



Conference Paper 1 - Motions

Introduction

This booklet contains the thirteen motions which will be debated on the second day of our conference.

Debating motions at a conference is a common process through which trade unions agree their position on issues of concern to members.

Debating motions also used to be common within our group until the formation of PCS when the new union decided that there were not enough members within the Forestry Commission to justify holding an annual conference. However the union's policy on this has now changed hence we are reintroducing motions to the second day of our conference on a trial basis.

The motions have come from members in our individual branches around the country.

Debating Motions

The debating of motions at conference is not an open discussion, but is controlled by the Group President and a specific set of union rules – called Standing Orders.

A copy of the PCS Standing Orders is attached for information. However, as this year is only a trial we shall not be following the rules too closely, and there is certainly no need for you to remember them! At the start of the second day of conference we shall run briefly over the ground rules for the day, which will be there to ensure that we have time to cover all of the motions and that everyone who wishes to has a chance to speak. With this in mind the points below are the main ones which we shall be using to guide the process.

- If two or more delegates seek to speak at the same time, the Chairperson shall decide which shall speak first.
- Speakers shall confine their remarks to the motion under discussion.
- Speeches by movers of motions shall be limited to 5 minutes. All other speeches including mover's right of reply shall be limited to 3 minutes.
- No one may speak more than once on any motion except:
 - The mover of a motion may reply to the debate before it is put to the vote if there has been opposition, even if they have spoken on a motion to amend it.
 - Where remission of a motion is sought, the mover shall have the right to comment before the vote for remission is put; if the vote is lost, the mover's entitlement under (a) shall remain unimpaired.
- The mover of a motion exercising a right of reply shall deal solely with points of opposition raised in the debate.
- The Chairperson shall ensure that where opposition to a motion exists, opportunity shall be given for this opposition to be expressed in debate.

Finally if any part of the process or terminology is unclear please don't worry about it. The chances are that everyone will have some questions and there will be plenty of time to explain any point on the day.

Edward Shephard
Group Secretary

Motions to 2008 Group Conference

Section 1: Pay and Grading

Motion A1

If FC management is required to operate a performance bonus system for Top Performers under PMS, can this conference support a payment system where the total amount of the bonus is shared equally between all Top Performers, regardless of Grade.

South Scotland

Motion A2

This conference notes with concern that, once again, the annual pay negotiations were not resolved by the expected payment date of October. This means that not only has the cost-of-living increase not been paid, but also any expected step-up the salary scale has been delayed. This conference therefore instructs the GEC to negotiate a change in the arrangements for the annual pay award, wherein salary increases resulting from steps up the scale are paid with effect from 1st October each year, regardless of any delay in applying a cost-of-living increase. This will ensure that newer staff members receive the greater part of their salary increase at the expected time and not after a protracted delay.

North Scotland

Motions A3 and A4 will be taken in common debate.

Motion A3

This conference notes that as PB 5 and 6A are the only two grades left under operational pay. Is it not time PCS negotiated with the FC to abolish operational pay and pay appropriate overtime rates for actual hours worked as they have done with PBs 3 and 4. Therefore this motion urges the GEC to campaign for a truly unified workforce of whereby all staff work under the same basic working conditions.

North Scotland

Motion A4

Conference requests that the GEC carry out a survey of all staff on the status of operational pay given that there has been a range of views on the subject ongoing for a number of years. The GEC should analyse responses and put forward recommendations in time to debate the issue at Branch 2009 AGMs.

South Scotland

Section 2: FC Policy and Values

Motion A5

This conference notes with concern the potential effects of devolution on the Forestry Commission as a UK-wide organisation. The GEC is instructed to look at the possible future ways in which the Forestry Commission might be expected to change, and determine what approach PCS should take with each permutation.

Wales

Motion A6

This conference notes with concern that the Terms of Reference of the "FES Forest District Administration Review" have a limitor applied of "a presumption that savings will be generated of a scale which cover the additional staffing need identified by the Operations Structure review" with the implication that, as savings from the full FES Operations Review were not as great as expected, any further savings will have to come as a result of reduction in administration staffing. This conference instructs the GEC to request a full financial cost/savings analysis from the FES Operations Review with a comparison against the planned savings; and also instructs the GEC to promote the benefit of maintaining a healthy administrative staffing level without shrinkage in staff numbers being forced by errors made elsewhere. This will ensure that the administrative teams are accorded due professionalism and respect by the organisation and are not treated as expendable.

North Scotland

Motion A7

Conference condemns the ongoing practice of employing consultants and contractors to undertake work, often at great expense, that could be done by FC staff. The true cost of this is often masked by assigning the costs to other budgets. We need to focus on the provision of in-service training to improve efficiency and the quality of our services to enable staff to deliver their programmes. This approach often undervalues the skills and competencies of existing staff who could have achieved the required results themselves and at a far reduced cost.

Conference therefore calls on the Group Executive Committee to engage with Senior Management to ensure that the use of consultants and contractors is justified and that skills transference is built into the process. Senior Managers should also provide details of the cost of consultants to the unions and to introduce safeguards against abuse of the system by formulating a set of guidelines on the scope and use of these services in consultation with the Unions.

