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eis
The Educational
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Presidential handover

Kirsty Devaney
becomes the
first national
President from
FE sector



2007 AGM in pictures

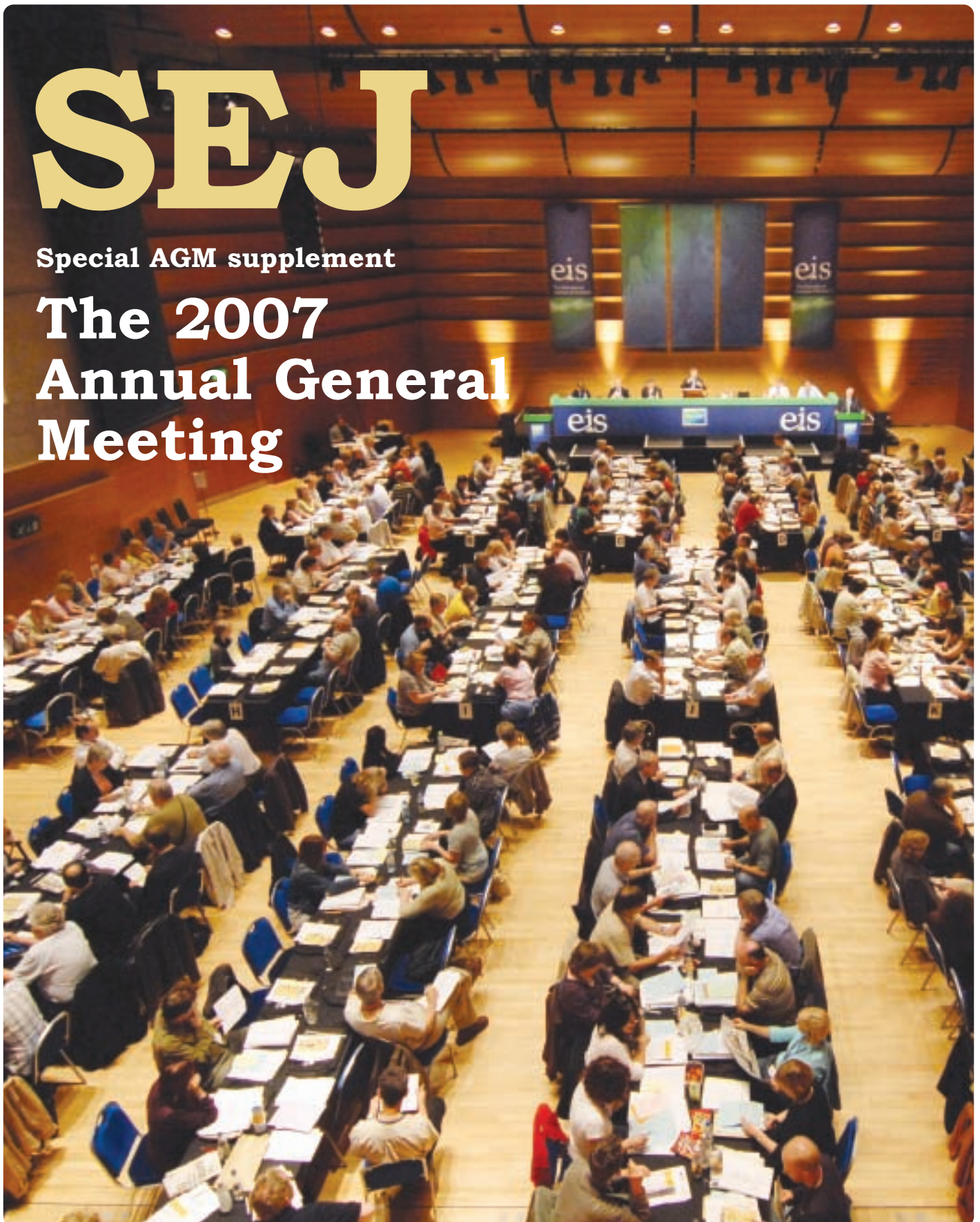
A look at this
year's AGM



SEJ

Special AGM supplement

The 2007 Annual General Meeting



Comment



This special edition of the SEJ reports on the 161st Annual General Meeting of the EIS. This year's AGM was the first to be held in the new Perth Concert Hall, a magnificent building which provided a fitting venue for this year's debates.

Of course, the AGM is an important event for the EIS but the debates at conference are also closely followed elsewhere. The decisions taken at the AGM send out a clear message to Scotland's political leaders at both a national and a local authority level.

This year, the AGM provided members with an opportunity to highlight priorities in education to the new SNP administration at Holyrood. Key issues such as class sizes, pupil indiscipline, and quality nursery education played a major part in this year's AGM – just as they played a key part in the manifesto pledges of most of Scotland's political parties in their recent election campaigns.

Over the 16 pages of this special SEJ, we highlight the issues discussed and the decisions taken at this year's AGM. We also report on the conference addresses by outgoing EIS President Peter Quigley and by General Secretary Ronnie Smith.

We hope you enjoy reading this special AGM edition of the SEJ, and we wish all our readers the best for a refreshing and enjoyable break over the summer period. ■

THE EDITOR:

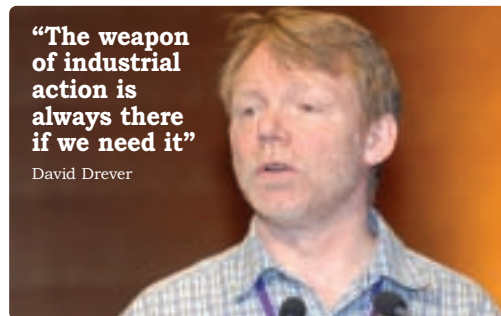
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Class size debate dominates 2007 AGM

The issue of how best to pursue EIS policy on class size reductions was a prominent feature of this year's AGM. With the long-running EIS campaign beginning to bear fruit, delegates debated how best to give added momentum to the class size campaign.

"The weapon of industrial action is always there if we need it"

David Drever



The AGM heard much debate on the issue of class sizes and how best to achieve reductions in

them. Willie Hart (Glasgow), proposing a motion from Council and South Lanarkshire, called for a phased introduction of a maximum class size of 20 across all stages in Scottish schools, and argued that this must be done through the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers and enshrined in the Scheme of Salaries and Conditions of Service for Teachers.

"Notwithstanding the progress made in P1 and S1/S2 Maths and English, our campaign extracted further promises from all political parties at the last election. None of the parties offered wholly what we seek for our agenda, but these promises were a step forward," he said. "We want to see concrete reductions over the lifetime of the next Scottish Parliament to

achieve a class size maximum of 20. Twenty is plenty, and we want it in 2010, not 2020. There is no lack of goodwill on the part of this union to address the issues of teacher supply, accommodation and financial planning, but politicians must have these discussions with the EIS, not just directors of educations and other micro-organisations in the world of Scottish education".

Andrew Fullwood (South Lanarkshire), seconding the motion, told the AGM that it was vital to have the maximum expressed in the contracts of employment, like current general class size maxima, so as to protect the future of education in unforeseen times.

Jack Barnett (Ex-President) also spoke of the need to reduce class sizes by seeking alterations to teachers' contracts, and urged delegates to engage in dialogue with local authorities and the Scottish Executive, but he argued against the use of industrial action. "What we seek here is

contractual change. Contractual changes must be agreed by all three parties on the SNCT and the more we talk about industrial action, the less likely employers will be to genuinely negotiate on this issue because they will see it as a stick to beat their own backs. All political parties have agreed to changes as a result of the EIS campaign so far, so reductions in class sizes are a matter of how much and when, not if," he said.

Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire) said that class teachers in P1 would also see progress in August. She said that the evidence on the link between smaller class sizes and better achievement was very clear and that the EIS must continue its campaign for its policy of 20 pupils for all classes at all levels.

