Health screening

CPSU is subsidising healthcare screening in the workplace for its members

Tests and results are are fully confidential, discussed on the day and are reviewed by cardiac consultant Dr R Kelly MD FRCPI

HEALTH SCREENING TESTS:

- Health & activity questionnaire
  (This is to assess family history and current state of health)
- Resting ECG
  (Quick painless test to check electric activity in the heart)
- Lifestyle, alcohol and smoking audit
- Full cholesterol profile
  (TC, LDL, HLD, TRI)
- HbA1C Diabetes testing
  (No fasting required)
- Cardiovascular risk assessment
- Blood Pressure measurement
- Pulse check
- BMI (Body Mass Index)
- Full health report on the day

NORMAL PRICE: €105, CPSU subsidising the balance for its members – YOU PAY ONLY €40

Please contact your local CPSU rep to express your interest
SO WE have a Government. Not one that will necessarily favour our interests but at least the political hiatus is over and we can plan for our future relationship with our main employer. Critically the new Government is to establish a ‘Commission on Public Service Pay’ while it is committed to observing the Lansdowne Road Agreement and the related timeframe. We have a new Minister for Public Enterprise and Reform (DPER), Pascal Donohue, and we await with interest to hear how he will respond to the agenda the public services unions – including ours – will have set at their conferences in recent weeks.

And our agenda has been clearly set by ADC in Killarney. Some 300 delegates from across the country took part in robust and comprehensive debate on more than 130 motions setting policy and goals for the union. Head Office and the Executive Committee have a new road map and we will be letting our employers and our sister public service unions know all about it in the coming weeks and months.

On pay and conditions, we will be seeking the restoration of all pay cuts to our members, the full reversal of the pension levy through an expedited Lansdowne Road Agreement (LR A) which we will also seek to have extended or replaced by a new Agreement that will finally bring an end to the years of austerity. Critically, we want the unpaid additional Haddington Road hours reversed.

We recognise that the LRA provides for discussions with the unions on a new pay determination mechanism and we will seek to have this apply a flat-rate approach to pay restoration and increases for the future. But in saying this we view with concern the Government’s plan for a Pay Commission. This has the potential to be very damaging and unfair to public servants and we will play our part with the ICTU Public Services Committee to protect our members’ interests.

Conference also gave clear instructions on how the union should approach the ongoing SO/OE Integration talks including the pay and work duties implications for both the Staff Officer and Clerical Officer grades. These will be brought to the negotiation table forthwith and members will be kept informed as developments arise.

The threat of outsourcing registered in the debates with the union reaffirming its commitment to resist all plans to privatise our work wherever and whenever.

ADC also endorsed the comprehensive Amalgamation Sub-Committee Report on the future of the CPSU. Authority was given to the Committee to progress plans to re-build and strengthen the union as a ‘Stand Alone’ organisation while at the same time bringing talks on a New Public Service Union involving CPSU, IMPACT and PSEU to a conclusion for ballot of the members in 2017. Critical to the success of the ‘Stand Alone’ plan is a comprehensive and active recruitment campaign with ADC agreeing that the union should target a minimum of 1,000 additional members to be signed up before ADC 2017. It was estimated that as many as 3,000 new members will have to be recruited in the next two to three years to offset the potential loss of the SO grade in 2017. New recruitment materials have been produced and localised recruitment meetings and activist training seminars will be rolled out in the coming months across the country.

After years of hardship and low morale I believe it is fair to say ADC 2016 marked a potential turning point. With new Clerical Officers joining the service and the economic climate improving, the CPSU must now seize the opportunity to deliver with ONE VOICE fair pay and conditions, advice and representation for our members.

Eoin Ronayne
General Secretary
AS Aontas goes to press, the CPSU remains in talks with An Post management over a Labour Court recommendation that provides for a pay increase partially paid for by cost savings.

Assistant General Secretary Paul MacSweeney said: “CPSU entered talks on behalf of the grades we represent in the company under Labour Court Recommendation 21053 which stated that unions and management should engage in negotiations on efficiency measures which would fund in part a pay increase.”

The pay claim was referred back to the Labour Court which in LCR21206 recommended a 2.5% pay increase from May 1, 2016.

The increase was subject to agreement on the following:
- Sick pay reduced in line with Civil Service levels;
- Voluntary Severance and Voluntary Early Retirement reduced to six weeks per year of service capped at 104 weeks salary;
- Agreement on additional efficiency measures;
- Savings achieved should be sufficient to fund 50% of the cost increases in pay recommended; and
- A further increase in pay that may be agreed on foot of the unions’ 6% pay claim should not be applicable before July 1, 2017, unless otherwise agreed.

It is understood the An Post National Committee will consider the outcome of discussions with HR in early May.

Mr MacSweeney, inset right, said: “CPSU were not a party to the most recent Labour Court hearing due to our opposition to an aggregate ballot of all unions on the Labour Court recommendation. “CPSU is party to the 6% pay claim and to the previous Labour Court recommendation which provides a framework for a pay increase subject to agreement of additional efficiency measures.”

B Y D E R E K M U L L E N
Deputy General Secretary
ONE of my first jobs after ADC is to formulate claims for presentation to management at General Council, which is our Industrial Relations forum for the Civil Service.

These claims are directly formulated from motions passed at our ADC held in Killarney last month and reported extensively on in this edition of Aontas. In particular we have to assess the restoration demands that are there from ADC and also develop new claims on increases in Annual Leave for our members.

Other motions address other aspects of your terms and conditions including such things as sick leave, flexible working patterns and family friendly working arrangements.

Currently we are also working on issues that are already before Council including the recently agreed Disciplinary Code and the controversial Underperformance Policy which is pending an Arbitration outcome.

On the Disciplinary Code, we are also planning a nationwide briefing of members on the new Code to ensure that there is as full a knowledge of all aspects of the Code as possible.

Shortly we expect to finalise a similar Code for probationary staff, something that is very important and has been highlighted by the Labour Court in recent findings.

The work of General Council is vital to progress on improvements in our members’ terms and conditions of employment and Aontas will endeavour to keep members posted on developments in relation to claims throughout 2016.

Combined Services Third World Fund

Since it was founded in 1980, the Combined Services Third World Fund has spent more than €8 million on development projects and emergency aid grants throughout the developing world.

The CSTWF is able to do this because of the generous contributions made by employees and pensioners of the Civil Service, An Post, eir and other State agencies. Contributions are deducted at source from salary/pension at a rate of either 0.1% or 0.2% of basic pay — your choice — working out at one cent or two cents for every €10 of pay/pension.

Makes a lot of sense for just a few cents...

FIND OUT MORE AT: TEL: 00 353 1 4082473/75 EMAIL: info@cstwf.ie WEB: www.cstwf.ie

Picture: John Martinez Pavliga (CC BY 2.0)
BY DEREK MULLEN
Deputy General Secretary

GARDA HR has advised CPSU in recent weeks that work on a major workforce plan is continuing and will be discussed with unions in detail in the near future.

This is an important piece of work which should pick up on a number of concerns we have about civilian staffing levels in An Garda Siochana. Indeed the career aspirations of our members have been dismally met by a lack of opportunity in recent years.

We will continue to press for the implementation of the recommendations of the Garda Inspectorate report – recommendations which are very significant in the context of further civilianisation.

This is a really important agenda for our members in Garda who should be performing a much wider range of functions appropriate to civilian staff, particularly in Garda stations. We fundamentally disagree with recent comments from Garda Associations which sought to suggest that there were certain functions our members could not perform because of their importance.

It is very clear to us that our members and future civilian recruits will have to be deployed much more appropriately and account taken of grade and salary issues.

The right to a proper career involving an appropriate pay, grade and promotion structure are all issues that we will fight on.

DEPUTY General Secretary Derek Mullen has claimed that CPSU members only have to look at the fiasco of the Executive Officer competition to understand the current situation within An Garda Siochana when it comes to career and promotional opportunities.

And Mr Mullen took pen to paper to make a very strong protest to Garda Commissioner Nóirín O’Sullivan about the delays in the competition.

In a letter, dated April 27th, to the Garda Commissioner, he expressed the union’s “strongest possible concerns”.

Applications for the competition closed on January 22nd and three months on, there has been little or no progress.

In the letter, Mr Mullen described the delay as “disheartening” and “unfair for candidates preparing for interviews”.

He continued: “The staff involved in this competition have waited a long time for the possibility of some limited opportunities for promotion, they worked hard on their applications and now they suffer this inordinate delay.

“It has been said to me by many members that they feel like second-class citizens within An Garda Siochana and this situation only reinforces that view, particularly where promotions continue apace for sworn members.”

In conclusion he urged approval to be given to allow preliminary interviews.

THE CPSU expects to meet the Garda Authority to press its case on behalf of members in An Garda Siochana and to make a contribution to putting in place a Code of Ethics covering all staff in the organisation. It is understood the Garda National Committee will meet to discuss this shortly.

THE CPSU has been asked to make its submission to the Commissioner on the Statement of Strategy for the organisation covering the next couple of years.

Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen told Aontas: “From our perspective we will major on the issues affecting our members and the improvements they deserve, while at the same time reflecting on the overall needs of the organisation and how we fit into it.

“These next two years will be very important from a change perspective and we must use all avenues open to us to improve the lot of our members in An Garda Siochana.”

The submission is expected to be lodged by the middle of May.
ON April 28th members of staff from DSP, including CPSU representatives, gathered to mark the third year of the Engagement & Innovation process. This gathering was to give an insight into the various projects that had been run under the E&I mantle.

This gathering took the format of a welcome from DSP Secretary General Níamh O’Donoghue which also included a brief history of how we got to the E&I programme.

Four years ago, DSP changed dramatically with the introduction of staff from FAS and the CWS. The Department needed to find a way to include all staff and unions in working through these new challenges.

Partnership – as it was then known – was not functioning as it should. A new way needed to be found the result was Engagement & Innovation.

Successful buy-in

Three and a bit years on, it has proved to be very successful with buy-in from all parties. (CPSU has a full-time official, Moira Haslam, assigned to the project and PSEU also has an E&I official.)

CPSU representatives are involved at all levels from local projects right up to the Strategic Leadership team. There are also Regional Leadership Teams as well as Headquarters Leadership Teams. CPSU are represented on all of these.

A large number of projects have been undertaken locally and have been completed.

A total of 69 projects have been completed in these three years and representatives from all of these projects along with those who have not yet been involved were invited to attend an afternoon in the National College of Ireland.

Following on from the DSP Secretary General’s welcome, a number of speakers outlined their projects and experiences.

Finger food and tea/coffee was provided during a break-out session where guests were able to see for themselves a number of the projects and experiences.

Members of the project teams were on hand to talk about the projects and give advice to anyone who might have been thinking of start-

From Cavan, a newsletter Cad é on sceal? / What’s the story? (and one of my personal favourites.) This is more than a newsletter, it gives an insight into who’s who in the office, what services are available along with some other bits and pieces.

When Letterkenny Headquarters Building was being refurbished, a Project group was put in place to ensure that everything went smoothly. All members of staff were kept informed about what was happening, where they would be moving to and when the moves would take place.

In all, there were 65 local projects and four special projects completed during the three years with new initiatives being launched as we go to print.

The agreed term for members of the various team is three years, new CPSU representatives for the Strategic Leadership team as well as the Regional and Headquarters teams will be elected at the next meeting of DSP National Committee which takes place on May 18th.

