

The order of this newsletter is as follows:

- Devon Association of Governors (DAG)
- Local Authority (LA)
- National Governors' Association (NGA)
- Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF)
- Primary Snippets
- Secondary Snippets

### **DAG**

**AREA MEETINGS for this term are now complete.** A detailed report has been placed on the DAG website. There are so many different topics discussed that the report is necessarily long. Noting that not everything will be relevant to everybody the website report has been broken down into bite size notes.

### **AGM**

**This year's AGM was held on Thursday 12 March 2009.** The list of the elected Executive Committee and appointed Officers is on the DAG website.

### **CLERKS.**

**We welcome all Clerks as members** of DAG.

**The appeal date for Clerks' JE** will take place on 12 May.

**Two Devon Clerks were short listed** for the regional round of National Clerk of the Year Award. The eventual winner, who came from Fleet in Hampshire, was announced on 21 March

### **CONFERENCE**

**The plans for the 2009 Conference** are all but complete. It will be held on 4 July at County Hall. We have secured the services of the author Sue Palmer, renowned for her book "Toxic Childhood", and we consider her attendance as something of a coup. In addition Chris Keates the Secretary of the NASUWT will also speak. Our third speaker is David Triggs the CEO of The Academies Enterprise Trust in Essex. Mr Triggs is also the Principal of Greensward Academy. These last two speakers have a national profile and we are again fortunate to have secured their services

**Online application** is now available. We anticipate a "sell out" so to ensure your attendance you are advised to book now. There are still places available.

**The theme for the Conference** will be "Self improvement = School Improvement"

**Although it is planned to be an all day event** the programme has been designed so that Governors can dip in and out and attend at their convenience.

**We are thrilled to have attracted some children from** Whitchurch Primary School, who will launch the day with their award-winning anthem D.E.V.O.N., and Mary Tavy PS's Gospel Choir, who will entertain us at lunchtime. We believe it very important that our children have the opportunity to show off their talents and the Conference is a great event to that.

**This year we are holding a Poetry Competition** and invite EVERY school to participate. There will be prizes for the winning schools from the 3 sectors and the LA have kindly offered to publish a digest of the poems the children produce. DAG has written to the Primary, Special and Secondary Heads' Associations inviting them to support this competition but Governors have a part to play too. The first words of the poem must be "Devon inspires me to.." **CLOSING DATE IS 30 JUNE 2009.** I know of at least one PS who sees this competition as an opportunity of engaging post SAT children to hone their creative writing even more. Please encourage your school to participate. It would be helpful if you could let me know if your school intends taking part. Thank you.

**The Conference is once again being supported by NPS (SW).** DAG is most grateful for that support and to Cornwall and Devon Connexions and Pecorama, Beer who have offered generous prizes to support the day and particularly for their help to recognise our youngsters' contributions.

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

You should have received a copy of the MOU, entitled Working Together for Better Schools, on 13 March 2009. Comments on this document will be most welcome.

## OFSTED INSPECTION PROJECT – SUMMER TERM 2009 PILOT

Devon will be participating in a pilot in the summer term. This follows Ofsted's consultations in 2008 on new arrangements for school inspections and pilot inspections which have taken place in a small number of LAs during the last year. There is quite a lot of information on this issue which I have placed on the DAG Website

## REPRESENTATIVES / LA COMMITTEES-

**Governor vacancies have appeared on the Forum for Learning and Achievement; the Schools' Commissioning Forum: Schools' Organisational Forum and Schools' Funding Group.** If you wish to be a member of these important fora / committees please contact David Tall.

**Additionally** you will note from the website that several people double up on various Committees and it would be great to spread the burden / skills base, so if you have a particular interest, do please let me know and I will negotiate succession or even increased representation.

## GENERAL

**The Chair and EO attended the NGA SW Regional Meeting** on 14 March. The next meeting is planned for October 2009. The Chair and I will attend but the meeting is open all Devon Governors, so if anybody would like to attend, please let me know.

**The Chair and EO met** Torbay and Plymouth Governors Reps on 18 March. We shall meet again in June, and will welcome a Cornish Governor for the first time.

**The next DAG Executive Committee Meeting** is being held on 21 May 2009

## LA

**Further to last month's note on The Boundary Committee's** provisional recommendations, the BC has published further draft proposals for unitary local government in Devon. The proposals are subject to consultation and the closing date for responses is May 14, 2009.

A full copy of the Boundary Committee's report is available online at:

<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/boundary-reviews/all-reviews/south-west/devon/devon-structural-review>

**You can express your views by:**

Using the Boundary Committee's online form at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk)

Or by writing directly to: Review Manager (Devon Review) The Boundary Committee for England, Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW.

Tel: 020 7271 0512, Fax: 020 7271 0505

DAG would be grateful if you could forward / copy any views to David Tall

**The Vetting and Barring Scheme**, which was designed to both improve and to extend the current employment vetting practices, scheduled to go-live on 12 October 2009 has been delayed until July 2010.

**The LA has announced increased charges** for school meal, effective 20 April. I am happy to forward details if you would like them

**The LA has produced a new policy** on provision dinner moneys arrears, effective 1 April. I can provide a copy if requested.

**Devon Governor Support is holding 3 Link Governors Meetings** 7 – 9 pm 14 May Barnstaple, 19 May Newton Abbot Racecourse and 3 June Great Moor House.

