

FOR USE OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OFFICERS ONLY

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUBPOSTMASTERS**

**REPORT OF A  
MEETING OF THE  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**held on**

**25 to 27 June 2012**

**at**

**STRATFORD HOTEL  
STRATFORD UPON AVON**



**PLEASE NOTE**

Items that are totally confidential and not to be discussed outside of the Executive Council have been 'boxed' and shaded in pink (as is this note).



**Report of a Meeting of the  
National Executive Council  
held on Monday-Wednesday, 25 to 27 June 2012  
at Stratford Hotel,  
Stratford upon Avon**

Those present: Mrs Bhavna Desai National President and Chairman  
Mr Andrew Craddock  
Mr Andrew Gilhooly  
Mr Paul Haines  
Mr Stephen Harper  
Mr Nilesh Joshi  
Mrs Kym Ledger  
Ms Kam Matharu  
Mr David Milner  
Mr Jim Nott  
Mr Ian Park  
Mr Keith Richards Part

In attendance: Mr George Thomson General Secretary  
Ms Marilyn Stoddart Assistant General Secretary  
Mr Mervyn Jones Part

Apologies: None received

The National President welcomed everyone to the meeting. She wished Sharon Merryweather a GRO and offered thanks for Sharon's hard work at Conference. Keith Richards would be joining the meeting on Tuesday 26 June.

**1. REPORTS & RESOLUTIONS**

- (a) The Minutes of the Executive Council meeting of 19-22 March 2012 were signed as a true record. DECISION
- (b) The Resolutions passed at the Executive Council meeting of 19-22 March 2012 were signed as a true record. DECISION
- (c) There were no matters arising from the meeting of 19-22 March 2012.
- (d) The Minutes of the Executive Council meeting of 20 May 2012 were signed as a true record. DECISION
- (e) The Resolutions passed at the Executive Council meeting of 20 May 2012 were signed as a true record. DECISION
- (f) There were no matters arising from the meeting of 20 May 2012.
- (g) The Minutes of the Executive Council meeting of 23 May 2012 were signed as a true record. DECISION
- (h) There were no matters arising from the meeting of 23 May 2012.

2. FUTURE OF THE NETWORK

**Irrelevant**

ACTION

ACTION

# Irrelevant

## (d) Mains and Locals Contract Issues

- The General Secretary thanked Marilyn Stoddart, Andrew Gilhooly and Andrew Craddock for the work they had done on the contracts. The contracts had still not been agreed. Copies of the draft contracts had been given to Commercial Contracts specialist. Marilyn Stoddart and Andrew Gilhooly will have a meeting with the lawyers in Edinburgh.
- Need to tell members that there had been a team working on the contracts to make them as good as they could get and these have now been handed over to commercial contract specialists. It is a voluntary scheme and it has to be the Subpostmasters choice to sign and change their contract.
- 95% of the draft contracts will remain. The NFSP has succeeded in scraping the waivers, the company to company requirement and have obtained a three year income guarantee.
- Concern raised that Co-op's would be dealt with separately under section 17 of the contract and culpability issues.
- There are no differences in culpability.
- Waivers in the past have always been temporary. There may be an issue that some relocated offices may be dealt with differently and that their waivers could be more permanent. This issue is being addressed.
- The need to ensure that when dealing with members on the new contracts it is carefully positioned.
- Individuals need to take their own view on the contracts as what may be beneficial to one may not be to another as their circumstances are different.
- The NFSP are pushing back on accretion of goodwill, private retail business and extended hours. Also extended hours for peak demands ie: Olympics.
- Any draft contract on Locals going back 3 years and existing Mains under the pilots signed will be migrated to the new contracts when they are agreed.
- There should be a refund of an element of the liability waiver.
- Kym Ledger will send to Marilyn Stoddart, Andrew Craddock and Andrew Gilhooly a copy of the part of a contract that had been sent out which made reference to goodwill.

**ACTION**

# Irrelevant

**Irrelevant**

# Irrelevant

ACTION

(c) Horizon

- The NC will have a meeting at Fujitsu at Bracknell in July to ascertain why the system falls over and what can be done to solve problems.
- Need to ascertain what detections are in place when failures occur.
- The NC will report back to the EC on what improvements will be made.
- POL have called for a full, external forensic accountants Second Insight, review into the Horizon system. This is because pressure had been put upon Paula Vennells by MPs who are challenging that the system is flawed. This has emanated from 10 cases where people have contacted their MPs after audits had taken place and losses found. Some of these have had their contracts terminated and some have been to court. POL are only reviewing the 10 cases.
- The Federation had never been consulted on the review.
- The NFSP has always defended the robustness of the accountancy of the system.
- There are 70 million transactions conducted on the Horizon system every week.

