

DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER –DECEMBER 2008

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THIS IS THE FOURTH NEWSLETTER TO BE ISSUED USING ONLY TWO ROUTES – DAG WEBSITE AND THE DAG INTERMEDIARY GOVERNOR. THE NUMBER OF IGs IS NOW 140, AND I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO ALL WHO HAVE SIGNED UP. THAT STILL MEANS HOWEVER THERE ARE 220+ SCHOOLS WE ARE NOT IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH. TO ENSURE WE REACH THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GOVERNORS PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO YOUR FELLOW GOVERNORS

DAG

AREA MEETINGS. Ivan Godfrey conducted 4 Area Meetings in September and October. They were as lively as ever, generated a number of discussions on challenging issues and as always Ivan has produced a very detailed, but digestible report, which is on the website.

The next round will take place as follows:

Lapford Primary School, Wed 21 Jan - South Molton, Chulmleigh, Crediton LLCs

Broadclyst Primary School, Thur 22 Jan - Clyst Vale and Exeter LLCs -

The Park School, Barnstaple, Tue 27 Jan - Barnstaple, Bideford, Braunton, Ilfracombe and Great Torrington LLCs

King Edward VI CC, Totnes, Thur 29 Jan - Dartmouth, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge, South Dartmoor, Totnes LLCs

All meetings 7.00 - 9.00p.m. with refreshments available from 6.30

Meetings open to all and not restricted to named LLCs (eg some people from S. Molton may prefer to go to Barnstaple meeting, some from Crediton to Exeter meeting)

Please let Ivan Godfrey sueivan@godfreyi.freeseve.co.uk or me, dmrmtall@mvdartmoor.freeseve.co.uk know if you intend attending.

REPRESENTATIVES / LA COMMITTEES - Carol Woodhouse has volunteered to be a Secondary Governor for the Devon Education Forum (DEF), which now brings us up to complement in that sector. We still seek a **reserve** Governor for the Primary Sector. Please let me know if you would be interested in representing DAG on this very important Forum.

There was a tremendous response to our request for DAG Reps on the ICT in Schools' Committee. Thank you everybody who expressed an interest. We have appointed Alan Morbey as the Primary Rep and Chris Vile as the Secondary Rep.

We now have a Governor from a Community School, Sue Roberts, to sit on the Local Admissions Forum, so to the best of my knowledge DAG has representation on all appropriate bodies. Nonetheless, 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.

The plans for next year's Conference are beginning to firm up. It will held on **4 July** at County Hall. We have secured the services of Sue Palmer, renowned for her book "Toxic Childhood". She is noted as a brilliant public speaker and we consider her attendance as something of a coup. In addition we are delighted that Chris Keates the Secretary of the NASUWT will also speak. Online application will be available in the New Year – but you can

register early interest direct to me. We anticipate a “sell out” so to ensure your attendance you are advised to book early.

The theme for the Conference will be “Self improvement = School Improvement”

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

One of the highlights of last year’s Conference was the contribution from a number of our youngsters. We are keen to continue that involvement, so if you have any groups (hand bell ringers / Morris Dancers / choirs etc) at your schools whom you would like to promote, celebrate and see perform on a wider stage please let me know at your earliest convenience. DAG will pay reasonable expenses and make a contribution to school funds. We are delighted to have secured the services of Mary Tavy PS’s Gospel Choir, but could accept one more contribution as described above.

The Conference is once again being supported by NPS (SW). DAG is most grateful for that support

DAG notes with pleasure the announcement that Whitchurch Primary School has won the PS Category in Sing 4 Devon and that Hannah Dell and Emma-Jane Weeks from St Nicholas’ School, Sidmouth were a very commendable third.

RECOGNISING YOUR PTA

Governors are reminded of the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations (NCPTA) Gold Star Reward Scheme for 2009, together with The Learning, Education and Parental Partnership (LEAPP) Award scheme for 2009. More details from www.ncpta.org.uk/awards. Your PTA could be rewarded to the tune of £1000

RECOGNISING YOUR CLERK AND THE WORK OF YOUR GB

2009 sees a biennial opportunity courtesy of the NGA to recognise the wonderful (and essential!!) work of our Clerks to Governors. Details are contained in the September edition of Matters Arising. There are also details on the NGA website www.nga.org.uk and on the DAG website

In addition the NGA intends rewarding Governing Bodies which have excelled in three specific areas: *Challenging Circumstances, Support for Governance and Exceptional Projects*. Please see Matters Arising and the NGA website for further details. Any further details will be placed on the DAG website too.

