



To: Heads, Clerks and Chairs of Governors (by email to heads with two hard copies by post for the Chair and the Clerk)

NB The Department is now in a position to communicate direct to Chairs and Clerks by email. Following the election of the Chair at the first meeting this term the Clerk is asked to complete and forward the attached Communications Return to Jenny Fitzgerald by no later than the end of November.

NEWSLETTER NO. 84

September 2005

Dear Colleague,

Welcome back to another academic year full of challenges and surprises but, we hope, many rewards and opportunities for you and your school. We trust that you have had a refreshing and fulfilling summer break. The start of a new academic year is always a time of re-dedication and fresh commitment. Recognising this, and the appointment of many new governors and members of staff, **Bishop Declan has agreed to celebrate a mass of re-dedication for all governors and members of staff on Tuesday 8 November at 19.00 in Clifton Cathedral. Please draw this to the attention of your governors and staff. You may wish to consider providing transport to enable people to attend.** Prior to the mass, there will be a **meeting for all Chairs of Governors at Alexander House starting at 16.00** with a buffet provided prior to proceeding to the Cathedral. Details will be issued in early October.

1. Foundation Governors and the Reconstitution of Governing Bodies

Jenny Fitzgerald has co-ordinated the huge exercise of appointing well over 500 foundation governors since June and most schools should now have their full complement in place. Our thanks to parish priests and to clerks for their assistance with this matter.

Those schools which have taken the decision to reconstitute under the new regulations from September 2005 should have received their new Instruments of Government from their LEA. The Instrument should not have been altered by the LEA in any way after the Bishop has given his approval on behalf of the Trustees. If any schools are concerned in this regard, please let us know.

All Governors appointed prior to the 1 September 2003 will serve out their remaining period of office. Where Foundation Governors have been appointed by the Bishop in the period between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2005, it has been decided that such Governors will be reappointed for a full four year term from 1 September 2005 unless:

- they have decided that they do not wish to continue as School Governors
- the new Instrument of Governors requires a reduction in the number of Foundation Governors

Other Governors appointed between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2005 will need to be reappointed or re-elected.

Co Directors: Mr David W Byrne MSc & Mr Peter G Bradshaw MA
Primary Schools Adviser: Mrs Trisha Antolik BA DipEd , Secondary Schools Adviser: Mrs Ann Fowler BSc MA
Administrator: Mrs Jennifer Fitzgerald

This is an appropriate time to ask you to convey the thanks of the Bishop and the Department to all governors for the time, effort and commitment they give so generously to ensure that our schools and colleges operate effectively and efficiently.

2. A Guide to the Law for School Governors – Voluntary Aided Schools

This vital document has been amended by the DfES in July 2005 in order to incorporate the terms of the Education Act 2005. It is important that every governor has a copy of the up to date document which can be downloaded from the Governornet website on www.governornet.co.uk/linkAttachments/VAentire.doc. The DfES no longer produces hard copies of its documents so **would Clerks please ensure that all Governors have a copy** by asking the school to print off sufficient copies for all governors. You can continue to use the plastic folders that were issued at the last time of publication.

3. First meeting of the Governing Body

It is the time of the year when we remind you that at the first meeting of the school year the governing body should elect its Chair and Vice-Chair for the coming year in accordance with agreed procedure. The Department can provide you with guidance if required but the new 'Guide to the Law for School Governors' gives full details.

It is also the time for the annual review of Governors' Committees, their terms of reference and membership. Governors should also review their scheme of delegation so that the process of decision making is understood both by the governors and the school leadership group. Although it is slightly out of date, the DfES guidance publication 'Roles of Governing Bodies and Head Teachers', which is available on www.governornet.co.uk/linkAttachments/ACFF3.doc, is very helpful. The Department has amended the decision planner in order to customise it for VA schools and to bring it up to date with changes to the regulations. We can e-mail this to schools on request.

