

The Fire Brigades Union



Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions

84th Annual Conference

13th, 14th and 15th May 2009

FBU – Campaigning For You



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions Annual Conference 2009

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84th Annual Conference

Scarborough 2009

13th – 15th May

Day One – 13th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Good morning everybody and welcome to Scarborough, a fine town on the Yorkshire coast. To open the Conference this morning we have the Mayor of Scarborough, Councillor Eileen Vickers, who is originally from South Yorkshire, a former nurse, and has been on the local council with a break of a couple of years, since 1995.

THE MAYOR OF SCARBOROUGH:

I hope you realise that we have got the sun here especially for you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. As the Borough Mayor, it gives me great pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to Scarborough. It is always an honour and privilege to welcome delegates to Scarborough, and my consort, Gordon and I are very pleased to be here this morning for the opening of your Annual Conference. May I thank you most sincerely for choosing Scarborough for your Annual Conference. I understand from the information kindly sent to me that this is the first time the Fire Brigades Union Conference has been held here. Let us hope it will not be the last. You certainly made an excellent choice because Scarborough is a most beautiful place and what a magnificent building in which to host your Conference.

We are extremely proud of our Spa Complex and there are further plans to upgrade it and hopefully bring it back to its former glory. Scarborough was one of Britain's first seaside resorts and can still claim to be one of the best too. For those of you who have visited Scarborough as tourists before, you may have noticed one or two changes. Our Borough area actually also includes the charming coastal towns of Filey and Whitby, both very popular as tourist resorts. Here in Scarborough we have recently enjoyed an extensive amount of redevelopment and, despite the current economic climate, we are striving to continue to make this area a great place to live, work and play, as our motto goes. I am very pleased to advise you that in 2008 Scarborough won the exceptionally prestigious award for being Britain's most enterprising place, and because of this we have now been entered into European awards due to be announced in Prague this month.

Over the last five years the public and private sectors have made significant developments, with the Council pulling in extensive external funding from Central Government and Europe. I am delighted to share some of these achievements with you. The development of the town's former Wood End Museum in Wood End's creative work place has provided over 50 office units for creative industries, IT, graphic designers etc. The centre

achieved more than 70 per cent occupancy within three months of opening last April, and has created 40 new local jobs. The redevelopment of the Rotunda Museum includes high quality public rail improvements around the building. I would certainly recommend a visit to this most wonderful historic building. Environmental improvements at Sandside at the harbour has attracted new business and means that many cafes and shops now trade all the year round, making the seafront an all-year attraction for locals and visitors.

Thanks to our South Bay Traders' Association, free internet connection at the harbour means that you can log on while having a coffee in one of the bars or cafes and immediately do business with anyone all over the world. Eighty-three acres of land have been open for development at Scarborough Business Park including 50,000 square feet of office development. The new offices are bucking the trend with two new banks on site creating new employment. We are about to embark on major skills initiative, working in partnership with other agencies to skill and re-skill local people to meet employers' needs. We hope to gain Government funding of £4 million to revamp this magnificent Spa Complex, but total project cost is likely to be around £11 million and will include internal work and refurbishment of the grand hall to make a more viable theatre and conference venue. There will also be external environmental improvements to the gardens, paths and walkways, the aquarium car park and the roundabout which will provide new facilities for surfers.

We are also working with consultants on new plans for Station Square to make that area more pedestrian friendly whilst creating a better transport interchange at this important gateway to the town. We are also delighted to see the continued development of the sands project over in the North Bay and I hope that you will have time to take a look at the open bus and our wonderful Marine Drive, and have a look at this multi-million pound project. Gordon and I were invited to go and see one of the new apartments which were terrific. So I am sure you will agree that there are some very positive projects going on at the moment and appreciate that Scarborough Borough Council continues to make the Borough a great place to live, work and play. Thank you again for inviting Gordon and I to join you this morning. I hope that your Conference will be a successful one and that you will enjoy time to spend in our Borough. We hope you will consider returning to Scarborough, and there is one thing that you will always be guaranteed and that is a very big, warm Yorkshire welcome, and I hope that the sun shines for you while you are here.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Eileen. Now Matt wishes to make a presentation.

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THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thank you Eileen for those kind words of welcome. Good morning Conference. I think people have noticed that we are in a very fine building and the sun has shone so far. Our Executive are in a hotel at the top of the hill, it takes them about 30 seconds to walk down here and about an hour and a half to walk back! Some of them don't like the idea. If they last the week, we will certainly be coming back for next year. On behalf of Conference, I would like to thank you for attending and we have one of our new plaques as a gift. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Next, on behalf of the local Labour Movement, we have Eric Broadbent, the Secretary of Scarborough and District Trades Council who brings fraternal greetings.

BRO ERIC BROADBENT (Scarborough & District Trades Council):

Good morning. President, colleagues, firstly, on behalf of the Scarborough and District Trades Council, can I thank the Fire Brigades Union for inviting me this morning to address your Conference here in Scarborough. Can I just say that as a politician I am not claiming any public allowances for this speech!

I guess a lot of you here this morning are wondering is there a lot of trade union activity here in this beautiful town of Scarborough, but this morning I hope to convince you all that size is not the important thing; it is the quality and the commitment that counts. The Trades Council here in Scarborough first started, I am led to believe, in the 1930s, and it is still going strong with our oldest member being 93 years old. Believe me, it is the older members that do steer the younger ones on the right direction.

Our affiliated unions include the GMB, UNITE, UNISON, USDAW and yourselves the Fire Brigades Union (and don't worry, your affiliation fees are all paid!).

I first became involved with the Trades Council and our union when I commenced my apprenticeship at Plaxton's, the coach builders, here in Scarborough in the 1960s. I can recall the strength of the union at that time as one of virtual control over its members. Everyone was in the union. Nothing wrong with that. So we all worked for the same goal: good pay, good working conditions and the right to negotiate and, of course, the right to withdraw our labour if we thought that was the right thing to do. We, of course, were the target of idle chatter in the local pubs: comments such as "Oh, the Plaxton lads are out again. The pork pies at lunchtime must have been cold." But for many years we were the

envy of the districts, being the highest paid workers in our Region. This was for the simple reason that we were a strong union; we had collective bargaining and good leadership.

Initially, the work was seasonal, and as coach operators the owners only wanted their vehicles for the summer, so in the winter things were slack and we were getting used to being laid off. Sometimes we managed to get MoD work and we got to build the fire engines. I think you will know them as the green goddesses, but when the Army and the RAF started using them when there was a strike or a dispute on, that didn't go down too well with our union at Plaxton's and I believe the green goddesses came out of mothballs in the 2004 dispute.

As a senior shop steward in the Transport & General Workers' Union at Plaxton's, I attended the Trades Council as a delegate of our union, and after serving many years on the Trades Council I am now proud to hold the position of the Secretary of the Scarborough and District Trades Council. The Council, as I am sure you all know, is part of the TUC and our role in Scarborough is very active and our goal, of course, is the same with all unions, to serve its members to the best of its ability, to communicate with the public and let them know our aims which is, of course, to look after their interests and improve everyone's standard of living. The threat to the working man and woman by a bad employer is always there, especially now with this present downturn in our economy. There are many excuses for employers to hide behind to reduce staff, to cut costs and to even wind up businesses.

We meet, as a Trades Council, every month at our local pub that is quite central, and we let all the trades unions know where we are and where we meet and what time. Our delegates vary from different unions, and I am pleased to tell you that we do have an FBU delegate who keeps the Council up to date with what is happening locally and also nationally. We do know the pressures that you as a union are facing now so I wish you all good luck with your Conference this year.

At the Trades Council we receive many complaints from the public: for instance, where people have received their notice by text on their mobile phones; workers on their way to a factory doing agency work being phoned up saying "Don't bother coming in today, the delivery is late" and, of course, they get no pay for this. We even have nurses in the private sector getting the sack for eating a potato croquette that they should have put in the bin. Our task at the Council is to inform that union and give them protection that way, and if they are not in a union, we try to enrol them, in their own interests.

Like all public organisations, we need to fund raise to be effective and to continue to stay in existence, so for

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many years we held a May Day dance which was really popular with the Musicians' Union playing a big part; and of course, to celebrate May Day, the only day in the year and in the world to recognise the working man and woman. We also every year hold a street stall on May Day and all the unions are invited. They usually send a delegate. Your guy was there this year. We have toys, balloons, things to give away from the unions to the kids. We have cakes, apples, bread (of course), and it really is a good day out. On a more serious note with the street stall we work very closely with the local Labour Party here in Scarborough, and as a TULO (a trade union liaison officer) rep with the Scarborough and Whitby Constituency Labour Party, we often collect signatures and do petitions on topical and controversial subjects. We do lobbying at the stall and for instance, a couple of years ago we collected hundreds of signatures to stop the perceived closure of the Scarborough Hospital which we sent off to Alan Johnson MP, and we still have our hospital.

This year we held a street stall on 2nd May and reminded the public that it is the 10th anniversary of the Minimum Wage. We informed the public how the Minimum Wage was to weave fairness into the fabric of our society and help to make work worthwhile, and show just what a difference it makes when the unions and the Labour Party work together. There is still a lot to do with the Minimum Wage and we need to make sure that we build on 10 years of success to make it stronger, fairer and to ensure that no-one is left unprotected by it. So what improvements can we make? We want to see apprentices covered by the Minimum Wage, we need to end the discrimination that lets employers pay young people less just because of their ages, and we need to make sure that the law is enforced with tougher penalties to make sure that no employer can wriggle out of it. Of course, we want to see that the Minimum Wage keeps increasing in real terms as a proportion of average wages each year.

Ten years ago there were many who said that the Minimum Wage would never work and that it was step too far. But we have proved our cynics wrong and have shown what a strong government and unions working together can achieve by acting boldly to make a fairer system in the working person's pay back. Despite all the good that the Minimum Wage has brought to working people's lives, there are still those who oppose it: Senior opposition MPs are trying to introduce new laws that would allow employers to opt out of the minimum wage payments, effectively killing off legislation and dragging us back to the days when people were left in poverty pay. So that is just one message that we have hopefully got across to the public a couple of weeks ago.

I was first elected on to the Scarborough Borough Council in 1991 and I still hold my seat. I was privileged

to wear the Mayor's chains in 2004/05, and I was elected on to the North Yorkshire County Council in 2001. Hopefully, I will be re-elected next month when the 4-year elections take place, but only time will tell because it is becoming a bit of a lottery at the moment with the BNP, the Green Party and various independent candidates all chasing seats, but I would say onwards and upwards.

Taking early retirement in 2000, I am still very active with my local union and chair our UNITE THE UNION branch in Scarborough where our transport branch is still very active, and my old company, Plaxton's, is now going from strength to strength and works for the on-site unions and not against it, recognising that collective bargaining is the way forward and this does help everyone to build a successful future. I am also a member of the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, and I have seen for many years the excellent work that the FBU have achieved here in North Yorkshire with all the challenges locally that have happened in modernising and changing work practices, and also nationally in maintaining and improving the pay and conditions for you, its members. As I have said earlier, I do appreciate that all of you still have a mountain to climb and I hope that these talks can happen around the table.

The one thing that I have noticed above all else working here in Scarborough is the amount of respect that is paid to you all as members of the Fire Brigades Union by the way that the public hold you in high esteem, the professional way that you go about your work, and when needed, are only a telephone call away. Of course, there are many times when the public do not see the many other roles that firefighters have and are committed to in order to protect and save lives. That is partnership working with the police, Yorkshire Air Ambulance, Mountain Rescue, The Coastguard Agency and, of course, the amount of work that you all do in the community in your fire protection role.

There was one duty that I became aware of just recently and that was that fire crews in England have received at least 1,780 calls to help move obese patients in the last five years. Seventy-five per cent of these were from the NHS. So I am trying to watch my calories. I even bought a bike last week and used it once!

I would like to conclude this morning by perhaps trying to answer a question that I do get asked as a trade union official many times and that question is, what is the relationship between a trade union and the Labour Party? I will try to answer that question by quoting a saying from one of my ex T&G comrades, Jack Jones, who sadly passed away a couple of months ago at the ripe old age of 96. When he retired he did not fade away. He carried on striving to improve the lot for all

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pensioners in the country and he made them aware that the only voice that many of them had was at the ballot box. He said that the relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party was the same as a perfect marriage; there were times when you wanted to murder each other but they will never ever get divorced. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Eric. It is nice to know that the Labour Movement here in Scarborough is thriving and that the FBU is playing its part in that. Again, I think, Matt, our General Secretary has a presentation to make.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

On behalf of Conference, I would like to thank Eric for the greetings from the Trades Council. We do encourage our local branches and Brigade Committees to become involved in Trades Councils who play an absolutely essential role in the Labour Movement and many of our local campaigns are successful because of the support of local Trades Councils. We wish you well in the work on Scarborough & District Trades Council. We have a gift for you. Thank you very much for coming and for your greetings.

THE PRESIDENT:

Before we move to the Standing Orders Committee Report, we have with us this week at our Conference two retired Presidents of the Union, Bill Deal, who probably not many of you delegates here will remember, but was President of this Union back in the early part of the 1980s, and also Ronnie Scott. We would have had a third retired president with us, Enoch Humphreys, who regularly attends, but unfortunately Enoch has been suffering from ill-health and is in hospital currently, but he is on the mend and I am sure you would all want to send your best wishes to him.

We also have retired former General Secretary, Ken Cameron, with us and I am sure you will all wish to show your appreciation of them. *Applause*

I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, to give Standing Orders Committee Report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you President. Conference good morning. The Standing Orders Committee seeks your cooperation with regards to your Conference credentials. Would all delegates and officials please make sure they have filled in their details on their credentials so stewards can

identify them. The Standing Orders Committee stress the importance of delegates stating their name and Brigade or Section when addressing Conference as this assists the President and the verbatim report. We also ask you to speak clearly into the microphone on the rostrum.

Visitors to Conference are identified by different coloured credentials which must be displayed at all times. Visitors are not allowed on the floor of Conference. Arrangements have been made for tea and coffee for visitors to be served in the refreshment area to your left hand side. Voting cards should have been obtained from the Standing Orders Committee by Regional Treasurers and handed to leaders of delegations. Access to the Standing Orders Committee room is through the doors on your right. Please follow the signs and instructions from the stewards, carry on up the spiral staircase as clearly marked, and give yourself at least 10 minutes.

Delegates that have business for the Standing Orders Committee should inform the stewards of their business and wait to be called by Standing Orders. The Standing Orders Committee must report to Conference that the whole of the Spa Hall is a no smoking building and trust this will be adhered to. Also may I request that all delegates, officials, observers and visitors switch off mobile telephones while the Conference is in session.

Everyone enjoyed the *Welcome to Scarborough Night & Quiz* last night at the Spa Complex. On Wednesday night in the Spa Complex there will be the International Night which this year will be in aid of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, from 7.30 pm until late. The Palestine speaker will be at 7.45 pm and at 8 pm Mark Thomas will be this year's political comedian and I am sure you will all make every effort to attend. Tickets are available at £10 per person and all proceeds will go to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Please see your Regional Treasurer for any more tickets required. On Thursday night, once again in the Spa Complex, the Executive Council would like to invite everyone to join them for some musical entertainment provided by *Legend*, a Bob Marley tribute band, plus DJ Alan "Motown" Paterson. This not-to-be-missed-evening with your Executive Council in dreadlocks is from 8 pm till late.

Back to business, may I remind you all that Conference is in session from 9.30. until 5 o'clock. May I bring to your attention that there will be lunch provided for all in the Spa Complex today and tomorrow. On Friday there will be a packed lunch here available in the Spa Complex also. If business is to work through lunch on Friday, there will be a short tea break to allow the staff a comfort break. Expense forms are on tables and should be completed correctly and handed to your Regional

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Treasurers as soon as possible. The delegation fee is £20 per day for the period of Conference including your day of travel.

The list of Scrutineers and Tellers has been circulated. The list of the Final Appeals Committee has been circulated. The list of Firefighter Representatives has been circulated and these lists will now be placed before Conference for endorsement.

At previous Conferences the President and the Standing Orders Committee have agreed that I will not announce changes to the list of delegates. This decision has now changed. The Standing Orders Committee must be kept informed of any changes to delegations and we, in turn, will keep the President's list up to date and I will inform Conference of the changes. We rely on the Regional Officials to exercise some influence on this procedure.

The Standing Orders Committee have agreed stall facilities for the following organisations to Conference: Bookmarks; Cuba Solidarity; War on Want; Union Learning Fund; Unite Against Fascism; Palestine Solidarity Campaign; Venezuela Information Centre; Love Music Hate Racism; UIA Insurance; RAFT; ESIU (Nottingham Trent University); Popularis; CND; Campaign Against Climate Change; and, of course, the FBU. The stalls will be situated in the Spa Complex on your left hand side through the refreshment area.

The Standing Orders Committee has received a large number of Emergency Resolutions and is dealing with them as soon as possible. Can I now ask you to turn to your Programme of Business. Please turn to Page 1. Delete Resolution 78, Recruitment and Organising – Training and Resources, Greater Manchester. Page 2. Resolution 75 has been withdrawn. Page 3. After Brendan Barber – TUC General Secretary, and up to and including Resolution 12, we will be in Closed Session. Page 4. Resolution 8 has been withdrawn. The Amendment falls. Insert Resolution 11, Overtime Ban, Grampian, Suffolk. Amendments, Devon & Somerset. Resolution 11. Suffolk have withdrawn their intention to move the Resolution to second Grampian. Resolution 21. London have withdrawn their intention to move the Resolution to second Grampian. Page 5 no change. Page 6. After Standing Orders Committee Election, up to and including Executive Council Policy Statement-FBU Elections, we will be in Closed Session. After Para G3, Elections 2008, insert Emergency Resolution No 2, Vacancy for National Officer, from the Executive Council. Resolution 11, delete together with Amendment. After Resolution 34 insert Resolution 35, Pension Abatement, Northern Ireland. Page 7. Resolution 88 has been remitted. Page 8. After Para G25, Membership Statistics, insert Resolution 78, Recruitment and Organising-Training and Resources, Greater Manchester. Resolution 79 has been remitted. Resolution 81 has

been withdrawn to second Resolution 80. Page 9. Resolution 29 has been withdrawn. Page 10 no change. Page 11. Delete Resolution 35, Pension Abatement, Northern Ireland. Page 12. After Resolution 68 insert Fraternal Greetings, Carmen Mayusa, from Columbia. Page 13, Para B17, National Framework, delete. Page 14, Executive Council Policy Statement – A Service for the 21st Century, delete. Emergency Resolution 1, Environment Policy, Cleveland, has been withdrawn. Resolution 47 has been remitted. Resolution 48 has been remitted. Page 15. After Standing Orders Committee Report, insert Para B17, National Framework. After Para B17, insert Executive Council Policy Statement – A Service for the 21st Century. Page 16 no change.

If Wednesday morning's business finishes before lunch-time we will move straight to Wednesday afternoon's business. May I remind Conference, and particularly visitors, that the stewards will carefully check credentials before the start of the Closed sessions in order to only admit into the hall delegates, officials, members, solicitors, tutors and our visitors. Other visitors and the media will be excluded until after the conclusion of the business I have detailed.

Can I now go on to voting on a challenge to the Chair of Conference. May I draw your attention to Standing Order Number 15. The number of delegates at Conference is 227. Therefore the number of delegates voting to carry a challenge is 152. Please note that the Control Staff National Committee delegates, B&EMM National Committee delegates, G&L National Committee delegates, Women's National Committee delegates, Officers National Committee delegates and National Retained Committee delegates are all entitled to vote on procedural motions and challenges only. Regional Officials who are not delegates have been issued with different credential cards and they are not permitted to vote at all. May I remind Conference that all credentials issued are the personal property of the person to whom they are issued and cannot be transferred to other persons without the approval of the Standing Orders Committee. We therefore rely on the integrity of all to comply with this procedure.

Finally, Standing Orders Committee election. May I remind you that this will take place this morning and Paul Reames is up for re-election. President, that concludes the first Standing Orders Committee report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Steve.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON (Bucks):

I need clarification. I have a challenge on all three Resolutions that we submitted. Two of them are on

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IRMP and one is on a separate subject. Can I take the two challenges separately or the whole lot together?

THE PRESIDENT:

Can you clarify, Gordon. You are challenging Resolutions that have been submitted and ruled out of order?

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

Yes.

THE PRESIDENT:

Do them separately, please.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

OK, fine, thank you. Conference, Buckinghamshire submitted three Resolutions to Conference and had all rejected by Standing Orders. Two of these Resolutions concerned IRMP, a subject close to everyone in this room working day to day in their Brigades. Yet Head Office have not ruled these out of order without explanation other than the usual standard comment, but must have deemed it a subject irrelevant to this agenda. I cannot believe we were the only Brigade to have placed Resolutions in the post on this subject, and strongly doubt that every one of them were factually incorrect or unclear in their intent. Conference, our first Resolution reads:

Conference demands that the use of IRMPs for reductions in brigade establishment by fire authorities be recorded for possible legal action. The endangerment of both crews and public by these means should be fought with every available tool including the courts of law.

In the first paragraph there can be no doubt that there have been disgraceful attempts to use IRMPs as a means of cutting staffing by Chief Fire Officers. This used to be challenged under the old standards of fire cover. The recording of each Brigade's IRMP is not a new idea as under the old standards of fire cover we were instructed by Head Office, and Mike Fordham, to inform them of establishment numbers. Remember Section 19. As for the second paragraph, the word "court" is plural so as to be quite clear we are taking all the different judicial and national assemblies that may be relevant into consideration. For any members being placed in danger, sustaining injury or dying where reductions have played a significant part, the FBU has a duty to take action whether locally or nationally. The information should be logged and the authorities and their Chief Officers brought to task. This is a national problem and it is wrong for Head Office to hide away from it any longer by leaving it to local negotiation.

THE PRESIDENT:

Gordon, can you stop one moment, please. It is not for the Motion to be moved now. It is for you to explain why you think the Standing Orders Committee was not reasonable in ruling it out of order and to appeal to Conference for their support in placing it back on to the agenda.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

The last half a dozen lines will explain. Eight lines in an Annual Report is not enough. The public is not protected by anyone else so we have a duty to work on their behalf. Listen to the Resolution and ask is this unclear in its intent? If it is, then with respect there are a number of nobbles in the Agenda:

Conference demands that the use of IRMPs for reductions in brigade establishment by fire authorities be recorded for possible legal action. The endangerment of both crews and public by these means should be fought with every available tool including the courts of law.

THE PRESIDENT:

Right. Before I ask Steve to respond on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I would just like to make it clear to Conference that it is not Head Office that rule the Resolutions out of order or otherwise; it is the Standing Orders Committee that has been elected by this Annual Conference. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

The Standing Orders Committee ruled out of order a Resolution from Buckinghamshire titled *IRMP Legal Challenge*. I must say that this Resolution came in with four lines; that is all it was. We have just listened to four or five minutes explaining what those four lines meant. The Standing Orders Committee didn't have that privilege. On the grounds that the Resolution is unclear in its intent in that there is no clear instruction about who is required to record the reductions. Is it the Executive Council, is it Regional Committees, is it Brigade Committees, Head Office, Thompsons, who? The Resolution is definitely unclear in its intent and was ruled out of order on these grounds. I urge you to uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee and reject this challenge. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I see those in favour of the challenge.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

President, do we have a right of reply?

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THE PRESIDENT:

No; there is no right of reply, Gordon. You have given your challenge. Steve has given his explanation. I will now put it to the vote. Can I see those in favour of the challenge from Buckinghamshire to the Standing Orders Committee report, please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That challenge *falls*. Can you deal with the second one please Gordon.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

The second Resolution, IRMP, reads:

Conference demands that the representations be made to the Department for Communities, Local Government and IRMP Steering Groups, the Health & Safety Executive and any other relevant bodies to condemn and with the aim of stopping any Chief Fire Officer, County Council, Fire Authority or Fire Board using our brigade or IRMP to propose the use of four riders as standard crewing on pumping appliances.

An IRMP should reflect local needs and set out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risks to communities. It must evaluate where risk is the greatest and determine its policies and standards for prevention and intervention accordingly. It is not a tool to cut public services to fit an ever-reducing budget determined by central government. When an appliance is planned to arrive at an incident with only four riders, it is dangerous to both the crew and the public risking the immediate rescue and safe operating procedures from being carried. When firefighter and public lives are clearly being placed at a far greater risk following the introduction of IRMP, this clearly demonstrates that the current system is failing...

THE PRESIDENT:

Gordon, please, again, it is not to explain the motives behind the Resolution or to appeal for support for the content; it is to appeal against the decision of the Standing Orders Committee as to why they have ruled it out of order. Please address your comments to that.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

With all respect, that was the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates have previously been circulated the Resolution Gordon. It is not for you to read it out verbatim. It is for you to explain what it is about and why you feel their decision is unfair.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

In the first paragraph, if Head Office need proof of any authority making four riders standard in the IRMP then

read Buckinghamshire's; it is in black and white on their website. As for making representation, we believe that all those listed exist and are relevant and should be made aware of what is going on under IRMP. The second paragraph is the truth and tells authorities what they should be doing. The third is what you and I and everyone else who has ridden a fire appliance knows, and as for the last paragraph, Head Office has been successfully complaining and outlining the increases in deaths of the members over the last decade. We have made representations to the relevant bodies about this and we have also complained that the system of IRMPs is failing. If this Resolution is factually incorrect, then we are all fools and Chief Officers are geniuses. Conference, put IRMP on the agenda. Do not hide from it. Listen to the Resolution and then support both our challenges. I say again, this is a national problem.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Gordon. Steve, would you like to respond, please.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee ruled out of order a Resolution from Buckinghamshire titled IRMP Proposals to reduce crewing levels on the grounds that the Resolution is factually incorrect in that it is not correct to say that an IRMP is not a tool to cut public services. The key words are "the public services". It is not a tool to cut public services to fit an ever reducing budget. There is not an ever reducing budget in public services. Take the police and health service, for instance. They have had budgets increased to improve their crewing and staffing levels in certain areas. The Standing Orders Committee sympathises with the intent behind the Resolution but has to apply the rules. The words "public services" are the words that let you down. That is the factually incorrect part of it. The Resolution is factually incorrect and was ruled out of order on these grounds, and I urge Conference once again to uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Can I see, please, all those in favour of the second challenge from Buckinghamshire to the Standing Orders Committee decision. Keep your hands up, please. Can I see all those against the challenge. That challenge *falls*. Please proceed with your third challenge, Gordon.

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON:

The third Buckinghamshire Resolution, Appropriate Fire Station Locations, has been ruled unclear in its intent.

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Conference knows that discussions with the employers and appropriate bodies has been engaged on the use of compulsory purchase for land for new fire stations. The ridiculous position of emergency cover for the public being in the wrong geographical position due to cost, availability and business interests must stop. The first paragraph simply asks for discussions to be opened on this subject with our employers, relevant governmental and legal bodies, on the possibilities. The first paragraph simply asks for discussions to be had with people concerned in the possibilities because, as stated in the second paragraph, Buckinghamshire cannot be the only Brigade who have seen their Fire Authority running around to count the district and planners searching for plots of land. Please support our challenge and let us discuss the idea, try to save public money and improve fire cover. Please listen to the Resolution. It is clear in its intent and it is trying to save money and trying to get better fire stations.

THE PRESIDENT:

Steve, can you please respond to the challenge.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee ruled out of order a Resolution from Buckinghamshire titled Appropriate Fire Station Locations on the grounds that the Resolution is unclear in its intent in that it does not make it clear as to what it wants to do. Read the Resolution not the explanation that has been given from the rostrum. That is all we can go on. There is no direction to either the Executive Council, Regional or Brigade Committees within that Resolution. Which employers are they talking about? Which appropriate bodies? And if we did know, which employers are to have the discussions with them? The Resolution is unclear in its intent and was ruled out of order on these grounds, and once again I urge you to uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Can I see those in favour of the third challenge from Buckinghamshire, please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That challenge *falls*.

Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed?
Agreed

Steve referred to the revised list of delegates. I do believe we have a first here this week which is that the Dorset delegation is comprised entirely of women delegates and I think that is something that ought to be recognised. *Applause*

We now move on to the appointment of Tellers and Scrutineers and I would ask that the following Tellers and Scrutineers be agreed. The Tellers are: Dave Allsey, Greg Edwards, Lyndon Jones and Paul Adams. The Scrutineers: Stuart Wilson as Chief Scrutineer, Kevin Shaw, Ashley Oldfield and Dermot McPoland. Can they all be agreed please? *Agreed*

Right. Could all Tellers and Scrutineers please report to Paul Woolstenholmes at the back of the Conference Hall.

We now move on to Section L of the Annual Report, the Obituary page. There are listed, all the current members of the Fire Brigades Union who died during the year 2008. We do not record Out of Trade Members who died during the year in that Obituary, but there is one Out of Trade Member who I would just like to mention at this stage who, unfortunately, did pass away last year, and that was Terry Fields who some of you may remember. Terry was a former Merseyside firefighter, became a member of the Executive Council, was a member of the Executive Council during the National Pay Strike of 1977, he then resigned from the Fire Service upon being elected a Labour MP in 1983, he was subsequently imprisoned for refusing to pay the poll tax, he was expelled from the Labour Party and he lost his seat at the next election. Terry was a committed trade unionist and Member of Parliament. I don't think you would have seen Terry on any list of people claiming expenses for all sorts of weird and wonderful things. I think that the Labour Movement is a lot weaker for the absence of people like Terry Fields, and I think he is a loss obviously to his own family, to our colleagues on Merseyside, and to this Union and to the Movement as a whole. So I would ask Conference, please, to stand in silence for all those listed in the Obituary. *Conference stood in silent tribute*

Thank you very much.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

It is my privilege to introduce the President of the Union to give his Presidential Address.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Alan. I would like again to welcome everyone to Scarborough for this, our 84th Annual Conference, and it has certainly been an interesting and eventful year since we met last year in Southport. I think if anyone had predicted at that time that the most hated figure in the country would be a figure pursued by the tabloid press camped outside his house and searching for him everywhere, would be the head of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Fred Goodwin, I think people would probably have been surprised. If people had predicted

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that interest rates would fall to their lowest level ever in the history of the Bank of England, and that the Retail Price Index would actually be going into negative territory rather than rising at a rate of 4 or 5 per cent, I think people would again have been surprised. If anyone had predicted that unemployment would have risen to above 2.2 million and that hundreds of thousands of people would be back on short time working – something that used to be common, of course, in the 70s and 80s – again, I think people would have been surprised. But all those things have happened as a result of the most serious economic crisis in living memory.

