

Good afternoon and welcome to the 84<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

And, as you know, my last conference, as a police officer, Federation member, Joint Central Committee member and your Chairman.

But you're stuck with me for the next three days.

This week we are joined by a number of friends, guests and observers. You are all very welcome.

I would like to extend a special welcome to friends who have travelled from overseas. We have guests from as far afield as Cyprus and New Zealand.

And I am delighted that, despite a battle against ill health in the last year, an old friend of the Federation who has spoken at conference before joins us here today. Greg O'Connor – President of the New Zealand Police Association. Greg, we are all delighted to see you well again.

There is one other guest in the audience today who I want to extend a special welcome to. When tragedy and heartache occurs, some find an inner strength to display courage, determination and will power to stand up for what they know is right.

Last August, in the Fearnhead area of Warrington, 47 year old Garry Newlove confronted a group of thugs who were causing a nuisance in the street, Garry was brutally and tragically kicked to death. This afternoon, Garry's widow, Helen, will join us and give her view of what is going wrong in society and why the criminal justice system must better serve the victim, not the offender. Helen, welcome to our Conference.

A warm welcome to all our speakers this week and we look forward to your contribution.

Conference wouldn't be conference without the exhibition. My thanks to the exhibitors, we value your support. Please take

time out to visit the wide range of exhibition stands, and not just to take gifts home for the kids.

This week we will again find ourselves in the media spotlight as we debate and discuss a range of issues that directly effect policing, affect police officers, and importantly impact on the public we serve.

But one issue has dominated the last 10 months – fair pay for police. Or, perhaps I should say the lack of it.

The betrayal by this government to honour the decision of the Independent Police Arbitration Tribunal led to the unprecedented and historical moment of 25,000 off duty police officers marching through London; many starting to talk of wanting industrial rights.

Conference, you can be assured I will be challenging the Home Secretary on this when she addresses us tomorrow. And I know, despite our anger, our frustration and our sense

of betrayal, we will remain professional and courteous yet robust, we will be polite but poignant.

But one issue cannot remain until tomorrow – the poll.

With the assistance of Ipsos MORI, and all branch board officials, we conducted a national poll of our members.

Many will know that we had to re-start and move to a paper based poll when we could not be assured of the confidentiality and security of an electronic version. Joined up IT is as much of a problem for us as it is the whole of the Criminal Justice system.

Despite the difficulty in getting polling forms out to all officers and the reduced timescales we had an impressive response.

We asked two questions.

First, should the decision of the Independent Police Arbitration Tribunal be binding on all parties?

No surprise here, 93% of the 60,572 responses said it should.

Now the crunch question.

In the absence of binding arbitration, do you wish the Police Federation of England and Wales to lobby on your behalf for full industrial rights?

Conference, a staggering 86% said they want us to start to lobby on their behalf for full industrial rights. Just 11% said no. The rest were not sure.

Now, I am sure the media will read into that what they wish. Just as I am sure someone will print the headline ‘Police officers vote to strike’.

But, as I shall reiterate to the Home Secretary tomorrow. I do not see this as a vote to strike. [Pause] Yet

This to me says that police officers want binding independent arbitration. Strange, the Prime Minister and Education Secretary said recently independent arbitration should be honoured – maybe they have listened. But Police Officers will expect their MP's to support this – when the time is right.

One of the first jobs for the new Joint Central Committee, in consultation with the 43 Joint Branch Boards, will be to decide how best to take this forward, not only from an England & Wales perspective but taking account of our negotiating partners across the UK.

Whatever the future may hold, one thing remains clear. Policing is still an extremely tough job.

In the last few weeks, together with colleagues from the Superintendents' Association and ACPO, I have been judging this year's Police Bravery Awards.

On Wednesday we will see a video of this year's nominees.

Every year I am equally shocked, and filled with pride, at the tremendous acts of bravery by police officers who all too often simply see it as ‘just doing their job’.

But there is a thin line between many of these brave acts and the tragedy of our fallen colleagues who pay the ultimate sacrifice serving their communities.

So, before I move on to provide an overview of this year’s conference, let us first reflect for a few moments and remember our colleagues who have died or been killed on duty in the last year.