Information and details of all projects is available on the DSP site Stór.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the CPSU representatives who have been involved with the E&I projects across the country and those on the Leadership Teams. I look forward to working with more of you in the coming term.
CPSU training for branch reps kicked off in Head Office on April 5th and 6th. The course was attended by reps from Longford, Athlone, various branches in Dublin and Meath General. It was a very successful two days with great participations by the members. The next training course will be held in Athlone on May 24th and 25th. Pictured above: Gareth Thornton, Health & Safety Authority; Stephen Bracken, Courts Parkgate St; Gerard Kelly, Valuation Office; Kevin Zeltner, Valuation Office; Cillin Hayes, IAA; Lisa Joyce, OPW; Frances McGrath, OPW; Ann Stephens; Education; Denise Soper; Revenue Georges St; Tom O’Donnell, Revenue Georges St; Diane Kelly, Ballymun DSP; Conor Fitzgerald, Longford; Laura O’Connor, Longford; Dennis O’Rourke; IHREC.

Flying the flag: Executive members Betty Tyrrell-Collard & Kevin Garry at the Dublin May Day march.

**SPEND YOUR MONEY WHERE WORKERS COUNT**

www.fairshop.ie
CPSU General Secretary has flagged up the “wholly unacceptable low pay structure” within the Clerical Officer grade and insisted there was “no place in the public service for cheap yellow pack labour.”

He made his comments in his presentation of the Annual Report to more than 300 delegates gathered for the union’s Annual Delegate Conference in Killarney on Friday, April 21.

Mr Ronayne claimed the low entry points imposed by the Government on the CO grade in 2009 had led to the creation of a “two-tier pay structure for new entrants for their entire career”. Though the Public Service Unions had resisted the move, two lower points were still added to the CO scale.

Pointing to increasing evidence that new recruits were leaving the service because they could not make ends meet on their current wages, he told delegates: “€9.70 an hour – or €21,879 a year – is not acceptable pay for new entrants, many with post Leaving Cert and third level qualifications.”

And he asked: “How can you justify a new entrant on €9.70 an hour working alongside the last new entrant recruited before the moratorium earning approximately €12.85 an hour or €7,000 more a year?”

“Whenever the politicians stop their game of charades this unfair attack on the lowest paid workers in the Civil Service must be stopped.”

Mr Ronayne admitted that many members felt the changes negotiated in the Lansdowne Road Agreement had not been enough but pointed out that the flat-rate mechanism agreed in the discussions would “bring the very lowest earners in the public service full restoration by the end of 2017”.

He noted that if the outgoing government had put more money on the table, the flat-rate mechanism “would have taken all our members out of the cuts net by the end of 2017”, commenting that this was “a failing of the politicians” and not of the trade union negotiators.

Mr Ronayne called for an end to the “scandal” of additional unpaid hours imposed under the Haddington Road Agreement which highlighted the inherent unfairness of how this part of the agreement had been applied across the public service, referencing in particular An Garda Siochana.

“Our members are watching the protracted industrial relations and pay review and close attention is being paid to the application of the HRA hours agreement to some grades as to the way it applies to them.”

He said the CPSU would expect fairness to apply to all grades and for “no special bubble” for any grade or grades in the Garda Siochana.
Against the backdrop of continued economic improvement, Mr Ronayne argued that restoring take home pay to lower-paid workers would “underpin that economic growth” and insisted that pay restoration for public servants was “good for everyone”. He continued: “Let us put government – whatever shape or hue it takes – on notice. Lower paid public servants want an expedited restoration of all the austerity cuts before the LRA expiry date – plain and simple!”

However, Mr Ronayne also warned delegates that a future government would “most likely [be] negatively disposed towards the rights of lower paid workers especially in the public service”. He admitted to conference that after years of “relentless attacks”, the union had been left “battered and bruised” and that there was a need to “rejuvenate and rebuild our organisation” not least through the recruitment of “new and former members”.

Conference was told that the need to boost recruitment was made even more pressing by the DPER decision to restructure the Staff Office grades, including the SO and CO grades”. Mr Ronayne also slammed what he called “knee-jerk commentary” on the SO issue and insisted that the Executive of the union was committed to securing the best outcome for the CPSU “including the SO and CO grades”.

“This,” he pointed out, “will not be an easy task but it would be made all the more easier if those with personal interests... took a step back and allowed the process to progress...”

And he said that discussions about the SO grade were occurring at a time when the union was also thinking about its organisational future and highlighted the “considerable work and effort” that had gone into preparing the Amalgamation Sub Committee report.

But in emphasising that the process was not yet complete, he said the report had asked for another year to carry out its work before members had a final say in a ballot.

In concluding, Mr Ronayne spoke about the centenary of the Easter Rising. “I have always been proud of the Proclamation,” he told delegates, “and I believe it should hold pride of place not only in our workplaces and homes but in our hearts and minds.”

“Let us speak with One Voice for Fairness and Equality for all citizens in the workplace and at home. Anything less is a betrayal of those who fought for a new and better Ireland 100 years ago this weekend.”

GOVERNMENT policy on outsourcing must be changed, conference was told.

In his report to ADC, Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen described outsourcing as a “flawed ideology”. “Public services are a vital part of the society we live in and there is no good reason why they should be outsourced for profit.”

Vowing to “stand fast and fight hard” against future outsourcing plans and to win back work such as the LPT and JobPath, he continued: “Let the message go out from this conference, we are against outsourcing and we will use all measures in our armoury – including strike action – to fight it.”

Mr Mullen said the union had faced “considerable challenges and upheaval” over the last eight years, describing that period as “almost a lost decade”.

The union had now begun the task of pay restoration under the Lansdowne Road Agreement. “This year we see relief on the infamous pension levy and by January 2017 income up to €28,750 will be exempt. However, our continuing challenge will be to get rid of the levy altogether.”

And he warned that members were “not blind” to pay developments elsewhere and were “restless” for more progress on pay restoration. Describing the ending of the moratorium as “great to see”, he cautioned that it was important that opportunities were “more equal across departments”.

On the integration of the EO and SO grades, he underlined the need to protect the promotional prospects of all Clerical Officers and blasted those he called “keyboard warriors” who had “done nothing to further the debate”.

“While we should avoid any unacceptable devolution of duties from the SO grade as they potentially move up, it is also important that we avoid a diminution of the grade, as this would have detrimental effects on pay bargaining for the grade in the future.”

**Appeals**

Turning to the new Disciplinary Code, Mr Mullen told conference it would provide more protection for members in difficulty.

“It contains a much stronger set of appeals processes and from a natural justice perspective delivers most of what we sought in the area of disclosure and the use of other procedures.”

He said that the CPSU had reached a “crossroads” and that important decisions had to be made about the future of the union and warned that there was no time for “the sort of negativity that some engage in”. “We will refuse to wallow in the mire that they have tried and failed to drag us into,” he added, “This is your union, so fight for it!”
PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS

We contributed to upturn... now reverse cuts to our pay

CPSU President Tony Conlon, in his last speech in that role, called on any new government to lift the controversial FEMPI legislation and restore “all pay and conditions for all public and civil servants including the pension levy in its entirety”.

Pointedly addressing his comments to “elements within the media”, he told delegates gathered at the ADC in Killarney: “Please understand that these are not new pay hikes we civil servants are seeking – rather they are the restoration of all our pay and conditions savagely taken off us over the last seven years.”

Reminding conference that the ADC was being held in the centenary year of the 1916 Rising, he expressed his pride in being a public servant “committed to serving the best way possible the people of this Republic”.

He continued: “Public servants have continued throughout the last seven years to put the citizens first despite the unjust attacks on our pay and conditions while those who caused the crash... walked free... bailed out at the taxpayers’ expense.”

He said that CPSU members had done their patriotic duty and would continue to do so in the years ahead.

Mr Conlon urged members to “step forward” through taking “an active part” in local CPSU branches and committees, warning that the future strength of the CPSU relied heavily on current activists “increasing our membership now that the moratorium has been lifted and new COs are being employed”.

Insisting that members should be involved at all levels of the union, he welcomed the impact the passing of the five-year rule at the previous Rules Conference had had on the union.

This, he said, “bodes well for the future” and pointed out that it had created more opportunities for activists to step forward to challenge for positions on the National Executive Committee.

Turning to the issue of the restructuring of the Staff Officer and Executive Officer grades, he reminded delegates that previous ADCs had mandated the union to protect the SO grade “as a promotional outlet for Clerical Officers”.

It was “imperative”, he added, that the CO grade was “not forgotten” during the negotiations about the future of the SO grade. Turning to the continuing talks with other unions about a possible merger, he told conference that he was looking forward to a “full and frank debate” on the subject. He said the sub-committee tasked with representing the union had worked “diligently and professionally” during these talks but noted that “we are still a long way from a final agreement” though he expressed confidence that conference would review and decide on the union’s continued participation in the process.

Mr Conlon said the high number of TCOs was a major concern for the union and underlined that the issue needed to be addressed “as a matter of urgency”.

He also slammed plans to outsource work traditionally done by CPSU members. “I am alarmed at the apparent plans to drive more of our work outside to minimum wage and zero hour contract workers in the private sector. We must resist these measures strongly if we are to protect our members’ pay and conditions for the future.”

Turning to the Lansdowne Road Agreement, he claimed it was time to “rethink our our position” because of the upturn in the economy with a forecasted growth rate of between 7% and 8%.

He said: “Our members through their sacrifices have contributed greatly to that upturn but there comes a point when our losses in pay and conditions must be reversed – and I think that time is now.”

Executive Committee Elections

Bermingham, Fergal – elected 9th count
Brennan, Debbie – elected 13th count
Byrne, Joan – elected 14th count
Coglavin, Roisin – elected 1st count

Copperthwaite, Daniel – elected 10th count
Donoghue, Cormac – elected 1st count
Doyle, William – eliminated, final count
Fanning, Deirdre – eliminated 12th count
Farrell, Aisling – elected 1st count
Garry, Kevin – elected final count
Ann McGee is new President

CLERICAL Officer Ann McGee has been elected as the new President of the CPSU at the annual delegate conference in Killarney.

Mum-of-two Ann, who works in the Pensions Office in Sligo, spoke movingly about how her disability – she was born with Spina Bifida – had shaped the type of person she is.

The Roscommon woman, who now lives in Leitrim, made the comments during a short speech to ADC along with other presidential hopefuls Terry O’Donnell, Joan Byrne and Terry Kelleher.

Ann told delegates: “You have a right to know all about the individual you are voting for. I have no hidden agendas. If nothing else the struggles I have faced have been real and I have overcome them which should prove to you how determined a character I am.”

On EO/SO integration, she insisted that the interests of all had to be protected.

She said: “If SOs get upgraded to EOs, Clerical Officers have to be compensated with regard to pay, leave, and promotional opportunities and – most importantly – the work of the SO is portable and transported with the SO grade.”

And Ann described outsourcing of core Civil Service work as one of the “greatest challenges” facing the union.

“There is no reason for the Government to continue paying private companies exorbitant sums of money to perform similar duties to the good job that we do.”

Terry Kelleher was voted in as Vice President.

Kelly, Sue – elected 7th count
Linehan, Helen – elected 1st count
McCaffrey, Michelle – elected 1st count
McDonald, Conor – elected 1st count
O’Loughlin, Laurence – elected 12th count
Quigley, Brian – elected 16th count

Smith, Louise – eliminated 16th count
Taylor, Jean – elected 16th count
Tyrrell-Collard, Betty – elected 7th count

New Trustees –
Niall Neely and Tanya O’Neill

EMERGENCY MOTION

Govt must get serious about protecting members

AN Emergency Motion, on behalf of Waterford General, claimed that the health and safety of members working in Intreo reception areas had been compromised and called on the incoming Executive to seek adequate measures to protect staff.

Financial Secretary Des Fagan, outlined some of the background to the motion, listing a number of serious incidents involving members working in Intreo reception areas across the country – a member of staff punched in the face, a computer kicked off a desk, a thrown phone, a thrown chair...

He flagged up the issue of risk and claimed that the Government – unlike, for example, an employer in the private sector – was prepared to take the risk because it had “enough funds to defend themselves” [in court].

