

Yes, OGA is still functioning, though you might not think so from the state of the website in recent months! To be honest in the first few months of lockdown I felt that schools and Governors were getting plenty of advice from the DfE and the County Council around Covid-19, and NGA stepped up to the mark with advice for Governors, including for non-members, so I felt any information from us would just add to the work overload. We are currently concerned at the extreme pressure school staff are now working under, compounded by the inadequate financial support for COVID-19 costs and will shortly be writing to the Secretary of State for Education to raise this concern on behalf of Oxfordshire Governors.

It has certainly been a year of two halves. Our last AGM and Autumn conference were held on 19th October 2019, when our speaker was Paul Aber, the Head of Training Development, National Governance Association, talking about **Vision, Culture and Strategy**. This was very well received by those attending, who departed our host school, Matthew Arnold, in good humour despite the lack of lunch due to Oxford traffic problems arising from closure of the A34.

We had an excellent speaker lined up for our Spring term meeting – Ann Finlayson, the Executive Chair of Sustainability and Environmental Education who was going to talk about **Preparing our students for a sustainable future: Evidence from 30 years of what works**. Sadly this event, like so many others this year, was cancelled. However, we are hopeful that this meeting can be rearranged for a future date. It is certainly an important topic for discussion.

As usual I would like to thank Governor Services for providing clerking support for our meetings and together with OTSA and OCC (through Schools News) for advertising our events. However, we still do not think we are reaching many Oxfordshire Schools' Governors. For those attending who did not hear about this event through their clerk, we would be grateful to hear how you did find out about the event, and from any of you what improvements could be made to our communications.

In the fourteen months since the 2019 AGM we have held 6 meetings of OGA's governing body, the Executive Committee, 3 face to face and 3 virtual. We also have representatives who attend the School Organisation Stakeholder's Group, Education Scrutiny and the Workforce Steering Group, as well as the Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership. Representatives also have regular meetings with the lead officer for governance. We have regular Consultation Meetings attended by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for schools and education and on occasion other County Councillors, plus key officers including the Director for Children's Services. At these meetings we raise issues of concern for schools and their Governing Boards. Notes and links to these groups may also be found on the OGA website. I would like to thank all my OGA colleagues who represent Governors at these meetings and for their continuing support and advice, without which the Association could not continue.

For those schools that do not subscribe to OGA through OCC and wish to pay us directly through Bacs, methodology may be found on our website along with a list of schools that have already subscribed through the OCC buyback process.

We always welcome feedback from you about current issues, ideas for improvements in how we work with you or suggestions of themes or speakers for our Open meetings.

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