

DAG

Chair's Report and presentation of accounts 2021

The Devon Association of Governance (DAG) is the association representing more than 3,000 school governors, trustees, directors, governance professionals, 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 been a challenging one for governors generally and for DAG, with Covid continuing to impact on our schools and governing boards. 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 day and our Annual General Meeting. Following the coronavirus outbreak meetings have been held virtually during 2020/21.

An important objective at DAG is representation. To that end DAG provide members to represent school governors and academy trustees at Devon Education Forum (DEF), Schools Finance Group, Schools Organisation Capital and Admissions Group, Devon Children and Families Partnership and a range of working parties and ad hoc groups as needed. Our board member Faith Butler chairs Devon Education Forum. We are grateful to all of the board members, associates and officers who freely give of their time to represent Devon governors and trustees in this way.

We have good working relationships with the education team at DCC, with Devon Schools Leadership Service (Formerly Devon Associations of Primary Heads and Secondary Heads) and with 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. Traditionally, one way of achieving this has been through our annual Autumn conference. Unfortunately, the coronavirus outbreak made it impractical to organise a conference in 2020 and 2021. We look forward to resuming this and our occasional evening seminars when circumstances allow these to safely happen.

Our web site continues to be a key focus. We moved to a new website last year to improve functionality and ease of access. This was a major task, and we are delighted that it is so well used by governors and trustees. Both our clerk Jill Larcombe 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.

Our long-standing Board member and representative on DEF, Malcolm Dobbins, retired as a governor last year and as a consequence ceased to be a DAG director. Malcolm has given innumerable years of service to governance in Devon and elsewhere and we thank him for

his contribution to DAG and DEF. We elected our board member Adrian Hines as our incoming vice chair in 2020. We were pleased to welcome Kate Brimacombe and Elizabeth Stubbs as new members of our DAG Board.

The accounts for the year to 31 March 2021 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 £4,184 with reserves increasing to £52,257 at 31 March 2021. Our expectation remains that we are likely to be reducing these in the coming years due to the increasing levels of expenditure on our web site and the greater time commitment of our officers in maintaining and developing this.

Whilst covid has impacted on our operating practices, it hasn't significantly altered our strategic aims. Our action plan for the current year focuses on: -

- Continuing to be an effective voice for Devon governance by meeting our representation commitments.
- Promoting positive governance, increasing membership engagement and raising our DAG profile with stakeholders.
- Expanding the support offer to our membership.

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 us as Board members or associates. Colleagues 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 web site to register an interest.

The focus of our association is to support school governance by providing resources and representation to raise standards and improve the life chances of children and young people. This AGM marks the end of my term of office as DAG chair. My thanks go to all office holders, directors and associate board members for their support and contribution over the past years. Together they have enabled us to successfully maintain this focus.

Alex Walmsley
Chair