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**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF SUB-POSTMASTERS**

**REPORT OF THE**

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
MEETING**

**held on**

**18th, 19th and 20th MARCH 2001**

**at**

**THE GRIMSTOCK COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL  
WARWICKSHIRE**



## Report of a Meeting of the National Executive Council

Held on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2001  
at The Grimstock Country House Hotel, Warwickshire

*Present* Mr N Bradbrook - National President and Chairman

Mr A R Butlin	Mr D F Marshall
Mr M Challinor	Mr D Milner
Mr M Darvill	Mr H Morgan-Jones
Mr P Finlay	Mr J Morris
Mr J Jannetta	Mr J Peberdy
Mrs P M Jenkins	Mrs S Reeves
Mr C Jones	Mr M Roger
Mr M Jones	Mr P Walsh
Mrs J Kendall	Mr J Willshaw
Mr I McLean	

<i>In</i>	Mr C Baker	General Secretary
<i>Attendance:</i>	Mr K Davis	Assistant General Secretary
	Mrs K Davis	Assistant General Secretary

THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT opened the meeting. He started by saying that Mr. Mervyn Jones might have to leave the meeting at any moment

**GRO** He then asked for a minute's silence to mourn the passing of Alan Potter, BEM, JP, past National President.

**GRO**

Due to the need for Motions for Conference to be discussed by the Executive Council, items under A4 would be taken first, but reported in the correct numerical order of the Meeting Agenda.

On the Supplementary Report Clauses 9 and 10 would be deferred until Tuesday morning.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY then informed the Executive Council that this was the last scheduled meeting for a number of colleagues. He said that at Conference there might or might not be a meeting. At the back of the room had been put the lists for people to put their names down to stand on the various committees, the dead line for applications would be lunchtime Tuesday.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY advised that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Stephen Byers MP was to address the Executive Council immediately after lunch on the following day.

*This part of the meeting was recorded in detail and is the subject of a separate report entitled "Report of the Meeting between Stephen Byers MP and The National Executive Council."*

## **A/1 REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Executive Council Meeting held on 8th and 9th January 2001

- **The Minutes of this meeting had been circulated and were approved.**

DECISION

## **A/2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE REPORTS**

There were none.

## **A/3 REPORT OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE**

Nothing to report.

### **1. GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

PO PZ

#### **1. (a) Mori Research**

PO PZ

MR PEBERDY said that the results were expected soon which would provide interesting and useful information which would then be circulated to the Executive Council.

#### **1 (b) Response to Preserving Access to Post Offices In Rural Areas**

PO PZ

#### **1 (c) Postcomm Research Study**

PO PZ

#### **1 (d) Response to Licence for Consignia Plc A Consultation Document**

PO PZ



1. (e) Post Office Closures in Wales  
Response to Welsh Affairs Committee

PO PZ

MR PEBERDY commended Annabel Barnett on the excellent research papers she had produced, which would be useful documents to make reference to if the need arose from the public and other organisations which might be addressed..

2. PERFORMANCE AND INNOVATION UNIT (PIU)

PO PZ 01

2. (a) Subpostmasters Conferences

PO PZ 01

MR PEBERDY reported that the Subpostmasters Conferences had started badly, so much so that both he and THE GENERAL SECRETARY had spoken to Dave Miller with the result that several pieces of information were sent out together with questions. Both he and THE GENERAL SECRETARY had got Stuart Sweetman, Dave Miller, Basil Larkins and Alan Johnson into the same room, to try to have the statement made by the Government reiterated and tell Basil Larkins how the Federation saw it.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY laid down certain caveats which was the stance of the Federation. Alan Johnson was not too keen on what was being said. They tried to address where the Federation felt they had been going wrong from the messages that had been taken on board from the Conferences. There would now be small group meetings in the Western Territory. There would be a different message now with heavy reference to the Federation, heavy reference to compensation package in place, new contract negotiations, all negotiations would have the involvement of the Federation. Both he and THE GENERAL SECRETARY were very pleasantly surprised.

MR MORGAN JONES questioned how the Post Office had got it so wrong. Eric Logan had given out the wrong information particularly about the Universal Bank.

MRS REEVES enquired about the future of the Conferences later in the year. Had the Post Office taken on board the problems that had come out of the Subpostmasters Conferences.

MR PEBERDY replied that Eric Logan had been admonished and the errors of his ways pointed out. At this stage they had received an assurance that the Post Office would deal with the Federation in the Network Project Reinvention Board.

MR PEBERDY then spoke about the numerous identical letters that had been received from the Sheffield and Chesterfield areas to which THE GENERAL SECRETARY had responded in order to ensure that the message of the Federation was delivered.

MR JANNETTA said that maybe there had been an attempt at trying to get a National Campaign started as identical letters had landed in Scotland.

2. (b) Letter to the Prime Minister  
Letter to the Chancellor

PO PZ 01

MR PEBERDY reported that these letters had emanated from the meeting with Geoffrey Norris which had been arranged in order to get the Federation's views and also the requirements of the Federation put into the Labour Party Manifesto. The Chancellor in his Budget Statement should re-state the Government's commitment to this funding with suggestions that it should be in the Labour Party Handbook. That there should be some statement about post offices and some commitment when the Government decided to go to the country.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that he had seen a draft of the Handbook which included one and a half pages on post offices. He was extremely encouraged. He continued that post offices would also be in the Conservative Party Manifesto and he would soon be having a meeting because they were missing the return to the Benefits Payment Card, that would be completely the wrong thing because everything was now on the banking role and that would be a retrograde step to introduce only the Benefits Payment Card. They were also on about privatisation.

The NATIONAL PRESIDENT asked THE GENERAL SECRETARY whether he thought the present Government had any ideas on privatisation to which THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that he did most definitely and that by 2005 they would have had a go at it. The whole Consignia issue would enable them to do it in Europe, to acquire things abroad and the separation of the business into the constituent parts and bringing together everything under one umbrella. That they would have the brand Post Office, Royal Mail their brand and ParcelForce their brand, all to do with privatising the Post Office down the track. As the Post Office wanted to break away from the public sector. This would continue where the Conservative Party had left off. This move away from the public sector towards privatisation would be resisted by the CWU.

2. (c) Universal Bank

PO PZ 01

THE GENERAL SECRETARY reported that there were difficulties with the banks on the opening of PAT 14 accounts. The British Bankers Association

had met with the Minister. It had started with the Halifax who had set their face completely against post offices having accounts and in fact sharing the brand. The Government's position was because they had all followed suit, none of the banks wanted post offices to open their accounts. They argued that if subpostmasters opened their accounts then subpostmasters were opening accounts for the banks, not the banks and that would lead to people having bank accounts which they might or might not want. They felt that this would facilitate money laundering. They did not want their branches to sit side by side with post office branches which they felt were scruffy and there was the payment issue.

But whilst the banks were up for the PAT 14 accounts drawing money out of the Post Offices and ATMs, they were not up for opening accounts. The Government's position was whether or not to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, whether to get that and then work towards account opening down the track or whether to continue to fight and delay the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding until this issue had been resolved. The longer it would take to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, the more people would get nervous, the more the banks would get nervous, the more the City would get nervous and the more opportunities there would be for the banks to slip away.

He finished by saying that the Executive Council would need to pursue Stephen Byers on this and make their feelings known to him. THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that it might not be the end of the world if subpostmasters did not open these accounts because if the opening of PAT 14 accounts was made more difficult then one might be more inclined to have a Post Office Card Account. However if there was incentivisation for PAT 14 then the more difficult that is made then it was more difficult for subpostmasters to get incentive, PAT 14 would enable more than one hit per week at the Post Office as opposed to the Card Account which was one hit one day, so he admitted that he had mixed feelings. He said that the Government would say that they have got to have PAT 14s opened over Post Office counters.

MR MORGAN JONES asked just one hit on one day did he understand from that that if the benefit was paid into the bank account that the customer could not take part of that benefit in cash on one day and leave some in.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that currently the Card Account was a replacement order book, opened at a Post Office, cash out only at a Post Office, drawn out in one go, but he was still working with Government to extend this.

MRS REEVES asked how did the scenario which the General Secretary had described fit with the Government's requirement to prevent financial exclusion. Part of their reasoning was that people would be able to access the bank account in which they could save if they wanted, so one hit and you take the lot out was not really what the Government wanted.



THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that it was currently the Government's view that PAT 14 accounts would deliver the promises on financial exclusion, the replacement order book – Post Office Card Account, no more than that. Government would fulfil their commitment. Financial exclusion fulfilled by the PAT 14, First of all the 16 million people that wanted to continue to use the order book selling the Post Office Card Account, for those that wanted a little bit more sophisticated then straight forward Order Book, Universal Bank had now become Universal Banking Services.

MR DARVILL replied how could we call this Universal Bank, it was not a Universal Bank, it was not fulfilling social exclusion.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that Universal Banking Services consisted of two tiers, on the back of the Gordon Brown letter was circulated the written answer from Alan Johnson to Geraldine Smith which explained what Universal Banking was. The difference between the Post Office Card Account and the Benefits Payment Card that the Conservatives wanted to introduce was the Card Account was an account and with the banking engine the Federation was hopeful that there would be an electronic purse later down the track. All those 16 million customers were entitled to have an account if they wanted one. The Universal Banking Services next tier was precisely the part about financial exclusion and that was the Government's answer to it, because it would cost the Government nothing, just 1 penny.