Incoming education convener Larry Flanagan (Glasgow) said that achievements in the EIS class size campaign to date had brought material benefits to many classes. "In our department, we will move from five S1 classes of

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All AGM photos in this edition by Alan Richardson

30 to eight S1 classes of 18 because of the multi-million pound investment by the last Scottish Executive, brought about because of our campaign,” he said.

Hugh Donnelly (Glasgow) urged delegates to demand a very clear timetable in reduction in class sizes from the Scottish Executive, and a radical commitment to find the necessary resources to fund the reductions.

John Black (Aberdeenshire) urged delegates that to seek tactical negotiation with the Scottish Executive over the issue was not a sign of weakness or a lack of resolve, but a clear indication that the EIS believes its campaign is justified. He believed our objectives would be met not through fear but because it is the right thing to do.

An amendment in the name of Inverclyde sought to begin organising a campaign of industrial action for 2008-2009 if insufficient progress has been made on the EIS objectives by the 2008 AGM. Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) told the meeting that the EIS was most successful when

the union asked its members to take industrial action. He said the amendment gave the Scottish Parliament more than a year to make progress on the issue, and that we must stand up for what we believe. Seconding the amendment, David Munro (Inverclyde) said that the issue was the highest priority for the union, and that smaller class sizes benefit teaching and learning. “We need to use trade union bargaining power,” he said. Bob Fotheringham (Glasgow), questioned how many governments keep their promises once elected. “The EIS is not a union that takes action willy-nilly but sometimes it necessary to actually do something,” he said.

Opposing the amendment, David Drever (Vice President-elect) struggled to see why industrial action would enhance the EIS campaign at this time. “During the recent election campaign, all political parties struggled to offer class sizes smaller than the next,” he said. “The weapon of industrial action is always there if we need it, but we need more time to engage.” Gavin Roberts (North Lanarkshire) told the meeting that “to threaten the new Scottish

Executive with industrial action at this time is not helpful”. The amendment was defeated by 184 votes to 110, and the substantive motion was carried unanimously.

A separate motion proposed by Edinburgh local association’s Annie McCrae, calling for an immediate move to industrial action if the previous Scottish Executive’s partnership commitments on class size reductions were not met by August 2007, was defeated by a very large majority.

“We should not be shy about sending out a clear message on potential industrial action”, said Ms McCrae. “Industrial action is not a dirty word”.

However those arguing against the motion – including Jack Barnett (Aberdeenshire) and Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire) - won the day by arguing that “holding a gun” to the head of the newly elected SNP administration was not advisable and would widely be seen as unnecessary and excessive, given the clear consensus amongst all political parties of the high priority to reduce class sizes. ■

A separate motion from East Dunbartonshire called for the EIS to oppose the notion of average class sizes and reaffirm its determination to achieve a maximum class size across the board. Sid Perrie (East Dunbartonshire) warned delegates of the danger of flexibility in class sizes, and said that averaging would not necessarily lead to benefits for all teachers. Frank Healy (East Dunbartonshire) said that smaller class sizes across the board would help less able pupils.

Ian Close (Renfrewshire) urged delegates to abstain on the motion, because a number of mathematics departments found the use of flexibility around the 20 maximum useful in assisting some pupils. The motion was carried nem-con.

A separate motion from Glasgow recommending issuing new strong advice to members in Mathematics and English departments on the need to reject flexibility arrangements which undermine a class size maximum of 20. Larry Flanagan (Glasgow), proposing, said that it was essential to get the message across that accommodation of flexibility undermined the campaign for teachers in other subjects demanding 20. Peter Lavery (North Lanarkshire) opposed the amendment, citing his own experience as a maths teacher. He said many maths departments use setting, and would prefer the possibility of making further reductions in lower-ability sets. “I am doing no favours if, for political reasons, I refuse to put a child in a class where I could teach them best,” he said. Keith Edwards (North Lanarkshire) agreed, arguing the flexibility would allow him to have classes of a low as 12 for low-ability sets.

Willie Hart (Glasgow) disagreed. “This would a tactical error, playing into the hands of those to oppose our campaign to seek across-the-board maxima for all classes,” he said. Aileen Barrie (North Lanarkshire) also supported the motion, saying “as a geography teacher, my chances of teaching a class of 20 would be diminished by the arguments from the other microphone”. The motion was carried.

A separate motion from Orkney instructed the EIS to monitor the implementation of the class sizes reductions from August 2007 to provide early information on any problems relating to how the reduction is achieved. David Drever (Vice-President) said that it had been a long time since there had been any reductions in class sizes in Scotland and we need to be observant. “We require to keep a very close watching brief,” he said, “and use the lessons we learn to inform future cuts in class sizes”. The motion was passed.

A further motion from East Lothian and Edinburgh called for a reduction in class sizes to a maximum of 20 for all S1 and S2 subjects from August 2008. John Inglis (East Lothian), proposing, said that it was unfair that some colleagues in S1/S2 have larger maxima than others, and they should be equalised across the two year groups initially. May Ferries (Glasgow), speaking against, said that further reductions must benefit all classes, not just specific year groups. Malcolm Maciver, Salaries Convener, argued that special pleadings for particular groups of teachers were divisive and ran counter to long-standing EIS policy that there should be a maximum of 20 for all classes, regardless of year groups. The motion was defeated by a large majority. ■

AGM



“Industrial action is not a dirty word”

Annie McCrae



“We want to see concrete reductions over the lifetime of the next Scottish Parliament to achieve a class size maximum of 20.”

Willie Hart

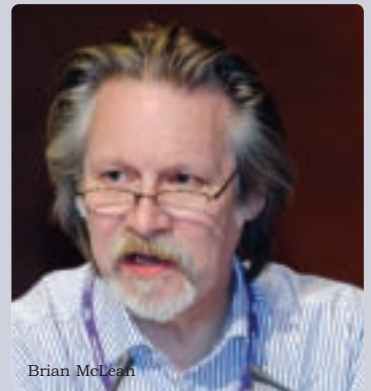


“Evidence on the link between smaller class sizes and better achievement is very clear and the EIS must continue its campaign for its policy of 20 pupils for all classes at all levels.”

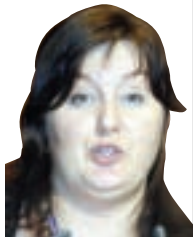
Helen Connor

Violence in the workplace

New advice will be issued on violent incidents in schools, following a motion from Glasgow Local Association moved by Willie Hart (Glasgow). He told conference that he was increasingly concerned by the disturbing frequency and nature of violent incidents he has dealt with. "I have seen experienced professionals destroyed on a daily basis because of the conduct of a very small number of damaged pupils. When all the strategies have been exhausted, we need new measures to protect our staff," he said.



Brian McLean



"Often, common assault on the street is treated more seriously than premeditated assault in the classroom"

Linzi Moore

Seconding the motion, Susan Quinn (Glasgow) said that peer-on-peer violence was also an important issue and has an impact on the quality of the learning environment. She also called for easier access to specialist support for pupils, reminding delegates that schools are sometimes required to produce voluminous evidence of the need for additional support before it can be arranged.

Brian McLean (North Lanarkshire) called for as much attention to be given to verbal and emotional abuse as physical abuse. Larry Flanagan (Glasgow) said that violence from outwith

schools can sometimes permeate the school gates and jeopardise a safe learning environment. Joe Kinsey (EIS FELA) reminded delegates of the importance of local associations and FELA branches working together to minimise violent incidents where pupils are undertaking studies at colleges.

In a separate motion, Linzi Moore (South Lanarkshire) successfully called for support to be given to teachers returning to work after being subjected to violent incidents. "Often, common assault on the street is treated more seriously than premeditated assault in the

classroom," she said. "We need support for teachers returning after violent incidents." She called for proper risk assessments to be carried out, and the option of home visits before returning. "We must be in doubt that we will protect and defend our members," she said.

