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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUB-POSTMASTERS

REPORT OF A MEETING

of the

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

held on

5th, 6th, 7th JANUARY, 1997

at

ABBAY HOTEL, GREAT MALVERN

A G E N D A

JANUARY 1997

- A/1 REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS** of the
Executive Council Meeting held on 21st, 22nd, 23rd October 1996
Special Executive Council Meeting held on 8th December 1996

A/2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS

A/3 REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

The following reports refer:- NC/POCL 12.11.1996 [Pay]

POST OFFICE GROUP

Post Office Board

1. Post Office Board PO BD
 - Project Genesis

Government Affairs

2. Government Review PO PZ
 - Government Direct
 - The Post Office Inquiry - Trade and Industry Committee

Post Office Counters

3. Post Office Counters Board PO PC 02

Off-Shore Islands

4. (a) Guernsey OI GY
(b) Isle of Man OI IM
(c) Jersey OI JY

POST OFFICE COUNTERS LIMITED

Commercial

5. Marketing Briefings PC CM 01 NC

Human Resources

6. Training for Subpostmasters PC HR 04 NC

Mailwork

7. Payment System PC MP 04

Network

8. (a) Local Area Network Plans PC NW 02 NC
- Franchise Offices (*formerly PC FO*)
- Conformance Trial - Raising the Standard
(b) Future of Post Offices PC NW 03 *
(c) Counter Automation - BA/POCL PC NW 06 01 NC
(d) Counter Automation - APT/Bar-coding PC NW 06 02 NC
(e) Counter Automation - ALPS PC NW 06 07 NC
- Goodwill payment for Sub-Postmasters
(f) Counter Automation - Mondex Trial PC NW 06 08 NC
(g) Funding of SPSOs PC NW 09 03 NC

9. **Security**

- (a) POCL/NFSP MeetingsPC NW 11 01
- (b) Devolution of Budget to RegionsPC NW 11 01
 - 'Matrix' Approach to Format and Security
 - Regional Security Forums
- (c) EquipmentPC NW 11 02
 - Security Questionnaire and Research
 - Trial of Smoke & Dye Packs
 - New SPSO anti-bandit screen (SPSO 2000)
 - Access Doors
 - Anti-intruder Alarm Grants
 - Proposed Trial of Remote Alarm Signalling
 - Open Plan
- (d) Trauma Care ProgrammePC NW 11 03
- (e) CashcoPC NW 11 08 NC
- (f) RomecPC NW 11 09 NC

Product Range

- 10. (a) Postal OrdersPC PR 01
 - Open Value Postal Orders
 - Fife Shopping Vouchers
- (b) Gift VouchersPC PR 06

Quality

- 11. Customer FirstPC QY 01 *
- Change in Focus of the Quality Function
- Putting the Customer First - Transactional Training
- Putting the Customer First - Changes to the Questionnaire

Subpostmasters Contract

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|-----|-----|---|-------------|----|
| 12. | (a) | Termination Procedures | PC SC | * |
| | (b) | Introductory Payment | PC SC 04 | NC |
| | (c) | Trading Hours | PC SC 05 | |
| | (d) | Advertising/Canvassing | PC SC 07 | NC |
| | (e) | Loss of Office (Compensation Agreement) | PC SC 12 | NC |
| | (f) | Paypoint (CashStop) | PC SC 21 01 | |
| | (g) | NIPOC | PC SC 28 | |

Subpostmasters Pay

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|-----|-----|---|-------------|----|
| 13. | (a) | Pay Review | PC SP | NC |
| | (b) | Pay Claim 1996 | PC SP/1996 | |
| | (c) | Unit Credits | PC SP 01 | |
| | | - Revision of Postage Stamp Unit Credit | | |
| | | - Barcoded Bills and Ad Valorem * | | |
| | (d) | Intermittent Allowances | PC SP 02 03 | NC |
| | (e) | Telephone Allowances | PC SP 02 06 | NC |

POCL CLIENTS

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|-----|-------------------------------------|-------|----|
| 14. | <u>Benefits Agency</u> | CL BA | NC |
| 15. | <u>British Gas</u> | CL BG | NC |

British Telecom

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|-----|--|----------|--|
| 16. | BT Payment Card - Automated Scheme | CL BT 02 | |
|-----|--|----------|--|

Electricity Boards

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|-----|--------------|-------------|---|
| 17. | Norweb | CL EB 07 02 | * |
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Foreign Exchange

18. Corporate Bureau de Change CL FX 03

Girobank

19. (a) NFSP/Girobank Meetings CL GB 01 NC
(b) Products and Counter Services CL GB 08 NC

Insurance

20. General Insurance CL IN 02
- Sun Alliance

Local Authorities

21. Home Help/Care Stamps CL LA 01 NC

Lotteries

22. (a) National Lottery CL LO 01
- Camelot Vouchers
- Prize Payments

Mercury Communications

23. Bill Payment CL MC 02

Motoring Organisations

24. AA CL MO 02 NC

National Savings

25. NFSP Meetings CL NS 01 NC

Personal Banking

26. Personal Financial Services CL PB NC
- Trial in North Wales & North West Region

Payment Collection Services

27. (a) Vodafone CL PC 04
(b) Secure Homes CL PC 05

Royal Mail

28. Priority Services CL RM 05 02 NC

Utilities

29. (a) Amerada Hess Gas Ltd/British Fuels/
Southern & Phillips Gas CL UT)
(b) Total Gas CL UT 04)
(c) Eastern Natural Gas / Brecon Gas CL UT 05/06

30. **Water Authorities** CL WA NC

Organisations

31. POUNC FM OO NC

32. Conference Resolutions 1996

- 96/2..... 1996 Pay Award
96/4..... Pay Review: referendum
96/11..... Pay Review: special conference
96/12..... Pay Review: consultation with Branches
96/13..... Pay Review: no reduction in remuneration
96/19..... Counter Automation: payment for pensions and allowances
96/21..... Introductory Payment phased over 5 years/Pay Review
96/23..... Introductory Payment, trading up/Pay Review
96/26..... Mailwork: address any shortfall in pay
96/27..... Mailwork: parity of pay for Community Offices
96/28..... National Lottery: improved payment systems for prizes paid

