



Devon Association of Governors

Minutes of the Executive Committee held on Tuesday 9th November 2004 at 5.30pm at the West of England School, Exeter.

Present: Roger Adcock, Laurie Burbridge, Faith Butler, Ivan Godfrey, David Gravell, Margaret Hosford, Helen Morrison, Carol Robinson, Ian Rogers, Rob Shilvock, Iris Watson, Martin Weiler, Leon Winston, Jenny Currie (Asst. Sec), John Udy (Ide First School).

Apologies: Mike Billington, Judy Burgess, Debbie Clapshaw, Richard Haysom, Simon Howes, Jane Lucas, Don Paterson, Claire Tod, Jean Willder.

04.45 The Chair welcomed John Udy, one of 2 DAG reps on the Extended Schools Working Party group, Jon Bell, LEA officer with responsibility for Extended Schools and Debbie Pritchard, Devon's Group Manager for Extended Learning.

04.46 Extended Schools

The meeting started with a presentation by Jon Bell, who has been Devon's advisor on Extended Schools since April 04. He explained the background to Extended Schools, and that they have developed alongside the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and the Every Child Matters paper. The DfES 5 Year Strategy has put a renewed emphasis on Extended Schools - '**now instead of encouragement, an expectation.**' He emphasised that the LEA feels it is important to have a strategic approach, with dedicated staff, analysis of local needs and sufficient funds. Devon's vision is for every school to be offered the chance to be an extended school, with dedicated staff working alongside existing staff & volunteers. They will be involved in working with other local agencies such as sports co-ordinators, youth workers and adult education. Each Local Learning Community (formerly Academic Council) will have a 0.5 Extended School co-ordinator, working with local schools, communities and Children's Trusts. New powers mean that governors can charge for any facilities or services that are for charitable purposes. However governors must consult with LEA, staff & parents first. Staff can be employed by the LEA or directly by the governing body (and certain other established groups). There will be some differences for Community & VA and Foundation & VC schools. Financial advice on charging and VAT etc. is available from the LEA.

The following questions were asked:

- *Governors can charge for facilities or services that are for charitable purposes. What defines 'Charitable'?* This could be seen as a broad term, and needs greater elucidation - for example, how does it affect PFI schools like the ones currently under development in Exeter? Jon Bell will raise this matter with Government working party group. (See also note below from Exeter Schools Partnership Group.)
- *Funding - are Governors meant to be budgeting for this? What are implications for School Improvement Plans?*
- *Who initiates a school in taking part?* Co-ordinators will look at the current situation in the LLC, get to know individual schools and recommend which schools could develop as extended schools.
- *What responsibilities will governors have?* Governors should take measures to ensure that school premises are safe and appropriate insurance has been arranged. A practical guide is being produced and when ready, Jon Bell will send to Ivan Godfrey to distribute via email or website.
- *Governors are worried - 'what are we letting ourselves in for?'* Governors would like more concrete information to look at. Jon Bell asked governors to look at web pages on the Devon website, and he is working on a leaflet and video for distribution via LLCs.
- *How can professional agencies reflect local needs that may possibly be only transient?* It was felt that schools should be encouraged to go out into the local community and initiate the services they require. Schools in LLCs can share facilities and staff and so help to make initiatives more sustainable.
- *Can becoming an extended school save small rural schools from possible closure?* Not necessarily, but in conjunction with other initiatives within LLCs such as sharing facilities, becoming an extended school should prove beneficial.
- *Will there be any governor training?* Jon Bell will be liaising with Judy Burgess (DGS) over governor training, and governors felt that it was crucial for them to be involved. As LLCs are the 'first port of call' for Extended Schools co-ordinators, it was felt that governor involvement in LLCs would be a positive move.

Jon had also received written copies of the following additional points from other meetings that had considered this Play Strategy (Zero Plus) committee:

- *It is hoped that Jon Bell, Extended Schools Coordinator, will join the committee and through him to have a direct link with academic councils.*
- *The use of school premises as the ideal venues for many play activities was discussed. Not all head teachers were keen on this. It was pointed out that misuse of school buildings and equipment is a matter for*

concern for head teachers. While they may want to support play schemes, they are protective of their own schools. It was pointed out that schools cannot get money from "Extended Schools" funding to support their after school clubs etc. Money often comes from school budgets or through parental contribution.

