

THIS ISSUE INCLUDES:

- Important information for governors
- Nationwide issues facing governors
- An opportunity to share your suggestions, ideas and questions with fellow governors

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Welcome - Catherine Simpson

Welcome to the Second Edition of Governor Talks. As a Torfaen Governor you will be aware of the many changes that have taken place within Education and the LEA over the last Term. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Catherine Simpson Chief Education Officer.

Catherine graduated in 1987 with an honours degree in English and Education Studies. Following that, she attended St Martin's University College in Lancaster where she gained a PGCE (Secondary) in English.

Having taught English at KS3/4 throughout Lancashire, as a teacher, head of department and as a member of a senior management team, Catherine became a Secondary English Advisory Teacher in Lancashire LEA. The post involved managing and de-

livering the secondary English course programme, joint management of the KS3 National English/Literacy pilot and management of the Heads of English district meetings. It also involved significant work outside the LEA addressing national meetings and delivering whole school inset throughout the country. During this time Catherine qualified as a First Steps Literacy and Stepping Out Trainer and also a Better Reading/Talking Partner Trainer. Catherine achieved a masters degree in Applied Linguistics in 1998.

In March 2000, Catherine was appointed to the post of Adviser/Inspector in Blackpool LEA, where she was Senior English Adviser, managing the KS1/2/3 English/Literacy consultants and was general adviser to a group of schools. During this time, Catherine also acted as head teacher

in two schools, one primary and one secondary.

Following this, Catherine was appointed as Senior Assistant Director (National Innovation and Development) with The Basic Skills Agency. This post involved working with a myriad of agencies to develop and write national initiatives to support the BSA's programme.

In July 2005, Catherine took up post as Assistant Director (Head of School Effectiveness) in Torfaen, and was subsequently appointed in December 2005, to the post of Chief Education Officer.

Catherine looks forward to working with all schools and governors in the future.

Clare Chatwin
Senior Governor Support & Development Officer



Tackling Child Poverty in Wales

A Good Practice Guide for Schools

The End Child Poverty Network Cymru, coordinated by Children in Wales have published *Tackling Child Poverty in Wales: A Good Practice Guide for Schools*.

The Network is a coalition of organisations both statutory and voluntary working together to raise awareness and understanding of child poverty in Wales and campaign to have policies in place which contribute to its eradication it by 2020.

The Guide is supported by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, the National Public Health Service for Wales and various voluntary and statutory agencies.

This Booklet aims to:

- Raise awareness about child poverty among staff in school
- Further the understanding of the contribution that schools can make to the challenging task of improving the educational outcomes of children in poverty
- Provide a checklist that can be used as part of a

school's self-assessment process

- Provide references and useful resources
- Help schools to evaluate their own practice and plan for the future

The Guide highlights practical steps schools can take to contribute to tackling child poverty. Measures include starting Homework Clubs to support children who do not have space, facilities or assistance at home; providing additional support for vulnerable groups; increasing the uptake of free school meals by providing information about entitlement and by introducing non-stigmatising provision e.g. swipe card systems and considering the financial impact of choosing a particular school uniform. The Guide is being sent out to every school in Wales during February 2006.

The Guide will be available to download from our website www.endchildpovertycymru.org.uk www.dileutlodiplantcymru.org.uk

Or contact Lucy Akhtar, Co-ordinator End Child Poverty Network Cymru, Children in Wales, 25 Windsor Place, Cardiff, CF10 3BZ

Phone: 029 2034 2434

Fax: 029 2034 3134 Email: [lucy.akhtar@](mailto:lucy.akhtar@childrenwales.org.uk)

childrenwales.org.uk

School Reorganisation



Amalgamation Update

Temporary Governing Bodies have been set up for the primary schools arising from the amalgamation of Greenlawn Junior & New Inn Infants and Woodlands Junior & Woodlands Infants.

Allan Jones will be the Headteacher for New Inn Primary School. Mrs Jaci Bates is the headteacher for Woodlands Primary School.

