



POA Annual Conference 2019 - 80th Anniversary

Annual Conference Verbatim Report

Dignity & Safety at Work

POA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Tuesday 14th – Thursday 16th May 2019

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POA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

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Tuesday 14th May, Morning Session

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Good morning and welcome. We have the Lord Mayor of Sefton here to open our Conference. I'll just introduce you to him. The Mayor Councillor Robinson and his wife Wendy, the Mayoress of Sefton, have been married since 1987, they have two sons and one daughter and have two grandchildren. The Mayor Councillor Robinson was a fireman with the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service from 1978 until 2010. He's been a councillor for the Derby Ward since May 2011 and he's also a church warden at Christchurch in Bootle. The Mayoress currently works as a care worker and has been for the past five years. The Mayor's interests include studying local history, travelling, reading, and they both enjoy looking after their two grandchildren. Councillor Robinson began his second term as Mayor of Sefton on May 17th 2018 and Councillor Dave Robinson, you're very welcome here at the POA 80th Anniversary Conference and I'm now going to ask you to say a few words and open Conference.

<Applause>

MAYOR COUNCILLOR DAVE ROBINSON: Good morning Conference. It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning. As mentioned before, this is my second year, term, as the Mayor of Sefton. This is also my last day. The new Mayor will take over about 6 o'clock this evening, so for somebody who's been a lifelong member of a trade union, I was a member of the Fire Brigades Union for 31 years, I'm now a member of the Unite Union, it gives me great pleasure to be here to welcome you all, fellow trade unionists, to Sefton, and to Southport. I hope that you have a good, positive and productive Conference and I hope that you all enjoy the hospitality both of Sefton and of the town of Southport. So on behalf of Sefton Council and the people of Sefton, you're all very welcome. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Dave. And as a token of our appreciation for taking time out to open Conference, I'd like to present you with this gift.

<Applause>

I'm now going to hand you over to Dave Todd for the Standing Orders Report.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Morning delegates, honorary life members, invited guests and observers. Welcome to Southport, the POA's 80th Annual Conference. As Chair of the Standing Orders, it is my intention to set out the order of business. I'd like to thank the Standing Orders Committee for conducting the business of the union. We've a lot of information which I need to share with you. Will you please ensure you have your Conference agenda and emergency motions paperwork to hand so that you can note the placement of changes as we move through the report. Firstly, due to an administrative error, the back page of the Conference agenda was missed off, omitting motion 87. This was notified to all branches and delegates, who have received an insert in their packs to enable the report-back to branches. Apologies for the inconvenience.

On the 7th May the Standing Orders Committee were advised that no delegates would be attending from Huntercombe and they wished to withdraw all their motions. I will draw Conference's attention to rule 12.7e, where any Conference motion that has been placed on the agenda, which cannot be heard due to the proposing branch not being present and where their absence is legitimate, the Chair will seek Conference's permission for the motion to be considered as formally moved. As the branch have asked for these to be withdrawn, this rule will not apply. Therefore, Chair, can I ask you to seek Conference's approval for motions 14, 15, 29, 61, 74, 76, 78 and 80 to be withdrawn?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, you need to show your support for these Conference motions to be withdrawn. All those in favour of withdrawing these motions please show. Thank you. Any against?

Those Conference motions are withdrawn. Dave, can you just go through the numbers again so the delegates can mark them in their booklets please?

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: 14, 15, 29, 61, 74, 76, 78 and 80.

I'll move on now Conference. On the 12th of May we were advised by Wormwood Scrubs that they wished to withdraw motions 19, 41 and 43. As the branch have asked for these to be withdrawn, rule 12.7a will not apply. Therefore Chair, can I ask you to seek Conference approval for motions 19, 41 and 43 to be withdrawn?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, same again. Do we have your permission to withdraw those motions? Please show. Thank you. And any against? Those motions are withdrawn. That's 19, 41 and 43.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Again Conference, I'll move on. You will note that in the order of business we have several fringe meetings scheduled during Conference. Can I urge all delegates to support these events wherever possible? Food and refreshments will be offered at each event. Space

is limited so get there early to avoid disappointment.

You should have all registered and been furnished with the appropriate documentation for this year's 80th Annual Conference. Most of this was forwarded to you via POA Branch Secretary Circulars 9, 11, 13 and 14 of '19. You should have copies of those with you; for the avoidance of doubt each delegate should have an Annual Conference Agenda Booklet, a Report-back Booklet, Conference Policy Document, Conference papers 1 and 2, three emergency motions, 11 appeals. All of the documentation was contained in your delegates' pack, which you picked up this morning. If you need any assistance during the week, do not hesitate to contact the Conference staff in the Conference office or any NEC member. Delegates wishing to address Conference should make their way to the front of the hall. All delegates must take up a seat at Conference. I'm assured that there's enough at the front.

Delegates, observers, providers, invited guests and honorary life members must wear their identification badge throughout Conference to assist the security team. Whilst we have no specific intelligence on security threats, will everybody be vigilant, report any concerns to a member of the security team? Conference, only delegates are allowed on the Conference floor, and observers and invited guests must take up seats in the appropriate designated area.

In moving the Standing Orders Report to this 80th annual Conference, the Standing Orders Committee seeks the approval of Conference for the following delegates to be appointed as scrutineers and tellers: Stewart McLaughlin, Wandsworth; Wendy Price, Drake Hall; Phil Tuck, Cardiff; Niall McIntosh, Whitemoor; Paul Bentley, Swaleside; and Duncan Williams, Littlehey. Can I call on the Chair to approve the scrutineers and tellers?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, do we approve the scrutineers and tellers? Please show. Thank you. That's approved.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: The standing orders procedure in regards to the order of business for Conference is set out in the inside of the Conference agenda. Please take a moment to remind yourself throughout the Conference. Delegates are reminded that the rules governing Conferences and procedures are set out in Conference paper 3 of 2015. If you are unsure of any issues please feel free to speak to the Standing Orders Committee. We are here to help.

For the 80th Annual Conference we received 101 Conference motions within the prescribed time and one was received out of time. Standing Orders Committee contacted branches and 17 motions were reworded in line with Conference policy and approved by the branch. One motion was withdrawn before the publication of the agenda, 11 have now been withdrawn, 8 from Huntercombe and 3 from Wormwood Scrubs. 13 were returned as not meeting the criteria and of these 13, 3 are subject to an appeal at Conference, following the NEC's determination on all appeals, giving us an agenda, this Conference, of 76 motions in the Conference agenda booklet. The Standing Orders Committee received 13 emergency motions; 10 emergency motions were rejected by the Standing Orders Committee. We have 11 appeals to Conference, which I will deal with shortly.

This morning Elmley approached the Standing Orders Committee and asked to move motion 26 to motion 40a, after their motions 39 and 40. The Standing Orders Committee rejected this appeal placement on the basis that we sought clarity from Elmley on this vote of confidence and received no response other than the matter had come from a branch member. Therefore, I'll call Elmley to the rostrum in due course.

I'll deal with the placement of the emergency motions shortly.

Conference are reminded that the section containing proposed rule changes will require a two-thirds majority and the rest of the Conference agenda will require a simple majority. Therefore, Conference, we now have an agenda of 76 motions as contained in your Conference booklet, two Conference papers and two emergency motions from the NEC and one from Wymott, which have been accepted by the Standing Orders Committee.

The emergency motion from the NEC in emergency motion booklet 2 is placed at 21a in the awards section. The emergency motion from Wymott in emergency motion booklet 1 is placed at 17a in the health and safety section. The emergency motion that you've been given this morning at registration from the NEC is placed at 9a in the health and safety section.

Conference, I repeat, the emergency motion from the NEC in emergency motion booklet 2 is placed at 21a, awards section. The emergency motion from Wymott in emergency motion booklet 1 is placed at 17a in the health and safety section. The emergency motion that you've been given this morning at registration from the NEC is placed at 9a in the health and safety section. Please amend your booklets.

Conference, in order to expedite business throughout the week, your attention is drawn to the inside of your Annual Conference agenda, which outlines the report of standing orders and procedures. Delegates are reminded that all mobile phones must be switched off or set to silent throughout the duration of Conference. This also includes NEC and FTOs, invited guests, observers and honorary life members.

Any branch who wishes to second a specific motion should ensure that they inform myself or Glyn Travis as soon as possible so that we can inform the Chair of Conference before he seeks a seconder to the motion from the floor. Delegates should be aware, if you second a motion you must speak at that time, as you will not be allowed to speak once the debate has started.

Again, delegates, if you intend to speak on behalf of your branch on any motion, will you please come forward to the front of Conference and occupy one of the seats during the movement of the motion. The Chair will call you to the rostrum to address Conference. Any delegates addressing Conference must give their full name and branch so that the recording facilities in use for the verbatim report can identify the moving of business.

Will all delegates, observers and providers return to their seats quickly following any break in Conference so that the Chair can move business.

Throughout the Conference, delegates may be required to attend the office on official business. All delegates must ensure that at least one delegate remains on the Conference floor whilst Conference is in session.

In line with custom and practice, Conference, the Chair of Conference may call motions when guest speakers are attending and addressing Conference with the approval of Conference. The Welfare Committee AGM will take place at the direction of the Chair of Conference, the Secure Hospitals AGM will take place at some point on Wednesday morning.

Chair, can I now ask you to hear the appeals? Frankland, having had an opportunity to view the order paper and note the actions of the Executive, have indicated that they wish to withdraw three appeals from Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, Frankland are seeking your permission to withdraw those three appeals, appeals 1, 2 and 3 in your booklets. Do we have your approval for Frankland to withdraw those appeals? Please show. Any against? They are withdrawn.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Feltham, need to address Conference with your appeals?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Feltham, just a reminder, it's very difficult but try not to go into the body of the appeal. Thanks.

CHRISTINE MILER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Good morning Conference. Chair, NEC, Conference, please support our motion in which we instruct the NEC to fund a legal case against HMPPS for the discrimination based on age and/or gender for the completion of the annual fitness test. We believe that this is important for the membership. How many members up and down the country have been dismissed or regraded because of this? Many of these members would have had a wealth of knowledge that we could do with right now with our service currently in shambles. What a service, ourselves and HMPPS have given them. Please support our motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, I'll let the Chair of Standing Orders reply first.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I will address the appeal of Feltham on their motion listed as appeal 4 in the appeals to Conference booklet. The correspondence on this motion is limited but the NEC considered the appeal and the reasons for the rejection by the Standing Orders Committee in line with paragraphs 14 and 15 Conference procedures, and rejected the appeal. In line with paragraph 16, Feltham exercised their right to appeal to Conference. The motion from Feltham was rejected in line with item 2 of the Annual and Special Conferences form that under annual Conference motion 56 of 2018, policy was determined in the last 12 months. For ease of reference, motion 56 read that Conference instruct the NEC to seek legal advice and take action with regards to the fitness test and new age of pensionable retirement, ensuring that all the tests are fit for purpose and safe for all staff. This was brought by Feltham and rejected. The Standing Orders Committee must follow procedures, which is what they have done. Conference, these are your rules and procedures and it's a matter for you whether you accept the appeal or not. On behalf of the NEC I ask you to reject and maintain the integrity of Conference procedures.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, it's a matter for you whether you accept or reject this appeal. All those in favour of accepting this appeal, please show. All those against. That appeal is rejected. Thank you Conference.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Appeal 5 please Feltham.

CHRISTINE MILER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, I am appealing to you, my colleagues, for our motion. Conference accepts that motion 35 of '17 was passed; however until such time that the fitness test is abolished, Conference instructs the NEC to negotiate that the fitness test is reduced from 5.4 to 2.2 in line with the Woolf Report. We understand that two years ago, Conference accepted that the fitness test needs to be abolished, and that is currently our long-term goal. But since this motion has been accepted, we have not made any progress. However, we continue to lose good, experienced colleagues through failing to complete their fitness tests. We need to save these colleagues. Please support our motion and give us an opportunity to debate our thoughts around this.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee I'll address the appeal of Feltham on their motion listed as appeal 5 in the appeals to Conference booklet. The correspondence on this motion is limited but the NEC considered this appeal and the reasons for the rejection by the Standing Orders Committee in line with paragraphs 14 and 15 of Conference procedures and rejected the appeal. In line with paragraph 16, Feltham exercised their right to appeal to Conference. The motion from Feltham was rejected in line with item 4 and 5 of the Annual and Special Conference Form. I ask Conference to consider the response from the Standing Orders Committee dated February 4th in your booklet (this is self-explanatory) and of course the terms of this motion before you. Conference, these are your rules and procedures and it is a matter for you whether you support the appeal or reject the appeal. On behalf of the NEC I ask that you reject. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Conference. We need to decide if we accept or reject. All those who wish to accept this appeal please show. All those against. That appeal is rejected. I have an indication on appeal 6 from Feltham that they wish to withdraw. Is that correct, Feltham? Conference, do Feltham have permission to withdraw appeal 6? Please show. Any against? Thank you, that appeal number 6 is withdrawn.

I now call Wymott to address appeal 7 to Conference.

GLEN SHARPLES – WYMOTT: Mr Chairman, thank you. NEC thank you and good morning Conference. This motion has to be looked at not in isolation as it's a follow-up to our motion that's now been put in at 17a regarding asking the POA for funding for NPS testing. This motion is, Conference instructs the NEC to demand a judicial review of the current health and safety provisions in regard to staff within our gaols. The background to this follows from the declaring of Wymott as one of the ten sites for voluntary testing of staff following exposure to NPS. After asking for further information on the testing to satisfy myself that this was a serious attempt to do some real science and to find out what was making us ill, I was very disappointed but not surprised to find that it was nothing short of an attempt to hoodwink us into believing that our employer was genuinely concerned. It was at this time that I called a branch meeting and explained what was going on. The branch then passed two emergency motions to Conference, one asking that the POA fund further testing – more of that later – and due to the lack of sincerity of the employer for our health and safety, that we call for a judicial review into staffing – into, I beg your pardon, into staff safety in our gaols, and this is why I'm now here and appealing for you to allow this motion to be heard on this vital issue.

The proposed testing has no overarching plan to it and it was only looking to find evidence of NPS in the air rather than a cocktail of chemicals that must be present, considering what is used in the manufacture of NPS. This coming less than two years since we finally pulled a smoking ban in our workplaces, after almost 11 years on from the rest of Europe's workers having a smoke-free working environment. And add to this the obscene increase in violence in our gaols. This is having an untold effect on both our physical and mental wellbeing and it's obvious that our employer sees our health and safety somewhere towards the bottom of a list of priorities. My guess is it's somewhere between ordering more boxes of paper and booking somewhere for the Christmas do.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Glen, if this gets carried you'll have nothing to say. If this appeal gets carried you'll have nothing to say. You're going into the body of it. I think Conference get the gist of it. It's asking for a JR.

GLEN SHARPLES – WYMOTT: No probs.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks. Standing orders?

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee I'll address the emergency motion of Wymott on their emergency motion listed as appeal 7 in the appeals to Conference booklet. The correspondence on this motion is limited but I need to refer Conference to paragraphs 4 to 7 of Conference procedures. This sets out how and when motions should be submitted. This emergency motion refers to a general matter that has been subject to many debates and actioned by the NEC for individual branches and, as such, this motion could have been submitted in time, for example before 31st January, and if it had it would have been accepted. The motion from Wymott was adopted at a branch meeting on 11th March, outside the prescribed timescale. That is the first reason for rejection.

Second reason for rejection is Standing Orders Committee must follow your procedures, which is what they have done. The Committee then must decide if an emergency motion meets the criteria. I now refer you to paragraphs 22 and 23 of Conference procedures. In this case the Standing Orders Committee determined that this was not an issue of such major national importance that arose after the closing date of Conference.

Conference, these are your rules and procedures and it's a matter for you whether you support the appeal or not. On behalf of the NEC I ask you to reject and maintain the integrity of Conference procedures. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Conference. All those in favour of accepting this appeal, please show. All those against? That appeal is rejected.

Wymott have called for a card vote. Do we have the support of ten branches?

OK, we have the support of ten branches. Scrutineers and tellers, if you go into your packs, you should have card votes and we're looking at the pink slip.

Scrutineers and tellers, we have a job to do. We're going with the pink one. That's the front cover, that one. The pink one we're going with. It matches the General Secretary's tie, that's why I've done it. Once you've filled your slips in, if you hold them in the air for our scrutineers and tellers, and they will come round and collect them for you.

Any more slips for the scrutineers and tellers? Anybody?

Thank you, Conference. I think we've got all the slips in. We will get back to you with the result when they've fiddled with their abacus.

Appeal number 8 is from Maghaberry. I have an indication that they wish to withdraw this appeal. Do we have Conference permission for Maghaberry to withdraw this appeal? Please show. Any against? Thank you. Appeal number 8 is withdrawn.

I now call Ford to address appeal 9. This is contained in Appeals to Conference booklet 2.

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, NEC, delegates, I've struggled to deal with this. I can't believe we're actually appealing to Conference, something I've never had to do. My branch feels that this needs to be discussed. The motion is that OMiC in the open/female estate is

debated by Conference. This is coming in in September. I won't go into the motion. This is coming in in September and we've done diddly squat about it. We need to debate this, all the opens, please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. I'll hand over to Standing Orders.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, this emergency motion refers to a debate about the OMiC model in the open estate and the female estate. Therefore this motion could have been submitted in time, for example before 31st January, and if it had it would have been accepted. The motion from Ford was adopted at a branch meeting on 2nd May, outside the prescribed timescale. That is the reason for its rejection. The Standing Orders Committee must follow your procedures, which is what they have done. The Committee must then decide if an emergency motion meets the criteria. I now refer you to paragraphs 22 and 23 of Conference procedures. In this case the Standing Orders Committee determined that this was not an issue of such national importance that arose after the closing date for receipt of Conference motions. Conference, these are your rules and procedures and it is a matter for you whether you support the appeal or not. On behalf of the NEC I ask you to reject the motion and maintain the integrity of Conference procedures. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Over to you, Conference. All those who accept this appeal, please show. All those who reject the appeal, please show. That appeal is rejected, Conference. Ford, can you address appeal 10? Again, that's contained Conference booklet 2.

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, NEC, delegates, our second emergency motion, can the NEC explain what protection would be afforded to the Band 4 O/S in the open/female estate with the implementation of OMiC, as information from the NEC states that we will not receive the same protection as the closed estate Band 4 O/S. I was hoping we'd have a debate on the last one. Currently I will lose 14 O/Ss. Doesn't sound a lot, we will lose 14 O/Ss. I've only got 38 officers and I will end up with (inaudible). This is a rank that will be going, and once they come after in the opens, they'll be after your Band 4s in the closed. Please accept.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Ford. Chair of Standing Orders to reply.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, this emergency motion refers to protections for SOs and Band 4s following the rollout of the OMiC model in the open estate. Therefore this motion could have been submitted in time, for example before 31st January, and if it had it would have been accepted. The motion from Ford was adopted at a branch meeting on 2nd May 2019, outside the prescribed timescale. That is the reason for the rejection. The Standing Orders Committee must follow your procedures, which is what they have done. The Committee then must decide if an emergency motion meets the criteria. I now refer you to paragraphs 22 and 23 of Conference procedures. In this case the Standing Orders Committee determined that this was not an issue of such major national importance that arose after the closing date for receipt of Conference motions. Conference, these are your rules and procedures and it is a matter for you whether you support the appeal. On behalf of the NEC, I seek rejection. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, over to you. All those who accept this appeal, please show. All those who reject the appeal. That appeal is accepted. We will get back to you later in the day with a placement.

I now call Elmley to address Conference appeal 11, as contained in Branch Secretary Circular 14 of 19.

THOMAS NUNDY – ACTING BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, Conference, NEC, I'm asking you to accept our appeal into the emergency motion that we submitted. In our reply from the Standing Orders Committee we were informed that this fell outside of the closing date for Conference motions, which is set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Conference procedures. Obviously we were aware of that at the time. This is an emergency motion. I know I'm going to get told in a minute that this isn't an emergency motion but in my eyes it is. Because this is a very important issue, OK? I think it's a very important issue. But I think we need to have a conversation about it and I think we need to have a conversation about how much we trust the legal aid procedures at the moment. I really urge you to accept this appeal so that this motion can be heard at Conference. Huntercombe tried to bring this motion and they decided to withdraw it. I know earlier I could have come up and said, 'No, we want to keep this motion in,' and I'll be completely honest with all of you, I did forget to do that. Please accept the appeal.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Elmley. Chair of Standing Orders to reply.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, this emergency motion refers to a vote of confidence in the Legal Aid Committee, a motion that was on the order paper and has been withdrawn by Conference following request of the moving branch, Huntercombe. Therefore this motion could have been submitted in time, for example before 31st January, and if it had it would have been accepted. The motion from Elmley was adopted at a branch meeting on 8th May 2019, outside the prescribed timescales. That is the reason for rejection. The Standing Orders Committee must follow your procedures, which is what they have done. The Committee then must decide if an emergency motion meets the criteria. I now refer you to paragraphs 22 and 23 of Conference procedures. In this case the Standing Orders Committee determined that this was not an issue of such major national importance that arose after the closing date for receipt of Conference motions. Conference, these are your rules and procedures; it is a matter for you whether you support the appeal. On behalf of the NEC I ask you to reject. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Conference. All those who accept this appeal please show. All those who reject the appeal? That appeal is rejected. I now call on Elmley to address their appeal on placement.

THOMAS NUNDY – ACTING BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, we're asking for your support as a branch in making sure that motion 26 gets moved and will be motion 40a. Motion 26 must follow our motions 39 and 40 as it will make logical sense. It is imperative that Conference be allowed to hear the motions 39 and 40 prior to making a vote of confidence in the National Executive Committee. In respect to a democratic and a transparent process please support our appeal.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Elmley. Standing Orders?

DAVE TODD – STANDING ORDERS: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, NEC. Conference, the Standings Orders Committee sought clarification on the vote of no confidence from the Elmley branch and received no clarity. Therefore, the Standing Orders Committee believe the motion is placed correctly. It's a matter for you, Conference, whether you wish to move this to motion 40a.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Over to you, Conference.

THOMAS NUNDY – ACTING BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Don't I get another chance to reply to that?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: No, we go straight to the vote.

THOMAS NUNDY – ACTING BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: I'm not sure about that. Is that definitely in the rules?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Yes. We go straight to the vote on an appeal. Conference, all those who wish to support this appeal, please show. All those who reject the appeal. That's supported, well done Elmley.

We will of course advise you on placements later on today.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, we will move motion 26 to 40a in your Conference packs. Thank you. I now ask the Chair of Conference to seek Conference approval for the adoption of standing orders.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, do we accept and adopt the Standing Orders Report? All those in favour please show. Any against? Thank you standing orders, that is accepted.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Thank you Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: As I say, we're just waiting for the result of the card vote, as soon as we get it I will let you know. We now move on to a minute's silence for our deceased members, and I just want to mention one deceased member, former National Chair Colin Steele, who sadly passed away in December. So, if we could all be upstanding for a minute's silence.

<Minute's silence>

Conference, before I address you, we're going to play a video that we produced when we launched it on the 20th March prior to our March and Rally in Westminster. I'm just getting the tech guys to play it.

<Video plays>

I think that highlights your daily shifts every time you walk through that gate and why we couldn't possibly work until the age of 68.

Conference, National Executive, observers, honorary life members and invited guests, welcome to the 80th Annual Conference of the POA: The Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers. We have a proud history fighting for our rights going back to 1919, when there was a strike among members of the police force. At the time the Police and Prison Officers Federation were organised in a body known as the Police and Prison Officers Union. Although few prison officers were affected, the government of the day decided to withdraw our right to band together in free organisations to improve workers' rights, essentially saying we could not openly meet as a trade union. At the time we were under a coalition government. That right to form our own trade union was finally won in May 1939, when the Secretary of State formerly agreed to the recognition of the Prison Officers Union. We've been fighting government and the employer ever since and long may it continue. Happy 80th anniversary to us.

I would like to welcome our newest NEC members to their first Conference as part of the coconut shy. Welcome Sarah, Dave and Terry, and of course well done to Joe Simpson, our new DGS, and Mick Pimblett, our new fulltime officer, and of course his first Conference as Vice Chair, Dave Todd. I would also like to thank you, the hardworking and dedicated branch officials. I know you do much of your work in your own time. Without your support we would not be the proud proactive and successful union that we now are. Without your dedication and support this would not be possible. So, from a very proud National Chair, thank you. I continue to be honoured and privileged to serve you and I can assure you all that the fires in my belly are burning hotter than ever.

During Conference we have several guest speakers, including representatives from the Northern Ireland Prison Service Trust for Widows – welcome to Mary Marley and Moira Kerr. We have Steve Newton, the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Mersey Care Trust; Chris Donovan on behalf of the

honorary life members; John Clinton, General Secretary Southern Ireland POA and Libby Morgan, Director of Business Development from one of our new associates and sponsors at Cornmarket Insurance. You are all very welcome. We did invite Rory Stewart, but as you know, after our 28-day notice and prior to his August promise to resign if his 10 Prisons Project didn't succeed, he bottled it and managed to crawl from under Theresa's Brexit propaganda and gain a promotion. Well done to Rory for the promotion – but let's be honest, Conference, nobody likes a creep.

Congratulations to our new Prisons Minister Robert Buckland QC and MP, I hope you last longer than the previous five.

And tomorrow we welcome our new CEO, Dr Jo Farrar, who will attend as an observer. Myself and the General Secretary will be meeting with Jo to discuss our 28-day notice, amongst other things. We also have several awards to announce, including the Cronin Clasp, Health and Safety Award, Shannon Trust Award and the Mabel Hempton Award.

Please also take time to look around the stalls that we have and take time to attend our fringe meetings. These include: employment law; misconduct in a public office; Justice for Columbia; Police Credit Union; social media; role of the safety rep; history of the POA and the National Committee for Private Sector Services. I was hoping to organise a fringe meeting about psychoactive substances, however the contact I had has let me down so it's not been possible. But I can report to Conference that in June I'm going to meet a professor, an expert in the field, at Bournemouth University and we will take forward the issues that you have hoping to secure protective equipment and also looking into the long-term effects of exposure.

Finally, this evening we have a special production at eight o'clock by the Banner Theatre Company, who will show a play called *The Spirit of 1868*, a dramatisation of some of the struggles and protests that shaped trade unionism, past and present. I have been informed that there are reduced bar prices in the theatre, so please feel free to attend.

Conference, this year our chosen charity is Duchenne UK.

I would also like to thank those branches for their feedback in relation to the Cuffe Report and I'm happy to announce that the National Executive have acted upon your concerns and Mr Cuffe will be addressing Conference. We listened to you and we've put it right.

Conference, the past 12 months has seen this union at the forefront of the Trade Union Movement. The challenges we face and the way we react to those challenges proved that the POA, and its membership, deserve and have earned the respect of the entire Trade Union Movement. It's time to take pride in the POA. It's time to unify. It's time to stop the infighting and it's time to end the negativity. It wasn't the POA who changed your retirement age from 60 to 68, it was the government. It wasn't the POA who let 7,000 experienced staff leave the job in order to save money, it was the government. It wasn't the POA who gave you unsafe staffing levels, it was the government. It wasn't the POA who gave you a pay freeze and refused to give you above-inflation pay rises, it's the government. It wasn't the POA who closed prisons, forcing members to disrupt their family lives, it was the government. It was the cruel, uncaring Tory government who refused to restore our trade union rights and continue to attack our terms and conditions and attack the working class, not the POA. But it is the POA who's fighting to refuse all of those things. We have absolutely nothing to be negative about. Let's look at the facts as they are in reality, not in the twilight world of social media. During the last 12 months have gained that much respect from politicians because of the dangers we have highlighted that we have been at the forefront of the introduction of the Parliamentary Scheme – a scheme that currently exists in the armed forces and the police, a scheme that gets your local MPs on the landings shadowing you, facing the realities and the dangers that you face every shift. And I would encourage you to write to your local MP and ask them to come in and shadow you as part of this scheme. And I know Liz Saville Roberts, who is a major supporter of this union, has already done that shift at Swansea Prison. And it's so, so important for politicians to realise what you face, because after she'd completed her shift at Swansea she was in no doubt that we couldn't possibly work in a most hostile and violent workplace in Western Europe until the age of 68.

All our prisons are now completely tobacco free. We have forced the employer to pay out members for additional holiday pay after the Berryman Case, a major success for this union and I know that you are more than happy to accept that lump sum. We've secured convictions due to the Emergency Workers Bill, a bill that doubles the sentences for attacks on emergency workers, which we are part of, including our successes at securing convictions for the degrading act of potting. And we've already had a case at Berwyn where a prisoner was given double the sentence for an assault on one of our members. We're now getting more convictions due to our Crime in Prisons Protocol, and we will continue to pursue miscarriages of justice. But let me be clear, when prison staff are assaulted, *all* prosecutions are in the public interest and we will settle for nothing less!

<Applause>

Colleagues, we rely on you for this information. We rely on you to tell us how unsafe your prisons are, so please furnish us with that information, especially when we ask for it. We know underreporting is rife; we need to know what's going on.

Our pensions challenge is lodged, we're ready to go, we're just waiting on the final outcome from the firefighters' case because government are stringing it out trying to appeal it. They will have to make a decision soon and once we know what that decision is our solicitors can formulate our challenge. It's a time-consuming process, but we are there and we are ready to go.

We have forced the employer to reinstate ACHP, giving those staff who suffer a pay detriment due to an unfair promotion policy at least some pay parity. You have until October to apply for that. We've forced the government to bring back Birmingham into the public sector, and I addressed Birmingham when they were temporarily brought back in and I made a pledge to them that this union would not allow them to go back to the profiteers after we bail them out. Birmingham, it's been a long and rocky road. Birmingham, welcome back where you belong in a public sector!

<Applause>

We will continue to campaign for all private-sector goals to be brought back into the public sector because we want our brothers and sisters in the private sector, wherever they work, to have the same level of protection as us in the public sector and the same benefits of our terms and conditions. But it's not going to be easy. We have a fight on our hands with new builds. The public sector fund them in their entirety. The public sector isn't allowed to bid for the contracts. The private sector waltz in and make a profit from the taxpayer – absolutely shameful!

We forced the employer to negotiate with us after a court case over their proposals to change terms and conditions in the youth custody estate; a costly court case back in December, a court case that could've been avoided if only the employer would've listened to what we were saying. We were adamant that the proposals, which included advanced prison officer and a contract hours scheme yet to be discussed, does change your terms and conditions. They were adamant that it didn't. So we went to court. And we lost that case because the case studies we had and the volunteers from the youth custody estate, those people who put their heads above the parapet and gave witness statements, we lost on a precedent in law. So you may be thinking, 'Well, why are you so happy about losing a court case?' Well, I'll tell you why, because a High Court judge, an independent person, confirmed absolutely everything that we have been saying to the employer all along, that these proposals change the terms and conditions of prison officers, that the national dispute we raised was within scope and that these should be negotiated. And after that court case the employer came along and said, 'We don't agree with what the High Court judge says and it's not legally binding.' Well guess what? They negotiated with us. The negotiations started at half-one in the afternoon and finished at half-ten at night, and we balloted our members in the youth custody estate and they accepted those reformed proposals because we had secured the protections that they needed, only because we were proactive, because we care. And I would like to thank those members from Wetherby and Warrington who became witnesses at that case, backed us up and put their heads above the parapet.

Our membership now stands at its highest since 2013, just short of 28,000 POA members, and it continues to rise. Nothing to be negative about. Due to your support we forced the employer to tackle the issues surrounding our disciplinary procedures and we'll be entering into talks on 25th June to remedy the injustice your members face. But again, colleagues, before that date we need examples of the bias, unjust and unfair procedures that your members are facing because of PSI 6 of 2010. So please, give your area reps the examples we need so we can go into those talks armed with the evidence.

We're currently at a delicate stage in negotiations about the OMiC model in the open and female estate. They are due to close in the next few weeks. We will protect staff in those estates. We have a forthcoming court case this December in relation to Lindholme and the health and safety concerns that they highlighted after a vicious and cowardly assault on one of their members. I'd like to thank the branch and the committee members at Lindholme. Without your cooperation and without your evidence we wouldn't have such a strong case. Conference, when it comes to protecting your health and safety, we will *never* back down. You proved on September 14th last year that you could make a difference. You remained united in solidarity and we gained something from that day, we gained the approval from government to roll out PAVA in the male adult closed estate. We're still fighting and we're still in talks to get it rolled out into the female estate, the juvenile estate and the open estate in its entirety. We want everyone to have it. But I need to give you an update on PAVA because there's a lot of rumours going around. It was announced in October last year that we'd be getting it, the rollout was due to begin in January this year, and in December the employer received a legal challenge, which is getting funded by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, people who've got no experience of working as prison officers, who don't walk the landings, who don't open a door to an angry and violent prisoner. These people have decided that you should not have the protections you so desperately need.

Funnily enough, after our 28-day notice, when our patience ran out, because I think we've been more than patient and more than understanding, all of a sudden things are starting to move rapidly. They've got courses running from the 20th May right through to the end of August, where they'll be training instructors in SPEAR, which is the new personal protection package, Rigid Cuffs and PAVA. And they have prioritised those first six sites that they've said would get PAVA. Cuffs and SPEAR are coming in, not as quickly as we would like, and that 28 days runs out on the 22nd May, when luckily enough we have an NEC meeting. And we have lots of options and we will consider all our options and we will act accordingly. Have faith in us, let us do the right thing at the right time. But you know something, Conference, this time last year assaults on staff were running at 23 a day, as I stand here now they're running at 28 a day. No green shoots there. Nothing to get excited about on the employer's side because the last quarter they've reduced. Over the last 12 months they've increased significantly – 28 of us each and every day getting assaulted, and we've got the likes of the Human Rights brigade and the Howard League saying that you don't deserve PAVA to protect yourselves and violent prisoners who attack each other. Well, I say to the Howard League and to the Human Rights brigade, we've got human rights as well, shame on you!

<Applause>

Conference, we've come a long way and you were part of that progress and I thank you for that. I thank you for the participation on the March and Rally on the 20th of March. We proudly blocked the streets of London, we marched on Parliament and we marched on the MOJ. We launched the video you've just watched, which highlights the violence you face and reiterates the fact that we can't work in that environment in our sixties. That video to date has had over 400,000 views. Get it out there, download it, get it on your social media sites, send it to your local MPs, share it with your families – let's highlight what we have to put up with. Together we are standing up and fighting back. We must not lose momentum. We must continue to protect our rights. We are standing up for all our members, those amongst us who are too afraid to speak up, the youngest amongst us who are worried about taking action, those who are victimised and those are who discriminated against. All our members are part of our family and our family will continue to protect them wherever they may work, whether it's public or private, you are part of the POA family. It's a right not a privilege to be safe at work. It's a right not a privilege to expect support when dealing with violence. It's a right not a privilege to receive protective equipment in order to maintain control. It's a right not a privilege to expect a decent pay rise. It's a right not a privilege to be able to retire with dignity aged 60. It's a right not a privilege to be heard, listened to and respected. It's a right not a privilege to have dignity and safety at work. And Conference, if we have to fight for that right and to

deliver that right, then together we damn well will! If we stand together, there is absolutely nothing we cannot accomplish. Solidarity to you all and thank you.

<Applause>

Results of the card vote. Total membership 27,303. Number of votes in favour – 15,445. Number of votes against – 9,486. That is accepted and we're going to place that at 17a. And Glyn, you'll be glad I stopped you because now you've got something to say. Well done.

OK, I now call on Steve Gillan to move the finance report.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Good morning Chairman, Conference, honorary life members, retired members and invited guests. The Annual Conference Finance Report. Colleagues, I can advise Conference that in line with Rule 12.17 of the union's Rules & Constitution I have received no finance questions related to the audited accounts of this trade union. As in previous years, although not required to do so under the Rules & Constitution all NEC and fulltime officers' monthly claim forms for 2018 have been brought to Conference. If anyone wishes to scrutinise those forms they will be made available during the week. Our accountant is also present and can be asked any question in relation to the audited accounts of this trade union.

Colleagues, it is now my duty on behalf of the National Executive Committee to present the union's accounts for the year ending 31st December 2018, commencing with the income of the union. There was a small increase in membership during the year in 2018 and, with the 30p subscription increase which took effect in June 2018, income increased by £19,000. Contributions from the Relief Fund of £114,000 accounted for an overall increase in the income of the union for the year of £60,000. Bearing in mind, Conference, that the Relief Fund within our Rules & Constitution will be dealt with later because each month 33 pence per member is moved from the General Fund to the Relief Fund. With this small increase in income and an overall reduction in costs we generated a surplus for the year of £112,172. So, we are on track with our accounts but nothing should ever be taken for granted.

Conference, I will now highlight the main areas where cost changes arose. Magazine costs reduced by £13,000 in the year and the advertising income remained stable, which meant the net cost decreased by this amount. We are not expecting the income from the magazine to increase in future years, so have budgeted conservatively for the cost to remain at the same level for this year at least. Diary cost increased by £11,000 for the 2018 diaries. The 2019 diaries have a much-reduced cost, which will be reflected in the 2019 accounts. Salaries and superannuation costs decreased significantly by £143,000, predominantly because some staff left in the year and were not replaced. Travelling and meeting expenses decreased by a further £12,000 following last year's £50,000 reduction, mainly due to the reduction in travel costs. Printing, postage, stationery, miscellaneous and telephone increased by £118,000, mainly due to additional IT costs in the year. Rates and utilities increased by £4,500 due to the full-year effect of the rates review carried out by Enfield Council and Cronin House. The contribution to the Provident Benefit Fund increased overall by 80,700. Legal and professional charges have decreased by 150,000. By Thompsons, under the agreed cap a repayment of surplus funds paid under the cap in previous years was repaid by Thompsons in the year. Training fees remain at a lower rate than in previous years as a result of moving courses in-house with the General Federation of Trade Unions in 2016.

Conference, I would now like to give you an update on the situation with IT costs at the POA. We'll be taking a brief look across the estate at our many services, systems, risks and data, security and membership systems and at our website. In late 2016 we invited a consultant who was recommended to us by the TUC to look at our expiring managed service agreement and to compare the market for us. Stephen Pye of Acert Associates reviewed the POA's IT environment and arranged for a number of suitable suppliers to bid for our service and support contract, including the incumbent provider, Neil Culank, who had been with us for many years. At the end of a rigorous procurement process we selected KCS Limited of Chesham, which was reported to you at the time. They have done a good job for us since mid-2017. In the first four months following implementation our savings were already £13,000, or 46%, and we had significantly reduced the risk to our operations after having a one-man business looking after us alone. Stephen Pye's work at that time had also identified a number of other risk and compliance issues, including business continuity, data protection and our aging home-grown membership system, which was no longer fit for purpose and not properly secure. On business continuity we were at risk from our standalone servers onsite at Cronin House that were coming to their end of life, with only local data backup. By comparison most organisations of our kind have moved to the Cloud, as it is called, where servers sit in secure data centres and can be automatically backed up to each other. Thanks to KCS we are now at an optimal midpoint where we have some of our critical services or new servers online and backed up on the Cloud, with the remaining servers operating securely in the Cloud alone. That means we have minimised the risk of a major failure or outage at Cronin House and elsewhere in the POA network.

Hand-in-hand with the server changes, we have taken advantage of expiring leases to achieve a number of things. We have moved from purchasing Microsoft licences together with maintenance and support over to the Office 365 platform, which gives us all the same word-processing, spreadsheet and presentation tools, but also a host of new ones including Workflow, Project and Team working tools. From a financial standpoint it also moves us from lease capital expenditure to a flexible subscription model, which means we can reduce or increase our costs on a pay-as-you-go basis. Among the other benefits, a standout change is with Skype for Business, shortly changing its name to Microsoft Teams, which enables us to have video conversations not only with each other but also externally and in virtual team rooms, rather than the single fixed link between Cronin House and Linden House. This will not only make us operationally more efficient but it may cut out a large amount of travel, saving money and time for more productive use. Some of this upgrade effort has required new hardware and as our old leases expired we were able to refresh our desktops and laptops accordingly. In a similar fashion the imminent expiry of a lease agreement with our incumbent printer and copier supplier has enabled us to refresh our small fleet with better equipment and to add print management software. Again, with Stephen Pye's help we have selected a new supplier who will help us save some 20% on current cost, equal to £15,000 over the three-year term of their initial agreement.

Last year, also under Stephen Pye's guidance, we engaged a specialist to help us select a modern secure system to streamline and improve our current membership and case management databases. We asked three organisations to bid and present to us. Late last year we selected MillerTech, who have a strong presence in the trade union world. During the final stages of the process our external consultants were able to negotiate a 22% reduction from MillerTech's original bid price, bringing us a £30,000 saving. A contract has now been signed and the project is under way. One of the key parts of the design was to develop a substantial amount of user self-drive to bring us properly into the modern world. In the future, members will be able to join online and to secure-manage the records and banking details, for example, with more direct interaction and delivering, as a by-product, saving for the union in the reduced administrative burden.

Another key issue unearthed was a potential challenge in meeting the General Data Protection Regulations, or GDPR, that came into force. As you may remember from last year's Conference, this has caused all organisations in Europe holding data on individuals to review and improve the way that they hold records and protect or delete personally identifiable information. As a union we are somewhat exposed in this area, as you might imagine, and thus potentially come in for extra attention from the Information Commissioner's Office. Last year we took steps to improve our position by engaging Simon, Stephen Pye's information security specialist, who was here last year at Conference and who has helped us with our data asset and risk registers and with our data handling and retention processes. Simon also has the role of Data Protection Officer for the POA on a low-level retainer basis, but with the ability to step up and help as and when required should we experience a data breach or a complex subject access request. Meanwhile, he is working on minimising the risk of these unwanted events occurring. Sadly Brexit won't mean this challenge from Brussels goes away, as our government has already passed the GDPR requirements into UK law.

The final element of our digital strategy in need of major work is of course the POA website. Aply supported by the POA team, our website provider Tom Rowley has bravely kept us going these last few years with a vibrant website that is unfortunately based on an outdated platform. We urgently need to develop a secure modern website that will present useful, important, interesting and changing content and that will link seamlessly with the new membership system. This has led us to start on a vast major project which will begin soon after Conference. We have seen some outlines; next we need to finalise the definition of requirements. Part of this process will include invitations to members and to POA officials to ask what the website should and shouldn't include, and what you would or wouldn't like to see on it. I urge you all to think about this as you look to the future shape of your own branch region and its membership and to tell us what will help you to access important information, news and resources and share all of that with the relevant audiences.

So that was a brief résumé of where we are with our digital strategy and I hope it all made sense to you. I'll be happy to take any questions informally during the week on these issues and report back to the team to respond to you on any questions that I cannot answer. So, it's business as usual at the moment with our IT development to make sure that there is a new, secure and resilient IT environment. By us taking on Stephen Pye from Acert as a consultant recognised by the TUC in 2016/17, he has had a cost to the union of some £96,000 because we did not have that expertise to do it ourselves.

Conference, now moving to the overview of approximate legal expenditure in 2018 and the potential liability in 2019. The POA has dealt with all applications for legal advice in accordance with the Rules & Constitution and Legal Advice Handbook, which also applies for Scotland and Northern Island. The Isle of Man must be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, although we do have a firm retained to cover all the work in general in the Isle of Man. 2018 was a difficult year for members and indeed the Executive, who had to deal with several court proceedings and applications for temporary injunctions from HMPPS. The Legal Aid Committee and Executive considered several appeals at the respect of monthly meetings and set out options to ensure claims were pursued, reviewed and/or rejected in accordance with the provisions and criteria of your scheme. For the avoidance of doubt, the union's criteria for taking cases forward is set out in the Legal Advice Handbook. This is not Thompson's criteria, nor the NEC's criteria or the Legal Aid Committee's criteria, it is the members' as approved by Conference in the Rules & Constitution.

Crown Court Proceedings, England and Wales. The POA agreed to indemnify all members' contribution orders whilst a member pleads not guilty and has a tenable defence. This was introduced as part of the scheme in 2014 and to date we have recovered almost all costs due to members being acquitted. In 2018 the POA covered approximately £42,000 in costs and expect to recover the vast majority as they were all found not guilty, with one appeal. This process is not applicable to members in Scotland, Northern Ireland or the Isle of Man currently.

Magistrates Courts, England and Wales. Whilst legal aid is available for members, more than 95% do not qualify and therefore all costs are covered by the Union. In 2018 the overall costs were approximately £72,000, covering all initial interviews at police stations and supplementary work. This process is not the same for members in Scotland or Northern Ireland, who do not get legal aid or the equivalent in most cases. Again, the Isle of Man is dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Employment claims. All employment claims are considered under the criteria of the legal aid scheme and covered under the provision of the retainer with the solicitors, save for the Isle of Man, which is dealt with on a case-by-case basis, no fees are recovered.

POA legal cases. Defence of Certification Officer claims, of Certification Officer application and an EAT and employment tribunal in 2017/2018, cost approximately £13,000 to defend. A Certification Officer case at this moment in time, £1,000 and ongoing. POA in Northern Ireland had a withdrawn application to the Certification Officer, which has cost £500.

NEC claims for branches. Mark mentioned in his opening remarks about Lindholme and various other branches. Lindholme is ongoing. At the moment there's been a £2,000 liability but we are going to trial in November and it could cost potentially, if we lost this trial, anything up to £600,000.

Bedford judicial review. Where we had them on the ropes, where they implemented changes to department, it still cost us £7,600 in order to protect

those members at Bedford.

HMPPS application for a temporary injunction. Ongoing, no bills to date, potentially liability £200,000.

HMPPS/MOJ potential contempt of court. Ongoing, no bills to date, potentially £200,000, perhaps more.

The YCS, as Mark indicated earlier, change to terms and conditions. No bills to date, estimated costs £12,500.

Pension challenge. Ongoing, no bills to date but estimate cost £40,000.

General claims outside of the Legal Aid Handbook, i.e. under 50%. 11 members' claims were authorised and reviewed by the NEC in 2018. They were covered outside of the retainer and costs incurred to date are approximately £57,000. Incidentally, 10 of those claims were lost, 1 was settled in a compromise settlement.

Medomsley. This involved retired members who were the subject of police investigations following allegations from ex-offenders dating back to the late seventies and eighties. The NEC took the decision to support these individuals through the magistrates' identification parades and then deal with each case on an individual basis if charges were laid. Thompsons represented all individuals and following lengthy procedures some members faced criminal proceedings. The cost to date is £68,000. This litigation may conclude this year, with an ongoing liability of, potentially, to the POA estimated at around £200,000. This type of investigation across the prison estate could well continue.

Self-inflicted death/inquests. The POA established a protocol as far back as 2009 for England and Wales to ensure members would receive legal representation in all cases. If a conflict of interest arises, the employer contributes to legal costs in most cases after detailed negotiations. However, this still leaves a shortfall of around 22%. It was recently reported in the Freedom of Information question that £4 million in costs had been incurred to the MOJ to defend prison officer grades at inquest from the public purse. I've got to say I think that was an excellent negotiation by this union, where the burden did not fall on the membership, but fell right on the employer. So, the POA policy is all members will be legally represented at inquests. In 2018 the costs in England and Wales including conflict solicitors was approximately £75,000. Of this, £58,000 was recovered by this trade union. So, Conference, I know it's been a long finance speech, but it was important to have it. Oh, and in relation to it, there is some positive news. We have a new provider called Cornmarket, who are going to provide benefits for POA members, retired members and their families. I'm not going to steal the thunder of the introducer tomorrow, who will have a platform on the stage to tell you what it's all about, but if you actually visit the stand I'm sure they will assist you as well.

Now, in relation to restructuring of the POA, there are costs attributed. Some fall in 2018, but some of the liability actually indeed fell in 2018. So, if I can just outline that, if I can. In 2018, for the restructuring committee team, there was a cost of approximately £35,000 in 2018, and in 2019 it was £16,000, and the report, Mr Cuffe's retained fee was £70,000, which was paid on the conclusion of the report. In relation to the Conduct Committee, the Conduct Committee, you will see when I move the Annual Report, dealt with several conduct cases. That was at a cost to the POA in 2018 of £19,336.

Turning now to the balance sheet, our net current assets increased by just under £189,000, principally due to the amounts held in the bank, in the trades disputes fund and the accumulated fund. The overall net assets of the Union increased by £158,000 and now stand at £4,471,000.

Finally colleagues, I must also report on the amount paid by the Union in death benefits, which was sadly £124,800. Colleagues, that concludes the finance report.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Steve. We now need to adopt that report. Can you all show if you're happy to adopt the finance report. That's been moved, Steve, thank you. Before I move on to you again Steve, just a few announcements. Some of you, amongst you, have obviously noticed the deliberate mistake. We do at times like to confuse you. So just to announce the successful appeals, number 7 from Wymott is actually now at 43a.

Appeal 7 from Wymott, 43a.

Appeal 10 from Ford is at 67a. That's appeal 10 from Ford at 67a.

Placement, 26 is now at 40a. So, motion 26, move that to 40a.

The emergency motions that were successful: one from Wymott is at 17a, 2 from the NEC at 21a and 3 from the NEC at 9a. Just a few more things. Because our CEO, Jo Farrer, is going to be here on Thursday morning observing, we would like to move the following motions, which are concerned with your health and safety and violence, to Thursday morning. So, they will be motions 9 from Sudbury, 11 from Sudbury and 9a, the emergency motion from the NEC. We'd like to hear them on Thursday morning so you get the opportunity to tell your new CEO what life is like for you on the landings, so she hears it, warts and all.

We now move on to the Annual Conference of the Welfare Committee and Welfare Fund report. Steve.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Just before I do, Chair, I think there's a couple of issues that I want to raise now the financial report has been accepted.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Yes, please continue, yes.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks very much, Chair. I said during my finance report that outside of the arrangements we always allow for our travel and subsistence expenditure claim forms to be looked at, and we've done that for a significant amount of years, even though we don't have to, and no one ever has come and asked to view them. I would ask that some people do come and ask, because there's nothing to hide. I've also brought along the full-time officer contracts of employment, along with the Deputy General Secretary's contract of employment and including my own contract of employment, because several individuals in the past have asked to see them, but when I've made the arrangements they have declined to come and view them. So, they're here now for each individual to come and have a look. And I've got to say, I'm surprised the Finance Report has been passed in the manner that it has, given some comments on social media in the past. And I'm not going to dwell too much on this issue, because I welcome social media comments when they are constructive. I don't even mind it when they are critical. I've got broad shoulders. But let me tell you, Conference, there's a boundary. And I think that boundary has been passed in the last few weeks and months. To call individuals parasites and corrupt is quite distasteful. I don't recognise that amongst any of my national colleagues or indeed those individuals on the Scottish National Committee or the Northern Ireland Area Committee. By all means criticise, but let's stop the abusive attacks, because you're in breach of Conference policy. And it's ironic that it was Long Lartin that brought that to this Conference way back in 2004 and for very good reason. It stood the test of time. Let's not sink to the depths anymore, and treat each other with respect. That's all I ask for on this issue.

<Applause>

And finally, on social media, Terry McCarthy at this minute in time is a man under immense pressure, and I pay tribute to Terry McCarthy for being here today. But you know what? On a certain social media site, some cowardly person anonymously put on there that the POA had sold your terms and conditions in a meeting with the employer to get Terry off. That's how low it has sunk. There were only three people in the meeting, and that was myself, the National Chair and Vice Chairman. And not one of us sold anything. What we've done is told the employer what they were doing to Terry McCarthy was a disgrace. I won't say any more on it because Terry's got his appeal coming up. But by the way, in case you see me or Mark speaking to the Chief Executive Officer, and I don't say this generally, because the vast majority of people who come to Conference don't use the social media sites that I'm talking about, that was a cowardly attack on a man of great integrity, and people, you can attack me all you want, not fussed by that, but don't attack Mark Fairhurst, don't attack Dave Todd. I think it's disgraceful and it's getting out of hand. So I think one or two people should attend the fringe meeting at lunchtime on the perils of social media. You might learn something.

<Applause>

Sorry for that indulgence Chairman, but I will now move on to the Welfare Accounts.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Steve, and very well said, and like I said to you all, no more negativity. Proactive, successful union that we are, down to you and your support. We stop the negativity, we move forward, we protect your terms and conditions, and we get our workplaces safe. Thank you, Steve.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you Chairman.

Conference, once again this is a very positive report from the Welfare Fund. Colleagues, it is now my duty to prevent the Welfare Fund's accounts for the year ending 31st December 2018. As agreed at last year's Conference, members' contributions increased to £1. This, along with a slight increase in the number of contributing members, increased subscriptions received by £71,000 to £312,108. The Gift Aid due to these contributions for the year amounted to £90,000. This amount, along with a final amount from 2015, has now been received from HMRC because they are a little bit slow in what they do at times, but it's now safely within our accounts. Nice to get something back from the taxman. The Welfare Fund also gratefully received a £25,000 grant in the year from the CSIS charity fund, which we're extremely grateful for. All of the above have resulted in an increase in income by £109,000 from last year to a total of £427,000. 69% of membership contributions were given out as grants during the year and the total grants of £214,000. £78,000 was provided for the residential rehabilitation courses for the Fire Fighters Charity. The other costs, including travel and subsistence, and stress and bereavement counselling helpline, increased by £6,000 to £18,000.

Turning now to the balance sheet. As at year end, the charity held just over £750,000 in the bank. The other debtors of £79,000 are mainly the Gift Aid due from HMRC.

Overall, the surplus in the year of £194,000 helped increase the overall reserves of the charity to a total of £831,000. Looking forward, I can advise Conference that once again this year the CSIC charity fund has made a very generous donation, as I've stated, to the Welfare Fund, of £25,000, and that will be used to help our members facing distress and hardship.

Finally, colleagues, I would like to place on record my grateful and heartfelt thanks to Bob Butterfield, the previous accountant from Wilkins Kennedy, who tragically passed away this year. Bob was a tremendous help to not only the Welfare Fund in the past but to the Finance Committee, and indeed I know to Pete Hancox as the ex-Finance Officer, and for me, who as Finance Officer from 2006, and sometimes it was in very difficult financial circumstances for the Union. So, I pay my respects to Bob Butterfield, who was a constant at this Conference for many, many decades. Rest in peace,

Bob.

And that concludes my report.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Steve. We need to adopt that report, so all those in favour of adopting that report please show. Thank you. That's adopted, Steve. Thank you very much.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Finally, Chair, do you want me to move the Annual Report, then that's out the way?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Yes please.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Very quickly, Conference, as is usual practice, this is the Annual Report for 2018. It's a good reference document. I would just take you to page 105 of that report, which you can read in your own time. I gave you the report-back in the Finance Report, which you accepted, the £19,000, it'll be £20,000 worth of expenditure for the Conduct Committee. Since the last annual report, the Conduct Committee had seven cases referred to them. Two cases went to a disciplinary hearing and awards were made; two cases were left on file as the people charged resigned from membership; two cases were discontinued as all parties accepted mediation; one case was found to have no case to answer after investigation; and I thank the members of the Conduct Committee for their work in these cases. Thank you, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference you've heard, and hopefully read the Annual Report. We now need to move that. Can we please show if we accept that annual report?

Thank you, that's accepted.

Conference, we're now going to start with our motions. Get through a few before lunch. Motion 1 is Durham and I have an indication from Full Sutton that they are the seconder. If this motion is carried, then motion 2 falls. Durham, please approach. Formally moved by Durham. Full Sutton do you wish to speak on it? Any speakers for this motion? On behalf of the NEC, Mick Pimblett.

Motion 1:
Amend Rule 6.3 to include;
(f) are entitled to remain in Conference during a closed session for delegates.
DURHAM

MICK PIMBLETT – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, I think the NEC have already committed to addressing this issue within the POA Conference on an annual basis. I think we all understand what's happened at previous Conferences and it's meant there has been some differences of opinion. Therefore, the NEC ask you to support the motion. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Mick. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour please show. Any against? Thank you, Conference. That is carried.

Motion 2:
Amend Rule 6.3 to include;
(f) are entitled to remain in Conference during a closed session for delegates.
NEC

Motion 2 falls.

Motion 3:
New Rule 10.10(a)
The Unions Legal Providers will be subject to a tendering process and appointed subject to a workplace ballot of the affected members in accordance with Rule 25.
BARLINNIE

Motion 3 Barlinnie. Barlinnie are asking for permission to withdraw this motion. Please show if they have permission to withdraw. Any against? Thank you, that motion 3 is withdrawn.

Motion 4:
New Rule 10.10(b)
The Unions Legal Providers are subject to a five-year review by the NEC and if the membership decide a change is proposed this will be conducted in accordance with the Unions Policy and Rules.
BARLINNIE

Motion 4, Barlinnie. Barlinnie are asking for permission to withdraw motion 4. Can we please show if they have permission to withdraw? Thank you,

Conference. That is withdrawn, Barlinnie.

Motion 5, Barlinnie. Do we have a seconder for Barlinnie please? Cornton Vale.

Motion 5:

New Rule 12.7(f)

That Conference accepts any motion outlining a “Vote of no Confidence”.

BARLINNIE

JAMES McCABE – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Chair, Conference, motion 5 reads, for a new rule, 12.7(f) that Conference accepts any motions outlining a vote of no confidence.

Conference, it appears to be a dilemma almost every time I have a lock-up and the members want a vote of no confidence, so they ask the committee, can we have a vote of no confidence, somebody in the hall will say no, you can't have a vote of no confidence, it's got to be a vote of confidence, we've got to get a vote of confidence rejected ... we're just looking to make this simple. That any motion coming to Conference that we don't want accepted, we don't go through the dilemma of a vote of confidence, getting seconded, and then pray that it gets rejected. I'm asking you to make it simple, and we have a vote of no confidence motions accepted. Support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Barlinnie. I can't see any other speakers. Responding on behalf of the NEC is Davie Cook.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, Conference, asking you to reject this motion. Whilst we understand why it was brought here, the fact is you are permitted to bring a vote of no confidence to this Conference to be debated and if necessary to be passed, the same as you are allowed to bring a vote of confidence in a particular thing to this Conference to be debated and passed as necessary. However, this involves a rule change. And if we actually agree to changing the rules on something that's already available to you anyway, that will hamper this Union, because it will mean that any vote of no confidence must be accepted at Conference irrespective, because that is what the rules are saying. That's what the rule will say. To do such a thing to this Conference and to this Union will be problematic. Motions of no confidence carry significant potential abuse; for example, settling of scores or furthering personal agendas. They give cause for instability and fractionalisation within the Union and they can adversely affect the interests of the membership. Such a motion could also cause or expose the union to ridicule and seriously damage or disrespect it. On these grounds, the NEC are asking you to reject this motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Barlinnie to reply?

JAMES McCABE – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Conference, we're trying to simplify things here, not make them more confused, so I don't really understand the reply. First of all we get told that we can actually bring a vote of no confidence, or of confidence, and then later on we're getting told if we have a vote of no confidence then it makes this union look weak or it makes this union look silly. I don't understand it. Quite simply, if we're not wanting something passed, why should we go through the dilemma of a vote of confidence that we don't actually support that, so we need to propose it, get a seconder and then let it fall. If we've got a vote of no confidence to be had, in persons or subjects, then let's just call it as it is. We've got no confidence in something or the organisation or the employers, why not just have it down there? Support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Barlinnie. Straight to the vote, Conference. All those in favour of this motion please show. Those against. That motion is lost.

Motion 6 from Feltham. Do we have a seconder for Feltham? Thank you Elmley.

Motion 6:

Amend Rule 12.13 and delete the word membership after branch on the second line.

FELTHAM

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Good morning Conference. Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 6, amend Rule 12.13 and delete the word 'membership' after 'branch' on the second line. This motion relates to the way that the card votes are accounted for. We are already mandated by our branches for what motions we vote for in favour or oppose. Let me just start. I haven't quite mastered my words yet or the way to pledge my argument to the fullest. Look at me, this is my first time as a delegate and I'm telling you now, right now I'm sweating! I've gone clammy and I'm not quite sure whether that's the sugar or the Red Bull! So, I hope you colleagues get the gist of what I'm trying say.

This motion requests a card vote is purely based on the number of votes cast, not for the membership numbers. It is our belief that the number of cards should be based on a single account. Over recent years the card vote has been used and good motions have been lost due to the numbers within branches. It is a belief of our branch that we need to support each other. Many motions are lost for various reasons or beliefs, but the establishments with smaller numbers need support. Just because it may not directly affect you doesn't mean that it isn't important, so how can we say that our motto is unity and strength, and how can we proud of that? Examples of this may be the various sectors between us – private, open, juvenile, women. The problems that we all face affect us differently, but it doesn't matter and it's not relevant. Yes, there is democracy, but how fine a detail do we want a count to be? It's a simple thing: in favour or opposed. Many of the branches here that I've spoken to have an open mandate and as an interpretation of that it means that they're accountable for one view. And I can assume now that the NEC are going to say reject this and give some spiel with some

policy and stuff, but it is our vote and it's the way that we see things. Please support our motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Miller. It's not the Red Bull or the sugar, it's the vodka!

<Laughter>

Any other speakers? Responding on behalf of the NEC, Jackie Marshall.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to vote against this motion. The rule currently says, 'Voting on all motions at Conference will be by show of voting cards, one per branch, but a card vote based on branch membership may be demanded by at least ten branches. This to include any appeals of motions to Conference. Votes from branches in favour, opposed and abstaining will be called for by the Chair on both voting card and card votes on all Conference motions.' Feltham proposed a change to read, 'Voting on all motions at Conference will be by a show of voting cards, one per branch, where a card vote based on branch may be demanded.' I won't go into the rest of it because I've already read the rest of it, and that doesn't make sense. I think what you need to remember, Conference, is if you come here with an open mandate, you're here with the voice of everyone in your branches. That's why we have the card vote. Because we're here for the membership and not just you as branch delegates. So, I think you need to reject this motion and just remember it's your membership at your branch. When you do a card vote, you're giving every one of them a voice. Please reject.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Feltham to reply?

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: So, I guess I was right with the NEC's response, but in another way this now just falls down to how it was worded. And I'm pretty sure that when we had all our mandates and we had all our motion branch meetings prior to us attending Conference, there were some people that had an opposing view to the one that the majority went for. How can you write that down on a piece of paper? We are told what we vote for and what we fall against. You can't be specific and say, 'Oh, Joe Bloggs voted against this,' so ultimately if it falls it falls, and it's down to the wording of the motion. So please support my motion regardless and have a little faith in me and what I'm trying to say. And I said from the off, I haven't written this the best way and I probably haven't argued the fullest. Thank you, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Feltham. Straight to the vote then, Conference. All those in favour of this motion please show. Those against. That motion is lost.

Motion 7 from the NEC. Do we have a seconder for this motion? No seconder for the motion, that falls. Oh, we've got one. Just in time. What branch please? Styal. Thank you. Speaking on behalf of the NEC is Mick Pimblett.

Motion 7:

Delete Rule 16.3 (a), (b), (c), (d) and any references to the Relief Fund under Rule 16.1.

NEC

MICK PIMBLETT – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, Mick Pimblett, Assistant General Secretary. The motion reads delete Rule 16.3 (a), (b), (c), (d), and any references in the Relief Fund under Rule 16.1.

Colleagues, this is just a tidying-up motion. Basically, the Relief Fund has not been used in a long, long time. Any money that's allocated to members is allocated from the Welfare Fund, so basically the Relief Fund is being replaced by the Welfare Fund. So, it's a tidying up motion. We ask you to please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: No speakers indicated so we'll go straight to the vote. All those in favour please show. Any against? Thank you, that motion is carried. Moving on to Motion 8, Sudbury. Do we have a seconder please? Don't be shy. Thank you. I had a few in the end. We'll go with Littlehey.

Motion 8:

Amend Rule 20.2 (d) to include:

or to cover short- or long-term absences, for example; suspension, maternity or disability leave.

SUDBURY

GEOFF WILLETTS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Chair, NEC, Conference, longest outstanding dispute in the history of the POA! Conference, motion 8 reads, 'Amend Rule 20.2 (d) to include: or to cover short- or long-term absence, for example: suspension maternity or disability leave.' Conference, the reason this motion is here today is there's a few problems close to Sudbury's heart. As this motion should really sit alongside 58, motion 58, as its current stance has restricted our branch in delivering the greatest coverage to our membership with additional stress to our local branch officials. The fast turnover of committee officials due to suspension, long-term sick, pregnancy, disability reasons and personal problems leaves a restriction within local branch. Our rules and constitution don't allow us to keep the local committee at full capacity and we really need to fill maximum coverage to protect our branch without putting strain on the rest of the committee's health and safety. Conference, our local POA committees are the backbone of the union and direct access for our membership, but our local committees have more than enough restraints in getting the best results for our members. Support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Geoff. Speaking on behalf of the NEC, Jackie Marshall.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, speaking on behalf of the NEC in favour of the motion. Absolutely right. We've got more work on now than ever, so we need to keep branch committees at full strength. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jackie. Geoff, to wish to reply?

GEOFF WILLETTS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: No thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: All those in favour of this motion please show. Thank you. Any against? That's carried.

Motion 9 will be heard on Thursday, when our CEO is present. Motion 10, Hewell. Do we have a seconder for Hewell please? Thank you, Feltham.

Motion 10:

That Conference instructs the NEC to campaign for with all Public Servants and Unions affected by the Government austerity cuts, which has reduced funding, contributed to increased violence and operational pressures.

