



## Scottish Police Federation North Area Committee

Minute of the quarterly meeting of the Scottish Police Federation North Area Committee, held on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 March 2024, at SPF meeting room, Dundee.

### 1. Attendance, Opening and Roll Call

#### Full Time Officials

Allen Shaw	Chair
Caroline Macnaughton	Secretary
Yvonne Sloan	Vice Chair
Andrew Sawers	Deputy Secretary
Gordon Forsyth	AGS Health & Safety

Constables	Sergeants	Inspecting Ranks
Mark Douglass	Simon Lewis Dalby	Gillian Donald
Allen Begg	Julie Stephen	Rhona Di Meola
Sorcha Burns	Geoff Catto	Lynne Kortland
James Will	Iain Fraser	David Gibson
Dale Evans	Gary Johnston	Pat Nicoll
Ronnie Irvine	Robert Southern	Andy Bilton
Scott Birrell	Ryan Thompson	Bruce Crawford
Robin Brown	David Mackay	
Ross Polworth		

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members present, extending a warm welcome to all new members.

Apologies were received from: Ryan MacDonald, Calum Smith, Dayne McDonald, Andrew MacKenzie and Paul MacLaren.

The Secretary then went through Standing Orders before going round the room for a brief introduction from everyone including rank, Area, specialisms and Federation experience.

The Chair then gave a brief overview for the new Reps of how to deal with queries coming from the membership.

## **2. Minute of Previous Meeting**

The previous meeting Minute was formally approved, having been proposed and seconded by Simon Lewis-Dalby and Dale Evans.

## **3. Separate (Rank) Committees**

The Secretary gave a brief overview of Separate Rank Committees and JCC / Reserves before Separate Rank Committees took place where Chairs / Secretaries / JCC Representatives and Reserves were elected as follows.

Inspectors – Chair Gillian Donald / Secretary Lynne Kortland  
Sergeants – Chair David Mackay / Secretary Simon Lewis-Dalby  
Constables – Chair Ross Polworth / Secretary Mark Douglass

Pat Nicoll, Dale Evans, Ross Polworth and Andy Sawers were elected to JCC.

## **4. Legal Advice and Assistance**

The Secretary gave an update on the number and type of applications for legal advice and / or assistance made by members in the Area since the last meeting.

Since the last NAC, between 25/11/2023 and 05/02/2024, for the North Area there have been the following number of legal assistance applications:-

On-duty – 4 applications. 3 x Criminal Legal Defence, 1 x Personal Injury

Off-duty - 7 applications. 2 x Criminal Legal Defence, 1 x Contract Dispute, 1 x Personal Injury, 1 x Property Protection, 2 x Other

### **JCC Legal Advice and Assistance updates –**

The Secretary advised there had been no Legal Standing Committee since the last NAC meeting and then gave an update on the following.

ALLARD (in respect of recall payments for CHIS handlers, been ongoing since 2015) – the Deputy General Secretary reported that this has now been settled. However, the case is with our solicitors for some tax implications advice.

JUDICIAL REVIEWS – with cause drug-testing where there has been no suspicion of use. Deputy General Secretary stated that the result of this from the courts was that the case had been taken to JR too early and the case should be left to run its course before a JR.

#### LEGAL OPINION

- an officer from the East who served time in prison for an Attempt to Pervert conviction is being subjected to an attempt by the SPA for his pension Employer Contributions to be forfeited. Legal case review is still ongoing in relation to the legality of the pension forfeiture in relation to interpretation of the Police and Pension Regulations.
- Pension trap, legal opinion being sought. Ongoing.
- Use of criminal statements in misconduct proceedings, with solicitors for legal opinion.

SPF FTOBs should be present in meetings with solicitors and clients – we can then keep abreast of the level of service being provided and where cases are going.

Memo of understanding provided to the panel of solicitors used by SPF and has been agreed by all solicitors used. Much closer scrutiny of all legal costs by the current executive team in the SPF to get value for money due to the increasing costs of legal cover to members and reduction in money coming in from members as numbers drop.

For the benefit of the new Reps the Secretary gave details of how expensive the legal costs are for SPF to provide this cover for our members. The most expensive costs are for off duty legal defence of criminal cases. Simple assault charge defence costs are about £30,000. If Kings Council is employed, this is a rate of £5,000 per day, whether used or not once instructed. At the last JCC it was reported that £1.5 million of claims have been settled obo our members and we have reclaimed legal fees of £4,000 (this will be higher when costs of public enquiry etc are paid back to SPF).

