

The Fire Brigade Society

Agenda for the 2017 Annual General Meeting

(As detailed under Clauses 20 and 22 of The Fire Brigade Society Constitution)

To be held on

Friday 22 September 2017 at 18.00 hours

in

**The Morton Room
County Durham and Darlington FRS Headquarters
Belmont Business Park
Belmont
Durham DH1 1TW**

- (1) Welcoming Address
- (2) Appointment of Chair (the President or his appointed deputy)
- (3) Advice of Minutes Secretary
- (4) Apologies
- (5) A 'Moment of Reflection' for The Society
- (6) Receive and approve the minutes of the 2016 AGM held on Saturday 24 September 2016 at 18.30 hours at London Fire Brigade, 169 Union Street London SE1 0LL.

(The AGM minutes were provided in November 2016 according to individual member's mandate.)

- (7) Matters arising
- (8) The Annual Report
- (9) Receive and consider the accounts of The Society for the financial year to 31 March 2017, the Treasurer's report on the financial position of The Society and the Auditor's report on The Society accounts.

(The Society accounts were provided in August 2017 according to individual member's mandate.)

- (10) The President's Address
- (11) Working Party Updates
- (12) Consider notices of motion duly submitted in accordance with Constitution clause 20(2)
- (13) Transaction of business that may be specified for the meeting
- (14) Rose and Bob Bonner Photographic Competition (No award - see Fire Cover 215, page 2)
- (15) Bob Herbert Award
- (16) Other awards and presentations
- (17) 2018-19 Annual General Meeting, National and International Visits
- (18) Any matters for the remainder of the AGM weekend

THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL REPORT 2016 / 2017

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I started last year's report talking about the Members Survey and using phrases like '*rash commitments*', '*Pandora's box*' and '*I'm not sure that any of us realised just what had been opened!*'

A year-on and I've realised that my concerns about our position and achievability of the work needed to move the Society forward were largely unfounded!

The two Working Parties, Management and Financial, took onboard the mandates they were presented with and, by giving freely of their time and energy, have delivered highly professional proposals to address the vast majority of the membership's demands as well as quantifying the physical and financial resources needed to achieve the outcomes.

As anticipated, work hasn't been completed within this year *BUT*, I'm pleased to report that we are well along the path to refreshing our approach to governance, finances, management and communications. The increasing membership trend is very encouraging but nowhere near the level that we would like. As we continue to look for initiatives that will engage the younger generation, please help by recommending membership to anyone who will listen. Further recruitment initiatives are planned and progress will be reported over coming months.

Both Working Parties still have much to do. However, I am confident of their will and ability to continue working on the outstanding items of the mandate you gave them and I'm sure you continue, with me, to give them our full support.

Recent tragic events have deeply impacted our Fire and Rescue community. Despite the sadness though, I am convinced that it has drawn us closer together with a reminder for just what it means to be part of this remarkable family. I am confident that the 'special relationship' The Society enjoys with fire and rescue services around the Country will only be strengthened in the years to come.

Over the course of the remainder of the 2017/18 membership year, the Society will be moving towards the new organisation whilst still delivering what you told us you value. The recent 'goodwill' exhibited in support of the efforts to deliver the Management Working Party's recommendations will be called upon through the transition period.

Our now priorities are to start appointing to the new organisation using the Working Party mechanism to assist where it can help. Experience has shown that those who make proposals are often best placed to ensure their successful implementation so, if you've been vocal about the way ahead, don't be surprised when your phone rings. I'm reminded of some wise words from the Management Working Party's Summary Report: "*Unless more members take an active role in The Society, either as an Officer, or in an unofficial ad-hoc capacity, its future will be limited*".

With this in mind, I would very much like to mention the outgoing Committee and other Officers for the amazing work they've done this year on behalf of The Society. I'm sure you will all join me in thanking them for their commitment and wishing them well in the future.

Thank you all for your ongoing support for this incredible Society and let's look forward together to an even more successful year ahead.

Jon Hall, QFSM, MIRM, FIFireE, President

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I believe acclaimed Yorkshire writer, Alan Bennett, once wrote 'change is inevitable, what's important is what you do with it'.

The Society is in the throes of change. This has drastically increased the 'workload' of a number of Officers, whilst still having to deliver 'business as usual'. As a retiree I can only sum it up as 'like going to work, but not getting paid for it!' I thank all those involved on Committee and the Working Parties for all their valiant effort during this time. I will not name you, but you know who you are.

As we move into a new organisation it is easy to forget what has been achieved previously.

