

Scottish officers back industrial action

Scotland's 16,000 rank-and-file police officers have voted for the right to take industrial action in protest over plans to "devalue" their pay.

At the Scottish Police Federation's annual conference held in Peebles last month, 53 per cent of delegates backed a motion that could see officers taking future industrial action. However, they fell short of supporting the right to strike over fears that it could affect public safety. The right to strike motion was narrowly defeated, by 56 per cent to 44 per cent.

Addressing the conference, Norrie Flowers, SPF chairman, launched a scathing attack on the Government. He said: "For the last two and a half years, our negotiations on pay and conditions have been interfered with in an unprecedented way.

"The Home Office representatives on the employer's side of our negotiating table have been nothing more than the mouthpiece for Gordon Brown, the Treasury and the Home Office who all quite clearly have one single aim – to devalue police pay."

He also branded the Home Secretary's decision not to ratify a pay award recommended by the Police Arbitration Tribunal to officers in other parts of the UK as "dishonourable and disgusting".

Mr Flowers sent the Government a clear message saying: "If they are looking for trouble they are going the right way about getting it."

The Scottish Government has honoured the 2.5 per cent deal, compared with 1.9 per cent in England and Wales. As *Police* went to press, officers were still awaiting the outcome of the judicial review of the Government's decision not to award officers their full pay increase.

Federation says farewell to senior figures

Three senior figures within the Police Federation of England and Wales are set to retire from the organisation and the police service this month.

Jan Berry has led the Federation for six years and will officially retire as chairman on May 22. Jan, a Kent chief inspector, was vice chairman of the Police Federation before she was voted into the top job in 2002.

John Francis, general secretary of the Police Federation, is also due to retire. John, a chief inspector with the Metropolitan Police Service, has been chief negotiator on police pay on behalf of the staff side of the police service.

Brian Fenlon, a GMP constable, retires as Treasurer, a post he has held for the last three years.

Alan Gordon, vice chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said, "Their commitment and dedication has helped steer the Police Federation of England and Wales through a period of unprecedented change in the police service. We have witnessed turbulent negotiations on police pay over the last two years, the move to a new purpose built Federation headquarters, training and conference centre, and some of the biggest challenges to ensure the police officer remains at the heart of policing."

The results of the election for all three positions will be announced at the end of the Police Federation's conference in Bournemouth.

Taking action: SPF chairman Norrie Flowers (left) accused Gordon Brown and the Government of attempting to devalue police pay



Federation farewell: Jan Berry, Brian Fenlon and John Francis



Federation pays tribute to ‘friend’ of roads policing

Alan Jones, the Federation’s lead on roads policing, has paid tribute to MP Gwyneth Dunwoody who died on April 17, aged 77.

Labour MP Ms Dunwoody was chair of the Transport Select Committee which published the influential report into the future of roads policing.

Mr Jones said: “She spoke so warmly and supportively of front line traffic cops. Under her leadership the Transport Select Committee has provided excellent encouragement in fighting for roads policing issues.

“She was a fine, well respected, highly regarded and very wise lady who perfectly understood roads policing issues and who connected very supportively with the traffic Federation representatives that met her.

“Her legacy is in the spirit to fight on, to battle against many challenges and adversities with belief and passion, and for that the Police Federation of England and Wales will always remember her with fondness.”

In December 2007, the Transport Select Committee announced it was to look again into the delivery of roads policing through a new inquiry into road safety.

“Although we could never say with any certainty that this was as a consequence of our meeting her, it’s fair to say that it might be,” added Mr Jones.

Ms Dunwoody was Parliament’s longest serving female Member of Parliament, having first been elected in Exeter in 1967, before becoming the MP for Crewe and Nantwich in 1974.

Ethics committee ‘a slippery slope’

Proposals to establish an ethics committee for officers who feel compromised policing certain situations has been criticised by the Police Federation’s vice chairman.

Adrian Lee, Deputy Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police said officers should be given more leeway to object to policing incidents that could compromise their principles.

Eighteen months ago, a Muslim officer in the Metropolitan Police requested to be re-deployed elsewhere after he was sent to guard the Israeli embassy in London.

Alan Gordon, vice chair of the Police Federation, said the service needed to be sensitive to individual needs, but feared the move could be the start of a ‘slippery slope’.

“Police officers are expected to uphold the law irrespective of personal opinion and belief,” said Mr Gordon. “Where will it all end? Could we find ourselves in a situation where a vegetarian could legitimately request not to police a dispute involving live cattle?”

Website goes live

The Police Federation’s new look website was launched last month.

The website contains a wealth of information including the Federation’s submission to the judicial review on police pay, which took place on April 15-16.

Tributes: Labour MP Gwyneth Dunwoody, who died last month



Photography: PA Photos

Slippery slope: Officers’ beliefs can’t take precedence over policing, says Alan Gordon



Photography: iStockphoto.com