



The
Scottish
Educational
Journal



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President
steps up



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The 2010 AGM

The Full
Report

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The Educational
Institute of Scotland

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This special edition of the SEJ reports on the 164TH Annual General Meeting of the EIS. This year's AGM was held in the Caird Hall, Dundee.

The AGM is a key event for the EIS, but it is also watched very closely by others. Scotland's broadcasters and newspapers cover the AGM in great depth, and the debates and decisions of conference are followed closely at both local and national government level. This year, it was easier than ever before for those outside the hall to follow the AGM as, for the first time, the EIS website – www.eis.org.uk – featured live updates on the progress of the AGM and a dedicated Twitter feed with additional information direct from inside the conference hall.

At this year's AGM, teachers and lecturers from across Scotland took the opportunity to send clear messages to both local and national government on major issues such as *Curriculum for*

Excellence, budget cuts, qualifications and assessment, lack of jobs for newly qualified teachers, and support for pupils with Additional Support Needs.

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

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

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Curriculum for Excellence concerns remain but boycott bid fails

A bid for a boycott of *Curriculum for Excellence* "until there is adequate funding for its delivery" was overwhelmingly defeated by the AGM. Instead an amendment by Council "to investigate and consider a work to contract" was carried with the overwhelming support of delegates. Speaking in support of the amendment, Education Convener Larry Flanagan said "A work to contract is an effective way of taking forward the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. It builds on the current EIS position of support. It means "seeking to impose the conditions of the teachers' 35 contractual hours." He pointed out that any work to contract would need a ballot of EIS members before implementation. He added "We are not Luddites – we shall take control of *Curriculum for Excellence* on our own terms." Mr Flanagan pointed to the gains made in terms of *Curriculum for Excellence* implementation in terms of additional £3m in funding, the ending of the NAB bank and additional in-service days.

In agreement, Susan Quinn (Education Vice Convener) said that "to be successful *Curriculum for Excellence* must empower teachers across the country." A work to contract, she said, would mean



"...to be successful *Curriculum for Excellence* must empower teachers across the country."

Susan Quinn

"delivery of *Curriculum for Excellence* within working time." A boycott move, argued Bryce Wilson (East Ayrshire), would mean "the EIS ending up with egg all over its face."

In support of a boycott, Brian McGovern (Renfrewshire) said that a boycott would signal to Government "Give us the money and we will deliver *Curriculum for Excellence* – a call for a boycott is an elongated delay." For the EIS, Mr McGovern believed, organising a boycott of *Curriculum for Excellence* represented "last chance saloon in terms of us as a union." The EIS should "beware of becoming an insider pressure

group, going to work in the boss's car." Going ahead with the new curriculum now would be "injurious to the health of education." In support, John Welsh (Renfrewshire) said he wanted to see *Curriculum for Excellence* delivered "in a proper form, not piecemeal as is just now." However, a strong majority agreed with Larry Flanagan that a boycott was "impractical."



"A work to contract is an effective way of taking forward the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*."

Larry Flanagan

The need for a delay in the timetable for implementation was stressed in a motion from Charlie McKinnon (Glasgow). He stressed the "huge number of problems surrounding *Curriculum for Excellence*." He had little confidence that the £3m earmarked recently by Government would get to schools and teachers. In support, Larry Flanagan spoke of the need for a "slowdown" of delivery especially "in anticipation of the new qualifications." Any delay did not mean no teacher engagement with the pedagogy associated with the new curriculum, he said.

In a separate motion, Mr Flanagan won the support of delegates in seeking to persuade government that there should be additional government provided ring-fenced funding to support *Curriculum for Excellence* developments. Mr Flanagan accepted that a recent government statement promising "tracking" of such funding was positive, but insisted that ring-fencing was the only way of ensuring that funding went to schools and teachers involved in the new curriculum.

Questions were raised in a number of debates on the degree of readiness in schools for *Curriculum for Excellence* implementation. In order to establish the views of teachers, a further survey should be carried out by the EIS. Proposing the motion, Jim Moore (West

EIS AGM 2010



"Curriculum for Excellence is being rammed down our throats."

Jim Moore

Dunbartonshire) said the perception of many teachers was that "Curriculum for Excellence is being rammed down our throats."

The importance of CPD entitlement in Curriculum for Excellence delivery was stressed by Ronnie Mathieson (North Lanarkshire). He referred to the entitlement of every teacher to CPD, and wanted to see a reversal of the "trend towards the increased organisation of CPD activities as twilight or weekend events."

Issues of literacy & numeracy surfaced in a motion from Bill Ramsay (Equalities Convener). Recent government statements on the assessment of literacy and numeracy had clarified certain issues – however, teachers need a much clearer picture, argued Mr Ramsay.

GTCS and teaching other subject areas



"...more and more authorities were asking teachers to be flexible in the subject areas in which they would be prepared to teach."

Cathy Grant

The EIS will seek reassurances from local authorities that teachers will not be deployed to teach subjects for which they are not registered with the GTCS. This was the result of a successful motion from Cathy Grant (Fife). She was concerned that more and more authorities were asking teachers to be flexible in the subject areas in which they would be prepared to teach. This was often made in the context of "inter-disciplinary learning" in the context of Curriculum for Excellence. According to Fife colleague, Paddy Miller, there were particular pressures on newly qualified teachers to agree to teach in areas in which they were not qualified at a time of few jobs and mortgages to pay. Delegates reminded the AGM that routes were available

to teachers seeking additional qualifications or professional recognition. ●

Nursery education



"If Curriculum for Excellence is to be from age 3 to 18, there will be a need for well trained, highly motivated nursery teachers."

Philip Jackson

The EIS will "investigate and report on the extent to which pre-school children in local authority provision have access to a nursery teacher" as the result of a successful motion from Philip Jackson (Angus). He argued "If Curriculum for Excellence is to be from age 3 to 18, there will be a need for well trained, highly motivated nursery teachers." Margaret Smith (Falkirk) said that recent information showed a decrease in the number of qualified nursery teachers employed across Scotland, though the overall pattern was "patchy". Ms Smith is convening a national working group on nursery education which has commissioned research on nursery education provision. This would lead to an update of EIS publicity material in that area. In the same debate, Kate Johnston (Edinburgh) warned of the increase in private providers in the pre-5 sector. ●

EIS policy seeking a delay in the implementation of revised National Qualifications related to Curriculum for Excellence was



"...trend towards the increased organisation of CPD activities as twilight or weekend events."

Ronnie Mathieson

re-affirmed in a motion from Eileen Morrison (Moray). She said that the new curriculum was "not sorted - especially as regards implementation in the secondary sector." She argued, successfully, that the EIS should pursue the "need for a longer lead time." She spoke of "lack of information, lack of time, lack of resources and huge concerns about assessment and reporting." ●

Opposing 'MOTs' for teachers

The issue of teacher re-accreditation, currently being considered by the GTCS following instruction from the Scottish Government, was the subject of a motion proposed by Ricky Cullen (North Lanarkshire). Mr Cullen successfully called for the EIS to oppose



"This exploration of re-accreditation is a duty that has been placed upon the GTCS by the Scottish Government – the GTCS themselves are well aware of all the issues around re-licensing."

