



NEWS

OCTOBER 2024

AUTUMN EDITION

HARDY MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Presents 'Annie' the musical



FIT GROUP

Go Axe Throwing



LEADERSHIP SEMINAR



BELFAST PRIMARY FA

Trip to Wolves FC



REP TRAINING



PRESIDENTIAL COMMENT

A TIME FOR CHANGE

Our last annual Conference for 2024 was a hugely successful event with many current issues being debated through resolutions including, safeguarding; social media and mobile phones; classroom assistants; Leave of Absence; SEND Transformation; reviews; governance; Team Teach; health and wellbeing; EA training; standardised assessments; Early Career Teachers; Educational Psychologists and attendance and the EWS, to name but a few. We also saw the launch of our Disability Campaign led by Pauline Hurst, our UTU Disability champion, and had representatives from EA on our panel, who took questions from the floor.

I would like to thank our ex-President Lynelle Fenton for the organisation of the Conference and for her year in office and welcome Janice Mullan into the role of Vice-President.

The Conference came at a time when the education system had finally recognised the need for teachers' salaries to gain parity with other regions across the United Kingdom. The **'together we are stronger'** campaign saw the strike action having the necessary effect, forcing politicians back to Stormont for them to put pressure on EA and DE. The three-year pay offer was welcomed by a large majority of our members and others across the NITC and would come to fruition in teachers' May pay. Alongside this came a pledge to engage in the Workforce Reviews, ratified and agreed on 31st May. Much work has been done by our union and the NITC on your behalf.

Alas, this change merely scratches the surface with still no funding for education as a whole and schools missing out on restoration and building offers that had previously been made. Other issues, including the arbitrary cuts to programmes that are vital if we educators are to cater for the ever-complex needs of the young people in our care as well as better conditions, are still a fight for all unions to undertake and we at UTU are proud to be your voice on all matters.



It is with mixed emotions that I announce my resignation as President of the union. I have been offered a new opportunity to serve as SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) at Ballyclare Secondary School, a role I am passionate about and deeply committed to. However, as many of you know, it requires complete dedication in the current educational environment. While I am excited to take on this new challenge, I regret that it means stepping down from my position in the union. It has been an honour to represent you at events across the province, Europe, and internationally, and a privilege to work in a union with such a dedicated staff and hardworking CEC. They are all amazing! I sincerely thank you all for your support during my time as President, and I hope to continue contributing to our shared goals in other ways.

Your dedication and hard work for the young people, in schools across Northern Ireland, is a constant source of inspiration to us all and we have the utmost respect for the fabulous teaching and learning that you are undertaking daily. Thank you.

LEIGH MCKAY
UTU PRESIDENT

GENERAL SECRETARY FOREWORD

Colleagues

The new term is now well underway and it's as if the summer is a distant memory!

I'm sure you have hit the ground running – and we have been no different in UTU HQ on your behalf.

This is the first UTU News that we have had since our co-ordinated action and I would like to take this opportunity to once again commend and thank all of you who participated in pickets, rallies, media and awareness raising around the on-going difficulties faced by teachers and schools. The voice of UTU was a significant one, and played a huge role in highlighting issues to DE and the employers resulting in a significant pay increase and a rejuvenation of the relevance and impact of union – particularly UTU – membership.

But as you enter school buildings and settings each day you will continue to be well aware that that victory signified the beginning of the struggle and not the end. We continue to face huge pressures such as SEN provision, lack of funding and resources and teacher shortage. We also have outstanding issues on workload to address – and the pay issue is back on the agenda.

So where are we? To begin with, we have had initial engagement with DE about the pay claim for this year with the group which negotiates teachers' pay due to meet next week. This is not likely to be a quick fix but the move to action last time will counsel the employers against dragging their heels in the same fashion as before and the point about timely resolution will be clearly made. We have seen moves towards resolution across the water, and there is some level of commitment around public sector pay in the Programme for Government; all of these factors can be brought to bear to make progress.

Yet we are well aware that, whilst pay is important as we watch our profession haemorrhaging members to other better paid jurisdictions, the issue of crippling workload is what remains to the front of many minds. We in UTU, and indeed NITC, are well aware of this and we have met with the employers frequently since August to establish how, on a practical level, we will translate the Workforce Review recommendations into systems and practices which will actually make an impact in schools. Patience is wearing thin – in your case and ours – and seeing no progress in the near future would be completely unacceptable. You can be assured that we continue to advocate strongly on your behalf and will engage you fully on decisions as we move forward.

The summer of discontent which we have just experienced in wider society has brought other issues to the fore in terms of the teaching profession and school staff which also require urgent attention. School leaders, teachers, classroom assistants and all other support staff are renowned for the support and attention they give to the children in their care and their particular needs outside of delivering teaching and



learning. We go above and beyond on a shoestring to cater for very particular additional needs of our children and young people which arise from SEN provision, disability, sexual orientation, domestic abuse and poverty to name but a few.

However, those who work in the education system in NI do not appear to be afforded the same rights and protections. We have teachers and school leaders who are struggling to access reasonable adjustments for disabilities. We have members who have experienced, and are experiencing, low and high level bullying and harassment, often on equality grounds, from sources both within and outside the workplace. Such harassment is happening both physically and on-line. And this behaviour is going largely unchecked.

