

Meet the Governors



I have been a governor since the early days of Clyst Vale becoming an Academy. Both my children came here and my wife and I chose CVCC because of its clear expression of a caring ethos and shaping young people to be well rounded, in addition to achieving the best they were capable of academically. I think those core values have become even more apparent in recent times and have enabled us to do our very best for students in the difficult years of 2020 and 2021. As a governor it has been an honour to be a small part of shaping that ethos.

Mr Simon Sanger-Anderson

Chair of Board
Member Appointed
Trustee/Governor
Member of Trust



Mrs Sara Jacobs
Principal/Ex Officio

My career in education began in 1995 at Paignton Community College, an 11-18 mixed ability comprehensive school. In 1999 I joined Tiverton High School as a Head of Department later assuming the role of Head of Faculty. Following a career break to focus on my family I returned to my career in teaching as Head of Department at Uffculme School. During my period of employment at Uffculme I had the opportunity to experience many aspects of school leadership, in addition to my role as Head of Department I was appointed as a Lead Practitioner before being promoted as Assistant Head and Director of the West Country Teaching School Alliance.

I joined Clyst Vale Community College in September 2019 as a Deputy Head and assumed the role of Principal in January 2024. Clyst Vale is a fantastic College, it has retained its unique culture and ethos against an increasingly challenging educational landscape. It is a school which recognises and promotes relationships and the happiness and wellbeing of all students and staff alongside academic excellence and understands the crucial interdependency of the two.

I am passionate about education, the potential of young people and continue to teach. Out of College, my interests include sailing, cycling and travel.



Mr Paul Colin
Co-Opted
Governor/Trustee

As a long-standing member of teaching staff, now retired, and former Staff Governor, Clyst Vale has been a big part of my life and I am delighted to now return as a co-opted Governor. After a period working in cancer research, I started my teaching career in Hertfordshire and then moved to Clyst Vale in 1990. I was second in Science and then Head of Science at Clyst Vale before becoming the College timetabler and latterly Assistant Principal. I hope to be able use my knowledge of the College, the curriculum and wider College life to make a positive contribution to the work of the Governing Body.



Mrs Sue Diffey
Member Appointed
Governor/Trustee

My career as a teacher spanned 36 years and I retired as Deputy Principal of a large Devon Community College in 2016. I was proud to be part of a team that achieved five consecutive "outstanding" inspection reports. As a Governor I can continue my passion for education and I still enjoy being part of a process that allows young people to realise their potential.

Although now retired I still find time for travel and choral singing.



Mr David Edmondson
Parent Governor/Trustee

I have worked in education for 20+ years. I worked in a secondary school for 12 years as teacher, tutor, Head of House, teacher coach and SENCo and for the last 6 years I have been working in education for the local authority. I am passionate about the opportunities that a quality, broad and engaging education provides for children and young people and would like to support CVCC in continuing to work towards this goal. When I was Head of House, our house mission statement was Promote Participation, Nurture Potential, Celebrate Success, and this continues to be my vision.



Mr Ben Evans
Parent Governor/Trustee

I am a team leader for the Environment Agency. In 2020 I combined my love of the environment and my community by forming the Broadclyst Environment group and have enjoyed previous board positions with the Wave Project, a Charity that introduces children facing various challenges in life to surfing, improving their resilience. I am an experienced Respect at work advisor with the Environment Agency, empowering individuals feeling bullied or harassed to take-action. My eldest daughter Lily is in year 7 and I expect Poppy (7) to follow. I am keen to contribute my skills and experience to benefit the board.



Mrs Sophy Norris
Co-opted
Governor/Trustee

I became a Parent Governor of Clyst Vale December 2017. I have one child at the school already and one soon to join. I am a full-time working mother, with a job that involves a lot of travel, so I thought hard about the commitments of becoming a Governor before putting myself forward. The opportunity however, to become involved in the development of Clyst Vale, a school I have been overwhelmingly impressed with since my daughter joined, was an opportunity I simply had to take.

I believe in a level and fair playing field for all children whilst they are at school, a place where each child is treated as an individual and is encouraged to be the best they can be. This quality shines through at Clyst Vale, I see it my own child, in my child's friends and I have witnessed it in the teachers and staff at the school. Clyst Vale is a strong community school, with a strong community heartbeat. It is this sense of shared community that I look forward to learning more about, encouraging and fostering over the coming months and years.

I read English Literature at Manchester University which I followed with an MA in English Literature at Vanderbilt University in the USA. Since I graduated, I have been involved in marketing and communications. I moved to Devon with my family about 12 years ago, but continue to work mainly in London, focusing on national and international awareness campaigns for a range of clients – from travel businesses to political causes. I specialise in helping organisations strategically plan their future communications plans and help them better articulate their messages and values to their relevant audiences. I hope to bring some of these skills to Clyst Vale.



