



Devon Association of Governors

Minutes of the Executive Committee held on Thursday 6th May 2004 at 6.45pm at the Cowick Barton Inn, Exeter.

Present: Douglas Lomax, Ivan Godfrey, David Gravell, Margaret Hosford, Ian Rogers, Roger Adcock, Rob Shilvock, Mike Billington, Judy Burgess, Helen Morrison, Jenny Currie, Don Paterson, John Gale, Martin Weiler, Vicky Rollason

Apologies: Laurie Burbridge; Jane Lucas; Carol Robinson; Claire Tod; Iris Watson; Leon Winston; Debbie Clapshaw; Richard Haysom; Faith Butler.

Minute Circulation: All members of the Executive Committee; Phil Norrey, Director for EAL; Lyndsey Stone, Acting Deputy Director for EAL; Ingrid Fisher, Assistant Director for EAL; Jean McEntire, Chief Executive NGC; Jane Phillips, NAGM; Sarah Lyster, Regional Chair, NGC; DAG website.

04.15 Introductions and welcome. The Chair welcomed Don Paterson to the Executive committee. Don is a partnership governor at Knowles Hill School, Newton Abbot. Also welcomed to the meeting was Vicky Rollason, Devon Group Manager for School Organisation and Access.

04.16 Issues for item 7. DAG membership/Exeter College.

04.17 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th March 2004 were agreed as a true record.

04.18 Matters arising from the minutes:

- Annual Assembly - there was a good attendance (about 80) and comments were very positive. The Secretary circulated copies of minutes and reports from speakers. Thanks had been sent to Phil Norrey, James Hennessey and Zannah Doan for their contributions. It was agreed that the venue was excellent, but more help would be needed next year with refreshments. It was reported that the PA system was not 100% effective; this would be checked before next year's meeting. Special thanks to Ivan Godfrey for organising the meeting.
- Venue for DAG Executive meetings. It was decided to hold the next meeting at the West of England School in Exeter. This will be on Thursday 15th July with refreshments at 4.30 for a 5pm start. Margaret Hosford will liaise with Ian Rogers over arrangements.
- DAG/DGS conference. It was felt that dates should be looked at on Friday/Saturday in June or July 2005 (Ivan Godfrey to liaise with Judy Burgess).
- Joint NAGM/NGC conference - "Governors leading or following?" Ivan Godfrey will be attending.
- Computer for Secretary - Ivan still trying to contact ScoMis.

04.19 Executive details & Election of Vice Chair(s). A list of Executive members for 2004/05 was circulated and nominations for Vice-Chair were received for Mike Billington and Iris Watson (proposed by John Gale, seconded by Helen Morrison). **The Committee approved the nominations and elected Mike Billington and Iris Watson as Vice-Chairs for the 2004/05 year. It was decided not to co-opt any members this year as most areas were represented and the Executive is already 'over limit'.**

04.20 Primary Surplus Places Review. Vicky Rollason is heading a working group looking at surplus places and falling rolls. Vicky gave an interesting and informative update on the purpose

and progress of the review. The main points were:

- The definition of a surplus place is the difference between the school's net capacity and the number of pupils on roll. The main reason for surplus places in Devon is due to a falling birthrate.
- Surplus places can have positive and negative affects. Small schools can be faced with serious budget implications, however the county sees the importance of working with schools to prevent closures. Looking at the positive, surplus places can give schools flexibility in arrangements for teaching and learning, and give opportunities to develop extended schools programmes. Schools can be encouraged to diversify in order to manage a drop in income. Buildings and temporary classrooms could be re-designated for other use, such as for the community.
- The Capital Programme requires Devon to reduce surplus places; however Capital money is calculated against the number of surplus places in the whole county. How does this affect individual schools?
- National context: Primary schools in Devon have 9% surplus places; the national average is 11%. For secondary schools this is 4% and 7% respectively. There are 32 primary schools in Devon with 25% or more surplus places (no secondary schools).
- Small schools affected by surplus places need to be looked at individually. The county would like to work with governing bodies in order to help them achieve their vision for their school in the short and long term. The working group would like to get directly involved with governing bodies.
- Schools working together should be encouraged, particularly in rural areas. Collaboration and Federation was discussed. This would involve governing bodies working together to pool resources including buildings and staff. A Federation could include community, voluntary controlled (but not voluntary aided), nursery and special schools. They could have one governing body but still have their own budgets (which can be pooled) and admissions policies.