Over the coming weeks the temporary governing bodies will appoint the Deputy Headteachers, agree the Staffing Structure and agree the School uniform. The 'new' schools will commence in September 2006.

Transition arrangements are well under way. Whilst there should be little or no impact on pupils/parents, the staff and temporary governing bodies have been consulted on building matters as work needs to start soon for completion by September 2006.



School Reorganisation

Project groups meet on a regular basis to discuss transition arrangements for all proposals, including closures. In the case of Trevethin Community School further meetings with staff and parents have been held.

The Schools and the Education Service are now working closely together to ensure transition arrangements are effective.

For Pentwyn Primary School, meetings have been held with the School and Headteachers of receiving schools. Events are planned for pupils at their new schools, including a sports event during the Summer Term to be held at Garnteg Primary.

On 29 March 2006 the LEA received notification from the Welsh Assembly Government that it was unable to support the proposed closure of Ponthir School. At the time of writing no decision had been made by the Assembly about the schools proposal for voluntary aided status.

We await a decision about the proposal to amalgamate Griffithstown Infants and Junior Schools.

Next Reorganisation Proposals

The School reorganisation process is a significant project and by Summer 2008 the council has committed to further amalgamations. Over the coming months the Education Service will be looking more closely at how it delivers these changes.

Foundation Phase

The LEA has received a guaranteed £275,000 for 2006/2007 financial year in order to deliver the Foundation Phase and a further £275,000 for this financial year. The key objectives are to bring forward the requirements of the foundation phase which are likely to be a statutory requirement in 2008. The LEA is currently assessing all the primary premises and schemes are being prepared ready for construction later in the year.

Disability Access Plans

A draft template and guidance document is being prepared and will be sent to all schools. This will form the basis for plans to be completed by Governing Bodies to meet their statutory obligations. The LEA will support schools in drawing up plans through advice. If necessary please contact Cliff Day on 01633 648289

For Further Information on School Reorganisations and Consultation please contact **Mark Horton 01633 648179**

Governors Letters

YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE....

The Role of the Governor is ever increasing in both time and responsibilities and governors have greater involvement in decision making. Other key areas include the direction of education in Torfaen and therefore, feedback on this newsletter, and the Governor Training and Support provided by the LEA is highly valued.

Are you a long serving governor that could give advice to a new governor? If so, I would love to hear from you. This newsletter's aim is to be interactive and all contributions, complimentary or critical are welcome.

Write in to raise a query, seek support from the LEA or fellow governors or even to highlight Good Practice at your school.

We would be interested in articles such as:

- **School Councils:** Have you met with your School Council? Have you acted upon information presented to you by the School Council?



- **Governor of the Month:** Do you have a Governor of the Month System? How effective is it?
- **Extended Schools:** Do you have an After School Club? How are governors involved?
- **Breakfast Clubs:** Do you have a club, what is the uptake?

Articles and letters should be forwarded to the Editor: Clare Chatwin, **FREE POST RLYZ-LTLX- HLAR** Torfaen Governor Support, County Hall CWMBRAN NP44 2WN or email clare.chatwin@torfaen.gov.uk

DEADLINE FOR ARICLES AND LETTERS: Friday 28 July 2006

Principles of Conduct for Governors

Governors Wales has long been aware that the way some governors perceive their role and behave in the course of conducting business both inside and outside governing body meetings can be the source of major difficulties and affect the maintenance of good working and personal relationships and effective governance.

A conference of representatives of governors from Torfaen and other parts of Wales considered these issues. With the support of Jane Davidson, the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning, Governors Wales is publishing a statement setting out Principles of Conduct for school governors.

Some of the Principles expressed may appear to more experienced governors to be self evident! School governors should have in mind the best interests of the school and its pupils in their decision-making or that governors need to attend governing body

meetings regularly. Others, while equally central to the effective working of the governing body, explore the nature of the relationship between the head-teacher and the governing body and stress the importance of the role of the governor as 'critical friend'.

