

# DORSET FIRE AUTHORITY FAILS TO BACK CFO ON BNP BAN



## **Union condemns the fire authority for allowing BNP members to join Dorset Fire and Rescue Service**

The FBU has condemned the decision to allow British National Party members to join Dorset Fire and Rescue Service.

The union hoped Dorset Fire Authority would agree with county Chief Fire Officer Martin Chapman that membership of the far right party was incompatible with the core values of the service.

But Authority members rejected a recommendation to ban the BNP, paving the way for racists to join up.

Martin Chapman told the Authority that:

- Failing to address the issue of staff being members of extreme groups such as the

BNP would be in conflict with the duty of the Authority under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

- The right to be a member of the BNP must be restricted in order to protect the rights and freedoms of minority ethnic groups.
- The statement proposed by the Chief Fire Officer was lawful and compatible with the appropriate European convention.
- It is vital for the Fire Authority to engage with this issue in order to progress equality and diversity within the service.

Despite all the above the Fire Authority rejected the recommendation of the Chief Fire Officer and refused to back the statement. It is understood by the FBU that the CFO was subjected to threatening phone

calls prior to the meeting. The proposal would have made it abundantly clear that there is no place for bigots and racists in the Fire and Rescue Service in Dorset.

FBU position clear - no room for fascist BNP in the British fire and rescue service

The FBU position is equally clear. There is no place for the fascist BNP in the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

John Drake, Regional Official for the FBU in the South West said "Dorset Fire Authority have not only missed a golden opportunity to come to a principled and morally correct decision they have also been bullied by the jackboots of the BNP."

"The FBU applauds the attempt by the Chief Fire Officer to put Dorset F&RS at the forefront of equality issues within the Fire Service but is appalled by the stance of the Fire Authority in failing to agree with their CFO statement on the BNP"

"BNP members have a history of expressing their views with the firebomb through the letterbox, the nail bomb and the boot. They have promoted racially motivated thuggery, not political debate."

FBU Regional Secretary Tam McFarlane said:

"Dorset Fire Authority has rejected a statement which was lawful, necessary and had the full backing of both the Chief

Fire Officer and the FBU. In doing so they have failed in their lawful duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act of 2000 and their moral duty towards their staff and the public of Dorset.

Dorset Fire Authority is pandering to the BNP

"The Authority had the opportunity to support the CFO in promoting equality and dealing with racism and bigotry. Instead of seizing that opportunity they have pandered to the repugnant views of the BNP and rejected a modern vision of the Fire Service based on the values of equality and diversity.

"The message that this decision has sent to minority groups and communities within Dorset is appalling. I urge the Fire Authority to reconsider their decision and join with the FBU who will continue to press for a total ban of all members of far right organisations, including the BNP, from working within the British Fire and Rescue Service."

**Notts fire managers start move to deduct pay over fire crews refusal to co-respond**

Nottinghamshire fire crews were outraged to hear on Friday 21 October that their fire authority has started moves to deduct 10% of their pay for refusing to carry out ambulance duties. The move was put forward by Nottinghamshire Fire Brigade management.

In September, Nottinghamshire fire

crews voted 4 to 1 to refuse to allow the imposition of ambulance duties on to their colleagues at Retford fire station in the north of the county. The ambulance duties - known as "co-responding" - would require fire crews to be specifically dispatched to medical emergencies.

The FBU has a longstanding policy of refusing to attend medical incidents. It feels this would provide a third-class service to the public who require trained paramedics on these critical occasions.

Matt Wrack, General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) said:

"This is a dangerous and badly thought out proposal. Firefighters do not have the necessary training to be sent to ambulance calls. This is playing dangerous games with people's lives.

"If there is a problem with ambulance provision in Nottinghamshire then that should be addressed but this proposal is just an attempt to solve a problem on the cheap."

Ian Young, FBU representative for the affected station said:

"As firefighters we have enormous respect for the skills and training of paramedics. People making calls to the ambulance service expect to see an ambulance with paramedics.

"This scheme means that the first people they see are likely to be firefighters - with just basic first aid training."

*Notts brigade committee has set up a hardship fund and regular donations will be made by all Notts FBU members not affected by the stoppage. Details of the fund are at [www.fburegion6.com](http://www.fburegion6.com). Messages of support can be sent to: Retford Fire Station, Wharf Road, Retford, Notts DN22 6EN.*

### **West Mids fire service final offer still short of key recommendations**

The final offer made by the management of the West Midlands Fire Service to firefighters still does not address the three key recommendations made by the Independent Chair of the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) in June this year.

Last Wednesday 19 October the management of the West Midlands Fire Service demanded that the Fire Brigades Union halt their ballot when they presented their offer to them in the morning. They further required an answer the same day leaving the FBU with little or no chance of consulting their members.

The offer itself has not changed substantially and has even worsened in some areas.

Visit [www.fbu.org.uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk) for more.

### **Pensions & Control - join the FBU campaigns, have your say**

The FBU is moving to encourage the widest possible debate in the union about the government's plans for

pensions and regional controls and how the FBU best responds to them.

Last week the second of a series of regional "open forums" was held in Yorkshire & Humberside (Region 4).

Matt Wrack addressed around 100 members and officials, informing of the problems the union faces and the government's agenda. Matt was joined by the newly elected AGS Andy Dark, National Officer Paul Woolstenholmes, President Ruth Winters and Ivan Walker from Thompsons solicitors.

Members were initially updated on the regional control issue by Matt and then an open Q&A session followed.

A debate on the pension proposals was opened by Matt and then an in-depth but concise explanation was given by Ivan Walker. It finished off with another Q&A session in which Ivan answered many questions from a legal point of view.

"The members who attended will realise the enormous effects that the proposals have on us all and officials will be visiting branches to pass on the message to all," says Sean Starbuck, Regional Chair, who attended the meeting.

"I would like to thank the team who put on such an informative presentation and thank members who attended. I am sure that we all agree that we needed to know the information that was passed on to us and that we must now make every member aware of the battle ahead."

Adds EC member Bob Blackburn: "Since the meeting Sean and other officials have received many calls commenting on how informative they found the meeting and how the information was generating debate and discussion on the branches."

The following "open forums" are also scheduled:

Region 1	16 Nov
Region 2	11 Nov
Region 3	30 Nov
Region 5	24/25 Nov
Region 6	22 Nov
Region 7	28 Nov
Region 8	9/10/15 Nov
Region 10	5 Dec
Region 11	24 Nov
Region 12	TBC
Region 13	28 Nov

The meetings will be attended either by the General Secretary or President Ruth Winters, or both.

Members should contact their local FBU official for more details.

### **Subscribe to the e-bulletin**

Get the e-bulletin, other FBU campaign news and information on Union services by email. Go to [www.fbu.org.uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk), type in your email address on the bottom left hand side of the home page and hit the "Sign Up" button.