

Governor News

**Welcome to the Autumn edition of
Governor News.**

The purpose of our bi-annual newsletter is to share with you the work that the governors do, on your behalf, to ensure that the learning experiences and educational opportunities provided for your child are the best that they can be.



The Governing Body



Sarah Wightman
Chair

Parent Governor



Rev'd Lynda Sebbage

Foundation Governor



Annie Throssell

Foundation Governor



Annabelle Reid

Community Governor



Andrew Wilson
Vice Chair

Community Governor



Helen Ashe

Headteacher



Nick Keefe

Staff Governor



Matt Bowe

Parent Governor



Jo Woodland

Community Governor

Return to School

Governors are delighted that children have been able to return to and stay in school. We would like to thank all parents and carers for supporting the school's reopening and adhering to all the changes (and changes to changes!) that have had to be made. Attendance so far this term is amazingly higher than it was this time last year! From the monitoring that we have been able to do, pupils have settled quickly and happily back into school life and learning is happening apace! Thank you again for all your support of the school's work – our strong home-school partnership is something that we are proud of.

The Governing Body is now looking ahead to welcoming another Year 5 class from next September when our current Year 5 group move up to become the first Year 6 class at Barrow. A Y5/Y6 Information Evening was held via Zoom for current year 4 families who will currently be thinking about next steps for their children. The word is already out that Miss Burchell will be the Year 6 teacher next year and Mr Hale will move up the school to teach Year 5. Recruitment will start in the new year for a Year 5 teaching assistant and a new teacher for lower down the school to replace Mr Hale. We are starting discussions with the Local Authority to maximise the funding received to ensure that we can resource the Y5/Y6 teaching provision at the highest level possible. Our new building was recently Blessed by Reverend Lynda and somehow it already feels like it has always been part of the school!

Sarah Wightman
Chair of Governors



Introducing Our New Governor

Rev'd Lynda Sebbage - Foundation Governor

I am pleased to be on the school board of governors in my role as priest in charge of the Barrow benefice. I moved from Sudbury to Barrow in August and live in the Rectory with my husband, Peter, and my Westie dog, Maddie. It's a very busy life running five parishes but I always find time to walk with my dog through the glorious countryside that surrounds us. As well as being a priest, I am also honorary chaplain to a historical naval organisation - The 1805 Club. I love nature, photography, history, travel and reading - whenever there is a spare moment that is!



Finance Update



Impact of Covid 19

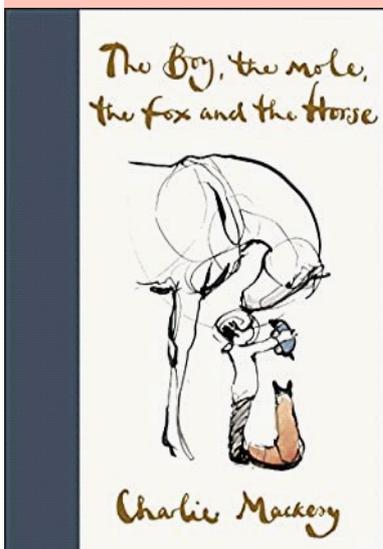
In Charlie Mackesy's book 'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse' one of the quotes that comes from the book is "When the dark clouds come, keep going". There have been moments during this year that I suspect have felt very much like this to us all. The dark clouds that have appeared over this year's school's finances have not surprisingly been linked to the Covid 19 pandemic; not only bringing additional costs but also a substantial drop in our income.

It's easy to see why, ensuring that everyone remains safe, with increased layers of protection, has increased our costs. Whilst the government agreed to fund 'exceptional Covid costs', the eligibility for such financial support was such we were unable to make a claim; resulting in the school having to fund the additional costs within its existing funds.

On the income side of the balance sheet, we have been unable to hire out the school hall and swimming pool (following Government guidance) for the majority of this year. The money we receive from hiring the school facilities has always been a crucial element within the overall finances of the school. It has often protected us from having to make some really difficult financial choices.

Because we have always known that some future event might potentially create some financial 'dark clouds', we have been steadily building up a reserve to cover for unforeseen events, basically 'saving up for a rainy day'. It will perhaps come as no surprise to know that this year we will have to use our 'rainy day fund' reserves. On current projections, whilst we won't have had to use them all, we will certainly have had to use a major chunk.

School Trip Contributions



Linking back to the 'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse', part of the wonder of the story is the adventures and travels that the four characters take. Protecting school bubbles has meant that the usual school trips, organised throughout the year, have had to temporarily be suspended. The school has therefore tried to recreate these school trip 'learning experiences' within the confines of the school. Travel costs (the cost of coach travel) usually account for half the overall costs of school trips. Bringing the experiences to the school rather than having to travel to them has meant that trip contribution costs have reduced. Even though the special experiences are taking place within school, we will still be asking for voluntary contributions as there are costs that still have to be met in order for the events to take place.

We are reliant on your continued support and thank you in advance for the contributions that you make.

Andrew Wilson
Chair of Finance Committee

Wellbeing Highlights

The children have been remarkable in how well they have settled back into school this term after such a disruptive start to their year. They have shown resilience, determination and general all-round awesomeness since September and they make us very proud!

Wellbeing of course, has been high on the agenda. The governors fully supported Mrs Ashe's brave decision to implement a 'recovery curriculum' for the first 10 days back at school which saw the children taking part in sports and team building activities, in place of formal lessons. This was to help them reinforce friendships, rebuild confidence and re-establish old routines and has really paid off, giving children the pastoral foundation on which to build their learning. When we surveyed the children's wellbeing at half term the questions that scored the most answers of 5/5 were "I feel safe in school", "I feel happy in school" and "the pupils try hard at school".

Respecting class bubbles and weather meant that playtimes have been a logistical challenge, yet a high priority this term. Time outdoors is imperative and with our new running track dug out, the pupils, staff and governors were keen to get it filled and in use. The children took ownership of this and every class (including reception) took a turn at shovelling 47 cubic metres of bark across the field to complete the job! A real Barrow team effort.

We really appreciate how hard it has been for some parents, especially our new parents, to not be able to come into school in person. Outside of Covid we operate an open door policy and actively welcome families to events and to share school experiences with their children. We absolutely understand that watching them online is not the same

as being in the room, but we hope it gives you a window into their Barrow world. The staff are determined that the children won't miss out, Christmas parties are in the pipeline and nativity rehearsals underway. At least this year your view won't be blocked by that really tall parent who sits in front of you!

In all seriousness, as governors, the wellbeing of Barrow families and staff is incredibly important to us. We know the challenges this year has presented to both children and parents. We are so grateful for how you have come together as a school community and worked with us to overcome these obstacles. We continue to work hard to ensure that we as a school support you in return. We are very much looking forward to being able to welcome you back into school soon.

Annabelle Reid
Wellbeing Governor



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