Mr Fagan warned: “The Government won’t do anything about this until we get serious about protecting the health and safety of our members.”

Kieran O’Connor, Department of Social Protection, said it was clear that management was prepared to risk the health and safety of employees because “it looked good providing an open service where people can walk in”.

Motion carried.
THERE WAS a comprehensive debate on the issue of amalgamation, under an emergency motion, which read: “This ADC notes the report of the Executive Sub Committee on Amalgamation and instructs the incoming Executive to carry out the recommendations of the report presented to ADC 2016.” The motion was proposed by Joan Byrne and seconded by Aisling Farrell.

In a lengthy speech, General Secretary Eoin Ronayne set out the background to the work being carried out by the Amalgamation Sub Committee and its efforts to examine various options open to the CPSU – whether it should remain as a stand-alone union, integrate as an industrial section into Unite, or join PSEU and IMPACT in a larger Civil Service union.

He told delegates: “There were other unions identified in previous reports [to ADC] but last year we distilled it down and you agreed to look at this three-option arrangement. This has been the busiest year for that sub committee – a lot of work has been done and it’s reflected in the report you have in front of you.”

‘Champions’

On remaining as a stand-alone union, he pointed out that the union had been “champions for years” of lower-paid clerical workers and had a “proud tradition” of being “bottom up in terms of democracy”.

He said: “In other words, it comes from the members up not top down [from the leadership] and that is very valuable principle in a trade union.”

Mr Ronayne outlined the current structure of the union and underlined the importance of ADC as a place where “all policy decisions are made”.

Pointing out that the CPSU offered “unique access” directly to Head Office officials – a situation that was not available to members in other unions.

He said: “We’re unique – you can ring us directly as a member and ask to speak to us and to deal with matters one to one.”

Looking at the CPSU’s position on the ICTU Public Services Committee, where it is one of 19 unions, Mr Ronayne told delegates that what stance the union took “hinges in many ways on
what others do”. He explained: “In Croke Park 2 we walked out with the nurses and Unite and we delivered a No vote. But that broke down when it came to Haddington Road talks and we ended up with the Haddington Road Agreement. As you know that was a very unpopular agreement.”

But he pointed out that the later Lansdowne Road Agreement was the “first major flat-rate increase deal for 30 years” which had come about primarily because of lobbying by the CPSU and other unions which represented low-paid workers, including IMPACT.

On membership and finances, he set out for conference what he called “some fairly stark figures”.

He suggested the union had two options – either “across the board” cuts or “to go out and recruit”.

“There are between 600 and 700 new COs since the moratorium was lifted and we’ve probably recruited about 190 so we need to target that. If we need to bring in 1,000 members in 2016 and, indeed, we need to bring in more if the SOs go in January, that means you’re looking at about 2,500 people to be recruited in the next couple of years.”

‘Critical area’

He described bargaining and representation as “a critical area” going forward and cautioned: “Our battles to restore our pay and conditions and to move on to real pay increases are going to be heavily interlinked with other public service unions on the Public Services Committee.”

Apart from the loss in revenue, there was also the risk of losing “industrial muscle” if the SO/EO integration goes ahead, stripping the union of “a tier of activists across the country – long-term activists that have stabilised the union in the workplace”.

He underlined that even if the union didn’t go for amalgamation, the report was still a “road map for the future”, describing it as a study “in how we got where we are, what our problems are and what we have to do to fix them”.

Mr Ronayne described the exercise as “a tier of activists” in the “first major flat-rate increase deal for 30 years” and that “if it is to have any value it must deliver “better services, better resources” that would hopefully motivate the members in the public service.”

The new union would benefit, he said, from “combined financial resources” that would hopefully deliver “better services, better benefits, [and] bigger fighting fund, [and] much deeper pockets to face the employer”.

He underlined that all three unions were aware of the risks involved. He told delegates: “No one union thinks this will be an easy project – PSEU, IMPACT and ourselves all have big fears and they tend to be the same.”

Risks included loss of identity, loss of decision-making powers, loss of representative positions and the “legitimate” fears of staff employed by the three unions.

Mr Ronayne reminded delegates of the structure of the new union.

“Our branches as they stand now, PSEU branches as they stand and IMPACT branches as they stand will come into this new union as a Civil Service Division staying as they are. You would not be merging with anyone – you’ll be staying as you are.”

“At a Biennial Delegate Conference, you would [elect] a Divisional Executive structured in such a way to guarantee the former CPSU, the former PSEU and the former IMPACT Civil Service people seats on that Executive to keep the balance.

“Over time a plan would be brought about to bring people together and to create one constituency and to elect them at conference without reference to where they come from.”

He also flagged up a new concept of “equivalent grade committees” which, he suggested, would give the new union a representative bargaining structure that currently doesn’t exist.

Regional offices

Added to this, the new union would have access to regional offices across the country – Letterkenny, Sligo, Galway, Cork, Limerick several in Dublin “and one to be built in the Midlands”.

An Ombudsman would also deal with individuals and grades that had grievances and an “exit strategy” would be put in place “if we wanted to withdraw from this new union”.

Urging members to read the report, Mr Ronayne described it as “really important”.

He continued: “The emergency motion is not asking you to affect a merger with IMPACT and PSEU, or a merger with Unite, it’s asking you to allow the Committee to go away – as the other two unions are doing – and give us the authority to finish the work.”

“A lot of time has been spent at it and we have put a lot of energy into it. Give us the option: To go back and finish this job in the full knowledge that nothing is going to happen until a full report goes back to ADC or a special conference and goes to the members in a ballot. The authority [to do a deal] rests with the membership in a ballot.”
AMALGAMATION DEBATE

What about our policy differences?

IN THE debate following the General Secretary’s presentation on the report from the Amalgamation Sub Committee, Terry Murphy was first to the podium.

With regard to the New Union Project option, he asked at what stage would the policy differences between the unions be addressed.

“When in these negotiations are we going to address the fact that, for example, at the PSEU conference, they passed a motion to ‘lobby the Government not to abolish the Universal Social Charge’?”

Another speaker agreed and pointed out that “despite all the reassurance, we haven’t got to [the] actual negotiation yet.”

He said: “There are kind of straws in the wind going on here and some of them seem to be contradictory.”

Pointing out that there were good points to all three options, he added: “I believe we should go back to the original idea of organising the unorganised.”

Terry Kelleher pointed out that IMPACT had voted against a motion [at the last ICTU conference] calling for water charges to be abolished and told delegates: “We were on the other side fighting for it. If we were in IMPACT, where would the battle against water charges be?

“We have saved people across this country and in this room two grand a year because the Government backed off on other austerity measures, such as compulsory health insurance and so-called social media tax and they’ve held down property tax and water charges very low.

“We should look at the policies over the last couple of years of how other unions have dealt with attacks not their members – both in terms of pay and austerity taxes – and measure them by that as well.”

General Secretary Eoin Ron- ayne said: “The whole area of policy differences between us is something we haven’t gone into in any great detail during the discussions. There are policy differences and industrial differences about the way we do things.”

Admitting there were many difficult issues to be ironed out in the process, he said getting presidents and vice-presidents “into the same room to discuss things rather than into trenches to attack each other” was a challenge.

“We’ve learned to have debates with people we don’t agree with to see if we agree something somewhere down the road. It may not happen. This motion is saying how would we protect the core policies that we believe in in a bigger organisation.” Motion carried.
Two-thirds for status change

A SECOND emergency motion from Letterkenny Branch was remitted after much debate. Tony Gallagher proposed the motion, which looked at what would be done in the event of a possible dissolution of the union, and it was seconded by Ruth Rutherford.

Mr Gallagher, referring to details carried in the earlier financial report to conference, said Mr Gallagher disagreed that the conference had approved the amalgamation was passed at conference.

Proposed by Tony Gallagher, and seconded by Ruth Rutherford, the motion stated: “This ADC instructs the incoming Executive that any ballot of members of the CPSU on all options of forming a new union either by merger, amalgamation or closer association, including with Unite/PCS or the New Union Project proposal but not exclusively these options must have the support/consent of two-thirds majority of those members voting in such a ballot. Should no option receive a two-thirds majority, then CPSU will continue in its present format as per the CPSU Rule Book unless dissolved as per Rule 1 b of the same Rule Book.”

Amalgamation debate motion remitted

A SECOND emergency motion from Letterkenny Branch was remitted after much debate. Tony Gallagher proposed the motion, which looked at what would be done in the event of a possible dissolution of the union, and it was seconded by Ruth Rutherford.

Mr Gallagher, referring to details carried in the earlier financial report to conference, said it was clear that the services provided by the union would change “unless we get recruitment” and reminded delegates that the union was an employer as well as CPSU members being “employees of the state”.

General Secretary Eoin Ronayne admitted he had no personal preferences with regard to the options that had been set out, adding that all options “had merits” and all “had concerns”. However, he said he had concerns over how the options were being presented. “Stand-alone is not looking like a really good option. They are telling us we are losing money, we’re going to possibly lose the Staff Officers, we need to recruit an unbelievable number of members... so it seems that we’re looking at the PSEU-IMPACT option as the one that is wanted.

“Stand-alone is not looking like a really good option. They are telling us we are losing money, we’re going to possibly lose the Staff Officers, we need to recruit an unbelievable number of members... so it seems that we’re looking at the PSEU-IMPACT option as the one that is wanted.”

In moving the motion, Tony Gallagher admitted that he had no personal preferences with regard to the options that had been set out, adding that all options “had merits” and all “had concerns”. However, he said he had concerns over how the options were being presented. “Stand-alone is not looking like a really good option. They are telling us we are losing money, we’re going to possibly lose the Staff Officers, we need to recruit an unbelievable number of members... so it seems that we’re looking at the PSEU-IMPACT option as the one that is wanted.

“Stand-alone is not looking like a really good option. They are telling us we are losing money, we’re going to possibly lose the Staff Officers, we need to recruit an unbelievable number of members... so it seems that we’re looking at the PSEU-IMPACT option as the one that is wanted.”

He told delegates: “We don’t face an immediate circumstance whatsoever in relation to having to take a decision on this issue. We have to consider the outcome of these talks that we’ve tried to bring to some conclusion by 2017. “Conference will get a report next year. Conference has supreme authority and will determine next year which direction it intends to take and how the members will be balloted on that issue. This motion is a year too early.”

Questions about remitting the motion, Tony Gallagher pointed out that rule book referred to a two-thirds majority in a conference. He continued: “This motion is not saying two-thirds majority of conference, it is saying two-thirds majority of members balloted.”

Mr Gallagher disagreed that the motion was being brought too soon before conference. “It is clear now that we’re coming into the last stage – the options will be before you and the members will decide – not the Executive and not the conference. “What we want is that it is a clear decision before we actually change to something so dramatically new. If it takes a two-thirds majority to change a rule in your rule book, it should surely take a two-thirds majority of a ballot of members to decide that you’re going to have a new union.”

Motion carried.

I think it sends all the wrong signals to the members.”

Kieran O’Connor, Limerick General, told conference he was not just concerned about scaring members, “I’m concerned how this might go down in the media”. Another speaker, opposing the motion, pointed out that members would be able to discuss such matters at the next conference and claimed it was “not helpful at this stage”. Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen, opposing the motion, admitted he was “astonished to see it on the floor as an emergency motion” and queried the signal it would send to other unions.

Terry O’Donnell, in calling for the motion to be remitted, said: “I think we should leave this and come [back] to this when we have to come [back] to this.”

In his reply to debate, Tony Gallagher said he was “not surprised” by the opposition to the motion and emphasised that it was about finding out the “facts and figures”.

Branch agreed to remittal. Motion carried.
MOTION 57, put forward by SP Dublin North, instructing the incoming Executive to support the Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th Amendment, was lost as delegates opted not to take a political position on this contentious issue.