Another section of the document mentions principles about how governors relate to each other; respect each other's sometimes differing views and priorities; demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity and observe collective responsibility for democratically taken decisions. One of the most important Principles concerns the need for governors to respect confidentiality where the governing body deems this to be appropriate. Few things can be more damaging or diminish a governing body in the eyes of its community than the leaking of confidential matters by individual governors.

Finally, the essential commitment by governors to activities de-

signed to maintain and update their knowledge and skills is emphasised along with the need for governors to be open, honest, fair and objective and prepared to confront the personal prejudices that may get in the way of informed decision-making.

Governors will probably be relieved that the Principles of Conduct for Governors, are restricted to a single sheet of A4 ... although guidance to accompany the statement is promised! Jane Davidson is to write to all Chairs of governors to strongly urge "... all governors in Wales to consider and apply these Principles (of conduct) to all aspects of their work".

Governors Wales hopes that compliance with these Principles will lead to an increase in effectiveness of all governing bodies.

**Anne Robertson
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
(SOUTH) GOVERNORS
WALES**



Performance Management



Performance Management

Performance Management is a system of annual performance review that involves professional dialogue about aims and achievements between teachers and their team leaders and the headteacher and their governing body.

Performance management is a shared responsibility:

The **Governing Body** has a strategic role in agreeing the schools performance management policy ensuring that performance of teachers at the school is regularly reviewed and for monitoring the performance man-

agement process.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for implementing the schools performance management policy and ensuring that performance management reviews take place.

An **External Adviser** provided by the Local Education Authority will advise the Governing Body's representatives on the setting of performance objectives for the head and will support them in reviewing performance at the end of the appraisal cycle.

The Governing Body decides on the timing for the Headteacher's performance

management cycle and the head decides on the timing of the teachers. This is an annual cycle and should link into the planning for school management and target-setting. However, performance management is not a single event that takes place once a year. It is a continuous cycle, involving self analysis, planning, monitoring performance, self evaluation and reviewing performance.

If you are a member of the Performance Management Committee and would like further information please contact **Stuart Foster on 01633 648130**

**ALL school
Volunteers MUST
have a CRB
Disclosure**

**Have you
completed
a LIST 99
form?**

Governor Security - CRB Disclosures

Governing bodies have expressed some confusion with regards to security checks for Governors. Governing Bodies in Torfaen are keen to ensure the safety of their pupils and many are taking all the positive measures possible to secure this.

TASG recently wrote to the Welsh Assembly Government seeking clarification and following their response this is the current situation:

Governors in England and Wales are NOT required by law to have a CRB Disclosure. However, in the **Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005** a governing body may request a governor complete a CRB Check and failure to obtain a CRB Disclosure will result in disqualification.

Several Governing Bodies within Torfaen have taken the decision to formulate their own CRB Disclosure Policy in which all governors (new and existing) must have a check – this would exclude the Headteacher, Teacher Representative, Staff representative and any governor that has received an

Advanced Disclosure in the last year. The cost of such checks must be met by the school. Governing Bodies must also be aware that **all Volunteers** working within the school **MUST** be CRB checked. This includes parents, governors, community members alike, where there is a possibility of being alone with pupils when supporting the school for example; reading with pupils, attending school trips, doing volunteer work during sports days, concerts etc. These checks are **'FREE'** and all forms must be clearly marked Volunteer and identification approved by the school before forwarding the form to the LEA.

Currently all Torfaen Governors are required to complete a LIST 99 form – this form is then checked against LIST 99.

List 99 contains the names, dates of birth and teacher reference numbers of people whose employment has been barred or restricted, either on grounds of misconduct or on

medical grounds. If a person's employment is restricted, the entry shows the types of employment in which he or she is permitted to work. People barred on misconduct grounds are listed separately from those barred on medical grounds, but no details of misconduct are given.