- 96/29.....364 day year/Pay Review
- 96/31.....Ad valorem pensions and allowances/Pay Review
- 96/33.....Interpretation of what constitutes training for new work
- 96/34.....Pricing policy for local authority schemes
- 96/RB2(2)M.....Telephone allowance/definition of controlling office/Pay Review
- 96/37.....Purchase of leasehold/freehold where franchise office nearby
.....makes unviable/Pay Review
- 96/RB4(P).....Stress counselling
- 96/55.....Open plan offices
- 96/56.....Security screen parcel hatch door
- 96/57.....Interest free loans for external security improvements
- 96/60.....Provision of relief/s whilst Sub-Postmaster recovering from
.....trauma
- 96/70.....Acceptance of debit and credit cards for all transactions

A/4 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

A/5 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) PUBLICITY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. REPORT OF PREVIOUS P & D MEETING

17 - 19th November 1996

2. FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Annual Conference 12-14 May 1997 - Llandudno	FM AC 1997
Annual Conference 11-13 May 1998 - Bournemouth	FM AC 1998
Annual Conference 10-12 May 1999 - N. Ireland	FM AC 1999
Annual Conference 2000	FM AC 2000

3. FEDERATION INTERNAL

- a) Membership Statistics FI MR 04
- b) Re-mandating Exercise PC HR 03
- c) Membership Services FM MS
- d) Federation Organisation FM OG 04

e) Federation Publications

Sub-Postmasters Handbook	FM PB 02
Speakers Brief	FM PB 04
Branch Secretaries Guide	FM PB 07

f) Branch Secretary Seminar

Keele 12 - 14th September 1997	FM MS 04
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4. FEDERATION/PROMOTIONAL & PUBLICITY

a) Federation Centenary 1997

Wakefield Weekend	FM PP CENT 97
Other Events	

b) Sub Post Office Exhibitions

Edinburgh 12-13 October 1996	FM PP 01
Birmingham 11-12 October 1997	

c) Charity Fund

Children in Hospital	FM PP 03
Macmillan Nurses	

5. FEDERATION PUBLIC RELATIONS

6. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1996

Subscription Review	96/86
Support for Branch Secretaries	96/90
Purpose and Format of Annual Conference	96/94/95
Sub Postmasters Internal Prize Draw	96/96

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS (Previous)

Access to Legal Services	95/85
Access to Legal Services	95/86
Guidelines for Employing Staff (See FM MS 02)	95/88

Future Dates and Venues of EC Meetings

March 1997	Sunday 16 - Wednesday 19 March 1997	Malvern
June 1997	Monday 16 - Wednesday 18 June 1997	Malvern
Oct 1997	Monday 20 - Wednesday 22 October 1997	Malvern
Jan 1998	Sunday 4 - Tuesday 6 January 1998	To be decided

A/6 SPECIAL MATTERS

A) MEMBERSHIP

- (i) New Membership Computer FI MR 01

B) FINANCE

- (i) Treasurer's Report FI AC 02
(ii) Conference Grants to Delegates (Union Facilities) FM AC
(iii) Union Facilities / Re-mandating exercise FI MR 01
(iv) Composite Branch Return to the Certification Officer 1995 FI CO 03
(v) Regional Rules (Disbanding of District Committees) FM OG 04
(vi) Regional Council Union Facilities FM OG 05

C) JOURNAL

- (i) Editor's Report FM PB 01

D) TRADING

- (i) Eagle Star Scheme FI ES

A/7 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS PRIOR 1996

A/8 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1996

- 96/RB5(I).....Datapost Accounting Procedure
(FORMS CA114, CA116 & PF/376)
96/70.....Payment methods

A/9 MOTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

A/10 DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

(A) FOR DISCUSSION

POST OFFICE COUNTERS LIMITED

Human Resources

1. (a) Sub-Postmaster Attitudes PC HR 01

Network

2. (a) Electronic Stop Notice System (ESNS) PC NW 06 07
- (b) Cash Accounts PC NW 08 01
- Cash Account Forms and Related Documents 1997/98
- (c) Helplines PC NW 10 *

Subpostmasters Contract

3. (a) Christmas and New Year Arrangements 1996/97 PC SC 05 01

Subpostmasters Pay

4. (a) P271 PC SP 05 01

POCL CLIENTS

Girobank

5. (a) IDEAS Scheme CL GB 08 12

Local Authorities

6. (a) Plastic Payment Card Automated Schemes CL LA 01

Lotteries

7. (a) Littlewoods CL LO 02

Payment Collection Services

8. (a) Lombard Tricity Finance CL PC 01
- (b) Subscription Services Ltd CL PC 06
- (c) Mail Order Hampers CL PC 07

Royal Mail

9. (a) Stamps CL RM 05 05
 - Christmas 1996 Special Stamp Issue

Television Companies

10. (a) Yorkshire Cable Communications Ltd CL TV

A/10 (B) FOR INFORMATION

Commercial

1. (a) Market Research PC CM 02

Network

2. (a) Counter Automation - BA/POCL PC NW 06 01
 - Benefit Payment card wallets
- (b) Cash Accounts PC NW 08 01
 - Computersied Cash Accounts

Quality

3. (a) Disability Discrimination Act 1995 PC QY 01

POCL CLIENTS

Benefits Agency

4. (a) Reward Scheme / Payment Security Card CL BA 06

BBC

5. (a) Bank Giro Credit Trial/Cash Easy Entry Scheme CL BC 03

British Telecom

6. BT 'Match the code and win' Promotion CL BT 04

Girobank

7. (a) Alliance & Leicester - Giro CL GB 04
(b) Employment Services & 'King Alfred' Girocheques CL GB 08 12

Insurance

8. (a) Insurance Products Update CL IN
(b) Travel Insurance CL IN 01
(c) "New" Insurance Product CL IN 02

Lotteries

9. (a) Lottery Products - On-Line Sales Promotion CL LO 01
(b) Littlewoods Scratch Cards CL LO 02
- Win a Car (KA) Promotion

Department of National Savings

10. (a) Evidence of Identity CL NS 04

Royal Mail

11. (a) Royal Mail / Parcelforce CL RM
(b) Use of the Registered Service CL RM 05 02

Western Union

12. (a) Change of Supplier of Money Transfer Product CL WU

A/11 REPORT ON CENTRAL APPEALS

A/12 GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Discussion on the Future Structure/Strategy of the
National Federation of Sub-Postmasters.