David Drever

the concept of re-accreditation, particularly any move towards a 5-year re-registration model – the so-called 'MOTs' for teachers. The motion was seconded by Kevin O'Brien (East Dunbartonshire)

who said, "The current system works well – so why should we start again with a new one? Is this proposed new system intended to be a support or a straight-jacket for teachers?"



"We must politely, but firmly, send the message that we do not support discussions on a system of re-licensing."

Tom Tracey

David Drever (Ex-President), who also convenes the GTCS, said, "This exploration of re-accreditation is a duty that has been placed upon the GTCS by the Scottish Government – the GTCS themselves are well aware of all the issues around re-licensing."

Ken Brown (East Dunbartonshire) said, "We are already the most scrutinised profession on the planet," and Tom Tracey (Inverclyde) warned, "We must politely, but firmly, send the message that we do not support

discussions on a system of re-licensing." The AGM agreed, as delegates overwhelmingly backed the motion. ●



"'Patchy' nursery provision across Scotland"

Margaret Smith

AGM calls for Industrial Action Ballot to fight Budget Cuts

The AGM decided that all EIS members should be balloted on strike action to fight back against budget cuts, with a planned campaign to fight the cuts set to commence with a one-day strike and demonstration planned for March 2011. The move to a ballot on industrial action, proposed by Bob Fotheringham (Glasgow), won overwhelming support of the delegates at the AGM.

"The 'Why must our Children pay?' demonstration in March was a great success," said Mr Fotheringham, "But sometimes demonstrating is not enough and we must step up the pressure by taking industrial action. This will show just how serious we are about fighting the cutbacks by taking an initial day of strike action."

Charlotte Ahmed (Glasgow) seconded the motion, saying, "The 'Why must our Children pay?' campaign offered an alternative to what every single political party was saying. We need to fight their political consensus that cuts to education are inevitable."

Annie McCrae (Edinburgh) supported the motion and warned, "We cannot underestimate this damaging 'age of austerity' that we keep hearing about from the politicians."

Reduction of Support Staff

Council will investigate the impact of the reduction of support staff on teachers' working conditions following the passing of a motion proposed by Jayne Rowe (Glasgow). Moving the motion, Ms Rowe told delegates, "Under the banner of budget cuts support staff will go and so will our conditions. Councils are taking our conditions and we cannot let that happen." ●

Industrial Action over any Pay Freeze or Pay Cut

Any attempt to impose a pay freeze on teachers will result in the EIS organising a campaign, including industrial action. Steve Caniffi



"As a trade union, we have a responsibility to defend the salaries of our members..."
Jack Barnett

(East Renfrewshire) moved the motion and reminded Conference that Scottish teachers had seen a year on year fall in their standards of living. "A pay freeze is a 5% pay cut. I might be persuaded to accept a pay freeze if 18 out of 23 Cabinet members were not all millionaires." Seconding the motion, Jack Barnett (Aberdeenshire) said "As a trade union, we have a responsibility to defend the salaries of our members and sustaining the delivery of Scottish Education by attracting graduates into teaching. A pay freeze should be part of our cuts campaign.

The EIS does not accept that public spending contributes to the crisis and any attempt to impose a pay freeze needs to be opposed". The AGM also resolved that any attempt by COSLA or the Scottish Government to impose a salary cut would trigger a programme of industrial action. The motion was moved by Margaret Conway (North Lanarkshire) who reminded delegates of the experiences of Ireland's teachers and was seconded by Brian McLean (North Lanarkshire). Both motions were passed with an overwhelming majority. ●



"Given the unprecedented cuts that we are facing, we must have industrial action as a method of fighting back against this threat to Scottish education."

Charlie McKinnon

Charlie McKinnon (Glasgow) added, "Given the unprecedented cuts that we are facing, we must have industrial action as a method of fighting back against this threat to Scottish education."

"We cannot underestimate this damaging 'age of austerity'"

Annie McCrae

Alan Ferguson (EIS-FELA President) spoke in support, warning that this was an issue that threatened every sector of Scottish education, and every single school, college and university in the country.

The AGM decided that now was the time to send a strong warning to national and local government, and overwhelmingly backed the move to ballot members on a day of strike action.

In a related motion, Margaret Conway (North Lanarkshire) successfully called for a campaign, including the possibility of industrial action, to ensure that no compulsory redundancies of teachers take place as a result of budget cuts. The motion was seconded by Ian Scott (North Lanarkshire). ●

Defending Scottish Education



"Our campaign got off to a great start with the rally in Glasgow, and we must now work to reiterate the message 'Why must our Children pay?'"

Margaret Conway

Margaret Conway (North Lanarkshire) successfully proposed that the EIS should deplore cuts in education budgets and continue with its campaign to fight the cuts. "Our campaign got off to a great start with the rally in Glasgow, and we must now work to reiterate the message 'Why must our Children pay?'" said Ms Conway. The motion was seconded by Ricky Cullen (North Lanarkshire), with support from Kenny Fella (Renfrewshire) and Brian McLean (North Lanarkshire). ●

Fighting staff cuts

The EIS will campaign against the continued reduction of Ancillary and Janitorial staff, as the result of a successful motion proposed by Kevin O'Brien (East Dunbartonshire). Mr O'Brien said, "This fits in well with our 'Why Must our Children pay?' campaign as we must ask why Ancillary and Janitorial staff are being cut back in schools, with clear implications for health and safety of pupils in our schools."

Liz Graham (East Dunbartonshire) seconded the motion, and said, "Ancillary and Janitorial staff help our children socialise and ensure their wellbeing in the playground. They are essential to the successful operation of our schools." Delegates agreed and backed the motion overwhelmingly. ●

ACTION & PENSIONS

Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme



"Motion drawn up on a false premise."
Dougie MacKie

Delegates resisted a call from EIS-FELA delegates for the EIS to enter into discussions with the SPPA (Scottish Public Pensions Agency) to change the long-term pension paid to widows and widowers of the scheme from the existing 50% of the member's pension to the position whereby they retain 100% of the pension for the rest of their life. John Cassidy (EIS-FELA) moved the motion and declared that pension benefits should be paid to families since the contributions came from family income. John Dennis (Dumfries and Galloway) supported the motion and said "There is no harm in saying that we want improvements in our pension scheme. Our union should not be refusing to ask for improvements to our pension scheme." However, Rob Peaker (Aberdeen) disagreed and informed delegates that there was a finite amount of money and any improvements in the scheme would increase costs. Salaries Committee Convener Dougie Mackie agreed and criticised the motion for being drawn up on a false premise. He reminded delegates that the EIS did not negotiate directly with the SPPA. "The EIS is one of 14 organisations who discuss superannuation issues on a UK basis. During the last review in 2007, this was not a priority for the teachers' working party" he said. He added "To get these benefits members would have to increase their contributions. At the moment we have to protect what we have; others will not be looking at improving our scheme."



