

## DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER – JULY 2009

You will no doubt be relieved to note that this is the last newsletter of this Academic Year!! The next one will be issued in September.

This has been an extremely busy and challenging year for all GBs and I take this opportunity to thank all Governors for their commitment to, and passion for, their individual schools and, by extension, their work on behalf of DAG. The vital work you do does not always receive the recognition it deserves – but it is my experience that our LA certainly appreciates your work. **I know from our regular meetings with Judith Johnson [Director for Learning & Schools] - and her close interest in the work of Governor Services - that she certainly shares this view and is keen to ensure that Governing Bodies receive the balance of challenge and support they need to undertake their functions in the context of a 21stC school.** Enjoy your well-earned break.

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)
- Ofsted
- Primary Snippets
- Secondary Snippets

### DAG

#### **2009 CONFERENCE**

This year's Conference was held on 4 July and had a number of highlights. The stars of the day were the choirs from Whitchurch CPS, who opened the day and Mary Tavy and Brentor PS who entertained us during lunch. Sue Palmer was electrifying and our other speakers, Judith Johnson and Bob Dore, struck the right balance between challenge and GB's workload and delivery. The workshops were all informative and relevant. 38 children submitted poems for our enjoyment and the winner was Jacob Woodbridge Harris. The only disappointment on the day was the number of Governors present. It appears that the date was not the best, being too near the end of term and in potential conflict for some individual school events, but we had shifted it from March, because that month was not deemed popular! We shall try a different month next year and have selected **Saturday 8 May 2010 at County Hall, Exeter**. GBs have therefore some 9 months + notice and we hope you will place the date in your diaries. Can I please remind you that this event is staged for ALL Governors and is NOT EXCLUSIVE to Chairs.

#### **AREA MEETINGS**

**Ivan Godfrey is arranging** the next round of DAG Area Meetings and they are planned as follows:

Tue. Sept. 22nd at Lapford Primary:  
Wed. Sept. 23rd at KEVICC, Totnes:  
Tue. Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> at The Park School, Barnstaple and  
Wed. Sept. 30th at Exwick Heights Primary.

More details to follow at the beginning of the Autumn term, but please note dates now.

#### **LOCAL DAG REPRESENTATION**

**DAG will be conducting a series of interviews** completing on 24 July with the aim to have some local area officers appointed for 1 September. We hope too to complete the appointment of 2 Researchers to help our service to you.

#### **REPRESENTATIVES / LA COMMITTEES-**

**A Governor vacancy** still exists on the Schools' Organisational Forum and the Schools' Commissioning Forum. 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.

## SWINE FLU

**This has now been declared a pandemic.** You are reminded that Governors remain responsible for the provision of education throughout the crisis and determine how and where to employ the Staff. Is such provision part of any Emergency Plan you may have? The LA has produced a detailed 16 page document entitled "Guidance for Schools in dealing with an influenza pandemic. It has gone to all schools, but if you require an individual copy please let me know.

## CONGRATULATIONS

**go to Jennifer Barker**, former Administrator and Clerk to the GB of Woolsery School, who was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. It is significant achievement and excellent news that school staff are recognised for their work.

**and to Hennock PS Headteacher Nicola Dunford**, who collected the Carol Adams Memorial Award for Excellence in Professional Development, Equalities and Diversity, at the South West England regional Teaching Awards ceremony held recently at Dartington Hall. The annual award is now in its second year and is presented in 11 regions across England to a Teaching Award finalist who judges feel has demonstrated a strong profile in commitment to professional learning and personal development, engaging colleagues and contributing beyond the classroom. The award covers every category and age range of schools in England and is set to be one of the most prestigious annual awards a school can receive. Mrs Dunford also collected a Distinction for Primary Headteacher of the Year. She was amongst over 8000 Teaching Awards nominees and was put forward by governors and parents at the school in recognition of her enormous devotion, passion and enthusiasm towards the school which has just 35 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11. Outside of school Mrs Dunford has contributed to conferences and workshops to inspire headteachers and staff from other schools and create several learning opportunities locally as part of the Teign Valley Learning Community Extended Schools programme. Parents and children have benefited from activities including maths and creative writing taster evenings, football coaching, arts and craft courses for families with Under-5s and parenting skills. This year she has also inspired teaching professionals and pupils internationally during a British Council grant aided visit to share expertise and forge international links with schools, teachers and pupils in South Africa. Her current work includes increasing opportunities for children from disadvantaged families.