Olwen McGarvey (Renfrewshire), supporting the motion, said that returning after a violent incident can be a humiliating experience, and having to teach a child who has previously assaulted you can be very difficult without support. ■

Campaigning on workload concerns

The EIS is to campaign with a view to reducing teacher workload as the result of a successful motion from South Lanarkshire local association. In moving the proposal for a campaign, Bill Ramsay (South Lanarkshire) said that it was "necessary to deal with the impression in the media that the 21st century (McCrone) agreement was about teachers getting something for nothing". In support, Phil Jackson (Angus) spoke of the impossibility of getting work undertaken within the 35 hour week. He spoke of "dissemination overload and innovation fatigue." He added "Teachers are being asked to take on far too much – they should look at what their real priorities are – not what politicians think they should be."

One particular area of concern at this year's AGM was the pressure of teachers in their probationer year. Keith Edwards (North

Lanarkshire), himself a probationer year teacher, listed whole areas of work which probationers undertook in addition to their contractual area of work. These, he said, were "opportunities which probationers cannot afford to turn down. Their career prospects depend on it." In support, Helen Connor (North Lanarkshire) spoke of the need to look closely at the basis on which teachers are being employed in their probationer year. The motion was supported unanimously. Fife delegates raised concerns about how some probationer teachers are being used to fill substantive posts in schools. Bill Cooper (Fife) said that probationer teachers were being used to "plug gaps". Kay Barnett (Aberdeenshire) wanted more information on such practice. GTCS Guidelines, she said, were clear.

The issue of resources to support student teachers returned to the 2007 AGM. Gavin Roberts (North

Lanarkshire) said that current resources were insufficient – "classroom teachers are growing more disillusioned as workload increases and resources diminish." In support, Annie McCrae (Edinburgh) said that "lots of money from SEED [for student placements] never gets anywhere near schools." Jack Barnett (ex-President) said that student placements "can only be delivered if schools have resources to do so."

Workload concerns related to HMIE procedures in the context of a 35 hour working week surfaced in a successful motion from Peter Lavery (North Lanarkshire.) He said that HMIE inspections directly "increase teacher workload." In support Keith Edwards (North Lanarkshire) said that HMIE inspections "put pressure on teaching staff to do more and more – where do we draw the line?" From Glasgow Charlie McKinnon spoke of schools "dominated by an inspection and audit culture – involving evidence gathering for all the different Quality Indicators." In agreement Eileen Morrison (Moray) said that "HMIE practices must be rooted within the terms of teachers' conditions of service." ■



"Classroom teachers are growing more disillusioned as workload increases and resources diminish."

Gavin Roberts

Teacher health

The EIS will survey the provision of occupational health advice across different local authorities, following a motion successfully proposed by Hugh Donnelly (Glasgow). He said that occupational health provision varied greatly but that, used correctly, could be very helpful in supporting teachers' health. Fiona Smith (Glasgow) said that the exposure of teachers to high-risk factors such as computer screens, poor ventilation, frequent bending down, and prolonged use of the voice meant good occupational health provision was vital. Pat Flanagan (Aberdeenshire) said that teachers must be allowed to self-refer to occupational health and that steps must be taken to ensure that teachers do not see the service as a punitive measure.



Bill Ramsay

In a separate motion, also successful, Ken Brown (East Dunbartonshire) called for action on asbestos in the workplace. He said the scientific

evidence on the dangers of asbestos was very clear, and that many schools in Scotland were built between 1945 and 1974, the years when asbestos was most frequently used in building

materials in the UK. He highlighted the dangers of using staple guns and drawing pins on asbestos-lined walls, and the possibility of infants breathing asbestos dust whilst crawling. Dust from asbestos ceiling tiles can be found on floors and surfaces. Kevin O'Brien (East Dunbartonshire) said that a number of cases had been documented where asbestos had been incorrectly removed from school buildings or accidentally disturbed during renovation. ■

No place for armed forces recruitment in schools and colleges

The EIS will highlight its opposition to Armed Forces Recruitment in schools and colleges as a result of a successful motion introduced by Linda Richardson (Edinburgh).

"Freedom of Information requests have shown that visits to schools and colleges are far more common in areas of deprivation than in more affluent areas. We know that the army is in the middle of a major recruitment crisis. While the army refuses to publish figures on the social background of recruits, it is clear that the majority of recruits come from less affluent backgrounds. Recruitment teams in schools are a huge concern for teachers, parents and pupils. Keep armed forces teams out of our schools and colleges."

Opposing the motion, Peter Nield (Dundee), himself a former member of the RAF and military recruitment officer, argued "This motion is a reaction to the political decision to wage war in Iraq. The military do not even recruit in schools."

But George MacBride (Glasgow) disagreed, saying that one Glasgow school had received

14 visits from Armed Forces Recruitment Officers in a two year period. "I can tell you categorically that the armed forces do visit our schools with the intention of making armed forces careers more attractive to our young people."

Ken Bryce Stafford (Edinburgh) argued against the motion, saying that "I understand that people hold strong political views on this issue, but these should not be used to take opportunities away from our young people. We cannot create a nanny state."

But Linda Richardson, summing up, argued "Armed Forces Recruitment will continue, in recruitment offices and at careers fairs, but outwith our schools and colleges. We must ban armed forces recruitment in our schools."

AGM delegates backed the motion to oppose armed forces recruitment in schools and colleges by a large majority. ■



"occupational health provision varied greatly but that, used correctly, could be very helpful in supporting teachers' health"

Hugh Donnelly



"This is probably some of the most robust advice that Scottish Executive ever issued."

Sandy Fowler

Use of video phones

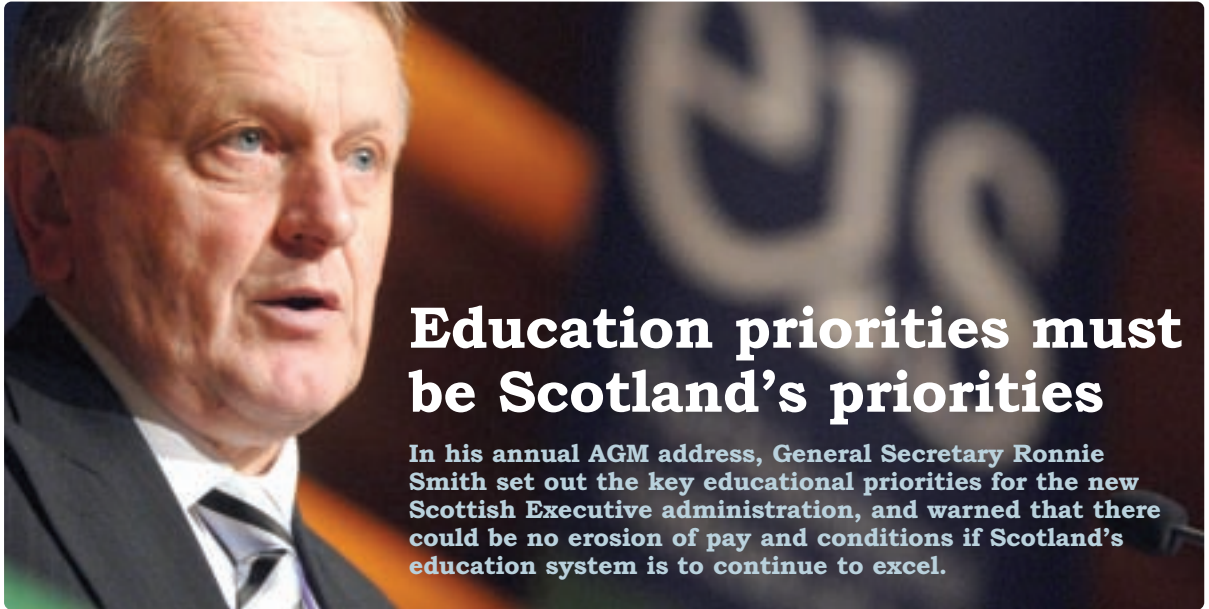
The EIS will issue new advice on the misuse of mobile phones and camera phones. Kevin O'Brien (East Dunbartonshire) successfully moved a motion reminding delegates that violent attacks on teachers have been recorded on mobile phones and broadcast to millions of viewers on the internet. He called for immediate action to end what he described as "cyber harassment".