**Irrelevant**

ACTION

ACTION

**Irrelevant**

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

Strictly Private & Confidential

© National Federation of SubPostmasters

**Irrelevant**

ACTION

ACTION

# Irrelevant

Strictly Private & Confidential

© National Federation of SubPostmasters

ACTION

ACTION

# Irrelevant

ACTION

**Irrelevant**

Strictly Private & Confidential

© National Federation of SubPostmasters

**Irrelevant**

**Irrelevant**

# Irrelevant

## 7. CONFERENCE 2012

- Apologies offered for the fact that obituaries were not passed on to the then incumbent President to read out at Conference. There had been seven names on the list. These are recorded only as and when HQ were notified of a death.
- Mr Milner proposed *"That to ensure the names of those members who have passed away is reinstated as part of the National President's opening speech at Conference next year and we include those members who were omitted this year"*. The proposal was carried.
- Obituaries are already published in the Subpostmaster magazine.
- Reported that Peter Finlay, Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee had sent an email to Committee members asking for their views specifically on card votes and breakout sessions. Any feedback received will be circulated to Executive Officers.
- General consensus of the Executive Council was that card votes should not take place at future conferences.
- Motions carried and not carried had been listed in a circulation dated 7 June. This also showed suggested brief annotations of how the motions should be dealt with.
- The National President read out the numbers of each of the motions carried and the suggested way to take forward. These were all agreed.
- The National President reported that ten of the Motions were to be dealt with by the Negotiating Committee and requested that the NC might consider asking other EC members for any help they require with these.
- There had been a rule change at Conference and the new Rules will be circulated to the Executive Council.
- Normal practice had been that a report of the Open Debates would be published in the Subpostmaster Magazine six months after conference.
- The first year that open debates were on the Conference agenda the relevant Executive Officer who had contributed to each open debate had produced a précis and this was published in the Subpostmaster Magazine. Later in the year POL reported on those points. This process proved not to be successful.

DECISION/ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

- Last year the open debates were more of a strategic nature. These were ongoing issues that were updated throughout the year via the Subpostmaster, Website and BSC's.
- This year there had been a motion after each Open Debate apart from the Operational Open Debate.
- Suggested that going forward there could be a report on the emergency motion tabled after each debate. Will need to report on the progress on these over the course of the year.
- Will need to cover off the open debate on operational issues throughout the course of the year.
- Reported that Post Office Limited's support with regard to the exhibition and donations was generally very good.
- Post Office representation at conference itself was abysmal. There were times when no POL representatives were present. There were times when only Stephanie Ulgiati was present.
- Request that the General Secretary go back to POL and let them know the Executive Council were disgusted with their lack of representation in the conference hall.
- Being sought by various teams from POL is a transcript of Conference. It has become apparent that POL have very few notes.
- POL have now been provided with access to the recording of conference that is on the NFSP website.
- During the closed session where all visitors apart from POL were excluded there was not one representative from POL.
- A meeting is being organised to consider the reportage of conference and to request that next years conference is properly observed.

**ACTION**

## 8. CONFERENCE 2013

- Conference 2013 will be hosted in Torquay.
- On the debate at conference 2012 there appeared to be an enthusiasm for break-out groups.
- The North East Region's delegates were located at the Palace Hotel this year. The benefits outweighed the logistics. The North East would be happy to go back to the Palace. Suggested that other regions should take their turn.
- Suggested that a presentation be given to Conference on Mutualisation.
- Paul Haines asked the Executive Council if they could provide him with suggestions for the theme of the Gala Dinner. Schoolboys/girls and Star Wars had already been suggested. Also suggested an Asian theme in acknowledgement of the NFSP's first Asian President. He asked for suggestions for the theme for the fundraising event on the Monday.
- The General Secretary believed that Conference for the next few years should still run for three days.
- Suggested that there is a need for a constructive speaker.

- Suggested that Paula Vennells, MD of POL should not give a presentation at conference 2013.
- The General Secretary reported that there would be a speaker on mutualisation and possibly a government speaker such as Francis Maude. Invitation to be given to Diane Thompson, CEO of Camelot who is an inspirational speaker. He believed there should be a speaker from Post Office Limited.
- Suggested a presentation/seminar/break-out group could be given by someone from Royal Mail, First Rate and an expert on small business retail.
- Standing Orders should get from and give feedback to their respective regions on the format on conference.
- The number of motions brought to Conference 2012 did not allow for time to be spent on having break-out groups. Some feedback already received from members of the Standing Orders Committee suggesting break-out groups for 2013. This being the case the number of motions will need to be reduced, constructive and forward looking.
- Need to encourage newer delegates to speak at the podium.