Questions/Observations from the committee:

- Voluntary Aided schools: how are they affected by plans for collaboration and federation? The LEA works closely with Dioceses but there is no legal mechanism for VA school GBs to federate formally (i.e. one GB for two or more schools). They can, of course, encouraged to take part in collaborative arrangements short of that.
- Collaboration & Federation should be about raising standards, and not devices to make use of surplus places. It would be beneficial for these to be looked at together with Devon's Vision for Learning in order to get the best out of initiatives such as workforce remodelling and extended schools.
- Will the LEA provide leadership and make a decision to close a school if there is no other alternative? The presumption is not to close schools and the LEA will do everything possible to find another solution but they cannot rule out closure where the case for doing so is strong, and consistent with the Vision for Learning in Devon.
- Parental preference. Has the government been challenged over how parental preference can affect surplus places?
- It was agreed that there could be no generic solution; however, principles could be agreed, with individual schools working with the LEA and their communities to find the best way forward.

The Working Group includes DAG executive members Roger Adcock, Claire Tod and Simon Howes. The group will analyse data and the committee looked forward to updates at future meetings. The Chair thanked Vicky for a very clear and informative presentation.

04.21 The Year Ahead. To agree priorities for 2004/05.

- Governor Academic Councils. Judy Burgess outlined her ideas on developing the profile of Governor Academic Council groups. Academic councils at present involve mainly Headteachers and staff. There are benefits for governors getting involved in these kind of groups and being pro-active in developing initiatives in their area. There are currently governor groups in Tiverton and Crediton who are working well together, and hopefully they could be involved in sharing good

practice. Judy would like to hear from interested governors and will help them to form their own groups.

Questions/Observations from the committee:

- This was a good idea and a good challenge but gives governors workload issues.
- DAG Area meetings have been a step forward - would ACs replace area meetings?
- Benefits include purchasing services in a group - easier and cheaper?

The Chair thanked Judy for her contribution and looked forward to further updates at future meetings.

- Vision for Learning. Information from the consultation is being pulled together and a draft document will be ready at the end of May. DAG will need to think about its responses to this.
- The DAG project is ongoing. Letters will be going out shortly to identified staff who will help provide good practice exemplars.
- Falling roles/surplus places will be a priority in the coming year.

04.22 Reports Back

- NGC South West Area Meeting. Each regional area needs to elect one person to serve on the NGC executive. Nominations to be discussed at the next DAG executive. The NGC AGM is on Saturday November 13th in London.
- Education Purchasing group (Ray Beale). Its remit is to support staff in Devon to improve the efficiency of purchasing. The group will report back to the SSSB. It was agreed for Rob Shilcock to be the governor representative on the Board.
- Extended Schools Steering Group - this is being set up to advise the Extended Schools Co-ordinator and encourage partnership and co-operation in the development of Extended schools. They would like a governor representative. Please contact DAG Secretary if you are interested.
- Premises Board Working Group - Douglas Lomax was nominated to serve on this.

04.23 Officers Reports.

- Treasurer's Report was circulated and accepted. Thanks to Ian Rogers.
- Secretary's Report:
 - DAISI have appointed a new Director, Liz Hill. The committee welcomed this appointment and looked forward to meeting Ms Hill in the future. The committee would like to acknowledge the work by the outgoing director, Zannah Doan and asked Douglas Lomax and David Gravell who are DAISI trustees to represent their views on this at the next board meeting.
 - Judy Burgess asked for a small group of governors to meet with the Finance Dept. to discuss comparative data. Volunteers were Ian Rogers, John Gale and Don Paterson. The Secretary will forward these names to Judy.
 - There is a proposal to change the name of NAGM to NASG (National Association of School Governors). This was agreed, and a suggestion was put forward for it to be phased in.
 - The Secretary has made links with Torbay governors and invited Jean Willder to future executive meetings.
 - School Profile Consultation, Transport Bill and Promotion of Food to Children. These all need responses from DAG soon. The Secretary will circulate details to nominated members and they will respond on behalf of DAG.
 - Annual Assembly 2005. The suggested date falls in the Easter holiday, so it was agreed to change it to **Saturday 16th April 2005.**

04.24 Item 7

- Should DAG membership be widened? DAG has been asked if it would extend membership to

managers (governors) at Exeter College, (further education college not funded by Devon County Council). It was agreed that communication with the college would be beneficial as it contributes to the learning not only of Exeter school children but a wide catchment area covering much of East Devon. The Secretary will investigate further and report back at the next meeting.

- Roger Adcock would like to dedicate his book of cartoons titled "Matters Arising" to DAG. The committee accepted with thanks and wished him good luck with the book.