Suddenly, all of the nonsense that has been spoken by people like Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and other new Labour Ministers over the last 15 years or so, look very clearly like the nonsense that they were. The idea that there was going to be no return to boom and bust, that all we were going to have was sustainable improvements in economic performance and standard of living, of course, has been shown to be unreality. Capitalism, in reality, is just as unstable as it ever was. The idea put forward by New Labour Ministers that we should be celebrating high salaries and that we should be relaxed about people getting seriously rich can now be seen for the obscenity it was as we see the kind of bonuses that were being grabbed by people who were running the banks, the same people who were running those banks into the ground. They took the money and they ran and people are absolutely appalled by that. The idea that was put forward by Gordon Brown in one of his speeches to the City of London at the Mansion, that the banks have developed these new innovative products that were going to lead to massive prosperity for all, that can be seen as being very hollow. In fact, those so-called innovative new products were a sham. We have all now got to pay the price for all of that. We have all got to pay the price for having to bail out those same bankers who were taking those huge bonuses, the bankers who were being knighted, who were being given awards, have all been shown to have been on the fiddle, in essence, and we have got to pay the cost of that. That price, that has got to be paid for the bailing out of the banks, is going to make our job as a trade union in defending our jobs, defending our pay, defending our pensions, defending the services that we provide to the people of this country, is going to make our job very much more difficult.

We can, however, I think, be proud of some of our achievements over the last 12 months. Firstly, we should recognise the success of our campaign and the lobby of Parliament that we held on the issue of firefighter fatalities. The report that we produced in the Line of Duty, showed there was the end of a 25-year downward trend in the rate of fatalities of our members and that since 2002/03 that rate of fatality has started to increase. It was absolutely no accident that that increase

in the rate of fatalities should have occurred at the same time as there was a vacuum created at the very head of the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK, that vacuum in terms of the governance of the UK Fire and Rescue Service. It was the Fire Brigades Union who showed that link. It was the Fire Brigades Union that said this had to stop, that we needed proper central guidance on operational procedures, that we needed proper recording of fatalities, that we needed proper investigation of fatalities when they occurred, and I think all of you here should be congratulated on your efforts in ensuring that that lobby was the success that it was. I have since spoken at two lobbies of Parliament in that same building in Westminster, organised by a union much bigger than our Union and they were not as well attended as our lobby, they were not as well organised as our lobby and I think we should be rightly proud of our achievements in doing that. We showed, if ever there was any doubt over it, that it is the Fire Brigades Union that not only speaks up for its own members, the people who provide the Service to the UK, but it is us who speaks up for the Service as a whole and we should continue to play that role.

I think we should also be pleased with the outcome of our campaign and our legal action on the issue of ill health and injury pensions. When we met last year that issue was still not resolved, and we had faced a situation earlier in 2008 where three of our members through absolutely no fault of their own were left in a position where they were deprived of their jobs, they were deprived of their livelihoods and they were put on the scrap heap without any pension and without any form of recompense whatsoever. We said as a Union, absolutely rightly, that that was a scandal and it could not be allowed to continue. By the time we met last year, of course, as a result of success on one plank of our legal challenge, we were able to get those pensions paid again and over the last 12 months, through a tortuous process, we finally managed to resolve that issue and the threat which faced our members' ill health and injury pensions has receded. That has not been an easy task. What we have faced is the duplicity of the people in the Government that we have to deal with on those issues because we had the Fire Service Minister at the time, Parmjit Dhanda, who stood up in the House of Commons and announced that it had never been the intention of the Government that any firefighter should be left in the position of having no job and no pension. But when it came to the court case that was argued in the Court of Appeal, the barrister instructed and paid for by that same Government Department, argued that that was indeed the intention of the Government: that firefighters could be left in the situation of having no job and no pension. Fortunately, we were successful in that court case and I think everybody from Head Office level downwards, everybody who was involved in campaigning on that issue, should be congratulated for

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the work that they did and for the success that we achieved. No-one should underestimate the importance of that lobbying work that took place. If it was not for the lobbying of our officials through their local Members of Parliament, who then raised the issue in the House of Commons, we would not have had that assurance from Parmjit Dhanda about firefighters not being left without a job and without a pension. That statement from Parmjit Dhanda to the House of Commons last year on that issue was key in the ruling in the Court of Appeal that we received this year. So I think that is a success that we can be proud of.

Of course, there is the other issue that is still continuing to unravel and to be resolved which is the issue of part-time worker discrimination. We were successful last year in the House of Lords in getting that matter returned to an employment tribunal for a satisfactory outcome. We were successful on the principle of retained workers, our retained members being part-time workers, and any discrimination against them being unlawful. What we have still yet to do is to resolve the issue of the compensation that should be given to them for the unfair treatment that they have suffered, but we will successfully conclude that and we will again successfully show that it is the Fire Brigades Union who is the only organisation that is able to fight for all those who work in the UK Fire and Rescue Service, whatever job they do in that Service and whatever duty system they work on.

In addition to those victories that have been achieved at a national level, there are victories that are being achieved as a result of the hard campaigning that is going on in Brigades throughout the length and breadth of the UK every day of the week. In particular, one of the most recent victories that has been achieved – and I think we should recognise the achievement – is that of our members in South Yorkshire. They faced having new shift systems, new working arrangements, imposed upon them. They faced all kinds of threats from the management in that Brigade, management who were not prepared to use the agreed disputes procedure in the Grey Book and our members there held firm. They balloted for industrial action, they achieved a very successful result in that ballot and as a result of that, that issue is going through the agreed disputes procedure in the Grey Book, and I think we should recognise the success, the hard work, the refusal to be browbeaten, and the determination of our members in that Brigade. *Applause*

However, despite those achievements that we have had over the last 12 months, I do not think there is any doubt whatsoever that things are going to get a lot more difficult in the coming year. We have got the issue of pay coming up later today which is obviously a major issue for this Union, as with any other. We are dealing

with the same set of employers who deal with UNISON, negotiating on behalf of local government workers. UNISON, on behalf of local government workers, have been offered a pay increase this year of 0.5 per cent, and if they do not accept that offer by the end of this month, they have been told that offer will be withdrawn. Clearly, it is not going to be a very easy task for us to achieve a satisfactory outcome to the pay negotiations this year. On jobs, despite the pressure that you have all been facing for the last five years or so at least, I think that pressure is going to increase over the coming 12 months: not only because of the public spending cuts that the Government will want to force through, largely as a result of that bailing out of the banks that we have seen in the last 12 months, but particularly following the publication of the Audit Commission Report that was produced last year that praised those shift changes that have been agreed or imposed in different Brigades, and pointed out the savings it was said could be achieved in other Brigades throughout the country, and that is going to lead – I do not think there is any doubt about that – to increased pressure on duty systems and to the jobs of our members throughout the UK.

That loss of jobs potentially could threaten the very survival of this Union, which is why it is essential that in the same way we had over at least the last 10 or 20 years, we continue to campaign to defend our Service, to defend our jobs, to ensure that the people in the UK are entitled to the right level of service when they need to call upon us, and that means having properly staffed Fire and Rescue Services everywhere. Of course, if there is going to be a loss of jobs – and I hope very much that we are successful in resisting those job losses wherever they are put forward – that is going to lead to pressure on the Union's finances. We will move very shortly on to the issue of the Union's finances and there is good news to be reported in the finances: that we have managed to get rid of the deficit that had been accumulated in past years. However, we cannot be complacent about our finances. In a period of low pay increases and a period of pressure on establishment levels that could lead to great pressure on the Union's finances and we have to ensure that we continue to manage those finances at every level of this Union in the most responsible way that we can.

I do not think there is any doubt though that the biggest issue we are going to face this year – as we have over the last 12 months – is the issue of Control Regionalisation. Our members who work in emergency fire control rooms, particularly in England (because the issue is very different, of course, in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland), have worked with the axe over their heads, the threat being faced to their job and to their conditions, for far too long now. We have to satisfactorily resolve that issue as a Union. We have to make very clear to the Government, to the employers of

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Fire and Rescue Services in England that this Union is not going to stand by and see our members forced on to the scrap heap through compulsory redundancy. We are not going to see our members forced into working in new local authority controlled companies on inferior pay and conditions and without FBU recognition, and there is an Emergency Resolution later this week on the agenda, and hopefully following that debate we will agree a policy of this Union that ensures that we are in a position to be able to ensure that our control members are not left on their own and that everyone of those that wants to continue working in the Fire and Rescue Service is able to continue doing so on Grey Book terms and conditions and with FBU recognition.

By the time that we meet again next year – and we are scheduled to come back here to Scarborough – there will have been a General Election. Of course, next month there are going to be European Elections. Unfortunately, it does not appear that there is going to be much good news coming out of either those European Elections or the General Election when it is held next year. They are going to be held in the aftermath of this huge expenses scandal that has broken in the last week or so. I think all of us working on fire stations, control rooms and elsewhere in the UK Fire and Rescue Service, know that we have got a handful of members who are quite keen when it comes to claiming expenses and can be quite creative when they have been on a training course, etc, about what they are able to claim when they come back, for their travelling, subsistence, etc. But our members have got absolutely nothing on those Members of Parliament down at Westminster, or at least the vast majority of them. They could teach any member of ours anywhere in this country lessons about how to maximise their expenses, and it is quite embarrassing reading the type of things that they are claiming for and the amounts that they are claiming for. We should not run away with the idea that every Member of Parliament is doing exactly the same thing. We are due to have, later this week, John McDonnell, the Convener of the Parliamentary Group, coming to speak to this Conference, and I certainly have not seen John's name mentioned anywhere in those reports or on those kind of expenses and I do not think you ever will see John's name. There are still some Labour MPs who have principles, some of them who believe they are there to vote on behalf of, speak on behalf of, campaign on behalf of working people and they are not there just to fill their own pockets at the taxpayer's expense. Unfortunately, it appears there are not enough MPs at Westminster who think and behave in that way.

What that is leading to at a time when people are facing losing their jobs and homes as a result of not being able to pay their mortgages, at a time when people who have private pensions invested on the Stock Exchange

and seeing the value of those pensions plummeting, at a time when people are reliant on their savings and seeing the returns on those savings fall at a dramatic rate, at that same time as there is that discontent as a result of that, if there is disillusionment in the political elite that run this country added to the disillusionment with the financial elite who have been shown to be filling their pockets at our expense as a result of us having to bail out the banks, those are the ideal conditions for the rise of fascism. We have seen it in other countries at other times and I think that we as a Union have to play our part in the UK Labour Movement to ensure that the fascists are not able to capitalise on that widespread fear that is no doubt existing. That is another debate that is going to be coming up this week and I would urge everyone here and all of our officials and members to do what they can to get involved in campaigning at every level to ensure that the BNP and other fascist organisations do not benefit from that disillusionment with the political process and with our economic process that we have at the present time. There are alternatives. We have got a fringe meeting organised tomorrow on the People's Charter that is demanding exactly that the people should not be forced to pay the price of the economic crisis that has been caused by others, and those are the kinds of demands that we should be putting forward so that it is not only the organisations like the BNP who are seen to have some alternative to that being put forward by the Government.

I hope very much that we have a good Conference here this week. You, the delegates of this Conference, officials, brigades throughout the UK and all parts of the United Kingdom, are the most important people in this Union. You are the people that ensure this Union continues to function, that we continue to recruit members, that we continue to represent members, that we continue to protect members. All of you at every level make sacrifices in terms of your own personal lives and your family lives, in order to ensure that this Union succeeds. This week at Conference is your chance to hold the leadership of the Union, the Executive Council and the Officials that work at Head Office, to account and I am sure you will do that, and I am sure we will all continue to ensure that the FBU remains the most democratic Union that there is, certainly in this country.

I very much hope that we all leave this Conference at the end of this week united and determined to continue to successfully defend our members because at times like this our members have never needed a stronger Union more than they have now. So have a good Conference. *Applause*

We now move on to Section K of the Annual Report and the Financial Accounts, and I introduce the National Treasurer, Warren Gee.

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THE NATIONAL TREASURER:

Thank you, President. Good morning, Conference. In moving the Statement of Accounts for year ending 31 December 2008, I wish to make Conference aware of the following.

Income has increased overall to a consolidated figure of £13,256,253, an increase of £516,579 over the previous year's figure of £12,739,674, with expenditure increasing to £12,559,985 from £11,560,107 for the previous year, giving a total increase in expenditure of £999,878. With a consolidated income of £13,256,253 and expenditure of £12,559,985 this gives a total surplus for the year ending 31 December of £696,268 compared to a surplus of £1,179,567 for year ending 31 December 2007, a decrease in our surplus of £483,299.

I therefore wish Conference to note the following. The decrease in surplus is mainly due to the increase in legal costs over the last 12 months: the judicial review for ill health pensions and the tragic circumstances surrounding the Warwickshire fire.

I now move to the General Fund. This has achieved an increased income of £264,695. This is mainly due to the increased contributions and gives a total income of £10,298,306. With expenditure at £10,133,152 this gives a surplus of £816,154 after pension scheme actuarial gain. However, a deficit of £324,880 has to be brought forward from 2007. This then leaves a surplus of £491,274 to be carried forward.

I would ask Conference to note that for the first time in a number of years we will be carrying forward a surplus from the general fund.

Moving to the Accident & Injury Fund and Political Fund, both funds have shown an income of £1,674,505 and £278,449 respectively. The Accident & Injury Fund has decreased in expenditure by £322,375 with an increase to the Political Fund in expenditure by £39,010. The Accident & Injury Fund carries forward a surplus of £3,858,791. The Political Fund carries forward a surplus of £1,090,851. Both funds are therefore financially healthy and are functioning on behalf of our members and the Union.

Cash in Bank. As of 31 December 2008 it is £2,985,027 compared to £2,884,156 for 2007. After the deduction of current liabilities of £1,459,160, this leaves a surplus of £1,525,911. I would ask Conference to note that we have enough cash in bank to pay all our current liabilities and still show a surplus.

At this point I would like to offer my thanks to the Executive Council and the Finance Sub-Committee for all their work over the past 12 months, all the Head

Office Staff, in particular the Accounts Managers, Nigel and Stuart, for all their work and support; our auditors from Hard Dowdy, Tim, Lorna and Nigel who are with us this morning; and of course, our Regional Treasurers for all the work they have carried out over the years on behalf of managing the accounts.

President, Conference, overall this Financial Statement puts us in a stronger position to face any attacks on our pay and conditions of service compared to last year. However, recent history shows that we must be prepared for any attacks, disputes and campaigns, both nationally and locally along with cases which proceed via the legal route. They must be taken into consideration and should not impact on the running of the Union as a whole. We must maintain sufficient funds in reserve to keep the finances in a strong state.

As I reported last year, consideration given to management of our finances, accountability, authorisation, central buying and budgeting, decisions taken by the Executive Council, the Executive Council Finance Sub-Committee, and the initiatives shown by our Regional Treasurers to work within their imprest system, have now shown results, and therefore we must continue to build up reserves in the best long term interests of the Union and its members. I move the Statement of Accounts. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Warren. Is that Report agreed? *Agreed.* We are on Paragraph K1. Paragraph K2. I now call Resolution 85 in the name of Staffordshire, entitled FBU Observers Expenses. The Executive Council are opposed. If anyone wishing to second the motion can please come to the front of the hall, that would assist.

Resolution 85 – FBU OBSERVERS EXPENSES

This conference demands that as of the 2010 FBU Annual Conference, FBU observers to our Annual Conference will be given the same travelling expenses and subsistence as delegates.

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO GRAEME McLEOD (Staffordshire):

This Conference demands that at the 2010 Annual Conference, FBU observers receive the same travelling expenses and subsistences as delegates. These observers are the lifeblood and future of the Union and as such should be treated equally with the delegates. To say no to this due to financial reasons is not a reason. No 7 Region has taken the lead by ensuring that all observers are paid the same subsistence and travelling as delegates. Observers give up their own time to

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attend Conference and as such should be encouraged to continue to attend Conference. By refusing, it seems petty whilst delegates subsistence is paid. It still costs observers to attend and as we are all in the same Union, as such we should be treated as one. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder?

BRO ROGER MOORE (West Midlands):

Attending as a delegate – it has already been said – costs time and money. As an observer, this is still the case. Observers are not entitled to time off for trade union leave and therefore have to show a commitment in order to attend in the first place. They still have to travel to the venue. They are still away from home exactly the same as delegates. The only difference there should be between observers and delegates is education. Observing is about learning what goes on. Observers should be learning to become future delegates, future speakers, future supporters of resolutions, and should not be seasoned Conference goers but people who have not had the opportunity to attend yet – new people showing an interest, people we wish to nurture into becoming union reps. In order to attend, observers move annual leave and travel to Conference. This incurs cost both in time and transport. I stand before you today as a delegate supporting or seconding a Resolution, something I would not have been inclined to do if someone said to me, “Get up. Make a speech” in an environment where you have absolutely no idea what is going on. Let us not alienate those who show an interest, by expecting them to pay for the kind of education that cannot be simulated in a classroom. I second.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone wishing to speak on the Resolution?
Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think the mover and seconder quite correctly outlined the importance of observers to this Conference in terms of our education process, and I am sure everyone in the hall at some point has travelled to Conference as an observer, either an official observer or under your own steam. I have certainly done it and stayed in a few dingy bed and breakfasts in Bridlington in my time.

We fully support the idea that Regions should build into their education programme mechanisms for ensuring that officials are trained in Conference procedures, and part of that needs to be bringing observers to Conference. So we have no objection to the principle of

equal payment. The issue for the Executive Council is that it is not a matter for National Union. You have just heard from the Treasurer about the work that has been taken over the past four years to eliminate a deficit, and a huge amount of work went into achieving that, and we have got some good news to report in respect that the General Fund deficit has finally been eliminated. But that took four years to achieve. So the Executive Council's view is that there is no commitment from the Executive Council to agreeing to fund observers to Conference. Regions need to consider that within the context of your own Regional Education, your own finances and, in that context, we have no objection to the principle with it, but we oppose the Resolution because it cannot be a matter for the National Union to fund. We urge Conference to oppose the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Are Staffordshire wishing to exercise their right to reply?

BRO GRAEME McLEOD (Staffordshire):

I totally disagree with the fact that you are saying it is not a National issue. This is a National Conference. This is where we learn the job. Observers up there have yet to learn. Financial restraint, okay, it has been a long hard job to get it back on to the straight and narrow, but it is National events we are talking about. The Treasurer is still giving money out to Regions and then Regions giving the money out. It is still a National issue.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will put Resolution 85 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Keep your hands up please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *defeated*.

We will now break for tea. Back in 15 minutes please.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

We are back in Session. I ask Steve Shelton, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, to give a report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Can you please turn to your Programme of Business. Page 3. After Para A3, Pay, insert Emergency Resolution No 8, Pay, Executive Council. After Emergency Resolution No 8, insert Emergency Resolution No 16, Fire Service Pay Rise 2009, Essex. After Resolution 12 insert Emergency Resolution No 14, Pay, West Yorkshire. This will also be taken in the Closed Session. Resolution 4, Pay Policy,

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Northern Ireland, has been withdrawn. The Amendment falls. Page 4. Resolution 9 has been withdrawn. Page 14. Resolution 45 has been withdrawn. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee Report agreed? *Agreed*

We are now on Section E of the Annual Report, Accident and Injury Fund. I call Resolution 19 from Dumfries & Galloway, and Resolution 86 from Staffordshire, in the same debate. Both Resolutions can carry. The Executive Council are opposing both Resolutions. Can I have Dumfries & Galloway, please, to move 19.

Resolution 19 – DEATH LEVY

Conference notes the disgraceful increase in the number of deaths of members whilst on duty.

Conference recognises the devastation this has on members' families.

Conference also notes the financial burden that many members' families may then face.

Therefore, Conference calls on the Executive Council to explore (with the national employers, for agreement with UK Fire and Rescue Service Authorities) the feasibility of establishing a national death levy scheme. Such a scheme will consist of members automatically giving £1 from their salary, through a deduction at source, on each occasion a member dies on duty.

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

BRO SAMI CHAUDHRY (Dumfries & Galloway):

There is no question that there is a genuine swell of sympathy for this Resolution and the principles that it is proposing which will be the establishment of a system designed to give ease, speed and a level of consistency to the collection of donations, and the individual knowledge that donations be made should a member be absent from work. Indeed, not only is a death levy of sorts in place at a couple of Brigades in Scotland, by this time next year Dumfries & Galloway hope to have a fund set up locally and there is nothing to stop Brigades from doing that on a local level. What we have realised since we came down and have conferred on this Resolution is that our Resolution is in conflict in its detail with some other Brigades' local agreements, and so it is our intention to withdraw the Resolution with a view to re-submitting a more concise and relevant Resolution in the future. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sami. Can we therefore have Staffordshire to move 86, please.

Resolution 86 – MEMORIAL FUNDS

This conference calls upon the Executive Council to set up and take responsibility for the management of memorial funds in the event of an FBU member's death on duty.

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO BRIAN MOSS (Staffordshire):

I will be brief, but let me make it perfectly clear at the outset that this Resolution is not about the setting of a death levy; it is about the setting up and taking responsibility for the management of a memorial fund in the event of a member's death on duty. It has to be said that many of our members have expressed real concerns that funds raised have not been used for the purpose that they were intended. Most people would expect that when donating to a memorial fund that ultimately the money given would be given to the families and dependants of our deceased colleagues. Our members believe that the FBU, with the advice of our legal representatives, is best placed to ensure that is exactly what happens. We have no problem with memorial gardens or statues that commemorate the names of our fallen colleagues, but the most important thing is to ensure that our members' families do not suffer financial hardship. Please support this Resolution and make sure that we take care of our own.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. Is there a seconder for 86? Did I hear formally? *Formally seconded*. Is there anyone wishing to speak?

BRO STEVE ROBERTS (Warwickshire):

Following the recent death of a dedicated FBU official in Warwickshire Conference requests that the Rule regarding AIF payments, Rule 30, section 16, be amended in order to prevent further suffering to our members' families. When a suicide attempt results in death, we surely have a duty to protect and assist our member's next of kin. This issue could be dealt with by amending the Rules to make a payment equivalent to a qualified firefighter's yearly salary to the nominated person as a one off payment. As we have just heard, the Accident & Injury Fund is in quite a good state so this should be achievable. We urge Conference to consider this important issue as we will be bringing a Resolution to Conference to amend this Rule and prevent further stress to our members' families.

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BRO PAUL BROWNHILL (NRC):

Please support Resolution 86. As a Retained member, I dealt with the Warwickshire situation. I do not expect going round to collect money off pensioners, people who have lots of money, children, goodness knows what, to be given as much as they can and only have 25 per cent of that money go to the families and the other 75 per cent be given on gardens or paying senior management to give the funds out. We have got Head Office, a Senior Committee, where they could train one person to issue that money out backed up by Thompsons. Let them do that. They are best trained to do it. If people knew only a quarter of that money went to the families and that 75 per cent was wasted, we would not have received most of that money. Please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council have obviously got huge sympathy with the thoughts and motivation behind the Resolution. It is simply the practicality of it on which we have asked Staffordshire to remit or unfortunately ask Conference to oppose the Resolution. I would still urge Brian to remit it to the Executive Council. In terms of our experiences, and particularly our experiences in relation to some very difficult events and the Warwickshire case looms large in that, the Executive Council understand fully the concerns that people have when memorial funds are set up and they are placed under the control of Chief Fire Officers or leading members of Fire Authorities, and the people who do the work on the ground (our members and our officials) have no say and are excluded from having a say in the management and organisation of those funds, and it is an absolute and utter disgrace, some of the decisions that have been taken in relation to that particular memorial fund and those people should be taken to task.

In terms of donations, I think the point has been made that people go around and raise funds for these memorial funds. One of the largest donations in relation to the Warwickshire fund came from our friends and colleagues in the POA, so a TUC affiliated union made a very large donation after the Warwickshire fire. I think it is entirely reasonable therefore that the work force, the people, the friends and colleagues of people who may be killed leading to the creation of such a fund, play a central role in the management of any such funds. No problem with that. The only problem we have, Brian, in relation to the Resolution is the requirement of the Executive Council to set up and take responsibility for the management of the fund. It is our view that that

needs to be done at a local level. That is the best way that we can ensure local accountability, the best way we can ensure local involvement. What we can say is that we are willing to work with Thompsons to provide advice to look at whether we can set up systems that can be put in place very quickly by local officials. We are willing to work with Brigade, Regional and Sectional officials to do that, but we simply do not think the wording of the Resolution in terms of placing that obligation essentially on the EC is the way to do it.

So I really would urge Staffordshire to reconsider the current position. We are more than happy to work with you on this, but remit to the Executive Council otherwise unfortunately, Conference, we will ask you to oppose.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Do Staffordshire wish to exercise their right to reply?

BRO BRIAN MOSS:

I understand the logistical and practical difficulties that the Executive Council would face but, to be honest, we can make that excuse for everything that we do, can't we? Are we going to be better equipped locally within the Regions. I do not think so. We could argue about finance and any other excuse. What we have got to say is, what are we about as a trade union? There can be nothing worse than losing a loved one, and then to worry about how you are going to put bread on the table. That is just not acceptable. I am asking you. This is an emotive subject. Yes, we are applying a bit of moral pressure here. I do not apologise for that. Our members have raised these concerns with us. They are well held, and I ask you to support them and support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. I therefore put Resolution 86 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Can people keep their hands up. Thank you. Can I see those against? That is *carried*.

We are now on to Resolution 74 from Fife on the Accident and Injury Fund. The Executive Council are seeking remittal or we will oppose.

Resolution 74 – ACCIDENT AND INJURY FUND

This conference notes the current rule book and the Accident and Injury Fund contained within.

Conference also notes that there are timescales for claimants but none for payments.

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Consequently, Conference instructs the Executive Council to define workable timescales for initial payments, final payments to be made subject to the correct paperwork being supplied and verified, these timescales to be enacted from the time they are agreed by the Executive Council and then incorporated by change of rule at the next available opportunity.

FIFE

BRO SCOTT McCABE (Fife):

It is worth stating for the record that we are not criticising the Executive Council or Head Office Staff in any way by moving this Resolution. That is not our intention. What we are trying to do is address an issue which, in our opinion, fails our members and the families by not giving them adequate financial assistance with funeral arrangements at a very difficult time. In 2008 one of our members died and the correct AIF form was completed. This was endorsed by the Branch, and together with a valid death certificate it was sent by recorded delivery to Head Office on 01 April 2008. We then had to wait three months for the initial payment of £5,000, the maximum payment allowed under law to be made. In our view, this delay is totally unacceptable given the fact that all the paperwork was correct and verified. We note that there are time scales for claimants but none for payments, and we agree with the Executive Council that any time scales defined for these initial payments must be workable.

What we are asking for is a workable time scale for the initial payment, to be set by the Executive Council, subject to all the paperwork being correct and verified. We are asking the Executive Council to define what that workable time scale should be based on their experience. Just for your information, 28 days appears to be a tried and tested workable timescale for initial payments from insurance policies within the insurance industry and in our opinion that would be a good benchmark to use. Again, we accept that each claim submitted is different and if the paperwork is not in order then obviously there will be slippage with claims and we would ask that this be monitored and managed. The issue of the final payments as far we can see, is fairly complex given that there has been four different legal systems in operation. We are pretty content with what is in the Rule Book just now. We are also asking that once the Executive Council have defined what these workable time scales will be, that they will be enacted and incorporated by a change of Rule at the next available opportunity.

In closing, please support this Resolution and allow us to help us support our members and families in the future.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for 74?

BRO BRIAN MOSS (Staffordshire):

I second Resolution 74. In all honesty, I have to say we have to recognise that the Accident and Injury Fund is not necessarily the selling point that it once was. However, that said, when you are meeting new members and explaining the benefits perhaps the most important benefit is the financial assistance that can be offered in the event of a member's death.

Similar to the previous debate, it has to be said that the Fire Brigades Union comes into its own with the level of support that we can offer to members and families when tragedy strikes. Like many of you, I have had the sad duty of meeting with members' relatives and explaining the process and assistance that we can provide. We tell them there is no need to worry about the immediate funeral and other costs, and that is a difficult enough job and every effort must be made to ensure that we deliver on those promises without delay. As Scott said, and quite rightly, there is no criticism intended here, it is simply a request to amend the Rules to support our members and their families at the time of their greatest need. I urge you to support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone wishing to speak to 74. No. I will ask the General Secretary to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Again Conference, we are asking Fife to remit or we are asking Conference to oppose the Resolution. In relation to the particular case that was mentioned, this has been raised at the Executive Council and there has been an investigation or examination into what happened in that particular case, and every time people have concerns about the administration of the Accident and Injury Fund there are mechanisms by which people can raise those concerns. We will examine it at Head Office, a report will be given to the Executive Council and a report will be given back to the Region and to the Brigade involved. So we are happy that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that those payments are made as quickly and as rapidly and efficiently as possible.

The difficulty with the Resolution is that it raises all sorts of problems in terms of administration of the fund. The truth is that every single case is different and I would ask you to think about the places where you work, the people you know who are members of this Union and the sometimes complicated and complex lives that they

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have ended up leading. We have to unravel those on innumerable occasions when dealing with the Accident and Injury Fund. That can be extremely complex and it becomes extremely complex at a very difficult time, particularly when somebody has died.

So the current arrangements, we believe, are adequate. We do not have large numbers of concerns raised with us. When we do, they have been investigated, and I believe that adequate answers have been provided through the Executive Council. If the officials from Fife still need to discuss that with the National Officer, then we can arrange that during this week in relation to that particular case, but we do not see the need for the change proposed in the Resolution. We would ask you to remit it, and the Accident and Injury Management Fund will consider the points made, but if we were going to make such changes, I think far more consideration would need to be given to it. We would ask you to remit, otherwise Conference we ask you to oppose.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Are Fife seeking the right to reply?