HEWELL

LES DENNIS – BRANCH SECRETARY, HEWELL: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 10 reads that Conference instructs the NEC to campaign for, with all public servants and unions affected by government austerity cuts, which has reduced funding, which has contributed to increased violence and operational pressures. Any poorly run business will always attract negative reaction and confrontation from those who use the services provided. Austerity cuts have brought the prison service where it sits now. So, where are we? Well the opinion of the Hewell branch is that their current experiences of working on the front line is that we, as a trade union, have not achieved enough. The current level of violence towards staff, not only in our establishments but mirrored throughout the estate, has added to the increasingly significant level of injuries currently sustained by our branch members continues to rise. By the virtue of our employers failing to effectively act on this matter, clearly indicates to our branch members that they do not care and will not be taking the necessary action to protect each and every one of us that work on the front line in the prison service. Hewell Branch are not intending, in any way, shape or form, to criticise or undermine the efforts of the NEC. We are not alone in being subjected to violence in the workplace. Other poorly run public-service workers suffer the same indignities in their workplace: the NHS, the ambulance service, the police, to name but a few. Hewell branch wish that Conference instruct the NEC to join forces with those trade unions with effective members to make our argument even stronger and drive our aim of reversing the impact of this austerity, which affects our daily working lives and also our futures. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Les. Responding on behalf of the NEC, Dave Cook.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, Dave Cook speaking on behalf of the NEC asking you to reject the motion, purely based on the wording of the motion. It's because it doesn't mention private-sector workers, especially private-sector workers in prisons and everything else, and it kind of excludes people that work for private companies. In our prisons today we have private education providers, private healthcare providers, and so on. And we actually work with them. So the other thing about this is, whilst we're asking you to reject it based on the wording, we assure Conference that the NEC are currently doing exactly what this motion is asking us to do: working with other public-sector unions and other public-sector workers on joint strategies on how we improve safety, primarily in our prisons, but also wherever else they are. So, we're already doing this. This motion's already been achieved, but we can't accept it because it's exclusive of certain groups of workers. The other thing that we have a problem with is that it says the NEC to campaign for ... we are not a big enough union to go campaigning for all other trade unions. We campaign with and we build strategies with other trade unions and other public-sector workers. We cannot afford to fund other trade unions in the campaign for their safety. I remind Conference, the Emergency Workers Act that was brought in, and prison officers were included as an emergency worker, and our protection, and the National Chair referred to that in his opening speech. This union, your NEC, were part of the campaign to get that act taken to Parliament and actually get it passed, along with other public-sector workers and other public-sector unions, for example the NHS, firefighters and ambulance workers. So, we're already doing this work, but purely on the wording, we need to ask you to reject this motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Dave. Les, back to reply?

LES DENNIS – BRANCH SECRETARY, HEWELL: I'm a little bit confused on this. If you're working with the unions, why are you recommending we reject it? And the same old chestnut of recent years rears its ugly head again. This motion was reworded after being submitted ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Les. Straight to the vote. All those in favour of this motion, please show. All those against. That motion is lost.

We're hearing motion 11 on Thursday but Ford, we're also going to hear your motion on Thursday, because if 11 is carried, then your motion will fall, at 12. So, we're on to motion 13 from the NEC, Joe Simpson. Do we have a seconder? Thank you, Gartree. I've been asked to remind you also that we're back to a simple majority when we vote, now the rules and the constitution are out the way. Thank you.

Motion 13:

Conference recognises for the POA to be effective in Health and Safety it needs more than just a strong membership within the workplace, it needs a robust Health and Safety Structure throughout the Union.

Therefore, Conference authorises the NEC to increase the Health and Safety Consultative Committee to two members responsible for each area.

It will be the responsibility of the Area NEC Rep along with the Chair of the H&S Whitley Committee to appoint from those candidates who express an interest in the post.

The appointment is to be for 5 years after which the position will be re advertised within area.

The minimum requirement for this position would be the TUC Diploma in Health and Safety or equivalent.

A Health and Safety Circular to be introduced for action by the Union's Health and Safety Reps.

NEC

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, moving motion 13 on behalf of the National Executive Committee. Why have we brought this? Quite simple. At the moment we're making very good gains on health and safety against the employer. However, where we fall down, we believe, is the organisation around the branch and area structure. Therefore, Conference, we believe that we need two of you from your area to help us organise our health and safety reps within your area. That is to help the NEC. That is to ensure that any health and safety rep in an establishment has got the assistance that they need, because time and time again we are finding that our health and safety reps are not getting the facility time to inspect the workplace, to ensure that the risk assessments and safe systems of work are revisited. These are all rights under the safety reps and safety committee regulations 1977. They're your rights. It is even written in the employer's own policy that health and safety reps will be given facility time as per the regulations, and we need to use that. But it will also help the National Executive Committee when we need to bring something from an area, if it's particularly in that area, to the attention of the employer through the Health and Safety Whitley. Conference, we ask you to support this so we can carry on taking the fight on health and safety to make our workplaces safer and better workplaces for you to work in. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Joe.

STEWART McLAUGHLIN – BRANCH SECRETARY, WANDSWORTH: Chair, NEC, Conference, I'm a local health and safety rep. Wandsworth is supporting this motion because health and safety still remains our greatest tool because unfair employment law prevents us taking pretty much any kind of action. Although in the wording of the motion I do see the qualification of a Diploma in Health and Safety or equivalent. I would only ask Conference and indeed the NEC to consider that anyone short of that, if they can evidence that they're actually an active health and safety rep with the qualification to be a health and safety rep, gaining that higher qualification within that five years, I believe, would be reasonable. You could end up with a very well-qualified health and safety rep but no evidence that they've ever done any health and safety work. My preference would be for the rep who's doing the work to gain the qualification rather than the over-qualified rep who never does the work, but please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Stewart. Some very good and relevant points. Jane?

JANE WARNER – BRANCH CHAIR, OAKWOOD: Chair, NEC, Conference, it's wonderful this idea, but however my only question is really, will you be covered, the area reps, will they be covered to cover the private sector? Because from what I can see, it doesn't mention us at all.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jane. Anybody else wish to speak on this motion? Joe to reply.

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes Chair. In answer to Oakwood, the private sector have got a Private Sector Committee and part of that Private Sector Committee is you can bring stuff on health and safety. In fact, I think it was not the last one or the one before, I asked all of our colleagues in the private sector to bring their health and safety policies, to bring their safe systems of work. So, the private sector's already got that. However, that doesn't preclude that, because when you look at it, to be effective in health and safety, it needs more than just a strong membership. Within the structure, it needs a robust health and safety structure throughout the union. Now I don't know what's happened since I wrote this motion but I cannot remember having POA public sector, POA private sector and POA anything. We are one union! We are POA members, and that's the whole idea of this motion! And that is to bring every employer to task on health and safety. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Joe. All those in favour of this motion please show. Any against? Thank you, that's carried.

We're on to motion 16 because 14 and 15 have been withdrawn. 16, Liverpool, do we have a seconder please? Well done, Dartmoor.

Motion 16:

Conference instruct the NEC to engage with HMPPS and ensure that all healthcare providers are required to offer medical assistance to all staff whilst at work as part of their contract and not just prisoners.

LIVERPOOL

ROGER MORAN – BRANCH CHAIR, LIVERPOOL: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 16 reads as follows: 'Conference instruct the NEC to engage with HMPPS and ensure that all healthcare providers are required to offer medical assistance to all staff whilst at work as part of their contract and not just prisoners.' Conference, this is about a basic human right for our members nationally. Our health and safety cannot and should not be a regional lottery, dependent on the establishment you work in. Quite simply, our employer, when giving out these contracts, lucrative contracts, must have our health and wellbeing at the forefront of their concerns, not simply that of the prisoners. Please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Liverpool. No more speakers indicated. Speaking on behalf of the NEC, Sarah Rigby.

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the NEC in favour of this motion. It's a very worthy motion; I'm fairly confident all branches will vote to support it. The privatisation of healthcare departments in prisons has been a colossal failure in more ways than one. We used to work as one with our healthcare colleagues. They cared, they went out of their way to assist us wherever they could. This included issuing medication to us, offering advice or basic first aid treatment if we were injured or assaulted at work. Admittedly the assaults were few and far between then, compared to now. In many prisons now, healthcare and discipline staff feel as though they are pulling in different directions. Frustrations exist between both departments. They too have had their staffing levels decimated and their terms and conditions eroded. Worst of all, most of them are no longer employed and paid by the NHS but they work for a private company who dictates what they do and who they treat. These private companies try to deliver what their contract requires and reduce budgets. The results have not been good. There will be difficulties in fulfilling this motion as there are several different healthcare providers and the contracts with each of them will differ. That said, we will give our all to try and achieve this, to make things safer for our members and to ensure their health and safety is a priority. Please vote to support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Sarah. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour please show. Any against? Motion is carried.

Motion 17, Wymott. Thank you, Garth.

Motion 17

That the POA mandates the employer to provide a health check policy following any PS incident involving staff feeling unwell due to exposure.
WYMOTT

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Mr Chairman, NEC, Conference, the motion 17 reads that the PO mandates the employer to provide a health check policy following any NPS incident involving staff feeling unwell due to exposure. NPS is now a major cause of ill health in our gaols, with staff reporting a variety of symptoms from exposure to these substances and the wide and varied chemicals making up their composition. Not only are these substances continually changing as detection processes become more sophisticated, but there are effects on those subjected to secondary exposure that is equally varied, producing symptoms from a sore throat or stinging eyes, mild headaches and nausea, through to psychotic intervals and heart conditions. These symptoms are also conditional on other physical factors such as age, gender, build, general fitness, underlying medical conditions and of course precisely what you've been exposed to. Once you have been exposed to these substances, and are showing any signs of ill health, it is only right that our employer takes responsibility for your safety and your ongoing health. There is both a legal and of course a moral duty that they do so, no matter what the consequences may be from their actions and whether or not they've now accepted liability. We are proposing that, following any incident of exposure to NPS that results in staff feeling unwell in any form that that takes, be it physically or mentally, that they are immediately given first aid treatment at the scene and this is followed up with removal to an A&E department should they desire or indeed it be necessary. Following any visit to A&E there must be a follow-up appointment made with the injured party's GP to ensure that they are fit for duty and fit to drive a motor vehicle before they return to work. Any subsequent time taken as sick leave must be excused by the governing Governor. We are sure that such a policy would ensure that not only our members receive the care that they should, following one of these incidents, but that the recording of NPS incidents would improve, with the net result of this would be better response from our employer to the severe threat to our health that NPS poses. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glen. Speaking on behalf of the NEC, after Rossie from Garth has spoken.

NEIL ROSS – BRANCH CHAIR, GARTH: Chairman, NEC, Conference, Garth are quite happy to second Wymott's motion. Colleagues, this motion should not have needed to be brought to Conference, because it should already be policy. This motion only serves to highlight the complete lack of compassion that our employer has not to provide staff with health checks when they've been poisoned in the course of doing their job. We're all aware of the plight that psychoactive substances have in our gaols. However, there is little or no support for staff when they have been exposed to these poisons. Often, when staff are sent off duty following becoming unwell, they've been disciplined for unacceptable attendance. How many times have staff summoned healthcare to attend a wing, to see a prisoner who has poisoned themselves with PS? Healthcare are concerned enough about the prisoner that they come back to the wing to observe that prisoner and provide medical support. What support do staff get for breathing in the exact same contaminant and pollutant in the air? I think we all know the answer to that. A health check would enable staff to get some reassurance that the horrific symptoms that they sometimes experience aren't normal, and would allow them to be sent off duty, either knowing they would be safe at home or sent into a hospital to receive further medical intervention. Conference, please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Neil. Any more speakers? Ian Carson for the NEC.

IAN CARSON – NEC: Chair, Conference, Ian Carson responding on behalf of the NEC asking you to support this motion and we thank Wymott for bringing it. It's a very important motion. But we'd also like to thank Haverigg, because recently our employer introduced a health-check policy based on the Haverigg model. And that model basically says that our members are supported should they feel unwell due to exposure to PS and there are things like blood pressure checks, members taken to hospital, detail placed in the accident book if it <inaudible> It's in the policy. Colleagues, we have a policy, and it's now up to us all to police the policy to ensure members are supported where there are examples of non-compliance, because that's what we end up with, don't we? Policies, where Governors don't comply – and where we get that, please forward us the details so that we can deal with that. Please support this motion, Conference, thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Ian. Glen, would you like to reply? To the vote then. All those in favour, please show. Any against? That's carried. Conference, I'm happy to take that forward when I meet this professor from Bournemouth Uni and see what he, as an expert in the field, recommends. So, we're happy to take that forward, and thank you to Wymott for bringing it to Conference.

We're now onto 17a, which was emergency motion 1, Wymott again. Do we have a seconder for Wymott? Stocken, thank you.

Motion 17a

Following the publication of HMPPS Policy on voluntary testing of staff, Conference instructs the POA to fund testing into members exposure levels to all airborne chemicals and contaminants resulting from the use of NPS within our Jails.

WYMOTT

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Thank you Mr Chairman. NEC, Conference, motion 17a reads, following the publication of HMPSS policy on voluntary testing of staff, Conference instructs the POA to fund testing into members' exposure levels to all airborne chemicals and contaminants resulting from the use of NPS within our gaols. Conference, in March of this year I was informed that within the next 10 days Wymott was to commence the voluntary testing of staff who believe that they have been exposed to NPS fumes or NPS second-hand smoke. I asked for a copy of the plans to carry this testing, wanting to satisfy myself that this was a genuine attempt to find scientific results on our exposure to these vile substances.

Wymott has a history of some shocking incidents involving staff being taken under and made very ill from their exposure to NPS, and I'm sure we're not alone in these incidents. They're bad enough to witness, let alone experience. These incidents have ranged from the feeling of nausea and racing heart, fainting, headaches and feeling of flu-like symptoms through to full psychotic incidents and hallucinations and bizarre behaviour. These incidents have been a regular occurrence across the country over the last five to six years. My request for the plan was met with the admission that there was nothing written down as such. I was offered a verbal briefing from our health and safety department. I pointed out my incredulity at such an important event not having a written plan but agreed to go and listen to our health and safety department. The briefing was as lacklustre as the written plan. I was told that the testing was due to last 'a couple of weeks' and that volunteers would need to give samples, ideally within a few hours of exposure, and I was assured that the testing was being done by a reputable company, the same company that does our MDT and VDT testing, and that they would be looking for evidence of NPS ingestion, and that was about it. I was very unimpressed and decided that surely there was a standard to which the testing of staff for chemical exposure was available. I then looked up the Health and Safety Executive's biological testing of staff guidelines, which is available online. This document gave me the alpha to omega of what should be done when testing staff. I also researched the composition of NPS and the means by which it could be detected through airborne ingestion and inhalation, and a day or two later I was handed a file from our health and safety department in which was a few sides of notes regarding the plan as such to test staff. It didn't say much more than I'd been told verbally, but it did tell me that if anyone tested positive for NPS exposure, they would not be informed of the positive testing until the end of the testing period. I pointed out that this was completely immoral, to not inform someone immediately that it was apparent that they had been exposed to a substance for which there is no known safe level of exposure. I was told that this was the best way to go about this. Evidentially it was the best way for the employer, but not for us. You can imagine what staff would have done if any one of us would have come back with a positive result on day one. Nobody would have been on a landing by day two; that's for sure and rightly so.

Following my research, I drew up a list of ten questions regarding the tests and what they hoped to achieve. I submitted the questions to our health and safety department a day or two later. My concerns included the information that would be kept back from those giving positive samples and what assurances would be given to them on how the employer would stop them from being exposed again, and the fact that they only seemed concerned or looking for the traces of NPS and not any other of the lethal cocktail of chemicals used in the manufacture of these substances.

There have been cases of NPS being manufactured out of alloy wheel cleaner, industrial solvents, chemicals used in the manufacture of steel and those found, incredibly, in cockroach killer.

What, I asked, about our exposure to these chemicals, never mind the NPS? I waited for more than a week for a reply and that didn't come. I then called a branch meeting. In the meantime, I informed the branch of my findings and my grave concerns that we were witnessing the employer going through the motions of protecting its staff but that we were being, pardon the French, bullshitted. A motion was passed that we withdraw from the voluntary testing immediately and I informed our Governor and the NEC of our action later that day.

Conference, we've seen first hand what our employer's attitude to our health and safety and wellbeing is. Record numbers of us being assaulted results in the usual stern words regarding prosecuting perpetrators to the limit of the law, etc. etc. Fine words and that's about all. We endured an almost extra 11 years of second-hand tobacco smoke, more than any other workplace in Europe, and the list of failings by our employer to ensure our health and safety is as long as your arm, so that we really trust these people to look for something that is potentially lethal, or has the potential to cause severe mental health problems in later years following repeated exposure at low levels, knowing that we would have every right to tell them to poke it and walk off the landings until they fixed it, or to sue them for thousands of pounds following exposure to it.

Now there is an argument that we should force our employer to live up to its responsibilities and to do this job properly, but I'd counter that by saying that we've tried to make them live up to their responsibilities regarding assaults on staff, and how has that gone? The numbers having doubled and doubled again in the last eight years. We simply cannot allow something as fundamental to our wellbeing as the quality of the air that we breath being left in the hands of this employer. We must find out what substances are present, in what quantities, and are they injurious to ourselves? This cannot be ignored. It must be done urgently, and it must be funded, and more importantly overseen by ourselves, and ourselves alone. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glen. There are no other speakers indicated. So, speaking on behalf of the NEC is Dave Cook.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, Conference, NEC, replying on behalf of the NEC asking you to reject the motion. Bit of a theme coming here, isn't there?

And the reason being that this motion is asking us to fund the testing and that in itself could be quite serious to this union because there is no ... we don't know how much this is likely to cost us, but it could run into tens of thousands of pounds.

Last year, on behalf of the NEC and on behalf of the Union I went to the Scottish Conference, where they were addressed by a Dr Craig McKenzie who's been doing some work on NPS in the Scottish prisons, and whilst a lot of it went above our heads because of course he's a very learned man, he was talking about chemical structures, but the thing is, the one thing that really came out of that was the fact is the majority of NPS is actually being made in China. So, the Chinese chemists are over there, in their factories, knocking up all this stuff to then be brought into England or into Scotland or any other country. Now then, every time one of their substances goes on to the banned list, all they do is change the chemical structure very slightly. And then it's no longer on the banned list, and it's then shipped into the countries, including us. But Dr McKenzie went on to also say that when you're actually trying to test for this stuff, you don't know what's in it. And we've had mentioned the fact about solvents and cockroach killer, but there's also been rat poison and goodness know what other chemical stuff that they're putting into NPS to give it the effect that they require. So, if you don't know what's actually in there, you can't actually test for it. So the tests at the HMPPS, and they were at great pains to explain to us that this has never been done before in this country or in any other country, they've not tested for NPS at all, it was the first time it's been done so they were shooting in the dark.

So, they did the first test at Holme House, I think it was, and the results came out of that. The results were extremely disappointing. The tests were, in my view and the view of the NEC, unscientific. They actually put these air testers in public places on the landings, but they put them near the offices and in other places, so that the prisoners couldn't actually interfere with the testers. They didn't test the air quality in *any* cell. And this is the point where our members are coming across the greatest exposure. When you're entering a cell, to save the life or tend first aid to somebody under the influence of it, you're walking into a concentrated zone at that point and they never did any tests from the cells itself. So, we thought this entirely wrong, we challenged it, HMPPS then ran out the ten prisons pilot where they are now testing a further ten prisons. We don't expect a great deal from that test either, but ... bringing it back now, this is talking about us funding it. Currently these tests are being done, research is being done, by HMPPS. Why will we get our members to pay for this? Because they are doing it. As far as results go, and <inaudible> to say at this point, is that the NEC were not informed that they were not going to advise any member whether they had the substance in their body or not until this Conference. So, we'll take that on board and we'll challenge that position. However, every member has the right to get the information on their tests, and it can be done through the Freedom of Information if they're not readily going to give it. Later this month the National Chair and others will be going down to Bournemouth to speak to a professor there who's also doing a lot of work on NPS, so that we can get all the facts together to challenge any results. This motion has no timeframe on it. This doesn't tell us when it will stop or when it will start. A tester, if we employ a tester, the Governor can refuse that person entering your prison to conduct the test. So therefore we're now requiring our members, who may be under the influence, to have to go to a central point for the test itself. It doesn't tell you how long it's going to happen, and this could go on for years, this motion doesn't ... it's not time bound, it doesn't say how many prisons, it means every prison. The cost to this union is going to be massive. Please reject.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Dave. Those Chinese chemists have got nothing on scouse chemists though, those scouse chemists can make anything! Glen to reply?

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Thank you Mr Chairman. I think what we've seen there is some desperate grasping of straws. The testing that's being carried out now is to search and find specific synthetic cannabinoids, and how they are metabolised by the human body. So, what we're looking for is a needle in a haystack, because these synthetic cannabinoids that metabolise and come out into the human body and can be detected are continually changing. We've heard that. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the other chemicals that are present, the other chemicals that are used. We have a good idea of what synthetic cannabinoids do, because we witness what the prisoners are doing rolling round on the floor when they've been exposed to it, but what I'm talking about is the other crap that we're being exposed to. It's the other chemicals. Now, all we have to do is find once that we are being subjected to, I don't know, cyanide or formaldehyde or some other nasty chemical; all we have to do is find it once. When we've found it once, we have a massive stick to go back and beat the employer with.

Everything that you've just heard up there was just flummox and fluster. They don't want to fund this. Ask yourself, why? It's our money. This is our health. This is your members' health and this has got all the potential for a cigarette smoke ... the 1940s and '50s doctors telling people, 'Oh no, the cigarettes are fine. They don't cause cancer,' whilst taking a massive backhand. I'm not suggesting these people are doing that – but they don't want to spend the money and I think we should be spending the money. If there's anything fundamental that a union does, it protects the health and safety of its members, and this is what we must do! If it comes to £10,000 or 20, or 30, 40, 50, whatever it costs, it is worth doing, because this has the potential to come back and bite us in the backside severely in the next 20 or 30 years time. Please support the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glen. To the vote. All those in favour of this motion please show. Against? That motion's carried.

Motion 18, Wymott. Do we have a seconder for Wymott? Elmley, thank you.

Motion 18:

That Conference instruct the NEC to pursue Governing Governors through the Courts when a breach of Health and Safety Legislation has occurred in accordance with the Unions Rules and Constitution.

WYMOTT

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Thank you Mr Chairman. NEC, Conference, ladies and gentlemen, motion 18 reads that Conference instruct the NEC to pursue governing Governors through the courts when a breach of health and safety legislation has occurred, in accordance with the union's rules and constitution. I'm sure that many of you have a governing Governor who operates outside of written policy, especially when it comes to our health and safety. Too many Governors have their own interpretation of PSOs and PSIs, and of health and safety regulations, and I'm sure you've spent as much time as I do trying to get your Governor to simply follow their own rules. What many of these Governors choose to ignore or fail to recognise is that health and safety rules are in fact criminal law and carry severe penalties for those who transgress them. A criminal conviction for breaking these rules would be bad for anyone, but a criminal conviction for a Governor would be a real career stopper. As we've seen incidence of violence to their current obscene levels in our gaols, so we have witnessed daily ourselves and colleagues struggling to maintain order in these environments. I've no doubt that subsequently investigations into conduct, and especially into use of force, have similarly increased too. What will not have changed is the desire from many of our Governors to follow the rules and attempt to criminalise those of us who are compelled to use force in order to maintain order as a direct consequence of the decisions made by these self-same Governors. How many of us have then had to face the worrying situation of a police interview following spurious accusations made by a prisoner or Governor and been told that, 'We are only following the rules.' Why is it the case that the rules are so inflexibly enforced on the rank and file but the rules cannot be similarly applied so rigorously to those who are responsible for the running of our workplaces? It is time that those who receive the pay and those that sit in isolation and safety of an office a million miles away from the consequences of their decisions felt the hand of justice on their shoulders and felt the consequences for their transgressions of the rules. We believe that it's about time that any governing Governor that transgresses health and safety law be pursued by this union through the courts and made to face justice for their actions. After all, these are only the same conditions that we must operate under. We believe that such a policy may go some way to focussing the minds of those who make the decisions that ultimately affect the conditions that we work in. After all, we only want them to follow the rules. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glen. Any more speakers? Tom, you can come to the front and have a seat.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, HMP BEDFORD: Mr Chairman, NEC, Conference, three or four years ago I stood here on this very same rostrum and said exactly this thing. Why are we not naming and shaming these people who are getting our members hurt, who are bringing in breaches of health and safety as daily routine and doing all number of things which are illegal and, as has been alluded to by the previous speaker, are criminal acts. I, as an individual, have taken this stance and I name and shame in grievances, suggestions for change, in the press, on the television, and let me tell you, it works! Very recently, on a slightly adjacent subject, our Governor was subject to one of the missiles from the NEC. I have never seen fear in a Governor's eyes, their stomachs turn to water and their knees to jelly, and the speed with which they moved was astounding in fixing the things which were put on the table and what they were requested to do. Right now, Mr Travis, I think you need to go back, speak to our solicitors, and prepare a nicking sheet which covers all the points that merely need you to fill in Governor's name, date, time, place and the section of the Health and Safety Act that they have breached and we start serving. The Finance Officer has told us we're spending a lot of money on legal costs; I don't care if we spend every single penny of this union dragging these Governors through the courts because that's the only way they will ever learn to respect this union. Please support the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Unfortunately, Elmley, as seconder you should have been up straight after the speaker. Standing orders did state it. Sorry. Any more speakers?

Responding on behalf of the NEC is Glyn Travis.

GLYN TRAVIS – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, Conference, honorary life members, invited guests, speaking and asking Conference to reject the motion. And the reason for rejecting the motion, Conference, is we're not grasping at straws, we're not ignoring the reality of your workplace and the problems we face; it's the simple fact of what the law says. Firstly, the law sets out which bodies are able to bring proceedings, and they are the Health and Safety Executive, with local authorities and other enforcing authorities. We simply are not one of those bodies. So, if you accept this motion, Glyn Travis on behalf of the NEC and on behalf of every member out there will write a million nicking sheets but we'll never be able to issue.

What we are doing, in the spirit of this motion, because Glen is absolutely right, we need to take people to task – but you take people to task when they're failing their duty of care to you as an employee, under the Human Rights Act, which is what Bedford are talking about, about the fact that we have taken out judicial review after judicial review and followed the process of a pre-action protocol letter about the fact that the Governor, and HMPPS, and the Prisons Minister, and the Secretary of State have failed to protect your human rights to work in a safe place. Different legislation, different proceedings, and we are an affected and interested party that can issue those proceedings.

The second point where we take the Governor to task is when a member of staff has been assaulted or injured. If you are assaulted, that leads to a potential breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, in the fact that there wasn't a sufficient risk assessment done, there wasn't an appropriate safe system of work in place, the fact that the staff who were working alongside those individuals when they were assaulted weren't C&R trained and were out of date, and we do that by prosecuting personal injury and CICA claims. And who is held accountable when those monies come out of the budget? It is the Governor.

But even if we had the opportunity to do what Glen's asking, and, believe you me, we all wish that we were an enforcing body, right? The reality is that the Governor would be protected by the top of the tree who would say, 'Don't worry, we've got vicarious liability for you, we'll protect you, we'll promote you and we'll move you,' because doesn't that sound familiar? Isn't that what's happening every day in your establishments? So, the purpose of this

is that we cannot simply achieve this policy and that's what we're asking you to reject it for. If you remember, going back, colleagues, to the 128 health and safety issues, the Executive wrote to every single local authority and asked them to investigate, a very prudent point because it's talking about NPS but this is about second-hand smoke, and do you know what the local authorities said? Very simple. There wasn't one single breach of health and safety legislation in any workplace of a prison or a special hospital in any area in relation to smoking in prisons. Poppycock! We know it's happened, we know there's failings, but unfortunately Conference, we simply cannot take this forward in this guise. What we do ask you to do is go back and make sure that your Governor is held accountable. Identify the judicial reviews and other areas of legislation that we can do, that we've done for Bedford. And so, on those premises, Conference, I ask you to reject the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Glyn.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: I refuse to accept that. I can't believe that it is beyond the ken of this NEC and Thompsons Solicitors in which we cannot bring any sort of a prosecution against somebody who blatantly breaks health and safety rules and regulations, criminal law, and make them accountable in a court. Is that what we're seriously saying? We are saying that is beyond the ken of 27,000 members plus the NEC, plus Thompsons, that we can't put one of these people in front of a judge? Really? Don't believe it. Support the motion. Call their bluff.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: To the vote. All those in favour of this motion, please show. Any against? That motion is carried. We look forward to receiving all the information from you at branch level on how we can move this forward. Well done, Glen.

Motion 19 has been withdrawn. We now move on to the awards section before we break for lunch. Motion 20 has been seconded by Ashworth, and speaking on behalf of the NEC is Steve Gillan.

Motion 20:

**Conference awards Duncan Keys Assistant General Secretary Honorary Life membership.
NEC**

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Chairman, Conference. Conference it is my great pleasure to move this motion on behalf of the National Executive Committee, that Duncan Keys should be awarded honorary life membership. Duncan retired on 5 April and is not here. Duncan has a long history dating back to when he joined the service in 1982 at Feltham, which in those days was a borstal. In 1984 he was elected onto the committee, and then in 1985 elected as Branch Secretary. He transferred to Wormwood Scrubs in 1988 and elected as Branch Chair in 1989. He remained at Wormwood Scrubs until 1999, when he was selected for employment with the POA as Assistant General Secretary, a position that he held for 20 years, producing some excellent work on behalf of the membership, particularly in the private sector and indeed in the special hospitals. Many members during that time were represented by Duncan to an exceptionally high standard and many were extremely grateful for the sound advice and representation that he gave. An astute negotiator, he had the respect of many employers in the NHS setting and indeed in the private sector. He was instrumental, along with others, in negotiating some of our first recognition agreements in the private sector. In the Prison Service, he knew the role of an Assistant Secretary and advised many Executive members with his years of experience, so that they could make the key decisions on behalf of the membership. Duncan was highly respected by past and current Executive members and carried out his duties to a high standard, and there is no doubt within the NEC that Duncan qualifies under rule 6.1 for honorary life membership. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Steve. We have some speakers.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, this is not the ideal situation for me to be in. However, this is what my branch have mandated me to say and I will deliver their wishes. In the year 2000 a teenager was murdered at Feltham Young Offenders by a psychopath. Mr Keys made an anonymous call to the Commission for Racial Equality. Mr Keys admitted that he made this call and this is widely available on the internet. Mr Keys went on to tell the court that he made a mistake and that much of his anonymous statement was wrong. This affected staff massively and Mr Key's actions have not been forgotten at Feltham. The staff involved could have faced a murder enquiry into themselves should Mr Duncan Key's allegation have been believed. Honour is a quality of knowing and doing what is morally right. What Mr Keys admitted to doing to the staff at Feltham is not honourable. Being an NEC member should not be an automatic entitlement to Honorary Life Membership. We, the Feltham Branch, ask that you reject this motion in support of the affected staff that are still affected today from Mr Key's actions.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any more speakers? Steve, would you like to reply. Oh, we've got one here. Thank you, Martin.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, HMP BEDFORD: Speaking in my former capacity as Branch Chair of HMP Wellingborough. I'm not going to dispute any of the glowing attributes given by the General Secretary. I'm only going to speak about an incident which came to my notice when Mr Duncan Keys visited Wellingborough in our darkest hours of market testing. At our request, on the behest of our area representative, Glen Birchell at the time, they came there to reassure the members that all would be well, the NEC were doing their level best to try to get us out of the problems that we were in. Instead, we were shocked to see this man belittle the membership to the point where basically he was asked to leave. Prior to that we'd been holding the branch together to try to assure them that we could do something about this. Some people voted with their feet and went to other establishments. But after that visitation, the trickle became a flood, to the point where we were on dangerous levels. We had to have detached staff in to help us run the regime. And that never left us, up to the point where we closed. That visit has always ingrained itself in my head and set me fully against what I perceived to be a big failing by what I believed to have been a senior member of the NEC. And on that basis only, in possibly a glowing

career of over 20 years of good service, that black mark on that black day cannot be forgotten, and on that basis we ask you to reject this motion.

JANE WARNER – BRANCH CHAIR, OAKWOOD: I've known Duncan for approximately 7.5 years and during that time he has been a very strong supporter of our plight, setting the branch up, getting where we are today and being supportive in the background to the point where I had his personal mobile number if anything ever happened. Duncan's gone through a lot of personal changes, a lot of health issues. That's no excuse for what I've just heard. Obviously, you've got long memories of what he'd done before and how it's affected you. I can only speak on how he's affected me and us in Oakwood and it's all been positive. I hope you'll support it because in my opinion he deserves it. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any more speakers? Steve, would you like to respond?

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much Conference. I will respond on behalf of the National Executive Committee. This isn't a popularity contest. This isn't about personality politics. This is about an individual that has worked very hard on behalf of this union, not just at national level, but at local level as well in very, very difficult circumstances at times. I'm not sure it's very helpful raising the Mubarek Inquiry because I tell you what, it was a sad day for many in this union, including many individuals at Feltham who had to give evidence to the Mubarek Inquiry as well as along with Duncan. I don't want to open up those issues, but I don't think anybody came out of the Mubarek Inquiry very well, including some honorary life members who are now sitting at the back, who were involved in the Mubarek Inquiry in those days. So why single Duncan Keys out? I think that is tragic, to be honest with you, and I think some people have been told to say certain things on behalf of the branch because it's about personality politics, and again sadly I read this nonsense, or I was sent this nonsense on social media – quite rightly, this is the place to debate it, not in the Victoria, not <inaudible> had the side little meetings, not on social media, but let me tell you, Duncan Keys is an honourable man. I'm not going to go into the realms of Mubarek because I don't think it's right and proper, but I know what Duncan Keys did, because I was around at the time. I know what others did as well and, let me tell you, it wasn't a good time for anybody, but if you're going to hold that against Duncan Keys, then you'd better revisit some of the honorary life memberships that you've given. I'd rather concentrate on the positives in relation to this issue. The man worked hard on behalf of this union and just because one or two branches don't like him should never come into it. There might be sixty branches out there that don't like me – the reality is I hope no one ever does put me up for honorary life membership because I'd reject it anyway – but the reality is for Duncan Keys the Executive have put him up because they have seen his work over the years. So have past Executives. And let me tell you, Mr Keys is a man who, if you cut him in half, would bleed POA. That's the reality. So I think, Conference, think long and hard before you reject this, because I remember the same people, a lot of the same people getting up and making comments. Duncan Keys is an honourable man and I think you should honour this man by giving him the highest award that this trade union can give. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: We'll take it to the vote then Conference. All those in favour of this motion please show. Against? That motion is carried.

Motion 21, we have it seconded by Holme House and speaking on behalf of the NEC is Ian Carson.

Motion 21:
Conference awards Tony Stocks Honorary Life membership.
NEC

IAN CARSON – NEC: Chair, Conference, Ian Carson addressing motion 21 and asking you to award honorary life membership to Tony Stocks. Conference, the criteria set by you, the members, is that honorary life membership is awarded to someone who's made an outstanding contribution to the union, and Tony Stocks did that in spades. To the members at Holme House, Tony was the trouble-shooter, he was the big bloke that scared the bejesus out of everyone. He was Ghostbusters to the members of Holme House and if you needed to call him he was there 24/7. He served in a number of gaols and most of the time he worked in seg units. Frankland and Holme House were his last two gaols and latterly as a committee member and as Branch Chair of Holme House. Tony and I worked closely together and during his tenure of Chair. I can't remember a single incident where we lost a member of staff who didn't want to go, such was his influence and impact at Holme House. His understanding of the Equalities Act was absolutely outstanding, and he understood the benefit that that act brought the disabled members. Tony Stocks couldn't be bullied or intimidated by anyone. I've never seen it ever happen in the years I've worked with him and I can remember one day he scared the bejesus out of the SMT when one of them started to make issues personally against him. And Tony looked at the SMT and said, 'Listen, don't make this personal. It's about business, because if you make it personal, we'll take it outside and it'll become personal,' and let me tell you they were all trying to get under the table in the boardroom.

His impact was huge. Tony left the service to spend time with his elderly parents. They're both very, very ill. But I've got absolutely no doubt, and those of you that know him, we shared the fact that had he have stayed with us, he would certainly be in a senior position today. We've got no doubt about that.

Before joining the service, Tony worked in the mines, and he spent a year on strike. And I remember him once telling me about the Battle of Orgreave and about the brutality that was meted out against the working-class people and about the destruction of the mines and the miners' union, and it left a marked impact on him. And he once said to me, 'You'll never take on a Conservative government as a working-class person because they'll destroy you, so pick your battles, pick your fight and pick your place to fight.'

Tony's list of achievements as a member of the local POA stand out as a shining light to those that knew him and those that followed him. Everybody

was absolutely confident in him. Let me just tell you a couple of stories about Tony Stocks.

We had members in the kitchen at Holme House, and one day one of them came to us and said they'd been bullied by the kitchen manager, so Tony and I went and said to the kitchen manager, 'Don't bully POA members. Do what you like with everybody else, but you're not bullying our members.' A week later, on a Wednesday, I remember it like it was yesterday, we got a call to say that the bullying had continued, so that night House Block 3 had to ring the Orderly Officer at five o'clock because all of their food was cold, and the following day the Governor was apoplectic with rage because of the impact on the regime. And he said to Tony, 'What's going on?' Stocksy said, 'Well listen. The bullying stops or tonight it'll be 1,200 rations you'll be missing.' That was the impact Tony Stocks had at Holme House.

Perhaps what best sums Tony Stocks up is one of the meetings I attended with him while benchmarking was taking place. Because of the benchmark challenges Holme House put in, at a meeting I was at, the Governor asked to speak to him on a personal basis. 'Tony, can I speak to you on a personal basis?' He said, 'No, I don't have any secrets. Say what you want to say.' The Governor said to him, and he was an SO at the time, 'BDG have seen the work that you've done on the benchmarking and they want you to come and work for them. You've got an immediate promotion to a Band 5, a PO, and they want you to start working for them next week.' That's what the Governor said. Stocksy's response was absolutely telling. And the Governor said, 'By the way, it'll impact on your pension, your pay's going to increase. Do you want to ring your wife?' Stocksy says, 'Listen. Benchmarking gets rid of my members' jobs. There is no way on this planet am I going to go and work for somebody who's going to do that.' And he rejected that offer of immediate promotion to go and work for BDG.

Conference, please support this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Ian. Do Holme House wish to speak on this motion? No one else indicating so we'll go to the vote. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 21a was emergency motion 2, this is being seconded by Glenochil, and speaking on behalf of the NEC is Steve Gillan.

Motion 21a

Conference awards Stuart Simpson Honorary Life Membership. NEC

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you Chairman, Conference. Conference, it gives me great pleasure in moving this motion on behalf of the NEC. Stuart started at Perth Prison on 21 December 1987. He worked there until he went to Glenochil in 1990 but returned to Perth in 1992, before, would you believe it, returning to Glenochil again in 1996. Stuart became involved in the local branch committee in 1997 and became Branch Secretary in the year 2000 and 2001. The local committee, along with the rest of Scotland, took action around that time which resulted in the formulation of the partnership agreement. He was elected onto the Scottish National Committee in 2006, a position he held until he lost in the election this year. I'm sure Conference wish his successor, Willie Reed, all the very best in the position of Treasurer in Scotland, when the result came out in April 2019. But for 13 years Stuart, on the SNC, has held the position of Treasurer in amongst his other duties on the SNC. The position of Treasurer is no easy task and Stuart has carried out that task, keeping the Scottish accounts, sometimes in extremely difficult circumstances, in very good shape. His outstanding work in that alone would merit honorary life membership, but Stuart was more than that. He was a man who tried his best for not just the Scottish membership but the POA membership as a whole. Over the years, Stuart has helped many members on discipline codes, grievances and pension issues to a very high standard, and this should be acknowledged by awarding him the highest honour of honorary life membership for the POA.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Steve. Would Glenochil like to speak?

CLAIRE MACINTYRE – BRANCH SECRETARY, GLENOCHIL: Chair, NEC, Conference, I would like to second the motion and, while I'm here, I would like to take a couple of minutes just to tell you something about Stuart. I am extremely new out of the wrapper when it comes to being a prison officer, I was only five years when I got involved with the POA and then only a year after that I found myself in the POA's chair on my own. There's no one there to help me, and Stuart came in like a raging bull and told me to sit down and listen because I was capable, and I think those very words were the words that stopped me from walking out the door right there and then, because my words to him were, 'I am out of my depth.' And he made me feel like I could do my job, he supported me, the grievances that were sitting on the desk that I was absolutely scared to open, he helped me open them, he helped me go through them. Then there was the misconducts that he helped me with, and then even after being deselected, he swooped down and helped me save a guy's job with a gross misconduct, who I wholeheartedly believe would not be in the job right now if it hadn't been for Stuart Simpson. I would like, on behalf of Glenochil, to thank you Stuart. I hope this motion is passed, and I ask you please, ladies and gents, to vote in favour. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. We'll go to the vote unless there's any other speakers. Barlinnie to speak, thank you.

JAMES McCABE – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Chair, Conference, first of all I don't know why it's an emergency motion. They had motions rejected earlier that could have been submitted in January. This could have been submitted in January. Is it submitted because he failed to catch his Treasurer's post? We don't reward failure. So, it shouldn't have been an emergency motion, and therefore it should fall the way other motions fell

earlier when Conference started. I cannot go back wholeheartedly and go to Barlinnie branch, with 500 or so members, and say that this man got this award. There was carnage in Scotland, at Scottish Conference in October, carnage. I can't get it any clearer. Four years the SNC, with Stuart one of the leads, led a pay deal, pay and conditions to get us better terms and conditions, and they held the membership off and they held the membership off and let them do their job. They failed abysmally – abysmally! Over 80% returned, told them we're not accepting this deal. What followed from that is the fact that his Treasurer's post was up this year, and I get all the war stories, I get all the stuff that people done; this was pay and conditions, this was <inaudible> for the membership. This year, out of 1,800 votes, he got less than 25%. To my knowledge, because we can't get the figures off the SNC, no prison carried a vote for him that came from the special hospitals and other places. No prison officers did he win the vote in the actual prison. You can't reward people for that, despite the codes and all the other stuff, the health and safety stuff, that we all do because that's our job. The job is to get us a decent pay deal, four years it failed and the membership unanimously rejected it. Stuart part-led it. Reject the motion.

KAREN GWEN – BRANCH SECRETARY, GRAMPIAN: I would like to support this motion, colleagues. I've known Stuart Simpson for well over ten years. He has been a power of support to myself, when we were closed our gaol and moved into a new one. He's always been at the end of a phone regardless of if he's your national rep or not. I really can't see any reason why anybody would not want Stuart to achieve this honorary award. Please support the motion.

EDDIE CRUSE – BRANCH SECRETARY, POLMONT: Chair, Conference, I'm in support of this motion for Stuart. I think it's deserved. What's been said before is correct, that there was a lot of angst, a lot of carnage in Scotland last year, but I don't think that should be laid at Stuart's door. I think there's a collective responsibility in that, between the whole SNC, the membership as well though. I think the history of where Stuart has come from, where he's been, I think that's deserving. I think the work that he's done and undertaken is deserving, and there's a lot of elements to Stuart's character as well, including his humour; and we'll no go into too much detail about that, Stuart, and what happened at Portsmouth. I think it's likely that he probably told Claire not to sit down but to park her arse. I appreciate Stuart coming to Conference, and I appreciate the support I've had and the working that I have had with him as well. I think it's deserving. I think as it stands alone, honorary life membership's appropriate for Stuart, and what happened last year was nae solely laid at a single person's door. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Steve, would you like to reply?

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you for your contributions, Conference, from Glenochil, Barlinnie, Grampian and Polmont. I want to come back, as you would expect, on some of the issues that Barlinnie raised. They mentioned that this could have been done next year, the year after, or the year after. I think if it had been delayed, then the reality is that he probably would never have got it; it would have been forgotten about, but the reality is Standing Orders were passed this morning. The motion was accepted by you on the order paper, quite rightly actually, by the way, because the election in Scotland didn't finish until April of this year. So therefore, it's a legitimate motion under the rules that you set. That's the reality of things. It's also been said that for four years he never achieved a pay rise on behalf of Scotland and the membership there. I hope we're not judged on this Executive by that because, by god, no one would ever get honorary life membership so I don't know what they're all sitting at the back for! Reality is we've never got rid of the 1994 Trade Union Bill either, which stops us from taking strike action. It's been there for 26 years for goodness sake. Are we going to judge individuals on that? That's two motions running, sort of, that we've heard negatives on individuals. I'd rather concentrate on the positives that these people have done. The reality is Stuart deserves honorary life membership for his work as the Treasurer in Scotland, no mean feat. I recognise that last year in Scotland it was pretty toxic, there was a lot of anger. That's democracy. That is democracy and Stuart has been beaten in an election. We haven't seen any tears from Stuart Simpson. He's just got on with it. He's got on with it and he'll go back to Glenochil and he'll do his best probably for the membership there as a POA member. Is that what we have become, Conference, personality-driven? And we're not going to recognise people for the good work that they carry out on behalf of this union? Because if that's the way we're going, then I'm afraid it's pretty sad. So I would ask you to support this motion wholeheartedly.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Steve. Over to you, Conference. All those in support of this motion, please show. Any against? That motion is carried.

Conference, before we break for lunch, just to make you aware ...

<Applause>

... that we have two fringe meetings, one on social media with Thompsons Solicitors in the Waterfront Suite, Room 1, which is just through the double doors there, on the ground level, and then the other one is a fringe meeting 'Role of the Safety Rep'. That is in Room 2. Light refreshments will be provided. See you back – we'll reconvene at 2:00 pm please, 2:00 pm. Thank you.

POA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th May 2019

Tuesday 14th May - Afternoon Session

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Just a quick update. I've just had a call about Jo Farrar, who's now got to meet the new Prisons Minister on Thursday, so she'll be arriving tomorrow evening. We'll have a meeting with her and then she'll have to shoot off rather rapidly on Thursday morning. But the director who is with her, Richard Vince, who's the Director of the High Security Estate, he's been instructed to stay on Thursday and listen to the motions that we've remitted so he can get the sense of feeling from yourselves to report back to Jo. So, when he's here and when we talk about those motions, get up and tell the employer exactly how it is.

So, to start this afternoon's session I'd like to introduce Moira and Mary. Moira and Mary's husbands were unfortunately killed by terrorists and they are here today to tell you about the work of the Prison Service Trust, a charity that was set up in Northern Ireland to look after widows and medically retired prison officers. Moira and Mary, you are very, very welcome and please address Conference.

<Applause>

MOIRA KERR: This is nerve-wracking, to say the very least! Mr Chairman, NEC and Conference, it's a great honour and privilege to be allowed to address the POA at the Conference once again. I first addressed Conference in 2003. My name is Moira Kerr, I'm the widow of Principle Officer Patrick Kerr, better known to his colleagues as Paddy Joe, who was murdered by terrorists in Armagh, Northern Ireland on the 17th February 1985. We had three children at the time when my husband was murdered – Deidre aged nine, Gregory aged seven and Kristin aged four. At the time Pat was murdered he was attending church in Armagh and I was with him normally. Unfortunately, I had to go to a funeral in Castleblayney, which is in Southern Ireland across the border. For security reasons Pat wasn't allowed to attend the funeral in the South of Ireland and therefore we decided that I would take Deidre, my eldest daughter, to the funeral and he would take Kristin and Greg to church with him. Pat was walking from the church with our two children by the hand, he let go of their hands to put his bible in the bonnet of the car, so he'd get the keys out of his pocket. This is when the gunmen jumped from behind statues outside the church and shot him. They made their escape on a motorbike and have never been caught.

Meanwhile, I was in Castleblayney, attending Pat's uncle's funeral, unaware that my husband had been murdered in Armagh. At the funeral I found it very, very strange that the Garda Síochána, the Irish police, had gone to speak with my husband's brother. My brother-in-law then said, 'Come on quickly, we need to go to the guard station, something has happened.' My heart sank. At the guard station my brother-in-law made a phone call and I knew by the expression on his face that something had happened. Nobody in the guard station spoke. Total silence. I grabbed Deidre by the hand and I ran out to the car and got back down to Armagh as quickly as I possibly could. When I got there, there was nobody there and then two of my neighbours came in the house followed by the parish priest. At that, my brother arrived accompanied by his friend, my GP Paddy, and Paddy took me aside and told me that Pat had been shot dead at the cathedral in front of the children. My whole life collapsed around me. I did not know what I was going to do. The two children had witnessed the murder of their father. How I was going to cope? How I was going to raise three children on my own without their dad? These things rush through your mind and there are no answers at that stage. However, I had to come to terms with the fact that my husband had been murdered and two of my children had witnessed the murder. And Deidre, she hadn't witnessed it but nonetheless she'd lost her best friend and her dad. I had to pick myself up and be strong for them.

Pat's funeral was very, very difficult for us all and I want to acknowledge the support of the POA family right across Northern Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland and Southern Ireland gave us. The support was tremendous at that time. It was a very difficult time for the family after the murder of my husband as he was the main earner in the family, although I was working fulltime. We got a civil service pension, but it was not enough to meet the household bills coming in each month. Therefore, I had to take on private catering work to make ends meet so I could try and give the children some kind of a quality of life. Conference, I can assure you that the life of the wife of a prison officer who was widowed through terrorism was, to say the very least, difficult. You had to take the role of head of the family with no husband to support you.

There were 29 male prison officers and one female officer murdered during The Troubles, therefore it's important that I explain to you about the Prison Service Trust and why it is so important to the families of murdered officers in Northern Ireland. The POA in Northern Ireland set up welfare committees at each prison establishment and when they had them all up and running the POA then handed them over to what was then known as the Widow and Orphans Fund or Benevolent as we called it. And when the Maze Prison closed, all those different benevolents all centralised, became one. This is the organisation that should have been looking after the interests of families of our murdered colleagues. Unfortunately, this was not the case. The report produced by Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, Head of the Civil Service in Northern Ireland, into The Troubles called *We Will Remember Them*, there was no mention whatsoever of any of the 30 murdered prison officers. They were completely and utterly ignored and from then on I called us 'the forgotten family'.

I complained to Finlay Area Chairperson and he said that was a matter for Central Benevolent Fund, that they took over the role of representation of our murdered colleagues and families. I asked them, I begged them, I pleaded with them up and down, and they ignored me completely. To have our voices heard I continually phoned Finlay. I had the man tortured <chuckles>, who at last agreed that he and the Vice Chairman, Jim Smith, would meet with a group of widows whose husbands were murdered by the terrorists in Northern Ireland. We met in Castell House, which is the POA office of Northern Ireland. We voiced our concerns at the lack of representation by the Central Benevolent Fund in relation to the widows and medically retired

staff. Finlay, Area Chairperson, said that his job was to represent serving officers here in Northern Ireland and it was a matter for the CBF, Central Benevolent, to look after us and so forth. We pointed out to him that all of our husbands were members of the POA and therefore POA should be looking after us if the other crowd wouldn't. Finlay then agreed that he'd try and arrange a meeting with the Prisons Minister, Adam Ingram, who was a fantastic guy. We took a group of widows to that meeting in Stormont and he agreed then that there was a need, and he gave us £25,000 towards getting a firm of consultants to do the research into what was needed to provide services to families of murdered staff and medically retired staff.

The study took nearly two years to complete and the research study showed that there was a need for somebody to represent the needs of bereaved families and medically retired staff. As a result of the study, an organisation called The Prison Service Trust was established thanks to June Robinson and Finlay Spratt, who had been delegated the responsibility to set up a board of directors to administrate the trust. We have a manager, an administrator, a chief executive, four part-time outreach workers, and they managed to have it all set up and started in January 2003. I was honoured to be offered the position on the board of directors to represent widows. The Prisons Minister made a grant of £230,000 towards the cost of running the trust for the first year. When we started, we had 94 widows and 224 medically retired clients. This has now grown to 189 widows and 333 medically retired clients since inception of the trust. I want to acknowledge the support our POA colleagues on the mainland have given us all over the years. In particular, Glyn Travis, who conducted the auctions on Irish nights of Conference, ably assisted by Jackie Marshall. The money you raised has been put to very good use, I can assure you.

Also, Steven Gillan, General Secretary, who encouraged June Robinson, the Area Secretary in Northern Ireland, Secretary to the board of directors Prison Service Trust to continue her voluntary work helping widows and medically retired staff. And I tell you what a terrific Secretary June is, absolutely fantastic. Conference, as honorary treasurer I can tell you the trust has now got a good bank balance and owing to the generosity of many individuals the trust now provides medical assistance for serving officers who are suffering from life-threatening illnesses and are reduced to half or little pay. Hence the <inaudible> to the trust. Out of the grant for the Northern Ireland Prison Service the trust provides assistance for widows and medically retired prison officers to carry out, for example, repairs to their homes, we provide classes for art, computer, digital photography, Spanish, iPad, guitar. Classes are very well attended by our clients. We have 33 widows here today at your Conference as part of our social outing and for them to enjoy beautiful Southport.

Conference, I have to tell you the Prison Service Trust has made a major difference to my life. Having the comfort to know that if I need help I can contact the trust 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year, any time and there's always somebody there. It's a great comfort to me and all of our clients to know of the trust. Once a month our manager phones all 522 clients to just check on how they are. If no answer, we leave a message. We on the board examine that at the meeting and if no one has been contacted we get in touch with them. So, I tell you, it's really proved its worth in the making of it.

Before I go I have to say a very huge thank you to Finlay and June for the sterling work they have done all over the years for us and on our behalf, or even just ably supported by all of you, I have to say. So, Mr Chairman, Conference, I've taken enough of your time and simply thank you most sincerely for everything you've done for the trust and I trust you will continue to do it for us. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARY MARLEY: Hello everybody, Mr Chairman, NEC and Conference. My name is Mary Marley, the widow of Michael Cassidy who was murdered by the Provisional IRA on the 16th April 1979 after he came out of church where we were attending his sister's wedding. We had two children at the time, one of which was with us, our three-and-a-half-year-old wee girl and a wee boy, ten months, at home. My husband was holding our daughter's hand as we left the church to walk the short distance to the car park when a white van pulled up beside us and a gunman jumped out and attempted to shoot Michael. Michael pushed his hand up to push the gun away and in the struggle he was shot, and he fell to the ground still holding his wee girl by the hand. Then another gunman jumped out of the van from behind and shot Michael twice in the head as he lay on the ground with his daughter still beside him. The two gunmen jumped back into the van and made their escape – no one was ever caught for his murder. I was so shocked and in total hysterics and my three-and-a-half-year-old child standing at her daddy's head screaming. It was a horrendous experience that we will take to our grave. I thought, here I am, 30 years of age, my husband is lying dead in front of me, my child is screaming, crying at her daddy and I had a baby at home. How can I tell him his daddy's not coming back?

Conference, it is really hard now to explain to you how I was feeling at the time. I was shocked, bewildered, numb, lifeless. I thought, how am I going to go on? Michael's funeral was extremely difficult at the time for all the family and we got through it with the help of friends and family. The most difficult period at that time was having to go home without him, back to Belfast and tell his baby he would not see his father again. My little daughter kept asking, 'Why did these bad men shoot my daddy?' She told us that the shots were <inaudible> because she was so close the resin came off the bullets that killed her dada.

Conference, as you all know, we have an inner strength that helps us when we have to deal with a crisis in our life. I had to rely on that strength, I had a family to support, I needed to pick myself up and get on. At the time of the murder the POA in Northern Ireland were not as active as they are today, therefore I did not have their support. I had to deal with Michael's murder on my own. Yes, I got compensation from the Northern Ireland office, yes I got a pension from the Northern Ireland Prison Service, but that did not compensate for the great husband and family that we had just lost.

As I previously said we have all an inner strength to go on and I had used that inner strength all up. The Prison Service Trust had been the catalyst that had brought us all together under one umbrella so there would be no one isolated or alone again. As Moira explained to you, what the Prison Service Trust does for the widows and medically retired in Northern Ireland is remarkable. Since I became a client of the trust, I have made so many

friends and no longer feel isolated. Conference, I want to tell you about a special woman that I met as a result of the POA agreeing to meet the widows of the murdered officers. Her name was Mabel Hempton, a female prison officer who was seriously injured along with three other officers as they left Armagh Prison on their way for lunch on the 19th April 1979. In that attack, one prison officer, their colleague Agnes Wallace, was murdered, the first and only female prison officer murdered during The Troubles, and it was only three days after the murder of my husband. Agnes's husband and daughter are here with us today and I will say we are a very close family.

After talking to Mabel, I realised what I had lost, a husband and father of my two children, I should not be complaining when you consider what Mabel had gone through as a result of the attack on her. She was confined to a wheelchair for the rest of her life, never had the opportunity to marry or raise a family of her own, had to live on tablets the rest of her life to ease the pain she suffered from the result of that attack. Mabel was inspirational to us all. In fact, I was delighted to be informed that the POA created an award called the Mabel Hempton Bravery Award. This is awarded at annual Conference each year to those members who have shown bravery over the last year. Unfortunately, Mabel has now passed away. The Prison Service Trust wanted to recognise the contribution that Mabel made to the establishment of the Prison Service Trust, so they created an educational bursary worth £1,000 called the Mabel Hempton Education Bursary Award. It is awarded to a student of a widow or medically retired client who is attending university, paying tuition fees. This award is made each year. Mabel was a director of the Prison Service Trust. I want to pay tribute to the board of directors of the Prison Service Trust who give their time freely to administer the trust. They attend board meetings once a month and make no claim for expenses to do so. Since the trust was established, they have managed to obtain £4 million from the Northern Ireland office for funding for the trust, and all this money has been spent on all clients. Without their dedication and commitment, I don't believe it would have been possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the POA for support for the Prison Service Trust and long may it continue as we are one family and we need each other to progress in this life. I'd especially like to thank Finlay and June for their time and effort, commitment, dedication. Their work has made an immense difference for all of us. Mr Chairman, NEC and Conference, thank you so much. Finlay and June, thank you so much.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Moira and Mary, I think we all agree two very brave women to stand in front of hundreds of people in this hall and share their experiences with us all. And this epitomises everything that the POA is about, togetherness, unity, empathy and support and strength. We've got some gifts for you here, don't get too excited because I really don't think it's a pair of shoes.

<Laughter>

But thank you so much Moira and Mary. Both the same gift.

MOIRA KERR: Lovely, thank you very much indeed for having us.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You're very welcome.

MARY MARLEY: Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You're welcome.

<Applause>

While we're here can we show our appreciation for Finlay Spratt and June Robinson, who were instrumental in this trust and supporting widows in Northern Ireland. Thank you.

<Applause>

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Conference, thank you Chairman for giving me the opportunity as General Secretary to say a few words on this very important issue. You probably noticed I wasn't on the top table. I was delighted to stand with Finlay Spratt at the back while this issue was going on because it was only a couple of years ago that some people were attacking June Robinson, Finlay Spratt in relation to the Prison Service Trust and I received many letters in from the widows. Now, let me be clear on this issue. As long as I am General Secretary, June Robinson and Finlay Spratt and the area committee will continue doing the outstanding work that they do, supported by this trade union in relation to the widows and the families of those people that were murdered in Northern Ireland. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Conference, while they leave the stage, once again, Moira and Mary, thank you so much.

<Applause>

Now, Conference, the fringe meetings, because we're progressing well with time, they will start at five o'clock this evening, so we've brought them forward by an hour. So, what we're going to do, we're going to get some Conference motions progressed, we've got a break in approximately 15

minutes and then after the break I'll invite Pat Cuffe to report back to Conference.

Motions 22 and 23 are the Special Hospitals AGM, which will be heard tomorrow morning. Motion 24 is a debate. Thank you for Frankland for supporting this debate. There's no need for seconders on debate but I will invite Frankland to speak – motion 24, Liverpool.

Motion 24

Conference to debate 6/2019 which is designed to protect and support members who have suffered a detriment due to P.S.I 6/2010. LIVERPOOL

ROGER MORAN – BRANCH CHAIR, LIVERPOOL: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 24 reads: Conference to debate 6/2019 which is designed to protect and support members who have suffered a detriment due to P.S.I 6/2010. Conference, I would like to commend the NEC on 6/2019. I am aware that 6/2019 has now been rescinded due to an action taken at HMP Liverpool, but that said, I believe this union had to make a statement to our employer. We have to be taken seriously; to this point I don't think we were. As we know, sadly, and we spoke this morning, levels of violence remain at a high, an all-time high, and continue to rise. The question is, have they listened to us, even with the actions we have taken, and are they listening now? Conference, please debate the motion.

PHILIP HANNANT – BRANCH CHAIR, FRANKLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference. Happy to speak on this debate. I fully understand the sentiments about the circulars coming out. What I would like to put forward on the debate is the potential issues at a local level the 06/19 created. At HMP Frankland we've got a very good relationship with our management. I know we haven't got that throughout branches across the estate, but we do have, and what this motion did to Frankland was possibly destabilise our branch. We had to go down, we spoke to the Governor. At the time we were talking on various issues about other PSIs, PSOs, 01/17 being one of the ones, and we've had significant success by talking to our Governor over the issues. And our Governor was looking across the table basically at us saying, 'So is that it? You don't want to talk to me anymore, is that it?' And I guess at the national level maybe we did have to make a stand, but this destabilised us locally. We understand what we have in our armoury at a local level – we can put disputes, we can basically shut the gaol down if that's what the Governor wants, but we have to make that decision locally. To put this on our toes from the NEC totally, basically as I say, it locked our hands and our Governor was just perplexed. And I'm glad that, however, we got out of this and we are back talking to the employer, over '05 and '6, that we got to that point and I think obviously the NEC, when they went back, I don't believe at some point that they were going to come back and talk to us, I don't know how... I believed that we were already in talks over 06/10. I'll be corrected if that's wrong. So that's the points that I'd like to put across on the debate that one shoe doesn't fit all, it destabilised us and it put us in an awful position. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any more for the debate before I invite an NEC speaker?

CHRISTINE MILLER – ACTING BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Chair, Conference, NEC, I'm always aware, and I support Frankland, in the fact that it destabilised us. We had a new Governor come in on September and literally two days into her job we were outside the front gates. What a great introduction that was. It un-stabilised our good relationships that we were building at the time, and then what made matters worse is it, through communication and networking, it was also made aware that it wasn't uniform. The whole instruction was not uniform; there were branches that were going against the circular. How can we have a circular instructing us to withdraw industrial relationships with our governing Governors and not everyone is following it? For me, we're either all in or we're all not – how can our 'unity be strength' motto exist?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

<Applause>

Any more? Terry McCarthy joining the debate for the NEC.

TERRY McCARTHY – NEC: Afternoon Conference, speaking for the NEC. First, I'll thank Liverpool to bringing this debate to the floor, and secondly, I'd like to remind Frankland and Feltham we're one union, not a series of unions, and like the last speaker quite rightly said, unity is strength. If we all stick together, we're strong. The beauties of PSI 6/2010 are multiple. Now, everybody in this room has got examples of where this policy has been abused, and the problem isn't with the policy, it's with the people who are applying the policy. Now, the time has come to hold these people to account, and moving forward we're going to do that. The only time our employer ever sits up and takes notice of us is when we do something out of the ordinary. Circulars 5 and 6 of this year got their attention, so much so that next month there's a dedicated meeting devoted to purely the abuses of 2010. And Conference, your NEC have always acted in your best interests. Next month we'll sit down and talk to these people and move forward with this policy because the sooner it gets sorted, the better. Thank you, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Terry. Thank you for the debate Conference. We now move onto 24a which was appeal 1, this is a debate. I'd like to invite Frankland to open the debate. Has it been withdrawn?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yeah, you're on 25 now.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Right, that's been withdrawn I've been informed, thanks for that. 25 is Hewell, it's been seconded by

Frankland.

JON SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: Chair, Conference, NEC, special guests, retired members, HLMs, greetings to Conference. Condemn is a strong word as part of my motion but there isn't a lot of other words I could choose. I can't have it as a point of fact, I can't have it as anything else, I had to have it as condemned or confidence in the NEC so I chose condemned. Like Frankland, it caused us huge issues. We were in the middle of negotiating OMiC, profiles, among other stuff, and it caused us a hell of a lot of issues and problems at our gaol too.

However, in 2016 I brought a motion here that said quite clearly that Governors were interpreting mandatory inclusions within 6/10 to their own benefit. They were interpreting them how they wanted to interpret them and not following them as a mandatory inclusion. It was supported by you all, it was approved, and it was signed up and taken forward. Jackie Marshall spoke on behalf of it and it was declared as unfit for purpose. So I have a report back from 2017 and the report back says that it was taken to NOMS, as it was NOMS in those days, and taken to the witness structure and NOMS reaffirmed that all mandatory instructions are mandatory, not guidance, that any individual cases where this is not occurring should be challenged during the process. They've done that. So, it doesn't matter now every time we have a hearing, every time they go against any mandatory things, we raise it. The disappointing thing is that they still go against mandatory inclusions, they still do that. The DDC support their decisions, which makes it even worse because they're actually approving the fact that they're wrong and it's the wrong procedure. What I'm actually accusing these guys of ... condemn, as I said, is a strong word, but it's taking their eye off the ball. They accepted the fact that they would reaffirm that all mandatory inclusions should be followed, but they haven't and three years later we then have an email sent round and a circular to say we now stop national negotiations and for everyone to follow suit. Because as a member put it to me, it's alright that we get blamed and we get targeted for following these and we don't get the mandatory put down there and they don't follow them, but now an NEC official has now had something against them and it's alright for them to bring it to the table and bring it to the front and say, 'It's wrong, therefore we're ceasing all negotiations until you rectify it.' You can condemn, you don't condemn them, it's just something that I had to bring forward and to take note. If they'd have followed the instruction and followed it all the way through, not accepted what NOMS said, that all Governors had to follow as mandatory, they'd chased it all the way through to its conclusion, maybe Liverpool might not have had to walk out, maybe Mr McCarthy might not have been subject to mis-construement of mandatory laws that apply to 6/10, maybe no other people would have been as well. So, I've got to say, thank you for your time.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Hewell. Frankland, would you like to speak on this?

