

## **DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNORS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER –OCTOBER 2008**

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)
- Gentle reminders – Primary
- Gentle reminders – Secondary

*THIS IS THE SECOND NEWSLETTER TO BE ISSUED USING ONLY TWO ROUTES – DAG WEBSITE AND THE DAG INTERMEDIARY GOVERNOR. WHEN YOU HAVE READ THIS PLEASE PASS ON TO YOUR FELLOW GOVERNORS*

### **DAG**

#### **AREA MEETINGS**

Ivan Godfrey will be conducting his fourth and final Area Meeting on Wed Oct 8th at Bridestowe Primary School for the Holsworthy, Okehampton and Tavistock LLCs. The meeting will be from 7.00p.m. to 9.00p.m. As for all the meetings the agenda will be based on the Autumn Term Checklist which arrived in hard copy format in your school during the first full week of term. It would be helpful if anyone attending the meeting brings along a copy of the Checklist for reference. This remains a once-a-year opportunity for you / fellow members of your governing body to meet with governors from your local area under the auspices of DAG, to raise any matters of concern from your school and to share experiences.

Without wishing to determine discussion in advance of the meeting I imagine the following points, amongst others, may warrant more detailed consideration:

- consultation on changes to governance
- headteacher recruitment and succession planning
- School Improvement Partners
- financial matters
- new school meals' requirements
- JE update

Coffee / tea + biscuits will be available before the meeting starts.

Points raised at the meeting will be compiled and presented to the LEA, NGA and others. Once replies and comments have been received a complete feedback paper will be sent out to all schools, similar in format to the ones you should have received in school over the past year.

#### **BOUNDARY COMMITTEE**

**The consultation on the recent draft proposals has now concluded.** The BC will now deliberate and in December make its recommendation to the Secretary of State for Communities. She can accept, reject or seek further information on the recommendation. The SofS will make her decision in February 2009

#### **DAG REPRESENTATIVES / LA COMMITTEES**

#### **We are still seeking an additional Secondary Governor for the Devon Education Forum (DEF)**

**In addition we also seek a Governor from a Community School** to sit on the Local Admissions Forum which is a mandatory body set up under the School Standards and Framework Act 1988. The Forum facilitates discussion between all admission authorities (Voluntary Aided, Foundation and LA Community Schools) on how best to organise admissions in the local area, in order to meet as many parents' preferences as possible, and to reach agreement about difficult issues, such as providing school places and sharing pupils with challenging behaviour. The Devon Forum meets approximately 3 times a year at regular intervals at County Hall, Exeter. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 20 November 2008 at 10.30 am.

**DAG is delighted to report that Ivan Godfrey** was re-elected Chair of the DEF and Faith Butler was elected Vice Chair, at the recent DEF meeting. They will serve until September 2010. These are significant appointments to a prestigious Committee and they are to be congratulated.

**The School Organisation Forum** is considering the criteria that should be applied to the prioritisation of Area reviews within the (PCP) Primary Capital Programme. An example of such criteria can be found in Section 4.13 on page 18 within the online document <http://www.devon.gov.uk/cypsp-pcp-strategyforchange-120608.pdf> The Forum's task group meets early in November and is now seeking contributions as to suggested criteria on how best to prioritise reviews.

Kelvin Lacy is the DAG representative on this task group and will take forward all comments and suggestions made to him via email at [kelvin.lacy@sky.com](mailto:kelvin.lacy@sky.com)

Terms of reference and minutes of the School Organisation Forum can be found online at [http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/education\\_consultations\\_notices/school-organisation/schoolorganisationforum.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/education_consultations_notices/school-organisation/schoolorganisationforum.htm)

### ***DAG 2009 CONFERENCE***

**Plans are beginning to firm up for next year's** Conference which will be held in June at County Hall. The exact date depends on our guest speaker. We have invited both Ed Balls and Jim Knight to address us but they have declined. We have therefore invited Michael Gove the Shadow Secretary, but have yet to hear from him.

**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.

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

### ***RECOGNISING YOUR PTA***

**Governors would wish to be aware 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](http://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](http://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.

### ***TEACHING AWARDS (INCLUDING GOVERNOR OF THE YEAR)***

**Nominations in 12 categories are open until 1 March 2009.** Regional awards will be announced in June 2009 and the National Awards will take place in October 2009. Please have your say in the various categories, by visiting [www.teachingawards.com/nominations/](http://www.teachingawards.com/nominations/)

**NORA CORKERY** has just retired from being Chairman of St Joseph's Primary School. To recognise Nora's outstanding commitment to local education she was awarded the runner up prize as Teignbridge's Citizen of the Year. It is wonderful on a personal level, but also very good to see School Governorship recognised.

### ***CHILDREN IN CARE***

**Did you know** there are some 600 Children in Care (CiC) in Devon?

You may have one / some in your school and it is important, this small, but terribly vulnerable, cohort of youngsters receives the best possible education. Governors can help these youngsters by:

- Knowing if there any CiC on roll

- If so, have them as a regular Agenda Item at full GB meetings
- If not, be prepared to receive them at very short notice
- Ensuring that a member of staff is appointed as the CiC Dedicated Teacher
- Consider appointing a dedicated Governor with oversight interest in CiC
- Ensure there is effective liaison with other agencies involved in CiC
- Share best practice through SIP / Advisors visit

### ***GENERAL***

**The Vice Chairman and EO** attended the NGA Regional Meeting on 4 October. At the meeting John Pay from Poole was elected as the new Regional Director in succession to Mark Hulland. Chris Pearce from Gloucestershire was elected as John's Assistant Director and DAG looks forward to working with them both in the coming months and years.

