

# **EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 27 March 2001  
(*Afternoon*)

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 2001.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Copyright Unit,  
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ  
Fax 01603 723000, which is administering the copyright on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate  
Body.

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by The  
Stationery Office Ltd.

Her Majesty's Stationery Office is independent of and separate from the company now  
trading as The Stationery Office Ltd, which is responsible for printing and publishing  
Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body publications.

---

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 27 March 2001

Col.

<b>SPORT AND CULTURE IN SCOTLAND .....</b>	<b>2173</b>
--	-------------

---

## EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2001, Session 1

### CONVENER

\*Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab)

### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)

\*Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

\*Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

\*Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

\*attended

### WITNESSES

Mrs Janet Allan (Donaldson's College)

Mr Douglas Arneil (Scottish Rugby Union)

Councillor Pat Chalmers (Historic Buildings Council for Scotland)

Ms Mary Hartnoll (East Park School)

Mr Mark Hopton (Historic Buildings Council for Scotland)

Dr Lillemor Jernqvist (Craighalbert Centre)

Mrs Sandra Kerley (Capability Scotland)

Professor Michael Lynch (Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland)

Mr Charles Raeburn (Scottish Schoolsport Federation and Scottish Local Authority Network of Physical Education)

Dr Carol Swanson (Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland)

Mr Kevin Tansley (Royal Blind School)

Mr Jim Telfer (Scottish Rugby Union)

Mr Bill Watson (Scottish Rugby Union)

Ms Christine Watson (Scottish Local Authority Network of Physical Education)

Mr Patrick Webb (Harmeny School)

Mr Blair Young (Scottish Schoolsport Federation)

### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Martin Verity

### ASSISTANT CLERK

Ian Cowan

### LOCATION

Committee Room 2



## Scottish Parliament

### Education, Culture and Sport Committee

*Tuesday 27 March 2001*

*(Afternoon)*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 14:03*]

### Sport and Culture in Scotland

**The Convener (Karen Gillon):** The committee will hear from a number of organisations today. The first is the Scottish Rugby Union. I appreciate that the SRU has wanted for a considerable time to come to the committee and I am delighted that our witnesses are here. I ask Bill Watson, the chief executive of the SRU, to introduce his colleagues, who probably are well known to us, and to make an opening statement. You can assume that we have read the papers that you sent to us.

**Mr Bill Watson (Scottish Rugby Union):** On my right is Jim Telfer, the director of rugby, who is well known to everyone. He has been the national coach and has coached the British Lions—he is steeped in rugby. Members may not know that he was the head teacher of Hawick High School—he comes with a good educational background. Douglas Arneil, on my left, is technical manager of our organisation. All our development officers report to him and he is fundamental to the development of the game. He, too, has been a teacher. He has an MA in business economics, commerce and marketing, so he comes with many skills not immediately related to rugby. I am the chief executive of the SRU and was managing director of an electronics company. All of us have been involved in rugby for a long time—we think that we bring a fair bit of experience to the game.

We appreciate the opportunity to chat with the committee. We have been considering the marketing of the game and how we are perceived. I notice that the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland is to follow us—I trust that the SRU is not regarded as an ancient monument. However, perceptions are a big part of what we have to change in the game.

Over the past few years, we have been trying to change. There was a time when change was not the rule, but now it is the norm. There is nothing more constant in business than change. We have been through Lord Mackay of Clashfern's report, which is a detailed survey into what is happening in Scottish rugby. The principal result of that is that a new board structure has been put in place,

which brought in good governance—governance that would be acceptable in any corporate environment, never mind a sporting one. I hope that we can illustrate to you that we are modern, democratic and streamlined in our approach. We play in a global market and we have to try to compete successfully in that market.

Although the professional game is only 5 per cent of the rugby that we deal with, it tends to have the highest profile. We have a great opportunity to expand the sport, but we look for support from the Government and other bodies, especially in education. We benchmarked our game in 1997. There are statistics in the Mackay report on how we go about that. We measure our performance every year and, despite what you might read in the press, our game is expanding. While England, Ireland and Wales have experienced a decline, we are bucking the trend at youth, adult and spectator levels. We are pleased about that because, although swimming is a growing sport, sport in general is in decline.

The fact that we have been able to measure our performance means that we know where our problems are; we have been able to address them with changes in tactics. The number of people playing grew by 10 per cent in the two years to September 1999. Growth including spectators was 6 per cent. We have tried to change our image by deliberately moving away from using largely brewing sponsors to using technology sponsors such as Oracle, BT Scotland, BT Cellnet and Capito. In partnership with them, we have put in servers to provide websites for 164 of our clubs. No other sport in the world has such an integrated structure available to it. We have had technology trailers on the road, funded by Oracle, which have brought technology to youngsters all over the country.

We have brought on board a marketing director, although I am afraid to say that we did not look in Scotland. We brought in someone in Switzerland whose background is Coca-Cola. We have to take the sport forward in that way, and with television and the media. The governance changes brought on board people with skills in those areas. We have eminent people, including someone who was involved in sorting out the Brent Walker Group, and Andrew Flanagan, chief executive of the Scottish Media Group. We have non-executives from NAI Gooch Webster—because we expect to develop Murrayfield—and someone from the Royal Bank of Scotland who was involved in the NatWest takeover. Those people are accountable—that is what we are aiming for.

Our marketing director has put together a plan and we are trying to increase the breadth and depth of the game among players and non-players. We are using television in a big way—you

have probably seen evidence of that. We have to change perceptions, as we are seen as old-fashioned, committee-driven and old school tie. We are spending a lot of time changing that perception because that is not the way we are—our statistics can prove that only about 20 per cent of our organisation might be regarded as old school tie. We have a fairly good image among the ABC classifications of income. We want to build on that strength, while being socially inclusive.

We put together an autumn test series and followed that through with a game against Italy, which took the audience at Murrayfield from 29,000 to 60,000-plus. We consider that a great success, but why are we doing it? We are trying to attract people to the game so that our approach develops down into the clubs. There will shortly be a series of adverts that portray club rugby as a good thing socially, involving friendships and camaraderie, as well as battling with your mates.

As youth rugby is important to us, I will repeat our mission statement, which is in the submission. It states:

"To develop rugby union in Scotland as an inclusive sport which all children can experience in a safe environment, which nurtures their talents through well organised structures and encourages involvement into adulthood for the benefit of the individual, the community and the country."

We mean what we say. Despite the perceptions, we are inclusive, top to bottom. We are quite well supported. We have 29 well-qualified development officers—that is a good sales force in any business. We have had support from the Government, for which we are grateful, and we are about to bring a women's development officer on board. We see the sport as inclusive, so a young lady now works for us in Murrayfield. We embrace the deaf—there are internationals at that level—and wheelchair rugby. There is evidence in our submission of the social inclusion partnership areas in which we participate. That is real and meaningful involvement; we go in only when we can give support.

The Cartha Queens Park statistics show the way in which we can measure our performance. We hope that you think that we are well organised and that such a big sport can measure itself so that it knows when it is successful and how to make progress to achieve success. We know where we are failing and how to change direction.

We work in partnership with many people—local authority joint-funded posts are evidence of that. Scottish Schoolsport Federation co-ordinators work well with our development officers. We are involved in the TOP programme and we have club-school liaison officers within an accreditation scheme that is designed to grow the game. We fund clubs when they grow; if they do not grow,

they do not receive money. We tend to use the expression "Let's drag them kicking and screaming." However, the clubs like it and are responding. That strategy has allowed us to expand the sport.

Members may ask questions about McCrone. There are hopes and fears about that, but we are hoping that sport will take up a good part of the five hours of continuous professional development. We are well aware of the laws on child protection officers in clubs. We may be the best-endowed sport for such officers. The clubs have embraced that approach and many sports have followed our example and used our policies. We believe in empowerment, right down to the people who can deliver. If funding is available, we think that it should be delivered at the coalface. We have good measures in place to address that.

There are many misapprehensions about our sport. We are a £20-million-turnover business with a £13 million overdraft—that is a bit unusual. Our bank is supportive, but we must bring the overdraft down. We have made huge investment in development officers and have made some profits but, in order to develop, sport generally spends what it makes. We are looking for help from MSPs—the committee in particular—to put a sporting culture into the curriculum. We would love it if Holyrood declared that sport has an important and natural place in our society and in schools. We would like sport to have a higher profile in Parliament and we would like support for the development of Murrayfield—people will be proud of Murrayfield in future. We would like a higher level of training for physical education teachers and for PE to be part of every teacher's training. There should be awareness of the intrinsic value of sport.

I hope that that short summary will show that we are bucking the trend, that we are professional and measurable and that we can carry the national cause for sport. Given the audiences at Murrayfield, we have the opportunity to make rugby the principal sport in the country for national support.

**The Convener:** Thanks very much, Bill. I now invite committee members to ask questions.

**Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab):** Thank you for your submission, which was very interesting. I am especially interested in encouraging youngsters to participate in sport. I have a friend who is a primary school teacher. I remember her despairing over one Easter break knowing that she was going to have to teach wee laddies rugby when she went back to work after the holiday. She had a wee book; she had never watched a rugby match and did not have much idea where she should start. How could you help that primary school teacher to teach kids rugby?

14:15

**Mr Douglas Arneil (Scottish Rugby Union):**

The first point of contact would be the local development officer, who would visit the school and introduce the teacher to all aspects of what, taught at that level, would be new-image rugby. We have a five-to-14 development plan for new-image rugby, which is available to all teachers. The programme contains a lesson-by-lesson approach to the teaching of the sport. The best way is through contact with the development officer, because he can talk directly to the children, enthuse them and demonstrate to the teacher that new-image rugby is a simple game. It is a game in its own right; it can, if necessary, stand alone from rugby. The programme includes information, videos and regular training courses for teachers who want to participate.

**Cathy Peattie:** How many teachers have accessed that kind of support?

**Mr Arneil:** Between 2,500 and 3,000.

**Cathy Peattie:** Has that been done through local authorities?

**Mr Arneil:** It has been done in conjunction with local authorities. Quite a lot of in-service training has been done. The development officers run regular courses for teachers in their areas. We are approaching the time of year when that is done.

**Cathy Peattie:** On access to sport, one issue that we have identified is the participation of young women, in their early teenage years, who do not want to participate in sport. The same young women will join gyms two or three years later. Can you offer anything to young women who might be interested in sport? Can you encourage them to be interested in the sport?

**Mr Arneil:** Watch this space. I think that girls' rugby will soon be among the fastest-growing sports in Scotland, now that we have appointed a development officer to that cause. Last summer, in our Ford Foundation programme, we introduced 39,500 children to rugby through new-image and tag rugby. Half those were girls, so about 19,000 girls are looking for somewhere to play. Now that the development officer is in post, we aim to put structures in place—through schools or clubs—to give those girls the opportunity to continue their interest.

