



## **DAG Chair's Report 2023**

The Devon Association of Governance (DAG) is the association representing those involved in school governance across the Devon Local Authority area. This includes school governors, trustees, members, governance professionals, clerks and company secretaries. DAG membership is free and automatic for those involved whether in a maintained school, academy or multi-academy trust, or other state funded school.

Our vision for DAG is to support school governance by providing resources, representation and opportunities for engagement, to raise the effectiveness of governance, hence improving the life chances of all Devon's children and young people. Our plan to deliver against this vision has four aims:

- To be a strong voice for Devon governance through effective representation, informed by good understanding of the views of members.
- To contribute to improving the quality of governance within Devon through provision of high-quality materials and guidance that reflect the latest insights into governance practice and educational issues.
- To ensure that those involved in governance in Devon are aware of DAG, and encourage active engagement.
- To understand the needs of the governance community in Devon, and respond through expanding and improving the support that DAG offers.

We are very fortunate to have a DAG Board and officers who are dedicated to pursuing these aims with energy and commitment, and who volunteer their time freely to doing so.

The past year has seen a move to a mixture of on-line and in person meetings and events, recognising the need to balance the benefits of meeting in person with the greater convenience and inclusion offered by on-line discussions. The DAG Board met in person on five occasions through the 22-23 school year for regular Board meetings, and also met in person for the annual DAG Strategy discussion.

DAG continues to fulfil its role in providing representation for those involved in governance across a wide range of fora: Devon Education Forum, Schools Finance Group, Schools Organisation Capital and Admissions Group, Devon Children and Families Partnership, and numerous other working groups and discussions. There remains an on-going challenge in finding representatives from maintained schools given the gradual move towards greater academisation. We are very grateful to all of the board members, associates and officers who devote their time to represent Devon governors and trustees in this way.

During the year we have continued to engage with Devon Education Services and the Diocese of Exeter with a view to ensuring good alignment between our activities, and have worked fruitfully in collaboration with them, including seeking their representation in our most recent strategy discussions. Alongside this, we have established a link with the newly formed Plymouth Governor Network and are working with them and the Devon Lieutenancy to develop plans for an event celebrating the impact of school governors in the county. We have also remained engaged with Devon County Council through a period of staff changes and will look to reinforce our relationship with them once permanent staff are in post.

Our activities to support and promote good governance across the community have been primarily on-line. These have included a seminar on disadvantage in Devon, an OFSTED update seminar, and our regular Chairs' forum and Clerks' forum which have both continued to attract a good audience, providing useful opportunities for community discussion. Our regular newsletters and website continue to provide a key means of communication with members, with wide reach across the community. We have also reinstated the in-person DAG Conference, with the event planned for 4<sup>th</sup> November. The conference theme is "Having an impact through effective governance", and we have a strong line-up of good quality speakers. We are very grateful to Amanda Blewett and Jill Larcombe for their efforts to produce and manage content, and for their hard work arranging the conference.

The accounts for the year to 31 March 2023 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 £4,167.24 with reserves increasing to £63,479.05 at 31 March 2023. We anticipate that our reserves will be reducing this year due to our investment in the conference, and our plans for further outreach activities. We are very grateful to our Treasurer, Ian Rogers, for his diligent management of the DAG finances.

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.

Adrian Hines  
Chair

**DAG Conference Autumn 2023**  
**Making an impact through effective governance**

**Timetable**

<b>09.00 - 09.30</b>	<b><i>Registration, networking and refreshment break</i></b>
<b>09.30 - 09.35</b>	<b><i>Welcome from Devon Association of Governance (DAG)</i></b>  <b>Adrian Hines</b> DAG Chair
<b>09.35 - 10.20</b>	<b><i>DCC's Vision for the future of education in Devon</i></b> <b>Donna Manson</b> Chief Executive and Head of Place, Devon County Council
<b>10.20 - 11.05</b>	<b><i>The Power of Localism in a School Trust</i></b> <b>Samira Sadeghi</b> Director of Trust Governance, Confederation of School Trusts
<b>11.05 - 11.30</b>	<b><i>Refreshment break and networking</i></b>
<b>11.30 - 12.15</b>	<b><i>How Governance Can Make a Real Impact</i></b>  <b>Michael Barton</b> NGA Regional Governance Development Lead
<b>12:15 - 13.00</b>	<b><i>Be More Lyndon: How key worker (Lyndon) changed Ashley's life</i></b>  <b>Ashley John Baptiste</b> Award winning broadcaster, journalist and a truly inspirational speaker
<b>13.00</b>	<b><i>End of Conference</i></b>
<b>13.00 - 13.15</b>	<b><i>Comfort break</i></b>
<b>13.15 - 13.30</b>	<b><i>DAG Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2023</i></b>

## **DAG Conference Autumn 2023 – Keynote speakers**

**Donna Manson** – Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, Devon County Council

### ***DCC's Vision for the future of education in Devon***



Donna joined Devon as Chief Executive in February 2023.

