

Welcome to the first CWGA newsletter of the autumn term

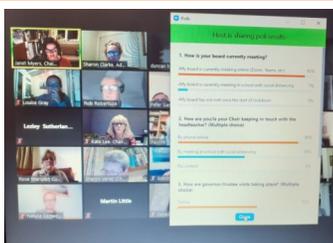
We hope you are all well and find the information contained useful and informative. If you have any feedback, please let us know by emailing CWGA@cwgovernanceassoc.co.uk

Headteacher Wellbeing by Janet Myers, Chair of CWGA

Back in September, FFT Education Datalab released [data](#) about teacher anxiety, including the impact of lockdown and wider school opening on teacher anxiety levels. A noticeable finding is the enormous increase in headteacher work-related anxiety before lockdown and during the wider re-opening of schools. I am sure that many of you can relate to this increase in anxiety. As governors and trustees, we have a clear statutory responsibility for the work-life balance of the senior executive leader. It is important that we have discussions with our Headteachers and CEOs about their wellbeing and provide them with support. The National Governance Association and the Schools Advisory Service published a [wellbeing evaluation tool](#) that you may find helpful in these discussions.

Chairs' & Vice Chairs' Networking Event

by Zoe Lochlin, Executive Member CWGA



On Thursday 8th October we held a virtual Chairs and Vice Chairs networking event. 31 delegates from across the county joined together to share their experiences leading a governing body, in what is the 'new normal' in these unprecedented times. It was a perfect opportunity for leaders to feel empowered and look for new ideas and suggestions for best practice from the safety and comfort of their own home.

During the breakout discussions there was a buzz of activity, the sparkling personalities of delegates wanting to strengthen their own knowledge on a range of subjects such as, Teaching and Learning, the Role of the Chair during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Financial Implications of Covid-19.

Delegates shared their own experiences about their involvement in extraordinary meetings and how actions were needed to plan for emergency school closures, how children were being supported with online or at home learning and how catch-up programmes were being developed and implemented. There was also agreement between all delegates that schools consider insurance options to help manage finances and the impact on school budgets when considering staff absences. Additionally, many delegates recognised the importance of having a staff well-being link governor to ensure that during this difficult and challenging time the welfare of staff is fully considered.



The event was a great success and a perfect opportunity for Chairs and Vice Chairs to share not only their own concerns but the concerns they have for their school. We had some great positive feedback...*'Please can you pass on my thanks to Janet Myers for so ably leading us through last night's chair networking session and juggling all of the technology; it was very much appreciated by a relatively new chair'...**'Thanks so much, last night was brilliant!!'*

Succession Planning by Janet Myers, Chair of CWGA

In 2009, I started governing at my children's maintained primary school. I fell in love with governing immediately, and realised that there was a lot that I could contribute, so I became vice chair within my first six months, and chair two years later. As a governing body, we were new and inexperienced, but keen and quick to learn. The headteacher and deputy head were also new, and together the governing body and the senior leadership team made a great partnership. I can honestly say that I loved every moment of my eight years governing there. We did some great things, moving the school from Ofsted "requires improvement" to "good", creating a new vision and strategy for the school, and becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. I also benefited hugely as a person, growing my education and governance knowledge, and my personal skills such as leadership.

During my second term, I became aware of the National Governance Association guidance that a governor or trustee should only serve eight years in one school, and six years as chair. It made sense to me intellectually that this would prevent stagnation, professional relationships tipping into friendships, an over-reliance on certain governors or trustees, and a concentration of power, but personally it was a big deal emotionally to think about leaving a school that I had invested so much time and energy into, and where I felt I was still making a difference. I knew it was the right thing to do, so I broached the subject with the headteacher, the vice chair and then the governing body. Fortunately, our very capable vice chair was willing to step forward, and the board were very keen to support her. We arranged an orderly handover, where she shadowed me for a period of time before being voted in as chair, and I stayed on for a period of time after the handover to give her any help that she wanted.

I have taken great pleasure in watching the school and the governing body from a distance as they have gone from strength to strength, proving that the systems and structures we put in place were sustainable and not reliant on one person at the helm, but also watching the improvements that the new chair and vice chair made and the benefit of a fresh approach.

Through discussions with local governors, I found that a nearby primary school that was part of a multi-academy trust had a very successful local governing body, but none of the existing members wanted to become chair. I had already met the headteacher and some of the governors, but I attended a few of their meetings so that we could find out more about each other, and we decided that we were a good match, and they co-opted me onto their board and a few months later, elected me as chair. I was surprised and delighted to find that I quickly built an emotional connection with this new school and trust, and got equal pleasure from working with a new team and addressing a new set of challenges.

So why am I telling you all this? Over the years, a number of member schools have mentioned that they are actively looking for a new chair, some chairs have said that it is time to move on but there is no-one to take over, and others have mentioned that they want to continue chairing in a new context, but don't know how to find the right school. Also, governors have said that they are ready to chair but there is already an experienced and successful chair on their board, and they don't know how to go about finding a school that does need a new chair. As a pilot, one of the schools that has contacted us is featured below. They are advertising their vacancy for a new chair and we are inviting anyone who might be interested to contact them directly. They will then run their usual recruitment process, and any interested individuals can also conduct their own due diligence. If it proves to be useful, we will offer this opportunity to other schools in the future, so please contact us if you would like to be featured.



CO-OPTED GOVERNOR VACANCY..... Cherry Grove Primary School

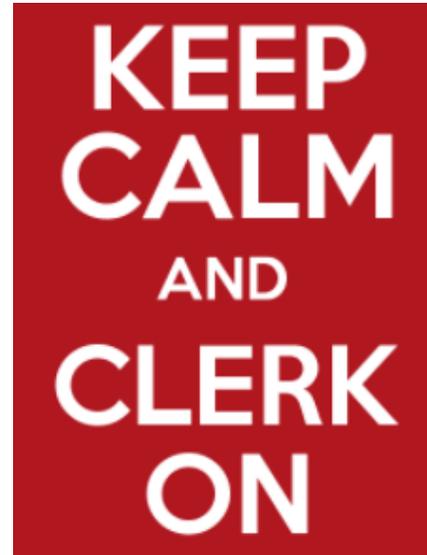
We have a vacancy for a co-opted Governor to join our dedicated governing body. Ideally we are looking for someone with a desire to be considered for a future Chair or Vice Chair of Governors. Our vision is our passion for nurturing individuality and respect for the rights of everyone enabling members of our community to achieve their potential and be outstanding local and global citizens. We are a rights respecting school and are proud to hold the UNICEF GOLD Right respecting school award for 2020. Email the clerk to governors for more information sclarke@cherrygrove.cheshire.sch.uk

Clerks Corner by Debbie Tomkinson, Secretary of CWGA

Calling All Clerks...Calling All Clerks...

Cheshire West Governance Association is an organisation that exists to support and champion school governance. It is a membership organisation for everyone involved in school governance including clerks and governance professionals.

There are three clerks in the Association and we are all passionate about our role and highlighting the importance of good clerking in school governance. We would like to include a clerking update in our newsletter but we want to make sure that the information we provide is relevant to you. If there is anything that you would like to see included in our newsletter, we would love to hear from you. You can email Sharon on CWGA@cwgovernanceassoc.co.uk with any ideas you may have, big or small, that may help you in your role.



Also, just a reminder that if your school is a member of the Association, clerks are able to attend all of our training and network events. These are very good opportunities to share thoughts and practice with colleagues involved in governance across Cheshire West and Chester.



Debbie Tomkinson

Clerk to the Board Cheshire Academies Trust

Self-employed clerk



Julia Hughes

Governance Manager

The Russett Learning Trust



Sharon Clarke

Administrator CWGA

Clerk to Governors
Cherry Grove Primary

Does your Governing Body or a member of your Governance team go above and beyond for your school? Do they deserve to be recognised with an Award?

We invite you to consider nominations for a Governing Body or an individual, for one of our Governance Awards.

If you feel you know someone deserving of that extra recognition then further details on how to nominate will be emailed out shortly, as well as being featuring on Twitter and Facebook very soon!

CWGA Governing Board of the Year



CWGA Chair of the Year CWGA

Clerk or Governance Manager of the Year

Last year's winners can be seen at <https://www.nga.org.uk/Membership/CWACAGB/Newsletter-Summer-2-2020.pdf>



You can keep up to date with our events and news on Twitter [@your_CWGA](#).



Or follow us on Facebook at [CWGA Facebook](#)

Upcoming events..... Don't forget our New Governors Networking event taking place on Thursday 26th November...see Twitter or Facebook for details or email CWGA@cwgovernanceassoc.co.uk



Cheshire West Governance Association
CWGA 'supporting the work of governors, trustees & clerks'

New Governors' Virtual Networking Event

Would you like the opportunity to network with other new governors and discuss your responsibilities as a governor including: What does good governance look like? As schools enter the COVID-19 recovery phase, what are the challenges of governance in the 'new normal'? How can we balance the finances?

Here at the CWGA we recognise what an extremely difficult time it has been for schools and governing boards and we want to offer our support by holding another networking event for new governors. This is the 3rd year that we have run this event, and it proves to be more popular year on year!

This is a free event* for school governors who have been in the post for less than 18 months.

Join us on Zoom on **Thursday 26th November 2020 at 7pm** Please complete a booking form and return to CWGA@cwgovernanceassoc.co.uk

Name of school	<i>*If your school is not a member of the Association, then the charge for attending is £20. Annual membership of the Association is only £35 per school (which is due for payment no later than 30th Sept 2020). For the £35 subscription, your governors, trust members and your clerk get access to our networking events and conference. We run three networking events a year, and they are free for members and £20 per person for non-member schools. For a subscription form, please email the address above.</i>
Name of delegate(s) and governor role held	
Contactable email address(es)	
Please help us plan this event and include any questions you would like discussed at this session....	

Also, how did you hear about this event? CWGA Newsletter/Twitter/Facebook/Other

****SAVE THE DATE** Headteachers, Chairs and Clerks Conference Friday 26th February (daytime event) **Confirmed speakers – Professor Mick Waters & the National Governance Association****



Cheshire West Governance Association
CWGA 'supporting the work of governors, trustees & clerks'

****SAVE THE DATE****

Secondary High School/Further Education
Governors Virtual Networking Event
Thursday 28th January 2021 @ 7pm
Free for CWGA members, £20 for non-members

****SAVE THE DATE****

Heads, Chairs and Clerks Conference
Friday 26th February 2021 (virtual half day event)
Confirmed speakers – Professor Mick Waters,
National Governance Association and Ofsted
Cost = £30 for CWGA members, £35 for non-members

****SAVE THE DATE****

'Governing in the new normal'
Governors Virtual Networking Event
Wednesday 24th March 2021 @ 7pm
Free for CWGA members, £20 for non-members