5?**

KS5 has all but gone because it only affected schools - colleges do not have to teach RE. Some people feel it should not be compulsory at KS4. Generally speaking, 14-19 quite a mess. If CC had stayed at education dept he would have implemented the Tomlinson report.

**5. Should curriculum be determined nationally not locally?**

CC admitted he was pretty prejudiced because when he was at the DfE he knew there were filing cabinets of locally agreed syllabi that never got looked at. He moved house from a vibrant multicultural area to Norfolk and his children's RE was completely different and he found that very dislocating. Because it is such a national issue, he is not convinced that there is any longer a need for the local picture to affect the RE syllabus. This is a big choice for Govt. The current insufficiently supported local structure is not satisfactory. Either make

it work or move to national and strengthen SACREs in other ways. If it is left as is, must have a genuine commitment to support SACREs properly and ensure it can work. If national, how do local SACREs work to ensure it. CC believes their influence should extend across all schools including independent ones. This will cause a delicate and difficult conversation.

Community cohesion is needed to ensure that the local structure that does exist extends to all schools whether it is a national or locally agreed syllabus.

So what could properly resourced SACREs do? Have local involvement even if not local syllabus - can be part of the review process and add to it - even if national should still be reviewed every 5 years. The syllabus can involve a full range of activities, discussion and engagement with faith communities, but only SACREs can ensure involvement with faith visits and visitors locally.

Non-theist faith systems should be taught and addressed in all schools. The promotion of community cohesion may have been removed from Ofsted remit CC feels this should be put back. Active local SACRE can ensure it happens and give it the weight and ensure it is resourced.

## **6. What about the right to withdraw?**

Is it still a correct requirement? It is no longer instruction, it's education. It would be a human rights issue - not straightforward. But is it the right way forward.

**Final Comment:** Is change needed? Unequivocal - cannot go on as we are. 70 year old act is not a sound basis for the future. Not clear what the outcomes would be but the discussion needs to happen.

### **Q/ideas from the floor.**

Should make presentations to local MPs.

Any govt would be reluctant to remove the right to withdraw but if it is being used by fundamentalists to stop their children learning about other religions in a balanced way, then it needs looking at.

Discussion on whether the SACRE balance of CofE holding one committee and other Christian faiths being in "other religions". CC feels the legal structure should be reviewed so that SACRE can reflect the religions of today.

His book will be launched mid-June - will be freely available electronically immediately.

South Gloucester SACRE discussed how the lack of LA support has included their clerk being removed. They have had to make an SLA with the Bristol diocese in LA absence but is that appropriate/giving them too much power? Nothing wrong with Katy Staples who helps them. LP answered this saying the clerking was a major role and needs to be done properly. Wave Lord Nash's letter at your local authority and tell them they should provide the clerk.

Shropshire asked if there was a place for humanists on SACREs. Should be seen side by side with other beliefs.

Salford suggested "Religious and cultural education". They have issues with the quality of teaching qualifications. Ts often can't answer questions children ask because they have their own misconceptions.



CC - not just a problem with ITT - CPD needs to be in place to pick up those already qualified. Teachers are at the cutting edge and need to be kept up to date. AT the very least they should be able to truthfully say what all faiths believe as their basic roots.

Try to show children the similarities between the religions as well as their differences. The moderate centre ground needs to be promoted to give a wider population a better picture.

**Business meeting** - all as per the printed reports we were sent. Additional notes: RE expert advisory group is drawing to a close. Lots of material already on RE online website. SACRE will need to look at it if syllabus review is imminent. Collaboration with AREIAC - next academic year there will be another joint conference, possibly on curriculum, hopefully in 3 locations. Must meet needs of both organisations but please speak to LP if you would like to contribute or have ideas.

Penny Smith-Orr spoke about the AREIAC conference - how any consultants should be part of it - and what is happening at this year's.

PM:

Denise spoke about issues, challenges and successes in RE - powerpoint will be on the website - repeated a lot of the issues CC had already raised. Focussed a lot on the tension between the academic side of RE and its quest for something more for the children in their transformation and personal development.

Issues with what people mean when they say they are non-religious - can still have a very active faith - hard to define.

Research shows that many young people call themselves "spiritual" but not religious. Coined as the happy-midi-narrative - they think if they live quite good lives they will be happy but this can lead to illogical expectations of life naturally providing happiness and a complete lack of resilience when things go wrong.

There are many mixed faith families and also many people "pick and mix"-ing from different religions - carrying out the practices they like from different ones. Weller's university data still shows that in all the universities just under 50% still say they are Christian but next highest group are "non-religious".

There are some interesting interfaith developments e.g. forest church includes Christianity, pagan, wicca and druids.