A/13 NFSP TRADING LIMITED

A/14 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORTS

A/15 MATTERS RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR INCLUSION ON AGENDA

A/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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**REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
held on 5th, 6th, 7th JANUARY 1997 at the ABBEY HOTEL, MALVERN**

<i>Present</i>	Mr J E M Burford,	National President and Chairman
	Mr I Abernethy	Mr D A Evans
	Mr N Bradbrook	Mr B G Ingham
	Mr J Brennan	Mr J Jannetta
	Mr D T Broadwith	Mr H M Jones
	Mr A M Burrows	Mrs J G Kendall
	Mr A R Butlin	Miss C Lindon
	Mr M Challinor	Mr D F Marshall
	Mr M Darvill	Mr J Peberdy
	Mr R Edmondson	
<i>Apologies</i>	Miss E O Parcell	
<i>In Attendance:</i>	Mr C Baker	General Secretary
	Mr K Davis	Assistant General Secretary
	Mr P Heasman	Assistant General Secretary

THE CHAIRMAN welcomed those present, particularly Mr Evans attending his first full EC Meeting. He thanked MR BRADBROOK for the information that a Sub-Postmaster, Mr Jimmy Sutra, had collected his OBE for charity work awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. (*Secretarial note: Lt Col John Margaron TD, Sub-Postmaster, Queensferry SPSO, Clwyd, awarded OBE in New Year's Honour List*).

GRO He conveyed Miss Parcell's apologies for absence and, with regret, advised the Council of Miss Kit Lindon's resignation as a member of the Executive Council, and consequently Negotiating Committee, and Federation Trustee.

- It was DECIDED that on this occasion Miss Edwina Parcell should be offered the opportunity to nominate herself and/or vote by proxy for nominees on the Committees. DECISION
- During the course of the Meeting, MR ALAN BUTLIN was elected to be a member of the Negotiating Committee; MR MICHAEL DARVILL to be a member of the Publicity & Development Committee, and MR MICHAEL BURFORD a Federation Trustee. DECISION

**A/1 REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF 21-23 OCTOBER 1996
SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING OF 8TH DECEMBER 1996**

- The reports of the above meetings were approved as circulated. DECISION

A/2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS

There were no matters arising

A/3 REPORT OF MEETING OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

MR BURROWS advised that unfortunately he had had to cancel a scheduled meeting in December of the Negotiating Committee, but the Committee had met the previous evening.

1. POST OFFICE BOARD (PO BD)
Project Genesis

Project Genesis was described as a new development emanating from the Post Office Group. This latest initiative came *hot on the tail* of other Post Office initiatives and the General Secretary, who had attended a special presentation, was invited to provide an over-view of how it *dovetailed* into what else was happening on the automation front for the Post Office Group.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY reported that he had seen the need to *sweep up* all the different automation projects in the Group; the BA/POCL automation plans had been renamed *Horizon*, but there were 2 other initiatives to be linked: namely the *Transaction Information System (TIPS)*, and the *Stock Control System (SACS)*, the latter being an integrated system designed to replenish Post Office stock. *Project Genesis* was, therefore, the pivot, with each of the Businesses within The Post Office Group having its own automation project. In what he described as an illustration of how The Post Office could look, he described an integrated system with a central stores at Swindon instead of stores for each Region. *Project Genesis* was an opportunity for The Post Office to be at the *leading edge* of technology and quoted Duncan Hine as referring to the "*potential to be come the most powerful virtual company in Europe*". He appreciated that there was a perspective in which the future could look *scary* as customers need never enter a Post Office to access Post Office services - being able to access them on the internet and, at the delivery end, the postman presenting them with a pad to sign. There was, too, *Government Direct* to be taken into account where what could happen was similar: the public able to tax their cars at a kiosk in the local library via a system capable of checking insurance and MOT details. It should also be appreciated, however, if The Post Office did not embrace such technological concepts for the future then someone else would. Developments needed to be watched carefully - with Post Office involvement the Federation could influence/steer the direction but if another company/organisation gained the initiative in the market Sub-Postmasters would be disadvantaged. He commented: as Mr Hine had remarked "*Better Genesis than Exodus*".

THE CHAIRMAN endorsed the remarks as the need for the Federation was even greater. MR BRENNAN agreed that, indeed, if the Federation adopted the wrong attitude it could not hope to change events once any system was *up and running*. In response to MR BRADBROOK's suggestion that a Sub Committee should be set up to look after Sub-Postmasters' interests, MR BURROWS pointed out the General Secretary had seen the presentation, the Federation had conducted a successful ACT campaign, the full implications of *Project Genesis*, were not yet known, Mr Sweetman would be addressing the Council the following day, and the Negotiating Committee would be involved. The Editor, MR BROADWITH, advised he had not printed a letter to the journal on the subject pending a presentation. MR BURROWS agreed with MR EDMONDSON that the whole Executive Council should have a presentation as quickly as possible, not just the Negotiating Committee.

Executive Officers expressed their anxieties: MR JANNETTA was uneasy about the impact upon Sub-Postmasters of *Horizon* saying POCL had spoken of *massive savings to the Business* but not mentioned any benefit to Sub-Postmasters. THE GENERAL SECRETARY gave some examples of possible benefits: no need to carry out a cash account balance or stock reconciliation, modern technology used to give advice on such things as traffic flows, etc. MR BRADBROOK was worried about City reports and on software which could deliver letters electronically via

Royal Mail. MR DARVILL was concerned that Sub-Postmasters' wishes could be overridden in stock control matters, and MR INGHAM cautioned that Benefits Agency work needed careful attention as the future could see an overturning of what had been achieved in the past.