UTU, through our Disability Champion Pauline Hurst, is driving forward the disability agenda and this is paying dividends with more and more members stepping forward to seek advice and support. This work will continue this year. But every teacher and school leader has the right to be supported and work in safety, free from harassment in their workplace. Every teacher and school leader should have an expectation that unacceptable behaviour is addressed and that education has an approach such as health and retail – zero tolerance of abuse of staff.

UTU will be pushing this year to address this issue and seek accountability and action in relation to employers to create the same safety standards for schools as are evident in other workplaces. But we need your help.

We stood together for pay. We supported each other through Covid when times were very tough. Stand together with your colleagues on this issue, call out unacceptable behaviour and support each other in the workplace whilst we work to get the system changed.

Thank you.

Jacquie White
General Secretary

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2024

TIME FOR **CHANGE**

The Ulster Teachers' Union Annual Conference took place at the Roe Park Hotel in Limavady, and was attended by 250 guests and delegates. This annual event is an opportunity for teachers to come together to discuss and vote on resolutions that affect teaching in Northern Ireland. This year's Conference covered a wide range of topics, including online learning platforms, social media, class sizes in nursery, funding for educational psychologists, special educational needs, operation encompass, foundation stage classroom assistants, additional funding for maths outreach support, disability, menopause, area planning, pastoral care, technology in schools, and electric vehicles.

One of the key topics discussed was the use of online learning platforms and social media in education. Delegates debated the benefits and drawbacks of these platforms, and voted to recommend that schools should use them in a responsible and safe manner. The Conference also addressed the issue of class sizes in nursery, and called for the government to provide additional funding to reduce class sizes and improve the quality of education for young children. Another important issue discussed was the provision of support for teachers who are pregnant, adopting, or taking maternity or paternity leave.

Delegates voted to recommend that schools should provide adequate support for teachers during these times, including flexible working arrangements and additional leave if needed. The other topics covered at the Conference included the need for additional funding for educational psychologists and Special Educational Needs, the importance of Operation Encompass in supporting children who are exposed to domestic abuse, and the role of foundation stage classroom assistants in providing support for young children. The Conference also called for appropriate school settings with sufficient funding, and for additional support for numeracy and maths outreach programs.

The evening session of the Conference saw the passing of the President's chain from Lynelle Fenton to Leigh McKay. A new Vice-President, Janice Mullan, who teaches in an EOTAS school in Strathfoyle, was also installed. These appointments reflect the ongoing commitment of the Ulster Teachers' Union to promoting the interests of teachers and improving the quality of education in Northern Ireland.

In conclusion, the Ulster Teachers' Union Conference provided an important opportunity for teachers to come together to discuss and vote on resolutions affecting teaching in Northern Ireland. The range of topics covered at the Conference reflects the diverse challenges facing teachers in the modern education system, and highlights the ongoing need for ongoing support and funding to ensure that teachers can continue to provide high-quality education for all students.





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JANICE MULLAN [INCOMING VP]



MATTHEW MCDERMOTT [EDUCATION AUTHORITY]



CONFERENCE VOTING IN ACTION



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JAYNE FROM PLATINUM FINANCIAL PLANNING



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SOUTH-WEST BRANCH



LOUISE CREELMAN (CAUSEWAY BRANCH)



JOY CARROTHERS (CEC)



GRACE MCCULLOUGH (CEC)



NI ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE



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LEIGH MCKAY (VICE PRESIDENT)



PAULINE HURST (CEC OBSERVER)



COLIN IRWIN (LISBURN/BALLYNAHINCH BRANCH)



JACQUIE WHITE (GENERAL SECRETARY)



HANNAH ENGLISH [BALLYNAHINCH/LISBURN BRANCH]



DELEGATES VOTING ON RESOLUTION



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CONFERENCE VOTING



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PAULINE BUCHANAN [NEU]



UTU GENERAL SECRETARY AND DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY



JANICE MULLAN



EX-UTU PRESIDENT CARNEY CUMPER



EX-UTU PRESIDENT JULIE BROWN



JILL JOHNSTON [CEC]

Daughter Honours Legacy of Former Fivemiletown College Principal and UTU President

Dr. John George Burrell, an esteemed educator, Past UTU President and former Fivemiletown High School Principal, left a lasting legacy through his innovative educational initiatives and extensive community projects. Celebrated for his dedication, he was awarded an MBE in 2022 and is fondly remembered by his family and community.