MR. ROGER asked how was the account going to be sold.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that there would be an information pack and that the Federation would be part of drawing up that information pack. That information pack would have a number of different banks forms to open. That would seem like the way it was going to work. What the banks had been saying was that they did not want that because they could not control, subpostmasters would be in control of what account, and would decide who had the account and who did not, not the banks. The pack would start from 2003 which would have all the information in relevant to make up ones mind as to what account was wanted., Card Account, Pat 14 but also a steer towards using ones own account. He said it would be a good one for Stephen Byers.

MRS REEVES asked whether it would be a straight transfer from the order book to the card to which THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that he did not know the answer to that but it would be a good one for Stephen Byers but it would be a bank account run by a bank on behalf of the Post Office, banking rules would apply.

MR PEBERDY related how Alan Johnson had addressed a meeting of subpostmasters in Leicester two weeks ago and was asked this question. He said that the name had got to be different, that the Post Office Card

Account was what it said and was not a bank account. He said that subpostmasters would be incentivised to open PAT 14 accounts, that the banks did not want these people.

THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT said Subpostmasters were looking for work, this was the future, somehow or other subpostmasters had got to become the biggest banking network in the country. There had been an assurance that the banks were going to put in £100 million.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that the banks did in fact put in nothing like what they should have put in, the banks did not like having to pay the Post Office Card Account and their own PAT 14, the growth areas were still there. He told the Executive Council to remember the 16 million people that were there now, if they wanted an order book replacement they had got the Post Office Card Account, currently losing beneficiaries, going to the bank, by use of the PAT 14, the next tier they could be provided with what they wanted which was ATM machines and Direct Debit. The only two places would be ATMs and Post Offices. He said that there was no reason why everyone over the age of 18 with a bank account should not be able to access it at the Post Office. It would then be up to SubPostmasters to sell that opportunity to its customers.

The Executive Council then welcomed the return visit of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Mr. Stephen Byers MP.

The meeting continued the following morning with THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT thanking everyone for the night before.

MR PEBERDY then continued the meeting on the subject of the Universal Bank. He said that there was no more to say on the Universal Bank. Stephen Byers had given the Executive Council a bit more assurance, but Universal Bank had still got to be delivered. MR PEBERDY went on to say that the work of THE GENERAL SECRETARY and the Negotiating Committee would continue on behalf of the Executive Council, which would be pursued at every opportunity.

The Negotiating Committee had on the Agenda a two day meeting early the following month, namely 5th and 6th April with the Post Office to specifically embrace some of the issues which were contained in the Performance and Innovation Report such as the Universal Bank, Government General Practitioner and Network Reinvention as well as the implementation of a new contract and a decision on a new payment system.

## 2. (d) Government General Practitioner

PO PZ 01

MR PEBERDY said that the pilot was about to roll out in Leicestershire and Rutland. There was now a user group, all members of the Leicester Branch Committee had been down to London twice and seen the kit, they had put

their requirements, it had fitted in very well and both the group and the Post Office were taking on board a lot of their suggestions. Surveys were running rapidly. Some 60 surveys had been completed for installation of the kit, using mainly unoccupied space. The Post Office had some concerns which had been put to Stephen Byers.

MRS REEVES enquired how was the Post Office managing what type of kit went in to what office, what level of GGP went to what outlet.

MR PEBERDY replied that he had seen the only set, but that there were four basic solutions, the first one had many many kiosks, it was a screen, free standing, very slim, not too deep, printer at the bottom, it could be adapted to the wall, mounted in those areas where there was less floor space because basically the four pieces of kit were the thing they called a signpost.

There were Menu Services, very superb piece of kit, all the subpostmasters were impressed and amazed. There was a kiosk and a signpost and then two leaflet dispensers, semi curved A4 and adaptable, one or two would go into an office depending on the space, a web phone. It could go into a L shaped corner, in a corner, or an external corner or a straight line up to 2 metres long, it needed a metre space in front of it.

MRS REEVES asked whether there would be the restriction of having GGP was down to space and nothing to do with office volumes.

MR PEBERDY replied that it was nothing at all, they would put in the largest piece of kit if the space was there, smaller offices would not have a big kit.

MR. WILLSHAW asked whether the kit was POPOS size.

MR PEBERDY replied that it was slightly different in shape, four of the User Group had had their office surveyed including his wife's office. POPOS would go at the expense of GGP.

MR JANNETTA said that this information did not fit in with what the Post Office had said in the Roadshows in Scotland. They were told that GGP was dependent on the size of the office and the volumes of business at the office. The Crown Offices were going to have everything. The Post Office was giving out the wrong message.

MR PEBERDY said that there were 279 offices in Leicester, BTHs did feature in the range, was one of their basis, but truthfully, that was not what they had done because the main thrust of offices were between two categories of office which would have between 1.75 and a metre. Part of the GGP Trial involved things called surgeries, there might only be three of them in the pilot which might well be Branch Offices in the pilot that have got room to do surgeries. This would involve the subpostmaster booking an appointment for some one to come in. For example booking an appointment for



a representative from the Inland Revenue to come in and talk to a customer. The Leicester Branch Secretary was asked if she had a room for surgeries.

## 2. (e) Network Reinvention

PO PZ 01

MR PEBERDY said that he would update the Executive Council on the Network Reinvention Project Board, an explanation of what the Programme Board did, background and activity to date, of which there had been three meetings to date. There would be wider liaison with the NFSP and the Business on negotiations on things that were going to go forward.

The Post Office were using a management tool which was actually controlling everything that was needed to deliver what the PIU Report had set the Post Office out to do in this direction, they had bought that piece of kit in as a computer programme, it was being used in many pieces of work. It was process driven, the programmes did work to a standard approach which ensured that complex and interdependent activities were co-ordinated. Its overall objectives, it monitored progress, it made key strategic decisions. It did not do any of the detailed work including any negotiations.

Everything that happened on the Programme Board was the Governing bit of it, the Projects were done by Projects Board below that and Negotiations would take place with the Negotiating Committee on behalf of the Executive Council which was where the Programme Board's accountabilities were. Any proposals were consistent with the strategic aims set out in the PIU Report. This was one of its main statements, it reflected Stakeholders Requirements, ensured that it stayed in that direction and did not deviate from what the Board had laid down and that they took proper account of any changes.

The Programme Board was chaired by Alan Barrie, there was one representative from Network Bank, one from GGP. Someone from Mails or Service Delivery, Sales and Service General Manager, (Tim Thorpe), Post Office Network Human Resources Director Peter Turgoose, Key Function Heads of Post Office Network, John Peberdy as NFSP representative.

How did the NFSP fit in. Obviously the first thing was that the seat on the Programme Board enabled high level influence on the programme and checks that the outputs were appropriate. It did not cut across NFSP's wider role in negotiation. Mr Peberdy said he was not there to negotiate, negotiations were to be done with different groups different bodies. For example, a lot of work was being done about Horizon, David Smith sat on the Programme Board, also had input in other works that were being done, dual functionality. It was being done in several strands and involved the Negotiating Committee and Executive Council and would still continue with all the other channels in which the Federation influenced the business inside and outside.

MR PEBERDY said that he was there to influence the Board and make sure it took into account subpostmasters view point. To check that subpostmasters input negotiations were happening at the detailed level. To help guide the overall programme in subpostmasters interests.

That's what the statement of requirement said when it was written and some of the phrases were lifts from that statement.

The work was being done in several strands. Commercial strand looking at the necessary changes to create PIU vision of bigger, better, brighter urban post offices, social strand looking at avoiding rural closures, supporting urban deprived offices. Format development strand, looking at the various formats of post offices, such as combi stores, open plan. Maintenance strand, looking at everything from scales, security, DDA.

What did each of these strands do.

They did the detailed work which was needed to produce outputs which the Programme Board required. For example, how were they going to make all offices DDA compliant. This would often involve negotiations with the NFSP. Any contract changes or compensation arrangements now would be negotiated with the NFSP before the Programme Board endorsed them.

Where were we now.

Determining the overall direction.

Preparation Phase

Implementation Phase

Maintenance Phase.

Programme Vision

The Network Reinvention Programme would deliver an improved network of operational efficiency and therefore an improved contribution to the business financial gap. A commercial return on investment for agents, A big deliverer or requirement of the Programme Board was that the work was returned to post offices so that subpostmasters investments were therefore maintained and improved. Post Offices would provide an attractive physical environment for the customer experience, accessible and uniquely convenient with the flexibility to take a full range of products.

A very big requirement in the Programme's vision, a stable social network both in the rural and urban deprived areas. An improved outlet working environment which was supportive of delivering good service.

To take this work forward which would be the start of the next phases, the first would involve negotiations with Mike Granville's team acting on behalf of Post Office Network. However the aim was that both organisations worked together in developing these propositions, for example, the two day workshop, Mike Granville and Senior Managers discussing how this was



going to be put together. One of the people who was working below the Board to produce work for the Board, one of them was John Holyroyd who was basically in charge of the commercial and network strand, he was process driven and programme mad and was likely the man that every RNM and every HORN in the country would have to speak to.

That workshop would deal with the revisions to the contract and remuneration, compensation and how the changes were to be processed in the real world. They were testing a model, not doing work with it, very expensive computer programme, which was giving them all the demographics, where people shop, why they go to shop there, etc., which could define the ultimate network, superimpose what was in that area, could see either if there were too many or secondly if they were in the wrong place. That was as far as the Programme Board had been told that the Project Board had gone. There was a man called Jonathan Clark, South West, Western Territory used to be in Network Transformation in the Western Territory who was actually working with that model so the only rumblings that might be heard was to test it, he might be asking RNMs about a particular office in that area, which did not mean that an office was blighted.