**Cathy Peattie:** Is there a role for education to encourage people to think differently about girls participating in rugby?

**Mr Arneil:** I would say not just in rugby, but in sport in general. The modified games that we use—new-image and tag rugby—are a good way of breaking down the barriers, because they can be played mixed sex. There is a controlled environment, which allows girls to experience the

skills of the game and decide whether they like it and want to take it on. We will have to work hard on the next stage—the transition to playing rugby in a structured environment—and get it into place quickly.

**Mr Watson:** The game is good for society. At the weekend, the women play on Sunday and the men play on Saturday. Rugby is a disciplined sport. The young ladies support the young men and the young men support the young ladies. There is a vibrant social situation.

**Cathy Peattie:** Do you agree that young men playing rugby is more widely accepted? The media cover men playing rugby, but women's teams tend not to get coverage or recognition. Will some of your proposals change that?

**Mr Watson:** It is already changing.

**Cathy Peattie:** That is good.

**The Convener:** The initiative is excellent; it is just 25 years too late.

**Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Primary school teachers were mentioned. Are you aware of the sportscotland TOP programmes, which use lottery money? Do you use those programmes for training primary school teachers?

**Mr Arneil:** We are heavily involved with the TOP programmes. We are waiting for sportscotland to come back to us, so that we can ascertain how heavily it wants us to be involved. We have done all the coaching cards and back-up material and we are keen to be heavily involved in the TOP programmes.

**Mr Monteith:** I will take a more depressing attitude, to elicit some answers. It seems clear that sport in general in schools was decimated in the 1980s, especially through the breakdown of relationships following the teachers' strike in the early part of the decade. I recall that at my school we had a lively rugby team at every level. My boys are now at the same school and there is no team above fourth year. Because of the development programme that you have introduced, that is changing and the sport is coming back.

Children want to get involved in other competitive sports, such as basketball, soccer, badminton and swimming. There is a fixture problem. To what extent are you able to alleviate the inter-sport fixture congestion? Many children who are talented at one sport are talented at another. They have good hand-to-eye and foot-to-eye co-ordination. I know from experience that it is easy to be picked by a team only to find that both the football and rugby teams are playing on the same day. Is it possible to co-ordinate things so that soccer is played on a Friday or a Saturday, for example, with rugby on a different day?

**Mr Jim Telfer (Scottish Rugby Union):** That would be quite possible. It is up to the local authority and the schools. We are soon going to change the time of year when those up to the age of 16 play the game. The game will be played in the better weather. Rugby is currently considered to be a winter sport. We believe that often rugby is not played in winter because it cannot be. We want to change the season so that it runs from August to November and from March to June, which would mean that we could use the longer days and better weather to introduce the skills. That may solve the problem of the football-rugby scenario, but there is nothing to prevent schools and local authorities from arranging the fixtures so that a boy or girl who is good at several sports can play them all.

We are not saying that rugby is the best team sport. I would like youngsters to play as many sports as possible, then finally decide at the ages of 16 and 17, or perhaps 18 and 19, which to take up. I do not see any problem in dealing with the logistics.

**Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** How big an issue for the SRU is the flood risk to Murrayfield, given that it is the national stadium and that you are hoping to expand its use?

**Mr Watson:** It is a huge risk. It is probably not publicly known that the place has flooded three times in the past 15 years. The stadium almost flooded again recently when the water came over from the river. If it floods again, we will not be insured. A flood could be disastrous for our ability to fund the sport. We must find a solution to the problem, but we cannot do so on our own. We have made a plea and we are speaking to the local council to try to get solutions. I know that the council is also working on the problem. Nothing moves fast enough when one is faced with that sort of threat.

**Irene McGugan:** Is what you have described part of the general flood strategy for the city of Edinburgh?

**Mr Watson:** Yes. We accept that it would have to be part of that. The situation has affected our development plans. We had a huge Drivers Jonas report done for us on how we could develop Murrayfield to capture the nation's passions and the city's passions. We will not be able to move ahead quickly until the flood situation is resolved.

**Irene McGugan:** Is it too soon to say whether the SRU's new marketing strategy and change of image is working? Can you see some movement?

**Mr Watson:** We conservatively estimated the crowds that we would get at various games and we exceeded the figures enormously. The feedback that we are getting is super. We get negative feedback as well but, because people are

open about it, we have been able to act to change things. We are still scratching the surface. There is loads more that we can achieve.

As for visual exposure of the game, just watch various channels on television and you will see that there is probably three times the coverage of rugby than there was before. We would like to embrace that, because expertise is available to look at sport as a whole. We have videos from Ireland, which show how the Irish have been successful at getting other sports on screen. We are encouraging sportscotland and the Scottish Sports Association to examine that with us. We want to be all-embracing. Our approach is that if more people play sport, rugby will benefit.

**Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab):** I am a sceptical Glaswegian on these matters. One issue is the regional location of rugby activity. I welcome the fact that your submission recognises that social inclusion partnerships in Glasgow have a sports development strategy with Glasgow City Council to increase sporting activity.

Are you involved in an overview of the quality of local facilities? Having been brought up in Glasgow, where I played football, I am aware of the red blaes phenomenon. You would have to be an absolute nutter to play rugby and dive about on such a pitch, although that does not prevent some of my colleagues and others from doing it during football games. In your presentation, you mentioned the Gorbals, where there is a new leisure centre and where we are looking to put in artificial surfacing for local primary schools. That might open up an opportunity. Do you have a perspective on playing surfaces in Scotland, as some surfaces may inhibit the development strategies that you have identified?

**Mr Watson:** We recognise that the capitalisation of sport in general—probably throughout the United Kingdom, but certainly in Scotland—is dire. We provided low-interest finance with two-year repayment holidays to try to regenerate our sport. Our internal reports showed that £160,000 from four different clubs was reinvested in the sport, which delighted us.

We are examining a facilities strategy for the whole of Scotland, which will consider the minimum requirements in various areas. Lord Mackay's report directed us in that direction anyway. We are looking for good surfaces that can be played on in good weather conditions with lights. That will require capital investment. We are prepared to support that as well. We are good partners with sportscotland, for example, in moving these issues forward. I am not sure when all that will happen, but the strategy will probably be written up in early May, so we will know the order in which we wish to do things.



**Mr McAveety:** Is there a hierarchy in your approach to the different parts of Scotland, given the regional variation in the take-up of, and accessibility to, rugby?

**Mr Arneil:** Not really. We do not view the issue regionally. One of our major concerns is that more games are cancelled in the west of Scotland because the pitches are unplayable earlier in the season—they get wet much sooner. We want to examine that. In our facilities survey with our development officers, which aimed to determine where we could target playable facilities, the officers from the west of Scotland all focused on school facilities, because those facilities have a multi-use and can be tied to the development of sport in schools. The officers also identified the issue of access to nearby club facilities, which could create more of a community balance between training facilities and match facilities at schools and clubs.

The development officers were clear in their view that we need to create playable facilities in the west of Scotland. We have targeted about 14 areas across Scotland, to allow our first-stage representative programme to happen every year. Jim Telfer mentioned moving the rugby season to months with better weather. We would like to window rugby, so that the competitive season runs from August to mid-November and the representative season follows. Quality facilities would enable us to develop our talent in good and playable circumstances. We must take a balanced view on what is needed across the country.

In his report, Lord Mackay mentions areas such as the far north of Scotland and the fact that there are no floodlit facilities north of the Tay. That is something else that we need to address. If we work in partnership with the new opportunities fund, we can really take the game forward and give more children opportunities.

**Mr Watson:** We think that many sports authorities are far too narrow-minded; sport must be considered as a whole. We met the chief executives of the principal sports organisations and gave them the message that, in proposing investment, we should consider, for example, whether facilities can be used for football and rugby—although not hockey as well, as we understand that that would be unrealistic. We should be all-embracing because we have restricted resources, although the new opportunities fund gives us the chance to create new facilities. If a site is close to a school that already has a sports hall, we can ask what is happening outside that and whether there could be a football pitch and a rugby pitch. If a football club is planning to expand, it should have a pitch of a size that can accommodate a rugby game. The people who make the funding available

should check such things out, so that we can get the most from the facilities.

14:30

**Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD):** I was going to ask you about that, but I do not want to go over it again. Can you explain to Frank McAveety what new-image rugby is, because he does not know about it? I come from Peebles, which has one of the most successful clubs—it is moving up all the time. Can you tell us about the relationship between rugby clubs and schools? Good things come out of that, such as community and the sharing of coaching and facilities. However, there is sometimes pressure when a youngster plays for both their school and a club. In spite of what Brian Monteith said, there is the possibility that people can play too much sport for their own good.

**Mr Telfer:** A few years ago, there was concern in the Borders because youngsters were playing on Saturday and Sunday. Often, the stronger team was the school team. We have tried to establish a balance, and our development officers are working hard to bring the total community into the picture and to consider what is best for the boys. Sometimes, the best thing for them is to play schools rugby. However, sometimes, because of the staff, the school team is not so strong and we encourage the boys to play outside school, in the clubs. It is a joint venture at the moment.

I hope that the boys will not be overtaxed. In some areas, such as the Borders, some boys start playing the game at the age of five, but by the time they are 18 they have been playing for 13 years and are getting a bit sick of it—especially when the weather is not very good. Our development officers are working to ensure that the tie-up between the clubs, the schools and the local communities is strong. I hope that players will not play too often and get pulled from one team to another.

We try to ensure that as much development as possible is undertaken in schools, as the players are pupils at that stage. As a former headmaster, I am a firm believer that the best rugby can be taught in schools, by teachers who have the right skills. Coaching is different from teaching, especially when the players are young. I am sure that the coaching that Brian Monteith received at his school was from teachers who also taught him.

**Ian Jenkins:** Bill Watson said that the SRU is not promoting rugby alone, and that you would like sport as a whole to be given a higher profile in the curriculum. You asked for assistance from MSPs. In what way can we assist you?

**Mr Arneil:** I shall answer that, because the issue is dear to my heart. The Scottish Rugby

Union is highly organised, professional and successful in development. We are held back by the number of children who play and get involved in sport, which is a reflection of the physical education programmes in schools. There is a need to review the whole physical education programme. There is a role for physical education in developing all children physiologically, and sport is an offshoot of that. Physically active children will want to play sport, because that is how they will want to express themselves. Beyond that, there is the issue of certification, which should be open to children who have a genuine, deeper interest in physical education.

A paragraph in the report by Her Majesty's inspectorate of schools report on physical education talks about the need for PE in S1 and S2,

"to articulate more closely with the requirements of Standard Grade courses at S3/S4."