Tensions between lived religions in the real world and sacred texts.

Debates about religion are becoming too anodyne because people are scared of causing offence. Should be critical in both senses - critical thinking and ok to be critical of some practices which are immoral or not ethical.

Who decides the facts that are taught? Academics or faith communities? If second - who are the right people to ask in that faith?

Other issues:

- Public understanding of what RE should achieve
- Lack of qualified secondary RE teachers
- Little input in primary ITT courses - 25% of primary courses get NO RE input at all.

- Lack of CPD for existing teachers
- Insufficient timetable time - both phases
- Varieties of schools

Successes:

- Lots of RE teachers doing a good job
- We have 45 years of teaching multifaiths which is admired by other countries
- Strong links with faith communities
- Critical enquiry approach is working - she notices better questions coming from her undergraduates in recent years.

Mary Myatt (also Suffolk till March!)

Promoted "Sharing our stories" as a resource created by Suffolk interfaith group resource - traces faith journeys and lives of many people in the area who may be immigrants or born and bred but have varying faiths. Good resource for teachers.

Discussed how Culham St Gabriel's Trust is supporting local hubs. Suggested that the best way for schools to up resourcing is for SACREs to point out where free material is. RE online is really good especially the blogs of different believers which can be shared with children.

Went through what Farmington, Keswick, Hockerill and CSGT are doing currently. (Everything that Alan Brine already reported at Hampshire Hub).

Promoting REQM - even if schools do not go ahead with it the toolkit is a very good way to self assess RE in your school. Nearly 200 schools have it nationwide.

Wokefield Park Conference - 3-4 October - free to schools - £500 worth of conferencing and materials.

Reminded everybody that schools should place an overview of their RE on their website because Ofsted check this before they come. Inspectors have been told to identify if it looks too narrow.

General discussion followed on the sheet we had to bring with us - our table felt that getting through to schools and getting schools to sign up to networks and conferences was the trickiest thing. Money was also a problem but Bucks reported they had just been given 10k if they start reviewing the syllabus now. Milton Keynes are looking for plans/resources to help the teachers teach the syllabus. Have had support from Jo Fageant to help with this but want to provide more.

Another SACRE had organised a group of faith reps to go into a school for the afternoon. In the morning, years 7&8 from secondaries and yr6 from primaries had met, been organised into mixed age groups and shared all they knew about certain faiths. They worked out what they didn't know and would like to ask. In pm, asked the reps to answer. Each question given to all faiths to answer. Very successful. Would definitely do it again.

Groups fed back to the room. Good discussions.

Then we were shown **new NASACRE website** - lots of good material and resources.

Downloadable PDFs and Powerpoints. Resources area locked - need a password but material from today will be on it.

**Westhill** - only had two applications for 5 awards - if there is something you want to do next academic year, apply before July.

David Hampshire closed the meeting.

# ‘Crossing the Bridges’

Pan-Berkshire SACREs Hub (Standing Advisory Councils for RE) annual conference 2015

Faith/Belief Communities SACREs RE Teachers Schools



**Bringing together schools, SACREs and faith/belief communities to enable better Religious Education.**

Teachers of RE and SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on RE) members are warmly invited to a joint pan-Berkshire REConference to explore closer RE working between schools and faith/belief communities.

This conference will explore how we make best use of places of worship across Berkshire, visits and visitors, to enhance children and young people’s RE learning.

We will launch the pan-Berkshire RE Hub’s first project: ‘Crossing the Bridges’, explain the outcomes we hope to achieve and invite SACRE and teacher involvement.

**Monday 15th June 2015, 4pm-7.30pm**

Easthampstead Park Conference Centre (off Peacock Lane),  
Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 3DF (for SatNav please use RG40 3DB).

Light Supper included

**Each SACRE will fund several members and several teachers, hence no charge to attendees**

## For further information contact:

Jo Fageant RE Adviser to West Berkshire and Slough SACREs [jefconsultancy@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jefconsultancy@hotmail.co.uk)

Anne Andrews, RE Adviser to Bracknell and RBWM SACREs [Anne.Andrews@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:Anne.Andrews@oxford.anglican.org)

Jan Lever, RE Adviser to Reading and Wokingham SACREs [jan@janlevergroup.com](mailto:jan@janlevergroup.com)

We very much look forward sharing this evening with you, helping you to cross bridges and make new connections, and to launching the first pan-Berkshire hub project with you all.

## Programme

3.45pm - Arrival, tea, registration

4.00pm - Welcome, opening reflection

4.15pm - Why do children need this bridge?

4.20pm - Strong bridges already there  
(good practice showcase)

5.00pm - Cross the bridge (meet, greet, talk)

5.45pm - What have we discovered so far?

