

Governor biographies – January 2011



Robin Casson (Chair)

Robin Casson is Director of Schools, Enterprise and Lifelong Learning for Northumberland County Council.

His appointment to this post in 2009 following the County Council restructure followed his previous role as Director of Schools and Family Support.

His career prior to the County Council was, from 1999 to 2005, as Headteacher of Prudhoe Community High School in Northumberland. Prior to that, his career included employment as a teacher, youth worker, community development worker, and head of adult education centres.

Robin is Visiting Fellow in Enterprise at Northumbria University and is a Director of Reaction, the County Council's enterprise company.

Phil Langton (Vice Chair)

Phil Langton is the CEO of Northumberland Business Service Ltd – Northumberland's enterprise agency.

Appointed to the post in September 2009, he has worked for NBSL for 10 years creating a county wide business start-up service now accessed by over 5000 people a year

He is committed to developing the economy of Northumberland by ensuring that people have access to enterprise learning opportunities, guidance and support, so they can achieve both their personal and business ambitions.

Dr Robert Bedson

Dr Bedson has worked in several industries. He has had a successful career in hotel and catering, as a photographer and as a teacher and University tutor and has a degree and PhD in physics before moving into software project management. He currently works for BT as a senior IT business manager and has managed large projects overseas. More recently he has started another successful photography company with his daughter. He volunteered as a non executive director with a large

local Housing Association for several years and has joined the Board at Northumberland College to share his passion for education.

Lesley Rickerby

Councillor Lesley Rickerby represents the Liberal Democrats in Blyth Valley South and is the Northumberland County Council Executive member for Children's Services. She joined the Board at Northumberland College in and is also a member of many panels and committees County-wide including the Schools Forum, Adoption and Fostering panels and Chair of the Teacher's Consultative Committee. Lesley lives in Blyth.

Chris Smith

After studying for a BSc in Mechanical Engineering at Newcastle Polytechnic in 1978, Chris Smith began his career as a research scientist, before moving on to become a project leader at International Research & Development Ltd.

From 1980 to 1997 Chris was a senior lecturer at Newcastle Polytechnic teaching electrical engineering. During this time Chris established his own business The Automation Group Limited which now employs over 70 staff worldwide.

Chris is also the Chairman for the British Robot Association.

Mark Rossi – teaching staff governor

After an early career in accounting, Mark Rossi joined Northumberland College in 1990 as after graduating from Sunderland University. Mark has taught across a range of courses, including Business, Accounting, Travel and Tourism and Reflexology.

He is actively involved in many projects with overseas partners, which has enabled Mark and students to understand and appreciate different cultures. Mark has helped set up Enterprise education in Sri Lanka and Albania, as well as, promoting enterprise around the county.

Mark has served on the Corporation for over 10 years as Staff Governor

Peter Down – support staff governor

Peter Down is a work based assessor in the Construction Department. He became a staff governor in 2010 and lives in Ashington.

Jacqui Henderson CBE

Jacqui Henderson has broad and deep experience of the post-16 learning and skills sector. Her previous roles include Chief Executive of UK Skills; a Regional Director of

the Learning and Skills Council; Chief Executive of the TEC National Council; and Director of Adult Education for South Tyneside.

She is currently vice-Chair of the Council of Newcastle University and Chair of Northumberland Care Trust. Jacqui was awarded the CBE for services to education and training in 2001.

Ros Smith

Appointed as a governor in January 2012, Ros is Finance Director & Company Secretary of Northumberland Business Services Ltd. She has previously been employed in senior financial management roles in the leisure industry and in radio stations, and started her career in the civil engineering sector. Ros is the Chair of the Audit Committee.