PHILIP HANNANT – BRANCH CHAIR, FRANKLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to support this motion and the reason being is, again, what the debate was saying. Yes, we are one union. Yes, we'll stand united, and we did what we were asked to do. Why I ask to support this is because what we were asked to do potentially destabilised and could've took us to a point that we would not get back from if they hadn't started to re-engage. I believe the use of the two circulars were possibly in breach of the rules, as a breach of rule 2.1(a) protect and promote the interest of its members, (b) improve the conditions of employment. Now, at that point what could them circulars ... the NEC or us a level, we could not promote the best interests of our members whilst we weren't talking. When you go into branch-official training, one of the big things you're told is, 'Last, last, last resort, stop talking', because at the bottom line you cannot achieve anything <inaudible> via them bringing anything. You have to keep them avenues open. Like I say, it's not a good way to go to withdraw all things, so I would ask you to support the motion, thank you.

STEWART McLAUGHLIN – BRANCH SECRETARY, WANDSWORTH: Chair, NEC, Conference, more to probably pose the question because if you look in Section 15 of our policy document the problems of 06/2010 are not new, so perhaps when the NEC speaker comes up he could perhaps enlighten us as to what's occurred so recently that I haven't seen my members sacked, failed on appeal, rejected by legal aid and then I take it through to an employment tribunal myself, and curiously enough and with a bit of luck, yes, we won that one. Clear evidence of a misuse of process, but nothing going out over our Section 15 policy document, but like I said, perhaps that one can be answered by the NEC speaker.

TONY WALKER – BRANCH CHAIR, PORTLAND: NEC, Conference, asking you to reject the motion to condemn the NEC. Yet again here we are, year on year, putting the people that we put our trust in out for slaughter. Absolutely drives me nuts, I just do not get it that we wash our laundry in public all the time, at the back-coconut shy is what it's been called and that's exactly what it is. When do we make a stand? We've got to be able to make a stand sometime, our employers and this government have taken all our rights away from us. What do we do? Do we all go to the gate every two minutes? The NEC made the decision and asked for our support. If branches weren't following that then more shame on them. It has got the employer to the table, which is exactly what the circular was sent out to do, so the NEC achieved their objective without taking us all to the gate, without anybody losing any pay. So, think of what resources we've got at our hands to be able to implement the things that we try and get. I urge you to reject the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Tony. Any more speakers? Responding on behalf of the NEC, Glyn Travis.

GLYN TRAVIS – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, honorary life members, invited guests, seeking a rejection of a condemning motion. Tony's just spoke about why we kick the people who try and progress your policy. It's not Glyn Travis's policy, Mark Fairhurst's policy, Steve Gillan's or any of the NEC or fulltime officers, the SNC and/or the Area Committee Northern Ireland. It's your Conference policy, it's your regional policy, it's your branch policy. And Stewart talks about if we'd have achieved Section 15 – well Section 15, Conference, is a reflection of your policy 26/18, 'That Conference mandate the NEC to challenge HMPPS over the use of Halsbury's Law.' We did that and they said no. 'Conference accept an allegation related to form of misconduct by a Band 6 or above in order to restore faith and maintain transparency.' Right, but that's dealt with. Well, during this investigation and disciplinary hearing it was brought to the attention of the National Executive Committee that a number one Governor had decided in her infinite wisdom, right, to take her mobile phone out of her office, take it up to the centre of an establishment and video record a member of staff, other members of staff and a prisoner on her personal mobile phone. That was in breach of PSI 4/2007 body worn video camera, it's

in breach of the GDPR, it was actually a criminal act. So, we raised that with them, and do you know the answer that we got from the DDC and from the Prisons Director North? 'This was dealt with.' Months after the event, nobody knows what happened to it and the Governor got advice and guidance. Wonderful! Criminal act – advice and guidance.

On top of that we then asked, 'Well, if that was the case, can you prove to us on the conduct and discipline case and the register of that where that was recorded?' Because we painstakingly went through every single one from the year and we thought maybe it's been lodged the year before, so we checked the year before – and do you know what, it wasn't even recorded as a misdemeanour. When we raised that with individuals higher above that, and there's not many, 'Well it's not for us to deal with.' Well, I'm sorry, corruption in the Prison Service is! Condemning this NEC will not prevent corruption. You, we have to stand together and prevent it and work together to prevent it. The next policy, Conference, mandatory instructions – absolutely right. Hewell, we support it, we went to them and the lip service that we got was the fact that, 'Yes, we'll tell Governors to do it.' This wasn't about Terry McCarthy. This was about a blatant political decision to attack a branch official who was making life difficult for someone who was deemed to be, 'Going to go to the top, aspiring Governor.' Therefore, Liverpool being Liverpool, like we've got with Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs, Durham and I could name every single branch on this floor who stand up for right and object to wrong by Governors and defend members, and therefore it was seen as attack, it was seen as a way forward. Was it payback for Michael Spur being sacked? Was that what really this was about? Well, do you know what, the one thing I will say about Terry McCarthy is he wasn't an NEC member when this happened, he was a local official at Liverpool. You elected him nationally to become an NEC member, but the process had already started, so therefore was Terry now becoming the sacrificial lamb? The injustices of Terry's process, the way that it was dealt with ... and I have to go into this and please bear with me, Chair.

How many people know that there's a Commissioning Manager Authority who dictates there's going to be an investigation? And at the 24th hour that's changed and a Band 11 does an investigation. Number one Governor does an investigation. Number one Governor contacts the probation services to see when they can interview a prisoner who's been released – that prisoner's then not available to come and give evidence. Staff who turn round and give evidence that the investigating officer says he's so absolutely trustworthy, honest, they're giving evidence to the police, that they knew they would be under oath if it went to criminal prosecutions which it could have, right, dismissed by the Hearing Authority.

And yes, I was the person who represented Terry – thought I'd done a reasonable job, thought I'd got half a chance. But Terry was right, if we don't change PSI 6/2010 we may as well go in clown outfits because they're not listening to you, they're not listening to me, they're not listening to this executive. And the reason that the NEC issued those circulars and those instructions was to draw this to a head, and it was successful, Conference. So, don't be condemning the NEC, condemn the people who deny you the right to justice, the Governor Phil Copple and the predecessors. Hopefully the new CEO, when the NEC meet them next week, maybe she will see different, but until then, Conference, think before you vote on this. The NEC don't deserve condemning, they actually deserve applauding because they've brought an opportunity to bring change that may bring justice. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glyn. Hewell, would you like to reply? Tony.

JON SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: Thank you, Glyn, for that. As I said before, condemn was a strong word but it's one of the only words that was open to me to use. I actually accused them of taking their eye off the ball but condemn is the only word we can use when doing this. It is a sad day that I do bring it to that, but it was a motion brought up three years ago, it's taken three years to get to this stage where 6/10 is going to be rewritten again hopefully ... maybe for the better, who knows. But hopefully with these guys' help and these guys' inclusions of certain things in the 6/10 and get it done right, maybe we stand a far better chance in our hearings, in our investigations and supporting all our members. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Hewell. To the vote – all those who wish to support this motion condemning the NEC, please show. All those against. Conference, thank you very much. It's now tea and coffee time, see you back at half-past-three. Thank you.

<Tea Break>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: If I can bring you to order and ask you to take your seats.

Thank you, Conference. I'm now going to invite Pat Cuffe to address Conference with his report back and then I will invite questions or any clarifications from the floor. Pat Cuffe, thank you.

<Applause>

PAT CUFFE: Thank you very much Mr Chairman, General Secretary, senior officials, NEC members, invited members, retired members, honorary life members, delegates. It's a great pleasure to be here.

<Laughter>

As you're aware, at this very venue this time last year, a motion was passed to have a look at the reviewing and restructuring of your organisation. I was asked, would I consider doing it, and my first criteria was, 'Let me go to the Conference and see what type of an organisation you have,' and it was all dependent on what I saw at last year's Conference. And what I saw at last year's Conference was a crowd of very committed delegates who really wanted to represent their members, and that's what swayed me to take on the project.

We could talk at this stage about the elephant in the room, and I suppose we probably should. Yes, reports are out – some people don't like them, some people like them. That's the way life is. Everybody can't like every part of every report. That's it. We've moved on, and as I said, I'm here today to talk to you about the report that you guys have spoken to me about. Yes, it's called the Cuffe Report, there's no doubt about that. My job, and I decided when I took on the role that the best way for me to deal with this issue of reviewing the POA was to meet with the people on the ground. There's no point in me sitting in an office with the title HR consultant or whatever type of consultant you want to use, and me write from an ivory tower. I decided to go out and meet you people and I met with the vast majority of you. I heard the Chair talking earlier on about people shadowing prison officers on landings. I did that, and I saw quite genuinely, and this is not flattery, I was scared on some of those landings I was on. I'm not hiding behind any truths here whatsoever. I saw what you did, I had to know what you did and then I had to talk to your officials, the branch, you people. We engaged, and some of the meetings, and I'm sure some of you will recall them, we met through England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales over a ten-month period. We had some very, very, very robust meetings and I'm sure you'll agree with that, and that's what it needed – robust dialog, interchange, we spoke about things.

I notice with interest one of the motions coming up from the NEC to defer this report, that's fair enough. Interesting, though, that I'm aware from listening earlier on, that motions must be put in before the end of January to be considered here today. The report wasn't even issued to the NEC until March. So obviously you have a bunch of people who can see the future particularly well and I congratulate you on that.

I want to continue on ...

<Murmurs>

... thank you. <Laughs> I want to continue on with the dialog we had. As I said earlier, yes, it's called the Cuffe Report, but all I did was take notes of what you people told me. If there's anything in that report that you believe I wasn't told or that I made up or that I fabricated or indeed my colleague Mark Freeman fabricated, please feel free to come up to that <inaudible> over there, that <inaudible> and say it to my face. This is your report. It's nobody else's, it's yours.

The Chair spoke fluidly today, and I loved the words he said – and he spoke about, and he's right, let's move away from the negatives. But you can't move away from negatives unless you deal with the negatives and there definitely is negatives in the POA, there's no doubt about it. You've told me about them, I've seen them, so now let's make those negatives positives. Well, we can't deal with anything unless we know what it is we're dealing with. Someone once said in trade unionism that the seats you're all sitting in, NEC seats, delegate seats, you're keeping them warm for somebody else down the road. This report is looking at where you are now, with advice on where to go in the future. My job was to identify failings within the POA. My recommendations, by and large – it's not the gospel according to Pat Cuffe – my recommendations were that I see what the problems are, I present the problems what they are in written format and I give them back to you by way of subcommittees from your own people to deal with them and address them. I'm not going to stand here and pontificate, saying somebody should be sacked or that person should do this or that should happen – that's not my role. My job was to identify the issues that you people told me. Now, each of those subcommittees will be tasked and they'll be given time frames, as I said in the report, those subcommittees will report back to me and, at Conference next year, hopefully, I will be here saying, 'This was done, that was done,' and the people who will be carrying out most of these things are my colleagues on the stage here at the NEC. They will have to carry out what the committees come back to them and say to them.

I'm not going to delay you too much here, guys – you've read the report, you know what it's all about. Again, I emphasise the following: it is, was and will be your report to move the POA forward. The POA needs change, there's no doubts about that, and anybody who tells you that is really being a little bit dishonest. This is your 80th anniversary – that's a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful time to start looking at change. All this report does is recognise that there are things that are not working well. This report, in my view, is step one of a small change to move away from what you've had, which you've said you're not happy with it. You told me what you're happy with and what you're not happy with, and that's all I'm concerned about. This report is yours. I have to be totally honest, guys, I'm going back on a flight to Dublin tomorrow ... it's a pity you haven't left Brexit, I would've got duty free, but you've delayed that a bit longer than necessary. <Laughs> So I hope that you guys move forward. This is not my report, I have no axe to grind here, I'm absolutely independent in this. Someone said to me, 'Well, you're being paid.' This is true. Someone said to me, 'Well, you're being paid by the NEC to do it, therefore ...' Therefore what? Did somebody really expect me to do it for nothing? I might be Irish but I'm not stupid.

<Laughter>

Ten months, guys, it took ten months. It's going to take you an hour to decide what you want to do with your union. Nothing to do with me, it won't affect me. It'll affect you and the people who are going to be sitting in your seats in years to come. Thank you very much.

<Applause>

As with all things there will be confusion – 'What did you mean by this, what did you mean by that?' I am more than happy to take questions and answers now. Sorry, Chair.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Pat. Judging by the amount of feedback we've got from branches, there will be a whole host of clarifications and questions, so if you seek those clarifications or questions please come to the rostrum and ask Pat while he's here.

TONY WALKER – BRANCH CHAIR, PORTLAND: NEC, Conference. Pat, there's a lot of facts and figures in the report. What it doesn't say is how

many people participated in the survey that you did. Could you just clarify as a percentage how many people?

PAT CUFFE: Because the survey was such a major part of the report, everybody reads the dialogue of the content of the report, but the survey was also given and I'm happy to answer you on that. To get the people who couldn't have a face-to-face to meet with, I have the survey coordinator with me, and if you'd like to ask that survey coordinator that question, that survey coordinator would be more than happy to answer. Are you happy for me to do that for you?

TONY WALKER – BRANCH CHAIR, PORTLAND: Yes.

PAT CUFFE: Please, Martin, would you come forward?

MARTIN, SURVEY COORDINATOR: Good afternoon everyone. There were 1,118 respondents that completed the survey from start to finish, all questions answered, and there was 778 partially completed responses. Is that OK?

TONY WALKER – BRANCH CHAIR, PORTLAND: So just under 2,000 in total?

MARTIN, SURVEY COORDINATOR: Yeah, just over 2,000 in total.

TONY WALKER – BRANCH CHAIR, PORTLAND: OK, thank you.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Chairman, Conference, NEC. The report is absolutely massive and reading through it, kind of trying to explain it to my branch, it was so hard to digest it. But one of the things that's really important to our branch is that we're led by our lay officials and that our lay officials are the people that negotiate on our behalf because they are the people that stood in our shoes on the landings, and from my branch they're the people that we want to see leading this union in the future. One of the questions that we would ask you is, in your report, because it's not very clear, will we be led by our lay officials or, if we go to having regional lay officials, will they not be able to negotiate on a national level? And I've got another few questions.

PAT CUFFE: It's a very laudable question, actually. Part of the report mentioned the recruitment of people with very senior level trade union experience, recruitment of as opposed to election of, if that makes sense. That can certainly happen, not a problem. There is also nothing wrong with the people that you want to represent you being upskilled and being upskilled properly. There's no point ... I firmly believe that someone who represents somebody who doesn't have the capable skills of representing somebody is worse than nobody representing them.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: In our views at Feltham we must say that the lay officials that we've had represent us at Feltham have been absolutely outstanding.

PAT CUFFE: Fantastic.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: We have no issues with any of our NEC reps.

PAT CUFFE: And you actually told me that when I was down there, yes.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Yes, and whether they need upskilling or not is a question as to whether it's them that needs upskilling or somebody else that needs upskilling. So, we, as a union, that's our big bug bear that we can't seem to get our head around with your report as to who is actually going to be the people that branches are led by.

PAT CUFFE: OK.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Another question, and it's going to come up in a motion but I might as well ask you straight off, when were you approached to do the report?

PAT CUFFE: I would have been ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Can I just intervene, point of order there, that is the subject of a motion which will be explained, so if you want to speak to Mr Cuffe in private before that motion is heard, that's fine, but that is actually a motion, so if we could move on please.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Just trying to get used to how to do all this, Mark, I'm not an expert so apologies. We'll ask that question later. Right, now my brain's starting to go through all the things that I got asked by my branch – am I allowed to sit down and come back up if I remember the next question?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Seeing as it's you, Laura, yes.

<Laughter>

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Thank you very much.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Just to clarify a couple of things, I've seen Pat on two occasions, one at Leeds and he came to Durham to see the committee and anybody else that was available. I also wrote a letter to the NEC about the un-invite, I'll be upfront with that. I'm pleased the NEC changed their mind so people had the opportunity to speak to Pat. Reference the figures, 2,000 people actually sent them back in – that's more than votes for the NEC. I think that's a success that, I think that's a big success. I was against the vast majority of this report but I'm going to support it when it comes to the ballot. Pat, I was against regional elections. In your opinion, and I'm asking you as the person who's done the report, could that lead to regional pay?

PAT CUFFE: I got the word regional but the last one... just interpret that for me Craig.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: <Laughs> I said, as you know I'm not in favour of the regional elections, do you think in your opinion that could lead to regional pay?

PAT CUFFE: Regional?

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Pay.

PAT CUFFE: Pay.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Yes, pay.

PAT CUFFE: OK. Well, to be honest with you, Craig, I don't know. And the reason I don't know is because everything that has to be done in a restructuring report, everything has to be reviewed as it goes along. You're bang on, but I don't know, and I don't think anybody would know, and if I said no it won't, I'd be disingenuous to the Conference. Everything has to be reviewed.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: And just for clarification, this report is not what you said, it's what branch officials and people that you met said?

PAT CUFFE: Correct.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Thank you very much.

<Applause>

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH SECRETARY, WYMOTT: Hiya Pat, nice to see you. I'll draw your attention to page 65, 12.9 senior executive NEC members. It's just a simple question. It says here, 'I recommend that these titles be changed to National President of the POA and National Vice President of the POA, these titles provide a better indication of the high-level functions of these roles.' If we're looking to do that, and I've got no idea why we want to do that, why would we then continue to call our General Secretary, Mr General Secretary, rather than Chief Executive Officer?

PAT CUFFE: Again, I'm sorry, because I'm standing behind you I'm ... so could you just say that to me, you've already said it to them?

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH SECRETARY, WYMOTT: I'll say that to you now. Why, if we're moving towards, if we want to address the former Chair and Vice Chair as future President and Vice President, why would we then continue to call our General Secretary, Mr General Secretary, rather than Chief Executive Officer?

PAT CUFFE: Yes, to me, I was only referring to the two roles of the National Chair and the National Vice Chair. I think every trade union has a general secretary; a lot of trade unions have national presidents. To me, to give this trade union more gravitas, I thought, and to give the two individuals concerned more gravitas, I think National President has a far more important status sound than National Chair. Now, the gentleman concerned is chairing this Conference today, he's a Chair for today, but he does far more than that and so does the Deputy Chairman. But, by the way, and this is just if I may use this as an example of where ... I wasn't NEC bashing. I spoke to them, I got information about them, it wasn't always the type of information I liked but on the basis of that I really firmly believe, and I take your point, should the General Secretary be Chief Executive Officer? I think that then becomes more company and industrialised.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH SECRETARY, WYMOTT: And I would say that president and vice president is moving us towards more of a corporate image rather than what we should be, which is a representative base, but that's just my opinion and that's a debate for another day. Thanks Pat.

PAT CUFFE: No, thank you very much, good question.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, HMP BEDFORD: Mr Cuffe, can I talk directly to you so you can hear?

PAT CUFFE: Yes.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, HMP BEDFORD: There's a lot of good things in that report and a lot of good recommendations. However, there is one which sticks in my craw quite badly, and that is the issue of the recruitment of the fulltime officers. When you were talking to us just now, you told us about how you'd gone into the prisons, gone on the wings, tasted the fear. Now, are you going to tell me that this organisation can be better represented by whiz kids who can tick boxes, show flash job descriptions, which reminds me very much of fast-track Governors and we all know how they've ruined the Prison Service, instead of those men and women who've tasted the fear, gone through the ropes and know exactly what it is I'm talking about when I come to them and say, 'This is my problem Mr Cuffe, please help me.'

<Applause>

PAT CUFFE: Thank you for that, and indeed it's a very, very good and very appropriate question. What I was alluding to in the report was to have the best possible representation that you can have. One comment that was passed to me, which I found very distasteful and I'm not going to comment on who said it, was that, 'Fulltime officers, the role should be awarded as an award.' Now, I don't agree with that at all. Now, I'm sure that I could create a storm of trouble here but I'm perfectly honest when I say it, I believe professional representation and nothing less is what is needed in the POA, people who know what they're doing. And that gentlemen very kindly said 'whiz kids' ... whiz kids are people who, you're 100% right, they've got letters behind their name and all the rest, I understand that. What I'm talking about is people who have proven track records in doing what it is that you need to have done. Not just looking at their CVs and seeing loads of letters, no. No, it's a lot more than that. I introduced this particular process into the Southern Irish POA and what happened was that people were selected, not elected, and the people who are selected moved that trade union on beyond belief. And if anyone has any doubts about that, my colleagues up there are sitting from the Irish POA and they'd be happy to tell you whether they wanted people who were suitably qualified to represent their members or people that they thought should be awarded.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any more questions?

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Chair, NEC, Conference, longest outstanding dispute in the history of the POA.

<Laughter>

Mr Cuffe, I've got a few questions. There seems to be more questions than answers in your report. A couple that spring to mind is lay officials, the removal of the allowance for lay officials. I believe obviously with the removal of that, that will only lead to the fittest NEC we're ever going to have because we're all going to have pushbikes, so great! The second one is ...

PAT CUFFE: Can I answer that?

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Yes, go on, sorry.

PAT CUFFE: Ideally, if you've got multiple questions, if I address each one that would be much appreciated. I assume that's tongue-in-cheek about the pushbikes thing. I reported on what the members said to me. The members said to me they didn't feel it right that the NEC had £10,000 each per year. They are the people you should be asking that question to.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: OK, I can understand that, but I don't understand how we can conduct union business if we're not giving the travel or subsistence for people to go around, because a lot of these branches are out in the sticks.

PAT CUFFE: Sorry, there is not one mention of travel and subs being touched. Not one mention.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: But there is the £10,000 being removed.

PAT CUFFE: £10,000 being removed but that doesn't mean that somebody going out on their dutiful work will not be recompensed.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: OK, but in your report there's no means of any kind of subsistence, any kind of compensation, anything else that's going to replace that, there's just the withdrawal of it.

PAT CUFFE: No, that's not true. Did you read the report?

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Yes.

PAT CUFFE: OK. The word impressed is in there – that's money up front.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: OK.

PAT CUFFE: And it's £1,000 so they won't be out of pocket.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: OK.

PAT CUFFE: And I just want to draw anybody else's attention to that who might have the same idea as my colleague here, and also the current NEC are not being touched, it's people when they move forward, that's when we look at that system. But there is £1,000 in the report, obviously you didn't get a chance to see it, but it actually does cover that in quite detail.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: £1,000 nowadays doesn't get you hardly anything though, does it?

PAT CUFFE: Well, it's more if you <inaudible>.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Probably is, but is it enough to do union business?

PAT CUFFE: Sorry, I just have to respond to that again. The situation is very clear. This report is the start of something moving forward. You have an Annual Conference every year, there are committees being set up to look at all of this stuff. When those committees report back, if they find, for example, if the committees report back and say, 'Do you know what, these guys should be getting 30 grand a year,' well then let Conference decide that. It's as simple as that. I have put up a template of where change may be needed. Again, the report states quite clearly that you are the members and it will be your subcommittees that will be looking at all of these issues and reporting back, and next Conference is where those issues get brought up and if it's decided that they can't live on the money then get it changed.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: I'm glad you mentioned subcommittees because I'm really surprised how we're actually going to achieve that where the fact is, I can't get branch official time to update my members, never mind all these subcommittees that you're expecting to set up.

PAT CUFFE: Can I respond?

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Yes.

PAT CUFFE: I think we've got a problem here, that you haven't read the report.

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: No, I have read the report.

PAT CUFFE: Well, there's two <inaudible> that you missed; the subcommittee is set up of retired members and honorary life members, I don't think they need facility time.

<Laughter>

<Applause>

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Back again. Conference, NEC, Chair. Right, so here goes, will this report give autonomy to the General Secretary?

PAT CUFFE: Will what?

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Will this report – so, say we go ahead with this report, will it give autonomy to the General Secretary?

PAT CUFFE: OK, will this report, if it goes through, give autonomy to the General Secretary? This report going through will not give autonomy to anybody. This report if it goes through, in my view, will give autonomy to those people out there. It should be their union. There's an analogy, and I'm sure many of you will remember it when I visited you, that the triangle we spoke about, where it seemed to be that the point at the top was controlling the large volume at the bottom. I think proper trade unionism should be the other way around, that the members put forward. So, to answer your question it gives autonomy to nobody.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: I don't know if I've worded this right, but I'll try. If we are going to look at employing top-class officials, what will be the cost of this to the average members?

PAT CUFFE: OK. I firmly believe that it can be done from existing structures so won't cost the members anything, because there have been cost savings recognised in the report and I think it will be cost neutral. Cost relieving, cost saving.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Because the way that I'm kind of looking at it is that it's kind of going to be funded from taking it off of our lay officials. So, if the lay officials are going to lose their £10,000 increase, that money is really going to go towards paying the fulltime officials that you wish to employ, does that make any sense?

PAT CUFFE: First of all, I don't see that as a bad thing, but also you're saving approximately £80,000 with the non-replacement of the finance officer.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: OK, just putting it out there, to me it seems as ...

PAT CUFFE: That would easily justify any pay.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Yes, to me and my branch it just seems as if we're kind of attacking the lay officials a little bit which is not what ... I mean we've made that very clear that's not what we aim to do. And then this is my very last one: when we put the report out, a lot of staff read through it. Some understood it, some didn't understand it ... and sorry I'm not looking at everybody else as I'm speaking. Some of the comments that are written in the report from the NEC have caused outrage in my establishment. Can you explain and share your views of this meeting, so I think it's a few pages in, it's where you say you sat with the NEC and you asked them and the way that it read to my branch, and this possibly isn't how it was supposed to come out but this is how our branch have seen it, that it looked as if the NEC were kind of trying to blame the membership for a lot of stuff that the membership don't feel that they should've been getting blamed for, in my branch. So, I kind of wanted you to elaborate a little bit on that meeting that you had with the NEC.

PAT CUFFE: OK and thank you for that. It was outlined in very minute detail in the report the meeting I had with the NEC. I explained very, very, very clearly what happened from the moment the meeting started to the time the meeting finished. I didn't find it a pleasant experience. But I understand why people would perhaps resist what they believed at the time was change. The interesting thing is, my meeting with the NEC, and believe me, I do not want to be seen here to be running telling tales, I want to be honest on every single aspect because this is an independent report. There's stuff from the branches, there's stuff from the NEC, there's stuff from the fulltime officers, there's stuff from the admin staff, there's stuff from everybody and I had to try and balance everything. And to come back to your point, that meeting was held in December, offsite from Cronin House. That meeting had told me what members of the NEC had discovered from some of the delegates and I was told what wouldn't work and what shouldn't be done etc. etc. etc. And, as I said, I don't want to sound like I'm hammering people, but you've asked me a direct question, I found that meeting very upsetting.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: OK, thank you.

PAT CUFFE: OK.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Thank you, Mark.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

KEITH MCDONAGH – DELEGATE, GRENDON: Conference, Vice Chair. Pat, in the report I just want to ask you a question more about process really to be clear for our branch, which we weren't 100% clear on, and I apologise if I haven't read it properly. The process of reviewing the Cuffe Report going forward, clearly there are parts in it members will like and members don't like, as you pointed out. We have to vote for this in its entirety or reject it in its entirety. The subcommittees that are set up, are those committees the process for those to review that, is it time bound and if it is when is that and is it also open to branches to bring back motions whilst that process is going on at Annual Conferences to address parts of the Cuffe Report?

PAT CUFFE: Yeah, that's a very good question. Yes, it is time bound. Those committees will be set up ... they can't be set up if the report isn't adopted here today. If it's set up, I've said in the report quite clearly that I will be engaging honorary life members and retired members (who don't need facility time) to carry out further assessment on areas that's within the report. They will be given strict terms of reference, they will be given strict time frames. The National Chair, or President as the case may be, will be selecting a Chair from the NEC to head up each of those committees. I will be selecting from applications received from honorary life members and retired members to sit on those committees. Those committees will report back to me within a specified time frame, and what they have found and discovered, ideally and all going well, will be reported back to me, by me, to Conference this time next year.

BILL BUPARAI – BRANCH CHAIR, BELMARSH: Chair, Conference, NEC. Pat, thank you very much for the report. Just one question, I'm looking at Appendix A, which the terms of reference for the report is. It looks like you have written the terms of reference yourself and my question is: did you write the terms of reference yourself and do you think it's appropriate that you wrote the terms of reference if you did so?

PAT CUFFE: One million percent appropriate for me to write a term of reference <chuckles>. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that whatsoever. I was working from a term of reference that the POA provided me and they were quite right to do so, but I also had to commit to a term of reference from myself to establish my boundaries, otherwise there could've been undue influence. And one of the major parts of my terms of reference was, and it worked, was that nobody was to interfere with or ask questions of me or any of my colleagues on the restructuring team. If they did, it would've been in that report. So, to answer your question, absolutely, it's the norm. Anybody carrying out a review or a report or any such action would always include a term of reference of their own.

BILL BUPARAI – BRANCH CHAIR, BELMARSH: Sorry, just leading from that, do you think the terms of reference should've been ratified by Conference or not?

PAT CUFFE: Oh, that's a very good question. I don't know.

BILL BUPARAI – BRANCH CHAIR, BELMARSH: Thank you very much.

JOHN SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: Pat, thank you for the report, it was enlightening, it is quite a read. Regional elections – I was in favour of that when I first saw you and I first met you, but I've had time to think and reflect. Regional elections, don't you think that would actually partly destroy

the union and take away the unity of our branches? Having said that, people would then say you maybe mandate it to only speak on motions that are brought by your area only and to walk out on any other members. Do you think there's a danger of that?

PAT CUFFE: There's a couple of answers I can give you. One, I don't see a danger in that at all because if a regional election has something representing that region sitting up here I can't see how they're restricted in carrying out their duties as a member of the NEC.

JOHN SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: No, I meant as me, as an official representing my gaol I may be mandated to not be involved in other areas' issues, only issues that relate to my area, the Midlands.

PAT CUFFE: OK, yes but see the idea is that your area will have full and proper representation at NEC level, but that wouldn't preclude that NEC member from dealing with things at national level also, which is more or less the way it should be at the moment, in fairness.

JOHN SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: OK, but are we in danger of not actually getting the best representative if it goes to regional elections? If it's national, I won't say the cream of the crop, but the people that are mostly interested or whatever, they want to do it.

PAT CUFFE: You see, what I've been told by the members, the reason they want these regional elections is to have their own democracy, to have their own control. It's interesting by the way that you said you originally felt that it was a good idea and with mature reflection now you're not so sure, and that's what democracy is, people have a right to change their mind. To try and answer the question you're saying, I don't see how it would affect an NEC at all if it was democratically elected by these people here. And as the comment was passed, will we get the cream of the crop? I don't know. Will you get the cream of the crop with the current situation the way it's done? I don't know.

JOHN SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: Yes, fair point Pat, thank you.

PAT CUFFE: Thank you.

PHIL STANBRIDGE – BRANCH SECRETARY, BELMARSH: Conference, NEC, delegates. Pat, I'd just like to ask you this question. I believe you restructured the POA in Ireland, so what similarities did you find with the POA in Ireland that compare with the POA in the UK that are negative or positive?

PAT CUFFE: I have a wonderful example to give you, and if anybody needs to find out, am I talking truth here, talk to some people sitting up there from the POA Southern Ireland. I had attended the same concept, the same process with branches throughout Southern Ireland in prisons and I was hearing all the relevant information. But there was two pieces of information kept coming out from two, possibly three branches, and it was to do with this horrendous thing of the NEC in the Republic of Ireland, the same as here, not liaising with the branches, not communicating with the branches and it was actually quite nasty. I went and I spoke to the Southern Irish NEC and I said, 'Lads, from my notes this is what people are saying about you.' It became, robust wouldn't be the right word, there was some expletives used in my direction as to how dare I say this, well that's not the case. To which I responded, 'Shout all you want, show me the evidence.' They showed me the evidence and it turned out the NEC was correct. They had very open channels of communication of what was happening, which I'm not saying isn't happening here as well, but that a lot of the branches weren't reading the dialog, weren't reading it or couldn't understand it, the communication wasn't clear enough. So that is a huge similarity. But what happened in Ireland was the NEC engaged and listened to what the complaints were and then said, 'Well actually that's not true and here's why.'

PHIL STANBRIDGE – BRANCH SECRETARY, BELMARSH: OK, that's great then, thanks.

PAT CUFFE: Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Anybody else, Conference? No. Thank you very much Pat.

PAT CUFFE: Thank you very much Chair, thank you delegates. Thank you very much.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: We're going to continue with some motions until round about five and then we've got those fringe meetings. Steve's just got a little announcement to make about the theatre production tonight ... something to do with beer tokens so it might be worth listening.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Conference, we approached Banner Theatre because it's the 80th anniversary of this great trade union and they're going to put on a show tonight called *Spirit of 1868: 150 Years of Union Struggle*. Now, I've seen it in Manchester, and I've got to say it was very, very entertaining. This is an opportunity for you to attend. We know that the prices in here are quite expensive so we've organised for a 25% discount on beer and so forth and we've given each person a voucher as well to use, so you should all have a voucher which will get you a free drink. If you want to see some good entertainment then come along and watch what trade unionism was about and the struggles up to present time. I think you'll find it very, very entertaining. I know it clashes with maybe the Irish Night over in The Vic, but I'm told by the Irish delegates that that will go on to about midnight, one o'clock in the morning, so I think there's plenty of time for people to come along to this if you so wish to. You're not forced to, it's a voluntary basis because we know your time is precious, but the reality is, if you want to see something decent, come along to this, I don't think you'll regret it. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: OK, we're onto Conference motion 27. Elmley, you might want to speak on this because, if this motion falls, so does yours, which is now scheduled to be heard at 40a. Please approach.

THOMAS NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, point of order. It was determined by Conference earlier that the Elmley motion, number 26, would be moved. That was their decision, our decision if you will, so we don't believe that that should be the case. This is a separate motion completely. The wording of the motion is different, it is a different motion. Please let our motion be heard regardless of the outcome of this.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, I'll let Standing Orders respond.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, invited guests, honorary life members. Tom's right – but you moved it, you requested the placement move, we didn't. The wording in it is near enough exactly the same. Thank you, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Tom. I have to go with Standing Orders and reject your point of order. We have motion number 27, Wymott. Do we have a seconder? Elmley are you seconding this? Yes, thank you Tom.

Motion 27

That Conference holds a vote of confidence in the current NEC to establish if the membership has their confidence.

WYMOTT

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Mr Chairman, Conference, speaking for motion 27 that Conference holds a vote of confidence in the current NEC to establish if the membership has their confidence. Since 2010 trade unions in this country have had to operate under increasingly oppressive and anti-union legislation from the <inaudible> Conservative government, but this is just par for the course with the Tories and there will be no surprise from any quarter on what they've done. Attacks on our specific sector have seen our rights, not only as trade unionists but as workers, eroded to a point where we are now being treated as second-class citizens. Fundamental working rights, which is the right to withdraw from voluntary tasks that attract nothing or little in the way of remuneration but carry huge responsibilities, have been taken away from us with the threat of disciplinary action for those who've tried to exercise this basic human right to do so. During this period, wages have shrunk considerably in real terms, with Band B officers now some £6,000 per annum behind where they would've been if they had kept pace with inflation since 2010.

We've seen staffing levels plummet to figures never seen before following the implementation of benchmarking, an accountancy tool that was all about saving a huge sum of money but has now had the net effect of turning our goals into virtual warzones. Violence and disorder are now the common threat, with consequent assault figures on our members doubling in a very short period of time and then doubling again. Our workplaces have been accurately described as the most violent in Europe.

In 2007 the EU member states went smoke free in the workplace and workers across Europe were now guaranteed by law the right to work in an environment free from a substance that was known to be extremely toxic. Did POA members benefit from this? We did not. Our members endured an almost further 11 years of breathing this toxic substance and we now have a new health risk, another airborne contaminant in new psychoactive substances. And there cannot be a goal in Britain that hasn't seen members overcome with a substance that has been described by the Royal College of Nursing as being both toxic and lethal. What has our employer done about this new threat to our health? Well, for the first three-and-a-half years it did precisely nothing. It was only following repeated instances of staff being made ill and the threat of staff walking off the landing before they did anything at all. The response was as lacklustre as it was late. A test to measure air quality carried out at Holme House that was due to run for seven days only ran for five-and-a-half ... before the machine mysteriously stopped working, but not before it had detected traces of NPS in the air, and let us not forget that as yet there has been no safe level of exposure to these substances determined. Rather than re-run the tests in an effort to get the truth of the matter, the testing was stopped and incredibly not repeated. One doesn't have to be Poirot to figure out why an employer, desperate to keep the lid on the NPS threat, chose a pitifully short period of time to test over and then chose not to repeat the testing, but why the NEC didn't insist this be done or make the wider membership aware of these events at the time is perhaps a greater mystery.

So what has been our union's response to these falling wages, the introduction of benchmarking, the moving of our retirement goalpost, the erosions of our basic human rights, the decreasing staffing numbers, the obscene increase in violence, the life-changing injuries, the unprecedented increase in PTSD and other mental-health issues affecting our members, the toxic and potentially lethal air in our working environments that our members are forced to breath, the unending stress and misery, the lack of respect and callous indifference from our conditions by a negligent employer? Perhaps to better understand that question we should ask first what its response should be. What do we expect from an organisation that is avowed to protect its members from physical harm and seek to improve the conditions of employment above all else – after all, if this isn't the aim why have it and why be a member? I stood on this spot almost two years ago during the closed session of Conference 2017 and described fears that this union was becoming an entity of two halves. One half containing its members on the shop floor who live the reality of a violent and toxic workplace, working for an incompetent, spiteful, cruel, neglectful employer, and the other half looking after not the members above all else, but a separate entity with a corporate outlook that looks for itself first, with everything else being subordinate to that aim, including its responsibilities to its members. A POA that is breaking the golden rule that we, as local branch officials never break – we never place the member between us and the Governor, we always put ourselves in harm's way, never the member.

I believe that those fears of 2017 have been realised. This other POA has consistently placed itself behind the member, seeking the protection and continuity that constant income from their subscriptions bring but risking little when things have come to a head, afraid to place itself in the firing line

but expecting its members to do so on a daily basis, shaking its responsibilities whilst focussing on the peripheral to give an impression of being an active union, ignoring the elephant in the room that its members' conditions across the board have deteriorated to an intolerable level. Now, I know most of our NEC lay members, I know that they are honourable people, I know that they are as frustrated as we are. I know our National Chair is full of fight, so the question is, why haven't we? Who is more concerned with the pay and pension responsibilities of the POA rather than condition of its members? Who indeed?

Now, nobody's calling for an immediate day of action, after all there's only so many times we can expect our members to lose a day's pay for little if any result. Perhaps in retrospect it's a matter of not just having half-a-day of action but we should've had *days* of action or until such time that the point is made, and we have actually achieved something. Surely that is our NEC's responsibility, to not only act but to ensure we act decisively and to achieve a defined end, no matter what the cost in blood or treasure. Isn't that what a trade union is all about? The last two days of action saw us with both the moral argument and public support in our favour, and on both occasions we blinked as soon as the employer had an injunction in hand. On both occasions the membership was told a solution has been found and that our plight is being taken serious by our employer, both times these pronouncements have subsequently unravelled and this has proved not to be the case. Both times, momentum and our members' good faith has been frittered away, both times the real driving factor in our return to these wretched workplaces was not any victory but a weather eye on how close we've been to being sequestered. This is not a satisfactory conclusion and has been the factor that has taken us back to our workplaces, along with false promises from a duplicitous employer who will tell us anything, desperate as they were to have us back on the landings.

We need to have a POA victory to end the action and protect the business, and the employer's desperation to have us back to work saw two of the three parties involved satisfied with the result. No guessing which one of the three parties – employer, POA and prison staff – has ultimately lost out. The POA must turn itself a full 180 degrees and focus on the membership, not itself, to defend those at the coalface properly from the mismanagement of an uncaring, callous and neglectful government. It's time that we said, enough. Enough of the violence, enough of being treated as second-class citizens, but also enough of our union choosing to fight on safe topics like retirement age when thousands of us will never retain a retirement age in this job due to bodily injury following assault or mental injury from what we've seen and experienced, due to the horrific conditions we are forced to work in. If we do not step up and take responsibility for the protection of our members then shame on us for not doing so and shame on us for daring to call ourselves a trade union. If we do not find the courage to fight for the protection of our members and their rights with every means we have available then we are staring at defeat and that defeat would not, could not and should not be forgiven by our members. If we are not prepared to do that, if we have so little regard and respect for those who fund this union, is it any wonder our employer has so little regard or respect for them either?

We must refocus and do whatever is necessary for our members, and if that means we have to change one or two faces at the top who are content to wring their hands whilst collecting a fat salary instead of leading that fight, and choose to model the POA as a business and not a representative trade union, so be it. A vote of no confidence would send that message. Please support the motion.

<Applause>

THOMAS NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, Conference, NEC, asking you to, as this is a vote of confidence in the NEC, to reject the motion so that we don't have confidence in them. I do not believe, and I know for a fact that all of the members at Elmley do not believe, that the entirety of the NEC is responsible for me standing here now asking for you to show a lack of confidence in our NEC. But the NEC act as a collective and they're restricted by Annex H, which means that they aren't allowed to name any individuals that lead the NEC in the wrong direction, should that be happening. So unfortunately, I am forced to support what Glen from Wymott has said, and I'd actually like to thank him for a lot of the good points that he raised about how *our* members are being treated and about how *our* members aren't getting exactly what they deserve. There are plenty of occasions, Conference, that the NEC haven't acted appropriately, and they haven't acted within our members' best interests. I'll just go through a few.

One of them would be taking no suitable action when an FTO revealed a member's legal position with the employer by revealing an email. Using the union's negotiating position to support an NEC member, as identified in circular 5 & 6/2019, this was wrong – and I'm not saying that it is, but it could be seen as an act that was an abuse of power. This also goes against advice that the NEC give to our branches and give to our members, where they advise them to not take any direct action until after the completion of internal events, such as an appeal to a disciplinary hearing. The NEC did not do this, and they withdrew from national bargaining following the initial hearing. They have also declared themselves employees, which contravenes Conference motion 66A of 2009. On the 24th of October NEC minutes they stated that Conference had instructed them to continue with the court case against an Elmley member of staff. Conference presented no such motion or indorsed any such approval to get them to do so.

Conference, I believe the NEC are not being completely truthful with us, they are not supporting our members, we should not show confidence to them. Reject the motion. Thank you.

<Applause>>

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference. I'm up here again. So, I'll read from my script, I'm probably going to get stopped halfway through. We have heard a very passionate speech from our General Secretary, Steve Gillan. My honest belief is that most of this was aimed at me and my social media postings. I am happy to stand by what I post. Let me assure you, if my complaints were dealt with in a fair way, I wouldn't need to look to social media to vent my concerns. My confidential legal information was shared with the employer after an FTO denying that he forwarded it. He was forced to admit that he did send it to the employer when the employer confirmed that he had done so. This cannot continue; the NEC as a collective need to take responsibility for their actions. As a union we cannot stand by and allow members of this NEC and the FTOs to make excuses for such behaviour. I would never have known that my information had been forwarded on had I not sent a Subject Access Request to

the employer. This box contains all the evidence that what I say is completely true and you are all welcome to view this, just as you are welcome to view the contracts of the NEC members.

NEC, take note of the discontent before it's too late. There are members of this NEC that I sincerely trust. Unfortunately, as a collective this motion cannot name individuals and therefore they must all fall on their swords. We have heard Mr Travis speak on motion 25, where he openly states a Governor should have been taken to task for her mistake and was only issued advice and guidance. Well, Conference, it's time for the NEC to practice what they preach. My branch cannot say that we have confidence in the current NEC. The Cuffe Report clearly shows discontent. It's not nice to stand here and say the things that I'm saying, but once again, I stand here on behalf of my branch and I urge that you make this decision on behalf of your branches. Thank you.

<Applause>

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: That Conference holds a vote of confidence in the current NEC to establish if the membership has their confidence. What does it mean? So, if we have the vote of confidence and one branch votes for it, does that mean we have confidence in the NEC? Or do we go down the line of the delegate from Barlinnie this morning about the no confidence votes? I'm a little bit lost on it. The NEC make mistakes, we've heard already from several members that they want to have a go at certain individuals. If you get this through today, and I surmise that you wanted to vote against the motion so the motion falls so that you've got no confidence, I'm going on holiday because everybody might as well go home, because this lot now have got to resign, apart from the fulltime officials. So, you're having a go at a fulltime official, I fully gather that, but surely you should do it the right way and go through a disciplinary. Challenge them on a disciplinary through the disciplinary committee, that's that the rules and constitution are here for. It just seems to be that if you want to have a go at individuals, great, but do it the correct way. I've wrote the NEC on two occasions this year, one in January about disengaging with HMPPS and once about the Pat Cuffe Report. On both occasions I believe that my email was put in front of the NEC and they changed their views. That's good. The NEC say they've made a mistake and they accept that, but you've got to give them the opportunity, but do it the correct way. If we have a vote of confidence now and it falls what happens? Please, Wymott come and tell us, is that what you want to happen, that this Conference ends now? Because that's what's going to happen. Please ... I don't know what to say, do you vote for it or not? I haven't got a clue, you tell me.

<Applause>

MARK SMY – BRANCH CHAIR, HOLLESLEY BAY: Chair, NEC, Conference. We're moving motions here today mandating the NEC to work on our behalf. Are we really saying if we've no confidence in the NEC what is the point in moving them motions? We've no confidence in them carrying out the work on our behalf, what is the point? As Craig has just said, we might as well wrap up and go home. These are the people we elected, and they've been elected, they haven't just come along, they've been employed by the union, elected and employed on our behalf. The ballot box decides who we get up there and, as Craig said, we've got a disciplinary committee. I was here in 2013 on the fateful day we lost a lot of the members of the NEC to a disciplinary code. We've rebuilt since then – are we going to get rid of them all? Please, have confidence in the NEC, let them carry out the work on our behalf.

<Applause>

TONY WALKER – BRANCH CHAIR, PORTLAND: NEC, Conference, getting me hat-trick on supporting the NEC – please reject the motion. Like Durham have quite rightly said, these need our support and we elect them. I completely disagree with Mr Cuffe on his version of how this union is led. My branch certainly don't, I'm not the pinnacle of my branch, my branch tell me what's happening, we tell the NEC what we want. The triangle's not that way, it is that way – we drive it, these do what we tell them and we need leadership from them and we get it. Never once have I had to ring the NEC and not had good advice. Please reject the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Just for clarification, Tony, I know what you're getting at, these are quite confusing but if Conference support the motion it means they have confidence in the NEC.

<Laughter>

If they reject the motion they have no confidence in the NEC.

<Laughter>

TONY WALKER – BRANCH CHAIR, PORTLAND: I voted for that one where it made it dead clear.

<Laughter>

<Applause>

I'm a thick scouser.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: I'm an even thicker scouser but even I knew that.

MICHAEL HULSE – BRANCH SECRETARY, HAVERIGG: Chair, Conference. Chair, get rid of this. You can't blame these people for one individual. If the person who's allegedly done – and I'm not disputing that it's not happened – what they've said, then they should do the honourable thing and fall on the sword, not the rest of these. Do it.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Conference. Any more speakers? Responding for the NEC, Steve Gillan.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you Chairman, thank you Conference. Where do I start with some of that? Well, as someone said it's always best to start at the beginning. Wymott got up and stated a whole load of issues about voluntary task, wages shrinking, staffing levels plummeting, benchmarking, most violent prisons in Europe, smoke free hasn't done us any favours, NPS, retirement age, a whole raft of others. I thought he was going to attack the government and the department, but he turned his guns on the National Executive Committee. And I think I'm right when he said the person with a fat salary – well it's none of them up there, I've got the fat salary. I don't pick my salary, Conference, it's set by you. So, if it's a personal attack I can wear that, it's being going on for a couple of years now, orchestrated by a couple of branches and a couple of individuals, but I can wear it. Not fussed by it and ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Point of order.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: The National General Secretary there is discussing personal matters, how does that address the main body of the motion?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well, to be fair Glen, there's been a lot of personal matters discussed during the content of this motion from a lot of delegates, I think Mr Gillan's got the right to say what he's saying.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: But he's not addressing the main body of the motion, which is members' confidence in the NEC. This isn't, contrary to what he believes, all about Steve Gillan.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well, he's not stating that about Steve Gillan, he's put an address ...

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Yes, he is, he's just stood there, and he's accused us of making personal attacks on him – it's a couple of branches, it's one or two individuals. How does that address the main body of the motion?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well if you let him speak, he'll get to the main body, so I reject that point of order.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Sorry?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: If you give him a chance to speak, he'll get to the main body, so I reject that point of order.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Shocking!

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Conference, I am responding to the main speaker's allegations they put forward and some of the issues they raised. I think it's only fair and appropriate that I have a response, not just on behalf of myself, but on behalf of this National Executive Committee.

Wymott also moved that a negligent employer, he's absolutely right, I don't think any of this Executive have been negligent. I do take issue with the realisation that he thinks that this trade union can go out for days of action on end, several days, three/four days or whatever it takes. Conference, when I go around different branches people tell me, ordinary members, 'Don't ask us to be walking out and doing x, y and z.' Now, the reality is on behalf of this trade union, we ended up with a permanent injunction by telling people not to do voluntary tasks. Whether we like it or not that was an inducement under Section 127, and you heard about all that in the closed sessions. It's just a shame that this is all out in the open now and I'm going to have to tell you. We recently received a letter, myself and the National Chairman, regarding contempt of court. You heard it in my finance report this morning and you accepted the potential liabilities – they're going to run us in, potentially, on a contempt of court for actions that were led by this Executive. I'm part of this Executive, whether people like it or not. The reality is I'm up for election at the end of this year and if people think that they can do a better job please stand against me, that's the reality.

On the issue of Elmley, well, I'm not going to go into that too much for the simple reason that there's still motions to be answered on the order paper, but he did say that this Executive had voted themselves as lay officials' employee status. Well, I'll go into that motion and give that explanation at the appropriate time, it couldn't be further from the truth. That's the reality. Feltham came up, I don't wish to personalise this issue, but I want to give you the scenario that, if your employer had investigated one of your members, would you put it in the public domain? No, you wouldn't, and neither are we. A lot of stuff has been apportioned to me but let me tell you, I played *no part* in the investigation procedures.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Point of order. Please approach.

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference. Rule 12.12 annex B is the allegation, or the content of a speech is abusive, offensive or discriminatory or unlawful, at the moment you're slanderous towards a colleague ... and please let me finish before you jump in because it might come out a little bit wrong. However ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Just one moment, please. OK, can you speak into the microphone so delegates can hear please.

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Sorry.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Just for clarity, I can't hear you either.

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: I apologise. However, General Secretary earlier, part of it was negligence, however a point of order should've been raised at an earlier speech that you made in which you made reference to personal people's social media postings. You made personal swipes earlier, and yes, it's a bit of a tit for tat but now you're going back for tit for tat so ultimately who's the bigger person?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Right, so just for clarity so I can make a ruling on this, what's your point of order? Just go and explain to Conference what the point of order is.

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Basically the point of order is, is it is now that, I believe, that Mr Gillan currently, that there is an allegation that a delegate has acted or spoken about something which shouldn't have been spoken about at Conference, however it was already referenced earlier.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: That's not a point of order. I'm sorry.

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: He's made it personal by going back at Laura, he made a swipe earlier at Laura about social media ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Right, can ...

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: In reference to parasites and stuff and now he, because she played it tit for tat, he's playing it tit for tat back, you can't do it.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Mr Gillan has not mentioned anybody by name, there's no point of order, I'm sorry. Please continue.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much Chairman. I think if you check the verbatim report I never named anybody, but thanks for clarifying that Feltham, who it was.

<Laughter>

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: How is that clarification? You made personal reference to those one (inaudible).

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Conference. Thank you, you've made your point, we need to move on, thank you. Steve.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: The reality is there's been a lot of allegations made from several branches that have come up here point the finger at National Officials, different National Officials including myself, including a fulltime officer. But it would appear when any NEC speaker are, whether it's me or not, determined we wished to defend ourselves from those specific allegations, that people don't like us for making those remarks. Well, the reality is, Mark said it this morning, this isn't a coconut shy, this isn't a coconut shy. Now, you've got a determination to make, either you have confidence in this Executive Committee, or you don't. I'm not going to say anything more on this, lots have been said but now you've got to make a decision. Either you do have confidence in this Executive to keep leading you or you don't, it's as simple as that. Thank you, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Right to reply from Wymott.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: I think Mr Chairman has cleared up the issue that the representative from Durham was talking about so I've no need to address that. What we've just heard from the National General Secretary was a lot of poor me and quite a bit of you can't criticise these people behind me. What we've lost sight of here is the fact that, a startling fact, that 28 of our members today have been assaulted. It's going on in every gaol, day-in and day-out. All the things that I mentioned, the big list that Steve made reference to, yes I referenced that at the start, that's a Tory government, we can't expect them to act any differently. But what we do expect is our national representatives to make a better fist of ensuring that our pay and conditions either remain static or move forward. We have not remained static, we have not moved an inch forward, we've moved about a mile back and that results in no confidence. The Cuffe Report, page 75, the question was posed, 'We think that having a regional structure will destroy the union so attitude motivation will be lost. Branches do not agree that regional structures ... and they currently say' – this is from the branches, this is not from me, 'We do not have the cream of the crop operating on the NEC on their behalf.' A little bit further back, I don't know what the page is but if you go further back still, people who are satisfied, it's less than 24% of our members are satisfied with the direction that we're travelling and what's going on. Now, to some extent we are the converted, we are the people who believe so much in the POA that we come here and

give up our annual leave and we stand here and get passionate, we shout at these people and these people shout back and that's the way it should be, that's the way democracy works. Nobody is too big to be criticised. And as for the idea that, if you say, 'We've got no confidence in, that's it, we all go home, pack up and that's the end of Conference.' Nonsense. It's a kick up the arse, that's what it is. It's a kick up the arse to these people to say, 'You need to sort yourselves out.'

And on another aside, the thing that's hamstringing this union, because I'm sure that there's people on there that are standing up in NEC meetings and saying the direction that we are travelling in is wrong – where do we hear those voices? Annex H handcuffs these people and it's starting to lead to places that we don't want to go. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glen. Just to clarify again, if you vote in favour of this motion you have confidence in the NEC. If you reject the motion you have no confidence in the NEC. All those in favour of this motion, please show. All those against. Conference, thank you very much. I think that's an apt time to draw today's proceedings to a close. Just to remind you of the fringe meetings from five till six: Justice for Columbia in room 1 and Police Credit Union in room 2. Thank you, Conference, we can reconvene – half-nine? Reconvene at half-nine tomorrow because we're doing well for time. Half-nine, thank you.

<End of session>

POA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th May 2019

Wednesday 15th May – Morning Session

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Good morning, Conference, bring you to order. Just one announcement before I hand over to our first guest speaker, and then we can get on with the special hospitals and hand over to Steve Gillan. Very pleased to announce that Imran Hussain, the shadow Prisons Minister, will be addressing Conference this afternoon. He'll be arriving round about lunchtime. Very good supporter of the POA, so we welcome him. And I'd just like to invite Ian Lawrence, the General Secretary of NAPO, to address Conference for a few moments. Very welcome Ian, and again a good comrade in the trade union movement. Conference, please welcome <inaudible>.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Mr Chairman, I come to the Conference now to speak. Has Mr Cuffe been uninvited for Conference again?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Mr Cuffe's at the back.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Can he stay for motion 32, 33, 34 and 35 in entirety?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: That's a matter for Mr Cuffe. Go and ask him.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: So he can stop?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: He can stop at Conference for as long as he likes.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Thank you very much.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: So, there is no point of order? Just clarification? Thank you. Sorry about that Ian. Please welcome Ian Lawrence to address Conference.

<Applause>

IAN LAWRENCE – GENERAL SECRETARY, NAPO: Chair, thank you. Good morning Conference. It's a real pleasure to have the opportunity to say a few words. Coming to the POA is often a test of my karaoke skills, still rubbish as some of you will have heard, but most importantly a chance to listen to your activists, your practitioners, about the life that you face working under extremely difficult circumstances, and I first of all want to bring a message of solidarity of course from our brothers and sisters in NAPO to you all for the struggles ahead. We share those struggles, as you well know. Our members work cheek by jowl with you, and if the Offender Management in Custody project moves to fruition, you'll see more of our members alongside you. I just don't quite understand where they're going to sit and how much room you've got in your prisons, among other things. I'll come to that in a minute.

Steve, can I just quickly thank you personally for the support you gave me in difficult circumstances last year, during my election campaign. It was on a private and personal basis but I wanted to express my appreciation, and anything I can do for you in the struggles ahead, I will. Thank you.

Look, you face huge problems, as do our members in probation. I don't need to rehearse them all here. But again, speaking with some of your activists last night about the difficulties brought home to me the importance of us working even closer in the coming months on the big projects ahead of us. Safety at work, understaffing and the disastrous impact of this government's privatisation policies are things that we have in common. The vital contribution you make to society, alongside our probation members, is absolutely critical. I suppose never in recent months have I seen a focus as I did yesterday in terms of the parliamentary debate on prison and probation, which whilst not as well attended as you might think, given there's not a lot else to talk about at the minute other than Brexit, did nevertheless bring home the absolute problems that our members face across the piece. So it was a good opportunity for issues to be laid bare around the impact of privatisation, the impact of this government's obsession with the so-called mixed economy that they keep talking about, and Ministers were in a difficult place. We expected by now an announcement from Ministers about the future of probation and the forward direction that they want to place us in. That hasn't yet materialised but there were strong hints yesterday, during that debate, that there will be a change of emphasis and I would say not before time as well. The government's and Chris Grayling's obsession in particular with privatisation has all but destroyed the probation service, and it needs to be repaired. It needs to do what it was set up to do. It needs to work with you and your members in terms of delivering the things that society needs, and that of course is the main emphasis of NAPO's campaign. So, we await an announcement about the future direction of probation. As and when it comes, we will maintain our campaign, alongside you, on the many issues that we face.

We've seen in recent months the disastrous impact of privatisation in terms of Interserve, Carillion and, in probation, Working Links, who left a sinking ship owing at least £1.2 million to third-sector providers. I find it quite strange that this government can't find the money for prison and probation staff to do the things we want, yet suddenly decides it will make reparation for those losses. That's the taxpayer – that's you, that's me and everyone else.

So, I just say these things, Chair, to emphasise the sorts of things that we're having to deal with going ahead. We want to work with you, as we have done. I'll leave you with the thought that we need a massive change of emphasis from this government, while it exists, about prisons and probation. Of course, we want a change of complex of government that will see an end to the waste of privatisation, disgusting loss of taxpayers' money, and the disrespect that you face and our members face in the hands of the private sector. That's common cause and I stand here to give you that message and the greetings of NAPO members going forward.

Thanks for the opportunity.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Don't be going anywhere Ian! Ian, don't be going anywhere, switch your hearing aid up! Don't be going anywhere. Nobody leaves Conference without a gift – I went to Poland on a trade union delegation with Ian and I got to know him very well so it's for that reason I bought you them stilettoes that you were after ...

IAN LAWRENCE – GENERAL SECRETARY, NAPO: <Laughs> Thank you brother!

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Conference. I'm now going to hand over to Steve Gillan for the Special Hospitals AGM.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you Chairman. It gives me great pleasure to open the Special Hospitals agenda. Once me and Mark swap our agendas actually – reading his paperwork ... It gives me great pleasure, we've got a guest speaker, Steve Newton. Steve's current role is Deputy Chief Operating Officer within the Secure Division and Mersey Care. The Secure Division comprises of high, medium and low-secure services. It also includes forensic outreach services and the Beacon at HMP Garth. Since April 2018 mental health services at HMP Liverpool have also been incorporated into the division. These diverse areas offer an opportunity to manage a division that strives to provide the best care for patients, ensuring a robust care pathway is in place to maximise wellbeing. Steve also states that they'll be able to offer staff the opportunity to work across different areas, increasing individual skills, and assist in staff wellbeing by having the absolute to mobilise staff to other areas of the division as part of an agreed process. Steve has been employed at Mersey Care for almost 31 years, apart from 12 months where he worked at Broadmoor High Secure Hospital. He commenced employment as a nursing assistant and went on to qualify as a nurse in both mental health and learning disability. He has worked across various areas within the hospital including high dependency admissions, women's services, mental illness and personality disorder wards, gaining a rich and varied skillset. He has been a senior manager within the organisation since 2008. Initially taking up roles in the clinical aspect of security management, he moved on to be Security Service Manager and Deputy to the Director of Security at Ashworth. Since September 2017 he is now in his current role within the division, something he is very proud to have achieved. Our main focus during this time has been to ensure staff engagement and safety are at the forefront of managers' thoughts. Please give a warm welcome to Steve Newton, Deputy Chief Operating Officer of the Secure Division, Mersey Care Foundation Trust.

<Applause>

STEVE NEWTON – DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OF THE SECURE DIVISION, MERSEY CARE FOUNDATION TRUST: Morning everyone. I've made a few notes but I think I want to talk really from the heart about what we've been doing within Mersey Care, but certainly within Ashworth, and I'll give you a bit of a brief history just to set the scene. It's an honour. I suppose if I'd have been asked to do this four years ago, I probably would have had some rotten tomatoes and some coconuts thrown at me. I'm hoping that won't happen today! I think, four years ago, from a Mersey Care/Ashworth perspective, there was some disparity and some disagreement with the POA and the managers around some suspensions, and that resulted in some employment tribunals. I think from a staff perspective, the POA perspective, and the managers, we were at massive odds with each other. I think for the last two or two-and-a-half years, we've worked hard on trying to change the culture, and from a Mersey Care perspective we've brought in the Just and Learning Culture. I think there was some scepticism, I think certainly from Ashworth high secure staff, around Just and Learning Culture and what Just and Learning Culture meant to them. They'd seen staff suspended, they'd seen staff sacked, and they'd been through industrial action because of the staff's injustice. I think it's a credit to the trust that they picked up the Just and Learning Culture. In effect, that really does acknowledge the fact that staff don't come to work inherently to do things wrong or to do something wrong, but from time to time things do go wrong, especially in the environments we work, secure settings. So, I'm going to talk a bit about that and I'll also talk a little bit about working into HMP Liverpool around the mental health.

So, Just and Learning Culture – what does it mean for the staff? I think it means the fact that they come to work, they can be open and honest. If there are issues or there are mistakes that are made, they should be able to report. That wasn't the case four years ago. They didn't feel open or able to report and they felt that they were just getting bombarded by managers. We had a lot of suspensions, we had lots of HR activity and we had lots of investigations. Since that time, we've worked closely with Lorraine and Martin, who I know are in the audience, from a POA perspective in trying to change that culture within Ashworth. We've been round to the wards, we've spoken openly with the staff, and I think just as a point of note – and this can be seen as a positive, but I think it can also be seen as lots of work still to do from a management perspective, but working in collaboration with the POA. We haven't had a suspension for 18 months and currently, with around 1,500-1,700 staff, there are five investigations. That's probably still five too many from the perspective of the staff involved, so we're doing something right, but I think there's a note of caution. We've got to keep doing those things right at a time when, I've just listened to Ian saying difficulties around staffing, we see similarities with the Prison Service in terms of numbers, new recruits, people coming in that haven't got the skill-sets of people who've been working within the environment for 15 or 20 years. So, I

think the scepticism is starting to drop with the staff in terms of, they are more open, we do get reports and that's helping us change both policy and procedure. I think from a management perspective we've got to acknowledge that we don't always get policies and procedures right, so maybe some of these words are quite new for managers to be saying – I really don't know – but it's something, from a trust perspective, we believe in. If a policy or procedure isn't working then we need to amend it to help the staff, then that's what we've been doing. I think the staff have been involved and impacting largely on those things as well, and I think that's where some of the discussions with the POA within Mersey Care, but at Ashworth we're starting to forge closer links.

So I think jointly we're working to resolve issues locally. That doesn't mean to say that we always agree. I think we continue to have some difficult conversations, but I'd rather have the difficult conversations with the POA representatives for their members, because ultimately they're the staff that I and we also employ. So, I'm probably talking about a different kind of managerial emphasis. I don't know, but I think it's something that the trust has picked up on.

We've worked massively on a joint enterprise around communication. I think some of the staff around the site quite clearly say, 'We don't know what's going on. There's rumour and conjecture.' So we spent time walking round the wards, speaking with staff directly, issuing joint communications around staffing, issuing joint communications that talk around our HR activity, our sickness data and our recruitment data, and I'll come onto those a little bit more in the future, but all those things help, assist the staff's greater understanding but also helps from our perspective, the work that we're doing with the POA.

And I think there's a massive benefit to that kind of communication and joint communication. We work in a time when staff are being asked to work till they're 67, we've got sickness figures that the trust target. We aim for 5% within secure services. We were at around 10%, but the main reasons, the two main reasons are musculoskeletal (no coincidence that we've got an aging workforce and we need to look at health and wellbeing of staff associated with that) and also stress and anxiety. And stress and anxiety, not always around the workplace, sometimes around home life. I think in fact about three-quarters of the people, it's around their home life. So, it's looking around health and wellbeing for staff outside of work. Again, perhaps a new emphasis for managers and POA to try and work together. Historically, we've been at odds.

