

Amicus National Executive Council
General Purposes & Finance Committee

35 King Street

16th February 2004

Present

Derek Simpson (General Secretary)
Steve Davison (Chair)
Sharon Allen, Judy Box, Allan Cameron, Alastair Fraser, Jerry Hicks, Vi Huddart, Jane Lewis, Peter Taylor, Howard Turner

Apologies

Gordon Whitman

In attendance

Michael Short (Director of Legal Services)
Michael Cardell (Director of Finance)
Georgina Hirsch (Senior Legal Advisor)
John Gibbins (Head of Conferences)
Christian Matheson (Personal Assistant to GS)

The Chair opened the meeting and reminded members of the tasks referred to the GPFC from the NEC: he stressed the importance he attached to returning to the NEC with a united position from all members of the GPFC to underpin the principles of cooperation with which he wished to work on the NEC.

1. Lifting of suspensions of members from holding office

The General Secretary, as part of his report, proposed that now would be an appropriate time, at the start of the new union, to consider lifting the suspension of certain members from holding office within the union which has been the subject of proceedings before the Certification Officer and of a threat of further proceedings in the High Court. This includes Mr David Beaumont and Ms Sue Michie and any other members whose suspensions were imposed as a result of the activities of their group. Such an offer would be made without any admission of liability and on the basis that it would dispense

with the need for hearing any appeal against the suspension. It was agreed that the letter to Mr Beaumont would, accordingly, be worded appropriately.

On a vote it was **agreed to endorse** the General Secretary's proposal, by 9 votes to 0 with 1 abstention.

2. Finance bank mandates

The GPFC considered a list of branch mandates, giving authority to employees of the union to sign union cheques.

The list of mandates was **agreed**.

The General Secretary was also requested to institute a review of the number of bank accounts held by the union.

3. Branch Officers' Honoraria

The General Secretary introduced a discussion on the harmonisation of practices for branch officers' honoraria. It was important not to allow huge disparities in payments, nor to institute a system that was either financially unsustainable, or which no longer reflected the burden of a role of branch secretary or treasurer; on the other hand, it would be unacceptable to make sudden major changes to long-standing practices. Members agreed that change was necessary but that it should be phased in.

The General Secretary proposed:

- That the honorarium of £350 pa for a branch secretary, £150 for a treasurer and £500 if the same person held both posts in a branch, be introduced: all new branch officers would receive this payment;
- That existing payments would be capped at their existing level and a system of reductions introduced year on year until the appropriate level is reached.

This proposal was **agreed**.

4. Lay members' expenses

The GP&FC considered existing practices for paying members' expenses and how a new system might bring the best from these, whilst maintaining fairness for members and ensuring financial probity on behalf of the union.

Following a discussion it was **agreed** to base a system of lay members expenses around the following practices:

For Travel: 2nd class rail fare can be claimed; or where necessary, air travel will be provided. For events within a member's region, mileage will be paid at a rate of 32p per mile. For events outside a region mileage can be claimed only up to the equivalent of the 2nd class rail fare.

For subsistence: members would receive a subsistence allowance of £5 per day for lunch, and £10 for evening meal. In addition, an additional supplement of £25 would be paid to members who have to stay a night on union business in central London.

Accommodation: Reasonable actual accommodation costs. Accommodation will be booked by the union wherever possible.

Loss of Earnings; The actual net loss of earnings – which will require production of appropriate evidence of loss.

These proposed new arrangements may have to be revisited in the light of experience.

5. Branch & Regional Council Finances

The GPFC considered the following motion referred to it by the NEC:

“That in accordance with the provision of Rules 30(1) and 30(7) this NEC approves that from 1st January 2004 retained fund balances at branch and regional level will be under the control of the union centrally.”

The Amicus Rulebook restricts branches to spending a maximum of 3% of their annual contributions income each year, and the General Secretary pointed out that many branches have considerably more than this amount in their accounts: it would serve the members' needs more effectively if this money was used on members' behalf by the union centrally rather than sitting inaccessible in bank accounts. Moreover, members pointed out that regional councils were now defunct and their finances should be returned to the centre.

Members unanimously **agreed** the motion.

Members also felt it was necessary to be sensitive to branches and to the fact that many branch secretaries and treasurers would be unaware of the new rulebook and may have been spending money regardless. It was also pointed out that branches would still need sufficient money to cover branch costs, such as mailings. It was **agreed** to ask the General Secretary to write to all branch secretaries explaining the new rule and the reason for returning excesses centrally, whilst leaving in each branch which has a sufficient retained fund balance, a sum equal to 3%.

6. Branch Standing Orders

Members considered the draft standing orders presented earlier to the NEC.

Following a discussion, the standing orders were **agreed**.

7. Correspondence – Affiliations

Members considered correspondence referred to the GPFC by the NEC. Following a discussion it was **agreed** to affiliate to War on Want and Trade Union CND; and to support the World Development Movement's campaign for a moratorium on GATS negotiations, as referred to the NEC by Nottingham Trent General branch.

Members also discussed the authority of branches to affiliate to organisations to which the union nationally has affiliated.