MR CHALLINOR said the EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale) system had so impressed him that he had installed the system in his own business. He estimated it to have saved him £5,000 in excessive stock holdings. *Project Genesis* might take work away but there would also be *windows of opportunity* so the Federation/Sub-Postmasters must be part of it and he, himself, would link his own business to such a system. Sky TV had already introduced a screen-ordering system but there were many people who could not afford the equipment, and other who would not wish to use it.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said there was nothing to indicate Sub-Postmasters' individual requirements for stock would not be recognised. If the Federation/Sub-Postmasters said "*Stop the world, I want to get off*", they would be allowed to! Commercial companies were constrained to make the best use of technology, ICL/Pathway would try to ensure their own place and use of their equipment in Post Offices. There would still be a place for the *touchy-feely* Post Office and Executive Officers should question Mr Sweetman the following day.

2. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS (PO PZ) Government Direct

The Green Paper *Government Direct* was described as having implications for Post Office Counters and, indeed, the Post Office Group - whilst they are looking at *Project Genesis* as a means of delivering the benefits, it was an area where the Federation needed to proceed with great caution. A draft submission from the Federation would be circulated to the Executive Council following the meeting.

Post Office Inquiry - Trade and Industry Committee

The Federation was now awaiting the recommendations of the *Post Office Inquiry of the Trade and Industry Committee* which, it was hoped, would capture and address the points made in the Federation's Memorandum to them.

3. POST OFFICE COUNTERS Post Office Counters Board (PO PC 02)

Details of the changes to Post Office Counters Ltd's Board had been circulated to the Executive Council following their issue on the 29th November. As far as the Counters Business was concerned, those Board changes involved Bob Peaple and David Taylor moving to Royal Mail. David Taylor would be replaced by David Morpheu of Royal Mail and Bob Peaple's role would be split between Jonathan Evans and Dick Wheelhouse. Paul Rich would take on Bob Peaple's Information Strategy role. There would, undoubtedly, be other Board changes. It was, however, disappointing that, having built up a relationship with people over many years, to have to start again with new people. An example of the difficulties that such changes created, was the last meeting between the Negotiating Committee and the Counters Executive Committee on strategy, when the Committee had had to deal with the Directors who had been advised at that time that they would be leaving the Counters Business within a month. That meeting was clearly not as valuable as others had been.

Irrelevant

POST OFFICE COUNTERS LTD
COMMERCIAL

5. Marketing Briefings (PC CM 01)

There was nothing to report.

HUMAN RESOURCES

6. Training for Sub-Postmasters (PC HR 04)

It was regrettable that there was nothing further to report on the subject of Sub-Postmasters' training. The subject had, however, been raised in the context of the Pay Review and in the context of *Quality*. Transactional training, in particular, seemed to be worrying the Counters Business, whilst the Federation was *pushing at their door* to improve the whole range of training which should be being provided to Sub-Postmasters. There was no doubt that this was one of the subjects which had *fallen victim* to the prolonged discussions on the pay negotiations, and it seemed appropriate to adopt this as one of the Federation's *Key Objectives for 1997*.

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

NETWORK

8. (a) Local Area Network Plans (PC NW 02)
Franchise Offices (formerly PC FO)
Conformance Trial - Raising the Standard

There was nothing specific to report. However, it would have been noted that, as part of the ancillary issues associated with the Pay Claim and Pay Review, there was now a formal offer for the Federation to become involved in the networking for Sub Post Offices, and the Federation would be seeking full involvement in the formulation of local area network plans once that forum became established and was underway. THE CHAIRMAN directed discussion of Opening Hours should be taken under *Item 12(C) Trading Hours*.

- (b) Future of Post Offices

MR ABERNETHY referred to the circulation of the article from the *Donegal Democrat* of 7th November 1996 and foresaw damage which could be done to Post Offices. An exercise undertaken by an RNM indicated that only 13, out of 56 Offices, would be included in automation. He pointed out that if APT machines had been made available to each Office, that would have allowed rural Offices to get involved with a basic sort of automation. He wondered how many Sub Offices would eventually *drop out* as this would impact upon finance - as had been experienced at the time of decimalisation.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY saw 2 issues: (i) the possibility of shrinking network following automation. Although the Federation did support POCL in closing a Community Office, if it was necessary, at the time of a Sub-Postmaster's resignation, he agreed if a Sub-Postmaster was thinking of leaving, automation could be the *final straw*. The first approach was to produce a video explaining *Horizon* in a *warm* way to encourage Sub-Postmasters to embrace technology as non-threatening. The Federation had offered assistance in this for members and non-members, eg, Branch officials should Sub-Postmasters' about their worries and how the Federation could help. He did not believe the Counters Business was *scope-ing* rural Offices with a view to closing them. The newspaper was an examination on (ii) harmonising *The Post*. The UK was unique in the number of Post Offices it had - although *Post Office* was a misnomer, Post Offices were *post-orientated* - and there were concerns about the future of the work and the future of the Federation. Hence the need to support the introduction of automation in a *warm* way to make sure Sub-Postmasters *stayed on board*.

(c) Counter Automation - BA/POCL (PC NW 06 01)

Although there was no circulated correspondence on this subject, it was now known that the BA/POCL project was named "*Horizon*" and that, on the current plans, the second phase of the roll-out would commence in Spring 1997 and would involve a further 90 Post Offices in the South West, and 100 in Tyne & Wear. There was much work to be done on this and the work concerning the payment due to Sub-Postmasters for the transactions involved could again be seen as part of the ancillary letter to that accompanying the Pay Review. Additionally, a communication was awaited from Post Office Counters advising Sub-Postmasters of what they can expect from *Day-One* when the new system was put into their Post Offices. There had been confusion generated by the different information given out by different people within the Counters Business and there was a need for a clear, concise, piece of communications - and the Federation were pressing for that and, indeed, had been promised that it would be forthcoming. Continued pressure would be applied to the Counters Business to avoid some of the confusion which was clearly being experienced at the moment.