Seconding the motion, Ken Brown (East Dunbartonshire) said that the use of websites such as YouTube could have calamitous effects on teachers who were set up in the classroom.

Sandy Fowler (South Ayrshire) welcomed the motion but reminded delegates of recent advice published by the previous education minister, Hugh Henry, on the topic. "This is probably some of the most robust advice that Scottish Executive ever issued," he said. The advice arose from the Ministerial Working Group on indiscipline, and was informed by EIS involvement in that group. Sandy Fowler said he welcomed the provision in that advice for police involvement in serious cases, and also commented on the role that mobile providers and operators could play. ■

“Our wish is to engage fully and seek to work constructively with the government of the day in support of the cause of a high quality, freely available public education system that promotes equality, fairness and justice.”

Ronnie Smith, EIS General Secretary



Education priorities must be Scotland's priorities

In his annual AGM address, General Secretary Ronnie Smith set out the key educational priorities for the new Scottish Executive administration, and warned that there could be no erosion of pay and conditions if Scotland's education system is to continue to excel.

This year, the EIS, the longest established teachers' organisation in the world, marks the 160th anniversary of its founding in 1847. And for the first time we meet together in these fine new surroundings of the Perth Concert Hall – a venue where I hope we shall witness many vibrant debates and discussions in the years to come.

We welcome Fiona Hyslop to the portfolio of Education Secretary in Scotland. I wish Fiona and her team all the very best in what I think is the most important ministry in the cabinet.

Much of the past year has been dominated by the elections, both for the Scottish Parliament and our 32 local authorities which are responsible for school education in Scotland.

These elections have resulted in a very different landscape indeed. An Executive without a majority. No coalition or Partnership Agreement able to deliver a programme for government. Instead, we face a step by step, policy by policy debate and decision making process.

This is a very new way of working – though we should not be surprised as it was always a likely consequence of a more proportional voting system. It is a way of working that will be far more demanding of everyone involved – including the EIS.

There is a risk I hope we can avoid – a risk of near paralysis, of moving only on the basis of the lowest common denominator. That would be bad for education, for we need to maintain the momentum of reform – albeit according to the resources available and capacity of the system to sustain change.

But, perhaps more optimistically, we can look forward to something closer to what I believe many of the supporters of the devolutionary settlement hoped to see at the outset – and that is a genuine sharing of power. The Executive really sharing power with the Parliament and also governing with the people, as opposed to visiting government upon its people.

EIS priorities

As an organisation, we vigorously defend our political independence from all parties. We will speak out and be critical where we believe an error is being made. But equally we will praise and support where a sound position is being adopted. Our wish is to engage fully and seek to work constructively with the government of the day in support of the cause of a high quality, freely available public education system that promotes equality, fairness and justice.

There is a big agenda to address, and I hope there will be found a broad consensus in Scotland on the steps that need to be taken to maintain the high standing and quality of the Scottish education system.

Over the past year we have highlighted the key priorities.

The need to reduce the large class sizes in which too many of our youngsters continue to be taught. We expect the commitments to a maximum of 25 in P1 and 20 in S1 & 2 Maths and English by August 2007 to be honoured – by every one of the 32 local authorities that run our schools. And we expect the Scottish Executive to come down hard on any authority that does not deliver. We have been assured often enough that the resources have been made available to local authorities to this end.

But this is just a beginning – much more needs done to drag Scotland up the international class size league table. It is clear from the manifesto commitments of at least three of the major parties that there is a shared ambition to cut class size – albeit the focus and pace of reductions proposed may differ.

If ever there was a priority on which it should be possible to advance on an agreed basis, this must be it.

Nursery education

Secondly, we need concrete actions to bring to all our pre-school children the same right enjoyed by their older brothers and sisters to access a fully qualified teacher.

This is a critically important phase for children's development, yet it is one of the least regulated. While there is a political will at present to make available – indeed to expand – early years provision, it is not a statutory requirement.

There is ample evidence to show both the higher quality of provision on offer from our local authority nursery schools and classes, and also the better outcomes achieved where qualified teachers are at the heart of that provision.

We welcome the manifesto commitment of the current Executive to ensure a qualified teacher for all our nursery pupils and look forward to early discussions on the means and timelines for delivery.

Our third priority is maintaining the work done so far on tackling the endemic problem of pupil indiscipline. It is an intractable problem – and of course technology is extending the opportunities for, and the forms of, challenges by pupils to the authority of the teacher.

It is a hugely complex area – and also one that can very easily, sometimes simplistically, become mired in the debate around inclusive education. Anyone who participated in our highly successful conference with Aberdeen University a few weeks ago well knows that Inclusive Education is about much more than badly behaved pupils.

There is no fast fix or indeed any cheap solutions. It's not the kind of area where there are quick political brownie points to be earned.

But we know that effective teaching and learning cannot happen where there is not good order in the classroom. And we know that teachers and parents are hugely exercised by this matter.

Political campaigning

Now the vigorous and high profile EIS campaign waged on these issues over the past year has been made possible largely because of the reserves built up in our Political Fund.

This was established in 1987 under the Tory anti-union laws – which, regrettably, survive largely unchanged to this day. The EIS established this fund then – not because we contemplated endorsing, funding or otherwise supporting any political party or candidate. But rather because we could never be sure under the law what activity might be challenged by any maverick individual or any organisation as being “political” in nature.

The law requires that the membership at large be balloted every 10 years in order to maintain a political fund. The EIS will therefore be asking all its members to vote for this proposal early in the new academic session, so that the EIS can confidently go on promoting the cause of Scottish education, totally independently of any political party and without fear or favour.

During the past year we have continued to witness some sniping at aspects of the landmark 21st Century Agreement – particularly the chartered teacher programme which is now under review.

We should aim to move towards the position where pretty much every teacher would aspire to chartered status as a matter of course – a huge achievement if our teaching force were almost all themselves to become qualified to Masters level.

How galling then to hear the sniping comments that some aspirants to chartered status are only doing it for the money or to boost their pensions. Or the whining of a few headteachers and directorates who complain that they cannot control or influence who accesses the

programme. So much for the brave new world of professional trust and respect this agreement was intended to usher in.

No agreement is forever. But, I want to warn against a retreat from the package of reform and the associated processes agreed in 2001.

We have a better qualified, better motivated and enormously hard-working teaching profession in Scotland. That has come about because of the commitment and investment of teachers and the EIS, the contribution of the Scottish Executive and, to some degree, their local authority employers. None of this must be forgotten or taken for granted.

The 2001 agreement was costly – and so too will be its maintenance. We will look to the new Executive to commit itself to maintaining and sustaining the agreement. And also to COSLA as the collective voice of the local authorities. Any change must be the product of free collective bargaining within the framework of the tripartite Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers – and not by ministerial diktat or appointed ad hoc groups.

Salary levels

One of the early challenges facing the new SNCT will be the question of teachers' pay.

The current agreement gave teachers a little over 10%, compounded, over a 4 year period – a fair, but far from generous, settlement. The last instalment – an increase of 2.25% this April came in at a time when inflation was running at 4.5%.

And I remind the Executive and COSLA that negotiations must urgently begin on a supplemental increase given that the CPI has risen to a level that triggers the re-opener clause of the last agreement.

