



Devon Association of Governors

Minutes of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 9th March 2004 at 6.45pm at the Cowick Barton Inn, Exeter.

Present: Douglas Lomax (chair), Roger Adcock, Mike Billington, Judy Burgess, Jenny Currie, Ivan Godfrey, David Gravell, Margaret Hosford, Helen Morrison, Carol Robinson, Ian Rogers, Rob Shilvock, Iris Watson, Leon Winston

Apologies: Faith Butler, Debbie Clapshaw, Richard Haysom, Simon Howes, Margaret Ladbury, Jane Lucas Claire Tod, Martin Weiler.

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.

04.07 Issues for item 7. Dates for next year.

04.08 Minutes of the last meeting held on 15th January 2004 were agreed with an amendment as previously circulated.

04.09 Matters arising from the minutes:

- Devon's Vision for Learning: The Secretary has papers from Phil Norrey's presentation available (can be sent as an email attachment).
- Annual Assembly. Draft agenda has been circulated. Phil Norrey and James Hennessey of DAISI will make a joint presentation.
- Executive membership - there has been possible interest from 2 new members and the current membership will put their names forward. The DAG constitution allows for the membership of executive to be flexible (within reason).
- A letter to Ivan Godfrey from David Miliband was read out at the meeting.
- A question was raised about UPS3. What if a teacher qualifies for UPS3 but the school cannot afford it? It was agreed to put this at the Assembly.
- To note the following from committee reports:
 - Martin Weiler unable to attend NGC Chairs' Conference.
 - Faith Butler and Roger Adcock attended DfES/OFSTED conference.
 - LPIG - Johanna Korndorfer and Susan Gay confirmed as DAG representatives.
 - Ivan Godfrey co-opted to NAGM Executive.

04.10 Devon Governor Services - Judy Burgess gave a current review of DGS:

- The DGS will be "relaunched " in April 2005. Consultation is in process for future financing of DGS. Estimate that budget will be cut by approx 1%.
- DGS will need to reposition itself within the new Children's Services Directorate which will replace the Education Directorate.

- Recruitment of governors - vacancies are being filled but mid term resignations have increased.
- PANDA survey has shown that in Devon, Primary Governance is rated above average for similar areas and Secondary Governance lower than average. Therefore DGS are extending their support for Secondary Schools.
- Supporting schools in need is taking up a lot of time. The post of Divisional Education Officer has been replaced with School Improvement Officer, whose remit is more focused.
- DGS website is becoming a more popular way of accessing information. Also increasingly popular is information sent on CD's.
- Governor training - take up for individual governor training has gone down, but whole governing body training has been popular and this could be a way forward in the future; also looking at cluster group training.
- Impact of service - Census response. Some questions on the census were debated but most governors were happy to fill in the questionnaire. Data will be collated for the end of April.
- The LEA will be inspected by OFSTED soon.
- Debate continues over whether DGS should be independent. At the moment, No.
- NGC recognizes that Devon has excellent support for governors , both DGS and DAG.

The committee thanked Judy Burgess and her team for their excellent work in supporting governors in Devon.

04.11 Items from last Meeting

- **Time and Venue of Executive meetings.** There was a request to hold meetings earlier in the day (especially in the winter months). It was decided to hold the next meeting at the usual time of 6.45, and ask the new DAG committee to consider holding future winter meetings at 4pm (venue still in Exeter).
- **Reducing workload at governors meetings.** Primary Heads have raised this for discussion. It was decided that DAG (IG) and DGS (JB) would get together with Charlie Werner to collate information and suggest a way forward. Starting points could be:
 - Heads/Chairs/Clerks encouraged to get together to discuss.
 - Find out the length of the average meeting.
 - Reconstitution would be a good starting point to review terms of reference and how meetings are structured.
- **Timing of next DAG/DGS conference (2005)** Judy and Jane to look at possible dates in May/June.
- **CRB police check forms** (Mike Billington) The Assistant Chief Constable is looking into this. There is a PELG meeting next week and if there are any developments MB will update the committee at the next meeting.

04.12 Reports back. Issues to be discussed:

- Meeting with Devon Governor Services. Carol Robinson will also attend joint NGC / NAGM conference in June
- Schools' Support Services Board - next year the portfolio of services is likely to include non-LEA services - it was asked whether this would work logistically considering the size of Devon area
- DAG project. The committee agreed to fund the project over a two year period.
- Reports were also received from: EDP Priority 3 14-19; School' Forum; Meeting with Phil Norrey; Workforce Reform Steering Group; Admissions Forum; EYDC partnership meeting; and Exeter Governors' Consultative Forum (new group - Chair, Martin Weiler). (see attachment to minutes)

04.13 Officers reports.

Finance

- The Treasurer circulated "Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year Ending 31st December 2003"

and "DAG final accounts 2003".

