

# Remembering Karen McCubbin

(26 January 1965 – 6 July 2024)



Karen McCubbin was a former PE teacher, PE lead officer and SATPE Secretary. But most of all to many she was an inspirational and entertaining person and a good friend. Karen sadly passed away on 6th July 2024 after living with cancer with a number of years but her memory lives on with those who were lucky enough to have known and worked with her. Here are some accounts from former friends and colleagues.

## Friend and former colleague Theresa Campbell

Karen McCubbin very sadly passed away in July 2024. Some of you reading this will have been in the fortunate position of having known Karen and will undoubtedly be able to relate to what is written here. For others newer to the profession, these words will hopefully convey something of who Karen was and the impact she had on colleagues and young people throughout her career.

Karen graduated from Dunfermline College in the mid-1980s and from then on most certainly made her mark in the world of Physical Education in Scotland. She initially worked as a peripatetic primary teacher later taking on an Advisory role in West Lothian. Karen was also among the original cohort of PE Lead Officers (PELOs), a team whose efforts were instrumental in shaping the delivery of Physical Education across Scotland.

Natural curiosity and sharp thinking were Karen's trademarks. She loved to ask questions and offer opinions. She challenged people when they needed challenged and supported them when they needed support. Karen was the ideal person to keep you on the straight and narrow, although her love of fun and sense of adventure ensured that the path forward was never dull. She was an organiser and a very loyal colleague and friend. You knew if you had Karen on board then she would make sure whatever needed

to happen would happen. She was a member of the original start-up team for SATPE and was very much a doer. If something needed following through, Karen did it.

Beyond her professional life, Karen's personal life was deeply enriched by several passions. A talented singer, she met her husband Colin through this shared love of music. Her love of travelling and pride in the beauty of Scotland meant she was always on the move. In the later stages of her illness Karen was determined to keep enjoying life to the full and planned a special trip each month with Colin or with friends.

Even during her personal health struggles, Karen's commitment to her profession did not waver. During her treatment and following her retirement, she continued to make significant contributions. Notably, she became a valued member of the Scottish Disability Sport Coach and Education advisory group, and she co-authored the SDS Schools Boccia Resource, further demonstrating her dedication to her profession and her passion for making a difference for others.

Karen's influence extended far and was evident in the many tributes written at the time of her passing. "A force of nature", "an inspiration", "a brilliant teacher" were common reflections. "She never settled for second best when it came to helping others" encapsulates Karen's determination to improve the lives of those around her, particularly the young people she worked with and the teachers she supported.

Karen was a great colleague and friend. She was someone who could make you laugh in the tougher moments, but also someone who would roll up her sleeves and get to work when it was needed. She was a loyal, and steadfast friend, and her contributions to Physical Education in Scotland will continue to influence the profession for years to come.

## Former SATPE Committee Member Elinor Steel

As a founding member of SATPE Karen brought her enthusiasm, commitment and drive to the project and continued in her inimitable style serving diligently as Secretary for many years. Karen was always supportive and encouraging of others - happy to share ideas or pose challenging questions during meetings! She was a 'go to' person as her vast knowledge and wide range of experiences enabled her to be a critical friend. Her philosophy was to continue to develop, progress and improve the understanding and delivery of Physical Education across settings. These were the ideals which shone through in her support for SATPE.

## SATPE President & Journal Editor Dom Tollan

When I first travelled to Denny High School 10 years ago to take my first steps in volunteering for SATPE, Karen was one of the first to welcome me. She was a really influential and important person in my own SATPE and PE journey, as she was always receptive and supportive of any ideas or suggestions I put forward, which as a new member made me feel really at ease and gave me further confidence to contribute and

continue my involvement in SATPE. When I told her I was starting in Primary PE, she went out of her way to find me some of her old resources that were invaluable in providing me with lesson content and really added to my own professional development.

That aside, she was a sparkling presence at meetings and especially at Conference. Her humour and personality shone through, from welcoming people at the front door to standing up on a table to rally everyone to take part in the raffle. Her enthusiasm and passion was infectious and had a massive impact on me personally. I owe a lot to Karen and hopefully in our continued work in SATPE the influence of Karen McCubbin will continue to impact Physical Education in Scotland.

***In Karen's memory and in tribute to the inspiration and dedication to PE, especially in Primary Schools, SATPE have introduced the Karen McCubbin Primary PE Award which will grant £500 to one primary school each year to help them deliver high quality PE. Through this, we hope that Karen's influence will live on in those who benefit.***

***If you are interested in applying for this award, details can be found below:***

## Karen McCubbin Primary PE Award

***£500 to support the delivery of high quality PE in your school.***

***Open to Primary and ASN schools.***

***Apply and find out more information:***

