

**Connect Group press release:** 2 March 2015

# Appointment of New Chairman

Connect Group, a leading specialist distributor operating in four divisions; News & Media, Books, Education & Care and Parcel Freight, is pleased to announce that Gary Kennedy will join the Board as a non-executive director and Chairman-designate with immediate effect.

In line with the Board's non-executive director succession plans announced on 15 October 2014, Gary will subsequently become non-executive Chairman when Dennis Millard steps down as Chairman and retires from the Board on 1 May 2015. He will also chair the Nominations Committee and be a member of the Audit and Remuneration Committees.

Gary Kennedy has extensive business experience with Deloitte, Nortel Networks (Vice President of Nortel Europe) and during the latter part of his executive career with Allied Irish Banks plc, where he was Group Director of Finance and Enterprise Technology and a member of its main Board together with subsidiary Boards in the US and Poland. He is currently Chairman of Greencore Group plc; Chairman of Green REIT plc and a non-executive director of Friends First Holdings Ltd. He has previously been a non-executive director of Elan Corporation plc and Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Ltd, as well as serving on the Board of the Industrial Development Authority of Ireland for 10 years, retiring in December 2005.

Commenting on his forthcoming retirement, Dennis Millard said: "It has been a privilege to serve on the Connect Group board since it was first listed in 2006. The Group's transition from a single activity business to a leading specialist distributor operating in four divisions has been an exciting journey, and we are proud to have delivered an unbroken record of dividend growth since 2006. It has been a pleasure to work with such a fine board and executive team and I thank all of them for their support over these years. I welcome Gary to the Connect Group family and wish him and all of the colleagues in the Group the very best."

Mark Cashmore, Group Chief Executive, said:

"I am delighted to welcome Gary to Connect Group. His experience across a variety of industries is highly relevant to the Group and will be a valuable asset as we continue to grow our business."

"I would also like to thank Dennis Millard for his clear leadership, unwavering dedication and contribution to the success of the Group during his time as a director and Chairman."

Gary Kennedy said: "Connect Group has a clear strategy to build a balanced portfolio of specialist distribution businesses that will continue to grow and deliver strong returns for shareholders. I am very much looking forward to working with the Board and supporting the further development of this strategy."

The Company confirms that there is no further information about Gary Kennedy requiring disclosure under paragraph 9.6.13 (2) to (6) of the Listing Rules of the UK Listing Authority.

## **Enquiries:**

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### **About Connect Group PLC:**

Connect Group PLC is a leading specialist distributor operating in large and diverse markets. The Group has four separate divisions, connecting suppliers to customers in an efficient, knowledgeable and service oriented way:

**Connect News & Media** – encompassing: Smiths News, the UK's largest news wholesaling business with an approximate 55% market share, distributing newspapers and magazines on behalf of all the major national publishers as well as a large number of regional publishers. Smiths News serves approximately 30,000 customers across England and Wales, supplying large general retailers as well as smaller independent newsagents; and Dawson Media Direct, an international media direct business supplying newspapers, magazines and inflight entertainment technology and content to over 80 airlines in 50 Countries.

**Connect Books** – combining a number of recognised brands in print and digital bookselling, including Bertrams, Dawson Books and Wordery. A leading distributor of physical and digital books, the division serves over 8,200 customers in approximately 100 countries, with over 200,000 in stock titles and access to over a further 7 million consumer and 20 million academic titles.

**Connect Education & Care** - a leading independent supplier of consumables through The Consortium and West Mercia Supplies with an approximate 5% market share. The division serves over 30,000 customers with an extensive range of over 40,000 products across a branded, own brand and value range, including stationery, arts and craft and cleaning.

**Connect Parcel Freight** - led by Tuffnells Parcels Express – one of the UK's leading business to business distribution specialists. With over 100 years' experience, Tuffnells' national network is trusted by over 4,000 customers, with over 700 vehicles operating from 34 depots. A reliable road based service into Europe and Air Express service to the rest of the world complements the range of domestic delivery services.

For more information, visit: [www.connectgroupplc.com](http://www.connectgroupplc.com)

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