GENERAL

DAG is delighted to report that it has established contact with the Cornwall Governors’ Network and the Chair, Rupert Butler and the EO met one of its Area Leaders on November 19th. We look forward to working more closely with Cornwall in the future.

The Chair, Vice Chair and EO met Judith Johnson on 19 November. The next meeting is scheduled for February

The EO and Ivan Godfrey are meeting the Heads’ Associations on 2 December to look at a number of issues, including how to strengthen Governors’ contributions to LLCs

LA

Throughout 2008 Devon County Council has provided Premises related Health and Safety training including provision for one School Governor from every school to attend a 2 hour overview session. Allowance was made to train 80 Governors when the Governor element commenced in November but only 33 Governors took up places. The feedback from those Governors was, however, very positive and DAG would urge you to take up the opportunity to attend training to be offered at the Coaver Club, Exeter from 4 – 6 pm and 6,30 – 8.30 pm. Although the take up is better, there are still places available.

It is hoped to hold another session at Bidwell Brook Special School, Dartington on 11 February

During the spring and summer of this year Devon County Council has further developed its online booking system for various training courses, we would now like to take the opportunity to encourage all delegates via this method.

This one time registration will improve all future training applications and an added benefit of this new process is that we are now able to identify course venues and dates at the time of your booking. Your school administrator may already be aware of this system and therefore may be able to complete the booking for you.

Please go to www.devon.gov.uk/onlinebookings to book, but please do not hesitate to contact Emma Huxtable at emma.huxtable@devon.gov.uk if you require any more information.

Building Schools for the Future

We will be submitting an Expression of Interest next month in entering the BSF programme. Devon schools were originally placed in the last three waves of the 15-20 year programme. But we are now optimistic that Devon will be advanced in the programme. A decision on which local authorities proceed will be made in early 2009. Schools identified as being on the county's priority list will need, through their governors, to agree a Memorandum of Understanding before being included in a project proposal. Contact Vic Ebdon on vic.ebdon@devon.gov.uk

You are advised that:

The Governing Body of Woodbury C of E Primary School, Woodbury, Exeter has issued a Public Notice, following consultation, on the proposal to enlarge the school from 140 places to 168 places with effect from 20 April 2009.

The Public Notice can be accessed on line at: <http://www.consultationfinder.com/devon> by typing 'woodbury' into the 'Keyword' box. The website will be updated as matters progress.

The closing date for responding to the notice is 5:00pm on Thursday, **4th December 2008**. Responses to Graham Gerdes, Chairman of Governors, Woodbury C of E Primary School, Castle Lane, Woodbury, Exeter, Devon, EX5 1NB. Or by e-mail to admin@woodbury.devon.sch.uk

Furthermore:

The Governing Body of Holsworthy C of E Primary School is consulting on the proposal to enlarge the school from 280 places to 315 places with effect from 1 September 2009.

The consultation booklet and further information can be accessed on line at: <http://www.consultationfinder.com/devon> by typing 'holsworthy' into the 'Keyword' box. The website will be updated as matters progress.

The closing date for responding to the consultation is 5:00pm on Friday, **19 December 2008**. Responses to Reverend Michael Reynolds, Chairman of Governors, Holsworthy C of E Primary School, Sanders Lane, Holsworthy, EX22 6HD. Or by e-mail to admin@holsworthy-primary.devon.sch.uk

The Devon Association of Primary Heads (DAPH) has been alerted to an e-mail dated 24 November 2008 sent to all Primary Schools regarding preparation for the 2009 Spring Term School Census otherwise known as PLASC, which contained the following important information.

The LA has been advised by the DCSF that the four-week "phasing in" period for new pupils no **longer applies**. Funding will be based on the status of pupils on the census day (15th January 2009) and therefore, **in order to receive full-time funding for your pupils please ensure that they are in full time attendance by 15 January 2009**.

DCSF

There are 2 new live consultations, launched in November on the DCSF Website

Ofqual was established recently. It is the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator and has assumed responsibility for the regulation exams, qualifications and tests from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The QCA will continue to advise on the National Curriculum (NC) and deliver Primary NC tests (SATs). You can learn more from www.ofqual.gov.uk

OFSTED

There are 2 current live consultations. They can be read and consultation can be submitted through www.ofstednews.ofsted.gov.uk They are:

A focus on improvement: proposals for further education and skills system inspections from September 2009

Closing date: 27 Jan 2009

We have reviewed arrangements for the inspection of the FE and skills system to ensure that they are coherent and well matched to the needs of the user and the quality of the service, and that they develop our ability to target inspection where it will make the most difference. Our proposals for a revised Common Inspection Framework and for the inspection of colleges, work-based learning and nextstep from September 2009 are set out in this consultation document.