The late Dr. John George Burrell was often described by the ancient Irish term "duine ildánach," meaning "a man for all seasons." He was a multifaceted and learned individual, an esteemed educator who earned numerous awards, and a former Principal of Fivemiletown College. Above all, he was a devoted father. Dr. Burrell left a lasting legacy of community service, which was recognized with an MBE in March 2022 by the now King Charles. In a heartfelt tribute, his daughter June Murphy, also a UTU member, shared memories of her father's life. Born in Lurgan in 1937, John was the eldest of four siblings: Mollie, Gordon, and Elinor. His family fondly recalls his childhood filled with adventures, games, singing, and guitar playing with relatives in Lurgan. John's teaching career began unexpectedly when he secured a scholarship to Queen's University and Stranmillis College in Belfast. This unique opportunity allowed him to pursue a degree while training to



become a teacher, igniting his passion for educational innovation. After graduating, John met his future wife, Unetta. At 23, he became Vice-Principal of a school in Fivemiletown, the same year he married Unetta. They enjoyed 47 wonderful years together until Unetta's passing in 2009. They had three children: Juanita, June, and Allister. John encouraged his children in various sports, and their home was a hub of activity with play equipment he built himself. John served as Vice-Principal for ten years and Principal for 26 years at Fivemiletown High School/Community College. He loved teaching Modern Languages and organized student trips abroad to Spain and France, later introducing ski trips to Bulgaria. He also built an outdoor swimming pool at the school, which Olympic gold medallist Mary Peters opened in 1976 and reopened as an indoor pool in 1995. John earned an MA in education, studying in the US on a scholarship. He was dedicated to improving his local community, raising funds for various projects and securing grants.

He helped renovate the "Buttermarket" into business units and community spaces and built an outdoor bowling green. John was a former president of the Ulster Teachers' Union. After retiring, he continued to develop community projects, securing significant investments, including £822,000 for workshop units at Clabby in 2008, and funding for local sports clubs. John had many hobbies, including playing the guitar and piano. He enjoyed family sing-alongs, dancing, and listening to various music genres. He sang bass in the church choir and loved gardening, passing on his passion for nature to his children and grandchildren. Dr. John Burrell passed away on December 6, surrounded by his loving family at home in Cran Lodge, Fivemiletown. He was a cherished husband to the late Unetta, a devoted father, a dear brother, and a special grandfather. A Service of Thanksgiving was held on December 8 at St. John's Parish Church. John will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by his family and friends. "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

BALLYMENA PRIMARY SCHOOL CELEBRATES **175** **YEARS** OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

This year, Ballymena Primary School celebrates its 175th anniversary, with students exploring its rich history and envisioning the future.

The school first opened its doors in May 1849 with 111 students. Today, its enrollment has more than doubled. "Throughout the generations, the school has educated thousands upon thousands," said Principal Elaine Ritchie.

"The school community's reach is extensive, with former pupils venturing into various fields." Initially known as the Model Primary School, it was later renamed County Primary School, and now, Ballymena Primary School. "It has undergone numerous changes," Ms. Ritchie noted. "But it has consistently served the Ballymena community for a very long time."

The historical significance of the school is evident in its listed building.

The original front door remains intact, original building plans are displayed on the walls, and vintage desks with inkwells can be found in the hallway.

The school staff also reflect its long history. Dessie Rock, the school's crossing patrol man, is a former pupil who now has great nieces and nephews attending the school. "I know many of the children," he said. "I know their grandparents, uncles, and aunts. It's a real community feel.

"It was a good school when I attended, and it remains a good school today."

Vice-principal Gareth Bridges, another past pupil, expressed his excitement about organising the 175th birthday celebrations.

"The children have been very engaged in class activities," he said. "We've created a tile mosaic featuring self-portraits of every pupil and staff member to mark the occasion.

"We are also putting on a show - Mary Poppins - to reflect that historical era." Looking ahead, students anticipate significant changes in the next 175 years. Lilith, a P5 student, believes technology will transform teaching.

"Teachers will all be robots," she predicted. "In the future, teachers won't need to be in the school; they can be anywhere, like in Spain, with just a camera on the robots for the teacher's face."



Shannon, a P7 student, appreciates the progress already made.

"Back in the old days, teachers could hit children with canes and rulers," she said. "I'm glad that doesn't happen anymore."

A Year of Gratitude and Progress: Reflecting on My Term as President

It has been a privilege to be your President from March 2023 – March 2024. Each day of this year was an honour. What a year it was, from encouraging you to support our increased industrial action this time last year to receiving our long awaited and overdue pay offer just before my term of office ended. Now, we have received this uplift in our pay which is welcomed by all of us! I visited many schools this year and met many members and children. The warmth and generosity you show to the children and young people you teach was humbling to see and has stood out as a highlight of my year.

During this year I also had the privilege of spending time with retired members and staff of our union and have a picture of what our union was like in its early days. I am deeply grateful to all members and staff who have served our union in days gone by and for the part you played in making UTU the great organisation it is today, Working in our HQ was another highlight for me as I saw the pride and passion Jacquie and her team have in their work. Daily I witnessed Jacquie, Stephen, Rebekka and Joseph help our members. Each of them is committed, dedicated and give their best to us. Lindsay, Tony, Merial, Denise, Karen and Heather in the office take on everything they are asked to do and much more – they keep our organisation running which is not an easy task. Each one of our staff is a credit to themselves and an asset to UTU. I am grateful to each of our staff for all they do. I am also thankful to have worked alongside a wise, dedicated and committed CEC who supported our staff and myself this year.

Finally, I am grateful to each of you for allowing me to have the privilege of being your President.