Mr Joe Pearce
Parent Governor/Trustee

I am father to 2 boys, the eldest of whom joined Clyst Vale from Whimple Primary School this year. Having been a member of the Whimple Pre-School, where I acted as Treasurer and Chair, and the Primary School PTA, I am keen to participate as a Parent Governor at Clyst Vale. I work for University of Exeter where I am Head of Business Support - responsible for supporting new venture creation and business growth support, working with students, researchers and founders of start-up and early-stage businesses. I believe my experience will provide a useful perspective to the Parent Governor team.



Mr Justin Powlesland
Co-opted
Governor/Trustee

I currently own/run JHP Recruitment Ltd which is a multi-million-pound turnover company which we have built organically without the use of investors/funding. The company specialises in the recruitment of Veterinary professionals, and we have clients across the whole of the UK and across the US.

JHP Recruitment has been recognised as the best in the UK at what we do and have been awarded 'The Best Veterinary Recruitment Specialists in the UK' on 3 occasions as well as winning the 'Most trusted veterinary recruitment company' at the London Vet Show. Beyond the Veterinary industry, we won the National Family Business award at Wembley Stadium in 2019 and finished 2nd in the 2022 'Business Champion Awards' for SME's from over 800 companies nominated.

I also part own another recruitment company and a surfacing company which I help run on a daily basis.

On a personal level, I currently sit on the committee as 'competitions and handicaps secretary' at Exeter Golf & Country Club and have previously spent 3 years on the committee at Teign Valley Golf Club, one of those years (2018) as Club Captain.

I have also spent time on the committee at local football clubs, including Culm Valley Youth FC where I have spent a couple of years as a youth team coach.



Mrs Dorf Ruscoe
Member Appointed
Governor/Trustee

I joined the Governing Board in 2016 although my initial involvement with the College began many years previously whilst helping in a backstage capacity, with the performing arts events. It was during this time I gained real insight into the how the College functioned, but most significantly, I became aware of the overall culture and ethos of the College. I observed a truly caring community which has been even more evident during the current Covid pandemic.

My own professional career has been mainly focused on Primary Care Nursing and Higher Education, working strategically both internationally and nationally. Prior to my retirement in 2012 I led the General Practice Unit at Plymouth University where I still retain an Honorary Associate Professorship. I also continue in my role as an Accreditation Assessor of Educational Programmes for the Royal College of General Practitioners.

My husband and I have lived in East Devon for the past 30 years and I am very committed to helping the College in any way I can during these very challenging and changing times for education. My eldest grandson has just joined the College in Year 7!



Mr Will Tipper
Parent Governor

After studying law and specialising in environmental law I've worked on environmental policy issues including dispute resolution and the introduction and implementation of new legislation and government guidance. I have two daughters, one in year 7 and one in her final year at university who previously studied at Clyst Vale. I'm keen to combine my experience of having children at Clyst Vale and the skills I've developed during my career to help the school to adapt to future opportunities and challenges and ensure that students' time at the school builds pride and confidence in their potential.

Mr Chris Toze
Co-opted
Governor/Trustee

A father of three with my youngest having just joined CVCC. Company director, entrepreneur, experienced leader, environmentalist, and problem solver.

Extremely supportive of the Rights Respecting School status.

My early impression of CCVC is that it reminds far more of my school days with a certain 'free-range' element that was sadly missing with my older children who experienced a far more regimented secondary education.

Having worked with many places of learning, I understand the numerous challenges CVCC likely faces and bring a broad range of experience.



Mr Steven Whitfield
Parent Governor

Hailing from Yorkshire, I kicked off my career as a joiner and swiftly climbed the professional ladder, attaining the role of factory manager at the age of 21. A shift into Logistics and subsequent qualification as an electrician added diverse skills to my repertoire. Then came an unexpected twist—a job opportunity beckoned from sunny Devon! Despite bidding a reluctant farewell to Yorkshire puddings and a comforting cup of tea, I embraced a new chapter in the picturesque Southwest.

Armed with budgeting finesse and a knack for finding bargains, I braced myself for the higher living costs of Devon. From scouring thrift shops for deals to discovering affordable ways to explore the breath taking countryside, I was determined to stretch my Yorkshire wallet in the realm of cream teas and sandy beaches.

Fast forward to today, where I've dedicated a significant portion of my working life as the Operations Director at Postscript Books. My schedule is filled, but my free time is dedicated to pursuits like following football, walking the dog, paddleboarding, kayaking, and camping. Above all, I cherish moments spent with my wife, Jayne, our daughter Leona, and our dog Archie.

During the past six years, I proudly served as the Chair of Governors at the Cedar Tree Federation. Recognizing the importance of quality education in a secure and nurturing environment. I then decided to contribute my experience to Clyst Vale Community College, where my daughter is enrolled. Ensuring that all children and young adults at Clyst Vale receive the best education, in a safe environment remains a paramount commitment for me.