BRO SCOTT McCABE:

What we are basically asking for is the initial payment, if the payment is correct and verified, to put a time scale on that. We do not think that is unreasonable. We do accept that cases are different, and there will be slippage that needs to be managed by the AIF Fund. On the issue of a workable time scale, the way we constructed the Resolution was pretty much not to tie the Executive Council down to a defined time period and allow them to work out what they think is reasonable. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will put Resolution 74 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Keep your hands up one moment. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *carried*.

We are now on to Section H of the Annual Report, Education, Paragraph H1. Paragraph H2. Paragraph H3. Paragraph H4. Paragraph H5. Paragraph H6. We are now going to take the Executive Council Policy Statement entitled *Embedding Union Learning in the FBU's Future*. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference. This EC Statement is the blue one which seeks to address various issues that have been raised by Resolutions submitted to Conference since 2004 on the issue of Union Learning. In particular,

Composite Resolution A carried unanimously in 2007, instructed us to act quickly to ensure the sustainability of lifelong learning, and that agenda within the Union beyond April 2008 as additional funding post 2008 had still not been approved. On that note, I am pleased to be able to report to Conference that successful bids have been approved now for the ULF, the Scottish ULF and the Northern Ireland ULF until April 2010. This year there is also a further two years of funding from Welsh ULF until April 2011. All of these have given us a little bit more breathing space in ascertaining the best way to embed the learning agenda within the FBU.

Following the Annual Conference debate in 2007, the Executive Council set up a Working Group on Embedding and that Working Group involved members of the Education Committee, ULF Project Committee Members, Regional Education Officers and FBU Learning Centre Staff, in order to look at how lifelong learning could be mainstreamed into the FBU at all levels.

Conference will already be aware that we had previously taken the decision to recognise the role of Union Learning Reps (ULRs) and embedded them and the role of Brigade Learning Coordinator in the Union Rule Book in 2006. The Working Group on Embedding met on a number of occasions following Conference 2007. A report was submitted to the Executive Council at the beginning of this year, and the Group has taken advice and gathered information from various sources: the TUC, from Trade Union Education and from Union Learn. It has also approached other trade unions to assess if there was already a model that may be suitable or one that could be adjusted to suit the needs of the Fire Brigades Union. They also took into account the Union's own Trade Union Education Programme and issues of work force development. They also approached the TUC Learning Centre Hub in the knowledge that current funding for ULF projects in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland would finish in April 2010. Having received the reports of the Working Group, the Executive Council in order to fulfil the wishes of Annual Conference and to take steps to ensure the embedding of lifelong learning within our structures, the recommendations before you in the Annual Conference Statement from the Executive Council needed to be agreed by this year's Conference.

The Executive Council also took into account the possibility of appropriate Rule changes but concluded that this could be achieved at next year's Conference and would allow us greater time to reflect on progress on the basis of the paper which we put before you.

The Executive Council are aware that there are a number of issues around the recommendations contained in the Statement which will require careful

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consideration if we are to achieve the goals outlined. It will not be as simple as switching on a switch. The new proposed post of Regional Education and Learning Organiser (RELO) may sound pretty daunting and, yes, there will be a considerable workload for those new positions to take on. But with proper support in place we are sure that the position will develop itself and provide advice across all aspects of education and learning within the Fire Brigades Union. It will be a key role within our structures. Trade Union education is vital to the future of this Union, and the EC believe that the new position can only strengthen us in this respect. The Executive Council also recognises that where strong and effective Brigade and Regional Education Learning Committees are in place, that the Union needs to provide suitable financial support, and the arrangements required for this will be made.

Ideally, an extended hand over period would be better, but we are where we are. The Executive Council recognise that none of this can happen overnight. The Union will set up a proper and realistic plan along with joint meetings between Education Officers and the ULF Coordinators to ensure the successful establishment of the new Regional Education and Learning Organiser's Role. It would have been presumptuous of the Executive Council to start on that until Conference had the opportunity to vote on the Statement before you, but I can assure you that, if carried, the work will start immediately. Arrangements will be made for the National Officer to reconvene the Working Group and meet with all appropriate people as soon as possible.

We need to be clear that there is a varying picture in different parts of the UK in relation to funding and it is the intention of the Union to submit further ULF bids, and if successful we would expect and support Regions to continue to do so within the requirements of the Executive Council Statement. It would also give us the opportunity to review positions of current Coordinators with the possibility of extending the time frame in order to develop the role of the new RELO and to embed the new posts within Regional structures. However, having said that, we need to recognise the very real possibility that we may face a Tory Government by next year, and the very likely possibility that ULF will be one of their first targets in terms of cutbacks. So consideration is already being given to approaching and seeking alternative methods of funding that would support education and support the Coordinators during that period.

Many of our members have seen the lifelong learning agenda as a new and real positive benefit of Union membership, and it is just worth drawing Conference's attention to some of the achievements over the past six years or so. Our projects have encouraged new ULRs (around 380 of them). Significantly, 50 per cent of those

have never held a position within the Fire Brigades Union before becoming ULRs. A number of us have attended the ULR seminars and seen those new activists who have come through, many of them subsequently encouraged to take on other roles within the Union. Under the various projects and schemes, we have delivered over 21,000 courses to members through the various ULFs, taking up learning opportunities from short courses to further education courses to Open University courses. We have engaged directly with over 15,000 members, most of whom have taken part in some learning activity. We have seen over 1,200 members passing their skills for life national tests in numeracy and literacy. We have seen another 500 or so taking and obtaining qualifications in IT.

The FBU also proudly launched our Whole Organisation Skills for Life Strategy subsequently supported by CEFOA and launched throughout the Fire and Rescue Service. That, again, has established the Fire Brigades Union as a clear leader in improving our members' developments and skills resulting in our employers having to recognise the work of FBU Union Learning and supporting that through NJC Circular 11/2008 on skills in the work place.

It must also be worth noting that another important side of the learning agenda for the Fire Brigades Union has been the link with the organising agenda, and that has resulted in numerous non-members becoming members of the Fire Brigades Union as a result of learning activity. Sometimes we don't emphasise the various achievements that this Union makes, but there is much to be proud of in the Union Learning agenda and the Fire Brigades Union role within that. I just want to say that in the wider Movement and in the wider Fire Service, that role and the achievements of the Fire Brigades Union in respect of this agenda, is widely acknowledged.

Just a few of the awards that have been won, for example: the Learn Direct National and Regional awards for working with employers; a National Star award for the work of our ULRs in Suffolk and supporting our members in relation to work force development; the GO awards for the FBU Skills for Life Strategy. We have seen the GO ULR (and some of these titles and initials are lost on me occasionally) of the Year Award awarded to FBU rep Paul Fletcher. The Adult Learners' Week ULR of the Year Award was awarded to FBU ULR. There are also the Union Learn Quality Award and the Matrix IAG award. We should not forget that the Learning Centre in Northumberland was one of the TUC U-net centres inspected by OFSTED and obtained a Grade II across all areas of learning delivery.

We should be proud of these various achievements that have involved new members in the organisation, that have involved new members in becoming within the

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organisation. You will also be aware that the Fire and Rescue Service is now in the Sector Skills Council Skills for Justice, and this in the future may also have an impact and effect on how the Fire and Rescue Service receives funding for training and development, and all matters relating to IPDS, National Vocational Qualifications and other work force development issues.

We believe that the document in front of you will strengthen current education and learning delivery for members and for officials. It will continue to help us increase Union membership and provide new opportunities for our members in the work place, in their social life and in their family life. We believe that we have addressed the requirements that Conference put before us in 2007. I move the Executive Council Statement.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I believe we have Suffolk to second.

BRO ANDY VINGOE (Suffolk):

I second the EC Statement. In withdrawing our Resolution, we welcome the opportunity to support the EC Statement Embedding Union Learning in the FBU's Future. Suffolk has been involved in the FBU's learning agenda since the very first Union Learning Fund Project going back to 2004. We are also involved in the Region's Trade Union Education Programme. Both have played a key role in providing core trade union education for our officials as well as lifelong learning opportunities for officials and our members.

We also have experience of both running in tandem with each other, both playing their role, both supporting each other in some cases, and both overseeing by Regional Officials. Nobody really knew in 2004 if our members would be interested in a learning agenda, be it as Union Learning reps or as learners. There was also a fair hint of scepticism from some officials who wondered why the Fire Brigades Union should get involved in Union Learning at all. Suffolk believes that over the last five years many of the early criticisms and questions have been answered, and certainly our members' view is quite clear. The learning agenda is a huge benefit for Union members and needs to be embedded within the Union framework. In Suffolk we have attracted more members to become Union Learning reps and they are well respected for the role they carry out as officials of our Union. They play an active and healthy part in Suffolk's Brigade Committee and are a source of information with regard to learning and work force development for other officials.

Adrian Mayhew, our Brigade life Long Learning Coordinator ensures learning is on every agenda at our

Brigade Committee meetings. We have also been successful in attracting non-union members or ex-members back to the FBU. The Union's Learning agenda is working for our members, not only at work but also in their social and family lives. It has an equality impact too. Many of our catering and support staff have taken courses offered through our FBU learning agenda. These are opportunities not previously offered by the employer.

I was pleased to hear Matt mention the award that Suffolk ULRs picked up at the latter end of last year. The ULRs from Suffolk were highly commended for their work in supporting work force development and bringing something new to the learning opportunities available to our members. These included: equality and diversity; death awareness; nutrition and health; skills for life, and conflict management, much to the amusement of the managers. The delivery was flexible to people's preferred learning styles, at work, at home, in groups, on line, blended learning with discussion and work packs, and it was made available to all members. All of this came on the back of Suffolk getting, after a lot of negotiation, a learning agreement with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.

None of this has been achieved easily. It took months of negotiation to finally get a learning agreement in Suffolk. We continue to fight to get time off for our members to access learning at work or, where possible, time off to attend external courses. I am sure Cambridge will not mind me mentioning one of their ULRs and Brigade Life Long Learning Coordinator, Martin Harding. Martin was nominated for, and has been announced, as the Adult Learners Week ULR of the Year Award for East of England in conjunction with NIAC and Union Learn. This is an award he received yesterday at a ceremony. He is a product of both our Trade Union Education and Lifelong learning programmes.

In our Region we have for about two years had our Regional Educational Officer also carrying out the ULF Regional Coordinator position. Fortunately, he has been able to be seconded through ULF to the post. But it has worked effectively and with no hint of compromise in either role. Steve Brinkley took on the role as the Education Officer and has been the catalyst for improving TU Education and Union Learning in the Region. Both roles have been developed and delivered by the Education Officer so it can and does work. There is no doubt that the proposed post of Regional Education and Learning Organiser is a fairly major piece of surgery but is one that can ensure that we fully embed Union Learning and continue the Union's delivery of quality trade union education in the future. In many ways the Union Learning agenda is still young and it will take a lot of hard work, and energy to ensure its success with or without further funding. Suffolk and our

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Region does not yet have the finished article in embedding Union Learning, and I am sure that we will develop the role of the RELO if agreed here at Conference. We do, however, agree that we need to act now so that our members will continue to get the benefit of the FBU learning. Support the EC Statement.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. The Statement is open for any debate.

BRO BOB DEWIS (NRC):

I am here on a personal note. Twelve months ago I was given by the Union Learn a quick read book which I read and then read another and another, and now I read every day. The knowledge I have gained is immense. Who said you cannot teach a very old dog new tricks.

The other thing is birthdays, which happens to be tomorrow. I don't get pants and socks now, I get books. I just want to say thank you Union Learn. It has been great to me.

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

We withdrew our Resolution on this matter to support the EC Statement. In Scotland, as I am sure you are aware, we have got a Devolved Administration and Union Learning in Scotland is available up to 2011 and not 2010 as was mentioned in the EC Statement. We welcome the fact that the EC are going to take this into account. On behalf of Region 1, I would like to thank Jock Munro for all his hard work in leading the way in Scotland. I support.

BRO PETER HOPE (Hereford & Worcester):

I feel that we should applaud everyone involved in the Union Learning Fund project for the tireless work that they have undertaken over the past few years. I say "project" because that is what it is called. We really do not want it to be called a project any more, do we. It needs to be an integral part of the work the Union does and second nature for our members to expect assistance with education in order to develop themselves not only for the working environment but also for their personal development and consequently that of their families.

There may be another bid for finance for 2010/11 but there is no guarantee that it will be successful or, more importantly, in this financial climate whether the Government initiative will still be there. The main problem is with the role being merged with the Regional Education Officer, and many Regional Education Officers not given facilities anyway. So to incorporate the lifelong learning role is impossible. That is always assuming that

a Region has got an Education Officer. We must not forget that the skills needed to work with what I would call the educational academia is something that needs total commitment. It is not something that can be gained overnight, but a very steep learning curve and knowledge base that requires full time application.

It is appreciated that we need some steerage for the forthcoming year and as such the EC Statement does provide a vehicle from which to move forward. Region 7 supports the EC Statement but would ask that the General Secretary confirms that the content is not set in tablets of stone, that if a Region decides to elect an official other than the Regional Education Officer, that it would be acceptable, also, more importantly, that if Regions source a stream of funding locally that would support the provision of a Regional Life Long Learning Official, then the Executive Council would have no objections. Even if the funds came from a well loved regional management boards, picking the pockets of the devil himself, this new and refreshing arm that gives strength to the trade unions cannot and will not be allowed to slip through our fingers. It demonstrates that the FBU is far seeing and all-encompassing. As stated, Region 7 supports the EC Statement but we need the assurance from the General Secretary that if national bids are not successful then there would be flexibility for the Regions, and if the shadowing for the role is better suited to an official other than the Regional Education Officer then no objections from the EC can be expected.

We cannot allow this excellent initiative to wither on the vine. We owe it to our members. I was once told by a senior officer not to expect a victory every time I sat at the table. I found that this was very true. But lifelong learning is a victory every day of the year for the FBU and its members. Region 7 supports the EC Statement and calls on the General Secretary to respond to our call for the flexibility.

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

I speak to oppose the Policy Statement. I know the EC and National Officers don't like us doing it, but putting finances aside for a second, Education Officers and ULRs are totally different things. Education Officers should be there to promote and progress upcoming trade union officials. ULRs are there for all members or Fire and Rescue Service employees. They are two different things. You cannot ask an Education Officer to sit in a room and potentially promote courses for people who have scabbed against our Union and expect our members to pay for it. At the moment the two different roles are being done by one full-time official per Region. That has been currently funded by the Government. What happens when this funding is withdrawn? I know some of the ULRs might be mistaken for merchant bankers, but I don't think there will be a big bail out in it for them.

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Why do our EC think that one lay official can do the role of two especially when these current roles are being done by one full-time official? Two does not go into one. Why also would we want to restrict the number of officials and activists that we have? Why not have a Regional ULR and a Regional Education Officer? To add to that, just like with our Brigade Management sometimes, we have to be cautious that this is not the thin end of the wedge. The EC Statement clearly reads *The position of branch and brigade ULRs will be considered further prior to Annual Conference 2010*. That will have a potentially detrimental effect on one role or the other. Again, they are two different roles. We have to make sure that our members and the future of the Union's trade union activists is paramount.

Next year when we come back to vote on this very same thing being about Brigade Officials, can we justifiably look at each and every one of our Brigade ULRs and say they will look after our upcoming activists, they can identify the right courses for the right people, they can pull out people from Branch and give them a guiding course through the path of the trade unions. I am not sure.

I agree and support the principles. Education is for all but, like I said, not to the detriment of upcoming activists and officials along with experienced officials maintaining and updating their skills to ensure our Union remains strong and we can provide the best possible levels of representation to all our members.

Going back to the finances, our main concern is that when the Government funding ends, members end up footing the bill for something that is not the Union's responsibility. Can we honestly say in this room that a top priority for our members is to spend our funds on this project. Again, I am not sure. Conference, I urge you to oppose.

THE PRESIDENT:

Matt, right of reply.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

On some of the questions that were asked. Firstly, in relation to Scotland, we do not envisage any difficulty. If there are other sources of funding available (and this touches on the West Midlands point), then we would clearly encourage Regions to take up such opportunities, and we believe the flexibility required is covered within the EC Statement.

There are a couple of difficulties however, in relation to the other point raised by the West Midlands about the idea that there may be two separate officials fulfilling separate roles. I think the Statement is clear on the first

page in the third paragraph from the end that the Regional Education and Learning Organiser would have that responsibility on behalf of the Regional Committee to organise learning and FBU education within the Region. I think the Statement is clear on that. So there will be flexibility subject to funding being available and possible secondments or full-time positions, or some other arrangements, but in relation to the structures of the Union and the new position, we believe the Statement is clear and would cover both aspects of those. That is the point that was challenged at the end there.

In terms of the opposition and the question of lifelong learning being used to provide assistance to non-members and possibly to people who have worked against this Union, members of other organisations or strike breakers or whatever, I think the situation, as far as I am concerned – and other people may need to think about this as well – once there is no Government funding, I think all those bets are off. I do not think we do put any of our Union money into providing learning or any other facilities for non-members of this Union. It is entirely different when we are receiving public money, and clearly there are requirements on us in relation to Government funded projects and initiatives. If that activity is undertaken by the Fire Brigades Union, I think that problem disappears because we will not be providing opportunities to non-members or to scabs or whoever.

I think hopefully that covers the questions in that. I would urge Conference to support the Statement. I think Bob summed up the value of this initiative in terms of his own personal experiences, I welcome his contribution to the debate today. We have hundreds of members who have been through similar experiences as a result of the initiatives we have taken around lifelong learning. I urge you to support the Statement and happy birthday on behalf of all Conference for tomorrow, Bob.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will put the EC Policy Statement to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Can I see those against. That is *carried*.

We are back on the Annual Report. Paragraph H7. Paragraph H8. Paragraph H9. Paragraph H10. Moving on to Section I, Fairness at Work. Paragraph I1.

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

At last year's Conference I asked a question under the Paragraph on Fairness at Work about the All Different All Equal statistics and why they were not contained in last year's Annual Report, and I notice that they are not in this year's either.

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JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

I previously had a conversation with Helen who brought this to my attention. I have given her the figures that were submitted for inclusion in the Annual Report and I will now have to carry out an investigation as to why they are not included in the Annual Report which we all just received last week, so I apologise Helen, but we certainly took cognisance of the question you asked last year. We did circulate last year's figures to Brigade Secretaries following Conference, and they most certainly should have been in this year's Annual Report.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will move on to Resolution 84 from the West Midlands, entitled *All Different All Equal*. The Executive Council are opposing. West Midlands to move, please.

Resolution 84 – ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL

This Conference recognises and fully endorses the aims and aspirations of the All Different All Equal policy with regards to respect, dignity and fairness at work for all.

To further enhance these aims and aspirations, Conference demands that the All Different All Equal policy is amended so that representation to an individual is not granted until the Regional Committee has met, and has located an "arguable defence".

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO MICK BELL (West Midlands):

We are all in agreement with the fundamental principles of the All Different All Equal policy, but we believe that to actually adhere to the spirit of this policy there has to be an exception to amending it. In Region 7 we have conducted several investigations recently and in every case the final verdict reached at a convened Regional Committee meeting has occurred after the discipline hearing has taken place. This has happened because of the time constraints on all officials and in some cases a late request for representation from the members themselves. In these instances, the actual policies under threat has failed because the member will receive representation come-what-may, thus rendering the All Different All Equal policy pointless and failing to achieve its aim of fairness and equity for all.

It is now time for us to re-evaluate this policy and decide one way or another will we represent all members come-what-may, or fully support the All Different All Equal policy and its aims and aspirations by carrying it out in its entirety. This issue raises a lively debate

amongst our members and we believe we must make everyone fully aware of the policy including officials who must ensure that members are aware of their responsibility when requesting representation. It is sheer folly to believe that all of the membership is fully conversant with the All Different All Equal policy, including the request for representation to be made as soon as they are informed of any nature of a disciplinary case against them. We believe that the time scales contained within the All Different All Equal policy are aspirational given all our workloads, but for this Resolution to be successful we need to leave members and officials in no doubt as to the correct way that the All Different All Equal policy is to be carried out.

Our members have different views on this policy, but let us make sure that people who are upset about this are in the minority and not the majority.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for 84? *Formally seconded* It is open for debate.

BRO DAVID HOWE (Cleveland):

I speak in opposition to Resolution 84. Resolution 84 states that it fully endorses the aims and aspirations of All Different All Equal with regards to respecting dignity and fairness at work for all. It is that statement that raises a problem with me. How can a policy which is fair to all be changed in order to discriminate against a member who may well be a victim of a malicious accusation? As a Union we have to strive to be fair and to deal with discrimination, bullying and harassment, but we must accept that we cannot start to assume members are guilty before any evidence of that guilt has been found. We are not in the business of making snap judgments on people. I have been involved in an investigation on All Different All Equal very recently, and I speak with my eyes wide open that the only way is to investigate and to do that investigation properly, and then decide whether that member is afforded ongoing representation or not.

We have to accept that we may not get it right all the time. We are not perfect and we do not live in a perfect world. A guilty member may get a couple of weeks' representation if the All Different All Equal policy is carried out properly. But if that is done properly, then the representation would cease and justice would eventually be done. Again, I say we cannot presume members guilty with nothing more than an accusation from another member to go on. This goes against fairness and equality which is exactly what we as a Union are supposed to stand for. Please oppose the Resolution.

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BRO IAN YOUNG (Notts):

I feel I had to get up and say something on behalf of Notts. Notts oppose Resolution 84 regarding the All Different All Equal policy. Nottinghamshire moved this issue a number of years ago and were successful in getting this through the All Different All Equal policy after a long and heated debate and I am sure many of you remember that. We moved it because we had experienced the difficulties and heartache of those who had been accused, rightly or wrongly, of a wrongdoing. Quite often we found following investigation, that they were wrongly accused. We did not feel it right that someone should be accused and receive no representation. It does not happen in a court of law, and we believe it should not happen within our Union.

For the record, Nottingham Officials and our members have no wish to protect or defend anyone who is guilty of racism, sexism, homophobic behaviour and the like. We deplore such actions and behaviour and we challenge it regularly where it occurs. We are equally passionate that all our members have the right to Union assistance whether they are the accusers or the person being accused in the first instance. We believe the current policy is correct and we believe it allows everyone representation until the All Different All Equal report has been completed. It is the experience of Notts that the system does work and is very much better than what was (or was not) in place previously.

We do understand the position that has just been portrayed to us by West Midlands, and we have sympathy for that. We do not feel it warrants at this time, however, a full review of the All Different All Equal policy. So we ask you to support Nottinghamshire's position.

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

I speak to oppose Resolution 84. The sentiment of Resolution 84 is archaic at best and draconian at worst. It calls for further enhancement when in reality, if successful, will only achieve a negative backward step for the policy, our members and our Union. Never have two sentences in a Resolution been so contradictory, damaging and without factual merit since the New Labour Modernisation Paper on the Fire Service. I realise that All Different All Equal is not a perfect policy, but as trade unionists we talk of solidarity, of comradeship and of helping the common worker against the tyranny of the oppressors that is the employer. Considering that on these isles we are thought to be the strongest trade Union, here I am today feeling a need to convince a Conference of delegates that we should represent our members.

I also find it hard to believe that Brigades who belong to a Region that has a nil return in the All Different All

Equal representation requests for 2007 then find the current guidelines so badly wrong. Was 2008 such a terrible year for the West Midlands?

I know that those in support of this Resolution will say that members should stick to the rules, but they sound just like a Chief Fire Officer. I know that those supporting this Resolution will say we don't want this kind of person or that kind of person in the Union. Firstly, they sound like they belong in a CFO's secret handshake club and secondly, are they not in breach of the very policy by discriminating. I also know that those in support of this Resolution will say that sometimes people don't deserve to be represented. To this, I totally disagree and I quote our General Secretary who recently said "Everyone has the right to a fair trial and proper legal process." To our members, when they are on a fizzer, it is comparable to a legal process and it should be dealt with fairly not only by the employers but by their comrades.

Recently, I attended a TUC Out at Work course which tackled failure at work issues. We compared union policies and generally put the world to rights, as one usually does on these courses. But every single other union rep on the course, including the tutor, felt the act of withdrawing representation was too severe for any act of any kind from any member. For over 100 years, trade unions have fought for workers for be afforded fair and equitable conditions and if members are denied representation in the initial stages, who will be there for those members in the short term? Who will help them when they need the help the most?

I have often pondered about the pros and cons of the All Different All Equal policy, how it can be improved, and at National School the last two years and at Brigade and Regional meetings, I have often discussed how it could be possibly improved, and I have hoped that our National Officials and our EC could have helped with improving it. For the purposes of the verbatim report, he looks hopefully at the top tables! Oh dear!

Before writing this, I talked amongst the Watches, I asked the members what they knew about All Different All Equal. They generally say it is the thing that means you won't get representation when you are in trouble. I find myself having to justify the policy, defending its aims, but as long as you have got an arguable defence you will be OK. But that will change if this Resolution is successful. I feel that this Resolution is both undemocratic and unnecessary. Is it really the wish of our members to withdraw representation until an arguable defence has been found. What has happened to innocent until proven guilty? What happens if the Brigade in question already passes judgment and charges a member? What happens if the member is sacked because of delay of the FBU and no official has

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been able to advise our member of their rights? Like I have said, it is not a perfect policy but at present it is better than the one that is being proposed.

We don't want a policy that is exclusive, we want a policy that is inclusive. We don't want a policy that punishes members who need help and guidance, we want a policy that tackles fairness at work issues and helps raise issues. We don't want a policy that is detrimental to some members, we want a policy that is beneficial to all members. I urge you to oppose Resolution 84.

JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

What a strange task to give the opposition from the Executive Council but to make sure that they don't get caught up in the chain of rhetoric we have just heard. When we say good morning to Ronnie Scott who is sat up there somewhere, some of you will remember Ronnie Scott sat here as President when we first introduced the All Different All Equal policy. The reason we needed one was because we had members out there, men, women, black, white, straight and gay, who had been abused by our members in the Fire and Rescue Service. They had been bullied and harassed and had their work place made miserable. I have to tell you Conference, not an awful lot has changed. You only have to ask some of our members in here what is going on out there. We are still having the same experiences.

The Executive Council thought very long and hard about taking the stance that they have taken on this policy, and after the debates that have taken place over the last number of years, they felt that the position we had reached in the All Different All Equal policy was expressing the will of the majority of members. I can tell you what they did not say, that they were going to take their foot off the gas in making sure that those who abuse our members do not stay in the Union and the British Fire Service. We understand in the Executive Council and particularly for the Regional Secretaries, they have probably the most difficult task of implementing the All Different All Equal policy but we believe that the policy is workable. There are elements built in there in terms of time scales, but what we do urge is that when an investigation needs to take place, it takes place as quickly as reasonably practicable. We have got to get that done as fast as we can. What we cannot have is our members out there who work up the courage to come to us and make a complaint because they have been bullied and harassed, to sit back and see the Union continue to represent the harasser. Let us get the investigations done as quickly as we possibly can. Let us stick with the existing policy we have got for the moment and of course, the Executive Council will continue to review all the policies of this Union and maybe they will come back in a future year.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Do West Midlands wish to exercise their right of reply? No. I will therefore put Resolution 84 to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Can I see those against. That is *defeated*.

Before we break for lunch, there has been a request that any new delegates or observers at Conference, if they could identify themselves at some time to Alan Miles, the man with the video camera, and the photographer, Tony Bartholomew, for a short interview for *FBU-tube* and for a picture for our archives. We will now break for lunch. Please be back in your seats promptly for 2 o'clock.

Adjourned for lunch

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AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Before we take the Standing Orders Committee Report, there are two things I have been asked to announce. One is that the FBU shop has been set up outside that doorway selling a fine range of T-shirts, sweat shirts and other memorabilia. The other is the Yellow Hope Not Hate T-shirts that were in boxes at the back of the hall, I had a request if all delegates can ensure that they have one, there are going to be photographs taken of delegates in their T-shirts this afternoon at some stage.

I will now take the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, Steve Shelton, to give a report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Programme of Business, Page 11. Resolution 70 is withdrawn. The Standing Orders Committee wish to report that there will be a fringe meeting titled *After Gaza what future for Palestine* at 5.30 in the Vetadome which is situated upstairs. Access from the balcony.

Delegates changes. Cheshire have deleted Andrew Price and inserted Johannsen Bostock. Berkshire have deleted Mark Stollery and inserted Maurice White. Hampshire have deleted Gary Sams and inserted Emma Morgan. Cornwall have deleted Mike Tremellen and inserted Pete Merrikin. B&EMM have deleted Carl Petch and inserted Samantha Samuels. Essex have deleted Andy Hull and inserted Dave Barnard. Essex have deleted Nick Maynes and inserted Kieron Davies. Northern Ireland have deleted Joe Heron and inserted Brian Stanfield. Mid & West Wales have deleted Deiniol Lloyd and inserted Andy Blackmore. South Wales have deleted Rob Bishop and inserted Nigel Mace. South Wales have deleted Simon Fleming and inserted nobody. Tyne & Wear have deleted D.Turner and inserted Alan Race. Derbyshire have deleted M.Cobb and inserted John Cook. London have deleted Richard Lockwood, Jock McIntyre and Paul Embury and inserted no-one else. CSNC have inserted Helen Young. That completes the report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed*

Next it is my task to introduce the guest speaker from the TUC, someone who is no stranger to our Conferences, General Secretary Brendan Barber. Brendan has been the General Secretary of the TUC

since 2003. He used to like to visit our Conferences in Southport because he could go and visit his family, but he has had to come to the other side of the English coast today. He was in Southport yesterday addressing the Prison Officers, in Newcastle this morning addressing the Maritime Officers, and now he is with us this afternoon in Scarborough so, as you can see, he leads a glamorous life and I would like to introduce Brendan.