Executive Officers expressed their concerns about the confusion getting worse, rather than better with some Regions failing to disseminate information quickly enough, or inaccurately - for instance some RNM's were advising that only one counter position in some Post Offices would be automated. It appeared that the introduction of the system would not be *piece-meal*, as previously thought, but from *day-one*, although it also seemed that a manual input would be needed for those not fully automated. Clarification was required on what would happen with the ECCO system once *Horizon* was adopted.

- MR BURROWS shared the Council's frustration. The information gained in Newcastle did seem at odds with that imparted at the meeting with the CEC; the RDC did not seem to know what was going on and many POCL personnel had been on holiday over the Christmas/New Year period. Action to gain information was a priority as it was important for the future of the organisation and the trust of members.

ACTION

MR BRADBROOK's observed that when the ALPS business had started it had been advised that the General Secretary would be consulted on all parts of the project - but now POCL seemed to be moving away from that. THE GENERAL SECRETARY agreed that was when the specifications were being written but the Federation had not been part of the informed selection following tendering. Matters had been made more difficult because of personnel changes: Bob Peale had ceased running this for POCL and Paul Rich had been brought in, Andrew Stott had since left and another person brought in.

(d) Counter Automation - APT/BAR-Coding (PC NW 06 02)

There was no correspondence on this subject, although Post Office Counters would soon be seeking a meeting early in the New Year to discuss the implications of bar-coding of bills. It was expected that the Counters Business would approach the Federation for a reduction in the payment for the acceptance of utility bills, and such overtures would be resisted.

MR BRADBROOK advised of some disorder in his Region with Sub-Postmasters tearing off the bottom part of the Bill so one could not recognise if bills had already been paid. MR BURROWS agreed that the gas billing system was in some disarray; there were, though, clear and concise instructions to those operating APT

barcoding not to retain anything but to give the whole bill and receipt back to the customer. He suggested, however, that an attempt should be made to check back to see if anything could be done about it.

As a point of information, MR DARVILL advised Midlands Electricity transactions were barcoded but Post Office APT machines could not read them. MR CHALLINOR advised he understood the plastic card was designed to be used by other outlets.

MR BUTLIN commented on the problem caused by misleading information in *Counter News Week 29*, and a suitable amendment had still not been issued in the *Counter News* (the correct information being that Offices without barcode readers should enter bills for Eastern Electric, East Midlands Electric and British Gas on the *Daily Record of Deposits, G6301, as Pivot Code 18*).

(e) Counter Automation - ALPS (PC NW 06 07)
Reimbursement of electricity costs for ALPS

In view of the activity on the Pay Review and the bringing together of the Annual Report, the Negotiating Committee had been unable to proceed with the Resolution of the Executive Council made at the October Meeting to pursue a goodwill payment for those Sub-Postmasters currently operating the ALPS system in the London Region. This had not been overlooked, and would be pursued at the most opportune time. The Committee would, however, be negotiating with the same people who negotiated the Pay Review with, and one of the ancillary issues was, of course, the payment for counter automation. There was a commitment to be in meaningful discussions with Post Office Counters in a matter of 2 to 3 weeks, and the Committee would be making representations for this goodwill payment at that time. It would also be capturing the point about the heat generated by computers which has necessitated the installation of air-conditioning.

MR DARVILL advised that the time taken to access information within the ALP's system was becoming even slower.

(f) Counter Automation - Mondex Trial (PC NW 06 08)

Mondex had received a boost to its credibility at the end of November when *Mastercard* acquired a 50% share in the Company. *Visa* had announced a trial of its own electronic purse, *VisaCash*, in Leeds - and *American Express* had secured a similar deal to *Mastercard* in signing up with the majority of Belgium's retail banks, who also produce a *smartcard electronic purse* system. Clearly the banks and financial institutions were pushing their customers into a *cash-less* society but the information from customers themselves was that they are still reluctant to take on the *Mondex* principle of an *electronic purse*. With 3 major players in this field, there would clearly be pressure on consumers to become *cash-less* and probably more advertising in that direction in the near future. In the meantime, however, there was considerable uncertainty - not only with consumers but also with the financial institutions themselves - who had still to turn a successful *pilot* into a commercial winner. It was likely that the principle of an *electronic purse* would form part of the wider automation discussions on *Project Genesis*, the Government's Green Paper and, of course, Post Office Counters' own initiatives.

(g) Funding of SPSOs (PC NW 09 03)

The General Secretary and MR BURROWS had visited Cashco in Manchester when an impressive explanation had been given of the processes involved in the cash assembly and delivery to Sub-Postmasters. It is still the Federation's intention to achieve a national standard for the provision of cash to Sub Post Offices and an early meeting with Bryan

Roberts, the Head of Distribution for Post Office Counters, was sought to resolve existing problems.

MR JANNETTA was of the view that in order to meet a national standard for the delivery of cash during run-up to holiday period, Cashco would have to double its fleet of vehicles and wondered whether the EC should recommend a figure, eg, 50K or 125K. THE GENERAL SECRETARY said the amount was a concern for POCL, not Cashco, and what the Federation was looking for was a process map which gave Sub-Postmasters a delivery when they required it.

MR EDMONDSON advised the in Leeds private carriers had previously been used but, following the recent switch to Cashco, the service so far had been excellent.

9. SECURITY

(a) POCL/NFSP Meetings (PC NW 11 01) and other subjects under Item 9 Security

A meeting between the General Secretary, MR BURROWS, and the Security Division had taken place on the 28th October and clearance of the Minutes was awaited when they would circulated to the Executive Council. The subjects covered under this section of the Agenda had all discussed at the meeting. Executive Council Officers had been provided with details of the *Matrix* approach to *Format and Security*. This *Matrix* was circulated on the 19th December, and the details should be a useful addition for Executive Officers in dealing with questions from individual Sub-Postmasters in their Region.

Also circulated on the 19th December, were the results of the *1996 Security Questionnaire*. These results set out the views of Sub-Postmasters and staff regarding security and this indicated that there were differing views held by differing groups of Sub-Postmasters. This *pointed-up* the difficulty of trying to provide security equipment and protection for Sub-Postmasters across a wide network with differing requirements. The information contained in the results would be used in on-going discussions with the Security Division.

