



**MINUTES OF THE WALES NATIONAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE (NOC)
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2005, IN FD OFFICE
WELSHPOOL**

Present:	Edward Shephard	Chair
	Kath McNulty	PCS
	Chris Tucker	T&G
	Andy Fryers	Prospect
	Steve Hunt	Prospect
	Andy Philips	T&G
	John Dodd	T&G

Minute Secretary: Antony Griffiths PCS

Apologies: Owen Thurgate PCS
Richard Gable PCS
Jim Davies (Resigned from FC)

1. Introduction

Edward Shephard welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of 10th November 2004

The above were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising From Last Meeting

a) NOC structure

5 PCS
5 T&G
3 Prospect
1 GMB

It was pointed out that there are only 5 members of staff who are actual GMB Members and these all work in Coed y Cymoedd. Although GMB representation had been allocated to the NOC it was unlikely that this place would be represented. It was also pointed out that it was likely that only 2 members from Prospect were ever likely to attend, but it is hoped that an extra member could be co-opted. The structure will be ratified by the FCTU at a meeting on 23rd February 05.

b) Handsfree Mobile phone kits

Colin Sobota has written a paper/policy identifying the position of mobile phones. Andy Fryers stated that there was no known issues of phones from

Prospect Members. John Dodd was still concerned about the safety issues involved as a proper car installation increased the phone signal strength and thus gave greater safety cover for loan workers. John Dodd was to look into this in more detail.

Action Required: John Dodd

c) Disposals

Selection and scoring criteria were received from Ian Shaw following a request from the last Staff Council Meeting. Antony Griffiths said that he would follow up with Ian Shaw the areas that the NOC wanted further clarification on. In particular; clarify the Financial Scoring Objective - High or Low; establish if there is a roll-over/continuation (additional) of disposals for future years; request the complete selection and scoring criteria for all FCW Woodlands; obtain FCW 'actual' policy (Strategy) on disposals and how it fits in with ODP; enquire if there is an acquisition policy programme to balance the disposals; establish whether the 'one-off' disposal list is static or fluid.

Action Required: Antony Griffiths

d) Woodland Expansion Review Group

Simon Mead has provided Kath McNulty with a document explaining the status behind the Group. It was also pointed out that this information was available on the FCW website. It was **agreed** that no further discussion was necessary.

e) Update on OD programme

It was pointed out that ODP is now in Phase 2. Jon Westlake is now in the process of visiting all the various Districts/Business Units to consult on what areas of the business are core / non-core and statutory / non-statutory.

It was pointed out that the Unions are not being included in the ODP process since the Steering Group became dormant. It was **agreed** to invite Jon Westlake to meet with the NOC. Edward Shephard would contact Jon for possible dates but 1st March was suggested as a possibility.

Action Required: Edward Shephard

A short discussion took place about the **need** for all sections of FCW to have the opportunity to feed into an ODP workshop. Operations Unit are hoping for two workshops so that a larger proportion of staff can be involved.

There is concern amongst members that whilst senior managers are consulting with staff (very welcome) the outcome is already known.

Concern was raised that perhaps the ODP process was not fully considering H&S aspects (countrywide, not just FCW) of the business. It was suggested that the OD Process should involve Emily Ramsey.

Further concerns were raised about the speed with which Jon Westlake is carrying out the consultation with staff within Phase 2 of ODP, given that there seemed to be no flexibility on the consultation dates, i.e. if you can't make it –

tuff! Bearing in mind that the time period for Phase 2 completion is July 05 there was a feeling that things were moving forward unnecessarily fast, which was preventing more staff from being involved. In addition concern was raised that ODP was moving completely independent of BIP assuming that the two processes would need to be aligned.

f) Update on Call Centre

Following discussion, it was **agreed** Kath McNulty would draft a letter to the Management Board. This would be to emphasise the complete and utter disgust that is felt towards the money that is being spent and the obvious complete lack of parity with other areas of the business. It was emphasised that staff couldn't understand how on the one hand money seemed to be no object, and yet on the other hand we are all being told the business is facing an extremely challenging funding future.

Action Required: Kath McNulty

4. Staff Council Minutes 25 November 2005

There was still some concern raised that the minutes didn't properly reflect the comment made by Simon Hewitt, in the last Staff Council Meeting, that the Management Board would make strategic decisions with no prior consultation with staff.

There now appeared to be a slight retraction on the position of moving substantially towards Standing Sales. The move may clearly still go ahead, but very much slower and over a longer period of time.

