

**Summary Notes from the AGM of the Association of Sandwell
Governing Bodies (ASGB) and Joint Chairs' Forum Meeting held at
6.15pm on 10th July 2019 at
Guardian House, West Bromwich**

Welcome and Apologies

Mr Patel welcomed guests and members to the meeting and thanked them for attending. It was agreed that the order of agenda items be changed as some members would need to leave the meeting early.

Annual Report from Chair

The Chair gave a short report, confirming that ASGB had continued to work hard on behalf of its members, focusing on the dire situation of school budgets. Following letters to all of Sandwell's MPs, a meeting had been held with Adrian Bailey MP last month and a further meeting was being arranged with James Morris MP in September.

Mr Patel thanked Mr Ward and Mr Felton for their regular attendance and updates throughout the year.

He also thanked members of the Executive Committee and all Sandwell governors for their continued support.

Chair's report is attached (appendix 1)

Annual Report from Treasurer

The Treasurer presented a draft report of ASGB finances which remained stable and in line with last year's budget. Final figures were still awaited for room charges and the final report would be circulated as soon as possible.

Membership of ASGB had remained at approximately the same level as last year.

School subscriptions were our only source of income, out of which we paid NGA membership for each school, room hire/refreshments and the services of a part time support officer. The only additional expenditure was the second instalment for the development of our ASGB website.

Appointment of ASGB Executive Committee Members

In accordance with the ASGB Constitution, one third of the membership had to stand down at the meeting. Nominations had been sought before and during the meeting and we were pleased to welcome Anita Randhawa onto the Executive. In the absence of any further nominations, the members standing down were reappointed to the Executive Committee. Updated membership is attached (appendix 2).

We still have vacancies on the Executive. We encourage you all to consider joining so that you can influence the future of ASGB in its efforts to support members. If you would like to know more then please contact the Support Officer.

Appointment of ASGB Officers

A short meeting of the Executive was held immediately prior to the AGM and nominations for Chair, Vice Chairs and Treasurer discussed.

At this point in the AGM, it was proposed that Elaine Benbow and Lynn Howard be appointed joint chairs, Bob Patel be appointed as vice chair and Carole Gallant remain as treasurer until the AGM in 2020.

There being no further nominations, members agreed to these appointments Elaine Benbow then took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting. On behalf of all members, she thanked Mr Patel for chairing and leading ASGB for the last two years.

Chairs' Forum Presentation – Chris Ward, Director Education, Skills and Education

Mr Ward presented the Horizon Briefing (appendix 3) to members. Any additional comments were included, clearly marked 'ASGB Notes'.

Update/discussion regarding the meeting with Adrian Bailey MP on 21st June 2019 about School Finance

The Chair introduced this item and gave a brief report on the meeting with Adrian Bailey MP. Members agreed that ASGB should continue to be a lobbying force in the matter of school finance and to continue to be pro-active in this coming year.

There was a short discussion about school budgets and the need for Mr Ward to ensure that the new councillors fully understood the situation; some school reserves may have increased but only because they had already made cuts in anticipation of even harder times to come.

The Chair urged members to share examples of the cuts already made and/or anticipated especially with regard to cultural capital. Many children in Sandwell were not exposed to a great breadth of experiences unless they were offered in schools. A full report on the meeting with Adrian Bailey was distributed (appendix 4)

Briefing from Craig Felton, Director, SIPS Governor Services

Mr Felton focused on governor vacancies which were currently running at 16% equating to 163 out of 1026. .

LA, parent and co-opted vacancies were 16% and rising, staff governor vacancies were 4% and foundation 23%.

Nine schools had over 30% vacancies on their boards.

In addition, the retention of governance experience was an issue: there was a shortage of chairs.

Reconstituting to a lower number of members was an option for some schools and others had already agreed reciprocal arrangements with another school if governors were needed for non-standard meetings such as disciplinary panels. Time, capacity and skills were all issues however.

The Governance team actively encouraged SIPS and LA employees to consider becoming a governor. Flyers had also been sent to West Bromwich Foundation and attempts made to encourage employers such as financial institutions to support recruitment.

Governors for schools and Inspiring Governors were also accessed.

In response to a question about LA governors, Mr Felton confirmed that a school could suggest an LA governor but could not appoint them until they had been validated by the LA. Any questions on this could be referred to Mr Felton.

Different members suggested that HSBC, the Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business might be in a position to help with governor recruitment. Mr Felton asked for their contact details and said he would be happy to meet with anyone who might be able to help.

Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held 23rd May 2018

Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

ASGB Executive Updates

Latest minutes from the Schools Central Safety Committee made available by Mr Byatt, member of the committee and ASGB Executive.

Members Survey

It was agreed that the members' questionnaire would be re-circulated and results reviewed next term. Please complete and return it, we need and value your feedback.

Future Agendas/Activities

The Chair raised the issue of the disappointing attendance numbers at ASGB meetings.

Members acknowledged that this might be due to increased governor/personal workloads and also discussed whether the timing and/or venue of meetings might be a factor. It was suggested that a bigger event, perhaps on a Saturday morning with a keynote speaker might be considered.

Picking up on the ever increasing governor workloads, there was also a feeling that governors were made to feel undervalued by Ofsted inspectors and in fact, generally, when their time and commitment is simply not acknowledged. A 'thank you' would go a long way!

Mr Felton was asked to ensure that ASGB was a regular item on school agendas.

A member asked if the Lead Inspector names might be added to the update on inspections included in Mr Ward's presentations?

Other suggestions for future agendas/activities were:

- Exclusions and Inclusion
- Ofsted Framework
- Continued lobbying of MPs and Councillors
- RSE
- Sharing good practice (speed dating approach!)
- Recruitment working with Mr Felton
- RE
- Saturday Conference perhaps in conjunction with Dudley Association
- School Commissioner
- Workloads – staff and governors.

Proposed Dates for next year (depending upon the availability of speakers)

11th or 18th September 2019

20th November 2019

12th February 2020

8th April 2020

20th May 2020

8th July 2020 AGM