## 9. REPORT OF THE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### (a) Membership

- The Chairman, Paul Haines reported that the IDC's number one key was to drive membership.
- The Committee looked forward to working with Andrew Gilhooly, Membership, Recruitment and Retention Officer.
- Regions had been identified that have to be targeted to increase their membership.  
NTEA need to recruit 63 members by September to keep 2 EO's. Midlands need 19 members to have 2 EO's. North West needs 100 to have 2 EO's and Scotland is just in by 37 to keep 2 EO's.
- The General Secretary gave his assurance that because the numbers used for membership in respect of the triennial elections are up to 30 September, which is a Sunday, that if any forms are received in the post on Monday 1 October, will still count towards the figures.
- Julia and Lisa are re-embarking on a recruitment exercise. They have an Aide Memoire to help with recruiting.
- Andrew Gilhooly asked that when he visits regions to recruit he is accompanied by someone to drive him around.
- Alan Seivwright will produce a route of offices to be visited if he is provided with the non-members list. Shoreham will provide the non-members list.
- To achieve 80% membership density for the organisation 420 new members would need to be recruited. To achieve 78% density would require 230 new members.

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

- An A5 script showing the top ten/twelve reasons for joining the NFSP will be sent out to Branch Secretaries by mid-July. Also show the things achieved such IBA.
- Not only will Executive Officers receive notice of closures or change of status but these will now be sent out to every Regional Secretary and every Regional Membership Officer. These details to be passed on to the Branches. The Regional and Branch Officials will then ascertain what the situation is with a particular office. Relocations will also be sent out as well as consultation documents. These can all trigger a recruitment visit to those premises.
- New Subpostmasters receive a welcome pack from Post Office Limited which includes a membership form to join the NFSP.
- Membership packs containing the application form and latest edition of the Subpostmaster magazine can be obtained from Lisa Harmsworth or Julia Goatcher. Should also insert top reasons to join.
- Executive Officers to ensure that they inform Shoreham of their Regional Membership Officer's details.
- Encouraged that recruitment is conducted at POL Training for Subpostmasters sessions. Even if a region recruits outside of their area they will still be rewarded by payment for their efforts.
- Recruiters should ensure a summary of visits is sent to Lisa Harmsworth at Shoreham. Preferably co-ordinated by the Regional Secretary.
- If someone in the past has benefited from 6 months free membership and has subsequently resigned they will not be entitled to 6 months free twice.
- Local office operators will not receive 6 months free membership under any circumstances.
- The General Secretary and Mervyn Jones had been working on maintenance contracts for roller safes as a membership benefit provided by the Trading Company. Work is also being done on Key Man Insurance. Necessary to provide benefits that will encourage the new Post Office model operators to join the NFSP.
- Lisa Harmsworth needs to be informed of any suspensions and reinstatements of Subpostmasters.

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

**Irrelevant**

**Irrelevant**

ACTION

(d) **Training**

- The General Secretary had attended Time Management Training.
- Currently trying to source training for the Trustees. This will be in late August or Early September for all Trustees.

ACTION

**Irrelevant**

ACTION

CTION

CTION

**Irrelevant**

# Irrelevant

DECISION/ACTION

## 13. FINANCE

### (a) Treasurer's Report

- The Interim Financial Review had been circulated and showed that year on year finances were static.
- The National Treasurer thanked the Council for their support in getting the 5% increase on subscriptions through Conference. This should enable the finances to break even by the end of the year.
- The Accounts had been well accepted by Conference.
- Need to be mindful of Network Transformation and the impact on membership levels.
- Need to look at representation rights on Locals and how they can be supported.

# Irrelevant

### c) Moderation of Forum

- The Forum was pulled previously as it was being used as a vehicle to criticise the NFSP.
- Conference had voted to have the Forum re-instated.
- The Forum will be reinstated on 1 August 2012.
- Need to inform members that ask why it has taken so long to reinstate between Conference and the beginning of August,

that this is because it takes time to get up and running and we have on board a new member of staff at Shoreham who will responsible for the administration of it. Also the need to have a Moderator.

- Any attacks against the NFSP will be removed.
- Reported that a couple of member's had shown interest in becoming the Moderator.
- The Executive Council will make the determination on who is appointed as Moderator.
- According to the Rules the Moderator has to be a member of the NFSP.
- Rule V(b) indicates that when the word member is stated in the Rules it relates to full members unless otherwise stated.
- The Federation Rules do not allow for a member of the Executive Council to hold the position of Moderator.
- Need to take cognisance of the word Moderator being singular, therefore there can only be one.
- The position for Moderator will be advertised in a Branch Secretaries Circular.
- Whoever moderates the Forum will need to be firm and remove unacceptable posts. Warnings will need to be given and if these are not adhered to then there should be a banning process.
- A debate took place on whether a collective view should be taken on Executive Officers going on or not going on the Forum. The outcome being that it would be up to each individual if they chose to go on the Forum or not.

DECISION/ACTION

**Irrelevant**

Strictly Private & Confidential

© National Federation of SubPostmasters



ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

**Irrelevant**

ACTION

ACTION

ACTION

Lynda Willoughby

June 2012

**GRO**