Exeter Schools Partnership Group meeting:

- *Key agenda item was presentation from Bryanston Square, the company working under licence to Mowlems on out of school hours extended use of PFI schools. They described themselves as "nearly not for profit" and have agreed a 50/50 share of receipts with the LEA once their licence fee has been covered. They will be marketing the schools for use by the community and are recruiting an extended uses manager.*

Extended Schools Steering Group:

- *Governors hoped that the Extended Schools Working Party group could meet more regularly than it does at present (next meeting due Feb. 05).*

Summary. The Chair expressed many thanks to Jon Bell for his presentation, which was very informative and answered many questions. Governors clearly would like to be kept informed and consulted at every opportunity, and collaboration between LEA, governors and school staff will be crucial for Extended Schools to flourish.

Summary of action points:

- Jon Bell to send practical guide to Ivan Godfrey, who will circulate to DAG Executive for comments.
- Videos/CDs are being sent to co-ordinators in LLCs which will be available for schools to borrow.
- Jon Bell will research/clarify the term 'charitable services'.

Jon Bell & Debbie Pritchard left the meeting.

04.47 Discussion of any other issues raised by Executive members:

- Freedom of Information Act - clarification/advice is needed on what information should be available. Ivan Godfrey will ask NGC & NASG for comment.
- Future role of LEAs - as outlined in paper circulated by Ivan Godfrey from the Education magazine - "Ministers plan another attack on LEAs". The DAG executive fully supports the important role of LEAs but will wait until the Education Bill is announced in the Queen's speech before making a response.
- Consultation issues identified in NGC October Bulletin Board - document on Foundation Schools circulated at the meeting. Individual members are encouraged to respond.

04.48 Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st September 2004 were agreed and signed as a true record.

04.49. To deal with matters arising not dealt with later in agenda:

- 04.36 Letter to Douglas Lomax sent
- 04.37 Response to Achieving Excellence document sent to Keith Anderson
- 04.37 Action on other items discussed - DG article on Sharing Good Practice written : governors who raised issues initially contacted
- 04.39 Purchase of Computer(s) still under consideration
- 04.39 IG's meeting with Roger Fetherston had been very helpful in establishing contacts and reviewing governor needs from DCS.
- 04.40 Police Community Support Officers. DAG comments had been sent to Deborah Booth who thanked members for their comments which she was passing on to Superintendent Jo Tennant who is handling the work within the force.
- 04.41 NGC AGM Simon Goodenough and Roger Adcock have both been invited to attend as founder members of NGC. Devon has tabled 2 'resolutions'. Both are linked to issues raised briefly at the last meeting but for which much of the information arrived later. Ivan Godfrey had discussed this with Leon Winston and Sarah Lyster and the 2 resolutions were supported at the NGC SW region meeting (see Report Back under Item 4). The executive supported the two resolutions.

04.50 Committee Representatives: Reports Back.

- **Play Strategy (Zero Plus), Extended Schools & Education in Exeter Partnership Group** - points covered in Extended Schools discussion above.
- **KS3 Strategy Group** The concerns expressed about KS3 English tests had been circulated to all secondary school governor contacts.
- **Education Partnership Board** meeting discussed the Government's 5 Year education strategy. This is an important consultation document and individuals are asked to respond. On initial reading, some DAG members expressed concern about changes for secondary schools and the possible drive for independence could mean they opt out of LLCs.
- **SSSB** Nomination for secondary school representative for the Board : it was agreed to nominate Carol Robinson.
- **NGC SW Regional** Devon motions for NGC AGM (as above).

- **Meeting with Judy Burgess:** Judy is producing a paper on a possible web forum for Devon, to be discussed at the January Exec meeting. Ivan Godfrey will ask if the new Deputy Director for Education, Deborah Magill, would like to speak at next year's Annual Assembly.
- **EDP Inclusion** report was circulated at the meeting.

04.51. Branch Business

- There was a discussion on the sustainability of local branches. Crediton Area has a flourishing branch at present. The Exeter group folded as there was a need to concentrate on Reorganisation, and was replaced with the Exeter Governors Forum. Secretarial support has now finished for this group, and it was felt that for branches to continue in the long term it would be good for a formal structure to be established. The obvious solution would be for governor groups to be formally linked with Local Learning Communities. Ivan Godfrey will take this idea to a Seminar with Phil Norrey this week.
- **Area Meetings** were held in Newton Abbot (about 30), Sidmouth (7) and Honiton (6). Despite wide variations in numbers attending all 3 meetings were very lively and interesting. Crediton Area has held a further meeting and planned, with DGS, a New Governors course for Nov. 30th.