BRO BRENDAN BARBER (General Secretary, Trades Union Congress):

Mick, thanks very much for those words of welcome and it is a pleasure to be back with the FBU again at your Conference. Thanks to you, Mick, and to Matt for all the work that you do in leading the Union. I want to bring greetings from the TUC and to reaffirm the close links that bind us together.

I want to start not by looking forward but by looking back because, as the saying goes, it has been a funny old year: a year when the world has been turned upside down. We have seen global capitalism teetering on the brink of collapse; banks asking how much they can borrow from us; nationalisation back in fashion. Let us not forget the most shocking development of all, something probably unthinkable just 12 months ago that none of us could have predicted that shows how fundamentally how world has changed. Yes, Everton back in the FA Cup Final for the first time for 14 years!

I want to begin by applauding the FBU for another year of solid progress, speaking up for firefighters and for working people across Britain and across the world. There can be no doubt that you make an enormous contribution to the work of the TUC and the wider Labour Movement. I know your commitment to international solidarity from Columbia to Cuba is second to none. I want to pay a special tribute to the FBU for your consistent leadership in the battle against the far right. For many years I know you have committed time and resources to the fight against racism and fascism, making a difference where it is needed most. That is something that you should be proud of. But your work and our work is far from done. With the local and European elections little more than three weeks away, let none of us rest until every community the length and breadth of Britain is free from the poison of the BNP, and let it be the politics of hope not hate that emerge victorious on the morning of June 5th.

We are meeting at what is an absolutely critical time for ordinary working people in Britain. I think perhaps this is a defining moment in our political and economic history. It is clear that we are now in the midst of a crisis perhaps unprecedented in our lifetimes. The global economy has been in melt down with Britain suffering

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the worst recession since the 1930s. The financial system remains in intensive care unable to function without hundreds of billions of pounds of our money. Unemployment is marching relentlessly upwards, perhaps towards 3 million, perhaps even worse.

None of this has happened by accident. It is the inevitable consequence of the deregulated winner takes all free market fundamentalism that has dominated our politics for the past 30 years: a brutal ideology that has left us all staring into the abyss. But out of this despair must come hope: not just a new kind of economy, more stable, more sustainable, more equal, but a new kind of politics that reconnects with ordinary people, that does not bend over backwards to accommodate the City and the financial special interests, and that affords unions a real say in shaping politics for progress.

It goes without saying that we welcome actions that the Labour Government has taken to mitigate the effects of the downturn, looking to maintain public spending where the Tories would only slash and burn; showing a genuine commitment to avoiding the crippling social costs of the recessions of the 1980s and 1990s; and, at long last, beginning to hold the super-rich to account through the new 50 per cent tax rate and a new determination to crack down on tax havens and tax loopholes. That much we welcome.

But it is clear that this crisis is likely to get worse before it gets better. It is equally clear that the long term implications could be devastating. Nowhere will the imprint of a contracting economy and collapsing tax revenues be felt more than in our public services. Regardless of who wins the election next year, the outlook is pretty bleak. Last month's budget underlined the size of the hole in our public finances which could be even bigger if the Treasury's growth predictions do not materialise. Whilst the TUC believes that the Government is absolutely right to borrow and that the UK's overall debt burden remains manageable by international standards, we are reaching a crunch point, and for public servants the impact on jobs, pay and pensions could be severe.

Our position is clear. Britain's firefighters, nurses and teachers should not be made to pay the price for the monumental greed of the bankers, for the reckless excess of a privileged elite, for a mess created in the City of London and on Wall Street. We will not stand by and let any Government take an axe to our public services or the terms and conditions of the dedicated people who provide them. Let us instead set out a positive vision for the future where we avoid wasting countless billions on pointless reforms, arbitrary changes and overpaid consultants, and where public servants are set free to use their expertise and experience in the service of all our communities.

Nowhere do these basic principles matter more than in the key service that you deliver. You know better than me, the past decade has been one of huge upheaval in the Fire Service, a constant cycle of reform, restructuring and re-organisation. The challenges that you face remain acute. Perhaps most disturbingly, as one of our front line emergency services, you are already having to get to grips with a severe programme of efficiency savings equivalent to 200 million over the past 4 years. This is at a time when the Fire Service is already stretched to the limit and when the Association of British Insurers says that the cost of fire damage has now reached a record £1.3 billion. These cuts are already having an impact on the quality of the services that you are able to deliver. As your research has shown, huge efficiency savings in places like Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and Lancashire, have been accompanied by a failure to hit key public service agreement targets on accidental fire deaths. In plain English, people are dying because your Services are not being properly funded.

The past few years have also seen another deeply disturbing trend and that is a rise in the number of firefighter deaths. Yes, the work you do is uniquely difficult, demanding and dangerous. But it should not, must not and need not be deadly. Since the beginning of this decade the number of firefighters paying the ultimate price while doing their jobs has increased, reversing the progress that had been made during the 80s and 90s. That is completely unacceptable, not a statistical blip, but evidence of deep systemic failings.

The TUC was proud to participate in your successful lobby of Parliament back in November. Let none of us rest until the Government treats this issue with the urgency and the priority that it deserves.

The Government needs to change tack in another absolutely crucial area, and that of course is Regional Control. This is a project which I think has now lost any shred of credibility. Nearly five years late, massively over-budget and seemingly going ahead simply for the sake of it. Where is the evidence base for Regionalisation? If it exists, we have yet to see it. Where is the financial case for the changes? Again, they seem pretty illusive and when it comes to large scale IT projects, where is the track record of successful implementation? It is pretty thin on the ground.

At a time when the public purse is stretched as never before we cannot allow huge sums of taxpayers' money to be squandered in this way. So I pay tribute to the FBU for consistently leading the way on this debate, exposing the gaping holes at the heart of the Government's plans. Just think about some of the numbers. According to the latest study by the Institute of Public Finance, the cost of Regional Control is now

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£1.4 billion, almost four times the official figure. The estimated saving from Regionalisation is just £8 million a year. According to my rough and ready calculations, that means the project will pay for itself in as little as 175 years. Yes, the taxpayer will only have to wait until 2184 to really begin to enjoy the savings. The problem is pretty plain for all to see. The costs have been massively underestimated and the benefits over-exaggerated. So I call on the Government, focus on what works, take a step back from the abyss and embrace a model of reform that commands the support of staff, service users and taxpayers alike.

With a General Election a year away at most, now is not the time to be playing Russian roulette with one of our most important services. As I said at the beginning, we have reached a critical juncture for the future of the services that you provide, for the future of all of our public services, for the future of Britain.

I do not think any of us can know what the coming years are going to hold either economically or politically. There is a very real sense that we are living through a period of huge unprecedented turbulence. But one thing can be said with certainty and that is that working people are going to need all the support they can get: a strong voice at work fighting their corner against job cuts and pay freezes; a reassuring presence in the community speaking up for all races, colours and creeds; and a powerful force for change, ensuring that the interests of labour not just capital shape the politics of the future. That is where our Movement comes in, and this is the agenda to which we must now respond.

I do not pretend for a moment that it will be easy. I think the coming years will test us as perhaps never before, but if we can rise to that mighty task, securing fairness for workers whilst shaping a fairer Britain, then trade unionism will be flourishing anew.

Thanks for listening and good luck in all the work you do. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Brendan. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I am sure on behalf of Conference I am able to thank Brendan for his attendance and greetings from the TUC. Brendan, you are always welcome at the FBU Conference. Brendan, as you have heard, is touring various conferences and will be hearing of the difficulties faced at each of those individual industries, services and so on. The whole of the Movement is facing an extremely difficult time and it is one where the whole of the Movement needs to unite to make sure

that we are united in defence of public services and ensuring that working people are not on the receiving end of the worst cuts in living memory and huge tax rises and so on, and there is a huge challenge facing all of us.

On behalf of Conference, we have just had a new plaque done, so there is a plaque and a bottle of Jameson. Thanks very much, Brendan and thanks for coming.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Brendan. I hope you have a good journey back. We are now going to move into Closed Session. Could I please ask the stewards to ensure that only delegates, officials, members, solicitors, tutors and official visitors remain in the Hall. Other visitors and the media will be excluded until the end of this Closed Session which takes us up to the Emergency Resolution from West Yorkshire.

Conference went into Closed Session and returned to Open Session

THE PRESIDENT:

We are now on the Annual Report. Paragraph A4. Pay Differentials- Promotion and CPD.

BRO GARY MITCHELL (Northants):

We would just like to bring to Conference's attention an issue that has arisen in Northamptonshire. Out of Trade FBU members who have recently retired are not receiving the CPD element within their pension. They have written to the local pension department and have received no response. On investigation, it is quite obvious that the pension department have no idea what CPD means or what it is all about. CPD payments are pensionable and should be paid. In some Brigades it is obvious that this is not happening. We would ask that the National Officer responsible for pensions raises this issue in the appropriate forum. We also ask that a circular be sent to all Brigade Officials to highlight this problem. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask Andy Dark to respond.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

We obviously thank Northamptonshire for bringing that to our attention. We have not heard that information to date. One thing we can assure Northamptonshire and Conference is that if those precise details can be ascertained from the member or members involved, we

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will be raising the issue at the Firefighter Pension Committee on 28th May. We have already got a number of Thompsons lawyers here, but certainly I understand that Ivan Walker who, as you know, is Thompsons lead pensions specialist, will be here later this week and I have no doubt at all we will be able to make sure there is a meeting to discuss those issues in preparation for that FPC.

I will say this. Certainly the comrade said that this was perhaps happening in other Brigades. If that is the case certainly do bring it to the attention of National Officials or your EC Member because certainly if it is more widespread than Northamptonshire, we do want to know about it and we will raise those issues in the same way as we will those from Northants.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. We are now taking Resolution 3 from Humberside with an Amendment from Shropshire. The Executive Council are opposed. Can I have Humberside to move, please.

Resolution 3 – NATIONAL PAY LEVELS

Conference notes with concern that currently, FBU members carrying out the same roles as their colleagues in other Fire & Rescue Services receive varying levels of remuneration in the form of payments over and above that of the NJC agreed pay rates. In effect, FBU members receive different remuneration for doing the same role depending on CPD levels and other locally agreed allowances. Conference believes this has the potential to cause division between FBU members.

Conference therefore instructs the FBU's pay negotiators, when entering into future pay negotiations, that they do so with a view to consolidating these varying payments (excluding agreed London weighting arrangements), to ensure that all roles within the UK Fire Service receive the same levels of remuneration for carrying out the same duties.

HUMBERSIDE

Amendment

In line 2 after "same" insert "or similar"

In line 5 after "same" insert "or similar"

In line 12 after "same" insert "or similar"

SHROPSHIRE

BRO NEIL TRENCHARD (Humberside):

We accept Shropshire's Amendments. Currently, FBU members carrying out the same roles as colleagues in other Fire and Rescue Services receive varying levels of

remuneration in the form of payments over and above that of the NJC agreed pay rates. This is through continuing professional development pay and additional responsibility allowances.

This Resolution is not covering the rights or wrongs of those payments. Other Resolutions have covered the unjustness of those. What we are saying is that it is unjust and morally wrong to work alongside a colleague from a different Brigade doing the same job and being paid less. How can a Union justify that differential in pay for a colleague doing the same job? We therefore through this Resolution are asking that the FBU pay negotiators when entering into future pay negotiations do so with a view to consolidating these varying payments, excluding the agreed London weighting arrangements, to ensure there is no division and that everyone within a role receives the same pay for working within that same role map. We cannot allow unfair differentials in pay. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 3? Formally seconded Can I have Shropshire please to move their Amendments.

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

The Amendments are quite straightforward in that we have discussions with our own management about what different work is and what it is called and what one thing is and another. One example for us has been trying to argue with management about safety equipment where we train and use rescue equipment with the line safety and we end up in a debate with management as to whether it is rope rescue or line safety, and so all we are saying is if it is similar work it should be paid the same.

I do just want to add over the last couple of years that Shropshire have moved Resolutions looking towards the EC to produce some guidance for Brigade Officials on additional responsibility allowances. People in different Brigades have been and continue to be paid vastly different amounts of money for the same or similar work. We still do not seem to have any national steer on this. We believe that it is time that the EC brought ARAs and other payments that affect our members nationally away from local agreements and end the wide variations that they bring as well as the variations between the CPD payments. Please support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Shropshire amendment? Is that formally? *Formally seconded*. It is open for debate.

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BRO FRANCIS BISHOP (West Sussex):

I oppose the Resolution. Many Brigade Officials in various Brigades have successfully negotiated local payments. I have not in West Sussex but my close colleagues in Surrey have very successfully achieved a local pensionable weighting allowance of more than £1,200 a year. So I feel that however well-intentioned this Resolution is, it will result in employers seeking to pay the lowest common denominator. They will be more than happy to enter into consolidation payments in order to dumb it down.

The other reason I am opposing it is I applaud our London members in achieving the weighting, but I notice that they have been excluded from this Resolution. I fear that supporting the Resolution will only serve to widen the already very considerable gap that we have between London and the rest of us. Please oppose the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will therefore ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think the opposition is based on an understanding that the Resolution is well-intentioned. If we take CPD, for some crimes in a previous life I spent almost a year with other people on this Executive negotiating that and it was extremely difficult. We tried to resist as far as we could the whole idea of different pay rates on CPD between different employers. We were not successful in that argument.

I think if the Resolution had been written purely on the issue of CPD, the Executive Council stance may well have been different although I cannot prejudge that because it is not. The Resolution is very clear that it is about a range of payments. Reference has been made to ARAs. ARAs are deliberately designed as local payments. That is the agreement we reached when we reached the agreement on the concept of ARAs, that they are locally determined within the 2003 agreement.

I think the second point that has just been raised in relation to the reference only to London: that there are other Brigades who have negotiated local allowances and have done so for many years. Surrey was mentioned. Surrey in terms of housing indeed is the most expensive County in the whole of the United Kingdom so it is not surprising that members in Surrey have sought a local allowance to take account of those costs. So the Resolution does not take account of such variations and is a further reason why we think it needs to be opposed.

Finally, it is the reference to pay negotiators raising these matters through pay negotiations because, again, we think that is a dangerous tactic. Conference has just voted on an Emergency Resolution opposing strings in relation to pay. If you want to open up the debate around strings, put some strings in ourselves. The very suggestion that we go in with a pay claim and say, by the way we want to discuss other things in relation to this pay claim, will precisely open up the whole debate about strings from the employers. They will say if you want to discuss ARAs or CPD we have got our two items we want to discuss as well. So if we are serious about no strings, we have to be serious and tactically that is not the way to raise the concerns. We understand the concerns. We think the Resolution is incorrectly worded in terms of what it is trying to achieve. I would strongly urge Conference to oppose the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Are Humberside seeking the right to reply?

BRO NEIL TRENCHARD:

Before voting on this, I would ask you to look again at the Resolution. We are not asking anybody to lose money on this. We are not looking for anybody to go down to the lowest denominator. All we are asking is that in the pay negotiations we look at that with a view to consolidating these varying payments and nothing else. There is no time limit, just a view to consolidating the pay.

THE PRESIDENT:

I therefore put the Amendment from Shropshire to Resolution 3 to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That *falls*

I therefore put the Resolution from Humberside to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That *falls*

We are now going to have a debate on CPD payments. We are going to take four Resolutions in the same debate. They can all carry. Resolutions 13, 14, 15 and 16. The Executive Council are giving qualified support to 13, qualified support to 16 and opposing 14 and 15. Can I have Berkshire, please, to move Resolution 13.

Resolution 13 – CPD REMOVAL AND PAY

This conference calls on the Executive Council to negotiate the end to the perverse practice of removing CPD payments from our members whilst

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they are undertaking temporary promotion, acting up, under development or following a disciplinary award.

BERKSHIRE

BRO MARK STOLLERY (Berks):

I move Resolution 13. CPD in its very term, Continual Professional Development, every single one of us probably from the lowest firefighter brand new in, right up to the top are continually professionally developing. Every day you turn up, there are new procedures, new equipment, new ideas, new dimensions, everything is new. You have to learn about it. You have to develop others below you, to the side of you, all the way through.

The first thing is, I have been in the job 20 years now and I have risen to the huge height of crew manager. I do a bit of fire fighting and I do a bit of driving. I do a bit of everything really including, when the Subs off, I do a bit of his work as well. They said to me do you fancy doing some acting up, temporary as a Watch Manager. It sounds a good idea. Then they turn round and say, oh, development. Thank you. CPD. Perverse, isn't it. I am developing myself. I have put myself up, my head over the parapet and then get it shot clean off. CPD: is it a term for them to just pinch money when they can? Not only from those that are doing development on temporary but also using it as a second stick when they include it in discipline. If somebody gets a discipline award, they come along just after that and whack you with the other stick called CPD and take that away.

We are calling on the EC to enter into negotiations to put a stop to this perverse idea and actual practice that CPD is just an excuse for them to penny pinch every time somebody wants to develop themselves.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder, please, for Resolution 13. *Formally.* Can we now have Humberside, please, to move Resolution 14.

Resolution 14 – CPD SCHEMES

Conference notes with concern that the application of the CPD payment scheme varies massively from one Fire and Rescue Service to the next. This is largely due to how Fire & Rescue Service managers decide to interpret the National Joint Council Application Guidelines and is also dependent on local policies.

This has resulted in firefighters in one Fire and Rescue Service receiving their CPD payment whilst in another Fire and Rescue Service firefighters may have had their CPD application refused, when they

are in fact performing to the same or even a higher level in the required standards contained within the application process.

This conference is also of the opinion that it is perverse, in that a Fire Authority/Fireboard's funds are boosted, the higher the number of unsuccessful CPD applications that are submitted by those eligible to apply.

This conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to raise this matter at the next meeting of the National Joint Council with a view to renegotiating the National CPD Scheme to include that the annual CPD budget for eligible applicants within a Fire & Rescue Service is shared by those applicants that are successful in accordance with a revised NJC application/guidance process that gives further clarity and instruction to Fire and Rescue Service managers.

HUMBERSIDE

BRO RICHARD WALKER (Humberside):

The problem surrounding CPD schemes have been with us ever since the concept was first introduced following the pay deal of 2003. Even back then those cynics amongst us suspected that some Fire Authorities or Brigade Managers would try to use CPD as a tool to keep firefighters in line or perhaps even more worryingly as a mechanism for saving money.

Variations in the application process across Brigades and the differing interpretation of guidance by Brigade Managers have resulted in firefighters in some Brigades receiving payment almost as a matter of course simply for filling in application forms whereas members from other Brigades are denied payment on whatever grounds their managers deem applicable.

Furthermore, the present system which uses a pot of savings from the removal of long service increment from pay as a set rate to successful applicants, could incentivise Fire Authorities to fail applicants and therefore save money. The more applicants they fail, the more money they save, and that cannot be right.

To give an example of this type of abuse, 74 members in Humberside Brigade were refused payment simply for having the misfortune of needing time off work on sick. There was no suggestion that these cases were anything other than genuine sickness. Indeed, most of them were supported by doctors' certificates, but that did not stop the Brigade from denying them money that was rightfully theirs. That decision to refuse payment to those 74 members would, if they had been allowed to get away with it, have saved the Fire Authority over £45,000. That is £45,000 of our money.

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The present system is open to misinterpretation from managers whose only concern is the bottom line. It needs to be tightened up to give clear instruction and avoid any abuse. We therefore call upon the EC to raise the matter at the next meeting of the National Joint Council and to renegotiate the CPD scheme so that it gives clear unambiguous instructions to managers and in order to prevent authorities keeping money which is rightfully ours, to include that the entire budget for CPD is paid out to successful applicants.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder, please, for Resolution 14? No seconder? *Formally seconded*

Can we please have West Midlands to move Resolution 15.

Resolution 15 – CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This Annual Conference is disappointed by the way the Continual Professional Development scheme has been implemented by some individual Fire Authorities.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council raises this issue with the employers at a national level to ensure the agreed NJC guidelines on the CPD scheme are adhered to by all Fire Authorities.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO MARK FELLOWS (West Midlands):

Following the phasing out of the Long Service Increment, guidelines were agreed by the NJC for the introduction and implementation of the Continuing Professional Development scheme. In accordance with these guidelines, the sum allocated in each Fire and Rescue Service for CPD, equated to the sum previously paid out in LSI. Furthermore, the initial guidelines stated that the total sum of this budget was to be distributed amongst the successful CPD applicants. This was to include any money not paid to those applications that were rejected. This of course, never happened.

Moreover, it now appears that in fact there is no CPD budget within Fire and Rescue Services and quite perversely as a consequence the more applications that are turned down, the more individual authorities prosper. Some authorities, not unsurprisingly, have been quick to exploit this situation. In the West Midlands alone 12 per cent of all applications have been refused, constituting a total gain to the West Midlands authority of over £111,000. This is despite the fact that the guidelines clearly stated that it was the expectation that the vast

majority would qualify for payment. We do not consider that around 130 applicants a year being turned down is the vast majority. So how can this be? One thing I can say is that the vast majority have had their CPD rejected in the West Midlands for one thing alone and that has been on attendance. This is despite clear guidelines expressing the contrary. These guidelines are still valid and current on the LGA website convey the following. The purpose of the CPD scheme is to recognise and reward experienced employees who can demonstrate CPD over and above that required at competent level for each of the national standards set out in the scheme. The criterion applied to high levels of attendance is one of a number of a number of criteria under one of those national standards committing them to the job. It should not be the only consideration upon which a decision is made to award or not award a CPD payment, yet this is exactly what is happening.

Similarly, we know of instances of managers beginning to refuse the CPD renewal form on the basis of lack of evidence. In one instance a whole Watch was turned down. Again, the current guidelines state that it is expected that not renewing the payments will be an exception.

So no wonder then, no wonder that at last year's FBU National School, Sarah Messenger from the employers' side of the NJC said how much the employers liked the CPD scheme. What a surprise! Therefore we demand that the AGS takes this back to Sarah Messenger (the Sir Fred Goodwin of the NJC!) to determine why our members have been robbed of their cash in clear contravention of the guidelines. Yes, we are aware that some Brigades have almost universally paid all of their eligible staff the CPD entitlement. That, of course, is entirely permissible under the current guidelines and there is no need for that situation to change. However, what we are calling for here is that all those authorities that operate the scheme below the agreed guidelines be instructed to adhere to them as a base minimum because in our opinion the CPD scheme has become nothing more than an attendance allowance, a sham whereby rogue managers can reject applications to make a name or if they bear a grudge. For us, CPD has not worked. Every application refused is a 3 per cent pay cut and what are the chances of recouping that back this year? The guidelines are ambiguous, discredited and it is costing our members. Support our Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder please for Resolution 15? *Formally seconded*

West Midlands, can we have you to move Resolution 16.

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Resolution 16 – CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This Conference demands that the Executive Council starts negotiations with the employers to ensure that Continual Professional Development payment is not lost on temporary or substantive promotion.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO MICK BELL (West Midlands):

I move Resolution 16, CPD. This is my first time speaking so please be gentle with me – especially as I realise I have just brought the wrong sheet up with me. Forgive me if I start talking about Gurkhas because that is the speech I have got with me!

I would like to think that the issue surrounding CPD is not contentious really. Surely it is a simple injustice that our members aren't getting this money. They are basically being robbed of it. I realise it is late on in the day and I don't want to bore you all with facts and figures, but for example if I as a firefighter applied in July this year to further my career as a Crew Commander, a Watch Commander A or Watch Commander B, I could in theory, if Brigades used temporary conditional promotions, move from fire safety to operational or vice versa. I could find myself in a position where I have actually moved from being a firefighter to a Watch Commander B and yet for a period of up to 8 years I would not be entitled to CPD. To me that is absolutely ridiculous. I have gone from a firefighter to a Watch Commander B and yet they are telling me I have not continued my professional development. The idea is ludicrous.

The night before I came up I spoke to a colleague. I was doing a night shift. His situation is that he has just done a similar thing. He has gone from a firefighter to Watch Commander B and waiting to go to Watch Commander A. He has been waiting three years now. He has not received a penny in CPD payments and it is likely that he will be at least another 12 months before he receives anything. In our Brigade that would have cost him upwards of £4,000. If, as the FBU, we cannot defend our members losing the amounts of £4,000, what are we here for? I really don't know. The Brigades are saving absolute fortunes of our members' money and it is not right.

That is the motion. Please support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 16? *Formally.* Unless somebody moves Suspension of Standing Orders, we are not going to be able to conclude the debate on these four Resolutions and take a vote on them. Is there

anybody moving such a proposal? *Indicated from the floor,* move Suspension of Standing Orders until the end of this particular session. Is that agreed? *Agreed*

Right. The four CPD Resolutions are open for debate. Was there anybody else who wanted to speak in this debate? No. After this speaker I will ask Andy Dark to respond on behalf of the Executive Council.

BRO STEVE COLLINS (Suffolk):

I oppose Resolution 15. This Resolution is demanding that all Fire Authorities adhere to the NJC guidelines on the CPD payments. If this is the case then it would be detrimental to those Fire and Rescue Services that have been able to negotiate a locally agreed policy on CPD payments. In Suffolk we came out of the national negotiations on CPD schemes as one of the worst off in the country when it came to the level of payment, £357. Due to the small amount of money for our members and the proposed guidelines being very cumbersome for a Fire Authority the size of Suffolk, we came to a local agreement that all eligible personnel would automatically receive CPD payment until we agreed the local policy. We have, in the last few weeks, been able to agree a policy with management that better suits and benefits our members than the NJC guidelines. Also with the agreement, we have been able to secure an increase in the minimal level of payment to £500 without being backdated to November last year.

If Conference carries this Resolution it will be detrimental to the local agreement we have been able to secure in Suffolk and would see our members worse off if we had to follow the NJC guidelines. Don't undo all the hard work and efforts of the FBU officials around the country that have been able to achieve a better deal than the NJC guidelines. Oppose Resolution 15.

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

Oppose Resolution No 14. We are actually in the fortunate position that we managed to agree terms without the national agreement so it is for this reason and the same reasons that were mentioned by my comrade that we are opposed to that.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Andy. On all four Resolutions, please.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, as the President said at the beginning of the debate, the Executive Council is giving qualified support to Resolutions 13 and 16 but opposing 14 and 15.

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I think Conference can well remember the tortuous route that it took to come up with the eventual agreement on CPD, how difficult that was, particularly from the starting point we had, whereby we had an agreement that something called CPD would come in but the shape of that was not known. That was difficult for all of us, for the Executive Council and for every delegate here, and certainly for the members in terms of the task we were facing at the time.

The agreement, you will remember, was reached on the basis of being the best that could be reached or agreed through negotiation. It is not without its problems and it was known then that it was not without its problems. It is certainly not without elements which we opposed during the discussions and which we still have problems with, many of which have been highlighted during the debate today: not least the fact that members who when they take promotion, whether substantive or otherwise, certainly in the development phase or during acting up lose CPD in many, but not all Brigades, and not least the way management have used it as a means to apply an informal discipline award.

On that basis and because of that, the Executive Council is supporting the Resolution from Berkshire and Resolution 16 from West Midlands, but with a qualification. The qualification is achievable on the basis that it is part of the NJC agreement and I think it was Mark that said it is something which the employers like. They enjoy it. They are not going to give it up easily. That said, simply because they don't want to give it up doesn't mean to say that we don't look to take it back and amend it, remove it if needs be, in the interests of the members. It is not impossible to do that and we certainly need to raise it and that is what the Resolutions are saying.

What will assist of course, is the evidence and the evidence is there, and a number of Brigades have supplied evidence over a period of time, and supplied information in many senses. Certainly the detail that has been given here today during the debate has been extremely useful.

I think also what will assist us is some kind of demonstration with regards to how our members feel, direct to those Fire Authorities that are telling the likes of Sarah Messenger how much they like it. For example, those members of ours who do act up knowing that in that Brigade there is no agreement to keep the CPD payment, there is a question whether or not they should demonstrate their opposition to that Brigade's insistence on that part which they can amend through local agreement by some means in terms of joint action with regards to saying we are not acting up on that basis. That would assist you and it would assist us.

I suppose the main point I would like to say is our opposition to 14 and 15. Certainly with 14, it is suggesting, asking, demanding in fact, that we raise it at the next meeting. I certainly think what we do need to do is to have the evidence for us to be able to pursue at the appropriate time, the discussions being asked for with the NJC, but to do it by the next meeting I think would be in error and certainly the Executive Council feel strongly that way.

Similarly, with regards to 15, there is a problem with 15. I am not so sure that what Steve was saying from Suffolk would necessarily apply, that if we were to revisit it, it would actually end any beneficial arrangements that have been reached by local agreement as part of local contracts which are in the interests of members. I don't think us raising it would have that effect.

Certainly, the effect that it would have is that it would leave us in a situation whereby we would be undermining in some ways the processes which we have been arguing long and hard in a number of Brigades and that is that we should use the procedures that we do have to pursue these issues. I say this with no element of spite or sarcasm at all. I think the examples which have been given and certainly the examples given by Martin and by Mick were extremely useful in this regard: clear examples of where the national guidelines are being breached. I think what we need to do is give evidence to the Fire Authorities that they need to apply it properly. We need to do that through a number of different means and certainly, in the first instance, I think it would be useful to meet with the West Midlands Officials at Head Office in the next couple of weeks to assist in that process to challenge that. I am sure many of you will be thinking we have got similar problems, but I think it is best to put out that offer to assist West Midlands in that way and that perhaps can be the template for others to challenge the problems that you are facing with your Brigade Managers on similar issues.

With that, as I say, we are giving qualified support to 13 and 16 but opposition to 14 and 15.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Andy. Are Berkshire seeking the right to reply? It would appear not. Are Humberside seeking the right to reply?

BRO RICHARD WALKER:

Very briefly, I would like to say there is nothing in Resolution 14 to prevent better agreed local agreements from remaining. I appreciate it is a difficult negotiation, but I do not think there is any part of the CPD scheme

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that I have ever seen that we have negotiated to allow members to lose pay simply for being off sick. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Are West Midlands seeking the right of reply to Resolution 15? No. And to Resolution 16? It would appear the answer to that is no. OK. I will therefore put the four Resolutions to the vote. They can all carry. To remind you, the Executive Council are urging qualified support for 13 and 16 and opposition to 14 and 15.