One speaker from SP Dublin North, admitting there were “fundamental differences” between members on the issue, pointed out that Ireland had undergone much change since the passing of the 8th Amendment.

He said: “Changes occur over time, different generations approach things differently. The problem with the 8th Amendment is that it ties the hands of our legislators and the courts. Our hands are tied by this wording in the Constitution. We should be able to canvass our individual politicians and they should be able to vote on their consciences not by party whip.”

Executive member Claire Ryan, speaking in opposition, described the 8th Amendment a “very sensitive issue”, adding: “We’re not moral guardians and this is a personal thing that we need to decide [on] if a referendum occurs – it is not a union issue.”

A delegate from Galway General, speaking in favour, pointed out that anyone procuring an abortion could be sentenced to 14 years in prison while “only seven [years is set] as a maximum for rape”. She continued: “Water charges are not technically part of this union, neither is gay rights but it affects us all in some issue or form. This is the 21st Century – we introduced divorce – we thought it would ruin the country, [but] it didn’t…”

Liam Lyster, Finance DPER, in opposition, pointing out that he was “going against the all-pervasive group-think on this issue”, said: “Quite simply, in my opinion, [this motion] should not be on the floor simply because it is a matter of private morality.”

As a result of the defeat of Motion 57, the union currently holds no formal policy on abortion.

MOTION 47, put forward by SP Dublin North, sought the reinstatement of uncertified sick leave to seven days in a one-year rather than a two-year period, told conference he understood the sentiments behind those who moved the motion.

He said: “We spent considerable time in negotiations on the revised sick leave arrangements in the public service and fought hard against those changes. Given that we’ve been through a recent review of these new arrangements, I will more that likely come back here saying to you that we weren’t able to achieve an outcome on this motion before conference today.”

Motion carried.
Childcare is a national crisis

IN a wide-ranging address, Assistant General Secretary Theresa Dwyer presented the Equality Report to conference.

Describing childcare in Ireland as a “national crisis”, she emphasised it did not just involve the financial aspects of the issue but also “the recognition of family, promoting gender equality, increased labour participation, sharing of parenting and legislative supports”.

Quoting OECD figures, she pointed out that participation in the Irish labour market had fallen to 40% for women with children.

Childcare costs were also sky high, representing 40% of the average wage – the highest in the OECD group of nations. The high costs were also due to low public investment in the sector.

Though admitting there had been a number of positive changes in the last 10 years, she claimed that people on low incomes “still can’t afford to take statutory entitlement [due to them].”

Ms Dwyer outlined how research carried out by the European Commission showed that women’s employment was tightly linked out by the European Commission showed that women’s employment was tightly linked to the distribution of work and family responsibilities.

‘Historic outcome’

She said: “Having children, women tend to work fewer hours in paid employment and spend more time fulfilling unpaid caring responsibilities with a higher proportion working part-time.”

Turning to marriage equality, she said May 22, 2015 – referendum day – proved to be “historic” for Ireland and described it as a “very good and very positive outcome”.

Turning to the Congress Women’s Conference held earlier in the year, she said that it had taken as its theme “the recognition of family, promoting gender equality, increased labour participation, sharing of parenting and legislative supports”.

She also flagged up the necessity for the Civil Service to “keep its policies on equality and diversity up to date at all times and available to staff.”

Turning to the Congress Women’s Conference held earlier in the year, she said that it had taken as its theme “the recognition of family, promoting gender equality, increased labour participation, sharing of parenting and legislative supports”.

She also briefly members on the Garda Equal Pay case describing it as a “very long journey for the union since it was launched in 2000”. In particular, delegates were told of recent developments regarding the choosing of appropriate comparators for the case.

Taking the opportunity to highlight the large number of gardai doing clerical work, Ms Dwyer said: “It is not our business to tell the Garda Commissioner where she puts gardai but when she wants to bring them in to sit at a desk and do clerical work alongside our Clerical Officers and pay them [gardai] more money, then that is our business.”

She continued: “There are gardai sitting at desks the length and breadth of this country doing clerical work for a lot more money. Why are we here 16 years later with a Garda Inspectorate report and a resistance from the Garda Commissioner and the Minister for Justice to put those gardai out on the beat? Either that or pay our members the rate of pay they should be getting?”

AN Emergency Motion instructing the incoming Executive to call a special rules conference in advance of ADC 2017 was carried at conference.

General Secretary Eoin Ronayne, who moved the motion, explained that the Executive felt there was a need for such a conference because of the volume of rule changes – estimated at 31 – that needed to be made, describing it as “purely a house-keeping exercise”.

He continued: “The rule book is a product of rules conferences held every three years. When one rule is changed in part, it can happen that that rule then has a knock-on implication for another rule. Over the years, this has led to a lack of clarity and confusion in the rule book which has led to visits to lawyers to figure out what exactly is being said.”

‘Vague and unclear’

Pointing out that there were times when the rule was “completely vague and unclear or contradictory”, a special rules conference would “bring some order once and for all... to make sure that all the individual rules do not conflict with each other.”

Tony Gallagher, Letterkenny Branch, opposed the motion. He said: “This is against the rule book – we’re only supposed to have a rules conference every three years. Added to that, this is hardly an emergency motion – bringing in 31 rule changes is hardly an emergency.”

Contending that the rules book was “not that bad”, he asked: “Who is challenging the rule book? The Executive! I don’t see branches coming up here and saying they have a problem with the rule book. The rule book has been used and abused by the Executive and now they want to tidy it up.”

Joan Byrne pointed out that according to the rule book if ADC gives permission to call a special conference, it can do so.

She added: “It is time that we did sit down and sort out our rule book once and for all.”

Daniel Copperthwaite, in support, said that “anomalies” within the rule book had led to “ridiculous need for legal advice” and this was the main reason why it needed to be “tidied down”. Card vote: For 118; Against 44; Abstentions 29. Motion carried.
PAY AGREEMENTS

Flat rate must be our starting point in pay talks

MOTION 71, instructed the incoming Executive “to relentlessly pursue” the full restoration of pay and conditions, overtime, working hours and the filling of all CPSU grades to return CPSU members to the T&Cs they were employed under prior to 2009.

The movers of the motion also called on conference to mandate the Executive Committee and negotiators to continue to press for a flat-rate mechanism “as a basis for further pay restoration and pay increases for the future”.

Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen, who proposed the motion, told delegates that negotiators had worked very hard to secure a flat-rate approach to pay under the terms of the Lansdowne Road Agreement.

He said: “It is clear from [what the] Government is saying that we are no longer in an economic emergency – if that’s the case, there should be no FEMPI and all pay and terms and condition of employment should be restored.

“There is an important piece of work to take place under the terms of the [Lansdowne Road] Agreement and that is to put in place new pay bargaining structure for civil servants. There are some people out there on the political right who would want to put in place some sort of board to determine our pay. We will be the people who will determine our pay and terms and conditions of employment in negotiations with the employer at the negotiating table. It won’t be the job of some independent group that the Government appoints.”

“And at that table we have to be strong and fair in respect of that mechanism and how it treats future pay awards. As far as it is humanly possible, looking at everything in a flat rate context must be our starting point.”

Motion carried.

Flat rate pay rise ‘put dinners on our tables’

MOTION 72, Letterkenny, called on the incoming Executive to make flat-rate pay increases a policy position of the CPSU during future pay talks or any amalgamation discussions with other unions.

Freda Nellis, proposing, told delegates the flat-rate approach was “more beneficial” to CPSU members “because if it’s a percentage, the top [earners] get more and the bottom [earners] get less... this [flat-rate mechanism] is a fairer approach to get more pay for our members”.

Niall Neely, Letterkenny Branch, speaking in support, said: “The higher paid trade unions weren’t happy [at the flat-rate mechanism] and said that we ‘ate their dinner’, but I’ll you what, it put some dinners on the table for our members.” Motion carried.

A SERIES of motions [Motion 61, Tullamore General; Motion 61, OPW; Motion 64, Education Dublin; Motion 65, Carlow; Motion 67, Longford General; Motion 69, Roscommon] calling on the Executive to seek the abolition of the extra hours provisions contained in the Croke Park Agreement were taken together and all carried with no debate.

Motion 61, SP South; Motion 66, Athlone; Motion 68, Dundalk; Motion 70, Revenue National Committee, calling for the restoration of full pay and conditions were also taken together and carried without debate.
KIERAN O’Connor, Limerick General, moving Motion 73, told delegates that it was “important to get serious” about the issue of full pay restoration.

He cautioned that if it did come to a ballot for industrial action, it was vital for activists to impress upon the general membership the need to “stand together and hold as a bloc to show how they feel” and noted, “If we’re going to have wishy-washy votes of 51% - 49%, then we’re not to get too far with the negotiations.”

Mr O’Connor told conference that the Government should be an example of a great employer. “If the Government is not a good employer and doesn’t treat us well, how does that bear for the rest of our citizens in the private sector? We need a Government that respects workers and shows that respect by dealing with us – the lowest paid civil servants – in a fair and decent manner and not trying to screw us to the wall all the time.”

General Secretary Eoin Ronayne pointed out the union will be involved in a pay bargaining process before the end of the Lansdowne Road Agreement and suggested that “events will pass this motion by”.

Terry Kelleher, while speaking in support of the motion said that the union should “move on this sooner” – in fact, he added, “the time is now, we should be prepared to move faster”.

He claimed the “powers that be” wanted to keep the extended hours aspect of the agreement. Mr Kelleher warned: “The longer we leave that [in place], the more difficulty there will be to motivate people. The longer it stays there, people will feel it’s part and parcel [of their contract of employment] and it will be harder for us.”

He suggested the CPSU should be prepared, if necessary, to act outside of the Public Services Committee of Congress.

“We have to act in a timely fashion to address these matters and not allow these obstacles in terms of a conservative leadership [in other unions] that is stopping us achieving our over-all goals.”

Another speaker said: “If anyone thinks we’re going to get fairness from Fine Gael or Fianna Fail, they’re obviously fools.”

Martin Gallagher, Ashtown Gate, said: “It’s vital that we support this [motion] and it’s vital that we don’t stick around – the further, faster, sooner that we hit them, the better.”

Motion carried.

Wishy-washy votes of 51% to 49% won’t wash

AN AMENDMENT to Motion 90, Cork General, called on the incoming Executive to ring-fence 100% of appointments to EO for serving COs for the next 10 years “half to be allocated on senior suitability and half on internal competition”.

Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen pointed out to delegates that discussions on the integration of grades were at an early stage and that much that was contained in the motions, involving protecting COs, was “slated to be raised with management side”.

Noting that the union had fought a “rear-guard action” on the 50-50 split between open recruitment and internal competition, he insisted: “There has to be compensation for COs – the scale of the compensation will become apparent as the talks progress.”

Describing SO/EO integration as a “large negotiation for the union”, he said it was a key issue of concern for COs “which we must fix”.

A RANGE of motions [Motions 87 to 97] dealing with SO/EO amalgamation and, more specifically, on the impact this development will have on Clerical Officers came before conference. Due to time constraints and because of the similar content of many of the motions, they were proposed, seconded, read out to delegates and voted on. Apart from Motions 87 and 90, there was little debate and all were carried.

MOTION 87, Dundalk Branch, instructed the incoming Executive to negotiate on behalf of all COs seeking “full compensation for the Staff Officer grade”.

Fergal Bermingham told delegates that all COs were affected by the SO grade development and called for increased pay and holiday leave provision “as part of the compensation package”.

He said: “We’d like to see the SO posts ring-fenced going forward for the benefit of Clerical Officers. Every time an SO that gets this promotion, that [post] can only be filled by the promotion of a Clerical Officer – not filled by someone who has come in off the external exam.”