It should be clearly understood that the 21st century agreement set a new pay benchmark for Scottish teachers and we consider it central to the integrity of the agreement that the benchmark is maintained, in the light of movements in prices and wages in the economy at large.

No government should countenance a return to the cycle of catch up and decline that has been the lot of teachers over the last 30 years.

Right now things are finely balanced. We are just detecting the first signs of relative decline. That is bad enough – but we should also be aware how sensitive this is at a time when we need to entice significant numbers of new entrants to the profession over the next few years as the bulge of teachers aged 50+ begin a significant exodus from the profession.

Further education

I am pleased to note the steady improvement in the Further Education sector overall. This is a sector that should be on the up in the context of a renewed focus on lifelong learning, skills and employability. Developing links with schools to enhance vocational education opportunities for school students.

Yet the more we expect of this sector the more we see pay levels for staff in FE generally lagging behind and now the unwelcome emergence of agency working – more precarious work, on inferior terms and driving down salaries still further.

It really is past time that this sector learned to address any financial pressures it may face in more creative ways than the usual one-dimensional approach of endless and repeated restructuring exercises.

I would like personally to thank the EIS for enabling and supporting my election last December as President of the Pan-European Committee of Education International and of the European Trade Union Committee for Education. My thanks go also to our kindred organisations in the British Irish Group for their support.

I am proud for the EIS that we are able to be so involved in Europe – coming from a state whose European credentials sometimes leave a bit to be desired. But I am also proud of the high regard in which the Scottish education system is held in much of Europe.

We should work towards an open and inclusive society that respects everyone – whatever their background and circumstances – looking out to Europe and beyond to draw on the best and reject the worst of other systems.

I like to think the EIS itself is a model for that. An inclusive organisation that welcomes and respects all educators, whatever grade of post they occupy or sector in which they work. That is why we stand today with yet another all time record of 59,978 members.

But please do not underestimate the challenge we face in recruiting new teachers – both as members and activists – to replace the baby-boomers who are on their way out of the profession over the next few years.

Let us too today celebrate the success of the EIS but also go from this AGM prepared to do the work needed for us to retain our pre-eminent position in the years to come. ■

Extracted from the General Secretary's AGM speech. Full text available from www.eis.org.uk



“No government should countenance a return to the cycle of catch up and decline that has been the lot of teachers over the last 30 years.”

Ronnie Smith,
EIS General
Secretary

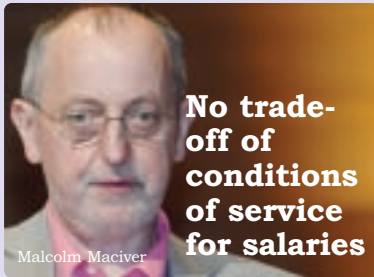
AGM in pictures

Itinerant teachers

James Lawson (Orkney) was successful in a call for the EIS to investigate the effect of the 21st Century Agreement on itinerant teachers, particularly their use in delivering reductions in class contact time. The motion was seconded by Moira McCrossan (Dumfries & Galloway). ■

Preparation and correction timetabling

The EIS will call for guaranteed preparation and correction time in each timetabled day for Secondary teachers, as a result of a successful motion introduced by Linda Richardson (Edinburgh). "We need to ensure that the timetabling of non-contact time is designed to benefit the teacher rather than simply being suited to the system", said Ms Richardson. The motion was seconded by Bruce Lowrie (Edinburgh) and was backed by a clear majority of AGM delegates. ■



Malcolm Maciver

No trade-off of conditions of service for salaries

The EIS will continue to oppose any trading off of conditions of service for salaries increases in future negotiations. The motion was introduced by Bill Ramsay (South Lanarkshire) and seconded by Salaries Convener Malcolm Maciver who said "We are always very clear – when we discuss salaries, we discuss salaries. Conditions of service are an entirely different matter and subject to separate negotiation." ■

How to measure inflation?

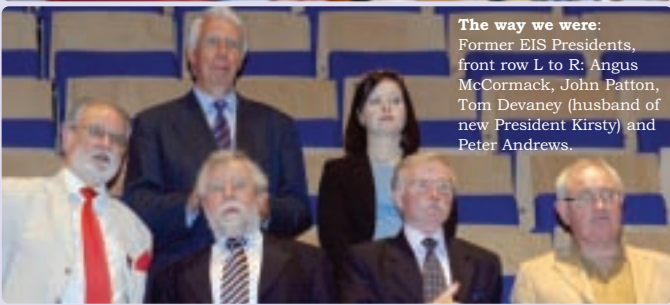
A move from John Dennis (Dumfries and Galloway) for the EIS to argue for the use of the Retail Prices Index (RPI) rather than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as the measure of inflation used in salary negotiations by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) was defeated in a vote of AGM delegates. Following debate, delegates rejected the motion by 133 votes to 89. ■



New faces in key places:

May Ferries has been elected as the new convener of the GTCS, while Larry Flanagan (below) is the new convener of the EIS education committee.





The way we were:
Former EIS Presidents,
front row L to R: Angus
McCormack, John Patton,
Tom Devaney (husband of
new President Kirsty) and
Peter Andrews.

Payment of increments

David Liddell (South Lanarkshire) was successful with a motion calling for improvements in the way that pay increments are paid, including ensuring that increments awarded by one education authority are honoured by all other authorities should a teacher move location of employment. Tom Castles (South Lanarkshire) seconded the motion. ■

New classrooms should take account of class sizes

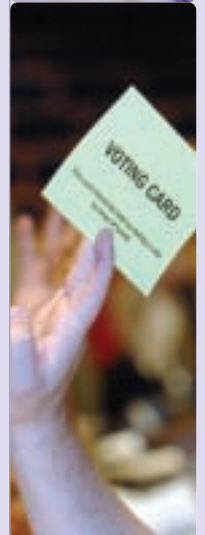
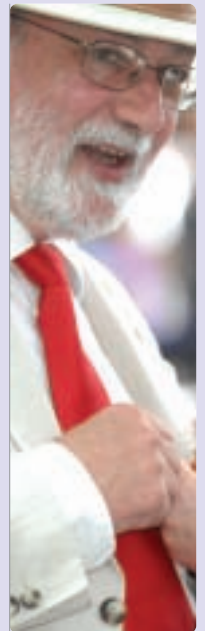
The EIS will monitor teaching accommodation provision in newly built or refurbished schools in relation to current and future class sizes, as a result of a successful motion from South Lanarkshire Local Association. ■

Training for health and safety officers

The EIS will enter into discussions with local authorities to ensure that school Health & Safety Officers receive adequate training for their role. Introducing the motion, Mike Birkett (Fife) said "This has major implications for the health and safety of our members in schools." Speaking in support, David Farmer (Fife) highlighted the lack of H&S training in his school – the largest in Scotland with around 1900 staff and pupils. ■

Neet solutions?

The EIS will investigate the role of the Smith Group, – the body, chaired by Sir Robert Smith, charged with looking at educational provision for pupils not in education, employment or training (NEET) – as the result of a successful motion by Andrew Fullwood (South Lanarkshire.) Mr Fullwood warned that the work of the group could lead to a "massive move to vocationalism – and the dangers of segregation." ■



New EIS Fellows celebrate degree awards

Back row: left to right: Larry Flanagan (Glasgow), John Rae (North Lanarkshire), William Dick (Stirling), Jack Barnett (Aberdeenshire), Arthur Forrest (Dundee), Bob Birrell (Convener of the Board of Examiners).

Middle row: Gordon Taylor (North Lanarkshire), Anne Wiltshire (daughter of George Elder Davie), Kirsty Devaney, Margaret Anderson (Argyll & Bute)

Front row: Patricia Swanson (Renfrewshire), EIS President Peter Quigley, General Secretary Ronnie Smith

Not pictured: Maureen Kilgour (Glasgow), Patrick Boyle (Renfrewshire) and George Elder Davie, special category FEIS, who died earlier this year



Treading the path on life-long learning journey

In his address to the AGM in Perth, outgoing EIS President Peter Quigley spoke of the importance of a quality life-long educational journey – from the first steps into nursery right through to further and higher education.