Leading on the strategic vision for the authority, Donna has responsibility for ensuring the Council is future ready and makes the most of opportunities to be inventive, flexible and responsive to local need.

Donna's remit covers Corporate Services which includes Democratic Services, Policy, Legal Services, Human Resources and Finance.

Donna grew up in Musselburgh, East Lothian, Scotland, and attained a Bachelor of Education from Moray House, at the University of Edinburgh. Starting her career in education, Donna spent her early career teaching in areas of deprivation, working on reducing inequalities for families. She then moved on to work in Children's Services in three Scottish councils.

Before moving to Devon, Donna was the Chief Executive of Scotland's largest rural authority, The Highland Council, since 2018. There she led the Council in developing an ambitious, sustainable, and connected vision for the Highlands during a time of immense change and challenge.

Donna has a track record of improvement, best value, and successful budget delivery, rebuilding substantial reserves and resilience within The Highland Council, while implementing significant investment projects.

Donna's priority is to involve children and young people in everything we do and build a Devon for Young People.

**Samira Sadeghi - The Confederation of School Trusts new Director of Governance**

**'The Power of Localism in a School Trust'**



Is your board considering the benefits of joining a multi academy trust or merging with another trust? Are you wondering how governance could be improved in your trust? Samira will explore what makes a good trust and what governance looks like in a good trust.

Samira is Director of Trust Governance at Confederation of School Trusts, a national sector body representing trusts across England. Samira has been involved in school governance for over a decade. Prior to joining CST, she served as Head of Governance and Company Secretary at Academies Enterprise Trust, a trust with 57 schools. She started her career in governance with Ark Schools, as a Regional Governance Officer. Before she moved to the U.K. with her family in 2010, Samira was a criminal defence attorney in California representing men on death row on their habeas corpus petitions for almost 12 years.

**Michael Barton – NGA Regional Governance Development Lead**

## **How Governance Can Make a Real Impact**



This is a really interesting question – we all give up a lot of time alongside day jobs and families to govern – why? What value can governance add to the quality of education in your organisation? And how do you make sure governance is having that impact? This session will explore how your governing board can have an impact on the children in your school/s

Michael specialises in trust governance, co-ordinating NGA's work with multi-academy trusts and producing tailored resources. He has authored a series of reports, on topics including the pupil premium and central leadership structures in MATs. He also leads NGA's work in the West Midlands, working closely with the region's trusts and local authorities, and will be taking on responsibility for the South West after Christmas.



**Ashley John Baptiste** – award winning broadcaster, journalist and a truly inspirational speaker

### **Be More Lyndon: How key worker (Lyndon) changed Ashley's life**



Ashley John-Baptiste is an award-winning broadcast journalist and frequent reporter & host for Morning Live, Sunday Morning Live and The One Show.

Ashley grew up in South London, where at the age of four he was taken into care. He grew up being shuttled between foster families and children's homes and moved primary school three times. A bright student, he attended a comprehensive school which had three times the number of children from deprived backgrounds than the national average. There, he battled to win a place at Cambridge University where he graduated with a 2:1 in History. Whilst at Cambridge, Ashley acted as a mentor to other students who grew up in care.

Many will remember Ashley as the member of boy band group The Risk who famously quit ITV's X Factor during the live final show, in order to pursue a career in media.

Ashley tells the compelling, inspiring and sometimes humorous story of his childhood and how to achieve your goals, follow your dreams and never give up. He has enormous enthusiasm and passion to use his story as a tool to motivate and propel others to face their challenges with a sense of optimism and triumph.

Ashley is an ambassador for The Fostering Network charity and a truly inspirational public speaker. He was shortlisted for the RTS Young Talent Of The Year 2018 award.