4. Annual Parents' Meeting and School Profile

From 1 September 2005 governing bodies will no longer be obliged to produce a governors' annual report, nor hold an annual parents' meeting. Similarly, the contents of the school prospectus will be much less prescribed by regulations.

Governing Bodies will be obliged to complete a School Profile from the academic year 2005/06 onwards. Examination results from 2004/05 will be included in the 2005/06 School Profile and the un-validated data will be available electronically to schools from October/November 2005. Guidance on the Profile will be available from the DfES in October.

5. Governors' Allowances/Expenses

The National Governors Council (NGC) has researched current practice in the payment of governors' allowances. As a result the NGC has produced the 'Good Practice Guide in Developing an Allowances Policy for Governing Bodies 2005'. The document contains recommendations from the NGC as well as a model allowances policy. It can be downloaded from www.governornet.co.uk/linkAttachments/NGCallowancesguidance05.doc

6. 'Leading Together'

'Leading Together' is a school-based development programme designed by the DfES to explore and improve the team-work of the governing body, the head teacher and the school-leadership team to better achieve school-improvement. The programme consists of three facilitated meetings in the school spread over a period of about nine months. Schools may wish to engage in 'Leading Together' for a variety of reasons, such as the opportunity for reviewing working relationships afforded by the arrival of a new chair or head teacher. Schools may also be encouraged to engage in the programme because the effectiveness of shared leadership is a cause for concern. As well as being available from the [Online Publications for schools](#) website, copies of the facilitator toolkit can be obtained from the DfES School Governance Team by telephoning 01325 391287 or by emailing governor.materials@dfes.gsi.gov.uk. Members of the Department team would be prepared to facilitate the programme as part of the additional services element of the Service Level Agreement.

7. Admissions

We are delighted to report that, in response to the referral by South Gloucestershire LEA of the admission policies of the Catholic schools to South Gloucestershire to the School Admissions Adjudicator, the adjudicator has confirmed that it is the duty of the Governing Bodies of a Catholic school to give priority in their admissions criteria to members of the Church. South Gloucestershire Council had lodged an objection to this practice but the Adjudicator recognises that the Trust Deed for Catholic schools in the Clifton Diocese identifies 'provision for members of the Church' as the prime responsibility of each Governing Body as an admissions authority. She goes on to state that she is persuaded that this wording of the Trust Deed is sufficient to allow governing bodies to give priority to children of the Catholic faith.

We are updating the Department's advice to governing bodies concerning admissions and will re-issue it shortly. The Department monitors national policy developments and tries to incorporate their implications into its advice. Would all governing bodies please ensure that they follow this advice in preparing policies for 2007 admissions.

8. Use of school premises other than by the school itself

Under Schedule 13 of the School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) of 1998, the control and use of the premises of voluntary aided schools, both inside and outside school hours, resides with the governing body although the Diocesan Trust Deed, to which the governors must conform under Chapter III, paragraph 38(4) of the same Act, places some constraints on its use. Essentially the governors may not lease or licence the premises for any purpose which is inconsistent with the principles of the Church. In addition they are required under the School Schedule of the Trust Deed to obtain 'the prior approval, in writing, before leasing or giving up or transferring possession or control of the school premises'.

Before allowing the use of the premises by outsiders, the governors will need to satisfy themselves that the hirers or lessees will not use them for an activity which is contrary to the teachings and norms of the Catholic Church. Secondly they will need to determine which form of hire agreement is appropriate.

A LEASE must be used when agreeing:

- **exclusive use** of
- **a defined area** of the school premises by a group or individual for
- **a specified period.**

E.g. exclusive use of a demountable building by a pre-school group.

