

**Summary Notes from the Meeting of the  
Association of Sandwell Governing Bodies (ASGB) held at  
6.15pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 at  
Guardian House, West Bromwich**

**Welcome and Apologies**

Mr Patel welcomed guests and members to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

**National Governors Association - Bill Kiely, Business Development Manager  
NGA**

Mr Kiely introduced himself and told members about his previous experience and role in NGA. A short presentation followed (attached) and links to all the items covered are included below.

The presentation was self-explanatory but additional comments and response to questions were as follows:

- New modules were being added to E-learning (the old GEL) which was also being updated to make the modules more simple and effective. A GDPR module would be released shortly and more would follow later this year.
- Mr Kiely recommended that anyone attending other training events would benefit from completing an E-learning module first to better prepare themselves and give some thought to any questions they may have.
- The DfE programmes were of particular interest and members were encouraged to take advantage of the funding which was limited on a first-come first-served basis.
- Development for Clerks course ran for approximately 38 weeks, and Development for Chairs approximately 40 weeks. Numbers needed to run a course were: Clerks 17-25 and Chairs 20-25.
- Members referred to Mr Felton to ask if Sandwell could register an interest with NGA for Development for Chairs and this was picked up under the next agenda item.
- Development for Chairs was aimed at Chairs, Vice-Chairs or prospective Chairs. This led to a short discussion about succession planning. Some members felt uncomfortable talking about succession planning with the current Head or Chair. Everyone did agree however that it was an important responsibility of the Governing Board. Mr Felton suggested that it could be standard agenda item once a year, at the set-up meeting, for example.
- Inspiring Governance helped schools recruit new governors, offering free training that would also benefit any business that encouraged their staff to be governors. On the flip side, businesses often underestimated the time commitment that their employees needed to make to schools.
- Links:

[Leading Governance](#)

[GOLD membership](#)

[Inspiring Governance](#)

[Learning Link](#)

[DfE funded programmes](#)

<https://www.nga.org.uk/Guidance/Workings-Of-The-Governing-Body/Governance-Tools/Eight-Elements-of-Effective-Governance.aspx>

The Chair thanked Mr Kiely for his presentation.

*All members of ASGB should be receiving regular updates from NGA and have access to the full NGA site. If you have any problems with access/updates, please let the Support Officer know.*

### **Governance Update – Craig Felton, Director Governance, SIPS**

- Following on from the NGA presentation, Mr Felton confirmed that all SIPS clerks were accredited to NVQ level. Any new clerks would attend training, probably through the NGA.
- Mr Felton would be attending an Inspiring Governance meeting in two weeks, looking at attracting new governors. The problem was not only attracting them but also retaining them. Many governors from corporate backgrounds simply wanted to 'tick the box' for their corporate social responsibility appraisal targets and left very soon after joining.
- It was difficult to find new governors, let alone trying to match skills to vacancies. Obviously, care was also needed to understand what has motivated a prospective governor to volunteer; it must not be to pursue a personal issue with the school for example.
- A member suggested that many new governors, especially parent governors, were frightened off by the huge amounts of legislation referred to in meetings.
- Governor vacancies in Sandwell were running at approximately 10% for LA governors and 25% for parent governors and this was causing problems especially when trying to populate complaints/disciplinary panels for example.
- Regarding the Development for Chairs training, Mr Felton reiterated that he would find out what interest there was and if it might be possible to work with Dudley to get sufficient numbers to run the course.
- Di Holden, a member of the Executive had already completed Development for Chairs and was able to share some of her experience. The course lasted about a year and consisted of four meetings 6.00pm-9.00pm, 1:1's with a mentor, webinars, self-assessment and evidence based learning. It was very worthwhile, the networking aspect encouraged everyone on the course to look at things in a new way, from a different perspective.
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into effect on 25.5.18. Governors needed to be ensure that their school complied.
- A new Keeping Children Safe in Education would come into effect in September 2018.
- The Governor Hub had been discussed at the last meeting but Mr Felton briefly reminded members that it was a national database that would help to manage governor details and was GDPR compliant. It comprised two separate parts, a 'back office' part which held contact details and a front facing portal for all documents such as agendas, minutes and news. Schools could of course, retain their current systems if they preferred. There would be a meeting with Business Managers in June to introduce Governor Hub which would be rolled out in September, however, if you would like your school to take part in the pilot in the summer term, please contact Craig Felton.
- Next term training would be offered on restructuring/redundancies. This would be offered as a general course or as 'whole school' training. Increased pension and NI contributions and the new living wage have put enormous

pressure on school budgets, even before the outcome of the National Funding Formula was known.

## **Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting held 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

Minutes were agreed.

### **Open Forum – School Budgets**

Members discussed the difficulties faced by schools in trying to manage their budgets. Once schools had looked at every possible way to save or generate funds, the only option left seemed to be staffing restructure.

Elaine Benbow, member of the Executive, suggested that ASGB write a letter to the Secretary of State for Education, copying in the local MP's and Andy Street, to document our concern at the impact budgets were having on the education of Sandwell's children. This was wholeheartedly agreed. Elaine volunteered to draft a letter for comment by Executive members. Copy will follow.

### **ASGB Executive Updates**

#### Questionnaire Summary

The Support Officer shared the results of the questionnaire (attached) which would help ASGB plan future meetings and support. .

#### Attendance Figures

Summary attached. Difficult to draw conclusions but on the evidence of tonight's disappointing attendance figures, meeting numbers were dropping. More thought needed to be given as to why this is but it might be as simple as ensuring that we are inviting presenters and addressing topics that governors are really interested in.

#### Tips for New Governors

Some ideas had been drafted (attached) and feedback requested. Please let the Support Officer know if you have any comments or more importantly, can share any advice that would help a new governor; anything that you would have found useful when you were new.

#### Flyer for New Governors

Attaching a draft flyer we will ask SIPS to include in their new governor packs. It explains our purpose and will be updated with membership/dates etc. after the AGM ready for distribution by September. Again, any feedback/suggestions welcome!

#### Constitution

Constitution has been updated and changes highlighted (attached). Copy to be sent to Craig Felton and any comments to be forwarded to the Support Officer please as this will be an agenda item at the AGM on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018

#### STEPS Centre

Following the presentation/invitation from Patrick Finegan, please let the Support Officer know if you are interested in a visit to the new arrivals/STEPS centre in Smethwick. Once we know about any interest in a visit, we can sort out dates which will hopefully be convenient for everyone.

### **Future Agenda Items/Plans/Share good practice**

A member suggested that ALL governors could share at least one item of good practice with colleagues; something that has solved a problem or improved standards in their school. Governors often don't realise that something they are doing is unique to them and not being done in other schools. (Recognising that the permission of the Governing Board to share might be needed).

Can we ask you all to take a fresh look at good practice in your school and share? Please send via the Support Officer. Thank you!

### **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

You will no doubt have been inundated with emails about GDPR but we need to just make you aware that

- We retain your name, school and email address on file in order for ASGB to communicate with you.
- We share your name, school and email address with the National Governance Association (NGA) in order that you may access their website and receive regular updates.
- We do not share your details with any other party for the purposes of marketing.
- If you have any concerns about any of the above, please contact the Support Officer.

### **Next meeting date: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018 AGM**

Look forward to seeing you at the AGM