That is a recipe for disaster, because it would isolate the many from the few who will go on to take PE. A child's freedom to run about because they are active and they love to do that is a vital ingredient in their growing up. What can be learnt through participation in sport is vital.

I cite an analogy that is relevant to the Parliament. If somebody wants to become an MSP, they must fight an election. They do not play an election, or participate in an election—they fight the election because they want to win. Winning and losing are part and parcel of that. Where better to learn about that than through being actively involved in sport and games from day one, all the way through school? There is a vital role for sport in schools. We must get that message across, to ensure that sport assumes an important and natural place in every school.

**The Convener:** You will be aware that the Executive has a major events strategy, to encourage major events to be held in Scotland. Scottish rugby was successful in encouraging world cup matches to be held in Scotland. How can rugby continue to play a role in tourism, business and economic regeneration in Scotland?

**Mr Watson:** I mentioned Murrayfield and its future. We have seen a number of speculative plans to bring anything from exhibition centres to other sporting facilities, such as ice rinks and arenas, to Scotland. The reality is that we are trying to achieve a higher occupation rate of Murrayfield. I do not have the exact figures, but an impact survey of an international that was held in Dublin found that the game brought between IR£14 million and IR£16 million to the local economy. We reckon that the economic benefit to the city alone was between IR£12 million and IR£13 million, without looking outside the city. The

occupation levels are huge, as is the cultural impact. Even pop concerts bring considerable economic benefit to the country, because the fans have to stay somewhere. People might not enjoy the negative effects of that, but the local economy must compete on that stage.

We believe that Murrayfield could be a significant location for many events, and we are trying daily to increase occupation levels. If international matches were taken away from the city, there would be a major shortfall in income. Members may have heard the local traders and hoteliers talking about the Ireland game's being called off. However, I assure the committee that about two thirds of the Ireland fans will still come, because they got cheap fares.

**The Convener:** Thank you very much. We have run out of time, as we expected. What the witnesses have said has probably generated interest in rugby and in the SRU. The witnesses will receive more questions in correspondence from committee members over the next few weeks, picking up on issues that we have been unable to raise today. I thank you for your time. It has been very worth while for us; I hope that it was for you, too.

**Mr Watson:** We are delighted to help at any time. We would like to play a major part in helping to develop the sporting scene in this country.

**The Convener:** Thanks very much.

Our next witnesses are from two bodies sponsored by Historic Scotland: the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland and the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland. I invite Professor Michael Lynch to introduce himself and his colleague.

**Professor Michael Lynch (Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland):** Thank you for this opportunity to talk to the committee. I apologise for the state of my voice; I am in the final stages of a cold.

My colleague, Carol Swanson, is a trained archaeologist and the manager of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, which encompasses most of the former Strathclyde region. I am probably best described as a jobbing historian. Carol has been on the board for three years and I have been on it for five years. Our submission outlines several underlying concerns that we have addressed in recent years. We suggest that it might be worthwhile for the committee to consider them as general subjects. They are continuing concerns, but some are quite urgent.

Our first area of concern is the national cultural strategy. When the board met Rhona Brankin last year, it took the opportunity to say how much it

welcomed the proposal to develop such a strategy to cover all aspects of Scottish culture, including the built heritage and archaeology. It is sometimes not realised how widely encompassing that area is. Ancient monuments are not just ancient, as Bill Watson implied; they are not just prehistoric brochs and 16<sup>th</sup> century castles. They can be 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery kilns—there is one a mile north of Buchanan Street station in Glasgow—or an A-frame colliery that has been dismantled only recently.

Our second area of concern is the built heritage. Despite the attention that is frequently given to the natural heritage, there is little about the Scottish landscape that is natural; the vast bulk of it is man-made. Although we welcome the mention of the built heritage in the national cultural strategy, the board is concerned—we expressed that concern to the minister—about the lack of joined-up thinking on the various aspects of the built heritage. There is no explicit mention of the built heritage in the document, although there are allusions to it. Critically, there is no mention of the significance of the historic environment as an economic and educational resource—what is sometimes called the heritage dividend. Education and the economy are the two aspects that we would like to talk about.

It needs hardly to be said that both history and archaeology command widespread public interest. The television programme “Time Team” attracts an audience of 3 million to 4 million. Young archaeologists clubs in Scotland, which cater for children aged five to 16, are a booming industry. Historic Scotland has, in various ways, tried to interest schools and school children. School and educational visits to Historic Scotland sites are free and a series of educational materials are available at low or no cost. Historic Scotland has also recently tripled the number of its educational officers. We would be happy to give the committee more details about those initiatives.

14:45

I take it as read that there is an integral connection between education—at all levels, not only at school level—and the built heritage. It cuts across all classes.

I want to emphasise the importance of the built heritage to the economy—the heritage dividend in economic terms. I do not have the figures for rugby, but I have the figures for golf and fishing. According to a British Tourist Authority survey in 1998, which became part of evidence to a House of Commons select committee the following year, golf accounted for 2 per cent of all visitors and fishing for 1 per cent. The built heritage accounted for 83 per cent.

A more recent survey is mentioned in the press at the moment. We can leave details of it with committee members. That survey shows that 65 per cent of visitors from overseas and from England—that might be the reason for the difference in the figures—wanted to come to see churches, historic buildings, monuments and castles. That is significant.

The heritage dividend includes local economic regeneration. I will give an example, and colleagues who speak later might want to talk about this as well. Skills such as those of stonemasons were declining until conservation that is specifically linked to the historic environment began to encourage those skills again. As well as providing employment, the encouragement of local craft skills gives a sense of community. Again, we can leave figures with committee members. They are Carol Swanson's figures and she will be pleased to give more details.

The historic environment generates income and jobs, but it costs money. In its previous four reports, the board has highlighted its deep concern about the long-term future of the archaeology service in Scotland. There are more local authority archaeologists in Essex and Sussex than there are in all Scotland; coverage is a problem. Four local authorities still have no archaeology service and in others, the service varies in quality. Therefore, we have a double problem—coverage and quality.

We remain concerned about resources at national and local level and that point has been underlined in our previous reports. We understand fully that there will never be enough resources to conserve and protect our entire heritage because there is just too much of it. We accept that there must be priorities, but there should be a wider set of national criteria for consideration of what the appropriate level of overall resource should be, given the economic and educational importance of what we are talking about.

If, as we have urged, new duties are put on local authorities, particularly the duty to keep a sites and monuments record—known in the jargon as an SMR—local authorities need to be given extra resources.

It is part of our remit to try to identify gaps in legislation. In the board's forthcoming report on Christian monuments, we identify one such gap in legislation. There is a lack of clarity about who owns redundant churches and churchyards. Some local authorities deal well with that and others do so far less well. Urgent consideration should be given to SMRs being given statutory recognition, and we have had confirmation of that from a rather odd source. The Culture and Recreation Bill is currently going through the House of Lords, and

an amendment to it has been tabled that would make SMRs a statutory provision. We would also like the Scottish Parliament to consider that urgently. The matter is very urgent.

Those are our six areas of concern. We will be very pleased to answer any questions.

**The Convener:** I shall first ask your colleagues from the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland to introduce themselves and to make an opening statement.

**Councillor Pat Chalmers (Historic Buildings Council for Scotland):** I am Pat Chalmers and my colleague is Mark Hopton. I am sure that many members of the public think that the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland is an elitist organisation or that what it deals with is perhaps specialist or elitist. That could not be further from the truth. We respond to applications for repair grants and we must prioritise. Last year, for instance, more than 50 per cent of our grants went to churches.

I do not think that I have to tell any member of the Scottish Parliament who has dedicated themselves to the culture of Scotland about the importance of Scotland's built heritage. I do not have to tell members of its importance to the economy, and I certainly do not need to tell members about its importance to tourism. We are all concerned about keeping our image and our identity, and our buildings—especially church buildings—do that in an iconic way, which is what the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland concerns itself with.

I am involved with the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland because of its economic and regenerative benefits. I would like to demonstrate how the council has brought those benefits to an area of Glasgow. Behind the Tron, the district court and Glasgow green, there is an A-listed building called St Andrew's in the Square, which is the only Georgian church in Glasgow. In 1992, it sat in what could only be called a coup, as far back as the Barras. The Glasgow Building Preservation Trust, which is a voluntary organisation—as is the HBCS—took on the building and has now restored it and given it its place in the hierarchy of Britain. It is one of the six most important church buildings in Britain and is considered to be the equal of St Martin-in-the-Fields. I am sure that members of the committee will be delighted to know that St Andrew's has now become a lively centre for the promotion of Scottish arts.

I was convener of planning at the time when St Andrew's was restored. We were able to negotiate with the local enterprise company and developers to redo the Georgian square around the church and to rescue all the other listed buildings in the

area. As a result, the public purse from all sources—the local council, Europe, the lottery and the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland—has put £7.25 million into the area. The private sector has put in £38.5 million. Three more projects that are in the pipeline will complete the regeneration of that area, which will mean that the leverage from £7.25 million will have been £61 million. I do not know where else one could get a ratio of 8:1, but it can be found in the field in which we work, if projects are handled that well.

That work has had enormous regenerative force on that part of Glasgow. I want to get away from the idea that the Historic Buildings Council or the heritage movement is concerned with castles that are owned by the nobility. It is much more concerned with helping people such as an old lady of 80 who happens to have a B-listed villa on the front at Greenock which, if it were taken out, would leave the area gap-toothed and would destroy the area's heritage.

I am concerned about the heritage lottery fund's priorities. As a proportion of its budget, its allocation to the built heritage was 25 per cent, but applications totalled 49 per cent. I am concerned about the fact that the Historic Buildings Council's budget has, in real terms, declined in the past three years. We must all be aware that there is enormous difficulty with redundant churches. A church, its skyline and its steeple are often what make the identity of a spot in Scotland. People cherish them and want them to remain and be put to other uses. More than 50 per cent of our grants last year had to go to churches; we would otherwise have lost those buildings.

I am also concerned about the new resource-based accountancy, because I feel that that will slow down enormously investment in heritage. That is rather a big issue, but I would be happy to put some evidence to the committee on that matter at another time.

**Mr Monteith:** I address my question to the representatives of both bodies. The witnesses may not have had the benefit of seeing each other's papers, but it is surprising how the descriptions of each body are quite similar. It will be of benefit to the committee and the public if you explain briefly the differences between the bodies.

**Professor Lynch:** The Ancient Monuments Board is concerned largely with policy. We take a theme a year, and have done so for the past 10 years. Committee members have a list of those themes. As I understand it, a good deal of the HBC's work is in dealing with details of grant. The composition of each body reflects those interests.

We consider a variety of issues in an integrated way. As it happens, our forthcoming report—which will go to ministers next month—deals with

churches. In some ways the two bodies' interests mesh but, as I see it, we have separate functions. A recent report confirmed that we were better kept at arm's length from each other to focus on those matters.