A proposal was made that in the absence of Amicus policy, pre-existing policy inherited by the predecessor sections would be used as a guide, except where there was a clash of policies, in which case the NEC would decide. This proposal was **agreed**.

8. UNIFI – Merger

The General Secretary presented the draft Transfer of Engagements document for the merger with UNIFI, previously circulated to the NEC. For the merger to proceed the NEC/GPFC had to agree the document.

The General Secretary urged members to give further careful consideration to the document, and not to allow it to go through without due attention, as this was a major legal undertaking.

The General Secretary gave the GPFC a report on merger talks with UNIFI, including proposals as to job titles and roles for senior UNIFI officers after the merger.

The GPFC **agreed** the Transfer of Undertakings for the merger with UNIFI.

9. GPMU Merger

The General Secretary reported that 11 of the 14 regions of the GPMU had voted in favour of the merger with Amicus. GPMU are aiming for an effective date of 1 October 2004 but we will try to encourage them to proceed more quickly if possible.

10. Delegation of Powers & Role of Individual NEC Members

Three papers were circulated to members: one on delegation of powers and two on the role of individual NEC members.

The chair introduced the discussion, reminding members that their role as an NEC was to provide overall governance for the union, rather than day-to-day operational management, which was the responsibility of the General Secretary: the rules required that the NEC delegate its authority to the GS in order to discharge this responsibility.

The General Secretary re-assured the GPFC that: in the matter of retained or delegated powers, ALL the powers vested by the Rulebook in the NEC were retained: no decision by the GS could run against a prior contrary decision of the NEC or conference, any decision could be overturned at the next NEC, to which the GS always reports, but delegation of powers was necessary to permit the efficient management of the union between NEC meetings.

Members were asked to outline their concerns or observations in this issue. These included: the accountability of individual NEC members to the constituency that elected them, and their accessibility to that constituency for the purposes of reporting back to members; the importance of the GS being accountable to the NEC.

The GS responded to these points to clarify and re-assure members about their role and that of the NEC. He pointed out that NEC members do not represent a constituency in the way that, for example, MPs might; and that these are electoral constituencies designed to ensure all parts of the union have a presence at the NEC. The General Secretary also emphasised, in the light of recent experience, that no NEC member has any authority as an individual to give instructions to any officer of the union. Nor was it appropriate for NEC members to raise individual industrial cases at the NEC: these should be raised in the same manner as any other member would raise them in the first instance, through their shop steward/rep or their FTO or their branch. If these avenues failed, then members have the right to complain and, if that complaint fails to give satisfaction, refer the case to the GS for consideration by the NEC.

The General Secretary recognised that there was a clear desire from members that they be able to get involved in their sectors, and that this should be facilitated. The following proposals were made:

Every regional sector conference should have an NEC member from that sector invited to it. This would be administered to ensure a sensible and equitable rota of invitations giving equal treatment to each NEC members as efficiently as possible.

Formal NEC reports to Sector Conferences would be provided by the appropriate National Officer on behalf of the NEC.

NEC members who give their permission will have their contact details published on the Amicus website.

NEC members will receive copies of all general circulars and of circulars relating to their own sector.

The General Secretary will provide a statement summarising the position he had outlined during the meeting which will be circulated to individual GPFC members for comment before it is placed before the NEC.

On delegation of powers, NEC members were asked to study the paper and contact Michael Short, Director of Legal Services, or the General Secretary, with concerns. Clarification would be provided where possible, to see if there is a rationale for delegating this power. A final proposal for the NEC would be agreed before the next NEC meeting.

These proposals were **agreed**.

11. Policy & Rules Conferences

A paper was presented to the GPFC proposing the number of delegates to the policy & rules conference from each sector and region of the union.

Members sought clarification over the number of women delegates, as some members were unclear whether sufficient women delegates would be sent by the women's conference or the national industrial conferences. The General Secretary recognised these concerns but explained that in the absence of previous experience a judgement had to be made, and this could be revised by the NEC as experience of organising these conferences grows.

For future conferences the NEC should review what steps need to be taken to ensure that representatives reflect the gender and ethnic balance of the membership they represent as required by Rule 15.

Members also expressed a concern that there was insufficient opportunity for regional branch conferences to submit motions or rule amendments, if they were to be restricted to one each. However, members accepted that even under the proposed arrangements there would be 120 policy motions for consideration and 68 possible rule changes.

Following a discussion, the paper was **agreed**.

The paper stated:

**AMICUS POLICY AND RULES CONFERENCE
AMICUS NATIONAL SECTOR CONFERENCES**

AMICUS NEC – GPFC FEBRUARY 2004

Under Rule the NEC need to confirm for Conferences 2004/5:

1. Size of Policy and Rules Conference and numbers of Delegates to be elected from Women's, National Sector, Regional Branch and Irish Conferences and National Equality Forums.