**[PLAY ‘FALLEN OFFICERS’ VT]**

Noel, Robert, Christopher, Ian, Katie, Andrew, Jonathan and Ricky – you will not be forgotten.

[Cassie]

Together with past colleagues who have lost their lives on duty, you will all be remembered at this year’s National Police

Memorial Day service to be held in Liverpool on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September.

You all have a copy of the agenda, and will see that there are a variety of debates as well as lunchtime and evening seminars.

I don't intend to read through the detail of every session but just to touch upon some of the key areas.

This afternoon we will focus on what must be done to tackle the growing and worrying culture of gun and gang violence.

Before heading back to your hotels this evening you are all invited to a drinks reception being hosted in the exhibition area by the Mayor of Bournemouth. This will also give you an opportunity, if you have not already done so, to look around the exhibition.

Tomorrow we start with possibly the biggest challenge the service will face in the next four years. The Olympics.

I recall in my speech to conference three years ago, when we were still over a month from knowing if we would be running the 2012 games, saying that if the bid were successful security and policing will need to be of the very highest order.

So, how prepared are we?

Then the highlight of my week. The scrap, or rather debate, with the Home Secretary. Jacqui Smith will be answering questions for an hour. I know many people have already registered questions, but let's try to keep your questions and thoughts short and to the point to ensure as many people can contribute questions as possible.

Then, you can look forward to an afternoon putting the world to rights on border policing, the impact of immigration and focus on the dismal state of the criminal justice system.

On a daily basis we are bombarded with horror stories about offenders brought to justice. We will examine what needs to

be done to stop the revolving doors of justice which means those we put away are out again before our paperwork's done.

Thursday morning is your opportunity to get involved in the future of policing.

You will be able to question and provide feedback to Sir Ronnie following the publication of his Review and give your views on what the Green Paper on policing should contain.

Conference will then conclude with the AGM.

As I mentioned at the start, together with General Secretary John Francis and Treasurer Brian Fenlon, this is my last conference.

Earlier today you elected your new Central Committees. My congratulations to all those elected, either newly or returning to the Central Committees.

On Friday morning the new committee will elect a new Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer, together with their deputies.

To the best of my knowledge this is the first time that all three positions have been vacated at the same time.

It is imperative that, as an organisation if we are to serve our members well, we ensure an effective handover.

I know those of us who have held these positions will not just walk away without a handover, but that is not the point. It should have been seamless.

The greater good of the membership and our organisation must override the personal aspirations of any individuals. We must look at our rules and how we do business to ensure we never find ourselves in this position again.

In conclusion, I am intensely proud of having led this vibrant, confident and powerful organisation for the last six years. Like

so many of the 89 years the Federation has been around it has been a time of constant challenge and renewal.

Let's face it, for an organisation that was designed and set up - to fail - we are not doing too bad.

My successors will pave their own way. But I say this.

As the leader of the Police Federation it would be easy to concentrate on pay and conditions, the modernisation of the service, the rapidly evolving requirements of training and equipment and on press releases, headlines, and meeting politicians.

Take the time to look internally too.

We must challenge what we do within as well as without. So when we publicly caution about the problems of delivering 'national policing' we must also consider what national standards delivered at a local level means for the Federation.

Let us not kid ourselves - the challenge of parochialism - be it on a geographical or rank by rank basis - is as big a challenge for us as a Federation as it is for policing in the UK.

The Police Federation is a powerful body - its achievements are many and a source of pride to us all, but in-fighting and collective insecurity will only succeed in diverting energy away from being there for our members and allowing officers to get on with their jobs. In a world of tightening budgets - we must work together.

The easiest thing in the world is for us to stand apart, highlighting and magnifying differences - the sign of real strength is working together, listening to each other, valuing our minority views and concerns - to show moderation, conviction and fairness is the way to show real leadership.

I know personally that this is not always an easy task. For six years however I have led a united national committee. This does not come naturally - it came through hard work,

determination and patience on all parts to in bring people together.

So, as I prepare to leave this platform today, I have a simple but stark internal message to you all as individuals and as a Federation... take nothing for granted. Our strength is in our unity, across ranks, across forces, across the United Kingdom and beyond these shores ...change is inevitable if we are to remain the force of persuasion.

Conference, this week we can make a real difference to policing and for police officers. Let's ensure we do.

Enjoy conference.