

DHMAT Directors

Will Finn - Chair

A modern history graduate from the University of York. In 1989, he began working with The McVitie biscuit company, and in 1991 left to join Johnson & Johnson, manufacturer of baby products, cosmetics and OTC medicines, in their marketing department.

He stayed with Johnson & Johnson for the next 25 years, becoming Marketing Director of their French cosmetics company in 1996, Marketing Director of the UK division in 1999 and International Marketing Director (Beauty Care), in 2003.

In 2006, he was appointed Managing Director of a newly acquired Johnson & Johnson company in France, and in 2009 he became Regional Managing Director for the African region, based in Cape Town. In 2012 he returned to Paris as President of all J&J consumer companies in France and a member of the Europe, Africa and Middle East management board, as well as the Global Beauty Care leadership team.

In 2015, frustrated by limitations of life within a large multinational company, he retired. He and his wife Victoria and their son Stanley, chose to settle in Hereford. Will is an occasional consultant, a trustee of Herefordshire Headway and has worked with the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust since May 2019

Andrew Smith - Vice Chair

Former Headteacher at Mary Webb Secondary School. Chair of Shrewsbury Partnership for Education and Training, Secondary schools, post 16 colleges and training providers. Promoting cooperation and collaboration across the Shrewsbury area.

Canon Andrew Teale – CEO

Andrew has worked in education for 25 years.

He has taught in primary schools in inner-city Nottingham and across Herefordshire, becoming the Headteacher of a small rural school, Pembridge Church of England Primary School in 2003. After 6 successful years as Headteacher at Pembridge, Andrew moved to become the Headteacher of a larger urban school, St Paul's Church of England Primary School, in Hereford.

Andrew became a SIAMs inspector in 2011 and has conducted church school inspections in the Hereford and Worcester Dioceses.

Andrew has been a governor of a federation of a secondary and two primaries and an all through independent school in Hereford.

In 2014 St Paul's achieved an outstanding inspection from Ofsted and became a National Support School and Andrew became a National Leader of Education in 2015.

Andrew was the Executive Headteacher for St Thomas Cantilupe CE Primary School from 2012 until 2014, helping the school move from 'Special Measures' to a 'Good' overall judgement in 11 months.

In May 2018, Andrew was installed as a Lay Canon at Hereford Cathedral in recognition of his service to education in Hereford.

In 2019, St Paul's was awarded an overall judgement of 'excellent' under the new SIAMS inspection framework.

Since September 2018, Andrew has been the Director of Education for the Hereford Diocese. He remained as Executive Headteacher at St Paul's until Easter 2019.

In January 2019 he became Chief Executive Officer for the Diocesan Trust, overseeing a transformation to its new identity, culture and ethos, as the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust.

Rob Pizii

Rob works for the Independent Schools' Bursars Association providing advice and guidance to its 1400 member schools. Previously he spent 13 years as a bursar, firstly at Edgeborough, a preparatory School in Farnham, Surrey and latterly at Hereford Cathedral School, a through school in the city centre.

Rob's first career was in the British Army, serving as an officer in the Royal Artillery for 22 years. Rob's roles were predominately in leadership positions, having the honour and privilege of leading soldiers in a wide range of situations, including on operations. Rob also worked in Human Resources and procurement, following his interest in science and technology. During his time in the Army Rob was fortunate enough to act as a Governor to three different primary schools in Germany, South Gloucestershire and West Sussex. This breadth of experience has all been put to good use in his second career in the education sector.

Rob grew up in Taunton, Somerset, before studying for a degree in Geographical Science at Portsmouth Polytechnic. A rigorous stint at Sandhurst was followed by many happy years in the Army, during which time he attended the Advanced Command and Staff Course and gained an MA in Defence Studies. Rob is married to a teacher and has three children. His interests include sailing and skiing.

Matthew Laird

Matt is married to Victoria, who works in Early Years education; they have two children in primary school, and live in Hereford. He works as a manager for a government organisation specialising in business development and programme management in the security and defence sector. He attended state education, holds a degree in history, MA in international relations, and is a part-time postgraduate student at the University of Oxford. In his spare time, he enjoys running, cooking and watching football.

Margaret Beaver

Margaret is a chartered Engineer and works as a Technical Specialist in Circular Economy for a manufacturing consultancy. After graduating in engineering from University of Birmingham, she worked for over a decade for Ford Motor company, working on manufacturing projects across their European plants. She moved into Environmental Engineering and completed a MSc in Environmental Management from the University of Bath in 2016. She currently works on sustainability projects, mainly focused on electrification and the automotive industry.

Margaret has served as a local governor at Conover and St Edward's primary schools for over 7 years, including 4 years as Chair of the Local Academy Board.

Katy Skerrett

Katy Skerrett graduated from Oxford, and was later called to the Bar in 1999. She was a tenant at 2-3 Gray's Inn Square and a scholar of Middle Temple. She practised in all areas of law, specialising in public, housing and local authority law. She was appointed a Judge in 2006, presiding over family and civil law cases in the Midlands and South Western region. She was later appointed as an Assistant Coroner in Berkshire, and later Gloucester. In 2014 she was appointed as full time Coroner for Gloucestershire, which now takes up most of her time. She is a mum of three children, and lives with her husband in Herefordshire with two very lively spaniels, having returned to her home county when her children began to run too fast to keep up with them in Battersea park.

DHMAT Members

Sam Pratley

Sam has been the Diocesan Secretary (Chief Executive) for the Diocese of Hereford since July 2016. He is responsible for all aspects associated with running the Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, employing staff, managing significant assets and setting the strategic direction for the Diocese alongside the Bishop of Hereford. Prior to that Sam spent 14 years in the housing sector, leaving the WM Housing Group as the Managing Director of West Mercia Homes.

In his spare time Sam is a visiting lecturer at the University of Worcester speaking on topics related to Housing and Leadership. He is the chairman of Vennture and a trustee at Close House, both Hereford based charities.

The Venerable Fiona Gibson

Fiona joined Hereford Diocese as Archdeacon of Ludlow in 2021, having previously been a curate and vicar in St Albans Diocese. As Archdeacon she has oversight, under the direction of the Bishop of Hereford, of those parishes in Hereford Diocese which are in south Shropshire, as well as a small number in Worcestershire and Powys. In addition to those duties Fiona chairs the Diocesan Board of Education and sits on a number of other Diocesan committees.

Before ordination Fiona was a lay Children's Minister in a local church, and before that she was a primary school teacher in Hertfordshire and north London, where she had whole-school responsibility for literacy and Special Educational Needs. She was also a mentor for newly qualified teachers, and a Teacher Governor. Fiona is currently working towards a PhD in Divinity.

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Chaplain to the Board

Reverend Canon Sarah Brown

Sarah was ordained in the Diocese of Peterborough in 2008 following a career in business. After reading German at Nottingham University she worked in corporate sales and marketing before responding to an unexpected call to lead Farming Community Network, a national farming charity, which she did in tandem with studying theology and serving her curacy. Her Church career has at different times engaged with the agricultural community, rural churches, a market town and a cathedral city, all of which now come excitingly together in the role of Dean of Hereford.

Sarah is married to Richard and they have two children; Alice, who is a musician and Edward, who is training to be a vet.

In her spare time, Sarah enjoys music, television crime-drama, reading, gardening, and making appreciative noises to the men in her life about classic motor cars and Formula One motorsport.