6.00pm - Supper and area discussions

6.30pm - Building new bridges (needs and offerings)

7.00pm - Summary

7.15pm - Launch: new pan-Berkshire RE Hub project

7.25pm - Closing Reflection

7.30pm - Close

## To reserve your place please RSVP to

By Email: to Jo Fageant [jefconsultancy@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jefconsultancy@hotmail.co.uk)

**(Only 50 places available - please book by Friday May 22nd 2015)**

**DRAFT Reading SACRE action plan April 2015-March 2016**

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Summer 2015</b>	<b>Autumn 2014</b>	<b>Spring 2016</b>
A. To be a supportive and proactive SACRE enjoying full and well-informed membership.	1. Fill membership vacancies	End July 2015	SACRE Chair Committee Services				
	2. SACRE members attend termly SACRE meetings (3 per year) and, when possible, teacher termly network meetings and training events e.g. annual SACRE conference	Termly SACRE meetings: Summer 2015 Autumn 2015 Spring 2016  Termly teacher network meetings Occasional training events	SACRE Chair/SACRE Adviser SACRE members SACRE Clerk	SACRE Adviser to prepare and attend x3 SACRE meetings a year @ £500 per term =£1500 SACRE Clerk to administer each meeting	Mtg 16 June 2015	Mtg 25 November 2015	Mtg 1 March 2015
	3. Produce annual SACRE Report	Autumn Term 2015	SACRE Adviser and clerk	SACRE Adviser x1 day @£500		Bring draft to November meeting	Presented at March mtg and to Councillors on <b>Date tbc</b>
	4. Review the action plan at each meeting and update for next year	At each SACRE meeting	SACRE Adviser and SACRE	SACRE Adviser time included in A2 above	June 16 mtg	Nov 25 mtg	March 1 mtg
	5. ~Subscribe to NASACRE ~ Representation at annual NASACRE conference, NASACRE AGM and ~local SACRE events including the annual pan-Berkshire SACRE conference	Ongoing	SACRE members SACRE Adviser to organise with other Berkshire RE advisers (Jo Fageant and Anne Andrews)	Subscription £95 Conference/s and AGM budget £500  SACRE Adviser time if needs to be the SACRE representative at NASACRE conference x1 day shared with Wokingham £250	JL to attend NASACRE conference in London. Chair?also attending		

				SACRE conference: 1 day prep and attendance shared with Wokingham £250			
B. To support teachers of RE to continually improve RE learning in their schools and  C. To support the implementation of the revised Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for RE	1. Provide a termly primary RE network meeting for Reading teachers, 4-5.30 hosted by schools. SACRE members welcome.	<p>Summer term 2015: 5 May 2015 Venue: tbc</p> <p>Autumn term 2015: Tues 13 October 2015 Venue: tbc</p> <p>Spring term 2016: Thurs 28 January 2016 Venue: tbc</p> <p>(Summer term 2016: Wed 18 May 2016) from 2016 budget Venue: tbc</p>	Led by Jan Lever Education Consultancy	SACRE Adviser x3 half days @£250 = £750			
	2. Provide a 'start of year' secondary RE network meeting, 4-5.30, hosted by a school. RE teachers and SACRE members to be invited	Autumn term 2015: Tues 29 September 2015 Venue: tbc		SACRE Adviser half-day days @ £500 = £250.			

	3. 'Crossing the Bridges' Project	Launch June 15 <sup>th</sup> 2015 at Easthampstead Park SACRE Conference. Training event for West of Berkshire (West Berks, Reading, Wokingham) Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June Venue: LDA Church, Meadway, Reading 2-5pm	SACRE Adviser and SACRE members plus Faith Communities and teachers	No cost to SACRE. Funded by Culham St Gabriel's Trust as a Pan-Berkshire RE Hub Project (£2000 total funding)			
	4. Subject Leader Training x1 half-day sessions (joint with Wokingham)	Autumn term 2015 Thurs 8 October 1-4pm Venue:tbc		1 day adviser time @ £500 a day..shared with Wokingham £250 for Reading	To be advertised September 2015		

**Costs:**

**Adviser/consultant time:**

3 SACRE meetings (including prep and travel) @ £500 = £1500

Annual report £500

Annual Pan-Berkshire SACRE conference £250

NASACRE conference £250

3 Primary network meetings (including prep and travel) @ £250 = £750

1 Secondary 'start of year' secondary network meeting @ £250

Half-day Primary RE subject leader training £250

Total: £3750 plus VAT (£750) = **£4500**

**Other costs:**

NASACRE subscription £95

SACRE members conference/training costs £500    Subtotal **£595**

**Total: £5095**