



BATH & WELLS  
Multi Academy Trust

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

# Local governor prospectus

Making a real difference to  
families in your community



# Introduction by Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust CEO Nikki Edwards

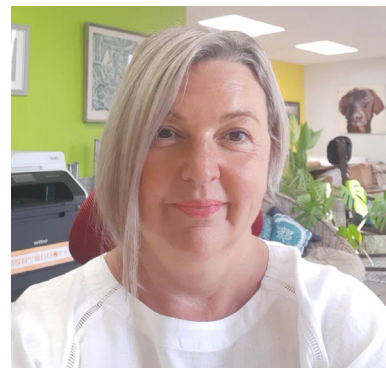
## **Want to give back to your local area? How you can be part of making the future brighter for thousands of children**

I am really pleased to launch our governor prospectus for the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust.

We believe in local governance and the strength that volunteers can bring to having a positive impact on the life chances of all children.

The work is varied and we know, from the experiences of the more than 300 local governors in our Trust Family, that just as they bring immense value and experience to their respective schools, the role itself is incredibly rewarding for each of them as individuals. You will read more about local governor experiences in the prospectus.

Please contact us if you want to make a difference to the children in your area by serving as a local governor in one of our schools.



# Welcome by Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust

## Chair of Trustees Nigel Daniels

### **Our local governors play a crucial role as the link between the school and the residents in your community**

The local governors play a vital role in the development of each of our 34 schools, which are spread across three local authorities: North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, and Somerset..

Each school has an unique character and setting and the local governors provide the essential link to the local community to ensure its views and needs are heard, whilst being the “critical friend” of the Headteacher.

In their profiles, the Chairs of Governors emphasise that there are no specific skills needed to be a local governor but rather a keen interest in children and their development, enthusiasm, and willingness to work in a team. In addition to personal satisfaction, the role of local governor also provides personal development.

I hope the experiences of the Governors profiled will inspire you to consider joining them in our Trust Family, thereby ensuring an outstanding education for the children entrusted to our care.

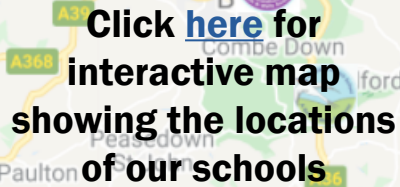


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# About our Trust Family



Click [here](#) for interactive map showing the locations of our schools

**BWMAT local governors in numbers**

**300**

Governors in the Trust

**6.5**

Hours of commitment per month for the role

**78**

Hours of commitment per year for the role

**23,400**

Local governor hours per year in the Trust

All figures approximate

***“Each school has its own unique character”***

We are proud to be a Trust Family of schools which are all unique but share the same values and aspirations.

Each of our schools has its own unique character and aims to serve its particular community. The majority of our schools were founded by the Church of England to serve their local communities and keep their close ties with their parish church.

We also welcome schools founded in partnership with other churches (ecumenical schools) and schools without a religious affiliation (community schools).

The Trust was established to provide support for five schools deemed failing by Ofsted. Eight years on from the trust’s founding, the majority of these schools are now judged to be Good and the trust has grown to include 34 schools in a whole variety of communities.

These vary from small schools in very rural locations, to urban schools in Bath, Bridgwater and Taunton. While the majority of schools which are now part of the Trust Family have chosen to be part of the Trust, we continue to provide a home for church schools which require a sponsor following an Inadequate Ofsted judgement.



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# Governor Q&A

## **What kind of people are you looking for as governors?**

Our local governors come from all walks of life and are drawn from their local community, providing the vital links the families, business and local organisations served by each school. Each Local Governing Committee is a diverse group of people who together bring a wider perspective to the task of leading their school. While this is a leadership role, each board needs to work together well and so local governors need to be good team players.

## **What is involved and how much time will being a local governor take?**

Leading a school in partnership with the Headteacher and school leaders is a significant task and so does require commitment of time and energy. As a Trust we recognise the value local governors bring to our schools and so we are careful to use their time wisely. You should expect to attend four to five full committee meetings, some additional meetings and visit the school during the school day about three times a year.