Lynelle Ferson

UTU President 2023-24





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The **right support** at the **right time**



At one time or another, inevitably we all experience challenges that can leave us feeling overwhelmed. At times like these, it may be useful to speak with someone trained to listen who can offer support, guidance and a fresh outlook.

The **Inspire Employee Assistance Programme** is fully independent and provides access to a range of wellbeing support services, including:

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Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid: Combatting Domestic Abuse Through Education and Advocacy



Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid operates across Belfast, Lisburn, and rural South Down, supporting women and children affected by domestic abuse. They offer three emergency refuges and extensive outreach services, aiding 266 women and 164 children in refuges and 944 women with 1188 children in the community in 2020-21.

Their vision is to end domestic abuse, fostering a future where it's unacceptable and homes are safe. They challenge attitudes perpetuating violence against women, advocating for education from childhood on non-violence and gender equality. Programs engage schools and communities in protective behaviors, healthy relationships, and safety awareness.

They've partnered with Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland, training primary school teachers in Social Guardianship and delivering workshops on gender attitudes and digital resilience in schools like St Malachy's and Hunterhouse College.

Recognising cultural shifts and persistent misogyny, they emphasise evolving forms of abuse and their impacts. They're grateful for union support funding workshops, and invite viewing of their children's animation on lockdown experiences.

They're launching a new animation in March via Belfast Domestic Abuse Partnership, exploring teen experiences in Belfast & Lisburn.

Follow @wiseupni on Tik Tok and Instagram for teen-friendly content.



Enniskillen Model PS Commemorates 80th anniversary of D-Day

Eighty years since the D-Day landings in Normandy, the staff and pupils of Enniskillen Model Primary School marked the event with a commemorative service and a day of World War 2 activities.

The school day began with the pipes and drums of the Royal Dragoon Guards playing for the children in assembly to signal the beginning of the day's events and as a focus for the importance of the day.

The entire school participated in a series of WW2 activities during the morning. The children had the chance to look at wartime vehicles and uniforms. They had the opportunity to look at and learn from a wide variety of artefacts from the time which were on display along with experts who could share their knowledge with them.

The town library brought stories to read and listen too that were set in war time. The children also had time to speak with current members of the armed forces about the jobs they do and roles they play today.

In the afternoon there was a service of commemoration to mark the sacrifices made for our freedom on D-Day and the subsequent weeks and months. The staff and pupils were joined by many dignitaries. These included, Viscount Brookeborough, The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland - Chris Heaton-Harris, US Consul General - James Applegate and the United States Special Envoy to Northern Ireland - Joseph Kennedy III. The service was led by the children in P4 with WW2 songs and readings about wartime and D-Day. The service was led by the children in P4 with WW2 songs, readings about wartime and D-Day.

Several P7 children then shared their recent experiences interviewing the sons of two WW2 veterans Bill Eames and JC Edmundson and the subsequent newspaper reports, diary entries and comic strip they had produced and had been published in the local press. A group of the gathered dignitaries were then interviewed about what D-Day means to them. The service concluded with a moment of reflection and prayer, led by the Padre of the Royal Dragoon Guards.

The staff and pupils of Enniskillen Model were honoured and proud to have undertaken this event to mark the importance of 6th June 1944.



HARDY MEMORIAL P.S. PRESENTS 'ANNIE JR'

Hardy Memorial Primary School in Richhill stages "Annie Jr", showcasing students' talent and fostering community through arts education.

Promoting, nurturing and showcasing the Arts is a key priority for the whole school community at Hardy Memorial Primary School in Richhill, County Armagh. As part of the extra-curricular provision at key stage two, pupils have the opportunity to attend a "musical theatre" after-schools club on Monday afternoons. This year, Primary Six and Seven pupils were delighted to learn that they were being offered the chance to audition and perform in the well-known and beloved classic, "Annie Jr".

Based on the popular comic strip and adapted from the Tony Award-winning Best Musical, this popular show licensed by Music Theatre International features little orphan Annie who, with equal measures of pluck and positivity, charms everyone's hearts despite a next-to-nothing start in 1930s New York City. Annie is determined to find the parents who abandoned her years ago on the doorstep of an orphanage run by the cruel Miss Hannigan. Annie eventually foils Miss Hannigan's evil plans, finding a new home and family in billionaire Oliver Warbucks, his personal secretary, Grace Farrell, and a loveable dog named Sandy.

Since late September, P6 and P7 pupils stayed behind after school every Monday where they focused on character development; assumed American accents; perfected facial expressions; learnt choreography; and rehearsed a score of toe-tapping pieces including "It's The Hard Knock Life", "NYC" and "Tomorrow". Months of commitment and hard work by all participating pupils culminated in three matinee and evening shows in February 2024 attended by fellow pupils, staff members, governors, family and friends of the school. Staff and pupils involved in the production also felt privileged to host friends and colleagues from their strong Shared Education partnership with St. Patrick's Primary School in Armagh for a full dress rehearsal, providing an excellent audience for pupils to equip them with confidence for all of their performances. The school assembly hall transported audiences to "the city that never sleeps" by the decoration of pupil's USA themed artwork created in Nursery right through to Primary Seven. Featured pieces included yellow cab taxis, painted flags, city skylines, Annie's red dress, big apples, Empire State drawings, Statue of Liberty portraits and Central Park sketches.