Can I see those in favour of Resolution 13 please. Thank you. Are there any against. Are there any abstentions. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

I now put Resolution 14 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That *falls*.

Now I move to Resolution 15. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That *falls*.

I now move to Resolution 16. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

I have two announcements to make before I close Conference today. One is to remind all delegates of the International Night tonight here in the Spa Centre. The tickets say an 8 o'clock start but you will need to be here earlier than that. The speaker will be on by 7.45 and the acts will be on sharp at 8 pm so I would urge everybody to be here for 7.30.

The second announcement is that the yellow Hope Not Hate T-shirts, if people can leave them on their places or bring them back tomorrow, it is the intention to hold some kind of photo call tomorrow morning. With that, I declare Conference closed for today. Thank you.

Conference adjourned

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MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Will people please take their seats and finish their conversations, we will start this morning's Session of Conference. Good morning everybody. I hope you are all feeling well rested after a good night's sleep and ready to face another day's Conference business. Before we start any other business, I will ask Steve to give a report from the Standing Orders Committee.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Good morning everybody. Would you please turn to your Programme of Business. Page 7. Resolution 76 has been withdrawn. Page 11. Resolution 69 has been withdrawn. After Section D, Pensions, insert Emergency Resolution No 19, Firefighters Pensions, London. After Para C1, Introduction, insert Emergency Resolution No 21, Yarl's Wood- Treatment of Children, Greater Manchester. After Resolution 55 insert Emergency Resolution No 20, The BNP, London. Page 13. After Resolution 43 insert Emergency Resolution No 13, Changes to Duty and Shift Patterns, Strathclyde. Page 15. Resolution 71 has been withdrawn.

The Standing Orders Committee wish to announce they have agreed and accepted a request from the Executive Council to hold a Bucket Collection at the end of Conference today in aid of Justice for Columbia and the Columbia Firefighters Union. Can I also bring to your attention that there will be a fringe meeting titled *People's Charter for Change* at 1 o'clock today in the Promenade Lounge here in the Spa Complex. Thank you, President. That concludes this morning's report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed?

BRO LEE MOON (Beds):

Two points of clarification please, to Standing Orders. The first one is it was my recollection that yesterday the President closed Annual Conference rather than adjourn it. The second one is can we have the length of speakers' times, please.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will deal with the first one. That was an unfortunate slip of the tongue, Lee. Obviously we did adjourn and the fact that you came back this morning hopefully

indicates that you realised what I meant to say, but I will ask Steve to clarify on speakers' times as in the Standing Orders. *Applause*

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Just have a look in your Standing Orders for Annual Conference which you received some time ago and I think you will find the Standing Order is very clear on speakers' times. If we change them, we will let you know.

BRO LEE MOON:

Can I have how the delegates are doing with those speakers' times.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Vice President sitting next to me has a stop clock and he has been diligently timing every speaker! He advises me that none have overrun.

Subject to those clarifications, is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed*

I will now ask the Chief Scrutineer, Stuart Wilson, to come to the platform to make an announcement regarding the Standing Orders Committee election.

THE CHIEF SCRUTINEER:

Just to inform Conference that there are 21 nominations for Standing Orders and I will ask the President to make a further nomination as regards to that. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Stuart. Before we get on to the rest of Conference business we have been notified by John McDonnell MP, the Convener of our Parliamentary Group, that he unfortunately is not going to be able to attend our Conference and give his report from the Parliamentary Group this afternoon. He also will be unable to address the fringe meeting at lunch time. This is due to a debate that is taking place in Parliament today on the issue of the situation in Sri Lanka. John has quite a significant Tamil community in his Constituency and obviously he needs to speak up on their behalf on that issue, and he is conscious, as we all are, that there is a General Election next year, and obviously he needs to ensure that he has the support of the largest number of constituents possible, and I think we would all understand why he has decided that that is more important than attending today's Conference. He does, however, send his best wishes to our Conference and I am sure we would wish to do the same to him.

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Following the report from Stuart, I should announce that Paul Reims who was temporarily on the Standing Orders Committee has now been elected. I am sure you wish to send your congratulations to Paul.

Can I remind all delegates that we are now in Closed Session for this part of the business. The only people who are able to remain in the Hall are delegates, officials, members, solicitors, tutors and official visitors. Other visitors and the media will be excluded from the Conference venue for this part of this morning's business.

Conference went into Closed Session and resumed in Open Session after the tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

We will now resume this morning's business. We are now in Open Session again. We are on the Annual Report and we are on Paragraph G4, Industrial Disputes. I understand Cumbria want to come to the rostrum.

BRO MALLY HIND (Cumbria):

I would like to report to Conference an issue that has the potential to escalate into an industrial dispute in Cumbria. In February of this year a member of Cumbria Officers' Branch, Station Manager Joe Little, was dismissed from the Service by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. In March that decision was upheld by the Chief Fire Officer. You may ask what was the seriousness of the offence that Joe committed to warrant such a severe sanction. It was nothing more than helping his son with the selection process to join Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, just what any father would do for his son. Strangely enough, Cumbria encourage their Managers to actively help potential recruits through the selection process. However, as human resources had not sanctioned Joe's coaching of his son, it appears he was singled out and made an example of. This was to an Officer with unblemished service who had never been disciplined in his career, an Officer who was awarded the silver axe as best recruit at training school and who received a Chief Fire Officer's commendation when he was a firefighter on the Watch for rescuing children from a house fire. All in all he was a credit to Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service.

The decision to dismiss Joe is a disgraceful example of why the Grey Book appeal process does anything but apply the principles of natural justice. I cannot imagine any circumstances where the Chief Fire Officer would undermine a decision made by his Deputy over a dismissal. I would ask Conference to support other members in Cumbria in condemning this disgraceful decision by our senior management.

BRO PETER MOSS (ONC):

Amongst the litany of unjust discipline cases that we have all heard about and dealt with on a regular basis, this one involving the sacking of one of our Officer members must be amongst the worst. As Mally has explained, this brother did nothing more than source information readily available to all on the internet and to use that information to try and assist his son in being successful in his application to join the Fire Service. The son looked up to his dad and wanted nothing more than to emulate him and to join Cumbria Fire Service.

His son is not the only one who looks up to our fellow Officer member. All our members and the general public right across Cumbria hold this particular Officer in high esteem. The number of face book messages, responses to newspaper articles and letters to elected members of Cumbria County Council have shown just what the people of Cumbria think of the disgusting decision to sack our member. So why has it happened? Our members, the middle managers in Cumbria, were wary that in the initial stages of the investigation this was a window opportunity for the Chief Fire Officer to send a loud and clear message to those middle managers. Unfortunately and despite the incredible amount of skill and dedicated work put in by his representatives, our member and his family got that message loud and clear. Following the discipline hearing he was literally frogmarched out of the building and driven straight to his own front door.

The FBU now also need to send out a loud and clear message. As a result of this distressing and emotionally difficult situation, we need to communicate our disgust, communicate our willingness to defend and fight for our members to the very end, and ensure that our member gets back his job with no loss of pay or conditions. He did nothing more than anyone else in this room would do for their families. If anyone would like to assist our fellow Officer, I am sure that Mally will be able to facilitate your help later. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask Andy Dark to respond to the two points.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

I would like to thank Mally for bringing that to the attention of Conference, and I am sure those comments by Pete are more than welcome. Certainly, there has been discussion between Head Office, the Region and indeed the Cumbria Officials on this matter, and I think it is something to be applauded, the way that our Officials have been so patient with that particular employer, a tactical decision I will say. One thing we can be clear on is the degree of outrage across all ranks in Cumbria at

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the mistreatment of this individual which I think is symbolic of the mistreatment of all members in that Brigade and sadly, all members within the Fire and Rescue Service across the UK. I think that degree of outrage just goes to show how bad a decision this was by that particular Chief Officer.

I think it is also symbolic – which we know in this Conference, and some members, and certainly some ex-members don't realise, is that management in Cumbria and management across the Service will attack anyone irrespective of your duty system, irrespective of your agenda, irrespective of your colour and irrespective of your rank. They will just attack our members. They see us as a lower form of life because we work in the ground floor and not in the ivory towers.

The National Joint Secretaries, the Employers' Joint Secretaries, are in the gallery. I hope they have heard. I will say it has been brought to their attention on an informal level, but I am confident they will have heard what Mally said. I am sure they will have seen the reaction of this Conference and I would like to think that they will be tinged by some feeling of shame on the basis that this is a Chief Officer and a human resources department which they have to represent. If it comes to a dispute, so be it. We are in the business of avoiding disputes. We have made that clear. This Conference has made that clear. We are in the business of avoiding disputes. But if disputes are not avoidable so be it. We will continue to do what we can from Head Office to assist in resolving this matter before it comes to industrial action. But if management locally, with or without the assistance of the National Employers, don't resolve this issue in the way described with no sanction against this member, a complete reversal of the decision, and an apology, it looks like we are heading for a dispute in that corner of the country. We will not shy away from it and we will support Cumbria if that is the decision that needs to be made. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I now call Resolution 89 in the name of Hampshire, Co-Responding. Can Hampshire come to the rostrum to move please and if there is anyone intending to second, can they please make their way towards the front of the hall and can I make that as a general plea. Where people know they are moving or seconding Resolutions, if they can try and arrange to be at the front of the hall for when their business is coming up, it will save time. Thank you.

Resolution 89 – CO-RESPONDING

This conference instructs the Executive Council to suspend the FBU policy on expelling FBU members who are found to be participating in co-responding.

This is until a report analysing the effects these expulsions may have on FBU membership is commissioned and completed and that the findings of this report are brought back to conference in 2010 to consider whether expelling of FBU members who are co-responding is in the long term interests of the FBU.
HAMPSHIRE

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

I will apologise. I think I have got a healthy dose of man flu so if I start coughing and spluttering it is not just because I am trying to get away with this one. I am not looking for the sympathy vote either.

I would urge you to consider the wording of this Resolution. Hampshire are not opposed to FBU policy on co-responding and neither are we looking for us to abandon the policy. What concerns us is the growth of co-responding schemes in several Brigades now. This growth of co-responding is almost wholly confined to Retained Stations and, as I said, is now affecting several Brigades. If I take Hampshire as an example, a year ago there were six Retained Stations co-responding. Today there are 14 with another four coming on line by the end of the year. Together it is anticipated they will answer over 8,000 co-responding calls. If I tell you that Hampshire as a whole at present probably go to about 22,000 fire calls, you can see this is a massive increase on calls for Hampshire.

A lot of good work has been done in Hampshire by Officials to recruit from our Retained colleagues into the FBU. One particular Station had 12 firefighters and we recruited 11 of them. That Retained Fire Station has now been approached to do co-responding and unfortunately, we are going to lose 10 members from that Station. They are all going to go and do co-responding. The reason they do co-responding: a lot of them say they are doing it for the community and I think they passionately believe that. The Ambulance Service in our area is particularly busy and it is not unusual for us to wait for half an hour, 45 minutes for the ambulance to turn up at an RTC or whatever we are at. So these firefighters passionately believe that they are helping their community by doing co-responding.

The other reason, and several Retained firefighters have openly said this to me, is they are doing it for the money because some Retained firefighters are benefiting by £200, £300 even £400 a month by doing co-responding schemes.

As I said, Hampshire Officials have made great inroads into Retained firefighters and over the last couple of years have recruited many of them, so you can see it is heartbreaking for us because we are going to adhere to FBU policy and we will expel those people doing

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co-responding. The one organisation that is going to benefit from this will be the Retained Firefighters Union because our former Retained members will almost certainly be recruited by the RFU and will bolster their numbers in Hampshire. They will be overjoyed at the fact that we expel those Retained members.

I believe that the latest edition of the RFU magazine features co-responding on the front cover and the benefits of co-responding to Retained firefighters. I know and understand that FBU opposition to co-responding has actually inhibited and limited the growth of co-responding. However, I believe that the Government is now putting pressure on Ambulance Services and Fire Services, to participate in co-responding schemes and this is not going to go away. The ball has reached the top of the hill and it is now going to be coming down the other side of it at a rate of knots.

There are several Brigades, as I say, that already have co-responding schemes and their Union Officials face the same decisions as Hampshire. So can I ask you, are we all expelling co-responders as we should do? I also appreciate that these problems do not yet relate to some of the larger Metropolitan Brigades, but if you read the CLG document, it is quite clear that internationally, co-responding has been taken up by many of the Urban and Metropolitan Brigades in several other countries, so never say never.

What this Resolution calls for is for the EC to suspend policy only on expelling members participating in co-responding until an audit or a report is commissioned and brought back to us next year. This report will focus on the impact that expelling co-responders will have on the membership of the FBU. Matt has already alluded to the fact that the FBU have financial problems. Our membership is down. We have to be careful with those finances. By me going back to Hampshire and expelling 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 members because they are co-responding is not going to help us.

As I said, the only winners from this will be the RFU but senior management will also be rubbing their hands in glee. They like to see a division between firefighters. They like the RFU to be strong. I ask all of you to be honest here. It is no good saying that we will support FBU policy and therefore oppose this Resolution and then go back to your Brigades and turn a blind eye to people who are co-responding. If this problem is happening in Hampshire today, it may well be your Brigade tomorrow and the cost to the FBU both financially and in membership may be profound. By suspending the expelling of co-responders we allow ourselves breathing space to –

THE PRESIDENT:

You have got the red light brother, if you could please wind up.

BRO PAUL TREW:

– analyse the long term effects and we can evaluate how best to deal with those effects. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for 89? *Formally seconded* Can I see those wishing to speak. It is not my intention to have a lengthy debate on this but I would like to call two or three speakers and then invite the General Secretary to give the opposition and hopefully take a decision. Can those wishing to speak keep their hands up. I ask for Merseyside. Brother there. Brother there.

BRO MARK DUNNE (Merseyside):

Being honest and speaking in opposition to Resolution 89. The issue of co-responding is one that all of us as FBU members are aware of. We are aware of the positives and negatives and we are also aware of the emotive issues that opportunistic Fire Authorities and Chief Fire Officers attempt to play on. It has been debated many times by Conference formally and informally. Discussions have been had throughout the FBU and throughout the UK Fire Service.

In 2004, you remember that time not long after the 2003 dispute and where we all were and what we all felt and how much apathy there may or may not have been around your individual Brigades and members. Merseyside took a brave decision. We balloted our members on the issue of co-responding – November 2004. We got a successful ballot. That ballot is still alive today. It was a brave decision but it was the right decision. Delegates should be aware and Conference should be aware of the long legal process that Merseyside FBU went down for the backing of Region and EC. A successful legal process. We won our defence in the hearing and then we were successful in the appeal hearing, and that hearing had national implications not just for the FBU but for all trade unions throughout the UK and the wider trade union movement.

Co-responding is not contractual. Co-responding is not in our role maps. Everyone is now agreed on that. It is voluntary. No-one can be forced to carry out co-responding. The FBU have a clear policy on co-responding. We do not do it. That has been reiterated many times through Conference, through your Branches, through your Brigade Committees. We do not co-respond. Oppose the Resolution.

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THE PRESIDENT:

West Yorkshire.

BRO ANDY IMRIE (West Yorks):

I oppose Resolution 89. I cannot believe that we are here again with a motion like this, trying to validate, once again, the actions nationally that when people are taking away somebody else's job in a manner that has been forced through by Chief Fire Officers and Fire Authorities on the cheap, that we have even brought it to the table again. West Yorkshire a couple of years ago vehemently opposed it, giving a fantastic example of why we should, and I will reiterate that because I think people need to know – for those that weren't here or have forgotten.

In West Yorkshire we had a case of a Fire Station out in the suburbs called out to an incident supposedly to assist ambulance personnel. That is how it came up on the print out. So they turned out. The incident was about 8-10 minutes away. Assisting ambulance personnel can mean a lot of things. As you can understand, it was not a persons' reported; it was not a blazing house fire with numerous calls; it was an assistance call. So the Crew Manager and the pump turned out. It was just outside their Station area. When they arrived there, there were about 25-30 people outside this house screaming and running at the fire engine. The Crew Manager was quite surprised. What is the problem? We are here to assist somebody in lifting somebody or helping somebody to get into the ambulance? The family then started to attack the crew, screaming and shouting at them to get upstairs quickly. An urgency call went out from the Crew Manager to tell the crew to get themselves in order and get upstairs. They could not actually find out what the problem was. When they went upstairs they found a man in his 40s laid between the sink and the bath on the floor unconscious. What is the problem? Why are you here? Why has the Fire Service turned up? We asked for an ambulance. Well, we were just sent to assist. Where is the ambulance? Where is the doctor? My dad is dying. We are the Fire Service. We didn't know. They were attacked for about half an hour before a paramedic turned up 29 minutes after the call. The man, the father, he died. Unbeknown to the fire crew there was a doctor that lived down the road five minutes away.

We ask why don't we do co-responding. It is not our job. It is not hard to understand that. The reason why we have an Ambulance Service, the reason why we have paramedics trained with the ability to resuscitate, to intubate and to sort these people out, to have the correct drugs and the training to carry out that rescue, there is a reason why. It is because it is their job. It is not hard to understand. Why are we clouding the issue?

How many people are related or who have got partners who are in the Ambulance Service, or nurses or doctors? What are we actually saying? The Resolution says let us have a look and think about it. What do you need to think about? Conference, what do you need to think about? How many times do we revisit an issue like this and even put it on the order paper? It is absolute disgrace for a trade union like the FBU to even bring something like this again to Conference. It is an absolute disgrace.

We talk about the sentiments and how hard it is in these rural areas. I totally understand where you are coming from. The local responsibility and the moral issue. How many times do we talk about the moral issue? You get turned out to a certain job and you have not got the right equipment. We visited it with water rescue – oh, it's the moral issue. Do we dive in? Do we get involved? I will tell you what the moral issue is. We should be campaigning to make sure that the NHS is properly funded and that the Ambulance Service is there. That incident is still talked about in West Yorkshire and it will be forever because I tell you what. The Crew Manager that was on that Watch has not recovered, and he constantly asks me the question: when is the NHS going to properly address these turn out times and attendance times? We are calling in motions to make sure that we have got our attendance times right, and then in another breath let us consider doing somebody else's job.

THE PRESIDENT:

Andy, the red light is on. Wind up please.

BRO ANDY IMRIE:

Let us be absolutely clear and send a message out to everybody out there, the paramedics and the NHS. We are not poaching their jobs, it is not our job to do it. Oppose the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Are there any speakers in favour of Resolution 89? This is an issue that we have debated very thoroughly at FBU Conference. It is my intention to just take one more speaker and then ask Matt to respond and then move to the vote. I apologise to anyone else who wants to get in on this debate, but I think our policy is clear and we do have a lot of business remaining at Conference.

BRO IAN YOUNG (Notts):

I would like to thank the EC for allowing us to speak being that we are from Nottinghamshire. It is a very difficult one, very emotive, you have heard the speeches. As a socialist, as an FBU member, trade unionist, I agree absolutely 100 per cent with the

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brethren from Merseyside and West Yorkshire, and I very much understand from the applause they are receiving that would probably be the way that most of us are thinking within the room.

However, I think it is worthy of coming up and saying a few things. I do sympathise with Hampshire and I probably sympathise with every other Shire Brigade as well. As you know, Notts led and won a court case on the issue of co-responding and we have been through a lot of grief. We were supported in that grief by each and every one of you. So Notts position on co-responding within the FBU should be very clear.

Since the court case, I would like to tell you that everything has been fine, that nobody in Nottinghamshire co-responds, that there have been no discipline cases. That is not true. People in Nottinghamshire – I am going to say it – Retained crews within Nottinghamshire, some continue to co-respond. Some have been dealt with under the disciplinary system and been expelled from the Union resulting in loss of Stations, loss of members, increase in the RFU. That is the side effect. Matt talks about loss of members. That is the side effect. Having said that, what I am trying to say is we do support the position of Merseyside and West Yorkshire.

We do find ourselves in a position when we get co-responding of two things: one, ignoring those engaged in co-responding and therefore ignoring FBU policy, or expelling them from the FBU to the joy of the RFU. Hampshire have outlined the problems that they encounter and we continue to share and encounter those problems too. We find ourselves in a position whereby we will uphold FBU policy. We continue to do so. It is not easy. The two speakers have been very passionate. It is really not easy but we will uphold FBU policy.

It does keep coming back year after year. The reason it keeps coming back is because Officials, particularly the Shire Brigades, are encountering massive problems with this issue and we will lose members. There is increasingly little we can do about that. We oppose Hampshire's Resolution. We will stand by FBU policy. We do support the others and we agree with everything they have said, but it will continue to come back and we will have this debate again. It is a massive problem.

THE PRESIDENT:

Matt, if you can respond on behalf of the Executive Council please.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I don't think we need a huge debate on this. We discussed the issue at Conference and Conference in

2008 was absolutely clear about maintaining our policy in relation to co-responding. The facts are that other people in CLG and CFOA keep pushing the issue. It is unfortunate and regrettable the issue has not gone away.

I just want to be clear about our procedures though so there is no mistake. The policy does not say we will expel anyone. What the policy says is we are opposed and members will not co-respond. We have procedures, discipline procedures, that are fair in relation to members who have alleged to have broken any policy. Conference needs to be absolutely clear and anyone listening needs to be absolutely clear, we are entirely fair in treating any member who is alleged to have broken this policy or any other policy, and the question of what awards are given to someone who is found to have broken policy are a matter for the Committee who hear that discipline case. So there is no policy as outlined in the Hampshire Resolution.

I understand, Paul, your contribution. I think it was an honest contribution. I would urge Hampshire to withdraw the Resolution, otherwise I would urge Conference to oppose. Just in relation to the RFU magazine, I wasn't aware they had them. Seeing them perform at various meetings over the years where they say absolutely nothing, I suppose there is a front and a back cover and nothing in between.

THE PRESIDENT:

Our Hampshire wishing to exercise their right to reply?

BRO PAUL TREW:

Hampshire will withdraw this – *Applause* – but if I could just say a couple of words. I am completely in agreement with West Yorks and Merseyside. I know the history. I have not come up here to be a troublemaker and try and divide us. The points I was making I believe were valid. Some of the Shire Brigades really encounter these problems. Hampshire are now going to be bogged down with dozens and dozens of discipline cases. The word will spread. We will not be able to encourage recruitment from Retained unless, I don't know what. We have a very difficult job. When I have people coming down and saying where are all your Retained members, you will now understand where they are. They will be with the RFU. That is the bottom line. Thanks for listening to me. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

We are back to the Annual Report. Paragraph G5, Black & Ethnic Minority Members National Committee Report 2008. We are now on to Resolution 66 in the name of Lancashire. European Election - 'Hope not Hate' Campaign. Lancashire to move, please.

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Resolution 66 – EUROPEAN ELECTION 'HOPE NOT HATE' CAMPAIGN

Conference reiterates its condemnation of the BNP as a far right racist organisation whose main policy is to incite hatred and division in society.

It is noted that the BNP will be standing candidates in the European elections on the 4th June 2009 and their leader, Nick Griffin, will be standing as a Member of the European Parliament for the North West.

Conference recognises the danger that this poses to the safety and security of all sections of our communities as the BNP attempt to gain a foothold in mainstream politics.

Historically, European elections have a relatively low voter turnout. Because the voting system for the European elections is a form of proportional representation, conference recognises the importance of there being a high voter turnout in order to ensure BNP candidates do not win any seats on the 4th June.

To this end, conference instructs the Executive Council to write to all FBU members immediately following conference, reminding members of the importance of there being a high voter turnout, and to urge all members to physically support their local 'Hope Not Hate' Group in the final stages of the anti BNP European election campaign.

LANCASHIRE

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancs):

If I can just say quickly in regard to Bro Joe Little, I was the Official that represented him in the appeal and Andy said the employers' side are represented here up in the balcony. I would just like to say over many years of representing our members, this was the worst injustice I have ever had to deal with, the worst injustice I've had the misfortune to be part of and I really hope that we can sort this mess out and get Joe back to work.
Applause

On to resolution 66, I decided I wouldn't waste time preparing a long speech trying to preach to the converted here in Conference. What I have been doing lately is committing all my spare time to supporting the *Hope not Hate Campaign* and the other anti-fascist campaigns. I just briefly want to tell you what we have been doing in the North West. As you know, the BNP are now standing candidates in all the Regions across the country in the European elections and if we do nothing they will gain seats. They will have members of the European Parliament and that is a fact.

In the North West we have Nick Griffin standing and we have seen them campaigning harder than we have ever seen them campaign before. We have seen them play down some of the more extreme policies in order to attract votes. However, if you scratch the surface they are still the same racist, homophobic, sexist, anti-trade union party they always were, whose aim is to spread division and hatred amongst our communities. Due to the economic crisis and the failure of the mainstream politics, they have been gaining support. They are even gaining support from people who should know better. Families and friends of ours are talking as if the BNP could be an acceptable choice and this is a fact. Our members are talking that the BNP could be an acceptable choice. They are falling for the false rhetoric that the BNP are desperately trying to get into the press and they are out on the streets lobbying as we speak.

The only way to stop the BNP gaining seats is to ensure that the voting public know the truth and to get them to turn out and vote on 4th June. The *Hope not Hate Campaign* is specifically aimed at just doing that. It is all about getting the message across to as many people as possible what the BNP is really about. To this end the *Hope not Hate Campaign* is currently delivering as many of the anti-BNP newspapers that have been sponsored by the Daily Mirror through as many doors as possible not only in the North West but across the country. This is an 8-page supplement that is extremely readable and it will be read by members of the public if we can get it through enough doors.

In the North West in the final four weeks we hope to deliver in excess of a quarter of a million papers. In Preston alone I am co-ordinating a campaign and we have taken delivery of about 70,000 newspapers. These are currently being delivered by activists that have signed up to the Hope not Hate website. This may seem a lot but we are also being helped by the United Against Fascism Groups, other anti-fascist groups, trade unions, trade councils, students, pensioners, faith groups, community groups, New Labour Councillors, Old Labour Councillors, Real Labour Councillors, Socialist Worker Party, Respect Members, Socialist Alliance Members, and the only ones I couldn't quite clinch were the anarchists. I did ask the Chief Fire Officer for support but they backed off because it was political.

Regards the FBU, the response of the Union has been greatly appreciated for the toolkit. That is on all Union Branches across the North West and indeed across the country. As the European election is based on a form of proportional representation every single vote we can turn out will make a difference. This means every door that we can get a newspaper through could make the difference. Times what Preston has done by 10 and you will have what Manchester has achieved. Times it by 100 and you will have what the North West has

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achieved. Times that by 1,000 and that is how many doors we will have achieved across the country. This campaign, linked with the Unite Against Fascism Campaign and the Love Music Hate Racism Campaigns and we will defeat the BNP. However, it is not over yet and we still need to get out there and fight the fight.

We can make a difference as Officials. We need help with the door to door work. We need to turn up at the rallies and as a very minimum we need to ensure that our members encourage families and friends, and neighbours to vote on 4th June. Looking at the FBU members in the North West, if we persuaded them all to turn out 10 more voters, that would be 60,000 votes. If we got them all to do one hour's work, that would be in the region of 900,000 more votes. We need to remind everybody that if they don't act now, when they do finally choose to act it could be too late. In the North West Nick Griffin will need in the region of 8.5 per cent of the vote that will win him a seat. In the last election he did poll 6.4 per cent of the vote and that was with a strong UKIP.

Every vote will count and it is essential that our members play the role. Finally, all Union Branches have signed up to support the campaign tomorrow. As we are all in Scarborough, we ask all delegates to walk the walk and consider doing one hour here in Scarborough. I have heard one of the local co-ordinating officials will facilitate that, if some of the Regional Officials can help liaise with that. We are asking if you could do an hour straight after Conference, but we know that might not be achievable. If you could give an hour of your time, that is 150 leaflets, we could blitz Scarborough in an hour – twice over probably.

One last thing. All those who have got T-shirts at the adjournment at dinner time, could you just file out to the outside area adjacent to the tea and coffee, we could just get a quick photograph for the national press. It can be used to show that the FBU is supporting the Anti-BNP, Hope not Hate, Unite Against Fascism. That would be greatly appreciated and it would only take two minutes. Please support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is there a seconder for Resolution 66?

SIS AMANDA CREGIN (Northumberland):

Just to follow on what Steve has been saying, I would like to remind Conference of the opinions that the BNP has expressed recently. Geoff Marshall, a central London BNP organiser on children with disabilities: "It would be kind to kill children with disabilities. At least we would all know where we stand. There is actually not a great deal of point in keeping these sort of people

alive." The BNP leader Nick Griffin wrote, in relation to race, "We affirm that non-whites have no place here at all and we will not rest until every last one has left our land." Finally, what Nick Erickson thinks of woman and rape: "Rape is simply sex. Women enjoy sex so rape cannot be such a terrible physical ordeal. To such that rape when conducted without violence is a serious crime is like suggesting that force feeding a woman chocolate cake is a heinous offence. A woman would be more inconvenienced by having her handbag snatched."

Conference, it is crucial that we go back to our Brigades and urge not only our members but everybody we know to use their vote against the BNP in the European elections on June 4th, and get behind the *Hope not Hate* campaign. Let us not forget that it only took 33 per cent of the votes for the Nazis to gain power back in the 1930s. Every vote counts. I second.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Amanda. The issue is open for debate. I call the General Secretary to outline the EC support.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I am sure this Resolution will be passed unanimously so I won't speak for long, but I am sure everyone will be alarmed by the comments that Steve made, that some of our members will be affected by the campaign of the BNP and some of our members families, and friends, and so on because of the failure of mainstream politicians and because of the economic crisis that some people, our people, may be looking towards the BNP. I don't need to say it here but the BNP stand in opposition to every principle that this trade union, and all trade unions, stand for. *Applause*.