"There is not a finite pot when it comes to profit. The gap between the rich and poor is increasing. We have got to start the fight back."

Penny Gower

Penny Gower (EIS-FELA) argued "There is not a finite pot when it comes to profit. The gap between the rich and poor is increasing. We have got to start the fight back." But Jack Barnett (Aberdeenshire) warned Conference that any improvements would have to be funded entirely by an increase in members' contributions and urged caution in raising expectations amongst the membership. In her last speech as an EIS delegate to the AGM, the former President and Convener of the EIS Equality Committee Margaret Nicol (Fife) also warned delegates of the dangers of re-opening the debate on the distinction between widows and widowers and those in a civil partnership. She added "This is not about bankers or profits; it's about our members and the benefits they receive from the Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme."

In summing up, John Cassidy (EIS-FELA) concluded that the AGM should be aspirational and added "We must always seek improvements in the superannuation scheme. We don't want cuts – we want improvements." However, the AGM disagreed and defeated the motion by a very large majority. ●



"We must always seek improvements in the superannuation scheme. We don't want cuts – we want improvements."
John Cassidy

Protecting Pensions



"We need to fight back against the misconception constantly perpetuated by some sections of the media that we have 'Gold-Plated' Pensions."

Bob Fotheringham

The EIS will organise a campaign in defence of the Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme, as the result of a successful motion proposed by Bob Fotheringham (Glasgow). "We need to fight back against the misconception constantly perpetuated by some sections of the media that we have 'Gold-Plated' Pensions," said Mr Fotheringham. "It is important that we can take up the fight for teachers' rights to their pension. This country is one of the worst in the world in investing in public sector pensions."

The motion was seconded by May Ferries (Glasgow), who put in a convincing performance as retiring EIS stalwart Alana Ross, capably assisted by Philip Cairney (Glasgow) who played the role



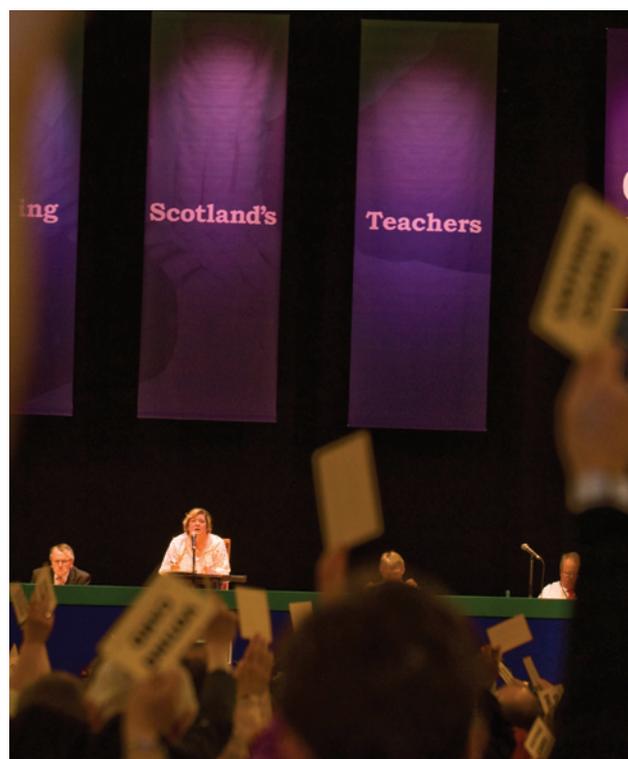
Alana Ross - aka May Ferries



Willie Hart - aka Philip Cairney

of former longtime Glasgow LA Secretary Willie Hart. Due to a scheduling clash, Willie and Alana were unable to attend this, what would have been their final AGM. But their Glasgow colleagues ensured that while they were absent, they were not forgotten, as "they" made a strong case for protecting teachers' pensions.

Salaries Convener Dougie Mackie added his support, stating "the average teachers' pension is less than £10,000 per annum – it is a myth that teachers enjoy so-called 'Gold-Plated' pensions." The motion was backed overwhelmingly by the AGM. ●



Facing the challenges ahead for Scottish education

In his annual address to the AGM, General Secretary Ronnie Smith warned of the threats ahead for Scottish education and urged all of Scotland's teachers to work together to defend Scotland's schools, colleges and universities.

One of my early duties as General Secretary was to walk through the streets of Edinburgh, in February 1996, at the front of a march of around 40,000 men, women and young people from a very wide cross-section of Scottish society, united in expressing their opposition and resistance to a diet of cuts in budget and education service provision being visited on our schools and colleges and universities by a Conservative Government in its twilight years.

I wonder how many of those present on that day would ever have imagined that, 14 years later, at the end of the first decade of a new century and millennium, 10,000 would be back on the streets, this time of Glasgow, united in expressing our opposition to the budget and service cuts being visited upon our schools and colleges and universities in the twilight years of a Labour Government?

On one view that is deeply disappointing. One might ask if that is all the progress we have made over the intervening years, that we are back where we started? It only goes to show that our work will never be done.

I won't rehearse the key points of the 21st Century Agreement. But, as we enter a period of austerity, the value of the pay platform it provided, built upon by two successive multi-year agreements, the last of which is now entering its final phase, will come to be better appreciated.

As job opportunities contract, the worth of the Teacher Induction Scheme will be better appreciated. Let us never forget that beginning teachers were taking an average of five years to accrue the necessary two years of probationary service to secure full registration. Just imagine what life would be like without this scheme for our new graduates this August trying to find chances to undertake probation. This scheme was never designed to create more jobs, but to provide a proper and professional entry path into the world of teaching.

And as numbers of promoted posts are squeezed, so diminishing opportunities for career progression, the value of the Chartered Teacher scheme which puts salary and professional advancement in the hands of the individual candidate for chartered status, will also come to be better appreciated.

It is worth recalling these points because there is little doubt we are about to enter a very long, dark tunnel which will test our members and our Institute to a degree that few will ever have experienced.

I am unsure just how well or widely understood is the scale of challenge we face in the coming period. It will test us.

Of course we will rage. Of course we will be angry that our children, our members, should be made to suffer because of the outrageous, shameless behaviour of an irresponsible private banking and financial sector.

But never underestimate how quickly the real villains of the piece will seek to rehabilitate themselves as forces for social good and supposed models of efficiency.

We recognise that the economic crisis will cause problems for public finances – but we do not accept that public spending is the cause of,

or contributes to, the crisis. Yet, almost by stealth, we in the public sector are being fingered as the problem.

We will see the ground being laid in all sorts of ways for attacks on teachers.

We can expect a hard time in the next pay round because we declined COSLA's invitation to forego the modest 2.4% April pay rise which was part of our last three year agreement. We are to forget that inflation is riding high at 5.3%.