List 99 is a sensitive and confidential document and access to it is strictly limited to individuals responsible for checking the suitability of applicants. The purpose of List 99 is to enable employers to safeguard against employing a barred person. It should be emphasised that not all those on the list are perceived to be a danger to children. **If you require further information regarding CRB Checks please contact Granville Hern**

**Clare Chatwin
Senior Governor Support & Development Officer**

Human Resources - Governors Responsibilities

The aim of the Education Human Resource team is to support schools and the LEA in the promotion of Torfaen as a place to work and live. Our objective is to support and help school governing bodies and the LEA recruit and retain staff through endeavouring to be an "excellent employer." To do this we ensure that policies are in place that promote the high commitment and motivation of staff and a working environment that is rewarding and enjoyable.

The support provided has been developed to help school governing bodies, the LEA and its employees to respond to the constant challenges of human resource management. We see our role as helping schools and the LEA to raise standards in education by the effective management of personnel and to set standards of excellence in employment policy and practice.

Each governing body has significant responsibilities in the employment and management of staff. The governing body will: -

- Decide the staff complement as determined by the School Staff Structure and the limitations imposed by the school budget;
- Ensure that all procedures relating to the recruitment and selection of staff are in place and that they are kept under review;
- Establish a performance management framework for the school;
- Deal with capability, disciplinary, grievance and dismissal issues; and
- Ensure that all procedures are in place relating to the health and safety of employees.

The service also involves providing school governing bodies and the LEA with advice on: -

- Suitable redeployment placements;
- Job advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications;
- Equal opportunities;
- The safe recruitment of people to work with children, young persons and vulnerable adults;
- Dealing with payroll issues; and
- Pay and other conditions of service.

The service is run by an 8 strong team of officers based in County Hall, Cwmbran. The team is made up of three Human Resource Officers and a small team of staff that help with the smooth operation of human resource issues.

"We are here to help you!"

Granville Hern
Principal HR Officer

Pay Review Panels

If you are a member of the Governing Bodies Personnel Committee you will be required to hold an annual Pay Review panel meeting. These meetings should be clearly and accurately minuted, to ensure that the governing body is aware of all delegated decisions made and if necessary a member of the Human Recourse team can be at hand for advice.

The Pay Review Panel has the following roles:

- To establish, in conjunction with the Headteacher, a performance management frame work for the school (as on opposite page).
- To review the salaries of teachers annually in accordance with existing arrangements, and notify them in writing on the basis on which their place on the existing pay spine has been determined.
- To review the Headteacher and Deputy's salaries based on their

overall performance for the year with reference to previous agreed targets. Agree performance objectives with the Head and Deputy for the coming year. The context of those objectives should be the schools development plan.

- To undertake a salary review at any other time as required.

Clare Chatwin
Governor Support

Torfaen Education Human Resources

You are not alone!! If a governor or your governing body need advice and support on issues relating to the above articles or another Personnel matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Torfaen Education Human Resources Section.

Teresa Parsons, Head of Human Resources (Education) 01633 648273

Paul Short, Principal HR Officer - (Employee Relations) 01633 648115

**Granville Hern, Principal HR Officer - (H&S Training & Development)
01633 648112**

Teresa Gibbons, Assistant HR Officer/Team Leader 01633 648123

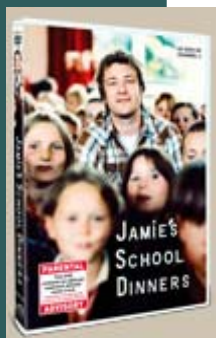
Sarah Strong, HR Admin Officer (South) 01633 648163

Emma Davies, HR Admin Officer (North) 01633 648163

Admin Support Team 01633 648091



School Dinners - Healthy Eating in Torfaen



Picture courtesy of BBC

The Torfaen Healthy Schools Scheme has been in place for considerable time, and good nutrition and health promotion is integrated into school life. However Jamie Oliver has acted as a catalyst for further change within the Healthy Eating Arena!