**Mr McAveety:** May I ask—

**Mr Monteith:** I think that the HBC's representative has still to answer my question.

**Mr Mark Hopton (Historic Buildings Council for Scotland):** The Historic Buildings Council has two functions. We advise on policy in much the same way as the Ancient Monuments Board and we manage a grants programme of £11.4 million a year. Much of our work involves focusing that grant money through the Historic Scotland secretariat.

**Mr McAveety:** Councillor Chalmers touched on regeneration and I am glad that she mentioned parts of my constituency as they are in the process of change because of such commitment. She might be modest enough to deny this, but without the recognition by such local champions—for example, the planning role that the councillor and indeed the council played—of the historic importance of St Andrew's, the building could well have gone the way of many other buildings in Glasgow that have been lost over the past 40 or 50 years. How can we get such champions in other parts of Scotland?

Secondly, you were able to put together a package to regenerate St Andrew's in the Square because many other agencies were able to match funding. What can we do in other parts of Scotland where there is no such capital asset base or opportunity?

Finally, Michael Lynch mentioned joined-up thinking. Are there two simple things that the Executive is not yet doing that could be accomplished more effectively by such thinking?

15:00

**Councillor Chalmers:** I am the front for a huge army of volunteers. Architectural heritage and civic societies are all made up of volunteers. People dedicate much time and effort to something that they do not and will never own, but which they see as part of their heritage. If a local authority gives credence to such dedication by being prepared to pay for feasibility studies and to use its planning and other professionals, there will be a very reasonable take-off. We have all found Historic Scotland and HBCS officers to be absolutely splendid about advising people from the beginning so that they can formulate an economic package that still delivers quality.

Unfortunately, with the local government reforms, many local authorities have considered

their conservation officers as an optional extra. Areas with a tremendous heritage have no one to steer things in the right direction. You are right; at such times, some kind of champion is needed. I have much admiration for the people who championed buildings in the past, because it is only in the past 20 years that the nation has come to think of such people as champions instead of cranks. We would have lost many wonderful buildings had it not been for their voluntary efforts. However, I genuinely believe that local authorities need the start-up money and imprimatur that comes with funding from the HBCS and other organisations such as the heritage lottery fund, which make it clear that a certain building matters and must be saved. Although our grant to a project might seem quite small, it is the seed from which the rest flowers.

**Irene McGugan:** You have both mentioned churches more than once, along with the fact that last year 50 per cent of your allocation went towards redundant church buildings. Such buildings were also the subject of a report that you published last year, which went to the First Minister. Given that the number of redundant church buildings will only increase in future, what response have you had from the First Minister and the Executive? Furthermore, what must happen at a strategic level to address the issue?

**Mr Hopton:** As far as I am aware, we have had little response. Churches are an issue. It is best if a historic building can find a new use. That keeps the money that has to be invested in the building down to an absolute minimum. Buildings only become a problem when they become redundant. The Hub at the top of the Lawnmarket is a prime example of a church that lay empty for a long time before finding a new use.

However, churches are only a small part of the issue. The committee might also want to examine the huge number of hospitals and education buildings that are becoming redundant. That estate might cause problems, as the buildings are hard to reuse. Quite rightly, people are trying to realise the highest possible return for the public purse from the buildings but there is a risk that they can be vandalised, that their roofs can fall in for no apparent reason, or that they might be burnt out. We are losing a lot of new heritage—as opposed to ancient heritage such as castles—through vandalism. The Historic Buildings Council's financial resources are fairly limited and we could use up our whole budget trying to save the hospitals that are lying empty in Glasgow.

**Councillor Chalmers:** We have written to ministers about the way in which we dispose of public buildings. A fine example of a local authority dealing well with a redundant hospital building can be seen in the case of Crichton royal hospital.

Despite having to fight with the auditor, the local authority purchased the building and brought in multiple partners to enable education facilities, business facilities and a range of other wonderful facilities to be provided on the site, which is connected to the local economy by good transport links.

The old buildings of Leverndale hospital, however, ended up with a private-sector developer and the site has become a bog-standard housing estate in which all the beautiful buildings are standing derelict. When Glasgow City Council's heritage and conservation committee, of which I am a member, visited the site, we saw that the last remaining buildings were overrun by youths in the middle of the afternoon. The developer obviously had no security on the site.

Gartloch hospital, which is right next to a site of special scientific interest and is part of Easterhouse estate, was sold for £300,000 to two men of straw who had no background in this area of work. I cannot believe that selling the site at such a bargain-basement price, without having any idea of what was to be done with it, was in the interests of the economy, never mind anything else. The estate is beautiful and could have been a strong economic factor in turning round the Easterhouse estate. I have struggled with the problem for two years and I have great fears about our ability to keep the Gartloch hospital site a rich and beautiful area. I worry that the developers might feel that they will invest in the lovely red sandstone buildings only if they can cover the rest of the site—which should be beautiful park land for the people of Easterhouse—in low-cost, tacky-tacky boxes.

There must be joined-up consideration of how decisions about redundant school and hospital buildings impact on the economy at large.

**Ian Jenkins:** Your submission mentions the need for Scottish slate and says that buildings are being robbed of their vernacular slate. Could you talk about the measures that you propose in the submission?

**Mr Hopton:** For a few years, there has been no slate industry in Scotland. Historic Scotland was a mover behind the recent opening of a quarry in an attempt to bring Scottish slate back into use again. The reason for not using Scottish slate is a bad one and concerns the British standards and the way in which slate meets—or did not meet—them. Spanish and other European slates could meet those standards, but Scottish slates could not and the industry died.

Slate in Scotland is a finite resource. Slates can be reused when buildings are being repaired, but every time that that is done, the slate is cut down so that it can be redressed. The amount of slate in

Scotland is declining, although substantial quantities of slate are left in many quarries in Scotland. The slate industry could be regenerated quickly and well. It is a craft-based industry, using material that is indigenous to Scotland, and we are striving to reintroduce it in Scotland.

**Ian Jenkins:** Is a feasibility study being conducted to see whether the industry should be given a hand to start up?

**Mr Hopton:** Economic studies have been done and, under the direction of Historic Scotland, the Stone Federation Great Britain, which is a group of stone companies, is considering the economic benefits of the slate industry. A quarry has been reopened.

**Councillor Chalmers:** Our stone liaison group is also doing that work. I have always felt passionately about the slate industry—people are fed up listening to me about it. To be frank, I believe that a country that does not use its indigenous materials is going in the wrong economic direction.

Frank McAveety will recall that when I was convener of planning at Glasgow City Council, the council tightened up on having stone on buildings where appropriate. The quarry at Locharbriggs, which supplied red sandstone to Glasgow, reopened with new technology. That quarry is thriving and the same thing could happen with the slate industry. The slates that come from China and Spain are less sustainable and have a shorter lifespan than Scottish slate.

We could be creating jobs, keeping the identity of our buildings and getting a more sustainable finish if we were to use indigenous material.

**Professor Lynch:** Carol Swanson engaged with Rhona Brankin on joined-up thinking, which was the subject of Frank McAveety's final question. She would be the better person to answer it.

**Dr Carol Swanson (Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland):** I am grateful for the opportunity to answer that question.

The problem with the historic environment is that it is seen as being something that Historic Scotland deals with and, within the Scottish Executive, that is the responsibility of the deputy minister for culture and sport—or is it sport and culture?

However, the protection of the historic environment crosses several ministerial briefs. Bodies such as the Forestry Commission are involved, as are agri-environment schemes, and money is available for the management of archaeological resources. We believe that documents produced by the Scottish Executive, such as the national cultural strategy and the Scottish tourism strategy, have not recognised the

value of the historic environment to Scotland, both educationally and economically. When Rhona Brankin was Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport, she said that joined-up thinking was at the heart of the Scottish Executive, but we believe that the documents that are being produced do not demonstrate that.

That is the problem with compartmentalisation: the brief is seen as being both culture and sport, but, given the significance of the historic environment to Scotland's economic wealth and to education, the historic environment must be placed at the heart of several ministerial portfolios.

15:15

**The Convener:** I thank the witnesses for their time. I am sure that members will have further questions for the witnesses and that they will be in touch with the relevant organisation in due course.

The next witnesses are from the Scottish Schoolsport Federation and the Scottish local authority network of physical education. Charles Raeburn will introduce his colleagues, one of whom is my constituent.

**Mr Charles Raeburn (Scottish Schoolsport Federation and Scottish Local Authority Network of Physical Education):** Thank you for the invitation to appear before the committee.

As the convener mentioned, I represent two organisations. I am chair of both, so we thought that it would be clever to link both organisations in a discussion with the committee.

The SSF was born in the shadow of the industrial action that was mentioned this afternoon. It has tried for the past 12 to 14 years to fight the case for school sport in the extended curriculum.

I apologise for the Scottish local authority network of physical education's long title. We are a young network that was born out of the death, if you like, of advisers. We were an association of PE advisers, but there are no longer any PE advisers in Scotland. We now have quite an extensive network of colleagues with different positions within local authorities. I think that the majority of them are PE teachers.

Christine Watson is co-ordinator of primary PE in Glasgow City Council. The convener's constituent is Blair Young, who is the SSF treasurer. Blair is a principal teacher of PE in Biggar, so physical education will have been moderate there this morning. I work for West Lothian Council, which is a little different in that, on reorganisation, it joined together education, sport and leisure. As a result, I am the council's sport and leisure manager. I still have a role with schools as well as with the community.

I shall try to co-ordinate my two colleagues this afternoon. Christine Watson will start by talking about PE and will focus on primary PE. Blair Young will focus on school sport issues.

On page 1 of our submission, we encourage the committee to join us on a number of issues. Post-McCrone school sport is a particular concern at the moment. This is a difficult period with regard to implementation of the McCrone report and how the McCrone outputs will be realised. We will come back to that.

We want to develop a wider concept of PE in the school curriculum and I hope that the committee will agree with that. McCrone recommended that primary teacher contact time be reduced to 22.5 hours. Perhaps that would provide an opportunity for the employment of specialist teachers, which would link with the requirement for more teachers in primary schools.

I will ask the committee to seek further discussion about issues, particularly the extended curriculum, which includes music, drama and the arts. I will also seek the committee's support for the establishment of an agency or unit to support and develop school sport and PE. In that context, we are talking about education and not necessarily about sport. We are talking about physical education and school sport and the complexity of dealing with two ministers, Nicol Stephen and Jack McConnell, on education and with Allan Wilson on sport and culture.