A massive thank you must go to the staff team at Hardy Memorial Primary School who sourced, bought or made costumes; organised props; created set; coordinated light and sound; taught choreography or kindly gave up their evening time to volunteer and help during the performances. Thanks must foremost go to the 50+ children whose dedication, enthusiasm and talent made this production possible. It is hoped that their involvement in Annie Jr will only be the start of a future pathway to help fulfil their dreams... possibly in the West End or on Broadway!



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5 October 2024

World Teachers' Day

VALUING TEACHER VOICES



VALUING TEACHERS' VOICES: A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR EDUCATION

Teachers around the world are facing mounting challenges—overworked, underappreciated, and underpaid. This has led to a growing number of teachers leaving the profession they care deeply about, while fewer young people are considering teaching as a career. As a result, we now face a global shortage of over 44 million teachers, threatening the fundamental right to education. In response, a worldwide call is being made to elevate and strengthen the teaching profession. This World Teachers' Day shines a spotlight on the critical need for meaningful dialogue between governments and teachers. The 2024 theme, "Valuing Teachers' Voices: A New Social Contract for Education," highlights the urgency of addressing the challenges educators face while recognising the invaluable expertise they bring to the table.

Join the global movement and encourage governments to engage in constructive conversations with the teaching profession.

Here's how you can get involved:

Print and display the official World Teachers' Day poster in your school.

[CLICK HERE TO
DOWNLOAD](#)

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE – A GREAT OPTION FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Did you know that Shared Parental Leave (SPL) allows both parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave. It's a fantastic way to balance work and family life, giving you flexibility in how you care for your child. If you're considering taking SPL or want more information on how it works, we're here to help! Contact our office for advice, support, and the resources you need to make the most of this opportunity.

Click the link to view a Shared Parental Leave Webinar.





BELFAST PRIMARY SCHOOLS FA THRIVES IN MEMORABLE TRIP TO WOLVES FC

The Belfast Primary Schools FA recently embarked on an unforgettable journey to Wolverhampton Wanderers FC, where they made waves in a thrilling tournament that left players and spectators alike on the edge of their seats.

The team showcased their talent and determination on the field, securing impressive victories over Wolves and Walsall in the group stages. However, their journey in the tournament came to a heart-stopping conclusion in the semi-final match against Wolves, where a late goal dashed their hopes of advancing further. Despite the disappointment, the boys exhibited resilience and sportsmanship throughout, earning admiration from all who witnessed their performance. Beyond the intensity of competition, the visit offered a range of enriching experiences for the young athletes. A tour of Molineux Stadium provided insight into the history and legacy of Wolves FC, while a training session at the academy training ground offered the opportunity to learn like professionals and refine their skills on the pitch.

For both players and parents, the trip proved to be an amazing experience and provided lifelong memories. The shared moments of triumph and camaraderie served to strengthen bonds and create lasting friendships, highlighting the power of sport to bring people together.



The Belfast Primary Schools FA extends its heartfelt gratitude to UTU for their generous support, without which this remarkable journey would not have been possible. Their contribution played a pivotal role in enabling the team to embark on this unforgettable adventure, and their support is deeply appreciated by all involved.

As the echoes of cheers and applause fade into the distance, the memories forged during the Belfast Primary Schools FA's visit to Wolves FC will continue to inspire and will never be forgotten.

Empowering the Future of Education: A Leadership Seminar to Remember

Over 100 school leaders attended a Leadership Seminar at Armagh City Hotel, organised by UTU, INTO, and NEU. The event focused on professional development, covering topics like SEND Transformation and Directed Time Budgets, promoting collaboration, networking, and empowering leaders to drive positive educational change.



Faustina Graham, ETI Chief Inspector, alongside colleagues from the ETI, UTU and INTO

Armagh City Hotel, April 15, 2024 —

Over 100 school leaders from across the province convened for a Leadership Seminar, a joint initiative by UTU, INTO and NEU. The event marked a significant milestone in fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge, and setting the stage for the future of education. Held at the picturesque Armagh City Hotel, the seminar was a beacon of professional development, bringing together a diverse group of leaders.

The seminar's agenda was packed with insightful presentations and interactive discussions, focusing on some of the most pressing issues in today's educational landscape. Key topics included Reasonable Adjustments, SEND Transformation, Directed Time Budgets, and Protecting Yourself as a School Leader.

Each session aimed to equip leaders with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of modern education.

Beyond the formal sessions, the seminar provided ample opportunities for networking and peer-to-peer learning. Attendees were encouraged to share their experiences, challenges, and solutions, creating a rich tapestry of shared knowledge and an opportunity for the union leads to answer any questions with regards to any of the issues raised. This aspect of the seminar was particularly valuable, as it fostered a sense of community and mutual support among leaders who often face similar issues in isolation. The seminar underscored the importance of continuous professional development and the role of collaborative leadership in shaping the future of education.

By addressing critical issues, providing practical solutions, and fostering a supportive network, the event empowered leaders to create positive, lasting change in their schools and communities. The future of education in the province looks brighter, thanks to the shared vision and commitment of its leaders.