In this situation the governors must obtain the approval of the Trustees, through the Department of Schools and Colleges, in advance. A lease agreement, signed by both the governors and a representative of the Trustees (as owners of the property), as well as by the tenants, must be issued. The Trustees will insist that such an agreement is checked by their solicitors prior to signature and that the cost of this is borne by the governors of the school since the funds necessary for the governing body to discharge its functions under the SSFA must be delegated to them by the LEA under their LMS scheme. The governors may, of course, recover the costs from the lessee. When such a lease is granted, the lessee has the right to apply for renewal at the end of the lease period.

In addition to the lease agreement, which defines the lessee, the area, the rent and the period of the lease, a **PROTOCOL** for the operation of the lease should be agreed between the governors and the lessee. Agreeing to sign the protocol should be a condition of the lease and it can be reviewed more frequently than the terms of the lease. This protocol should stipulate the conditions that will apply in how the lease will operate e.g. access times, arrangements for recuperation of costs incurred by the school on behalf of lessee, security, cleaning etc. It should form the basis of the working relationship between the school and the lessee.

The Trustees have asked Stone King to produce model Lease and Protocol documents and we hope to make these available on the website shortly.

A LICENCE grants use of all or part of the premises which is used at other times by the school. E.g. use of the school hall by a badminton club one evening per week. In this situation the organisation/hirer is not granted exclusive use of any part of the premises and can be required to meet conditions of hire designed to ensure that the shared use does not adversely impact on the work of the school. If a school is considering granting a licence to an outside organisation or individual, prior approval of the Trustees is not required although we would advise that the Diocesan model licence form for schools is used. The model licence agreement form has been updated and is available on the Department's website.

9. LCVAP Projects

May we remind all schools that have had 2005/06 LCVAP projects approved that, whenever the Diocese has agreed to fund the 10% of any element of a school condition or improvement project, the Diocesan Trustees insist that the Hookway Partnership, of St Nicholas House, Lawfords Gate, Bristol, BS5 0RE act as their agent in reclaiming the grant. In the event of Hookway's not acting for you in supervising the work, your project manager must liaise with Jim Corrigan of Hookway's on 0117 955 4545 as soon as you have received final approval for the project from the DfES.

Our thanks to those schools that submitted 2006/07 LCVAP project proposals by the deadline in July. As soon as final allocations for each LEA area are known and we have been able to discuss project proposals with LEA and Church of England officers we will notify all schools of the approved projects.

10. CES Contracts and Model Procedures

May we remind you that CES contracts for all categories of staff and model employment procedures for the use of the Governors of Catholic VA schools, including:

- Capability Procedures (Teachers and Headteachers)
- Disciplinary Procedures (All staff)

- Grievance Procedures
 - Sickness Absence Procedures,
- are available to download on www.cesew.org.uk/publications/index.htm

11. Vocations

Please find attached a letter from Fr Robert King, recently appointed Vocations Director by Bishop Declan, offering his support for initiatives in schools focussed on raising the profile of the priesthood and religious life. A poster for display in the school/college is also enclosed with the copies sent by post.

12. Forthcoming events

A Department calendar of 2005/06 events was issued to schools in July. The following are of importance to all schools in the period to Christmas:

Wed 21 September	New/acting Heads' Induction Day, Alexander House
Th29/Fr30 September	Diocesan Headteachers' Conference, Bath
Sub-Committee Meetings	(for Heads and Chairs):
Mon 3 October	<i>Somerset</i> (3pm) at Ss Joseph & Teresa, Wells
Tue 11 October	<i>Bristol</i> (2pm) at Alexander House
Wed 12 October	<i>Gloucestershire</i> (2pm) at the Rosary School, Stroud
Thu 13 October	<i>South Gloucestershire</i> (2pm) at St Mary's, Bradley Stoke
Mon 17 October	<i>North Somerset</i> (2.30pm) at St Joseph's, Portishead
Tue 18 October	<i>B&NES</i> (10.45am) at St John's Presbytery, Bath
	<i>Wiltshire</i> (4.30pm) at St Augustine's, Trowbridge
Wed 19 October:	<i>Swindon</i> (7.30pm) at Holy Rood Junior School, Swindon
Thu 20 October	Chaplains' Day at Alexander House
Tue 8 November	Meeting for Chairs at 16.00 at Alexander House
	Mass for all staff and governors at 19.00 at the Cathedral.