Torfaen Catering Schools Meal's Service provides lunch-time meals to all Torfaen Primary Schools. In the past the service has used a large number of 'plate coverage' items such as chicken nuggets and turkey drummers. However, as of 6th June 2005 all plate coverage items were totally removed from the menu and the new menu plan was implemented.

Trials of a Healthy Eating new menu took place at Woodlands Junior and Infants, Henllys Church in Wales and Griffithstown Infants and as a result

recipes, such as chicken curry, quiche, meatballs and lemon chicken have been introduced.

The majority of Secondary Schools have now taken the catering function 'in house'. One of the biggest sources of revenue for secondary schools comes directly from Vending machines. It is possible to achieve good financial return from machines that sell milk, juice and water. The decision about of what to sell from the vending machines is for the School, contactors and Governing Body to decide.

Advice and support for schools is available from Donna James, PSE Strategy Manager and Toni Edwards Catering Manager who have been very successful in obtaining a Healthy Food Grant of £70,000 this will be spent on the following activities

- A Menu Analysis System
- Healthy Eating Tasting

- sessions with pupils
- Training on basic knife skills and food preparation
- Visiting Chef
- Culinary consultant to work on recipe development
- Food processors
- Healthy lunch boxes and parent sessions
- Water vending machines
- School meal sample days for parents
- Basic Hygiene and food preparation courses
- Healthy Eating skilling sessions as part of out of school play scheme

If you are interested in further information in relation to School meals please contact **Toni Edwards on 01633 648413**

Clare Chatwin
Senior Governor Support & Development Officer

Welcome to all
Nursery School
Governors

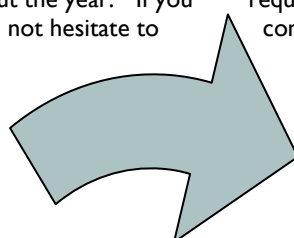
Do you know
what's the
greatest drain
on your school
budget?

Welcome to the New Nursery School Governors ...

With effect from 1 April 2006 all Nursery Schools are required to have a Governing Body (Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005) As a new governor you may find your first meeting quite daunting, but it need not be. A good approach would be to read all the documentation before hand, arrive 5-10mins before the meeting is due to start, which will allow time for you to speak with the headteacher and Chair of Governors, who will then introduce you to fellow governors as they arrive. Please do not be afraid to ask questions or seek clarity on any issues. You are not alone. Below you will see the Annual Cycle of the Governing Body indicating the relevant issues that will arise in meetings throughout the year. If you require further information on the role of governors or the School please do not hesitate to contact Governor Support or your Head teacher.

Summer Term

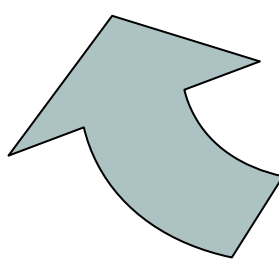
- Receive Headteachers Report
- Receive Committee Reports
- Review SDP
- Review School Policies
- Staff Development
- Review progress of SDP against priorities and timescales



Annual Cycle of the Governing Body

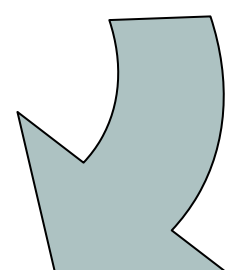
Autumn Term

- Elect Chair and Vice
- Review Committee Structure
- Receive Headteachers Report
- Appoint Governors with Responsibility
- Programme of meetings for the year
- Review School Development Plan (SDP)
- Review School Policies
- Prepare Governors Annual Report to Parents



Spring Term

- Pay Policy Review
- Agree the School Budget
- Receive Headteachers Report
- Receive Committee Reports
- Review SDP
- Review School Policies
- Staff Development
- Review Governor Training



The Torfaen School Budget 2006/07

More cash per Torfaen pupil.....