SLANOPE wants to point out that sport is not the only area of physical activity within physical education. We would need a little more time than we have at this meeting to go through the potential of physical activity. We seek clarification of sportscotland's role, because there is a fear that we may reduce physical education to sport alone. There has never been a more opportune time to consider the whole area of physical activity, play and sport. A growing body of evidence suggests that importance should be placed on the physical development of the child from as early as birth, as that could have a direct effect on brain development and, consequently, on academic attainment in later life. We suggest that a cradle-to-grave strategy should be adopted, rather than the strategy that is used at the moment, which is age group targeted.

We have put in bold type in our written submission our great concern about the evidence that is building up that physical literacy is not being addressed in many schools. Christine Watson will say more about that. SLANOPE warmly welcomes the positive messages emanating from the committee and from the convener's report. Our submission mentions the value of sport in schools, describes the institutional policy context, examines the needs of school sports and makes

recommendations for improving current practice. We agree that schools have a potential to maximise those benefits and are in place to do so. It is from that viewpoint that we want to offer comments and suggestions for discussion and debate.

We agree in broad terms with the report's recommendations and those that refer to the work in schools of PE specialists would be our focus for attention. However, we also feel that to get the total picture, certain other factors, issues and areas of concern need to be addressed. We want to indicate the scope of physical education. At the top of our list is the whole area of primary physical education and I shall ask Christine Watson to talk about that.

**Ms Christine Watson (Scottish Local Authority Network of Physical Education):** I will start with the famous Scottish Office document, "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland, National Guidelines, Expressive Arts: 5-14", published in June 1992. The rationale in that document says that physical education is essential to the growth and development of children and offers opportunities for the development of physical competencies, social skills, fitness and a healthy lifestyle. In other words, every child should be entitled to a safe, well-balanced programme that promotes positive attitudes towards physical education, health, fitness and sport—educating children for life.

Why, then, do we have such a massive problem with the health and fitness of children in the primary sector? What are children doing in primary school to develop positive attitudes? Are they getting the minimum of 56 minutes—note that that is the minimum, not the maximum—to which they are entitled, according to the expressive arts document? Many primary schools now operate a PE programme of one period per week, which sometimes is cut if the communal hall is needed for something more important. Members can imagine the different important uses there might be for one hall in a school—many primary schools have only one area, which is used for assembly, dining and physical education. Class sizes are a constant problem for practical subjects in the primary and secondary sectors. In primary schools, there could be 32 or 33 children for physical education in a communal hall.

Good habits are laid down in primary school and primary teachers have the huge task of trying to cover a packed curriculum, which now includes information technology. With their limited training and knowledge of physical education and poor facilities, how are teachers able to conduct a well-balanced PE programme? Karen Gillon's report mentions a review of the training of primary teachers and supports the prioritising of primary

schools.

Never has there been a greater need in the primary sector for PE specialists who are trained in implementing the five-to-14 PE programme. PE is not sport; it is a balance of gymnastics, games, dance, active health, athletics, swimming and outdoor activities. It educates children to manage their bodies, develop their motor skills and learn through a cross-curricular approach. Therefore, the specialists who deliver the programme must be educationists who have an understanding of the whole child. Karen Gillon's report to the committee supports that.

Every child should be equal. Why, then, do children in private sector schools have a minimum of three periods of PE per week, delivered by a specialist? How do they still manage to address the rest of the school curriculum competently? The erosion of PE in the primary sector is frightening, particularly given the constant reports of young children's lack of fitness. Young children's lifestyle is becoming more sedentary with every day that passes—think of all the IT initiatives. Statistics have proved beyond any doubt that inactive children become inactive adults. Girls in particular become less active than boys as they get older. If that is allowed to continue, we will be on a downward spiral.

There are many good initiatives in different authorities throughout Scotland, including the introduction of the active primary schools, TOP play and TOP sport programmes. I am a TOP trainer and we have already piloted the programmes in Glasgow. However, there is no substitute for a primary PE specialist, who will not only influence the physical well-being of the child, but motivate and encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. The specialist not only provides invaluable support to the primary teacher, who has the ultimate responsibility for delivering a good, well-balanced PE programme, but supports the head teacher with the planning and development of the school curriculum.

It is now vital that a nationwide policy to promote PE in the primary sector be considered. Such a policy would include encouraging the activity, diet and healthy lifestyle of our children. If it is not considered, we will continue to build problems for the future. With the changes that are about to happen in the teaching profession through the implementation of the McCrone report, what better time is there to implement a national programme that involves PE specialists visiting and supporting primary teachers and children across Scotland?

**Mr Raeburn:** I will outline some other aspects of the situation. I will not elaborate on them hugely. I am anxious that the committee knows that my secondary colleagues have come together and would like the committee to be aware of some of



the issues that surround secondary school PE.

Health and safety, particularly from the teacher's perspective, is becoming more and more of an issue. What we in West Lothian Council call health-enhancing physical activity is another issue. For the first time, the health world is recognising physical activity as an important issue in health. That did not happen until a year ago.

The next issue is participation in core physical education v certification. That is an old debate. What is the margin for change? Does everything that goes on in a school have to be certified?

The picture on facilities and their availability is hugely different from one part of the country to another.

Extra-curricular activities and school sport are also an issue, as are the links between them and PE itself.

A big issue is the link between the implementation of the McCrone report and the national priorities that have been established in school education, which do not specifically include physical education. The challenge for us is to demonstrate and to implement quality physical education opportunities and experiences that can deliver the national priorities. We have no concern at all about our ability to do that. The difficulty is whether our colleagues in management will always recognise that. SLANOPE urges consideration of the appointment of PE specialists in primary schools, which could be achieved during the implementation of the McCrone report.

The absence of PE advisers—we used to have them—creates a vacuum in which consideration, advice and action could be combined to improve local practice of physical education. We would recommend the creation of a small agency or unit to assist in the process.

Although I have been chair of the Scottish Schoolsport Federation since about 1989, I will not talk much about the federation. I hand over to my colleague, Blair Young, who will talk about school sport issues.

15:30

**Mr Blair Young (Scottish Schoolsport Federation):** Last Saturday morning, I thought that I might be talking to the committee about a footballing failure and a narrow rugby win against Italy, as examples of why the status quo is unacceptable. At 3.30 pm, due to two goals from ex-Scottish schoolboy Billy Dodds, plan A was looking a wee bit dodgy. Of course, as you all know, by 4.50 pm, plan A was back on. We certainly cannot accuse Scottish sport of being dull, predictable or easy on the heart.

Regardless of which examples of Scotland's exploits on the international field we use, they demonstrate only, very publicly, the lack of depth of activity at the base level, in schools. The relative success of some of our top performers is due more to the individual efforts of athletes and coaches than to an organised system that encourages, supports and sustains our young people in sport.

The base of the pyramid of sports development has narrowed considerably over the past 20 years, particularly in activities such as football, rugby and hockey, which are traditionally seen as an integral part not only of sport but of Scotland's national culture. To some extent, that has been compensated by growth in other activities. However, the total number of participants has undoubtedly decreased. Despite that, the Scottish Schools Football Association co-ordinates the activities of well over 30,000 pupils weekly. I am sure that members will agree that that is a magnificent figure for an almost entirely voluntary body.

It has been argued that the answer is to promote school-age sport. Although many of the initiatives and opportunities created under that banner are laudable, they miss out large sections of young people for whom the only sporting contact on offer is what is available at school.

The simple fact is that schools are the only places to which all our young people go regularly, which offer a safe, secure environment to learn and develop skills and attitudes to sport, exercise and healthy living that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

The recently published report by Bob Littlefield, on behalf of the University of Strathclyde's Scottish school of sports studies at Jordanhill, describes the patchwork of sport provision within the extended curriculum that is currently on offer in Scotland. On the positive side, almost all secondary schools and a large number of primary schools provide games and activities outwith the normal curriculum. Dedicated individuals among the schools' staff give freely of their time to promote those activities. In addition to solid grass-roots work on local and national festivals and championships, pupils are prepared for international success. Recent examples of that include wins at UK level for national teams in basketball and football, top-five finishes for individual school teams at various UK championships, including gymnastics and orienteering, and several medal-winning performances by Scottish schools athletes at the world schools gymnasium held in Beijing.

On the negative side, provision varies greatly among schools across the nation, from virtually no out-of-school sport to large and varied

programmes at lunch time, after school and at weekends. More varied provision is commonplace in the private sector and is used by private schools as a selling point. Why, then, cannot we create an atmosphere that would allow us to match that in the state sector?

Rapid curricular changes in schools and the associated work load have led to a reduction in the time that staff can offer to school sport. Development plan fatigue is now a common reason among school staff for failing to keep up the commitment to school sporting activities.

Education policy towards raising attainment at all levels has been interpreted in many local authorities and schools in a narrow academic manner, with creative and aesthetic activities, including games and sports, being afforded a much lower priority. That has led to a change in perception on the part of parents and pupils, to the detriment of participation in sporting activity.

I know of no one who does not accept that sport and other activities that are not traditionally considered as academic have a major role to play in raising overall achievement, self-esteem and citizenship and in promoting a positive ethos in schools. Why is it acceptable for programmes designed to advance those aspects to adopt a narrow focus, which excludes school sport?

The system currently recognises exam-focused schemes of supported study in preference to taking a more open view of the extended curriculum. It is not only sport that has been caught in that trap. Therefore, we seek a rationale for the extended curriculum. The status and role of activities beyond the formal curriculum should be placed in context, with emphasis placed on their value to the overall enhancement of the schooling experience and on their role in making the school a better place for all pupils.

Many educational policies can embrace school sport but because no explicit mention is made of sports, many establishments have chosen to exclude them from their programmes for supported study and raising achievement.

There is little doubt that the most important factor in the future of school sport in the next few years will be the implementation of the McCrone report's recommendations. The agreement represents either the greatest opportunity that school sport has had in recent years or the beginning of a rapid end. If we wish school sport to flourish and grow, it must be implicit in the considerations surrounding the McCrone agreement. We are pleased to note that the First Minister stated that he hoped that, following the McCrone settlement, teachers would feel more comfortable about conducting extra-curricular activities. The value of sporting activities in the

extended curriculum must be recognised within the contractual 35 hours as being on a par with any other additional pupil activity.

We seek a national strategy for physical education and school sport—there is currently none. We welcome the recent commitment to offer every nine-year-old the opportunity to try playing golf, but we do not think that that fits into a coherent and sustainable national strategy. There is a golf course on the doorstep of Biggar High School and I would welcome increased access for my pupils, but will the Scottish Executive's plan achieve that?

A further example of the need for an overall national strategy is the current response to sports schools, which sees more than £1 million going to a small number of pupils at Bellahouston Academy. The Scottish Schoolsport Federation's consistent policy over many years has been to favour the establishment of focus schools in each area, providing opportunities for all, something that Karen Gillon's report also recommended.