HOLD THE DATE

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

TUESDAY 26TH NOVEMBER

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)



15 Bikes for 15 years!

EDUCATION FOR ALL

www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/gifts

Bicycles enable students, particularly those in remote rural areas, to get to school more safely and easily. Ease of travelling to school means less absence as well as more alert pupils in lessons. This in turn impacts performance, as being less tired means pupils are able to study and learn more effectively. Young people are so keen to get an education, even if it involves walking long distances to get to school. Students in receipt of bicycles have been overjoyed.

Having the bicycles benefits them to get far more from their education and also allows some children who have completely missed out on an education to date to enrol in school and stay there. Educators are delighted to see children arriving safely at school, on time and not too tired to work. They can enjoy teaching and seeing the children thrive. In this 15th anniversary year of the Steve Sinnott Foundation why not be part of the celebrations by ensuring access to education for students in remote rural areas - gift a bike!

15

#15bikesfor15years



Teachers at Njoren School, in the Upper River Region of The Gambia, noticed that Lamin, one of their students had holes in his shoes, and eventually had to walk bare foot. The teachers were concerned when he explained that his parents could not afford to buy any more shoes, they wore out so quickly, as he lived an hour walk away. He was a very bright boy with the potential to go on to secondary school and do well.

When Marie Antionette, General Secretary of GTU (Gambia Teachers Union), heard this story she discussed ideas with the teachers in the region and decided that many of the children needed bicycles to get to school. She contacted the Steve Sinnott Foundation to see if they could provide funds for them to buy bicycles locally to give to the children who lived far from their schools.

Now Lamin and many other children at his school have bicycles to get to school. They are not tired when they get there, their shoes are not wearing out and they are more able to concentrate at school.



#15bikesfor15years

Lamin
from Njoren School



HOW THEY WORK



BRANCHES

AREA ASSOCIATIONS

12 Branches

- Banbridge/Dromore
- Belfast
- Carrick/Abbey/Larne
- Causeway
- Foyle
- Mid Ulster
- Mid-Antrim
- Mourne/Newry
- Orchard County
- Lisburn/Ballynahinch
- Newtownards/North Down
- South-West



5 Area Associations

- Belfast
- North Eastern
- South Eastern
- Southern
- Western



Branches form part of an **Area Association**.

The Area Association will hold **one meeting per academic year** and to be eligible to attend the **Annual Conference** or be nominated for the **Central Executive Committee**, you should attend this meeting or send an apology via another member.

When you join UTU, you will be a member of a Branch, either based on the **school** you teach in or your **home** address. You can change Branch by letting your school rep know or emailing HQ.

There will be up to **three meetings per academic year**. The details of the date, time and venue will be **emailed** to you. There will also be a **Whatsapp** group chat.

To be eligible to attend the **Annual Conference** or be nominated for the **Central Executive Committee**, you should attend these meetings or send an apology via another member.



Check the mailings sent from HQ or ask your rep to see what branch you are in .



FUTURE IN TEACHING GROUP HITS THE MARK AT AXE THROWING NIGHT!

What a memorable night it was for the Future in Teaching (FIT) group at Friday's axe-throwing event! From bullseyes to laughter, the evening was packed with excitement, camaraderie, and new friendships.

Held at a lively axe-throwing venue, participants had the perfect chance to unwind, connect, and have fun. Whether perfecting their aim or cheering others on, everyone enjoyed an unforgettable experience. The event also created a great space for networking and strengthening bonds among educators, reinforcing the supportive teaching community.

Thank you to all who made this night a success! The FIT community looks forward to more events like this, bringing student and early-career teachers together for meaningful experiences.

If you're a student teacher or newly qualified educator and want to join future FIT events, email events@utu.edu for more details. Can't wait for the next one!

30 YEARS OF PEACE - A RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS



One of the biggest changes in life in Northern Ireland over the last 30 years has been the way our society has worked to develop more peaceful ways of living together.

This resource includes a complete school assembly for September (marking the month between the two 1994 ceasefires) and four activities for KS3 students. The activities aim to help students engage with related issues and create their own foundations for a peaceful future in Northern Ireland.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)



STRANMILLIS STUDENTS' UNION AND ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION TEAM UP FOR AN EXCITING YEAR AHEAD

Great news for students and teachers! Today, Andrew Irwin, President of Stranmillis Students' Union (SU), and Leigh McKay, President of the Ulster Teachers' Union (UTU), met to brainstorm ways the two organisations can work together in the upcoming academic year. This meetup signals a fresh wave of collaboration between students and educators.

The SU has been really active in reaching out to different parts of the education community, and their meeting with the UTU is just another example of their commitment to making student life better. Big thanks to Andrew and the new SU Executive for staying engaged and always pushing for more.

UTU is just as excited about this partnership. The UTU can't wait to meet new students and freshers in the new year and is looking forward to engaging with them this year. Leigh McKay mentioned how important it is for teachers and students to connect and support each other, and this collaboration is a great step in that direction.

The UTU has lots of ideas for events and initiatives to support students throughout the year. The UTU wishes everyone good luck for the new academic year and is looking forward to seeing the positive impact of these joint efforts.

