

APPENDIX B: FORMAT OF CONFERENCE

19 September 2006

**GS LETTER 2279/2006
[TO MEMBERS OF THE NEC]**

Dear Colleague

CONFERENCE 2008

At a recent meeting of the NEC at your request I agreed to write a brief paper for your consideration in relation to the options which may be available to us for future annual conferences. It was suggested at the NEC that we need to look at doing seminars during conference and it was also requested that I look at the timing of divisional conferences and annual conference bearing in mind the need to try and finish conference at a reasonable time in order to allow individuals to travel home.

Timing of Conference

This year [2006] we found that delegates were leaving annual conference early on the Sunday in order to catch trains home. Bearing in mind the amount of engineering work that takes place at weekends it is likely that this will continue to be the case for some years to come. However, even though the divisional conferences for the BBC, IB and A&E plus the divisional committee for RPD, all lasted no more than three hours, there is a clear preference in BBC, IB and A&E to have their divisional conference prior to annual conference. As we explained at the last NEC, it is not possible to change what has already been agreed for 2007 and therefore in 2007 annual conference will be on the first day with the divisional conferences on the second day.

Because of rules revision, we have in the past allocated three days to cover all conferences. Using the last rules revision conference as a guide, I believe that as long as NEC have not got a lot of tidying up rule changes to propose, then the following timetable could work satisfactorily in 2008:

Day One

10am approximately	divisional conferences
3pm approximately	commencement of rules revision conference

Day Two annual conference

Make up of Conference

If we are to continue with the current practice of going through the Annual Report paragraph by paragraph as well as taking the propositions, then I cannot see how time can be allocated in order to allow the conference to break up into seminars for a fixed period of time. However, if members of the NEC felt that the idea of seminars is one that should be given further consideration, then my suggestion for dealing with this would be as follows:

Conference would begin with the opening followed by the Standing Orders Report, this would be followed by a presentation on Recruitment, Retention & Industrial Business, i.e. the activities of the union. Conference could then break for seminar sessions and reconvene for the final session, which would commence with the Finance Report and then the Propositions would be taken.

This would not allow any time to go through the Annual Report paragraph by paragraph. However as it is a record of the union's work, I do not believe it should just be glossed over, and therefore I would suggest that the report be sent to branches 6-8 weeks prior to annual conference and branches could indicate at that stage which sections of the annual report they would wish to be discussed at conference, which would not already be covered by the above sessions, and these would then be taken after the propositions.

Personally, I have no strong views on whether we continue with the current practice or propose some change to this. I would however caution a unilateral change and therefore believe that any proposals for change should go to the 2007 conference, with no changes being implemented prior to 2008.

GERRY MORRISSEY
Assistant General Secretary