More importantly, from a narrow, self-interest point of view – and we hear about some of the struggles in Cumbria and elsewhere – fascists also aim to entirely smash and destroy the trade union movement. That is the record of history so our members who see the need for trade unions have to be opposed to fascism and have to stand up, and we need to take that message into every work place. It is no good us activists talking to the converted. We are trying to build that into education. At National School we have been debating this in great detail. Regions have some done some remarkable work in educating our activists against the far right. That is only of any use if we take that back into our Branches, if we have that dialogue around the mess tables and on the Branch meetings to convince our members that we have got the right answer. So we welcome the instruction in the Resolution to write to all members, but it is not just a question of writing circulars to them. Everyone in this room has got a role to play. I am sure we will support this unanimously. Thank you.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Lancashire seeking the right of reply?
I assume not as there has been no debate against. Can I put it to the vote. All those in favour please show.
Thank you. Were there any against. Were there any abstentions. That is *carried*

We are now going to take the Scrutineers reports from the two card votes that were held earlier. Stuart, please.

THE CHIEF SCRUTINEER:

First of all, apologies for the time it has taken to get the card votes done, but you will have two consecutive bun fights so that is what happens.

On Emergency Resolution 2, The National Officer, votes AGAINST were 22,005; votes FOR were 19,920.

On the EC Policy Statement, FBU Elections, votes AGAINST were 18,887; votes FOR were 24,270. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much Stuart. That therefore means on Emergency Resolution 2, that *fell*

The Executive Council Policy Statement was *carried*.

I ask the General Secretary to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Just to be absolutely clear, we have had a forthright debate, different points of view. That is what Conference is for and I will give you an assurance that that election process will start as soon as practicable after the end of Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We are now on to Emergency Resolution 5 in the name of the Officers National Committee, Gurkhas' Right of Residence. If the ONC could move, please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 5 GURKHAS' RIGHT OF RESIDENCE

This Conference deplores the actions of the British Government in their shameful decision of 25th April 2009, which was overturned by Parliament on 29th April 2009, to refuse to grant an equal right of residence to all Gurkhas and calls upon the Government to bring forward revised proposals that do grant that equal right of residence in the UK for all Gurkhas.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO MICK COAKLEY (ONC):

I think before we go on we need to look at the Gurkha situation. The origins of the Gurkhas date back to the heart of our Commonwealth aspirations. After suffering heavy casualties at the invasion of Nepal, Victorians recognised that they had special fighting qualities and in 1815 a peace deal allowed recruits from the ranks of our enemies. Following that, the partition of India in 1947, agreed with Nepal and India that meant that four Gurkha regiments were transferred into the British Army becoming the Gurkha Brigade.

Selection process for Gurkhas was described as one of the toughest in the world, fiercely contested with some 28,000 youths from Nepal looking for 200 recruit positions. After the Gurkhas had served their time in the Army for a maximum of 30 years and a minimum of 15 to secure a pension, they are then discharged back to Nepal. An interesting fact is that the Government issued guidance notes that would clearly discriminate the rank and file from Gurkhas to the officers by imposing a 20 year minimum service as a cap for citizenship, knowing that the rank and file only served 16 years. The Gurkhas resisted.

We in the FBU have had similar direction and guidance from Government to create such a split in our Union. We too should resist.

On 29th April this year Ministers still said that they had done a great deal for the Gurkhas cause. They did not want to leave an open door policy because it would simply be too expensive. The cost was put about £1.4 million. Perhaps that can be offset, in my opinion, when eventually they review the expense sheets. On 29th April it took 27 Labour MPs to join Liberal Democrats and Conservatives. They ignored a three-line whip and simply sat on their hands to abstain. That was only to stun Gordon Brown's right wing Labour Government that suffered an embarrassing defeat within the Commons, unknown since Jim Callaghan's Government in 1978. Reaction of 29th April: one was just before the vote was taken. Joanna Lumley said our spirits were nearly zero. When it came through on the screen, I can tell you a sense of elation, a sense of pride: pride in our country; pride in our democratic system and pride in our Parliament. She went on, "We want the policy changed as swiftly as possible." What is not widely known is that Gurkhas living here who have made applications for residency were not allowed to work, not allowed social security, not allowed to go to an NHS facility, who are in fact living in limbo, great hardship and poverty, and sometimes great illness. I draw your attention to the similarities of these petty restrictions that can be drawn to long running Labour disputes. A prime example was the miners' strike in the 1980s which was described yesterday quite well by the West Yorkshire delegate.

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Paul Wallace, Immigration Minister, "This Government respects the will of the House bringing forward the date of determinations of outstanding applications to the end of May. Recognising the strong feeling of the House, we will come forward with our proposals for the next stage before the summer recess." Wake up. Smell the roses. Listen to people. Listen to what they are talking about. As a former Gurkha, I would like to thank the loving and lovely people of Britain from the bottom of my Gurkha heart. Having fought so hard, it is a great feeling to know that my colleagues will be able to stay here. We stand now on the precipice of a tremendous historic victory for the gallant Gurkha veterans of Nepal. This victory that restores honour and dignity to deserving soldiers who have served in Her Majesty's armed forces. It is a victory for common sense. A victory for fairness. A victory for the British sense of what is right. It is not right for someone who is prepared to die for this country that they should not live in this country. It is by applying continued pressure on this Government that a full and final victory will be ours. I urge you to support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Emergency Resolution?

BRO IAN YOUNG (Notts):

After the last few minutes, I am hoping this one is going to be a bit easier. For almost 200 years more than 200,000 Gurkhas have fought shoulder to shoulder with Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English soldiers in two world wars and in other conflicts throughout the world including Hong Kong, Malaysia, Borneo, Cyprus, the Falklands, Kosovo and now in Iraq and in Afghanistan. The numbers have sharply reduced from 112,000 to 3,500 and during the two world wars alone they lost 43,000 lives fighting for our freedom. They have been highly decorated and have received 13 Victoria Crosses from within the ranks.

After the Gurkhas had served their time in the Army, a maximum of 30 years and a minimum of 15 years to secure a pension, they are discharged back to Nepal. In regard to pensions, historically, they have received a much smaller pension, up to six times smaller than British soldiers, on the grounds that the cost of living is much lower in Nepal. With more choosing to settle permanently in the UK and with their families, campaigners said that this has left them suffering considerable economic hardship. The Regiment moved its main base from Hong Kong to the UK in 1997 but it was not until March 2007 that they won a partial victory when the Defence Minister announced that all those who had retired after July 1977 would get the same amount of pension as the rest of the British Army is entitled to. The pensions battle was not completed

however, until September 2008 when, challenging immigration rules, it was said that those who retired before 1997 did not have an automatic right to stay, was overturned. This affected some 2,000 former Gurkhas. The judge, Mr Justice Blake, said the Gurkhas long service, conspicuous acts of bravery and loyalty to the Crown, all pointed to a moral debt of honour and gratitude felt by the British people. I think he is right.

Following the defeat of the Government, the Liberal Democrat leader, Nick Clegg, a long time campaigner for the Gurkha cause, said "It is a victory for the rights of Gurkhas who have been waiting for so long for justice. It is a victory for Parliament over a Government that just was not prepared to listen. But actually the biggest victory of all is a victory of decency and it is the kind of thing that I think people want this country to do: that we pay back our obligations, our debt of gratitude towards generations of Gurkhas who have laid their lives on the line for the safety of ourselves and our country." Outside the court Joanna Lumley said, "It is a day more important than I can tell you because it gives our country the chance to right a great wrong and to wipe out a national shame that has stained us all."

Please remember it was only last week a Gurkha lost his life in Afghanistan fighting with his comrades in the British Army. Please Conference support this Resolution and support equal rights for all.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have an indication of who wishes to speak on this Resolution?

BRO MICK BELL (West Midlands):

I have got to confess to personal interest on this one having had a grandad who fought with the Gurkhas in Burma in the Second World War. He was a trade unionist activist all his life. He was very passionate and when he spoke about the Gurkhas it was with reverence. They were the sainted Gurkhas. For me that was good enough for a starter. So for grandad, if you are up there somewhere, this one is for you anyway.

I know our comrades have given some facts and figures, but I would like to reiterate a few numbers for you. Thirteen is the number of Victoria Crosses won by Gurkhas. Two the number of George Crosses won by Gurkhas. 45,000, the number of Gurkhas who have died fighting for this country in the two world wars. Fifty, the number of years served by the Gurkha riflemen. Twenty, the number of years this Government says a Gurkha has to serve to live in this country. May 7th, less than a fortnight ago, the last time a Gurkha died fighting for this country. April 29th, the Government was overturned on the Gurkha justice motion. Since April 29th there have

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been five Gurkhas who have received letters telling them that they do not have the right to reside in this country.

Gordon Brown has said this is a mistake that these Gurkhas have received the letters and he will look at it. I am sorry about that, but I don't really trust Gordon Brown, and I don't trust the New Labour Government on it. They have actually managed to make the Tories look good on immigration over this policy. What does that tell you?

The battle is not won. I am wearing a T-shirt here: WWW.Gurkhajustice.org.uk. I would urge all members if they have not already, to log on to that site and sign the petition. Keep the pressure on the Government. For my personal opinion, I would find it a privilege to have a Gurkha as a neighbour, which is a lot more than I can say for my local MP. I know it is a very simplistic argument what people say, but it has been said many times before, the Gurkhas are the best friends this country has ever had. As was said by one of my comrades earlier, if you are willing to die for this country, surely you should be allowed to live in this country. Please support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. There is no opposition. No need of right to reply. I will put Emergency Resolution No 5 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. Were there any abstentions. That was *carried*

Back on to the Annual Report, Paragraph G6, B&EMM National Committee AGM 2008. That therefore brings us to the end of this morning's business. Before we adjourn there are three items I would like to raise. One is that there is a fringe meeting taking place in this Complex starting at 1 o'clock. The fringe meeting is on the subject of the People's Charter for Change. There is food being served there. I would urge everyone who is able, to to get along there. Unfortunately, there is a football match that has been arranged that clashes with it. I understand that it is between the Region 1 delegations and the London delegation and it is taking place on the beach. For those who don't like bloodsports you may be better off at the fringe meeting. The final request is to remind delegates that their hotel accommodation is booked for tonight and until tomorrow morning, but they will need to vacate their hotel rooms tomorrow morning before Conference starts. The hotel rooms will have left luggage facilities so you can leave your luggage there and please be back in your seats promptly for 2 pm. Thank you.

Lunch break

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

If delegates will take their seats, we will reconvene for this afternoon's Session. We are now back in Session and I would remind delegates that we have quite a bit of outstanding Conference business now, so I would urge the cooperation of everybody to try and enable that we fit all business in and we discuss it properly. First, we have a report from the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Standing Orders Committee must report to Conference that there is a lot of business outstanding and suggest a change to Speakers' Times. Mover 7 minutes; Seconder 5 minutes; Subsequent speakers 3 minutes.

A couple of changes to delegates: West Midlands, delete Pardeep Raw, insert Sacha Farley. Devon & Somerset delete Trevor Streat, insert Dave Chappell. Please turn to your Programme of Business. Page 12. Resolutions 60, 61 and 62 have been withdrawn to form Composite A, Palestine Solidarity, Devon & Somerset. Amendment to Resolution 61 falls. Emergency Resolution No 18 - Palestine, has been withdrawn. After Resolution 59, please insert Composite A, Palestine Solidarity, Devon & Somerset. Just before I finish, could I report that after taking an early lead scored by Joe MacVeigh, London lost 5-1. Is there a delegate from London that could please come to the front, please. And can I have the captain from Scotland. President, that concludes the Standing Orders Report, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed* We are now on to the Annual Report, Section D, Pensions. I call National Officer, Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Just a quick update on pensions. I know there are a few issues still outstanding. First of all, I am going to thank people for the support they gave us, thank Thompsons for their support and everybody for their lobbying they did.

We have just put out an All Members Circular which gives our view on what the appeal means to members who are into the pensions situation that three London firefighters faced. What we have got now is, CLG are

now saying that the 2008 circular is basically what we should be dealing with, but there has been a slight amendment to this. We have got a Firefighters Pension Committee on 28th May and we will be asking for some ratification on this. We will also be asking that they deal with the IQMPs position. CLG are still considering the commutation grievances. We have had over 5,000 submitted now. They have got until Monday 17th to deal with it. They have two months from when the judicial review came in for the police federation. It is going to have an impact on our position, but our position is slightly different. We are asking to go back further. I would also like to report that we are putting together a Pension School later in the year in September. Ivan Walker, Trevor Cave and John Botterill are working on this. I would advise people if they can to get on to this, it is going to be quite informative and cover a lot of the issues which have been raised throughout the last year. It is also going to have a session on how to deal with medical appeals. I think we could all do with a brush up on that.

New Local Government Pension Schemes were introduced in Scotland on 01 April 2009 and we will be working with the Regional Education Officer from Scotland to get some sort of local update for members and officials in Scotland on the new Local Government Pension Scheme.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. I now therefore move to Emergency Resolution 19 from London, entitled Firefighters Pensions. Joe to move.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 19 FIREFIGHTERS PENSIONS

Conference deplores the disgusting stance taken by the CLG legal team during the recent appeal hearing whereby the CLG skeleton argument to the appeal hearing was reversed to place our members back into the position of leaving our injured members with no pension and no job, a stance that was both recognised and challenged by the appeal court judges.

Conference further congratulates those who include the General Secretary, The National Officer for Pensions, The Executive Council, Thompsons Solicitors and the three London members amongst others who maintained their position to both challenge and win the right for our members to receive a medical retirement and to retire with dignity.

Conference demands that those who manufactured this scenario are held to account for the scandalous waste of public monies in pursuing their attacks on the dignity of our members to medically retire following injury.

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Conference calls on the General Secretary and the Executive Council to ensure that;

- 1. The revised IQMP Guidance is made available to both the IQMPs and the FRAs.**
- 2. Pressure is applied to the Fire Minister to ensure that those responsible in CLG are held to account.**
- 3. We obtain and release to the media the frivolous and scandalous waste of public monies in defending their deplorable position.**
- 4. Letters of thanks are sent to the three London members for continuing with their claims for the benefit of all members.**
- 5. In the event that further attacks are made against our member's right to retire with dignity that we immediately initiate a campaign to defend those rights.**

LONDON

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

Are the EC supporting me?

THE PRESIDENT:

Yes, the EC are supporting.

BRO JOE MacVEIGH:

That's cut my speech down by half. We have just received a very helpful letter which answers a lot of questions we have already put in the Emergency Resolution, so I will be as brief as possible.

Because we are in Open Session, I will put a few people's names on the proceedings. Certainly, I would like to thank Sean Starbuck for his assistance through the Pension 3 Campaign and Matt Wrack obviously. Joe and Doug Christie from Thompsons, Martin ... the barrister we used and Anthony White QC who was at the Court of Appeal and was absolutely magnificent with his efforts on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union and, the three comrades from London. I would like to thank our EC Member as well for the assistance and support he gave us at national level.

The Resolution itself is, one part to thank people for their assistance and yourselves and the wider membership. It would be remiss of me not to say that. The three comrades involved, Martin Marrion, Neil Burke and Andy Scott send their fraternal greetings. I spoke to Andy just this week. He is still trying to get on with his life after the debacle of the CLG's guidance or lack of guidance and I think it is absolutely right and proper that we should be scathing of the CLG, the *volte face* that they made in the High Court was absolutely disgraceful. We could not believe what we were hearing when they started going back on what had been said

only a few weeks prior. I think we should condemn the CLG and their legal team for what they did that day and I am pleased that the Appeal Court Judges saw through that and the right decision came through in the end.

Realistically, I have just seen the figures, £300,000. I mean, £300,000 of taxpayers money for a case that could have been settled and dealt with without having to go through this rigmarole. I think, in the words of a former General Secretary, it is a damn disgrace and I think it is only right and proper that we should condemn them for that.

As I say, the Resolution is fairly straightforward. We would like you to support it unanimously.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Joe. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution 19? *Formally seconded.* Matt to speak on behalf of the EC.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I do not wish to speak very much. Everyone will agree, I am sure, with this Resolution. Just in terms of the points on the Resolution, I can assure Conference that all of those are currently being addressed: the issue of IQMP guidance is due to be raised at the next Firefighters' Pension Committee. We have already written to Martin Hill on that issue. In terms of the second point, hopefully people have had a chance to read the letter, a fairly scathing letter in terms of the role of CLG throughout this whole episode, covered also in point 3, and we have I believe already written to the London members for their support and determination through that.

I think a quick comment on the whole episode about what happened to those three members and the length of time it has taken to resolve that. First of all, if you look at that role of CLG, an absolute and utter disgrace that the CLG, as Sean has just said, in the aftermath of the Court of Appeal Judgment, issued an email around "stakeholders" as we are called these days saying that we believe this confirms the 2008 guidance. Just refresh your memories. The 2008 guidance was what we negotiated with CLG and what we have brought to this Conference in draft form last year. We said we believed that would settle the whole issue of ill health pensions and injury pensions within the FRS.

Fine, we reached that agreement, but when they went to court on the instructions of the same Government Department, the QC acting for the Government argued that that 2008 guidance was legally incorrect. Well, they are trying to have it both ways. They tried to have it that the 2008 guidance is now accepted but they in court clearly argued that it was wrong, they argued very clearly by the way – and it was staggering to hear it – when the

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Judges said, "Would your position not lead people back into the no job no pension situation?" the QC for the Government said, "Well, that is the case in lots of other industries." The Judges were quite flabbergasted themselves and said, "We are not here to discuss other industries; we are here to discuss the Firefighters Pension Scheme and what the regulations within that scheme mean." So this Government has got some questions to answer because they cannot have it both ways. They cannot have Parmjit Dhanda going into Parliament and saying, "That was never our intention" and then spend £300,000 of taxpayers money to go into court and argue the complete opposite. We will be pursuing that.

Just finally, we have had some hard decisions and hard discussions this week. We don't always celebrate our victories. We have won a tremendous victory in that Court of Appeal the other week. *Applause*

We should remember the role of other people in the Fire Service, because I have said before, we have to sit down and explain to Chief Fire Officers how the pension scheme worked, to explain how serious this issue was. That is a bit worrying, people who are Chief Executives of running pension schemes in local areas, but that is what had to happen. And other organisations who claim to speak for firefighters. None of them put their money where their mouths were. It is only the Fire Brigades Union who had the commitment, the resources and the political will to do it. We won it, it is our victory, give yourselves a pat on the back for that.

THE PRESIDENT:

There is no need for right of reply as there was no opposition. Can I see those in favour, please, of Emergency Resolution 19. Thank you. Were there any against. Were there any abstentions. That is *unanimously carried*.

We are now on to Section C of the Annual Report, Trade Union and Labour Movement, Paragraph C1. I will now take Emergency Resolution 21 from Greater Manchester entitled Yarl's Wood – Treatment of Children. Greater Manchester to move please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 21 YARL'S WOOD – TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

Conference condemns the treatment of the children detained in Yarl's Wood as revealed in the April report by Sir Al Aynsley-Green, the Children's Commissioner for England.

Around 2,000 children a year are held in immigration centres – half of those in Yarl's Wood. Sir Al Aynsley-Green's investigation paints a shocking picture of neglect and even cruelty towards children trapped

within the centre's razor wired walls and finds "substantial evidence that detention is harmful and damaging to children and young people."

He also identified that children held at the infamous Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre are being denied urgent medical treatment, handled violently and left at risk of serious harm.

This bizarrely as the UK Government prepares to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The FBU Executive Council, all its officials and members should unite in a call by whatever means possible to end the automatic detention of children, recognising the fact that children are best served by remaining with their families, and for urgent measures to ensure all detainees are treated humanely.

GREATER MANCHESTER

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

I am quoting directly from a report to start off with. "What sort of country sends a dozen uniformed officers to haul innocent sleeping children out of their beds, gives them a few minutes to pack what belongings they can grab, pushes them into a stinking cage van, drives them for hours while refusing the chance to go to the lavatory so they wet themselves and lock them up, sometimes for weeks or months without the prospects of release and without adequate health service?" Our country, apparently.

This was revealed in a report published in April this year, The Arrest and Detention of Children subject to Immigration Control. For the arrest, officers pick a time when they are most likely to corner families when they are asleep, appearing at all hours of the night and not with a gentle knock but on occasions smashing down the door and running into homes shouting. I have got a quote from a child here. It was a boy of 11 who said, "There was this woman just shouting, shouting at my sister to get up. She was in bed asleep and she is only 5. She was crying and the woman just kept shouting at her. She didn't have to do that. The search was bad. Why did they have to search my sister. She is only 5. What is she going to have? They touch you all over and they are rough. It is true." That is not the only example.

The report recognises and describes the process as one of the most dehumanising on earth. The more they know and are familiar with, they are, despite contrary instructions, put into cages that stink of urine and are stained with vomit. Comfort breaks are not allowed leading inevitably to accidents causing further distress. Locked up in a virtual prison, children have been consistently denied the chance to come to terms

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emotionally with the wrench from their normal sometimes long term homes, denied health care, urgent or otherwise (scale 4 in the report), verbally and physically abused. Only in a year which the UK Government signed up to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child cynically confident that it would not prevent them arresting and detaining children of immigrants. Let us take the Labour Party slogan for our own, every child matters. Ensure that all the recommendations in the report are carried out and that no child whether UK born or a child from overseas ever has to go through this again.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Val. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution 21?

SIS JANE CLARKE (Beds):

Conference will remember when Bedfordshire brought the issue of the Yarl's Wood Fire at the detention centre to Conference to talk about some of the issues that were raised around that. There were issues around the circumstances of the fire and there were issues around some of the security stuff that was going on that prevented our firefighters going in for a very long time to fight that fire. Since then the detention centre has been rebuilt, sprinkler systems have been put in at last and it has been made into a family detention centre.

The investigation by Sir Al Aynsley-Green highlights that the detainees have changed and they have. It is now a family centre. But the conditions and treatment that they have to endure there has not changed; it is not any different. The very fact that these families and their children are imprisoned in detention centres means their voices are muted and their plight is hidden. We are in Bedfordshire and we should be the voice of these children, and their families. Please support this Resolution and take it back to your Brigades and make sure everybody else is aware of what is going on there. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jane. I am assuming there are no speakers against. The Executive Council are supporting. I will therefore put Emergency Resolution 21 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*

We are now on Resolution 67 in the name of the National Gay & Lesbian Committee entitled Equality Representatives. The Executive Council are supporting. The National Gay & Lesbian Committee to move, please.

Resolution 67 – EQUALITY REPRESENTATIVES

Conference acknowledges the work of the Trade Unions, the TUC and Government in recognising, developing and supporting the work of representatives in the workplace with a specific role of progressing equalities issues. Many unions have specific Equalities representatives, in the FBU these roles are often covered by the Equality Sections representatives, including officials of the National Gay and Lesbian Committee.

One barrier these representatives constantly have to overcome is the lack of facility time provided by our employers.

Disappointingly proposals in the Single Equality Bill fail to provide equality representatives with legislative provision of time off to conduct their duties, similar to that of Health and Safety and Union Learning representatives.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to work with the TUC and affiliates in developing a campaign to bring about change by the Government to implement the required change to legislation that facilitates paid time off to carry out their duties, a report on progress to be provided back to conference 2010.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

SIS ALI BURROWS (NG&LC):

I am frustrated in having to move this Resolution. You may wonder why especially given the progress given on a number of different equality issues by the present Government. So credit where credit is due. Yes, we do acknowledge this: be it improved maternity provision, civil partnerships, increase the sections on grounds of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation to list a few. There remain still more to do and we believe this would certainly continue with the amalgamation of much of this legislation into the single Equality Bill which is due to continue its journey through Parliament.

I still have to outline the missed opportunity, especially given the emphasis made on the role of trade union equality reps will have if we are to embed true equality in work places and society. The need for equality offering a fair chance and developing the talents of everyone in our society is not just the luxury to dream of but a real need in work places across the UK today, and equality should be the beating heart of the Union. Gross inequality lies at the heart of so many of our problems.

The hard work and dedication of our Equality reps is already delivering equality within the Fire Service by

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raising awareness on equality issues, negotiating with employers and advising colleagues whose needs are most acute. Union reps are making a real difference to people's lives. The network of Equality reps is still a work in progress. As a Union I am sure we will continue to train and support more Equality reps, but in order for them to be fully effective we want them to follow in the footsteps of our Safety and Learning reps and receive statutory rights in order to keep equality firmly on the agenda.

The difficulty we have with this ever increasing and important agenda is the ability for reps to obtain paid facility time. Whilst legislation is not perfect, powerful Safety together with Union Learning reps do have the extra level of legislation to encourage their paid release. In this economic climate employers will not be motivated to provide facility time, fully paid for covering equality work for something of a legal stick, even if it is only a small one. We need to keep up the pressure on Government to include provision for Equality reps to get paid facility time for Health and Safety and Union Learning reps. Conference please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder please for Resolution 67?

SIS JO BYRNE (NWC):

I second Resolution 67, Equality Representatives. Equality reps are not expected to be complete experts but should have a basic understanding, most certainly a passion for equality and must have the ability to signpost or spot potential discrimination cases. Equality reps will promote equality and develop good practice in work places. Also at the same time they will support other reps by building equality into the mainstream bargaining agenda. There appear to be two common arguments against Equality reps. The first argument which is used time and again is that equality should be mainstream and part of everybody's role and not left to individuals in each of the equality strands to deal with. I argue that the presence of an Equality rep actually supports the mainstreaming of equality issues into the role of all reps including the negotiating agenda, Branch campaigns and recruitment, because there is always at least one person who can keep reminding the rest of the work force about equality and support them to take this agenda forward.

The FBU has many real life experiences of this. One of those is the development of the FBU model maternity policy which was written and driven by the NWC but which has been used as a negotiating tool by Brigade Secretaries to gain improved conditions for all FBU members. The second is that the Equality reps role is often carried out by reps who hold other positions and already have statutory rights for time off such as Health and Safety reps or Union Learning reps. My response to

this is that equality is such a large area that reps cannot be expected to do this on top of other roles within the same trade union leave time scales awarded by management.

I have been incredibly lucky. For the past ten months my Deputy Chief Fire Officer has given me a full time release to carry out my role as Regional Women's rep and to look at the wider social justice issues within Wales as a whole. This is only on a temporary basis though and I could be recalled at any time. However, this opportunity has ensured that I have been able to organise around the equality agenda which I hope has been of benefit to the FBU, but I know that as soon as I return to a 2:2:3 shift system again in conjunction with juggling my family commitments, that my role will be much more difficult to fulfil.

The Wales TUC are currently running a pilot project with the Welsh Assembly Government, setting up a network of Equality reps throughout Wales. Hopefully this will demonstrate the case for providing reps with the recognition and time off that they need, not only to carry out their role properly but also to attend vital training sessions. A similar project is due to be run throughout the NHS in Wales too and this will be used to keep up the pressure on the Welsh Assembly Government to provide statutory rights. If we can achieve some success in Wales, then we have a better chance of persuading the other governing bodies in the UK. Please show your commitment to equality issues and support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Jo, is there anyone speaking against Resolution 67? No. Like with the last Resolution, where there is no speaker against and the Executive Council are supporting, and we are pressed for time for the remainder of Conference, it is not my intention to take any more speakers. I will therefore put 67 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Are there any against. Were there any abstentions. That is *carried unanimously*

We are now on to Para C2, TUC 2008. Paragraph C3, Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Conference 2008. Paragraph C4, Scottish TUC 2008.

SIS. SHARON SALES MOSSOP (Strathclyde):

Every year the STUC awards the union official who won the work place equality award. The strategic award is given to an individual who has shown outstanding work in developing equality issues in the work place. We in Strathclyde and in Scotland are extremely proud that this year's recipient is Alex Miller, Brigade Secretary in Strathclyde and up until recently, the Fairness at Work rep for Scotland. Alex has assisted many members and

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officials over the years and has tirelessly promoted equality and diversity in a practical and tangible way. His achievements include being actively involved in the STUC Union's Inter-Schools Programme, boosting the number of women and ethnic minorities in Scotland, negotiating effective maternity policies, assisting in the design of a welfare park, to dignify facilities at incidents, ensuring proper access in Fire Service premises for disabled persons and negotiating improvements to flexible working for members, with care responsibilities. Alex's contribution and assistance is invaluable and I am sure that Conference will join us in congratulations and thanking him for his tremendous work. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Well done, Alex.

BRO JIM MALONE (Tayside):

This relates to a success story. A group of workers actually standing up for their rights and winning. On 02 March the managing director of a company in Dundee went into the factory and told the workers that the company had ceased trading. Seventeen workers received no redundancy, no legal assistance and they were left little hope. All of them bar one was on minimum wages. The vast majority of them were women. The work force were not unionised. However, Dundee Trades Union Council visited the workers with the Fire Brigades Union at the fore. We supported the workers in their occupation. They took ownership of the factory. The Fire Brigades Union both Locally and Regionally gave moral and financial assistance for the workers there. The support gathered pace and as you can see from the *Socialist Worker* that you have got, the occupation became a workers' cooperative. The orders gathered and they were steaming in and the workers were offered a meeting with the bankers and again the financial support required started to come in, and on 24th April after seven weeks of occupation and living in the factory, still working in the factory, there was a fully unionised work force.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Jim. We are on to Paragraph C5, Wales TUC 2008. Paragraph C6 Wales TUC Annual Women's Conference 2008. Paragraph C7, Women's TUC 2008. Paragraph C8, TUC Lesbian & Gay Bisexual and Transgender Conference 2008. Paragraph C9, TUC Black Workers Conference 2008. I am now going to take in the same debate Resolution 55 from the B&EMM Committee, British National Party Membership and Emergency Resolution 20 from London – The BNP. We will take them in the same debate. The Executive Council are supporting both of them and both of them can carry. Can I have B&EMM please to move 55.

Resolution 55 – BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY MEMBERSHIP

The leaking of the BNP membership list in November 2008 exposed a minority of fire service employees who are members of that organisation. This Conference reiterates our abhorrence of that organisation's ideology. This Conference strongly supports the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the general statutory duty placed on Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote good race relations.

The FBU must continue to lobby the Fire and Rescue Service to make a clear statement to its current employees and new applicants, that members of these extremist organisations are not welcome in the Fire and Rescue Service.

We applaud those who have already made clear statements that these people are not wanted by their Fire and Rescue Service.