## **What support and training does the trust provide for local governors?**

We provide training for all our local governors, starting at appointment with induction by the school and the Trust. Every governor is provided with membership of the National Governance Association by the Trust and in addition to our Trust's bespoke training, we also buy access for all governors to the NGA's web-based suite of learning modules Learning Link, which they can access at any time.

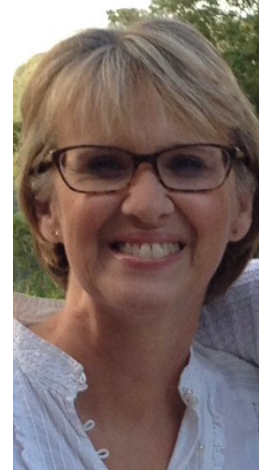


# Governor Profiles

## Clare Ford, Chair of Governors at Freshford Church School

- **To do something meaningful that is flexible time-wise,**
- **To work with people from the local community,**
- **Sharing common goals and knowing that our decisions could potentially make a difference**

“ These were just some of the reasons I answered a local advertisement for new governors at my local primary school in Freshford. Five years later, I am truly in awe, not only of the professionals who I have had the privilege to work alongside, but of the volunteers who, like me, continue to offer their enthusiasm and their willingness to listen, to learn, to adapt and develop. It has been a busy, fulfilling and at times, unexpected journey, but one which I can honestly say, I have enjoyed enormously.



Our governors come from a wide cross section of the labour market; several are retired and whilst there isn't a governor "type", I would say that they all bring something special to the role. They all share an interest in educating young people, they tend to be patient, are often kind, are good listeners, are generous with their time and are enthusiastic in wanting the best for our school. Without exception, all start the role feeling unprepared, occasionally get lost in the jargon, and wonder what, if anything, they can offer. However, with the support and training on offer and by asking questions, it isn't long before a new Governor sees how they fit into the team and become that (oft quoted) "critical friend" to the school. Our meetings are a lovely mixture of professional input, concerned focus, and, at times, good natured laughter. The tea and cake helps too!

As a Governor, you will also learn valuable new skills. What other role would give you the chance to meet new parents, watch children perform a play, grapple with the costings of solar panels, listen to a lesson on how to do fractions, discuss a confidential issue with the Head, or attend a training on safeguarding? If you are looking for variety, want to make a difference and like working in a team then being a Governors one of the most rewarding and fulfilling volunteer opportunities there is.

# Governor Profiles

## Terry Gibson, Chair of Governors, The Three Saints Federation

“ As a lifelong teacher, my vocation has always rested in education. The opportunity to be involved in the life of a primary school during my retirement is one that I find stimulating and exciting. It is a huge privilege to work with teachers, support staff, parents and carers, and of course the children themselves, to build a school community that is vibrant and full of hope.

I joined the Local Governing Body of the Three Saints Federation at a difficult time, following a poor OFSTED inspection. With a new head and a reinvigorated staff team, we have worked to turn the school around. Joining the Bath & Wells MAT has been a crucial part of this work, and I welcome the Christian vision that is at the very heart of the Trust's ethos.



I believe that being a governor is a unique privilege and I relish the chance to continue to be involved in the education world, and be involved in the education journey of young people. Fundamentally, though, the appeal of the role is when I am in school, working as part of a team to provide the very best conditions for children and to lay foundations for their future flourishing and wellbeing.

For anyone who wants a new challenge, or to develop fresh skills and insights, I would heartily recommend becoming a school governor. It will stimulate and stretch you, as well as providing inspiration and encouragement. It will provide a chance to make a difference to the world, and especially to the next generation. It will also give you a fresh understanding of how important education is for the whole of society.

If you are committed to young people, enjoy working as part of a professional and multi-skilled team, and feel inspired by the thought of shaping the future, I encourage you to consider volunteering as a school governor. Your commitment will be rewarded every time you visit the school and see the pupils whose lives are being formed by a high-quality education that will stay with them forever.



# Governor Profiles

## Mike Davies, Chair of Governors at Wembdon St George's Church School

“ I have been a governor at my local primary school for about 12 years and chair for seven. My journey as a governor began because I wanted to bring my leadership and management experience at work to the school my children attended as a way of supporting their education. Since then, my children have grown up and moved on to university, however I have continued my role as a governor at the school. They both enjoyed their time at the school and have done well; I want that to continue for other children.