As far as the equipment was concerned, information regarding the research on *Screen 2000* has been provided to Council - from which it would be seen that, generally speaking, the *Screen 2000* had been received very well by those Sub-Postmasters concerned.

The subject of the *Trauma Care* programme had been discussed at the meeting with the Security Division on the 28th October and a letter received from Margaret Beaumont dated 25th November. The letter gave an up-to-date resumé on where the *Trauma Care* programme stood and the leaflet, referred to in the letter, was awaited to cover information on the effects of trauma and the availability of the trauma counselling. These would be circulated to the Executive Council on receipt.

The General Secretary and MR BURROWS had meet with Cashco on 29th October, as previously reported earlier. Part of the presentation from Cashco was to ask the Federation to reconsider the method by which *Smoke and Dye* cases were received at Sub Post Offices. There had been resistance to Cashco's overtures for Sub-Postmasters to receive these boxes; however, the offer was made to afford Cashco an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to Sub-Postmasters' security by making a contribution towards the Security Screen Update programme currently being undertaken. Cashco had agreed to discuss the matter with Alex Docherty of Post Office Counters and development from this discussion were awaited.

Being cynical, MR EVANS saw a *balanced scale* between *commercial advantage* and *risk*. He quoted an instance of a Sub Post Office of 13,000-14,000 units having had 5 armed robberies but was still awaiting security camera/s, with lack of funds being the excuse given.

MR DARVILL was concerned about the inadequacy of some RNM's who had received some trauma care training. MR BURROWS said the Federation had been endeavouring to get trauma care for some time and had now secured it. He advised that RNM's had been trained in order to provide an initial, point of call, contact and advice, with more professional advice provided by the Employee Support counsellor. If the latter advice was not forthcoming if needed, that was a matter which needed to be addressed, but it could be difficult to access as often people denied needing help.

MR JONES advocated ensuring that trauma care counsellors were available during holiday periods - this matter to be pursued at Regional Security Forums. MR BURROWS referred to Margaret Beaumont's letter of 25 November "*Should one of our sub offices experience an attack but the retail network manager has not yet received training, nor is a trained substitute available, then Employee Support will be alerted immediately so that those affected have exactly the same support offer to them. No one should be left to suffer without support being readily available.*" He appreciated the frustrations expressed but now wanted to see how well the new procedures worked out.

MR BRADBROOK advised how Sub-Postmasters and assistants who had suffered an armed attack often saw every customer as a potential assailant. Trauma care was non-existent in the South East. On Regional Security Forums, he had had 5 Regional Offices. On Screen 2000 whatever company was used conformance to POCL's specifications was required. It appeared POCL were willing to visit Post Office to assess equipment and give them a *clean bill of health*. MR BURROWS advocated that when Executive Officers attended Regional Security Forums they should be pro-active in obtaining as much information as possible, ie, on equipment utilisation and budgets. He objected to a Region having a security budget of, say, £495,000 but having to write of £1½ million in losses.

In reply to a query from MR BROADWITH about Sub-Postmasters who though Screen 2000 unsuitable for their Office, MR BURROWS not received any such report previously so it caused a dilemma - the Federation having endorsed Screen 2000 because of the split.

MR INGHAM advised on RNM's in the North East putting security requirements in *Letters of Appointment*. He thought security matters POCL's responsibility and thought Mr Bradbrook's *Bill of Health* idea good. THE GENERAL SECRETARY expressed surprise on the former point because the relevant Agreement had been circulated. (BSC 5/1996 of 25 January 1996).

Referring to what incoming Sub-Postmasters were required to do, in MR BUTLIN's view POCL were always trying to *push the boundaries*. He asked whether the Regional Security Budgets were *set in tablets of stone* each year. MR BURROWS replied each Region, each year, bid for a Security Budget depending upon geographical area and should discuss with the Federation how many alarms to bid for in the ensuing year. The difficulty was that the Head of Human Resources was responsible for Security, whilst the Head of Facilities was responsible for the Budget, so a *dog-fight* ensued, an example of which was to find £50,000 *creamed off* the Security Budget for other purposes - hence the need to get into Security Forums in depth. He urged Executive Officers to overcome any difficulties and hold Security Forums in their Regions as quickly as possible but to

ensure that both parties learned to develop mutual trust so that more information could be shared and made available.

In reply to a question on who should be members of the Security Forum, THE GENERAL SECRETARY did not presume to advise but was of the opinion the persons from the Federation should be of the highest level possible but dependable and capable of keeping information in confidence. The Federation had asked for details of Security Budgets, not only the global sum of money but a breakdown of the £800,000.

- It was quoted by MR EDMONDSON that the quoted price of Screen 2000 had risen from £2,900 in June, to £3,927 in October. MR MARSHALL believed the increase might be for "holes" - ie, to facilitate the installation of *Horizon* equipment at a later date. MR BURROWS undertook to take the matter back.

ACTION

Irrelevant

TION

Irrelevant

(Agenda)

QUALITY

11. Customer First (PC QY 01)

Change in Focus of the Quality Function

Putting the Customer First - Transactional Training

The main news on *Putting the Customer First* was the changing the frequency of the questionnaire - which had been the subject of a letter dated the 18th December from Post Office Counters. A key decision emanating from the research done on *Customer First*, was to move the frequency of issuing questionnaires for those Offices achieving 90%-scores from every year to every 2 years. There would be other changes, and the offer to keep the Federation informed had been received. However, the latest initiative in *Putting the Customer First* would be welcomed by Sub-Postmasters who were feeling there to be *questionnaire overload* within the network and vindicated the stance taken by the Executive Council.

As regards the *Transactional Training*, the Counters Business had advised that 57% of Sub-Postmasters were accepting the invitations and 26% of Sub-Postmasters had turned down 2-or-more invitations to attend this training. The Business was very concerned at the lower acceptance rate of this style of training and would be asking the Federation's assistance in identifying what more could be done to encourage Sub-Postmasters and their staff to attend these training evenings. The Federation might need to address this particular subject of training, as it had been criticising the Counters Business for not paying Sub-Postmasters and their staff to go to training sessions. Clearly, even when payment was made, the take-up of these sessions was still extremely low. The Committee would keep the Council advised as to developments in this area.