Silvan House

Section 3: Terms and Conditions

Motion A8

This conference is concerned that the JEGS process takes too long to carry out and is being used in such a way that it favours the more senior paybands. Conference instructs the GEC to review the JEGS process and note how it has been applied in recent years.

Wales

Motion A9

This conference notes with concern that despite various initiatives by HR, staff still have no confidence in the post filling procedure. This concern stems from the inequality of decision making apparent at several stages, especially where a business case needs to be put forward before a post can be filled and where this seems to depend on the payband of the job involved. This conference instructs the GEC to review the post-filling procedures so that inconsistencies can be identified and the confidence of staff restored.

Wales

Motion A10

This conference is concerned that the Staff Transfer List is being abused. Members feel that rather than it being a mechanism for those requiring a compassionate move or a means of career development, it is being used by some to “jump the queue” for specific posts. The GEC is instructed to liaise with HR to ensure that the transfer list process is both transparent and fair.

Wales

Motion A11

This conference asks the GEC to look at a special disturbance allowance to compensate those staff who are required to work away from home on a regular basis. This would be outside the normal pay bargaining situation.

South Scotland

Motion A12

Conference recognises that with new retirement regulations in force many staff are taking the opportunity to work beyond their traditional retirement age. This has many positives, but also potential negative effects in areas such as recruitment and succession planning, and salary costs. The GEC is instructed to find out whether management has a strategy for dealing with these issues, and to ensure that the benefits for members are being protected and maximised.

Wales

Motion A13

This conference urges the FC to consult widely with staff before any plans are mooted to adopt a successor scheme to FC Choices which has proved to be an expensive disappointment to most members.

Wales

Appendix 1: Conference Standing Orders

Order of Business

- A1** The order of ADC business shall be decided by Conference on the recommendation of the SOC and shall comprise:
- (a) Report of the SOC and references back.
 - (b) Minutes of the previous ADC.
 - (c) Annual Reports and Supplementary Annual Reports.
 - (d) Financial statements, including the audited accounts, report of the auditors, and estimates for the current year.
 - (e) Elections.
 - (f) Other GEC reports and papers.
 - (g) Motions.
 - (h) Other business.

Motions

- A2** All motions shall be in the affirmative.
- A3** Motions shall be moved when called and seconded immediately after the mover's speech, otherwise they shall fall.
- A4** A motion may be withdrawn only by the mover and with the consent of Conference.
- A5** A motion to affiliate to another organisation shall include a synopsis of its aims and objectives together with the annual cost of affiliation.
- A6** Motions other than those appearing in the booklet of motions shall not be accepted except:
- (a) Emergency motions, where the decision of a Branch General Meeting or of the GEC (as the case may be) to submit an emergency motion is notified to the SOC by 3pm on the Friday immediately preceding the start of Conference together with the actual wording of the motion on the appropriate form issued by the SOC.
 - (b) Motions to refer back an SOC report or suspend Standing Orders, or motions of order.
- A7** A motion to amend shall not directly negative the substantive motion, and if carried shall become part of it.
- A8** A motion once lost may not be moved again at the same conference.

Motions of order

- A9** At the Chairperson's discretion, the following motions of order shall have priority and be taken without discussion:

- (a) That the debate be adjourned.
- (b) That the vote be now taken.
- (c) That Conference proceed to next business.
- (d) That Conference do now adjourn.

Motions for 'The previous question' shall not be allowed.

- A10** Motions that the vote be now taken, or that Conference proceed to next business, shall only be moved by delegates who have not previously spoken in the debate.
- A11** If Conference agrees 'That the vote be now taken', the motion under debate shall be put to the vote after its mover has been offered the right of reply.
- A12** If Conference agrees 'That Conference proceed to next business', the Chairperson shall proceed to the next item on the agenda without any vote being taken on the motion under debate.

Points of order

- A13** Delegates raising a point of order shall seek to prove one or more of the following:
 - (a) That the speaker is using sexist, racist or abusive language.
 - (b) That one of the Union's Rules is being broken.

Reference back of SOC report

- A14** Branches must give the SOC notice of their intention to move reference back of the SOC report (excluding any supplementary report), with details of proposed alterations, and with reasons for it by 3pm on the Friday immediately preceding the start of Conference on the appropriate form issued by the SOC. The Branch delegation shall meet the SOC before Conference at a time determined by the SOC.
- A15** Branches wishing to move reference back of any supplementary SOC report published up to 5pm on the day before Conference should arrange to meet the SOC by 8.30pm on the same day to give the SOC details of the reference back and reasons for it.
- A16** Only Branches which have complied with these Standing Orders may seek to move reference back of an SOC report. There is no prescriptive right to move reference back: whether a reference back is heard shall depend on the time allocation acceptable to Conference. If a delegate is called they shall produce a credential card supplied by the SOC certifying that the correct procedure has been followed.

Suspension of standing orders

- A17** These Standing Orders shall not be suspended except with the support of not less than two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by delegates present.
- A18** No suspension shall be accepted from any delegate after the adoption of the SOC

report relating to the order of business, unless prompted by later external events.

- A19** A delegate wishing to suspend the order of business shall apply in writing to the Conference Chairperson, who shall decide whether the suspension is admissible under the Union's Rules.
- A20** The Conference Chairperson may propose a suspension of Standing Orders at any time, to alter the order of business or to introduce new business.

Rights and duties of delegates

- A21** When a motion is called the mover shall proceed immediately to the rostrum, and the seconder shall proceed to the vicinity of an alternative rostrum (unless in either case the moving or seconding is purely formal). Speakers shall use the rostrum, announce their name and Branch (or office in the case of speakers for the GEC), and address themselves to the Chairperson. After speaking all movers of motions shall remain in the vicinity of the rostrum in case they are invited to reply to the debate.
- A22** If two or more delegates seek to speak at the same time, the Chairperson shall decide which shall speak first.
- A23** Speakers shall confine their remarks to the motion or point of order under discussion, except for questions on the adoption of the Annual Reports and accounts and on GEC statements where Conference has agreed to provide for such questions.
- A24** Speeches by movers of motions shall be limited to 5 minutes, except that GEC speakers may be allowed up to 15 minutes to introduce a Conference paper. All other speeches including mover's right of reply shall be limited to 3 minutes.
- A25** No one may speak more than once on any motion except:
- (a) The mover of a motion may reply to the debate before it is put to the vote if there has been opposition, even if they have spoken on a motion to amend it.
 - (b) Where remission of a motion is sought, the mover shall have the right to comment before the vote for remission is put; if the vote is lost, the mover's entitlement under (a) shall remain unimpaired.
 - (c) A delegate who has already spoken may propose a motion of order.
- A26** The mover of a motion exercising a right of reply shall deal solely with points of opposition raised in the debate.
- A27** The Chairperson shall ensure that where opposition to a motion exists, opportunity shall be given for this opposition to be expressed in debate.
- A28** Where a delegate causes a disturbance and refuses to obey the Chairperson's instruction, they shall be expelled from the Conference and shall not be allowed to return until an apology has been received which the Chairperson considers acceptable.

A29 During a speech other delegates may rise to address the Chairperson only on a point of order.

Card votes

A30 The doors of the Conference meeting place shall remain closed, and delegates shall remain at their seat, while a card vote is taken.

Chairperson of conference

A31 The Chairperson's ruling on any question arising under these Standing Orders shall be final unless challenged. No challenge shall stand unless at least 50 delegates indicate their support, in which case a motion 'That the Chairperson's ruling shall stand' shall be put to Conference by the Deputy President or a Vice President without discussion. The Chairperson's ruling shall only be reversed with the support of not less than two-thirds of the votes entitled to be cast by delegates present.

A32 The ruling of the Chairperson on a point of order shall be final and not open to discussion.

A33 The Chairperson may operate the 'guillotine' at their discretion when the time allotted on any agenda section expires.

Soc procedural rules

A34 The SOC shall separate motions into the following categories:

Category A Motions for debate, grouped as far as practicable under the main subject headings appearing in the Annual Reports.

Category B Motions which confirm existing policy.

Category C Motions which seek to reverse policy as determined at Conference within the last 2 years.

Category D Motions capable of being dealt with by correspondence with the General Secretary.

Category E Motions covered by composite motions in category A.

Category X Motions which are out of order.

A35 The SOC shall send to the relevant Group or Association SOC any motion it considers appropriate to a Group or Association Conference agenda.

A36 The President may transfer any motion on a Group agenda to the ADC agenda, or rule out any motion which they consider inappropriate for Group decision, after consulting the SOC and the Branch(es) concerned. Such decisions shall be

communicated to the Group SOC not later than 14 days before the Group Conference.

- A37** Wherever practicable the SOC shall find composite motions for inclusion on the agenda, which may be either (a) existing motions chosen as representative of others on the same issue, or (b) motions drafted by the SOC which incorporate the essential points made in others. The passing of a composite motion shall not imply acceptance of the detailed variants in the motions it covers.
- A38** All motions which are out of order shall be listed, and reasons given why such motions are out of order.
- A39** All motions designed to amend the Union's Rules shall be so printed as to leave no doubt as to the objective they are designed to achieve.
- A40** The SOC may exclude any motion from the agenda which it considers may provide grounds for legal proceedings.
- A41** The SOC shall, subject to Rule A15, be available to meet delegates at certain times on the evening immediately before Conference to allow the requirements of the rules relating to emergency motions and references back to be met, and to consult and advise delegates.
- A42** The SOC shall inform the President which Branches have fulfilled the conditions of Standing Orders in relation to reference back of SOC reports. The SOC shall give the Branch delegate(s) a coloured credential card bearing the Branch name and the number of the motion.
- A43** The SOC shall ensure that a report containing emergency motions is made available to delegates by not later than 5pm on the day before Conference.
- A44** During Conference the SOC shall advise the Chairperson on the progress of business in relation to the timetable, and about the operation of the 'guillotine' where necessary.
- A45** The SOC shall be present during the debate on any motion to refer back an SOC report, and shall express its views before any vote is taken.