This year the budget strategy employed by the Council and Education Service has enabled the following:

- Additional £26.58 per Primary Pupil
- Additional £85.35 per Secondary Pupil
- Additional £250K for Energy Funding
- Fully fund the teachers pay award from September 2006
- Fully fund the pay award for all other categories of staff
- Increase in funding for UPS 3 (from 55% to 87%)
- Fully fund non-pay inflation for premises factors including building maintenance, statutory testing and grounds maintenance

- Fully passport to schools the additional funding for Workforce Remodelling

TOTAL FUNDING (Inc Grants) increases by 3.8%

For full details of the Torfaen Budget Strategy and 'Your Schools Budget' please contact the Headteacher or Chair of Governors who have been sent the full breakdowns.

Your Schools Budget Plan for 2006/07 must be approved by the Governing Body by 31st May 2006

Governors are not expected to be financial experts, and support is available from LEA Officers.



The School Development Plan should drive the Budget and not vice versa.

The Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase seeks to provide a different way of educating children aged from 3 to 7, and is an important part of the distinctive approach to education set out by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in its paving document "The Learning Country" (2001).

The key features of the Foundation Phase are:

- more informal learning through active involvement and play
- improved staffing ratios and training
- emphasis on children learning outdoors as well as indoors.

There is a new curriculum that builds on the current Desirable Outcomes for children before compulsory school age (Early Years), and includes aspects of the guidance for Key Stage 1. The curriculum framework comprises seven areas of learning.

- Personal and Social Development and Well-being
- Language, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematical Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development
- Bilingualism and Multicultural Understanding.

Piloting of the Foundation Phase began in selected schools and nurseries across Wales in September 2004 starting with Nursery and Reception pupils, and was extended to Year 1 in September 2005 (including Year 2 for schools with split year classes). In Torfaen Hollybush Primary is the pilot school, and staff from other primary schools in the County Borough have been able to visit Hollybush to see the Foundation Phase in operation. This is helping them in their planning and preparation for when it is rolled out across the whole of Wales, starting in September 2008.

Governors need to have an awareness of how the curriculum for the Foundation Phase differs from the current arrangements for Early Years and Key Stage 1. This could be obtained by requesting a briefing from the Headteacher, or teacher leading the introduction of the Foundation Phase. The Foundation Phase has already featured in the Torfaen Governors Training Programme, and, hopefully, there will be further sessions held in the run up to September 2008.

However, there are also important resource implications for governors to consider. The emphasis on children gaining first hand experience through play and active involvement rather than completing exercises in books carries implications for the space needed for indoor learning. The emphasis on outdoor learning is likely to involve investment in new equipment and makeovers of designated areas in the school grounds.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect is staffing. For the pilot, the staffing ratio of adults to children was set at 1 to 8 for Nursery and Reception, and 1 to 13 for Years 1 and 2. However, WAG is changing the latter ratio to 1 to 15 from September 2006. This could mean 1 or 2 less support staff in some settings, which would make achievement of the new learning outcomes more difficult.

Following an initiative by the Torfaen Association of School Governors, Governors Wales is making representations to WAG to ensure that adequate additional finance is made available for implementation of the Foundation Phase. It would be a shame if the success of this important educational initiative were jeopardised through a tight-fisted attitude to its funding.

Allan Tait, Chair of Governors, Hollybush Primary School



Torfaen Association (TASG)



Working together to improve the provision of Education in Torfaen

“TASG as an important forum for communication between governors and the LEA”.

So far this school year TASG has discussed a number of major issues and received presentations on a variety of topics.

The first presentation was from Catherine Simpson, then Head of School Effectiveness, who discussed the way she saw the LEA and schools working together. She stressed the need to look at cross cutting ways of working, the need for good communication and a single point of contact for Advisory and Inclusion teams and the Education Psychology Service. Consultation would take place with all stakeholders before a staged implementation of change ending in October 2006. Since this meeting Catherine has been appointed as Chief Education Officer. She now attends TASG meetings regularly in this role and is keen to take on board governors' views and concerns. TASG is being kept up to date with her plans and vision for education in Torfaen.

