LDCs call for revolution freedom

Eddie Crouch received rousing cheers at the Conference of local dental committees (LDCs) following his speech on the state of NHS dentistry.

He said: ‘The GDPC’s failure to recognise the depth of feeling at that LDC Conference is deeply worrying.’ He added: ‘Do the BDA committees actually make policy decisions and set political direction in the way dentists want anyway?’

Nevertheless, he thanked the BDA for assisting his court case as an interested party. He said: ‘I did not expect them to pay my costs but it was the judge who thought they should help.’

Dr Crouch thanked all the ‘wonderful people’ who had supported him through his Judicial Review. ‘The letters of encouragement and the generous financial assistance from dozens and dozens of supporters have helped me and my family immensely’, he said.

In conclusion, Dr Crouch said that it would be a sad day ‘when dentists queue up for IT training in presessional skills to impress primary care trusts with business plans and box ticking exercises, instead of improving clinical skills on postgraduate courses to provide better care for their patients.’

The theme of Evolution, not Revolution, was reflected at the conference the day after. ‘Talks on working with the Dollc and accepting that the contract is here to stay were top of the list.

More people than ever before came forward to say that the new arrangements could work – despite serious misgivings.

The set tone was amplified by Lester Ellman, chair of the General Dental Practice Committee (GDPC), who said: ‘We need change – not a knee-jerk, panic-stricken, untimed change, but evidence-based, tried and tested change. We need evolution, not revolution.’ (See page two for more on this speech).

Meanwhile, the conference agenda committee is to take over and manage all future conference events. This includes the responsibility that ‘conference resolutions will be considered expeditiously by the GDPC or other appropriate bodies.’

The unprecedented move, means the committee can now liaise directly with the Dollc and its ministers, instead of relying on the GDPC.

Conference elected Jerry Asquith to chair the conference in 2009, and Richard Emmus the following year.