Worth noting – SPF will NOT pay for legal costs that members have incurred without prior agreement or instruction of the SPF.

## 5. Divisional Reports

Divisional Rep Simon Lewis-Dalby gave an update on A Division issues. He spoke about the Chief Constable's comments being fed back to A Division Command. He also raised an issue regarding reasonable meal allowances – HMRC £5 maximum anything over that then tax has to be paid. There was then lots of discussion around this issue.

### **ACTION – The Chair to take reasonable meal allowance issue to Finance Standing Committee.**

Divisional Rep Ronnie Irvine gave the D Division update. These included Estates issues, mental health issues with custodies, community vans (football), Rest Day overtime, management issues with Wellbeing Days. He also stressed the need to ensure that

members are aware of what they are paying for in relation to SPF Group Insurance etc.

Divisional Rep Ross Polworth gave the N Division update. He spoke about snow survival equipment issues with a lack of supplies. Good feedback from TIPT sessions and SCD Wellbeing Conference at SPC being well received. He also spoke positively about Lifelines training and Police Care UK. The Secretary then gave an update on the housing occupancy charges in N Division.

## **6. JCC Sub Committees**

The Chair advised there have been no Conduct and Equality Standing Committee meetings since the last NAC meeting.

### **Conduct**

The Chair then gave the following update.

There are 66 suspensions nationally – a drop from 21 to 17 across the North Area.

There are 35 criminal cases ongoing and 14 conduct cases.

There have been 5 Gross Misconduct Hearings this year with a further 5 pending.

The Chair then advised there would hopefully be a Conduct Training Course held within the Aberdeen office in the next few months. He also said there is a good relationship between PSD and himself / Lynne Gray, AGS Conduct.

The Chair then gave a run down on timescales for Conduct / Misconduct cases.

### **Equality**

The Deputy Secretary gave the following update.

8 Grievances

12 Equality cases

36 IH cases

10 IHR cases

The Deputy Secretary stated the common themes amongst cases as follows:-

Grievances – Alleged bullying / misogyny / incorrect processes / not following policy / poor line management.

Equality Cases – Shift patterns / FWP / medical and family issues / poor line management / lack of communication from PSD.

He then gave some points of note as follows:-

- IH / Grievance / FWP and any welfare / equality issues – There are times when members will come direct to SPF for various reasons, if approached by anyone looking for information and you are not 100%, come to one of the FTBOs to ensure the correct guidance but remember to make sure they have done their bit through line management first, if suitable.
- With Grievances, it's not about jumping straight to this, what has been done first to remedy the situation, HR staff have gone through mediation training and often can resolve issues if line managers can't or won't. Let the Service try and remedy first if they can't or won't then we can step in to assist. Remember though, realistic expectations are crucial.
- With Ill Health Retirement (IHR), remember there is a difference between 'Retirement' and 'Redeployment' within the IHR process and much of this is based on medical evidence, so it's about getting it right at the start of the process to provide a realistic expectation for some members. If there is a potential for the Service to retain someone in Service, they will.
- New Injury on Duty (IOD) process being trialled as a result of drive from SPF to SPA to bring in line with rest of UK and ultimately saves stress and anxiety for the member and makes financial sense for the Service.
- Mental Health / PTSD and Neurodiversity on the increase and failure to diagnose / treat can cause issues with IHR process.
- Neurodiversity Strategic Working Group has been set up with Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland as Chair. No invite, as yet, to SPF but there will be, but a positive sign that these issues are being recognised.
- The Deputy Secretary was fortunate enough to get a seat at the table of the National Police Chiefs Council Menopause Group, chaired by a Chief Superintendent from Thames Valley and bringing the issues raised to local Groups within Divisions. A Division has a Menopause SPOC but as it stands N and D Divisions do not. I am engaging with Area Commanders as I know that there are individuals who would be delighted to take on that role.
- 1919 Magazine have published an article today from the Deputy Secretary and Jennie Macfarlane in the West regarding the 5-year anniversary of the signing of the agreement between PSoS and the Human Right Commission. Thanks to those that provided some local narrative.

- Equality catch up meeting arranged for 22 March 2024 in Aberdeen for the equality trained staff. Further Equality training will be coming.
- Note of thanks to Divisional Rep Julie Stephen for her assistance with a time critical misogyny case which will have had huge implications on the Service and still might as it's a live case, so cannot discuss details. Also note of thanks to Divisional Rep Dave Gibson for his assistance at recent Police Medical Appeal Board (PMAB).