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

(f) PayPoint (CashStop) (PC SC 21 01)

The debut of *PayPoint* cards in Northern Ireland was not the success its initiators had hoped for - although the Federation could not, of course, take matters lightly. As could be seen from the correspondence, a letter had been written to *OFTEL* to see if acceptance of these *PayPoint* could not be undertaken on a much wider network, including Sub Post Offices. It was understood that *PayPoint* was still on schedule to roll-out in April - a national roll-out and would involve an eventual 8,000 terminals in *neighbourhood* shops and petrol forecourts across the United Kingdom.

A Head of Retail Network from the Midlands, Edward Inches, had *defected* to *PayPoint* to join a colleague who *defected* from the Retail Development Centre in the early days. Therefore, even though the launch in Northern Ireland was not the success that they would have wanted, the Federation must not treat *PayPoint* as anything other than a serious threat at this stage and do all it could to counter that threat.

To MR BUTLIN's request for information on what had happened to the APT machines designated for Northern Ireland to THE GENERAL SECRETARY was unable to give an immediate answer and replied that it was not yet known where *PayPoint* was going next - there was talk of the Midlands, South West, but POCL wanted to ensure the machines were in the right place at the right time.

MR ABERNETHY advised of a meeting between *PayPoint* and POCL before Christmas when it had been suggested to the consortium that the cards should be embossed in order to be made available through imprinters. He thought another meeting imminent. He had heard that the reason why the trial had been switched to Northern Ireland was that there were not enough outlets in the North East prepared to undertake the work possibly because they would have to have their accounts swept within 2 days to clear transactions.

(g) NIPOC (PC SC 28)

The correspondence dated the 13th November, included a letter dated the 11th November on the latest position on the NIPOC exercise. That correspondence, some of the strongest which MR BURROWS had seen from Federation Headquarters, re-stated the Federation's position:- that it still required confirmation that Sub-Postmasters excluded from the NIPOC exercise for staff costs would be excluded for the purpose of non-staff costs, and Mr Bloor was working with John Legg of Post Office Counters in seeking to resolve the issues. It was a very complicated and complex subject, the experts are working away on it and it was hoped to have the position resolved in time for inclusion in the *Supplementary Report*.

MR EVANS recalled the subject discussed at last year's Conference. He had no criticism of the Secretariat and Philip Bloor had explained the subject clearly to him. He thought it unbelievable for POCL to change the criteria and wished to register his *deep concern* that this money had been outstanding for 4 or 5 years. It should be repaid to Sub-Postmasters and reinvested into their private pensions. All the time the Post Office held on to it, the money was lost to Sub-Postmasters.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

DECISION

Irrelevant

DECISION

POCL CLIENTS

14. Benefits Agency (CL BA)

There was nothing to report on this subject. Specifically, the main activity with this client was contained in the *Horizon Project*, discussed earlier in the Agenda.

Irrelevant

GIROBANK

19. (a) NFSP/Girobank Meetings (CL GB 01)
(b) Products and Counters Services (CL GB 08)

There is no correspondence on the subject, although advice had been received from Girobank that they had purchased *Sovereign Finance*. Some Executive Officers would recall that *Sovereign Finance* were a very "iffy" company and there were a number of complaints about them from Sub-Postmasters. They had since been bought out by The Bank of Austria, Austria's largest financial institution and had significantly *cleaned-up its act*. Its acquisition by Girobank would *clean it up* yet more and, it was hoped, the company could trade on Girobank's *good name*, and it added to Girobank's portfolio in now providing specialist financial services for business. The Managing Director of Girobank had asked that this be made known to the Federation's Executive Council and Sub-Postmasters and, with the Editor's kind permission, it might be helpful for relationship if a space could be found, at the Editor's discretion, to announce this acquisition in the "*Subpostmaster*".

MR DARVILL mentioned that the National Westminster Bank were closing 350 branches, but Girobank appeared not to be endeavouring to promote new accounts

and THE GENERAL SECRETARY requested information on Girobank's rapid reaction to bank closures.

(Agenda)

Irrelevant

CTION

genda)

Irrelevant

In reply to a query from MR DARVILL as to whether Camelot could be persuaded to make their accounting day Wednesday, MR DAVIS did not think so because Post Offices were only 16% of outlets; and there was no reconciliation problem with Camelot, most errors being wrong line entries, etc.

Irrelevant

MR BROADWITH drew attention to transactional training and the tests being carried out to ascertain *knowledge on instincts*, which MR BURROWS explained as the BLP (Best Lottery Practice) conducted by Camelot on all their retailers to make sure people had a basic knowledge of the work.

DECISION

ACTION

Irrelevant

DECISION

(Agent)

Irrelevant

DECISION

(Agenda)

(Agenda)

(Agenda)

Irrelevant

(Agenda)

ORGANISATIONS

31. POUNC (FM OO)

There had been no further meetings with POUNC since the meeting between the General Secretary and MR BURROWS of the 10th October when they fully briefed the Chairman of POUNC on the Federation's submission on the Green Paper which, subsequently, appeared to be totally ignored! The Federation would maintain contact with POUNC in the hope that they will take more of an interest than they appear to have done so far.

32. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 1996

96/2	1996 Pay Award
96/4	Pay Review: referendum
96/11	Pay Review: special conference
96/12	Pay Review: consultation with Branches
96/13	Pay Review: no reduction in remuneration
96/19	Counter Automation: payment for pensions and allowances
96/21	Introductory Payment phased over 5 years/Pay Review
96/23	Introductory Payment, trading up/Pay Review
96/26	Mailwork: address any shortfall in pay
96/27	Mailwork: parity of pay for Community Offices
96/28	National Lottery: improved payment systems for prizes paid
96/29	364 day year/Pay Review
96/31	Ad valorem pensions and allowances/Pay Review
96/33	Interpretation of what constitutes training for new work
96/34	Pricing policy for local authority schemes
96/RB2(2)M	Telephone allowance/definition of controlling office/Pay Review
96/37	Purchase of leasehold/freehold where franchise office nearby makes unviable/Pay Review
96/RB4(P)	Stress counselling
96/55	Open plan offices
96/56	Security screen parcel hatch door
96/57	Interest free loans for external security improvements
96/60	Provision of relief/s whilst Sub-Postmaster recovering from trauma
96/70	Acceptance of debit and credit cards for all transactions

All Conference Resolutions remitted to the Negotiated Committee had been incorporated within the Annual Report and had been the subject of discussions with the Executive Council.