In January Darren Joseph, Head of Education Finance, had the unenviable task of giving a presentation on the draft budget for 2006/2007. The original funding gap had been balanced by savings (mainly from the central LEA budget) and there were additional allocations for school and non-school areas. It was expected that most, if not all, schools would see a small gain in their budget. Governors had the opportunity to question Darren and he will be coming back to the May meeting to provide an update.

The Spring term ended with two presentations – “The Healthy Eating Project” and “Learning Pathways – 14 to 19”. Torfaen successfully bid for £70,000 from WAG to improve school meals and raise the awareness of pupils and parents of the importance of a healthy diet. The project includes training for catering staff, healthy eating tasting sessions for pupils and parents as well as a review of menus and vending machines. Schools have been keen to come on board with the project and with the continued support of governors, pupils and parents Torfaen will be well ahead of WAG targets.

Peter Scott met governors to outline WAG's Learning Pathways initiative which is aimed at transforming education for 14 -19 year olds. Significant funding is available over three years to provide a wider choice of courses and qualifications more suited to the individual. Each pupil will also have access to a Learning Coach and impartial careers advice. Involvement in the project will spread beyond schools and colleges and although accepting the need to encourage 14-19 year olds to continue or begin education and training, Governors also felt that funding should be available to improve facilities for years 7 and 8 pupils.

In addition to these presentations, there has been regular discussion and debate on the Primary School Review, including proposals for S.W. Cwmbran. No

doubt this will remain on the agenda for some time. Thanks to Allan Tait, Torfaen's Management Committee representative, governors are kept up to date with the activities of Governors Wales. They will soon be issuing a Code of Conduct for Governors for consideration by governing bodies and have prepared an Acronym Factfile which will be of interest to new and experienced governors alike.

At the annual meeting Gil Barnett was re-elected chairman of Torfaen Association of School Governors and he has this message for governors “... Come and join the debate! Your school will have a nominated delegate but TASG meetings are open to all school governors. Topics discussed seek to provide answers to the queries and problems raised by governing bodies. This is an opportunity to discuss your views with Catherine Simpson the Chief Officer for Education, other senior education officers as well as the Executive Member for Education. Collaboration between schools is likely to expand. Come and meet governors with a common interest – **the education of your school's pupils.**

**Contact Anne Jenkins
01633 648092 for details
of meetings..”**

Interview with a Governor

There are over 600 governors in Torfaen, who make a voluntary but highly valued commitment to support schools by becoming a Governor. This feature will be a regular slot within Governor Talks, a chance for Governors to be introduced to colleagues. In this issue we meet Jeff Phillips, Chair of Governors of Greenmeadow (Parent Governor). We asked Jeff;

What made you decide to be a Governor ?

I'm Chair of Governors at Greenmeadow Primary School in Cwmbran, and have been a governor for 7 years.

I was originally involved with the work of 'Friends of Greenmeadow', the parent teacher association for the school, and could see from doing this how much hard work is involved in running the school. I decided to stand as a Parent Governor in order to support the excellent work of the school, and to 'give something back'.

What do you find to be most rewarding about your role ?

As a governor representing parents, I'm part of a team contributing to the direction and operation of the school, to ensure that every opportunity is given to all children in the school, and to support all staff in their work. Each member of the governing body brings their own view and a second opinion to the work of the school, and we support the school in different ways. We help out directly in school, we help with the running of the school through various committees, and we support school events such as Christmas concerts and our Summer Fair.

There are many rewarding aspects about being involved in the work of my school. Seeing the excitement and joy of the children at so many of the events that staff, parents, and the children have put so much effort into organising, such as our excellent school concerts, is certainly very rewarding. Working with staff to plan for the year ahead and dealing with issues throughout the year is also very satisfying.

What particular contributions do you feel parents bring to the governing body ?

Parents can bring many qualities to the work of the governing body, with their focus especially on the needs of children. There's no requirement for a parent to have specialist knowledge of education - that's for the educational professionals involved with the school - but parents can bring practical knowledge and skills to the governing body, put forward ideas, and ask the really pertinent question when governors are dealing with a particular issue! Parent governors often have contacts in the wider community or at work which can be helpful for the school.

Being a parent governor really is very rewarding, and I would strongly urge more parents to get involved in the work of your school.

Jeff Phillips
Chair of Governors
Greenmeadow Primary School

Governor Training

Well informed governors are crucial to the success of a school and training plays a vital role in ensuring that governors are equipped to deal with many major issues.

Governors already commit a considerable amount of time to their schools and many find it difficult to dedicate time to training. However, course evaluations show that governors speak very highly of training attended and appreciate the help it provides in deal-



ing with complex issues such as Redundancies. Governor Support are continually looking into effective methods of delivery and therefore we would welcome your comments on training and all other aspects of the service provided.

Training Needs Analysis 2006

We are continually reviewing the support available to the 600 School Governors in Torfaen, with the specific aim to improve the effectiveness of the Governing Body through enhanced communication, support, training and monitoring. Therefore a Training Needs Analysis Questionnaire has been compiled to ensure that governors are provided with a varied and balanced training programme which accommodates the needs of both the experienced and the newly appointed governor.

Last year in consultation with Link Governors it was agreed to create a Termly Training Programme rather than an annual one to increase attendance and flexibility of courses provided. However, attendance dropped for courses held in the spring term.

The questionnaire is an opportunity for you to tell us if there are any issues we can address to make the training sessions more accessible, relevant etc. Therefore, when you receive it, please answer all questions fully and honestly and return in the FREEPOST envelope.

Thank you
Clare Chatwin, Senior Governor
Support & Development Officer

Torfaen County Borough Council

Contacting the team:

Governor Support and Development Service

FREEPOST RLYZ-LTLX-HLAR

Torfaen Education Service
 County Hall
 CWMBRAN NP44 2WN

Phone:

Stuart Foster 01633 648130
 Clare Chatwin 01633 648248
 Anne Jenkins 01633 648092

Fax: 01633 648164

E-mail:

stuart.foster@torfaen.gov.uk
 clare.chatwin@torfaen.gov.uk
 anne.jenkins@torfaen.gov.uk

Teachers TV

Sky Guide 880, Telewest 240, ntl 803, KIT 70, HomeChoice 845, Freeview 88 (12-6am)

This TV Channel not only provides Teachers with resources it also provides practical support and case studies for Governors.

Programmes This Term:

- Special Needs
- Setting Targets
- School Improvement
- Opting for Health
- An Injury in the Playground
- Being Chair
- Self Evaluation
- Discipline
- Exclusion and Drugs



For more information log on to www.teachers.tv

Governor Training Summer 2006

NAME _____

GOVERNING BODY _____

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

Code	Course	Date	Time	Venue	Select Course
GOVI4/1	Healthy Schools in Torfaen	Tuesday 16 May 2006	1.30pm	County Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOVI6/1	The Role of the Chair	Tuesday 13 June 2006	1.30pm	County Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOVI3/1	Redundancies	Thursday 15 June 2006	6pm	County Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOVI/2	Governorship	Tuesday 4 July 2006	1pm	County Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOVI8/2	Health & Safety	<i>Date to be confirmed - week commencing Monday 3 July 2006</i>	5pm	SCHOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOVI7/1	Dealing with Vulnerable Children	Thursday 22 June 2006	6om	County Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please cut out and return to **Governor Support, FREEPOST RLYZ-LTLX-HLART** Torfaen Education Service, County Hall Cwmbran NP44 2WN. Further details on courses can be found in the training booklet