



Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association

Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
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NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION - JULY 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since late March of 2020 the teaching profession has faced unprecedented events resulting in unprecedented challenges. The Covid-19 lockdown may have put schools to some extent into hibernation but the work and role of teachers has not stopped or diminished.

There has been a shift from teaching within the classroom environment to the virtual platform, resulting in teachers developing new skills quickly to accommodate the demands of distant learning. The admirable efforts by all teachers under the present difficult situation is greatly appreciated by all, however these new digital platforms attempt to provide an effective learning model but it is not a substitute to the "traditional" form of teaching and learning and the support mechanisms tailored to individual needs.



John Guidi, President

From August of this year, the future of education in schools will see a new environment which will be unfamiliar to us all and, under such circumstances, it is still of paramount importance to protect the health and well being of pupils and staff.

It is now more than ever, that the role of the SSTA is to promote and maintain a safe working environment. We, as an association, will seek solutions and inform decisions to minimise the risk of infection of this insidious virus that has affected everyone's once normal life.

The SSTA also recognises the tremendous work and sacrifice both in time and effort that our members have so diligently provided to their learners.

I hope our summer break will help us all to reflect and overcome the stresses and strains of our recent past and make us ready for a new but uncharted future.

Keep well and stay safe.

John Guidi
SSTA President

SSTA PRESIDENT 2019-2021 - JOHN GUIDI

John Guidi is a Physics Chartered teacher at Mearns Castle High School and has been actively involved with the SSTA for over twenty years.

As well as being President for the next two year's John is also the Renfrew Area Secretary as well as East Renfrewshire District Secretary. His work and experience for the SSTA includes membership of the Education Committee and Council.

Message from the General Secretary

Thank You

I would like to acknowledge the support that members have shown for each other during these difficult times, paying particular tribute to school reps and district secretaries many of whom have worked extremely hard distributing information to members, reading and digesting the unending flow of information, and negotiating safer working environments and practices with, and on behalf of, their colleagues.

Reopening of Schools

All schools have now closed and it is still not clear how schools will return in August with the constantly changing situation of Covid-19. We anticipate a statement from the Deputy First Minister on 30 July regarding the expected arrangements. The SSTA advice is to try not to anticipate the statement, as plans may need to be undone. The SSTA is still pushing for guidance for staff who are vulnerable and shielding, details on physical distancing, the provision of PPE and the wearing of face masks.

The most recent advice from the Government on re-opening schools was published on 16 July is available here: <https://www.gov.scot/news/planning-for-re-opening-schools-safely/>

The SSTA is engaging in discussions with the Government and COSLA throughout the summer break with the main focus being the safety of staff when schools reopen in August.

We expect more focused advice from the sub-group on education and children's issues to be published shortly.

Education Recovery Year

The SSTA believes all available teachers will be needed throughout the coming year to support pupils who have missed out on formal schooling since March. The Education Recovery plan cannot be achieved in a few weeks, its success depending on a concerted effort by all in the coming year. This is going to need, in particular, the provision of additional teachers for every school to provide additional support for all pupils. The SSTA continues to press for the guaranteed employment of additional teachers now, in time for the reopening of schools. We advise all teachers seeking work to contact your Local Authority with a short personal summary and your availability. The Scottish Government is making funds available but we know some local authorities are still intent upon saving money by delaying making appointments at the expense of the future education of the pupils.

SQA and Appeals

The SSTA has received a very small number of concerns from members during the submission of estimated grades for national qualifications. The SSTA is confident that where schools have submitted estimated final grades using the internal school processes, pupils will receive the appropriate grade. As a consequence, there should not be a requirement for the school to submit an appeal. It is worth reminding members that the estimate grade is a school decision and not an individual teacher decision. Members are advised not to share any details of estimated grade details with pupils or parents.

SSTA Congress 2020 - Motions

The SSTA Annual Congress in May had to be postponed as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The SSTA National Executive agreed not to lose time and to begin work on the motions submitted from the Districts. It is intended to have these motions ratified at a future meeting of Council. The constitutional motions, however, have been held and will be considered at the next SSTA Congress.

SSTA Academic Diary 2020 - 2021

The production and distribution of the SSTA Academic diary has been delayed because of the restrictions in place due to the coronavirus pandemic. We will be receiving delivery of the diaries from the manufacturer during the summer holidays and will have them distributed to schools for the start of the new session in August.

If you do not wish to receive an academic diary, you can opt-out of receiving one at www.ssta.org.uk/diary-opt-out

HMRC – Tax Relief

We wrote all members in January after we saw evidence indicating over 50% of taxpayers in the teaching profession have been given the wrong tax code by HMRC in the past 4 years causing them to pay too much tax.

Apart from explaining the problem is caused because HMRC relies on you checking your tax code and informing HMRC if they give you the wrong code, we also offered members the opportunity to receive a free online review of their current and last 4 years tax codes.

The review, provided by leading PAYE tax specialists, The Tax Refund Company, identifies any errors that caused an employer to deduct too much tax and will help get your money back from HMRC where this has occurred.

Since then, hundreds of members have taken advantage of this new service and gone on to request a full tax review. Of those that have finished their review, 65% have found they were owed money back from HMRC. So far, the average tax refund is £178 each, but some members have received over £2,550 back!

There is no charge for this review. If you have paid the correct amount of tax, the review is free. If the review concludes you have paid too much tax, The Tax Refund Company will correspond with HMRC to try and recover your money. Where they are successful, there is a fee of £38 for amounts up to £100 or 38p per £1 where the amount recovered is over £100.

This fee only relates to money you overpaid in previous tax years. Any money you overpaid in the current tax year will be included as part of the review and recovered free of charge. In the rare event the review concludes you have underpaid, only you will be told, not HMRC. However, for complete peace of mind, if you receive an unexpected tax bill as a direct result of using this service, The Tax Refund Company will pay the bill for you. (T&C's apply)

To take advantage of this new service, please go to www.sstatax.co.uk You will find out within a few minutes if you might have paid too much tax and if so, you will be able to register for a full review.

Please note – HMRC has a deadline for reclaiming overpaid tax so if you want to avoid losing money you could get back, you should consider reviewing your tax affairs as soon as possible.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION YEAR 2019

SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT TO MEMBERS FOR PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

as required by section 32a of trade union and labour relations (consolidation) act 1992

Income and Expenditure

The total income of the union for the period was £1,048,443. This amount included payments of £917,132 in respect of membership income of the union. The union's total expenditure for the period was £928,090.

Political Fund

The Association does not maintain a political fund.

General Secretary Salary and Other benefits

The General Secretary of the union was paid £96,442 in respect of salary and £0 in respect of benefits.

Irregularity statement

A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider obtaining independent legal advice.

Independent auditors' report to the members of SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION for the year ended 31 December 2019 which comprise Cash Flow Statement, Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) to the extent that the standard is relevant to the association.

This report is made solely to the association's members, as a body. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the association's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the association and the association's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the association's affairs as at 31 December 2019 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (amended 2016).

Independent auditors' report to the members of SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION *(continued)*

Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Finance Committee members use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Finance Committee members have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the association's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the report and financial statements, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Finance Committee members are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Finance Committee's report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Finance Committee's report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the association and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Finance Committee's report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Finance Committee's remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee

As explained more fully in the Finance Committee's responsibilities statement, the Finance Committee members are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Finance Committee members determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Independent auditors' report to the members of SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION *(continued)*

In preparing the financial statements, the Finance Committee members are responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Finance Committee members either intend to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Stephen Grant, Senior Statutory Auditor
for and on behalf of Tindell, Grant & Co Limited
Statutory Auditors
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Stirling FK7 7UU

SSTA Legal Services cover more than you think



Call 0800 081 2207
Visit TalkToThompsons.com

Are you and your family prepared for the future?

We all know that we should have a Will but statistics show that less than 50% of Scottish adults have one. It is difficult but it is not morbid. It is just about ensuring that your wishes are expressed and followed and it is about ensuring that your family are properly catered for. But a Will is only one of three key legal documents that experts advise everyone should have these days for the future protection of their family.

The three documents are a Will, a Power of Attorney and an advanced Directive. Our legal partners, Thompsons Solicitors, will explain the importance of these three documents and answer any questions that you may have.

The SSTA's best kept secret – complete legal services for you and your family

You will know that if you have an employment issue you will have the full support of the SSTA's legal service. You may know that if you have an accident at work you will also receive expert legal support for free. But there is so much more to the legal support you and your family receive as an SSTA member.

In fact, our aim is to provide a complete package of free or discounted legal services so that we can be your one stop shop for every legal issue you may have.

Our legal partners will describe the full range of legal services and support available to you as an SSTA member, how you may access them and some of our success stories over the years.

Office Bearers 2019 -2021

President, John Guidi
Vice President, Catherine Nicol
Immediate Past President, Kevin Campbell
General Secretary, Seamus Searson
Depute General Secretary, Fiona Dalziel
General Treasurer, Elaine Henderson
Minutes Secretary, Alan Taylor

National Executive 2019-2021

Elected Members:

Paul Cochrane, Inverclyde
James Cowans, East Renfrewshire
Monique Dreon-Goold, Lothians
Stuart Hunter, Lothians
Ward McCormick, Ayrshire
Gordon West, Aberdeenshire

SSTA Committee & Panel Conveners

ASN Panel	Ruairidh Nicolson, Lothians
Education Committee	James Cowans, Renfrew Area
Equalities Panel	Maggie Nesbitt, Central Area
Finance Committee	Elaine Henderson, Aberdeenshire
Health & Safety Panel	Sue Edwards, Aberdeenshire
Recruitment Committee	Sid Sandison, City of Aberdeen
Salaries & Conditions of Service	Catherine Nicol, Ayrshire
Senior Managers Advisory Panel	Archie Bathgate, Angus

SSTA Social Media Channels

You can follow the SSTA on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for updates on current issues and campaigns, publication of advice notes and information on training events.

 fb.me/sstatradeunion

 [@sstatradeunion](https://twitter.com/sstatradeunion)

 [@sstatradeunion](https://www.instagram.com/sstatradeunion)

SSTA District Secretaries

Argyll and Bute Peter Lewis	Highland Andrew Sutcliffe
City of Aberdeen Vacancy	Inverclyde Paul Cochrane
Angus Kevin Madill	Midlothian Sandra Richardson
Aberdeenshire Barbara Adams	Moray Fiona McAllister
Clackmannanshire Maggie Nesbitt	North Ayrshire Catherine Nicol
Dundee City Peter Thorburn	North Lanarkshire Steve Clulow <i>(Acting)</i>
Dumfries & Galloway Jay Young	Orkney Rosemary McLaughlin
East Ayrshire Ward McCormick	Perth & Kinross Matthew Mackie
City of Edinburgh Lynn Myles *	Renfrewshire Jane Liston *
East Dunbartonshire Sally Shearer	South Ayrshire Ruth Nicoll
East Lothian Monique Dreon-Goold	Scottish Borders Duncan Taylor
East Renfrewshire John Guidi	Shetland Chris McGinlay
Eilean Siar <i>Vacancy</i>	South Lanarkshire Jacqueline Bradley-Heeps
Falkirk Claire Mawston	Stirling Eddie Love
Fife Kevin Campbell	West Dunbartonshire Claire Mackenzie
City of Glasgow James How	West Lothian Douglas Bringhurst

* from August 2020

Ten good reasons to join the SSTA

1. To advance Scottish Education
2. To ensure that the secondary voice is heard
3. To safeguard and promote interests of secondary teachers
4. To advise teachers on curricular matters
5. To support in teacher negotiations
6. To represent teachers views at national committees
7. District secretary to support you in your local authority
8. School rep to support you in your local educational community
9. On-line support available for support and guidance
10. Headquarters in Edinburgh therefore advice given usually within 24hrs

Contact:-
West End House
14 West End Place
Edinburgh EH11 2ED

info@ssta.org.uk
Tel 0131 3137300
www.ssta.org.uk/join

1. To enhance and advance real improvements in Scottish Education

2. To ensure the voices of secondary school teachers are heard at national forums

3. To safeguard and promote the interests of Scottish Secondary school teachers

4. Advice given on the implementation of curricular matters

5. We support negotiations on salaries and terms & conditions

6. Representation at

- SNCT
- SQA
- GTCS
- SCRS
- Education Scotland

7. District secretaries in place in your local education authorities who are nominated to promote, support and defend teachers' rights

8. School Representation
To support you with:
- W.T.A, support and mentoring, SSTA and GTCS updates, grievances, local and national policies

9. SSTA Website is available to all members to keep them updated on current issues pertaining to all areas of legislation and practice.

10. Headquarters in Edinburgh where support is available from a team of Professional Officers who will support you with individualised issues either via phone or by arranged visits.