Failte chon a choinneamh bhliadhnaig an EIS an deidh ceud bliadhna tri fichead agus a haon. Fialte bliath do na riochdairean o na dha dheug air fhichead meur ionadail. Failte bhhlath do na riochdairean o na buidhnean eile da ar seorsa fhein agus mu dheireadh don a chor a tha comhla rinn.

I have tried to open the conference in Gaelic. I am not a native Gaelic speaker but I felt that after 161 years perhaps it was time to introduce Gaelic to the business of this organisation. Though Matthew McIver (GTCS Chief Executive) informed me last night that in his FEIS address he himself managed to incorporate his native Gaelic language.

I am told that I spoke with a Harris accent. In this I was trained by my wife's cousins Annie and Catherine who took their responsibilities very seriously indeed given the importance of the occasion.

I was somewhat apprehensive about this, as this summer I'm accompanying my new granddaughter to Harris the island of a number of her forebears and I didn't want to get run off for saying something rude in a patois incomprehensible to native ears.

In fact I'm grossly over exaggerating as anyone who has enjoyed the hospitality of the islands can testify.

Speaking of hospitality can I take this occasion to express my appreciation of the hospitality in all the local associations I visited this year. Particularly in an election year, it was immensely valuable being able to talk to members and seek their views on how the delivery of the EIS manifesto would impact on them and their teaching in the classroom.

I think that much of the campaigning by members on the manifesto has borne fruit as last night Fiona Hyslop the cabinet secretary responsible for Education and lifelong learning was our guest at the dinner for kindred organisation. She seemed very eager to learn about our policies and I would say that the initial contact was very friendly and positive indeed.

I mentioned my new granddaughter earlier and one of the EIS manifesto commitments is to ensure that when she takes up a place in the nursery sector her education will be lead by a nursery teacher.

Nursery

In certain areas when a nursery teaching post falls vacant a nursery nurse is being appointed in the teacher's place. That of itself is a problem. The EIS has always viewed nursery education as being delivered by a team with education being responsibility of the teacher and the care and welfare of the nursery child being delivered by the nursery nurse or nursery officer.

I believe that STUC must face up to the fact that for nursery nurses to take over the position of teachers cannot be acceptable. I believe that teachers' concerns about this kind of encroachment are echoed by skilled workers in other parts of the public service. This year at the STUC an agreement was reached that the STUC and the trade unions will pursue statutory provision of nursery education with the new Scottish parliament. This, however, does not resolve the immediate problem faced by certain local associations and this must be pursued as a matter of urgency by our representatives on the General Council.

Class Sizes

Another main manifesto commitment for the new Scottish parliament to pursue is the issue of class sizes. To a greater or lesser degree political parties have committed themselves to a phasing in programme in the course of the new parliament.

In the course of this conference through Council's motion and through the motions from local associations conference will establish Institute policy as to how this programme will be pursued.

In the meantime, some progress has been made through the proposed implementation of the partnership agreement to take effect in August 2007.

For the implementation of the class sizes maximum of 25 in primary one

there do not seem to be too many obstacles at present and no doubt these will be addressed through local negotiation.

However, the issue of averaging creates serious problems for us.

In the past when we have campaigned for improved conditions of employment, clear arguments were taken to the members as to why these new conditions should apply. We have always sought their introduction consistently across the board.

In a situation where we sometimes have three or four secondary schools, may be even more, in the same town within easy distance of each other we put our members in a vulnerable position if we do not pursue that same consistency.

Local authorities and school must recognise that new rights on class size maxima have been given to parents and children, rights that will eventually be phased in throughout mainstream education, hopefully in the lifetime of this parliament.

One of the reasons why class sizes was at a major feature of our campaign is because of its likely impact on improving discipline.

In addition to improved class sizes more than ever I am convinced of the crucial role played by the Headteacher in ensuring good discipline in schools.

Discipline

Where headteachers are actively engaged in supporting their staff in ensuring good discipline then such Headteachers require the full backing of the EIS when they require support from the authority.

Maintaining good discipline from the top is often very hard work. I have seen Headteachers actively engaging with their staff in transforming schools where discipline has been poor or nonexistent.

Equally, I have seen schools which were not likely candidates for discipline problems fall into disarray because of neglect from the top. The reality is that authorities cannot run schools from the passenger seat. In circumstances where discipline has a low priority it is virtually impossible for authorities to make available appropriate resources with the confidence that these will be directed to areas of need.

“What conceivable connection is there in combining Home Economics with PE except improved chances in the interschools egg and spoon race.”

Peter Quigley, EIS President

In addition to class sizes and good school management to maintain good discipline a school also needs to have an effective management structure.

Management Restructuring

In TP21 agreement was reached to dispense with AHT posts, APT posts, and senior teacher posts.

However, certain authorities went way beyond that and started a campaign to decimate secondary schools of principal teacher posts.

This was surprising. In the negotiations on TP21 the authorities had sought and won an agreement on job sizing. They did so based on the argument that they wanted the flexibility to develop the curriculum by introducing new, possibly smaller departments, and pay the principal teacher accordingly.

Instead many authorities went into reverse gear. They created mega departments built like a mammoth on steroids combining subjects which have no conceivable connection and giving principal teachers a span of control way beyond anything they're capable of delivering. What conceivable connection is there in combining Home Economics with PE except improved chances in the interschools egg and spoon race.

This continues to cause serious tensions within secondary schools particularly where employers have completely disregarded Annex F and the requirement to reach agreement on the remits of new posts, or the need to reach agreement on proposed changes to the remits of principal teachers currently in post brought on by the restructuring.

Another outcome of the TP21 agreement was the introduction of principal teachers to primary schools.

In too many cases this appears to have been done in a slipshod manner. Even now, there is too little evidence of time being made available to primary principal teachers to carry out their duties, despite the fact that the reduction of class contact brought about a greater flexibility in timetabling primary schools that should have facilitated the process. Furthermore, all too often, very little thought appears to have been given to the remit of primary principal teachers to set out their responsibilities with regard to the delivery of the primary curriculum and/or the responsibilities for the pastoral care of pupils in their school.

All too often, initiatives from management seem to be pursued in a haphazard and piecemeal manner.



“One of the reasons why class sizes was at a major feature of our campaign is because of its likely impact on improving discipline.”

Peter Quigley,
EIS President

Further Education

Just before this AGM, negotiations through ACAS brought to a conclusion a dispute in Perth College that had spilled over into industrial action.

The dispute, together with the dispute at James Watt College earlier this year highlights the unnecessary fragmentation pervading Scottish further education sector at this time. In England they have national bargaining for schools, colleges of further education, and for institutions of higher education.

In Scotland we have national bargaining in schools and we have national bargaining in higher education.

In further education we are still stuck with plant bargaining. EIS policy calls for a return to collective bargaining with the harmonisation of wages and conditions in colleges throughout Scotland. Not only would this create a better work environment for lecturers but it would have profound implications for students of further education.

One of the limitations of the funding council was that, as its name suggests its focus though not exclusively very much on the disbursement money. The recent decision by the Scottish executive to create a department where the focus

shifts from finance to education and lifelong learning surely presents an incentive to improved and effective planning for all those young people who access further and higher education and all those others who would access its potential lifelong learning.

The Law

Other good news was the victory won by our member David McNab when, at his own expense, he won both a tribunal hearing and an appeal hearing with respect to discrimination in employment in a denominational school.

What this victory makes clear is that the law requires people in this room and 50,000 other colleagues throughout Scotland to submit their religious beliefs and character for scrutiny when they applied for a job in a publicly funded sector of education - four times the size of the private sector where no such restrictions apply.