This Conference therefore calls upon the Fire Brigades Union to:

- 1) Clarify its policy on what action will be taken if any FBU member is found to be a member of a far right or extremist organisation whose policies are in direct opposition to the policies and Rules of the FBU.*
- 2) Bring all relevant Rule Changes to Annual Conference 2010 allowing for the expulsion from the FBU of any member who is also a member of the BNP and other similar fascist organisations.*
- 3) Ensure that all FBU educational processes discuss the far right and the real threat they pose to democracy in the UK and Europe.*
- 4) Lobby the Government to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service can have the same rights as the Police and Prison services to dismiss members of extremist organisations from their employment.*

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

BRO DAVE PAZIR (B&EMM):

I move Motion 55. This Motion is clear and obvious in its intent. The FBU has a duty to all its members to have a clear policy statement regarding any Fire Service employee who is also a member of the FBU being a member of any far right or extremist organisation including the BNP. At present our policies and rules contain no statement reflecting the wishes of our members regarding the BNP or other extremist members in our Union.

The issue was formerly raised in 2005 when the Union issued a circular about this very issue. Four years later

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there still remains no clear specific policy regarding the matter. Last year B&EMM raised the need for a circular to all members stating and clarifying the FBU's position.

As a Union we remain in a position of limbo. That, giving the willing actions of some Chief Fire Officers, is quite embarrassing. The CLG state in their national framework document that membership of extremist organisations “may not be compatible with being a member of the Fire and Rescue Service”. “May not be compatible”. I would love to know what circumstances they deem are compatible. We already know of Brigades who have policies regarding the BNP and other extremist organisations, but until this Union has a clear policy statement, we are weak as a Union based upon a very simply principle. Any Union needs to be fully united. When it is fully united, it is strong. This also needs to be reflected in clear policy that cannot be open to misinterpretation.

I would like to remind Conference that the National Front are the BNP. There is no difference. We are talking about a far right fascist organisation wrapped in a political party wrapping paper.

We welcome the joint statement from the CFO of Avon Fire Authority on BNP membership. We know that it will always be unacceptable to include within our organisations any member who is part of any belief system or group or political party or organisation that not only openly distinguishes between members of the public in a negative and destructive way but subscribe to an ideology that is in direct conflict with providing a humanitarian service.

What we do every day as firefighters is go all out to help anyone when they need our help. We do not stop to think about the race, colour, religion, whether they are gay, if they have a disability or, for that matter, whether or not they are a member of a trade union. We are too busy thinking about our own safety, the safety of our mates, colleagues and we are all totally focused on saving life. That is what sets us apart from anything that is ignorant. As a group of men and women we are and should always remain above any ideology that conflicts with what we really do, which is saving life. If we don't fully understand that all people are equal and worth saving, then we lose sight of what it is to be a firefighter.

I could equally be talking about people like Abu Hamza, Osama Bin Laden who are no different. Their message is exactly the same. It comes from the same source. They are talking about power, hatred, division, conflict, violence, delusions of superiority. They are deluded. They are deluded to the point that because they have these beliefs it makes their views seem more plausible and more normal. Any person who has an underlying understanding that they feel that they are superior, this

just plays into their hands. It is exactly how Hitler gained popularity with the Germany public prior to the Second World War. Unwise Government decisions, ill-thought out foreign policy and war, stretch economies to breaking point until people are so fearful of their own survival that they are willing to believe anyone else so long as the message says that you will be OK, we will look after you. They will convince and tell you how, by playing to your own weaknesses and fears.

There is no justification for legitimising extremist views simply because they come wrapped up in a shining wrapping paper of a political party. You cannot legitimise or justify the right to freedom of speech if the words and intent can be clearly seen to cause distress, fear and hatred between people simply because they are different. I am sure my granddad, who was a Welsh Bevan Boy, who went blind and died with a fair helping of pit dust in his lungs dragging coal out of the earth to keep our industries going through the Second World War, did not die thinking his grandson would ever have to stand up against the views of fascists or extremists in this country after all the death and suffering our relatives endured to keep this country and all its citizens free from such a deluded ideology. It has no place within our organisations, it has no place within a modern educated Britain and I just cannot understand what there possibly would be to gain by opposing this Motion. I am not just asking people to support this Motion, I am asking you to support it wholeheartedly. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 55?

BRO ROB MOSS (Staffs):

This Resolution is simply calling for the need to formulate a clear policy of our own and the need to educate our members of the threat the BNP and far right pose to democracy. We fully understand the concerns members may have with the FBU appearing to lobby to get members dismissed, but Conference, remember, it is for the very specific reason of dealing with members of an extremist and fascist organisation.

We cannot continue to make Resolutions and make grand speeches opposing racism and the BNP and yet ignore the fact that BNP members may reside within the FBU. The message we need to send is that these people are not welcome in the Fire Service and they are certainly not welcome in the FBU. We must lead by example. We cannot expect others to act if we do not, if we do not even have a clear policy on what action we are prepared to take. Subject to taking the necessary legal advice and making the relevant rule changes, we must be allowed to kick racists and fascists out of our Union. We overwhelmingly reiterated our opposition to co-responding

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and our commitment to dealing with members who break that policy. So please support this Resolution and let us deal with the racists and fascists as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Can I have London, please, to move Emergency Resolution 20.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 20 THE BNP

Following the astonishing attack on Dr John Sentamu by the Deputy Leader of the BNP Simon Darby in April 2009 when he described Dr Sentamu as being a “anti-British zealot” and an “ambitious African” this Conference both applauds and re-affirms its support for the efforts of the Hope not Hate Campaign to challenge racist and fascist organisations such as the BNP.

Conference further condemns the deplorable unprovoked attacks on peaceful anti fascist protesters which took place in Leigh on Friday 13th March 09 perpetrated by supporters of the BNP who are trying to use the current economic crisis and the slogan of “British jobs for British workers” to make a breakthrough in this Junes Euro elections.

Conference strongly supports the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the general statutory duty placed on the FRAs to promote good race relations.

Conference believes that the trade union movement must mobilise its forces to stop the BNP from making an electoral breakthrough.

Conference further believes that membership of the BNP is incompatible with any role in the public services and with membership of the FBU.

Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to;

- 1. Encourage support with Unite Against Fascism, Love Music Hate Racism and other trade unions and anti racist groups to mobilise the biggest possible campaign to stop the BNP in the European elections.*
- 2. Support and encourage FBU members to join the days of action called by Unite Against Fascism on 30th and 31st May 2009.*
- 3. Widely publicise and donate to the cost of the Love Music Hate Racism festival in Stoke on 30th May 2009.*
- 4. Campaign for the legal right of trade unions to expel known BNP members from their membership and if legally possible to bring*

forward the relevant Rule Changes to Annual Conference 2010 allowing for the expulsion from the FBU of any member who is also a known member of the BNP or other similar racist, fascist organisation.

- 5. Lobby the Fire and Rescue service to make a clear statement to its current and future employees, that members of racist, fascist extremist organisations are not welcome in the FRS.*
- 6. Ensure that where appropriate that the FBU educational processes discuss the far right and the real threat they pose to democracy in the UK and Europe.*

LONDON

BRO YUSUF TIMMS (London):

The previous speaker from B&EMM and lots of other speakers today have outlined the dangers of the British National Party far more eloquently than I could do, so I am not going to go over that ground right now, and also the President alluded to it in his address yesterday.

The plain truth is that this economic crisis that we are going through at the moment is devastating working class communities and the BNP are using that disillusionment with the Labour Government to try and build their own support inside of what were traditionally Labour supporting and left wing areas. There is every possibility now that in the coming European elections the BNP might well be able to win seats to the European Parliament which is something, of course, we all find horrific and this brings me on to the crux of our Resolution. The crux of our Resolution is a call for action. Action in the next few weeks is going to be critical in doing all we can to prevent those people getting any seats inside the European Parliament. For that reason we are calling on the Union to support the day of action organised by Unite Against Fascism and any other initiatives by other organisations as well as the Love Music Hate Racism festival in Stoke which the BNP have come to regard as one of their bases.

It also commits us to action in the long term and to a fight to drive BNP members, which unfortunately we know we have (we have got some in London) out of our Union.

In respect of the B&EMM Motion, it is a good Motion in many ways. We do unfortunately have a problem with point four of it in particular because we believe that, with all due respect to B&EMM, that the wording is unclear and oblique and such a policy could easily be used against organisations of the far left that are committed to fighting racism inside of our Union as well as the far right, and unfortunately for that reason we cannot support it. I would call on Conference to get behind this Resolution and let us mobilise our forces for the fight against the BNP over the coming months and years.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution 20? No seconder? *Formally seconded.* Can I have an indication of those who wish to speak in this debate, please. I have seen four. We will keep it at four. Then we will give rights of reply, the platform will respond if necessary and we will move to the vote.

BRO COLIN JARRETT (West Midlands):

I don't know what to say. We have heard all the words today. I did have an 8-page speech but it is pointless. Mindful of Alan's clocks as well, I will just stop and say that we need to support this Motion. Why do we need fascism in our organisation? Or are we hiding them? Therefore, I urge that we all support the Motion wholeheartedly.

BRO CHRIS JACKSON (Avon):

I totally agree with the B&EMM Resolution. In this Resolution it asks for the Union to do four things. One is to lobby Local Government to afford the Fire and Rescue Service the same rights as the police and the prison service. That is brilliant but this may take some time to actually get this. So in the meantime what we did in Avon was we lobbied our Fire Authority to issue a statement on BNP membership. I believe that statement is front of you. It sends out a clear message that the BNP are not welcome in the Avon Fire and Rescue Service. It also supports our stance to try and get the same rights as the prison service and the police service. Until we get these rights agreed, I urge you to lobby your Fire Authorities to try to issue a similar statement. There is no legal status in the statement that our Fire Authority issued, but it does send out a clear message and that message is that the BNP are not wanted in the Fire Service. I urge you all to support the Motion.

SIS SAM RYE (NWC):

We support Motion 55. Conference, this Motion may not be perfect; many aren't. What it does do perfectly is encapsulate the fundamental principles of trade unionism. It highlights the FBU's abhorrence of the BNP's ideology, goals and aims, and reflects the National Women's Committee support for the eradication of racism, sexism, homophobia and fascism in the British Fire Service and FBU. We believe that we should never shy away from challenging unacceptable behaviour and removing it from the workplace whether that is within the Station, the Control Room or our Union Offices. Let us be clear and the Union Rule Book is crystal on this, the constitution of the BNP and the FBU Rule Book do not, and never can, sit comfortably together. You may well be bombarded with European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights facts, findings and

statistics. Finance this week has featured heavily I am sure, but on this matter, principle has no price. We can never afford to lose our trade union anti-fascist principles ever. Remember, a job in the Fire and Rescue Service taken by a BNP member is one less FBU activist. Comrades, support the Motion, allow anti-fascism to be entwined and enshrined within our whole organisation's ethos and FBU education process, and let us make the Fire Service the change we want to see. Please support.

BRO SAMI CHAUDHRY (Dumfries & Galloway):

Membership of the BNP is historically regarded as a white against black. I hope the previous speakers have got it across adequately that the defeat of the BNP is in everyone's interest. They hate me and my B&EMM colleagues because we are not white, they despise LGBT. Their opinions on women are vile and they actually remind me of the recent comment about marital rape by one of the candidates, of the law being passed in Afghanistan, and I am sure we find that barbaric. There is a certain irony to that. For everyone who does not fall into those categories and I think you know who you are, they hate you because you are trade unionists as well. So they hate everyone in this room pretty much. It is actually a bit of a surprise to me that any BNP sympathisers would want to join the Fire Service but they are there.

Increasingly rather than just being upset that I am to be working alongside a BNP sympathiser, I am convinced that they could not possibly be doing their work effectively. How can these people work adequately and concentrate on the job in hand when they are so seething about their own superiority? It must really anger them. I recognise that there is not much difference between the two Resolutions. I think both are asking for similar outcomes. B&EMM's wording is much clearer in point four, in my opinion, to dismiss the members rather than London's wording which is that they are not welcome in the FRS which is perfectly commendable. If you are looking for Sectional advice, here is mine. If you have an employee or a member that hates others so much that they join a party whose sole purpose is to spread that hate, get them out and keep them out. Thank you. Support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sami. I will ask Matt to respond from the platform.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council are supporting both Resolutions. There is a slight qualification on Resolution 55 which I am sure was reflected in some of the debate by supporters of the Motion so I don't see there is any problem.

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The difficulty is in relation to our position as regards to the law. People will have followed the ASLEF case. I think one of the disgraceful things about our trade union laws is that this Government has not adequately amended trade union legislation to take account of ASLEF's victory in the European Court of Human Rights. What we need to demand, what we need to insist on from this or any future Government, is that we as a Trade Union have the right to set our own rules and the right to organise. The right to organise ourselves in the Trade Union also means the right to decide who is not welcome in our Trade Union. We insist that that right needs to be built into future legislation.

We have been discussing this with our legal advisers and at a number of recent conferences and seminars. What we do not want to end up with is in legal problems where we end up paying some fascist some form of compensation. So the qualification that the Executive Council has is in relation to seeking legal advice particularly in relation to point two on Resolution 55. Any relevant rule changes would clearly need to take account of the current legal position at the point at which we brought them. Hopefully that answers it.

Just in terms of London's concern about point four in Resolution 55, I would hope that Conference is quite clear. There may be some difficulties with the wording. I would hope that Conference is quite clear. It is in the context of BNP membership. We are talking about right wing head cases, fascists, who have no place in this Union, no place in the Fire and Rescue Service. I would hope that everyone is in agreement that we are not talking about socialists and left wing organisations. Hopefully that clarifies any concerns that people have.

Just to finish, I think Sami touched on it. The fact is that we are here to represent firefighters, but we are also here to fight for the best possible Fire Service for our communities. I wonder how the hell anyone can possibly serve a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, diverse community if they believe sections of that community should not even be here in the first place. They clearly cannot serve that community fairly and equally. They cannot provide the best possible service. We are in favour of that in terms of our own Union. The fact is fascists coming into our Union are clearly opposed to the principles of trade unionism. They are effectively a fifth column within our ranks. We will fight for that right. We will bring those rule changes in due course. Both Resolutions can be supported.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Do B&EMM wish to exercise their right of reply? No. Are London seeking to exercise their right to reply? No. OK. We will therefore move to the vote. Both are supported by the Executive Council. Both can carry.

Can I please see all those in favour of Resolution 55. Thank you. Were there any against? Abstentions. That is *carried*

I will now put Emergency Resolution 20 to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*

We are now on to Resolution 57 from the Black & Ethnic Minority Members Committee, entitled Racial Abuse Whilst Carrying Out Duties. B&EMM to move please.

Resolution 57 – RACIAL ABUSE WHILST CARRYING OUT DUTIES

During a routine home fire safety visit in Merseyside an FBU member was the victim of racial abuse and not for the first time. The police took no action against the perpetrator, as the law says it is not a criminal offence under the Public Order Act to verbally abuse anyone in your own dwelling.

Fire and Rescue Service members are not alone, as other public sector workers have also been victims of this form of abuse.

This conference believes that this form of abuse should be classified as a hate crime and should be prosecuted as such.

This Conference therefore calls upon the Fire Brigades Union to:

- 1) Instruct all our members not to continue with home fire safety visits in residences where members are abused, and to report any incidents through their incident recording mechanisms as well as informing the appropriate authorities.***
- 2) Use their good office to lobby all appropriate bodies to launch a campaign calling for an amendment in the law so that perpetrators can be prosecuted.***
- 3) Raise this at the Practitioners Forum as a Health, Safety and Welfare issue.***

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

SIS SAMANTHA SAMUELS (B&EMM):

I move Motion 57 on Racial Abuse Whilst Carrying Out Duties. Although this is a Motion from B&EMM, we need to be clear that racism is not just an issue for black and ethnic minority members; it is an issue for all members of all races and all nationalities.

When members of the public can racially abuse public servants who enter their homes to save lives without any risk of any form of prosecution or retribution, it is

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time for us to take action. Brigades have decided that we will go into the homes of members of the public to do preventative work without assessing the risk to our members first. Brigades have rushed us into a place that I would argue becomes our work place as soon as we enter. We are not against carrying our preventative work in our communities but members of the public need to be aware that we are not going to allow our members to be abused whilst they are carrying out their duties and until the time when the law gets amended to protect our members, and other public sector workers – we also need to remember that this includes community advocates, fire safety officers and inspectors, midwives, home helps, nurses, social workers to name but a few – we want all Brigades to put in interim measures which mean that they will support our members in removing themselves from an abusive situation, and also support the individual or crews that may be involved in this abuse. At the end of the day Brigades have a responsibility under the Health & Safety and Welfare Act to protect their employees. I ask you to take this Motion back to your Brigades and negotiate some agreed actions that will be taken if members are abused.

There is a reason why we say this as well, because the situation mentioned in the Motion when our member was abused, nobody knew what to do. The member did not know what to do and the person in charge of the crew did not know what to do either so it is obvious that they were not aware of any actions that they needed to take. So please support the Motion and take the action back to your Brigade.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for 57? Les.

BRO LES SKARRATTS (Merseyside):

I second Resolution 57. The Resolution refers to one of our members on Merseyside who was, as Sam said, the victim of racial abuse whilst undertaking community fire safety duties in Merseyside. He put up smoke detectors in a community member's house. Unfortunately, it is not the first time our member has suffered racial abuse whilst on duty. It is not even the second time regrettably that our member has suffered, but it was the first time that our member had suffered racial abuse in somebody's home. As Sam said, remarkably we could not do anything about it. The first two incidents our member suffered there was police intervention as it was classed as a public order offence. But the incident in the community member's home could not be regarded as a public order offence and we could not do anything at all legally and judicially to address that incident. Remarkably, it is called the "Englishman's Castle Legislation" where you can pretty much do whatever you want within your home.

We are working with Thompsons and the police and the B&EMM Officials to see if we can move this situation forward, but as the Resolution clearly lays out, there is a strategy within the Resolution. I think the strategy is a perfectly reasonable strategy and I would urge you to support that particular strategy and Resolution 57. Thanks very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Les. Were there any speakers against 57? The Executive Council are supporting. I will put 57 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now moving on to the part of the agenda this afternoon where we have a fraternal guest speaker and excuse us for one moment while we rearrange the seating here on the platform.

We are very fortunate this afternoon to be able to have a guest speaker from Colombia. Last year we heard from two Colombian firefighter trade unionists and I know how much they moved Conference with their explanation of their difficulties that they faced in organising in that country and in working as firefighters in that country. They are not alone in suffering those difficulties in trying to organise as trade unionists. There are many trade unionists each year in Colombia who are victimised at work, who end up being prosecuted and imprisoned, and there are dozens of cases each year of Colombian trade unionists who are assassinated, and it is an absolute disgrace that trade unionists anywhere in the world should face that kind of treatment for the crime of trying to speak up on behalf of working people. Our guest speaker who we have here this afternoon is Carmen Mayusa who is a nurse and an activist with the Health Workers Union in that country, and Carmen has direct experience of that kind of treatment of which I have just spoke. She has been imprisoned as a result of her activities. She is currently unable to work as a result of the treatment that she has suffered and members of her family have been assassinated for their activities. It is therefore my pleasant duty to introduce Carmen to address this Conference.

SIS CARMEN MAYUSA:

Good afternoon, comrades. It is an honour for me to share this afternoon with you.

The motive of my presence here today is the persecution, the barbarity and the daily death which we trade unionists endure in Colombia for defending the rights of the workers. In Colombia our trade union work means that we live daily with the fear of death. The number of trade unionists killed in Colombia is

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uncountable. There have been more than 10,000 trade unionists killed and just in the government of President Alvaro Uribe over 550 trade unionists have been killed.

Just this year since the 1st January we know of and have proof of, the murders of 17 trade unionists. Those not murdered are imprisoned and accused of terrible crimes and this is how they make us pay for opposing neo-liberal policies and defending the rights of the workers.

My case was one of many. I was in prison for 25 months and 17 days with some of my family, my sister and her one and a half year old son who had to see out the sentence with us. We got out of prison but to our immense pain we are given no employment opportunities now. The government has condemned us to poverty because we are supposedly their enemies, when we are the enemies of the policies of his government. We now suffer this unemployment.

The worst thing is that in Colombia our families are made to pay for our trade union activity. In my own case my brothers were murdered. Three of my brothers were killed. The last of them was murdered on 08 August 2008, one month after I was freed from prison. His name was Luis Mayusa and he was a leader of the Colombian TUC. But we do have hope and you are that hope, you our trade union brothers from Great Britain. You are comrades in the United Kingdom who also organise to defend yourselves from neo-liberalism. You are our hope.

We have the hope that Justice for Colombia will continue its support of the Colombian victims of this war against the political opposition in Colombia. I was released because of a Justice for Colombia Campaign just like the release of my comrade Martin Sandoval who was released from prison yesterday thanks to, in parts, Justice for Colombia Campaign.

I want to thank you again, comrades, for your support, and I invite you to continue being an active part of Justice for Colombia's work and to come and visit us in Colombia and see our struggle. Our people will continue to struggle always and we will always carry aloft the banners of trade unionism in our struggle. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

We have heard contributions this week about trade unionists in the UK being victimised and losing their employment for their trade union activities but I think when you listen to the contribution from Carmen it puts in perspective our difficulties and the difficulties that are faced by your comrades in Colombia.

I had the opportunity two months ago to visit Colombia as part of a Justice for Colombia delegation and we were certainly moved by the accounts that we heard

while we were there. Some of our delegation had the opportunity to visit Carmen's comrades, Martin Sandoval in his prison and I am extremely pleased to hear that he was released yesterday. I think it does show the kind of results that can be achieved by campaigning on behalf of workers in other countries.

The Fire Brigades Union was one of the founders of the Justice for Colombia Campaign. It is an extremely important campaign doing very important work and I would urge everyone both to join as individual members to ensure their Brigades and their Regions, are affiliated, and play an active part in their work, and I will remind you that there is a bucket collection taking place at the end of today's business with the proceeds being divided equally between the Justice for Colombia Campaign and also for the Colombian Firefighters Union who are trying to raise the funds to organise a National Congress of Firefighters throughout Colombia to take forward their work. I know that Matt wants to make a presentation on our behalf to Carmen and Carmen will be attending our function this evening so hopefully some of you will get the chance to speak to her personally. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Carmen, I think on behalf of our Conference I would like to thank you very deeply for attending the Conference today. The Fire Brigades Union has a long history of Internationalism of which we are extremely proud. It is built into our Rule Book, into our aims and objectives as a Union. A key part of that is the International guests that we bring here every year to speak to Conference and to speak to the delegates so that people can hear directly from comrades around the world about the struggles that are taking place elsewhere, struggles in circumstances as Mick has just mentioned that some of us can only struggle to comprehend. I think the reaction of the Conference has made clear the warm greetings from the Fire Brigades Union to yourself and on behalf of Conference I thank you again for attending. Please accept this small token, a plaque of the Fire Brigades Union, to take back to Colombia. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Carmen. We will return to the agenda. We are on the Annual Report, Paragraph C10, Affiliations. We will now take Resolution 63 from Strathclyde, CND. Strathclyde to move, please.

Resolution 63 – CND

Conference reaffirms its opposition to the UK's nuclear weapons of mass destruction and notes the UK Government's continued commitment to renewing Trident at a minimum cost of £70 billion.

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This was a gross misuse of public funds prior to the economic crisis and would now represent an unpardonable folly at a time when public expenditure is due to face massive cutbacks.

Conference further calls for the labour and trade union movement to support CND by mounting a mass campaign of opposition to reverse current Government policy and have the renewal of Trident cancelled.

STRATHCLYDE

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

CND evolved in the 1950s to indicate the revulsion of ordinary working people against the horrific outcome of the use of atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki on civilian populations. This caused the incineration of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children and a lasting legacy of stillbirths, deformities and cancer cases caused by the radiation poison. So we have a powerful and vibrant peace movement that was fuelled by this and it was influenced by the Labour and Trade Union Movement.

CND marches of 50,000 to 100,000 to sites of weapons establishments such as Aldermaston have been common place. The peace movement won the moral argument, but despite this, the political elite representing successive UK Governments sought and ultimately acquired atomic bombs with the assistance of the USA in the 1950s. Negotiations to achieve nuclear status were conducted in secret and not only the House of Commons were not informed, but most members of the Cabinet were kept in the dark. This culture of secrecy was again evident in the 70s when the Wilson Government updated the nuclear system by acquiring Polaris from the United States. In the 80s the Thatcher Government replaced Polaris with the Trident missile system, again provided by the United States. This system represented a massive increase in the destructive potential of the UK's nuclear capability. Each of the four submarines that carries the missiles, has 16 missiles each of which has 12 warheads. Any one of these warheads contains a destructive force around four times greater than the atom bombs used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They have almost incalculable and unimaginable destructive potential. Again, there was widespread revulsion at the ratcheting up of the nuclear arms race. Of course, this was also in direct contradiction of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty that required nuclear powers to commit to reducing and eliminating their weapons of mass destruction at an early date.

CND again led the opposition to Trident and permanent camps were established at nuclear sites, famously by the brave women at Greenham Common and at Faslane on the Clyde, and these continue to this day. The

current Labour Government are in the process of updating Trident and despite the biggest rebellion of Labour MPs in this Parliament, Parliament recently approved the replacement of the nuclear submarines. This was despite the then Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, committing Britain to reducing and abolishing nuclear weapons in the same year, 2007. Again the culture of secrecy has been employed to mislead Parliament with the Government insisting that there has been no decision yet taken on upgrading the warheads. Leaked Government papers have now revealed that plans are afoot to replace them by 2010.

The world as we know has become a very different place since the end of the Cold War. Climate change, the financial chaos caused by casino-capitalism and regional wars over dwindling resources, are the major threats to peace and stability. Yet Britain still wages its outmoded and illegal weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the former head of the armed forces, General Garnett, in a letter to *The Times* this year signed by other retired generals has called Trident completely useless against the threats facing the UK and the international community. He also said it was inconceivable they could be used without the permission of the United States. This is, of course, a tacit admission that they hold the launch codes needed to launch the missiles, so bang goes Britain's independent nuclear deterrent.

The cost of a complete upgrade of Trident is now calculated to be at least £100 billion over the 25 year lifetime of the system. £100 billion. That is enough to proper resource the UK Fire Service for around 60 years, yet this Labour Government are still committed to spending this vast sum of money despite the huge cut backs in public spending on Health, Education and the Fire Service announced as a result of a financial crisis. So we can have a completely useless system of weapons of mass destruction, but mass redundancies for public service workers and huge cuts in public service for the public. It is a disgraceful situation. Of course, this blatant disregard for the non-proliferation treaty is noted by States such as Iran and North Korea who wish to develop nuclear capability to defend their countries against a nuclear threat from countries such as the UK. So £100 billion of public money is actually going to make the world far less safe. This position has now led many Labour politicians and even the Tory Party, to question the need for a Trident upgrade, so all is not lost.

In Strathclyde we have been given the dubious honour of hosting all the nuclear submarines from 2015. Strathclyde Brigade have yet to be called out to any of the 40 major leaks of radioactivity over the last 20 years on the Clyde from the Faslane base. We have not turned out because these leaks were kept secret until

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the recent review by Channel 4 using Freedom of Information legislation. The 3 million people who live around the Clyde don't need that terrifying threat on their doorstep.

There is a pressing need to find new technology to tackle climate change. The workers maintaining the subs can easily be retrained to build wind turbines and develop tidal technology. This is exactly the policy of the Government in Scotland and it is supported by many Labour and Liberal MSPs, so it is achievable. Not only is the moral and ethical argument on our side, but the political, economic and environmental case for cancelling Trident is clearly unanswerable. So I ask you Conference, to support this Resolution and each and every one of us commit to building a mass campaign, the CND, the TUC and the Peace Movement that will ensure whatever Government takes power next year will have no choice but to cancel the Trident upgrade as a first step to ridding the UK of weapons of mass destruction.

Conference, we demand jobs not bombs. People over profit. Peace not annihilation.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 63? Formally seconded. I take it there are no speakers against? The Executive Council are supporting. I will put 63 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*

We are now on to Resolution 77 from Cleveland, Holocaust Memorial Day. The Executive Council are supporting. Can we have Cleveland to move, please.

Resolution 77 – HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

This conference is appalled at the acts of genocide committed by Nazi Germany, and more recently in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur for example.

Since 2005, Holocaust Memorial Day has taken place on January 27th, and is the international day of remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust and other acts of genocide. January 27th is the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council and Brigade Committees to do whatever they can to support, and play an active part in, Holocaust Memorial Day.

CLEVELAND

BRO TELFER WHITFIELD (Cleveland):

I move Resolution 77, Holocaust Memorial Day. Firstly, I would like to give some background to this event and explain why it is so important that we commemorate this, and why on this date.

Basically it is a day when we remember the victims of the Holocaust that occurred in Nazi-occupied Europe during the Second World War and the chosen date, January 27th, is the anniversary of the liberation by Soviet troops of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. In reality though, it is much more than that. There have been various national days of remembrance throughout the world, but in November 2005 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution establishing January 27th as an international day of remembrance urging every member state to honour the memory of the holocaust victims and all acts of genocide. It goes on to encourage the relevance of educational programmes about the history of these atrocities in order that future generations understand the causes and reflect upon the consequences.

Let me just remind you of the scale of some of these acts. In the Second World War the annihilation of 6 million European Jews and anybody else who did not fit in with the Nazi ideology.

Rwanda: over a period of approximately 100 days in 1994 the wholesale slaughter of at least 500,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates. Most estimates put the death toll nearer 800,000 to 1 million which is as high as 20 per cent of the Rwandan population.

Cambodia: between 1975 and 1979 under the Khmer Rouge at least 200,000 people were executed. Most people will remember the phrase and the images "The Killing Fields". On top of that it is estimated another 1.4 to 2.2 million deaths were attributed directly to the policies of the Khmer Rouge through Bosnia: In July 1995 Bosnian Serb troops targeted to extinction 40,000 Bosniacs (that is Bosnian Muslims) in and around Srebrenica. They killed up to about 8,000 Bosniac men and boys. They rounded them up and killed them as well as ethnically cleansing between 25,000 and 30,000 refugees.