And the next excuse will be that there is no money because employers are being dragged screaming and kicking into granting pregnant employees their fundamental right to receive annual leave foregone when absent on maternity leave. So much for any commitment to equality and fairness as they seek to wriggle out of a fundamental legal obligation.

Then they will come for our pensions – a softly softly approach, to begin with at least. A supposedly "independent" commission (does such a thing exist?) to review the long term affordability of public sector pensions. Yet, we agreed changes just a few years ago to raise the pension age to 65 and to cap the contributions employers could be required to make – and the Treasury agreed then that this made our scheme sustainable.

And we should expect a campaign which will seek to undermine public confidence in teachers. In times of shortage, politicians and pundits like to talk up the value and quality of teachers. When they are trying to contract teacher employment, they turn against us and question our competence and seek to run us down at every turn.

Cuts

But the whole agenda is cuts-driven. We have already seen dramatic cuts in places in TEs for new teachers and we now see the consequent impact on our members employed in universities' education faculties. Not only are we losing the capacity to prepare new teachers – but there will also be reduced capacity to sustain the CPD needs of the profession. Across councils we see attacks on instrumental music instruction, the non-replacement of departing teachers and the reduction in teaching support staff too.

The recent GTC follow-up survey of post-probationers revealed that 30% are either unemployed or sitting at home on a supply list, hoping someone will call to offer them a bit of work. The worst outcomes since this exercise began.

And last year, in 2009, another 700 teaching posts disappeared out of the system. The problem is not too many teachers – it's too few jobs.

Authority after authority will be looking at reorganising – that is a euphemism for closing down much of their school provision (and the FE colleges are at that game too in Glasgow).

But let's be blunt. After a decade of "education, education, education", we now enter a decade of "cuts, cuts, cuts".

The failure to embed class size limits in agreements or statute leaves schools and Authorities the freedom to do that – an indictment of both the current and the previous Scottish Government.

It is remarkable that today is the closing day for a consultation on draft regulations to limit P1 classes to 25. Three years through the lifespan of the current Government, they haven't even got round to securing the promise made by the last Government.

" Never will it have been more important for us to build alliances with parents who rely so much on the once in a lifetime learning opportunity we seek to provide for their youngster."

SCOTTISH EDUCATION



I believe teachers will increasingly ask where are our local authorities in all this? In our 1996 demonstration large numbers of local councillors were present and spoke up strongly and in public for education and the services for which they had responsibility. I may be wrong, but I was aware of none on the streets of Glasgow in March. Maybe I read the wrong newspapers, but I can't recall when I last heard a councillor actually speak up for education.

If local government is serious about being a tier of government, rather than local administration, it needs to get up off its knees and start to fight for the communities whose interests they are supposed to represent and the services, the vital public services, they are trusted to provide. We in the EIS want to believe in and give support to local government, but the performance of too many councils is eroding confidence in many quarters.

Colleagues, these are big challenges we have to confront and we need to do so at different levels. We have just had the UK elections and it is clear that Westminster government policies will impact on us. But so too will the Scottish Parliament's policies and we will need to exercise maximum leverage over the coming year in the run-up to the elections. That is a time when politicians come closest to being in listening mode.

Of course the EIS is not aligned to any party and I hope that will always be the case – that we will always be influenced only by what is right for education.

Alliances

But we cannot be divorced from politics. Our ability to secure the tools for the job will depend upon political decisions at all levels of government- local, Holyrood, Westminster. But we cannot act alone in this.

Never will it have been more important for us to build alliances with parents who rely so much on the once in a lifetime learning opportunity we seek to provide for their youngsters. They need to be told what the front-line service cuts mean for their children – the loss of teaching time, the narrowing of the curriculum, the restrictions on subject choice, the insidious introduction of charging for services. And we need to explore joint working with other trade unions – teacher unions and the wider movement through the STUC. Now is the time to focus on what we have in common rather than on any differences among us.

Simple Message

Our message remains simple and clear.

“Why must our children pay?”

And we will need to be nimble – to be smart and thoughtful on how we respond to the multiple attacks which we will face from so many different quarters at different points over the coming years.

At the very time we enter a period of extreme austerity we stand at a critical point in moving forward on the major curricular reform of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The truth is that, right across the profession, there are very mixed views about it. Some are evangelical about it, some are content with it, some are sceptical, some are downright opposed and many are unsure, unclear and unprepared. That is the reality.

But one thing is clear, that is that any inherent problems with CfE are exacerbated by this project moving forward at a time of retrenchment. Looking ahead – particularly in this period as political parties prepare their manifestos for the upcoming Scottish elections – local authorities and the Scottish Government will need to adjust their appetites and ambitions for change to take account of the new realities being imposed on our classrooms and the reduced resources made available to us.

Teachers understand they will have to contribute to the painful process of repairing the public finances.

Teachers understand their first duty is to continue to provide the best education they can for the youngsters in their charge.

Challenging Times

But we will not be the fall-guys for others' fecklessness. We must not allow this to be an excuse for Government to transfer public education provision into the hands of the private sector opportunists.

There are plenty of them waiting in the wings, salivating at the prospect of education being opened up to the market.

The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers is a tripartite body – unions, COSLA and the Scottish Government – and all partners in that body would do well to remember not just the letter, but also the spirit, the new ways of working, the collegial approach, set out in the 2001 Agreement. Those who are committed to a high quality public education service need to find common ground and work together.

The main threat to that consensus comes from the changes we have seen, and are about to see.

The EIS has come through many challenging times in its 163 year history. I am confident it can do so again.

So, let's be proud of what we are – of being teachers, of being teacher unionists. Let's be proud of what we do, as teachers and as teacher unionists. And it's what we DO that really matters.

I ask all of you to keep in mind the words of Vergil's Aeneid.

*“stat sua cuique dies;
breve et irreparabile tempus omnibus est vitae;
sed famam extendere factis hoc virtutis opus”*

*Everyone has their appointed day.....
For all of us Life is brief and irrevocable;
but it is the work of virtue to extend our fame by our deeds*

Colleagues, there is much to be done. And if we don't do it for Scotland's children and young people – who will? ●

“...let's be proud of what we are... proud of what we do...it's what we DO that really matters.”

Membership Audit

The AGM instructed Council to investigate and report on the extent to which the membership of Council and its committees reflected the membership of the EIS in relation to gender, age and educational sector. Jo Hill (Orkney) moved the motion and stated that a balanced Council was important. **“Monitoring will show up any imbalances”** he said. David Drever (Ex-President) seconded the motion and urged delegates to pass the motion as it would help to identify the obstacles which prevent members from being involved in the work of the EIS. The AGM agreed and passed the motion with an overwhelming majority.

Council will also investigate and report on the gender, race and social class breakdown of pupils educated, in whole or in part, within the context of the provision and assessment of additional support needs following the successful motion proposed by the Convener of the Equality Committee Bill Ramsay and seconded by Dorothy Finlay (Falkirk). ●

Defending Higher Education

The EIS will do all that it can to support the joint union ‘Defend Higher Education’ campaign, as the result of a successful motion from Mike Napier (EIS-ULA). The motion was seconded by Penny Gower (EIS-FELA) and backed overwhelmingly by AGM delegates. ●

Personal Protective Equipment

Council will also investigate and report on what obligatory Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be provided and maintained to protect teachers from injury or risk of entrapment while using equipment in Technical Departments following the successful passing of a motion moved by John Welsh (Renfrewshire) seconded by Kenny Fella (Renfrewshire). ●

Setting EIS salaries

The AGM overwhelmingly rejected a motion from David Farmer (Fife) calling for a review of the link between the salary of the EIS General Secretary with headteachers in Scottish schools. Incoming EIS Vice-President Alan Munro successfully argued that the motion was an attempt to renegotiate a salary agreement without going through normal collective bargaining procedures with EIS employees. **“It would be entirely wrong for us to breach that agreement, arrived at via free collective bargaining, through an AGM motion”**, said Mr Munro. ●

Insurance Protection

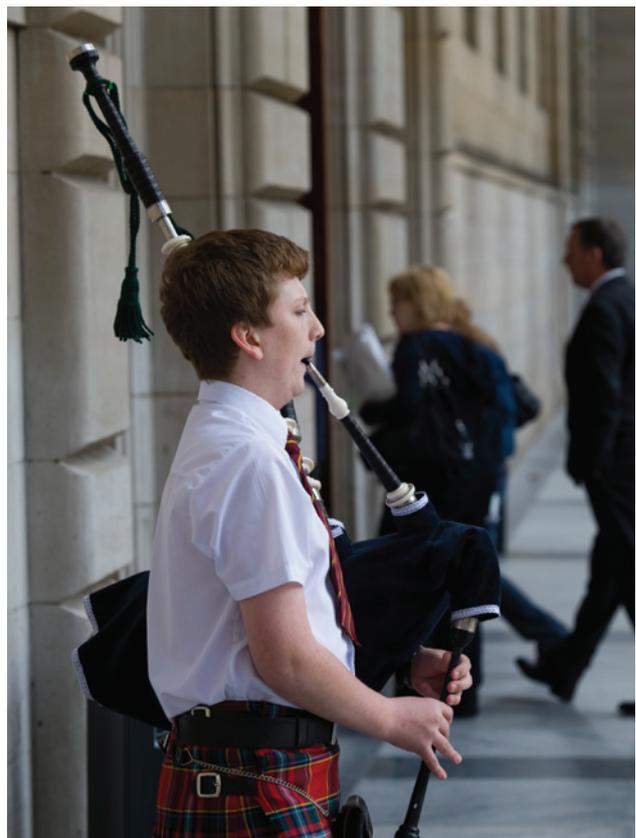
Council will investigate and report on Local Authority insurance protection for staff injured in the course of their duties. **“It is dangerous to assume that teachers are covered”** said mover of the motion Kevin O’Brien (East Dunbartonshire). He added **“Local authority insurance protection must be forthcoming for our members but we cannot take it for granted. Let’s investigate and find out.”** Martin Monigatti (East Dunbartonshire) seconded the motion by adding that **“it is important to ensure that insurance is in place.”** The AGM agreed and passed the motion with an overwhelming majority. ●

Electronic SEJs

All members will have the option of receiving the SEJ in either printed or electronic format, as the result of a successful motion proposed by Colin Mackay (Edinburgh), who argued that doing so would cut down on duplication and waste. The motion was seconded by Alison Thornton (Edinburgh). ●



St Paul’s Academy - Madrigal group



Rory Allardyce (Harris Academy) welcomes delegates to the AGM

AGM SIGHTS & SOUNDS



Over to you - Helen Connor (right) hands over the EIS presidency to Kay Barnett



Stephen McCrossan, EIS Learning Representative in North Lanarkshire takes up post in August as EIS National Officer (Education & Equality)



New Vice-President Alan Munro



Tony Finn replies for new Fellows



Grove Academy pupils entertain delegates

New EIS Fellows Celebrate Degree Awards

1. Rob Paterson (Midlothian)
2. Patrick Cullen (North Lanarkshire)
3. Bob Birrell (Convener of the FEIS Board of Examiners)
4. Helen Connor (Outgoing President)
5. Alexander Burgess (Angus)
6. Ronnie Smith (General Secretary)
7. Audrey McAuley (Perth & Kinross)
8. Kay Barnett (Incoming President)
9. *Tony Finn (GTCS Chief Executive)
10. *Norrie Bissell (former Area Officer)

*Both special awards



The Threat of Lyme Disease

Urgent EIS advice to all educational establishments concerning the threat of Lyme Disease in Scotland and the UK will be issued following the passing of a motion proposed by Ken Brown (East Dunbartonshire). Mr Brown highlighted to delegates that the consequences of this pernicious disease were serious and long term. He pointed out that the disease was spreading but that the risks of exposure can be reduced. **"The potential consequences of the current level of ignorance are high"** he said. Seconding the motion Alan Janeczko (East Dunbartonshire) reminded delegates that 171 cases had been reported in Scotland in 2006. **"This disease has a foothold"** he said and added **"We need to raise awareness of this disease and its mode of transmission."** The AGM agreed and passed the motion with an overwhelming majority. ●

Teachers must work together on curriculum and fighting cuts

In her keynote address to the AGM, outgoing EIS President Helen Connor spoke of the importance for everyone in education working together on the *Curriculum for Excellence* and fighting to protect education budgets.

During this year I have had the honour of visiting a large number of Local Associations and, although this may sound cheesy, those visits were the most interesting and exciting part of my year. Whether this was the experience of meeting the P2 boy in Greenock who clearly thought I was bonkers when I joined in with his role-play and went too far and asked him for a cup of tea....the look on his face when he said to me "Do you not know this is role-play?" was an absolute picture or very recently the P1 girl in Shetland who was telling me unprompted about what the class were doing, she certainly did not need any help in becoming a confident individual.

I will also never forget my visits to the many special schools or units in our various Local Authorities. There was the school in East Kilbride where the young people who had severe autism could talk with me and come into a picture for the local press, something they would not have been able to do a few months ago. There was the experience in the school in Tranent where the more challenging young people in the mainstream were very different when supporting youngsters in the unit and the self-esteem which this gave them.

I don't only mention these to let you know that I remember where I've been and the impact these visits have had on me but to make it clear that none of these experiences and the many thousands of others which happen in our schools day in day out would be happening if it were not for the professionalism, commitment and sheer hard work of the teaching profession, sometimes under very difficult circumstances.

Let there be no doubt in anyone's mind that today's teachers work extremely hard and are very dedicated to the profession and the young people whose lives they touch in a very positive way each day. That is why I am clear that we, as a profession, have nothing to fear from any wider examination of our professionalism, no matter where that may arise.