## NGA

### **The following has been received from the NGA**

#### **More pay for Heads**

The continuing anomaly over executive headteachers has finally been resolved by the current pay settlement. Until now there was no clear contractual basis for appointing an executive head and each case required a specific contract. Heads who now take on additional responsibilities – for example running several schools in a federation, will now receive a higher pay settlement, which, in some cases, could see Heads earning close to £200,000.

The settlement for teachers was agreed at 2.3%.

#### **Parent Governor Representatives (PGRs)**

PGRs were created several years ago by the government as a means to represent parents in local authority committees relating to education and to feedback to parents. PGRs are entitled to speak on any matter under discussion in a committee and can vote on those issues relating to education.

The DCSF states on its website that “The role of the PGR is, primarily, to hold their local authority to account by consulting with and feeding back to parents on discussions and decisions relating to education.”

A number of members have raised the issue of PGRs in particular in relation to a lack of transparency in their appointment, but also in the sheer practical difficulty they face in carrying out their appointed task of feeding back to parents.

The NGA would be grateful for any information from members about the appointment process of PGRs in your area and the role they carry out.

Please email [Gillian.windass@nga.org.uk](mailto:Gillian.windass@nga.org.uk) with any information.

**The next meeting of the Review of Governance Committee will be held on 21 April.** It’s clear that the DCSF have ‘rowed back’ from their view that the effectiveness of a GB was determined by its size. Some adjustment to the maximum GB size may follow from the group’s report, but the clear consensus within the group was that size was the wrong starting point. Our consistent view has been that the important issue was the job we expected GBs to do. Once that strategic task was properly defined then other things would follow.

NGA remains hopeful that Ministers have accepted the view about the need for mandatory training for new governors, and about the need for a clearer focus on the status of and training for Clerks.

There is concern that ministers have lost enthusiasm for this project and that little actual change may result from the process.

#### **Call for NGA Representatives**

The NGA represents governors in literally dozens of meetings. Some of these are direct with the DCSF, including our regular meeting with the Minister; others are with agencies and groups, such as the TDA and NCSL.

NGA is very aware that they may be members who have specific knowledge or skills who have no particular desire to be Board members, but who would welcome the opportunity to represent governors in these meetings and with NGA policy formation. If you would like to be considered for NGA representative work, please let us know. You would need to feel comfortable representing the NGA policy position, and be available to attend meetings two or three times a year. Most of these meetings are in London. The NGA would pay expenses in respect of people’s attendance at these meetings.

If you are interested please contact [phil.revell@nga.org.uk](mailto:phil.revell@nga.org.uk)

**The next NGA AGM** will be held on 7 November 2009 in Birmingham. DAG will be represented

**The NGA has produced a number of its weekly newsletters.** They have been e-mailed to all members for whom the NGA hold e-mail addresses, whilst the monthly Board Bulletin (BB) is sent to Local Associations. I always forward the BB to IGs, and place it on our website, but if you would also like the weekly newsletter please let me know.

## **DCSF**

**DCSF recently announced its intention to establish a 14-19 learner panel**, to help the department explore national policy development and delivery issues with learners on a regular basis. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) are now taking this forward. It is intended to have 15-20 part-time volunteer learners on the panel and hope to have a diverse range of participants across different types of learning provider, region, gender, age (13-20) and other demographics.

DCSF is particularly interested in understanding how the reforms feel from a learner's perspective, so no specialist interest or sector understanding is required. Nonetheless, experience of the reforms would greatly improve their capacity to contribute - for instance, Diploma learners, participants in the functional skills pilot, FLT or Extended Project learners, young apprenticeships etc. If you know of any potential participants or teachers and form tutors who might be able to invite applications from their learners, please forward them the attached recruitment materials, or point them towards <http://www.direct.gov.uk/nationallearnerpanel> where they can find further information. The expected time commitment is three full-day panel meetings over the next nine months, with some preparation and discussion work between sessions. All reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

**There are 8 live consultations currently** on the DCSF Website and whilst Consultations can be time consuming they are an important part of our democratic process. DAG is conscious that it may have a role to assist GBs in responding to consultations. DAG will NOT however participate in Consultations per se because it recognises that there will be a variety of different considerations / ideas, and the Executive feels that it cannot fairly represent every view / counter view nonetheless it might be able to take some of the pressure off GBs and assist the process. We will look at developing this assistance in the coming year. Meanwhile GBs are encouraged to participate in all Consultations. Please note 3 of the consultations complete during April

## **PRIMARY SNIPPETS**

**Remember it is now just 19 months (September 2010)** before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6.

RSPCA Week will be held throughout week beginning 27 April. In its 15<sup>th</sup> year, you can find details of how to be involved from [www.rspca.org.uk/rspcaweek](http://www.rspca.org.uk/rspcaweek)

There is an opportunity to win gardening gift boxes and vouchers for your school by entering the Spotty Boxes colouring competition. The closing date is 30 April, so please accept my apologies for the short notice, especially as your schools are on holiday for the next couple of weeks, but if interested go to [www.spottygiftboxes.co.uk](http://www.spottygiftboxes.co.uk) and follow competition link on right hand side of page.

The Tree Council is promoting a Walk in the Woods from 1 – 31 May. There are walks, talks and events and information can be garnered from [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk)

In contrast as of today there are 177 days to register for the Flora Cooking with Schools initiative. See [www.cookingwithschools.com](http://www.cookingwithschools.com) to register and get further information.

## **SECONDARY SNIPPETS**

See above re RSPCA etc.

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has given its backing to the Humanities Diploma, which will be available in September 2011. Representatives from the RSC will join a panel of experts who are developing the Diploma's content

I hope you enjoy your well-deserved break

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG

7 April 2009