A national agency should be charged with producing a coherent and sustainable policy for PE and school sport. It should be charged with turning that policy into reality by promoting, encouraging and supporting all aspects of PE and school sport to enable every pupil to receive, as an absolute minimum entitlement, two hours of PE a week. By giving positive direction, leadership and support to a Scottish agency for physical education and school sport, the Scottish Parliament would give the same three things—positive direction, leadership and support—to the builders of the foundations of Scottish sport.

**Irene McGugan:** I agree with almost everything that Blair Young has said; I applaud what was set out in the submission and what he has outlined to us today.

Is Blair Young aware that, in recent weeks, ministers have expressed firm views about some of the issues that he talked about? For instance, when asked how the Executive would ensure that sport is given priority in the school curriculum and that there is a natural role for sport in schools, given that it does not feature as one of the national priorities, the answer was:

"Increasing the amount of time devoted to sport could ... only be done at the expense of other areas of the school curriculum.

There are no plans to review current arrangements for providing physical education programmes in the school curriculum."—[*Official Report, Written Answers*, 8 March 2001; Vol 11, p 127.]

When asked whether all children in Scotland would be guaranteed at least two hours of sporting activity a week—Blair Young focused on that today—the answer was that the Executive had no

plans

"to prescribe as part of the curriculum that school children should have set levels of sporting activity per week."—*[Official Report, Written Answers, 14 February 2001; Vol 11, p 292.]*

What is the Scottish Schoolsport Federation's response to that and how can its programme be progressed in this climate of limited support?

**Mr Raeburn:** We are disappointed. We are bottom of the European league table in terms of how much time is allocated to physical education. As we understand the situation, the average for European states is two hours a week, not just for primary school children but for every age. In the old days—I am aware that there are a number of ex-teachers on the committee—PE in secondary schools would have been thought of as a core activity. Now, however, physical education is vulnerable.

Champion schools develop that take PE seriously. An active primary school helps us, of course, but it can deflect some of the serious issues that we raise. Michael Jess, who is a lecturer at Moray House, is close to completing research on physical literacy at the moment. His results show that, at a basic level, physical education is about body management and use; it is about sitting, lifting, carrying, jumping and walking. If we have not got those things right, it is clear that we will not get into serious sport. There is also a raft of issues linked to play and learning through play. We are hugely disappointed at attitudes towards all those things at the moment. We urge politicians to be concerned about them.

**Cathy Peattie:** I agree with all that I have heard. I would like to talk about cultural barriers. I know from speaking to parents of children in schools in my constituency that there is not a clear understanding of why physical education is important. I hear parents talking about giving their bairns a note so that they do not have to do PE. How can we overcome such cultural barriers?

**Ms Watson:** One of our biggest problems is to do not so much with parents but with curriculum time. The 1992 Scottish Office document says that children are entitled to a minimum of 56 minutes of PE. If children are not getting that, they are not having experience of physical education in primary school. We have no way of knowing how many schools operate a minimum PE policy. We know that some schools are doing away with their PE programme because the communal hall is being used for something else. Children can go through a whole week at school without any physical education. How can we possibly have positive attitudes to PE if children are not experiencing it at school?

**Cathy Peattie:** But the parents of those children

have probably had a different experience and have had the opportunity to do PE. Despite that, they have the attitude that I described.

**Mr Young:** That attitude is not uncommon. I am glad to say that it is not that common in Biggar, but I am sure that colleagues from elsewhere would say that it is very common. Parents with that attitude have probably had a bad experience. We recently had a primary 7 open evening for next year's intake and the first thing that I said to parents was that what they were about to see was something that they had never experienced in PE in school. They saw a dance display by boys and girls wearing jeans and other casual clothing. We had to stress that that was not the school uniform and was purely for the display.

A lot of the parents were once pupils at the school and they talked about how the evening brought back memories. However, it was obvious that some parents were thinking that they had never done orienteering or dancing and that when they were at school, males and females were separated for PE. Getting over the message that things have changed completely would help to overcome the attitude that you described.

**Cathy Peattie:** Do you think that new community schools can help in getting that message over and in encouraging parents to consider what their kids could be involved in?

**Mr Young:** Even in Biggar High School, which is not a community school, lots of parents come in, partly because the primary school uses the same facility and partly because we are in the middle of a community. Charlie Raeburn has more experience of community schools.

**Mr Raeburn:** In West Lothian, we are piloting some community school work. At Inverlorn Community High School, there is a lot of support for what we are trying to do in PE. We have to learn a lot more about working with parents. Many years ago, I was lucky enough to go to Australia for a few months on a study tour. When a routine of daily physical education was started there in the mid-1980s, people recognised that the body has the most powerful meaning for a person—if one invades that, especially during adolescence, one has problems. The Australians also felt that if we are to help with lifestyles—a subject that was mentioned earlier—we must experience being fit. They asked how that could be done and tried to give youngsters the chance to learn about becoming fit at least for one year while they were at school.

There is a lot of work that can be done. Sadly, even though we have drawn the issue to the attention of the Scottish Executive, nothing in community school literature talks about buildings for sport.

**Mr McAveety:** At the risk of sounding nostalgic, it strikes me that motivation and access are significant issues. On Fridays at 4 o'clock, I regularly used to play the senior students at football. It shocked me that, as each year went on, I was still fitter than some of the 16 or 17-year-old players. One reason why teenagers are so unfit is the lifestyle choices that they make. Another reason is that teenagers have alternative interests that do not involve sport, whereas, even as late as the 1970s, they would at least have been doing solo sports. How do we tackle that? How do we deal with poverty, which is a major determinant of people's health and lifestyle choices?

**Mr Raeburn:** I will start, but I am sure that Blair Young will want to say something too.

Motivation, access and, in particular, deprivation are major issues. The Bob Littlefield research, to which Blair Young referred, highlighted the patchwork scenario that exists to tackle deprivation in Scotland. We try to create opportunities for all youngsters, even the ones who have two left feet, but it is more difficult to persuade volunteers—they are usually teachers—to get involved if their experience of teaching is becoming more challenging all the time. How we support youngsters in areas of deprivation is an issue; we do not have ease of access at the moment. We must find ways of encouraging and supporting staff in the more vulnerable schools.

The issue of how to motivate staff is at the heart of what we are trying to put across today. The current system does not recognise sport—the McCrone report did not include it as part of "additional pupil activity"—and already there are stories that the draft recommendations do not include sport. Sadly, that does not exactly motivate the volunteers or anyone else to become hugely involved. Although we recognise that the settlement will take five years to implement, we are concerned that sport will be given no recognition. We have been banging the drum about recognition for a little while.

15:45

**Mr Young:** I agree with the previous answer. To motivate pupils, it is important that they be given variety and ease of access, so that they can do sport whenever they want. They need to be given the chance to try as many things as they like as often as they can. There is a limit to that, because one cannot just open the school doors. More emphasis needs to be placed on creating competitions within the school so that youngsters can see that it is not just the 11 boys in the school football team or the 11 girls who want to play hockey who get the opportunity to play sport. There need to be opportunities for dance, aerobics and so many other things. I firmly believe that

hitting the right activity can motivate youngsters.

**Mr McAveety:** They could take up squash.

**Ms Watson:** We are talking about primary schools.

**Mr Young:** Mr McAveety is talking about facilities—perhaps we need to get in there early.

**Ian Jenkins:** Broadly speaking, I agree with everything that Mr Young has said. I would love to see more sport in schools. However, does he accept that sport has to compete with other things? It may be okay for Christine Watson to say that the two hours for physical education is dismissed out of hand by people because there are competing claims on teachers' time, but those claims are real. I would like to see more drama and music in school. We need a debate in which all those things are in the pot. Teachers have to do what they can with the limited time and resources that are available. We cannot continue to expect primary teachers to be able to teach rugby and music and science and drama. The curriculum needs to be looked at as a whole.

**Ms Watson:** I agree with that. The expressive arts element in the curriculum is being cut back. IT and French are now taught in primary schools. The primary teacher has to pack those subjects into the same amount of time—the school day has not been extended—so it is obvious that something has to go. It has ended up being our subject and that is a frightening prospect. The private sector maintains three periods a week for physical education, but we cannot do that.

**Mr Raeburn:** Christine Watson has hit on an interesting point about how the state system compares with the independent sector. Significantly, the independent sector, far from having reduced its investment in physical education, has increased it.

I take the point about the expressive arts, music and drama, which all tend to be part of what a good friend of mine refers to as the "emotional base" of a school, which is the things that make a school buzz. We must hang on to the few champion head teachers, but we feel that there is no support at national level. Our worry about the McCrone settlement is that it has not talked about outputs. We need to come to the outputs; we can deliver on outputs. As was mentioned earlier, it is fascinating that other European countries recognise that; somehow the leadership does not fully recognise it.

**The Convener:** I thank the witnesses for their time. I am sure that we will be back in touch about some of the issues that have been raised. If there is anything that you feel should be brought to our attention, please do not hesitate to do so.

We will break for a few minutes.

15:50

*Meeting adjourned.*

15:55

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** I welcome representatives of Scotland's grant-aided schools. As members are aware, the committee produced a report on special educational needs, part of which focused on the financial arrangements for grant-aided schools. Several such schools have written to the committee to express concerns about arrangements that may be made in future. We felt that it would be useful if those schools gave evidence.

It is not the committee's role to decide the funding package that will be available to schools. That is for the Executive. However, as I spoke to the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs this morning, I can give members and schools' representatives an update. I understand that Nicol Stephen, the Deputy Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs, will seek to meet representatives of each school during April. Jack McConnell said that no decision that would adversely affect the schools would be made for the coming financial year and that any decision will be made in consultation with the schools. The Executive will not adopt a top-down approach or impose a decision. I hope that that provides schools with some information and reassurance, particularly given press speculation that future pupils might not be able to take up places next year and that current pupils might not be able to continue their education. That is not the committee's or the Executive's position.

I will ask each representative to speak for a short time about their school's concerns. Committee members will then address questions to a representative or to all the witnesses as they see fit. I ask Sandra Kerley from Capability Scotland to introduce herself and talk about Capability Scotland's schools.

**Mrs Sandra Kerley (Capability Scotland):** I am director of children's services for Capability Scotland. As members probably know, we have two grant-aided schools: Stanmore House School in Lanark and Corseford Residential School in Renfrew. We made a submission to the committee and responded to the committee's report, so I will not say a great deal today.

I reiterate that we support inclusion. We are working with local authorities to develop local provision. We accept that change is needed, but today we will focus on two main concerns about the report. The first relates to the report's reference to special schools with a national role. The committee appears to acknowledge that such

schools have a place, but there is no definition of a national role or clarity about MSPs' expectations of those schools. It is important to examine that role. We would be happy to work with the committee to try to find a mutually agreed and acceptable definition.

Secondly, we feel that, along with other recommendations in the report, the national role should be defined within the overall framework of a national strategy for special education. We would be interested in contributing to the development of such a strategy.

Central to all our concerns is funding. In our written submission, we have supplied information on our current difficulties with local authorities and the role that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities is playing. There is no reference in the committee's report to any transitional arrangements. I welcome the reassurance that there will be no change in funding in the coming financial year and that there will be consultation. We have also referred back to previous proposals that were made by the Scottish Executive in response to the Riddell report, and we have highlighted our concerns about them. It remains our view that those proposals are unsatisfactory. We are happy to discuss those or any other issues in more detail with the committee.

16:00

**The Convener:** Thank you. I invite Dr Lillemor Jernqvist, the director of the Craighalbert Centre, to speak next.

**Dr Lillemor Jernqvist (Craighalbert Centre):** I am the director of the Craighalbert Centre, the Scottish centre for children with motor impairments. It was created just over 10 years ago, following a great deal of parental interest in, and pressure for, the system of conductive education that is in use at the Peto institute in Budapest. Ours is the only school in Scotland that has implemented a full system of conductive education, in line with the existing guidelines on education in Scotland.

Conductive education sets out to achieve certain aims that are in line with current thinking. It is based on early intervention; parents bring their babies to the Craighalbert Centre so that they are with us during the early years of their development. As a result, the vast majority of the children at the Craighalbert Centre will be able to enter mainstream education. Some 90 to 95 per cent of children who have been through our system go to mainstream schools, and it is to prepare children for entry into mainstream schools that the Craighalbert Centre exists.

We have a well-implemented system of joined-up working. Teams of staff, who are recruited from

all the relevant professions but who have one job description, work together under a group leader so that a whole day of learning is provided for the children by a team of staff who are with them at all times and know them very well. We also have great experience of the transition into mainstream school and the staff development that is required for staff in the receiving school.

Our concern is that because the children stay with us for quite a short time—a few years—it is not easy to budget. Furthermore, numbers may vary from term to term or from year to year, which makes planning for staffing difficult. To deliver the conductive system, staff members require two years of additional training and practice; therefore, it is not easy for people to come and go as the number of children at the centre changes. Over the years, we have established wide links with the authorities in Scotland to provide staff development opportunities in relation both to the children who are with us and to others. Those are our areas of concern.

**The Convener:** Thank you for your comments. I welcome Cathie Craigie, who is sitting in the public gallery. She is the member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth, the constituency in which the Craighalbert Centre is located. Cathie has a long-standing interest in special education and has kept the committee informed of her concerns.

I also welcome Lisa Stapleton, our signer, who is helping us today by keeping everyone informed about what we are up to.

I now invite Mary Hartnoll, from East Park School, to address the committee.

**Ms Mary Hartnoll (East Park School):** I am here as the chair of East Park School. East Park is perhaps the opposite of the Craighalbert Centre, as we are a long-established home and school for children with multiple disabilities in Glasgow and the surrounding area. Over the past three years, there has been radical change in the range of services that we provide and in their development. East Park has progressed on the basis of the recommendations that have been made for the future of schools, working closely with local authorities and the local health service. That process of change is continuing.

The main issues for East Park also relate to funding. We have an increasing number of children and there has been an expansion of our respite and family support service. We want to develop small units for residential care in the community, combining the care that is provided by East Park over the whole year with attendance at school, either on a day basis or a residential basis. That would mean that children from the surrounding area would be able to come to school on a day basis. If they needed respite care, that

could be provided and their families could be supported either at home or, for short periods, in care. As the children got older and family circumstances changed, if they needed long-term care, they could then move into one of the small houses in the community. We take an inclusive approach to the care and education of children with a high level of disability.

The funding problem that East Park is experiencing is due to the fact that it is also registered as a nursing home. We have three levels of registration: as a social work establishment, as a school providing education, and as a nursing home for the health authority. That means that we can provide for any child with any level of need; however, we have no way of accessing funding for the nursing aspect, as the health board does not think that it can support the school financially, although there is strong support for the services that are provided locally.

We seek to take part in the creation of a national strategy that will define how best to proceed, although we see ourselves as part of a local service working with local parents and authorities in the area. A decision must be made about funding, so that we can plan with some certainty of the time scale in which the proposed transition will take place.

**The Convener:** Thank you. I invite Kevin Tansley, from the Royal Blind School, to speak to the committee.

**Mr Kevin Tansley (Royal Blind School):** Thank you for the opportunity to present you with some information. The Royal Blind School has 120 pupils from throughout Scotland and the northern part of England, and 23 Scottish authorities send children to the school. However, those numbers fluctuate as is the case with all low-incidence disabilities. We have four different departments: a pre-school nursery for three to five-year-olds; a primary department; a secondary department; and a separate campus for children who have multiple and complex learning difficulties. The latter provision is currently being expanded by a £4 million development.

The school is inclusive in the way in which it provides for the needs of the children. Like East Park, it is registered with its local registration service for residential provision. We have 76 residential pupils, and that number is about to rise again. We regard ourselves very much as a national centre. None of our children suffers any disadvantage as a result of the curriculum provision—it is inclusive and there are no environmental barriers to their inclusion in all activities, especially physical education.

The committee's report on its inquiry into special educational needs has led to a number of

interesting developments that we are already taking part in, such as split placements between mainstream schools and the Royal Blind School. We have a well-established link with Firrhill High School, and we are developing one with Boroughmuir High School. We are involved in continuous professional development, through the University of Edinburgh's teacher training course, and we disseminate a range of other specialist provision throughout Scotland.

We also want to take part in a discussion about how we could fit into a national special educational needs strategy, which has perhaps been lacking up to now. As a member of the SEN advisory forum, I know that that view is shared by many of my colleagues.

We are also concerned about funding issues, which centre on how much local authorities will be prepared to pay for our services if the grant is removed. I would like the schools to be evaluated for their national status, which is an idea that has been bandied around in the press. We feel that we are a national school; however, there are no criteria for national school status, and we want the opportunity to demonstrate that objectively.

**Mr Patrick Webb (Harmeny School):** I thank the committee for inviting us here today. Harmeny School is the only grant-aided school specifically for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. We work with young children aged between six and 13 and are currently involved with 18 local authorities.

The important part of our work is in developing relationships with families and local authorities that will result in inclusive solutions for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The core of our work lies in helping deeply traumatised children make sense of their lives within a safe, structured and caring environment and establish appropriate structures and supports to enable them to return to their own communities wherever possible.

Like other colleagues here, we believe that a national strategy for special educational needs should now be developed as a matter of priority following this inquiry and should include an evaluation of inclusion strategy before key resources such as Harmeny are jeopardised.

We are concerned about losing grant aid, as it subsidises fees for local authorities and stabilises our cash flow. An appendix to our submission contains two charts, the second of which shows the fatal effect on our cash flow if grant aid is removed and local authorities pay their fees only one month later than expected. Under company legislation, such a situation would cause the closure of Harmeny.

The removal of grant aid will cause two serious

problems. First, fee levels will rise steeply and abruptly; secondly, our cash-flow situation will be untenable. If we foresee a situation in which we will be unable to pay our bills, company legislation obliges us—frankly—to fold our tents.

**Mrs Janet Allan (Donaldson's College):** I am principal of Donaldson's College, which is the national school for severely and profoundly deaf children and for severely speech and language-impaired children, some of whom use sign as a means of communication.

All of the children in the school are sign dependent; none of them can access the normal interactions of a mainstream school such as, for example, communicating directly with friends, teachers, school secretaries, janitors and the whole plethora of people they would usually meet.

There are 65 children in the school, approximately half of whom are so-called straightforward deaf children, who, apart from needing the community of sign-using people, have no further educational difficulties. The other half are profoundly deaf, but have other complex learning needs.

Donaldson's College believes that the nation needs a national strategy for SEN to protect the children of the nation from the whimsies of pendulum swinging that have so damaged education over the years. Each of the seven schools should be independently evaluated on their capacity to give children their entitlement to inclusion and on how they perform their function as national centres of expertise.

National schools flounder a little because no one has ever defined what we are supposed to do to be a national school. My school is heavily involved in research and teacher training throughout Scotland and in helping the Scottish Qualifications Authority scrutinise papers for language accessibility. We help to train speech and language therapists and the increasing number of classroom assistants who are required to meet the special educational needs of our children.

16:15

We feel strongly that if the grant were removed, the existence of our school would be seriously at risk. If that were to happen, the dispersal of expertise would be a huge loss to the nation. Once people have been dispersed, it is difficult to bring them back together. Professionals do not survive without interaction with each other. We believe that the nation should evaluate the effect of mainstreaming on its children before it endangers alternative provision.

I agree with my colleagues that we need predictable funding. If we were to lose the grant,

one child removed from our school would mean the loss of roughly the equivalent of a teacher's salary. We cannot run a school without knowing what the next year's income will be. We would like clear and agreed transitional arrangements.

It has been said today that next year's funding is secure. We are pleased to hear that, but in August we have to tell local authorities what the fees will be. The grant runs out in April of the next school year. There is confusion between financial years and school years. Some local authorities are already trying to do deals with us; they say, "If we pay you the full rate for two terms, will you take less for the third?" Our answer is that we cannot do that. We look to the committee to make recommendations that will give us clear guidance on how we are to manage our business so that it can be transparent and serve the needs of deaf children.

**Cathy Peattie:** All the inputs were helpful—thank you. I am interested in the development of a national strategy. As it is not really for us to give you guidance, we want to know how you think that such a strategy would work so that we can present that to ministers.

**Mrs Allan:** Most of us believe that parents have a right of choice and that the needs of children are on a continuum. Although the Government is committed to mainstreaming, there is huge confusion between inclusion, integration and mainstreaming. We must get that clear before we proceed to a strategy. Most of us here believe that inclusion is about what happens within a child. It is that child's ability to be nurtured, to achieve their potential and to feel included in the school; it is not about where the child is educated—that is mainstreaming.

We all want an inclusive society, but mainstreaming under the guise of inclusion is not an acceptable option to many parents. We want the national strategy to consider the wide range of children's needs and the range of needs of the individual child at different stages of their development. We want parents to be given a realistic choice, which may include special schools for some children.

**Mr Tansley:** There will always be a need for specialist provision to support the needs of children who have low-incidence disabilities. Financially, it would be difficult for local authorities that have one or two children with needs every two or three years to build up a service to meet those needs. Children have a range of needs, so there must be a range of provision to meet those needs. It is difficult to justify saying that schools are inclusive if, for example, they have a unit where the children spend most of their time and do not interact with their peers in the mainstream school. There are many such cases in Scotland.