### **Efficiency Standing Committee**

The Secretary advised there have been no Efficiency Standing Committee meetings since the last NAC meeting.

She spoke about a couple of shift consultations - armed policing 2x2x2 shift consultation underway across all three areas and A Division PPU and then gave an overview of the process.

The Secretary spoke about previous Deep Dives undertaken by SPF and advised the next one would probably cover frontline policing regarding OBLs – levels are being dropped to accommodate the resources available, not the level that would be safe to police. This will hopefully be confirmed at the next JCC meeting.

There was then discussion around shift consultations and if A Division can go back to consultation regarding 2x2x2 shift.

**Action - The Secretary to take A Division 2x2x2 shift consultation to Deputy General Secretary as it is still within the review period. Divisional Rep Rhona Di Meola consulted with members in A division and majority are in favour of the pattern so no requirement to refer to Deputy General Secretary.**

### **Health, Safety and Welfare Standing Committee**

Before giving an update, Gordon Forsyth, AGS Health & Safety gave a brief overview of Health and Safety and his Federation experience to date for the benefit of the new Reps.

He gave an update on the Police Housing Deep Dive which took place a couple of years ago and advised PSoS are now acting on recommendations. He then spoke about the Clothing Equipment Working Group / uniform contracts and a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) for cannabis cultivations.

He then gave an update from Vehicle User Group stating 30% of fleet is now low emission (EV or hybrid). Now looking at some EVs to be marked up as response vehicles but there is still an issue with the level of infrastructure. Defect management is still a problem, but they are hoping to expand the use of mobile mechanics.

He advised the results of C3 Deep Dive have now been published. Started with a survey sent out re OBLs, workload etc and out of 655 surveys sent out, over 200 responses were

received. Biggest concern is that C3 runs below OBLs, lack of resilience for ITFCs. Resulted in 11 recommendations.

## **7. JCC Updates**

The Secretary advised the last meeting of the JCC took place on 6 February 2024 and then gave an update on the Finance Standing Committee meeting.

### **Finance Standing Committee**

The Secretary advised there are 47 new Reps to be trained as a result of the quadrennial elections, this will increase training expenditure in the budget. Costs of running events and meetings are being reduced by the use of internal staff (Cara) rather than reliance on external Event Management company.

She advised the JCC gave approval to fund a new "Its what's we do" video. Production is underway and the working title of the film is "Relentless". There is support from PSoS so some costs will be reduced by the Service supplying police vehicles and equipment for filming.

A review of outgoing costs and income provided by the General Secretary to JCC. There has been consideration of an increase in Voluntary Fund (VF) subscriptions due to rising costs of legal cases – this remains under consideration and any increase is likely to coincide with any pay deal implementation. There has been a fall of over 1,000 members which has resulted in a decrease in the VF contributions. Legal costs for the SPF in 2022 were £2.2 million, up from £1.1 million in 2015. The VF currently stands at £17.39 per month, running at a loss due to increase in legal costs and it has not been increased in 10 years. The Chair advised of the £17.39, only £6.31 goes to legal costs.

The Secretary gave an update on Inspecting Ranks Flexitime claims – to date, 25,000 hours taken as flexitime, average of 42 hours per Inspector. Many extra days off for those recording their flexitime. The Service have no way of electronically recording this, they are using Excel spreadsheets.

### **PNB(S)**

The Secretary advised from 16 August 2023, this is now called the Police Negotiating Board for Scotland and is a recognized legal body. The website is hosted by the Scottish Government.

Last year's pay negotiations reached a 7% pay settlement but in conjunction with a Pay Index Wage Review. Scotgov is tendering for an organisation to conduct this independent review of pay levels, which will then influence future pay deals. Two companies in the running at the moment – Fraser of Allander Institute and Kornferry – this is progressing very slowly and no further progress on the tendering process. This will not be in place prior to the 2024 pay deal.

The PNB Technical Working Group is still dealing with a number of outstanding issues around the previous pay deal that need to be agreed and resolved, including:

1. Pay levels check and index.
2. Recall to duty agreement and clarification – hours of 2300 – 0700 etc.
3. Court standby.
4. Public holiday compensation.

The Secretary advised there was discussion at February JCC around the 2024/25 pay claim and the focus on the inability to take industrial action; restrictions on private life; deals done elsewhere in the public sector. The only group to have submitted a pay claim so far are the teachers at 6.5% (based on average inflation rates / month). The SPF have engaged the services of an economic expert to advise on pay claim. There was discussion around the proposal for a reduction in the working week and the General Secretary advised caution around taking this forward as police officers are paid for their meal breaks in the 40-hour week and we do not want to jeopardise this.

The pay claim will not be in place for March 2024.

## **Pensions**

The Secretary advised the SPPA Board last met on 5 December 2023. Remedy discussions took up most of the meeting. Employer costs are going up but decision still to be made around whether employee costs should go up. Life expectancy post-retirement is now lower, not higher than pre-covid levels. This is a positive thing for pension calculations. (GAD review).

SPPA contact number for Police Enquiries – 01896 893000.

## **JNCC**

The Secretary advised the JNCC last met yesterday (5 March) and previously on 14 December 2023.

Issues that were raised and discussed with the SPF were :-

- Low Emission Zones – paper presented and ACC Johnstone (WEST) tasked with reviewing the issues around police diesel cars and vans. The Dundee LEZ comes into force on 30 May 2024. Aberdeen and Edinburgh come into force on 1 June 2024. The SPF have queried what contingencies there are for officers who will not want to travel into these zones in their current vehicles. Will they be moved to other stations? PSoS saying it's not an issue – probably because the financial implication is on individual officers, not on the Service. The average age of the vehicle fleet has decreased to 3.5 years. Divisional Rep Simon Lewis-Dalby gave a brief update on Low Emission Zone exemptions for emergency vehicles.
- New WFA was brought to the Working Practices Review Group – agreed but just



awaiting signatures. ASPS will have their WFA reviewed at same time.

- The Policy and Procedure Group stated that they had reviewed all policies and procedures in the Service and found that 99.8% of them were not misogynistic or discriminatory. (Which contradicts what the previous Chief Constable implied with his public statement).
- Discussion around the withdrawal of nightshift road policing units. The new Chief Constable suggested that armed police officers could cover the motorways in lieu of RPU. It was highlighted to her that they are not trained for motorway road policing. ACC Johnstone stated that in the West they use general purpose police vehicles on the motorways – the Vice Chair highlighted that the vehicles have the incorrect lighting for doing these patrols so not legal.
- OST manual to be reviewed and will need to come to the SPF for consultation in relation to Health and Safety review and consideration. OST training previously introduced two new techniques / procedures that have had no consultation with the SPF or risk assessments conducted. Could be potentially fatal (knife attacks). This has now been withdrawn.
- Police Housing occupancy charges – discussion around the obligations for Benefit in Kind tax for all officers in police housing and the number of officers that are likely to request a move from their rural postings.
- Discussion at the JNCC around the Probationer training changes memo – DCC Spiers was not aware of it and had not seen it.
- BWV project tendering is now complete, and contracts signed. Will be rolled out to federated ranks by summer 2024, then after that CID etc.

### **SPF Training**

The Secretary advised there will be the following training:-

Basic training for all new Reps.

Mental Health First Aid training by Lifelines for all Reps.

Positive Bystander training.

PIP refresher training.

Equality / Conduct / H&S training to be scheduled throughout the year.

### **SPA**

The Secretary advised the new DCC process has concluded with appointments being Alan Speirs and Bex Smith.

### **Scottish Parliament and Political Engagement**

The Chair gave a brief update following the recently attended Conservative Party Conference in Aberdeen.

## **Police Related Charities**

The Police Treatment Centre (PTC) uptake is increasing. The new wing is now open which has been sponsored by the SPF. PSoS now signing up to the 2-week complex PTSD treatment course that England and Wales already support.

The Secretary advised of Issue around officers on islands not having travel costs paid to attend the PTC. The Secretary advised this has been raised with SMT in N Division. There may be room for some costs to be supported by the PTC once officers have sorted out travel to the mainland.

Police Children's Charity – reminder about those going through ill health retirement that their kids can benefit from this, also officers that suffer the death of a spouse.

## **SPF Bravery Awards**

The Secretary advised the Awards will be held on Wednesday 27 November 2024 at Dynamic Earth. Email sent to all with the details of categories and links for the forms. The links should also be on the SPF website. All nominators and judges get to attend and stay over. Award finalists get to attend with their plus one and have a meet / greet with MSPs in the afternoon.

Amy Irons presenting again.