In concluding his Report, on behalf of the Committee and himself, MR BURROWS wished to place on record grateful thanks for the work done by MISS LINDON on the Negotiating Committee over 6-7 years. She had supported the Executive Council and worked extremely hard on behalf of the NC and her fellow Sub-Postmasters. She had always been *independently-minded* with a *driving, vital spirit* and would be deeply missed. He wished her well.

MISS LONDON thanked the Executive Council for the reception they had arranged for her the previous evening, for their best wishes, for all her memories as she had enjoyed all the time she had worked on the Executive Council and she had enjoyed the company of all the people with whom she had worked. She expressed her very best wishes to the Federation for the future.

- The Executive Council APPROVED the Report of the Negotiating Committee.

DECISION

A/4 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- The Annual Report for 1996 was considered in draft form as circulated and amendments thereto were AGREED and the Report APPROVED.

DECISION

A/5 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) REPORT OF THE PUBLICITY & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. REPORT OF PREVIOUS P & D MEETINGS

Since the last meeting of the Executive Council the Publicity and Development Committee had met twice, on the 17-19 November in Boumemouth and on the 10 December in Liverpool.

2. FEDERATION CONFERENCES

Llandudno 12th - 14th May 1997

FM AC 97

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

- It was agreed that an invitation be extended to Mr Stuart Sweetman, Managing Director, Post Office Counters, as a guest and to speak at Conference 1996, (but with a General Election forthcoming no decision was made on a political speaker).

DECISION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

a)

Federation Centenary 29 - 30 May 1997

FM PP CENT

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

CENTENARY BOOK, which was almost complete. He read out a list invited guests who had replied to the invitation to attend: Mr & Mrs Stuart Sweetman accepted, Richard Dykes declined, Mr & Mrs John Roberts accepted, Mr and Mrs Kevin Williams of Parcellforce, Sir Marcus Fox declined, Colin Croxall accepted, Mayor of Wakefield accepted, Bishop of Wakefield hopes to accept, Paul Webster accepted, Alban Morgan had queried whether travelling expenses would be paid (the Council was consulted on this and decided no travelling expenses would be paid), B Taylor hopes to be able to accept. Mrs Doreen Jacobs had not been invited

GRO

THE GENERAL SECRETARY then reported on those invited to sponsor the event. Of those

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

ICL/Pathway were prepared to make a modest donation.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

ACTION

- The idea of inviting a politician from each of the 3 main political parties was directed to be investigated (and also noted that Roy Hattersley lived nearby and might be appropriate).

ACTION

ACTION

DECISION

DECISION

DECISION

Irrelevant

DECISION

Irrelevant

DECISION

(Agenda)

Irrelevant

DECISION

DECISION

Irrelevant

ACTION

Irrelevant

ECISION

ECISION

DECISION

DECISION

Irrelevant

ACTION

DECISION

Irrelevant

Network

2	(a)	Electronic Stop Notice System (ESNS)	PC NW 06 07
	(b)	Cash Accounts	PC NW 08 01
		- Cash Account Forms and Related Documents 1997/98	
	(c)	Helplines	PC NW 10

MR DAVIS advised there was a Review of *Helplines* being undertaken by the Business which was why some had received letter from a Head of Human Resources asking for their comments.

MR PEBERDY asked what was known in the North West about a *Remedy Trial* and MR JONES responded it would be part of the Region's remit to enquire.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

Network

- | | | | |
|----|-----|--|-------------|
| 2. | (a) | Counter Automation - BA/POCL
- Benefit Payment card wallets | PC NW 06 01 |
| | (b) | Cash Accounts
- Computerised Cash Accounts | PC NW 08 01 |

Quality

- | | | | |
|----|-----|------------------------------------|----------|
| 3. | (a) | Disability Discrimination Act 1995 | PC QY 01 |
|----|-----|------------------------------------|----------|

POCL CLIENTS

Benefits Agency

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 4. | (a) | Reward Scheme / Payment Security Card | CL BA 06 |
|----|-----|---------------------------------------|----------|

BBC

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|----------|
| 5. | (a) | Bank Giro Credit Trial/Cash Easy Entry Scheme | CL BC 03 |
|----|-----|---|----------|

British Telecom

- | | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 6. | | BT 'Match the code and win' Promotion | CL BT 04 |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|----------|

Girobank

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|-------------|
| 7. | (a) | Alliance & Leicester - Giro | CL GB 04 |
| | (b) | Employment Services & 'King Alfred' Girocheques | CL GB 08 12 |

Insurance

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---------------------------|----------|
| 8. | (a) | Insurance Products Update | CL IN |
| | (b) | Travel Insurance | CL IN 01 |
| | (c) | "New" Insurance Product | CL IN 02 |

Lotteries

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|----------|
| 9. | (a) | Lottery Products - On-Line Sales Promotion | CL LO 01 |
| | (b) | Littlewoods Scratch Cards
- Win a Car (KA) Promotion | CL LO 02 |

Department of National Savings

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|----------------------|----------|
| 10. | (a) | Evidence of Identity | CL NS 04 |
|-----|-----|----------------------|----------|

Royal Mail

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 11. | (a) | Royal Mail / Parcelforce | CL RM |
| | (b) | Use of the Registered Service | CL RM 05 02 |

Western Union

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|--|-------|
| 12. | (a) | Change of Supplier of Money Transfer Product | CL WU |
|-----|-----|--|-------|

A/11 REPORT ON CENTRAL APPEALS

There were none.

Irrelevant

Irrelevant

DECISION

GRO

GILL PAYNE