The closing date for the consultation is 27 January 2009.

and

Indicators of a school's contribution to well-being – a consultation

Closing date: 16 Jan 2009

As signalled in the Children's Plan and in the well-being guidance, the DCSF and Ofsted have been working to develop strong school-level indicators of pupils' well-being. These indicators will improve the information available to schools to help them assess the well-being issues their pupils face and to evaluate the school's contribution to promoting pupil well-being. Ofsted will be looking for evidence from all schools on well-being and therefore the indicators will apply to all maintained schools, primary, secondary, special and Pupil Referral Units and to academies. DCSF and Ofsted have now launched a consultation paper with proposals about those indicators. Responses are requested by 16 January 2009.

NGA

The NGA have produced a 3-page guide about the Appropriate Deployment of Support Staff in Schools. If you would like to receive this, please let me know.

The NGA Board Bulletin for December is on the DAG Website.

PRIMARY SNIPPETS

This year's Y6s will now be in compulsory education or training until they are 18.

International Mountain Day is on 11 December and this UN day aims to raise the importance of the world's mountains and highlands and to promote sustainable development in such areas.

National Braille Week is being held 4 – 10 January 2009 and celebrates the 200th birthday of Louis Braille. See www.nationalbrailleweek.org

Appetite for Action Day will take place on 23 January 2009 and is aimed at KS2 pupils. See www.appetiteforaction.org.uk for an update.

The Times invites 11 and 12 year olds to enter the UK's first National Spelling Bee. Entries close 19 December. Details from www.timesonline.co.uk/spellingbee

Remember it is now under 2 years (September 2010) before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6.

SECONDARY SNIPPETS

This year's Y7s will now be in compulsory education or training until they are 17.

The Times invites 11 and 12 year olds to enter the UK's first National Spelling Bee. Entries close 19 December. Details from www.timesonline.co.uk/spellingbee

The English Chess Federation has launched a national campaign to get more pupils playing chess with up to 10 free sets / school. To receive your sets e-mail chessforschools@englishchess.org.uk

Daley Thompson is supporting Olympic-themed resources for schools at www.onyourmarks.london2012.com

The renewed Secondary Frameworks have been developed by the National Strategies. Science, maths, English and ICT are now online at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/frameworks

Secondary Governors may wish to be aware of the new exhibition, Body Worlds and the Mirror of Time which is running at the O2 Arena until August 2009. Suitable for KS3 onwards. See www.bodyworlds.com/en/prelude/education_uk (Note underscore between education and uk)

EDUCATIONAL GIFTS

I take this early opportunity to wish you all a very merry and peaceful Christmas and in so doing, without prejudice or endorsement, bring to your attention the following gifts of learning for PTAS, GBs, Parents and Grandparents to consider!!:

- Playmobil Roman Figures for Age 8+. Stockists nationwide. £2 each
- Dinosaur Puppet kit for Age 4+. www.craftykids.co.uk. £9.99
- Science Museum Test Tubes for Age 5+ and 8+. Sainsbury's. £2.99
- Detective Science Fingerprint Kit for Age 7+. www.kidsstore.co.uk. £8.50
- Ukelele for Age 6+. www.mesdirect.com. £14.99
- Wild Science Eco Dome for Age 6+. www.argos.co.uk. £29.99
- UB Funkeys Starter Kit for Age 8+. www.gadgetshop.com. £19.99
- Wise Up for Age 5+. www.justchildsplay.co.uk. £19.99
- War Horse from £10 Age 12+ www.nationaltheatre.org.uk
- Cosmic Rocket for Age 14+ www.sciencemuseumstore.co.uk. £9.99
- The Teenager's Guide to Money for Age 13+ www.amazon.co.uk £5.99
- SmartGlobe for Age 5+ www.oregonscientific.co.uk £89.99
- Stagg Silent Violin for Age 12+ www.mveducation.com £69
- Keystudio 49i www.sibelius.com £149
- Launchpad mini-kits for Age 8 – 14 www.mutr.co.uk £6 each

SOME TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR WRITING

1. Avoid alliteration. Always.
2. Never use a long word when a diminutive one will do.
3. Employ the vernacular.
4. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
5. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are unnecessary.
6. Remember to never split an infinitive.
7. Contractions aren't necessary.
8. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
9. One should never generalize.
10. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
11. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
12. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG

1 December 2008