

# LANGUAGES NETWORK GROUP SCOTLAND (LANGS)



## LANGS Meeting Friday 14 June, 10.00-15.00

### MINUTES

	<p><b>Meeting opens</b></p>
1.	<p>Sylvia Georgin, Chair, welcomed everyone.</p> <p>Thanks to Louise Glen &amp; Shona Hugh for fixing this venue up at the last minute, following a plumbing incident at Atlantic Quay.</p>
2.	<p><b>Keynote:</b> <i>The End of a Journey and the Road Ahead: Reflections on Languages in Scotland</i></p> <p><b>Ed Welch</b></p> <p><a href="#">View presentation</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ed moving to Durham Uni in September; reflecting on where we've been. 'You may be at the summit, but that's essentially halfway.'</li> <li>• His 'end of road' at Aberdeen University has been well documented...languages constantly under scrutiny in a way that e.g. other subjects are not. The shock of likely redundancy did at least produce a lot of welcome support from the wider languages community. It reminded us of the community spirit in ML teaching <u>at all levels</u> and focussed understanding on the value of what we all do. And in fact, the University backed away from its 'slash &amp; burn' plans. Others said they had never before seen the power of response in similar situations. And the thought is that the University did more damage to itself &amp; its own reputation.</li> <li>• So – where are we now? Languages is in a challenging place – when is it not? Trends: steep declines in French &amp; German; Spanish, Chinese a bit more encouraging. And maybe things are beginning to stabilise.</li> <li>• Language Explorers Scotland (university mentoring programme). National Rollout Year 1: 14 schools from 10 authorities, working with 5 universities. Demonstrating the power of networking in the ML community in Scotland. Modelled in Aberdeenshire on something piloted by Cardiff University...but without the budget. Then Covid stopped everything...or seemed to. Then SCILT agreed to get involved. There was a pilot in Aberdeenshire last year: 5 schools, 10 mentors; distribution from Thurso to Ayr.</li> <li>• Please encourage more people to get involved for Year 2. Interventions in S2/3 are key. Sometimes it's sowing seeds for Uni. Sessions are more about what it <i>means</i> to be multilingual, rather than grammar, vocab etc. There has been encouraging feedback from mentees.</li> <li>• More info on <a href="#">SCILT website</a>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To sum up: collaboration, partnership, resilience, optimism. And remember - there's nothing like LANGS, or SCILT, south of the border (of the same quality anyway). Resilience: it can be hard not to feel defeated, but we may be stronger than we think. Optimism: remember the means, tools at our disposal.</li> </ul>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Farewell</b></p> <p>This was Sylvia &amp; Gwen's farewell as Chair &amp; Vice Chair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They reflected that <b>support</b> was probably the main feature of LANGS. It is a great deal more than 'just chat'...real professional dialogue and collaboration.</li> <li>It has always been relatively easy to get distinguished speakers to address LANGS, such is its reputation.</li> <li>Thank you to all who have been involved.</li> </ul> <p>'What Does LANGS mean to you?':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A great chance to hear about the national picture surrounding language learning</li> <li>Opportunity to network with colleagues in different local authorities and sectors.</li> <li>A sounding board.</li> <li>Peer to peer support.</li> <li>Networking &amp; updates and being able to explore and discuss policy &amp; practice.</li> <li>A one stop shop for all things language learning related in Scotland.</li> <li>Experienced support and advice; someone to reach out to.</li> </ul>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Education Scotland update, Louise Glen</b></p> <p><a href="#">View presentation</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum Improvement Cycle: OECD have published recommendations to update various aspects since CfE was set up 16 or 17 years ago...but without the 5-14 → CfE seismic shock.</li> <li>Is there too much focus on skills, rather than knowledge? We need to improve PISA results. Reviewing: Curriculum Specialists (secondary practitioners), prioritisation (grammar!).</li> <li>Deprioritisation, clutter &amp; coherence of curriculum (what we can we take out).</li> <li>Parameters for review – capacities and big ideas (the most exciting bit: what do learners need to be able to do to show what they've learned). Central tenets stay. Four capacities stay, e.g. but looking at – did we ever properly address attainment barriers, transition Primary → Secondary, BGE → Senior Phase, progression, moderation, tracking &amp; monitoring...?</li> <li><b>BUT</b> don't reinvent your own wheels...material will be published shortly on, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations, themes &amp; 'tensions': (teachers want clarity and flexibility, but not prescription; &amp; more guidance. Somewhat difficult to balance!)</li> <li>Aiming for less discrepancy across schools and LAs re time allocation for languages. This has caused massive inequity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>What is 'missing' from present ML curriculum? For example, prescribed topics, grammar progression, exemplification of levels; clarity – e.g. what a 'short conversation' means; the old question, should levels be linked to CEFR? Joe Carson, St Andrews University and past Chair of UCMLS always said Scotland doesn't stand up very well on that measure. [Ed Welch: some of the CEFR descriptors are helpful]. Baby not being thrown out with bathwater. Learning &amp; Teaching events portal...ES will work with departments, schools, clusters, authorities...please get in touch!</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Scottish Government update, Dehra MacDonald</b></p> <p><a href="#">View presentation</a></p> <p><b>Scottish Education Exchange Programme:</b></p> <p>5. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test &amp; Learn Project (Dehra Macdonald, SG, part of International Ed Team): Scotland’s International Education Strategy (Higher Education);</li> <li>• <i>Destination Scotland</i> (coping with no longer having access to Erasmus, both financial and networking etc)...designing projects to close the gap between what <i>was</i> possible under Erasmus and what’s possible under Turing.</li> </ul></p>
	<p><b>SCILT/CISS update, Karen Faulds</b></p> <p><a href="#">View presentation</a></p> <p>6. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New SCILT professional learning offer out.</li> <li>• As is SCILT/CISS strategic plan.</li> <li>• New CETs coming: Chinese teachers available 15 hrs/wk for any secondary school who wants them;</li> <li>• Multilingual Approaches through Art resource packs available.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">View presentation on TOGS</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of <b>TOGS</b> (Teachers of German in Scotland network); to address decline in uptake.</li> </ul> </p>
	<p><b>Handover to new Chairs:</b></p> <p>7. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Robbie Kirk</b>, PT MFL at Chryston HS (new Co-chair): it’s good to be continuing/developing the model of actual practising teachers chairing LANGS. And there’s a good spread of LAs represented in the chairs. LANGS is possibly a uniquely supportive group...but as a discipline, it is under chronic attack like no other. Need to address disconnects...e.g. Strathclyde University, one of the best engineering departments doesn’t offer German. And University of Aberdeen has already been under discussion this morning. And Brexit...not just no funding, but visa difficulties as well.</li> <li>b) <b>Laura Morris</b>, Faculty Head at Mintlaw Academy (Co-chair): LANGS gives the opportunity to appreciate the bigger picture outside one’s own LA silo. Equity. Expanded horizons; We need more work on curriculum to make it accessible for those with dyslexia etc. But expanding cultural awareness is equally important. KHG: why are languages perceived as difficult? Ans: historic reasons; in many communities people don’t go abroad much, so don’t see the value. But we can contribute to all aspects of literacy...perhaps particularly in communities where there’s little grasp of it. We start from the ground up. Literacy can still quite a barrier to all aspects of the curriculum.</li> <li>c) <b>Joanna Paterson</b>, East Renfrewshire, finishing as PT Langs and some central MFL support (Vice Chair): Playing with words, language, broadening horizons, cultural curiosity is my thing. Initially Primary trained. Wish to see LANGS as a collective voice to address SG etc. About to take on a P3 class. Class say they want a ‘country corner’ to learn about other countries. Gives you hope! Population changes bring a wider collection of L1s.</li> </ul></p>
	<p><b>‘Just a minute’ updates from cultural organisations</b></p> <p>8. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kay Turnbull and Jane Halstead, British Council</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">View presentation</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul></p>