The school plays a central role in the local community and I have found that being such a special place, it gets under your skin and becomes part of you. The governors work closely with the school to support it, but also to provide challenge in a constructive way. As governors, we observe the school in action, monitor its performance and ensure the best use is made of its resources.

There have been many highs, such as spending time in the school watching pupils learn and grow, but of course over the years there have also been tough times and some hard decisions to make.

The school staff and wider community have always been amazing, working incredibly hard to give each and every child the best possible opportunities and develop them into life-long learners. Being a governor allows me to use my skills and expertise to give something back to the community. It gives me an additional sense of purpose outside of my normal family and work life. It has been challenging and rewarding; my own skills and experience have been developed and used by working with governors in ways that no other role in my life has offered.

I am incredibly proud of my school and proud of being part of it. I would thoroughly recommend becoming a governor as a way of contributing to your local community, using and developing your own skills and experience, and because of the sense of pride it gives in supporting young people achieve their potential.

# Governor Profiles

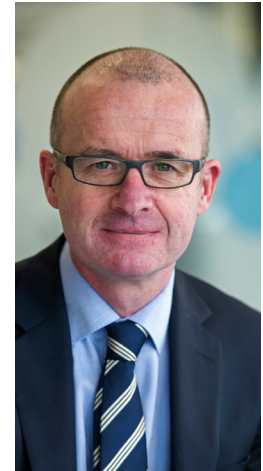
## Roland McCormack, Chair of Governors, St Michael's Church School

“ My own school journey was a mixed experience, and it was only when I moved to a very good school that I realised what made an excellent school and how much it enabled me to do well and succeed in life. Now, years on and having achieved success in my career in banking, my initial motivation to become a school governor was to give back, particularly to communities where there are significant economic and social challenges.

I registered with a charity who match people to governing boards and of the schools I was offered chose St Michael's Church School which serves a community that has the significant socio-economic factors that can make it difficult for children to achieve their full potential. Serving this community reminds me of the barriers many people face in life. This is one of the things about being a governor I value; a different perspective and an insight into life as it is for others, often those we might not otherwise meet.

Being a governor has also provided a real challenge to me which is very different to the challenges and learning opportunities I have through my professional life. Leading a diverse governing board and chairing board meetings is a complete contrast to work meetings; in our governing board meetings I have to work harder to make sure everyone has a voice, and that we hear the different perspectives around the table. Working with others who are also volunteers also requires different skills and approaches. Learning how a different sector works, understanding the world of education, has also stimulated my brain and given me something new to get stuck into.

I thoroughly recommend being a school governor. It is something I have benefited from and offers a different angle to life which I don't get from anything else I do.



# Governor Profiles

## Shannon Carr-Shand, Chair of Governors at Swainswick Church School

“ I became a governor at my children’s primary school when my son was in Year 1 and became Chair of Governors a year later. Initially my interest in joining the governing body was to give something back to the school community that welcomed my child so positively. However, as I became more involved, I was fascinated by the range of issues that governors deal with, and the value and support good governance brings to the school’s leaders.



My professional background as a sustainability consultant means that I am comfortable in the role of a critical friend; asking meaningful questions when you are not an expert in the specific topics being discussed. I do not have a background in education, so am very clear that our Head and teachers are the ‘experts in the room’. For me, being a good governor is to ask challenging questions and supporting leaders.

The only key skills required to be a Governor are:

- **Commitment to your school’s ethos and vision**
- **Willingness to do your research and come prepared to meetings**
- **Being open to participating in difficult conversations**

As a governor, our role is to always ask “*What is in the best interests of the children in our school?*”. This is not a simple question, but does often bring clarity to difficult decisions, and can help ensure a strategic rather than operational focus in discussions. I have grown personally through being a governor and Chair; particularly gaining broader expertise in meaningful community engagement and developing my ability to chair meetings effectively. I am now more at ease with difficult conversations; I now consider an awkward or tense discussion is often the sign important issues have been addressed openly and honestly. Whilst my role as Chair of Governors is a significant time commitment, it is deeply rewarding, and I consider it a privilege to be alongside my school’s journey.