So I think for me that's describing what a Just and Learning Culture is for me. It's about treating people as I would wanna be treated but treating people fairly. I think we are moving in the right direction. I wouldn't say we're there but we've got some difficult challenges ahead.

So what we have seen, on a positive note, is improvement in staff survey results. I think they do feel a little bit more listened to. We're on a journey but not even part the way there. We're also working massively on increasing staff safety and I think that is something, working into Liverpool, you can see the correlation. We're asking some of the most skilled staff to put themselves in some of the most dangerous situations. We are reducing incidents, but we have still got incidents of harm occurring to the staff within our organisation, so that's members of the POA but it's also members of the staff that we employ. So I think we've got to work together and again probably four years ago that was at odds and we've worked massively over the last two years to make sure that we get those things right.

The trust operates on a least-restrictive trauma-informed care emphasis; that's about getting people out of segregation and seclusion. We are then in a risk business and increasing the risk, but it's giving the staff the skill-set – here comes I suppose the difficulty – over the next three or four years we've got lots of staff retiring, the age of retirement, 55, is still there for the next two or three years. That starts to drop off and I think, like the Prison Service, having worked into Liverpool for the last 12 months, there will be an influx of newer staff. So, we've got an art and a skill to work together to make sure we adequately equip those staff. So, I think we've got some difficult times ahead, but I think the relationship from where we were four years ago, and those who are around will remember that, is a totally different relationship. The use of technology, from a high secure perspective, we are looking at and have been working with POA around the introduction of body-worn cameras. When I spent 12 months at Broadmoor that was in. I think it was fair to say there was some staff scepticism. That's now gone from Broadmoor and they can see the benefit. I think from our perspective, when you look at certainly the two high-profile employment tribunals, the scepticism will come from the fact that CCTV was clearly used to demonstrate, from a managers' perspective, what potentially happened to a patient. Conversely it was also used in the employment tribunal. So, I think there's a belief that body-worn cameras and technology can assist in reducing incidents. Again, it's the collaborative working with the POA that will give the assurance to the staff, and I genuinely think we're on a journey – we're not there, even after two or three years of working like this.

Some of the things we've been looking at in terms of initiatives around staffing, and again this has been a joint work with POA, so from a division perspective we've gone through a large amount of cost-improvement plans and changing services. Front-line staff, from an NHS perspective, you could argue, have been largely protected, but there will still be some savings around the periphery and the numbers of staff, and the skill mix for qualified staff as opposed to nursing assistants. But what we have done over the last 12 months is we've looked at growing our own staff. We've invested £500,000, not new money but monies to send nursing assistants into training. That will have a big impact, but it'll have a big impact in three years. We clearly need males. Three-quarters of the nursing is around male wards. What we do know from an education perspective, 95% in this local area of people coming through the nurse training for mental health and learning disability are females, so we've got to work hard on a joint initiative to grow our own staff but also keep and retain our own staff. And those are ongoing discussions. So, I think that sets the scene in terms of Ashworth and where we've been and the journey we're on, and I think it's been quite a profound journey over the last four years.

Just very quickly about HMP Liverpool: since April last year we've provided the mental health care into HMP Liverpool. I think I can clearly see the differences between mental health in a high secure environment as opposed to the prison. Firstly staffing, we've got the Mental Health Act, and we've got medication. But I think being able to go in and talk to managers within the prison and the staff within the prison around some of the initiatives of trauma-informed care, certainly around personality disorder, I think the amount of prisoners, not necessarily patients, within Liverpool, that you can

see with underlying personality disorder and maybe some ways of treating those, it's embryonic but I think we are clearly on a journey that's going to take three or four years. I think we can work together within Liverpool, massively, to impact both on the safety of the staff working there, but on the care and the health of the prisoners. And I say that at a time when I know Liverpool's only got a capacity of 700 and that will increase back up 1,300 in the next probably 18 months.

And added to that, I think, within Liverpool we've been able to break down some of the care pathway barriers. The ability to move people in and out of Liverpool Prison into secure care within the area, Liverpool Prison, 95% of the population from the surrounding areas, the ability to move people into Ashworth Secure Clinic and Rathbone has had an impact on the care but also the safety of the staff. But again, this is only embryonic. Lots of work with the POA around organisational development and effectiveness within the prison for the staff. Clearly there are lots of new staff, mental health staff, within the prison. We have got to train those in working in secure care but working in a prison environment, but also providing mental health care in the prison environment, and for that I think the collaboration with the Prison Service, with the POA, and with Mersey Care managers around making sure that we provide the best care we can in a safe environment.

So just very quickly, just ending on a positive note, we've come from a pretty dark place I think, from a managerial and ... there's no point in dodging that, it would be remiss of me to stand here looking over that way, because I can see Lorraine and Martin and others, we've come from a pretty dark place four years ago where we had industrial action taking place. I think we've worked massively. My plea would be to continue that work from a manager and POA perspective. We're committed to it. I think there's going to be some difficult and hard discussions going forward around workforce and around getting new people in and retaining, but that's a national picture, not just a Mersey Care picture. And what I want is the healthy debate. We don't agree – nor should we always agree – but I think that healthy debate to come to some resolution is the way we will move forward to make sure the staff, both employed by me but also under the care of the POA, will take us forward.

I suppose that's where we're at and maybe it's a new kind of phenomenon for a manager to be stood up here saying that. I don't know. I'm there to be shot at, but thank you very much for listening.

<Applause>

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: We'd like to present you with a box, and you're welcome to stay here.

Firstly Steve, thank you very much for attending today and I think you've been exceptionally honest in some of the stuff that you spoke about, and it is pleasing to hear that from the dark place that Ashworth were in several years ago, that things appear to be moving forward in a working and collaboration with the POA. The reality was though, it was a dark place and it seemed that I was never away from Ashworth at any given time, to try and forge better working relationships between people. And I remember meeting the Chief Executive, Joe Rafferty, at the height of those issues, when two of our members were dismissed, wrongly dismissed actually because we won it at an employment tribunal, that it was an unfair dismissal. Those talks broke down, not because of the POA but because of the intransigence, at that time, of the Chief Executive, Joe Rafferty. There were other things going on as well, with the suspension of Stuart Eales, who was a leading member of this trade union for a long time. And if it hadn't been for the intervention of this trade union, I'm afraid Stuart would have been down the road as well, but sense was seen and Stuart won his code of discipline in the NHS, of course, which is very different from the code of discipline that we face in the public-sector arena of the Prison Service.

So those were dark days, and it didn't give me any pleasure in sanctioning the strike action, as General Secretary, under the anti-trade-union legislation, because we had to jump through all sorts of hoops in order to satisfy those regulations under TULCRA, and even although we believed our ballot procedure were right, at the eleventh hour, even the day before the strike took place, management at the trust were looking to injunct us in the High Court because they believed our ballot paper and our membership lists were inaccurate. I instructed our lawyers to continue with the strike action and if we ended up in the High Court then so be it. So, I do know what you're talking about, they were dark days. We also had a branch official at that time, who had been treated unfairly in the execution of their trade union duties, which we also won at an employment tribunal as well. So, my union will take on a poor employer. Strike action is always a last resort. Luckily, we have the right to strike, not just at Ashworth but in all the special hospitals such as Broadmoor, Rampton and Carstairs. And we have used it on the pension issue, and I'm glad you mentioned the pension issue because 67 and 68 is far too late, even in the secure arena. I recognise that you can't do anything about that, Steve. That will come from government. And we will continue to campaign as we are campaigning, for our members in the Prison Service and elsewhere, and the special hospitals are no different, and we will continue that campaign to get them pensions justice because you will know that we are challenging that. We are keeping a close eye on the Fire Brigades Union challenge and indeed the judges' challenge. So, we'll wait for that opportunity to arise. I hope justice is done and that there's a complete U-turn because we balloted our members in the special hospitals – they rejected the increase to pension age and everything that went along with it.

So I'm really pleased that after those dark days, where we demonstrated as a trade union that if you cross us and treat our members unfairly, we will react and we'll react in a big way – but I agree with you, it's about changing the culture as well. And I'm so pleased to see that there's been no suspensions in 18 months. You do admit, though, there's plenty of investigations. And that needs to be looked at as well. But I'm sure the local committee, who are forging that relationship with management and trying to have a Just and Learning Culture, will indeed hopefully change that culture with yourselves on that journey. So, I wish you well. We will keep a close eye on what develops, not just at Ashworth but throughout the special hospitals. And we're not always going to agree, you're absolutely right. I'm glad to hear that you mentioned the POA specifically at Ashworth and within the trust because in my discussions with your Chief Executive – I think the mic's gone off, oh no, it's not gone off – he was very sceptical about POA involvement within the NHS setting, and I had to give him a history about some because reality is the POA have been around the special hospitals far longer than any other trade union in the NHS, going back to the days where it came under Home Office control. So, I'm pleased to see that you recognise that the POA have a major role to play as the major trade union within the MerseyCare Trust, and that will not go away. We'll go from strength to strength. So,

thank you very much for coming, Steve. We've got a couple of motions that you're very welcome to sit and listen to, and I'm delighted that you're here. So thank you very much.

<Applause>

Thank you very much. We now move to motion 22 of the Special Hospitals AGM, Rampton with Carstairs to second.

Motion 22

Conference accepts that the staffing levels in our secure hospitals need to be increased due to the levels of violence and workloads.

RAMPTON

NICK CARDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, RAMPTON: Chair, NEC, Conference and invited guests, the motion reads: Conference accepts that the staffing levels in our secure hospitals need to be increased due to the levels of violence and workloads.

My journey began on 1 October 1980, when my uncle, who was Chief Nursing Officer at Rampton Hospital at the time, asked me if I wanted a job. I said yes and started on 8 October. At that time, we had 1,500 patients and 700 staff. As I stand here now, at Rampton we have 250 patients and 1,700 staff but we don't seem to be able to manage the situation, because of the enhanced levels of observations and other work pressures on our qualified staff to fill in endless amounts of paperwork. The wards run short some days, with staff unable to take a break. Attacks on staff were dealt with professionally and appropriately, with the staff available at the time. We have new starters and staff coming through the induction system and applying for jobs, but they are not staying, one reason being the loss of psychiatric lead pay in 2011. New starters do not receive this pay and when they go to the wards and speak to their colleagues, they are on £4,000 less than the other nursing assistant sat at the side of them. That causes a lot of animosity and we get to the point where staff are saying, 'You get four grand more than me, you go and do it.' And that's not good for the working environment that we have to put up with.

Existing staff do not have time to mentor new starters because of their workload. Because of the nature of the job, it's not going to be for everyone but for the ones that want to stay we should be encouraging them to do so, and if that means bringing back the lead, so be it. Please support the motion.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you Rampton. Mick Pimblett on behalf of the National Executive Committee.

MICK PIMBLETT – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, we all saw the video at the start of Conference which depicted the violence which prison officers are facing every single day. That could also be substituted for our members in the secure hospitals, who are also facing the same violence. Austerity has hit the secure hospitals in the same way as it hits our prisons. They are no longer able to provide the gold standard which their patients require. The gold standard included positive therapy, multidisciplinary working, comprehensive mental and physical healthcare, which would all contribute to reduced levels of violence. Because of the lack of these services, violence in the secure hospitals is increasing. I thank Rampton for bringing this motion and I ask that you support the motion and your colleagues who work in the secure hospitals.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much Mick. Sorry Rampton, do you want to come back on anything? Conference put it to the vote. All those in favour of the motion. Anyone against? The motion's carried.

Motion 23, Rampton to move. Carstairs to second.

Motion 23

In light of the recent announcement by the Prime Minister that the NHS budget is to be increased, Conference mandate the NEC to enter into urgent negotiations with the Health Minister to secure additional funding to increase the local budget and staffing levels in all our secure hospitals.

RAMPTON

NICK CARDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, RAMPTON: Chair, NEC, Conference and invited guests, the motion reads: In light of the recent announcement by the Prime Minister that the NHS budget is to be increased, Conference mandate the NEC to enter into urgent negotiations with the Health Minister to secure additional funding to increase the local budget and staffing levels in our secure hospitals.

Two-and-a-half years ago I saw a sign on a bus that said, 'When we come out of Europe, we will save £350 million per week which will go back into our NHS.' We all know now that that was a load of rubbish like a lot of other stories told by this government. Rampton is asked to cut its budget with cost-improvement programmes or CIPs, as we have come to know them, year on year. The latest figures I've been given show that we have been asked to cut, on average, £5 million a year for the last five years. That's £25 million from our budget of just over £400 million, which is a lot. All we ask is for the budget to be looked at so we can attract the staff needed to carry on supplying a first-class service but not a second-class budget. Please support the motion.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you Rampton. Mick Pimblett to respond on behalf of the Executive.

MICK PIMBLETT – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, in 2018 Theresa May announced that she was increasing the NHS budget by £20 billion per year. The special hospitals have suffered similar to the Prison Service in that they have had their budgets cut in recent

years. As far as we're aware, this £20 billion increase in budget for the NHS, none of it has been allocated to special hospitals. That cannot be right. You cannot manage an institution like a secure hospital with some of the most dangerous, violent people in our society by continually cutting budgets. I thank Rampton again for bringing this motion and I can assure them that if this motion's carried, the NEC will try their best to take this forward and to increasing the staffing levels and the budget in the secure hospitals. Support the motion.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much. Rampton, do you want to come back? Conference put it to the vote. All those in favour of motion 23. Anyone against? The motion's carried.

There were only two motions in the Special Hospitals AGM so I will conclude this section simply by saying I thank the branch committees in Ashworth, Broadmoor, Rampton and Carstairs for their utmost professionalism and respect when we have our meetings. I've got to say it's incredible the knowledge that they have between them, and sometimes it's a learning curve for us on the National Executive Committee in dealing with the issues that they have.

I'd also like to thank Dave Todd, Mick Pimblett, Andy Hogg and Duncan Keys, who have all done immense work this year, sorry, last year and this year, with the special hospitals, particularly Dave as well who stood in for me, and others, when I've not been able to make the meetings due to other commitments. But I've got to say the special hospitals are a significant part of the POA and I would urge you to read the short histories and involve yourselves in what happens in the special hospitals, because what happens in the special hospitals can link in to prisons in the private or public sector and vice versa, because we tend to interchange individuals between those establishments. So, I've got the utmost respect and I know the challenges that are coming your way in the NHS are no different from the challenges that we have in the private sector and the public-sector prisons. So, Ashworth, Broadmoor, Rampton and Carstairs, you can be very proud of the work that you do on behalf of the POA membership in your establishments, and you are a massive, integral part of this trade union and that should never be forgotten. So, I'll close on that and thank you very much for the motions that you've put forward, and thank you very much for the annual report that has been put forward and all the work that you do for the membership throughout the year. So, thank you very much.

Conference, that now concludes the AGM for the special hospitals. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Steve and thank you Conference, we will now reconvene business. We are on to Conference motion number 28, which is The Verne. Do we have a seconder for The Verne?

Motion 28

Conference instructs the NEC that due to the current climate that whenever a member is subject to a disciplinary hearing and the box for dismissal is ticked that that member is represented by an NEC Official.

THE VERNE

SIMON JOSLIN – BRANCH SECRETARY, VERNE: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 28 reads: Conference instructs the NEC that due to the current climate, that whenever a member is subject to a disciplinary hearing and the box for dismissal is ticked, that that member is represented by an NEC official.

Conference, in the same way branches have lots experience on the landings due to VEDS, so have branch committees, which is affecting the level of support to our increasingly stressed and battered membership. Staff are being dismissed for ridiculous reasons, which the NEC can relate to first hand, and members are not feeling supported by our solicitors. And with many Governors who'd rather dismiss staff than support them, this would offer greater protection to our members and would go a long way to stop criticism of the NEC and indeed put them in a positive light and help to stop confidence motions in them. This practice always used to happen. Support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any other speakers? If you're a seconder – does the seconder wish to speak? No indication. Carry on, yes.

THOMAS NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to reject this motion. There are a variety of different reasons that I think this motion needs to be rejected and I'll address each one of them individually. The first one is that I think this would cause a lack of confidence on local branch officials. I was elected by my branch to represent them. A lot of the members of my branch probably aren't actually that interested in some of the stuff that we're discussing here, in some of the bigger picture, they view the POA as a way to support them, and that's why they elected me. That's why they elected our chairman, that's why they elected the other members of our committee, to support them through this time. It's gonna be a lot easier for a local branch official to defend a local member, because the local member is more likely to feel comfortable in discussing various different aspects of their personal life and various different aspects of the case, as they would ... which I don't personally believe they would be with a member of the NEC. That isn't to say anything bad about the NEC, it's just the personal relationship that we have with people. I have a very good relationship with a lot of my colleagues. If it was a member of the NEC, they might not even know them. How can I say to someone, 'You're being represented by Mr X'. 'Who's that? Never heard of him. I don't read *Gatelodge*.' We can't make people do that sort of thing. We need to reject this motion for that reason.

We also need to reject this motion because the NEC are not there to come down to prisons and support our members. That's our job, Conference. The NEC should be fighting for reduction in violence in our prisons, to get that disgusting, toxic poison Spice out. They are there to lower our retirement age. They are there to increase staff. That's what our NEC are there to do. That's what I want our NEC fighting for. We, as branch officials, are more than capable. We have access to the training, we can develop, we can support our new committee members as they come on. Can you imagine the

case, last year we had a very, very big investigation at Elmley and we had 17 members of staff suspended. That was really difficult for our committee to manage, but do you know what? We got through it and we got through to the other side, because the staff, our colleagues, trusted us because they know us personally. We can't expect the NEC to do that. Our area rep, great bloke, fantastic, doesn't live nearby. So logistically it would be an absolute nightmare. Conference please reject this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Tom. Neil?

NEIL ROSS – BRANCH CHAIR, GARTH: Chairman, NEC, Conference, like the last speaker I'm going to talk against the motion, because I feel strongly about it. I understand the sentiment of Sudbury, but I've got to speak against this motion. The NEC officials, they simply have got too much work to do, supporting us at national level, and can't realistically attend every disciplinary hearing, every time someone is considered for dismissal. And not to mention the workload that goes into presenting a case for each member. I'm a proud union official, I'm proud to be the Chairman at Garth, and I'm proud to represent my members in disciplinary hearings. I've attended many courses, paid for by the union and the TUC, and they're available to all officials and that includes the Employment Law Diploma that I've done. That knowledge has afforded me the understanding of a disciplinary process up to and including employment tribunals, and I've had a lot of successes on the back of that. Representing staff during disciplinary hearings should not just be afforded to NEC officials, as this motion asks. The NEC officials are extremely knowledgeable but so are some branch officials, and it's a statutory right for a member to decide who represents them. This motion is simply unworkable and restrictive. Please reject the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Neil.

KEITH McDONAGH – BRANCH CHAIR, GRENDON: Chair, NEC, Conference, like my last two colleagues, I urge you to reject. I'm not going to repeat everything they say. The only thing in addition I would add is that at branch level I think we need to push training, to develop knowledge, develop confidence in new reps that are joining the committees. We've got branch officials training, advanced training. It seems to be more and more difficult now to get on board with TUC training at local colleges, and perhaps that's something we need to look more into with the NEC on the TUC. But yes, if you accept this motion it's going to debilitate committees, losing more confidence, more knowledge and affecting their ability. So please reject the motion, thank you.

DAVID FERRY – BRANCH SECRETARY, FRANKLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, speaking against the motion. This motion will heap a lot of unnecessary extra work on NEC officials which the local branch chair, secretaries, committee members are more than capable of handling. As a union we need to be developing branch officials rather than deskilling them and taking away this aspect of the role. It's Frankland's view that this motion will undermine the role of local officials and committees and put extra pressure on the NEC. The current system does allow for NEC reps to take courses if it's in the best interests of the member. Please reject this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Dave.

RAY SOMERS – BRANCH CHAIR, ICE BRANCH IMMIGRATION: Chair, NEC, Conference, speaking to reject the motion. Once again, it discriminates against us. If you're included on tick the box for gross misconduct, that covers the private sector. But you've excluded us from there. And I agree with all the other delegates that are here. I go in and defend my colleagues at the highest levels. If I feel out of my depth, I need help, I ring the guys up there. They support us. They look after us. But it's us that look after our members. We know our members, they know us. They trust us. Without trying to be rude, sometimes they come down, they don't know these guys. The wealth of knowledge is there, they pass it down through us. Please reject.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Ray. Can't see any more speakers. Replying for the NEC, Ian Carson.

IAN CARSON – NEC: Chair, Conference, responding on behalf of the NEC asking you to reject this motion. Branch officials achieve the results based on their skills and knowledge and some of the other reasons have been laid before you, but I've personally got experience of people out there, you people, who've been in my area, getting results on codes of discipline that Michael Mansfield couldn't have achieved. And that's because of the way that you operate, the knowledge of the policy and the relationship. There are times when the National Chairman can allocate one of us to come and assist you and it's happened on a number of occasions and it's happened recently, and if there are difficult circumstances we all will drop in and give you a hand and have a look at what you're doing and give you some advice. Whilst this motion is well-meaning, in my opinion and in our opinion, it will, in a lot of cases, lead to poor outcomes for members. On that basis, please reject.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Simon, would you like to reply?

SIMON JOSLIN – BRANCH SECRETARY, VERNE: Chair, NEC, Conference, I brought this up because my members asked me to bring it up. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Simon, well said.

<Laughter>

You sounded a bit like Rory Stewart there with his get out of jail free card!

<Laughter>

But because I know you and I like you; you know ... well said. Let's take it to the vote for Mr Joslin. All those in favour of this motion, please show. Any against? Thank you. That is lost.

Motion 29 has been withdrawn. We're on to motion 30, Parkhurst. Do we have a seconder? Permission to withdraw, Parkhurst seek permission to withdraw from Conference. Can you show if you give permission to withdraw? That's withdrawn. Thank you Parkhurst.

Motion 31 is an NEC motion. Speaking on behalf of the NEC is Dave Todd. Can I have a seconder please? Thank you.

Motion 31

If a Conference Motion is not achieved by its tenth anniversary it should be removed from the policy of the Union and placed into the archive document, the reason why it has not been achieved to be explained on a circular to the membership.

NEC

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: Conference, Chair, NEC, invited guests, I stood up here last year and gave you a commitment that we'd look at the policy document because we had some really old pieces of policy in the document and it wasn't up to date, it wasn't current. We've done that work and as a follow-on from that we'd like to propose to you that if a motion's not reached by its 10th anniversary then we'll put it into the archive document with an explanation to you. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any speakers? Straight to the vote then. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 32, Feltham. Formally moved? Do we have a seconder for Feltham please? Thank you. Providing an explanation for the NEC will be Steve Gillan.

Motion 32

For the NEC to provide details of when Mr Cuffe was first appointed to act for the POA in regards to restructuring of this Union as the Feltham branch understand he was first approached and appointed in April 2018.

FELTHAM

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you Chairman, thank you Conference. Conference, on behalf of the National Executive Committee I am very happy to explain and provide the details of when Mr Cuffe was first appointed to act for the POA in regard to restructuring of this union. The Feltham branch understand he was first approached and appointed in April 2018. The Feltham branch are nearly correct but not quite. Let me explain. On 22 January 2018 a draft Conference Paper was submitted to the Executive in preparation for Annual Conference motions. The NEC are no different from your branches. We must have motions in by the 31 January deadline. So the original draft Conference Paper had no reference to Mr Cuffe or indeed any other independent person. The Conference Paper was prepared for the NEC agenda on 13 March 2018 and was amended and approved by the NEC with having Mr Cuffe named as the independent person, as the NEC wanted an independent overview. On behalf of the NEC, I met Mr Cuffe to inform him that the Executive wanted an independent person to carry this work out and we were aware that he had done a similar review in Ireland several years ago. Mr Cuffe was formally invited to Conference on 4 April 2018 and he agreed to come to Conference in May 2018 and agreed in principle, if Conference Paper 1 was carried. Clearly, if Conference Paper 1 had been rejected then there would have been no need to engage him. On 1 June 2018, Mr Cuffe attended Cronin House after arranging a meeting with the team he would be working with and he presented me his projected costs for the work, where his fees would be capped at 70K as identified in my finance report. I placed this on Finance Committee agenda as Conference had given approval for us to set a budget. On 5 June 2018 the Finance Committee determined that the budget sat outside our remit, so therefore we referred the matter to the full National Executive Committee. At the finance meeting on that day, on 5 June, there was Dave Todd, who chairs it, Joe Simpson, Andy Baxter, Sarah Rigby and myself. The capped fee for Mr Cuffe was agreed at the meeting of the NEC on 13 June 2018, of which the minutes have been published. So in effect, if the budget had not been agreed with the NEC, then Mr Cuffe would not have been appointed. So in effect, he was approached in March to sound him out; he attended Conference in May 2018, and the budget was approved on 13 June at an NEC meeting 2018. The decision of the NEC was relayed to Mr Cuff and he indicated that he would write to me with his terms of engagement, to demonstrate total independence. Those terms of engagement were placed before the NEC on 15 August 2018 under my written General Secretary Report, where the written report was discussed and accepted by the Executive. Those minutes have also been sent out to the field. The terms of engagement or reference for Mr Cuffe were signed off by me for and on behalf of the NEC. That is the explanation, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Steve. Feltham, happy with the explanation? Thank you Feltham. No need for a vote because it's an explanation. We now move on to motion 33, which is an NEC motion. Do we have a seconder please? Thank you.

Speaking on behalf of the NEC, Sarah Rigby.

Motion 33

The NEC direct that Conference considers the contents of the Pat Cuffe report and present it to their respective branches to gain direction and to decide if recommended changes are necessary as per Conference Paper 1 2018.

A Special Delegates Conference, as per Rule 12.2, will be called no later than November 2019 in order to debate the recommendations contained within the Pat Cuffe report.

NEC

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, I'll start by reading the motion out. The NEC direct that Conference considers the contents of the Pat Cuffe report and presents it to their respective branches to gain direction and to decide if recommended changes are necessary as per Conference Paper 1 2018. A special delegates conference, as per rule 12.2, will be called no later than November '19 in order to debate the recommendations contained within the report.

Obviously I'm speaking in favour of this motion on behalf of the NEC. The first point I'd like to make, the General Secretary has already said it, the NEC, like all other branches, had to make decisions and to propose motions on this report by 31 January. That is why the Executive submitted three motions on the order paper. We were not in receipt of the report until after 31 January. Like all of you, we had no input into the report other than when we were offered the opportunity to meet Mr Cuffe and share our thoughts. The report is a comprehensive review of the POA, but it offers no insight into how we could implement some or all of the recommendations at this point in time. The Executive ask you to support this motion to allow the NEC and you and your branch members to go away and fully consider the recommendations and to cost them. We need time to look at each recommendation and consider the practicalities.

Following this, we would then be able to ask you to accept or reject each of those at the Special Delegates Conference and possible future Conferences. It is important that you are aware that the report recommends a major restructuring of our union that potentially could take around five years to implement in part or fully. It will be you, the membership, who will decide this, not the NEC.

The NEC will follow your direction. This motion is an option for you to consider. It's for you to make the decisions following the direction from your members. The POA is your union. If you decide you want to take forward particular elements of the report then that is what we will do. This report is being carried out on the back of a Conference motion that was supported last year. It is important we make the right decisions to ensure we get the best results for our union, results that will allow the POA to stand the test of time for another 80 years. To go through the entire report and recommendations would take too long. That is why we, as an Executive, believe that this motion will provide you and your members with time and the opportunity to seek clarity on elements contained within it and to then make informed decisions. We would need to set out the costs of any proposal and provide each branch with a comprehensive paper setting out the changes, so that at the Special Delegates Conference we can debate the issue and not be constrained by time.

I will now highlight some of the recommendations to explain why you should support this motion.

Chapter 14 covers elements of the report that can be delivered in the short, medium or long term, over a five-year period, and any implementation will be over a lengthy period of time, which is why there is no need to rush any decisions.

Chapter 15 is a table of actions. There are 22 actions in total. We do not know how much each action could cost the union, we do not know how each action could impact on our union if they are accepted. The report also contains recommendations that will affect employees, workplaces and terms and conditions. Therefore, we have to get it right.

Some of the report's recommendations have been before Conference previously and have been rejected. Some were rejected because Conference felt they did not have enough information; we don't want to make that mistake again and we want to make sure you can make an informed decision. We need to ensure that whatever we propose to change, we decide on the way forward together and ensure it is all for the right reasons.

Chapter 8 covers several issues, including what was voiced at the branch meetings. We cannot make improvements if these opinions are not voiced to us. We will always listen and we are happy to explain any reasoning behind decisions if we are able to. One thing we all agree on is that communication needs to improve, and communication is a two-way street. Chapter 8 also covers member subscriptions. This is something previously rejected by Conference but if we need to revisit this decision then we will.

Finally, Chapter 12 of the report, the research and recommendations. If you accept this motion for a Special Delegates Conference, each of the recommendations from within this chapter will be considered by the NEC and brought to the Conference for you to decide if the individual recommendation is accepted or rejected. Each one will be presented to Conference with additional information and any costings, where appropriate. You will then decide to support or reject, having taken the guidance from your members locally. If the suggestion of a Special Delegates Conference is rejected by Conference that is a matter for you. We then either accept the report in its entirety or we reject the report in its entirety. Be under no illusions – you are the POA and if you decide to cherry pick that is your choice. A Special Delegates will allow you to do that, as will future Conferences if you so wish. Please support the motion and allow the Executive to fully consider the report and provide you with additional information for you to decide on the future of your union.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Would Preston, as the seconder, like to speak?

PAUL MALLIBAND – BRANCH SECRETARY, PRESTON: Chair, NEC, Conference, Preston did indicate that we were actually going to put an

emergency motion in, but it was that well written this, when we actually got the booklet, we decided we wouldn't, and we'd second it today.

Firstly, Conference, I wish to thank the author of the report, Pat Cuffe, for doing this piece of work and completing it on time. It's no mean feat in itself in this organisation. It is my opinion that the terms of reference have been followed fully, as laid out on pages 123 to 126 of the report. The report itself has produced 22 recommendations, which have staggered implementation dates for valid reasons, and they appear to be the facts.

Pat is absolutely correct when he says, in all such reports there are people who will not like certain things and those who will, but it'll certainly not suit everyone, and I've got a feeling that's the case here. We've already witnessed some fractious interactions on the floor regarding right or wrong and we really need to start to move on from that. To continue in such a manner will only cause further ill feeling and division, which we can ill afford. Our attention should be on, are we functioning as an organisation satisfactorily and servicing our members effectively? That's always a difficult question. This document suggests and appears that we are not. It has, or should have, focussed our attention on what we need to achieve going forward, and I'm not sure that we've got the real desire to actually acknowledge that, as we seem hell-bent on self-destructing, pointing the finger at personality assassinations, which clearly are unhelpful and certainly not acceptable to our members, especially in public.

We have an employer who loves and indeed brings about disunity. That is not what we should be about. Our fight is with them, not each other. We do however love a healthy debate! Just over six, seven weeks ago, the report arrived for us to consider. Three weeks of that period were the Easter holidays, which is staggered over the country, or countries. So, in essence we've had it for four weeks. The document is lengthy and gives a framework to address identified areas of work. It would appear many are dissatisfied by this as they were expecting all the answers on a plate, which isn't what we asked for.

How many branches can honestly, hand on heart, tell me that they've had sufficient time to circulate it, absorb it, discuss it, and conclude everything that's included in it? Not many, I would have thought. The fact is we haven't had enough time to deal with that, on top of everything else we do on a day-to-day basis. I mean I'm arguing the toss about PAVA and feeding it back to the Executive because the employer are sneaking documents out restricting the use of it in the four pilot sites – and you lot don't know yet. (Thank you for the circular by the way, Mark.)

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You're welcome.

PAUL MALLIBAND – BRANCH SECRETARY, PRESTON: So, no doubt we'll get up and suggest that we can't afford an SDC. The mood so far in this Conference suggests we can't afford not to. I have a theory here today that if the motion isn't carried, that we will make decisions on impulse which do not further us as an organisation. Our members expect us, as activists, to sort this stuff out. It's difficult to get them to engage the best of times and it's a heavy burden that we have to carry and it's because of that that we must get this right. To do nothing is not an option, but to do something without proper consideration is criminal. Something you really wanted, you didn't get – Pat Cuffe must feel like Jurgen Klopp at the back at the moment. He got so near, achieved not a great deal but has got another opportunity ... an SDP will give him that. I'm sure Mark sees the irony in that!

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: There's a lot of Kloppites unhappy with you at the moment Paul!

<Laughter>

PAUL MALLIBAND – BRANCH SECRETARY, PRESTON: Support the motion for an SDC, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Paul.

<Applause>

JOHN MUMFORD – BRANCH CHAIR, DARTMOOR: I ain't gonna make no jokes about Liverpool because I'm sitting next to them! Chair, NEC, Conference, speaking against this motion. Colleagues, enough money has been spent on this report already. Why kick the can down the road when the best equipped people to vote on the report are here today? Spending money on a Special Delegates Conference is unnecessary and wasteful when it is clear that many branches have already decided how they're going to vote. This money would be better spent on urgently enacting Wymott's motion to get independent testing rolled out. Colleagues, we've had enough time to read through the report and discuss its contents with our members. There are many recommendations we like and there are many recommendations that we don't. We are told that we have to vote for this report in its entirety. I can't vote in favour of a report that contains changes to our union that will be detrimental to the membership. By enabling a vote today, and by voting against the report, doesn't mean it's been a waste of money and Pat and his team did all that hard work for nothing. It will, in effect, enable branches to go away, use the report as a reference to cherry pick the best bits in order to formulate motions for next year's Conference, where ourselves and our members can affect the changes we seek in order to make our union fit for future generations. Please reject this motion and if it is rejected, please vote against this report. Thank you very much.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you John.

<Applause>

PHILIP HANNANT – BRANCH CHAIR, FRANKLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to reject this motion. The Cuffe Report was circulated around the membership on 4 April. Frankland circulated the report around their membership and presented it at a branch meeting held on the 30th.

Over 200 members were at that branch meeting. It was fully debated and Frankland branch have sent us to Conference with a clear mandate on motion 34. The report has been in the public domain for nearly six weeks, which in our view is sufficient time for the membership to send branches with clear mandates on this. The fact that the NEC uninvited Mr Cuffe because, or their reasons was, the report was in the public domain would suggest that they believed there was no report-back needed by Mr Cuffe because we've all had time to look at it. And one of the reasons, obviously, that the Cuffe report is we're looking at savings. Special Delegates, approximately I don't know, £50,000, if we want a Special Delegates. We are the right people to do it – let's hold a Special Delegates Thursday afternoon after Conference. Let's get it done, let's move on, let's vote on motion 34. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Phil.

JULIAN NEWBOLD – BRANCH CHAIR, LANCASTER FARMS: Chair, NEC, Conference, on behalf of my branch I ask that you reject this motion. The Cuffe Report has already cost the membership in excess of £100,000. After discussion at our branch meeting it was decided that as only 1,118 members assisted in completing the survey out of 26,000 members, it was not necessary to spend money on a Special Delegates Conference when only a little over 4% of the membership participated in producing it. There are several issues my branch had with this report. The appointment of subcommittees, independent bodies and additional staff, and that many of these are to report back to Mr Cuffe. All this costs money and needs additional resources that this union can ill afford. Please reject the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jules.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Chair, NEC, members, I'm going to ask you to reject the motion. Motion, Conference Paper 1 last year set out what was to be involved in it. All the parts from regional/national structure, structure in Scotland, structure in Northern Ireland, all the way through to structure of NEC. Everything has been met by the Cuff Report. Motion 63 dealt with Conference Paper 1, and what it said was, I'll go to the end, 'Conference therefore accepts Conference Paper 1 as terms of reference for a small working group to make clear recommendations by Conference 2019. So, we're adhering to that, so we don't need this now. Everybody's had a mandate from their branches to vote whichever way. I hate a lot of the Cuffe report, but I'm going to accept it because I want people to debate it, because it's got to come back to Conference next year, and then Conference will decide next year on whether to accept it, because what you've got to remember is it'll go to Cuffe and Cuffe will look at it with honorary life members, and some of them things might come up and say we're not going to do it. For instance, I didn't know we had a property developer who lives behind us. I don't know what he's doing on there, about selling buildings and stuff like that. He's obviously a failed property developer because he's on the NEC. In the Cuffe Report, it tells you, the lasses that work in Cronin House have never been approached yet. It actually says he will speak to them, because if you move to Watford, and I'll be honest with you, I don't come out of the northeast very often, I don't know what the benefits of Watford are from Cronin House. I haven't got a clue. I get the idea about Linden House, because when it first opened it wasn't too bad but I'll tell you now, parking there's terrible. So, I understand but I'm asking you just to reject this entirely and go to the next motion and go for that one.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Craig.

STEWART McLAUGHLIN – BRANCH SECRETARY, WANDSWORTH: Chair, NEC, Conference, seeking rejection of this motion. I sent round the Cuffe Report to my members. A few did read it, one person in a great deal of detail, so I know the view of my membership. But I knew from last year that this would be the Conference that we decide to accept or reject. The one thing that was not suggested, that we delay, and what's been going on in our country for the last year or so, putting off something, delaying it, isn't very helpful. But if you look on page 125 of the Cuffe Report, it's quite clear that it was signed off by our own General Secretary and Pat Cuffe, that this report to be considered and all or nothing acceptance or rejection at Conference 2019. It's signed off by our NEC for accept or reject at this Conference, not delay. So, we need to get on to the motion for which I expected to come here to speak on and vote on, and not to delay it.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Stewart.

<Applause>

Anybody else which to speak? Sarah, would you like to reply? No. OK, straight to the vote. Just to remind you that if this is carried, 34 and 35 fall. So, all those in favour of this motion, please show. Against? That motion is lost.

Motion 34 is an NEC motion. Do we have a seconder? Thank you Durham. Speaking on behalf of the NEC, Joe Simpson.

Motion 34

**That Conference Endorse the "Cuffe" report in its entirety.
NEC**

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, as has already been said from this podium, that the National Executive have to put in motions exactly like you before 31 January. Therefore, Conference, your National Executive wish to withdraw motion 34 in order to speak on motion 35. Thank you Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Joe. Do you give the NEC permission to withdraw motion 34? All those in favour of withdrawal of this motion please show. All those against? Permission denied.

<Laughter>

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Can you put another five minutes on there for us?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: That's why you are DGS, Joe!

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, colleagues, as has already been said by delegates from here, this is your report. This is your report and it's down to you and our membership in order to vote on what you want from the Cuffe report, and whether or not you want to carry it, in its entirety. As has been said, there's some good things, some not good things, but you heard from Pat yesterday when he was talking about the subcommittees, when he was talking about how it would come to Conference next year for you to vote on whichever part that you wanted to vote on. Conference, I wasn't expecting to speak on this.

<Laughter>

As you can hear by what I'm saying, so as far as the NEC are concerned, this is your report, this is your union, take charge of it. Thank you Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Joe. Please do Craig – you're very welcome to speak on this.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Seconding the motion. I don't know how you second something that he doesn't want to speak on ... I'm in favour of the report in its entirety. I hate it. I hate loads of it! And I have read it. I sat in my office last Wednesday for the second time and went through loads of it, right? I don't like the regional elections, but I've already said you're going to have regional <inaudible> because the management will seek that straight away. I don't like that. But my big thing in this report is, regardless of what back table's got to say, right, I want the <inaudible> taken away from the NEC because I'm sick and tired of hearing of NEC officials saying, 'I am not employed by the POA' and then when something goes wrong, run to the certification officer because I'm employed by the POA. They don't get a P60, they're not employed by the POA. Please support, let's bring it back to Conference next year, decide on what you want to do with the debate from next year and let's go for it. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Craig.

<Applause>

JIM STARKIE – BRANCH CHAIR, PRESTON: Asking you to reject this motion. It's quite short, what I'm going to say. There's many issues in the proposals, some good, some bad; if we accept this, we're accepting them all. If there's any good ones, branches are free to bring it back to Conference next year as motions. Please reject this motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jim.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Just to reiterate what Jim from Preston's just said. This is the proverbial curate's egg. It's good in parts, it's dreadful in others and there's a few gems in there, but what the representative from Dartmoor said on the motion before, why do we have to accept it in its entirety or go to and SDC? What we need to do is deconstruct this. This is our report, as Pat has said and the NEC have said. We deconstruct it, we put the bits to our branches, for motions for next year and we vote on those. Why do we have to take all of it, some of it? Why not just deconstruct it, take it down to the bits, and then we vote on the bits that we want as motions. It's not rocket science. Reject the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glen.

PHIL STANBRIDGE – DELEGATE, BELMARSH: NEC, Conference, Chair, the Cuffe Report is not flawless but it's a start of the restructuring of the union. By voting in favour and accepting the Cuffe Report, gives Conference, who are after all the ruling body, the opportunity to amend it over the coming years. By doing nothing, we, the POA, will remain stationary. This year is our 80th anniversary and this is the right time to make changes. Conference, make those changes, support this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Phil.

JULIAN NEWBOLD – BRANCH CHAIR, LANCASTER FARMS: I never expected to get back up here again so I'm unprepared for this, but are we really going to accept something in its entirety when only 4%, just a little over 4%, 1,118 people were bothered to do this survey? So there's 95% of people that aren't interested, they're either happy with what's going on or they're just not interested. 4% of our membership – we're really going to accept anything like that? Reject this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jules.

STEWART McLAUGHLIN – BRANCH SECRETARY, WANDSWORTH: Asking you to support the motion, because as we heard from Pat Cuffe, we'll be back here next year actually doing the cherry picking, for want of a better word, but this isn't the Conference to start doing the cherry picking. This is the Conference that says, let's start with the Cuffe Report and we'll be back for the next few years going through it, what's feasible, what's not, what's achievable, what's not achievable, but we have to start somewhere. If you sign up for a package holiday you take the whole lot. You can cherry pick it apart I suppose, but you take the whole deal and if it goes a bit wrong you get compensation for the bits that didn't work out. In terms of people engaging with the survey, just over 1,000 I think, or 1,000 few hundred for the full completion and another 700, so about 2,000 ... Looking at NEC election, that would possibly put four NEC members up behind me on that turnout. So, the Pat Cuffe Report has got a bigger endorsement than some of our own NEC. But we do have to change. Can we really believe that if we keep putting this off we'll never restructure our union, make it relevant to our members? What are we currently doing to make ourselves relevant to our members with that kind of return? No one's come up here with an alternative to the Cuffe Report, apart from rejection or dismantling. Let's build on it and take it forward. Please support.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Stewart.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: Mr Chairman, NEC, Conference, any organisation is only as good as how it evolves with time, and clearly the time has come for our organisation to evolve. About that, I do not believe there is any dispute in this hall. Clearly the dispute is to how we do the evolving, what parts of the evolving we want to do now and what parts we want to put off till later. The one issue which I did have some problems with, I did address yesterday, but one of the wags on our committee suggested that the Pat Cuffe Report should have been better referred to as the Pat Cuffe Retirement Plan, in terms of how they've set up all these committees which are reporting back to him, because I recall where this all started was in this hall and Mr Jackson from Frankland was asked, with some other colleagues, some wise men and women from off the floor, to look at these issues. They presented a report to the NEC which in turn they discussed, which in turn has become the Pat Cuffe Report. Are we once again forgetting that there are many able men and women out here on this floor and out there on those branches who could be doing a lot of the work which many delegates have quite rightly pointed out will be very expensive if it's done by Mr Cuffe? And on the grounds of the expense, on the grounds of overlooking our own in-house talent, on the grounds of several of the issues that I don't like in there, one of which I related to yesterday, I ask you to reject this report and we will come back to it later. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Martin.

RAY SOMERS – BRANCH CHAIR, ICE BRANCH IMMIGRATION: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to accept this Cuffe Report. Pat, thank you very much for doing all the work you did, that we asked you to do. And he's done it for us. Now if we're going to keep delaying this, it just keeps going on and on. Last year at Conference, one of the last motions was to employ two staff to look after the private sector. That's put on hold for 12 months because of the Cuffe Report. How much longer does that have to be put on hold? How much longer do we have to wait? We are here to make the decisions. The ineffectiveness of people voting – well it's already been said, you get more votes than the people sat up there, because they don't want to do it. You can give them a voting slip, you can give them an envelope; what you can't do is lead them down to the post-box to put it in it, and they won't do that. That's what we're here for. They elect us to come here and speak on their behalf. Let's do that! Accept this report. Yes, you don't want it in its entirety. But then it gets picked out, not cherry picked, I don't like that word, but we start deciding, we decide what bits are good and what aren't. It takes rule changes. Rule changes take time. Who votes on the rule changes? We do! Let's move it on and vote and accept this report.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Ray.

Any more speakers? Indication that the General Secretary wants to reply or doesn't? You want to reply, OK.

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Conference, I just want to make something clear here. That the motion says that you accept it in its entirety. If it's rejected, it's gone. That's it. There is no cherry picking later. It's gone. And can I just say as your DGS, if you remember a while back when we'd done the University of Bedford investigation into PTSD and stress amongst our members, only 1,500 of our members responded to that. Yet we championed it and got a lot of things back from it, especially around politicians. So as I say, Conference, this is your union, take charge of it. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: OK, we'll take it to the vote. All those in favour of the Cuffe Report in its entirety, please show. Against? That motion's carried.

<Applause>

That means that 35 falls. 36, from the NEC, do we have a seconder for 36? Thank you. Speaking on behalf of the NEC, Glyn Travis.

Motion 36

That Conference accept Conference Paper 1 Retired Members.

NEC

GLYN TRAVIS – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Good morning. Chair, Conference, NEC, invited guests, Conference Paper 1 sets out the direction that the Retired Members Committee worked on throughout 2018. The Retired Members Committee have looked at a number of issues and a number of options over the years. And as a result of the hard work, and it has been hard work for them, and their direction, they were looking to establish a death benefit for retired members, their own welfare fund, separate to the POA Welfare Fund, and to try and improve services for retired members as they move on. The Executive agreed to survey all of the retired members by post, because all the retired members – we have their home addresses, and so we sent an individual letter to every single member. We gave them an email address to return and a prepaid envelope to return their comments, and the comments are contained within the Conference Paper 1. We have two Conference Papers. One was to take forward the issues of a death benefit and a welfare fund, and to look at how we would establish that. And the National Executive Committee considered the options and the potential liability to the union, because there's one thing sure in life, and that's that we're all going to die. We don't know when, but the reality is that we do. And we are one of the few unions that has a very, very healthy death benefit for members who unfortunately die whilst in service and still a member of the POA of £5,000. What the retired members were looking to do was basically ensure that we could give something to retired members, because they may have been a member of the union for 30 or 40 years and never accessed the death benefit, thankfully. Thankfully they're drawing their pension from the Civil Service or from the private sector or special hospitals, but the reality is, Conference, that the liability to you would have been £4 million. And for the subscriptions that we were looking at taking, and the benefits that were coming, the reality is that for somebody to have left, that it would have taken about 26 years to break even. And it's not about breaking even, but it's about looking at where we're going. And we ask you to support this Conference Paper because it will allow the NEC and the retired members to look at different options moving forward in 2019 and 2020. It's not saying the retired members aren't going to continue to work, and work hard, because they do and they will. But what we need to look at are options. How can we improve our retired members' section? How can we improve the benefits for our retired members, whether they are in Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales, Isle of Man? We heard about the tremendous work yesterday from Northern Ireland with the trust, and maybe that's something that we need to consider going forward. But what we wanted to be with you, Conference, is honest and open to say that the Retired Members Committee, and I thank them all, have worked really hard. I've met with them on a number of occasions in 2018 and drafted this paper with them to say this is not the end game, it's the start. We looked at something last year, we didn't think it was financially viable, we think we can move forward and bring changes and hopefully the Retired Members' Committee and the Executive, with your support, we will bring changes that will improve the benefits that we've got for our long-serving and sometimes very short-serving retired members who leave the service and the POA. And with that Conference, I ask you to support Conference Paper 1. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Glyn. Any speakers?

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Mine's more like of a point of order. Is it possible that the retired members or somebody from the retired members can come and speak on this motion? I know they're not a branch. However, in the past retired members have been allowed to speak and especially on this forum.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Unfortunately, not, because you've just answered your own question. They're not a branch. And there is a meeting arranged after Conference with the retired members to go through their issues and sort that out.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Can I ask Conference to decide on that, Mr Chair?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You can't, because the rules quite clearly state that invited speakers are at the discretion of the Chair. But thank you for bringing that.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Can I challenge the Chair on it?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You can't because you are challenging the Chair over something that can't happen. The retired members are a committee and not a branch.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: In the past though, I remember Colin Moses coming and speaking when he was a retired member.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: That's correct but as I've already stated, we have a meeting arranged after Conference to take on board their concerns. Thank you.

Any more speakers?

Straight to the vote. All those in favour please show. Any against? That's carried. I think we'll take a break there Conference. Back at half-past please.

<Break>

Conference, now for the enjoyable part, the awards. We're starting off with the Shannon Trust. Shannon Trust, as you should know, is an initiative in

prisons that assists prisoners in learning to read and to write, an initiative that we get eight hours a week profiled time to do, so if you haven't got that profiled time and you haven't got this initiative in your prison then this is the person to listen to. I'm not going to steal her thunder, I'm going to let Angela Cairns from the Shannon Trust tell you what goes on, what it's all about, how you access it and what support is out there for you. It costs absolutely nothing and I would encourage every gaol to get this initiative into your prisons. So without further ado, on behalf of the Shannon Trust and giving this award out is Angela Cairns.

<Applause>

ANGELA CAIRNS – CEO, SHANNON TRUST: Thank you Mark, and thank you to all of you here today. It's great to be back in Southport and with the sun shining this year as well. It's incredibly difficult to admit that you can't read and we know that this is a reality for many people who are in prison, and it holds them back from many opportunities. We've been doing a lot of work at Shannon Trust in finding out why people don't take part – what are people's barriers to learning to read when they're in prison? And we know some of them already. We know that people don't want to go to a classroom for example, but we know some of them are about people's very personal barriers around confidence, etc. So this is from Jodie, who's one of our learners who went on to be a mentor, mentoring her peers. Jodie says, 'Fear of failure was a big thing for me. It was a really big thing. Putting yourself out there to fail is scary. You've got embarrassment, but I didn't want to fail and make myself vulnerable.' And in reality officers can make a big difference in helping people to take part in Shannon Trust and our Turning Pages programme. Some of you may still remember it as being Toe by Toe. So, we encourage everybody to do so because it does make that difference. We have been doing some focus groups in a number of prisons in the last month or so about these barriers, and a guy called Ade said this, 'I was scared of starting and being taught. I thought I was a big boy. I made out I knew it all. I had a reputation. People looked up to me. My cell mates and officers had been helping me out with my reading. A young woman officer asked me about reading and writing and said it was a shame that I couldn't.' And with her encouragement, Ade went on to start learning to read and becoming a Shannon Trust learner, and he said that now he can read a good night story to his daughter. So, all kinds of things like that. He also talked to my colleague about how his view of himself had changed and how he used to kick off, he used to use bad behaviour as an excuse to try and cover up the fact that he couldn't read and he was embarrassed, and now he doesn't have to do that. So, lots of positives. But we do it with the help and support of many, many amazing prison officers in prisons across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and as Mark mentioned, we work in all of those prisons. Some of them we don't necessarily have as active a programme as we would like, so I would encourage you, if you don't see it in your prison, if you don't know what it's about, to go and ask someone and say, 'Where can I find out about Shannon Trust here?' And help us to keep encouraging people to take that learning journey and start learning to read.

Now one of the most amazing things in this job is being able to present awards like this. We have many fantastic officers supporting our programme, but once a year we get a chance to say thank you to someone who's gone above and beyond the main facets of the programme and encouraging people to take part and succeed and change the way that they work. Essentially they are helping to unlock the power of reading, and today we are presenting the award to someone who has been very, very committed. I'll read you some bits from the nomination, which came from his Shannon Trust volunteer. All of our nominations either come from Shannon Trust volunteers or from POA Branch Chairs. We had quite a number this year. So we asked about raising awareness of Shannon Trust by promoting it and ... I won't mention his name yet, don't want to be a spoiler: this person 'has visited all areas of the prison, focussing largely on workshops to raise awareness of Shannon Trust. He repeats this on a rotating basis as staff are continually changing. All areas of the prison are supportive and have agreed to support learning during the core day if it's at all possible.' So we understand the realities of it really. But importantly as well, it said, 'Shannon Trust runs as smoothly and as effectively as he can humanly make it. Men like him and respect him, enjoy being part of a team. He's a joy to work with, always a smile, a cheery conversation and a cup of tea.' And we know how important those things are in encouraging people to try things where there are difficulties to doing this. So I won't read all of it. We had a four-page nomination in this case, all of which was exceptional, but I'm very pleased today to be able to award the Shannon Trust POA Cup to Roger Steggles from HMP Wayland.

<Applause>

ROGER STEGGLES: As a PTI I don't like to talk a lot but ... and I know you've got some lunch to get to. I'd just like to thank Angela for the presentation, I'd like to thank James, who's the area manager for Shannon Trust in East Anglia, and also like to thank Linda Godwin who is my coordinator, volunteer for HMP Wayland. It was her who nominated me. I feel that I just do the job that I was given – I don't think I do anything special, but obviously somebody thinks I do a bit more than is required of me. Shannon Trust, a big part of prison. Like Angela said, if you don't know about it in your prison, please find out. It's a very worthwhile cause. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Next to the David Evans Health and Safety Award. Bear in mind, Conference, when I read these out, I haven't written them, so those of you that are about to get stitched up, it's nothing to do with me.

This award goes to Alan Ferguson from HMP Maghaberry, and for the record, this has been written by Michael Shanks. Alan has been on POA committees for over 30 years, serving in three establishments – HMP Belfast, the Maze and Maghaberry. He's been in the dog section for 15 years plus and he has completed courses in his own time through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Alan has also done a National Health and Safety Certificate. To say that Alan has taken an interest in health and safety is a gross understatement. He selflessly helps colleagues in the aftermath of accidents and injuries and he has conducted innumerable sick interviews. He is a worthy recipient of this David Evans Health and Safety Award for all his hard work on behalf of the POA and it gives me great pleasure to award this award to Alan Ferguson, HMP Maghaberry.

<Applause>

ALAN FERGUSON – MAGHABERRY: Chair, NEC and Conference, I would like to thank you for this award and take the opportunity to thank all the other Northern Ireland Reps who help to support our members under exceptional circumstances. We always welcome the chance to attend Conference and find that we share similar problems. I have been privileged to learn from people like Finlay, James Smith, Ava and others, and obtained support from June, Steve Gillan and the NEC. The first rep to start my insight was Noel Frizzell, who sadly passed away recently. We had many disagreements but stood together against management. I know from experience that Joe Simpson's vision for the Health and Safety future of the POA is only going to be realised if we all stand together and be united. I would have preferred Adrian Esme <inaudible> to accept this award, but like David Black, they died because of their job. Health and Safety is the only means to protect staff in work and I trust that people like Michael Shanks and fellow delegates at this Conference will continue to work towards making prisons a safer place. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Now to the Mabel Hempton Awards. You're gonna have to bear with me on this. OK ... On 19 April 2018 a horrific incident occurred at HMP New Hall involving our colleague, OSG Cheryl Stronell. Cheryl had been working in the gate-lock processing and return (inaudible) prisoner, when tragically she became trapped by the closing vehicle gate. Unable to free herself against the powerful hydraulics, Cheryl was at its mercy. With no ability to communicate to close-by colleagues, the inquisitiveness and sixth sense of OSG Lambert made him return to the gate, where he saw the dreadful incident developing. His instincts were to raise the alarm, alert other colleagues and try to free Cheryl. The immediate response and fast-thinking professional actions of staff on duty that evening undoubtedly saved the life of OSG Stronell. Cheryl had been trapped and crushed by the neck and torso by a 7.5-tonne hydraulic vehicle gate. The gate's entire safety system had failed, including the so-called 'failsafe' system. Staff were attempting in vain to free Cheryl from the gate, putting their own safety in jeopardy, also causing injury to themselves in the process, but with the hydraulics and power still applied, they had little chance of succeeding. The gate continued to crush Cheryl. Time was of the essence. The fast thinking and action of Officer Shooter was to give Cheryl mouth to mouth, to keep her alive as she was slowly losing consciousness and dying right in front of her friends and colleagues. With Cheryl pinned into a gap of less than 8 inches, the gates staff were desperately trying to gain access to the vehicle lock, but were defeated to the point that they could not even get out of the inner gate to assist. With all options exhausted, OSG Hopson, risking potential broken limbs, jumped from the gatehouse window, which is approximately eight-foot high, in the hope that he could manually disconnect the hydraulics from the main power source. Luckily this worked and they were able to free Cheryl and continue safely with CPR as she had been trapped for approximately eight minutes and wasn't breathing. This action undoubtedly helped save Cheryl's life. Without it, the hydraulics would have continued to crush Cheryl to death. With Cheryl being in the vehicle lock, officers Green and Shooter continued CPR until she eventually regained consciousness, but heartbreakingly when she did so, she went into major shock and began to convulse uncontrollably. Staff relentless attempted to keep Cheryl as stable and safe as possible until medical help arrived from the doctors and nurses within the prison. Once medical help arrived they immediately applied oxygen to Cheryl and continued to work feverishly until the ambulance service arrived. This was another 40 minutes away. Cheryl was rushed by paramedics to hospital where she was placed in an induced coma, where initially it was stated that she was likely to remain for the following ten days. Cheryl was in a critical condition at Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield and every minute was crucial and also heart-breaking for her loved ones around her. After three days it was decided that due to the nature of Cheryl's injuries it was too dangerous to keep her in a coma as she needed surgery. Cheryl suffered five broken ribs, one of which was sitting on her carotid artery in her neck; she had bleeding to her lungs and her liver, bleeding in the heart and bleeding in other organs. These had also been crushed and damaged. Cheryl miraculously regained consciousness three days later, and she coped extremely well with her pain when she was brought out of the coma. Thankfully Cheryl continues to make good progress; however, without the brave and selfless actions of the POA members here today, Cheryl would likely not have survived the horrific incident. The Mabel Hempton awards go to firstly Danielle Shooter ...

<Applause>

The next Mabel Hempton award, Trever Lambert.

<Applause>

The next Mabel Hempton Award goes to Aidan Hopson.

<Applause>

The next Mabel Hempton Award goes to Vicky Green. She's not here but Cheryl herself is going to collect it on her behalf.

<Applause>

I've had a special request from Mark, Cheryl's husband, who'd like to address Conference and say a few words – so, Mark.

<Applause>

MARK STRONELL: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It's such an honour to be here today. I would first like to thank the POA for inviting us to this prestigious occasion. I would like five minutes of your time. It's been a long 13 months for me and Chez. I've just returned to full-time duties and Chez is still at home recuperating, and this could be for some time yet. Physically she's doing well but emotional scars are taking a lot longer. The counselling

is going in the right direction. I will never forget the night of 19 April 2018 for as long as I live. I was sat home with my son having my tea and the phone rang. I picked it up and I said, 'Hi babe.' It was the SO from work. She just said, 'Kez, you need to get here a.s.a.p.' I drove to work in five minutes. I got to the New Hall gates and they were open. There were 40 staff running around. I didn't know what had happened. My CO, Mr Brackenbury, came running up to me. He was crying at the time. He looked at me and said, 'Kez, it's not good.' I heard a wailing and screaming in the background. I realised it was Chez. I ran over to find her on the floor. She was being held down by four staff members and a doctor. The doctor looked at me with tears in her eyes and she said, 'Kez, you need to hold her still.' I tried to hold her down, I used both arms, pushing on her shoulders. All I could see was the whites of her eyes. She had five broken ribs, a crushed heart and crushed lungs. She was hysterical. 25 minutes I was there, 40 minutes for the ambulance to come – that was the longest ride I've ever taken in an ambulance. Five hours later I was told she was going to go in a coma. Chez looked at me and said, 'Kez, don't leave me.' 'I promise I won't.' And I didn't. I sat by her bed for 3.5 days holding her hand, talking to her, not knowing whether she could hear me or not.

I stopped at the hospital for 6 days. Luckily she was only in there for 12. Them 12 days were so much support from my colleagues, it was unbelievable. I've never seen so many grown men cry, and I myself cried a bath. During Chez's time in intensive care, it was our son's 18th birthday. Of course we cancelled his party. The day of his birthday, 7:30 am ... 29th April, we sat there opening his cards. We all cried like babies and my son looked at me and said, 'Dad, my mum <inaudible> prison.'

So ... a huge thank you for ... sorry, a huge thank you on behalf of my amazing wife, Chez, our three beautiful kids, Chris, Claire and KJ, and myself. So, Aidan Hopson, Danny Shooter, Trevor Lambert, Vicky Green, New Hall's finest – thank you for saving my wife's life. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts, even though Chez's is still dented!

<Laughter>

Thank you to Liane and Kelly, the nurses on duty that night, the doctor, thank you to all the staff who worked 24 hours a day in Pinderfields ICU. Thank you for all the support from our family and friends and colleagues, and from the POA, Mr Phil Lee and Mr Bob Miller, who are now friends for life.

So just to finish off, I just wanted to say, to Chez, for putting up with me for the last 12 months, I've been married to her now, to Chez, my beautiful wife, for 20 years and I've treated her like an angel, but since the night of that miracle, I now know she is an angel. And the world is a much better place with her in it. So now we just live life to the full as much as we can, because things could have been so much different that night if it wasn't for these amazing people behind me. So Chez, I love you – and if you could put your hands together for New Hall's heroes and my wife Chez!

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Wow! Fantastic! Thank you all so much for coming. True heroes. Thank you.

Now on to the Cronin Clasps on our 80th anniversary. And remember, it's probably payback time for a lot of committees, and I didn't write them.

The first one, I really do hope she doesn't swear ... much. Jackie Bates. Jackie Bates recently left HMP Buckley Hall after a long and colourful career, which matches her language. Just before I came to Buckley Hall, the former Branch Chair of Garth and former NEC member Dean Acaster said to me, 'Jackie Bates is there, you'll be alright.' I heard Jackie before I saw her. She was shouting at one of our clients in the seg. The description and demeanour described by Dean was spot on. Jackie somehow managed to get me interested in the committee. At the time there was only three committee members. I soon learnt how much Jackie knew about being a union rep and what she did. It became clear, what she did was pretty much everything. Her passion for the role was unquestionable and her battle walk became very familiar as she stomped off down to Admin to rip a Governor a new one.

(Don't punch me!)

Her SMT meetings were something else. She could easily go from the RMP or profiles to the hazards of lady-hair removal using Veet and falling asleep.

<Laughter>

(Use your imagination.)

Any Governor was left in no doubt whatsoever that she meant business and the consequences of crossing her. I got to feel like her wingman. Little did I know she was grooming me to be squadron leader. Sadly Jackie decided to give up our highly respected and paid job. Sad because Buckley Hall was losing its Master Yoda, but also because the service was losing an exceptional officer. The night before the protest day last year, when Terry McCarthy phoned me up, asking me to take the branch out the next day, my stomach sank. First thing I thought is, 'What would Jackie do?' I soon found out that what Jackie would do, nothing ... as she was in Gran Canarias!

<Laughter>

'You'll be fine,' she said. 'Now sod off, I'm getting pissed!' Jackie found the unionist in me, and for that I thank her. It is one of the most thankless jobs I've ever known, but strangely I like it. Jackie is sadly missed, more than she knows, by Buckley Hall, not by management but by the people that matter, the branch members and friends. Jackie was also well respected by the prisoners. She was firm but fair, having worked with carrots and in reducing

violence and safer custody. She also spent a great deal of time working in the seg unit. Jackie was never afraid of taking on a challenging role and would give it her best. She was equally never afraid to speak up when she thought that things were being done wrongly or that the system was unjust. In fact, Jackie was often the person who sorted things out and would never settle for just making do. Things had to be right and done properly. This unflinching attitude has gained her respect across the establishment and indeed across the service as a whole. Jackie has now retired and is sadly missed. A very difficult act to follow.

And that was written by Michael Banks.

Jackie Bates, Cronin Clasp winner.

<Applause>

JACKIE BATES – CRONIN CLASP WINNER: Erm ... thank you.

<Laughter>

But while I'm here, just a quick one for Joe being as finance ... can we have Gala Night back? No? Oh right ... well thanks everyone!

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Now we know how to keep her quiet!

<Laughter>

The next Cronin Clasp winner, Nick Cardy, from Rampton.

Nick deserves to be awarded the Cronin Clasp due to his ongoing work and dedication to Rampton Branch POA. He has been a member of the POA since starting at Rampton in 1980. He was asked and agreed to join the committee by the great man himself, Steve Oxby. Nick agreed and proved to be an asset to the branch. Nick was elected as branch secretary and has continued in his role for the last 17 years, seeing many changes and challenges in his role to the committee. When Steve died this left a big hole in the committee and Nick. Nick knew these would be hard shoes to fill. He supported the committee and members through this difficult time, holding the fort until a new branch chair was elected. In 2012 Nick decided to go part-time, but this never happened. His phone continues to ring or ping for support and advice, not only from members but also committees for his support. He's always there to give guidance and advice. I know this is true as it's normally myself sending him a text. He's always there with the support and never turns anyone away, even when on leave. The branch committee members are proud to work alongside Nick and thank him for his loyalty, commitment and dedication to the branch. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nick for his encouragement and support when standing for Branch Chair in January this year, even believing that a girl could do the job. I look forward to being mentored by Nick and working with him to move the branch forward and recruit members.

And that was written by Karen Henry, Rampton Branch Chair.

Nick Cardy, Cronin Clasp winner.