So far, £25,000 in sponsorship for the event. If anyone has contacts with companies / organisations that could be interested in sponsoring some of the cost of this, let Chair know.

The Secretary advised nomination so far, two in the North, two in the West and only one in the East.

## **8. JCC Circulars and Consultations**

The Chair advised of the most recent JCC Circulars and SOPs for Consultations issued since last meeting.

## **9. Motions**

The Secretary gave an overview of the motion process before handing over to the Chair to run the motion to be proposed.

## **Motion**

*This NAC ask the JCC to amend rule 6.6 of the SPF Scotland Rules,*

*“In the event of an equality of votes at any stage in the election the candidates will draw lots in a manner determined prior to the commencement of the election”.*

*To be replaced with:*

*“In the event of an equality in votes, those votes are discarded and a second round of voting takes place. Should this second round provide an equality in votes the candidates shall then draw lots in a manner determined prior to the commencement of the election”.*

## **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

*A vote for the election of officers, when no candidate receives a majority vote, is of no effect, and the situation remains exactly as though no vote had been taken and could technically go on ad-infinitum.*

*The proposal is to introduce a second round of voting then move to a tie break of drawing lots. This motion would give the electorate an additional opportunity to consider the candidates and ensure a tie is broken.*

*It also allows an opportunity for those who may have sat on the fence or abstained from voting initially, to reconsider their position.*

There was then a vote on the motion being put forward which was supported unanimously; therefore, it will be taken to the next JCC meeting.

## **10. Communication**

The Chair spoke about previous motion from Ronnie Irvine which has been discharged and now being progressed through a JCC Communications Group with FTOB Iain Gray (West) and Andy Sawers (North) being actively involved.

The Deputy Secretary gave an update on the progress so far.

It's agreed that comms need to improve from SPF to membership. Despite pockets of successful comms within different areas, there is no consistency nationally. The website in its current form is outdated and not user friendly.

The social media output from SPF has been limited to "X" and we do not use any other social media platforms. There have been splitter "X" pages set up, which on one hand can be excellent but often is wrong or has misleading information. My opinion has always been that using social media in its current form is not a place to drive information about PNB and other matters as it is a public forum.

Divisional Rep Ronnie Irvine put forward a motion at NAC about the potential of an app which was driven forward to JCC with an amendment to increase overall comms which led to a SLWG. This SLWG involved Reps from each Area where several options were considered and several businesses approached with a view to a build of an app. It was agreed within the SLWG that an app is not the answer to all the comms problems, but a huge leap forward along with other approaches.

We approached services with existing live apps and looked at the good, the bad and the ugly. Subsequently we presented to JCC for a vote. The motion was passed and SPF are now committed to drive forward with an updated website and the exploration further into an app and the linking of the two.

The SPF Executive agreed to then set up a Project Management Group which involves members of the Executive Team, myself and Iain Gray from the West. This Group will initially look at the website, possibly just a front page website. The app will mirror the website but have the ability to get messages out to the membership directly.

The app will have the ability to provide live updates to Reps through push notifications that will alert directly to your device. This is particularly useful when there is a live incident and there might be clear failings with welfare provisions etc and a push notification to geographical staff that SPF have been made aware regarding the issue and have been in contact with local command to have this rectified.

There will be costs attributed to this and this can vary depending on what we have within. Anything from £50k to £150k. The list of potentials that we pulled together are extensive and not for the room today.

The Link to PNB and the ability to have traffic information on the most searched for questions and have that front and centre. The ability to make it easier for members to submit a question directly from the app or website. The ability to link short talking head style videos to the app and website to create positive stories to increase the image of the SPF.

Be patient, things do not move quickly where there are costs involved as it is members money but be assured that I am personally pushing this every opportunity I get but we would all rather get it right slowly than rush a poor product.

## **11. Correspondence**

The Secretary read out a letter from support staff member, Cara Riley who will be running the Great North Run and is looking for a charitable donation for her chosen charity "Maggies", Dundee.

## **12. AOCB**

The Secretary advised the Committee of the next Annual Conference which will be held, probably for the last time, at Turnberry from 24 -27 March 2025. The next Conference will more than likely be multi venue.

## **13. Closure**

The Chair advised that the next Meeting of the North Area Committee is to be held on 3 and 4 June 2024.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their active and constructive participation and closed the Meeting. He was thanked by the meeting in the customary manner.

**Allen Shaw**  
Chair

**Caroline Macnaughton**  
Secretary