MR PEBERDY said that he was on the Board to ensure that the subpostmasters voice was heard and that the role of the NFSP was understood so that the Programme Board had not got any misapprehensions about the mechanics that had to be gone through, to explain to them that the Federation's timescales might be longer than they wanted in certain directions for certain decisions, that process had got to be put in place. It was early days, the work had only so far been preparatory as the Board moved into greater detail from the new Post Office Financial Year and had been totally assured that the Federation's input negotiation would take place.

Mr Cyril Jones asked whether it was possible to have copies of the slides and if so how secret was this.

Mr Peberdy said he would have to ask the Board's permission, he said that he would try.

### **3. OFFSHORE ISLANDS**

#### **3a) Jersey**

OI JY

Mr Davis reported that he had had a meeting with Jersey Post on the 25<sup>th</sup> January. He had been hopeful of having available for the Council the Action Points from that meeting, but there were certain aspects of the Minutes of the meeting which he was not satisfied with and had written back to them for changes. It had been a long day from 8.30 a.m and he

had got the 6.30 plane back. They had rolled out their Director of Finance, the Group Retail Manager and a solicitor from the solicitors firm that looked after the interests of the Post Office, so it had been high level.

The meeting had been to discuss the contract, Jersey Post had tried to explain things away by saying that they were not going to implement the changes that Mr Davis was objecting to immediately, for example, a type of Introductory Fee, they had never had it before and were now looking to put that into the contract, Mr Davis said that he would never agree to that. They said that they were not going to use it but just wanted it in the contract in case they wanted to use it.

Eventually the contract was resolved and they then dealt with the subpostmasters pay claim which had been outstanding from June 2000 which was 5.5 % increase which he got, they then discussed a new payment structure which was accepted in principle to be worked into the system. As part of that discussion, Mr. Davis reported that he had spotted the special cash allowance had not been increased since 1997, so as part of that negotiation before a new payment system started if they wanted to start from ground zero then they would have to bring up that special cash allowance to its current value. Then one would have to start applying the equation on how to pay for the future bearing in mind the principle that no one should lose and no one should gain from the changeover.

Mr Davis also insisted that they should pay it back to 1997 which they duly agreed and that was one of the things that was missing from the Minutes. They had used the UK pay tables since 1969 when they became a separate post office administration so that they could not drop that. Those were the three main issues. They also covered the arrangements for the new insurance products that were going to be sold and they agreed a 10% premium payment to subpostmasters. Advised of developments with Lloyds TSB and Barclays.

He asked that in accepting this report to accept the outcome of those negotiations. This was agreed.

DECISION

#### 4. MAILWORK

PC MP 04

MR PEBERDY reported that this was a success story on behalf of those 100 Mailwork SubPostmasters. Royal Mail now had set up the Arm Service Delivery and were adapting a can do mentality and with the work of the Mailwork Forum were progressing quite rapidly through some authorisation of some big spend into Mailwork Sub Post Offices to make them space compliant.

Phase one had been approved, Phase two was being worked through, they were prioritising space deficiency in relation to the number of staff and individual cases were very much being approached with a can do mentality.

Post Office Network's representatives, Lee Drohan and Steve Gibbs, were like terriers in not wanting to part with Mailwork, in fact so much so that there was a case in the Midlands where they were going to put it back and with the help of other members of the Forum who worked individually on cases around the country at Mailwork offices, he advised that they were going somewhere.

There was going to be a meeting on the Way Forward Agreement, which would be the next thing to have impact on postmen in those offices and the Mailwork Forum was demanding that postmen get better information. The recent article in the Subpostmaster generated some phone calls and there was now a contact list of the Mailwork Forum members which included the GENERAL SECRETARY.

He reported that it was a success story and no subpostmaster had been asked to pay a penny. There had been a discussion on trying to decide the formula, some offices were being totally rebuilt, new sorting office.

## 5. COUNTER AUTOMATION

PC NW 06 01

### (a) Horizon Polling Problems Report on Action Points

PC NW 06 01

PC NW 06 01

MR PEBERDY reported that these problems are still being highlighted and just recently had been circulated and reported on the problems in organising meetings with the business but now monthly meetings had been scheduled and there had been a meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2001 from which could be seen from the Action Points, there were 28 items that required action, some of them the business still had to come back to them on.

Amongst it one was to set up the two day meeting, a separate meeting on Losses and Gains Policy, a separate group to bring in the Horizon problems. There had been stories about the problems that had been created by Horizon, shortages, Horizon was not doing things, the problem with losses having to be made good immediately, and all the things about Suspense Accounts. He reported that he wanted a group to examine this. He had been led to understand that there was £10 million in Suspense Accounts now as opposed to about £2 million 18 months ago. Another feature of the system was that it highlighted everything.

He reported that THE GENERAL SECRETARY had tried to deal with the recent polling problems and that there was a letter addressing it in the current month's Subpostmaster.



MR WALSH asked a question about Losses and Gains Policy, whose responsibility was it when a claim for money was sent out whether it was put in as per the Losses and Gains Policy or whether the total amount should be asked for. When Post Office Network requested repayment of money, they would know in the Losses and Gains Policy they should only be asking for 25% plus £2,000 if the loss was £10,000, why did they not ask for that immediately

MR PEBERDY responded that they got the Security Report that would say that the office was x% culpable, if 100% was £10,000 he believed that the business tried it on and he had told the business that this had got to stop because all it did was lead to an appeal and there had been problems with a particular HORN in this regard.

MR CYRIL JONES said that there had been a meeting with a HORN, and this problem had been brought up. He had been very concerned about this problem causing problems in the appeals area and forcing unnecessary appeals. Security went in at some point and made a recommendation that the subpostmaster was responsible for the entire loss. That was then sent off to the RNM, because the final decision as to whether to ask for that entire amount. In most cases the RNM took the report as verbatim which was causing a lot of problems.

MR MORGAN JONES highlighted a particular case which was a hostage situation and the subpostmaster was asked to pay £53,000 which had now been reduced to £5,250. At the interview for appeal, the subpostmaster was asked if he was insured and that gave MR MORGAN JONES great deal of concern. Eagle Star provided a £5,000 cover under certain circumstances.

MR PEBERDY replied that he was concerned that in the original Robbery Losses and Gains Policy, the business tried to write in £5,000. The Federation disabused them of that in the Negotiating Committee and Mike Granville as it was then and now Steve Gibbs re wrote it and wrote it out of the Losses and Gains Policy. However he was concerned that Zurich was saying that a subpostmaster could get £5,000 of insurance if they insured with them. There would be a separate meeting on this because the business was still operating on a 1998 document for assistance and counter losses through assistants.

MRS KENDALL spoke about the original letter requesting for liability which was handed to the business. The first line of the letter said that the subpostmaster had already been found guilty and was liable which was putting subpostmasters through a lot of stress. This was a totally inappropriate letter.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that there would be a separate meeting with Losses and Gains and then told the Council that he was going to give them some private information which they should be very careful about. There had been a gentleman from ICL who had just been arrested for

stealing out of post offices when he was carrying out Horizon installations. Clearly there were implications for those offices where this man had been working in. The identities of those offices would soon be known. So if anyone was asked to make good losses particularly losses in or around the time of installation, he advised that time was spent delaying.

MR WILLSHAW said that he had got one at the moment, one particular HORN was asking for 100%.

MRS REEVES reported that she thought that there might be pressure being put on the HORN to make good losses for the end of the financial year.

MR PEBERDY said that they had just sent a very strong signal to Mike Granville that because of the financial plight of the business they were playing a lot harder ball over losses and sticking everything they could on to the subpostmaster. There was pressure on the business, end of the financial year.

(c) Eye Sight Tests

PC NW 06 01

MR PEBERDY reported that they had made some requirements on the business in the Negotiating Committee meeting of which they were waiting some outcomes.

6. SUBPOSTMASTERS CONTRACT

PC SC

(a) Standards for Agency Offices

PC SC 03

MR PEBERDY reported that the Council would be pleased to see that the Federation managed to write the statement when the standard leaflet was sent out again with name badges and accompanying letter clearly said that they could be displayed, could use a pseudonym. The Negotiating Committee tried very hard to get them to reprint the poster and the leaflet and it was agreed that they were going to correct it at the next reprint.

(b) Appointment Scale  
04

PC SC

MR PEBERDY reported that this was good news all round.

7 SUBPOSTMASTERS PAY

PC SP 01

(a) January 2001 Review of MSPO Payments

PC SP 2001

MR PEBERDY reported that the Negotiating Committee had met to discuss the Modified Contract and perceive the areas which were needed to be addressed particularly in advance of this year's pay round.

(b) Pay Claim 2001

PC SP 2001

MR PEBERDY reported that the draft of this years pay claim from the Negotiating Committee had been circulated at the meeting. It needed minor alternations which the Executive Council went through and amended accordingly.

MR MORGAN JONES had a question about offices represented by the Federation, he knew that the Federation was able to represent all offices but did not in fact represent all offices in certain circumstances. Was it right that it should be put in the context and what was the rationale behind it to which THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that it was misleading, that it was for all offices of the kind represented by the NFSP, not negotiating for franchises but introducing modified.

MR ROGER asked whether the Federation was asking for 15% for rural offices and 30% for urban offices.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that the PIU report referred to the flow through of money out of the urban area into the rural.

MR JANNETTA thought it was a mickey mouse scheme and he did not think the Federation should be putting this sort of scheme in. There was no chance of getting it.

MR FINLAY asked when would it be known whether an office was urban or rural.

MR PEBERDY reported that a gentleman called Phil Smith had been appointed to be the Tsar of the deprived and rural network. He had a team of eleven to tag those offices that conform to that 10,000 conurbation being classified as a rural and he understood that as recently as last week they had got up to 9,000 offices. It was believed that between 9,000 and 9,800 offices would fall into that category. That knowledge would be shared. Very large offices would fall into that category now would be ring fenced and safe.