**and finally to Ian Courtney** the Chair of Governors at Okehampton CC who has been selected as the SW Regional Governor of the Year. This is a fantastic achievement and we wish Ian every success in the short-listing process for National Awards ceremony to be held in October.

## LA

Following the recent Local Elections the DEVON County Councillors were appointed to their new roles on 25 June at the first Full Council meeting under the new Conservative administration.

**Cllr John Berry**, local Member for Cullompton Rural, is appointed as Chairman of the Council.

**Cllr Trevor Pennington**, South Brent and Dartington, is Vice-Chairman of the Council.

**Cllr John Hart**, Leader of Devon's Conservative group and local Member for Bickleigh and Wembury, has been appointed as Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Council's Executive Committee.

**Cllr John Clatworthy**, Dawlish, is Deputy Leader of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee, and now holds responsibility for the Council's Finance and Property.

**Cllr Stuart Barker**, Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, is appointed as Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services.

**Cllr Christine Channon**, local Member for Budleigh, takes responsibility for Schools and Skills.

**Cllr Roger Croad**, Ivybridge, is appointed to Environmental and Regulatory Services.

**Cllr Andrea Davis**, Combe Martin Rural, takes responsibility for Children's Health and Wellbeing.

**Cllr Stuart Hughes**, Sidmouth Sidford, is appointed to Highways and Transportation.

**Cllr Andrew Leadbetter**, Exeter St Loyes and Topsham, is appointed to Workforce, Performance and Communications.

And **Cllr William Mumford**, local Member for Yealmpton, has become responsible for the Council's Economic Regeneration and Strategic Planning.

Liberal Democrat Councillors have been appointed as Shadow Members to the Executive Committee.

**Cllr Brian Greenslade**, Shadow Leader of the Council, Leader of the Liberal Democratic group and local Member for Barnstaple North, is appointed as Chairman of the Council's Policy Overview Committee.

**Cllr Vanessa Newcombe**, Exeter Alphington and Cowick, is Chairman of Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee.

**Cllr Gordon Hook**, Newton Abbot South, is Chairman of the Environment, Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee.

Exeter Newtown and Polsloe County **Councillor Richard Westlake**, is Chairman of the Council's Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee.

**Cllr Saxon Spence** remains Leader of the Council's Labour group, and **Councillor Rodney Cann** is Leader of the Independent group.

Our main dealings will be with Councillor Channon and we look forward to working with her. Her predecessor was Councillor John Smith, who lost his seat. DAG wishes to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation Councillor Smith offered in all his dealings with DAG.

**You will no doubt be aware** of the latest LA communication about Harnessing Technology Grant / Broadband Charges dated 6th July 2009 from John Barnard sent to schools earlier this week. [Click here](#) to view.

**I have a copy of the latest CYPS structure chart.** If you would like a copy please let me know.

**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.

**Judith Johnson, Director for Learning & Schools** has just a Spirit of Devon Award and schools have, by now, received a plaque and certificate to allocate annually to a child or young person from a school or setting who best illustrates "enjoyment of and engagement with the learning process and has worked collaboratively over the last year". For further details [click here](#).

**JE**

**It was expected that following the recent** Informal Appeals by the nominated Clerks that a final decision would have been made by now. DAG reminds GBs that as part of the process, the Appellant Group, supported by DAG developed an updated more realistic Job Description. Whilst it is, at first sight, a very challenging document it is a realistic presentation of the extremely onerous duties and responsibilities our Clerks are required and expected to undertake to ensure GBs are properly advised. It also reflects the proper role of a Clerk as envisaged in the White Paper issued on 30 June 2009.

**Devon Governor Services** have identified that that Ofsted inspectors are requesting evidence that clerks hold dates of birth for governors when carrying out their inspection. DGS would like to remind clerks that these are recorded on the Declaration of Eligibility form, which all governors should have completed. Clerks would also need a date of birth to apply for a List 99 check and a CRB check. They will not however, be required for submission on Form H (R) as this information is not required by the local authority.

**If your GB is having difficulty filling** Community or Local Authority governor vacancies please contact [Brenda Dutton](#) of the Governor Support Team. The team hold a list of people interested in becoming governors in Devon and they may be able to help you.