“Wishy-washy votes of 51% to 49% won’t wash”

Ring-fence SO posts for COs
PENSIONS

Do away with compulsory retirement age

LINDA Byrne, Portlaoise, moving Motion 79, pointed out that compulsory retirement at 65 only affected “a certain number [of civil servants].” She told delegates: “If we were members of the LGBT [community] or a disability group, everyone would be screaming ‘discrimination’ but we are just older members of the CPSU and nobody cares. I call on fellow CPSU members and the Executive to seek to have the compulsory retirement at 65 removed in line with the state pension age which at the moment is 66.”

Cormac Donoghue, speaking in support, said: “It’s very unfair that you’re made to retire – you expect to get a pension and you don’t get it. You have to sign on and go through the process of signing on. But you’re not [eligible for work], you’ve done your bit, your service to the state. When that day happens [when you retire], it should be a happy occasion – you’ve done your time, you should be able to sit back and relax, not worry about how you’re going to manage.” Assistant General Secretary Kevin Gaughran gave conference “a note of caution” on the subject. He said: “As a general principle, the trade union movement is opposed to extending the retirement age for a number of reason.

“One is to do with employment issues – and creating badly-needed employment opportunities for our young people. The second is it feeds into a pro-employer agenda which is to savage and, if at all possible, eliminate current establish pension benefits.”

Mr Gaughran added: “The single biggest attack on workers under FEMPI was the introduction of a new pension scheme for new entrants which does not provide for anything like the level of benefits that currently exist.”

Ann Doherty, Department of Transport, Shannon, told delegates: “I don’t want to work past 65 – I’m tired now! I want to fight for the money now than raising the age that I can stay on [at work] and I do think there’s a lot to be said for us retiring at 65 and letting young people in at the other end now that the moratorium has been lifted.”

Another speaker said: “I’m 47 years of age – if I could afford to, I’d go tomorrow! I don’t want to work to 65 but I don’t feel I should have to go at 65 if I’m healthy and well and capable for working.”

Laurence O’Loughlin, Clare Branch, pointed out the pension was introduced by Bismark but that people were not expected to live to make use of it.

Terry O’Donnell, Ashtown Gate, said that people wouldn’t be looking to stay on [after retirement age] if they didn’t need to. He said: “People require this money, they should have the right to stop this.”

Motion lost after vote – 96 for; 134 against.

Call for transition payment

MOTION 77. Tullamore General, called on the incoming Executive to seek a transition payment for eligible members “to bridge the gap from the compulsory retirement age of 65 to the qualifying age for the state pension.”

Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen pointed out that the Civil Service group of unions had been engaged in “considerable discussions” with DPER on the issue.

He told conference: “The formal position for workers caught in this predicament is that on retirement they have to apply for welfare benefit – an appalling vista really for people at the end of their working lives.

“ICTU have raised this [issue] persistently with the Government and have had no success in respect of the wider private sector.”

Pointing out that civil servants who do not qualify for social welfare payments could apply for a supplementary pension payment, he commented: “It is not widely publicised but it’s there. “I am sure they [the Government] are going to change on this, but there is a new government coming in and this motion will breathe life into the issue again and we’ll go back to the table and see if can get this problem resolved.”

Motion carried.
MOTION 20, on behalf of the Executive Committee, backing ICTU’s Charter for Fair Conditions at Work was carried at conference.

Terry Kelleher pointed out that it was not just public servants “who were working longer and harder for less money, it was most workers”. Describing what is happening as a “coordinated attack” on workers, he claimed that IBEC were “sitting in dark rooms with other forces” seeking to drive down terms and conditions.

He said: “At the moment, one seventh – 15.2% – of all workers live on a wage less than [what is recognised as the] official poverty line of €202 per week. What we’re experiencing is a speeding up of the race to the bottom.”

Mr Kelleher continued: “Unemployment for the under-25s is 19.5% – the EU average is 9%. There are 205,000 fewer 20-somethings in Ireland now than there was in 2009. We are driving the youth away and employers are part of that – one in 20 jobs is a zero hour contract [job]. You come in when the boss tells you to come in and if you’re not wanted, you don’t get the phone call.”

Financial Secretary Des Fagan said delegates might ask themselves “what they can do about all this”.

He continued: “There are campaigns going on in social media – the Tesco workers, the bar workers and others involved in disputes. With the encouragement of top management private sector appointees are being brought in at the highest levels in the Civil Service. What they want to do is impose private sector [terms and] conditions on you. If we don’t support people outside of the Civil Service, outside of the public sector, you will be next. Believe that and support these people.”

Motion carried.
GENERAL Secretary Eoin Ronayne spoke on Motion 23, dealing with an issue involving HCOs in Ballina.

He told conference that he had met a number of staff in Ballina “who had effectively been passed over in seniority terms” after a decision made in 2007 had meant that they lost out.

Mr Ronayne promised to follow up on the issue and indicated that there was a number of options open. Mr Ronayne added that in terms of the SO/EO integration debate, the union would be looking at the whole area of HCO appointments to try and rectify the issue.

MOTION 25, Courts National Committee, calling on the incoming Executive to ensure CPSU members do not have to disclose their PPS numbers to PeoplePoint was lost.

Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen admitted to delegates that there was very little the union could do about this and called for the motion to be remitted.

He said: “What people have to understand is that PeoplePoint is now part of their HR function in the very same way that payroll shared service also use your PPS number to pay you.”

Motion carried.

ANN McGee, PSO Sligo, pictured right, moved Motion 31, calling on the incoming Executive to seek to look for five days’ paid leave in a rolling 24 month period for members to attend specialised medical appointments, daycare treatments and consultants appointments, regardless of location”. She informed delegates: “In our branch, our sick leave is just being actually halved – seven days uncertified in 24 months and people now have to take annual leave or pregnancy leave to attend hospital appointments.” Motion carried.

MOTION 35, seeking the recognition of on-the-job training courses as professional accredited qualifications, was remitted.

Laurence O’Loughlin, Clare, who moved the motion, told conference: “If you’re to look at the promotions system, the percentage given for experience in employment is disgracefully low. It’s ridiculous – I don’t know if it get to 10% - [that’s] all the percentage you get for an entire career on the job.”

He continued: “We do a lot of technical work in a lot of different departments that has been built up over a long number of years, but we get no credit at all for it. If you were to compare the pay of gardai, nurses and Clerical Officers in 1960s, you would see that our pay has dropped compared to others.

“The only the difference between the jobs they do and we do now is that their jobs require degrees – we’ve nothing. We have received no recognition whatsoever. We are a very highly treated like

Delegates told: Today’s favours, tomorrow’s work

Des Fagan: ‘send a message to management’

Laurence O’Loughlin: experience counts for little...
professional Civil Service but we’re treated like Yellow Pack workers.”

Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen said that Laurence O’Loughlin had made some good points but asked the branch to consider remitting the motion.

He told conference: “Not many departments have professional accredited qualification arrangements in place. The Revenue Commissioners do through the University of Limerick and the DSP is considering something similar. We are currently reviewing along with DPER and the Public Appointments Service the whole question of promotion arrangements, taking into account such things as long service and how best to put in place arrangements that suit the majority of our members.

“There’s a lot of work there to do. I’m urging caution on this one so that we can address the question right across the board in the context of ongoing discussions.”

Motion remitted.

MOTION 38, which called on the incoming Executive to ensure that all COs were assigned as HCOs after 20 years service in the CO grade, was carried. Ann Bolger, Meath, who moved the motion, claimed the HCO grade was currently being “drip-fed willy-nilly” and that instead it should be based on 20 years service. Motion carried.

MOTION 21, SP National Committee, called on the incoming Executive to form a committee and bring a report to ADC 2017 about seeking the amalgamation of the CO-EO grades “with a view to informing CPSU policy in an future pay agreements”.

Fergal Bermingham said, like Martin Luther King, he had a “dream” to “transform all COs into EO’s”.

He continued: “In many of the departments we’re doing the same work already. I think with the proposed amalgamation of the SO and EO grades, we find, in our department especially and probably mirrored in other departments too, that work that was formerly done by SOs and EOs is being pushed down on top of Clerical Officers.”

Insisting that COs were “well capable” of doing the work, he underlined that they had no problem doing the work but “pay us the money”. Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen pointed out that COs shouldn’t be doing EOs’ work. He said: “We had a long debate yesterday on motions involving the integration of the SO and EO grades. I don’t see a circumstance where we can then consider the integration of the CO and the EO [grades] but [what] we can do is ensure that Clerical Officers carry out duties that are appropriate to their grade. We should all be careful in our branches that this is the case.”

Laurence O’Loughlin said: “I do want to be remunerated for the quality of work that I do – the grade is irrelevant. This [motion] is about money for us – to be paid for a job that we’re already doing.” Motion carried.

AN amendment to Motion 33, calling for a change in the eligibility and pay for the HCO grade, was carried at conference.

Caution urged over transfer policy change

DEPUTY General Secretary Derek Mullen, speaking on Motion 34 which called of a review of transfer policies, said that he had, along with AGS Paul MacSweeney, started negotiations with DPER on a new mobility policy for the Civil Service which is set to be introduced later in the year.

But he underlined the importance of protecting those on Central Transfer lists and on CAF lists, where they still exist.

Mr Mullen said: “This motion seeks to turn a long-held policy on its head. Since about 1990, we have had a policy position that if you transfer voluntarily to another department, you lose your seniority.

“I would urge extreme caution about turning that policy on its head, given that it has had such an impact on members over those years and I think we’d be wrong to change it.”
ASSOCIATION/ORGANISATION

Motion to post ballots home is lost

HELEN Linehan, Cork General, proposed Motion 8, calling on the incoming Executive to ensure that ballot papers were posted to “each member at their home address” or, alternatively, “as per the Aontas mailing list”.

General Secretary Eoin Ronayne, speaking against, flagged up the “cost element” involved in carrying out the motion, claiming it would be “extraordinarily expensive”.

He said: “Branches are the link between members on the ground and the Executive. The major function of a ballot is that it brings contact between representatives and ordinary members to discuss matters of importance. It is not just a ballot paper that you’re handing out, it’s an opportunity to influence the debate about what we’re voting on. So if we remove contact between the ballot and the representative, I think we will have done ourselves a disservice.”

Cormac Donoghue, also speaking against, pointed out that explaining to members the Executive recommendation on a vote was a “part of getting people involved in our union”.

He told delegates: “If we lose that [point of contact] and [the ballot] goes to the home, I would be fearful that we wouldn’t get ballot papers back and won’t get an accurate picture of what members want. What’s the point of having a branch if everything going to be sent to the home [address]? ”

Martin Gallagher, Ashtown Gate, speaking in favour, suggested that it would be a “clear, concise way” of “letting members know that they are members of the CPSU” and “would help in identifying where our membership is”.

Claire Reilly, Tipperary General, speaking in opposition, pointed out that assistant secretaries could be appointed “to give branch secretaries a dig out”.

Terry Kelleher, An Post, emphasised that ballots were about collective decisions. “It’s about people coming together and discussing what’s best for them collectively. The ballot is a collective decision – not an individual one – although it is an individual vote. And I think [this motion] is anti-collective.”

He continued: “The ideal of the union and the basis of the union [is] to debate and discuss – but most of the things we want to achieve, we would never do on our own. We have to stand together [to achieve what we want] and I think that this posting out to people undermines that and it’s much more preferable if we had workplace discussions and the ballots came from there.”

A delegate from Cork General, in support, said: “I don’t know how much time you think branch secretaries can spend at their voluntary jobs. If you think for a minute that we can have a conversation with everybody about the whys and wherefores of a ballot. It is the responsibility of Head Office to deliver that ballot paper to that person and it is the responsibility of the member to vote.” Motion lost.

Difficult job keeping track of CPSU membership

MOTION 15 called on the incoming Executive to ensure that membership lists were updated each year.

General Secretary Eoin Ronayne explaining to conference how the membership list worked, said: “Really it is only in the last three years that our database is tracking members but we have encountered a problem in the current year with regard to the changes in shared payroll.