He thought that when it was known when we went around bleeting that subpostmasters were going to the wall and proving it in many instances, when it was known that there were other monies coming into the Post Office to be managed, the Negotiating Committee thought that there was no harm in telling. It would be wonderful to achieve it. The Negotiating Committee believed that this year they should know that, as this year a new contract and new payment system were going to be negotiated, those sorts of sums should be talked about.

MRS REEVES queried the 10,000 rural offices and the additional 15% in the pay claim for bigger, brighter, better offices but within that element of 10,000 was going to be a lot of offices who would still have to conform and the £2 million from Mr. Byers would not help them very much, that would leave a big chunk of those offices, who would be large rural offices who would be required to make investment in the future but would not be included in the additional fund.

MR PEBERDY replied that the sum was £270 million was available for those offices not £2 million which was for when they could not get anyone to open an office or when a front room had to be converted, that money would be available. The £270 million available from 2003, a large chunk of that was for the protection of the rural network.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that this was the year for flagging up the cross subsidy. There was an assumption on using PIU definition of rural. Rural had not been defined, it was referred to as historic.

MR JANNETTA mentioned that this had been done before in the Hartley McMaster which had not produced any results.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that it had to be told, no opportunity must be missed particularly in the PIU and the Crown Offices..

MR PEBERDY asked that the Draft Pay letter before them was the one that should be sent to the Business.

ACTION
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DECISION
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MR PEBERDY then went on to speak about the draft letter for the pilot of the GGP.. The Negotiating Committee met on the 26th February to get the money out so that the pilot would roll, so that those subpostmasters in Leicestershire and Rutland knew what they would be giving up in wall space and what they would be getting in return.

He reported that it was uncharted water, the first part was on the space element and the Negotiating Committee were not sure that those represented the mean averages, the transaction hours were a stab in the dark. There would be variants dependent on where the kit would go. None of the subpostmasters had been asked to give up prime retail. He thought the £500 per square foot pretty generous. The gross profit margins could be argued. He asked the Executive Council to consider it in the light that they still wanted to tweak it. He believed that in this instance Mike Granville

was being a totally honest broker. He said that they needed to retain a sum of money for different circumstances. Main categories of offices would fall between one and two, originally there were five categories, the first category might have a surgery. The Negotiating Committee felt that there should be a slight tweak between one and two, that this was a reasonable sum of money with assistants properly paid to go to training which could involve two to three days training. He reported that there would be a Roadshow on the 1st April in Leicester.

A proposal was made that the Executive Council go ahead with this document in those parameters.

ACTION
DECISION

(c) Small Office Payments

PC SP 2001

MR PEBERDY reported that the Post Office had at last agreed to remove telephone call allowance and holiday substitution from the calculation of pay for Small Office and this would be included in the next round of National Minimum Wage requirements. The Negotiating Committee could not accept this, it should not be gross income should be net income to get the National Minimum Wage.

MR MILNER asked whether the result of the Haywood case, was there any danger that this would be withdrawn to which THE GENERAL SECRETARY replied that it would not..

(d) Alternative Collection Points

PC SP 01

MR PEBERDY reported that this had been discussed at the recent Negotiating Committee meeting with the Business, there were still some actions to come from it. Mr Butlin had had his first meeting with the representative on the patch, it looked as though it would go to National Roll Out, there were some slight worries.

MR DARVILL reported that he did not think 99% would be collected within seven days, 3000 items a month, were held for three weeks at the end of which 80 or 90 were being sent back.

MR PEBERDY said that this trial was for ordered goods.

MR WILLSHAW asked whether there were any Mailwork Offices that were Alternative Collection Points and were they were paid for 793 work to which Mr. Peberdy replied that they would be paid for this.

MR BUTLIN said that there were Mailwork Offices involved in this trial.



(e) Motorola Returns

PC SP 01

MR PEBERDY reported that they were making a case that Motorola Returns which were free post but are special delivery items should attract payment and the Negotiating Committee were pursuing that line of battle.

(f) Payment Cards Ltd (PCL)

PC SP 01

MR PEBERDY said that this was the company who were providing the trial in the Manchester area. The Negotiating Committee had a presentation in Cotton House, another can do bunch, if the trial worked well in Manchester, he thought that there was a great future for it throughout the country and it would be a very good product. The team had worked hard, he hoped the Manchester SubPostmasters made it work. This particular company had their deal signed up with the Post Office. He said that it would be a while before it progressed.

MR. MORGAN JONES asked whether there was any discussion on any other types of business other than the ticketing.

MR PEBERDY replied that it had massive capabilities, scheduled to go live in November 2001, there would be 150,000 applications processed before Christmas.

MR CHALLINOR said that there were several different varieties of Smart Cards, the particular one that the Post Office was going was was one that did not actually touch any equipment so that was why it had a 5 year shelf line, it was shown to the reader. The other thing was that the consortium in PCL was made up of the manufacturer of the equipment, it was very cost effective for bus companies. £80 to put the equipment on a bus compared with other technologies in this field which were much more expensive to fit a bus. It was right there at the right price. This product must be delivered correctly. Manchester had a huge responsibility for the rest of subpostmasters during the 4 month trial. Executive Officers in the region should be encouraged to deliver this. Could be the largest network in Europe with this technology. Extended hours could come into this.

MR PEBERDY agreed that this was big business, potential volumes were huge.

MR WALSH asked whether this would come on to the Horizon Kit.

MR PEBERDY replied that Smart Kit technology would migrate to Horizon, short term piece of kit.

MR DAVIS reported that there was a small scheme in Caephilly. The Negotiating Committee were negotiating a rate for the transaction.

(g) POPOS – Payments to Offices

PC SP 01

MR PEBERDY reported that the Negotiating Committee and the business were streaks apart and their latest offer was £100 per panel subject to audit, the end of the road, leave it out in the voluntary sector. The Negotiating Committee wanted to go back and say that they noted it.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that he was not happy with it but if subpostmasters wanted to take it they should but he was not happy with that because it cut across bigger, brighter, better and also GGP. It was out of step with what the Post Office was doing but if subpostmaster had got space on the wall and if they had a POPOS panel why should the Federation stop them having the £100. It was not good value for money for retail space.

MR WALSH asked whether we could remind subpostmasters that they could have it taken out because a lot thought they had to have it.

MR PEBERDY said yes it was voluntary and then went on to state that the proposition was that it was merely noted the Post Office's intention to pay subpostmasters £100 per year was voluntary and was not mandatory.

DECISION

(h) Redirection Service

PC SP 01

MR PEBERDY reported that £1.27 had been achieved at the last meeting.

The Chairman of the Negotiating Committee formally moved his report and this was accepted.

**A/4 CONFERENCE MATTERS**

The GENERAL SECRETARY reported as follows:-

(a) Nominations

Malcolm Roger's was the only nomination received for Editor. Therefore there is no requirement for a ballot.

DECISION

(b) Supplementary Report of the Executive Council

(c) Motions

The motions had previously been circulated with recommendations. THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that

this debate must be in secret and must not be conveyed to the Membership. He stressed that it was important that there was as much information as possible from the Regional Council Meetings. This information must not be divulged to delegates. All the Motions were discussed and recommendations made.

(d) Motions & Nominations received late.

There were no motions or nominations received late.

(e) Conference Agenda, Annual Accounts, Officers Reports.

The Annual Accounts had been previously circulated. There was a possibility of one amendment, if agreed by the Executive Council, and a recommendation to the Standing Orders Committee that for this year only the Treasurer's Report be taken first business on Tuesday morning at Conference, in advance of the debate on Rules.

(f) Standing Orders Committee – Expenses

In line with the previous agreement in January for Conference Delegates, no increase in Standing Orders Committee Expenses was recommended.

(g) Report on Conference Arrangements – Official Guests etc.

Mr Stuart Sweetman, Group Managing Director, Customer Banking Services, will address Conference on Monday morning. Mr John Main, Sales & Service General Manager (East) has also agreed to attend Conference. Mr Martin Stanley, Chief Executive, Post Services Commission has agreed to address delegates on Tuesday morning and The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Stephen Byers, will address Conference on Tuesday afternoon. Undoubtedly there will be other attendees from the Post Office and Postcomm but these will attend under their own steam and not be official guests.

(h) Conference Reporting

It was recommended that Clive Oxley should professionally produce the report, as last year. The cost last year was £3,113.75 for the typing and £3,690 for the printing.

DECISION
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(i) Conference Grants to Delegates. (Union Facilities)

It had been agreed at the January meeting of the Executive Council that there would be no increase to the current rate which is £135.

(j) Official Conference Observers

The Post Office had not yet formally notified us but it appears that Mike Granville, Gwen Doswell and Chris Harker will be acting as Official Conference Observers. There will, of course, undoubtedly be others attending.

(k) Tellers

The information regarding tellers at Conference had been received at Head Office.

(l) Vice President - Order of Seniority

Mr Challinor was next in order of seniority.

(m) President's Testimonial

Last year the President's testimonial monies were increased by RPI. It was agreed the same action be taken this year, bringing the amount up to £500 and expenses to £1,500.

DECISION

(n) Gift to President's Partner

The Gift to the President's partner was increased this year to £165.00.

DECISION

**A/5 SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A/5A) REPORT OF PUBLICITY & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**1. REPORT OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

The Report of the meeting held on 5th/6th March 2001 had been previously circulated. Referring to the item 3 paragraph 4 of the report, MR MARSHALL understood that the Trustees had been upset by the item but thought the Committees should be able to work more closely on things of this nature. He assured the meeting it had not been the Committee's intention to cause friction and offered apologies to the Chairman of the Trustees.



2. FEDERATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE. FM AC

2(a) Conference 2001, Llandudno – 14-16 May FM AC 2001

Detailed arrangements are currently being made with the Conference Centre. The Committee had seen the draft proposed stage set design and the details would be finalised during a visit to Llandudno by MR MARSHALL and MRS DAVIS in April.

As a result of the concern expressed about last year's Conference video, enquiries had been made about a second Camera. However, the cost was prohibitive and the option had been dropped. The Conference Centre would be briefed by MRS DAVIS in detail on requirements.

Agreement had been reached with Zurich to sponsor the Tuesday evening (£2,000) provided their logo can be projected at the back or to the side of the stage. Zurich have been unhappy with the small amount of business they have achieved with Federation members and will also provide a seminar for Branch Secretaries during one of the lunch breaks with a view to increasing interest.

The Co-op Bank have agreed to sponsor Conference's opening reception to a value of £1,000.

Because of problems encountered last year, Benenden were not prepared to print the Agenda this year, but have agreed to provide a folder into which the Agenda will fit.

2(b) Annual Conference 2004. FM AC 2004

Details of the possibility of holding Conference 2004 in Torquay or Plymouth were attached to the previously circulated P&D Report. The various options available and the costs involved were discussed in detail. Torquay was basically considered to be the best venue, despite one or two conditions being attached to the provision of facilities. It was recommended that The Grand Hotel at Torquay be used as Headquarters Hotel. A vote was taken and it was decided that Torquay should be the chosen venue for Annual Conference 2004. A second vote was taken on the matter of The Grand Hotel being used for Headquarters and this was also agreed.

DECISION

DECISION

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

#### 3(a) Recruitment

Beverley Wright had been appointed as agent to carry out telephone recruitment and advertising sales for one year's trial period. Miss Wright's fee would be 22% of advertising sales.

The decision made by the Executive Council at the January meeting to engage an employee to carry out telephone recruitment work was discussed further. Mr Marshall reminded the Executive Council the January meeting had decided to engage an employee to carry out this work. It was believed this decision should be viewed long-term and recruiting an employee would be the most cost effective option.. The possibility of Miss Wright being an applicant for the position was discussed and it was generally felt that as she had now been appointed the trial should not be pre-empted and that the situation should be reviewed at the end of the trial.

MRS KENDALL observed that she did not recall anything declaring the person had to work "in-house" at Evelyn House, only that the work would come under the umbrella of the NFSP. The person could possibly work from home as Beverley does now. MRS KENDALL also felt that a decision on recruitment should not be left until the end of the trial but that a review should be made earlier to assess progress and the ongoing situation. It was decided that a review would take place in January 2002. In the interim there would be regular monitoring.

DECISION

MR MILNER queried the proposed 22% pay rate and asked what the previous rate was. It was confirmed by the GENERAL SECRETARY that Marot's commission was 25%. Miss Wright had originally suggested a charge of 20% but this was increased to 22% in the light of the additional accounting work she would be doing for the advertising instead of Philip Bloor who would take a supervisory role. The Federation's income would be on a monthly basis from invoices prepared by Miss Wright and sent out on the Federation's behalf on headed paper. All monies would be paid direct to the Federation, and Miss Wright's payment would be made from that income. Advertisements will be checked month by month against the invoices sent out. Miss Wright will also provide a monthly list of contacts she has made on the recruitment side.

#### 3(b) Membership Information & Systems

The structure of the new membership system had been demonstrated to Kate Davis, Philip Bloor, Lisa Saunders and Barbara Collier. There is a problem with the new data protection

legislation and which is causing a great deal of concern. However, MRS DAVIS is working on this issue. PONU are supportive and recognise our need for this information but must comply with the legislation. Without the required information it would not be possible to administer the membership system. Every effort will be made to surmount the problems and provide Branch Secretaries with the information they need. A meeting had taken place the previous Wednesday with Post Office Network to continue pursuing a way forward that is workable for the Federation.

### 3(c) Training

There is one workshop left on MRS DAVIS' Training Practice Course. Most elements of the course are now completed. Some work has been undertaken with the P&D Committee including the planning and delivery of the first training course. The outputs of that meeting were attached to the P&D report. Arrangements are under way for the first training course in Wales with a group of Branch Secretaries.

## 4. PUBLICATIONS

FM PB

### 4(A) The Subpostmaster

The Committee expressed concern about the amount of time spent by MRS DAVIS on organising and writing articles for the Journal. It is recognised that the journal is our prime communication tool and its use must be maximised, but the lack of resource available restricts the ability to progress other P&D Committee work quickly.

MR PEBERDY expressed concerns that the Membership were starting to speak negatively about the "*The SubPostmaster*". It is being said that it's no longer a smart piece of literature and subpostmasters are no longer reading it. Perhaps the format needs alteration. A letter from Paul Webster, who carries out exhibition work for the Federation, was circulated and it was suggested that there must be an element of truth in what is being said. MR MILNER said "*The SubPostmaster*" should reflect members views and the letters to the Editor should be printed. MRS KENDALL felt that Mr Webster should not be permitted to meddle in our business, and MR CHALLINOR felt that Paul Webster was attempting to use our journal to run his own business.

A long discussion took place about the balance of views and the tone of articles which appear in "*The SubPostmaster*". It was generally believed that contrary views should be expressed, but the general balance must be more even as it was felt that the wrong message was getting across. Although the journal is the only vehicle the members have to express their views it should be talking the



Federation and the industry up. Not enough use is made of the journal to do this. People who have put money into their business and are seeing little or no return for that investment need to be reassured. It was generally felt that we should not try to gag people or the Editor and *"The SubPostmaster"* must portray a balanced view.

MRS REEVES requested that the information be more balanced. It was suggested that at the bottom of letters a note could advise where in the journal the answer to a particular problem was printed.

MR MARSHALL pointed out that the Editor's job was extremely demanding and never stops. Things are being left until the last minute and the Editor is saying he has little to put in *"The SubPostmaster"*. Executive Officers should take it upon themselves to write, and encourage others to write, articles for *"The SubPostmaster"* to relieve the constant pressure on Tim Cobb's Office and MRS DAVIS. MR ROGER said it was not possible for him to do it all on his own.

## 5. PROMOTION & PUBLICITY

FM PR

### 5(a) Sub Post Office Exhibition 2001

A meeting had already taken place between MRS DAVIS, MR BUTT and Paul Webster to begin planning for the 2001 exhibition. It was believed important that the NFSP take a higher profile and earn more money from the exhibition.

### 5(b) Pan Presentations Agreement

Due to changes in personnel both at the Federation and the Solicitors, the agreement has not yet been completed. Changes have been made and the agreement is currently with Paul Webster for his final agreement.

### 5(c) Caring for the Customer

A Bureau de Change poster was distributed in the March edition of the Journal.

The Western Territory team, through Sue Chalk, had set up a liaison process with the Federation Executive Officers to discuss ways of improving sales support to all offices. Encouragement will also be given to Sue Chalk's colleagues in the Northern and Eastern territories to do likewise. The P&D Committee had agreed to invite the heads of the three territories to meet to discuss ways in which liaison meetings could be progressed further.



6. PUBLIC RELATIONS

FM PR

Deputy Heads Group

A progress report had already been circulated attached to the back of the P&D Report. Active involvement of Branch Secretaries will be encouraged. It was planned to launch the project in the April edition of *"The SubPostmaster"*.

7. NFSP RELIEF SUBPOSTMASTER SCHEME

FM PR

Mr Marshall explained that a number of possible options for setting up a Relief Scheme had been discussed at the P&D Meeting. Explanatory correspondence had been attached to the P&D Report.

Provision of a list does not deal with the problems that led to looking at the set-up of such a scheme, and is no more than is done already by Branch Secretaries.

A booking service administered by Regional Council Secretaries was not practical. There were potential downside risks. There was also no resource to instigate a full time professional service based at Shoreham.

It was considered by the Committee that a professional, well administered scheme was required. Taking account of the resource necessary and the potential liabilities it was believed practical to consider a partnership with a commercial provider who would bear most of the risks but which would need to make a commercial return on the capital invested in setting up the scheme.

The Committee had discussed the scheme proposed by Management Advisory. It was decided to re-open discussions with them, taking account of the concerns previously expressed by the Executive Council, to see if these concerns could be addressed. A meeting had taken place between MR MARSHALL, MRS DAVIS and Peter Abrahams.

MRS DAVIS then reported on the outcome of that meeting, saying that the concerns expressed by the Executive Council previously were:

- responsibility for training reliefs and cost
- organising training & accreditation
- vetting of reliefs
- insurance protection
- dishonest claims against the losses policy and its impact on the Federation's reputation.
- geographical location
- whether Peter Abrahams was looking to corner the market

- whether it should be run commercially or whether we should run it free

These points had been addressed in a letter circulated on Sunday.

Details of the service were then given. Users of the service would be initially supplied with a CV but no name of the relief. If a subpostmaster was unable to book a relief the fee would be returned. Insurance would be provided, giving cover for losses which the subpostmaster contractually has to make good as a result of employing the relief, should they arise. Management Advisory would not be acting as an employment agency. Any payment made to the relief would be between that relief and the subpostmaster, not through Management Advisory. Management Advisory would vet the reliefs using existing PON checks, before offering their services to subpostmasters. In the first three years there will be no charge to reliefs for joining the service. If the matter of making a charge should arise in the future, this would have to be agreed with the Federation.

The proposal to offer Horizon training will not now be offered as most have already been trained and there is no longer a need for this. Management Advisory would not corner the market but would operate under normal commercial rules. They would not be taking anything away from Branches which already offer this service.