- It was decided to award honorariums for 2004 of £3000 to Ivan Godfrey (Secretary) and £1000 to Jenny Currie (Assistant Secretary).
- It was decided to purchase a PC for the Secretary and a Laptop for joint use by Secretary/Assistant Secretary and other Executive members as needed. Total purchase price of £2000. It was recommended that they have USB ports so that memory sticks can be used to help transport information.

Secretary

- **Surplus Places Review** (draft paper from Simon Howes circulated) This is a draft document from the Primary Places Working Group. Their main remit is to make recommendations on how to address the options around dealing with the growing number of surplus places in the light of falling rolls. Comments would be welcome, especially from small Primary Schools. It was suggested that the committee invites Vicky Rollason to the next meeting to discuss.
- **LEA Governor Appointments.** JB reported that most LEA governors are appointed within 8 weeks, and she would find out how this compared with other authorities.
- **NAGM Executive** - to note that Ivan Godfrey is now a member of the NAGM Executive and will send the DAG committee regular updates from the Chair, Jane Phillips.
- **DAG & Devon Websites** have experienced a few difficulties lately but seem to be resolved now.
- **Official Legal Support for Governors.** There was concern that individual governors do not have a central point to go to if they are experiencing legal problems concerning them individually. (This is not concerning procedural matters). The topic is on the agenda for the Annual Assembly and IG will ask NGC and NAGM to look at it.
- **Miliband Speeches.** Use DAG executive 'Rapid response' team to respond if necessary. See 04.06 Secretary's report.
- **Devonplay** - letter received and replied to by Secretary. Devonplay are a voluntary organization which promotes the benefits of play throughout Devon and the SW. The Secretary asked Devonplay for information for DAG update and invited them to the Annual Assembly.
- **Nominations for DAG Executive** - most current executive members would like to continue. (Chair and Vice-Chairs included).
- **South West NGC Assembly** - the meeting planned for next week has been postponed - DL and IG will represent DAG at the meeting proposed for mid-April.

04.14 Review of meeting - Next year's Executive will decide what to focus on - current executive would like to alternate debate/discussions with day to day work. It was felt the meeting had been very productive.

Date for next meeting - Thursday 6th May 2004, 6.45, Cowick Barton Inn.

Provisional dates for further meetings:

Thursday 8th July 04

Tuesday 21st September 04

Tuesday 9th November 04

Thursday 20th January 05

Tuesday 8th March 05

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Action Points:

- 04.11 Time of Executive meetings - to be decided by new executive at next meeting
Reducing workload at governing body meetings = Ivan and Judy to discuss with Charlie Werner.

- DAG/DGS conference 2005 - Judy and Jane to look at dates.
- 04.13 Finance - IG to purchase laptop and PC
- 04.13 Surplus Places - Ivan to invite Vicky Rollason to committee meeting
- 04.12 Legal support for Governors - Ivan to ask NGC/NAGM to look at this.

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS
Reports back for Executive Meeting on March 9th 2004

EDP Priority 3 14-19

Date of Meeting 23/01/04 **Representative** David Keep

Issues to discuss at Executive None

Issues for Information

- Priorities 3.27 were reported on. The chair, Steve Kibble was anxious to find quantitative information wherever possible and to relate this to neighbouring counties. Devon has to face a further OFSTED in the next academic year.
- There continue to be problems in trying to get responses from schools to requests for information.
- Collecting information on participation in vocational and physical education is especially difficult: impressions and reports on outstanding achievers are not enough.
- I am not sure what the value of having a lay representative at these meetings is. As a Governor I have little to contribute, apart from local anecdote, but I suppose it is useful that DAG should see the slow and expensive process of gathering data to attempt to satisfy the government. I am beginning to appreciate how the process works and am grateful for the welcome I receive.

Meeting with Devon Governor Services

Date of Meeting 23/01/04 **Representatives** Ivan Godfrey & Douglas Lomax

Issues to discuss at Executive

Identify second governor to attend June conference

Next DAG/DGS Conference

JB presentation

Issues for Information

- Debbie Clapshaw will respond to the NGC Research Projects on governor support that has been forwarded.
- Drugs Policy for Primary School - IG to Contact Gillian Feest for advice. Suggested that a small primary needs half side of A4 on this.
- Joint June conference on school governance - 4 can attend for the price of 3. Suggested that DAG pay £75 for IG to attend. JB will talk to a member + another governor (Judy would pay).
- DfES March conference - Roger Adcock and/or Faith Butler will attend. Cost £100-00 + VAT + transport per person - IG to contact Roger / Faith.
- Next DAG/DGS conference - ideas to go to next Exec. Late April/early May 2005? Jane Lucas + Ivan to put brief paper to next Executive.
- Computer laptop – Judy is following this up, possibly for Jenny (together with computer support for both Jenny and Ivan)
- JB asked to give a presentation to next Executive meeting in March

Schools' Forum

Date of Meeting 23/01/04 **Representatives** 13 nominated representatives

Issues to discuss at Executive None

Issues for Information

- Arrangements for funding of any transitional support to schools for 2004/05 agreed
- Director for EAL will report to a future meeting on how steps can be taken to implement needs-led funding

- Concerns expressed at implications of cuts to the central LEA budget: Director for EAL will report to next meeting on impact of these cuts on service performance, school improvement and learning development
- Lengthy discussion about Carry Forwards: acknowledgement that a certain level of Carry Forward is necessary - but request that clearer guidelines be identified for schools in managing these
- Letter from DfES indicated that there will be no further consideration of funding levels until 2006/07 - 'stability of poverty' !!!

Meeting with Phil Norrey

Date of Meeting 27/01/04

Representative Ivan Godfrey

Issues to discuss at Executive

Support DAG can give in Vision for Learning discussions

Issues for Information

- Outline arrangements agreed for Annual Assembly. Phil will discuss details of presentation with James Hennessy ... and possibility of shared 'performance'. The presentation will not be a version of the Vision for Learning!!
- Phil will welcome DAG support in promoting the debate on the Vision for Learning as governors can help bring the context of the outside world into school discussions. He sees the task before the education community in Devon as the development of a document that will outline Devon's vision, what it wishes to do, over the next 10 years at least. The Single Education Plan (initially for 3 years) will pull together steps to move towards the achievement of Devon's intentions ... and, in response, the DfES will indicate how it will support Devon in achieving those goals. By June it is hoped that a draft consultation paper will be in place, to be followed by a vision document in the Autumn Term. Phil would be pleased to see governors encouraging debate and discussion within their school communities.
- Workforce Remodelling Audit should identify good practice within Devon ... and areas that need to be addressed. The government sees any additional funding above inflation as growth money to support WR
- The response to the Catering Review has been overwhelming (6,500+ replies)
- The LEA is currently drafting advice to schools on UPS3 payments
- The LEA hopes that schools will ensure that they do not run up large carry forwards ... as this could give the wrong messages to councillors at a time of considerable pressure over Council Tax

Schools' Support Services Board

Date of Meeting 27/01/04

Representatives Ivan Godfrey & Rob Shilvock

Issues to discuss at Executive

Raise awareness of implications

Issues for Information

- Very high level of response to Catering Review questionnaires.
- Letter on the very high year-on-year increases for Capita computer licence has gone to LGA.
- Portfolio of Services has been sent to all schools.
- Main part of meeting given over to presentation on Barnsley LEA's development of a brokerage system and the steps taken to introduce such a scheme that allows schools to have information about / to opt for service providers other than the LEA.

Healthy Eating Review

Date of Meeting 03/02/04

Representative David Dutton

Issues to discuss at Executive

Awareness of work being done

Issues for Information

- Report of meeting of the Health Issues Group (one of the sub-committees of the Primary Meals Review)

- We are looking for as **hard evidence** as we can gather, no matter what the aspect. So: "We don't like D.D.S." needs to be supported with **detailed reasons**. "We're going to go it alone" needs to be accompanied by some **comparative costings** or, at the very least, some explanation. It will be helpful also if we can collect **evidence** (if it exists) that **co-operation** is taking place **across Academic Councils or groups of schools** or at least that the possibility is being discussed. (If it isn't being discussed, it would be of interest to know why it isn't, as this would appear to be such fruitful ground for such discussion at Ac. Council level.)
- Also, we are interested to know to what extent discussion about "school dinners" is taking place within the context of some **rigorous discussion about healthy living as a whole** i.e. with physical activity; break time snacks and tuck shops; fruit in school; breakfast clubs; walking to school; etc. etc. on the agenda.
- Are governors and are parents involved in any discussion? And what about the children - are they putting forward their ideas and to what effect?
- Questionnaire based on points above developed and circulated to interested governors / parents in readiness for meetings in early March

DAG Project

Date of Meeting 09/02/04

Representatives Ivan Godfrey & Margaret Hosford

Issues to discuss at Executive

Timescale and funding of project

Issues for Information

- Jenny Bates has identified a number of schools / staff members who might be prepared to contribute to the booklet. She agreed to follow up some further contacts / possibilities
- In order to develop a consistent format to the exemplars of good practice we agreed a pro forma for contributions
- It was agreed that IG should draft a covering letter to be sent to headteachers of the relevant schools with a copy to the relevant member of staff. Letter + pro forma would be sent out in the second half of the Spring Term with a request for return within a two-week period
- The timescale has clearly slipped - we are now looking at printing in July and distributing at the beginning of the new academic year. DAG may wish to consider funding the project over a two-year period.
- IG will contact Simon Goodenough re advice/help in production of booklet
- IG to ask Judy Burgess about governor responsibilities and 'do's and don'ts' for governors.
- Jenny Bates suggested 'How Schools manage Critical Incidents' as a future topic for DAG to consider