Based on current membership the figures are as follows:

<u>Paying Members</u>	<u>693,865</u>
Size of Conference [one delegate per 1000 paying members]	694
Women's Conference	81
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	613
National Sector Delegates [at least 75% of 613]	460
of which:	
Aerospace [inc Shipbuilding]	41[39-2]
Business Services	3
Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals and Process	24[12-12]
Construction	34
Craft	14
Education	10
Elec. Eng., Electronics, IT	25
Energy	17
FPA, incl. CMA, Manufacturing Staff	29
Finance	24
Food, Drink & Tobacco	13
Foundry	10
General Industries	63
Government Departments	7
Health Service	43
Local Authorities	10
Metals	11
Motor Components	28
Motor Vehicles	19
Servicing	9
Transport	14
	[7 Airlines, 7 Railways]
Voluntary & not for Profit	12
<u>This leaves:</u>	
<u>Branch, Irish, Equalities Delegates</u>	<u>153</u>
of which:	
Equalities	16
[Four from each of Youth, Disabled, Black & Ethnic Minority, LGBT]	
Branch, Irish	137
of which pro rata to Membership:	
North East	9
Yorkshire and Humberside	12

East Midlands	10
Eastern	9
London	13
South East	11
South West	9
West Midlands	14
North West	21
Scotland	12
Wales	10
Ireland	7

Nb: Additional delegates will be elected from Unifi and GPMU if these transfers are implemented in 2004.

2. Sectors for Conferences:

The above figures referred to the National Sectors listed in Rule 11.

The exact configuration of Sector Conferences used in the previous sections and the resulting National Officers are different to that list. For these reasons we may need to consider whether we organise:

- separate Aerospace and Shipbuilding Conferences
- separate Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals and Process Conferences
- a single Foundry & Metals Conference
- separate Airlines, Airports, Aircraft Maintenance and Railways, Buses and Ferries Conferences
- the Business Services Conference jointly with the Finance Conference
- Conference

3. Secretaries of Regional Sector Conferences, Regional Women's Conferences and Regional Equality Forums

This should be delegated to Regional Secretaries. Further consideration to be given to Secretaries of National Sector Conferences.

4. Number of motions for Conferences

It is suggested that these split in the same proportions as delegates ie once number of motions for women is determined split 75% Industrial Sector, 25% Branch

[a] from branches to the Regional Branch Conference

- one General Policy Motion per branch
- one Rule Amendment per branch

[b] from Regional Branch Conferences [including Irish Conference] to the Policy Conference

- two General Policy Motions per region
- one Rule Amendment per region

[c] from Regional Sector Conferences to National Sector Conferences

- one Industrial Sector Motion per region
- one General Policy Motion per region
- one Rule Amendment per region

[d] from National Sector Conferences to Policy Conference

- two to five General Policy Motions per sector
- [will depend on size of sector] but making 84 in total
- one to three Rule Amendments per sector but making 48 in total

[e] from Regional Women's Conferences to National Women's Conference

- one General Policy Motions per region
- one Rule Amendment per region

[f] from National Women's Conference to Policy and Rules Conference

- eight General Policy Motions
- four Rule Amendments

[g] from Regional Equality Forums to National Equality Forum

- one General Policy Motion
- one Rule Amendment

[h] from national Equality Forums to Policy and Rules Conference

- one General Policy Motion
- one Rule Amendment

5. Size of National Sector Conferences

[a] 150 Delegates

Women
General Industries
Health

[b] 100 Delegates

Aerospace and Shipbuilding
Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals and Process
Construction
Electrical Engineering, Electronics and IT
Energy
Finance
FPA
Motor Components
Motor Vehicles
Women

[c] 60 Delegates

Education
Food, Drink & Tobacco
Government Departments
Local Authorities
Servicing
Transport
Voluntary and not for profit

[d] 30 Delegates

Business Services
Metals
Foundry

Based on the size of these National Sector Conferences, regional delegations will be calculated pro rata to membership together with consultation with Regional Secretaries and National Officers.

6. Regional Sector Committees

These are comprised of the delegates elected to the National Sector Conferences. However in some cases this can be a small number. It is therefore suggested that regional sector committees should have a minimum of 6 delegates [ie if fewer than six delegates are to be elected to the National Conference, extra delegates should be added to the Sector Committee. If more than six delegates are to be elected to the National Conference then these delegates will serve as the Sector Committee.

12. Finance Issues

The General Secretary and the Director of Finance, Michael Cardell, gave an overview of the Amicus budget, and how the process of establishing the budget had been developed through discussions with individual budget holders. This had been difficult as integration had been taking place at the same time. The outline included an explanation of current financial positions and some of the outstanding financial issues facing the union. The General Secretary gave an undertaking to provide the GPFC with management accounts at future meetings.

The General Secretary confirmed that a breakdown of the individuals leaving on voluntary redundancy terms will be provided in due course.

He also confirmed that the review of by-laws of groups or associations within Amicus agreed at the NEC will include a review of the status of any separate funds held by these groups.

13. Next Meeting

It was **agreed** that that GPFC should met for an hour on the evening of 15th March before the NEC meeting on 16th March.

It was also agreed that the next NEC meeting would be asked to fix the dates for the further NEC meetings that are required under Rule, to take place during 2004. The General Secretary observed that it may be necessary to hold more than the minimum of 6 meetings required by the Rulebook.