04.25 Review of the meeting.

- The committee found the debate on surplus places excellent;
- Discussions focusing on learning were highlighted as a priority; the 'business' side was seen as necessary part of the Executive's remit.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Provisional Date and Time of next meeting: West of England School, Topsham Road, Exeter. Thursday 15th July 2004 - refreshments at 4.30 for a 5pm start.

ACTION POINTS

- 04.18 Next committee meeting - Margaret and Ian to liaise over venue.
DAG/DGS conference - Ivan and Judy to liaise over dates/venues.
Secretary's computer - Ivan to contact ScoMis
- 04.22 National Governors Council - discuss nominations at next meeting
- 04.23 DAISI trustees (Douglas Lomax and David Gravel) to report back to next meeting about an acknowledgement for Zannah Doan, outgoing DAISI director.
Ivan to forward names to Judy re. comparative data working group.
Ivan to inform NAGM that DAG agree with change of name to NASG
Ivan to circulate details of School Profile, Transport Bill and Promotion of Food to Children to nominated members for their response.
- 04.24 Ivan to report at next meeting on possible link with Exeter College managers.

<p style="text-align: center;">DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS Reports back for Executive Meeting on May 6th 2004</p>
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Schools Support Services Board

Date of Meeting 10.03.04

Representatives - Ivan Godfrey : Rob Shilvock

Issues to discuss at Executive

None

Issues for Information

- Catering Review is making good progress and should report in late May
- LEA is actively pursuing issue of large increase in charges from Capita computer services
- 'Brokerage' - pursuit of policy for presenting list of recommended alternative providers to schools. The group has established a sub-group to investigate ways of moving forward. A booklet of alternative providers may not now be available for schools for next year.

- Presentation on Governor Services from Judy Burgess - DGS are looking at alternative methods of charging schools for their services, particularly whole GB visits.
- Presentation from Go-Teaching on latest developments and requests for feedback from the group. Go-Teaching will be offering a broader range of services and make more services available through the internet

Police Education Liaison Group

Date of Meeting 18 March 2004

Representative - Mike Billington

Issues to discuss at Executive

None

Issues for Information

- Another packed agenda including items on the 'Children's Bill', review of the role of Youth Affairs Officers, Youth Justice issues, Restorative Justice training, Penalty Notices for Disorderly Behaviour, Penalty Notices for Truancy, CRB checks on Police Officers.
- Youth Affairs Officers will, from September be known as Youth Intervention Officers. Direct schools inputs will be on an evidence-based need in future. The schools first point of contact for any issues will be the Neighbourhood Beat Manager. YIOs will become consultants to NBMs.
- NBMs will be receiving additional training for this and will include Restorative Justice. The Police Service have decided that Disorder Penalty Notices will not be issued to people under the age of 18 yrs. Peter Walker reported that a Code of Conduct for Truancy Penalty Notices was being drawn up. All Police Officers will now be subject of checks against 'List 99' and the Protection of Children Act list via Devon County Council.
- **Next meeting 9.30am 080704 at Torpoint Community College.**

Exeter Reorganisation Co-ordinating Group

Date of Meeting: 16th March 2004

Representative - Martin Weiler

Issues to discuss at Executive

None

Issues for Information:

- Reducing number of teachers and non teachers at risk. Schools must advise LEA BEFORE advertising full time jobs.
- Working group is looking at 'engaging pupils' voice' in City. To give early experience of democracy.
- Examining pan City ICT approach
- Feasibility study for Exeter Arts project. Looking at marking historic achievements of schools about to change.
- Build of PFI schools underway.
- Names for new schools being agreed
- First meeting of new Governors' forum a success
- Schools will be working in new clusters from April
- City wide approach to timing of double entry of Years 7&8 in 2005
- Admissions being looked at carefully – could be pressure point in primaries
- Next meeting – 1 July 2004

NGC South-West Area Meeting

Date of Meeting 22.04.04

Representatives - Ivan Godfrey : Jenny Currie (Secretary)

Issues to discuss at Executive

We will need to debate our nomination for SW area Executive member at the July meeting.

Issues for Information

- Meeting approved arrangements allowing for election of an area representative to the NGC Executive (in future the NGC Exec. will have 9 members elected on an area basis and 9 elected at the AGM on a national basis). Details of election procedures were also considered and recommendations put forward to NGC Executive. The election for the area rep. will take place at the October area meeting.
- NGC has produced a number of documents for governors in recent months and also represented governors at meetings with ministers (see DAG website)
- NGC have appointed a new policy and consultation officer - Gillian Windass
- NGC is now self-financing
- We raised the concern about falling rolls / surplus places and asked NGC to pursue this
- Attempts will be made to link county associations more carefully and to circulate SW based information (e.g. about county events that might be opened up to other associations)