The partnership between Stranmillis Students' Union and the Ulster Teachers' Union is set to bring exciting opportunities and programs. Everyone is excited to see what these organisations will achieve together!

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE OF TEACHING!

The Ulster Teachers' Union have been attending the Freshers' Fair alongside our INTO and NEU colleagues. It was a pleasure to meet and connect with so many eager and passionate student teachers, all preparing to embark on their educational journeys.

The road ahead is full of opportunities, challenges, and growth, and the Ulster Teachers' Union is here to support you every step of the way.

Remember, we're stronger together, and with UTU by your side, you're never alone on this incredible journey!



A SLICE OF CELEBRATION AT STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE!

Joseph Wyglendacz, Organising Officer of the Ulster Teachers' Union, had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the Stranmillis University College Students' Union Kitchen in September – and what better way to celebrate than with some delicious pizza! Sponsored by the Ulster Teachers' Union, the event was a great success, with a fantastic turnout of students all excited to enjoy their brand-new space.

The energy was contagious as students gathered to mark this exciting moment for



their Students' Union, and it was wonderful to see such a strong sense of community. Pictured alongside Joseph is Andrew Irwin, President of Stranmillis Students' Union, both celebrating the vibrant student life that continues to thrive on campus.

At the Ulster Teachers' Union, we believe in supporting students and fostering connections that will help shape the future of education. Caring for teachers, caring for children – that's our mission!



JOINT BOARD: EMPOWERING SCHOOL REPS IN AN EVER CHANGING TEACHING CLIMATE

Joint Board training sessions provided essential education for union representatives, ensuring members are well-informed.



A number of successful and very informative sessions were organised by The Joint Board of UTU, INTO and NEU over the academic year, to give all of our hard-working representatives training needed to allow our members to be well informed on a number of issues.

More training will follow next year so keep an eye on our socials for details.

Lauren Dunwoody from Ballyclare Secondary gave her feedback on the training:

“Becoming an interim UTU representative has been such an honour and privilege. Now more than ever, it is important to be the listening ear and a voice for the invaluable work we do in an ever-changing teaching climate.”

The recent Joint Board Reps Training gave me the opportunity to connect with fellow union representatives and work together in achieving what we only deserve will always be a priority and highlights the vocational importance of the role of a teacher.

Officials from the 3 unions imparted their knowledge across several days on issues such as the Roles and Responsibilities; Agreements and Procedures and Directed Time Budgets and it was so beneficial and a well-structured day of learning. It was also so fascinating to network and see the bigger picture outside of my own school environment.”



Pauline Hurst:
UTU Disability
Champion

As a disability champion, Pauline is committed to engaging with union members, listening to their stories, and learning from their experiences.

Pauline graduated from Stranmillis College in 1997, and the following year, secured a permanent position at the Speech and Language Centre, attached to Enniskillen Model Primary School, where she currently teaches. The Speech and Language Centre caters to all primary school-aged children. This year, Pauline is teaching P2-4.

In addition to her teaching role, Pauline is a passionate trade union activist with firsthand experience of living with a disability. This personal insight drives her commitment to removing barriers for disabled individuals and those with long-term health conditions in the school workplace. She is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can reach their full potential and achieve their goals.

As a union, we can make a huge difference in the way disabled members are treated at work. We can and will bring about far-reaching changes that have an extremely positive impact on a disabled member's work environment.

As Pauline said recently at the UTU Conference: "As your Disability Champion, I hope to engage with our members, listen

EMPOWERING CHANGE: DISABILITY CHAMPION STRIVES FOR EQUALITY IN SCHOOLS

to their stories, and learn from their perspectives. Working together with other colleagues, I aim to raise awareness about disability issues with our employing authorities and advocate for changes to policies and procedures."

Working alongside the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Pauline will campaign to push the Government to enhance legislation and policies that support disabled workers. As a representative of the UTU, she is committed to sharing best practices on reasonable adjustments and providing disabled members with the support they need, amplifying their voices and championing their rights. While society is beginning to recognise that discrimination against disabled people is unacceptable, Pauline, along with the UTU Central Executive Committee, knows there is still much work to be done to ensure genuine equality for their members within the education sector.



UTU SUPPORTING 40 INITIATIVES ON 3 CONTINENTS

2024 has been another pleasing year for A Ray of Hope, UNESCO Youth Ambassador for the Culture of Peace with our aim being for 40 projects to be completed in 9 countries. Just one project had to be postponed due to family commitments; however, an extra initiative was added to replace it. Thankfully for most part unlike previous years our projects were not affected by pandemics or natural disasters though war and civil unrest made difficult the lives of those involved with a few of our projects in Ukraine and Myanmar.

In India a plethora of projects relating to language development and educational field trips were completed aiming also for a positive use of leisure times. The initiatives in most cases centred around the readers in our network of Henny Penny Libraries now numbering 53.

Our two schools in Uganda required a complete redecoration for the secondary school and vocational centre, whilst the totally new nursery and primary school urgently needed furniture to cater for the ever growing popularity and a consequent demand for places. Both schools are now seen as centres of excellence for the provision of education.

