

Summary Notes from the ASGB Chairs' Forum
held at 6.15pm on 9th October 2019 at
Guardian House, West Bromwich

Members of the ASGB Executive had a brief meeting prior to the start of Chairs' Forum and discussions were reported during the meeting.

Welcome and Apologies

Lynn Howard, one of the ASGB co-chairs' opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. This was the first Chairs' Forum held independently of the regular ASGB meetings and was intended to address the more specific needs of chairs and vice chairs, allowing them time to meet and discuss the issues that they faced in their schools.

Lynn invited Chris Ward, the Director of Education, Skills and Employment to give an update.

Chris Ward, Director of Employment, Skills and Education

Mr Ward's presentation is attached (appendix 1), additional notes arising during the meeting have been added in the Notes section, clearly identified as such.

Elaine Benbow, joint chair of ASGB then provided a summary of ASGB activities and plans to date:

- ASGB members had a follow up meeting with Adrian Bailey MP on 13th September 2019, again focused on school budgets and in particular, the cuts made by schools to the music service. Mr Bailey indicated his full support and agreed to raise the issue in Parliament as an adjournment debate.
- ASGB had a further meeting arranged with James Morris MP for Rowley Regis and Halesowen on 11th October and all members from Rowley were encouraged to attend. Members agreed that ASGB did have a role to play with regard to lobbying on important issues and Elaine suggested that we should also have more interaction with councillors.
- **National Governance Association (NGA) Members Survey:** Elaine reminded everyone that as members of the ASGB, they were also standard members of the NGA. She encouraged governors to complete the membership survey before the closing date of midday on 4th November 2019.
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NGAmembershipsurvey2019>
- **National Governance Association (NGA) Elections:** Elaine also referred members to the NGA West Midlands Board of Trustees Election. There were three candidates, one of whom was our own Lynn Howard, co-chair of the ASGB and the only candidate from Sandwell. Please see:
<https://www.nga.org.uk/About-Us/Elections-to-the-board.aspx> The voting form is available from a link on this screen. Votes must be submitted by the Chair on behalf of the Governing Body. Please ensure that your school uses its vote.
The ballot form asks for a membership number and we are advised by NGA that all ASGB members should use: M42579. If you have any problem with this, please let the support officer know.
- **National Governance Association (NGA) Meetings:** The NGA West Midlands Meeting would be held 16th October 2019.
The NGA Regional Conference would be held 16th November 2019.
As a member of ASGB/NGA, there are free places but numbers are limited so please book as soon as you can.
<https://www.nga.org.uk/News/Events/Annual-Conference-and-AGM-2019.aspx>

- **Chairs Development Programme:** Following the fantastic interest in the Chairs Development programme last year, we were able to arrange for NGA to centre one of their cohorts in Sandwell. As schools are able to apply for free funding for TWO governors now (was previously only one), we are once again asking NGA to run another cohort in Sandwell and already have several governors who have expressed an interest. Members who have attended the programme told their colleagues that it provided an opportunity for excellent personal development in addition to benefitting the governing body. It was also good for the profile of Sandwell. If you are a chair, vice chair or aspiring chair please contact the support officer who can provide you with more details.
- **ASGB Conference:** ASGB is arranging to hold its first conference on Saturday 16th May 2020. Venue will be in Sandwell, likely to be in West Bromwich as it is a central and relatively convenient location for travel. We propose to invite governors from around the region, hoping to attract around 100 people to the event which will run from about 9.00am - 1.30pm. Our keynote speaker will be Prof. Mick Waters, from the Alliance of Leading Learning. His presentation will be followed by various workshops such as Succession Planning, Recruitment, Ofsted, Staff Workloads, Early Years, National Leaders of Governance, Parental Engagement, Finance, Complaints and Chris Ward input. Please keep the date free and share with your Governing Bodies.

Members then had time to discuss ideas and thoughts about how ASGB could support them and the outcome is summarised as follows:

- Time and venue of ASGB/Chairs Forum meetings to be considered. Can we hold meetings on a different evening and perhaps return to using local schools as a venue. *Chairs to consider*
- The needs of primary, secondary, special, PRU's, church schools, etc. schools are not all the same. Can we hold more focused meetings for each type of school so that governors from those schools can meet to address their own specific issues? *Chairs to consider.*
- Governors liked the idea of 'speed dating' type meetings to give/encourage attendees to mix and share views/ideas. The theme of each meeting would need to be clear in advance however.
- Governors felt it was important to receive regular updates from SIPS Governance.
- Themed meetings were felt to be a good idea.
- Ideas for future meeting agendas included the implications of Brexit, new framework for Catholic schools, BSF, Finance, curriculum, writing, maths, transition, mental health, staff CPD.
- Picking up on transition, members recognised the need to embed maths at primary school to improve attainment in secondary.
- A member stressed how important it was for governors to monitor all data prior to Y6 and highlighted some issues around transition.
- Acknowledging the need to increase attendance at meetings, a member suggested that everyone might like to encourage even just one other colleague to attend a meeting.

The co-chairs thanked everyone for their very useful feedback and would use it to plan future meetings.