

Barnsley Governors Association
Annual General Meeting
15th October 2024
Chair's Report for the academic year 2023-24

Introduction

Our 2023 AGM was held at the Holiday Inn in Dodworth and was followed by an excellent Expert Panel on Inclusion and Behaviour (Dave Whitaker, Michael Sanderson, Rebecca Paddock; Cllr Jo Newing) who showed their wide-ranging experience and expertise in answering questions from the floor.

History: our inaugural AGM was held in 2011; since then we have commissioned training, organised conferences, carried out research (for example, governance risk & support assessment in conjunction with local authority), and run an interactive website with information about the Association and education more generally. We have also offered peer mentoring and peer review of GBs. We are members of the NGA.

Activities 2023-24: we held a number of Forums throughout the academic year:

- Governor Development Planning
- Finance for Governors in Maintained Schools and Academies
- Safeguarding and the Governors' Role
- SEND in Relation to Governors; Questions to Ask
- The Primary Curriculum
- Staff Wellbeing.

Our Forums include a presentation with a Q & A session, but also give governors the opportunity to network and share good practice from different settings. All our Forums have been enthusiastically received by attendees, and they are all free of charge to governors/trustees of Barnsley schools

We also represent the voice of governors on the Schools Forum and the Barnsley Alliance Board.

In November 2023, we started to use HCAT HQ for our Forums. Not only is this venue cheaper, but it has state of the art training facilities and excellent coffee.

Future Plans: We intend to continue with Forums this academic year, and already have dates in the calendar until Easter

Thank you: I'd like to thank Stephen Gallagher (Secretary and Vice Chair) who has continued to fulfil his BGA roles in difficult times, and Molly Beever who has now stepped down as a trustee of Wellspring Academy Trust and therefore is no longer a director of the BGA. However, she's aware that we couldn't manage without her, so I'm really pleased she will be staying on as chief admin officer. Thank you too to John Gostelow who is our treasurer and webmaster

Tonight's Topic: we want to look at the future of education, and particularly the future of governance. The educational landscape has changed throughout my time as a governor but never so much as in the last 14 years since the BGA was founded. How do governors have input into what change is in the best interests of our pupils, staff and stakeholders? How do we ensure that governance is ethical? How do we have an impact on governor wellbeing, recruitment and retention?