**At Clerks Update** this term DGS offered model terms of reference for a two-committee structure for those GBs who might wish to consider it. These models and accompanying notes are now available on DGS web pages at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learningschools/schools/governors/dgs-governors.htm>

**NGA**

**John Pay our Regional NGA Director** has been hospitalised following a fall. We wish him a speedy recovery.

**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 normally forward the BB to IGs, and place it on our website, but this month have sent it straight to our website so as not to deluge IGs.

**DCSF**

**DCSF has produced a White Paper entitled YOUR CHILD, YOUR SCHOOLS, OUR FUTURE: BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS SYSTEM** This important document is very detailed. I hold a short(er) Executive Summary if you would like to receive it.

**You are reminded that the DCSF target deadline** to write a School Travel Plan (STP) is March 2010

**There are 12 live Consultations** on DCSF website, 4 of which complete this month. Of particular interest is the one on the revised statutory guidance, "Promoting the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children" As you know Looked After Children are at a particularly high risk of teenage pregnancy and parenthood, so contributions to the consultation are really important to help ensure the new guidance is as helpful as possible. The consultation runs until 3 August. See [www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations) for further details

**I receive a very useful monthly e-mail from DCSF.** If any of you would like a separate copy, please let me know and I shall try and remember to pass it on.

### **OFSTED**

The new Framework for the inspection of maintained schools from September 2009 will be made available on the Ofsted website shortly. The Framework will highlight the key features of the new inspection arrangements which have been driven by a greater focus on improvement, the views of parents and pupils and 'narrowing the gap'. Ofsted has been piloting the new inspections extensively over the last academic year, and the findings from these pilots have informed the arrangements for September. The changes to the inspection process have also been piloted alongside changes to the self-evaluation form (SEF) which has been streamlined to become an even more useful and manageable tool for school improvement. To help schools prepare for these changes, a copy of the new SEF has now been made available on the Ofsted website for schools to read. It is planned that the new version of the SEF will go online sometime this month for schools to complete.

To read Part A of the draft SEF from the summer 2009 pilot inspections and a questions and answers document visit <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/20090027>.

### **PRIMARY SNIPPETS**

**You are reminded that from 1 April 2009 it is mandatory** for all first time heads to hold the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headships) before they can be appointed.

**Remember it is now just 14 months (September 2010)** before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6.

**Have you registered register for the** Flora Cooking with Schools initiative? See [www.cookingwithschools.com](http://www.cookingwithschools.com) to do so. Just over 70 days to take advantage of coupons for equipment deal

**NPS are supporting a Garden Design Competition.** The closing date is 11 Dec 2009. Details at [www.growupdevon.co.uk](http://www.growupdevon.co.uk) and the initiative encourages the children to get their green fingers grubby and gives your school the opportunity to win its very own sustainable school garden. There are 3 design categories to gain inspiration from. These include **coastal**, **urban** and **rural**. So even if you don't have a patch of grass to dig up you can still create a sustainable haven.

**I have a very interesting** update from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Team. If you would like me to forward it to you. Please let me know.

**You are reminded** that you have until 30 July to "cash in" your Times Book For School vouchers.

**The Devon Association of Primary Heads** is holding its Annual Conference, entitled "Courageous Leadership" on 17 and 18 September in Dawlish. Further details through e-mail [daph@devon.gov.uk](mailto:daph@devon.gov.uk) or 01392 410766. Office is shut from 22 July until 3 September.

**Celebrate the life and work** of Roald Dahl on 13 September 2009. Further details [www.roalddahlday.info](http://www.roalddahlday.info)

### **SECONDARY SNIPPETS**

**The nutrient-based standards for secondary** schools will come into force from September 2009. The chief executive of the School Food Trust, the organisation charged with transforming school food, has written to

headteachers and caterers to clarify some myths around the new standards, and highlight some achievements ahead of the deadline in September.

**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

**DCSF produce a monthly newsletter** on the 14 – 19 Agenda. Please let me know if you would like July's copy.

**I also have a very interesting** update from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Team. If you would like me to forward it to you, again, please let me know.

**You are reminded** that you have until 30 July to “cash in” your Times Book For School vouchers.

David Tall  
Executive Officer to DAG

15 July 2009