**The Chairman and EO are attending a meeting** with Plymouth and Torbay Governors on 22 October

**The EO is representing Devon** at the NGA AGM on 8 November

**DAG is delighted to report that it has established** contact with the Cornwall Governors' Network and the Chair and EO will be meeting one of its Area Leaders before Christmas, and one the DAG Executive will be attending the Cornish Conference on November 8th.

Without endorsement or prejudice DAG informs GBs of the existence of Naturalwatt, about whom more can be learnt from their website [www.naturalwatt.com/Education](http://www.naturalwatt.com/Education)

### ***LA***

#### ***CLERKS' JE UPDATE***

You will remember that I sought 3 Chairs to assist the 3 Clerks to Governing Bodies who have been elected to represent the 70 or so Clerks who have appealed following the JE Review that took place last year. I am pleased to say that we now have 3 volunteers, to whom go many thanks.

#### ***FEDERATION VISITS***

**You may be considering Federating** your school and if so you will be interested to know that the 5 Devon Federations will be opening their doors to visitors between 10 and 14 November as follows:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Monday 10 <sup>th</sup>    | First Federation – Blackpool VC Primary & Chudleigh Knighton VC Primary                    |
| Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup>   | Chulmleigh Federation – Primary & Community College  |
| Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> | West Exmoor Federation – Lynton, Parracombe & Kentisbury primary schools (VA/VC/Community) |
| Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup>  | The Tavistock Church Federation – St Peter's VA Junior and St Rumon's VC Infant            |
| Friday 14 <sup>th</sup>    | The Dartmouth Federation – Primary & Community College                                     |

To learn more and book a visit please contact Sue Newson at [sue.newson@devon.gov.uk](mailto:sue.newson@devon.gov.uk)

### ***DCSF***

**There are 8 live consultations on the DCSF Website**, though two complete very shortly

**Please note the 29<sup>th</sup> September launch** of the new UK Council for Child Internet Safety. More details can be gleaned from [www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2008\\_0215](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0215) (please note \_ in the address)

**Of particular note is a Consultation** on A New Way of Handling Parents' Complaints About Schools issues. It will run for 8 weeks and will close on 21 November. Governors/ GBs are encouraged to participate and DAG would request that they are informed of your views. Thank you.

### NGA

The **NGA Board Bulletin** for October is on the DAG Website. Your attention is drawn to their forthcoming elections.

**The following is the latest update from NGA** on the Ministerial Review into Governance. *"The Ministerial Review into Governance Group, on which the NGA has two representatives, has now met three times, with a further meeting scheduled for the autumn. At the second meeting NGA presented some very quickly gathered anecdotal research on GB size and skills, which was welcomed. A robust discussion took place on what it means for GBs to "be strategic" and on how much the GB role should be defined from the centre. The July meeting listened to our presentations about "governance" in other sectors. The meeting also touched on the issue of paid governors: the majority of contributors to the debate believed that this was not the way to go and that the spirit of volunteering and "giving something back" was to be preserved."* We still await details on any national consultative process

### GENTLE REMINDERS (PRIMARY)

**\*\*\*There is very shortly to be a consultation with parents**, schools, pre-schools and all interested bodies on whether Devon county schools should move to a single point of entry for Reception classes. All schools will be welcome to contribute their views and Learning Communities may also wish to comment. **The consultation is short however with all contributions and comments requested before the end of October.** Comments should be addressed to [andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.brent@devon.gov.uk)

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

**Every PS is being offered** a free copy of *The Communication Cookbook*. See [www.ican.org.uk/cookbook](http://www.ican.org.uk/cookbook) for further details

**In addition every reception child** can receive a free poetry anthology and picture book. Visit [www.booktime.org.uk](http://www.booktime.org.uk) for more details.

**Appetite for Action Day** will take place on 23 January 2009 and is aimed at KS2 pupils. See [www.appetiteforaction.org.uk](http://www.appetiteforaction.org.uk) for an update.

**A reminder and guide to Bonfire Night Safety** is available for schools at [www.berr.gov.uk/fireworks/teachers.htm](http://www.berr.gov.uk/fireworks/teachers.htm)

**The DCSF has published guidance on how** to deal with mental health problems among teachers at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications) (DCSF - 00380-2008)

**National Schools Film Week** will run from 20 – 24 October. Visit [www.nsfw.org](http://www.nsfw.org)

**Remember it is now only a little over 2 years (September 2010)** before all primary schools are due to have foreign language teaching in place across KS2, with progression from Y3 – Y6. See [www.primarylanguages.org.uk](http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk) for more details.

**Primary School Improvement Partners (SIPs)** will undertake two visits to schools this term. Within this visit, statutory targets for the end of KS2 in 2010 will be agreed. It is therefore important Governors and the HT discuss these targets before the SIP visit. A Primary Briefing Paper has been distributed electronically to schools

### GENTLE REMINDERS (SECONDARY)

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

**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](mailto:chessforschools@englishchess.org.uk)

**Daley Thompson is supporting Olympic-themed** resources for schools at [www.onyourmarks.london2012.com](http://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](http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/frameworks)

**See Primary Reminders** about National Film Week, Bonfire Safety and Mental Health support

**DCSF have** written to Secondary HTs recently to highlight human transplantation issues

David Tall Executive Officer to DAG

5 October 2008