



**Press Release: Monday 8th February 2010**

## **Launch of National Schools' Competition on climate change**

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) has today launched a national schools' competition on how climate change will affect the lives and livelihoods of people in their own local areas.

Part of its major inquiry into *Facing up to Climate Change*, the competition invites primary and secondary school children to produce a poster and 5 minute DVD on how climate change will affect the lives and livelihoods of people in their own local area.

The competition is being supported by former weather forecaster Heather Reid, with a prize fund of £5,000 available between primary and secondary schools in the north, centre and south of Scotland.

The competition has been designed to complement Curriculum for Excellence, and will invite students to look at both the opportunities and challenges caused by climate change, and the impacts it is already having on people's lives and livelihoods in the developing world.

Launching the competition at the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Heather Reid commented:

*"Climate change is one of the most serious challenges facing people across the world, but at the same time it can come across as a complex scientific message. Working in science education, I am keen to support this Royal Society of Edinburgh competition so that it can be used to help children work through the implications of climate change for both Scotland and developing countries."*

The competition has been devised by Erica Caldwell, Honorary President of the Scottish Association of Geography Teachers, to enhance the understanding of pupils in Primary and Secondary schools of sustainable development, global citizenship and international understanding as part of the Curriculum of Excellence. The competition

*The RSE is Scottish Charity SC000470*

is being disseminated by Learning and Teaching Scotland on their LTS GLOWscotland web site and via the Royal Society's own website.

Speaking about the competition, Erica Caldwell commented:

*“This is a excellent opportunity for children to research and present their findings about how climate change will affect the lives of people in their own area: and by studying a developing world country where climate change is already a concern to the lives and livelihoods of its people they will be able to demonstrate an understanding of global interdependency .”*

This national competition forms part of the Royal Society of Edinburgh's major inquiry into facing up to climate change, launched in October 2009, which seeks to identify how to bridge the gap between the aspirations of the policies now in place to address climate change, and how much the public are currently prepared to go.

Speaking at the launch, the inquiry Chairman, Professor David Sugden, commented:

*“We are looking to find out how we can bridge the gap between the policies needed for a low-carbon future and what the public will accept, and in particular what the social, economic and practical barriers to change are. This national schools competition is an important part of raising awareness and we look forward to seeing the challenges and opportunities that different communities will face.”*

## Notes for editors:

### *1. National Schools' competition on Climate Change*

Schools and teachers can find details of the RSE national competition can be found at:

Learning and Teaching Scotland web site:

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/sustainabledevelopment/events/index.asp>

<http://ltsblogs.org.uk/globalcitizenship/>

GLOWscotland:

<https://portal.glowscotland.org.uk/establishments/nationalsite/Climate%20Change/Lists/News/DispForm.aspx?ID=29&Source=https%3A%2F%2Fportal%2Eglowscotland%2Eorg%2Euk%2Festablishments%2Fnationalsite%2FClimat%2520Change%2Fdefault%2Easpx>

Royal Society of Edinburgh web site: <http://www.royalsoced.org.uk>

*Who can enter?*

Groups of no more than 4 pupils can submit an entry, but schools may submit more than one entry.

*What are the prizes?*

Overall winning group, Primary £1000

Overall winning group, Secondary £1000

£500 for three regional winning groups at Primary and at Secondary in each of three regions namely north, central and south Scotland.

*What is the format for submission of entries?*

- **One A1, (594 mm x 841mm) poster.**
- **One DVD** (if desired) with mixed format additional or back up material. If a DVD is submitted it must have a **maximum of 5 (five) minutes** duration (this includes required reading time for any additional print material).
- Regional and National winning groups are expected to present their entries at a prize giving event before Dr Heather Reid ("Heather the Weather") to be held in **The Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22-26 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PQ on a date to be announced in late August/September.**

*Entry Deadline?*

Entries must be sent or delivered to The Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22-26 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PQ. Entries must be received no later than noon (12.00) on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010.

### *2. The RSE Inquiry into Facing up to Climate Change*

The RSE is undertaking an inquiry into how we can best respond to climate change in Scotland. Climate is changing and the trends in statistics on flooding, precipitation and temperature in Scotland over the last 40 years have already required changes in our approach to risk and uncertainty. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act has now been set in place with a statutory target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42% by 2020. In order to achieve this, the Scottish Government is looking for:

- de-carbonise the heat sector through a combination of reduced demand and energy efficiency, together with a massive increase in the use of renewable or low carbon heating.
- decarbonisation of road transport through wholesale adoption of electric cars and vans, and significant decarbonisation of rail.
- Ensuring that carbon (including the cost of carbon) is fully factored into decisions about rural land use

However, the gap between the necessary policies and where we are now, is large. In order to inform the Inquiry, The Council of the RSE has agreed to undertake an inquiry into how society can best respond to climate change in Scotland with the following remit:

- (1) To engage with individuals, industries, civil society and public authorities to help develop and respond to proposed Government climate change policies;
- (2) To identify barriers to change and to recommend measures for current and future policies in these areas and the timescales on which actions need to be developed

## ***2. Biographies***

*Heather Reid:* Heather Reid is a physics graduate from Edinburgh University with an MSc in Remote Sensing and Image Processing Technology. She is a trained Met Office forecaster and presented the weather forecast on BBC Scotland for over 15 years. During that time Heather combined her media role with promoting science to young people and the public. She has recently changed career and now works full-time in science education. Heather is a Trustee at Glasgow Science Centre, a Fellow of the Institute of Physics and holds an honorary lectureship in the Physics & Astronomy Department at Glasgow University. In 2003 she received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Paisley and the prestigious Kelvin Medal for science communication from the Institute of Physics. In 2005 she received an OBE for services to physics.

*Erica Caldwell:* Former Principal Teacher of Geography at Carnoustie High School, Erica is the Honorary President of the Scottish Association of Geography Teachers and on the Board of Royal Scottish Geographical Society and its Education Convener. She is a Senior Examiner and Setter for Advanced Higher Geography with Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

*David Sugden:* Professor David Sugden is Professor of Geography at the University of Edinburgh, and a world leader in glacial and polar geomorphology. He pioneered our understanding of how ice sheets behave and interact with the global environment through computer reconstructions of the dynamics and thermal regime of ice sheets. Professor Sugden is a graduate of Oxford University, and has held positions at the University of Aberdeen, the University of British Columbia, the University of Colorado and the University of Lund, Sweden, and was appointed to the chair in Edinburgh in 1987. In 1990 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.