Since the start of the millennium The Society has: had a new Constitution that has served us well: Membership Rules, a Data Protection Policy, only two modest membership subscription increases; regular Fire Covers, on time and to budget, including the largest ever published, improved communication with the fbsgmail addresses, a new web site, soon to be completely renewed; a memorable and fitting 50th Anniversary Year and celebrations, which included five Fire Covers and a Special Publication; more Special Publications, including the largest ever, Merryweather & Sons Ltd, as well as the Special Inserts to Fire Cover, Made in the USA, OZFEST and FLOODEX, than at any other time in The Society's history; more Overseas Visits than at any other time in The Society's history; very successful AGM and Annual National Visits' and a range of annual local visits. The potential is for the new organisation to continue to deliver what has gone before together with local newsletters, winter meetings and much more.

I have been on Committee for 25 years and Committee Chairman since the role's formalisation in the 2005 Constitution. It is with some personal sadness that the Committee will no longer be operating, but I am consoled by the knowledge that it is for the betterment of The Society.

I am proud of what has been achieved since the turn of the century and those who have contributed, the volunteers, should also be rightly proud. Ask yourself what have those who 'knock' The Society achieved in this time?

I will shortly be passing the 'Chairman's baton' on to our President, Jon Hall, very safe in the knowledge that it is in 'very capable hands'.

I thank all those that have personally assisted and guided me in my roles over the years. I have been truly graced with being able to work closely, as Chairman, with three excellent Presidents John Parry, Tony McGuirk and Jon Hall.

Whatever the future holds for you, may extend my very best wishes. With kindest regards.

Ralph Horton, Committee Chairman

EDITORIAL TEAM'S REPORT

The Society's publications arrive with members not only as a result of the Editorial Team's (ET) efforts, but also as a result of the proof reader, Charles Keevil, and the team at MP Printers, Phil Pease and Mike Pease.

We extend sincere thanks to all those involved in our publications, our contributors, our regular correspondents to Fire Cover and all those who send reports and information for Area News. Without their invaluable support and unstinting work we could not produce publications.

During the period April 2016 to March 2017, the ET delivered Fire Covers 212 to 215. All were 52 page plus cover editions. They were delivered to budget and agreed schedules as in The ET's Operational Plan 2016 / 17.

The ET continually strives to keep production costs down. Set against this MP Printers are still confronted with increases, significantly the cost of energy and materials. With the continued co-operation of our printers in reducing production runs below the economic quantity of 1,000 copies, together with other 'cost saving initiatives', we can report that although it was expected that an increase of 2% - 3% would apply there was no increase in printing costs in the reported financial year. However, it is likely that an increase in the order of 2% - 3% must be expected for the year 2017 / 18.

All communications and movement of copy for Fire Cover, between our printers and the Editors continues to be carried out using 'cloud technology' established and moderated for us by MP. This has drastically reduced the ET's running costs.

The costs over and above those of the production and distribution of Fire Cover are detailed below in this report with previous year's costs for comparison. The ET are now at a position where they are certain it is unlikely that further economies are available to them without reduction in the quality of our publication, which will be a 'last resort'.

The Distribution Manager is key to the final stage of the Fire Cover process. Fire Cover distribution is now carried out by Richard Williams, aided by his wife Mary, who is also a Society member. Distribution costs for Fire Cover are very significant and continue to attract annual increases. All distribution of Fire Covers in 2016 / 17 was by Royal Mail as it was the cheapest method. However, it should be noted that the last increase in membership subscriptions, in April 2011, only served to redress the increases in the cost of distributing our publications since the previous increase in April 2006.

Information for members is now being supplied according to individual member's mandate. The ET are co-operating with Committee to reduce the 'Parish Notices' in Fire Cover so copy space can be utilised for articles. The ET encourages members to consider opting for electronic communication as it not only reduces The Society's operating costs, it frees up pages in Fire Cover and reduces the amount of items that need enveloping at the distribution stage. However, it must be recognised that as the current Financial and Management Working Parties report, 'Parish Notices' may increase, but this is expected to settle as the new organisation is put in place.

The income to produce our publications is raised from membership fees, The Society Sales Unit, donations, or the sale of donated items. An increase, or decrease in membership, has an effect on what can be delivered in the way of Society publications, as does a fall in other revenue.

As Fire Cover (and other publications) represents the most tangible item the majority of members receive from their membership, as in previous years, it is the Committee's resolve to maximise investment in this facet of The Society.