<Applause>

NICK CARDY – CRONIN CLASP WINNER: It's even got me name on it! I've still got tears in my eyes from the Mabel Hempton Awards. Firstly ... we volunteer to do this job. The awards are nice and I thank the committee, NEC, for putting me forward, it's a great honour. I'd also like to thank my wife, two daughters, for turning up today ... how you got the day off! But ...

I've served under a lot of chairmen, I've always wanted to be Branch Secretary, I've never wanted to step up ... Steve taught me well ... and hopefully I'll carry on doing that as long as I'm able. Thanks again to Karen, who I've got to say and acknowledge she's the first Chairwoman at Rampton Hospital in its 80th year, so I think that's an achievement in itself. Thanks Karen, for stepping up, and hopefully I'll be here next year and carry on with the business as usual, but ... thanks again everybody. It's a great honour.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Next award goes to David Eadie, HMP Glenochil. Time in office, 35 uninterrupted years! Final post, Local Branch Treasurer. Dave joined the service in 1984, quickly starting off his union involvement with the Scottish POA as the Health and Safety Representative and then moved on to be the local branch finance officer, prior to the amalgamation with the POA. After the amalgamation Dave remained on the local branch committee as the Treasurer. During this time he has attended Conferences on several occasions as part of the security team. Maybe too many to count, some of the places being Pitlochry, Portsmouth and Southport. Dave has been a rock for the members over the years. He has been an active and passionate member, giving guidance and holding the purse strings close. His knowledge is second to none and he will be sorely missed by both the local branch committee and members.

During Dave's time he had the honour of being presented with the Malky Still Memorial Trophy in 2006 by the Scottish National Committee, an award for him that was extremely humbling and one he remains extremely proud of.

Dave sends his apologies for not being in attendance today to receive the Cronin Clasp and wishes to extend his thanks to you all. He has enjoyed his time in both the service and his involvement with the POA Scotland. He remains at HMP Glenochil part-time as a relief officer instructor and is enjoying his partial retirement, and remains a loyal member of the POA Scotland. In Dave's own words, 'That's all folks.'

And that was written by Claire Macintyre. And I suspect someone will be collecting this on Dave's behalf.

David Eadie, Cronin Clasp winner.

<Applause>

Here she is – keep clapping!

<Applause>

CLAIRE MACINTYRE, BRANCH SECRETARY, GLENOCHIL ON BEHALF OF DAVID EADIE – CRONIN CLASP WINNER: Wasn't sure if I had to speak or no, so we thought just to make it up and say thanks and get it up you – so that's for him!

<Laughter>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Don't know where you're going. You're going to be required again in a minute!

James Freeburn, from Glenochil, is our next Cronin Clasp winner. Time in office, 20 combined years. Final post, PLR and local Branch Secretary. Jimmy joined the union as a member in 1991 and has remained until this day a loyal member. He became an elected local branch committee member in 2002 and was appointed the Union Learning Rep for a term, followed by the Chair for a term, 2010-2015. 2017-February 2019, Jimmy took up his last post as the Secretary. During his tenure in his various roles, Jimmy attended his first Scottish Conference in 2004 as an observer, and from there realised that it was certainly the road for him. 2005-2010 he attended the Scottish Conference and the National Conference of Security, which gave him the knowledge and insight to move forward and attend both Scottish and National Conferences as the local branch committee Chair and Secretary. Jimmy has served his time on the local branch committee diligently and with the best interests of the membership at the forefront of his mind at all times, helping those in the service through some of the toughest times in their lives, both in and out of work. As Jimmy would say, 'I'll get right on that.'

And that was written by Claire Macintyre. So, on behalf of James Freeburn, let's award this Cronin Clasp to Glenochil.

CLAIRE MACINTYRE, BRANCH SECRETARY, GLENOCHIL ON BEHALF OF JAMES FREEBURN – CRONIN CLASP WINNER: He's really sorry to not be here today. He's actually on a cruise and said that was far more important, so thanks on his behalf. I took over from him and he told me that he'd never thought he'd see a bird in the job, doing this job! But (inaudible) and get on with it. And that was that. To which he failed to answer my next phone call so I take it this is me getting on with it!

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: The next Cronin Clasp award goes to Clive Fisher, HMP Swansea.

Clive joined the Prison Service in 1985, and arrived at Swansea by the Sea shortly after. He was voted on to the POA committee by his colleagues within a year or so of arriving at Swansea. Within two years of his inclusion on the committee, he found himself the Chair of a rather disenchanted branch. Clive held the position of Chair for over 25 years. The fact that the current POA membership at Swansea stands at 99.5% of eligible staff is largely testament to Clive's drive, leadership and example. Clive is a quiet and thoughtful man; he does not waste words unnecessarily. He measures his words carefully and when he speaks, people are inclined to listen. Along with his vast knowledge of all things related to health and safety, working conditions, industrial relations and investigations, Clive is a fearsome negotiator. Indeed Clive has sought, over many years, to educate successive management teams in the art of industrial relations. In this he has been very successful and it would be a foolish Governor that did not grant Clive the begrudging respect that this success demands. In this modern world of blame culture, there are many staff who over the years have found themselves under investigation who can thank Clive for saving their jobs. Clive has always made himself available to staff in work and at home. Always happy to answer his phone to advise those in difficulty. A number of years ago, whilst lying in a hospital bed, 12 hours after having a knee replacement operation, he was offering key advice to a young committee man who had been left holding the reins – while lying in a hospital bed recovering from his knee op. Those two young committee men under his guidance went on to become the Chair and Secretary of a very healthy Swansea branch. Clive is clearly a man of great intellect and drive. He is also a man of high principle. If Clive had put the effort into furthering his career that he put into his POA work, there is no doubt that Clive would have reached the highest heights. It says a lot about Clive that he has chosen to continue his POA work for so long and to his own detriment. I would want Clive to know that, as some compensation for his sacrifices, he is held in the highest respect by all who have worked with him and been represented by him.

And that was written by Tony Thomas.

Cronin Clasp winner, Clive Fisher.

CLIVE FISHER – CRONIN CLASP WINNER: Well, where do you start? Turn up at Conference ... no speech, no mandate ... it's going to turn into a BAFTA award I think with all the thank yous! Thank you to all of you, for awarding the (inaudible). Thank you NEC especially for accepting my nomination – sorry, Tony's nomination, and awarding me the Cronin Clasp. Big thanks to my wife, and big thank you as well to my youngest daughter, who's birthday I missed every year. I'll make it up to her, I'll make it up to her! One big thank you I've got to say because this is a tremendous year for me as a Welshman – a certain man by the name of Gatland, but I won't mention the Six Nations, honestly, alright?

<Laughter>

But we will look forward to the British Lions Tour I'm sure, together, they can play as well as we work, and hopefully we'll come back champions. Thank you all.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Next Cronin Clasp goes to Tommy Traynor, HMP Belmarsh.

Tom moved with his family to South Africa for work in 1984, returning to London in 1986, joining the Prison Service in 1988, starting at Brixton. He then moved on to Belmarsh in June 1991. In 1995 Tom joined the committee of Belmarsh and by 1996 Tom became Chair, until 2010, when he retired. Belmarsh is a very complex prison which has had many issues over the years. In Tom's time there was a battle over staff shortages and High Cat A Escort commitments. Phil Wheatly at the time was the Area Manager, during a very difficult time, and Tom and Phil nearly came to blows in reception one morning. However, later on Phil apologised to Tom. Another highlight for Tom while at Belmarsh was when the branch had to make a stand regarding the Cat A Escort commitment. The committee embarked on a plan of action not to run care TOIL by going on escort. Belmarsh reception became a car park for prison vans as nothing moved because lunch reliefs could not be provided. This highlighted the problem to ministerial level by many disgruntled high court judges and the issues were addressed. More problems occurred when one day 72 staff were out on escort when only 18 were profiled. Luckily, Peter Atherton was in to see this. There was no regime at all. This enabled a complete reprofile to ensure more staff were available to escort. Whatever the issue, Tom led from the front, routinely challenging Governors who were acting in a questionable way, turning up policies in meetings when they weren't being implemented in the spirit in which they were written, and walking out of meetings, giving Governors time to reflect on what they were doing. Tom could be described as a principled man with high moral standards. If he thought something was wrong, he would stand up and fight against it. A true trade unionist and a fighter for people's freedoms, Tommy would have been a credit to any organisation. Luckily, the POA had him. Branch officials do an extraordinary job, a difficult job, and a select few whilst doing their job also leave a legacy which remains for generations. Tom left a legacy at Belmarsh, which is why he is nominated.

That was written by Bill Buparai. Tommy Traynor, Cronin Clasp winner.

<Applause>

Collecting it on behalf of Tommy is the scribe himself, Bill.

BILL BUPARAI – BELMARSH: I will say a few words. Chair, Conference, NEC, it is an honour receiving this award on behalf of Tommy Traynor. He was first nominated for this award in 2009 when he was retiring. He has since been nominated every year since 2009 and it was my plan to continue nominating Tom for the next 28 years until I retire. That probably says a lot about Tom. It only took 10 years for the general secretary, chair and NEC to get fed up of seeing the same application turn up on that desk each and every year. Big thanks to Nicola Hubert for assisting and processing our application every year. Finally, on behalf of Tommy Traynor – good branch officials do good work, great branch officials do good work and leave a legacy. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIRMAN: This next winner – I haven't read any of these before the awards. I haven't got a clue what this is going to read like and when you know what branch it is from you will understand why I have just said that. Pete Killeen, HMP Albany.

Pete Killeen started his career at HMP Frankland in September 1980 and has remained a loyal POA member ever since. He has worked his way around the jails of his beloved North East in various roles. In his time, he has been a bricklayer and a PEI, and has worked his way up to the dizzy height of a principal officer, now a CM. Pete also worked in some of the North East's specialist units dealing with some of the service's more challenging individuals and was thought of highly by both staff and prisoners he met along the way. He has served on many POA committees, including the first at HMP Home House. Pete was part of that first POA committee established at Home House in 1992. He was part of a committee that were instrumental in forming local agreements and safe systems of work that stood and protected members for around 15 years. In his time on the committee at Home House, the prison was under severe scrutiny, being what was anticipated to be one of the last publicly financed and publicly run establishments. Pete worked alongside Colin Moses and was part of a very effective committee that protected the livelihoods and careers of many POA members. In April 2007, Pete relocated back to the Isle of Wight, having previously worked at HMP Parkhurst and started at HMP Albany. After a brief settling-in period, he joined the Albany POA committee. After the Isle of Wight was clustered in 2009, Pete bounced between Albany and Parkhurst, which is now called HMP Isle of Wight, several times, but remained a loyal and trusted committee member at Albany. His advice, support and guidance has been invaluable.

He has helped in various capacities whilst being a committee member, more recently as treasurer here at Albany. Every branch committee needs a Pete Killeen – a steady, knowledgeable, experienced and calm individual, always willing to share those qualities with anyone. He has often been a voice over my shoulder saying, ‘Hang on a minute, fella. Step back and think,’ or, ‘Well done, fella. Good job.’ While I am wrestling with a dilemma, I know I can pick up the phone any time and he will listen and give me some straight, honest advice and bring clarity to the situation. He has supported us at a number of conferences and area meetings, often in his own time and at his own expense. He has decided to leave us and return to where he started at HMP Frankland, where we wish him well. It has been an honour and a privilege to have served with him. Very often it is the branch chairs and secretaries that get noticed and the committee members are often overlooked, but without them and their support we as chairs and secretaries would struggle. Good luck in the future, my friend and colleague Pete Killeen.

Written by Neil Yule, branch chair, Albany, supported by Glen Holmes, branch chair, Parkhurst. It gives me great pleasure to give the Cronin Clasp to Pete Killeen.

<Applause>

PETE KILLEEN – FRANKLAND: It is not very often you get a chance to actually address Conference. My very first virgin address to Conference was done many years ago down in London at Westminster Hall. It was actually criticising the top table for getting expenses of cars. Everybody said, ‘Yes, you should have them.’ We were mandated, Colin and myself, to go down and say, ‘No, you shouldn’t.’ I haven’t had the pleasure of being up at the rostrum since so that was the start, and this is probably the finish. I don’t really deserve this. I work for the POA committee, for the union, because I love it. This is the legacy you are laying out today for the future. We have got to progress, we have got to move on. I have had some great times with the POA. I remember sitting at Home House and we had a Governor – I can’t remember his name, Colin, but he was a chain-smoker. We absolutely tortured him at every meeting because he kept, ‘Can we have a break, can we have a break?’ Then Colin would pipe up again. I will say I probably spent the shortest time as a committee member before becoming the chairman at Home House ever. I think it was a week on the committee and then I was asked to go as chairman. I have enjoyed every moment of it. This is a shock, although it is a privilege. I thank you very much. Colin, I continue to have conversations over football with you until we come good. We will come back. Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues ... overcome. Thank you very much. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIRMAN: And the last award of the Cronin Clasp goes to someone very dear to me who I owe a great debt to. Mick Devereux, HMP Liverpool.

Mick Devereux has been part of the POA at Liverpool for longer than anyone can remember. In fact, most of our members were still in primary school when Mick was first elected on to the committee. Mick has been a permanent fixture at Conference for many a year, usually providing security, but for the last few years he has represented Liverpool as a delegate. Conference is one of the highlights of Mick’s year and there aren’t many hostels in Southport whose doorstep he hasn’t darkened on the pretext of networking on behalf of Liverpool. Branch accounts will bear this out. Mick has been a branch secretary to four different chairs. Fortunately, all the different chairs have been very understanding, as Mick’s technical skills are legendary. Mention copy and paste, word document or save as and you might as well be speaking Chinese, but give him a slate and a piece of chalk or an abacus, then he takes some beating. Even though he might lack in technical ability, he more than makes up for in other areas. He is what you want as the branch secretary: knowledgeable, experienced and level-headed. Mick never panics and will always be there with a common-sense solution to any problem, respected by his peers and management alike. Mick is going part-time in the near future and as such has decided to step down from the committee. However, typical of the man, Mick is still there for the new committee members, offering advice and guidance should they need it. Mick Devereux stepping down from the Liverpool committee is a huge loss, not only locally but for the POA in general. He epitomises everything that you want in a branch official and has been for a long time, and as such deserves to be honoured by Conference with the award of the Cronin Clasp. Mick has quite often been my voice of reason. He has quite often been there for me supporting me with his knowledge, experience – calming me down when I was about to hit the roof.

On behalf of Liverpool, on behalf of Conference, on behalf of the POA, it gives me great pleasure to thank you, Mick ‘the Kingmaker’ Devereux, Cronin Clasp winner.

<Applause>

MICK DEVEREUX – LIVERPOOL: Christ, I never thought I would speak at Conference. I have been avoiding it for the last 10 years. What can I say? Humble is the word. These nice things said about me. I have worked with some right beauts – I mean chairmen – over the years. Mark, Terry, Chris Donovan, who is probably the bravest man ever, and obviously my wife Jackie, who has supported me, my children who have supported me, and the committee. The two new lads we have got now are taking Liverpool in the right direction. We have always been a strong branch, we always will be, and I am proud to have represented Liverpool branch, but there is one person I would like to mention. He is not with us now, unfortunately, but a man called Paul Leigh. He got me on this road to the POA and I love him for it. Paul, if you’re up there, I’ve got one too now. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Conference. That brings us to the end of the awards. We can reconvene at 2:00. See you at 2:00. Thank you.

POA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th May 2019

Wednesday 15th May – Afternoon Session

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Conference. If I can bring you to order and ask you to take your seats. Thank you, Conference. We will start to move business. Conference, sat next to me is Imran Hussain MP, shadow prisons minister. Imran addressed our march and rally on 20 March in London. I have met Imran a few times – very supportive of the POA, fully understands your working conditions and what we all go through on a daily basis. I am sitting in the Central Methodist Hall, got a piece of paper in front of me, and as the guest speakers are approaching and taking their seats in the front waiting to take their turn, I am writing their names down and I see Imran Hussain. I will get him on after John McDonnell. John McDonnell is his boss, by the way. John McDonnell introduces him as Imran Khan – prime minister of Pakistan. I am sitting there thinking, I am sure that is Imran Hussain. I am absolutely positive that is Imran Hussain, but if John McDonnell, his boss, has said that's Imran Khan I'm going with Imran Khan. You can guess the rest, can't you? I introduce Imran Hussain as Imran Khan because his boss has just put my mind in doubt even though I have met him a few times, but he took it in good humour. He got up and he probably delivered – well, he did deliver – the best speech and the most supportive speech on the day. I am going to read out this little sheet that Imran has produced himself. He is probably after a round of applause after this, aren't you, Imran? It is a privilege to introduce our next speaker this afternoon, Imran Hussain MP. Imran sits as the Labour Member of Parliament for Bradford East after his election in 2015. In July 2017 he was appointed as a shadow minister for justice covering prisons and probation. As a proud trade unionist, Imran has spent most of his life fighting against injustice, and standing up for the rights of working people. He is a friend of prison officers and the POA and he joins us today fresh from attacking the Tories' ideological plans for privatisation of our prison system in Parliament yesterday. Let me please welcome on stage – and Imran, you are always welcome to the POA Conference – please welcome Imran Hussain, shadow prisons minister.

IMRAN HUSSAIN MP: Thank you Conference, thank you Steve, and thank you Mark for inviting me here today for this, the POA's eightieth annual conference. It is an absolute privilege and honour to join friends and comrades here today. As Mark was telling that story, what he forgot to mention ... Everything he said was factual. What he forgot to mention was two further things happened after I left that conference, which perhaps even they don't know – two significant further changes. One was I started receiving much more press interest from Pakistan, which my office continues to deal with. Thanks for that, Mark. The second is that the parliamentary cricket team now wants me to play.

<Applause>

Now, who said there was no benefits of rubbing shoulders with prison officers? Can I start today by saying that it is always a pleasure to be addressing fellow trade unionists. I believe that by working as a collective force there is little that they cannot achieve in the workplace or even in society. After all, it is trade unions that have fought hard for and won some of the most fundamental rights in the workplace, which today we take for granted but which 100 years ago would have been unthinkable. It is trade unions which are the beating heart of the labour movement, having jointly formed the Labour Party and playing a key role in political parties representing ordinary working people right across the world, and it is trade unions that have the expertise, the knowledge and the experience to organise their workers and deliver a better deal, but it is also trade unions and the working people who they represent who face bitter attacks by this government. Since coming to power, they have watered down employment rights, tried to erode collective bargaining that increased standards, and imposed illegal employment tribunal fees.

Conference, an attack on working people is an attack on us all, and today we tell the Tories that they cannot carry on attacking trade unions, they cannot carry on attacking the rights of working people in whatever industry they work in. That is a message we send loud and clear from this conference today. These senseless attacks by a government more concerned with propping up and giving hand-outs to their rich mates are seen all too clearly in the justice system. Since 2010, under the austerity agenda, this Tory government have cut the Ministry of Justice and the Prison Service to the bone, with more cuts to the MoJ than any other government department across Whitehall. The scale of these cuts is eye-watering, as by the end of the next financial year, the MoJ's budget will have been cut by a colossal 40 per cent. It is not rational to cut budgets to such an extreme level with no evidence that suggests a system so completely starved of funding can deliver a better service, so it becomes increasingly clear that this is not an evidence-based policy but an ideologically based one, with the Tories driving down budgets so they can give tax cuts to their rich mates and creating a justice emergency that becomes so bad they bring in the private sector to try and fix it, allowing them to break and carve it up for their big business friends and donors at the expense of staff and the expense of the public. This is despite the failings that we have seen of G4S, Carillion, Sodexo and Interserve.

Conference, austerity cuts are having a huge impact on the justice system across the board as it continues to be run down, with hundreds of courts closed across the country, limiting people's ability to access justice, massive cuts to youth offending teams that help steer vulnerable young people away from a life of crime, restricted access to legal aid, and failed reforms of our probation system that is no longer fit for purpose. These cuts are unsustainable, as no department can survive after such huge losses, and they are undermining the very ability of the justice service to perform its key function of defending people's rights and keeping the public safe. The right to access justice is too important, the right to a safe society too vital, and today we tell the Tories that the cuts to our justice system must end and they cannot get away with their plans for privatisation in our justice system.

Conference, whilst these cuts have been felt right across the justice system, it is in prisons where these ideological Tory cuts are doing the most damage. In recent years, violence across the whole prison estate has skyrocketed to record levels, putting staff and prisoners at serious risk of harm and in far too many cases actually subjecting them to serious harm, with the latest safety in custody figures showing that the number of assaults in 2018 rose 16 per cent on 2017 figures to over 34,000, and that the number of incidents of self-harm rose by 25 per cent to over 55,000, with the

number of cases which required hospital treatment also rising to a record high. All these <inaudible> distressing for prison officers. It is you who are the first to discover a body, who cut them down, who clean up blood after an assault, a suicide or an act of self-harm, whilst rising drug use and a mental health epidemic, with prisons used as a dumping ground when there are no mental health beds available in the community, are partly to blame. But these are not the only two factors behind its rise. The cause is the relentless government cuts. The blame for the violence lies squarely with this government. Staff are also finding themselves not just observers of violence, but the victims of it.

Since the Tories took office we have seen a shocking number of assaults on staff because, quite frankly, you are outnumbered on the balconies by prisoners and because you don't have the necessary protective equipment. In the 12 months to December 2018, there were over 10,000 assaults against staff, which equates to 27 every day and just over one assault on a member of prison staff every hour, every day of the year. Now by the end of this three-day conference, that means there will have been over 80 assaults on your colleagues in prisons. Conference, let us be clear. These are not minor incidents of violence. It is more than just scrapes and bruises. It can be and is extremely serious. Just recently, a new prison officer at HMP Nottingham, a prison which should be receiving additional resources due to its status as a prison subject to the urgent notification protocol, had his throat cut. It is not just assaults that are driving down the level of safety in our prisons as there are far too many deaths, particularly preventable deaths, taking place behind bars. In the 12 months to March 2019, there were 317 deaths in custody, of which 87 were self-inflicted, and both of these were a rise on the previous year. The number is 317. Too many. But cuts to budgets are stretching staff and services to breaking point. Now, I want to be firm on this. A death in prison should not be commonplace. It should not be accepted by ministers, prison bosses or even staff as part of everyday prison life. That is not the system that I want to see, and I know – and I am sure it is not the system that you want to see, but under this government the prison workforce has been cruelly and ruthlessly slashed, with thousands of staff lost. Back in 2010 there were over 33,000 staff in the prison service, with 24,000 serving as band 3-5 front line officers, but this has since fallen to just 28,000 and 22,000 respectively as the government turned their cuts on staff. With such a high number of officers lost – close to 7,000 front-line officers between 2010 and 2015 – it was inevitable that violence would increase. It took until years later for the government to realise the horrific damage that they had done to prisons and put in place recruitment targets to return prison officer numbers to 2010 levels, but unless they implement a retention plan to keep experienced officers and stop them from leaving, it will not be enough. This issue of retention is a serious one, as whilst almost 90 per cent of prison officers had three or more years' experience in 2010, it is now down to just 60 per cent, with many experienced officers needlessly driven out of the service.

Now whilst I absolutely applaud the dedication and commitment of new prison officers joining the service, the simple fact is that unlike previous joiners they will not enjoy the same level of handed-down experience from longer-serving officers, and it restricts the ability of new officers to develop and perfect their jail craft, which puts them and their colleagues at risk and leaves them at a disadvantage when against a prisoner who has spent years inside. When we see the conditions that prison officers face, it is however little wonder that so many have chosen to leave the Prison Service within their first year or to join another profession after years of service. Like many public-sector professionals, prison officers spent many years subject to a pay freeze and then a pay cap forced upon them by the Treasury, who whilst taking with one hand from prison officers, police officers, nurses and firefighters gave to the rich. Even with the pay cap lifted, prison officers are unfairly disadvantaged and underpaid when compared to their public-sector counterparts. When I recently met with your Chair, Mark, and also... Can I say at this point, actually, can I applaud the work that the leadership of your union do? Both Mark and Steve and other comrades who sit on the front bench there fight your corner day in, day out. I want to take this opportunity to put my appreciation for both Mark and Steve and the rest of your leadership, for the continued efforts and work they do for you. Give them a massive round of applause.

<Applause>

In one of my most recent meetings with Mark, we spoke at length about prison officer pay and how officers feel undervalued and underappreciated by the public, because unlike other public-sector employees, the public don't see prison officers at work and only notice when something goes wrong. Now, let me be absolutely clear. Prison officers are a front-line service working in very difficult conditions and prison officers deserve to be paid accordingly and fairly. That is a clear statement that I wish to make here today.

<Applause>

Not only are prison officers working for less, they are being asked to work for longer, up to the age of 68. This is quite simply outrageous.

<Applause>

Being a prison officer means being in strong physical condition that is beyond that of many people who reach 68 years old and over, yet the government think it is a good idea to put someone who should be enjoying their twilight years with friends and families in conditions that at times can be very difficult. I don't blame officers who leave whilst they still can. What all this amounts to, Conference, what all this amount to is a lack of respect by this government for the work that prison officers do. During the debate yesterday, the Justice Secretary spoke of creating parity for probation officers with comparable staff, but we need to see the same parity for prison officers. Attacks on prison officers cannot go on. Running down your numbers cannot go on. The financial squeeze cannot go on. And, Conference, today again we tell the Tories that they need to treat prison officers with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

<Applause>

Yet, as I told the POA rally in Westminster earlier this year, these are already things that you know. You don't need me to tell you about the soaring violence in our prisons. You don't need me to tell you about the real emergency situations that you have to deal with on a daily basis. You don't need

me to tell you about the rising levels of assaults on staff, the colleagues who have had enough, the pay that is too low, the retirement age that is too high, and the agenda from the government that is just plain wrong. What you want to know is will things get better? What can we do about it and what will a Labour government do? Friends, Conference, a Labour government working with prison officers and the POA will develop and deliver a real retention strategy that shows prison officers that they are valued. We will give you the respect that you deserve as valued public servants, and that means paying you fairly, with real training. By investing in staff, we will also help end the violence that is endemic in our prisons, putting boots back on balconies where they belong. We will also end the scandal of prison officers being forced to work long after their counterparts in the police force, and we are clear that 68 really is too late. Conference, as prison officers you have every right to be proud of your profession and you have every right to be proud of your hard-working, campaigning trade union, who have stood up for you against the cruel Tory government. Today we tell the Justice Secretary and his ministers, we send them a clear message from this conference, that they cannot continue to neglect justice and they cannot carry on with the emergency in our prisons. Conference, it has been a pleasure to join you and show solidarity today. Thank you very much.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: There you go, Conference. You heard it for yourself. The only way we are going to improve our terms and conditions is by a change of government. At the march and rally, Labour committed to returning our retirement age to 60, to restoring our trade union rights and giving us the right to strike back, and to returning the private-sector jails back into the public sector with a commitment not to continue with the disaster which is outsourcing and privatising absolutely everything in the public sector. We are only going to get that under a Labour government. Imran, it has been a pleasure. You are always welcome. We have got a little token of our appreciation. It is a pair of wicket-keeping gloves.

<Applause>

Conference, Imran is a busy man. He has got to get off. He has got some spinning practice later. We will continue with the order. We are now on Conference motion 37, which is an NEC motion. Do we have a seconder, please? Wymott, thank you. Speaking on behalf of the NEC is Joe Simpson.

Motion 37

Conference accept Conference Paper 2 in relation to increase in subscriptions.

NEC

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, moving motion 37, Conference paper 2 for and on behalf of the National Executive. Conference, the lifeblood of any trade union is the subscriptions that come in from its members. We have already passed motions this week that's going to see an increase in the expenditure of this trade union. In order for the POA to balance its income and expenditure whilst facing up to the challenges post-Conference, an increase in subscriptions is vital. Conference, we believe that that increase should be £2 for three years. Why is that? As we all know, we have been shackled by the anti-trade union legislation and we have been since 1994. At times, we have been going out ... Can I call it strike? Yes? Thanks.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Not with the employer at the back of the room. It is protest action, for god's sake.

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: ... been out on protest action, which they call illegal. We are in court and we have got a permanent injunction. That permanent injunction means that we can't go out. For the first time ever, a High Court judge turned around and said to the Prison Service, 'Why do you keep coming back here for an injunction? Bring them back here for contempt of court.' Contempt of court, colleagues, means fines – big fines. Therefore, as you heard from the General Secretary yesterday, we have got a lot of liabilities that are coming along, and we need to be in a sound financial position in order to make sure that we are ready for it. We are slowly starting to build the membership up again and, despite that, we are still just balancing the books. Then when we look at the information technology ... Conference, the information technology when I became an FTO was a pigeon dovecot and two cans and a piece of string. I would say the IT knowledge on the National Executive was zero. We have needed to upgrade everything that we do to keep you informed, to ensure that our membership can engage with us through our website, through the members' portal, because once that members' portal becomes available they will be able to look after their own membership, they will be able to look after their own and check up on where their legal process is going to be. Conference, that has been a big expense to this trade union. The legal challenges and costs. Yes, every time we take the employer to court, it costs money. Conference, the Prison Service, every time we take them to court, they say, 'Why are you doing that? Why don't you come and talk to us?' Because it needs for us to take you to court for you to want to come and talk to us. Why is that? This is all <inaudible> coming away from that and the POA legal action as well. Colleagues, we do cover our members, especially when they are taken to magistrates and when they are taken to Crown court. This trade union indemnifies our members and it costs money – in order to keep going forward, and as a trade union it is only right that we carry that on. Conference, now we come to something which is very close to my heart: training – education. The whole idea of the trade union movement is to organise, educate, agitate. That is it. Without that education, we can't agitate. Then we look at it. We train 90 of our branch officials every year. 90. Every time we run course, we run two courses initially and one advanced where we are still playing catch-up over the years. It is the intention of the National Executive to introduce a health and safety reps' course for our members because the TUC aren't delivering. Our members are not getting the training that they need and deserve to help them represent our members in the field, and that is vital for any trade union. Therefore, Conference, the NEC ask you to support a £2 per month levy for three years to ensure the union is financially stable. Conference, please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Joe. Would the seconder like to address Conference?

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Thank you Mr Chairman. NEC, Conference, to quote Cicero, the first century BC Roman orator,

'The sinews of war are infinite money.' The NEC are not asking for infinite money. They are asking for £2 a month. If we want to properly protect our members, if we want safer working environments, if we want our arguments to be heard and our members to be protected through the courts, this costs money. It is as simple as that, so please support the motion.

JULIAN NEWBOLD – BRANCH CHAIR, LANCASTER FARMS: Chair, NEC, Conference, on behalf of my branch I ask that you reject this motion. My branch feel that an uplift in subscriptions by £2 per month is an excessive increase to accept in one rise and feel it would be a detriment to the membership, making it less attractive for existing members on a budget and for staff who are paid less and perhaps would have considered joining at the current subscription rate. Whilst my branch accepts the reasoning on Conference paper 2, it feels that a gradual rise in subscriptions could have been a more attractive alternative over a longer period of time. Please reject the motion.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to reject this motion. A lot of our members haven't had a pay rise in quite a number of years, and I mean a pay rise that doesn't meet the rate of inflation. Some of our members are now having to visit food banks to put food on the tables of their families and that is an outrageous position for anybody to be in, let alone us working the job that we do. By raising the subscription rate by £2 each month, I agree with the last speaker. That is an excessive amount of money that is going to put people off joining and may actually force some of our members into leaving our union. If that continues to happen, we will eventually reach the 50 per cent threshold potentially where we have less than 50 per cent of the workforce in the union, which would be catastrophic for us because that would take away bargaining rights. We would no longer function as a trade union at all, let alone being financially unstable. That is what they are saying. That is what the people behind me are saying: that we are financially unstable. Conference, our members are financially unstable. Our members are having to make sacrifices in their lives. If they have to make those sacrifices then we as a union have to make sacrifices as well. I was talking to a member a few months ago about how expensive the POA is becoming and I agree the POA is a great union – we provide a lot of support, we campaign well and when it matters we stick together, and we fight for what we know is right. But this member that I was talking to told me that over the past five years the cost of a tin of baked beans has gone up by 25 pence, which meant that he couldn't buy Heinz anymore unless it was on special offer. That sounds ridiculous. It is not ridiculous. That is the real situation that people out there are facing at the moment. It is not just the Prison Service, it is always. This shows how desperate our members are for money. Conference, I urge you to reject the motion.

<Applause>

JOHN SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: Chair, NEC, Conference, also seeking rejection on this motion for everything that has been said before – reference food banks, people going to food banks. We have heard that. People will leave. I have been told that by my membership. If this goes up £2, I am definitely going to be losing members when I return back to Hewell with this if this is passed. We can't afford it to be passed. It is a 12.5 per cent hike. I haven't had a 12.5 hike in my wages. I haven't had a 6 per cent, haven't had a 3 per cent. The last speaker was already speaking about our pay freezes and what we haven't achieved and what we haven't got and how unfair it is, and I think this is totally unfair. We have just passed the Cuffe Report to be accepted. The Cuffe Report states quite clearly that we should be looking into a tiered system. A tiered system would protect a lot of the lower-paid people that we represent – OSGs, cleaners, private sector, hospitals – all on different pays, all on different sectors. All this money needs to be saved. All we are going to do with this £2 hike is alienate the lower-paid people that we represent in this job. It is hard enough trying to get new members and cajoling them to join the POA as it is at £15.60 a month. To tell them it is going to be £17.60 – I am sorry. Please reject this motion.

<Applause>

GLEN HOLMES – PARKHURST: Chair, NEC, Conference, I am asking you to reject this motion, not for any other reason than asking you to support motion 38. The reason is that this one is only for three years. Are we going to be stable after three years? I don't think so, whereas 38 covers it for as long as the NEC want it to be covered. Also, this is going to be used, it is ringfenced for certain things. On 38, use your money on what you want as long as it's not cars. We don't really care, but to be honest you have got other unions – the wife is in a union. They are paying £30 a month and they don't get anywhere near the cover we get or the support from their top table. Please reject the motion and support 38.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glen.

PHIL TUCK – CARDIFF: NEC, Conference, mandated by my branch to come and seek rejection for this motion. Who are the services in the grip, I suppose, if that is what you want to call it, but recruitment process? Cardiff, like other places, we are actually getting new staff in, but we are over-recruiting, which means that a lot of those staff end up on detached duty somewhere up and down the country. Speaking with some of those new members of staff, many of them reject the idea of joining the POA now, citing the cost of the membership subscriptions as their main reason in not doing so. The cost of subscriptions was also identified in the Cuffe Report, which we have already accepted this morning in its entirety, which I will quote. 'At several meetings and site visits, the issue of membership subscriptions came up on a regular basis. The overall feeling was that it was fundamentally wrong that members on lower incomes should be paying the same subscription rates as those members on higher incomes. This was felt to be a contributory factor in making membership recruitment a more difficult process.' Conference, this proposed increase in the monthly subscription rate, if only for three years, will I be sure force many more of my members as well as yours to leave the POA for what they see as a very expensive diary and something they can do without. Please reject.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Phil.

PHIL STANBRIDGE – DELEGTE, BELMARSH: Chair, NEC, Conference, first of all I think this should be a point of order because if you all turn to the Cuffe Report page 113, action number 2 – and I will read it out to you – 'Cuffe Report recommendation: complete the membership fees review and

report. Starting time frame: forthwith post-Conference upon acceptance of the Cuffe Report 2019. Completion time frame: November 2019. Responsibility: subcommittee on membership fees.' Basically, I think we should reject it, or the motion should fall and anything to do with increases in fees because there is already going to be a review, which we have all voted for in its entirety and it is there in black and white.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Phil, just for clarity for Conference, are you raising a point of order or are you just including that in your address?

PHIL STANBRIDGE – DELEGTE, BELMARSH: I will raise a point of order.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: As you have just quoted, post-Conference. We are in Conference so that would fall, that point of order.

PHIL STANBRIDGE – DELEGTE, BELMARSH: But still we have accepted this in its entirety, therefore it is still an active document.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: It is post-Conference.

PHIL STANBRIDGE – DELEGTE, BELMARSH: But, that is the actions on membership fees, isn't it?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Post-Conference, yes. You have raised a point of order and you have quoted from the Cuffe Report. The Cuffe Report comes into play and we enact it at the end of this Conference. We are still in session so there is no point of order.

PHIL STANBRIDGE – DELEGTE, BELMARSH: There is the ruling body there. They decide.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: I have just decided you haven't got a point of order. Thank you. Any more speakers? Thank you, Craig.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Asking you to reject. We had the Finance Report the other day. We are a little union, but we are doing pretty well. Steve told us the balance sheet went up by £199,000. Not bad. We do pay out. Our assets have increased by £158,000 and total assets now are equated at £4.47 million. Not bad at all. Yes, we pay money out, but I have got a little suggestion. Why don't they come to the branches and ask the branches for some money? They know what they have got. We put our accounts in every year, so ask the branches and take some money off us. I worked it out before. If this comes through, they are going to get two million quid. That is what they are going to get, and it is going to be ring-fenced. What happens if we don't use that money? What are we going to do with it? I know they will use it. IT – Steve brought up before on the Finance Report. They are saving £5,000 a year over the next three years. As we said before, the Cuffe Report said we don't know what there is going to be in savings. We know the Cuffe Report is going to cost us money, but we don't know what the savings are going to be. Surely we should wait till next year and then decide what is going to happen? It is simple. Put a levy on the branches. Ask the branches. It might not be popular with the branches, but I said to Cuffe at his meeting in Leeds, 'Why don't you come to the branches and ask for some of the money to finance the Cuffe Report?' It is not a hard thing to do. I am sure we have done it before. Or don't give our subscriptions back, keep it for two years. It doesn't bother Durham. Durham has got a few quid in the bank. I am sure a few others have. We spend nowt. We use everything the department give us. I photocopy, I use their stamps, I use their telephones, I use the lot. That is what you should do. You are entitled to it. They give us a lovely office. I have got a beautiful office. Use everything. While I'm on, everybody who has come to the Big Meeting, the club is open, it has got a new carpet, so don't walk around with that daft pint glass and spill beer on the new carpet.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Craig, I look forward to christening your new carpet at Durham Miners' – as long as you are buying.

RAY SOMERS – BRANCH CHAIR, ICE IMMIGRATION: Chair, NEC, Conference, seeking to reject the motion. My members have said that they can't and won't take a £2 increase like that. It is hard enough on them as it is, but to put that on top of them, they won't do it. Personally – and this is me – I am with you guys. I am here, I will fight with you and I stand for solidarity with you, but I can't sell that to my members and, unfortunately, as others have said, we will have an awful lot of people leaving because of it. Why? The first thing they say to us is, 'What does this union do for us as a private sector?' Do we stand together? It doesn't feel like it sometimes. Do we get any help? Sometimes it doesn't feel like it. Do we get the technology to help us and to just talk to my branch? It is in the process. Two years down the line, it is still in the process. Please reject. That is what my branch asks.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Ray. Any more speakers?

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Conference, NEC, Chair, urging you to reject this motion. As colleagues have previously stated, this is unsustainable for our members during this continuous period of austerity. Every year we are asked to agree to an increase in our subscriptions to save our union and I am led to believe that last year was for the Relief Fund. We are also currently affiliated to the GFTU, in which we also gain the access to their facilities, something which some of you may not know about. Assistant General Secretary Joe Simpson has referenced that the TUC aren't currently facilitating courses. Well, the GFTU are, so why aren't we making use of them? If we are not advertising stuff that we can use, what is the point in being affiliated to umbrella unions? Urging you to reject this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Bill, a Belmarsh delegate has already spoken on this.

BILL BUPARAI– BRANCH CHAIR, BELMARSH: Chair, the first delegate that spoke on a point of order, not on the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Was it a point of order or was it part of his speech? I am still trying to work it out. Seeing as it is you, Bill ...

BILL BUPARAI – BRANCH CHAIR, BELMARSH: Chair, Conference, NEC, the majority of the content in Conference paper 2 is concentrating on one element of the union, which is that we are a campaigning union. There are two strands of the union. There is the services element and then there is the campaigning side. We passed motion 34, which was the Cuffe Report, which deals with the services that the union provides and the structure of the union. Conference paper 2, if we don't support this motion, what it will do is cripple the union in the way in which we campaign. The reason why I am in the union, the reason why every delegate in this room is in the union, is because we are a union, or we should be a union, that campaigns and forces change. That is exactly what Conference paper 2 will do. I would pay £100 a month subscription for a union that campaigns rather than a union that just provides a service. Conference, please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Bill. Well done. You can go back to your tag team now. No more speakers, so replying is Joe Simpson.

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, in response. Hearing that some of our members are using food banks, that is absolutely disgraceful. From this NEC, that is disgraceful – but Conference, what is it going to be like if they also don't have a trade union in the workplace to protect them, to protect their health and safety, to ensure that we do campaign and get results for them? Yes, we are affiliated to the GFTU and, yes, people can go along and do health and safety courses. They can do shop stewards' courses. They are all there and we advertise them, but our members and our branch affiliates don't take that up. They much prefer to be taught about what happens in their sphere of work and that is why we run our branch officials' training. We say we passed the Cuffe Report and tiered subscriptions. Well, let's talk about tiered subscriptions. What tiered subscriptions means to any trade union, because any trade union in its element is there for the strong to look after the weak, so on a tiered subscription if we reduce the subscription for low-paid workers to £8, the £7 that is missing off that has got to go somewhere else so it goes to the people who earn more. That is tiered subscriptions. Be careful what you wish for. It doesn't mean to say that you are going to be paying the same subscription now and the low-paid workers are going to be paying £8. It doesn't work like that. You still need to balance the books and bring in the same level of finance as what you would in order to allow people to join the union. And why do people join a union? They join it for the protection, because I will tell you something now. I didn't join it for a diary. I wouldn't pay £15 a month for the diary that came out this year. Would you? I'll tell you what I pay £15 a month for. I pay £15 a month because I have got you behind me when I go into negotiations. I have got the 27,000 people behind me when I go in and talk to the scheme advisory board on your pensions. Conference, Belmarsh hit the nail on the head. We are and have been in the past a servicing trade union. We need to become a campaigning trade union and we need to go out there. You have just heard from the shadow minister saying the work that this National Executive and our branch officials are doing. That is because we have the finances in order to be able to do it. Conference, please support the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Joe. We will take it to the vote, Conference. All those in favour of this motion please show. All those against. The motion is lost.

Motion 38, Parkhurst. Do we have a seconder for Parkhurst? Last chance? Haverigg. Thank you Haverigg. I am happy to answer your question.

Motion 38

That there is an increase in monthly subscriptions for all members of this Union who pay subs to be set by this NEC of no less than £2 per month to insure the future financial stability of this Union.

PARKHURST

GLEN HOLMES – BRANCH SECRETARY, PARKHURST: Just asking for clarification. If the last one has just fallen, that we are not accepting a subscription rise, surely 38 should fall?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: It is a completely different motion because ours was a levy for a set amount of time and I am sure the mover of the motion will explain all. Thank you. Glen?

GLEN HOLMES – BRANCH SECRETARY, PARKHURST: Chair, NEC, Conference, I think we know where this is going. I will do my best. £2. Less than 7p a day. It can be used wherever the NEC feel it should be used. Let's just put a little bit of fact into this. Over the last two years on the Isle of Wight we have had 10 members of staff die. £50,000. We haven't put £50,000 into the NEC. We haven't put £50,000 anywhere. We are actually saying, you have got to be in the job for nearly 27 years to pay your £5,000 in without anything else that we do, without anything else that the members get, without the support from the solicitors, without the support from the NEC. You are on call 24 hours a day, so really for the £2 that we are paying, 7p a day, we get a hell of a lot. £30 some unions are paying; some members are paying in different unions. £30 a month and we are complaining about £2 more. Please support the motion. Let's not be silly.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glen. Any more speakers on this motion? Responding for the NEC, Mick Pimblett.

MICK PIMBLETT – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, basically what has already been said previously by Joe and the other delegates. Speaking in support of the motion for an increase of £2 to the subscriptions. I think for this union to go forward on a sound footing post-Conference, especially with the decisions that have been made at Conference regarding Cuffe and about challenging health and safety legislation, that all will come at a cost, so please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Mick. Any right to reply, Parkhurst? Straight to the vote then. All those in favour of this motion, please show. Against. Thank you. That is lost.

Motion 39, Elmley. Secunder for Elmley please? Feltham.

Motion 39

Conference instruct the NEC to explain the reason for the lay members of the Executive Committee to vote themselves employees of the POA.

ELMLEY

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, the motion reads: Conference instruct the National Executive Committee (NEC) to explain the reason for the lay members of the Executive Commission to vote themselves employees of the POA.

I would like to just point out I know that a lot of people are going to think this is about an Elmley member of staff and that it has come from him, and it hasn't. I am not going to mention that person's name. I am not even going to mention that person as much as I can. There is evidence pertinent that he has told me about, but this has got nothing to do with him. This was raised by a different member of Elmley staff. They came to me, they told me they wanted to raise this motion, we had a branch meeting, now we are here. Now I am asking for my voice to be heard. The history behind this motion is very important, so please listen carefully, Conference. The rules we set here are very important. This Executive behind me, others before them and others in the future, do not have the right to simply ignore our policies, our rules that have been set in this democratic forum. The decisions of a conference are the lifeblood of our union and it is imperative that they are listened to. Circular 58 of 2009 issued by the National Executive Committee in March 2009 stated: 'The union does not accept that any NEC member, with the exception of the Deputy General Secretary and General Secretary, is an employee of the union. The NEC, throughout their term in office, remain as prison officers and/or other grades. At the end of their term, like Pete Cartwright and others, they return from whence they came. The union does not accept they enjoy employment rights with the POA because they are elected to hold a position within the union hierarchy.' At Conference 2009, the NEC brought the following motion 66a. I believe it was an emergency motion. It was seconded by the Liverpool branch and it read as follows: 'Conference accept that members of the National Executive Committee, excluding the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary, are not and never have been employed by the POA.' The motion was spoken on by the finance officer at the time and I quote from the verbatim report: 'We are employed by the Prison Service on facility time and always have been. The only exceptions to that on the National Executive Committee is the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary, who are executive members and are employed by the union. Now, Conference, I want to keep it very simple because there is a court case with regards to it, but I believe and this executive believes it never has been the case where any of us that are employed by the Prison Service has employment status with the POA and we hope that you endorse that.' The finance officer went on to say, after a number of differing views were shared on the motion – I am quoting this again from the verbatim report – 'I would urge you to actually vote in favour of this motion because the reality is it is you that determines it, not an employment tribunal.' Going on again, he went on to say, 'Now we are going down a dangerous route here because if Conference rejects this motion then effectively you are saying that you don't know what the status of your executive are and we have just given you the facts. The executive are members and are employed solely by the Prison Service, with the exception of the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary, and on that basis we would ask you to support this motion.' Those words were said. I can't change that. That was in the verbatim report. Motion 66a of 2009 was passed by Conference by a card vote and therefore is policy of this union. That being, that the Conference of that year determined only the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary were both employees of the union and executive members on the NEC. All other NEC members would continue to be classed as lay officials. This decision was further endorsed by the national chair at the time, Mr Colin Moses, in the June 2009 *Gate Lodge*, where he said, 'The POA, in celebrating its 70-year history, is proud that it is a lay-member-led union. There have been 16 elected chairmen since the formation of the POA in 1939 and countless NEC members. All of these have been lay-led members and are proud of that fact.' Conference, they are not employed by the union, the NEC – apart from, as has been stated previously, the Deputy General Secretary and the General Secretary. However, recently in a complain made to the CO – the certification officer – by an Elmley member of staff, the union seemed to change their policy on several different occasions. The union position was endorsed by motion 66a. That I can tell you and it is very important that is listened to. In appeal paperwork prepared for the POA by Peter Edwards of Devereux Chambers dated 12 July 2018, the following was stated. I won't use the individual's name as I stated earlier, as he did not propose this motion, nor has he asked Elmley to bring this motion. In paragraph 34 of the decisions, the CO concluded that Mr X – we will call him – was an employee of the union. That conclusion was based on a concession or agreement allegedly made by both the POA and Mr X. There was no such concession or arrangement made by either party. The clear and stated position of the POA was that Mr X, as national chair, was not an employee of the POA. However, in preparing for the employment appeal tribunal, the POA instructed Oliver Seagall QC to act alongside Thompson Solicitors. Mr Seagall advised that the POA were bound by the Gough & Cox decision and that NEC members, including the national chair and vice chair, were employees of the union, which is changing from what they originally said. In a skeleton argument placed before the court dated 4 October, Mr Seagall submitted, 'The EAT should note the POA does not pursue its ground of appeal 4 that the CO erred in concluding that Mr X was an employee of the POA. The POA accepts the CO was bound by POA v. Gough & Cox in that regard.' The Elmley branch member who had raised the complaint with the certification officer on receipt of the skeleton argument wrote to the NEC warning them of the implications of their latest position on 18 October, stating, 'Your legally produced complaints in relation to me being banned from national office have ranged from initially being a resignation, then in realisation that this may not stick, you attempted to say I was a "lapsed member"...'.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Tom, can we wrap it up? I am trying my best to let you finish, but you are well over five minutes.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: I appreciate that I am well over five minutes, Conference, but this is very important. Do you want to hear it? Can I have 10 branches to remove the chair so I can continue saying what I have got to say?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: It is not a point of order. It is quite clear in your conference pack that everyone will be allowed five minutes. I have allowed you significantly more than five minutes. I am trying my best for you. Round off please. Thank you.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: I will round off quickly as I am not being allowed to finish what I had to say for various different reasons.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You can reply to this, Tom, and bring it up then.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: I will wait until reply. Support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Tom. <Applause> It is an explanation, so replying on behalf of the NEC to explain – it doesn't go to a vote – is Steve Gillan.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you chairman, thank you Conference. The motion reads that Conference instruct the NEC to explain the reason for the lay members of the executive committee to vote themselves employees of the union. Conference, the simple explanation is the executive didn't vote themselves as employees of the POA. In the Gough/Cox case in 2009, an employment appeals tribunal ruled that they were employees. That judgment is in the public domain, as are all the recent cases, and I do not intend to rehearse any arguments in respect of them. The simple answer and explanation is the NEC didn't vote themselves employees.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Steve. That is the explanation, Elmley. Are you happy with that? I will let you reply. You have got three minutes. Thank you.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Thank you. I may not need three minutes, but we will see how it goes. I am not happy with that. The NEC's position seems to have changed more times over the past few months than we have had prison ministers and justice ministers. It is just wishy-washy. I am not buying into it. What is the legal position in terms of the employment status of NEC committee lay members with the POA? What steps have been taken by the General Secretary since his statement in response to motion 34 of 2010 to change the employment status of NEC members? Where is the approval from annual Conference to continue with a court case supporting a legal position that contravenes Conference policy, that policy of the union set by motion 66a? I am not happy about it, but I am willing to accept that as a response. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Tom. We now move on to motion 40, which is asking for another explanation, from Elmley. Do we have a seconder for Elmley, please? Feltham. Thank you, Feltham.

Motion 40

Conference instruct the NEC to explain the future financial implications, that the members will have to bear (after the lay members of the Executive Committee decided vote themselves employees of the POA) when HMPPS invariably cease paying salaries and granting facility time to POA employees.

ELMLEY

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: I forgot that I was up again.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Don't worry, you're getting your steps in for today. You're doing OK. 10,000, don't forget.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference – Conference instruct the NEC to explain the future financial implications that the members will have to bear after the lay members of the executive committee decided to vote themselves employees of the POA when HMPPS invariably cease paying salaries and granting facility time to POA employees. Apparently it is a fact that the NEC are employees of this union. Whilst they may be joint employees of both their Prison Service employer, private or public, and also the Prison Officers' Association, it is still clear that the POA has legal responsibilities in terms of their employees. Can you imagine the embarrassment should the tabloids run a story on our union for failing to provide our employees with a contract of employment, a statutory written notice of basic terms, holiday entitlement, pension payments, minimum wage, equal pay? The list of statutory requirements and ethical decisions the union should take in regard to their employees goes on. Whether the NEC sitting behind me wish to act upon the decision to claim their employment status or not is, quite frankly, irrespective in terms of the potential embarrassment to the union, for not providing the legal and statutory obligations is irreparable, as is the fact that we expect our union to be an exemplary employer as a trade union should be, constantly asking for better rights for workers, constantly asking for an increase in the wage of workers, asking for health and safety, all these things that the union are campaigning for, apparently. Are they providing that to their employees? No. Thankfully, none of this has happened yet, but when it invariably does, what provisions have the POA made for taking over the full-time salary payments, inclusive of pension, national insurance and other costs of their NEC employees, and when their period of office ends for the POA, where will these employees be cast off to? Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Tom. You have still got <inaudible> time left if you want some more. Explaining for the NEC is Steve Gillan.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Chairman, Conference, we do not believe that the employer will go down this route as they are aware of the Gough/Cox ruling and have been for some 10 years. The only financial liability on the union that has altered is the finance officer post when HMPPS determined under the new facility time agreement that they were not going to fund the finance officer post as they had done in the past in that role, as all the work was specifically trade union activities for the POA. You, Conference, accepted that position in 2013 when you adopted that post as an employed position in Conference papers 1-10.

There was a challenge to the certification officer at that time, after Conference had ruled and that challenge failed. In respect of going forward, all NEC lay officials are employed at this minute in time by HMPPS, who pay their salaries, pensions, paid annual leave, paid sickness etc. and are continuing to do so and releasing officials on facility time and joint interest project work. The assumption from Elmley branch is they believe HMPPS will cease paying salaries and granting facility time. That is not the position and HMPPS have confirmed this, but if it ever was in their thinking then, of course Conference, you would have to determine what you wish to do as the ruling body. Legislation currently permits lay officials to be released from their respective employers in all trade unions, not just ours. I don't see that position altering whatsoever. The ruling of Gough/Cox alters nothing, and lay officials are still paid by their respective employers. As stated, we have had discussions probably over the last 25 years with HMPPS about facility time, and in the past they stated they were not prepared to pay officials, for example, for release to do conduct committee work as our internal affairs were nothing to do with them as an employer. We then had to set up our own conduct committee from Cronin Clasp holders and honorary life members, which Conference adopted, and we as the POA have to pay all costs associated with conduct cases, as was outlined in my finance report.

Conference, the NEC are of the view that there was no necessity for this motion. Elmley branch could quite simply have written to us and we could have given them the answers. Putting motions such as this in the public domain gives not only employers ideas, but ministers as well. In our view, that is not helpful to the POA or indeed the wider trade union movement. Our explanation is clear. We do not anticipate this will occur, as suggested by Elmley, but if it does, then Conference, you will make the decisions, and indeed if you think we should pay everyone who is a lay official a salary, pension etc. when they are elected as lay officials then bring it to Conference and alter the rules – but be careful what you wish for.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Steve. That is your explanation, Elmley. Please do.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: While I appreciate the sentiment of the General Secretary at the end of that where he said that there was no need for this motion to come to Conference and that we could have simply written to the POA and asked for that explanation, they could have offered when we sent the motions in. The standing orders committee could have said, 'No, we don't want this motion to appear. Here is your answer,' but they didn't do that. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Tom, and thank you, Steve.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 40a fell as a result of Wymott motion 27 not going through.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: 26.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: I would like to use POA rule 12.4 and ask for a two thirds majority to hear another vote of confidence in the NEC following the two motions we have just had, as that is the direction I have been mandated to do by my branch.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: It is not a point of order. It is an emergency motion.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: The motion didn't get heard. Is that the case? I assume through the rules that it would be done through a point of order.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Your motion fell due to another motion getting carried. We can't just point of order the fact that you need to formulate another motion. If you wish, the option is there to formulate an emergency motion and let the standing orders committee deliberate and make a decision. That is an option you have between now and the end of Conference, but certainly not a point of order.

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Fantastic, cheers.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You are welcome. Conference, 40a fell to motion 26, 41 has been withdrawn so I am now before our break going to invite an honorary life member to give fraternal greetings to Conference and I am delighted to invite Chris Donovan to the stage. Chris Donovan.

CHRIS DONOVAN – HONORARY LIFE MEMBER: Chair, NEC, Conference, honorary life members and invited guests, an incredibly proud honorary life member bringing fraternal greetings on behalf of all the honorary life members. It has been an interesting couple of days with plenty of passion and fire from many delegates on the rostrum, but we need to remember we are all on the same side and shouldn't wash our dirty linen in public. We should be united, speak with support for each other whilst delivering our mandate from our branches. I am also going to welcome Duncan Keys, Tony Stocks and Stuart Simpson to our numbers. I was until yesterday the only honorary life member who is still a serving prison officer. Stuart, I believe, puts our number at two serving officers. I am not taking up any more of your time. Enjoy Conference. Remember: unity is strength, and no surrender!

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Go on, Chris. Where are you going, Chris? Stay there. He is not 68 yet. He can't hear a thing. What is it going to be like on the landings working at 68? Thanks, Chris. You said more there than you did in five years on the NEC. <Laughter> Well done, mate. Great to see you. Thank you. Conference break. Time for a coffee. See you back 25 to. Thank you.

<Break>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Conference. I will bring you to order. We have got a guest speaker to address Conference, a good comrade from the trade union movement. He doesn't pack his lunch in a SunBlest bag, and the kids don't call him Bogey, but he is the General Secretary of the Bakers' Union who has taken on and won the might of McDonald's, but I will let him tell you all about it. Please welcome to Conference Ronnie Draper.

<Applause>

RONNIE DRAPER – GENERAL SECRETARY, BAKERS, FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION: Thank you, Mark. Thank you, comrades. An absolute pleasure to be addressing your eightieth conference and it is great that somebody from your top table got my name right this year, unlike Steve, who once introduced me at a rally in Westminster as Ronnie Baker from the Drapers' Union. I see where the Imran Hussain and Imran Khan thing comes from. Comrades, we have got longstanding links between the POA and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, not just the fact that you look after lots of our members on a daily basis, but really great links and I have got some really good friends within the POA who I have known for many years, and I also serve on the executive of the General Federation of Trade Unions with them. Your eightieth anniversary. This year is our 172nd anniversary – and I am not a founder member, Steve, before you say it. Steve and I have a relationship that goes outside. I don't mean that type of relationship, but we have a relationship that goes outside of work. We get invited to a lot of stuff like this. It is a very little-known fact, and I am sure Steve is not advertising it because he is too humble to do that, but when the royal wedding was on last year, the two of us were invited to go along. We were only there as body doubles. I was there just in case Harry got cold feet. I was ready to step in, and of course we didn't know how Prince Philip was going to react after his illness and so Steve was on standby as well.

Comrades, it is a great pleasure to be here addressing this conference. I didn't know I was going to be doing it and that is why I never dressed up. I only found out today that I was going to be doing it. I think on a serious note, there's a few things that I would like to say. There is a common purpose amongst us that we are campaigning unions. We are not unions that are receptacles for members' money where we just sit on a fortune and tell everyone how many millions are in our funds. I retire next year, and our union hasn't got that much money, but I will tell you what we have got. Like you, we have got a great reputation for taking on injustice within society and that is what I want to see – campaigning going on. You talked about it in one of the motions a little bit earlier on. It is great to see that you are talking about those issues of campaigning on behalf of the people that you represent. We have got a common goal of getting rid of this government, a common goal of making sure that we have our National Health Service fully funded. We want the renationalisation of our railways. Yes, it is going to cost money, but that is one of our goals. And we want a government that is going to give us hope for the future, not just us as individual trade union members, but for the society and the people that we represent, young and old alike. We need a government that is going to give us full trade union rights in the workplace, not like this one where Theresa May stood on the steps of Number 10 and said, 'We are the true party of the trade unions,' then went straight into bringing in a Trade Union Act that put all sorts of restrictions on workers from taking action against unscrupulous employers. The right of access to workplaces is something that we should all be jointly campaigning for, not when you turn up to a workplace and an employer says, 'No, my workers don't need it. We look after our workers.' We want right of access so that we speak to members or potential members, and the workers are the ones who say whether they want a union or not, not their employer.

Now we have got an EDM that is going through Parliament that we are trying to get that in, and we know that once we get a Labour government, these are some of the pledges that they have already given to us. We want the removing of these prohibitive thresholds on strike action, having to fulfil and jump over hoops to say whether you go on strike against an employer, but there is no vote ever taken by the employer as to whether they donate to the Tory party or whether they can take repressive action against you as workers. It is just taken, but the legislation is there to protect employers. And of course, we want the right for everybody in this country to take strike action – everybody. The last Labour government gave the right to GCHQ workers to have trade union representation and I don't know why that government missed out the Prison Officers' Association, but it has got to happen. Not walking out because there's health and safety problems and the legislation says you can be led to a place of safety, but actual strike action, fighting back against low pay, fighting back against cuts, fighting back against your pensions being restricted. They are the sort of things that we want a Labour government to ensure for you – and of course, as I say, the right of unions to have proper health and safety within the workplace. You, like every other union in the UK, have a right to return home every single day, maybe a little more tired, but in the same healthy condition that you went to work, but sadly that is not true. I have got to say being a prison officer is one of the jobs that I would never contemplate doing. I would never contemplate it because I know what it is like. Not only has it been bad in the past, you know more than anybody it is getting worse by the day.

More assaults on staff and no protection given because the Health and Safety at Work Act talks about your employer having to protect you. I will tell you what – as an outsider, I see that as sadly lacking within the Prison Service. The other thing I want to see legislated for – I want to see legislation brought in that says, for prisons, corrective institutions and special security hospitals, the union for that is the POA, not something that is made up and then amalgamated into another union. Prison officers in prisons and in corrective institutions should be part of the Prison Officers Association. That should be legislated for. But you know, comrades, to get this we first have to get rid of the bastards who are in government. We have to do it.

<Applause>

We need a government that is going to give a manifesto and keep to the manifesto, not put something down on paper just because they are going to

get some votes. We need a government that we can hold to the fire with our rights and the terms and conditions that we want. I have been a member of the Labour Party for 46 years, all but the six weeks when they suspended me, but they let me back in. We need them to be on our side. I don't know what your levels of salary are. I am sure they are not great, but you know we were the union who moved the £10-an-hour campaign. We were the union who called for the abolition of zero-hour contracts within workplaces. We are the union who have taken on the likes of McDonald's. It isn't me and it isn't our officials. These are brave young people who took the stance that they had had enough of their employer. If I tell you that McDonald's is the second-biggest employer in the world and probably the biggest serial exploiter of people in the world ... What gives a company the right to pay young people under £4 an hour? Because a tin of beans costs the same for a young person as it does for you. A pint in a pub costs the same for a young person as it does for you, and yet we have this discrimination when it comes to wages. We have to have a government that will do something about it.

My union was founded in 1847 and we are still today fighting some of the injustices in the workplace that my forefathers were fighting in 1847 when the union was founded in Manchester. Still poverty levels of pay for some of our members, still terrible health and safety standards within workplaces, still precarious work and still not knowing when the next pay packet is going to come in because of zero-hour contracts. We have to change it and we are going to change that together. We have to do it. Comrades, in this country the government used to call us the enemy of the state. Well, trade unions aren't the enemy of the state. Neither are the unemployed and neither are migrant workers, and neither are the disabled or the pensioners. The only enemy of the state is the government and the people who donate to them. They are the enemies of the state and, as I said before, we have to bring in change. The most heinous government we have ever had in living history. I used to hate Margaret Thatcher. Hated her with a passion. But I will tell you what. What we have got now is a damn sight worse than whatever she did. I don't believe some of the stuff that this government is attempting, she would have done. If you think what they have done, they inherited what they said was Labour's debt, a massive debt that said we have to have austerity. What have they done? We have still got austerity and they have doubled the debt that Labour had – more than doubled it. We have now got £1.7 trillion. I listened to a fact the other day, somebody saying – I think it was on the Marr show – that if you start counting now and never go to bed and you count to a million, it is going to take you 12 days to reach a million. You start counting now and count to a billion, it is going to take you 31 years. Well, think about how long it is going to take to count to a trillion. That is the magnificent debt that this government is leaving us in. Homelessness up, benefits absolutely slashed, pensions never keeping track with the standard of living or the inflation rates, and of course, a Trade Union Act that hamstring workers. The only thing that has increased with this government is the amount of tax-dodgers we have got. The people who launder money, like Rees-Mogg, who takes his money out of this country and makes £7 million by moving it over to Dublin and being proud that he has done it. Yet there will still be people who vote for him, there will still be people who will say it is OK to donate to his country estate and make sure that the repairs are done on it because it is Rees-Mogg and because it is the Conservatives. They don't come and fix your houses. They don't fix council houses. They don't even build council houses, do they? They do none of that for us because it is a different class thing that they have. As I say, they have crippled everything and of course we have got more dependence on food banks. I heard the comrade before talking about it. That is what we have got to change. We have to change their – what they see as – values and we have to make sure that they know of our values.

Comrades, I want to finish off by saying that we need a change of government, we absolutely need a change of government, but we also need a strong trade union movement. Trade unions can't die as the youngest of the old people lock the door. We have to embrace young people. The way we look at things, we have to change. We have got to make sure that young people have the chance to do the things that we did. We shouldn't accept that this is the first generation who are going to be worse off than their parents. We have to make sure that they have got a future. You may not have young kids, but the kids you have got will have kids in the future and they have got nothing to look forward to. I have got to say bringing them into a trade union is very difficult. It is not an easy job, but we are making a stance to do it. My conference took a decision a number of years ago to say that we will give every single one of our branches an extra delegate. I am not advocating you do, but every one of our branches got the right to bring an extra delegate as long as that delegate was under 27 and a union member. It has been absolutely fantastic. We have got lots and lots of young people who are associating with all the older people. They are getting all that experience, but not only that, they are bringing their own values, their own needs, the things that they want to look at in the future, and that is changing the face of our trade union. And so, we are not just a trade union that is full of older people. We have now got young people who have got some absolutely fantastic ideas, and we have got to do that. All of you – there's 200-odd in the room – all activists. You are all probably great activists in the workplace. You go and recruit your members. But you know what? You can play a part outside as well. If every one of you take the task of recruiting a young person – and it might not even be to your own union, it could be to any union. I am not saying they have to come into ours, but you know when you go to Clark's for your shoes? There will be young people in there who are on exploited wages, zero-hour contracts. Very often they will be harassed, they will be bullied. I know in McDonald's we had a situation where workers – young women – were taken in a room to be disciplined or to be asked for sexual favours by a manager to make sure ... I will tell you what. Strikes might not work, but they worked with McDonald's two years ago when we took them on because they got the biggest pay rise they have ever had in 10 years, we got an end to zero-hour contracts where workers want it and, of course, we got managers who were harassing workers taken out of the business. Sacked. Not moved around the country somewhere else: taken out of the business totally. And Wetherspoon's last year. The first ever strike in Wetherspoon's. Young people exploited, but we took the challenge on. My comrades say to me – we had a motion last year – what we should do is anywhere that pays under £10, we shouldn't do it. Then they all go out and they go and have a pint in Wetherspoon's. Those people are all on really low pay. When you go for your pint, I am not saying boycott them because that is not going to be the answer to any of these places, but when you have your burger, talk to the young people behind the counter. When you go to Clark's for your shoes, talk to the young people who are giving you them. Talk to them about trade unions. Talk to them about what trade unions can do for them and talk to them about what they can do for trade unions. You have all had the benefit of either a parent who brought you through the trade union movement, said to you, 'You should join a union when you go to work.' My kids have had that benefit. I had the benefit of people in the workplace, mentors who brought me through, and I have heard some fantastic speeches today about how people were mentored by other people within the workplace, but these young people haven't got trade unions and their parents very often weren't in trade unions so we have got a job to make sure that the trade union movement grows and we can all play a role. Set yourself a goal of at least in a year recruiting one young person into the trade union movement. If we can get all 6 million trade union members to do that then we will have 12 or 13 million in the trade union movement in the future. That has got to be the goal we have got to do. We have got to make

sure that young people have a chance in this.

Comrades, you are an absolutely great union. You have been around for 80 years – not all of you, probably only Steve. I hope you are around for another 80 years. You are a great trade union. You are part of an absolutely great trade union movement. Let's all make sure and pledge that we are going to make it an even better trade union movement in the future. Comrades, when the vote comes, vote Labour. Solidarity and thank you for listening.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Ronnie. I would like to pay tribute to you, your officials and your members. The Bakers' Union: a strong union, a proactive union. To take on the might of McDonald's with young people aged 17, 18, 19 on zero-hours contracts who were afraid to take strike action, afraid to walk out for fear that they would have no employment because they were threatened by their managers. 'You walk out, you take industrial action, you are on a zero-hours contract. We will give you no work.' They stood strong with the backing of their union and they won the day. If we can go back to our branches and emulate that and empower our young workers who probably don't know what a trade union is about because it is their first job or they have never been in one, who probably don't understand the workings of a trade union, but more importantly, need to be made aware by you how strong the POA are and how we can win the day if we stand in solidarity just like the Bakers' Union. Our problems are not unique. It is the same in every industry. Ronnie, I know you have been banned from McDonald's, but I got someone to go along Lord Street before and we have got a load of Happy Meal toys in this box for you. On behalf of the POA, thank you, Ronnie Draper.

<Applause>

Conference, before we get going with a few more motions, our nominated charity this year is Duchenne UK. Before I tell you all about it and why it has been nominated, I would just like you to watch a short video.

<Video plays>

WOMAN: What do you want to do when you grow up?

CHILD: Um... Er...

MAN: When I was seven, I probably wanted to be a footballer.

MAN: I always wanted to be an ice cream man.

MAN: I think I just wanted to be like my dad.

MAN: Fireman. My mum said they got all the girls so that was the thing. Fireman.

CHILD: Um ... Er ... I want to be a rugby player like my daddy.

CHILD: Yes.

CHILD: Yes.

<Music plays>

WOMAN: So, I have always said that I won't retire until I have found an effective treatment, and even five years ago I used to stand up in front of families and say I didn't know when that treatment might come. I think now today there is gene therapy, there is utrophin modulation, there is exon skipping, there is stop codon readthrough and a combination of those or one of those will certainly provide some effective treatment and relief for these boys, so I am really optimistic. We will get there.

WOMAN: Boys typically lose the ability to walk between the age of 8 and 12 and thereafter they lose the use of every single muscle in their body, and ultimately it affects the heart and lungs.

BOY: There are a lot of issues that have to be looked after on a daily basis to keep me healthy. Now I have to use a tracheostomy to breathe because my lungs are too weak to take my own breaths anymore.

WOMAN: A few months ago, I was just putting him to bed and out of the blue he said, 'Mummy, are they going to kill me, my poorly muscles?' I just ...

WOMAN: We quickly learned that there was a lot of research happening, but it was drastically underfunded.

MAN: To pull together and try and make a difference with Duchenne, it is absolutely remarkable what they are doing, the strength of these people. Alex alone, going around talking to the White House, going to the Houses of Parliament, making a difference constantly absolutely staggers me. Us people

in sport and friends, we marvel at what they are about as people.

WOMAN: I think the scientists share with us a belief that we are going to see treatments for this generation of boys. We really are.

WOMAN: We can see the research. It is now translating into clinical trials. It is within grasp and we just need that last bit of momentum and money to help us get there.

WOMAN: What we have is not just hope, it is a realistic belief that we are going to make a difference, and we already have.

WOMAN: All of the people who are coming together to support our charity, it is going to be their legacy. Ultimately, they are going to help get a treatment for this generation of boys.

CHILD: I want to be a rugby player.

WOMAN: Who do you want to play for?

CHILD: England.

<Sounds of children playing>

CHILD: I'm winning.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Duchenne muscular dystrophy is one of the most common fatal genetic disorders to affect children around the world. Approximately one in every 3,500 boys worldwide is afflicted with the Duchenne muscular dystrophy disease, with 20,000 new cases reported each year in the developed world. It is a devastating and currently incurable muscle-wasting disease. Symptoms usually appear in male children before the age of five. Progressive muscle weakness of the legs and pelvis eventually spreads to the arms, neck and other areas. By age 10, braces may be required for walking and most patients are confined to a wheelchair by age 12. Eventually this progresses to complete paralysis and increasing difficulty in breathing, requiring ventilation. The condition is terminal, and death usually occurs before the age of 30. Charlie is the son of a member who works at HMP Kirkham. He is 11 and was diagnosed with Duchenne at the age of four. Last year he lost his ability to walk. He will lose the use of his arms in his teens and in his late teens to early 20s will have ventilation and heart problems, resulting in death. There is no cure, but this is an area where lots of research is being done. Charlie is not currently on any trial. Charlie's father didn't want to be here today, and he asked me to say a few words on his behalf. The Finance Committee have kindly donated £2,000 to this appeal. Tomorrow at the end of Conference we will be doing a bucket collection on your way out. If you are not going to be here tomorrow or you want to donate after Conference today, just see any of the NEC or go and see the girls in the office. We will also be asking the Prison Service Charity Fund to donate as well so we can raise quite a bit of money for this horrible disease. All I can say is, in advance of your generosity, thank you very much for supporting this worthwhile charity. Let's make a difference to Charlie's life and support one of our comrades at HMP Kirkham. Thank you.

<Applause>

We will now progress business, Conference. We are now on motion 42, which is from Whitemoor. Do we have a seconder for Whitemoor? Thank you. This is an explanation so requires no vote.

Motion 42

That Conference instruct the NEC to identify annually over the last 4 years legal cases that have been below the 50 per cent threshold that have been pursued by the NEC on principle against legal advice either by Thompsons or Barristers and the costs, successes, losses, to be identified on a case by case basis along with benefits of pursuing such cases for the whole membership. If this motion is accepted by Conference then a report to be sent to branches by no later than 1st September 2019.

WHITEMOOR

CHRIS DELANEY – BRANCH SECRETARY, WHITEMOOR: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 42 reads that Conference instruct the NEC to identify annually over the last four years legal cases that have been below the 50 per cent threshold that have been pursued by the NEC on principle against legal advice either by Thompson's or barristers, and the costs, successes, losses to be identified on a case-by-case basis, along with benefits of pursuing such cases for the whole membership. If this motion is accepted by Conference then a report to be sent to branches by no later than 1 September 2019. Conference, I understand from time to time that some cases will be taken on a point of principle for the benefit of the whole membership, but I want to make sure that every branch is being treated the same as I can't recall any member at Whitemoor where a member has had a case pursued that was below the 50 per cent threshold. The breakdown we are asking for is merely which branches are identified and the outcome of success against not winning and the expenditure. I recognise that individual cases cannot be identified, but the number and branches will be sufficient. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any more speakers? Glyn Travis for the NEC.

GLYN TRAVIS – NEC: Chair, Conference, invited guests, NEC, I will set out the position in relation to the last four years so it will be a matter of record

in the verbatim report and therefore no need to circulate it to branches because anybody who wants to see the information, it will be freely available. Firstly, you set a criterion for the legal aid handbook and that is that cases must have a better than 50 per cent chance of a value of £1,000, unless it is a civil claim and it is £5,000. Must not be disproportionate to run or conduct and therefore that is your criteria. That is the criteria that we issue to all solicitors, barristers, when providing advice to the member and to the union, and we recognise that there is nothing more disheartening than when a member finds out that they have less than 50 per cent chance of prospects on succeeding with their claim. That claim may be in the employment tribunal for discrimination, unfair dismissal, it may be a CICA claim where the member of staff has been assaulted and they feel aggrieved at the award that they have been given – and sometimes it is nil. They feel they should get justice and compensation. It may be a personal injury claim and it may also be for a criminal matter where an individual has been charged, and we are facing more and more of those on a weekly basis, as I am sure you know through your own branches. Within the criminal cases we have to use what is determined as a tenable defence. There is no 50/50. It is about weight of evidence and where we go, and we are always looking at the tenable defence. Turning to the questions in hand, in the last four years we have had 29 cases where the executive has determined to conduct the case, which did not meet the criteria. The first case, which is well documented – and I will name the case because the person agreed to the funding – was the Cox case, which involved a female member who was injured by a prisoner. We were successful in the first case and the member received compensation. The employer determined to appeal that decision. They were successful and overturned the decision. We went to the Supreme Court because of the principle of it and that was: could POA members be insured if a prisoner injured them, because the Cox case was all about vicarious liability. The liability to the union was over £500,000 and therefore it was never going to be proportionate to run, even though we had already won it, but the executive determined because of that principle that we would take that case on. Of the other 28 cases, they have impacted on 11 branches where cases have been done. Of those 28, four cases were settled before proceedings were required, 20 were lost and two were successful, although the two that were successful were disproportionate in the end – i.e. the fact that we actually spent more money pursuing the case than the individual got, but we demonstrated that is where we were. We have two ongoing cases, which are still being conducted in 2019, and therefore the cost to the POA in those four years for running those cases is £162,000 give or take a few quid. In total, that is what we have spent. We have been successful in the Cox case. We have given members hope and sometimes they have got a settlement. It is always the individual's choice whether they accept the settlement, or we take it forward. I hope that satisfies the moving branch and Conference, and that is the report. Finally, in addition to what it has cost the POA, Thompson's, your providers, also took two personal injury claims which they ran the risk of. They were both unsuccessful because it was a principle on their point, and they cost just over £60,000 as well. Thank you, Chair, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Whitemoor, do you want to say anything else? Conference, I am reading the wording of this motion and I am just going to ask you for a show of hands to support the Whitemoor stance that Conference is sent a report, all branches get a report, by 1 September 2019 so you have evidence to report back to your branches. Can I have a show of support for that, show of hands? Thank you, Conference, that is most helpful. We will get that report to you by that date. We move on to motion 43b, which was appeal 7. That is from Wymott. Do we have a seconder for Wymott? Last chance. Preston. Thanks, Duncan. Got you.

Motion 43b

Conference instructs the NEC to demand a Judicial Review of current Health and Safety provisions in regards to Staff within our jails. WYMOTT

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Chairman, Conference, first of all I would like to thank Conference for allowing this motion to be brought in front of you. Thank you for voting on the appeal. The motion reads: 'Conference instructs the NEC to demand a judicial review of current health and safety provisions in regards to staff within our jails.'

A recurrent theme of this Conference has been the appalling conditions in which our members have to work. The violence stats are rising continually and it is evident that our employer has neither the will nor the ability to get on top of this problem, but it is the human cost in injury and loss to our members that is the real story here and we need to use all that is available to us to both turn these conditions around whilst drawing the public's attention to our plight. This is why we are calling for a judicial review into staff safety in our jails. When creating any public body such as a Prison Service, legislation will define the duties, limits of power and prescribe the reasoning a body must use to make decisions. These provisions provide a means by which decisions may be found unlawful. This is the reasoning behind calling for a judicial review, as the direct decisions made by HMPPS have resulted in the situation we now find ourselves in. In addition to this, the Human Rights Act 1998 provides that law must be interpreted, and public bodies must act in a manner compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights. As the National Chairman rightly said in his opening speech, we have our human rights too and there must be scope here to find some redress. We cannot allow this uncaring, callous and neglectful employer to preside over our health and safety a moment longer without answering for its actions. We need real oversight of this issue and this may be another step towards achieving this. We cannot trust our employer to do what is right. It will only do what is expedient for itself. Our members' health and safety is not negotiable. Let us therefore call for a judicial review. Please support this vital motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Glen. Any speakers? Responding for the NEC, Dave Cook.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, replying on behalf of the NEC. We are asking you to reject this motion purely on the basis that we can't achieve it. This is absolutely unachievable. We would like to be able to take our employers to court. We would love to be running Governors into court on a weekly or daily basis on behalf of our members, but quite frankly, we cannot achieve it. Liking and wanting to do something is insufficient when it comes to the law, and the law states we cannot just demand a judicial review. The wording of the motion itself is too broad. It is too broad in its context and everything else. 'A judicial review of current health and safety provisions in regard to staff within our jails.' That encompasses literally everybody – not just the members of this union – that works in a jail. The way it actually works for us when we take judicial reviews or we try and push judicial reviews into court is, the fact is, if you as a branch identify a worry about health and safety in your branch, you only have three months from the point

when you have identified the issue in which to gather all the information and for us to then push it through for a judicial review. Before we can get to that point, branches are required to gather as much information as they can to support their concerns and their issues. You cannot just go to a JR. You have to go through the whole process first and that means that you would have to highlight it with your SMT and your governor, you would have to discuss it, it would have to be discussed at health and safety meetings, we would need the health and safety minutes to say that it has been done, you may even have to eventually report it to the HSE and get the HSE to try and come in and investigate it. Good luck with that one as well, because we tried to get HSE into our establishments. You need things like HMIP reports and action plans from those, health and safety inspection reports, action plans from those, RMP and everything else, any information that can support your case and your concerns about the health and safety in your establishment. Once you have done that, then you sit down with your Governor, you discuss all the issues. If the Governor fails to act about your concerns, we can then go to the lawyers and we can then put a letter before action to the employer. We will issue a letter before action to the employer, at which point we go back to the table, we sit down, we discuss it all with them, they come up with an action plan and time has to be allowed for them to enact that action plan. If they fail to carry out their action plan or if their proposals are not sufficient, we can then start to look at going through judicial review, but this comes with a caveat at the end of the day. This week we have spent huge amounts of money from our membership, and it is right. At the end of the day, health and safety, we should spend the money, but we don't have an endless pot. We cannot afford to throw money away demanding JRs because we have no rights. There is no legal basis to demand a judicial review. At the beginning of the moving of the Finance Report, the General Secretary outlined possible future liabilities through the legal cases that we are currently running through, that are in the past or even historical cases that can come and take a lot of our money away. The Deputy General Secretary moved a motion to try and increase our funds so we can make ourselves financially stable and everything else, and that was rejected. We cannot achieve this motion. Please don't tie our hands because at the end of the day, we come to you when you have your issues to get you to highlight it and we ask you for the information. Unfortunately, the information coming back to us is not always there and we are losing a lot of cases before we can even get to a letter before action, let alone to a JR. Please reject this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Wymott to reply?

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and thank you for the explanation, Dave. What I would say is that if my jail is anything like any of your establishments, I would suggest that 99 per cent of us are at the stage where we are at letter before action. Now we have had that clarification I would stand by for a flurry of letters coming through to the NEC explaining how close we are to achieving what you suggest we would need to do for a judicial review. Just picking up on another point, what Dave has said – and it is quite worrying – is a suggestion that future liabilities are tying our hands in respect to future actions, especially on health and safety. I am sure I speak for all of us when I say that we cannot allow that to happen. I appreciate that we do not have a limitless pot and I did stand here, and I did ask for and support the motion for an increase in subs. That has been voted out. That is fair enough, that is democracy in action, but we can't allow ourselves to have our hands tied because of future liabilities. If they happen, they happen and we can cross that bridge when we come to it, but if we need to act immediately on health and safety. If it is a cost, we must bear that cost. How we do that is a different matter, but we cannot have our hands tied. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Glen. To the vote, then. All those in favour please show. Against. That is lost.

44, Aylesbury. Secunder please? Thank you.

Motion 44

Any member/s who plead guilty to any criminal offence and the POA are providing financial support shall have this withdrawn immediately from the date their plea is lodged at the Court or an admission indicated.

AYLESBURY

AL MILLER – BRANCH SECRETARY, AYLESBURY: Chair, Conference, NEC, honorary life members and invited guests, motion 44 reads: 'Any members who plead guilty to any criminal offence and the POA are providing financial support to have this withdrawn immediately from the date the plea is lodged at court or admission indicated.'

Now, the wording of this motion may seem a little strange considering that part of our job is defending members, but it is a sad fact there are corrupt staff in our prisons and we have had more than our fair share at Aylesbury. A few years ago, the local press started dubbing us the Carphone Whorehouse due to the amount of female staff who were being dismissed for gross misconduct for trafficking mobile phones or bringing in drugs. At their hearing, they were represented by branch officials including myself because they were POA members, and for those who were being prosecuted through the courts, they were represented by the POA solicitors including QCs. This led my branch to ask, 'Why are they being funded by the POA?' I explained to them that a benefit of being a POA member is the legal representation that they get. This motion is directed at those staff who are caught or discovered and arrested and plead guilty. At the earliest opportunity their funding is stopped by the POA. Those staff have put every single person at the prison at risk, and for that they should be on their own. They don't deserve to be part of the POA. We don't want them. We have heard of the levels of NPS increasing, levels of violence increasing. These could all be brought on by those corrupt members of staff. As Glyn said yesterday, we must all work together to prevent corruption, and accepting this motion will be a start. The problem I have with it is this. If this motion is accepted and how it is disposed of, it will not form part of our rules. We wanted to bring this motion last year, but on advice we were told the wording wasn't quite right. We withdrew the motion on advice. We brought it back this year with the suggested wording that was given to us, so hopefully the NE speaker will explain how this motion will be disposed of, but on the whole please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Would the seconder like to speak?

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to reject this motion. If our members pay their subs, they must be represented. Anyone that is a member of our union is entitled to exactly the same rights as any other member of this union, regardless of what they have done. Moreover, there was a lot of talk from the person that raised this motion about corrupt staff. What about staff that have just made a mistake? What about if we have a member of staff who, really stressed out on the night shift, hasn't checked an ACT document and in the morning the prisoner in that cell has sadly committed suicide and killed themselves. That member of staff could potentially end up in court over that. There is potential for a negligence charge. It would make far more sense for that person, who has made a mistake, to enter a guilty plea. Are they less entitled to legal representation because they have made a mistake? Come on. That is not fair. Another reason I think this motion should be represented is if – and I have to be very careful with the way that I word this, otherwise I might get shouted at by somebody behind me – a member of the NEC or even one of us branch officials were to walk our branch out in protest action, if that is right word ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: I would shout at you for the shirt you're wearing, not for what you just said!

TOM NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: If they were to walk somebody out on protest action, that would be breaching an injunction that is placed against this union. How embarrassing would that be if that person would have to plead guilty because yes, they have done it? They would have to say, 'Yes, I did tell my branch to go out. There was a meeting. Minutes were taken at that meeting. Yes, I did ask them. Yes, it is a democratic decision. Yes, we voted on it.' It would be known about. The NEC would have to say, 'Yes, they phoned us and told us they had done it.' They would have to make a guilty plea. Are we really not going to back staff and give them legal aid and represent them fully in court for defending their rights, for defending their health and safety? Conference, I urge you. We are a trade union. Never forget that. This motion is not reflective of a trade union. Please reject the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Tom.

JIM STARKEY – CHAIRMAN, PRESTON: Chair, NEC, Conference, pretty much the same as the previous delegate said. Please reject this motion, pretty much for the same thing. We have an example there of a colleague and close friend of mine ended up in court with a suspended prison sentence because some guy hung himself. Nobody was going to save the guy. He just didn't check the obs for an hour, so ended up in court. We all make mistakes; we all know about conditioning. If the wording was different, to say that wrong ones were to be taken to court, people who take contraband in, have relationships, I would say support that, but the net is flung too far out here. It could be any of us could end up in court. Please reject the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Jim. Any more speakers? Responding for the NEC, Terry McCarthy.

TERRY MCCARTHY – NEC: Conference, speaking for the NEC in favour of the motion. Conference a guilty plea is prima facie evidence of guilt. It is only right and proper that if a person enters a guilty plea, that person should fund their legal expenses and it shouldn't be down to this union. Having said that, Conference, we are aware that sometimes there are occasions when after legal advice, it is expedient to enter a guilty plea and cases such as that will be considered on an individual case basis by this executive. Please support the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Terry. Aylesbury to come back. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour of this motion please show. All those against. That motion is lost.

45, Barlinnie asking for an explanation. Do we have a seconder for Barlinnie? Sorry, my eyes are going. It has been a long day. Thank you for that, Joe. Can I borrow your glasses? Thank you, Barlinnie.

Motion 45

NEC explain to Conference Rule 10.9 of the POA Rules and Constitution and to who this rule affects.

BARLINNIE

JIM MCCABE – BRANCH SECRETARY, BARLINNIE: Chair, Conference, an easy motion I believe. NEC explain to Conference rule 10.9 of the POA rules and constitution, and to who this rule applies. 10.9, to keep this short and sweet, if any national committee member resigns, they can't stand for the post again for five years. All I am asking is, is this rule for all the national committees in Britain, as in the SNC, the Northern Ireland committee and the NEC, or as we believe, only affects the NEC? That is, it. I am just looking for an explanation.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks. Steve Gillan to provide an explanation.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Barlinnie. The explanation is very simple. It pertains to the National Executive Committee members only. It doesn't apply to the Scottish National Committee, the Northern Ireland Area Committee or indeed local branch officials.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Steve. Happy with that, Barlinnie? Thank you, Barlinnie.

46, Dartmoor. Secunder for Dartmoor, please? Thank you.

Motion 46

The POA NEC are to apply annually, starting in 2019, to HMRC in order to be included on the list of professional bodies approved for tax relief.

When the POA NEC receive the decision from HMRC it is to be distributed to all POA members via Circular.

If the 2019 application is unsuccessful then the NEC will apply annually until successful.

DARTMOOR

JOHN MUMFORD – BRANCH CHAIR, DARTMOOR: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to support motion 46, which reads: 'The POA NEC are to apply annually, starting in 2019, to HMRC in order to be included on the list of professional bodies approved for tax relief. When the POA NEC receive a decision from HMRC, it is to be distributed to all members via circular. If the 2019 application is unsuccessful then the NEC will apply annually until successful.'

Colleagues, inclusion onto the aforementioned list will result in all POA members getting a small tax rebate for the subscriptions that we pay to be members of our union, which in effect will be a small pay rises for our members. The amount will be negotiated between the NEC and the relevant officer of revenue and customs. Two years ago, I asked the then finance officer why we weren't on the list. He informed me that the POA had applied before, but were rejected, and as it was a lot of work wouldn't be applying again in the near future. Unhappy with this answer, I asked the Labour MP David Hanson if he would look into why our application was rejected. He received a letter, which he shared with myself and the CEO of HMRC, John Thompson MP. He said the POA did not provide enough evidence that it met the criteria for inclusion onto this list. If it can now do so then they should reapply. The criteria can be found on the HMRC website and after reading it extensively it is clear that the POA meets these criteria. Now just in case the NEC speaker is about to take the stand and tell you all to reject this motion for some reason, here are some of the organisations which are included on the list: the Police Federation, the Prison Governors' Association, NAPO, and some you might not have heard of, which I am sure are all noble organisations: the American Vacuum Society, the Viking Society and the Violin Makers' Society. If they qualify to be on this list then so should we. Please support this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, John. I am sure you researched that diligently of a night in bed. The Violin Makers' Society boggles the mind. Andy Baxter for the NEC.

ANDY BAXTER – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to support this motion. As John outlined, there is an extensive list of bodies HMRC has approved as professional societies for the promotion and protection of members within. John gave us some examples. He is quite right. There are six sections of the Police Federation, the Prison Governors' Association Scotland are on the list. Again, I got a bit carried away like John did. I started looking at some of the other ones on the list. The British Sleep Society are on the list, the South Pacific Underwater Medicine Society are on the list, and – I kid you not – the European Association of Fish Pathologists are on the list. Again, as John said, there are some fairly well-known names within the trade union movement on the list. The UCU, which is the University and College Union, the RCN (the Royal College of Nursing), the NUT (National Union of Teachers). It is a logical step to follow. If we can put some money back in our members' pockets, we should do it, and the NEC are asking you to support it. Once your organisation is on the list, your members qualify for tax relief against subscriptions. The actual eligibility criteria laid down by the HMRC is that the organisation's main purpose is to share or advance professional knowledge, maintain or improve professional conduct and competence and to protect members from claims made against them while doing their job. We will give it a go. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Dartmoor, do you want to come back? No? Happy, John, yes? Thanks. To the vote, then. All those in favour, please show. Any against? That is carried.

47, Durham. Seconder for Durham. One at the back. Belmarsh, thank you.

Motion 47

That Conference mandate all local POA committees to provide weekly reports to the General Secretary via a dedicated email address, identifying all serious incidents. This will provide the NEC with hard data to challenge the employer over the current inadequate reporting systems.

DURHAM

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Conference, I would just like to make a statement because somebody has pulled us again. I have never stood for the NEC and I have got no intention of standing for the NEC, so just to clarify it. 'That Conference mandate all local POA committees to provide weekly reports to the General Secretary via a dedicated email address identifying all serious incidents. This will provide the NEC with hard data to challenge the employer over the current inadequate reporting systems.'

We see it on a monthly, on a weekly basis. We see things happening in our jail and we never see it reported nationally. It is quite simple, really. I send to the NEC on a monthly basis at the present time what happens on nights in our establishment. I don't collate that. Health and safety do and send it to us, and I send it to them. When you see what happens on nights, when we are running with three short and we have asked for extra night staff and we are told, 'You are not getting any' ... Alan Scott said, 'There is no money in the pot. You are not getting them.' We are a remand prison and we can't get the extra staff, yet we have got this text message – magic text. Some of you might have heard of it. There's people keep sending me emails to Durham saying, 'Can you put us on the magic text?' I reply and copy in my Governor ... Magic text, sorry. He has got a bed watch to do tonight.

<Laughter> They keep sending us them. Sorry, Nottingham, but I don't know who at Nottingham keeps telling them to send me emails about magic text. Obviously, you know my stance on doing bed watches and constant watches. I reply, 'Does your Governor know you are doing it, because you need permission?' We have got to the point now we have had words with the PU SMT about it, but night shortages. We had a learned gentleman from BDG, once was. I was at Home House and he's told us if we had a problem on nights we should pick the phone up and phone us. I phoned up and said, 'I'm not coming in.' 'But you must. You are a dedicated person.' 'I am not.' 'That means I have got to go and tell the minister we haven't got a dedicated service.' 'Well, tell the minister I'm not doing it. Simple as that.' In the end, he decided to tell us that what would happen is, we do this, do that, and what we ended up with was an OSG in ECR. I had to tell them that OSGs aren't allowed to be in charge of an ECR in a local prison. Andy Hewitt was there, and Andy Hewitt had to tell them that as well. We have got people whose negotiating for the department who don't know what is going on. I was at Leeds area office for an area meeting earlier on Monday, and on the Friday night at Durham we had a major power failure. Our generators went down for 20 minutes. Eventually got them back on again. All the computers were down in the jail. That meant we couldn't open any gates. Any electronic gates couldn't be opened, so we cancelled visits. Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon, Monday morning and Monday afternoon, waiting for somebody from Manchester to come and fix them. You ask Jackie Marshall, she will tell you there is nothing on about that. All I am saying is, give them the information that they require, the NEC, and let's go for the department on it. Dead simple. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Craig. Any speakers? Terry McCarthy for the NEC.

TERRY MCCARTHY – NEC: Conference, speaking in favour of the motion. Conference, in this day and age as we all know everything is evidence-based. If it is not written down, it didn't happen. I want to thank Durham for bringing this motion to Conference. Maybe in the past we haven't quite been good enough as a union in gathering evidence to present to the employer about our concerns. Their reports put out by the employer are grossly inaccurate and totally unreliable. You heard the National Chairman yesterday. Give us the evidence and we will challenge the employer. Supporting Durham's motion will give us the format to move forward. Please support the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Craig, are you coming back? Thank you. All those in favour please show. Any against? That is carried.

Conference, just to close proceedings today I am going to invite our last guest speaker, John Clinton, who is the general secretary of the Irish POA, with fraternal greetings. John, you are very welcome. John Clinton.

<Applause>

JOHN CLINTON – GENERAL SECRETARY, PRISON OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION IRELAND: National Chairman, thank you very much. Colleagues, it is a great pleasure to be here once again at your conference from the Ireland POA to give you fraternal greetings from your colleagues in our union in Ireland. Like you, we have all the same problems, and I will discuss some of them shortly. We had our conference fairly recently. Steve and Mark were there, and our agenda was the very same as the agenda I hear here. Just to give you some examples, on our agenda this year were drugs in prisons, violence from criminal gangs in prisons, illegal articles and substances being flown into our prisons by drone, violence against staff, our fight with our employer, which I heard here as well with regard to looking for the best type of personal protective equipment. We are looking for smoke-free prisons, which I know you have here. We don't. As you can see, our agendas are extremely similar.

To move on to some other issues, on the pay front we are shortly going to conclude a three-year pay deal. Our members and all public servants in Ireland will receive a 2 per cent pay increase on 4 October. This pay deal overall gave our members 7 per cent over three years, so in that regard we are doing better off in Ireland than certainly you do here. I was very interested coming over here this year to hear your debate on the review that you had done. I was well aware the review was going on. I actually had a copy of the report sent to me a number of weeks ago before I came here, probably at the same time you as delegates got it. I read your report with great interest and was very – I won't say surprised, but I thought it was a reasonable report. We had a similar exercise done in our trade union in 2009 and, like many people said here when they were speaking on it, you are going to like some things in it, and you are not going to like some things in it. Our members did exactly what you did here this morning and in a very large number endorsed taking our review report that Pat Cuffe did in its entirety, and we have walked on since there. We had a motion put to our conference in 2007 that we would have a review done and brought back to our conference in 2009. I asked a man I knew in Ireland called Dr Gerry McMahon to do that work for us. The reason I asked Gerry was we had used him on various other things in the past and our membership were very happy with the outcome of the work that Gerry McMahon did for us, but when I met Gerry he said to me, 'I don't do that type of work, but I will recommend somebody to you.' He recommended Pat Cuffe, the man that did the work here for you. I didn't know the man from Adam, but he came in and he did a review with us as he did with you. As I said, we liked some things and we didn't like other things. After your vote this morning, at the coffee break, I spoke to some of your members from Belmarsh and the northern prison – Fairland, is that the name of it? Frankland. They said to me, if we were speaking here today, would I just give some examples on what it did for us. What I can say about reports of that nature is this: people are always very apprehensive about change, sometimes fearful about change. Our members were no different in that regard, but you shouldn't really be fearful because you are going to shape the change. You are going to look at these issues as they come back to you. You are going to make the decisions on the change, and you are really in control of that, so you should not be fearful in that regard and I will be confident that you will work your way through that, piece by piece. You won't be able to implement every aspect of it. To give some examples of our report, we got 25 recommendations. One recommendation was that we appoint a national officer of our union to represent senior grades. Something like that was very easy to do so I appointed my deputy general secretary as one of his tasks to look after our senior grades. That was done easily. It was a recommendation you could look at, analyse and say, 'Yes, here is a way to do this. This will keep this group of members happy.' That was easy to do. He also recommended that we make better use of our building in Dublin. Steve has been there recently and Joe Simpson, so we did make better use of our building in Dublin. We turned the back of it into a purpose-made training centre now where we can train our branch officials to an extremely high standard. We are not dependent on anybody. Then the basement

of our building we now rent out to another trade union, the Plasterers' Union of Ireland. They were in difficulty. They were losing their premises in Dublin. We took them in. We looked after another trade union, which is what trade unionism should be about, and at the same time then we were able to bring more funds into our association. They are just two examples on how we were able to implement some of his recommendations easily. On the other side, some of our members in country prisons said to us, 'We believe from time to time you should hold your Executive Council meetings in Cork in southern Ireland or maybe in Castlereagh in the west of Ireland.' When we actually looked into that issue, analysed it and looked at the cost-benefit analysis of it, it wasn't feasible, so we weren't able to implement that recommendation, but those were decisions that were taken by our National Executive Council, our membership and our conferences, so you are in control in that regard. What I could say to you from our experience is, you will be fine. The other thing it really did for us, and I have noticed it here for many years coming over to this conference, it took political infighting and personality-based infighting out of our trade union altogether, so when we go down to our conference now, we can get right down to the business of what the members are concerned and what they want. We have gotten rid of that. I hope you will be able to do that here and I hope it has given you the vehicle to do that.

Just to conclude, colleagues, we see many documentaries on the television about the prisons in the UK here. I said it here before about the documentary I saw on Northumberland Prison and the difficulties with Spice, and a prison officer walking into a control room and collapsing because of the effects of the Spice in the atmosphere. I saw one recently on Durham remand prison and the difficulties with people who are dealing with mental health issues with prisoners, violence and, again, Spice. We don't have the problem of Spice in Ireland. Strangely, we just don't have that problem in our prisons yet. I thought by now we would have, but we just don't. What the contributing factors are behind that, I don't know. I have my own suspicions that it is those that run the drug trade wouldn't be making big money out of it. That is probably what is keeping it out of our prisons, but it is a horrendous issue to have to deal with when you see it on the television. Your prisons certainly look worse than ours when I watch from the outside. However, having said that, if you take Spice out of the equation, we have all the exact same problems that you have. We are well aware of them. We know what you have to deal with. On that, I would like to thank you, the men and women of the POA at the grassroots level, for the work that you do for your members every year out there on the floor because, without you, this trade union wouldn't be able to operate. I know it is a thankless job, but I would like to say on behalf of, giving fraternal greetings from your colleagues in the Republic of Ireland here today, thank you very much for the time and the efforts that you give to the union here. Thank you very much.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You don't get away that easy. Thank you, John, for those fraternal greetings. You are always welcome at the POA and we learn a lot off each other. Thank you for the invite to your Conference. John Clinton.

<Applause>

Just a few announcements before we close proceedings. There are fringe meetings from 5:00 till 6:00. Room 1 is the national committee for private-sector services and room 2 is misconduct in a public office. The only other announcement is tonight at 6:30 in the Vic, Sarah Rigby has invited the South West region for a glass of tap water. And tomorrow morning, to expedite business – because I know you are keen to get home – can we start prompt and be seated for a 9:00 start? Any more announcements, Steve?

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes. We decided as an executive that there is a fringe meeting on in the morning at 7:30, but last year when we did it very few people turned up, and we provided bacon sandwiches and different things, so is there an indication from Conference who is going to turn up, just so as we can have a look? If you are not, then we will cancel it. Anybody turning up 7:30? That's not too many, is it. Yes, me and Joe were going to be turning up. I am afraid we are going to cancel it because there's only two people indicated. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Conference. See you in the morning.

<End of session>

POA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th May 2019

Thursday 16th May

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Conference, good morning. If I can bring you to order please. We did of course have motions remitted until today because they dealt with violence. We have, as an observer, Richard Vince, Director of the High Security Estate – you're very welcome Richard. And we've been asked to play our *68 is Too Late* video again for the benefit of Richard and any other observers who maybe haven't seen it. So we're going to play that video, we'll get on with these motions about violence and then we'll move business as we go along. We probably will get to a break this morning, a little coffee break and get you some fresh air, and then we'll plough on, we'll get through it and we'll get you away. So if we can play the video please.

<Video plays>

And I'll just reiterate again, send that video on to everyone, everyone you know. Over 400,000 views. I've sent it to trade unions in America and New Zealand and Australia, it's out there. The more support we do, the more campaigning we do, we will get our retirement age lowered. We do want a retirement age of 60 and we will continue to fight for that right. Conference, we're now on motion number 9, which has been seconded by the Leeds fan from Lincoln.

Oh, I do apologise, who's seconding Sudbury? Styal? Thank you. We have a point to raise.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Thank you Mr Chairman. NEC, Conference, I'm just asking for a clarification on something here. We're not looking to stir trouble, we don't want to re-enter motions etc. but last night I was chatting to a few other branches and there's a little bit of confusion over motion 34 that we passed to endorse the Cuffe Report in its entirety. During his proposing of the motion the Deputy General Secretary, Joe Simpson, made comments. Through his own admission he'd not prepared properly for this, expecting to have the motion withdrawn. And he made comments that what we'd do is that, if we endorsed it, if we accepted this, if we took it on, what would happen next is that this would be taken away and dissected and they would look at the various parts of it. In his remarks, the gentleman from the Irish POA after we'd moved the motion and it had been accepted by Conference, he made similar comments. He said that there was no need to fear, people fear change etc. – and what had happened is that the Irish POA had taken away their report and they'd also took it to pieces and they'd looked for the good bits in it. Well, that's not what we were told. What we were told is that it would be accepted in its entirety. So, we're just a bit confused here. What we're actually looking for is not to go back into the main body of the motion – that's wrong and I'm sure Mark wouldn't allow that – but what we want is, we just want to know what will happen next with the Cuffe Report. Will it be acted on in its entirety immediately – or obviously there's some things that are time bound. What's going to happen next with the Cuffe Report, please?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well I could give you the Pat Cuffe answer, couldn't I – don't know? But what I will say is, we've got an NEC meeting on Wednesday, we need to go through it line by line and our communications to you will be clear, and if you feel you need to exercise your right under our rules then you can do that. But we have to dissect it ourselves. We will communicate with you and we will cost things and we will clarify things and we will communicate with you, get back to you and you will give us your feedback. Rule changes take a long time. They have to be ratified by Conference, by a two-thirds majority. There's going to be a lot of rule changes. So that's all we can do. NEC meeting on Wednesday – I'm sure we'll be sending a Circular out after Wednesday. Happy with that Glen? Thank you.

We're on motion number 9, Sudbury. It's been seconded by Styal, so I'll ask Styal to speak after Geoff, thank you.

Motion 9

Conference debates the current levels of violence across the Prison Estate.

SUDBURY

GEOFF WILLETS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Chair, NEC, Conference, longest outstanding dispute in the history of the POA. Colleagues, this subject seems to be reoccurring every year at Conference, and more and more widespread attacks. We've seen increases in horrific injuries to our members. The recent shocking events and attacks on our members seem to go unnoticed by the public, with restraints to media by government. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the staff and their families caught up in these acts of violence a speedy recovery and best wishes to them.

<Applause>

I would also like to thank the NEC in their positive campaign video of *68 is Too Late*, as the power of social media has bypassed government restrictions and shown the public what our members have to put up with on a daily basis. Well done, and I think you would agree.

<Applause>

We've seen the power of social media with the positive campaign video of *68 is Too Late*, so we need a plan, and the NEC need to be the driving force

behind this to get the message across that we've had enough of these violent attacks on our members, and zero tolerance means zero tolerance. We need the correct PPE for our members to complete their duties: body worn cameras; batons; PAVA to all staff; rigid cuffs; belts to hold the PPE; stab- and slash-proof vests that the police have, because I'm sure when I last looked I have the powers of a constable under the 1952 Prison Act legislation paragraph 8. So, where's mine? Because I want protection, I deserve the same protection, you deserve the same protection. HMPPS clearly promotes new signage around prisons promoting zero tolerance to violence. This seems to be nothing more than a pacifying statement. I suppose I could use this as a defensive implement as we don't carry batons in the open estate, we're expected to use pens. The escalating violence across the estate is evidentially on the rise and our members are becoming targets of these attacks. There is no code of ethics amongst prisoners nowadays. Society has changed and this is reflected in our prisons. Male, female, young and old staff are targeted on a daily basis for doing their job. The days of open prisons being less violent and having the best well-behaved clientele have gone. Recently we have had many escalated incidents and one concerning NPS and CNR in the <inaudible> estate. To set the scene – inadequate staffing and resources, two officers, an offender supervisor and four OSGs. It's not even enough for a CNR team. If it wasn't for the local police attending our establishment and attending the SAU to make up the poor, inadequate staffing numbers to restrain a prisoner in <inaudible> with police-issued lace straps, well, I don't know what would've happened.

Conference, we're having intruder balaclava gangs bringing parcels in on a regular occurrence that mimics the pied piper line of rats, with organised crime gangs, intruders entering the establishment at all times of days. As you can see, on the display screen is one of the parcels that was recovered containing a 10-and-a-half inch hunting knife. Yes, hunting knife. It isn't a butter knife or a razor blade welded into a toothbrush – this is one use and the clue is in the name. Two credit card knives were discovered and these are designed to go undetected and able to deliver maximum effect. These are used as stabbing tools. Our staffing levels are so poor we might recover one parcel and miss five – it's like a scene from the *The Benny Hill Show*. On the last set of nights, we intercepted 15 litres of vodka, mobiles, takeaway food. We intercepted an intruder carrying five big bags containing contraband – 20 litres of vodka we discovered in the same week. It's a joke! And if the public were aware of what was going on, it would be an embarrassment. I'm sure it won't be long before firearms become the normality as society reflects prison life, and this will be a different environment for our members. Zero tolerance should mean zero tolerance for all prisons. And seeing escalated levels of violence – overcrowding, poor allocations, alcohol, drugs and debt all play a massive part in this rollercoaster of violence.

The open estate has always been, and even more, the last step for prison life to a rehabilitative culture, but it's always a poor relation to the Prison Service, with minimum resources and maximum responsibility. This is your chance to share your experiences from your branch, join the debate and make sure that these seats are full at the front and support your members. Thank you very much.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Geoff, well said and thank you for those kind words. Styal.

ANDY HARRISON – BRANCH CHAIR, STYAL: Branch, Chair, NEC, Conference, we would like to thank Sudbury for bringing this motion to Conference. Violence within the female estate has increased dramatically in recent years. Staff assaults have increased and the severity of staff injuries has worsened. Staff are often requiring hospital treatments after suffering attacks from a population high on NPS and prisoners who quite clearly require mental health facilities rather than prison. Gangs within the female estate are now commonplace, often tooled up and causing numerous problems throughout female prisons. Assaults are at an all-time high on both staff and prisoners. The definition of violence also encompasses the very serious issue of self-harm, with suicides also increasing considerably year on year – this year alone, three suicides at Styal. A wing containing 140 prisoners, and at the start of Conference, 52 of these prisoners in our care subject to ACCT documents. Of a prison roll of approximately 480, a return of 62 prisoners on ACCT documents. Now, the reason I get on to violence on the ACCT documents is self-harm on an average hourly basis is taking a toll on the membership at Styal that is relatively young in service. Often members find themselves having to fight with these prisoners attempting to kill themselves, incurring injuries themselves in an attempt to preserve life of those in our care.

Level of violence within the female estate continues to grow at an alarming rate and serious assaults on staff and prisoners are commonplace. No longer is the female estate a less dangerous place to be than the rest of the service – POA members in a female estate are suffering. A slash is still a slash, a stabbing is still a stabbing, a potting is still a potting, a punch is still a punch and a spit is still a spitting. Also scalding is still a scalding and maiming is still a maiming regardless if it's a male prisoner or a female prisoner. Conference, join the debate.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, well said.

JOHN MUMFORD – BRANCH CHAIR, DARTMOOR: Chair, NEC, Conference, joining in with the debate. Prison violence is a dangerous academic which POA members have to face on a daily basis in a prison system that is poorly, and at times, dangerously managed. In the latest Safety in Custody stats, assaults on staff in the 12 months to December 2018 went over 10,200. We've got staff getting their throats cut. The Prison Minister claimed he had lowered violence before abandoning his post for a promotion like so many of his predecessors. And I'll touch on a number of reasons why our prisons are seeing such dramatic levels of violence – the following are just a few examples.

Number one, Tory austerity. Benchmarking under Chris Grayling saw a massive reduction in staffing numbers, which resulted in the loss of thousands of years of experience. The void left by the loss of these experienced and undervalued staff was quickly filled by organised criminal gangs who exploited the reduction in staff numbers and experience. Psychoactive substances: these dangerous drugs were a game changer and together with VEDS created the perfect storm in our prisons. These drugs have flooded our prisons and put our members at risk. The employer's response to this matter

has been woefully inadequate and prison Governors are almost powerless due to funding cuts to prevent these drugs from entering our prisons. Security: PS taking over and fuelling the black market within our prisons is down to a lack of staff and physical security. Our prison so-called leaders are not focussing on security, instead of increased security staff, more dogs, body scanners, enhanced perimeter security and CCTV they gave us key work. The lack of consistent and robust management of violent prisoners: managers are more concerned with continuously attacking our members than dealing with this demographic of prisoner. How often is a prisoner assaulting a member of staff and instead of going to the seg they get put back in their cell, or room, as they're called these days? The majority of managers are too concerned with hitting targets, unrealistic targets, when they should be devising a robust strategy to create a safer workplace for our members.

In closing, our trade union must continue to press for more resources, which as a priority must equate to more boots on the front line, appropriate and effective PPE and enhanced and properly resourced security departments and physical security in all prisons. We fully support the NEC call for PAVA, but also as a priority we would like the NEC to demand an immediate increase in staffing numbers nationally as a matter up the utmost urgency. We must also demand the immediate rollout of rigid cuffs, which we were promised years ago. I implore all branches to get behind the National Chair and the NEC in their fight to make the workplace safer for our members. This is the main reason that we all represent our members and we're all branch officials. Conference, thank you very much and join in with the debate.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jon. Three minutes, Tom, three minutes.

<Laughter>

THOMAS NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, yes I will try and keep this one slightly shorter than my speech yesterday. Conference, I would like to thank Sudbury for bringing this motion. It's absolutely necessary for us to have this conversation. I'd also like to thank the NEC for moving this motion to today, it's just a shame that Dr Jo Farrar, our new CEO, isn't here to see it but I'm sure that the person that she has sent to our Conference to observe this debate will inform her of the things. And I hope she watches that the video that the NEC have created, and I think the NEC really do need ... I know Sudbury said it before, but I really do think the NEC need thanking for that because that is a fucking brilliant video – excuse my French, sorry, unparliamentary language.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Slip of the tongue.

THOMAS NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: But it is a very, very good video and we do really need to push the social media on it. Conference, the levels of violence in our establishments are absolutely disgusting and I really hope that our new CEO gets told what we've said today, sees where her predecessor failed us *massively* as an employer, sees the fact that HMPPS have continuously disregarded our safety, sees the fact that this Tory governance we have at the moment have consistently failed us as human beings on the basic human rights that we deserve and we should demand. Conference, violence is increasing. The one thing that I will say is, we've had several members of staff at Elmley assaulted over the past few years and just referring it to the police now isn't enough. Even referring it on the advice of the NEC, referring it ourselves to the police, isn't enough. Colleagues, get out there and tell your MPs about it. We had a member of staff assaulted at Elmley – didn't go to the MP, just reported it to the police, still haven't heard anything back about it. We had another member of staff assaulted, went to the MP, within six months the scumbag that hit him had a conviction. Conference, join in the debate and let's make prison safe. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You're now known as Tourette's Tom.

<Laughter>

JOHN DICKSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, SHOTTS: Chair, NEC, Conference, I had to come up here today without anything prepared to show a wee bit of solidarity with my colleagues in England, Ireland and obviously ourselves. It's no different in Scotland. One of the characters we've seen on the video happens to be a good friend of mine. When you see the gate opening up, what you didn't actually see there was the person with the stitches down the side of his face, 21 stitches – that's what happened in that incident just with a razor blade, straight away. What I will say to you at this moment in time, we had a Special Delegates Conference up in Scotland on Friday where we passed three motions about assaults and NPS. We need them to start listening to us now. NPS is a scourge upon the Prison Service at this moment in time and it's causing unprecedented levels of violence, and we are also getting to the stage now where our own colleagues have mental health issues. We had a member of staff who was recovering from mental health issues, was well on the way to recovery and on a night shift went to a door and the prisoner was leaning against the door breathing out the toxic substance. It caused that member of staff to collapse and vibrate a wee bit on the floor, convulse and then sadly we heard that he tried to kill himself. These are the reality of our job role as it stands just now.

In Scotland, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in 2017 was 656, in 2018, 673, in 2019, 989. Fights: 709 in 2017; 695, a wee drop there in 2018, and 969 this year. Staff assaults: in 2017 189, in 2018, 261 and in 2018/19, 360. It shows it's going up and up and up. We now need to stand up and tell our employers we are no longer accepting it. And here's the embarrassing thing, colleagues – prisoners who don't get up for work in Scottish gaols, they either get five all round or seven all round. A prisoner coming up to the staff swearing at them, threatening them, going to bomb their cars, going to kill their families – caution. That's what we're dealing with and it's absolutely diabolical.

And then we've got another wee sinister turn of events in Scotland. When we go to the door now when a prisoner's non-compliant and aggressive, we are having accidents when we're going in to deal with them because that's how my employer is viewing a lot of the things that happens. We go to the door, there was a prisoner decided to bite a member of staff's arm down this side of their arm. As the officers tried to pull away, he breaks that arm. An accident. We have had staff going to the door, as we do, as a three-person team and somebody standing with a kettle of water and they throw it. That prisoner is not going for the number one, he's going for as many people he can get and he wants somebody to have an accident, he wants something to trip, he wants somebody to fall, he wants somebody to be very, very hurt. But what happened? The member of staff at the front was assaulted, the other two that went in to take the prisoner to the floor slipped on the water and various injuries. Accidents. This cannot be allowed to happen. And in Scotland we are pursuing it and in England you'll have the support of Scotland because we can take industrial action in Scotland and we will when we need to. Please support.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you for your support from Scotland, John, and it's good to see you looking so well. Thank you.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Conference, Chair, NEC, as you're all aware Feltham is one of the most violent prisons in the UK. We are awaiting currently the outcome of the Charlie Taylor Report. This report is looking into whether we can use pain-inducing techniques on children. The young people's estate could very likely end up with no protection at all. Our members at Feltham want PAVA. The reason that we want PAVA is because we've had many incidents where there's been large gang assaults – 15 prisoners jumping on prisoner's head. Doesn't matter how many staff are coming, that boy's getting hurt. A few years ago, one of our staff actually jumped into the middle of that to protect that child in the middle and put her whole body across him. She's not a prison officer anymore, she took some serious kicks to her back. If we'd had PAVA we would've been able to stop that. I'm a mum, I've got five children and god forbid if any of my children ever ended up in that place and 15 other boys decided to jump on his head, you know what, as a mum I'd want that PAVA sprayed. It's not just to protect ourselves, like I've said, it's to protect the young people in our care. We don't join to be prison officers because we want to run around whacking batons out, spraying PAVA and using force on people. We join the Prison Service because we have a passion to help people and to change people's lives, and I think that our bosses at the back, they're forgetting that – they're forgetting that that's why we joined the Prison Service. We need protection.

There is some good work happening in the young people's estate but it's not happening quick enough – we need the PAVA now. We need the resources to be able to achieve what you want us to achieve. Very recently we had to have minibuses turn up at Feltham to take our staff to hospital – do one run, come back and take the next lot to the hospital. I got that phone call to say that the hospital was full of POA members and I should go make my way there to see them. It wasn't just the physical injuries of the staff that weekend, it was the mental injuries that they've still got now, being pushed to come back to work very quickly when actually they're not ready to return. I've had phone calls at four o'clock in the morning from staff having breakdowns on the phone because they do not want to go back in the next day. We are fortunate at Feltham that right now there has been a change in our leadership and they are working with us to try and find a way out of this, but without resources how is that ever going to happen? Those minibuses are just going to keep coming. I had a phone call quite late last night that there were some more incidences. It's just getting out of control and if this report comes in removing pain-inducing techniques on young people, I don't know what we're going to do. I don't know what the other young offender establishments are going to do. So, I ask, and I might have got your name wrong – I did try to write it down, Richard Vince, is that correct?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: You've got it right.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: OK, so Mr Vince, I ask you directly from my branch at Feltham, please help us. Please work with us to save our lives, because if you don't work with us one of our members is going to die. And we really, really need to be supported, we need you to bring something so that we can protect ourselves. The cohorts that we're working with now, they are not the cohorts of ten years ago. The boys in young people's estate now are the most violent criminals that we have. We don't have boys in prison for nicking a bicycle, these boys are very violent and we need protection and we need you to give it to us and we needed you to give it to us... we needed it last year, we needed it the year before, but I'm begging you now, please give it to us now.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: I knew I'd get you smiling by the end of Conference, Laura. And on your behalf and behalf of your members I have recommended PAVA to Charlie Taylor when I met with him. It would be a very brave move from him to recommend it because of the Human Rights brigade who don't work in our environment, have never experienced the world that we've experienced, but it's a necessary and essential move and we will keep campaigning for every single operational prison officer to be issued with PAVA. Thank you for those comments.

JON SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: How do I follow that one then? Up here again. Violence at Hewell – violence all over the estate – is at epidemic proportions. It's disgusting the way we're treated. It's disgusting the way we're treated by our managers who are there to protect us as well through health and safety and through lack of protection when members of staff are assaulted. They run around with tissues and everything else when one of the prisoners is assaulted, but it seems to fall away when staff get assaulted. At Hewell I did a quick snapshot survey that I sent to Andy Baxter, and I'm going a different tack on what other people have done now. Since the 1st of January to the 31st of March this year, we had 52 assaults on staff – 19 technical ones, all the rest though: spitting; potting; physical assaults and threats with weapons. We had 34 weapon finds in that period, we had 108 assaults on prisoners, which actually caused 41 physical assaults, but some were assaulted by as many as ten people at the same time, so it's 108 acts of violence. We had 40-plus fights with prisoners in that period, we've had eight lots of obstruction of officers in their duty, which has resulted in violence, we've had a near hostage situation take at knife-point where staff intervened, we've had members of staff physically beaten, one who had

at least 20 blows to this person's face by a prisoner and the new staff stood around in horror and it was prisoners that pulled the prisoner off. So sometimes, yes we criticise and we say that the lack of staff and the lack of the older staff that went on VEDS causes a lot of this issue, but a lot of the issue is caused by new staff – their training is substandard, the training is inadequate, a lot of the training is unfit for purpose. I talk to the new staff when they come and it shocks me to think that they don't actually do what I did all those years ago in training with CNR, how to act, how to confront, how to challenge. None of it, absolutely none of it. The youth of these people, the millennium staff as I call them, born around '97,'98,'99, and they openly state they're only here for three to five years – it looks good on their CV. That's what the government have created, no correct vetting procedures. There's a lack of support all the way through. And it's a shame that Dr Jo Farrar's not here because I'd like to challenge our new CEO and say that if staff are our best asset then prove it. Protect the staff, bring in what we need to protect our staff, get on with the job and stop just abusing us from afar, taking away our rights, stripping us of our pension rights, not giving us a decent pay rise. Jo Farrar, I challenge you, we are a best asset – prove it!

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jon.

PAUL WRAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LINCOLN: Colleagues, to Mr Vince at the back, one thing that we haven't mentioned today so far about assaults on our members of staff is the *pathetic* awards and sentences that are given to them. Concurrent sentences need to be changed to consecutive so that it's actually being added on and our members are getting the just desserts or rewards that they should be getting. We've got a local agreement with our police force now, and similar to the thing that the NEC have actually brought in, where we're pushing for charges and we're doing everybody for it. But I've just had a member of staff assaulted, eye-socket broken, jaw broken, off for three months and they've given them six months consecutive – is that right?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Concurrent.

PAUL WRAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LINCOLN: Consecutive, sorry.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Yeah, consecutive, is what you want.

PAUL WRAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LINCOLN: Yeah, concurrent. That's no award, that's no deterrent. If you're going to take anything back today, please take that back that we want protecting. We're not asking for it, and like Laura said, begging for it – we're demanding it! Get us and give us it, thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well said. Any more speakers? Joining the debate ... yes, one more, well done.

ROB ATKINSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, STOCKEN: Chair, NEC, Conference, recently I've been assaulted myself and this was down to a prisoner who is in our segregation unit. He decided to walk out the cell, go into the office and attempt to take a Governor and a colleague hostage. As we responded, this prisoner then decided to try and barricade himself in the office. We entered and then the prisoner brandished two weapons, one four-inch shank and one three-by-three-inch piece of glass round some bedding. He then started to swing this at us, causing injury and assault to three of our members. Luckily the staff did get out, the prisoner was appropriately restrained and professionally dealt with, but this is going to continue to happen if we do not get what we have been promised. We've been promised PAVA. If I had that with me the other day that would have been over in a matter of seconds and I would not have been injured. We need to be given everything we have been promised – the staffing, the PAVA, the rigid cuffs, the SPEAR training – this all needs to happen now before it's too late, before somebody gets seriously injured or dies. We need this sorting now.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Could you just identify yourself for the report, name and branch?

ROB ATKINSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, STOCKEN: HMP Stocken, Secretary, Rob Atkinson.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Rob. Well said.

ALEXANDER WILSON – BRANCH CHAIR, LINDHOLME: Chair, NEC, Conference, we've got some pretty well-documented issues I think we've had around violence, obviously I'll try and be careful, please pull me as and when. I'll try not to go to ... I think you have all covered the actual attacks, I think what I need to put across is the disgusting treatment that staff get after they've been assaulted.

<Applause>

We have bully-boy tactics consistently applied to our staff. They're relying on newer staff with different terms and conditions that their level of pay drops on a much more rapid basis than we ever did with the closed terms and conditions. An example we've got – when a member of staff has the audacity to pass out unconscious having been choked out on a landing, and then has the obvious mental health issues that have followed on from that, rather than support that individual and ensure that we get the right charges to the prisoner that's doing it, we make sure that he's going to drop to half pay and that's going to force him back to work quicker, to the stage of, I've got to enlist the NEC and the Chair himself to escalate this so we could actually ensure he was still getting the correct wage so he could afford to pay his mortgage after recovering from being choked unconscious in the course of

his duties. How can we treat our staff in this way? And then we follow that on with, rather than let's deal with our staff, 'Right, what is your issues, why don't you feel it's safe there? Let's work with you, let's give you the PAVA, let's give you the way to protect yourself, let's stabilise the environment.' We don't, we run to an injunction. We would much rather hide behind a bit of paper and force us through the courts than actually work with us, an association, as a group of staff with the experience levels we've got and fix the environment that we're working in, and it's a disgusting way, disgusting state of affairs. And they're hiding behind these legal procedures rather than actually working with us to stabilise our environment because they don't care.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

JULIAN NEWBOLD – BRANCH CHAIR, LANCASTER FARMS: Chair, NEC, Conference, standing at this rostrum is a difficult task and one I personally find very hard indeed. However, what is more difficult is working within our gaols with the underfunding and violence toward us at unprecedented levels. My establishment – over a two week period I had several staff assaulted, two of which were hospitalised. Every day we have packages thrown over our walls, prisoners arranging incidents in the gaol to deplete staff in specific areas so that they can maximise their throw-overs. It's not right we face these difficulties on a daily basis. We need protection now. We need more staff now. We need your help, Mr Vince. We need the government to address our issues and not pay lip service to our members. Make a difference, Mr Vince, help us make this service proud again.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well said Jules.

STEWART McLAUGHLIN – BRANCH SECRETARY, WANDSWORTH: Chair, NEC, Conference, largely to echo the issue of the aftermath of this violence. I find at Wandsworth a member of staff is assaulted or is injured through the course of their duties. Yes, new joiners since I think 2013, one month full pay, one month half pay, rising to a maximum of five months full pay after five years' service. Sick leave excuses for assault should go through quickly – they do not. I get members, 'I can't pay my bills.' I take this to management, they say they'll get onto it – some do, others do not. I do a health and safety inspection to find out what staffing figures may have been when the incident takes place. The weekly health and safety checklists are not completed by management. Sadly, this level of management that should be dealing with this work are custodial managers, my members. When I raise this at health and safety meetings and management meetings, the Governor has said, 'Well, perhaps it's a performance issue.' Well, I'd much rather just get the work done and have our members protected and their pay, but there are no consequences to management not supporting their staff, and when you can prove it there are still no consequences. So, the management and the Prison Service must take responsibility for their own management, because if my members fail in their duty to look after a prisoner they will be poor-performed, investigated and quite likely sacked. When managers don't look after the health and safety of their staff, do not look after the welfare of their staff and do not ensure that they get paid correctly as a result of assault or injury at work, they should literally suffer similar investigation as most of our members do when we fail. So please, management, can you please get your people sorted out to protect *all* our people. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Stewart.

JAMES SKITCH – BRANCH CHAIR, CHANNINGS WOOD: Chair, NEC, Conference, what I'd like to say is, looking around Conference here, I can see that the majority of the staff joined the Prison Service when violence wasn't such an issue, when we had controls in prison and the majority of the Conference knows the reason why we didn't have that level of violence. However, unfortunately our employers, through BDG, taking 25% of the staff off the front line, taking away a whole management structure, the SOs from the frontline, have allowed levels of violence to rise in prisons to unprecedented levels. And what I would say is the solution doesn't come from Nottingham University and de-escalation and psychologists, the solution comes from talking to our representatives up here and getting proper sought solutions to problems that are running out of control. And that's all I'd like to say.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Jim. Delegates, we're all one union and I'm going to invite, you don't have to, but I'm going to invite someone from the private sector to tell us about their levels of violence, and someone from secure hospitals. If you'd like to, we'd like to hear about what goes on in the private sector and the secure hospitals. You are members of this family – violence affects us all.

LORRAINE LEWIS – ACTING BRANCH CHAIR, ASHWORTH HOSPITAL: Hi NEC, Conference, Chair. I'm almost in tears listening to what's going on with you, but for us it's not much different. One of the reasons why I didn't want to stand up with this is because I don't want to dilute what that man at the back has got to take away from here. I don't want him to think that this is the norm, because it isn't. Certainly for us it was in Ashworth, yes, daily-basis violence. I spoke to our Chair on Monday and I asked him about the video we'd watched because I have a member who I'm representing right now and his face, if we'd have used it in the video, wouldn't have actually been there to be seen because his face was chewed off. After a lot of months and a lot of plastic surgery, yes he's got his looks back, but we are still dealing with that, we are still fighting for full pay and not half pay for him. We are still fighting for him to have his enhanced shifts while he's not working at full capacity. This is just one member. But like you, my heart goes out to him ... so sorry.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Lorraine.

<Applause>

PHIL STYLES – BRANCH SECRETARY, BIRMINGHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, I'd like to say that it would be a brilliant time to be returning back to the public sector, but hearing and reading everything that we see every day I think you guys are in pretty much a similar situation to where we are and we have been for the last seven years. You have protections of our MPs, regime management plans – we have nothing. We are forced to unlock up to 160 prisoners with three staff because of financial penalties to the company. I don't really know what else to say, but Tuesday, myself and the Chair here received a text stating that one of our members was seriously assaulted because staff, again, didn't follow correct unlocking procedures which we now have since the 'Step In' process. But again, inexperienced staff, scared to listen to advice from us and a member of staff suffered a broken cheekbone and a broken jaw. Unfortunately, that has now led to two situations. A member of staff that we now need to support who's been seriously injured and two members of staff that have now been suspended for failing to work to the correct procedures. And I just want that to sink in. And to my colleagues in the private sector, as you're well aware, as of 1st July we return back to the public sector.

<Applause>

But, again, I'd like to thank Mark. Mark has been quite a strong advocate of removing private-sector organisations from our institutions. However, I'd still like to let my colleagues in the private sector know that you will always have a friend in Birmingham. And whatever support you need, Birmingham will always give you. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well said. Well said.

PAUL MALLIBAND – BRANCH SECRETARY, PRESTON: Chair, NEC, Conference, PAVA pilot site. Deliberately waited because I knew it would be referred to. Well, quite right, you all need it. Trust me, it works. It is an incapacitant that deals with an incident right in front of you, there and then. We also have a baton on our belt – the restrictions on using it are so great that we don't. It just sits there as a piece of equipment that's supplied to us that we aren't use for fear of being prosecuted.

<Applause>

And let me tell you that the do-gooders out there who want to restrict and put our lives at risk on a daily basis for using PAVA – that's instant recovery in about 30-40 minutes maximum, right – are trying to do exactly the same with that with a legal challenge. Well I've got some news for them – come and stand with me on a landing when my members are being stabbed in the face, the back, bitten, potted and all the rest of it, and tell me it's not okay to use it in them circumstances. And worse, and I actually know Richard Vince is a man of integrity because he was the governing Governor at Preston for a considerable time, you have got your hands full when your colleagues are producing documents that were circulated on 3rd May that none of you lot know about, including that top table, telling us and putting provisions in place that made it harder for us to use PAVA than a baton. That is not acceptable. The challenge for you, Richard Vince, is to get the politicians – and we don't know how much longer they're going to be there. The massive climb-down this morning – well done Napo, right, on OMiC ...

<Applause>

If you think PAVA is the answer, and it is, they must let us use it. The police do. The police ... my son is a policeman, he's a sergeant in the police in Blackpool. One of the worst areas in the country. This is the saying in the police force: 'If I draw my PAVA I'm going to use it. There is no warning.' Well you want to see the restrictions that there are on us. Not only have you to <inaudible> it, you've to read Hansard to decide whether you're going to draw it, by which time you've been stabbed and assaulted. Richard Vince, sort out the people you work with and the politicians to protect us. PAVA should be rolled out immediately, not just in the six sites but in every prison in the country.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, and believe me, that new operational guidance will change. We are in a consultation period. We will change it. We will give you the protections you need. And we have got no faith in 6/2010 when we use force on prisoners and that's why we're sitting down with the employer in a couple of weeks and highlighting to them the injustice that your members face. We need your cases from your branches sent to us so we can go in there with clear and concise evidence. And that's why we backed one of our own and that's why we will continue to back you over 6/10. And we will get PAVA out there, we will.

ANDREW FOSTER – BRANCH CHAIR, NORTHUMBERLAND: Chair, Conference, NEC, I wasn't going to speak but Birmingham came up and as they're coming back that leaves us as possibly – definitely – the only private gaol that's going to be ... had been previously public. I've been punched, potted, assaulted – private and public – and, guess what, it's exactly the same. You've got the same problems, the same issues. The two points I'd like to bring, just to reiterate where we've been with a female SO taken hostage at knife-point, exactly the point the young gentleman made before. Seven days concurrent was the sentence. She was rescued by three hot-plate workers. Following from that, once we took to the MP, took as far as Rory Stewart before he packed his bags and did a bunk, release on temporary licence. The process that goes with that, compared to where we're at with HDC, I digress a little bit but HDC now is alright. We let a man out of prison, me and my Secretary, in reception one morning and he potted a member of staff six weeks earlier. He'd been given 42 days by the judge, did his 42 days and he still received the HDC. How can that be right? It cannot be right.

Mr Stewart says, favourite word of the time, it's a 'robust' policy. That's not a robust policy, it's a ridiculous state of affairs. Didn't get referred to the police, waiver off and that's what happens. How can that be a correct policy? I'll leave it at that, thank you very much.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

BILL BUPARAI – BRANCH CHAIR, BELMARSH: Chair, Conference, NEC, Richard, on behalf of the male estate, female estate, young offender institutions, secure hospitals, open estate and the high security estate, please can you reduce the levels of violence to the same levels of violence you face in headquarters?

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: I can see why that diet works now, Bill. Well said. Nobody else? Have we got someone else? Roger. Thanks Roger.

ROGER MORAN – CHAIR, LIVERPOOL: Chair, NEC, Conference, Mr Chairman, I'll have to seek your advice on this. I don't know if I can ask Mr Vince to come forward to prove to this conference that he has actually heard. Heard the passionate pleas that have been made today and not simply listened, and give us, this Conference, the firm and verbal assurance that he will take our fears, concerns and demands in person to our new CEO and then promise to meet our NEC to report back to us.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well, I think I speak on behalf of Richard because I know Richard very well. And I can confirm what has been said by Paul – he is a man of integrity, and I can assure you he will report back to Jo Farrar. He will take our concerns forward. I can see him writing feverishly at the back, so he will do that. I'll make sure he does it.

TYLER TIERNEY – BRANCH SECRETARY, COOKHAM WOOD: Chair, Conference, NEC, I joined the job about five years ago and I am one of the younger staff, and I'll give you the background about me and I'll go into it. I am one of the younger staff and I was proud to join the job. I had my epaulettes framed on my wall. I was really proud. I was assaulted seven times within one week, I went straight home and I took them epaulettes off my wall. I wasn't proud to be part of this job. I went back into the prison, I spoke to my POA rep, Andrew Boddam at the time, and he gave me the confidence to do this job. I stood back up and I stand up with this union. The guys that stand beside me in this room, the men and women, the Chair, the NEC, they are the ones that make me proud to do this job. They are why I wear this uniform, why I stand there every day and I face the fight that we face, the violent levels.

We went into our Governor about three weeks ago. In this weekend we had 46 alarm bells, 17 cell fires, four assaults. We went to our Governor on the Monday morning and we said, 'What are we doing about this violence?' The answer that we got was, 'What violence?' That was three individuals. We had seven staff sent home that weekend – seven staff – and the governor was just blasé: 'What violence?' I said, 'Governor, this is the violence we face on a day-to-day basis.' The members were stood outside the gaol on the Tuesday, they said to me and my Chair, 'We are not going in. This is not safe for us. We can't do it.' I spoke to the members, we went in, we got to the wing and they said, 'Right, we're going to run a normal regime.' We were 14 staff short. They told us we were going to run a normal regime. We stood up in that briefing and we said, 'No, we're not. We're not going to run a full regime because it's not safe for us to do so.' We stopped, we went up and spoke to the Governor. The Governor then said, 'Well, we'll have to try and run education because we need to.' Not even a thought for the staff and the issues they faced.

We had a member of staff, he was assaulted – broke his wrist, broke his arm. Within two weeks he'd had a return to work notice. He was told he was going to be dropping to half pay. Two weeks it took. He then came back, applied for his sick leave excusal, the Governor still hasn't approved it. It's been over three months.

I've had another member of staff who defensively struck a young person who pulled a weapon on him. He's now been suspended since October. We've raised it with the Governor every time – he's not had a single extension. We've raised it with the Governor every 28 days: 'Where's his extension?' He hasn't had one. What are we doing about this? He had the notice of report back in January. Notification, finished the report, he still hasn't conducted it and this member of staff is still suspended – still doesn't know what is going on, still doesn't know what his livelihood is facing. So, stand up, stand together, stand strong. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well said. And waiting patiently to respond and join the debate for the NEC is Jackie Marshall.

<Applause>

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, Conference, violence within the prisons has slowly increased over many years, but following benchmarking and the mass exit on VEDS it went boom. And it's not just the number of incidents that went boom, it's the severity of the injuries our members are receiving. They are horrific and our thoughts are with all of those who have been assaulted.

I really don't know what statistics Phil Copple was reading when he wrote his intranet article at the end of last month. He said the latest government statistics have revealed some encouraging signs of recent reductions in violence and self-harm in prisons. He went on to say, 'While the number of assaults in 2018 rose compared to 2017, the latest quarter, October to December 2018, has seen an 11% reduction in assault incidents.' We've heard it all before, the stats have gone up but the last quarter is promising. Time and time again we've heard it. You heard the National Chairman say in his opening remarks that the number of staff assaulted has risen to 23 to 28 a day, and if Phil can't see that he should have gone to Specsavers.

Conference, we thank Sudbury for bringing this debate and thanks to all of you who have contributed to it. But, Conference, one thing I'd ask you all to please remember, that when your members have been assaulted or injured it's your Governor, it's HMPPS and the government legal department who are denying liability and access to compensation. It's not the POA and it's not Thompsons.

Richard, you've heard what they've said, I hope you've taken copious notes to take back. Do something now, act now, before somebody dies. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Conference and, of course, in law we all have the right to deliver a pre-emptive strike. If you hold an honest-held belief that you're about to be assaulted, if you perceive that you're about to be assaulted, you have the right to strike first. So why does our employer suspend you and try and sack you when you do that? We will take that forward on these talks because that will change. Thank you for the debate. You're a credit to this union. Thank you.

<Applause>

We now move on to motion 9A, which was an emergency motion from the NEC. Moved by Joe Simpson, seconded by Liverpool. Thank you.

Motion 9a

That Conference accepts that the recent spate of serious assaults against staff at a number of establishments demonstrate that prisons are still not safe despite HMPPS and Government claiming otherwise.

Conference recognise the consequences of violence and direct the NEC to take legal action to ensure the Secretary of State, HMPPS and Government provide a safe workplace where all POA members work.

NEC

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Conference, I have been a prison officer for nine years. I worked at Holme House. So, I'm going to start moving this motion this way. Chair, NEC, Conference, epaulette number 247 – because that's all our members are to the employer at present, an absolute shame.

<Applause>

Conference, the first part of the motion, that Conference accepts that the recent spate of serious assaults against staff at a number of establishments demonstrate that prisons are still not safe, despite HMPPS and government claiming otherwise. Employer, government – stop lying! There is no 'green shoots'. What there is, is blood on our landings from our members being assaulted because they are absolutely scared of using the tools that you have given them because Governors look at it again and they see a slight thing wrong – it doesn't matter what it is – you are under investigation and you face the sack. Our members would rather be assaulted than use the tools that you have given them. That is an absolute sad indictment on management in the Prison Service. Colleagues, this can't go on. It just can't go on.

To every employer: you have failed every POA member under the Health and Safety at Work Act, where you have failed to ensure their safety whilst at work. And you have done absolutely nothing about it, nothing. Then we had what everybody looked at from the employer and from government. Wonderful Rory, come in – who is going to save the day. 'I will resign if I don't reduce violence in prisons.' Well, Rory, you've done something that nobody in this room or back in our prisons would ever contemplate – you ran away.

<Applause>

That's unforgivable but, wherever you are, I'm sure you'll make a right pig's ear of that as well.

Conference, as the lead for you on your pensions, I have to deal with some sad cases when it comes to ill-health retirement, when it comes down to being dismissed under medical inefficiency. What I don't hear from the employer is actually rehabilitating our members, taking the time to get them back to work, ensuring that they and their family can still afford to pay the mortgage and the food bills, where they don't have to go to food banks. How about starting with something like that?

Conference, I joined in 1987. C&R wasn't in, it was a thing called mufti, I don't know if everybody in the room knew what mufti was. It's where you got the smallest person and you ran into a cell with a mattress. That's what we done and then everybody else charged in and, well, it wasn't C&R.

<Laughter>

Then we introduced C&R, where it's compliance through pain. That is now 30 years old. We are still the only profession that goes in somewhere and rolls round the floor with them. We get injured, they get injured. And then we ask for PAVA and the employer says, 'Yeah, you can have it,' but we're still waiting. We want rigid cuffs. 'Yeah, you can have that as well.' We're still waiting. Conference, it's time to stop waiting. It's now time to start taking action.

I was sat last night at the Honorary Life Members' dinner and I was sat with one of our colleagues who had helped save our colleague who was crushed in a gate at New Hall. Very brave, got the highest honour that we can give as a Trade Union for that heroic piece of work. What did she get from the employer? A sick warning and threatened to lose her job. Disgrace. If you take anything back, Richard, take that back because that is absolutely diabolical.

<Applause>

We come on to the government Civil Service Compensation Scheme. I have argued and argued on your behalf. The Civil Service Compensation Scheme should not be reduced for injured staff because we see it every day where our members who are no longer able to do their job through their line of duty. Now government want to reduce that compensation. That compensation is to allow our members to rehabilitate, get the help they need, but in the safe assurance that they have got money and compensation behind them to allow them – they and their families – to survive until they can go back into the workplace. That doesn't happen.

And another thing that happens – once they're dismissed any treatment that they're receiving through the Prison Service, the employer, ceases with it. That's wrong. They were injured doing the work that you wanted them to do. So therefore make sure that they ensure that they get the treatment all the way through, even if you dismiss them. And then let's get round this 75% myth because I saw it the other day and it makes my blood boil. Excuse, Governor – you have got the right to turn around and say, 'I'm going to award 100%.' If it goes up then the HR Director can do it back down to 75%, so don't ever listen to that lie ever again. I'm telling you that.

<Applause>

Conference, the employer has failed you. The government has failed you and now it's time for us to start fighting back on this and it has been a long time coming. That is, Conference, recognise the consequences of violence and direct the NEC to take legal action to ensure the Secretary of State, HMPPS and government provide a safe place where all POA members work. All POA members work. And we include the Secretary of State for Health in that as well because, in the private sector, I know you work for G4S, Sodexo, it is still the Prison Service and they are liable for your health and safety as well.

Conference, by passing this motion it allows us then to go after the people who are doing this to you and that is only right and proper. Conference, we've heard on PAVA the Equalities and Human Rights Commission is now challenging the government on their decision. This Trade Union and its members are absolutely deafened by the silence on what is happening to you in your workplace. Conference, please support the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: No speakers, straight to the vote though. All those in favour, please show. Yeah, we'll have that. Carried.

<Laughter>

Oh, happy days. Wait until I see that David Gauke. Right, we're on to motion 11, which has been seconded by Lincoln. I invite Sudbury to move that motion. Ford, your motion will fall if this is carried, so I invite you to speak as well.

Motion 11

Conference to direct the NEC in gaining Baton's 24/7 to protect our members Health & Safety due to the escalating levels of violence and incidents in the prison estate including the Private Sector, Open Estate and YJB.

SUDBURY

ROGER MOORE – BRANCH SECRETARY, SUDBURY: Chairman, NEC, Conference, we are asking Conference and the NEC to support this motion. It reads, Conference to direct the NEC in getting batons 24/7 to protect our members' health and safety due to the escalating levels of violence and incidents in the prison estate, including private sector, open estate and YJB.

HMP Sudbury identifies and proves that escalating violence and incidents within the night state period, not to mention the extreme incidents in the core day. I'm sure no one in the room would deny any of our members the right to protect themselves. The recent public media concern in this escalating violence only highlights the problems around the estate – not forgetting the fact that as an open prison we have no physical barriers to put between staff and prisoners and prisoners move freely 24/7 if they wish. We have no alarm bells for staff to come running and, if they did, our geographical layout of the prison would mean walking with a purpose would be like taking on a marathon for most staff, even before engaging in C&R. So you can see the fact that personal protection equipment is not available is putting our members' health and safety at risk.

Not forgetting the 1952 Prison Act legislation, para. 8, Powers of Prison Officers, which states, 'Every prison officer, while acting as such, shall have all the powers, authority, protection and privileges of a police constable.' The public's perception of open conditions, most prisoners are from white colour and low-risk backgrounds that reside at open prisons. This could not be further from the truth and the following wrong categorisation of prisoners being allocated to open prisons is a ticking time-bomb waiting to happen.

I understand similar motions have been put to the Conference but times are changing and our members' health and safety are at risk. It is going to take a fatality before NOMS wake up, before HMPPs wake up and address that every prison officer in every prison up and down the country should be issued with suitable equipment 24/7 to protect their wellbeing. Support this motion and let the NEC take this motion, roll it up and use it like a baton to verbally beat the employer over the head. Conference, please support this motion. Protect our members.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

PAUL WRAY – BRANCH SECRETARY, LINCOLN: Colleagues, I've been started in the open estate, I recognise where happiness is door shaped is not an option. So therefore all means available should be to protect our members 24/7, 365 days a year. That all needs to be afforded across the whole estate, not just those of us in closed conditions. Just because our members are given a baton does not mean that staff are freely going to use them to beat prisoners like a Derby fan would be doing, going around abusing a Leeds United fan.

<Laughter>

Over there, lucky win. I would like to thank Sudbury for bringing this motion, to remind all of us the problems across the whole estate. And Isis who, throughout the week, have done their branch proud by reminding us of the problems that they're facing in the private sector. I was fortunate last October to spend an afternoon with Mark meeting my MP and saw at first hand the work that's being done by himself to get issues out into the public domain. To Richard Vince, at the back, doing your Marcelo Bielsa, take this back. Quite simple, as I said earlier on, we demand a safe workplace across the whole prison estate. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Paul, well said.

<Applause>

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, Conference, delegates, we've seen the effects of not having batons. We had the riot and we don't forget it. All I've got to say is we have a 127 <inaudible> site with a bloody main road, sorry, a main road running through it. If you're the only person on duty on a workshop patrol, the nearest member of staff is a good five minutes' run and that's if they can run and help you. We get a baton on nights. Up until recently we had three officers on nights. Because we haven't got the money, it's been withdrawn, so we're back to an officer, two officers, an SO and three OSGs for 541 prisoners who aren't locked up. The only time they get locked up is when we put them in cells to ship them back. Last year we shipped out 186 prisoners as not suitable Cat Ds. We don't have Cat Ds – what was Cat Ds this time ten years ago was Cat Cs or maybe Cat Bs.

We had an incident one Friday night. Staff went to do roll-check at one in the morning and there were six prisoners drunk, abusing staff. So, the Governor said in the morning, duty governor, give him his credit, 'We'll breathalyse them.' So, they breathalysed them, they gave them a bloody breathalyser slip, gets delivered by the staff who have to go into these rooms first thing in the morning to deliver these. Four of them turned up, one didn't. The lowest blew 15, the highest was 48. The one they couldn't find, we spent staff sending round every single room trying to find him. We hadn't got a baton so if we had come across him still drunk we would have had to have defended ourselves with our gobs. Some of us are good at it, some of us aren't. He turned up at quarter past eleven, five minutes before we were going to do a staff <inaudible> roll-check, and he blew 58. He blew 58 at quarter past eleven in the morning on a Saturday morning. So, on the Tuesday the decision was made to move them all. We've got four cells, so we put five in. We put two that were room-mates in together – they decided to play up because they were juveniles, they were 21 and 22. But we don't have the staff to deal with this. We need to have a baton to protect ourselves.

We've got members that were assaulted on nights in October last year by one on NPCS. One only came back two months ago because they're not fit for duty and we've now gone to two again. Sooner or later someone will be killed if we don't have it. When you go and do a roll-check at night, you have to kick the door to see there's nothing coming your way before you go in. It's a normal old Nissan hut, it's no better than anything else. We need to have a baton 24/7 and I say to Richard Vince at the back, we need a baton 24/7. We've got it at night, I've got a personal-issue one but I can't use it during the day. But I'm expected to deal with the same prisoners during the day who are still drunk during the day without a baton and we've got an MSL on a Saturday and Sunday of six and they're out and about walking about, doing what they like, on their mobile phones, intimidating victims, getting drunk, having food parcels thrown over the fence. Please support this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Kev.

LES DENNIS – BRANCH SECRETARY, HEWELL: Chair, Conference and NEC, former Earl of Plymouth residence, Hewell Grange, part of the Hewell

Cluster mess, has four staff on nights, one SO, supposedly with a baton, and three OSGs without. So, really, what use is a baton in this situation. I undervalue it a little bit when I say, what do we face on nights? Well, there's parties, alcohol, prisoners climbing out the window, people in the grounds. We don't have a Spice problem in Hewell Grange, it's a massive cocaine and cannabis problem. The other issues such as recovering a mobile phone from a sleeping prisoner is a risk that staff are mostly unwilling to take.

Ah, but we have support from Hewell Blakenhurst half a mile away – they'll come up and help you. Well, actually, no – they're depleted by all the bed watches that have gone out and all the constant watches we've got out and the unwillingness of management to support staff on nights. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Les.

<Applause>

No more indicators so responding on behalf of the NEC, Jackie Marshall.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the NEC in support of the motion. This is already Conference policy and we continue to put pressure on the department. We've made some headway that you've heard, albeit a first step – open prisons in the male estate now carrying batons during night state. An acceptance by the department that violence is rising in the open estate. You heard Styal earlier, violence in the female estate, you've heard the special hospitals.

As I say, it's already Conference policy but it's a bit further than the estates listed. Let's not forget the hospital officers, special hospital and anywhere else where we have POA members. Everyone should be wearing a baton. Please support the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Sudbury, do you wish to respond? Thank you. Straight to the vote then, all those in favour please show. Any against? That's carried.

Richard, thank you for your attendance this morning. Thank you for witnessing the video. Thank you for taking on board what our members have said. I know you'll take them back to Dr Jo Farrar. I welcome your feedback in the future. I would suspect we'll be sitting down to discuss these issues but you know, Richard, you're welcome to stay as long as you want. But before you go, now you know why I'm so passionate about these amazing people.

Conference, before we move business further I'd just like to invite Libby Morgan, Business Development Director from Cornmarket Insurance, our new provider that we've done a deal with. She'll tell you what it's all about, what's on offer. I'd like to welcome Libby to address Conference. Welcome Libby.

<Applause>

GUEST SPEAKER: LIBBY MORGAN – CORNMARKEt INSURANCE SERVICES: Good morning. Many thanks for having me here. I have to say to Steve I'm delighted to have been invited and come along to talk to you. Some very serious motions and I'm sure the last thing you want to hear about is somebody from an insurance company. So, apologies, I will not keep you too long, okay?

My name is Libby Morgan, I work for Cornmarket Insurance. We're based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. I believe we've a Northern Irish contingent here somewhere in the room, have we? Right guys, there you go. I've also been told to speak a little slowly. We are well known to either talk too much or talk too quickly. I do have a presentation but apparently there is no clicker so apologies if I sort of go back and forth over a few things. So, thanks to Steve and the team, Cornmarket Insurance have been appointed as the new insurance provider for the Prison Officers' Association. We're absolutely delighted with that; I'm sure 99% of you in the room have never heard of us before. I'm just really here to spend a few minutes to tell you who we are and a bit about our history and our association with unions throughout the UK and Ireland. I think with John Clinton in the room from the Republic of Ireland Prison Officers' Association as well, hello John. I know I haven't met you.

Cornmarket, we have been running over 45 years and as an insurance broker in Ireland and in the UK we work exclusively with unions and associations. We've over 25 unions that we work with and that includes in the UK four of the largest teaching unions in the UK, in fact the largest teaching union in Europe. Two days ago I was with the College of Paramedics. We've been appointed as their general insurance provider as well, and now this year we've been appointed to work for yourselves and, again, I'm absolutely delighted with that. We've got 80 staff based in Belfast. We're a very big operation in terms of the Northern Ireland context but we've 400 working in Dublin. We're part of the Irish Life Candidate Life Organisation and we're ultimately owned by a Canadian company called Great-West Co.

So, what can we offer yourselves and what can we offer your friends, your family, etc? I'm here today to talk about specifically car insurance, home insurance, gap insurance, travel insurance and all policies similar to that. We don't provide life insurance in the UK – we do in the Republic of Ireland, and you never know, that might change as things go along. What we really pride ourselves in is offering really excellent customer service. We don't stop until we give the service that we think is best in market. And I can hand-on-heart say that, from the testimonials that we get from our union associations and also from our customers. Every single customer that takes out a policy with us or renews with us, we survey them and we actually beg them to give us feedback, whether that's good or bad, because we listen to every single word that they say, OK?

We've agreed, in terms of discounts and really our price point, because price ultimately is what the customer is looking for, a really strong price point. We work with all the major insurers in the UK – RSA, my old employer, Aviva, Axa, Allianz, AEGIS – you name it, we have dealings with them. And they give us exclusive deals because of the way that we wrap ourselves around union associations. It's a very unique insurance model and we're probably the biggest in the UK that do that with the unions.

So really here today hopefully you walk away remembering the name Cornmarket. All I'm really asking from you is please try us. I can guarantee that when you look at the business that we write with similar unions I can guarantee that we will be able to give you, certainly close to 70-80% of you, we can guarantee to give you a cheaper price on car insurance. If we don't, we will absolutely do all that we can to make sure that we can give you the best discounts.

One of the things we also pride ourselves on, and it's almost a rarity in the market now and you probably don't know this, if you go online and you decide to take your insurance out with a cuddly toy or an opera singer, not that I'm here to bash any of these aggregators or website comparison sites, but when you go on and you input your details, what I would just say to you is just make sure that you know what you're doing. Because what we're seeing time and time again is that people are acting as their own broker, they're going on, they're inputting information and I even fell foul of this myself and I'm supposed to be an expert. A couple of months ago doing my own insurance I thought I would try out these cuddly toy websites and I hadn't realised, I actually had a claim, I hadn't realised that I was inputting the information incorrectly and I was actually doing myself out of a couple of hundred quid. So, there you go. What we offer is advice and that advice is there to make sure you're getting the product – the policy – that really does suit your needs. And it's not just about your needs, it's about if you've got your kids noted on your driving policy, it's about your partner, your spouse. It's also about your home or your holiday home or if you take extended periods of time away you need to notify your broker of all these things because, believe it or not, you may not be covered. That's one of the things, as I say, we will take time, spend that time with you.

Again, I'm seriously not here to bash any of the online comparison sites but we can offer our best discounts, believe it or not, when you call us, particularly for car and home insurance. That's because a lot of, believe it or not, the questions that we ask just don't appear on websites and insurers really like the model that we have because we build relationships with customers. So, let's just say, in RSA or in Aviva or whoever, they'll give us discounts if you want to go online but they'll give us much better discounts if you call us. So, I know that takes time.

So, I think I've covered everything. I'm sure there's something I've missed but, again, I think if the Irish guys were to say any few words, we've dealt with them for years and we've built a brilliant relationship with them. They helped support us in talking to Steve and the team to win the partnership here. I'm really, really excited about that, as I say. Winning deals like this supports 80 young people back in Belfast to have a full-time job with what I believe is a brilliant career and what I believe is a brilliant company. So, we just want to make this work. So, I'm just saying give us a try. Please feedback if you're not happy with either a price point or you're not happy with the service you've received personally. I'll take that call. So, I think over the next few weeks I'll be talking to Steve, you'll hear a bit from us, you'll hopefully get an email. Please do try us. And, listen, all the best with this conference. As I say, I'm a bit hoarse here, I was talking to 300 paramedics the other day and I was just hoping that I didn't get confused with paramedics and prison officers. But listen, all the best with your conference. Some serious motions and all I would just say is people like me sitting on the wings fully support what I've just heard this morning. All the best and thank you for having me here today. Take care.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Libby, you're very welcome. It's good to hear. I wish I had known about car insurance a few weeks ago – it's just cost me a fortune. I'll take you up on that offer next year. Just a small token of our appreciation, on behalf of the delegates and the POA union, I'd like to give you this gift.

LIBBY MORGAN – CORNMARKEt INSURANCE: Oh my goodness, Mark.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Conference. We're going to have a coffee break at eleven so we can move some more business before then. We're on to conference motion number 48, which is Whitemoor. Do we have a seconder for Whitemoor please? Maidstone seconded that.

Motion 48

Conference note that only the National Chairman and General Secretary produce a weekly diary that is published on the website. In the interests of transparency Conference instruct all elected National officials to produce a weekly diary that is published on the members only access to the POA website.

WHITEMOOR

NIALL McINTOSH – BRANCH CHAIR, WHITEMOOR: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 48 reads, Conference note that while the National Chair and General Secretary produce a weekly diary that is published on the website, in the interests of transparency, Conference instruct all elected national officials to produce a weekly diary that is published on the members only access to the POA website.

Conference, I don't think I need to elaborate on this motion as the wording says it all. And I'm sure the elected national officials won't have an issue with this because ultimately it will demonstrate to the membership the hard work that they carry out on behalf of us all. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Niall. Any speakers? Andy Baxter for the NEC.

ANDY BAXTER – NEC: Chair, Conference, NEC, asking you to support the motion. Like Niall I'll be short and swift. Your NEC has nothing to hide, welcomes the motion from Whitemoor. It makes complete sense that branch officials and members can view the NEC diaries. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Andy. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour? Any against? That's carried. 49 Ford, seconder please. Last chance. Thank you.

Motion 49

That the NEC supply an annual diary in the same style as the PGAs.

FORD

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, NEC, delegates, motion reads that the NEC supply an annual diary in the same style as the PGA's. I've got my diary here. All I've got to say is I'd like to thank you for my extra day off because there's no 12th January next year. So, I've got the day off have I? Thank you very much. That's the first thing my members found.

<Applause>

Other than the fact is that I've got membership of 68, I had 72 at the time but three have just retired, they've got out. My diary has arrived, it normally comes in a box so big; it was in a box that big. That's not right. So, I counted it, there was 50. So, I phoned up Cronin and said, 'I think we've got a problem.' 'Yeah, we know. They sent out the same number as each branch gets *Gatelodge*.' I get 50 *Gatelodges*, I get a diary. My members say it's the most expensive, and even Joe referred to it the other day, it's the most expensive diary, you wouldn't pay for it. My members say it's the most expensive diary that they get. The information in it is irrelevant, most of it they don't even look at. What they want to know is if they need to speak to someone about an accident, an insurance thing or anything like that, or get hold of one of the FTOs or the NEC, there's no phone numbers in there for them. We need to look at what contents we have in these diaries. We need to make sure that they are out in the branches early enough. We book our leave in October for the following year. They want a diary, want to know it. So, can someone, as we've had the Cuffe Report now, give one of the subcommittees of the Cuffe report a little task? Get us a diary that's fit for purpose for 21st century. Please support.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: For the NEC, Dave Cook.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking on behalf of the NEC. Continuing the normal format, we're asking you to reject the motion – purely on the basis that it mentions the fact it's the same style as the PGA. I remind Conference, I don't know if you can all remember the very first diaries. When I joined the job they were little booklets of a similar style, they were hardbacked cardboard booklets that we kept and that was the diary that we had at that time. These were seen to be inadequate by our membership and by Conference and quite a few years ago now it was brought to Conference that we change the diary to something that would sit into our top pockets, our uniform pockets. Hence, we got the diaries of the style that we have today. Our members want a diary that they can put into their uniform pockets and will survive the daily rigours of the uniform and the job that we do. Has anybody seen a PGA diary? Yeah? They are big, they are long, they are thin, they are hardbacked cardboard, they've got little metal corner pieces on them. They're designed as that because they can put them into their pockets of their suits. A PGA diary will not sit in a band 3 or operational member of staff's uniform. So, it's not suitable.

I fully understand the sentiment that was brought to moving this motion. Yes, we don't always get it right. Sometimes our diaries could be a little bit better. I remember a couple of years ago where the diaries were falling to pieces – about a month after we received them you opened them up, the spine broke and the pages were falling out. So, we can improve it and we will take away from this motion, the fact is that we need to do better with our diary and get maybe a better print quality. Maybe we also need to check the dates before we actually go to print and all those sorts of issues. So, we will take that away. We will look to improve the diary but if you go with this motion then you are restricting us to a style like the PGA. We would like to keep that open and if we can find a style of diary that suits, that would benefit our members, and the current ones seem to be doing that, then we're asking you to reject this motion. Thank you.

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Cheers Dave. I hear your sentiments Dave but we need to get something sorted rather rapidly. They don't last more than a month, you're lucky if they do last a month. Membership wanted one in the style of PGA, not the same size, something that all the information that was relevant. So please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Kev. To the vote, then. All those in favour please show. Against. That's lost. Kev, we've taken those comments on board. We know what the issues are, we will sort it. We know diaries are important, we will sort it.

50, Whitemoor. Formally moved. Secunder for Whitemoor? Thank you. Speaking for the NEC ... Do you wish to speak on it, seconder? No. Speaking for the NEC is Sarah Rigby.

Motion 50

Conference mandate the NEC to ensure the POA Diary is produced and distributed to branches and members by the end of September of the year prior to the diary beginning.

WHITEMOOR

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, another one I've got lucky with. The NEC are in favour of this motion following the issues we encountered last year when we changed supplier. The General Secretary mentioned the cost of diaries as part of his Finance Report. We changed supplier to reduce costs. We have already taken steps with our new provider to ensure these errors are not repeated and we will do our best to ensure the diaries are sent to all establishments by the end of September, that they are dated correctly and that the days of the week are on the outside of the page. We will also ensure you are sent the correct amount so you can issue them to all members. We can only apologise for last year's efforts and promise we'll try and do better.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Sarah. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour. Any against? That's carried, thank you.

Feltham. Feltham are asking permission to withdraw this motion. Do they have permission to withdraw? Please show. Thank you. Permission granted.

52 Northumberland. Seconder please. Thank you.

Motion 52

Conference instructs the NEC to improve and develop Circulars that are sent out to Branches. Often Circulars are difficult to understand, we request that in future all Circulars are written in plain English, contain as little jargon as possible and transparent in which areas of the POA they involve.

NORTHUMBERLAND

ANDREW FOSTER – BRANCH CHAIR, NORTHUMBERLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 52 – Conference instructs the NEC to improve and develop Circulars that are sent out to branches. Often Circulars are difficult to understand. We request that in future all Circulars are written in plain English, contain as little jargon as possible and are transparent in which areas of the POA they involve.

Conference, I believe this is a fairly self-explanatory motion. The membership deserve to be informed of the matters affecting the POA in a clear, concise and appropriate manner. The second point being relevance – as with motions to conference, the reference point is nearly always HMPPS. The POA membership covers Sodexo, G4S, Serco, NHS and a number of other employers, not just HMPPS. As a branch we were recently obliged to carry out a workplace ballot for a group of staff that we don't even have. This left us in a potential breach of rules of constitution through absolutely no fault of our own. Conference, please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Andy Baxter for the NEC.

ANDY BAXTER – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to support the motion. Colleagues, there is no deliberate attempt to confuse readers when circulars are issued. There are times when circulars have to contain an element of legalese or of fairly complex formula. The NEC thank Northumberland for bringing this motion and for highlighting the issue. Going forward, the NEC commit to remove jargon, be clear and transparent, relevant and clearly identify who the affected members are. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Andy, we'll go to the vote. All those in favour please show. Any against? That's carried.

53 Northumberland, seconder please? Thank you Birmingham.

Motion 53

Conference instructs the NEC to explore the use of technology, including electronic voting, in carrying out work place ballots, especially Branch elections to maximise turn out, interest and modernise the current outdated system.

NORTHUMBERLAND

ANDREW FOSTER – BRANCH CHAIR, NORTHUMBERLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 53 reads, Conference instructs the NEC to explore the use of technology including electronic voting in carrying out workplace ballots, especially branch elections, to maximise turnout, interest and modernise the current outdated system.

Conference, obviously this motion needs to be in line with legislation and the constitution but surely in the 21st century we can find a better, more effective and inclusive way of carrying out a ballot than sitting in a gate lodge every morning for a fortnight. At least look at the possibility of a tool, something like Survey Monkey, that can benefit the branch, the POA, the union, help evolve. Conference, please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Birmingham.

PHIL STYLES – BRANCH SECRETARY, BIRMINGHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, yes, please support this motion. We've heard a lot about staff turnaround and a new generation of staff. Have you heard of a thing called nomophobia? That's what a lot of our new members struggle with. Everything

now is a paperless society. With the transition of moving back to Birmingham I need to produce certain documents to be able to verify that I have a right to work in the UK. But as I bank online, do all my energy online, I had a very difficult time of producing documents to prove my right to work in the UK.

You've heard the Cuffe Report on the modernisation. We need to be moving forward with the times. Part of the Cuffe Report says about updating the POA website and the POA app. There are ways of, as Northumberland have said, Survey Monkey. We've all sat there in the gate balloting times, an hour before the start of work hoping to catch somebody coming out, a night patrol, but also conversantly catching one of the strange people that decide to come into work an hour and a half early, maybe for a cup of coffee. So, please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Sarah Rigby responding for the NEC.

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking in favour of this motion. We are currently in the process of looking at our IT systems and ways to update them. This includes a number of things such as member records, the POA website and the joining process. We hope that by next year's conference we will be able to vote on motions electronically, negating the need to count card votes and causing unnecessary delays. We hope that moving forward we can modernise certain processes, this will enable us to keep more accurate, up to date membership records. It will also enable members to access and amend their own personal details.

For us to fully achieve this motion we need the cooperation of the membership and local branches to enable us to keep the up-to-date records of members. Monthly membership returns are currently very low, so it is often very difficult for us to look at accurate membership data. On a national level this motion will not currently be achievable as we are bound by legislation and the requirements of TULRCA but there is a possibility of success with it locally. We ask that you support the motion to enable us to explore all options available and to help us modernise and move forward as a union. Increasing the numbers of people voting locally and generating more interest within our membership can only be a good thing. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Sarah. Straight to the vote then, all those in favour? Any against? That's carried.

54, Hewell. Seconder for Hewell please? Don't all shout out at once. Thank you.

Motion 54

That Conference instructs that all routine branch correspondence, such as membership, finance and legal, be sent by email rather incurring postage costs.

HEWELL

LES DENNIS – BRANCH SECRETARY, HEWELL: Chairman, NEC, Conference, motion 54 reads that Conference instructs all routine branch correspondence such as membership, finance and legal be sent by email rather than incurring postage costs.

By routine this motion refers to notification of membership leavers, payment notification, remittance and stuff like that, legal correspondence acknowledgements and anything else that the NEC would deem similarly appropriate. These things are easily sent by email, and when this was discussed at our branch meeting our membership were a little astounded that our Trade Union still communicates through paper post. When I've suggested to those at Cronin House that this would be <inaudible> and inefficient and significant cost-saving to our membership, I was told that this would have to be a conference motion. So, Conference, here's a motion, please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Les, any speakers? Speaking on behalf of the NEC on this motion is Terry McCarthy.

TERRY McCARTHY – NEC: Morning Conference, speaking in favour of the motion. Hewell are exactly right, it's time to move on into the 21st century. Not only will it be financially beneficial but will also provide a useful audit trail should we need it. Please support the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Terry. All those in favour, please show. Any against? That's carried.

Motion 55 has been seconded by Frankland because, if this is carried, 56 will fall, so I'll invite Frankland to address Conference as well.

Motion 55

Conference mandate the NEC to stop the Annual Workplace Ballot in regard to the PSPRB Annual Award.

WHITEMOOR

NIALL MCINTOSH – BRANCH CHAIR, WHITEMOOR: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 55 reads Conference mandate the NEC to stop the annual workplace ballot in regard to the Prison Service pay review body annual award.

Conference, we've been carrying out this ballot for a number of years now and the question has to be asked whether it's done the POA membership any good or not. At Whitmoor we normally have a very good return rate when we carry out a workplace ballot. However, when our members know it's a ballot to do with the pay review annual award they're not interested and do not complete their ballot paper. They say it's a waste of time.

I wish I could disagree with my members' feelings. However, I can't. I'm one of the scrutineers and tellers and we are responsible for the workplace ballot counts that are done at Cronin House following a ballot. It has become clear that, over the years, less and less branches are carrying out these ballots and sending the returns. In fact, I would say that in the last two years of this ballot, only approximately 50 branches have returned the ballot sheets. Conference, this is not good enough. We're wasting the time of the branch officials that are taking the time to carry out these ballots and the final numbers that vote are only a small percentage of the POA membership, and this does not give a true reflection of the wider membership's opinions. Please support this motion – let's stop this workplace ballot.

PHILIP HANNANT – BRANCH CHAIR, FRANKLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, happy to support Whitemoor's motion. I guess sometimes on these pre-meetings that we have <inaudible> and forget what we talk about because our motion is obviously very similar to it. I fully agree with the sentiment of the motion that I believe it was Holme House brought, motion 30 in 2007, which reads that we ballot the membership on all recommendations of pay service review body. Whitemoor is quite correct – when we do that, we then ballot. By the time the ballot comes round, as we all know, we haven't had our pay award yet, but the time it comes around we're many months. It's implemented, it's put through and actually the wording of the motion when it says there were 13 pay review body recommendations last year and we voted on obviously the pay one. The ballot, as I say, our members, we stand at the gate every morning, we have a lot of our membership start at half six so we're there and we stand there and we have to explain it. What we have to tell them is, 'Yes, we're voting on it. It's just to say we don't agree with it, but nothing will happen if we don't agree with it. It will be implemented.' So please support the motion, thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Phil. Jackie Marshall for the NEC. Oh, Dave. It's changed, thanks for letting me know.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, with your permission I'd like to reply on this one because the Frankland motion I was due to reply on that and this is the first motion I've had this week that I can actually support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Do you know what, Dave, seeing as it's you and it's Thursday morning, crack on.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Thank you Chair. Chair, Conference, yes, the NEC are happy and I'm happy to support this motion. But I remind you that the fact is it was Conference's mandate that we actually did the ballot. It came from Conference so it's only right that Conference can take it away. Yes, as a Branch Chair I've stood there year after year doing the same pointless ballot as has been highlighted on this. It is your ballot ... sorry, it is your mandate, it's for you to take it away. We recognise the futility of it but also within the futility of it we have to take also the point is when we're saying our members it's getting hard for them, it's harder and harder for us to reply to the ballots, for elections to national positions or even for local positions, because, do you know what, they're tired of useless and pointless ballots. So, on that basis, from the NEC, please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Dave. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour? Any against? That's carried.

56 falls. 57 Sudbury. A seconder for Sudbury please? Whitemoor, thank you.

Motion 57

Conference accept that RMPs have had a positive impact on the Health and Safety of POA members and that this positive impact must be also afforded to our members in the private estate, Conference instruct the NEC to seek the roll out of RMPs in the private estate.
SUDBURY

ROGER MOORE – BRANCH SECRETARY, SUDBURY: Chairman, NEC, Conference, we are asking Conference and the NEC to support this motion. It reads, Conference accept RMPs have had a positive impact on health and safety of POA members and this positive impact must be also afforded to our members in the private estate. Conference instruct the NEC to seek out the role out of RMPs in the private sector.

Colleagues, the implementation of an effective and compliant RMP in the public sector has been a good thing overall nationally. This is due to having a written down set of figures and rules and a more thought-out approach to work with when dealing with day-to-day problems that a prison goes through, therefore making the prison a safer place for all our parties involved and not letting poor judgement in putting our members' health and safety at risk. I strongly agree that the NEC need to be working towards this goal whilst we have private-run goals in the system. Thanks.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Ian Carson, NEC.

IAN CARSON – NEC: Chair, Conference, asking you to support this motion. Colleagues, it's clear that where we've got agreed RMPs in place and where there's full compliance, conditions will improve. RMPs are policies that give branch officials greater influence over the safe running of prisons than you've ever had before and we believe RMPs must be rolled out to our colleagues in the private estate. Therefore, please support this motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Ian, we'll go to the vote. All those in favour. Any against? Thank you, that's carried.

58 Sudbury, it's a debate. Do we have a seconder? Gartree, thank you.

Motion 58

Conference debates the current restrictions on our local POA Committee structure.

SUDBURY

GEOFF WILLETTS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Chair, NEC, Conference, longest outstanding dispute in the history of the POA. Motion 58 – Conference debate the current restrictions on our local POA committee structure.

Colleagues, Sudbury has brought this motion to Conference as other committees must be feeling the restraints in the ever-changing Prison Service. We welcome Conference to debate these problems. Conference, our local POA committees are the backbone of our union and direct access to our membership. But our local committees have more than enough restraints in getting the best results for our members. The fast turnover of committee officials due to suspension, long-term sick, pregnancy, disability reasons and personal problems leads to restriction within our local branches. Our rules and constitution don't allow us to keep local committees at full capacity and when we really need to fulfil maximum coverage to protect our branch without putting strain on the rest of the committee's health and safety, but it might now.

Conference carried motion 8 and this debate should have really sat hand in hand with that motion. The lack of training spaces for branch officials and long waiting lists proves by the time newly volunteered officials have taken up residency on the branch and been issued their place on the course, they could have been on the committee a year or two in the position with restraint to their development, never mind the lack of educational knowledge. But according to the Cuffe Report it's all going to be compulsive, online, modular training. Page 100 12.2.6 – yes, I did read it again last night.

Facility time is a priority aspect of our ineffective local committee. Maverick Governors seem to exclude branch officials in their autonomous movement towards a tyrannical crusade by restraining representation at local level. Local SMTs' perception seems to emulate that branch officials are worse than Theresa May's Brexit advisor. Facility time is a bone of contention and proven historical establishments have a joint-interest approach demonstrates that this benefits all. The adoption to policy reinforcing at a national level to obtain within policy to allow additional responsibilities to duties to be incorporated into committees require more time to complete union business than the statutory profiled hours. The antiquated policy has no reflection to the list of added requirements and duties that have evolved after the policy was written. Colleagues, please join a debate.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Jeff. Any other speakers for this debate? I'd like to invite Joe Simpson to respond and join in the debate for the NEC.

JOE SIMPSON – NEC: Chair, NEC, I'd just like to start by thanking Conference for that full and frank debate on the structure of your committees. Sudbury are absolutely right, you are the backbone of this Trade Union, you are our activists. You are our eyes and ears back in our establishments. Under the Cuffe Report, that's down to you whether or not you're going to accept everything in it. That will be coming back here for you to debate. That will be coming back here for you to change things for what you believe is best for the Trade Union.

We come on to training. I've been involved in training in the POA since I came on in 2007 and I enjoy it. It has been you, the branch officials, that have changed our training because at the end of it we do listen to what you're saying, and we change it. Unfortunately, what we can't do is, we can't extend the time that we can have you. We would love to have, as soon as somebody joins a committee we would love you to come on training. But, as Sudbury has pointed out, spaces are few and far between because of the cost. Everything, it doesn't matter what we do, Conference, everything has a cost. And I'll go on to say this – the restrictions that are placed on this Trade Union through this so-called Cabinet Office guidelines, that's all they are. Then we switch to the legislation and the legislation is that you, as a Trade Union official, are entitled to reasonable facility time. Not eight hours per branch, not ten hours per branch, not eight hours for everybody doing everything – you are entitled to reasonable facility time. And we need to start pushing back at them. So, if you're not getting your facility time, grievance against the Governor, Trade Union discrimination, LA100 to the Legal Department – let's take them on. We have done it before with health and safety reps from Nottingham and won it three times. So, we need to start pushing back.

As for committee absences through whatever is, either through sickness, we've been assaulted, the need to be with the family, whatever – you can always write to the General Secretary and ask to co-opt somebody on to cover that period. However, you are coming up to a time where we are going to restructure this Trade Union so there's nothing wrong with coming back next year, going to Pat Cuffe, whatever you want to do, in order to change the way that our committee structures and then we have the debate.

Conference, I'd like to thank Sudbury for bringing this and thank you very much for the debate. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Joe, no vote required, it was a debate.

We'll go to 59, Parkhurst. Do Parkhurst have permission to withdraw? Conference, please show. Thank you, that's withdrawn.

Just to remind the secure hospitals delegates to remain in the room. Apparently, we're getting a photograph. Coffee break. Back at half past. Thank you.

<Break>

Thank you, Conference, I'll bring you to order and we'll get through the rest of business.

Conference, we're on to motion 60, which has been formally moved by The Verne. They're not on the floor because of domestic reasons, they had to get back. Do we have a seconder for this motion? Moorland, thank you. Would anyone like to speak on this motion? Speaker on this motion, then, for the NEC is Ian Carson.

Motion 60

To reduce violence and the known threat of 'spice' to staff, the NEC are instructed by Conference to seek a legislation change in regards to searching Rule 39 correspondence to prisoners.

THE VERNE

IAN CARSON – NEC: Thanks Chair. Chair, Conference, asking you to support this motion and it's going to be short and sweet. We're happy to seek the necessary legislative changes with relation to rule 39 correspondence. Please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: All those in favour of this motion please show. Any against? That's carried.

61 was withdrawn. 62, Hewell. Secunder for Hewell? Moorland, thank you.

Motion 62

That Conference instructs the NEC to address with the employer the issue that assaults on staff, including 'potting' and 'spitting' are no longer considered to be serious assaults.

HEWELL

LES DENNIS – BRANCH SECRETARY, HEWELL: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 62 reads that Conference instruct the NEC to address with employer the issue that assaults on staff, including potting and spitting, are no longer considered to be serious assaults.

The first our branch became aware of this was when our health and safety rep attending the monthly health and safety meeting was told that potting and spitting weren't classed as serious assaults anymore. But it's good news, good news – we've had less serious assaults on staff. Potting and spitting have the potential to have life-limiting consequences, not to mention the psychological impact, and they are intentional and predetermined criminal acts and should be reflected as such. An incident in Hewell last week was when three members required medical attention after a prisoner spat blood in their faces and it went in their mouths. The Hewell branch view is that the employer's decision to do this not only blatantly fudges the figures, it minimises assaults and sends out the clear message to our prisoners that this behaviour is acceptable. It's not rocket science to understand why reoffending rates are so high. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Les. Would the seconder like to speak?

JADE LANCASTER – BRANCH SECRETARY, MOORLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, I'm asking you to support this motion. One of our members recently was severely potted and I mean absolute head to toe. What did they employer do? They actually blamed the officer for being in the wing office. This type of assault does not seem to be taken seriously and it must be addressed. Myself or any of my members, and I'm sure all of you, do not come to work to be spat at or potted. Please support this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Jade. First-time speaker at Conference, she is. Well done. Well done, Jade. Responding for the NEC, Sarah Rigby.

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, in favour of this motion. We welcome this motion from Hewell and wholehearted agree with them that to no longer class potting and spitting as a serious assault is completely wrong. We have raised this with the employer numerous times already and informed them it's not appropriate and to date they have chosen not to listen. We will not stop telling them.

There are many of our members who are victims of these vile assaults and each and every one of them is affected in some way. This type of assault can change you as a person and the consequences can be far-reaching. There does not need to be a visible injury for there to be a serious impact on a person's health and wellbeing. It is time the employer started to support their staff. They need to take these incidents seriously and to treat them as such. Downplaying the seriousness of these assaults only demonstrates to prisoners they can behave in this way with little or no consequence. This is unacceptable, please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: All those in favour please show. Any against? That's carried.

Just a quick announcement from the General Secretary.

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks Chair. Conference, our new provider, Cornmarket Insurance partner, was doing a prize draw to win an Amazon Echo. We've just done the draw and Brian Goodman, honorary life member, has been successful. So, Brian, could you go to Cornmarket stand because they wish to have a photograph with you in collecting your prize. Well done.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: He looks a bit bemused there, Steve. Do you know what it is, Brian?

<Laughter>

Does he know what it is?

63 is a debate. Moving the debate is Glyn Travis for the NEC. Do we have a seconder please? Gartree, thank you.

Motion 63

That Conference debate the impact Prison Reform and Government Policy is having on POA members.

NEC

GLYN TRAVIS – ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, Conference, NEC, invited guests, honorary life members, moving the debate on what impact prison reform and government policy is having on POA members.

Colleagues, prison reform was brought in because the Prison Service was and still is in crisis. They recognised that each prison was grossly understaffed, violence was out of control, organised crime within prisons had escalated. Drugs, each prison is awash with them, NPS, self-harm, self-inflicted deaths, the list goes on and on and on. Systematic failure by this government. The shambolic position of Carillion in the way that they addressed small repairs, fabric, and left staff vulnerable. So, what did they do? The government and HMPPS came out with a shroud of smoke and mirrors and were going to increasing staffing by 2,500, which they did. I think that we all accept that there's more staff, but to cover that up, what did they do? They didn't say, 'There's your 2,500 staff. Let's improve safety.' They said, 'What we'll do is give you more work.' They brought a new contract in called Next Generation – I thought it was *Star Trek* actually. They're going to give a new contract now for courts and escort under prison reform and they've recognised that the private sector used to have a footprint, when the original contract was let, of a million people coming in and out of prisons. It's down to 500,000, so did they reduce the money from the private company to invest in prisons? No, they gave it back to the shareholders of the private company so they could build better buses that we're paying for as taxpayers, improve contract times so hopefully now prisoners will get to court and back in a reasonable time and not keep staff late.

The list goes on. They brought OMiC in, which was part of the 2,500 key-work in some prisons but not all. And the real problem that we've heard this week on reform is the inept management in the vast majority, and I'll use the word vast majority because I know out there that there are some real good Governors who do care and manage their establishments well. But they are in the minority rather than the majority. And you have demonstrated that in buckets this week, colleagues.

So, what did they decide to do in their infinite wisdom was give Governors more power – more power to bully, more power to intimidate staff, more power to drive regimes, more power to undermine the confidence of the staff. Fail to address sick leave excusal. And I want to clarify something, Conference, because I'm really, really confused and I've only been in the job a short while, because I'm only a young lad. When you are assaulted at work, your pay is not affected. Your pay is not required to have a sick leave excusal because the provisions of the Principal Civil Service pension scheme are clear – your absence as a result of assault and any subsequent absences until you retire are protected for the purposes of pay. So, when your Governor says that, 'Oh, you need to make a sick leave excusal because you've been assaulted,' you don't. Your pay is protected. The individual needs to raise a grievance and we need to seek legal advice on a breach of contract. Let's start to hold Governors accountable for the failure to protect you and your members' pay following assaults.

The second point, colleagues, and I'm fed up of hearing it, is about when you've been assaulted. Under prison reform, the employer is absolutely reliant on additional hours worked, paid or unpaid. Absolutely reliant and yet they say that when you've been assaulted you don't suffer because your pay is protected. What isn't protected is the fact that far too many of our members are reliant on PP and we know that, and they don't get average pay for the three months of doing the PP and this union is challenging that. We've had three cases so far and each one of them has been settled. So, again, when a member of staff is assaulted, ask your Governor to pay them their average PP for the three months previous, which is what used to happen when it was overtime.

So, prison reform is a sham. We've got a drugs strategy which is devised now to reduce supply, reduce demand and capture the drugs that are in there. In 2016, colleagues, 1.25 tonnes of drugs were recovered from our prisons – shameful. We've got a violence reduction strategy, it's clearly working. Phil Cople has told you and he doesn't lie. Phil's an honourable man. He said there's green shoots coming out in the October period till Christmas. I think he was thinking about mistletoe, not green shoots.

So, prison reform is impacting on you. We need to get smarter as a Trade Union. We need to learn from you branch officials. We need to work together as one union to fight to improve our terms and conditions, to fight to improve your safety. Because when I joined the job, the prison population was about 50,000. I used to work on a wing and every morning when I went on that wing with 300 prisoners who were doubled or trebled and used to slop out, which wasn't a pleasant thing and I'm pleased we got rid of that for our colleagues. But let me tell you, there were four of us on a landing – four staff on every landing, five on the twos where you serve food. That was in every single landing at Liverpool Prison and it was mirrored across the vast majority of establishments.

So, reform has done one thing. Reform has reduced staff, it's driven staff to do more for less and the government's reform agenda is about trying to address a population by saying, 'If we can stop them coming into prison, the prison population will reduce.' So, I say, colleagues, on behalf of this executive, prison reform needs to be stopped. We need to go back to basics, and that's security and safety as a priority. We need to go back to searching. We need to go back to protecting our colleagues and we need to increase the staff on each landing, on each unit, wherever you work, because that's the only way that we will reform the Prison Service. Not with ideology, not with policies that look good and policies that people think are nice. The reality is, colleagues, safety and security of our prisons is what reform should be about and not paper policies.

I'm going to close on this one point. Rory Stewart said we're going to have a 10-prison project and it's worked, to a degree. But do you know why it worked? Because he invested £10 million in that ten. Well, let's invest £10 million in every ten prisons, whether it's an open prison, a female prison, a Youth Justice System prison, a special hospital. Let's really invest in the professional men and women by putting more staff in places so that we can get proper engagement with offenders and patients, proper results and therefore we may change lives, their lives. Our lives are being changed because of the failure of prison reform. Please engage in the debate, colleagues. Thank you.

<Applause>

BILL BUPARAI – BRANCH CHAIRMAN, BELMARSH: Chair, Conference, NEC, the impact of government policy on POA members – wow, what a topic. Probably the most important topic, in my opinion, on the conference papers this week.

What has government policy done? I'll tell you what it's done. Number one, forty years of capitalist government favouring the employer over the employee. Number two, forty years of anti-Trade Union legislation crippling workers. Number three, section 127 of the Criminal Justice Act crippling POA members and their rights to take action. Number four, POA and Trade Unions now have no clout because, specifically, of government policy. Number five, POA and other Trade Unions are slowly becoming or are sleepwalking into becoming servicing unions rather than campaigning unions. Number six, people are now considered as members or POA members because they pay their subs rather than being part of a collective workforce which fights for what is right. Number seven, communities shattered, services privatised by a neoliberal government agenda which has increased violent crime and increased the prison population. And finally, number eight, workers poorly trained and uneducated in simple values and hence too weak to force change. In essence, POA members are a lot less militant than what they should be.

Motion 63 of '18 said specifically that a full review of the union needed to be undertaken in order to make the POA fit for purpose moving forward. In my opinion, the union is primarily the members and what comes secondary is the structure and the services. Motion 34, which was passed, deals with the structure and the services when really it needs to focus on making the membership stronger. And that's why this debate is so important.

Why? Because a strong union is made from strong members and it's not made from strong services or strong structures. What then makes a strong POA member? Every member – regardless of rank, colour, sex, sexual orientation, disability – has an understanding of what is right. The value of doing the right thing needs to be instilled into our members as it is immeasurable, unlike riches which are measurable but have no moral value. We can focus on reform in the union structure and services, by all means, or we can go back to our branches and reform the membership.

This week we've seen a fair bit of criticism in this room. On the whole, General Secretary, full-time officers do good quality work, but they're not perfect. The NEC do good quality work, but they're not perfect. Branch officials do good quality work, but you're not perfect. The membership, excuse my language, is becoming piss poor and that's where this union needs to reform.

Go back to your branches and reform your members and teach them to fight for what is right. Because when we do fight for what's right, we will be able to start a grassroots rebellion, which is exactly what this union needs. Yes, the POA could potentially start the next yellow vest rebellion. Thank you – please engage with the debate.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Bill. No more indicators for the debate so we will move on to motion 64 formally moved by The Verne. Do we need a seconder, please? Whatton, thank you. Would you like to speak on it Whatton? In that case I'll hand over to Terry McCarthy. Oh, we've got a speaker? Well done, thank you.

Motion 64

To reduce violence and the threat of spice, the NEC negotiate that all prisoners are returned into prison clothing until such time this huge problem is under control.

THE VERNE

DAVID FERRY – BRANCH SECRETARY, FRANKLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, speaking against this motion. This motion may well be appropriate for many establishments around the estate but not all. The threat of violence to staff as a result of Spice is at critical levels and no-one would argue that steps are needed to be taken to eliminate this threat. Requiring prisoners to wear prison clothing may be the answer to this problem in many establishments but not in others. Putting prisoners in prison clothing would destabilise dispersal in high-security prisons and possibly increase the threat to staff and all POA members. Yet, it may be the solution to the problem in other categories of prisons. Therefore, I ask you to reject this motion despite its good intentions.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Asking you to reject the motion. I think it's worded wrong. I think it should say that clothing is not accepted into the gaols, not that they can't wear it. I can't see the difference. I know Durham now we do the testing, the same as the airports. It's so sensitive very little gets through, so if you go to that stage and it gets tested at the gate when it comes in through reception and it fails, it gets sent back out again. Please reject.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Craig. Terry McCarthy, NEC.

TERRY MCCARTHY – NEC: Conference, in favour of this motion. I'd just like to remind everybody once again we're all one union. We're not a series of unions, we're just one union. Conference, we all know that the lack of discipline in our prisons causes a multitude of problems. Putting prisoners back into prison uniform, blue or brown, it won't solve the whole problem but, you know what, it's a step in the right direction to getting some discipline back. Furthermore, restricting the amounts of personal prisoner property coming into the establishment is going to cut off an avenue of entry for Spice and other such contraband. Conference, support the motion and let's start getting some discipline back into our gaols. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: We'll take it to the vote then. All those in favour please show. Any against? That motion is carried.

65, formally moved by The Verne, seconder please. Whatton again. Want to speak on it Whatton? No. Any more speakers? Handing over to Ian Carson on behalf of the NEC.

Motion 65

Conference instructs the NEC to negotiate that the employing of all wing based jobs for prisoners are now allocated by operational wing staff once cleared by the appropriate department.

THE VERNE

IAN CARSON – NEC: Thanks Chair. Chair, Conference, asking you to support this motion. We thank Verne for bringing it because we believe it's an important motion as it has at its core a plan to reinvigorate and underline the importance of wing-based operational staff. Since the introduction of benchmarking, wing-based staff have been deskilled – we all know that. Before benchmarking, what used to happen? We employed the cleaners, didn't we? As a cleaning officer in house block 6 at Holme House, nobody got a job unless I employed them. So, what did that lead to? Cleaner wings, better relationships, fantastic dynamic security. Then what happened when we got benchmarking? We introduced activity management units. I think they got the term from a John Le Carré thriller. Activity management units, which was a load of people who didn't have a clue what was going on, on wings deciding who was working on the wings. How mad is that? Yes. Anyway, Conference, the results we can all see of activity management units, can't we? We've had reports in all the gaols around the country and, when the HMCIP go in, what do they find? They find gaols are unclean. No poo, Sherlock. Your activity management units are employing the wrong people. We should be employing them, we should be controlling them and we'll get the safety and the cleanliness back. Please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Ian. We'll take it to the vote. All those in favour please show? Any against? That's carried.

66, Sudbury. Seconder for Sudbury? Askham Grange.

Motion 66

Conference to accept that the Open Estate is just as important as other categories of prisons and requires recognition and deliberation when implementing policies.

SUDBURY

ROGER MOORE – BRANCH SECRETARY, SUDBURY: Chairman, NEC, Conference, we're asking the Conference and the NEC to support this motion. It reads Conference to accept that the open estate is just as important as other categories of prisons and requires recognition and deliberation when implementing policies. This is going to be short and sweet because we're going on a bit.

Colleagues, in the past the open estate can be the last thing on people's minds in their ivory towers when implementing policies for the closed estate, which can affect the open estate when they're implemented. Example: HMPPS have brought in the OMiC model with a ratio of staff for the closed estate running one officer to six offenders. Currently I have to deal with 26 prisoners on my <inaudible> list so cannot afford to give the time to help them all to the degree they receive whilst they are in the closed estate. The open estate is currently getting up and having our voice heard at all levels of the service and therefore putting our members' health and safety at the forefront at all times. Conference, please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Askham, do you wish to speak on it?

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, Conference, NEC, I just want to thank them for this motion. Every time we get something down from the NEC, my Governor looks at it and goes, 'That's for the closed. We're an open, it doesn't affect us.' We need to have everything that either says open, closed, female, juvenile. If it doesn't involve it, our manager thinks it doesn't affect us. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Responding for the NEC, Dave Cook.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, happy to support this motion. I'll keep it short as well. However, it's disappointing that the branch felt it necessary to bring a motion like this to Conference. But I think in doing so it adequately highlights how the open estate actually feel. Today we heard, where they're addressing PAVA and everything else, from Ford – one SO and one Band 3 operational officers on duty during the nights. Now, the issue with that is, we'll give them a baton, we will give them PAVA, but you're on your own. So therefore, if one of those officers are reduced to actually having to use a baton against a prisoner then he or she is going to have to use it sufficiently to defend themselves and possibly cause injury to the other person. It's not good enough, it really is not good enough.

This union, this NEC and this union, will continue to fight and fight and fight again until such time that we achieve parity of PPE and policies for our members in the open estate, not just the open estate but also the special hospitals, the hospital officers that we have, the private sector and anybody else that feels that they are not the same as our closed estates. I think it's really wrong that we have areas of this union who feel they don't have the same level of importance as every other person. Let me tell you from the top table, irrespective of your branch, irrespective of what estate you work in, every single member is as important as any other member or branch of this union. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Cookie. If that's keeping it short, I'm glad you didn't drone on.

<Laughter>

All those in favour please show. Any against? That's carried.

66A was appeal 9 from Ford. It's a debate. Do we have a seconder? Seconder for the debate? Sudbury, thank you.

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, NEC, delegates, the motion reads, can the NEC explain what protection would be afforded to the Band 4 OS in the open/female estate within the implementation of OMiC as information from the NEC states we will not receive the same protection as the closed estate Band 4 OS. Currently I've got 14 OSes, Band 4s ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Ford, you're on 66A which reads that OMiC in the open/female estate is debated by Conference. The one you're talking about is 67A.

<Inaudible> That was lost. 66A was lost.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Right, so that's my mistake because in my book we've got that down. We're on 67, we should be on 67 then, not 67A. It's a Sudbury motion. That's my mistake, Conference, in my book it wasn't down as lost. I'm going to blame my Vice-Chair because he's Chair of Standing Orders.

DAVE TODD – VICE CHAIR: And I'll blame the FTO because he didn't do what he was told.

<Laughter>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: I shall chastise him later. Seconder for Sudbury, please, motion 67. Thank you Ford. My apologies for that last mistake on behalf of Glyn Travis.

Motion 67

Conference instruct the NEC to gain key workers or equivalent profiled time for the open estate to accommodate the rehabilitative culture. SUDBURY

GEOFF WILLETTS – BRANCH CHAIR, SUDBURY: Conference, NEC, Chair, longest outstanding dispute in the history of the POA. Motion 67 reads, Conference instruct the NEC to gain key workers or equivalent profile time for the open state to accommodate the rehabilitative culture.

Conference, as set out in previous motions, the open estate is always the last in line for consideration but poses the highest risk to the public. Key-worker has been introduced in the closed estate with a considerable amount of success and resources to achieve interaction by means of basic prison officer duties. Key-worker is equivalent to the personal officer work and the removal of the personal officer work under benchmark took this away from the open estate. Our outstanding 3½ year dispute, which is still on the national dispute table, has been and is detrimental to our members, never mind appalling in failing the membership. The expectation of the work to be completed by management is there, with veiled, indirect threats to new staff going undetected, which leaves our members vulnerable. Key-worker is and was the substitute for delivering this work but not in the open estate. Our members believe that this was the resolution to the problem to date but nothing has been secured. Acknowledgement of how beneficial this is to prisons is more than predominance. When releasing prisoners into the community, when managing the risk to the public, especially, recently with the amount of <inaudible> failures. The closed estate has a set amount of profile time with a restricted number of prisoners, completely appropriate work that was assigned as so important and essential by the Justice Minister but not in the open estate where it's needed the most.

We're asking Conference to instruct the NEC to gain key-workers or equivalent profile time as it might have been called something else by now. It

doesn't matter what you call it, but we need it. The time to complete this work and give us the same consideration as a closed estate. Support this motion. Even my colleague Paul from Lincoln, who is not wearing his Leeds shirt this morning.