- Two new colleagues at British Council Scotland working across schools, FE and HE - Harish Lokhun (Head of Education) and Jane Halstead (Education Manager). Keen to become more active in supporting schools with their international ambitions, so please do keep in touch! If you would like to contact us, please email [Jane.Halstead@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Jane.Halstead@britishcouncil.org)
  - We are very excited to be launching Language Trends for the first time in Scotland this year. Language Trends is an annual survey of primary, secondary and independent schools, designed to gather information about the situation for language teaching and learning. The survey will go live for schools in August. Any help with dissemination from colleagues would be much appreciated.
  - Please visit our website for [resources](#) and [international school partnership opportunities](#).
- **Sylvia Davidson, French Film Festival UK**
    - [View programme](#)
    - Reached 13,000 pupils in schools last year. Free to access, all films in French with subtitles. Bookable from mid-August; screenings Oct-Dec.
- **Sylvie Charlotte Hyvernaud Ning, Institut français d'Écosse**
    - [View slides](#)
    - Linking with the above. Annual [Concours de la Francophonie](#); two prize winning ceremonies; details follow in SCILT ebulletin.
    - On Friday, 27 September, the Institut français d'Écosse together with European consulates and cultural organisations will be celebrating European Day for Languages in Edinburgh with morning activities aimed at S2 and S3 pupils and two conferences in the afternoon. One of the conferences will focus on how European writers foster creativity and 'out of the box' thinking style through language and the other on multilingualism and creativity. They will be followed by a cocktail. Watch this space for further information to come late August!
    - You can also contact Charlotte Hyvernaud, Education attaché, Institut français d'Écosse : [charlotte.hyvernaud@institut-francais.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.hyvernaud@institut-francais.org.uk)
- **Thomas Deleuze, Alliance Française Glasgow**
    - Fliers will be available in two weeks: offer for secondary French teachers, giving them the chance to converse in French at their own level; and new tools etc. Full programme of cultural events. Keen to visit schools to support.
- **Arne Muus, British German Association**
    - [View slides](#)
    - UK charity, recently ramping up activity in Scotland. Network called Youthbridge, connecting learners, making the case for German learning; not really resources as such. About 2x events a month, mostly online; competition. [www.britishgermanassociation.org](http://www.britishgermanassociation.org)
    - If you have any questions: our Youthbridge Representative for the Western Central Belt (Glasgow, Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire and Falkirk) is Heather Laird, [h.laird@britishgermanassociation.org](mailto:h.laird@britishgermanassociation.org). For all other areas, please contact me directly: [a.muus@britishgermanassociation.org](mailto:a.muus@britishgermanassociation.org). And do follow us on social media! We are @BritGerAssoc on X, @british\_german\_association on Instagram, and on Facebook.
- **Ann Robertson, SEET**
    - Euroquiz (30 out of 32 auths involved) & Our World competitions – record numbers took part. George Watson's Edinburgh received first place in Euroquiz, St Fillan's PS, Glasgow second place. SEET closing down; competitions etc will