04.52 To update DAG representation

- Membership arrangements from last time confirmed.
- Link Governor Meetings were very successful.
- DAISI. It was agreed that Margaret Hosford replace Douglas Lomax as rep. Leon Winston becomes ex officio DAG Chair member.
- Schools' Forum representation. It was agreed to nominate Simon Howes and Alex Gibson to replace Douglas Lomax and Geraint Williams.
- Lynda Price (Honiton CC) has been added to the list of DAG reps on the Child Protection Group.

04.53 Officers' Reports

Finance : Income and Expenditure Statement for the Period Ending 9th November 2004/DAG Current Account 2004 was circulated. Many thanks to Ian Rogers for keeping the executive regularly informed on the financial situation.

Secretary

- Jenny Currie has prepared a DAG leaflet based on materials already circulated. Members thanked her for doing so, took away copies and agreed to discuss at the next meeting whether it was worth producing one for each governor in Devon initially and whether this should be followed up with a new version each year (one or more copies per affiliated GB).
- The DAG website is being upgraded and transferred to the section of the DCC website where visitors can use a Search Engine. IG has been assured that there should be no difficulty with access during the transfer. Archive materials will remain outside the Search Engine area.
- IG has been making a really serious attempt to check the governor e-mail contact network and ensure contacts really are there. In future he is planning to send the brief 'headline' version of the monthly updates to all those schools affiliated to DAG but not on the network.
- DGS issues. An LEA governor coming to their end of term of service wrote " By the way the letter that comes out of County to ask if a governor is willing to stand for a further term whilst technically correct is a real turnoff. Perhaps a friendly telephone call prior to the letter might be preferable. " Ivan Godfrey to pass on to DGS for comment.
- SW Links. Plymouth governors invited us to their meeting attended by Neil Davies. Unfortunately no-one could attend from Devon. IG has written to the Plymouth Chair and e-mailed Plymouth Governor Services to establish contact.
- IG has contacted the new Team Leader at DAISI (Liz Hill) and hopes to hear from her soon.
- Vicky Rollason has reviewed Roger Adcock's ' Matters Arising ' book in the Devon Governor. It was agreed that this would be good 'thank you' to long serving governors, but discussion on whether DGS or DAG buy copies was deferred to the next meeting.
- DAG has received an informal consultation on draft job descriptions for TAs from Jocelyn Davis at the LEA. A formal consultation is now in process, aiming to finalise a model scheme. Ivan Godfrey will make further enquiries with Governor Services in terms of how we can facilitate access to the scheme for governors.
- Jenny is putting together replies already received for the Inclusion booklet. IG will make one final attempt to get responses from those who have not yet replied.
- DAG link with Exeter College governors. Pippa Warin is still pursuing this.
- IG received a request from NGC for help with a TES article on governor involvement in ICT developments in their school. He contacted governors who had indicated this interest - Sally Aldridge (Combe Martin) and Barry Poole (Bishop's Tawton) have responded positively.

04.54 Review of meeting. Members felt that the meeting structure of debate first and business second was good, and appreciated having paperwork sent prior to the meeting. Facilities and refreshments were good. Thanks to

the West of England School. It was agreed to change the date of the March meeting from Tuesday 8th to Thursday 10th March 2005.

04.55 The meeting closed at 7.35 pm. Date and time of next meeting: **Thursday 20th January 2005, 5.30pm.** Refreshments from 5pm. West of England School, Topsham Road, Exeter.

ACTION POINTS.

Secretary

- 04.46 circulate guide to Extended Schools (from Jon Bell) to DAG executive.
- 04.47 clarification on Freedom of Information - ask NGC & NASM
- 04.49 computers
- 04.49 present Devon resolutions to NGC AGM
- 04.50 update DAG reps for SSSB,
- 04.50 enquire if Deborah Magill could speak at the Annual Assembly.
- 04.51 pursue the principle of governors getting involved formally with Local Learning Communities.
- 04.52 update DAG reps for DAISI, Schools' Forum and Child Protection Group.
- 04.53 ask DGS to look at end of term of office letter.
- 04.53 pursue replies for Inclusion booklet.

All

- 04.47 respond to consultation on Foundation Schools
- 04.53 read *DAG - a brief summary leaflet* for review at next meeting. Contact Jenny if you need a copy - jmazcurrie@blueyonder.co.uk
- 04.53 Roger Adcock's book - discuss at next meeting the possibility of buying some as leaving gifts.