In June 2020, The Royal Television Society announced Ashley as its first ever ambassador for the prestigious RTS bursary schemes, which support students in the field of broadcasting and entertainment. In his role as ambassador, Ashley will champion the scheme and motivate students looking at a career in the Television sector, provide his support and share his experiences with current and future bursary students, as well as joining the Education Committee.

He is the founder of the online charity Be Inspired, supporting young people leaving care and helping them fulfil their aspirations.



**The Devon Association of Governance AGM will be held on Saturday 4 November 2023 at 1.15pm in the Iddesleigh Gallery, Exeter Racecourse.**

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome from the Chair, Adrian Hine
2. Apologies
3. To agree the minutes of the DAG AGM held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022
4. To receive the Chairman’s Report for 2023-24
5. To receive the accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2023
6. To elect one Board Member for a term of office of three years: Kate Brimacombe

**The Draft Minutes of the Devon Association of Governance AGM held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022 at 6pm at County Hall, Exeter and virtually via Zoom**  
**7.**

**Present:** Adrian Hines (AH): DAG Chair, Education South West (Remote attendance); Kate Brimacombe (KB): DAG Vice-chair; First Federation (Remote attendance); Jill Larcombe (JL): Clerk to DAG Board, Uffculme Academy Trust; Alex Walmsley (AW): First Federation & Ted Wragg Trust; Amanda Blewett (AB): DAG Officer; Ian Rogers (IR): DAG Treasurer; Christina Mabin (CB): DAG Ex-officio Member, Diocese of Exeter; Gilly Sanders (GS): DAG Associate Member, Athena Learning Trust (Remote attendance); Faith Butler (FB): DAG Board Member, Marland Special School (Remote attendance); Isabelle Candy (IC), DAG Associate Member, Governance Professional, First Federation (Remote Attendance)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome from the Chair, Adrian Hines.</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies.</b> Apologies were received from Elizabeth Stubbs.
<b>3.</b>	<b>To agree the minutes of the DAG AGM held on 15th November 2021.</b> The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.
<b>4.</b>	<b>To receive the Chairman’s Report for 2021-22.</b> The report was taken as read. There were no questions.
<b>5.</b>	<b>To receive the accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2022.</b> The accounts were agreed. There were no questions. It was noted that DAG was in a good position financially.
<b>6.</b>	<b>To elect two Board Members for a term of office of three years</b> Nominations: Faith Butler and Adrian Hines. Faith Butler and Adrian Hines were unanimously elected, proposed by AW and seconded by IR.

**DEVON ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNANCE**

**Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ending 31st March 2023**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>2022/23</u></b>	<b><u>2021/22</u></b>	<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b><u>2022/23</u></b>	<b><u>2021/22</u></b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Bank Int (net)	£5.99	5.51	Travel	171.63	0.00
Grant*	20,000.00	20,000.00	Room hire / catering	13.80	0.00
exhibitors (conf)			Away Days	0.00	0.00
membership			Printing/Copies/stationery	0.00	48.00
			- DAG Annual Conference	372.00	0.00
			- Subscriptions NGA /TES/Zoom/Governor Hub	397.68	448.40
			communications publicity	2,134.70	2,142.00
			Facebook/Twitter	724.86	414.00
			Network Groups	1,747.29	1,384.78
			Auxiliary Payments	4,753.73	3,924.00
			Web Site	4,753.24	3,925.20
			CIO/GDPR	35.00	35.00
			Gift	47.00	5.48
			Insurance	687.82	624.74
	<b><u>20,005.99</u></b>	<b><u>20,005.51</u></b>		<b><u>15,838.75</u></b>	<b><u>12,951.60</u></b>
Surplus of expenditure over income	- 4,167.24		Surplus of income over expenditure	-	7,053.91
	<b><u>15,838.75</u></b>	<b><u>20,005.51</u></b>		<b><u>15,838.75</u></b>	<b><u>20,005.51</u></b>

**Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023**

	<b><u>2022/23</u></b>	<b><u>2021/22</u></b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Current Account	63,479.05	59,311.81
	<b><u>63,479.05</u></b>	<b><u>59,311.81</u></b>

**Represented by Accumulated Fund**

Opening Balance	59,311.81	52,257.90
Surplus for year	4,167.24	7,053.91
Overspend for year		
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b><u>63,479.05</u></b>	<b><u>59,311.81</u></b>

These accounts have been prepared from the books and records of The Devon Association of Governance and I certify that I have examined them and find they are in accordance with such records.