

LogBook

Issue 30 May 2006 Campaign News from the FCTU



Pay: Progress, But No Solution-Yet

For the two-thirds of us who are union members the last few months have been unprecedented times. The unwarranted imposition of a pay deal which reduced the long-term values of pay scales and pensions for all staff (except members of the Board and other senior managers), has seen the first formal dispute between the Commission and all union members in the FC's 87 year history.

Over the last few weeks we have all been working to ensure that the strength of our feelings cannot go un-addressed—anger at the actions of the Board—dismay that years of positive organisational change could be so easily abandoned.

At the start of the campaign we agreed that we would try and do this responsibly through discussion and negotiation if at all possible. Therefore over the last few weeks we have been raising your concerns in a series of frank meetings directly with our most senior managers. The purpose of these was to look at how we might resolve our differences from last year and to convince managers that if they wish to avoid the mistakes of 2005 then we must work better together in 2006. The outcome of this effort has

been mixed.

On the down side we must be clear that we have not achieved the goals of our campaign; we have not got a commitment to address the unfairness of 2005, nor a commitment not to repeat the imposition in 2006. Therefore we must be clear that the basis of our dispute remains unresolved and our campaign must go on.

However on the positive side it is also clear that thanks to your efforts the great strength of feeling surrounding the last pay round has not fallen on deaf ears. In the last few weeks we have seen a significant change in language and approach from the Board towards working together in the future. The joint statement issued yesterday indicates that we have agreed how we shall work together to prepare for the 2006 and 2007 pay rounds: for example over the coming months we shall be working together to undertake proper bench-marking of our pay systems. Although not an immediate solution this does represent a significant step forward in addressing our concerns, and enables us to take our campaign to the next stage...

Local Pay Meetings

...Therefore over the next few weeks as part of the ongoing campaign we are holding a series of meetings for union members around the country. These meetings will give you a chance to give your views on where we are with pay, the issues behind the joint statement, and how the campaign should proceed.

Although our campaign must continue to try and address the issues of imposition and below inflation pay increases, there is no doubt that your efforts so far have made a difference. So thank you to everyone who has supported the campaign; let's keep up the momentum and I look forward to seeing you at one of the meetings around the country.

Local Pay Meetings

Details of local pay meetings are still being finalised. If you would like further details about any of these meetings then please speak to the contact listed.

Additional meetings are currently being arranged in North West England and South Wales, so if there is nothing listed near you please speak to your local rep or click here to see the latest on-line list.

Spey Bay Hall

1300 WEDNESDAY 26TH APRIL

Contact: Alistair Gillies, Jim Lauder, Ashley Woodhouse

Lochgilphead

1400 TUESDAY 2ND MAY

Contacts: Roy Laird, Allan MacKenzie

Silvan House

1400 TUESDAY 2ND MAY

Contact: Edward Shephard

Aberfoyle

1330 FRIDAY 5TH MAY

Contacts: Roy Laird, Robert Beaney, Allan MacKenzie

Northants FD

TIME TBC TUESDAY 9TH MAY

Contacts: Robert Beaney, Andy Patmore

North Wales - Ruthin

1200 THURSDAY 11TH MAY

Contact: Kath McNulty

Welshpool

1430 WEDNESDAY 17TH MAY

Contact: Matthew Park, Anthony Griffiths

Forest of Dean - Beechenhurst

1030 THURSDAY 18TH MAY

Contact: Edwin Rowlands, Nick Smith

West Midlands FD

1000 FRIDAY 19TH MAY

Contact: Steve Holdsworth

FChoices

As part of the ongoing pay campaign many people have been asking whether or not the unions support the new benefits package. Now that the scheme has been finally reached the launch pad, the unions do encourage everyone to look at the scheme and to sign up for those benefits which are of interest to you.

Variouly billed as the best thing since staff unification and worth at least a 3% pay rise, whilst some of the elements in the scheme may not be of interest to many people, others such as the child-care vouchers will be a major benefit to those who are eligible. Also at a potential total cost in excess of £350,000 over three years (not including staff time), it is important that we wring as much benefit as possible from the scheme. We also anticipate that the scheme could be part of a larger re-vamp of the current pay and reward packages that have been variously criticised by senior managers in recent months. Now that the FChoices scheme is nearing completion it can only be hoped that in the coming months HR will find time to turn their attention to pay, PMS, top performer bonuses, managing poor performance and career development, to name but a few. But for now if wine, shopping or fishing are important to you – enjoy.

PCS Group Conference 9th - 10th May

Following the announcement of the PCS conference in March there are now just two places available due to last minute cancellations.

The conference will draw together all of the work being done by the union including the pay campaign and recruitment; as well as debating and agreeing policy motions from local branch AGMs.

We shall also very pleased to welcome three high-profile speakers:

- Mark Serwotka, PCS General Secretary will talk about the current national campaigns on pay, pensions and jobs.
- Forestry Commission Chairman Lord Clark will be talking about the role of trade unions in the Forestry Commission, and
- Tim Rollinson will speak after dinner about his vision of the FC.

If you would like to take up one of the last few places then please contact the FCTU office asap.

People News

Finally I'm pleased to confirm that Allan MacKenzie has been re-elected unopposed as the PCS Group President. A final list of all 2006 PCS reps and contacts is available from the PCS section of the intranet.

Unions' Diary

- 2/5 PCS Silvan House Branch Meeting
- 3/5 PCS Drop-in Centre (Silvan House)
- 9/5 Prospect BEC (Silvan House)
- 9-10/5 PCS Group Conference (York)
- 11/5 FIRS Central Panel
- 11/5 PCS Wales Branch Meeting
- 16/5 FC Association AGM (Usk)
- 17/5 Wales NOC (Welshpool)
- 25/5 FC(S) Staff Council
- 30/5 DEFRA MRD Programme Meeting
- 6-7/6 PCS GEC (Brighton)
- 22/6 FCTU Council

5 Steps to Join the Campaign!

- 1 Make sure that you and your colleagues are **aware of the campaign.**
- 2 **Join a union** and support our campaign for Fair Pay.
- 3 **Recruit** a colleague.
- 4 Put up one of our campaign **posters or postcards.**
- 5 Wear one of the campaign **wristbands** to demonstrate your concern.