EDITORIAL TEAM'S OPERATING COST (in addition to printing and distribution)

FINANCIAL YEAR	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
TRAVEL	£447.85	£251.26	NIL	NIL
POSTAGE	£86.84	£37.26	£4.66	£6.79
OTHERS	£12.99	NIL	NIL	NIL
TOTAL	£547.68	£288.52	£4.66	£6.79

Please note that as the above expenses were claimed after the end of the financial year they were proper to, in accounting terms they may appear in The Society Accounts in the year settlement of expense claims took place.

The ET's and Distribution Managers 2017 / 18 Operational Plans has been posted on The Society's web site and regular progress reports will also be provided.

We close in re-stating that the Editorial Team remains committed, within the constraints of the resources available to them, to a highly professional approach to producing and delivering consistently fine quality Society publications. Fire Cover remains as the very 'keystone' of The Fire Brigade Society and long may it prosper.

Ralph Horton, Les Edkins, Mike Smith, Editorial Team

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

This was my second full year as Membership Secretary and having retired from full time paid employment in July 2016 I seem to have become a full time unpaid employee of The Fire Brigade Society. On the whole, membership renewals went quite smoothly, there were one or two minor hiccups, but nothing of a systemic nature, and they were all sorted amicably in the end.

The renewals by Direct Debit went well, and I must never cease to thank Gordon Whitehead for willingly volunteering in continuing to assist me with these, and also the PayPal payments. Although we naturally continue to accept cheques, we would encourage all members who have not already done so, to consider Direct Debit, or at least electronic transfer / BACS payments, as the cost of these is considerably less than we are charged for processing a cheque. PayPal is a useful tool, particularly for International members, but does have quite a high transaction charge, and again there are cheaper alternatives available to UK members. These previous comments are just a guide for members who wish The Society to gain the maximum benefit from their hard – earned subscriptions. Whichever method you use, we would much rather have your money than not.

The total membership of all classes was 598 at the end of the 2016 / 2017 year, compared with 587 at the same time in 2015 / 2016, and it currently (31st July 2017) stands at 573 for 2017 / 2018. Renewals are still trickling in, and with the ongoing quest for new members, I am optimistic that we can surpass the 2015 / 16 figure. It would be good if we could also pass the 2016 / 17 one. Please consider if you can help by encouraging former members to re-join and new members to sign up.

Richard Williams, Membership Secretary

SALES UNIT'S REPORT

As you are all aware both Nigel Crisp and I retired at the 2016 AGM from our roles running the Society's Sales Unit. Nigel, as Assistant Sales Manager, served for over twenty years, and as Sales Manager, I served for seventeen years.

It is estimated that during this time the turnover (not profit) for the Sales Unit may have exceeded £100,000.

Sales turnover for the last half financial year were just over £2,400.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting the Sales Unit over the years and both Nigel and I wish you all the best for the future and hope to see many of you in the future.

Eddie Baker, Sales Manager

TREASURER'S REPORT

Following this report is the Finance Statement for Year Ending 31st March 2017, this being in the format determined by the Finance Working Party. The Society Accounts are now the subject of external audit, the results of which will be provided for the 2017 AGM.

Fire Cover, along with its distribution, continues to be the highest expenditure of The Society.

I must put on record thanks to the Editorial Team for implementing initiatives and for negotiations with our printers that have had a real effect on the production costs of our journal. (See Editorial Teams Report)

I also draw your attention to the Financial Working Party's Report accompanying this Annual Report.

The continued use of subscriptions being received directly into the bank and payments out, mostly by BACS, has kept costs down.

I have recommend to Committee, and it has been agreed, that no increase in subscriptions will be required for the 2018 / 19 financial year.

I thank all Officers, especially my Committee colleagues and the Editorial Team, for keeping operating expenses to a bare minimum.

Brian Jackson, Treasurer

THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY

FINANCE STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2017

INCOME (£)

MEMBERSHIP INCOME	16,145.00
SOCIETY EVENTS (NET)	117.30
SALES UNIT	2,400.00
DONATIONS	400.00

TOTAL	19,062.30
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EXPENDITURE (£)

FIRE COVER PRODUCTION	10,185.00
FIRE COVER DISTRIBUTION	3,182.96
BANK CHARGES	230.29
INSURANCE	274.20
WEBSITE COSTS	163.26
MEMBERSHIP OF FIRE HERITAGE UK	25.00
OFFICERS EXPENSES	431.24
PRINTING & STATIONERY	331.78
POSTAGE	109.25

TOTAL	14,932.98
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SURPLUS	4,129.32
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STOCK (£)

AT 31ST MARCH 2017, STOCK WAS HELD AT COST VALUES:

SALES UNIT	2,918.84
SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS	2,846.30

TOTAL	5,765.14
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