There was still some confusion on the statement that there is now a 'Moratorium on Recruitment'. However, it appears that if there is a business case for additional staff then recruitment can be sanctioned. This was understood to be for either internal or external staffing needs. The Unions' understanding is that if there is a business case then recruitment would be possible. Therefore there isn't really a 'Moratorium on Recruitment'.

5. Update on WHAM

The presumption is that there will be a greater move towards Standing Sales operations. There is some concern from staff within the operations units that they are not being consulted/involved adequately in the ODP process, given that many feel that they will be affected the most. This also relates back to the points raised in section 3 e. It was agreed that the process of ODP obviously has to take WhaM and WSO into account.

6. Update on staffing situation in G&L

Concerns of similarity were raised here with WhaM. G&L is perceived as being 'sorted out' and is thus outside the ODP process.

Following a recent meeting of staff from the G&L Team, held by Peter Garson, some fairly major changes emerged which would have substantial impact on current staff. The concern was that decisions had been made that appeared to have been taken outside the OD process. As ODP is looking at core / non-core business it should, therefore, consider every part of the business including G&L. The Unions have asked Peter Garson to engage. He has offered a meeting. This was cancelled and we are waiting for a new date. what is going on.

Concern was raised about the development of GLADE and whether it would deliver what it was set out to do, if in fact work at all. If GLADE does not deliver original perceptions then staffing would be a major concern as it is believed that Peter Garson's meeting centred upon GLADE delivering the original design objectives.

Action Required: Kath McNulty

7. Pay Deal

Kath McNulty reported that many PCS members may resign from the Union following the recent pay offer. Discussions emphasised that without active and supportive Union members it is extremely difficult to represent members effectively. Union Reps are not superhuman and, therefore, rely on support from all members. In any event Edward Shephard explained that the offer communicated to members was Management's last and final one. In other words there was no more money! It was considered by PCS Group GEC (at a meeting on 25th-26th January 05) which decided to recommend reluctant acceptance.

Andy Fryers reported that the ballot has gone out to Prospect Members with a form for comments on how best to address the issue of pay for now and the future.

It was stated that staff on their max's had lost out in recent pay deals, but it was said that at least they had managed to progress to the max of their payband. Concern has been raised as to whether the pay progression format may come under threat.

It was **agreed** that each Union should explore ways of expressing members' dissatisfaction with the deal. It was **agreed** that some form of co-ordination between all Unions would be an advantage.

8. Civil Service Pensions

This topic also raised much discussion, but it was felt that little progress could be achieved by the Wales NOC on its own. However, Antony Griffiths raised the issue as to the legal situation i.e. can the Government do this as terms and conditions of Civil Servants would be changed and hence would be different to when they took up appointment of their jobs. The question was

asked “have the Unions taken legal advice of the fact that their members Contract of Employment would be changed?”

9. Personal Cases

PCS currently has 3 personal cases. Neither Prospect or T&G were aware of any current personal cases.

10. Staff Council 2 March 2005

- TRA's
- Call Centre
- ODP

11. Any Other Urgent Business

1. Sick Leave:

The issue of sick leave was raised as it had come to light that some staff who had been off sick with a Doctor's note on paid sick leave subsequently took a trip abroad (holiday) without losing any annual leave entitlement. A consensus view was sought on this. After some discussion Edward Shephard said that it was at the discretion of Line Managers to assess whether a trip abroad (holiday) would exacerbate an individual's reason for sick leave and result in lengthening the period of time that an individual required before returning to work. Whilst it appeared wholly unfair that staff were effectively on holiday during a period of paid sick leave, on the face of it there was nothing one could do to stop staff as long as this didn't prolong the time needed for a member of staff to return to work.

2. Issues with trawl in North Wales:

Discussion took place regarding the correct grading of a GIS job trawl in Clawdd Newydd. The Unions felt that if the correct procedures (i.e. JEGS, Grading maintenance) had been carried out then there was little that they could do.

3. TRA's:

A list had been received following the last Staff Council Meeting – 25th November 04. It was apparent that this list was now out of date and thus it was decided to ask the Management Board for an updated copy. Until this was received it would be difficult to assess if there were still any outstanding issues. This would be brought up at the next Staff Council Meeting on the 2nd March 05.

Action Required: Kath McNulty

4. Health and Safety Report:

John Dodd is to attend his first meeting representing Wales on the 25th February 05. He is trying to put together a list of all H&S Reps for all FCW offices.

5. Issues for Simon:

As for Staff Council Meeting on 2nd March 05.

6. FCW Staffing Strategy:

Kath McNulty reported that Colin Sobota had circulated the Staffing Strategy to the Management Board and had now shared it with Kim Lardge. He is hoping it will be adopted GB wide.

12. Date of Next Meeting :16th June 2005 10:30-14:00 in Abergavenny