In Nepal we have 8 enthusiastic project leaders 5 of whom passed through the portals of the Metta Centre Home, an establishment for disadvantaged young ladies who took delight in perusing the pages of the UTU News in years gone by.

Now as university graduates they demonstrate a flair for the organisation of initiatives to advance the education system in Nepal including : - a modernised science laboratory refurbishment and equipment supply, increasing awareness of their important heritage especially in the culture of dance, music, costume , conservation and preservation programmes, leisure activities, educational visits to historic and religious sites. Throughout the presentations and programmes of study, "health and well being" topics have again come to the fore and these have included police seminars on internet safety, drug awareness, also aspects of mental health, building self confidence and reliance , mother/ daughter health clinics, dental care, optometry testing and distribution of reading glasses.



Uganda - new furniture for Nursery and Primary School



India - environmental field trip



Nepal - environmental conservation and preservation



Nepal - dental health clinic



Nigeria - cookery demonstration and competition

More unusual initiative topics were In

- **Nepal** -- tree planting for the future
- **Nigeria** -- cookery competition for students
- **Philippines** -- solar lighting for a vulnerable crime affected area aiming at community safety.
- **Ethiopia** -- provision of a more efficient water delivery system for agricultural projects

These and the usual provision of educational expendables and necessitous family supplies completed our programmes of assistance in 2024.

We are as ever most grateful for the kind and generous support proffered to us by the Ulster Teachers' Union and its members.



India - International Book Fair



Philippines - mother and child mental health and advice forum

'HOPE FOR OUR WORLD' EVENT IN DUNGANNON

The United Nations Association Northern Ireland is organising an event with two guest speakers on the topic 'Hope for Our World'. Hosted by the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, Councillor Eugene McConnell, the event will be held on Tuesday 15 October 2024 from 10.00am to 12.00pm at the Hill of the O'Neill and Ranfurly House, Dungannon. Admission is free with prior booking required by e-mailing unassocni@gmail.com

Guest speakers include Manuel Carta and Laura Hampton. A former Commissioner of the Italian Red Cross, Manuel Carta is currently serving in Belfast as an Emergency Response Volunteer. He has participated in several humanitarian missions, including earthquakes, floods, landings, and the rescue of immigrants in the Mediterranean. He is currently a multilingual instructor at the UN World Food Programme in Rome. The title of Manuel's talk is 'Where Chaos meets Hope: The role of the Disaster Manager, with a subtitle 'Field Experiences amid Natural Disasters and Community Recovery'.

Speaking ahead of the event, Manuel said, "What happens during a huge emergency, what are the changes in a city and why is it so difficult to intervene in the first moments? I will also talk about First Aid training at WFP UN."

Laura Hampton is from County Armagh and has recently completed a round the world sailing adventure to benefit UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund. The Clipper Round the World Yacht Race on the UNICEF boat raised over £440,000 for UNICEF and they won the final race as well! The title for Laura's talk is 'From Orchards to Oceans - Tales of Eleven months spent circumnavigating the Globe'. In advance of the event, Laura said, "After racing 46,200 nautical miles around the globe, in some of earth's most challenging environments, I am delighted to be back home in NI and to share my story, trials and tribulations and to inspire hope for our future!"

Founded in 1945, the United Nations Association is a charity that builds movements, provides expert insight, and designs campaigns dedicated to promoting human rights, peace and security, and UN reform. UNA-NI is a regional branch and exists to promote the United Nations at a local level. It is a volunteer-run group which links the local, national and global themes and issues which affect us all. A spokesperson for UNA-NI said, "We want to thank the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council publicly for his support for this event. We invite local schools and individuals to join us and hope that they will gain from what the speakers have to tell us."



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Presents

Hope for the world

15 October 2024 - 10:00am - 12:00pm

**Invitation From UNA-NI to
Talks by
Manuel Carta and Laura Hampton
10:00am - 12:00pm**



MENOPAUSE
TOGETHER

13TH OCTOBER 2024

CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, BELFAST



Hosted by Marie-Louise Connolly

MENOPAUSE TOGETHER CONFERENCE

Our Annual Conference where you can meet, and hear from local experts to help you on your menopause journey.

- **Morning session:** focus on menopause and its impact on physical health, mental health, lifestyle, HRT and breast cancer
- **Afternoon Session:** focus on managing menopause in the workplace, how to improve your workplace and know your rights

Our Fabulous Local Speakers:



Dr Siobhan Kirk

Consultant in Sexual & Reproductive Health



Dr Gwyneth Hinds

Doctor & breast surgeon - focus on lifestyle factors & cancer



Dr Catherine Black

Clinical Psychologist specialising in physical health & chronic pain



Janey Mac is an improviser, stand-up comedian and writer who recently completed her one-woman stand up show Janey Mac is Hot (Blame the Hormones) and she will bring her own touch of humour to the conference!



Nicola Shaw

Senior Consultant at EVOLVE HR



Oonagh Ferson

HR Advisor at EVOLVE HR



Mary Kitson

Senior Legal Officer at the Equality Commission NI

REGISTRATION:

<https://fixr.co/event/menopause-together-annual-menopause-conference-tickets-431976370>



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