It is hard to believe that it is 9 years since the 21st Century Agreement and all that this entailed. I wish for the moment to concentrate on the inclusion within that agreement of the concept of collegiality. I do not have time here to elucidate on all the thoughts of what collegiality means but think we would all agree that the very minimum it would mean would be that within schools ALL staff work together and proper and effective consultation takes place within establishments, true regard is given to the views of others and decisions whilst not always taken collectively are fully understood by all.

I would like to mention though the challenge which the concept of collegiality poses for us and by us. I mean both teachers and management alike. There are some headteachers in our schools who play lip-service to the concept of collegiality and equally there are some staff within schools throughout the country who find the idea of having to be involved beyond their own classroom teaching a challenge. In the coming years when there is no doubt that working together to save the education service is paramount we need to address this issue.

This is a challenge for all within our schools. It is all too easy to blame managers for not embracing collegiality, but we have a responsibility as well.

We also have to be clear that the current thinking of extending the powers of Headteachers and parents in the running of our schools is not one which we as a union are comfortable with. That does not mean that we give "carte-blanche" to the way Local Authorities run our schools but we have long fought for national conditions of service and working conditions for our members and this is all the more crucial in the present economic climate. We only have to look at the situation within FE to see how dangerous a move away from that would be.

The proudest moment of my year as President was undoubtedly the rally in March. As someone who cut my teeth in the late 70s with the college occupations and the beginnings of teacher unemployment, speaking to a rally of 10,000 people was a very emotional and proud moment for me.

Many in this hall were indeed on that rally along with many thousands of parents, lecturers, students and children from across Scotland. I hope you will forgive me for reinforcing some of the messages from my speech to the rally. I personally feel that they cannot be repeated often enough.

We must once again question the deeply held belief that public sector cuts are inevitable.

I could go on with the challenges which we have to face and the questions which we must be asking and to be fair we must play a part in attempting to answer. Time does not allow me to answer all of them just now but I could offer the Government a first step towards a solution and that is:

Get rid of the Concordat which is not working and return to ring-fencing of budgets - that way we at least know where the money is going and we are not in the middle of a blame game with Scotland's young people falling through the middle.

"The proudest moment of my year as President was undoubtedly the rally in March."

“ The most vulnerable in society are children and the EIS has a very strong record of standing up for children and their right to the best education which our teachers are very well trained to provide. ”

Helen Connor
EIS President



Let us be clear colleagues that the EIS remains fully committed to the principles behind CfE but recognises that there remains confusion in schools, even although we are 6 years down the road. This was clear from the recent survey and although the main difficulties appear to be in the secondary sector let me get rid of the myth that all is well and up and running in every primary school across the country.

Having said that, we do recognise that there are real problems within the secondary sector and we have been pursuing this vociferously with the Cabinet Secretary. There is no doubt in my mind that we need time and resources in order to carry this forward and the suspension of inspections is a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, this suspension only occurring in the secondary sector perpetuates the myth that all is well in the primary sector, and I'm sure primary colleagues here would have welcomed a similar approach within their schools. In the present economic climate without adequate CPD it is also impossible to move forward as quickly as we would wish. We also must get rid of the phrase full implementation by August 2010. This will not happen and believe me the world will not fall apart in schools come August. To quote the Cabinet Secretary himself – “the laws of Physics and French Grammar will still be the same.”

I would like to take this opportunity to mention a few people who are retiring from their activity within the EIS. There will be many who are retiring such is the age profile of the union but I want to concentrate on those who played a very large part in the work of the union and were indeed former National Presidents.

- **Margaret Nicol** who has played a huge part in the building up of the Equalities work within this union and will leave that as her legacy.
- **Willie Hart** You will all remember Willie's very many heartfelt speeches at former AGMs.
- **May Ferries** who has been a wonderful advocate for her primary colleagues and did sterling work also as GTCS Convener.
- **Alana Ross** whose sterling work as Convener of the Employment Relations Committee over many years has

helped alleviate the plight of literally thousands of our members.

- Last but certainly not least **Sandy Fowler** who has been hugely involved within the Education, Executive and Strategy Committees of the union – a wise old head which we will miss.

I became involved in politics and particularly this democratic, inclusive Institute of ours as I am passionate about standing up for the rights of others, particularly the more vulnerable in our society. The most vulnerable in society are children and the EIS has a very strong record of standing up for children and their right to the best education which our teachers are very well trained to provide.

I hope that during the last year I have played my part in bringing that issue to the forefront and that over the next few days we continue to do so. ●

Long-time EIS-FELA activist and national EIS Council member John Cassidy paid his own tribute to the President's speech. We hope you enjoy it as much as the President herself did:

Last Hoorah

Well the days the day Helen Connor gies up
Wan thing about hur she's never tellt tae speak up
She spoke o' techurs getting undeserved criticism
An' the work done in EK wae weans wae autism
There ye wull find really dedicated staff
Who dae evrythin' tae help these weans laugh
Thur wis the boay in Greenuck who thocht she wis bonkers
An' the wee lassie in Shetland who teelt hur a few stonkers
She sayed bye bye tae five ex Presidents who retire
An' hopes we get some new members wae the same desire
She spoke o' the need fur some members tae be mair collegit
Insteed o' actin mair like an eejit
Then went oan about the terribul times we face
Cos some o' the cuts proposed ur a bliddy disgrace
It finisht oaf wae the awards o' Fellow
Tae four punters an' the Speshul award tae anither two
Tony Finn replied fur the fellows, an' whit did he say?
Plain and simple "Why must oor weans pay?"

John Cassidy

Employment Opportunities for Newly Qualified Teachers

The Annual General Meeting condemned the lack of permanent employment opportunities for newly qualified teachers (NQTs)



"The *Curriculum for Excellence* will not be achieved with such a high turnover of teaching staff."

Shona McAlpine

and called on the Scottish Government and local authorities to maintain and enhance the level of the teaching workforce in Scotland. Moving the motion, Margaret Conway (North Lanarkshire) reminded delegates that the latest figures demonstrated that only 25% of NQTs went on to secure full time permanent employment and was highly critical of the "intermittent, piecemeal contracts" which were prevalent in Scotland. She was also critical of local authorities who invested in NQTs but did not employ them in the post-probation period. Seconding the motion Shona McAlpine (Glasgow) told delegates that many NQTs worked in over 10 schools in a three year period following their probationary year and that this pattern of working "short-changed both the pupils and the NQTs." She added "*The Curriculum for Excellence will not be achieved with such a high turnover of teaching staff.*" The motion was passed overwhelmingly. ●

Pupils with Additional Support Needs

A number of Motions relating to support for pupils with ASN won support of delegates at the AGM. Susan Quinn (Glasgow) called for the EIS to investigate the impact of budget cuts, including reductions in support staff, on the implementation of the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act in schools. "*The most vulnerable children are losing the specialist support where they need it most. This will increase the workload for class teachers, and will rob children of the support that they need.*" Frances Carey (Glasgow) seconded the motion.



"Additional support needs are, by definition, outwith the normal duties of a class teacher – that is why they are additional."