In view of the investment he would have to make in the scheme, Peter Abrahams is still looking to obtain a 3-year contract. If the scheme is not up to standard the Federation would have the right to pull out. The booking fee to subpostmasters would be £35 plus £5 per day. These fees would remain in situ for 3 years. There is no financial risk to NFSP. The scheme would be confined to members only. NFSP would receive 20% of the gross booking income. NFSP would be responsible for selling the scheme through the journal and providing exhibition space free of charge. The income from the scheme would contribute towards NFSP costs.

It was estimated that over 3 years with 500 bookings of two weeks each the gross income from the scheme would be £52,500. Management Advisory costs would amount to approximately £30-35,000. NFSP income would be about £10,500

On the basis that the Executive Council's concerns appeared to have been addressed the P&D Committee recommended that the Executive Council should reconsider the scheme as laid out in the letter.

The proposed scheme was discussed at considerable length and in great detail. Some Executive Officers spoke out strongly against the scheme, or certain aspects of it, and some Executive Officers were

in favour of the scheme, believing that as an organisation we should offer this service to our members. Deep concern was expressed by a number of Officers about the insurance cover for losses. It was believed that a Professional Indemnity insurance could not be obtained because there are no accreditations or qualifications for relief subpostmasters. It was pointed out that it would be almost impossible to prove negligence or misconduct by a relief when money was missing, and more information on the Insurance cover was thought necessary although this scheme was no different to any other with regard to the liability for missing monies.

The question as to why Peter Abrahams didn't 'go it alone' and why he wanted the NFSP involved was raised. The hidden cost to the NFSP of providing exhibition space was raised, but this was said to be provided for Management Advisory already for the Helpline and did not constitute an increased expense to the Federation. A number of Executive Officers felt that the Federation should not make money out of a Subpostmaster's need for a holiday.

Nearly all the Executive Officers had a view on the scheme in general and after a great deal of discussion two proposals were put before the Executive Council.

MR CHALLINOR proposed that the P&D Committee go back and provide a paper on how other professional bodies deal with a relief system, i.e. Doctors, Pharmacists etc. This was seconded and lost on the vote.

DECISION

A second proposal by MR BUTLIN that Peter Abrahams' scheme be accepted with the caveat that the Federation did not take 20% of the fees and the insurance cover was qualified to the Executive Council's satisfaction. A vote was taken and the result was 8 for and 8 against. The Chairman wished to remain with the status quo and the motion was therefore lost.

DECISION

7(b) Wall Planner

The wall planner will be distributed with the April edition of the journal. Printing costs are reduced by approximately £1,000 and should produce a net income of about £3,000.

7(c) Federation Web Site

MR PEBERDY made a personal vote of thanks to Annabel Barnett for producing the Federation Web Site.

DECISION

8. 3-YEAR PLAN



The P&D Committee had decided to develop an ongoing 3-year plan to focus and prioritise its work. An initial plan has been constructed as a basis for future discussion and development.

9. FUTURE DATES AND VENUES OF EC MEETINGS

June 4th & 5th 2001	Grimstock Country House Hotel.
July 30th & 31st 2001	Grimstock Country House Hotel.
Sept 24th & 25th 2001	Grimstock Country House Hotel.
November 12th & 13th	Grimstock Country House Hotel.

MR MARSHALL requested that the P&D Report be moved and this was agreed.

DECISION

**A5(B) FEDERATION TRUSTEES REPORT.**

MR WALSH reported that the Trustees had been updated by MRS DAVIS with regard to the installation of the new membership system. The basic structure of the system was now in place and had been demonstrated to all those directly involved at Shoreham. The account based functions are the furthest advanced as these are necessary for communications with the Post Office systems and BACS. In all, progress appears to be such that the Trustees can see no reason why the expected completion date before Conference will not be met. The Trustees intend to visit Shoreham before Conference in order to see the system in operation.

The Trustees do, however, have one large concern and that revolves around the Data Protection Act with the data provided by Post Office Network. Initially it may be restricted – this data may be only the name and amount but this is subject to further negotiations and work at Shoreham.

The latest advice from the Brokers, Laing & Cruikshank was discussed and it was agreed to follow the advice to sell a small stake in Granada and add to the investment in Lloyds TSB, together with a sum of £10,000 from the cash balance holding.

The Trustees confirmed their approval of the rolling programme of improvements to the Shoreham computer systems. They are aware that the "server" is in need of upgrade and this will be part of the ongoing improvements.

As reasonable and responsible employers, it has been arranged to call in Health & Safety experts to advise of the Federation's responsibilities under Health & Safety Regulations for all working at Shoreham. The Trustees are well aware that this may have cost implications but the Federation cannot and should not avoid their responsibilities under this legislation.

As the Executive Council had decided to meet six times a year, the Trustees considered and discussed the timing of their own meetings and agreed that quarterly meetings, in January, March, July and November in tandem with the Executive Council meetings would be sufficient for their needs.

DECISION

MR WALSH concluded his address to the President and the Executive Council by saying "Mr President, it has been a privilege for me to have been Chairman of the Trustees and I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their support and input. I would also like to thank all those from Shoreham for all they have done. Mr Bradbrook has been a Trustee for some considerable time now and members of this Federation have benefited from all your efforts, Sir. I would like to thank you personally for all you have done. I wish our successors total success and with that I move my Report".

It was agreed that the Trustees Report be moved.

DECISION

A vote of thanks was given to MR WALSH, the Chairman of the Trustees, for all his hard work and for the huge contribution made by MR BRADBROOK AND MR WALSH to the Trustees.

DECISION

#### **A5(C) BOARD OF BENEVOLENCE REPORT**

MR PEBERDY reported that the Trustees to the Board of Benevolence had met the previous Sunday evening when they considered the state of the Portfolio and the brokers advice thereon. The Trustees had decided to accept the brokers advice and this would be documented in the minutes of that meeting. The arrangements were further approved at a meeting of the full Board of Benevolence at the meeting on Monday night.

The Trustees had also considered the final accounts of the Board of Benevolence which were ratified. Donations had increased the fund by £130,000.

It was considered that the Trustees to the Board of Benevolence did not pay fully for the services the Board receives from Shoreham, and investigations will be made to consider an opportunity to move some of the funds to assist the Federation fund. The Board does not pay directly for the Secretary/Treasurer's services, or for Philip Bloor, nor are the actual expenses of the Trustees and Board of Benevolence members attending the meetings recouped from the Board. These charges are legitimate and these will be looked into.

Cases were considered and an amount of £4,953.00 en bloc had been agreed, together with grants totalling £2,231.

It had also considered what should be done with the Safetel Telecash Dispenser given by Brian Ingham. MR MILNER had been asked to find out what Mr Ingham's wishes were in this respect.

ACTION

The Trustees to the Board of Benevolence had also had the pleasant but unpleasant duty to say goodbye to one of their members, MR HUGH MORGAN JONES who has served the Committee as a Trustee and has visited many cases of their behalf in the North West. The Trustees to the Board of Benevolence placed on record their grateful thanks. The Executive Council echoed this and wished MR MORGAN JONES all the very best for the future.

Since the new format for the Executive Council meeting of six times a year was decided, the Trustees to the Board of Benevolence had to decide whether they too wished to meet with the same frequency. The rules currently say that the Trustees will meet at each Executive Council meeting. After a discussion it was decided that the Trustees would meet quarterly in January, March, July and November in tandem with the relevant Executive Council Meetings. The appropriate changes to the Rules would be put to Conference in May.

DECISION

There being nothing further to report, MR PEBERDY moved the report of the Trustees to the Board or Benevolence.

DECISION

## A6 SPECIAL MATTERS

### A6(A) FINANCE

#### Treasurer's Report

FI AC 02

The Treasurer's Report and the Annual Accounts had been previously circulated. MR JANNETTA wished to make some comments on the Accounts. The £72,000 bad debt related to Marot. The amount had grown from £66,000 to £72,000 this year. Total balance sheet loss was £91,559.00 but more had been expected. Projections for next year indicate a minimum loss of £100/130,000 which led back to MR JANNETTA's suggestion in January of increasing Subscriptions. In addition, MR JANNETTA suggested asking Conference to approve a reduction in branch per capita funding. Multiple tier subscriptions had been considered and rejected on the grounds that there were not enough members in the higher rate bracket to offset the numbers in the lower ranges. The proposal suggested in January was that the lower rate subscription be increased by £5.00 to £33.24, and the higher rate increased by £15.00 to £115.44. It was also now proposed that the branch per capital be reduced from 30% to 25% which will put £50,000 back into central funds. A further proposal to be placed before Conference was an increase from £3.40 to £4.10 for Branch Secretary time



spend away from the Counter and an increase of the telephone grant to the branches from 60p to 75p per member. These adjustments will result in the Federation being approximately £30,000 better off.

After a good deal of discussion it was agreed that the increase in subscriptions would be placed before Conference. It was also agreed that the reduction in branch per capita, from 30% to 25%, be laid before Conference.

DECISION

DECISION

Dependent on the result of Conference votes going in favour of these previous proposals, it was agreed that the Branch Secretaries' rate be increased from £3.40 to £4.10 and the branch telephone allowance be increased from 60p to 75p per member. These increases would be announced when moving the motion at Conference.

DECISION

Following these decisions, THE GENERAL SECRETARY pointed out that should any branch find themselves short of money they have the facility to apply to Head Office for a top-up.

MR JANNETTA continued his report by saying the remainder of his report was domestic.

The substitution rate for Executive Officers had not been increased for some time and he believed this should be looked at. Following his examination he intended to take his findings to the General Purposes Committee for approval.

Accommodation at Conference for partners would be charged at £45, the same as last year. This amount included dinner, bed and breakfast.