My late father-in-law was a minister of the Church of Scotland. His brother also a minister, by a quirk of fate, survived the Great Escape and its reprisals to become a Professor of Divinity at Glasgow University.

I think they would have had real difficulties were members of their congregation to come to them and say. I have got a degree. I have a teaching qualification. I am GTCS registered. I am subject to all manner of disclosure checks. Yet you are to measure my commitment to the presbyterian religion and measure my moral standing as well to prevent me from being debarred from employment in certain publicly funded schools.

Yet we have a law in the statute books of Scotland which says you can make judgements and on these ground alone deny jobs to people in schools which they themselves are funding through their own rates and taxes.

But at the end of the day laws are not the responsibility of religious groups. They are the responsibility of politicians and legislators. And it is politicians and legislators who must give account for this laws fitness to remain on the statute books of Scotland.

As the forthcoming debates will confirm, I believe that if we show courage and confidence the Educational Institute of Scotland is taking decisions on a range of fronts which can only serve to move education forward through the young years of this millennium to the benefit of all those treading the path of lifelong learning. ■

*Extracted from the President's AGM speech.
Full text available from www.eis.org.uk*



George MacBride,
Retiring Education Convener

Children from asylum seeker families

The EIS will seek assurances from Local Authorities that no information will be released to the Home Office or the Immigration Service regarding any child from an asylum seeker family unless a formal request is received and cleared by a specified senior official within the local authority. Presenting the motion to the AGM, Bob Dow (Glasgow) said “This motion should be unnecessary, but unfortunately it is necessary. Corners are being cut and correct procedures are not being followed – we know of cases where the Home Office phones the school and asks a few questions, and the next thing that you know pupils have been removed from their homes and locked up in Dungavel. It is a fact that Dungavel is now busier than it was two years ago, when the EIS AGM passed a motion to campaign for its closure. Children are still being removed from their homes and schools and locked up in this former prison.”

Seconding the motion, Stephen Dolan (Glasgow) referred to a recent letter in the Scottish Educational Journal. “The Home Office state that they are looking for alternatives to dawn raids. My alternative is simple – stop doing it.”

Retiring Education Convener George MacBride (Glasgow) added his support to the motion, telling a story of young children being passed from balcony to balcony in a high block of flats in Glasgow, to protect them during an early morning raid by immigration officials.

AGM delegates also showed their concern, and heavily backed the motion. ■

Tackling homophobia

The EIS must continue to campaign for the elimination of homophobia in Scottish schools, the AGM heard. Kay Barnett (Aberdeenshire) successfully moved the first motion of conference, arguing that the elimination of all forms of discrimination towards pupils is enshrined in the professional values of teachers. “Homophobia is still rife in workplaces, and it affects all of us,” she said.

“Anecdotal and research evidence shows us that this agenda is still as relevant as six years ago. There is no hierarchy of discrimination, but strategies to eliminate homophobia need to be more full embedded in policies. Too often, homophobia is deliberately excluded or marginalised in school bullying policies.”

Kay Barnett reported that fewer than half the education authorities and only a quarter of schools mentioned homophobic bullying in their policies. She called for effective, unambiguous guidelines from the Scottish Executive on the matter.

She also indicated that the elimination of homophobia was also a matter of protecting the employment rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gender teachers in their workplace.

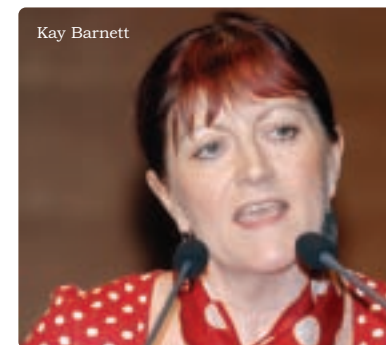
To applause, she said that we need to raise awareness, develop better policies, challenge unacceptable attitudes, and provide high-quality staff development for teachers on how to deal with homophobic bullying.

Seconding the motion, Andy Heron (North Lanarkshire) said he had come across many examples of pupils who had suffered horrendous bullying at the hands of fellow pupils. He said that, although there was much good practice in many schools, he had met a pupil who had dropped out of school at the earliest possible opportunity because of the lack of a support when they came out. A member of the senior management team had told him that he shouldn’t have come out and that it had been a stupid choice to do so. He also called for proper access to information on

LGBT health to young people, and the need to end the derogatory use of the word “gay” to mean something bad. “This is offensive and simply the language of discrimination,” he said. “Homophobia is the last piece of the jigsaw. Homophobic bullying needs to be dealt with on the same basis as racial or sexual discrimination.”

Andrew McNeil (Fife) said it was fitting that this motion was the first to be discussed at the AGM. Margaret Nicol (Fife and Equalities Convener) assured conference that the Equalities Committee would take forward the work. Noting the consensus in the room, she said “this is less of a debate and more a meeting of minds”.

An amendment from FELA to ensure that the campaign will also focus on colleges was accepted and John Cassidy (FELA) spoke. ■



Kay Barnett

“Homophobia is still rife in workplaces, and it affects all of us.”

Kay Barnett



Larry Flanagan

Class size maximum for ASN units

The EIS will campaign for a class size maximum of 10 pupils in ASN units for non-English speaking children as the result of a successful motion proposed by Lesley Atkins (Glasgow) and seconded by Larry Flanagan. "Currently, there is no limit in these units. Scotland is becoming far more culturally diverse, and these units are now full to bursting point", said Ms Atkins.

In a separate but related motion proposed by Marjorie Bell (Glasgow), delegates resolved to call for a national agreement on a maximum number of non English speaking pupils who can be educated in mainstream classes, as well as in dedicated class or units. "There is a crying need for a maximum in mainstream schools," said Ms Bell. "This is becoming an increasingly urgent issue due to the level of migration to this country." ■

Additional support needs network needed

The EIS will seek to establish an Additional Support Needs network, as a result of a successful motion introduced by Shetland Local Association.

Presenting the motion, Mary Sinclair (Shetland) said, "The number of pupils with Additional Support Needs in our classrooms is increasing. We need to meet their needs, but without impacting on the education of other pupils."

AGM delegates voted overwhelmingly for the creation of the ASN network by the EIS. ■

Teaching in Iraq

The EIS will publicise the plight of teachers and pupils in Iraq and send a letter of support to the Iraqi teaching unions, as a result of a successful motion introduced by Iain McManus (South Lanarkshire) and supported by Linzi Moore and Jack Barnett. ■



Jack Barnett

Healthy food in schools

Kathleen Johnston (Edinburgh) was successful in introducing a motion calling for AGM to campaign for the provision of healthy and nutritious food in all school canteens. ■

Smaller specialist art classes in primary rejected

Delegates rejected a call from Colin Mackay (Edinburgh) for Art classes taught by visiting subject specialists in Primary schools to be limited to a maximum of 20 pupils. Introducing the motion to the AGM, Mr Mackay said, "This motion would address in imbalance in the conditions of art specialists working in primary with those of their secondary colleagues". Argued Mr Mackay, "This motion is seeking to address an anomaly."



Alana Ross

But primary teacher Alana Ross (Glasgow) spoke against the motion, saying "How would primary teachers feel if they have to teach 30 pupils in their class, while the visiting subject specialist only has to teach 20? What would happen to the other pupils in the class if the subject specialist was only teaching the first 20?"

Nick Stevenson (Shetland) argued in favour of the motion, saying "This move would be part of the wider agenda in the reduction in class sizes."

But primary headteacher Maggie Anderson (Argyll & Bute) disagreed, saying "It is already our policy to campaign that all subjects at all levels should be taught in classes of no more than 20. Are we really suggesting that we should place special emphasis on art?"