13. Clifton Diocesan Directory 2006

Tom Bigwood, the Editor of the Diocesan Directory, has asked us to thank those who contributed to the updating of the schools section. Schools will be contacted by Tom again in the spring of 2006 and asked to complete an amendment form which must be returned by 30 June 2006 in order to be considered for publication in the 2007 Directory.

14. Tsunami Conference for Year 11

The City of Bristol College is inviting students from Bristol and South Gloucestershire schools to a conference focusing on aspects of the Boxing Day Tsunami. Topics range from 'the politics of aid, relief and development', to 'short term relief vs long term development' to 'how the media presented the tsunami and its aftermath'.

The conference will take place on **Friday 21 October 2005** from **8.45am- 3.30pm** at **3C4, College Green Centre, St George's Road, Bristol, BS1 5UA.**

The College has invited three key speakers to address the conference including Tony Vassallo, the regional co-ordinator from the CAFOD, who contributed significantly to the international response to short and long term aid and development in the region. The Diocese has also been invited to supply a representative to provide a religious perspective to the occurrence of natural disasters such as the tsunami and the Bishop's office is endeavouring to arrange this.

This promises to be a challenging but interesting experience and we would encourage local schools to respond positively to the invitation. For more details contact Maggie Moss, Schools' Liaison Co-ordinator, Tel: 0117 3125583, Fax: 0117 3125549 Email: maggie.moss@cityofbristol.ac.uk

15. Congratulations

Congratulations and best wishes to

Gail Crees
Caroline Hostein
Lynette Carter
Ian Murphy

St Augustine's, (Joint CofE/RC), Taunton
Corpus Christi Primary, Weston Super Mare
St Ursula's, Bristol
All Hallows, Shepton Mallet

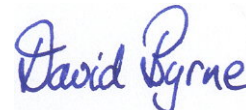
who took up their Headship appointments on 1 September.

16. Co-Directors

May we remind schools that currently the role of Director of Schools and Colleges is undertaken by Peter and David on a job-share basis. Although contractually employed on a half-time basis we each work a minimum of three days per week - David works on Monday and Tuesday, Peter works on Thursday and Friday and both work on a Wednesday. Although we are each prepared to be somewhat flexible in assisting schools we would ask you to respect the fact that Peter is not be available on a Monday and David is not be available on a Thursday. May we both take this opportunity to thank our colleagues in schools for all the help, support and encouragement you gave us last year and of express our hope for a fruitful partnership during the new academic year.



Peter Bradshaw



David Byrne

Co-Directors



CLIFTON DIOCESE

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August 2005

Dear Headteacher

I write to introduce myself as the new Diocesan Vocations Director. For many reasons the idea of a vocation to the priesthood seems alien, if not unattractive, to children and young people in the present climate and I believe it important that we work and pray together to raise awareness of, and promote, vocations to the priesthood and religious life. I would welcome the opportunity to be involved with any vocations or career awareness programme to speak about the priesthood.

There is a scheme in the Diocese by which Mass is celebrated daily for vocations to the priesthood. In addition to this I would encourage schools to include a Mass to pray for vocations in their 2005/06 programme and to promote the subject during the course of the year. May I recommend the Mass for 'Priestly Vocations' (*Masses for Various Needs and Occasions 9*) from the Roman Missal.

Again, I offer my full support and willingness to be involved with school and college initiatives. If I may be of any assistance in raising awareness of vocations then please do not hesitate to contact me. I enclose a poster which I would ask you to display.

With my best wishes
Yours sincerely

Rev Robert King
Vocations Director
Robert.King@CliftonDiocese.com