MR JANNETTA's thanks were extended to MR BRADBROOK and MR WALSH. They had been of great assistance to him during his time as Treasurer and he wished them both well for the future.

There being no further Treasurer's business to report, MR JANNETTA requested his report be moved.

DECISION

#### A6(B) JOURNAL

##### Editor's Report

FM PB 01

The Editors report had been circulated previously.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY had circulated a letter dated 14th March from Paul Webster which was self-explanatory and contained a number of adverse comments about the Editor and the content of the *Subpostmaster*. MR ROGER expressed surprise and

disappointment that he had not had previous knowledge of the letter and been given time to respond to the remarks. General discussion ensued during which the comments of negativity from Mr Webster were examined. MR ROGER said he had been proportionately representing readers' letters and there had been a large amount of worried correspondence. He expressed a strong wish to receive more positive letters from members and was always looking for more positive news to report. MR ROGER said that he does not always get information he requests and he would like to see the General Secretary's "Above the Line" reinstated. MR ROGER continued by saying he realised that he relied heavily on TIM COBB and MRS DAVIS for contributions. He offered his sincere thanks to the GENERAL SECRETARY and the staff at Shoreham for their support. THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that a high proportion of the items in the *Subpostmaster* had been from MRS DAVIS and ANNABEL BARNETT and appealed on the Editor's behalf for some assistance with articles and news for inclusion in the Journal.

MRS KENDALL asked what the remit for the job of Editor was. Was it part of the job description that they do articles and research for the paper, or was it their job to edit? THE GENERAL SECRETARY said that the Editor should not be made to feel pilloried. A problem was being discussed and all the Executive Council should share it. As the workload is rising he suggested it might be an idea to have an executive editor with P&D sourcing.

After a great deal more discussion covering various aspects of "*The SubPostmaster*", where there may be room for improvement, it was proposed and seconded that the matter be remitted to the P&D Committee to explore the production, format and editorship of the journal in total, with the Editor on board. This proposal was carried.

DECISION

The Editor's report was moved and accepted.

DECISION

#### A6(C) DISSOLUTION OF A BRANCH

MR MARSHALL informed the Executive Council that Barnstaple Branch wished to be dissolved. MR BUTLIN had put in a great deal of work and the Branch cannot be kept going any longer. MRS KENDALL asked if there was cover for the remaining 91 members and was assured they would be joining other branches. In accordance with Rule V(n) the Executive Council was requested to agree that the Barnstaple Branch be dissolved. Agreement was confirmed.

DECISION

MR WALSH had received a letter requesting the dissolution of Crawley Branch and Executive Council agreement to this was also confirmed.

DECISION



**A7 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS PRIOR 2001.**

No Report.

**A8 CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS 2000.**

No Report.

**A9. MOTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.**

**A9(a) Motion to the Executive Council for March Meeting. FM OG 02**

The documents supporting MR WALSH's motion had already been circulated. MR WALSH said he believed the Federation used the wrong premise to represent members. He had prepared the papers based on an Executive Council representation of 19 members. He proceeded to indicate how he believed the branches and regions should be allocated, each geographically split. MR PEBERDY congratulated MR WALSH on the thought behind the work and its presentation. However, MR PEBERDY pointed out that the network was about to move from interim to permanent territorial boundaries and PON were looking at the total structure which will reduce some of these numbers. Also Security Division has gone to what is perceived as final boundaries and this had brought problems because they do not want to talk to the Federation. He agreed we had a basis for discussion which needs to come forward from a time when Post Office Ltd comes into place and decisions are made on how many Horns there are and which way that retail line is going to go. The Federation's representation is more with the retail line and if that carves our branches in half then we will have jumped ahead of the structure and may leave people without representation rights.

MRS JENKINS asked whether there would be a reduction in numbers or whether the boundaries would change. MR PEBERDY responded by advising that they do not yet know this. PON are currently making out job specifications. MR MORGAN-JONES said he understood the possibility of a reduction in numbers, but the difficulty with PON is that they will not listen to Executive Officers from out of their area.

MR WALSH indicated that he just wanted to establish the principle of an association of branches and the geographical location of branches bearing in mind with the new retail line it is more likely that more offices will never see an RNM and will need more help than ever from the Federation.

MR BUTLIN added his congratulations to MR WALSH for his presentation which he believed was a good idea for the future, but

asked how Branches were to be convinced when they believed their Region was sacrosanct. MRS KENDALL added her congratulations to MR WALSH for his excellent work. MRS KENDALL proposed that

this matter, including all MR WALSH's work be remitted to the P&D and they come back to the Executive Council in the not too distant future with proposals to the Council which hopefully can be taken to next year's Conference. This proposal was seconded

MR PEBERDY pointed out that MR DAVIS had been committed to work on the Federation's representation and that this should be encompassed with the work he was doing so that the whole thing joined up. MR DAVIS said that the work he was doing was being set up on the current representation and on the current boundaries. MR DAVIS envisaged his work runs on slightly different lines. MRS KENDALL pointed out that the matter MR DAVIS had been working on was the representation of the Federation externally with the Post Office, but this is all about how the Federation best serves its members internally. She felt that while there is a flow-through, she did not see the two aspects impacting.

MRS KENDALL repeated her proposal that part of the plan for the P&D deal with the NFSP organisational structure as a top priority and come back with presentations to this Executive Council with a view to putting recommendations before Conference in the year 2002. This had already been seconded and the vote taken was in favour.

DECISION

MR WALSH reminded the Chairman that Rule 7(c) was to be changed at this Conference and nothing had come forward. MR DAVIS explained the application of the rule. MR PEBERDY recalled that we would make it clear. The rule didn't state that the application of Rule 7(c) does not apply at the triennial election period. A phrase should be included which made it clear that the reduction is not applied at the Conference next, because at a triennial election everyone stands down. Something needed be written into the rule which said "except at triennial election period". MRS KENDALL suggested that the part of the rule which required adjustment is the part that talked about "the annual conference after" because this rule slipped the net when the Federation went from annual elections to triennial. Various suggestions were made for alterations to the rule and it was proposed that THE GENERAL SECRETARY, on behalf of the Council, be authorised to take this matter away, examine it and make the proper necessary amendment to ensure that the rule clearly states what it actually means. A copy of the final version will be faxed to each Executive Council member. This course of action was seconded and agreed.

DECISION

DECISION

**A10 DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE****A10(A) FOR DISCUSSION****1. SECURE STOCK SERVICES PC NW 09 06**

There was nothing to add to the minutes of the last meeting with Hemel Hempstead, which had been circulated previously.

**2. COUNTERFEIT NOTES PC NW 12**

Nothing further to add to correspondence already circulated.

**3. SUBPOSTMASTERS' CONTRACT PC SC****(a) Christmas & New Year Arrangements. PC SC 05**

A recent circulation has a copy of the Review of Arrangements for the year just past. The report contained comments passed to MR DAVIS by the Executive Council. This review will form the basis for next year's arrangements. They are very much aware that last year they did not talk to the Federation about the arrangements before they published them. It is MR DAVIS' intention to ensure we have an opportunity to comment on any proposals they may have before they publish them.

**(b) Sick Absence Substitution Allowance. PC SC 16**

The previously circulated letter is confirmation of the recently announced change in relation to male and female and the application of the rules. The allowance paid is now available to both men and women aged 69 and under. MRS KENDALL asked if it was intended to reply to this letter as she believed that the criteria on retrospective payment is unreasonable. MR DAVIS said he was quite happy to go back on that point.

ACTION

**(c) Assistants in Subpostmaster Employment P356 Exercise. PC SC 20**

The response rate on last year's exercise was 60%. The cost of chasing the missing ones and following up requests for information was quite substantial. It was doubtful whether the information produced was worth the cost. Will probably not carry out a similar exercise this year. MR PEBERDY asked whether the Data Protection Act would be contravened. MR DAVIS responded that all Post Office employees have to sign the Official Secrets Act, but that he would ask the Post Office

ACTION

about Data Protection. MR WALSH suggested some details of the letter be published in the journal to highlight the fact that Subpostmasters should notify PONU of any assistants they employ, including holiday reliefs, and that assistants have to be registered to conform to the requirements of the compensation scheme.

4. SUBPOSTMASTERS' PAY

PC SP

(a) Telephone Allowance

PC SP 02 06

The Contract still includes unit bandings for determining which of the telephone call allowance each office is entitled to. The letter of the 7th February replaces that arrangement with a cash equivalent. This does not change entitlements, it's just a tidying up exercise which is more relevant to today.

(b) Small Office Payments 2000/2001.

This was discussed under A3. The circulation under A10(B) is simply a letter saying that the exercise will be carried out this year and sets out how it will be done. The Post Office have subsequently decided to take out the Telephone Call Allowance and Substitution Allowance and also to calculate on a monthly basis rather than Subpostmasters waiting a year to find out what they would get.

A10(B) FOR INFORMATION

ACTION

MR PEBERDY requested a copy of the Sales, Service and Retail Line Trial Research which he felt might be very useful.

ACTION

MRS REEVES asked how many offices fell into the "larger" offices under Secure Stock – Easter & May Bank Holiday. MR DAVIS believed there were about 2,000 but he would find out and advise.

DECISION

The reports under A10(B) were accepted.

A11 REPORT ON CENTRAL APPEALS

No report.



## A12 GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

(a) Mrs Bain FM LW 04

Mrs Bain's cheque has now been paid.

(b) Clifford Chance FM LW 04  
(c) Mr Hayward PC HR 02

The Clifford Chance Report had recently been circulated and contains the information requested. This is linked to the Hayward decision as well as the Bain decision. Clifford Chance is flagging up once again the dangers involved in pursuing cases of this nature in a fragmented way. As before, this report is strictly confidential.

