



**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE FORESTRY
COMMISSION PCS GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE CENTRAL
BOARD ROOM, SILVAN HOUSE, ON THE 6TH JANUARY 2006.**

Present: Allan Mackenzie, President
David Gibson
Malcolm Crosby
Jim O'Neill
Jon Bates
Liz Richardson
Steve Holdsworth
Liz Stewart
Kath McNulty
Antony Griffiths
Joanne McAuley
John Winterbourne
Jim Lauder
Edward Shephard, Secretary
Michael McCann, PCS full-time official

Minute Secretary: Sue Gillingwater

Apologies: No Apologies were received.

1. President's Introduction

Allan Mackenzie welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance, particularly those who had cut short their Christmas break.

2. Pay 2005

The meeting had been called in response to the issue of Pay Notice No 8 advising staff that despite their firm rejection of the pay offer management had decided to impose it. By taking this course of action, Allan said that management had overridden and undermined the views of staff; which compounded by the lack of any reasonable explanation was, he said, an act beyond comprehension.

It was noted that an overwhelming majority of union members felt that the offer was unfair and as a result unacceptable. The meeting Allan said had therefore been convened to establish a course of action that would represent the views of members.

Michael McCann endorsed Allan's comments and continued with a full and in depth account of the pay negotiations and discussions held with the Director General. He lamented at the different management style now adopted by the Commission, and in particular that the new approach appeared to have the full

backing of the Executive Board. It was agreed that any form of planned action represented a complicated path; but Michael felt that if this style of unabashed behaviour were allowed to continue unchecked the trend would undoubtedly continue. This was endorsed by Edward who reported that many members had contacted him to register their anger and concern at both the unfairness of the pay offer, and the Executive Board's decision to impose the pay settlement.

Edward presented a comprehensive report detailing proposals for taking the process forward. Following a detailed and informative debate, it was concluded that even though there was sufficient provocation to initiate an immediate call for industrial action, this would not be a responsible course of action to take at this moment in time.

It was **agreed** that in the first instance, all efforts should be concentrated on the formulation of a controlled **joint union campaign** that will utilise all possible avenues for reaching an amicable settlement.

It was further **agreed** that:

- a. The goals of the campaign will be to seek an assurance from management:
 - that the inadequacies of the current settlement will be addressed as part of the 2006 pay round;
 - That they will never again seek to impose an offer against the wishes of a clear majority of members.
- b. The Campaign Strategy will focus on two main promotion strands
 - A central campaign strand, which will work to raise the concerns of members and seek support from the Board of Commissioner's and Ministers.
 - An internal campaign, which will enable all staff to register concerns over the Board's action.

It was finally **agreed** that the proposal should be submitted as the PCS recommendation to the other unions for ratification at the Core Group meeting which is due to be held immediately following the conclusion of this meeting.

Action Required: Allan Mackenzie and Michael McCann

6. Organising Strategy

The new 2006 version of this document summarising the work needing to be undertaken in order to achieve the action points set out in the strategy, which had been circulated prior to the meeting by Edward, was unanimously endorsed by the Group.

7. Any Other Competent Business

There were no items of any other competent business.

13. Dates of Next Meeting

It was **agreed** that the next GEC meeting would take place on 14-15th February 2006 at Silvan House, with a start time of 1.30pm.

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Pay Campaign – Outline

Issues

1. That the settlement is unfair.
 - It does not provide all staff with an inflationary increase.
 - It fails to protect the value of our pensions.
 - It discriminates against staff in pay bands 3 and 4.
2. The imposition shows a clear lack of respect for the views of staff.
 - The EB has made no attempt to address the concerns of staff.
 - It shows no respect for the views of staff.
 - It shows no respect for the negotiation process.

Goals

Given that the money is now spent and cannot now be redistributed:

1. To seek assurance that the inadequacies of the current deal will be corrected in the next pay round.
2. To seek assurance that management will never again impose an offer against the wishes of the majority of members.

Strike Action

Are staff prepared to take protest style strike action? *Yes, but probably not enough at this time.*

Why won't people strike? Resisters: *Action.*

- They're not members: *We need to recruit asap.*
- They're not convinced of our argument: *we need to continue to make our case against the HR disinformation.*
- They're not bothered about the issue: *We need to generate and use anger by making the campaign personal to everyone.*
- They're not used to taking action: *We need to start with asking everyone to take some small easy steps and to build up the level of activity.*
- They're not convinced that strike is the next step: *we need to ensure and demonstrate that all other options have been exhausted.*

Two strand approach

1. Continue and exhaust all options for central negotiating and lobbying.

- It's the responsible thing to do.
- It will give members confidence that strike (if necessary) is the last resort.

2. Programme of small-scale local activity.

- It gets folk used to taking action.
- It gives them ownership of the campaign by personally opting in.
- Recruitment builds numbers and gives members confidence.

Possible actions strands

1. Continue to exhaust all options for central negotiating and lobbying.

- Write to DG/EB notifying dispute.
- Write to members notifying dispute.
- Write to / meet with Chairman and Commissioners seeking intervention.
- Write to / meet with Ministers seeking intervention.
- Offer binding arbitration through ACAS.
- Ask NOCs to lobby individual EB members.

2. Programme of small-scale local activity.

- List 5 quick actions everyone can take.
- Recruitment – quickly.
- Petition from all staff objecting to imposition.
- Ensure 'you' understand the campaign.
- Raise at management meetings.
- Write to MP/MSP/AM etc.
- Write to EB asking how this action accords with FC values.
- Put up poster.
- Wear badge / wristband.
- Set out of office assistant to signal support.