

SCOTTISH RETIRED TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

70th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

19th JUNE 2019 at 1.30pm
at EIS Headquarters
46 Moray Place, Edinburgh.

MINUTES

1. **Apologies.** Shetland, Edinburgh and Moray Branches
2. **Sederunt.** Douglas Currie, President, Edinburgh, Irene Bates, Vice-President/ PSPC and Lynwen Greavey, Aberdeen, Moira Fleming, Secretary, Borders, Kenneth Deas, Treasurer, and Jean MacDonald, Dundee, Carine Seeley, St Andrews/ NE Fife.
2. **Chairman's Remarks.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.
3. **Minutes of AGM of 20th June 2018.** Approved, Carine Seeley, seconded, Lynwen Greavey.
4. **Business Arising.** To be dealt with under other headings.
5. **Treasurer's Report.** The Annual Abstract of Accounts was presented. Some points were highlighted.

- Website costs: Half was paid at start of process (£540.00) and half at completion (£540.00) with annual costs of the licence (£72.00)
- There was an increase in revenue from last year from £29696.69 to £31517.35

The approval of the accounts was proposed by Irene Bates, seconded, Douglas Currie.

- Branch Membership. There was a reducing number of members. Those branches which seem to retaining good numbers operated a life-membership scheme. However, not all branches have this arrangement and all branches operated their own membership system.

6. **PSPC REPORT.** Mrs Bates stated that she had been unable to attend the AGM. She referred to problems relating to the new Executive. Reports and summaries of the Council's activities normally sent to representatives had not yet been received. Mrs Bates would contact a member of the Committee for more information about the current situation.

The main issue was with regard to the BBC and the proposed ending of the free licence arrangements for over-75s. It was proposed that this arrangement would end in 2020, with only those on certain levels of benefit not required to pay the licence fee. The new General Secretary of PSPC, David Luxton, had written to Mr Jeremy Wright, MP, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; to Mr Tom Watson, MP, Depute Leader of the Labour Party, and also to the BBC, expressing the PSPC's concern at this proposed change in policy and also concern that the BBC should be responsible for this benefit, now or in the future. Only the BBC had replied, promising to keep in touch should there be any further developments.

The President remarked that he was concerned that the BBC should have to deal with this issue. Surely it should be a matter for government.

In relation to lobbying on this issue, it was important to remind members that it was SRTA and associated organisations which would be lobbying the government, not the teaching unions. This issue would be highlighted on the website. Meantime, members should sign the AgeUK petition and/or write to their MPs.

No request for the Annual Levy had yet been received from PSPC.

7. **Secretary's Report.**

Website.

Dundee and District reported that there were many mistakes on the website and helpfully provided a list of these. The Secretary would endeavour to correct these as soon as possible. Some reported difficulty getting on to the website. It was suggested that they had used the wrong web address as it seemed to be easily accessed.

It was suggested that a logo was needed for the website, etc. Branches would be asked to provide suggestions.

EIS website re SRTA. EIS would be contacted to amend errors and remove names and addresses.

Branch news: It was hoped that branches would provide news of their activities for inclusion on the website. No names would be posted.

Constitution. A message had been sent asking Branches to check that their Constitution included a clause indicating how funds would be disposed of in the event of the branch being wound up. Fife and Aberdeen reported that this had been checked and that all was in order.

8. **Office Bearers.** Current Office Bearers were confirmed in their positions. Most were appointed for two years.

Treasurer: proposed, Carine Seeley, seconded, Irene Bates.

Secretary: proposed, Douglas Currie, seconded, Jean MacDonald.

Auditor of Accounts (Independent Examiner): Margaret Coutts would be invited to continue in this role.

9. **Dates of Future Meetings 2019-2020.**

National Executive Committee: Wednesday, 16th October, 2019.

National Executive Committee: Wednesday, 18th March, 2020.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Wednesday, 17th June, 2020.

National Executive Meeting: Wednesday, 21st October, 2020.

Rooms would be booked for these meetings.

10. **AOCB: Recruitment.** It was suggested that platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter would be useful to the Association. The President asked if anyone would be willing to take up the challenge. Branches would be contacted for ideas.

Data Protection Uncertainty was expressed relating to the legal time-limit on permissions for branches to hold their members' details. Branches were recommended to check the Privacy Policy on the SRTA website for confirmation.

The accuracy of the minutes of the NEC MEETING of March 2019 was raised as an issue. This would be considered at the October meeting of the NEC.

Lunch at future meetings? The President wondered whether the provision of a light lunch for delegates at meetings would encourage better attendance? This should be submitted to Branches for their consideration.

Irene Bates on behalf of the meeting thanked the President for conducting the meeting so efficiently and wittily. Seconded, Moira Fleming.

11. **Welcome to the Speaker**

Mr William Ramsay was unable to address the meeting due to ill health. In his place, Mrs Alison Thornton, retiring National President, was welcomed to the meeting.

She reported that it had not been a quiet year for the EIS, with campaigning for better pay for teachers being the main issue. As President in such a year she had been very busy. But for her it had a degree of completeness, for she had joined the profession in 1984, in Dalbeattie High School, when pay negotiations had been underway.

The year of her Presidency had gone past in a blur, with lots of action and many visits to schools all over Scotland, from Stranraer to the Western Isles and all over the Highlands. It had been a real privilege to visit so many places and meet so many EIS members. She had found that many older teachers had said that this action must be taken, for the sake of their younger colleagues. They would have to endure longer careers and more challenging demands.

She recalled some of the highlights of the year: meeting therapy dogs in schools, hearing young people express their concerns, sometimes surprising ones, being part of the work of the Scottish Education Council and its visits to schools, and her visit to Bangkok for an international summit.

She recalled with nostalgia that her first headteacher had been President of EIS exactly 50 years before her and that there were so many similarities between his issues and activities at that time and hers this year.

There followed lots of fascinating discussion of current and past educational issues. The company enjoyed fine hospitality, courtesy of EIS. The meeting finished with warm thanks to Mrs Thornton.