Delegates agreed that singling out specific subjects was not a sound strategy, and voted to reject the motion by a large majority. ■

Right to education for Palestinian pupils and students

The EIS will affiliate to the Right to Education Campaign at Birzeit University as a result of a motion introduced to AGM by Robert Paterson (Midlothian).

"The right to education is a basic human right", said Mr Paterson. "Israel is in the process of making education in the occupied territories inaccessible – road blocks, travel permits, arbitrary restrictions on movement. Curfews force inhabitants to remain indoors, with no access to education. The Right to Education campaign was established to raise awareness of the effects of the occupation on Palestinian education. Education is critical to the health of Palestinian society and the prospect of peace between the Palestinian and Israeli communities."

The motion was seconded by Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian) and overwhelmingly backed by AGM delegates.

In a related motion, Lillian Leach (Midlothian) successfully called for the EIS to seek to raise awareness of the issues facing Palestinian education under military occupation. ■

Multiple disclosure checks unnecessary and wasteful

Martin Turnbull (Fife) successfully called for the EIS to investigate the practice of multiple disclosure checks on the same individual. "This is not about questioning the need for teachers, support staff and parent volunteers to undergo initial disclosure checks. What we are questioning is the wasteful practice of multiple disclosure checks on the same individual. One member in our school, due to recent promotion, some after school activities, and a lot of voluntary work has managed to clock up five separate disclosures in the last year. This is a sorry mess."

Seconding the motion, Margaret Nicol (Fife) said, "The current system is about spending money, not protecting children. It is a wasteful and unhelpful system." ■

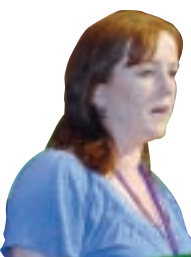
"What we are questioning is the wasteful practice of multiple disclosure checks on the same individual."

Martin Turnbull (Fife)



“need for investment in sports pitches”.

Ken Brown



“Learning Reps are being placed under pressure to drop all other union activities. That is unacceptable.”

Susan Quinn (Glasgow)

AGM condemns national collation of test results

The AGM unanimously condemned the collation by some local authorities of National Assessment results. In addition, delegates agreed to seek assurances from the Scottish Executive that they will advise local authorities to end this practice. Speaking to the successful motion Jayne Rowe (Glasgow) said that such a practice sent “a message of failure to pupils at a young age”. She said that certain local authorities were “not interested in raising attainment across the curriculum; they are only interested in National Assessment results”. She said that collating and publishing the results “served no purpose other than to pass judgement on individual schools”. ■

Funds sought for English as an additional language

The Scottish Executive should provide “significant extra funding” for English as an additional language and bilingual services across all Scottish council areas which required them. This was the purpose of a successful motion from Glasgow Local Association. Lesley Atkins (Glasgow) said that additional funds were essential “to ensure that bilingual pupils are not excluded from access to the curriculum”. She called “an enhanced service across the country”. In support Graham Dane (Edinburgh) said that the growth in numbers of children requiring teaching in English as an additional language meant that “the EAL service is being spread out more thinly”. ■

Exam prelims and workload

Neil Kerr (South Lanarkshire) told the AGM delegates about the increase in workload for secondary teachers caused by SQA procedures in relation to appeals and prelims. He said that in order to produce evidence based on prelim results “teachers across the country are continuing to reinvent the wheel”. He asked whether it would be possible to have available national assessment packs of prelim exams. He added that it was necessary to “find a system of parity of evidence for all our students and all our schools and to decrease teacher workload”. ■

Invest in school sports pitches

Ken Brown (East Dunbartonshire) said there was a real “need for investment” in sports pitches

across Scotland. In agreement Frank Healy (East Dunbartonshire) said “there is a need for sports pitches fit for the 21st Century”.

Nursery education

The Perth AGM re-stated its support for nursery schools and classes involving qualified nursery teachers. Kathleen Johnston (Edinburgh) said that the issue had a particular focus in the context of a Curriculum for Excellence. For nursery schools, she said, “a Curriculum for Excellence starts at age 3 – nursery education is all about a Curriculum for Excellence.” In support, Gill McKinnon, also from Edinburgh, warned of the danger of a “watered down service or privatisation.” ■

CPD for EIS reps of the future?

The EIS will look at the possibility of providing CPD for future representatives involved in EIS work, as a result of a successful motion from Susan Quinn (Glasgow). Ms Quinn praised CPD currently in place and available for EIS members. We should “think about the future and the EIS reps of the future,” she said. Also on CPD, Alan Morrison, (Aberdeenshire) called for advice and guidance on good practice regarding coaching and mentoring schemes in schools. ■

Flat-rate gets a facelift, but result is the same

A hardy perennial returned to the AGM with a new look this year. Introducing a motion which called for a future pay strategy based on equitable distribution of the amount available rather than a fixed percentage applied to all salaries, Andrew McGeever (Edinburgh) said, “This motion is dedicated to the famous group of EIS flat-raters. We are arguing for equal shares for all.”

Annie McCrae (Edinburgh) seconded the motion, saying, “Pay settlements have to be fair and shared equally”.

But salaries committee members Malcolm Maciver (Falkirk) and Eric Baillie (Dundee) disagreed. “In all of my years as an EIS activist, I have never heard any disquiet from members about increases being based on a percentage of salary”, said Mr Baillie.

The flat rate argument again fell flat with delegates, and the AGM rejected the motion by a clear majority. ■

Annual pay agreement strategy ruled out

A call for the EIS to formulate future pay strategy on the basis of purely annual agreements was defeated in a vote of AGM delegates. Annie McCrae (Edinburgh) and Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) argued that annual agreements would offer greater protection against changing economic conditions. “We need to be able to respond quickly to the needs of our members”, said Ms McCrae.

But Aileen Barrie (North Lanarkshire) disagreed, arguing “We need to retain the flexibility to negotiate the best possible deal for our members. Limiting ourselves to one year deals would give away our strategy to COSLA and the Executive.” ■

Time for learning representatives

The EIS will offer support for LA Secretaries and college Branch Secretaries in negotiating sufficient time for Learning Representatives to carry out their LR responsibilities, as a result of a successful motion from East Dunbartonshire Local Association.

Speaking in support, EIS LR Susan Quinn (Glasgow) said, “Learning Reps are being placed under pressure to drop all other union activities. That is unacceptable. We need to ensure that our LA Secretaries, our Branch Secretaries, and our Learning Representatives receive as much support as we can provide.” ■

Where is the staffroom?

EIS Council will formulate advice to Local Associations on how to oppose the rebuilding or refurbishment of schools lacking a designated staffroom, as a result of a successful motion presented by Eddie Burns (South Lanarkshire).

“Is the lack of new staffrooms an issue of divide and control?” asked Mr Burns. “*A Curriculum for Excellence* places a heavy emphasis on collegiality – but it seems that the design of new schools is at odds with the development of the new curriculum. We need to oppose this erosion of teachers’ working conditions.”

Seconding the motion David Liddell (South Lanarkshire) said “Facilities are being downgraded purely on the basis of cost.” ■

EIS political fund renewal 2007

Notification of ballot

Unions are required by law to ballot once every ten years on renewal of their political fund. The EIS political fund was set up in 1987 following a ballot in which 85% of EIS members supported the setting up of a fund. The fund was re-newed in 1997 following a ballot.

Ballot 2007

Opens Monday 10 September 2007

Closes Friday 5 October 2007

- A political fund is NOT about affiliation to any political party.
- The EIS is NOT affiliated to any political party.

Vote yes

- A political fund protects against legal challenges to the campaigning role of the EIS.
- A political fund allows the EIS to continue its vital work as a campaigning union.

Scrutineers: Electoral Reform Services

Further details will be issued to all educational establishments

A copy of the rules governing the ballot is available on request.

The logo for the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) features the lowercase letters 'eis' in a white, sans-serif font. The letter 'i' has a small dot above it, and the letter 's' has a small horizontal line through its middle.

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