<Laughter>

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, NEC, delegates, quite happy to second this motion. My Governor wants these key-workers done. You've got billets, I've got 32 to do, I've got room inspections to do, non-profiled tasks. We've got managers who are telling members of staff they will be poor-performed for failing to comply with non-profiled task. Staff can't cope with it – they're going sick because they're stressed with it. The Governor wants to do every single ROTL board with a key-worker report and if you do it properly by the time he reckons you've interviewed one for 20 minutes and then sat and written the report, that's 40 minutes. It's non-profiled task – we don't have the time or the staff to do it. Like my colleague said, we're the poor supporters of this society. Please support.

PAUL MALLIBAND – BRANCH SECRETARY, PRESTON: Chair, NEC, Conference, Cat B local prison support in the open estate who have key-work. I'm not stood here endorsing the OMiC model or key-work, it's a task that gets dropped quite regularly – however it does have some effect. However, if it's going to put more people in the open estate, happy days. There's a specific reason that I've got up and this needs supporting and yet again I'm going to talk about PAVA. I know the NEC have said they will revisit this document that's been circulated and hopefully get amendments. Well there's one specific one that they need to get amended and I will read it to you.

'All prisons will be supported by the PAVA roll-out team prior to the deployment of PAVA.' This is paragraph 3.1, *Preparing a Prison for Carrying PAVA*. This is what it says and then read the motion that's in front of you. 'The roll-out team will make sure that a prison has fully implemented phase I of the Offender Manager in Custody model, i.e. key-workers, and is fostering a rehabilitative culture.' What we've got is a department that is deliberately discriminating, institutional discrimination, against a group of our colleagues in an area of the estate, and they are restricting the use of personal protective equipment on the back of it. That is not acceptable, that can never be acceptable. Support the motion.

<Applause>

LES DENNIS – BRANCH SECRETARY, HEWELL: Chair, NEC, Conference, Hewell, which incorporates Hewell Grange in the open estate. The staff are that thin on the ground in the open estate, the only people influencing prisoners' behaviour in Hewell Grange are other prisoners. We're that full of gangs and gang culture that we are missing the risk factors such as absconding and ROTL failures without regular interaction with staff.

Hewell is rolling out OMiC and the occasional one goes at the Grange. The Grange is reviewed as another house block because it holds 200. So, it holds 200 prisoners, therefore it's the same as a house block as in Blakenhurst. So, we're half-arsed playing around with OMiC in the open estate and I feel very sorry for the other open estates that aren't getting it at all. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Responding for the NEC, Terry McCarthy.

TERRY MCCARTHY – NEC: Conference, speaking in support of this motion. Conference, why have the open estate been treated differently under OMiC when it comes to key-work? It's a question that we're currently asking the employer. Prisoners in the open estate still need key-work, therefore it's only right and proper that it be profiled in and, if needs be, increase the staffing levels. OMiC negotiations are continuing next week and this NEC will be pushing for the open estate to be treated under OMiC as the same way as their colleagues in the closed estate. Please support the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour. Any against? That's carried.

Now we're on 67A, Ford. Seconder? Thank you Eastwood Park.

Motion 67a

Can the NEC Explain what protection will be afforded to the Band 4 O/S in the Open/Female Estate with the implementation of OMiC, as information from the NEC states that we will not receive the same protection as the Closed estate Band 4 O/S.

FORD

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, NEC, Conference, reading this motion again. Motion says can the NEC explain what protection be afforded to the Band 4 OS in the open/female estate with the implementation of OMiC as information from the NEC states that they will not be protected the same, receive the same protection as the closed Band 4 estate.

Like I said, we've got 14. We had a meeting with the Governor the other week. He said, 'I don't know much. I was hoping that your meeting that we'd arranged with the NEC for 7th May would go ahead.' It got cancelled because the NEC went into negotiations with Richard Vince because he said he didn't know anything. However, the following week he then came up with the Deputy. We had a meeting with the Band 4 OSs and the Band 5s and he said the information is that, if you don't take a Band 5 job that you're qualified for, you don't map over to it but you will be in open competition for all those others that want to come to Ford as a Band 5. We've currently got six Band 5s so he said he would only need 12. So, we said, 'Is this official?' 'No,' he said, 'this is just what I believe.' So, I said, 'That means that if we get six going across it still leaves eight, what are you going to do with them?' 'Well there won't be a job for them, they can take the POM's role.' So, okay, if they don't take the POM's role, what happens? 'I haven't got a job for

them. I can't find them meaningful work. I can't put them back on the wings because that went in the benchmarking.' 'What are you going to do with them?' 'I think I'll put them on surplus list or they'll be asked to find transfers.' All we want is the NEC to explain, and I know they're going into negotiations with it, explain what protection they will get, if they will get any protection. My Band 4s want to know whether they're going to have a job and pay their mortgage next week, not whether they're going to be looking at buying a new car to travel to Lewes every day and back. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Kev. Explaining for the NEC is Jackie Marshall.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, Conference, the protections that we've got in place at the moment for all prisons are hopefully promotion to Band 5 because CM posts are going up. If we've got a closed grade officer who moved to an F&S Band 4 to do the OMiC work, doesn't want to do that now, they can revert to a closed grade officer back on old terms and conditions with two years' pay protection. An F&S officer who went to an F&S Band 4 can revert to an F&S officer with two years' pay protection.

What's not being afforded at the moment, and we strongly disagree with and we are in talks about it, is the transfer one. What we've got for the male closed estate is an agreement that there will be no compulsory transfers for any Band 4. When we started these negotiations, we were talking about Band 4s as a whole. We talked about closed grade SOs and how many there were. At the time there were 900 closed grade SOs still in the service. There's now less than 500, but it was never said that was only the closed male estate, that was everybody. We talked about all the numbers. It's only recently when we went to a meeting a few weeks back that they told us the compulsory transfer wasn't going to apply to the female estate and the open male estate. Well, we objected to that and we still object.

We are in talks. We're back in talks next Tuesday with Richard Vince, who is the lead on their side, and we have three main priorities. One of those priorities is protections for Band 4s, regardless of what job they are doing. If they're a POM, we want protections because the MOU 2013 protected Offender Supervisors. As we stand here now, it doesn't protect Prison Offender Managers, it doesn't protect them about outsourcing, and that's what we're trying to get agreement on.

So, I can't go any further than that. I'm sorry. We've got some protections in place. We will fight for the same protections for the female estate and the open male estate. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Happy with the explanation, Ford? Thank you and thank you for your understanding. I've just seen a flurry of activity behind me telling me that more motions have been withdrawn, more motions have fallen. You see the cranks I have to work with.

We're on to 68, Bedford. Secorder for Bedford?

Motion 68

That the NEC actively engages with HMPPS to remove the OSG grade from working in Segregation units in the night state, as per the provisions of PSI 42/1997 which clearly state that " Duties which are not consistent with the role of the Operational Support Grade are those which require higher levels of security training, planned use of force (C&R) and the higher levels of inter-personal skills, for which Officers are specifically trained."

BEDFORD

MARK SALISBURY – DELEGATE, BEDFORD: Chair, NEC, Conference, I bring to you motion 68, which reads that the NEC actively engage with HMPPS to remove the OSG grade from working in segregation units in the night state as per the provisions of PSI 42/1997, which clearly states that duties which are not consistent with the role of operational support grades are those which require higher levels of security, planned use of force, C&R, and the higher levels of interpersonal skills for which officers are specifically trained.

The OSG grade provides an essential element to support the officers in the various roles they carry out. As we've seen today with the video this morning and also yesterday during the Mabel Hempton awards, our colleagues are subject to attacks, violence and serious injury carrying out the roles that they are actually trained to do. However, the OSGs do not receive any training in dealing with refractory prisoners. We have had a number of OSGs at Bedford who have been spat on and had unknown fluids squirted at them through the doors whilst on duty on nights down the segregation unit.

We also had a period of time where the observation panels had been broken, and we challenged management on this and their response was that the OSGs would remain down there because that's what they were benchmarked for and that's what they were profiled for. When we challenged them on the broken observation panels the response was, 'They can use a commando shield to carry out their observations,' which again we challenged because the OSGs are not trained in the use of C&R PPE equipment. However, the OSG grade still remains down the segregation units on nights. Just because the night estate comes on doesn't mean to say that a refractory prisoner, his poor behaviour finishes. It will continue, regardless of who is down there.

Fellow delegates, I urge you to vote in favour of this motion for the safety and wellbeing of a group of our membership who have no training and, under the OSG agreement which is PSI 42/1997, have no place in segregation units as a place of work. I thank you for any support you can give.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

<Applause>

JON SWIFT – BRANCH CHAIR, HEWELL: NEC, Conference, Chair, I'm glad this has been brought forward, but us at Hewell, we went against the Governor and we do not allow the OSGs to work in our segregation unit. They don't like it, they uphold it. We did it on the grounds of safety and that they were not the appropriate persons to be dealing with the people that are in our segregation unit at the current time and forever. It's important the OSGs are protected by us. They are disillusioned at times with the function of the POA organisation because they think it's only for staff and we have to show them full support. We have to show them support and it's vitally important that we support them. We need to put this motion through, support it and get these OSGs out of Bedford seg and any other establishments that are using their OSGs to operate in a segregation unit that is not fit for that grade. Support.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Jon. Andy Baxter.

ANDY BAXTER – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, asking you to support this motion. We all know that some of the most complex and demanding prisoners end up located in the segregation unit. Mental health needs, personality disorders, depression, mood disturbance, substance misuse issues. The complexities and demands related to these prisoners are a 24/7 demand. The demands placed on staff continue well into the night and into the early hours. These duties are clearly outside of PSI 42/1997. Segregation unit staff should be selected and trained for the positive roles they can play in segregation units. Staff must be familiar with the prisoners in their care. We all know that the interpersonal relationships built between segregation staff and prisoners in their care can be pivotal when prisoners find themselves in crisis.

We also need to consider the strains put upon our OSG colleagues, who sometimes rotate duties every night and suddenly find themselves dropped into the most demanding environment in the prison, the segregation unit.

Segregation of a prisoner is a complex process. There are complex records in place to record the specific aspects of segregation and to document and recognise the increased risk of deterioration within an individual. Those tasks must be covered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by selected and trained segregation unit officers, with support in place to also recognise a deterioration in staff resilience. Our employer knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing. Being in a seg unit overnight carries responsibilities way above the job description of an OSG. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Andy. We'll take that to the vote. All those in favour. Any against? That's carried.

Conference, motion 69 is an NEC motion. I'll just let Joe Simpson explain about this motion.

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, I'm the Chair of the Equalities Team and I've been looking at this motion again and again and being consulting with some of my colleagues out on the floor. To get this right in the Trade Union is so badly needed and I've written, and I apologise to my colleagues in the NEC, I've written a badly worded motion. Conference, this is very important and I would like to withdraw it so I can bring it back to you for consideration next year. So, could I ask for permission to withdraw?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Well it didn't go well for you last time, did it? So, we'll give it another go. Do we have permission to withdraw this motion? Joe, you are redeemed, that's withdrawn.

70, Durham. A seconder for Durham please?

Motion 70

That Conference instructs the NEC to seek a change to the current Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy to include an Independent Appeal Authority from the employer.

DURHAM

JON NEWTON – BRANCH CHAIR, DURHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, invited guests, motion 70 reads that Conference instructs the NEC to seek a change to the current code of conduct and discipline policy to include an independent appeal authority from the employer. Simply put, the current appeal authority is not independent of Prison Service. A poor decision at local level can be, and regularly is, backed up at appeal. Any further challenge then relies on input from POA solicitors and NEC to decide whether the case can go to an ET.

In an ET I was involved in some time ago, the judge to preside over the case was removed on the first day because he had presided over a previous case from Holme House where evidence was produced in court showing collusion between their Governor then and the area manager, the same area manager involved in the case I was doing. How much against any principle or policy statement is that? Does fairness, openness and integrity only apply to uniformed staff? The policy states that the desired outcomes are that decisions are based on the merits of the individual case and are free from bias. That free from bias can only be achieved through an independent appeal authority. Having an independent may save POA money and time through ET.

I note that in the report backs number 26 states that HMPPS are having a review on the PSI 6/2010 by our People's Policy Project. Durham ask that an independent body can be sought and included as the appeal authority through that project. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Durham. Gartree, do you wish to speak on it?

RICHARD WILLIAMS – BRANCH SECRETARY, GARTREE: Chair, NEC, Conference, I thank Durham for bringing this motion and wholeheartedly support them. I brought a very similar motion to this approximately three years ago when I stood here and said exactly the same as what's just been echoed by my colleague from Durham. We need an independent body to have some kind of involvement in disciplinary code of conduct hearings. We've got too many maverick Governors interpreting 6 of '10 to suit themselves, which is to the detriment of our members and it has to stop. It's not right. Please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Rich. No more speakers, so responding for the NEC is Terry McCarthy.

TERRY MCCARTHY – NEC: Conference, speaking against this motion. Conference, the NEC seeks rejection of this motion because it will tie the hands of the executive as we enter into negotiations with the employer over PSI 6/2010. We all know that the application of disciplinary policies by the employer too often leads to unfair, unjust and sometimes downright malicious decisions. I know that better than anybody, having experienced corruption at the very, very top of the tree in HMPPS. But, you know what? It's all about changing the system now.

Currently, internal appeals are dealt with using a higher grade on the hearing authority. We know that, more often than not, this isn't fair, but would an independent appeal authority change that? Too key questions here. Number one, can we achieve this or an alternative? Secondly, if we do achieve it, will it be to the benefit of the members? The answer to the first question is possibly, but it will be difficult. The answer to the second question is difficult as well. Currently, the NEC are considering policy from other organisations. More importantly, we're looking at the outcome of their appeals. Their appeals against dismissal the outcomes aren't as positive as you might think. The police do not speak highly of the IPCC, a supposedly independent body. You know what, Conference? Sometimes be careful what you wish for. On this basis, Conference, please reject the motion. Let the executive enter into negotiations without having their hands tied. We want a policy that's fair for all our members no matter where they work – private prisons or special hospitals. We want that policy to be fair, just and, more importantly, applied correctly. Reject the motion. Thank you Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Terry. Durham, do you wish to reply?

JON NEWTON – BRANCH CHAIR, DURHAM: Conference, I'm sure you understand the sentiment and I understand what the NEC are saying. But they've also said stop being negative, be positive – that was the NEC words used earlier. We've also heard today our governors are being given more power. Support the motion. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Durham. To the vote then, all those in favour of this motion, please show. Against. That motion is lost.

71, Bedford. Secunder for Bedford?

Motion 71

That Conference instructs the NEC to seek a change to the current Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy to include an Independent Appeal Authority from the employer.

Further to this the NEC to enter into urgent discussion with HMPPS, using all means possible, to ensure that properly trained mental health professionals are appointed at every Region/establishment to properly monitor and directly address the issues to staff mental health.

BEDFORD

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: Mr Chair, the NEC, Conference, it's very rare you'll see me coming to stand here with some notes but regrettably this is a very emotive motion from our branch. Earlier today we had an excellent debate about violence in prisons, and what we need to know, and what was alluded to by Stewart from Wandsworth, is once all the blood has been dried away and all the physical injuries have been repaired we are inevitably left with many members suffering long-term mental health illnesses. At that point this PSI 1/2017 starts to kick in.

Now, much has been said and will continue to be said about PSI 1/2017 as branches relate one horror story after another about the abuse of this particular piece of legislation by the employer. But thankfully to date none of you will be able to say that the abuse of this piece of legislation by the employer has yet led to a prison officer taking their own life. Yes, Conference, a prison officer has taken their own life due to the illegal manner in which they were treated by this legislation, as read with its cousin 6/2010. <Inaudible> not married and had no children. But she has, of course, left behind many friends and work colleagues and, more importantly, a distraught and angry family who want to know how a reputable employer, their words not mine, could allow something like this to happen on their watch.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Martin, I'm sorry about this but I've just been informed that what you're referring to is still subject to a police investigation, what you're referring to. It could be sub judge and it could affect the outcome. So, if you can sort of highlight the issues but not mention specifics because it is still an ongoing police investigation.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: Thank you, Mr Chair. I did say to Kelly's family that I would talk about this in the hope that her death will be not just another forgotten signpost on the highway of abuse driven down every day by the HMPPS managers and Governors who were responsible for this outrage. And I hope that I am equal to this challenge.

So, on to the motion, the first part. In the executive summary of this legislation, it says our staff play a critical role in NOMS delivery against its objectives and have an important role to play in preventing victims by changing lives. Remember that because I will come back to it at the end. This policy focuses on being clear, honest and fair with staff. Well it certainly wasn't clear or fair to Kelly, who questioned the Governor over her question and asked the question, 'Why am I being discriminated because I suffer from anxiety and depression? Just like a lot of other staff do here, so why am I being treated differently?' Well, regrettably, Kelly, you were not being treated differently but, like so many other staff, you were not being treated correctly, nor were you being treated in accordance with the regulations. And, as so many of you will know here who have sat at attendance meetings and <inaudible> meetings, the word duty of care is just another ad lib comment thrown around by the employer, and things are rarely done in accordance with the regulations.

<Inaudible> says line managers must – must – focus on early intervention and be proactive in addressing health issues which may affect attendance or performance. Regrettably, I am still waiting to see this proactive line manager. I could go on forever, illustrating failures by managers and Governors in implementing the provisions of this PSI. But as all of you know, on this basis alone, on what I have said already, I would ask you to condemn the employer for their failure to operate this thing properly. Is there a problem, Mr Chair?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Martin, I think you've relayed that very well, despite the restrictions. I think you've done very well despite the restriction – you've relayed that to Conference very well. Well done.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: Are you removing me?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: How much more have you got? How much longer?

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: I've got a little bit here to talk about.

<Laughter>

The important part, Mr Chairman, two or three minutes if you will indulge me.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: I'll indulge you for another minute and a half. Any good negotiator gets a compromise. 90 seconds, Martin, go on.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: Well, I never thought I would see this day. So, anyone can stand here and condemn the employer because they are what they are and they never do things properly. So, what is the way forward? I've contacted the Centre for Mental Health and I read their 2017 report and their headlines read, 'Staff shortages, a toxic working environment and a failure to recognise the traumatising effect of prison for both prisoners and staff have all contributed to an unsafe environment.' Their CEO said, 'We need to bring about a culture of change in prisons that puts safety top of the agenda, that understands the traumas both prisoners and staff often have to live with and that means people need to get help right at the time that they need it.'

So, Mr Chair, I'm asking you now, and I am requesting it on behalf of our branch, that you urgently seek and interview with the top people at the HMPPS to put this at the top of the agenda, that we get full-time professional mental health people working in our regions and our establishments who can help all these people with these mental health issues. When you go there, please do not ask them on moral grounds because they will ignore that, do not ask them on legal grounds because that hasn't worked, but use it in the language that the employer will understand, that it is cheaper. The cost to the employer of sick and people being off duty is horrendous in comparison to the amount it would cost us to employ these professional mental health persons.

That is all I have time to say, folks, so I'm going to stand down now. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr Chairman.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Martin, I'm happy to do that on your behalf when Conference give me permission to do so, which I'm sure they will. Ladies before gentlemen. Feltham seconded. Ladies before gentlemen, Tom.

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, you might have noticed I got up and down a bit like a yoyo there because I wasn't going to come up here and speak on it because it's quite personal to myself. But I think it's the time to share it and he wasn't able to go into his full story because of the legal case that's going on, but there's no legal case with me so I can.

Working at Feltham hasn't been an easy task. In recent years I've seen things that most people only see in their nightmares. I am happy to admit that I rattle when I walk on medication that I take for my mental health. You'll probably all have guessed at Conference that I'm a little bit mental. In 2017 I attempted to take my own life. At this point I had to accept that I needed to get some help. My happy face, well sometimes happy face, and my loud mouth covered my inner feelings. I didn't want to admit that I couldn't cope, I didn't want to look weak. I now understand that admitting this isn't weak, it shows strength. I'm sure that others in this room have felt exactly the same.

Mental health is a growing concern in the Prison Service. The violence that we see is not normal. Had there been someone available I would have

been able to face my demons a lot sooner. Care teams within establishments are amazing but they also need to offload. My care team lead is at the back of the room today and he is amazing, as is the whole care team at Feltham. At Feltham we're good at noticing when someone isn't feeling so great.

The care team need the back-up of the professionals. Feltham have already introduced this support but it is not a full-time support. Please support this motion because this motion will save lives. Thank you.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you for that very brave and honest address, Laura. Thank you so much.

GLEN SHARPLES – BRANCH CHAIR, WYMOTT: Thank you Chairman, NEC, Conference, if your establishment or gaol is anything like my gaol we regularly operate with 20-plus ACCT documents and at least one constant watch. This is as a direct result of government cuts to mental healthcare provision for prisoners, but this is just the visible part of a mental health iceberg. There have been no effective provisions for the mental health of staff, as we've heard from previous speakers.

As the violence figures have skyrocketed, <inaudible> the consequent effect on our members being subjected to direct assault on themselves or their colleagues while witnessing the results of assaults on prisoners has either an immediate traumatic effect or, more probably, an accumulative effect that will manifest itself at a later date. We now have a further potential threat to our mental health, the threat of NPS exposure.

We see daily the effect that this stuff has on our prisoners and who knows what continual low-level exposure to this may do to us in the long term, and especially affecting mental health. Conference, we cannot allow the mental health of our members to be placed further into jeopardy by an employer who will not follow its own rules and pays lip service to the term decency if it applies to the staff. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Glen. Any more speakers? Tom.

THOMAS NUNDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, ELMLEY: Chair, NEC, Conference, I was talking to the other delegate that I've come up with from Elmley last night about this motion because we both feel very strongly about it and he told me a statistic – one in four people will at some point suffer from a mental health problem throughout the course of their life, and one in six people are suffering with a mental health problem right now. Conference, that's the general public, not people that work in prisons. That video that we saw earlier that the NEC made that is very, very good, that shows what we have to deal with every day. That shows the public what we have to deal with every single day. That is going to make ... I dread to think what the statistics are for prison officers suffering from mental health. I can't even imagine how high the rate must be. It is shocking the stuff that we have to deal with on a daily basis. And it's not normal and it warps your mind and it will have an effect on you, no matter what people say.

We really, really need to support this motion, Conference. We need to condemn the employer for their utter failings, it's absolutely disgraceful. And we need to make sure that we do have mental health problems in our establishments that can support our staff and support our members. And what Laura said earlier, absolutely bang on, Conference. This motion is going to save lives. Support the motion.

<Applause>

NICK CARDY – BRANCH SECRETARY, RAMPTON: Chair, NEC, Conference, invited guests, in support of this motion brought by Bedford. Working in the NHS can have its ups and downs but one thing that is vital in our workplace within Nottinghamshire NHS Trust is a dedicated occupational health department and staff counselling service. We have this at Rampton and have had it for many, many years. It works, it helps staff recover quicker and gets them back to work quicker, which helps their mental health. If there is no budget for a dedicated team in your establishments then please ask the person that holds the change purse if you can just get somebody in on an ad hoc basis, maybe once a week, whatever, just so they can come in and talk to these people.

Assaults on staff are the biggest figure in our sickness figures. Next to that is work-related stress. Our staff need this service to aid them to get back to work safely and securely. I've listened to previous speakers. Tom hit it on the head – one in four of us will suffer with mental health. If this was one establishment and there's 300 people in the room, one in four of you would suffer from a mental health condition. Now, if this was one establishment instead of two people from all your establishments, a quarter of this room would need to access some form of mental health service. Where do you go? You can't go to your local authority because you'll be waiting six months to see anybody. At Rampton, within a day and a half we're seen. We're seen by a professional that aids you and gets you back to work very, very quickly. That saves the firm money, it saves us hundreds of thousands of pounds a year having to wait for us to get in a queue to see somebody else. Please support the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Dave Cook for the NEC.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Chair, NEC, Conference, replying on behalf of the NEC. More than happy to support this motion. I'll keep it really short. It's right that we condemn HMPPS for its lack of care to our staff and our members. And secondly is that the NEC will enter discussions with HMPPS and push this forward as fast and as quickly as we possibly can. I am aware that these talks are already ongoing and the care of mental health of our members

and our staff is already at the forefront. But we will take this forward, and thank you very much Bedford for bringing this motion to Conference. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. All those in favour please show. Any against? That's now policy, happy to take that forward for you.

71A, 71B have been lost, we're now on to 72, Frankland. Secorder for Frankland? Belmarsh, thank you.

Motion 72

That Conference condemns HMPPS on the way our members exit the Service under IHR and enter into discussions to rectify this.
FRANKLAND

PHILIP HANNANT – BRANCH CHAIR, FRANKLAND: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 72, that Conference condemns HMPPS on the way our members exit the service under IHR and enter into discussions to rectify this.

Unfortunately, this is another tale of woe from our employer. I've had a member of staff who, unfortunately, was ... I guess he was in the right place at the right time because he saved a lot of staff and he's rectified incidents. But over the period of his service he's been assaulted on numerous occasions and I guess the straw that broke the camel's back, he went in on a constant watch who was under the bed with a ligature round trying to obviously kill himself. Alan went in, Alan Farbridge, by the way, is his name, some people might know him. He went into that and he saved the prisoner. However, the thanks he got for that, the prisoner jumped up with a weapon and tried to stab him in the eye. He missed his eye but he suffered lacerations round the back of the neck. So unfortunately Alan never returned back to work after that incident.

The way, unfortunately, that it went, Alan couldn't get better until he basically got the thing that was making him ill off his back, as such, and that was the Prison Service. Alan absolutely loved the job, he's never ever slagged the job off. He was proud to put his uniform on and the day I took him down to occupational assist to see the practitioner, there was two ways we could go – he could sit in front of there, you could lie, you could put the brave face on. You could see he loved the job and he wanted back but he acknowledged, he knew, he had to leave the service. When the practitioner uttered those words, 'You will fit the criteria for ill-health retirement,' I took him back outside with his wife and the three of us sat in a café and sobbed. I'm not one to cry much, to be fair, I'm not a crier and stuff like that. Luckily, I don't support any of the northeast teams so I don't get to do that very often anyway.

But that's when, to be fair, that's when Alan's bloody trouble started because trying to exit the service, even though you've been given that certificate, just drags on and on and on. I'll thank Joe Simpson. Joe's done a little bit of work and Joe's contacted people. I was begging, I was begging the department just to get on with it for the sake of the lad. Trying to get his permanent injury award, there was no support. Everything just goes up. And I got to a point where I actually believed Alan would have taken his own life. Thankfully, eventually after months and months and months we did get through and Alan's had a great result eventually. But it's just the length of time that it takes to get through ill-health retirement when you eventually acknowledge you want to go and you need to go but getting them certificates, the amount of times you have to go to occupational assist, then the practitioner, to get that result and then the follow-on from that is just an absolute disgrace and nobody appears to be able to do anything about it. So, I urge Conference, please support. Condemn HMPPS on the way it treats our members. Thank you very much.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Phil. Any more speakers? Replying for the NEC, Sarah Rigby.

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, in support of the motion. We couldn't do anything else but support this motion. Everyone in this room will have a terrible example of a member or members who have left the service on ill-health retirement and been badly treated, let down when they needed help and support more than ever. Lost paperwork, miscommunicated appointments, lengthy waiting times at every stage of the process, Governors keen to end the process as quickly as possible, often leading to more confusion later on in the process. Members left on nil or half pay, even when their illnesses are work-related – I could go on.

Ill-health retirement is usually a confusing and frustrating time and the process adds more pressure at a time when someone is facing life-changing decisions. After some pressure from the POA, the employer did actually listen and take some steps to address some of the issues we have raised. There is now an IHR manager in place who acts as the link between the POA shared services and my CSP. He can provide updates as requested and has some very good knowledge of the process. He has managed to unpick some very complicated cases and work out what has gone wrong in the process.

We have also managed to get a website set up that members can access outside of work which explains the IHR process and provides access to several of the forms. We continue to request updates and improvements to the website as issues arise. Please make your members aware of this website if they are off work and going through the process and please make us aware if you think there is any way we can improve the website by adding further information or explaining certain aspects of the process in more detail.

The work is ongoing and goes some way towards fulfilling the second part of the motion. We would further like to see various aspects of the Service Level Agreements amended, particularly in relation to timescales, and we will continue to push for this. Whilst these measures may improve things

moving forward, they do absolutely nothing to help our members previously affected. We absolutely support this motion from Frankland but also felt it was an appropriate time to make you aware of some progress that we are hopeful will make a difference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Any reply from Frankland? Straight to the vote then, all those in favour. Any against? That's carried.

73, Feltham. Secunder please. Scrubs, thank you.

Motion 73

For the NEC to negotiate an extra payment for OSGs carrying out skilled task which require them to pass an examination for example control room trained OSGs. For all OSGs carrying out extra duties to also receive this payment including care team, youth justice foundation degree etc.

FELTHAM

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Conference, NEC, Chair, like a bad karaoke singer, really, I keep coming up here. Motion 73 reads for the NEC to negotiate an extra payment for OSGs carrying out skilled tasks which require them to pass an examination, for example, control room trained OSGs. For all OSGs carrying out extra duties to also receive this payment, including care team, Youth Justice Foundation degree etc.

Our OSGs at Feltham feel that they deserve extra pay for the extra tasks that they carry out. For example, our control room OSGs, in particular, are dealing with up to and sometimes over 30 incidents a day. To carry out this task, they need to complete and pass a specific course. OSGs are important and seem to be the forgotten force. At Feltham the OSGs are the heart of our establishment – without them we could not function. The employer is looking to upskill in the youth estate but, again, the forgotten people are the OSGs. If they are doing specialised jobs, they deserve specialised pay. I couldn't do some of the jobs that they do, so why are they paid such a low amount? It's time for this union to fight for the OSGs. Please support the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Scrubs, do you wish to speak on it? No. No more speakers indicated, responding for the NEC, Jackie Marshall.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, Conference, against the motion. Whilst we fully understand the sentiments of this motion, we cannot agree to it because of the wording – and that is OSG and why only OSGs? Yes, we fully accept they are required to carry out control room training but so do the control room Band 4s in the high-security estate. We believe, and have told the department, that any member of staff, regardless of grade, should be paid for any speciality that they have been trained for, be it control room training, care team training, first aid training, or anything else. All grades should be paid for completing specialist training, not just OSGs. We will continue to challenge the employer but allow us to do it for all grades and not just OSGs. Please reject the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Jackie. Response from Feltham?

LAURA DUGGAN – BRANCH SECRETARY, FELTHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, I don't really understand. If the motion came through and it wasn't worded that well, why would somebody not just come back and speak to me about that so that we're not having to bring this back to the table again next year? The OSGs do feel like the forgotten force. They are in those control rooms and I totally get your point and I take your point that you've got Band 4 staff and I take that everyone should get the specialist pay. But the OSGs don't feel as if they've been included in that. If they did feel included in that then they wouldn't have brought this motion to conference. I urge you to support the OSGs and put it out there that, you know what, us as a union, we will fight to get the OSGs extra pay for the specialist tasks that they carry out.

This motion, I just don't get how we can reject this on the wording because we already know that we're fighting for the other grades. So, I just don't seem to understand what your argument back is. The OSGs deserve us to do something for them. We're asking in this to give the OSGs, we're not saying don't give anybody else it, we're asking to do it for the OSGs. We've already asked to do it for everybody else, now let's ask for the OSGs and understand the work that they do and how hard they work. So, I really ask you, Conference, please support this motion on behalf of your OSGs at your branches.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Feltham. To the vote. All those in favour of this motion, please show. Against. That motion is carried.

Motion 74 has been withdrawn. 75, Feltham. Secunder for Feltham? Thank you Durham.

Motion 75

For the NEC to formally challenge the vetting process currently in place by HMPPS, ensuring that all staff working in Prison Establishments are correctly vetting before taking up employment.

FELTHAM

CHRISTINE MILLER – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Good afternoon, Conference. Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 75 reads for the NEC to formally challenge the vetting process currently in place by HMPPS. This will ensure that all staff working in prison establishments are correctly vetted prior to taking up employment.

Conference, the crux of this motion is simple. We had the solution to this problem prior to shared services with having individual establishments being responsible and controlling their own vetting. It simplifies the process. Having shared services just means that HMPPS have some form of excuse for the mistakes that are being made, an automated service. Our service isn't automated, our job is not automated, so why is vetting?

Not long ago at Feltham we had someone working within the establishment for months and was about to undergo their POELT training. This person was being accused of a serious crime in more than one country. Imagine the implications! Should that person have been successful within vetting, what risk would our members have been at? But this is just one example, so what if there is more?

Currently the system is not appropriate. HMPPS might be pushing through all these new staff but that also means that they are also being trained incorrectly without proper vetting. An example being just the other day, a young man returned to the establishment after his course but he couldn't be given his keys as he was still awaiting the results of his vetting, ten weeks prior to the shadow week. Yet we've already invested our time and effort in his training. Therefore we require the NEC to challenge the current process and I'm asking you, Conference, to support our motion.

<Applause>

CRAIG ROBSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, DURHAM: Happy to support this motion. I'm sick and tired of seeing my Governor and telling him, 'What are we employing in this job?' It's an absolute disgrace. I'm part-time, I'm semi-retired – sorry, I'm a re-employed pensioner, I've got to get it right. I was at home one Saturday morning and I got a phone call from the Chairman. He said, 'I've had one sent back from the training school.' I said, 'What for?' He said, 'On investigation.' 'What for?' 'Apparently she's on an adult website.' I says, 'Which one?' So, he told us, so I went looking at that adult website. You had to pay to get on the adult website – I wasn't paying anything, but it had a Twitter account. So, as the National Chair knows, I go on Twitter and I found this other person on Twitter from Wales with the price list of what she does, what she doesn't do and everything. This lassie was on that website, so I told my colleague, 'Tell her to go not guilty – we'll find out who from the HMPPS has paid to go on the website.' Needless to say, I think she intended to resign anyway because we then found out she was an adult dancer as well, so that was the Christmas party routine out.

Honestly, we're getting some poor people in. I'm getting people now, I'm on the work-life balance committee and I'm getting applications of people who have joined the job with a work-life balance application saying, 'I don't want to do nights, I don't want to work weekends.' Come on man, what are we working here? We've got to sort it out. The amount of people we're losing straight away, we hear about it all the time. It's in the press about people coming in from the gangs. And they wonder what's happening in the gaols, where the stuff's coming from. Of course, it's coming from staff, it doesn't all come over the wall. It's crazy, please support the motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Craig. Responding for the NEC, Dave Cook.

DAVE COOK – NEC: Thank you Chair. NEC, Conference, replying on behalf of the NEC and we're happy to support this motion brought forward by Feltham and well presented in moving the motion. The vetting process is a disgrace, it really is. There's nothing more I can add to this, it is absolutely appalling. The vetting process was reduced in the rush to recruit 2,5000 prison officers in the time that was given by the government so that they could turn around and say in the press and in public that they'd achieved it. In doing so we've got people, and I've had more and more examples, of inappropriate people with criminal histories or undergoing criminal investigations being employed.

But there is one cautionary thing on this, is that the vetting system will not improve the quality of the people that they are recruiting because the vetting system is about previous crimes and that sort of stuff. It doesn't make them good officers. But we've already raised this with HMPPS and will continue to raise it with HMPPS. They better start recruiting the right quality but, more importantly, people who are suitable for the job that they're employing them for. Please support.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Dave, straight to the vote then. All those in favour. Any against? That's carried.

77, Ford. Secunder please? Thank you Stocken.

Motion 77

That the NEC negotiates the issue of an additional "soft style" uniform (polo shirts & DST cargo trousers) for unified grades to wear with MoJ.

FORD

KEVIN JEPHSON – BRANCH SECRETARY, FORD: Chair, NEC, delegates, those of you who have been around a while will know my branch brought this motion a couple of years ago, or maybe a few more than that. PJ McParlin was the Chairman at the time. I was warned about not slating off my membership or individuals. Because I asked for a yellow T-shirt, egg yolk yellow, with red and black spots on it. So, I got asked afterwards by someone

why. I said, 'Because every time he eats his breakfast half of it is down his front.' So, he's put this motion up again this time but on a serious note we wear a white shirt, we go searching. By the time you go searching in the room where there's two prisoners in some of these rooms and enough kit to sink a battleship, you end up filthy, so you end up with a white shirt that's black, covered in stains. So, we've just asked for, and the motion reads, that the NEC negotiate the issue of an additional soft-style uniform, polo shirts and DST cargo trousers, for unified grades to wear with the MOJ. Please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Kev. Stocken, do you wish to speak on it? No more speakers identified, so responding for the NEC, Sarah Rigby.

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking against this motion. The previous motion was withdrawn. We would not have been opposed to a review of the current uniform issued if the membership require it. We are, however, opposed to additional uniform.

Under Fair and Sustainable it was decreed that Bands 2 to 5 would remain uniform grades. We recently had success with a dispute from HMP Berwyn after their Governor decided he wanted operational Band 5 CMs to wear their own clothes. The branch quite rightly objected, and Band 5 staff are now back in uniform. To introduce an alternative uniform would mean disciplined staff would not be as easily identifiable and it would further erode the professional appearance of the uniformed staff. This is not something we want.

There is currently a review of our current uniform provider ongoing. As part of this, prison officers were surveyed about what uniform they would prefer to wear. They voted overwhelmingly to stay in black trousers and a white shirt. It is current Conference policy that all civilian staff should wear an identifying item of clothing. It's also current Conference policy that all uniformed grades working with young people continue to wear the National Prison Service uniform.

Last year Conference accepted a motion that said Governors and operational managers should also wear uniform. It therefore seems improper to support a motion that introduces additional uniform items for staff to wear. We understand the sentiment of the motion but feel that at this time we should be pushing for all uniform grades to remain in their current agreed uniform, and ask that you reject the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Ford to respond. No? Yes. Okay, straight to the vote. Thanks Kev. All those in favour of this motion, please show. Against. That motion is lost.

78 has been withdrawn. 79 has been withdrawn. 80 has been withdrawn. 81, Liverpool. Secunder for Liverpool? Thank you Feltham.

Motion 81

Conference reaffirm the Unions policy to scrap the annual staff fitness test as it is not fit for purpose.

LIVERPOOL

ROGER MORAN – BRANCH CHAIR, LIVERPOOL: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 81 reads, Conference reaffirm the union's policy to scrap the annual staff fitness test as it is not fit for purpose.

I don't want to take up any more of anyone's valuable time. Conference, this motion has been raised before, yet here we are again, still here talking about it. The motion says it all, I simply reaffirm it. Conference, please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Roger.

CHRISTINE MILLAR – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, urging you to reject this motion. Why do we need to already reaffirm a policy that was only passed two years ago? We have already set the NEC an impossible task of achieving an abolishment of the fitness test, and I quote in the report-back given for 35/2017, 'We endeavour to achieve this and it is due to be assessed to examine the current issues that the NEC believe to be discriminatory within the current testing system in relation to age.' Yet we still haven't lodged a legal case for those that we have already lost.

Now don't sit there and think I'm a pro-fitness-test person, I'm not. But an alternative needs to be sourced. We heard this morning about the dangers that we all face within our establishments and how 68 is too late. The reality is, at 68, after years of being injured, achieving the requirements of this fitness test are dramatically reduced. However, have you considered that we've already brought ourselves to potential ridicule? Let's be realistic, the vast majority of our members are now on F&S. Should they be new or have opted in at some point in their career, it is written within our contracts that we have to have a minimum level of fitness. So, can you imagine HMPPS resending out all our contracts? I'm not on about every officer, I'm on about every contract post-2000. The report back given stated that they would endeavour to remove the fitness test. However, HMPPS, like our Governors, would just implement it regardless. They've already implemented the alternative of walking on a treadmill, personally I would take the bleep test than the treadmill. Walking at increased speed on a gradient for six minutes wasn't my best idea and that was just a light cardio workout in the gym.

HMPPS follows the Woolf Report and the Woolf Report says that it should be gender and age neutral. Therefore a reduction of the fitness test from 5.4 to 2.2 will help ensure that we save our good, experienced members that we continue to lose until a suitable alternative is sourced. We need a hear and now plan to save these members that we lose every week, the ones that are facing those capabilities due to failing the fitness test. Last year, Conference, we supplied a motion as an achievable short-term goal, which was rejected on the temporary solution to achieve our long-term abolishment.

Please reject this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you and well delivered, but just for future reference, if you second a motion you can't speak against it.

CHRISTINE MILLAR – BRANCH CHAIR, FELTHAM: Acknowledged. Apologies.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: It's a learning curve, no problem. Just for future reference. Responding for the NEC, Ian Carson.

IAN CARSON – NEC: Chair, Conference, asking you to support this motion. It's not inclusive – the fitness test is not inclusive. It doesn't take into account the aging process. It's not fair measurement, especially for women suffering whilst going through the menopause, and those of you who have seen the programme on the BBC recently will see how the menopause affects women at a particular age who are expected to do exactly the same fitness test as everybody else, and it's wrong and it needs getting rid of. Please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Ian. All those in favour of this motion, please show. Any against? That's carried.

82, Liverpool, a seconder please. Hewell, thank you.

Motion 82

Conference instructs the NEC to engage with HMPPS to seek changes to the current promotion policy and procedures, so that experience, knowledge and service is considered when selecting candidates. This would help to eradicate the bias, discrimination and nefarious intent which is inherent in the Service and more so with some managers.

LIVERPOOL

ROGER MORAN – BRANCH CHAIR, LIVERPOOL: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 82 reads, Conference instructs the NEC to engage with HMPPS to seek changes to the current promotion policy and procedures so that the experience, knowledge and service is considered when selecting candidates. This would help to eradicate the bias, discrimination and nefarious intent which is inherent in the service and more so with some managers.

Colleagues, firstly let me start by saying, this is certainly not an attack on new staff, but is it any surprise that our prisons are in the state they are? The desperation of our management to retain new staff means that young, inexperienced staff are being promoted at breakneck speed to both front-line and senior management roles. The impact of this is the shocking level of leadership we see on a daily basis and we are left, the staff, to deal with this and pick up the pieces of this inexperience. This cannot go on. Being an experienced member of staff should not mark you down as a problem to management but rather as the valuable asset that you are. Colleagues, please support this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Roger.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: It's read already, Mr Chairman.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: It's Fingers Gillan, here – he's the one. If we can let Hewell the seconder address, then. You're welcome Martin.

LES DENNIS – BRANCH SECRETARY, HEWELL: Chair, NEC, Conference, seconding this motion. Hewell brought a similar doing motion a few years ago and unfortunately the NEC didn't see the merits of it at the time. So, we thank Liverpool branch for bringing this motion, a similar motion, back to conference.

Hewell branch members regularly raise concern and often anger at what presents itself as a corruptible and abused process, not based on performance but the ability to answer a predetermined quiz. An example of management hiding behind policy was when I tried to recently infiltrate a recent promotion board to ensure fair and open competition. But the fact that policy is that all board members should be of line management rank precludes all of our branch committee, so I'm at a loss to understand what our SMT is scared of.

Hewell has evidence of staff promoted beyond their current skill set and ability and experience, and our SMT are unable to evidence that their promotion decision-making has integrity. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks, Les.

MARTIN FIELD – BRANCH SECRETARY, BEDFORD: Mr Chair, the NEC, Conference, I fully endorse and recognise the issue that Liverpool has brought before this conference today. We have been surrounded with exactly the same issue. Regrettably, until recent times closed grades in our establishment wouldn't even bother to apply because of the Fair and Sustainable provisions. But now that we've managed to get over that hurdle, that you don't lose five grand by taking a promotion, consideration has been given by closed grades to taking up TSO, TCM and actual positions within the Band 4 and 5 grades. Regrettably to say that of all the applications that have been made by the few remaining closed grades that we have, to date we

only have one TSO on the books. Most of them cannot even get through the paper sift. How is it possible that a person with twenty years' experience cannot be found to be better than a person who is one day out of probation. I don't care how good that person might look to somebody, but a day out of probation does not make that person a senior officer material.

As has been said by the speaker from Liverpool, we have absolutely nothing against the new staff and there are very many competent people amongst there who I'm sure in time to come will make good managers. But if you look at it, you can see and join the dots between the failure in the Band 4 and 5 grades and the escalation in the amounts of violence within our establishments because they cannot understand and do not know how to do their jobs properly as of yet. That is a major detriment to the other staff who are working there. So, quite clearly, and we have put up a suggestion for change about this, there is an actual and direct bias against closed grade staff in getting promotion. Colleagues, please support this motion.

<Applause>

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: No more speakers. Sarah Rigby for the NEC.

SARAH RIGBY – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking in favour of this motion. We wholeheartedly agree with the sentiment behind this motion. Experience now seems to mean very little and it is no longer a prerequisite for promotion. We sit and listen to the employer telling us they want the experienced staff to stay in the job and they want the experienced staff to apply for promotion. Their actions do not reflect these words. We've recently been issued with an annexe A that states, as long as an officer has passed their probation they can ask to be considered for promotion. They quite simply do not have the adequate experience required for these roles.

Current Conference policy says we must push for the JSAC process to be discontinued as part of the promotion policy and be replaced with a promotion board for uniformed staff. It also asks that we engage with HMPPS to implement a better, fairer, ability-based promotion scheme than the one we currently have. This motion, therefore, gives us some scope moving forward as we try to achieve what Conference has already decreed and to achieve what Liverpool are directing through this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Straight to the vote – all those in favour please show. Any against? That's carried.

83, Sudbury. Secunder for Sudbury? Elmley, thank you.

Motion 83

Conference to direct the NEC to address the antiquated amount of Travel & Subsistence, and uplift the Travel & Subsistence through any means of negotiation through joint venture with the TUC and consultation with the HMRC to gain a more realistic amount for our members and to report back to Conference 2020 if not before.

SUDBURY

ROGER MOORE – BRANCH SECRETARY, SUDBURY: Chairman, NEC, Conference, we are asking Conference and the NEC to support the motion and it reads, Conference to direct the NEC to address the antiquated amount of travel and subsistence and uplift the travel and subs through any means of negotiation for a more realistic amount for our members and to report back to Conference 2020 if not before.

Colleagues, it's been numerous years since the last rise in travel and subs allowance. The current figures are not a true reflection of the actual costs of running a motor vehicle in the current climate, with the correct insurance requirements and the rising cost of fuel. Also, for some of the allowances for the over 5s and 10s can be well under the cost of a drink and a meal in a motorway service station which can be, on average, 83% more expensive than the high street due to the location and the running costs involved. Currently, HM Revenue and Customs look at this benchmark scale annually on a plus or minus 10% based on the Consumer Price Index. I know this may need the resources of the TUC to help steer through policy through Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs department, either through Parliament or other means. Conference, please support this motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Elmley, would you like to speak on this motion? No other speakers indicated. Replying on behalf of the NEC, Jackie Marshall.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, Conference, in support of the motion. Travel and subsistence is set by the Tax Office, which is why the overnight subsistence was recently reduced from £26 to £25 a night. It should have been reduced three years earlier, but the employer reached agreement with the Tax Office for an extra two years and then through negotiation we were successful in getting the department to agree to pay the extra pound for a third year. We obviously can't negotiate with the Tax Office, but we will do whatever we can with the department, so please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. Straight to the vote then. All those in favour, please show. Any against? That's carried.

84, Whatton. Are Whatton here? No? Whatton are here, yes.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: He's asking for a second. Is there a seconder?

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Give us a chance.

<Laughter>

Secunder for Whatton? Thank you.

Motion 84

That Conference instructs the NEC to seek a change to the current grievance procedure to ensure each stage of the grievance is heard independently.

WHATTON

PAUL TUNE – BRANCH CHAIR, WHATTON: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 84 reads, that Conference instructs the NEC to seek a change to the current grievance procedure to ensure each stage of the grievance is heard independently.

This proposal here today is simple and is one of the most significant motions to Conference that has been proposed by the POA membership at HMP Whatton to date. It is that the current system of grievance procedure that is in use within Her Majesty's Prison Service today is insufficient, flawed and not fit for purpose. Change is required to protect individuals correctly, serve the future of the Prison Service responsibly and further the future needs of our members. The problem: the current system, when abused by the managers who control it, has resulted in the silencing of individuals and their concerns at establishment level. This is unforgivable and counterproductive for everyone, including those who work or reside in prisons and to the public who rely on those entrusted with the job of running prisons to do so with professionalism and integrity.

Unfortunately, it is all too often indicative of partisan management who are in control of the current procedure to consider their own needs above the complaint that has been made. Examples: it is unfortunately common practice in our establishment that complaints made against individual managers for either their behaviour towards staff, i.e. bullying and harassment, or for them not following clear rules or policies of the Prison Service, are actually being answered by those individual managers themselves. This approach has a clear absence of procedural justice and obviously results in limited outcomes for managers. This approach in one instance at HMP Whatton was taken on an occasion where a manager answering a complaint made against him decided not to even record or acknowledge the complaint. These types of abuses of the grievance procedure have been criticised by the Prime Minister, Theresa May, when considering the grievance procedure for Parliament in Westminster. Theresa May had no hesitation in stating that an independent grievance procedure was needed, and a review into their policy was swiftly commissioned and subsequently conducted by Dame Laura Cox. She investigated bullying and harassment by MPs. It was clear in Dame Laura Cox's summing up that MPs shouldn't be involved in investigating the complaints of bullying and harassment made against them, as people widely reported that MPs wouldn't criticise each other.

Another review of this issue was conducted for Oxford University by Baroness Kennedy and was reported in *The Sunday Telegraph* 17th June 2018. The university structure allowed individual colleges to under-report sexual crimes and the baroness welcomed a centralised reporting service being launched in October of that year. Baroness Kennedy said, 'I'm a lawyer who worked in the field for most of my life, and with all these scandals, the church, children's homes, the BBC and Jimmy Saville in situations are tempted to put their own reputation ahead of the allegations in dealing with something that has impacted the lives of the individuals. They tried to find ways of burying it and dealing with it in a secretive way. We know this is about silencing the complaint, we can't have that. I think the university and colleges should look at this issue very soon. It is allied to the question of the culture within the institution.' Baroness Kennedy wrote this in July 2017.

Figures obtained by *The Telegraph* did show that students made complaints about eight staff members over the last two academic years, but Baroness Kennedy said the true number could be more than twice as high. This report, as you may agree, sounds unfortunately too familiar when considering the approach taken by our managers in the Prison Service tasked with managing such grievances, all too often resulting in decisions being made which at best can be described as a cover-up and, at worst, corrupt.

More recently we have seen the National Executive Committee deciding not to engage with HMPPS concerning any national issues including attending meetings and entering into negotiations – this decision being taken in support of POA members who have been subjected to unfair and unwarranted disciplinary procedures, where their employer has clearly failed to abide by PSI 6/2010. This has been highlighted in the case of an NEC member and other members, with clear abuses and dishonest interpretation of the application of the Conduct and Disciplinary Instructions. This example goes hand in hand with the case of disciplinary process being applied by management at HMP Whatton on a Band 3 member of staff in recent years. A Band 3 member of staff raised the issue of the clear two-tier system in place ...

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Can you start to wrap it up now, please? You're over time. Thank you. You've delivered well but start to wrap up.

PAUL TUNE – BRANCH CHAIR, WHATTON: OK, I'll just go straight to the conclusion then. As staff working in Her Majesty's Prison Service we deserve an inquiry and review, which would consider us being granted an independent grievance procedure such as has clearly been afforded to other institutions. We deserve the fairness of process that procedural justice demands. We deserve integrity from all who work in the Prison Service, including Prison Service management, when dealing with complaints and grievances. And, more than anything, our voices and our concerns need to be heard not silenced. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you.

<Applause>

JON NEWTON – BRANCH CHAIR, DURHAM: Chair, NEC, Conference, grievances are pushed to the lowest level so the second stage can be kept in house, as has been said by Whatton, for a reason. I'm sure everyone here has had experience of managers not following policy, and sometimes that's what the actual grievance is about. Second stage is, at best, a three-person panel with hopefully one POA rep, realistically a two-to-one decision before it's heard because HRBP, in my opinion and my experience, don't go against the Governor.

Para. 4.1.3 of the Grievance PSO 8550 is summed up with the following statement: the decision made by the manager chairing the appeal is final. So, again, we're back to submitting paperwork for legal advice in the hope of an ET, depending on how strong the case is. More money, more cost. We need an independent in this process that would be fair and honest, or is that, again, too much to ask from our employer? Support the motion. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: No more speakers. Jackie Marshall for the NEC.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking in support of the motion. Whatton, we totally agree, it's not fit for purpose. It's regularly abused by management, particularly by, again, lower grades who cannot uphold the grievance to hear the first stage. Durham, you're correct, it's to keep it in house. It's not worth the paper it's written on. Conference, please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thanks Jackie. All those in favour. Any against? That's carried.

85, Whitemoor. That's been seconded by Frankland.

Motion 85

Conference mandate the NEC to pursue an uplift in the Care and Maintenance of Dog Annual Allowance.

WHITEMOOR

CHRIS DEVANEY – BRANCH SECRETARY, WHITEMOOR: Chair, NEC, Conference, motion 85 reads, Conference mandate the NEC to pursue an uplift in the care and maintenance of dog annual allowance.

Conference, we are asking you to support our motion due to the fact that it's been over 15 years since there has been an increase to this allowance. The care and maintenance allowance was originally brought in as a compensatory measure for the dog handlers as they have to exercise their dog three times a day, clean the dog's kennel at home, feed and water the dog, grooming and to clean the dog crate in their cars. These all have to be done whether the dog handler is on shift or a rest day.

Conference, as I have said, it's been over 15 years since there's been an uplift to this payment. Even the minimum wage has risen numerous times, so why hasn't the care and maintenance allowance been increased? If you work out the hourly rate that a dog handler was getting within this allowance over 15 years ago, is it fair that they receive the same hourly rate now? Of course not and ultimately I find it disgraceful that it has not been increased during this time. Conference, please support this motion and allow our NEC to try and get an increase to the care and maintenance allowance on behalf of our dog handlers nationally who have to carry out the earlier-mentioned tasks in their own time.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you Whitemoor. No more speakers? Jackie Marshall for the NEC.

JACKIE MARSHALL – NEC: Chair, Conference, speaking in support of the motion. Dog handlers have to do a lot of work with the dogs, inside the prison and outside the prison. Whitemoor are right, it needs increasing. Please support the motion.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you. To the vote then. All those in favour. Any against? That's carried.

Next motion is from Maghaberry. I don't know if they're in the room, but they've formally asked us if you can give them permission to withdraw this motion. So, I'll ask Conference permission to withdraw this motion please. All those in favour of withdrawal. Thank you, that's withdrawn.

86 is a report back for Lancaster Farms. Reporting back is Joe Simpson.

Motion 86

The NEC provide Conference a detailed report back on conference motion 89/2017.

LANCASTER FARMS

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chairman, NEC, Conference, reporting back on 86 on behalf of the National Executive. Conference, since that motion was passed in 2017, your National Executive, along with branch officials, have been campaigning and putting political pressure on to MPs and the House of Lords as well in order to reduce the pension age back down to 60.

You've heard from the shadow minister, and for all those who attended the march and rally, Labour have given a commitment to reduce your pension age back down to 60. However, this motion wasn't just about reducing your pension age, it was to give you a mandatory retirement age of 60 from front-line work. Conference, you must remember that, what it said about the motion. And, as you all know, the FBU and judges have been successful in their appeals to the Employment Appeal Tribunal. The government then turned around and asked the Employment Appeal Tribunal if they could

appeal. They only can appeal on the point of law and the Employment Appeal Tribunal turned round and said no. So therefore they've had to go to the Supreme Court to ask permission to appeal the decision by the Employment Appeal Tribunal. That's what we're waiting for because, if you remember, Conference, we have our own employment tribunal racked up and all the people who are going take point for our employment tribunals ready to go on the same as what the judges and Fire Brigade won theirs on.

The best thing that happened with the judges and the Fire Brigade is that they won on the first part of their employment tribunal and that was that the government had discriminated against the members of those specific pension schemes purely on their age, which will assist us if and when we find out what's happening with the Supreme Court. If the Supreme Court then allows the government to appeal, then you're looking at another 12 to 18 months possibly of waiting for the Supreme Court to hand down its decision.

Conference, if they turn around and say no, that the government can't appeal, then it goes back to the original employment tribunal for remedy. So therefore it will go back to there, they'll argue what the remedy should be and the employment tribunal will decide on that.

Conference, it may not mean that you will go back into the pension schemes that they forced you out of. We believe, and so do other Trade Unions, that you'll be compensated. However, that doesn't stop our fight and the political pressure that we've put on.

Conference, after the successful march and rally that spring-boarded our campaign for a return to a pensionable age of 60, and we need to work on that, and we need to get into our MPs. Because what you get from Tories is quite simple. Yes, you can retire at 60, how are you going to pay for it? The same way we used to pay for it before you robbed us of it. Quite simple. Conference, as part of my duties as the DGS I sit on the scheme advisory board for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme along with other Trade Unions and we've been putting pressure through there as well. And we are getting a sympathetic ear from Cabinet Office that for front-line prison staff to retire at 68 is just not acceptable. So, we're going through that area as well.

Also off the back of that it was found this year that you are paying too much into your pension scheme. On your behalf and after getting a stay from the NEC in order to remedy it, they have to take money out of it in order to bring it back up. So, what they decided was, or what we asked for, was a total reduction for the next four years in contributions so you wouldn't pay anything, because every four years they have to assume how the pension scheme is going to run. They baulked at that for the simple reason, politically they couldn't then turn around and say, 'Yes, you're absolutely right,' because they told the country four years earlier that you needed to pay for your pension because they couldn't afford it. So, what we agreed was a 2% reduction in your contributions, three times death benefit if you were in alpha, a higher accrual rate in alpha and also a better re-evaluation rate at the end of the month. Because of the FBU and because of the judges, government are now starting to panic and they've turned around and said, 'We're going to suspend that,' for the simple reason they believe that in order to rectify what they've done to us and other public-sector workers, it's going to take £4 billion. So therefore that £4 billion, guess where that's going to come from? It's going to come from you, because they're not allowing you to have that reduction. They're not allowing you to have what's supposed to happen in your pension.

So therefore we, POA along with PCS, are looking and just at the moment we are looking to see if we have a legal challenge on it, along with all the other Trade Unions. Conference, we also may have a problem with other Trade Unions on this. Because since the changes, there are a lot of Trade Unions who actually like what's happened because they're getting a higher pension. They're getting a higher accrual rate. And, as you know, I've been in some of your establishments and I've done pension roadshows and talked to our staff. I'm now getting POA members turning round and saying, 'If that happens, Joe, and I go back into my original pension scheme, can I refuse and stay in alpha?' Conference, we have to remind our members of what their policy is, and the policy is a mandatory retirement age of 60 and a return back to where you come from. That's the explanation, I hope you accept it, Conference. Thank you.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you for that explanation, Joe. Don't go anywhere, you're doing another report back on 87 for Feltham.

Motion 87

For the NEC to provide a Comprehensive Report back on the adoption of motion 81 2018 and details on the steps taken to date to employ two people to represent the Private Sector.

FELTHAM

JOE SIMPSON – DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY: Chair, NEC, Conference, reporting back on 87. After the adoption of 81/2018, the steps taken to employ two people to represent the private sector was given to Pat Cuffe. We engaged with our private-sector committee, told them what was happening, and we left it along with Pat Cuffe for the simple reason that what we didn't want to happen was to employ two people and then Pat Cuffe come along and say, 'Well, actually, you don't need them.' That would have been a risk and we would have been where we would have had to basically let go two staff. The Pat Cuffe report is now out, you've adopted it Conference, so therefore we go onwards and upwards and you will decide what happens with that. That's the explanation. Thank you, Conference.

MARK FAIRHURST – NATIONAL CHAIR: Thank you, Conference, that concludes our motions.

I'd just like to start my closing remarks by thanking a few people. I'd like to thank the security staff. Without their assistance we wouldn't be able to run such a smooth conference. I'd like to thank the photographers, Cannon and Paul Carr, who've had the benefit of an actual, real, professional photographer with a real camera. Hopefully you've picked up a few tips there, Cannon.

I'd like to thank the hotel and conference staff for the way they've organised everything and treated us. And I'd like to pay tribute to my National Executive Committee, the full-time officers, for their dedication, their passion, their commitment and their support for me this week. Let's not fudge the issue, this is the most united NEC you have ever witnessed, and we will move this union forward.

Most of all, I'd like to thank you, the delegates, for giving up your time, attending here and being so passionate about what you deliver. It's good to see and long may it continue. And I just made a few notes as we went through the motions, things that I just want to conclude with and address.

The health check policy in relation to psychoactive substances. At that meeting with the professor in Bournemouth in a couple of weeks' time, I will take up these issues with him. And I will be costing the tests, finding out if there's any research out there on safety equipment that we can use to protect ourselves from these toxic fumes.

I'm just as frustrated as you over the fact that we haven't got the right to strike, that we cannot collectively bargain with the employer over pay and bring pay parity to all our members. It's abhorrent that someone starting the job, doing the same job as us all, should be on at least £5,000 a year less with no career structure or guaranteed increments to entice them to stay in this job. Without collective bargaining rights, our hands are tied.

An update on PAVA. This morning I received further communications from the employer, who have clearly been rattled, and so they should be, that next Wednesday that 28-day notice concludes. Things are progressing at a rapid rate. They've given us assurances that the training courses for C&R instructors in relation to PAVA, SPEAR and rigid cuffs start on Monday and will continue. That is down to us, as a union, together being robust and taking the issue to them.

<Applause>

It's been an interesting week. There have been a lot of issues brought up. But let me confirm to each and every one of you today, and this morning's events and today's events in the conference hall have proved it, we now have togetherness, unity and respect. All those issues that have gone on this week have been put to bed. The past should stay in the past. We're a proactive, successful, campaigning, passionate union. We're going to move this union forward together. And I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for that vote of confidence in the National Executive Committee because that means more to me than anyone will ever know.

Colleagues, we can and we will fight to regain our right to strike. We can and we will pressurise this government into giving us collective bargaining rights. We can and we will support our colleagues who have been assaulted, making sure that the employer gives them sick leave excusals, gives them what they need to get themselves back to work. We can and we will reduce violence in our workplace, wherever you may work – public sector, private sector, special hospitals, on the road transporting prisoners, wherever you may work. We can and we will make our prisons safe.

Colleagues – my family, my friends, my comrades – with respect and in solidarity to you all, let's move this union forward. Thank you.

<Applause>

STEVE GILLAN – GENERAL SECRETARY: And now, Conference, just before I close Conference, inspirational speech once again from our Chairman, Mark Fairhurst. Mark is right, there is a togetherness on this executive full-time officers and executive working on your behalf and campaigning on your behalf.

I want to make mention to motion 9 about the violence. I've been at Conference a long, long time over the years and I tell you what, there were some fantastic speeches contained within that. I hope Richard Vince has taken great note and taken them back to the employer. But I've got to say, I think Paul Malliband from Preston, his speech was exceptional, very passionate. Well done Paul. And Laura, I've been coming to Conference a long time. That was an intelligent, inspirational and compassionate speech on behalf of your branch in respect of that. And you thoroughly deserved that standing ovation. Very, very well done.

<Applause>

There has been much said at this Conference and, of course, much was said about social media and it had to be said, Conference. Mark has said, indeed, that there's a togetherness and we want unity in all aspects. My comments about social media wasn't an attack on one or two individuals. We have all made mistakes, including myself, on social media in the past. That's one of the reasons that I shut down my social media accounts on Facebook because at times you can react and react wrongly. The last thing I want to see is any individual in this union get into trouble from their respective employers in relation to comments made on social media. So now let's move on in respect of that particular issue. So, the comments were made in respect of everybody with regards to that, NEC included as well.

On the Cuffe Report, we should never be afraid of moving this Trade Union forward. In 2012 I persuaded the Executive to bring a restructuring motion, not because for the fun of it, it's because if we stand still then we'll go down the drain. I've watched unions go down the drain and I've said repeatedly, when I first got elected on to the General Council of the TUC, there were 76 affiliated unions. Today there's 48 because some unions have fallen by the wayside, some have had to merge into bigger unions. I do not want that to happen to this union. I want us to be an independent Trade Union for as long as possible so as it's fit for the future. Once I've gone, once others have gone, so it's fit for the future for the next generation.

We've just celebrated our 80th anniversary – let's hope we're around for another 80 years. I've got to say, Belmarsh, when they said about the Cuffe Report servicing the membership, Bill was absolutely correct on that and I commend that. But he also mentioned about a campaigning union. We will always be a campaigning union, and let me be clear on this issue. This union will always be a lay-led union by those elected on to the National Executive Committee. They are the individuals that make decisions when Conference isn't sitting. It cannot be any other way. The employees of the union are there to give advice and advice they give, but the main people will always be elected lay-led officials, make no doubt about that.

As usual from Wandsworth, Stewart always has words of wisdom. The Cuffe Report has been endorsed now. Conference, this is where the hard work starts. You've heard from our colleagues in Ireland, John Clinton, it could have been so easy just to avoid this issue of getting someone independent to do a report. But the reality is that report has now been done and we will try hard to make sure that it's costed properly, that when reports are done that we look at those reports. But make no mistake, this National Executive will not make the decisions on the future of this union. You, on behalf of your members, will. So, colleagues, the future of the POA is in your hands and rightly so because you are the ruling body and it can't be any other way in my view.

<Applause>

So, with that, Conference, Mark has already thanked everyone, there's no need for me to do that. God bless you and safe journey home for everyone. Thank you.

<Applause>

<End of Conference>