

DAG

Chair's Report & presentation of accounts

The Devon Association of Governance (DAG) is the association representing more than 3,000 school governors, trustees, directors, clerks and company secretaries across the Devon Local Authority. DAG membership is free and automatic for any school governor, trustee, director, clerk and company secretary within the Devon Local Authority whether in a maintained school, academy or other state funded school.

The past year has once again been a busy one for governors generally and consequently for DAG. We are fortunate at DAG to have a great team of people, directors and office holders, who are dedicated to governance and work tirelessly to represent governors and to make sure the information needed to support good governance is readily available. The Board meets five times a year, in addition to which we have working group meetings, a Board strategy meeting and our Annual General Meeting.

An important objective at DAG is representation. To that end DAG provide members to represent school governors and academy trustees at Devon Education Forum, Schools Finance Group, Schools Organisation Capital and Admissions Group, Devon Safeguarding Children's Board and a range of working parties and ad hoc groups as needed. Our vice chair Maria Wallis chairs Devon Education Forum. We are grateful to all of the directors, officers, associates and members who freely give of their time to represent Devon Governors in this way.

We have good working relationships with the education team at DCC, with Devon Association of Primary Heads, Devon Association of Secondary Heads and Special Heads Association of Devon and have attended their events where relevant. Board members have also attended conferences, briefings and workshops organised by Regional Schools Commissioner South West and other educational bodies.

A second key objective is to provide information and support to promote good governance in Devon. One way of achieving this is through our annual conference. Our conference in Autumn 2018 was a great success and we have an outstanding team of speakers for the Conference which immediately precedes this AGM. Special thanks go to our clerk Jill Larcombe for all her work on this conference and all who help her make these conferences so successful.

We decided last year to run an additional event, being an evening seminar, to test the popularity of this. I am delighted to say that our resulting June seminar on the new Ofsted Inspection Framework, arranged in partnership with Babcock LDP and Exeter Diocese, was a great success with about 90 governors attending in Tiverton and enjoying a really informative presentation from Karl Sampson, the Assistant Regional Director for Ofsted South West. We look forward to hearing Karl update us further on the emerging messages for schools and governors from the new Ofsted framework in a follow up seminar arranged for 11th February 2020.

Our website has continued to be a key focus over the past year and we are delighted that it is so well used by governors and trustees. Both Jill and our website content consultant Amanda Blewett put a huge amount of time and energy into this. Together with our regular newsletter, it is our prime means of providing information to support good governance in Devon.

Wilson Forster stepped down as a director during the year and we thank him for his contribution to DAG and his long commitment to education in Devon. We were also sorry to lose Tim Newman who resigned as a DAG Associate. We were delighted to co-opt Liz Groves to our DAG Board, representing clerks and to welcome four new associate members, Liam Cottrell, Adrian Hines, Elizabeth Stubbs and Flora Wood.

The accounts for the year to 31 March 2019 are presented at this Annual General Meeting. A copy of the Accounts is included with the agenda and they are also available on the DAG website. These accounts show a surplus of £10,298, with reserves increasing to £44,387 at 31 March 2019. Our expectation remains that we are likely to be reducing these in the coming years due to the increasing levels of expenditure on our website and the greater time commitment of our officers in maintaining and developing this.

Our action plan for the current year focuses on: -

- Building on the continuing success of our annual conference and looking to provide further evening workshops on topical governance issues.
- Launching our new website.
- Developing our use of social media to improve engagement with governors.
- Continuing to meet our representation commitments.
- Planning for the future by recruiting new directors.

DAG is keen to encourage serving governors, trustees and clerks who share our commitment to supporting education and improving the effectiveness of governance in Devon to join our Board. Directors come from a variety of backgrounds and bring a range of skills and experience to the Board. The role is engaging, challenging and enjoyable. If you would be interested in becoming a director or associate please do contact us, either in person, by email or via our website to register an interest.

The focus of our association is to improve the well-being of children and young people through the encouragement and maintenance of good school governance. My thanks go to all office holders, directors and associate board members for their support and contribution over the past year. Together they have enabled us to successfully maintain this focus.

Alex Walmsley
Chair