

NEW FBU PRESIDENT ELECTED



London firefighter Mick Shaw elected unopposed as President of the FBU

London firefighter Mick Shaw, 48, has been elected unopposed as President of the Fire Brigades Union. He took up office for the first time today for a four-year term.

The incumbent, Ruth Winters, decided not to accept nomination for re-election. February 27 was Ruth Winters last day in office.

Mick Shaw, who for the last ten years has represented London members on the FBU's Executive Council, paid tribute to his predecessor and to the work that she has done on the union's behalf during a difficult period including the 2002/2003 pay dispute and its aftermath.

Mick Shaw said in a statement: "My priorities are to ensure that we can put our recent difficult period behind us and to re-assert our position as the leading voice for the UK Fire Service, one that no


Government or employer can ignore."

Mick Shaw served at Shoreditch and Plaistow Fire Stations. He still lives in Romford, where he was born and brought up.

In a letter to all branches, Mick Shaw said:

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank those members who supported me in my successful election as President and to pay tribute to my predecessor, Sister Ruth Winters. Ruth held the position during probably the most difficult period that this Union has faced. She did so with commitment and dignity and I hope that all members will join with me in wishing her well for the future and in hoping that she can still make a valuable contribution to the work of the Union.

"My priorities are to try and put the difficulties and divisions caused by the 2002/2003 Pay Dispute and its aftermath behind us. We need to re-assert our position as the leading voice for the UK Fire Service, a voice that cannot be ignored by any Government or



employer, campaigning not just for decent pay, working conditions and pensions and against cuts and regionalised Control Rooms; but for Firefighter and public safety; for equality and fairness; and for proper recognition as a highly trained, highly motivated, professional service. I hope that I can play a leading role in achieving such a position.

"I will be writing to all Regional and Sectional Secretaries, seeking invitations to attend meetings of Regional and Sectional Committees. I would also welcome - time and other commitments permitting - the opportunity to visit Brigade Committees in order to listen first hand to our Branch Officials and the concerns that they raise.

"The slogan "Unity is Strength" is an old one in our movement, but it is absolutely correct. I hope that, almost five years after our 2002 Pay Campaign began, we can now move forward in unity, with the strength to be able to achieve the recognition that our members deserve."

Ruth Winters

Ruth Winters, commenting on why she did not push the election to a vote, said:


"This is arguably the hardest decision I have ever had to make and I hope people appreciate its heartfelt nature. I would firstly like to thank all the members and branches who nominated me, as well as all the members and officials who have supported me over my past 22 years as an FBU official. I will

never forget it or stop appreciating it.

"My reasons for not standing are many and in no way does this decision affect my belief in trade unionism, my politics or my commitment to my Union. However, it would appear that my Union members, or at least the bulk of them willing to participate at this stage, seem not to have the same beliefs as me. I have always argued against unnecessary elections and wasting the Union's money and will not be a hypocrite and push this election through to a conclusion which may end up with this same result...

"...My decision not to stand is also a principled one, in that I truly believe that the lead lay official in Head Office, the President, should actually have the mass support of the membership and that is not what the nomination results show. Nominations in my view are not just about showing the views of the membership but should also give a steer to the candidates...

"...I genuinely don't feel that my staying in this position, given the outside chance that I might even win if I stood, would change this position either. Sadly four years down the line it would appear that I am not in a position to take the majority forward, for whatever reason: therefore I will not stay around to be used as an excuse as to why any campaign won't move forward or to be blamed for why another attack on the members is my fault...



"...I make a plea to the members and officials of this Union, unite around the issues, don't be afraid to fight and don't be afraid to fail because I truly believe there is no shame in that....

"...It has been an honour to be the President of the FBU and I have been in that role throughout the hardest time in its history since 1977 and whatever people out there are being told or may think, I know I have been a good President, and ultimately I have done my best and given it everything that I am....

"...I will no doubt see you at mass meetings, picket lines or some other trades union get-togethers or campaigns. I wish you all success and hope when the pressures on, as it will be, we all fight the true enemy, whoever it is attacking us...."

Matt Wrack

Said Matt Wrack General Secretary:

"I am sure that all members and officials of the Fire Brigades Union will join me in thanking Ruth for her contribution to the work of the Union over many years and, in particular, since 2002 as the Union's President."

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