Eileen Morrison

Philip Jackson (Angus) moved a related motion on the resources needed to implement the ASL Act in schools. The motion was seconded by Sue Burns (Midlothian) who said, "*Resources are absolutely crucial to the implementation of the ASL Act.*"

Eileen Morrison (Moray) successfully called for clear advice to teachers regarding their responsibilities on ASN. "*Additional support needs are, by definition, outwith the normal duties of a class teacher – that is why they are additional.*" The motion was seconded by Marion Ross (Moray) and supported by Paddy Miller (Fife).

Michael Dunn (South Lanarkshire) successfully called for a campaign for additional ASN staff in schools. Victoria Schoenhofen (South Lanarkshire) seconded the motion, saying, "*The clue is in the title – the support is supposed to be in addition to the class teacher.*" ●

Supporting specialist groups of members

The EIS will explore methods of supporting specialist groups of EIS members, such as sectoral and subject specialists, as a result of a successful motion proposed by Larry Flanagan (Glasgow and Education Convener) and backed overwhelmingly by AGM delegates.

Non-English speaking pupils

Following the AGM, the EIS will be campaigning to "ensure that pupils who are non English speaking and new to the Scottish education system receive appropriate support." Speaking to the motion, Jayne Rowe (Glasgow) said "*the Scottish education system is failing large numbers of pupils new to English.*" She made a strong plea "for enhanced teaching staff, for classroom assistant support and appropriate CPD."

Probationer teachers on the flexible route

Michael Dolan (West Dunbartonshire) persuaded the AGM that the EIS should "investigate and report on methods of supporting teachers on the flexible route" to full registration.

TEIs and assessment of students

The EIS is to examine the support given by Teacher Education Institutions to teachers responsible for the assessment of students, as the result of a successful motion from Stewart Paterson (West Dunbartonshire.) He was aware that the reduced role of TEI staff in schools was in part a consequence of cuts in TEIs. He argued that the EIS should seek to "persuade TEIs not to shed staff because we need them to assess students." ●



"...persuade TEIs not to shed staff because we need them to assess students."

Stewart Paterson

Supporting disabled adults into teaching

The EIS will explore ways to encourage disabled adults to apply for places on teacher education courses, as the result of a successful motion from Julie Ferguson (Orkney). Ms Ferguson argued that

"Pupils with ASN would miss out on working with people with personal experience of overcoming their disabilities if we do not encourage disabled adults into the teaching profession."

Julie Ferguson

teachers with disabilities brought much to the classroom, with particular benefits for pupils with Additional Support Needs. "*Pupils with ASN would miss out on working with people with personal experience of overcoming their disabilities if we do not encourage disabled adults into the teaching profession.*"

The motion was supported by Sarah Moar (Orkney), who said, "*Disabled people benefit the teaching profession by combating stereotypes of people with disabilities while pupils are at a young age in schools.*" AGM delegates backed the motion overwhelmingly. ●

OPPORTUNITIES & DETAILS

Class Sizes

Once again the important issue of class size attracted several motions and speeches at the Annual General Meeting. And once again delegates were reminded of the broken promises made by local and national politicians on this key topic.



"We must continue to campaign for a universal reduction in class size."

Hugh Donnelly

Susan Quinn (Glasgow) moved a motion instructing Council to resist any attempts to "average out" class size maxima. Ms Quinn said "The reductions we have achieved mean that we are seeing more and more averaging of class sizes which leads to winners and losers. We have a postcode lottery of class sizes and we need legislation to restrict the numbers of pupils in classes. Without legislation, that statistic becomes twisted." Seconding the motion, Hugh Donnelly (Glasgow) told delegates "The case for lower class sizes is an extremely strong argument. We must continue to campaign for a universal reduction in class size. Lower

class sizes result in more time with individual pupils and leads to improvements in attainment." He concluded "The reduction in class size to 25 is a modest reduction and is achievable for all children, not the few." The AGM agreed and passed the motion with an overwhelming majority.

The AGM also approved a motion instructing Council to organise a campaign, including industrial action, to ensure a maximum class

size of 20. Charlie McKinnon (Glasgow) told delegates "Scottish pupils are paying a very high price for the financial irresponsibility of the banks and the Government's mismanagement of the economy. Our kids deserve better than this." Commenting on the fact that the number of teachers had shrunk by 2500 in the last two years he said "It is a national scandal that we have a large pool of unemployed teachers who can be hired and fired at will." David McNab (Glasgow) agreed and told delegates "In Curriculum for Excellence every subject is a practical class. We need class sizes of 20 to make Curriculum for Excellence work." The AGM overwhelmingly passed the motion.

Elsewhere on class sizes, the AGM passed a motion calling upon Local Authorities to ensure class sizes in SEN establishments and bases and units in mainstream schools have class size maxima in accordance with the SNCT Handbook, Appendix 2.9. The motion was moved by Charles Docherty (West Dunbartonshire) and seconded by Josephine McDaid (West Dunbartonshire). The AGM also passed a motion instructing Council to review EIS class size policy with particular regard to Additional Support Needs. Philip Jackson (Angus) told Conference that with regard to class size "Councils are scrambling around to appease the Scottish Government. But making it up as you go along simply is not good enough. This is a scandal with Curriculum for Excellence. If class sizes of 20 were a reality, then inclusion may become a reality. The Government has not delivered on its promises." Pam Manley (Angus) agreed and in seconding the motion told delegates "We need to be clear what our policy is. We need to review our policy." ●



Class Size for Music

The AGM defeated a motion instructing Council to negotiate the inclusion of Music as a practical subject with a maximum class size of 20. John Welsh (Renfrewshire) moved the motion and argued that the current exclusion of Music restricted pupil choice. He also argued that health and safety issues were a major concern and that a reduction of class size in music would lead to "enhanced



"This is special pleading. We have a policy on class sizes. Let us unite around that and get 20 for all."

Sandy Fowler

choice." Robin Irvine (Renfrewshire) seconded the motion and reminded delegates that this was not "special pleading" on behalf of music. However, Derek Ross (Aberdeenshire) disagreed and told Conference "Every subject area could make a case for practical status. We must oppose the motion which sets out to



Aileen Barrie agreed that for primary teachers this motion was special pleading

achieve 20 in only one subject area." Mr Ross was supported by Sandy Fowler (South Ayrshire) who was making his last AGM speech after long and distinguished service to the EIS. Mr Fowler said "I don't disagree with the speeches made at the other microphone, but this is special pleading. We have a policy on class sizes. Let us unite around that and get 20 for all." Aileen Barrie (North Lanarkshire) and Maggie Anderson (Argyll and Bute) both agreed that for the primary teachers this

motion was special pleading but both Michael Dunn (South Lanarkshire) and Josephine McDaid (West Dunbartonshire) were uncomfortable with the concept of special pleading and urged delegates to approve the motion for Music and thereafter to seek improvements for other subject areas. However, the motion was defeated by a substantial majority. ●

AGM rejects ban of members of extremist parties

AGM delegates rejected a call to seek a ban of members of certain extremist Fascist organisations from entering the teaching profession. Proposing the Motion, Charlotte Ahmed (Glasgow) argued, "Other organisations in the public sector – such as the police, the armed forces, and the prison service – can already ban members of the BNP and other extremist organisations. I simply do not believe that a card-carrying member of a Fascist party can fulfil all the obligations that a teacher must meet in terms of treating children of all backgrounds fairly and appropriately."



