Alban City School

Governors' Newsletter

SUMMER 2025

Word from the Chair

A year has passed since I last wrote to you, and what a lot has happened in that time. I remember bidding a fond farewell to three governors in our last newsletter, and since that time we have been delighted to welcome five new governors to our board. In the Autumn term you elected two new parent governors (Elisabeth Phillips and Gavin Baylis), and we then recruited three non-parent governors. We were keen to maintain a good balance of parent/non-parent governors, and were also keen to introduce more people with a background in education and finance. Mike Lovett, Ian Gregory and Kris Moseley have done just that, and I am delighted to see the positive impact the new governors are having on the governing body, and in turn on the future of Alban City School. Kate Leahy, who has been a governor since the school opened, has sadly decided that now is a good time for her to step down. We shall miss her sage advice a great deal, and thank her for all she has done for the school. You can read about all of our current governors on the school website.

Last summer I made reference to the school's sporting successes, and mentioned how well the girls football team had done to finish second in the league, in only their second year taking part. How wonderful that this year's team has gone one better and taken home the trophy! As governors we are keen to enable as many children as possible to take part in sport, and I have (cont.)

been impressed to see all of the opportunities on offer this year. A big thank you to Mr Clements for all of his hard work in this regard, and for all he has done to advance sport at Alban City School during his time with us – he shall be missed.

This time last year I recall being excited to see the school's plans for the new playground unfold, and I was delighted to visit the new playground when I visited the school recently. I have heard great things about the new OPAL scheme which has been introduced, and you can read more about this in our "Spotlight" section below. It wouldn't have been possible to build the new playground without the hard work, and support, of the PTA Committee. From fairs to discos, to sponsored reads and ice lolly sales, they put in so much hard work to enhance the children's school experience and to also raise vital funds for the school – thank you.

As ever, times are tough for schools on the financial front, and the fall in birth rate is continuing to have an impact on all local schools. Please do continue to spread the word about our lovely school, as we currently have spaces available in the majority of year groups and would love to see these spaces filled.

Wishing you a fun-filled summer.

Paula Willoughby

Spotlight on Play!

When to be the Link Governor for 'Play', I was fascinated, and maybe slightly surprised, to hear that children in primary schools spend 20% (or 1.4 years) of their school attendance 'playing'. With there being so many benefits of the provision of play, the governors were committed to exploring and increasing the quality of the children's play experiences at Alban City School. As a parent governor, it was a pleasure to be involved with the recent planning and launch of the school's OPAL Programme. OPAL is about creating rich opportunities for the children to be creative, collaborative, and active during their outdoor play time. Coinciding with the unveiling of the new playground, and through the hard work and imagination of Mrs Carter and the play supervisors, playtime at Alban City has been transformed!

During a recent governor visit, I was invited to observe and engage with OPAL in action. Whilst slightly anxious about being on the school playground for 90 minutes over lunchtime (!), I left feeling inspired having watched the children positively engage with each other and the different activities on offer. There was no shortage of imagination and problem solving, as I witnessed children making rollercoasters and obstacle courses, other children creating a café in the (cont.)

hideout, with many others honing their basketball skills. The impact of the scheme is evident: when speaking to the play supervisors, they shared how previously the children found it difficult to come up with games and activities as there was little stimulation, however there is now no shortage of ideas and equipment to enhance their playtime. Whilst OPAL is focussed on the quality of play, it is also teaching the children important social skills such as co-operation, sharing, taking responsibility – values which are

emphasised and reinforced during the weekly Play Assemblies.

Whilst still in its infancy, it is clear to see the difference OPAL has made to 'Play' time at Alban City School and we are committed to ensuring quality play remains a fundamental part of the children's experience at Alban City. I am excited to see how the scheme continues to develop and the different zones that materialise each term. Please keep an eye on the school's newsletters and Instagram page, as your help in donating and sourcing resources for the children to play with is an invaluable part of the scheme's success.

Sarah Wright

Getting to know our Governors

Sean Trend

Favourite St Albans restaurant: This might be controversial, but Murgano's on Victoria Street – nothing beats fried chicken.

Favourite book: *Night* by Elie Wiesel. I have a History degree so found it incredibly moving.

Favourite film: *Love Actually*. A Christmas rom-com is a perfect combination.

Why did you become a governor at ACS?: I have a busy job but wanted to do something for the community. I love children so it's a great combination.

What areas do you focus on?: I am the Link Governor for Finance. I've been a Finance Director for a while and so it makes sense to put my skills to good use.

What is your favourite thing about ACS?: The staff. They are amazing and create a fantastic environment for the children.

Describe yourself in three words: energetic, fun, curious!

Happiness, well-being, high achievement

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