	<p>continue under stewardship of SCILT: thanks to them, especially Alice Lister, who have made it happen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Caroline Cordier, Edinburgh College</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online national courses offered to schools to plug gaps in school provision. Astonishing growth in demand...grounds for optimism. 110 pupils across 4 languages 2 years ago; now 240 applications, 50 schools then → 100 now. Very good feedback from 150+ pupils. 40AH pupils for both French &amp; Spanish...and we have a waiting list.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Other updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew McKenna, SALT: <a href="#">View update</a></li> <li>• Liz Neil: <a href="#">View update</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Monumental Mingling...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A means to meet new colleagues by matching halves of photos...</li> </ul> <p><b>Diamond 9:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An opportunity for colleagues to discuss what they want to see from LANGS moving forward and give opinions/thoughts on priorities for group.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Robbie's plenary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much to be thankful for.</li> <li>• Much to look forward to.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Gwen on Sylvia</b> – retiring altogether, albeit (allegedly) early! Tribute...‘the Queen of Collaboration’ – Gwen also noted the achievements of Northern Alliance under Sylvia’s Chairmanship, and that she steered both that and LANGS through pandemic etc.</p> <p><b>Sylvia’s thanks</b> – LANGS’ main strength is that ‘You’re amongst friends’. And she paid special tribute to Alice Lister, who is the one who makes the whole thing function.</p>
9.	<b>Meeting end</b>