"These organisations pose an immediate and alarming threat."
Nicola Fisher

Seconding the motion, Nicola Fisher (Glasgow) said, "These organisations pose an immediate and alarming threat. The BNP are not just another political party – they are predicated on hate and prejudice."



"To beat the BNP, you don't ban them, you take them on head-on"
Rob Peaker

However, Keith Edwards (North Lanarkshire) cautioned against a move to ban, saying, "I abhor the BNP and their policies. But we are a democratic organisation and we must stand up for democracy – banning without due democratic process is a step too far."

And Rob Peaker (Aberdeen) argued, "To beat the BNP, you don't ban them, you take them on head-on and defeat them. The light of publicity in recent elections has already exposed the BNP and what they stand for, and voters are now deserting them in droves."

Kenn Bryce-Stafford (Edinburgh) agreed, saying, "Opposing this motion is not about supporting the BNP – it is about ensuring that our organisation remains a democratic organisation."

AGM delegates listened intently to the different approaches to beating the BNP, and voted to reject the move to ban on a show of hands within the hall.

"Statutory" proposal for PE defeated

A move to guarantee in law two hours of PE per week in schools was defeated by the AGM. The proposal came from Graeme Cowie (Aberdeenshire) who argued that two hours should be a "minimum provision to allow all pupils to develop physical literacy and a healthy lifestyle." Mr Cowie pointed out that the 2 hours are "already embedded in *Curriculum for Excellence*." However, the majority of delegates accepted the view of Keith Edwards (North Lanarkshire) that the 2 hours move was "not measurable, not achievable, not timeous and not reliable." Graham Dane (Edinburgh) said that setting a statutory minimum for PE amounted to "special pleading." He asked "Why only PE?"

HMIE concerns

The EIS will "investigate and report on the Quality Assurance demands placed on schools by local authorities in the lead up to HMIE inspections" as the result of a successful motion from John Black (Aberdeenshire). In a further motion delegates agreed to a motion from May Ferries (Glasgow) to campaign for an independent review of HMIE inspections. Elsewhere in debate Kevin O'Brien (East Dunbartonshire) committed the EIS to campaigning "against the continuing pejorative reporting and identification of teachers in HMIE reports." Maggie Anderson (Argyll and Bute) complained of "no professional dialogue" with Inspectors when her school was inspected. ●



Funding PPP schemes

A motion from Ken Brown (East Dunbartonshire) calling for a campaign to ensure that all PPP schemes continue to be funded



"The EIS opposes PPP – we cannot pass a motion that ensures that such vast sums of public money continue flowing to the private sector."
John Dennis

was remitted to EIS Council for further consideration. Mr Brown argued that, "Pulling the plug would be disastrous for local authorities, schools and young people. Moving the goalposts cannot be allowed at this advanced stage of the game." The motion was seconded by Martin Monigatti (East Dunbartonshire).

But John Dennis (Dumfries & Galloway) and Greg McCarra (EIS-ULA) argued against the motion, with Mr Dennis saying, "The EIS opposes PPP – we cannot pass a motion that ensures that such vast sums of public money continue flowing to the private sector." The AGM agreed that this was a difficult issue, and remitted the motion to EIS Council for further consideration. ●

Moderation and A Framework for Assessment

"The lack of ring-fenced funding means that we cannot be certain that resources will be allocated properly and there are no guarantees that schools will benefit from the additional funding associated with the development of A Framework for Assessment." That was the claim made by Sonia Kordiak (Midlothian) who was successful in moving a motion calling for the AGM to instruct Council to seek to ensure that an agreement is reached at national level to enable the requirements of school and local authority moderation for A Framework for Assessment to be met without detriment to teachers'



"The lack of ring-fenced funding means that we cannot be certain that resources will be allocated properly."
Sonia Kordiak

contractual working hours. She warned Conference that unless in-service days are dedicated to this activity there will be inequality of provision throughout Scotland for this very significant area of CPD. She added that "moderation will take on much higher importance in the future." James Glen (Midlothian) seconded the motion and alerted delegates to the dangers of assessment overload. He said "We will not have to wait too long to find out how deep the cuts will go. We already see teachers working longer hours every day and every week. The moderation for A Framework for Assessment must be introduced with no detriment to teachers' contractual positions." ●

Teacher Workload

"Talking about teacher stress is no use unless you address the route causes of it." That was the message issued to the AGM by Philip Jackson (Angus) who successfully moved a motion instructing Council to publicise concerns over excessive workload and to consider ways in which best practice in terms of managing workload can be disseminated. Mr Jackson informed delegates of the recent questionnaire issued by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) and urged all local negotiating committees to complete the exercise. Seconding the motion, David Drysdale (Angus) reminded delegates that the new requirements of *Curriculum for Excellence* required more time and additional resources and that teachers should not be subjected to excessive workloads. ●

Poverty and Education Report launched



Bill Ramsay, Convener of the EIS Equality Committee, chaired a fringe meeting which examined "Poverty and Education". Mr Ramsay welcomed delegates and said that the EIS has to be part of a broad alliance to oppose education cuts which increased poverty

and seriously damaged Scottish Education. The meeting was addressed by Dr Linda Croxford, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Educational Sociology Edinburgh University.

Dr Croxford highlighted the research findings which demonstrated that

- Poverty has a damaging effect on life changes
- The effects of poverty are cumulative
- The current education system reinforces poverty
- All stakeholders must examine the different levels within the system – individual, school and community – when discussing the issue of poverty.

She discussed the issues of setting and streaming which reinforced inequalities and was highlighted by the fact that ability groupings resulted in segregation by social class. She was

"...piecemeal funding which demonstrated a lack of commitment by the Government to this issue."
Dr Linda Croxford

also critical of "piecemeal funding which demonstrated a lack of commitment by the Government to this issue."

Dr Croxford concluded that the EIS report on Poverty and Education was very valuable and timely and urged delegates to take this issue forward. ●

EIS condemns Israeli attack on Gaza Aid Flotilla



"This attack took place in international waters in breach of international law."
David Drever

Ex-President David Drever informed delegates that Ronnie Smith had written on behalf of the EIS to the Prime Minister of Israel over the Israeli attack on the Gaza Aid Flotilla. In his letter, which had been approved by the Office Bearers, the EIS condemns, absolutely, the loss of life which resulted from the Israeli attack on the humanitarian aid convoy which took place on 31 May. The letter calls for the immediate lifting of the blockade. "The Israeli attack and the ongoing blockade on Gaza are unacceptable" said Mr Drever. He added "This attack took place in international waters in breach of international law." ●



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