

THE BURY GOVERNOR



Welcome to the Summer Edition of The Bury Governor

LETTER FROM THE BGA CHAIR

The Spring meeting of the Bury Governor Association was held in the Peel Room of the Town Hall on 3 March 2015. It started with a presentation and group interaction from Sue Andrews with the statement — *No F in Phonics for Bury Governors*, which proved to be fun and very informative. Sue's a regular with the BGD (Bury Governor Development), so keep an eye out for her courses.

Next was a presentation on DfE Requirements Section 1.7 from one of our new Executive members, Mike Cardwell about minimum statutory requirements for school websites — remember Ofsted can only see your data and website prior to a school visit. Recent discussions with an HMI Inspector concluded the emphasis is now an inspection is being done *with you*, rather than *at you*. She confirmed that the school data and website only raise questions for the inspectors to ask, and as governing bodies are now part of the whole category of Leadership and Management, this information should also be raising questions of ourselves (and our schools), leading to self-evaluation, and ultimately school improvement.

A final reminder about reconstitution followed, with recent confirmation from the LA that approximately 1/3 of Bury schools have already done it, the LA knows the importance of this and the schools have been given their deadline, and all schools will be reconstituted by 1 September 2015.

Open discussion followed, with the 2nd edition 20 questions from NGA raising an interesting comment from the floor contesting the NGA suggestion that Chairs of Governors be replaced every 6 years. All in all, it was felt the new 20 questions are well worth discussion, but not a bed-rock of planning every Governing Body.

Teaching Schools—a winning formula for all, Bury's got 3 and now a collaborative of BPLC, BSLC, BAPH, BASH, Bury LA and BGD = The Bury Teaching Schools Alliance (BTSA) is a collaboration between Christ Church CE (Aided) Primary, Walshaw, Elms Bank School and Parrenthorn High School.

Initially, this was teacher supportive, however members of the Bury Governors groups have been included as it was felt governors are part of the formula, adding to the support of governance in Bury. There is a wealth of support in Bury, the more involved we get, the more accessible it is for all.

Finally, children are voiceless stakeholders in their own future; so, isn't that why we are here, assuring world enabling education for our children?

Richard Ainsworth

Chair, Bury Governor's Association

Dates for your Diary

Chairs of Governors' Briefings: -

Thursday, 23rd April 2015
Wednesday, 9th September 2015
Wednesday, 13th January 2016
At 6.45pm, at Peel Room, Town

Bury Governors' Association meetings: -

Thursday, 11th June 2015
Thursday, 19th November 2015
Wednesday, 2nd March 2016
At 7.00pm to 9.00pm at Peel Room, Town Hall

Bury Governor Training Group—board meetings:

Wednesday, 6th March 2015
Wednesday, 24th June 2015
At 12.30pm to 2.30pm at DTC

The View from the Bury Governor Training Group as it morphs into the Bury Governor Development Board

There is firm evidence that excellence in governance goes hand-in-hand with excellence in the education of and outcomes achieved by school pupils. The Bury Governor Development Board believes very strongly that excellence flows from a holistic approach to development of the whole pupil, the whole teacher, the whole school and its Governors. The change in name to Bury Governor Development reflects our determination to model best practice in governance and our commitment to the young people and their parents who have chosen to advance their education in a Bury School.

The work of the Board has moved forward on a number of fronts in 2014/15 as illustrated by the items on the agenda of the most recent meeting:

- Primary & secondary governor training
- Modern Governor and GEL materials and modes
- Bury Teaching School Alliance
- Use of training venues
- Website update — working group report
- NGA offer re 360 degree appraisals for chairs of Governing Bodies

If any or all of these topics excite your interest please ask your Training Link Governor for a copy of the minutes which she/he can obtain by emailing a request to Sandra Whalley at the DTC (s.whalley@bury.gov.uk).

Following the meeting, the board was delighted to invite Janet Butterworth (Chair at Greenhill Primary) to join us. Janet is the board's second National Leader in Governance (NLG) and can be expected to support and challenge the board in the ways that are essential for all board members of we are to exemplify continual improvement in everything we do.

The agenda items around online and blended learning using materials from The Modern Governors and Governor Electronic Learning (GEL) indicate the BGD Board is seeking to give all governors access to personal development of their knowledge and understanding of the practice of governance. In addition, the Chairs' Leadership Development Programme is running for the first time in Bury and is an ideal opportunity for Chairs and potential Chairs to develop their skills.

The survey of all governors in June/July 2014 indicated a demand for governor training events to be held in schools or in school clusters. Sandra and her team responded to six requested during 2014/15 and organized and administered five in-school and one cluster event around; The Governor Role in School Improvement (x2); Challenging the School; Data for Governors & Understanding and Using Data; New curriculum. The Board will support every viable request for in-school or in-cluster development events.

Monitoring and Feedback Report for 2014/15

The final summary of governor activity for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 indicated that Sandra and her team, the trainers and participants in training enjoyed another successful year. To allow comparisons the figures for 2013/14 are shown in brackets.

- 1) An overall response rate of 90% (93%) was achieved from a total number of attendees of 871 (577) i.e. 50% more participants in 2014/15 than in 2013/14.

- 2) Four key performance indicators (KPI's) were rated Good or Excellent — Usefulness to you 98% (99%); Well organised & led 99% (99%); Matched well with the stated objectives 98% (99%); Course materials provided 94% (98%) with 85% (89%) of respondents agreeing that the length of the course was about right for the content and activities involved.

The challenges for the year ahead are fourfold:

- To match or preferably exceed the KPI's achieved in 2013/14 which were the best ever outcomes. This will involve taking a long hard look at whether some sessions are overstuffed with material and/or include too few active learning opportunities for governors.
- To increase the number of individual governors who undertake development provided by BGD
- To increase the range and diversity of modes of learning to include inline and blended modes
- To increase the locations on offer to governors who undertake BGD sourced development and training in Bury

The final challenge is directly linked to the LA's decision to relocate Sandra and her team to New Summerseat House from 2016/17. A move to a listed building may have many attractions but they do not include ease of access from the south and east of the Borough or for those who prefer or must use public transport.

The challenge to the LA is the same as the one I outlined in my article in the Autumn 2014 edition of *The Bury Governor* — provide a 'Best for You' facility for the development of governance in Bury where the 'You' are all of those governors whose Governing Bodies have bought back the BGD governor development package for 2015/16.

Ken Kerr

Chair of Bury Governor Development Board

BURY GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

Chair — Richard Ainsworth

BURY GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Chair — Ken Kerr

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Traded Services to Schools—Summary of Survey 2014

After the close of the financial year 2013/14, all schools that bought back at least one Bury LA traded service were sent a survey asking for feedback and comment t about the service(s) provided.

Key Points :

- The survey was conducted on line. There were 14 responses to the survey, which equated to 17% of all schools in the survey. In 2013 and 2012, there were 31 and 30 responses respectively.
- A total of 49 services were included in the survey. This is an increase from the 34 services offered in 2013. This was due to new services on offer e.g. G2 Pupil tracker update; support for NQT, and differentiation in previous service offers e.g. Short and long term sickness insurance rather than just schools insurance.
- A like-for-like comparison was not possible between the surveys for the last 3 years because the respondents had changed, and services on offer had also changed. Additionally the very small number of returns made any comparative analysis even more problematic.
- Respondents were asked whether they were willing to be contacted. Where they were expressing dissatisfaction this was passed on to the service and follow up work done to try to resolve any issue(s).
- Respondents were asked whether they had attended the Traded Services fair. 4 of the 14 (29%) of respondents indicated that they had attended and found the fair useful.
- The following services were bought by 86% (12) or more of the respondents: School Effectiveness; Educational Visits Advisory Service; Procurement services; Health and Safety Support Services; Human Resources; Insurance Services; Asset management; Pay Services — Payroll and Pensions; Recruitment and Contracts Services; Long term sickness Insurance Scheme; Governor Services; Waste and Recycling. However, only the first three listed here were rewarded with a 100% satisfaction rating. 23 other services were also rewarded with a 100% satisfaction
- Generally, services had dissatisfaction recorded across one or two factors of the four included in the survey: Overall service; Value for money; After care received; Responsiveness of service. However, two services recorded dissatisfaction across all four factors. They were Cleaning and Catering services and the Waste and Recycling services. Value for money was a common factor where dissatisfaction was expressed.
- The following services were not bought by any of the respondents: Graphic Design and Photography; Grounds Maintenance; Youth Service; Footway, Highway, Car park and Playground cleaning; Civil engineering.

As the Bury Governor Association representative on the traded services to schools strategic group I felt empowered to raise questions in a recent meeting of the strategic group on behalf of governors and governing bodies. My focus was around the exclusion of governors from the processes used to collect feedback from schools about the traded services used in 2013/14 and the formal agreements about which traded services were to be brought back for 2015/16. You and I will know whether my representations have had any impact if the Autumn term Chairs Briefing mentions the imminent arrival of the annual survey in schools; Chairs and Governing Bodies are involved in providing feedback through the survey; Chairs of Governing Bodies are involved to sign off in the Spring term the school's agreement for the traded services they require for 2016/17; the School Improvement Service address relevant reports directly to governors as well as to the school. A Traded Services fair is planned for 11 November 2015 at which the offer for 2016/17 will be launched.

Ken Kerr BGA Executive member

To book a training course or for further information, please ring or email Governor Training -

Email: educationdtc@bury.gov.uk

Telephone: 0161 253 6931

A full list of all available training courses can be found at <http://www.burygtg.org.uk/>

GOVERNOR HELPLINES

If you need help with governance issues, please contact the Governor Support Team either by phone or email on:
0161 253 5688/0161 253 5670 **Governors.Support@bury.gov.uk**