“We have to match the payroll [databases] with our database and we have a program to do that – but there could be several Mary Joneses and Tom Healsys and if we don’t have the correct codes we can’t track the member at their home address.”

Terry Kelleher, a collective decision”

Trade union democracy in action... voting for the Executive Committee at ADC

Martin Gallagher: “TTIP ‘knocking at the door of this country...’”

Martin Gallagher, Ashtown Gate, speaking in support, brought up the issue of TTIP which he claimed was “knocking on the door of this country”. It was very important, he added, that the union knew exactly “how many members we have and who’s paid up”.

Kieran O’Connor agreed that TTIP presented a danger and suggested there would be “a kind of harmonisation with everything going to the lowest level for companies to operate”. He said the union needed “to find an alternative way of delivering our subs from our members [if the automatic payroll deductions went under TTIP].”

Helen Linehan pointed out that it was very hard for branch secretaries to keep tabs on everybody and said that if members are going to resign, they should let the branch secretary know. Martin Gallagher, Ashtown Gate, in support, said: “It’s the responsibility of Head Office to deliver that ballot paper to that person and it is the responsibility of the member to vote.”
CONFERENCE was told that the work being done by the branches was the “life blood of the union”. General Secretary Eoin Ronayne made the comment as he spoke on Motion 6, Waterford General, which looked at tasking branch secretaries with the issuing of ballot papers.

He told delegates: “A union cannot, or should not, function without the direct input of representatives on the ground. A trade union is about members and we pride ourselves in the CPSU about making sure that the branches and the people on the ground is where the the heart of the union is.” Pointing out that he had “every sympathy” with general and larger branches, he admitted: “It is difficult work [for branch secretaries] at a time when hours have been added on and when people have been asked to cover for members of staff. But at the end of the day, the balloting process is a core function of any branch or trade union organisation on the ground – that is where members are consulted directly by the Executive about decisions.”

Mr Ronayne also spoke about use of the membership database as well as the legal requirements governing the balloting process. “I need to be able to stand over [the balloting process] in front of any third party [that] the General Secretary issued the ballot per the rule [of the union] to the branch secretaries who then issued the ballots to their members.”

But he promised to “sit down with branches that have difficulties and sort it out.” In her right of reply, the mover from Waterford General, again asked: “Why are we taking on work that should be done by Head Office?” Motion lost.

MOTION 12 called on the Executive to explore the possibility of boosting membership by recruiting at clerical officer level outside of the public service.

Peter McDermott, Dundalk Branch, who moved the motion, said: “It’s our future and depending on whether we amalgamate or go solo – if we stand alone, we will obviously need more members and I feel that the best form of recruitment for us is among the low paid.”

He told delegates he did not think other unions represented low paid workers fairly “especially when they are in unions that are involved with managers or people who are on higher incomes”. “I believe that CPSU is the best union to represent these people. We need a big union – we need to be known as the CPSU – the people who will represent the low paid.”

A delegate from the Cork Branch, speaking in support, said many people were working in sectors where they were “being treated like dogs” and took the opportunity to send out a message of support and solidarity to striking Amazon workers in Germany.

Helen Linehan, Executive, said that while she fully supported the sentiments behind the motion “we need to be very, very careful putting forward where we’re going to start our recruitment.”

In his contribution, Deputy General Secretary Derek Mullen cited the experience of PCS in the UK who had suffered considerable outsourcing. He said: “They [PCS] realised very quickly that it was important to follow the work – and one of the best ways of achieving outcomes such as bringing work back into the public service was recruiting members in those [outsourcing] companies and by improving pay and conditions to an extent that outsourcing became less of a policy practised by governments. We need to have an open mind on this.”

Peter McDermott, in his right of reply, said it wasn’t really important where we get members from – “it’s about building a bigger and stronger union”.

Heart of union is with people on the ground

Eoin Ronayne: ‘difficult work’

Building a bigger, stronger union
ASSOCIATION/ORGANISATION

We need to get our act together on recruiting

INDUSTRIAL Relations Officer Denis Keane, proposing Motion 10 on behalf of the Executive Committee, told conference that recruitment was the “life blood of our trade union” and underlined “the need for us to get our act together” on the issue.

He said: “We want to build a strong CPSU, we want to build a strong trade union movement. Head Office can’t do this on its own, activists must be doing this [recruiting new members], but – more importantly – members must be doing this.”

Mr Keane said that when he joined the CPSU 24 years ago, he was approached and told ‘everybody is in the trade union, so sign the form’ and pointed out that this did not happen any more.

“But we want this [approach] to be the way we do business and reclaiming the discussion [about joining trade unions]. We should have no fear about it.”

Tony Gallagher, Letterkenny Branch, speaking in support, reminded delegates that while it was right to attract “new blood” into the union, “what about also considering the old blood?” and posed the question, “Why don’t we have a retired members’ branch?”

He continued: “The union needs recruitment but we’re also losing members who are retiring and who would still like to remain part of the union. They’re having their pensions cut too and they need a voice. We could consider having a retired members branch and paying half a per cent instead of one per cent.”

Pat Ormond told conference that the job of recruiting new members “takes more than just words, it takes action for members to see what they’re signing up to. We’ve all experienced pay cuts and the extra hours... it’s vital for anyone in the trade union movement to step up to the plate... and to fight for what we believe.”

Another speaker agreed with Pat Ormond and said the CPSU needed explain why trade unions are important. “Getting the flat-rate the money back has been great and I think if we could really start to work on the hours, we would keep the members we have – and keeping them going – as well as [putting in place] a recruitment campaign.”

Motion carried.

EOIN Coyle, Finance DPER, moved Motion 7, calling on the incoming Executive to put black and white photographs beside each candidate on a ballot paper “akin to the current national electoral format”. Motion carried.
1. No matter what happens in the office you can still pick up the phone if you need to talk to a colleague at the end of the day.

2. They are the first ones to rally around any family who is in need or to organise a collection or a fundraiser for any great cause.

3. No matter how bad things are in your office – someone always has a worse story of what happened to them and will proceed to tell you all the details.

4. We all remember the good times and there is nothing better than talking about them with each other and each adding their bit to the story.

5. No one else, only civil servants understand how the Civil Service works or what a “panel” is and how you “get on it”.

6. Majority of people think we all have top secret jobs and sometimes we like to let them think it.

7. There is nothing better than a night on the tiles with your work colleagues and having a right good rant and fixing all the problems in the workplace in a few hours “if only you were in charge”. If any of the officials are looking for any strategies they are welcome to come along some night – of course they may not remember the brilliant solutions the morning after the night before!

8. There is always food – no matter what the time of day or what the situation - if you need a chocolate hit or some sweets – all you need do is go for a wander around any section and you are guaranteed to find something for your craving.

9. Tripadvisor does not have a patch on the Civil Service. No matter where you are going, someone has always been there and will be able to tell you how to get the best deals while you are there.

10. As a lower paid worker in the Civil Service – we are not always recognised as the go getters or the game changers of the future. The work we do is a huge contribution to our society and to the public even if it’s not recognised as such. How many of you have helped someone in a social welfare office bring home a few more euro to a family on a budget, helped someone who came into a Garda station, Given someone an understanding of their tax and the benefits of this, listened to a range of abuse in a An Post office, a courthouse or even PeoplePoint, only to still turn around and help the person and then get a thanks from them as they were just stressed from the whole process.

In conclusion, these are jobs done by us every day, without medals, without awards and without recognition. We are the groundwork for every project ever started, for every training plan that is drawn up. We are the roots and the foundation of every great idea. I just want to say thank you, well done, and keep up the good work.

Diane O’Sullivan, PER/Justice Killarney Branch, sent delegates back to their home counties with big smiles on their faces. In remarks to close the conference, Diane shared her thoughts and reminded delegates why – despite everything – it is still good to be a civil servant. Her top 10 reasons are set out below...
CPSU Car Benefits
Unlimited Windscreen Cover
No Claims Bonus Protection
24hr Breakdown Assistance*
*Cumprehensive policies only

CPSU Home Benefits
Shopping In Transit Cover
Alternative Accommodation
24hr Emergency Access to Tradesmen

Right Cover, Right Price  Exclusive CPSU Rates  Dedicated Claims Team

When buying or renewing your Car or Home Insurance
CALL US: 1890 989 567 OR VISIT US ONLINE: CPSU.GLENNONS.IE

Frank Glennon Ltd trading as “Glenmon” and “Glenmon Insurances” is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.
Recently CPSU officials Paul MacSweeney and Denis Keane joined thousands of other runners, including a strong Irish contingent, on the Right to Movement marathon, through the occupied territories of Palestine – an area so divided by a ‘security barrier’ and illegal settlements that it is not possible to run a full 26.2 mile marathon without doubling back...

**BY PAUL MACSWEENY**

Assistant General Secretary

SETTING off on a first marathon, the day after my 50th birthday, in the heat and hills of far-away Bethlehem, past the illegal Israeli wall and Palestinian refugee camps was some experience.

As red, black and green balloons – the colours of the Palestinian flag – were released into the bright, blue sky, 4,000 joggers, aged 10 to over 70, from Palestine and 50 different countries, set off from Manger Square (a stone’s-throw from the spot where Jesus was reputedly born and where the Church of the Nativity now stands), on the marathon, half-marathon and 10km races.

It has been a long road for myself and my colleague Denis Keane since we decided last September to give the marathon a go. Denis was starting from scratch, I had jogged a 10km race in the late 1980s but nothing since.

Week by week we moved from the couch to 5km and then decided on Halloween, when we managed to finish the 10km Glendalough Trail in aid of Fighting Blindness, that we were someway fit to do a marathon. Little did we know!

Over the winter and spring we trained separately upping the mileage incrementally until we ran a half marathon in January. I couldn’t walk for days after and wondered whether I would ever be able to run a full 26.2 mile marathon.

I slowed down, after-all it was a marathon not a sprint, and this helped with the training if not the time. Four hours and 30 minutes was the target time – Des [Fagan] in work asked if I walking it at that pace. As it turned out I didn’t get near the target time but that’s for later in the article.

By the time we reached Bethlehem and met up with Ryan who was co-ordinating Irish runners based in Derry, Belfast, Dublin, Cloughjordan and Germany, we had jogged more than 30km and felt we were ready for the Palestinian marathon. In all, 25 Irish people participated.

The races both celebrate and highlight Palestinian citizens fundamental ‘Right to Movement’, which unfortunately is severely restricted by the occupying Israeli authorities. The Israeli Army controls all access routes into and out of Palestine and restricts movement of Palestinians within Palestine.

We met Palestinians in Bethlehem who cannot visit family and friends living just over four miles away in East Jerusalem because Israel restricts and controls such basic move-

Continued on page 30
ment across the West Bank.

There is an illegal wall built by the Israeli authorities across much of the West Bank. To travel the short trip between Bethlehem and Jerusalem firstly requires a permit (as a tourist you receive one, but for Palestinians they are very limited) and then you have to go through an airport type scanner and then border control manned by Israeli soldiers as you cross through the wall.

On arrival in Jerusalem there are further security checks from time to time at the Damascus gate and within the walled city. Many Gazans who signed up for the marathon hoping to come to Bethlehem were refused the necessary permits to travel with the Israelis claiming that the permits had not been applied for in time.

Taunted

Children going to school face Israeli soldier checkpoints on a daily basis where in some instances they are hassled as well as taunted by Israeli settlers living in Palestinian areas the International community recognise as illegal settlements.

The ongoing conflict, fuelled by illegal Israeli settlements and Israeli occupation, has been particularly stressful on young people. Israel ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. But a 2013 report by UNICEF, the UN children’s agency, concluded that abuses of Palestinian minors in military detention were "widespread, systematic and institutionalised". Around 100 Palestinian children under the age of 16, some as young as 12, are currently imprisoned by the Israelis under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

The only airport in Palestine, agreed to under the Oslo Accord, was destroyed by the Israeli Army a number of years ago in response to the second Intifada. To go to Palestine and witness first-hand how Palestinians are treated under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

On arrival in Jerusalem there are further security checks from time to time at the Damascus gate and within the walled city. Many Gazans who signed up for the marathon hoping to come to Bethlehem were refused the necessary permits to travel with the Israelis claiming that the permits had not been applied for in time.

Taunted

Children going to school face Israeli soldier checkpoints on a daily basis where in some instances they are hassled as well as taunted by Israeli settlers living in Palestinian areas the International community recognise as illegal settlements.

The ongoing conflict, fuelled by illegal Israeli settlements and Israeli occupation, has been particularly stressful on young people. Israel ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. But a 2013 report by UNICEF, the UN children’s agency, concluded that abuses of Palestinian minors in military detention were "widespread, systematic and institutionalised". Around 100 Palestinian children under the age of 16, some as young as 12, are currently imprisoned by the Israelis under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

The only airport in Palestine, agreed to under the Oslo Accord, was destroyed by the Israeli Army a number of years ago in response to the second Intifada. To go to Palestine and witness first-hand how Palestinians are treated under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

On arrival in Jerusalem there are further security checks from time to time at the Damascus gate and within the walled city. Many Gazans who signed up for the marathon hoping to come to Bethlehem were refused the necessary permits to travel with the Israelis claiming that the permits had not been applied for in time.

Taunted

Children going to school face Israeli soldier checkpoints on a daily basis where in some instances they are hassled as well as taunted by Israeli settlers living in Palestinian areas the International community recognise as illegal settlements.

The ongoing conflict, fuelled by illegal Israeli settlements and Israeli occupation, has been particularly stressful on young people. Israel ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. But a 2013 report by UNICEF, the UN children’s agency, concluded that abuses of Palestinian minors in military detention were "widespread, systematic and institutionalised". Around 100 Palestinian children under the age of 16, some as young as 12, are currently imprisoned by the Israelis under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

The only airport in Palestine, agreed to under the Oslo Accord, was destroyed by the Israeli Army a number of years ago in response to the second Intifada. To go to Palestine and witness first-hand how Palestinians are treated under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

On arrival in Jerusalem there are further security checks from time to time at the Damascus gate and within the walled city. Many Gazans who signed up for the marathon hoping to come to Bethlehem were refused the necessary permits to travel with the Israelis claiming that the permits had not been applied for in time.

Taunted

Children going to school face Israeli soldier checkpoints on a daily basis where in some instances they are hassled as well as taunted by Israeli settlers living in Palestinian areas the International community recognise as illegal settlements.

The ongoing conflict, fuelled by illegal Israeli settlements and Israeli occupation, has been particularly stressful on young people. Israel ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. But a 2013 report by UNICEF, the UN children’s agency, concluded that abuses of Palestinian minors in military detention were "widespread, systematic and institutionalised". Around 100 Palestinian children under the age of 16, some as young as 12, are currently imprisoned by the Israelis under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

The only airport in Palestine, agreed to under the Oslo Accord, was destroyed by the Israeli Army a number of years ago in response to the second Intifada. To go to Palestine and witness first-hand how Palestinians are treated under military law. Stone throwing is the main reason Palestinian children are brought before the military courts.

On arrival in Jerusalem there are further security checks from time to time at the Damascus gate and within the walled city. Many Gazans who signed up for the marathon hoping to come to Bethlehem were refused the necessary permits to travel with the Israelis claiming that the permits had not been applied for in time.
“Freedom of movement is not a right in itself, but is essential for the enjoyment of many other human rights. Restrictions on freedom of movement imposed by Israel on the occupied Palestinian territory permeate almost all facets of everyday life and continue to separate Palestinians and fragment the territory.”

Running to tell a different story

BY DENIS KEANE
Industrial Relations Officer
THE Bethlehem marathon Paul and I ran in was organised by a global running community called Right to Movement. The first Bethlehem marathon, organised by Right to Movement, took place in 2013, and has taken place every year since. It was launched following the calling off of the Gaza marathon that year because Hamas refused to allow women to run in the race.

The three co-founders of the initiative are two Danish women Singe Fischer Smidt and Laerek Hein along with a Palestinian man, George Zeidan.

The 2013 race had fewer than 700 runners but this has built up over the past four years so that this year over 4,300 people from more than 50 countries took part. This figure could have been higher unfortunately registered runners from the Gaza strip were not allowed to attend by the Israeli authorities.

What was particularly impressive was the number of women running in the race. The international average for female participation in marathons is under 30%. In this marathon more than 2,000 – or 46% of the runners – were female. This is all the more impressive when you consider that previously the idea of women running on the streets at all would have been frowned upon and three years previously the Gaza marathon had been cancelled due to the ban on women running.

A secondary theme gained momentum at this year’s marathon. The issue of inheritance by women was highlighted to bring attention to the discrimination facing Palestinian women in terms of inheritance rights.

Due to the occupation of Palestine, it is not possible to find one strip of land of 26 miles in length. In fact, you can’t run more than 10 km without meeting a border checkpoint or the wall. Because of this you run the same route back and forth and come to the finish line twice. Diala Isid, a marathon organiser put it well when she said: “The Palestinian Marathon illustrates how we live in Palestine. It starts from the Nativity Church, through an apartheid wall, through two refugee camps and then back to the Nativity Square.”

On its website Right to Movement states that “we run to tell a different story”. George, one of the co-founders of Right to Movement, in talking about the daily life of Palestinians, said: “In order to understand our reality, you need to put on your running shoes and try to run anywhere, where you have restrictions. This is what is happening to us here in Palestine.”

As I ran the marathon these words made complete sense to me. The race started off from Nativity Square and within a couple of miles you meet the apartheid wall standing at 8 metres high (more than double the height of the Berlin Wall). Then you immediately run through Aida Camp, a refugee camp since 1948. Those few miles taught me more than hundreds or thousands of articles or videos.

Right to Movement is an international running community, with 14 different running communities worldwide, and one that I believe should be and needs to be supported.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the marathon or Right to Movement, you can contact myself or Paul through CPSU Head Office. Also, if any runners, of any level, as well as those who have not run before – from beginners to the more experienced – are interested in joining a Dublin or Irish Right to Movement community, let us know.
AS A younger man dealing with the pressures of mortgage and young children along with the stresses of working in the print industry, I was, like anyone else, concerned with my workplace and the working conditions we faced.

I was also, as a result of an inability to keep my mouth shut, a representative for members of the Graphical Paper and Media Union (GPMU, as it was then, now Unite).

In the mid-sized print company where I worked which had about 55 staff, we faced an employer who was a tough but, I’d have to say, fair man for the most part.

A redoubtable and resolute Scot, he was a self-made businessman who came from Edinburgh to work in the print industry in Guinness’s and then started up his own print business.

Like most young union reps I was untrained but enthusiastic. However, I was very much fearful of engaging with and representing members in what was an industry-wide battle to reduce manning levels on large printing machines and, of course, increase profits for the owners.

What has all this got to do with the 1916 Easter Rising and the centenary celebrations? Well, as I was worrying about putting my job and family’s future on the line, I was inspired to remember my grandfather and great-grandfather who were involved in the Easter Rising and further efforts to secure a Republic and break away from British rule.

When I thought of how my great-grandfa-
Volunteer James Quinn faced the might of the British Empire with an outdated Mauser rifle and meagre rations, it really put into perspective the risk I was taking when representing union members at work.

James Quinn was 42 years old in Easter 1916 when he volunteered for action. He was a painter by trade and is described in the census records as a ‘finishing painter’. He lived with his wife, Marcella, and their four children and two boarders in Hammond Lane, Blackpitts, Dublin City.

On the day of the mobilisation on Easter Monday 1916 he would have taken his rifle – one of the many he helped to unload from the Asgard in Howth – and grabbed some rations before assembling with the 4th Battalion of the Irish Volunteers under the Command of Eamonn Ceannt.

The 4th Battalion was tasked with taking control of the South Dublin Union site (now St James’ Hospital). This was to enable the volunteers to stop British troops coming from the Curragh down the Naas Road and in through Inchicore to the city centre.

Volunteer Quinn and his comrade took up a position in a field opposite a wall that separated the hospital from the canal. When British troops arrived the officers ordered their men to scale the wall and take the position. It was not too hard for Vol. Quinn to stop them as the British troops struggled to get on top of the wall.

However, after retreating due to heavy losses, the British forced open a door in the wall rushing the position killing the two volunteers. Their bodies would later lie in the field for most of the day.

Some of the fiercest house-to-house and room-to-room fighting took place in the South Dublin Union as the British Forces found it extremely difficult and costly to dislodge the rebels.

Much has been written about the aftermath and how attitude of Dubliners and Irish people generally towards the rebels changed. It was not until after the merciless executions amid the destruction of the city that public attitude turned back to support the Rebellion and its leaders.

How the bodies of the fallen soldiers were treated was revealed to me by members of the National Graves Association (NGA) during a visit to the 1916 plot on the Easter Rising anniversary.

They told me that the volunteers who were buried there had mostly been brought at night having been identified by only one family member. Following this identification, they were unceremoniously put into a pit normally reserved for paupers.

Such was the rush to bury the dead, it is thought that there are a number of civilians and even two British soldiers were buried alongside the men of 1916.

James Quinn’s son, Leo, would later take part in the War of Independence. When hostilities ended, he got a job at the Department of Agriculture and the Land Commission. When he died in 1958, he received a full military funeral in Mount Argus church, Harolds Cross, Dublin.

When I thought of how James Quinn fought the British Empire with an outdated Mauser rifle, it really put into perspective the risk I was taking when representing union members at work.
**TRANSFERS**

**Clerical Officer**, job sharer, 4 day week (off Fridays) in DSP, Insolvency Payments Section, Hatch St. (Not a Public Office) Due to move to Store St. in Summer/Autumn of 2016 seeks head to head transfer to People Point or a South Dublin office (any Dept.) or Garda Station. (with car parking if possible) for urgent domestic reasons. Very friendly office with flexi time, limited car parking in Hatch St. NOTE: there is no car parking in Store St.

**Box 921**

**Clerical Officer**, Courts Service, Ennis, Co. Clare seeks head to head transfer to any Government Department in the Co. Clare or Limerick City areas. Free car parking, flexitime, and canteen facilities available.

**Box 922**

**Clerical Officer**, Department of Justice, Sligo wishes to transfer to any Dept. in Claremorris /Castlebar/Castlerea/Ballina/Tuam/Swinford/Westport/Tubbercurry or surrounding areas for urgent domestic and commuting reasons. Flexi-time and car parking available.

**Box 924**

**Clerical Officer**, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Newtown Road, Wexford, seeks head to head transfer to any Government Department in Wexford or Enniscorthy. Friendly office with flexi time, canteen and car parking available.

**Box 925**

**Clerical Officer**, (half days) Flexible, Dublin 9 Garda Station, new building, secure parking, gym facilities etc., seeks transfer to any Department in Dublin 11 or Dublin 15 for family reasons.

**Box 926**

**Clerical Officer**, wishing to transfer to any Departments within Dublin 1, 2, 7 and 8 area.

Currently working in Social Protection (non-public office) Located in Dublin 1 on Store Street, very central and right Beside Connolly Station the Red Luas Line. Very large office 5 floors and very friendly atmosphere with flexitime available. I’ve Been working in this department for many years and I would be interesting in a change for self-development And career advancement.

**Box 927**

**Clerical Officer**, Dept. of Public Expenditure & Reform, seeks head to head transfer for commuting reasons, to office in West Dublin, e.g. Lucan, Palmerstown, Chapelizod etc. Great location in Dublin city centre, friendly office, good promotional opportunities.