The provision that we have now must be preserved and developed, but it must be clearly stated. Most local authorities believe in the work that we do. If they did not, they would not send children to us, regardless of the fee situation. However, the local authorities would also like clarification on where we sit within the overall framework of special educational needs in Scotland. A clearly defined system whereby national centre status is approved would be a sensible way forward. It would also enable a good use of resources as, currently, not all the resources are being used to the best effect.

**Cathy Peattie:** Who else could be involved in a national strategy?

**Mr Tansley:** Do you mean who should be involved in developing a national strategy?

**Cathy Peattie:** Yes.

**Mr Tansley:** HMI has views on the quality of provision that we all offer; we have been inspected relatively recently. The SEN advisory forum has been discussing the development of a national strategy, which was proposed by a number of colleagues on that committee. The forum, under Nicol Stephen's chairmanship, is a good way of starting the process of developing a national strategy. We all have slightly different ways of seeing how it could be developed, but greater expertise exists than ours to evaluate sensibly and objectively how we can take that proposal forward.

**Ian Jenkins:** I am interested in the idea, which Janet Allan described well, of the definition of a national school as well as the definition of a national strategy. Each of the schools has been happy to be known as a national school without having had to make that case in absolute terms. What criteria would allow us to say that a school has national status, given the definition that has emerged from discussions at the forum? Perhaps you will start by attempting to set out that definition.

**The Convener:** Before Mr Tansley answers the question, I would like to apologise to everyone. I have to leave to attend a conveners group meeting, at which a matter put forward by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee is to be discussed. My colleague Cathy Peattie will convene the remainder of the meeting.

**Mr Tansley:** Each school, to a greater or lesser extent, provides services for the nation. That is something that would be better developed if a clearer set of criteria was defined. We are all involved in training other colleagues. A key issue, arising from the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 and from the committee's inquiry, is the need to spread existing expertise, but not by dispersing it from the centre; if that happened, we would lose out in terms of the qualities and skills



that have been developed.

National training is one issue, as individual schools do things differently. Another issue is the provision of advice to parents on a national basis. There are a number of opportunities for research. My school has 120 pupils; the ability to study 120 visually impaired pupils together represents a great opportunity for universities and others to conduct research. There are opportunities to develop new teaching techniques, which we have all pioneered in different ways. That is the national picture, but the definition of a national school does not come down to the fact that some schools take children from across the whole of Scotland and others do not. National expertise is centred in the national schools, and Government money has been put systematically into those schools down the years to develop that expertise.

**Ian Jenkins:** Although I am aware that there are worries about our report and about some of the other policies that have been proposed, do you welcome the fact that, in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 and in our report, the rights of the child are discussed as is the idea of the child being able to develop his or her potential?

**Mr Tansley:** Yes

**Ian Jenkins:** That might be a comfort for you when we come to discuss the national strategy, as there are cases—we have seen them on visits to schools—where mainstreaming in its broadest sense is not appropriate for individual children. That means that resources and choice, wherever they are situated, must be made available to children who need them.

**Mr Tansley:** Fulfilling individual potential is the key criterion.

**Mrs Allan:** As local authorities mainstream more children, the need for national schools increases. Mainstreaming gives rise to a situation in which there are penny numbers of youngsters all over the country with whom the system cannot cope because their needs are so extreme. The need for some kind of highly skilled provision that will pick up the needs of those remaining children is inherent in a mainstreaming policy.

**Mrs Kerley:** Ian Jenkins mentioned a national strategy. The problem of defining a national school arose as a result of the Riddell observations. Probably all the schools thought that they were fulfilling a national role, but Riddell was critical of that role. If we are not fulfilling a national role, we need to be told what the expectations are for such a role.

Janet Allan talked about what we can do to support inclusion and mainstreaming. It is important to have a broad definition of inclusion;

inclusion is not only about which school somebody attends; it is also about social inclusion. The schools have an opportunity to consider how we can support other children in a range of settings within the community. We can do that in many different ways; for example, we can do it through providing advice, support, consultancy and assessment. There is no one way in which to meet the needs of children. What is important is that we meet the individual needs of children, wherever that is most appropriate, that we have the necessary resources available to do that and that the schools have a range of skills and expertise that can contribute to the support of children.

**Dr Jernqvist:** The Craighalbert Centre has existed for 10 years. There was a big change when the new local authorities were created; after building up our numbers for about five years, we saw a drop in numbers. Since the Riddell report, we have experienced referrals from more authorities than before. It takes a long time to put things in place.

I have no doubt that the 13 or 14 authorities that have not placed children with us would do so if the parents knew that we existed. The availability of information to parents is important to us all. Some parents do not have the stamina to fight for a place for their child.

Our work, which could benefit all Scotland, is dependent on having a stable group at the centre. We could not do a lot of our outreach work if we did not have a group at the centre that the child can access from time to time or from which people can learn about solutions to problems that children with cerebral palsy face. We are very much in favour of a central point with outreach activities and outreach stations.

**Mr Monteith:** Can Mr Tansley confirm whether the SEN forum has formally discussed the changes in funding that the Government is considering?

**Mr Tansley:** At the most recent meeting of the advisory forum, the deputy minister asked for advice on the way forward. We have not discussed the proposals for the grant-aided sector in detail. In the minister's absence—he had to attend another meeting—we discussed where the grant-aided schools fitted into overall SEN provision. Two or three colleagues stated quite clearly that they felt that the schools have a place because they have expertise that some local authorities do not have. However, there was a split in people's views on where the funding should come from. We have discussed the issue at that level, but we have not discussed the grant-aided sector in any great detail.

**Mr Monteith:** Do your conclusions, reports or advice go into the public domain? Would any of

that be available to the committee?

**Mr Tansley:** I understand from our most recent meeting, which was about a fortnight ago, that a website is being developed and will be available imminently. All minutes will be made available on that website.

16:30

**Mr Monteith:** Practically everyone has mentioned the concept of a definition of national schools and how that definition may be arrived at. A number of the schools that have presented evidence today are clearly relatively young. If a definition comprising three or four points was drawn up and some sort of funding arrangement was put in place, and if that required HMI to review and report on the schools every five to seven years, which might affect their status, the schools might drop out of the system. Equally, new schools might apply for national status. Do you see national status as being as fluid as that, so that new national schools could be created and new provision made, perhaps with as yet undiscovered or undeveloped forms of teaching? Moreover, other schools could move back to having a local or regional role if that is what their numbers suggested was appropriate.

**Dr Jernqvist:** I certainly believe that other types of provision would be included—indeed, I would very much welcome that—because the witnesses who are here today do not represent all the major disabilities. However, I am not sure that I would welcome a review every five years, because I do not know whether we would want to devote our time to meeting the politicians as regularly as that. Nevertheless, we are open to a somewhat more flexible system than we have at present.

**Mr Webb:** One of the issues about national status concerns the ability of an organisation to have a high level of expertise available for working with other people, especially children. Training is an obvious example of work that a nationally recognised organisation could do. No one organisation would have a monopoly of training. From that point of view, we would all welcome a variety of approaches to all sorts of problems.

What concerns me most is the fact that, although we talk about this as an academic issue, the one thing that the committee has not heard today is that every organisation represented here is passionately interested in work with children and families. That work has to be a primary reason for our existence. We are the sort of organisations that put our money where our mouth is. We work and do the job; the standards that we achieve are observable and we are inspected regularly. I want to bring the emphasis back to working with families and children and to raising quality and

standards—those should be part of the criteria for national status.

**Mr Tansley:** Recently, several of us have been privileged to listen to presentations by community schools. Community schools seem to be flavour of the month for the Executive. One thing that has emerged from those presentations is the high quality of provision that those schools make. Until 31 March this year—it may be next year—they will receive £200,000 each, but one of the heads was concerned about what would happen after that. That is a pertinent concern. Those schools are producing high-quality services for the communities that they serve, as we are. They will be in great jeopardy if that funding is removed, and we could be in the same position.

**Mr Webb:** We are all looking for a commonsense platform from which to progress. I was pleased to hear what Karen Gillon said at the beginning of the discussion. We all recognise that no one stands alone and that together we can achieve all sorts of things. Most important, we can see changes in funding and in the way that schools develop, but we need time, co-operation and communication with the Executive. I sincerely hope that the committee will further that request.

**The Deputy Convener (Cathy Peattie):** On that note, I thank our witnesses very much for attending this afternoon's meeting.

*Meeting closed at 16:35.*

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

No proofs of the *Official Report* can be supplied. Members who want to suggest corrections for the archive edition should mark them clearly in the daily edition, and send it to the Official Report, 375 High Street, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

**Monday 9 April 2001**

Members who want reprints of their speeches (within one month of the date of publication) may obtain request forms and further details from the Central Distribution Office, the Document Supply Centre or the Official Report.

#### PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

##### DAILY EDITIONS

*Single copies: £5*

*Meetings of the Parliament annual subscriptions: £500*

The archive edition of the *Official Report* of meetings of the Parliament, written answers and public meetings of committees will be published on CD-ROM.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, compiled by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, contains details of past and forthcoming business and of the work of committees and gives general information on legislation and other parliamentary activity.

*Single copies: £3.75*

*Special issue price: £5*

*Annual subscriptions: £150.00*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

*Single copies: £3.75*

*Annual subscriptions: £150.00*

Standing orders will be accepted at the Document Supply Centre.

Published in Edinburgh by The Stationery Office Limited and available from:

**The Stationery Office Bookshop**  
**71 Lothian Road**  
**Edinburgh EH3 9AZ**  
**0131 228 4181 Fax 0131 622 7017**

**The Stationery Office Bookshops at:**  
123 Kingsway, London WC2B 6PQ  
Tel 020 7242 6393 Fax 020 7242 6394  
68-69 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AD  
Tel 0121 236 9696 Fax 0121 236 9699  
33 Wine Street, Bristol BS1 2BQ  
Tel 01179 264306 Fax 01179 294515  
9-21 Princess Street, Manchester M60 8AS  
Tel 0161 834 7201 Fax 0161 833 0634  
16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD  
Tel 028 9023 8451 Fax 028 9023 5401  
The Stationery Office Oriel Bookshop,  
18-19 High Street, Cardiff CF12BZ  
Tel 029 2039 5548 Fax 029 2038 4347

**The Stationery Office Scottish Parliament Documentation**  
**Helpline may be able to assist with additional information**  
**on publications of or about the Scottish Parliament,**  
**their availability and cost:**

**Telephone orders and inquiries**  
**0870 606 5566**

**Fax orders**  
**0870 606 5588**

**The Scottish Parliament Shop**  
**George IV Bridge**  
**EH99 1SP**  
**Telephone orders 0131 348 5412**

[sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk)

[www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

**Accredited Agents**  
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers