



Helen Radcliffe (Chair of the Board of Directors) – Helen's career has focussed on helping young people to develop skills to enter employment, beginning in the Careers Service supporting young people with special needs. She has also worked for Tyneside Training and Enterprise Council and the Learning and Skills Council specialising in learning opportunities for young people. More recently Helen was the National Apprenticeships Scheme Head of Business Development for the North of England, involved in developing national models for Apprenticeships and establishing the Apprenticeship Vacancies recruitment system. Helen now works for Durham Council, developing new projects to help young unemployed people into work, training or education. Helen enjoys singing, rock music, running and powerchair Football.



Shirley Welsh – Started her teaching career in Doncaster, returning to the North following the birth of her daughter, to teach in Barnard Castle, where she remained for 15 years.

In 2006 Shirley was asked to be Acting Headteacher of a Junior School in Bishop Auckland, but enjoyed the job so much that she remained as Head for a further 5 years.

Currently Headteacher at Whinfield Primary School, a Director of EVAT, Chair of the Education Standards Committee at Gurney Pease Academy and providing leadership support to the primary schools in the Trust on a part-time basis. Shirley has grown-up children and lives with her husband and a number of cats and dogs she has rescued over the years.



Scott Smith is a people professional with over 17 years' experience working in HR, Talent, Learning and Development and has enjoyed a successful career working for a number of large organisations across Financial Services, Utilities & Water, Social Housing, Transport and Public Sector. Scott founded People Spark Solutions during the Summer of 2020 to support organisations to evolve their Talent, Learning and Development strategy.

The past 17 years has equipped Scott with experience of working in complex organisations, delivering large scale change agendas, where he has been central to managing people change. Supporting local communities and volunteering is a big part of Scott's professional life, currently acting as Vice Chair of the CIPD North East of England Branch and part of the Enterprise Adviser Network.



Mike Butler - Mike has held a wide range of leadership roles in schools and national organisations during a 25 year career in the education sector.

He spent the early part of his teaching career in the East Midlands where he led the transformation of two very different schools into one of the first academies, which opened in 2003.

The success of the academy was recognised with multiple awards and led to the development of the Djanogly Learning Trust where Mike was Chief Executive until 2013. He has also performed the roles of consultant and course facilitator for the National College for School Leadership and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, held a number of board positions, including being: a governor; a Director and Chair of the Independent

Academies Association; and a trustee of the National e-Learning Foundation.

Outside of work, Mike enjoys hillwalking, mountain biking, cricket, the theatre, playing guitar and motorcycling.



Kit Dixon (Vice Chair of the Board of Directors) - Having spent 4 years as a trustee at another academy trust in Darlington, Kit became a parent governor at Beaumont Hill Academy and more recently a trustee/vicechair at EVAT. He is a qualified accountant (CPFA), a trained fraud investigator and formerly worked as an external auditor in both the public and private sector before joining the ESFA in Feb 2013. He is currently a Senior Regional Business Partner for the Northern region, leading on the most complex and high profile cases relating to financial management/viability, compliance with the Academies Financial Handbook and governance arrangements in academy trusts. Kit is a firm believer in life-long learning and about to commence studying for his

second Master's degree.



Chris Ashford – Chris is a married father of two who has lived in the Darlington area for 30 years. He retired from Durham constabulary in 2014 after 30 years' service where his roles included the Crime Investigation Department, the Fraud Squad and Child Abuse investigation. Chris holds a BA Hons degree in Crime investigation and Post Graduate Certificate in Education. He is currently employed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board/Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board in Darlington as the Multi agency Safeguarding Trainer.



Tim Hedger-Gourlay - Tim spent 34 years working in businesses including HSBC, Ernst & Young and RBS, living and working across the UK, India and Asia. Tim's experience spans information technology, organisation development/HR and risk management. Tim now runs his own business consulting in risk management alongside working with organisations at board level to help them be successful and to manage rather than being scared of risk. After becoming a father later in life, Tim has been increasingly interested in education and wanting to ensure that what he's learnt during his career contributes to the provision of the best possible learning experiences in the 21st century. In his spare time Tim loves cooking Indian food and making his son laugh!



Steve Clapham – Steve is a married father of two who has always lived and worked in the Darlington area. He has worked for a global manufacturing organisation for 24 years and has held various positions within Quality Management, IT and Supply Chain. Steve holds a MSc in Manufacturing: Management and Technology from the Open University.

Steve has been associated with The Education Village for the last 4 years where he served in a voluntary capacity as the Chair of the Board for an internal organisation supporting the trust with IT services and provisions. His desire is to translate what he has developed as career skills into supporting children in having opportunity and access to high quality

teaching, learning and facilities.

In his spare time, Steve enjoys watching most forms of motorsport as well as mountain biking and football.



Ed James - is a practising Solicitor and works at The Bannatyne Group in Darlington, where he is a Director and General Counsel. He oversees the Legal, People, Learning & Development and Payroll Departments. He is also the Company's Safeguarding Officer and was the Responsible Person for its creches. He has worked at The Bannatyne Group for 10 years and prior to that, he worked as a Corporate lawyer at a regional law firm in Newcastle.

In his spare time, Ed enjoys running and cycling but spends the majority of weekends supporting his children at football matches and trampolining competitions!