The Workforce Reform Steering Group

Date of Meeting 13/02/04

Representative Jane Lucas

Issues to discuss at Executive None

Issues for Information:

- Four conferences are planned for schools in the next couple of months. These day courses will provide training on a variety of aspects of the National Agreement as well as opportunities for sharing good practice and finding out where help is most needed
- This is a big agenda! There needs to be a rapid building of capacity to deliver training to the County's schools
- It is clear that there is an expectation that between 30% and 50% of all schools will have 'engaged' with the workforce remodelling programme (in addition to the legal minimum implementation of the National Agreement) by the end of 2005, and that all schools will have engaged by the end of 2006. Evidence will be required to measure the impact on schools
- Work is underway to decide how the training will be made available for those wishing to qualify as higher level teaching assistants

School Organisation Committee

Date of Meeting 19/02/04

Representatives Ivan Godfrey : Andy Holbrook : Chris Stone: Iris Watson

Issues to discuss at Executive None

Issues for Information

- Following closure agreed - Hill Crest Special School
- Proposed Nursery Unit at Stoke Hill First agreed
- Proposed new Primary for Clyst Heath area of Exeter agreed
- Changes agreed to proposals for current John Stocker Middle / Cowick First with establishment of new Nursery School on site of Cowick First and new Primary (Bowhill) on site of John Stocker

Admissions Forum

Date of Meeting 19/02/04

Representative Roger Adcock

Issues to discuss at Executive None

Issues for information

- New Admissions Forum now in place on which DAG is a Core Member, one of three representing the community. Tenure of office 4 years!
- Co-ordinated Admissions awaiting agreement of 4 out of the 5 VA/Foundation Schools, otherwise will have to be imposed by SoS.
- Admissions arrangements 2005 approved with requests for simplification of forms and help for illiterate parents (role for PTA Devon here?)
- School Places: DfES now to take into account only the total number of county vacancies without regard to local circumstances, which will create problems.
- Appeals: 97% first choices achieved. Appeals well below national average and over half rejected.
- Casual Admissions Scheme going well although some heads grumble!

EYDC Partnership meeting

Date of Meeting 25/02/04

Representative Iris Watson

Issues to discuss at Executive None

Issues for Information

- A review of the year's work on "Sure Start" showed that very satisfactory progress had been made. Success is due partly to the interagency support and co-operation, and as a result two thirds of childcare targets have been met.
- In the coming year it has been decided to focus on four key areas of work:

Integrated services	Create and sustain childcare
Ensure Inclusion, Access and Quality	Development of workforce.
- It was reported that Devon is a year ahead of funding for all three to four year olds and the take-up rate is; 3 years 78% and 4 years 88%.
- To meet current and future needs it is proposed to site four new maintained nurseries, three in Exeter, Clyst Heath, Stoke Hill, St. Nicholas School and in St. Peter's School in Budleigh Salterton. In addition seven neighbourhood nurseries will be opening this year.
- A number of children's centres are being planned, some of which are already operational and these will work very closely with NNIS to deliver more integrated services.
- D.I.S.C. DEVON INFORMATION ON SERVICES FOR CHILDREN. A brief report was given on this useful service to parents. Zero 14 PLUS administers the Devon County Council's early years education funding plus other possible benefits, DISC can advise parents on child benefit, child support, guardian's allowance etc. and can also offer help to parents with children who are ill or disabled.
- QUARTERLY REPORTS In future quarterly reports will be carried out by OFSTED but these figures will not be automatically passed back to the partnership. In view of this it was agreed that it would be prudent to continue to keep our own monitoring records.
- BUDGET REPORT The budget at month 10 showed evidence of over and under spends but in the main was considered to be on target. It was noted that ring-fenced amounts of money (£40000) had not been spent and have been clawed back by central government.
- The EYDCP strategic plan in draft form 2004/2006 available if any DAG committee member wishes to read it.

Exeter Governors Consultative Forum

Date of Meeting 04/03/04

Representative Martin Weiler

Issues to discuss at Executive

Note formation and first meeting of new Exeter Governors' consultative forum

Issues for Information

- First meeting successfully held
- Terms of reference agreed (including that agenda will be agreed with DAG)
- Group will be supported by LEA. It will not have decision-making powers. It will meet once a term. Notes of meetings will be circulated to all schools and put on the web.
- Reviewed progress on Exeter Commission Recommendations
- Will focus on a commission issue at each meeting
- Received update on reorganization progress
- Discussed concept of pupil entitlement in Exeter (i.e. whatever the school)
- Martin Weiler to be chair of group
- Next meeting 15th June (special issue: early years/extended schools)