# Governor Profiles

## Anthony Fletcher Rogers, Chair of Governors at Kingshill Church School

“ I originally decided to become a governor in 2013, when my two boys were at Kingshill. The school became an academy as part of the Trust, and a new local governing board was being setup. I wanted to contribute in some way to the future direction of the school, which had been through some tough times.

What struck me at the time, and has been confirmed many times since in the intervening years, is the ethos of the Trust and how it really valued the local governing board as an important link the local community. Kingshill Church School has always fostered those relationships, which means the governors really care about the outcomes for the children, not just academically but in all aspects of school life.



Being a governor gives you a unique insight into the huge amount of work that goes into educating our children and seeing how they can thrive through passionate and creative teaching. I did not come from an educational background and initially I wondered what I could bring to the table, but I realised that a different perspective is important in providing objective challenge to the school and that is what a diverse team of governors can bring.

During my eight years as a governor, I have realised that personally I have learnt so much. Being able to absorb information and challenge in a supportive way is a valuable skill that I've taken into my working life as well as learning how to chair a meeting and keep it to time! More importantly, it has been a privilege to support the school during this past year, when I've learnt that understanding and empathy are just as crucial to what governors do. Finally, what brings the most satisfaction is seeing children, teachers and a school develop and grow. I have been truly fortunate to be part of Kingshill Church School's journey and seeing at first-hand how a dedicated and caring team with inspiring leadership can build the foundations for a successful school.

# Governor Profiles

## David Williams, Chair of Governors at Bishop's Lydeard Church School

“ I joined the Governing Body of the primary school in the village in which I live approximately six years ago and have been fortunate to be Chair of Governors for the last four. I became interested in joining the Governing Body as a parent of children in the school at a time where OFSTED had assessed the school as requiring significant improvement.

In all honesty, I wasn't entirely aware what I was committing myself to, but felt that I had skills which could benefit the school as I am responsible for business improvements in my line of work. In return, the role has allowed me to be more involved in matters affecting my local community and it has broadened my understanding of the local social issues.

A good governing body needs a variety of skills to be effective and I have also learned so much from my fellow governors on a professional and personal perspective. Overall, being involved in the school and the school's improvement journey is hugely rewarding. There are challenges but knowing the governing body has supported and ensured the school leadership team have kept children safe, improved the quality of education and outcomes for all children and provided an enriching experience is worth every volunteered moment.



# Governor Profiles

## Alison Murkin, Chair of Governors at Churchfield Church School

“ I became a governor, and also chair of governors, with the Trust in September 2019. I was drawn, initially, by hearing the Headteacher’s vision for the school and by its Christian ethos. However, it was on meeting and engaging with the children that I was well and truly ‘sold.’

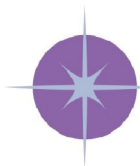
My background is in special education [SEND]. What has always motivated me in this work, is being part of a team giving those with greater hurdles to overcome, the self-belief to achieve beyond their own and society’s expectations of them. It is this self-belief which will help them to gain the learning, skills and personal qualities, and will enable them as adults to have flourishing, fulfilled, contributing lives. That said, I also simply enjoy meeting and talking with the children around the school doing their learning: questioning, being curious, reflecting, problem solving and their sharing their creative ideas.

Being a governor provides an opportunity to share your skills, experience and expertise, whatever your background. There’s also a responsibility to be curious, to question and challenge in a positive way. In the best interests of all the children in the a school community, we seek to learn and improve continually, and I enjoy that challenge. It is rewarding to be able to play a small part, together with governor colleagues, in this process. The visionary leadership and team of staff are inspiring; they are hugely committed to the children and families they serve and that in turn, encourages and enthuses us as governors. That sense of being a team, with a shared vision for our children, includes being part of the wider Trust, which places collaboration at the centre of its developing vision for the future.

Whilst being a governor is a significant commitment; it has the potential to be a very rewarding role. For me, the greatest reward is seeing the progress the children make, individually and collectively, as they grow, learn and thrive.







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# Inspired? Get in touch

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