**Box 928**

**Clerical Officer**, Central Statistics Office Cork seeks head to head transfer to the Dept. Of Agriculture Food & the Marine, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, for domestic and commuting reasons. Friendly office, car parking, canteen and flexitime available.

**Box 929**

**Clerical Officer**, Department of Agriculture, Portlaoise seeks head to head transfer to either Department of Education or Department of Revenue, Tullamore for domestic reasons. Friendly office with car parking, canteen and flexi-time.

**Box 930**

**Clerical Officer**, Dept. of Justice, Irish Film Classification Office, Smithfield, Dublin 7, seeks head to head transfer to any other Government Department in City Centre area, for self-development & career advancement. Friendly office with flexitime, on Luas line.

**Box 931**

**Clerical Officer**, Revenue Lansdowne House, seeks head to head transfer with CO at the Passport Office in Balbriggan for family and commuting reasons. Friendly office with varied and interesting work, with opportunities of transfers to other areas of taxation and Revenue buildings. Flexi, Staff Canteen, Kitchen Facilities, Rest Room, Shower Room and Car Parking. 7 minute walk from Lansdown Road DART Station, good variety of shops, pubs and public park.

**Box 932**

**Clerical Officer**, (Full-time) Property Registration Authority, Four Courts, seeks head to head transfer to Talbot for domestic reasons. Friendly office with canteen and flexi-time. Central location for all buses, Luas stop outside the door and shopping central.

**Box 933**

**Clerical Officer**, Department of Social Protection, Child Benefit, seeks head to head transfer to any Government Department in Donegal Town. Parking and Flexi time available.

**Box 934**
Clerical Officer, Full-time, Department of Social Protection, Employment programmes Section Dublin 1 seeks head to head transfer to any areas/departments in Dublin 1, 2, 7 as would like to gain experience in other areas. A friendly office with flexi time, canteen and car parking.

Box 935

Clerical Officer, Fulltime, Dept. of Public Expenditure and Reform seeks transfer or head to head transfer to any government department in Tullamore or Portlaoise for personal reasons. Social Club, canteen, flexi time and parking available.

Box 936

Clerical Officer, Garda Area, Harcourt Square, D2 (working 4 day week) seeks head to head transfer to any Government Department in Dublin City Centre/South City, would be interested in Revenue, Health, Arts & Heritage. Friendly office, flexi-time, social club, gym, car-parking, next to Grafton Street & Luas line (Green line). Looking for transfer to gain experience in a different department.

Box 937

Clerical Officer, Dept of Social Protection Clonmel seeks head to head transfer to Dept of Children & Youth Affairs in Clonmel to gain further experience. Very friendly working environment, flexi time and car parking available.

Box 938

Staff Officer, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform Tullamore, Co Offaly seeks transfer to Department of Education, Tullamore or Department of Education in Athlone, Friendly office environment, flexi-time and car parking available.

Box 939

Clerical Officer, Dept. of Foreign Affairs & Trade seeks transfer or head to head transfer to the Revenue Commissioners in Ashtown Gate / Tallaght or any other Dept. in the Mid West/South West area of Dublin for commuting reasons.

Very friendly office with flexi time available. Convenient City Centre location.

Box 940

Staff Officer, Irish Prison Service HQ Longford, Department of Justice and Equality, seeks urgent Head to Head Transfer to any Government Department in Trim, Co. Meath for personal reasons. Flexi, Parking, Canteen and Gym available.

Box 941

Clerical Officer, Dept of Social Welfare, Finglas, Dublin 11. Seeks head to head transfer to any government department in swords or north county Dublin. Flexi time available and free parking.

Box 942

Clerical Officer, Government Department, Killarney Co Kerry seeks head to head transfer to any Government Department in Cork City or County for commuting & domestic reasons. Friendly office to work in. Flexitime & car parking available.

Box 943

Clerical Officer, (four day working pattern) -Department of Education and Skills in Athlone seeks head to head transfer, to any department in Ballinasloe, or any other department in Athlone, Loughrea. Friendly office, canteen, flexi time available.

Box 944

Clerical Officer, full time, working in the Department of Social Protection, Longford seeks head to head transfer to any office in Sligo for commuting and domestic reasons. Friendly office with car parking, canteen and flexi-time.

Box 945

Clerical Officer, Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation, Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 seeks head to head transfer, preferably Department of Agriculture, Kildare Street or Department of Transport or Environment to gain wider experience of the civil service and for commuting reasons.

Friendly office, Canteen, Flexi time, car parking available on a rota basis.

Box 946

Clerical Officer, CSO, Cork, seeks head to head transfer to any Cork department. Flexi time and parking available.

Box 947

Clerical Officer, DSP Cork City seeks head to head transfer to any Galway City department. Very friendly office, canteen, flexitime and car park.

Box 948

Clerical Officer, Dept of Defence, Renmore, Galway seeks head to head transfer to any Government Department/Agency in the Castlebar/Claremorris region. Very friendly office, good location, free parking, canteen, excellent social club, flexitime available.

Box 949

Clerical Officer, An Garda Síochána, Kilkenny seeks head to head transfer to Department of Foreign Affairs in Cork or Limerick. Other Government Departments considered in Kilkenny. Friendly office in convenient city centre location, flexitime & car parking available.

Box 950

Clerical Officer, Waterford Garda Station, seeks head to head transfer to any Government Department/Garda Station in the Waterford/Kilkenny/Wexford area. Friendly working environment. Flexitime & car parking available.

Box 951

Please note that to respond and/or have a transfer printed in Aontas, send an email to Monica at mrooney@cpsu.ie
Two Tickets to ‘Ravelóid’
Music Festival to be won

Aontas has a pair of tickets for Ravelóid music and culture festival in Ardgillan Castle, Balbriggan on 10-11 June.

Delorentos, Kila, The Ripetide Movement, Heathers, Hothouse Flowers, Altan and many more will be on stage.

Free camping is provided.

To win a pair of tickets answer this question:

He was a leader of the 1916 Easter Rising and a trade union leader.
Who was he?

Answers, including your name, union number, contact number or email to:

Aontas Competition, CPSU,
19/20 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2.

Mark your envelopes ‘Ravelóid’.

Closing Date: 1 June 2016

CPSU has negotiated a discounted rate for CPSU members to Ravelóid. Further details will issue by circular.
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION & RIGHTS UNIT

HERE TO SERVE CPSU MEMBERS

- Advice on your rights under Agreed Circulars/Reports and Agreements
- Guidance on annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, shorter working year, deductions from pay, flexi-time etc
- Guidance on handling disciplinary and grievance policies and procedures
- Advice on Bullying and Harassment policies and procedures
- Referral of individual rights cases to third parties such as the Rights Commissioner Service
- General Information on Equality, Disability, Health & Safety as well as pension rights and entitlements

CONTACT MIRU TEAM ON
T: 01 6020202 E: miru@cpsu.ie

CPSU Civil Public & Services Union
CIRCULARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Issued to</th>
<th>Cir</th>
<th>Issued From</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Temporary reallocation of Depts &amp; Offices for Industrial Relations services by Head Office</td>
<td>26th Feb</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>032/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branches AGMs outstanding Re ADC 2016</td>
<td>4th March</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>033/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Women's Day</td>
<td>8th March</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>034/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADC 2106 material</td>
<td>9th March</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>035/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADC 2106 material</td>
<td>18th March</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>036/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information meeting pre ADC on Amalgamation Report</td>
<td>21st March</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>037/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Update</td>
<td>24th March</td>
<td>Harcourt Square Members</td>
<td>038/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aontas Jan/Feb crossword competition</td>
<td>5th April</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>039/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADC 2016 Material</td>
<td>13th April</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>040/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADC 2016 Arrangements</td>
<td>14th April</td>
<td>Branch Secretary /Delegate to ADC</td>
<td>041/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various Issues</td>
<td>15th April</td>
<td>All Dublin Garda Members</td>
<td>042/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road Traffic Offences</td>
<td>15th April</td>
<td>Members Garda Area</td>
<td>043/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SO/EO Integration</td>
<td>15th April</td>
<td>Branch Secretaries</td>
<td>044/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not issued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>045/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not issued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>046/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elections ADC 2016</td>
<td>19th April</td>
<td>Candidates for President/VP, Trustee, EC and Standing Orders</td>
<td>001/16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NEWS CIRCULARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>003/16</td>
<td>26th February 2016</td>
<td>Unpaid Additional Hours &amp; the HRA, Temporary re-allocation of Departments &amp; Offices for industrial relations services by Head Office, Civil Service Disciplinary Code, Overpayments in the Civil Service, Central Transfer List/CAF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004/16</td>
<td>11th March 2016</td>
<td>Marriage Leave, SO/EO integration, Underperformance policy, PSSC Tullamore, Dept. of Justice, Staff Resources/Civilisation, EO Competition Garda, Garda Inspectorate Report, Garda Counselling service, Bullying and Harassment, Harcourt Sq Closure, Garda Vetting, GNIB, GISC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005/16</td>
<td>29th March 2016</td>
<td>SO/EO Integration, Disciplinary code review, Transfers, CTL, CAF/Mobility, Data Breach, Legal Aid Board, Garda Nat Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006/16</td>
<td>11th April 2016</td>
<td>ADC, Underperformance Policy, SO/EO Talks, Marriage Leave, Garda Harcourt Square.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>007/16</td>
<td>14th April 2016</td>
<td>Data Breach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two prizes of €100 will be awarded to the members whose correct solutions are first opened. Solutions must reach the Editor no later than 20th June, 2016. Only one entry per member accepted. Send your correct entries to: Crossword 153, CPSU, 19/20 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 together with a copy of a current payslip.

**Crossword 153**

**Clues Across**

6. Starting prices gets lubricated and ruined (7)
7. Windfall could be on you and me (5)
9. Alan Kyne is somewhat thin and tall (5)
10. Unsightly letters are rewritten by Bill (7)
12. In which the future will arrive (5,2,4)
14. Accept with love and belief (4,2,5)
18. Lire are not later if converted (7)
19. Give the show away (5)
21. Set out, for example, in container (5)
22. Being generous has turned something round (7)

**Clues Down**

1. Converse on Southern tip of mountain (5)
2. Shellfish hides in shallow ink leak (6)
3. A rabbit is a favourite example (3)
4. Signs of the future at birth (6)
5. Can you be briefly in slime and far from ridiculous (7)
8. Trade Unionist in the monastery (7)
11. Sounds like a super cavalryman (7)
13. The horses mum got older and injured (7)
15. Make car lie about something sweet (6)
16. This account relates to wine (6)
17. Flash eyelids with second letter connection (5)
20. Third person is partially emeshed (3)

**Crossword 152 Solutions:**


**Prize Winners – Two Prizes of €100 Each:**

Crossword 152: Regina Swaine, Attorney General’s, Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2 and Carmel Feeney, Dept of Defence, Lakeshore Drive, Renmore, Galway.
Support your family for less!
Discounted Health Insurance* for members of Civil & Public Service

*Unique discount for Civil & Public Service staff only available through Lyons Financial Services

As the price of Health Insurance rises due to changes in tax relief, Lyons Financial Services are delighted to now offer a discounted Health Insurance plan, only available to members of the Civil & Public Service!

The plan offers;
- Access to Public Hospitals
- Access to Private Hospitals
- Access to the Beacon Hospital
- Excellent Maternity cover
- Money back on day to day medical excess (GP, Dentist, Physiotherapist)

To find out how to join the Plan contact Lyons Financial Services on 01 8015808 or email health@lfs.ie

LYONS
Financial Services

Office 1, Dunboyne Business Park, Dunboyne, Co. Meath
Phone: 01 8015808   Email: query@lfs.ie    Web: www.lfs.ie

Roisin Lyons t/a Lyons Financial Services is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland