



GEC PAPER

Minutes of GEC Meeting held in Silvan House on 27 September and in PCS Edinburgh office on 28 September 2011

Attendees:

Mary Irvine	Group President
Danny Williamson	Group Secretary
Allan MacKenzie	Assistant Secretary
Joanne McAuley	Group Organiser
Hazel MacLean & Eva Sparreboom,	North Scotland
Bruce Hamilton,	South Scotland
Linda McGinley & Sam Telford,	Silvan House
Andy Best & Antony Griffiths,	Wales
Jim O'Neil,	North England
Jon Bates,	Yorkshire & Humber
Chris Waterfield,	North West England via Telephone
Amanda Snell,	East England via Telephone
Sam Hall	NEC Liaison Officer

Apologies:

Steve Holdsworth	Group Treasurer
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Introduction

1. Group President Mary Irvine opened meeting and announced the apologies and arrangements for the meeting.
2. Previous minutes from the June 2011 GEC were agreed.
3. Matters arising; the use of hire cars instead of standard mileage this is still work in progress.

Action Point 1: Allan MacKenzie

Campaigns

4. **National Campaign:** We had an **NEC update** from Sam Hall who outlined the national campaign, the overall excellent turnout on 30 June in which 80% of PCS members took part and how the NEC are preparing for the national day of action on 30 November. Every member should be aware of just how much of an attack on their pensions is being waged. If anyone is in doubt they should use the pension calculator on the PCS website to fully comprehend how much they will lose as a result of the change being put in place by the Westminster Government. The

calculator needs to be publicised more and every member and non-member should be encouraged to use it.

Action Point 2: GEC

It is important that every branch hold a planning meeting to enable members to plan for action in delivering the Alternative Vision.

Action Point 3: GEC

5. **FC Campaign** this summer saw the FCTU leaflets and postcards being distributed throughout the constituent unions and aimed at members of the public, campaign groups and forest outlets. Danny outlined the current Alternative vision campaign and pointed out that this needed to be moved along and should be tied to pay meetings. The summer saw something of a hiatus whilst we waited for other national unions starting to catch up with PCS. We are aware that a national day of action will take place on 30 November as public sector unions' ballot their members for action.

Industrial Relations Matters

6. **SR10** we have seen the various consultations take place and implementation plans being produced. In England the workstreams have reported and we have entered into a three week consultation period, the workstream have reported on wildlife, administration, learning and retail. The GEC are concerned that the number of people leaving the FC is leading to high residual workloads and we will ask the FC how they can demonstrate to us that they are reducing those workloads.

Action Point 4: Danny Williamson

Assimilation panels' have sat at national level and some in local areas. The GEC are concerned that local meetings are the first time that the union is being given information on grading changes from those agreed in the consultation process. We would ask to see the JEGs evaluation on these changes to grades of jobs.

Action Point 5: Danny Williamson

Much of the concern is that members may be making rushed decisions on the assimilation days by feeling pressured into accepting any job at any cost.

7. **Privatisation/Outsourcing** appears to coming into the FC in many areas and we would seek to ensure that all appropriate Cabinet Office protocols are being followed. We should seek assurances from FC that adherence to COSOP and the fair Deal for Pensions forms part of the evaluation of bids. The workstreams have provided many topline costs but lack any credible detail on how those figures have been gathered. The GEC would like to see a breakdown of all figures being supplied during the consultation.

Action Point 6: Allan MacKenzie

FCTU are asked to determine the accuracy and effect of the figures being provided by FC England.

8. **Single Environment Body (SEB)**, in Wales is still seen as a very real threat to FCGB and our members. The setting up of the SEB may suit the other two bodies but the case for including the FC in Wales has yet to be proved. The GEC wants to be seen to be supporting the branch and improving linkage to PCS Wales and lead officers. Branch should build links with PCS Wales and send a motion to PCS in Wales seeking opposition to FC inclusion in SEB.

Action Point 7: Antony Griffiths/Andy Best

9. **Pay 2011:** The Group Secretary presented a paper to the GEC recommending rejection of the final offer and calling for membership meetings There should be no ballot as the public sector pay policy was imposed. Civil Servants pay will be frozen for two years, commencing 1 October 2011 with FC applying a £300 underpin for staff earning less than £21000. Following PCS representation this would not be pro-rated for part time staff. FC's legal advice was that progression pay is not a contractual obligation and will not be paid during the pay freeze. The FCTU registered its disagreement with this position. The final position of the GEC is to reject the imposition of the pay freeze and to notify the FCTU of our view. Members meeting should be held to explain the pay situation.

Action Point 8: GEC

Pay Briefing note to be issued once the FC respond to the final position being adopted by the FCTU. The GEC did discuss other aspects of the pay structure in the FC and suggested that talks with HR should be commenced to raise these issues with a resolution being gained during the pay freeze period.

Action Point 9: Danny Williamson

10. **Other Pay Related Benefits:** There was a brief discussion on the recent pay benefits review and the removal of a free Christmas tree for staff. The GEC felt this was just another item that would undermine staff morale.
11. **Assistant Secretary's Report:** Allan gave a report describing some of the consultations that had been undertaken between the unions and the FC since the last GEC. These included changes to the redundancy matrix, Re-deployment policy, Stress policy and other SR10 related consultations.
12. **Progress Of Conference Motions:** A paper was presented by the Group Secretary and the GEC noted progress.

Trade Union Matters

13. **Treasurers Report** In the absence of the Treasurer the Group President presented a written report which was agreed. Although the report indicates that we have managed our budget very well but supplementary funding is now required to ensure that the campaigns and meetings can be carried out. A bid has gone forward to PCS HQ for and additional £4000.
14. **Group Organisers Report** was presented by Joanne who issued several papers on strategy and Commix reports. Members need to be further reminded about keeping information held by Commix up to date. The committee endorsed the report.

Action Point 10: GEC

15. **Branch reports** were presented and gave a fairly accurate estimation of how our members are coping with the levels of change being experienced in all parts of the FC. Morale seems to be at a very low point and this is at odds with what the FC perceives. It may be necessary to have a further conversation with the FC on this subject.

Action Point 11: Allan MacKenzie

16. **Appointments to National Forums** were announced and a list will be published later.
17. **Group President:** The position of Group President will become vacant early in the New Year as Mary has decided to take Voluntary Exit. The search for a suitable candidate will be underway very shortly. The GEC extended a vote of thanks to Mary and wishes her well for the future.
18. **AOB:** There was one item of other business which highlighted a problem regarding speed limits in FC fleet vehicle that may be deemed to be commercial and therefore should be driven at lower speed limits. FCTU are in discussion with MES about a number of issues and are taking this item forward as well.
19. **Date of Next Meeting:** There will be an extraordinary GEC to be held in Leeds on 21 October for the GEC to meet with Assistant General Secretary Chris Baugh. All GEC members are to attend this important meeting.

Action Point 12: GEC

AOB

20. **Changes to Vehicle Categories:** The Department of Transport are apparently saying that FC vans are now classed as goods vehicles rather than car derived vehicles. This has implications for speed limits as number recognition cameras will

class these vans as goods vehicles and issue a ticket where the speed limit is exceeded. There was concern that this was not flagged up to FC staff.

Action Point 13: Allan MacKenzie

3 October 2011

Allan MacKenzie
Assistant Group Secretary