MR ROGER asked if Mr Hayward planned to appeal. THE GENERAL SECRETARY responded that it was not known for certain but almost certainly he would.

It was proposed and seconded that the Clifford Chance Report continue to be kept strictly confidential. New Executive Officers will be bound by the rules if they request any past Executive Council papers. This decision would be conveyed by the President to the two members who had already left the meeting.

DECISION

ACTION

(d) Consultation Arrangement PO PC 03

It was suggested that the Federation now go back to the Post Office and agree to go ahead with the Consultation arrangement, carrying the caveat that it be reviewed later if necessary.

MRS KENDALL referred to Appendix C- Branch Secretaries. One of the problems in the Retail Line Review areas is that the Branch Secretaries wanting to take up individual members, don't have RNM's, only a business support centre which is almost impossible to get through to. As result they are referred to the NFSP Executive Officer and will cause a major problem. Also, Branch Secretaries feel they do not have a role. This must be clarified and sorted out and MRS KENDALL asked what the Executive Council's intention is in this respect. MR DAVIS replied that we have the option to roll this out. In accepting totally MRS KENDALL'S point, he indicated that national consultative arrangements are not matched to a trial. This is a major problem as approximately two-thirds of the offices in the trial areas do not have RNMs. The Negotiating Committee has asked Bruce McNiven to

provide a report on the present situation. We must continue to pursue this issue with The Post Office but believe this should still be rolled out with the caveat that the Retail Line Trial must be discussed in detail.

MR WALSH commented that nobody seemed happy with the way the reporting of incidents is currently dealt with. People do not end up with the right information at the right time. He asked if that had been taken into account. MRS KENDALL also said there did not appear to be anything on the ground to cover any security forum at all. MRS KENDALL asked if this was a separate body the Federation were talking to. Executive Officers are currently in Security Forums and this report does not alter that and the arrangement should continue. MR DAVIS assured MRS KENDALL that national meetings were still taking place but he would cover this point in his response to the Report.

ACTION

THE GENERAL SECRETARY was still awaiting the Foot & Mouth information. He asked Executive Officers to let him know in writing if and how they are affected by the outbreak.

#### A/13 NFSP TRADING LIMITED

THE GENERAL SECRETARY spoke on behalf of Nadeem Butt and showed a brief selection of slides demonstrating the work that had been done. A sample of the new branding was passed round. Counters Club is on schedule for a July launch.

The Trading Company accounts will be reinstated and monies received would be placed in the Trading Account. The Post Office will bear the bad debt. The Federation can legally get out of the Contracts with Parcel Force and Universal.

There is a myriad of e-companies with whom MR BUTT is liaising. A great deal of business is expected from them but they have to be carefully vetted.

Total Income projections for Counters Club are:

£120,000	Current year
£245,000	This year
£320,000	Year 2001/2002
£365,000	Year 2002/2003
£421,000	Year 2003/2004
£503,000	Year 2004/2005

MR BUTT is confident that these figures are achievable.

The Postshop brand is to be retained, but we have to get out of the contract. MR MILNER asked whether Counters Club was tied solely to P&H. He was advised that P&H have the products and services we want and this was a good strong deal. No others come close.

#### **A/14 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS' REPORTS**

No Report

#### **A/15 MATTERS RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR INCLUSION ON AGENDA**

No Report

#### **A/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

MRS KENDALL broached the subject of NIPOC wanting to bring to the attention of the Executive Council the difficulties members have experienced concerning the letters from the Contributions Agency to Subpostmasters regarding refunds etc., and about applications for SERPS.

The Post Office have gone to the Contributions Agency applying for non-staff costs back to 1993/94. Because they have gone back 7 years, Contributions Agency are not going to refund the Post Office for the first year. Some offices have slipped through the net. The Post Office have broken a National Agreement whereby a number of Subpostmasters were not in the scheme. They have surreptitiously re-included these Subpostmasters. This is retrospectively reducing some Subpostmasters pensions. The Contributions Agency have had a lot of letters from Subpostmasters about it and although they are sorting it out some have slipped through. If this continues, MRS KENDALL suggested that the Federation go back to the Post Office, re-open the agreement and get some of the money back. She stressed that the Federation should make sure that no Subpostmaster's pension is seriously affected at this stage.

MALCOLM ROGER queried whether Stephen Byers' address was under Chatham House Rules and whether any of the information could be disclosed. THE GENERAL SECRETARY suggested use of Tim Cobb's press release only.

MR PEBERDY drew attention to the brochure from First Call Direct which he thought was disgusting. They have been told they have misrepresented the situation and that it has not done them any good. They have tried to be too smart too soon.

As the meeting was drawing to a close, MR MORGAN-JONES rose to pay tribute to MR BRADBROOK as follows:-



"Yes Mr President, it looks as if we've got to the end of a long day and the end of a long Executive Council meeting. There we have in the chair, NORMAN BRADBROOK. Norman has done many years of service in London and on this Executive Council. He's a wit. From what I hear he's a bit of a raconteur, but more than that he's a listener and I am sure people round this table have had conversations with Norman and he's listened. At this meeting, which has been tedious and it's been rocky, but at the end, as always, it has been positive and that's something that only he can control. When the Secretary of State was here, I think he acted with calm and dignity. Norman certainly took the proceedings away from himself in some respects offering him to have the chair and on occasions he would ask who wanted to speak but, that's Norman isn't it. Over all, I think, we are looking at a man with a sense of magnificent humour, giving everybody a fair chance of speaking, particularly at this meeting.

"It's our last Executive Council meeting. There is sadness and happiness. But like me Sir, your involvement in the Federation will not finish at the end of Conference, I am sure of that. Thank you on behalf of the Executive Council for all you have done and particularly for this meeting." A round of applause followed.

MR WALSH also addressed MR BRADBROOK (tongue in cheek). "I've had a splendid time. You've made things great. As soon as we got you away from this end of the table, Sir, it was an absolute pleasure." More seriously. "I've thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Executive Council. It's been a treat. It's opened my eyes and it's been a privilege to be with you all. Thank you very much indeed".

MR MORGAN-JONES followed by saying "As I said, we are both at the end of a line. There are five of us going and only two to replace us. I hope everything goes fine for you. In the thirteen years that I've been round the table – some of you, not all of you, it's been a great pleasure to be here. I've felt that the time I've spent has been valuable so far as I am concerned because I have learned an awful lot and those who follow me will learn even more because they are going to have a hell of a lot more to do. The network reinvention is probably the biggest thing that's going to happen since the Post Office began and it's incumbent, as I said last night, for everybody to pull together and work together. I hope that while I've been round the table I have done something to help them. If I have, I have, and if I haven't I haven't. If I have it's because I wanted to and because I could, and if I haven't it's because I didn't want to or I couldn't. So on the basis that I have sat around the table for 13 years, I hope you can bear with that fact, live with it forever, and I promise you that the Federation will still be in my mind even after Conference, as I have said. Thank you."

MR MARSHALL made his farewells by saying "I'm like Hugh, I'm saying the same sort of thing. I've had a very enjoyable time with the Executive Council and indeed the years before that when I was Editor and also a member of this Council, and I wish you all the very best for the future.



You've got a tough future ahead. I think I said this last night. It is going to be tough, I feel, but I'm one of those guys that feel at the end of the tunnel you have a good future ahead of you. Once it's all sorted and it's all tucked away under the table, I think it's going to happen and you'll have a really good network. You're the people that make it happen. This is what it's all about, so I wish you all the best, all good luck and, in particular, once again, I would just like to thank the P&D. An excellent crew. We've done a lot of work and it's been good fun working together and there's Ian and there's Mike, Trish, John and Kate. Thank you all very much for your help and assistance and all the best for the future."

MR FINLAY was then invited to speak. He responded by saying "Mr President. I have been on the Executive Council for just 9 months. I was just starting to come out, just starting to develop the confidence to talk at the Executive Council. Although I have had the experience elsewhere, it has been a learning curve for me and a humbling experience in many respects. I always said when it was asked of me to come on the Executive Council that I would take time to settle in. I feel that time was starting to come to fruition, but circumstance as it is I know that there are better people to come to do the job. However, I reiterate everything that has been said. The camaraderie and friendship I have gained in these few months have been wonderful. I do pledge my support to the Federation. I have deliberately retained my association with the Regional Secretary's job for the simple reason I knew that I wouldn't be here all that long and I will be back at the other side of the fence in 12 months time. Thank you."

MR BRADBROOK then closed the meeting by saying "Well, thank you all, very much. National President – it's a job that I wanted to do. I didn't think I could do. In fact I was quite willing to get off that platform before it all happened. So having seen it through as far as this, yes I am very proud, and very proud to wear this (Presidential chain). The amount of respect it had throughout the country I think it was fantastic, and really I think we doubt ourselves far too much because most people are standing behind the Federation all the time. But it's only due to the work you do in the Regions, so you should be congratulated for that.

Thank you very much to the Secretariat. The number of times I ring up every day, especially to Diana asking questions. Nobody has sort of said – "no thank you, pass him off". We've had some good fun, but on the serious side, I've enjoyed it. I came on to get rid of the introductory fee, because that was a thorn in my side and I thought John would come over this table many times, and when I first came to this Council I stood up, out of order, and gave him a slanging match I thought he would never forget. But he forgave me afterwards and he said "you're here to fight for your members and you're doing the right thing" and I think that's what you've all got to do. You've got to come here, air your views no matter what, and get it off your chest and not just go with the whole crowd. Anyway, thank you very much

*for having me as your President. I've enjoyed it very much and thank you for your support. Thankyou.*

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

**GRO**

DIANA DENTON  
MARIAN JONES  
MARCH 2001