Darfur: That has been ongoing since 2003. The Sudanese military and militia backed by them have been responsible for 450,000 deaths and nearly 3 million displaced. Although the UN concludes that there is no genocidal policy by the Sudanese government, they recognise that the crimes are no less serious and heinous as genocide.

We all, as good trade unionists, recognise that humanity is deeply scarred by the belief that race, religion, disability or sexuality, somehow makes people's lives worth less than others. Genocide, anti-semitism, racism, xenophobia,

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and discrimination still continue. We have a shared responsibility to address these evils however we can so I call upon the EC for a pledge to strengthen our efforts to promote education on this subject and to urge and remind Brigade Committees to support and play an active part in the holocaust memorial events across the country.

President and Conference, this is my last year here and this subject is one that is close to my heart, and it is fitting that it is probably my parting shot. I will continue to campaign against hate for as long as I can and can I ask that when I move this Resolution that you show your support, not in the usual way, as I feel that somehow applause seems inappropriate, but by taking time to reflect and make a note for your respective Committees. Thank you Conference. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder, please, for Resolution 77? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting. I will therefore put it to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

Now is an appropriate time to break for tea. Please be back in your seats in 15 minutes.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, if everybody can now please take their seats and finish their conversations, we will have a report from the Chair of Standing Orders Committee. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Just a quick one. Programme of Business, Page 13, please. Resolution 43 has been withdrawn to support Resolution 38. Thank you Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is the Standing Orders report agreed? *Agreed* Thank you.

We are therefore on the Annual Report, Paragraph C11, The Institute of Employment Rights. We will take Resolution 64 from Fife on Trade Union Rights. Fife to move, please.

Resolution 64 – TRADE UNION RIGHTS

This Conference condemns the failure of the UK Labour Government to repeal the Anti Trade Union

Laws, despite their promise when in opposition, to do so when they took power.

This Conference considers this to be entirely unacceptable and calls on the Executive Council to instigate and pursue a political and trade union campaign, exploring all possible avenues, to effect the revocation of the anti trade union laws.

FIFE

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

I move Resolution 64, Trade Union Rights. Prior to Labour coming to power in 1997 we were in the unfortunate position of having a Tory Government for 18 years. During that time a number of high profile disputes took place: The Miner's strike in 1984; The Newspaper Workers' strike at Wapping in 1986; and the Dundee strike in 1993. They are just some examples. During this time the Tory Government also introduced a number of anti-trade union laws which were designed to undermine the role of the trade union in the work place and what we do in trying to secure our industrial aims.

When Labour launched their election manifesto for after the 1997 general election, they said they would repeal the anti-trade union laws that had been introduced since 1979. Guess what? They have been in power for 12 years and the promises they made have still not been delivered.

We consider this to be entirely unacceptable and call on the EC to explore all possible avenues to revoke the anti-trade union laws and replace them with a framework that includes, the right to strike, the right for pickets in any number, and any work place to take part in peaceful demonstration, the right for trade unions to organise industrial action and support their fellow groups of workers, and finally, to be able to exercise those rights free from the threat of police arrest, dismissal and legal action. Conference, please support this Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for 64? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting. I will put that one to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. Were there any abstentions? No. That is therefore *carried unanimously*.

We will take Resolution 68 from the National Women's Committee on Human Trafficking. NWC to move, please.

Resolution 68 – HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Annual Conference condemns the appalling and unacceptable escalation of human trafficking, which predominantly targets women and children.

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Internationally, human trafficking is the fastest growing organised crime, with around two million people being forced into the sex trade every year. This is nothing short of 21st century slavery and must be wiped out.

Therefore this Conference calls upon the Executive Council to:

- ***Campaign within the TUC and sister unions to seek adequate Government resources to prevent and deter the perpetrators, and to provide support and refuge for the victims.***
- ***Publicise and oppose this form of exploitation and abuse.***
- ***Work closely with organisations such as Amnesty International and other relevant agencies to highlight and to eradicate this slavery.***

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS JO BYRNE (NWC):

I move Resolution 68, Human Trafficking. Crime statistics show that trafficking is second only to drug related crime. Shockingly, it is now more profitable than gun running. Forced prostitution, domestic servitude and forced marriage are just three examples of trafficking but all involve some sort of abuse and exploitation ranging from retention of travel documents to psychological and physical abuse, rape, and in the worst scenarios, ultimately death.

As human trafficking predominantly targets women and children resulting in many being forced into a life of degradation and exploitation, I cannot imagine that many of you are going to need much persuading to support this Resolution. I was a delegate at the Wales TUC Women's Conference last October and felt sickened and outraged after listening to Kathy Owens from Amnesty International describing the horrors of human trafficking and how women brought into this country on promises of a better life are treated like modern day slaves. The slave trade was apparently abolished 200 years ago but today women and children are still being bought, sold and brutalised in a sex industry and other forms of forced labour.

It has been reported that victims of trafficking to the sex trade have been found in all parts of the UK and not just the big inner city areas where all these persecuted people can become lost in the ether. Many of the young women involved believe that they are coming to this country to work in the tourist or agricultural industries and then find themselves at the mercy of evil gangsters who take their passports, lock them in brothels and force them to have sex with ten or more men every day.

A recent case study tells of an 18 year old Lithuanian girl who ended up working as a prostitute in Cardiff after

being promised a new life as a waitress in a hotel. The girl had agreed to travel, to work in the UK, but had been sold into sex slavery by the police officer in her village. She was then trafficked into London before being taken to Cardiff and gang raped to prepare her for her new job. Beaten every day, she was also caused to dance naked on tables for customers. She was burnt with cigarettes and threatened that if she went to the police her family would be harmed. Sadly, this story is all too common and gobsmackingly some people actually believe that a large proportion of these women choose a life of prostitution. I think not. A career in prostitution! Admittedly, it is a life that not many of us can really imagine, and if we are honest if it does not touch our own lives it can stay remote, and how could we as individuals effect a change anyway? If you start to imagine a life, forced into prostitution, sex with a number of strange and brutal men every day, constant fear, living in poverty, possibly having your children sold as slaves and even having a kidney removed for someone else to profit from, then you are probably touching the tip of this iceberg.

These are some of the reasons why we must call upon the Executive Council to remind not only Westminster, but also the Devolved Parliaments in Wales and Scotland, of their obligations both moral and legal to these women. These issues need to be raised time and time again to ensure that the UK Government carry out the promise made by Jacqui Smith on December 17th last year to ratify the European Convention against trafficking in human beings, and provide these women with the support they deserve and need so urgently. The Resolution asks that the FBU support the Amnesty work that is currently taking place. Like the campaign against poverty and for human rights, the aims are to empower those who live in poverty to actively participate in claiming their rights, to ensure that human rights are accessible to all people equally and that people who are marginalised are given additional assistance to achieve their rights, to hold to account those who violate the rights of others including states and governments. At a UK level we must continue to demand that the UK Government tackle trafficking by using the full force of the criminal justice system to tackle these evil gangs, ensuring that the immigration status of traffic victims in the UK does not stop when receiving the services they need. Working with Devolved Administrations to ensure that services are delivered to victims across the UK, we must continue to press for appropriate services to women who may have suffered terribly wherever they are in the UK including the urgent provision of appropriate and secure accommodation for the victims of trafficking if, of course, they have the courage to tell somebody, access to emergency medical treatment, independent translation and interpretation services to inform victims of their legal rights and, of course, decent counselling services.

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The problem is, shouting from the rooftops is not enough. I doubt much will change. But support of this Motion means that each of us will have to commit to actually doing something, something to force the changes trafficked women so desperately need. So please contact and put pressure on your MPs, MSPs, and AMs. Circulate some standard letters around your networks to do the same. Raise the issues at your Branches and throughout your structures. Comrades, keep the pressure on. We must make every effort to stop sexual slavery at all costs. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jo. Was there a seconder for 68?

SIS SHARON SALES MOSSOP (Strathclyde):

Human trafficking is a worldwide problem and the UK has been a destination country for many years. Thousands of women, children and men are trafficked to the UK each year. The lack of comprehensive statistics and data available in relation to trafficking in the UK and the hidden nature of trafficking makes it difficult to fully understand the scale of the problem. What I can tell you is that human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal activity in the world with a turnover exceeding \$US 10 billion. Estimates that suggest that the number of people trafficked annually is between 600,000, according to US government figures, and 3 million according to the International Labour Organisation. In the UK the majority of victims of trafficking are young, sometimes under 10 years of age coming to the attention of the authority.

According to information made available in the UK action plan on targeting human trafficking, the size of the UK market for human trafficking for sexual exploitation was up to £275 million in 2003. There are no reliable estimates of the number of individuals trafficked over to the UK for sex or labour exploitation. However more is known about exploitation for sex as there is no comprehensive collation of data in relation to those trafficked for labour exploitation. Although victims of trafficking suffer a complete loss of their human rights, trafficking is used as an issue for illegal immigration rather than a violation of human rights. Clearly, this is a situation that needs to be rectified. Human trafficking means sexual exploitation, domestic slavery and forced labour.

Human trafficking almost always involves the defection and coercion of the victim. The journeys undertaken by some of these young people to become involved in modern day slavery are shocking. When they reach their final destination frequently an even worse ordeal awaits them. There is a desperate need to support the victims of human trafficking and to make greater efforts to secure convictions against traffickers and those

associated with them. Both of these needs can be enabled by encouraging victims to give information, intelligence and evidence, and in order to do so they need support. I urge you to support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are supporting the Resolution. In the interests of time, I cannot imagine there are any speakers against. It is my proposal to move straight to the vote. I will therefore put Resolution 68 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against? Were there abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Emergency Resolution 9 also from the National Women's Committee on the subject of Sri Lanka. Can NWC move, please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 9 SRI LANKA

Conference welcomes the Independent Newspaper's front page coverage of the 19th April 2009 – highlighting the horrific situation confronting civilians in Sri Lanka, civilians who are caught between the forces of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and the Military.

Sri Lanka has experienced the depths of civil war for the last 30 years with in excess of 70,000 dead. Despite this horrific statistic there has been little international coverage of this conflict and the Sri Lankan people have received little support or assistance from the international community during this time.

Women and children have suffered acutely, with children being conscripted to fight by the LTTE and the human rights of women living on the front line being repeatedly violated by all sides. This includes rape, murder and the removal of their political voice. The removal of democracy and freedom has ultimately been endemic during these three decades of civil unrest.

Conference therefore calls upon the EC to use all means at their disposal to achieve:

- ***Greater awareness of the human rights abuses committed by all sides in this conflict.***
- ***Support for the demilitarisation of the North and East of Sri Lanka.***
- ***The re-instatement of democracy and social justice to form part of any reconstruction process in the country.***
- ***Supportive networks with sister organisations with the above common goals.***

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

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SIS EMMA DAVIS (NWC):

The situation in Sri Lanka is complex and protracted and one thing the National Women's Committee would like to highlight in this speech is not the rights or wrongs of either side at any period in history because over 30 years the situation has changed beyond recognition. But we do aim to highlight the position today and the situation for Sri Lankan civilians, Sri Lankan innocents and the oppression they are suffering caught between two sides within a civil war that has spanned over three decades.

At the National Women's School last month we were honoured to have a guest speaker, a Sri Lankan woman who lives today in exile from her homeland. She fled at the age of 7 under the cloak of darkness accompanied by her father and sister. Where was her mother you may ask? She was dead. Because she was a teacher, a trade unionist and a political activist fighting for democracy and the removal of the oppressive, divisive and sexist ways of her community, she was killed by extremist forces who believed that women had no right to be exposed to the world and thinking outside of her religion, her elders or her station. She was killed for developing freedom of thought, freedom of expression and attempting to achieve basic human rights for the community and all its members.

As you can imagine, the School's feedback sheets reflected the members' depth of feeling about this subject and prompted the Motion you see before you.

Just a few facts about life mainly in the North and East of the country. Women and children living on the front line of this war are suffering acutely. Children are being conscripted to fight rather than being sent to school. If they do not fight, their families are intimidated and escapees are exposed to horrendous beatings in front of their peers as a warning to others. Women are subject to rape, murder and the removal of their political voice. Democracy is not present with oppressive government forces intensifying the misery on a daily basis. 70,000 people are dead and many more driven from their homes and homeland. Innocent civilians are being targeted and sacrificed in the attacks. Just to highlight that, page 2 headlines in the *Morning Star* yesterday read *Another 49 die in Sri Lanka when a mortar shell struck the only functioning hospital in the region, a hospital made from corrugated metal and plastic sheeting*. Today the same again and more dead. The Red Cross were also prevented access during this with food and supplies or the possibility of evacuation of any wounded. Death, suffering, disease, famine, these are just every day struggles for those living on the front line.

Raising awareness on this issue is key especially for women and children who are seeking assistance to work with communities to stop this suffering in this militarised

undemocratic climate. An Amnesty International press release clearly highlights the fact that civilians are being used as a defence buffer and that there are many individuals who have, who do and who perhaps will in the future take an uncompromising stance towards the human rights abuses of the state and who are outraged that once again civilians are being sacrificed for the sake of those who possess weapons, no matter who they represent. No mandate gives any of them the right to sacrifice those who want to live and not die for their country.

There is a registered charity organisation in Mannar, North East Sri Lanka, who work with women suffering from abuse and who have been delivering a service to war-affected women since 1988. They are independent and consequently under pressure from the state and the LTTE all the time. They are in greater demand than ever due to the escalation of the war and have launched a fund raising appeal. Mannar Women's Development Federation already has a crisis centre for women suffering different forms of abuse including sexual abuse and they are now getting more and more women from LTTE controlled areas, most of whom have been injured during the hostilities and are disabled and disengaged due to the general escalation of violence against women. There is an urgent need for an extension to the crisis centre to house the ever increasing numbers to a bill of approximately \$6,000. So what can we do to help? Firstly, you can support this Resolution and ensure our EC uses all means possible to spread the word and have a positive influence on these innocent people's lives. Which political division is in search of democracy in the whole of Sri Lanka? Support people working on the ground who empower women and are committed to the principles of democracy, social justice and reconstruction, and aid the recovery of those who have been abused and injured. Comrades, in short, get involved, be aware, give where you can and share the message of support for Sri Lanka's future democracy and the removal of human rights violations wherever they currently occur, ensuring a representative political structure for the future of their nation. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution No 9?

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Lothian & Borders):

It is an honour to second this Motion as I have heard firsthand what the Sri Lankan civilians are facing right now. As I speak, women are being raped. As I speak, civilians are being murdered and as I speak, children are being forced to fight. This year's Women's School had a very inspirational speech from someone who was born and bred in Sri Lanka and still campaigning. She told us how women and children were at the sharp end of this

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war. After her contribution the women at the School asked her what could be done to help and everyone agreed an Emergency Resolution to this year's Conference would be the first priority.

Reports state that there are over 100,000 civilians trapped in the conflict zone with a further 2,800 killed and 7,000 injured since the beginning of the year, many of whom are women and children. Civilians still trapped in the North Eastern part of Sri Lanka require urgent humanitarian aid as reports emerge that food and medical supplies are running low. Amnesty International's Asia Pacific Director said "The human misery and desperation is rising and has now reached an alarming proportion". The GM has consistently warned against the bloodbath scenario as they have watched the steady increase in civilian deaths over the last two months and on Monday Gordon Byes, the UN spokesman in Sri Lanka said "The large scale killing of civilians over the weekend including the deaths of more than 100 children shows that the bloodbath has become a reality".

Food, water, shelter and medical care are in short supply and the International Committee of the Red Cross has described the situation as catastrophic. A government doctor said 378 civilians had been killed and more than 1,100 wounded on Sunday during intensive shelling of the combat zone in Sri Lanka's North Eastern coast. This is happening now and greater awareness is needed of the situation, and this Resolution addresses this. The view this Resolution takes is for all communities and members of them to have a democratic right to determine a peaceful and effective future. The human rights and freedoms of women must be reinstated, developed and supported along with medical treatment, education, freedom of movement and self-determination. This Resolution is not taking sides. It is about the fact that women and children are suffering. The FBU can raise awareness of this horrific situation. We can highlight the campaign in *Firefighter*, we can send out all member circulars, we can raise it within the TUC and Devolved Government, we can contact sister organisations with common goals and offer our support there. Can we do it? Yes, we can.

The FBU prides itself with the involvement it has in international issues so let us support this Resolution with all its intentions wholeheartedly and let us make a real effort in highlighting this, not just to our members, but right through the trade union movement.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Denise. The Executive Council are supporting Emergency Resolution 9. I take it there are no speakers against. Can I therefore put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

Therefore, we are now back on to the Annual Report. Paragraph C12, International. We move to Emergency Resolution 10 from the National Women's Committee, Afghanistan. NWC to move, please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 10 AFGHANISTAN

Conference commends the courage of the many Afghan women who, on the 15th April 2009, protested against the new Shia Family Law legislation which was passed by the Afghanistan Parliament and signed by President Karzai on the 31st March 2009. These women were spat at and stoned by counter protesters, the majority of whom were men.

The new law will deny Afghan Shia women the right to leave their homes without their husbands' permission, forbids women from working or accessing education without their husbands' express permission; explicitly permits marital rape; diminishes the right of mothers to be their children's guardians in the event of a divorce; and makes it impossible for women to inherit houses and land from their husbands – even though husbands may inherit immovable property from their wives. Conference believes that for a new law in 2009 to target women in this way is extraordinary, reprehensible and reminiscent of the decrees made by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the 1990s.

The Karzai Government has said that the Shia Family Law is being reviewed by the Justice Department and will not be implemented in its current form. However, Conference joins with the many governments and human rights groups around the world who are deeply concerned that the Afghanistan Government has drawn up legislation which fundamentally violates human and women's rights.

Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to urgently write to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to urge him to:

- 1. Continue to express grave concern at the highest level over this issue and;***
- 2. Use all available diplomatic means to press the Karzai Government to act in a way that is consistent with the UN Charter on Human Rights and the Afghan Constitution.***

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

It falls to me to complete the trio of Women's Committee Resolutions this afternoon, unfortunately, continuing along the same theme.

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On 31 March this year President Karzai of Afghanistan provoked international outrage by introducing legislation that placed restrictions on women reminiscent of the Taliban era. The restrictions included that a woman is banned from leaving the house without the permission of her husband and that a woman cannot work or receive education without her husband's permission. In this law, child marriage is endorsed. The law states that girls are legally able to marry once they menstruate. The law also says that a woman is bound to give a positive response to the sexual desires of her husband and it goes further stating that a husband has the right to have sexual intercourse with his wife every fourth night. Make no mistake, this law sanctions marital rape.

Supporters of the law have redefined rape to fit their narrow patriarchal view and people around the world have expressed their horror about what this means for Afghan women. It begs the question really, how has the war helped women in Afghanistan and by sending troops there and removing the Taliban regime from power, what exactly do we save people from? Conditions for women in Afghanistan now are worse according to the former head of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. He said, *"Never have women achieved equality by somebody coming in and giving it to them"*. You cannot bomb your way into equality.

Since the Taliban left Afghanistan, there has been progress and young girls go to school and women go to university. Access to healthcare for women has improved and women now work outside their homes. On paper at least women do have power. Because of quotas, a quarter of all members of parliament are female but that representation has not really translated into the power that we had hoped. A female member of parliament says women have little political influence. She says that women like her are interested in protecting modest gains such as the right to an education and to go to work rather than any western style liberation.

Some women and human rights activists also worry about the constant rumblings of possible reconciliation with the Taliban and other anti-government insurgents to end the conflict. They feel that their hard won yet modest freedoms could be washed away but this remains a deeply conservative society where loyalties to religion, family and tribe are dominant. Following the announcement of this legislation, the women of Afghanistan reacted and they took to the streets of Kabul, and 300 women protested outside a religious centre that was run by a cleric who helped to draft the law. The women marched in the streets with their veils pulled back and their faces uncovered. One protester was quoted *"We see this as a law that is limiting women's rights. We want it reformed and we want it*

overturned". Other protesters liken the legislation to that made by Taliban rules which should now have been an abiding but fading memory. The brave protesters were swamped by hundreds of Afghans, both men and women, in a counter demonstration. The protesters were stoned and spat at by supporters of the law and their banners were taken. The police intervened and as they separated the two sides, chants of *Death to the slaves of Christians* reverberated. The protesters were called whores and dogs.

These women are the reformers. They are the women who are trying to make a positive change and are taking on the corruption of the government, the law, the judiciary. They are piecing together the cultural information that becomes the data that can be used to change things, to halt the violation of human rights, women's rights. The women's movement now is small but it is growing and that process has brought the President to think about reviewing his position on the law. Obama accused them of selling out the basic human rights of women in return for the votes of hard line conservatives. In that election, as community leaders are relied on to deliver the votes of their people, the women are presumed to vote in accordance with their husbands and you can see the direct impact of women being oppressed in this way. None of us sitting here would be happy for someone else to have the power to cast our vote, would we?

There is already a suspiciously high ratio of women registered to vote in Afghanistan with almost three quarters of the voters being women in one of the provinces bordering Kabul. If you add into the mix that this is an area where women are often reluctant to travel, the likely answer is that the men are illegally collecting voter cards in the name of women. As the President is considered to be the strongest candidate, I don't have to tell you the likely outcome of that.

This President Karzai, when challenged about the new law by women activists, defended himself in a skilful and political speech saying he did not fully understand it at the time he signed it. Even if that is honest, it is disgraceful. The laws of Afghanistan will be in complete harmony with the constitution of Afghanistan and the human rights that we adhere to in our constitution. The constitution does guarantee equal rights for women.

The reason that we as the National Women's Committee brought this Resolution to your attention was to highlight the story of these brave oppressed women and ask you for your support, and you can support these women by voting for this Motion. We are asking that the EC write to David Miliband to urge him to express our concern and to try and bring around the restoration of these women's basic human rights. In a nutshell, that is it. Vote for some basic human rights for those women.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Helen. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution No 10?

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

We welcome the National Women's Committee's Resolution to Conference as our members were stunned to hear of the horrific law being passed and signed off by President Karzai. We were even more surprised to hear some of the arguments in support of this law. One MP, Usted Mohammed Aktari stated *Men and women have equal rights under Islam law but there are differences in the way men and women are created. Men are stronger and women are a little bit weaker. Even in the west you do not see any women working as firefighters.* If this is the view of one MP in Kabul, then we must send our message loud and clear, and the FBU Conference is the best place to do that. We must write to David Miliband and tell him that any law that oppresses women and children must be opposed by the UK Government with vigour. The international community must not be silent on this issue as our silence would suggest that we accept the deterioration of women's rights in Afghanistan.

The international community does have an influence on President Karzai as he has already started to alter his position, so let us not take our foot off the gas, let us speak out, let us get heard and support the human rights groups in Afghanistan. Conference, please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. The Executive Council are supporting. I am assuming there are no speakers against. I will therefore put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of Emergency Resolution No 10. Can I see those against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now going to move on to the agenda. We are on to Resolution 59 from Dumfries & Galloway on Cuba. Dumfries & Galloway to move, please.

Resolution 59 – CUBA

This Conference notes that the new administration in the US Government is advocating change.

Consequently, Conference agrees that the opportunity must be taken to demand that the US Government finally ends its illegal trade blockade of Cuba.

The US Government must recognise that Cuba has the right to exist as an independent nation, and that

the people of Cuba must be free to choose their own method of government, without duress or consequence from outside nations.

Conference therefore calls upon the UK and devolved governments to make the necessary representations to the US Government, demanding they immediately end their illegal blockade of Cuba.
DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Amendment

Insert new paragraph before the first paragraph:

"Conference congratulates Cuba on the 50th anniversary of the revolution, and celebrates Cuba's many achievements domestically and internationally. These achievements must be applauded even more in the context of the disgraceful commercial, economic and financial blockade of Cuba by the USA since 1962, and its many other efforts to undermine Cuba, including literally hundreds of attempts to assassinate President Fidel Castro."

DEVON & SOMERSET

BRO GERRY McLEOD (Dumfries & Galloway):

This is my first time. *Applause*. I have been asked by Comrade President to remind you all that this evening at quarter past five there is a Havana Club Rhumba Session, 50 years of the Cuban Revolution, and 10 years of Chavez in Venezuela, and he is expecting a full attendance.

In this, the 50th anniversary of the Cuban blockade, there are changes afoot that we never thought we would see in our lifetime. The US President, Barack Obama has recently approved measures that will allow Cubans in the US to travel more freely to Cuba and send more money to relatives. The speculation is that the latest steps appear to be the start of the possibility of an end to the 50 year old blockade.

Clearly, we should be thankful for these developments, yet at the same time we need to recognise that there is much work still to be done. Comrades, this is a time to demand more from the US Government. It is now the time to demand an end to the inhumane and illegal US blockade. The recent policy changes are limited. These measures were put in place by the aggressive policies of the Bush administration in 2004. The removal takes us back to the previous position. However, the new Obama administration appears to be proactive in paving the way forward for further positive developments. A delegation from the US Congress visited Havana recently to meet Cuban President Raul Castro and Former President Fidel Castro in a clear sign that there is scope for improved US Cuba relations. Congressman Cleaver said *"We have deluded ourselves into believing that if we*

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isolated Cuba the Castro regime would collapse and the US version of democracy would be established. It has turned out that we are the isolated country because every other nation in the Western hemisphere has diplomatic relations with Cuba" Obama attended a summit of Latin America heads of state where he stated, *"I do believe we can move US Cuban relations in a new direction"* and went on to say, *"I am prepared to have my administration engage with Cuban Government on a wide range of issues"*. From outside the summit where Cuba is still excluded Raul Castro made it clear that Cuba were willing to enter discussions with the US.

Cuba has survived 50 years of interference and aggression. Cuba has had to defend itself against invasion, blockade and numerous attacks of terrorism against its people over the years. The Cuban people should have the right to set their own terms of engagement with countries that have previously joined this aggressive policy. It is our duty as trade unionists to respect the right of the Cuban people to determine their own policy and to decide their own way forward. When Karl Marx said *Workers of the world unite*, he was not having a laugh. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 59? Could Devon & Somerset get ready to move their amendment please by coming to the front.

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

I speak in support of Resolution 59 with the Amendment. The necessary representations referred to in the Resolution must specifically urge the removal of the numerous restrictions found within the US Government's Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Act of 1996. They are Acts which claim a desire to see a transition towards democracy and also to bring about economic growth in a manner that is helpful to the Cuban people, a little, I suppose, like Chavez's Venezuela who, by the way, are continually condemned by the US Government who are still actively trading with Venezuela.

Everyone in this hall knows that the US Government have as much interest in the Cuban people as they do in the people of Palestine, Iraq, Zimbabwe, etc. The truth remains that unless US executives are able to return to their millionaire playgrounds, such legislation will not only penalise those participating in any commercial activity with Cuba but also to prevent the Cuban people from recognising the full potential of a socialist society in their country. The Revolution needs to be allowed to unfold properly. Support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. Devon & Somerset to move their Amendment, please.

BRO TREVOR FRENCH (Devon & Somerset):

I had the pleasure of going to Cuba last year with the delegation and spent the first week with the delegation and the second week with a family, and we really got to see what the embargo meant to the people in Cuba. The easiest way and the most practical way for us to fight that and help the Cuban people is to go there on holiday. It is as simple as that. It really helps and is their biggest income now. I know Mick does it by going about five times a year. So if you have not booked your holiday this year, think about Cuba. It is cheap. You will have a great time. But the most important thing is you will help the Cuban people on the ground. I move, and support Resolution 59.

THE PRESIDENT:

As Trevor says, I have done my bit to break the embargo. Is there a seconder to the Amendment from Devon & Somerset? *Formally seconded* The Executive Council are supporting. I am assuming there are no speakers against, in which case I will put it to the vote. I am putting the Amendment from Devon & Somerset to the vote first. The Executive Council are supporting both the Amendment and the Resolution with or without the Amendment. Can I see those in favour of the Amendment. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

Can I see on the Resolution 59 from Dumfries & Galloway as amended by Devon & Somerset all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is carried unanimously as well.

We are now moving on to Composite A being moved by Devon & Somerset, supported by Greater Manchester and Tayside who have both withdrawn Resolutions and have asked to speak in the debate. So can I please have Devon & Somerset to move Composite A.

COMPOSITE A: PALESTINE SOLIDARITY (Compositing Resolutions 60, 61, 62 and Emergency Resolution18)

Despite international condemnation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the continued disregard of UN resolutions and rulings from the International Court of Justice, which includes the building of more settlements within the 1967 Borders, Conference believes that Israel has consistently failed to uphold its duties under international law.

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Conference supports the statement, made in December 2008 by Luisa Morgantini, Vice President of the European Parliament, when supporting the EU Parliament suspension of the vote on the upgrade of EU/Israeli relations, that "It's time for the Israeli Government to stop considering itself above the law and start respecting it, beginning by freezing all settlement – building activities and ending its siege on the Gaza Strip."

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to support and promote throughout the Trade Union and Labour Movement a campaign to boycott Israeli Goods, disinvest from Israeli institutions and for sanctions to be taken against Israel, similar to those sanctions imposed by the international movement against apartheid in South Africa, until such time as Israel ends its occupation of Palestine and its oppression of the Palestinian people.

DEVON & SOMERSET

Supported by:

GREATER MANCHESTER

TAYSIDE

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

I just want to say that although everybody has had a long day and we have got lots to get through, this is a potentially historic discussion for the FBU and we should not underestimate the importance of this particular issue on what is a very contentious matter. Also, I want to say in starting the discussion that I pay tribute to all of those in the FBU over the years that has meant our Union has played a very important role in advancing the cause of Palestinian Justice, in particular Ken Cameron who, when it was not at all sexy was involved in putting forward the need for justice in Palestine. It is something that we should be rightly proud of and something we should recognise in addressing this debate.

I was one of the lucky people who went on the delegation to the occupied territories of the West Bank, Jerusalem and to parts of Israel last year and saw for myself the terrible injustice that is ongoing. The Pope has been there just recently and has said there is a stalemate there. It is not a stalemate. It is ongoing ethnic cleansing, annexation, it is theft by anyone else's terms: oppression on a scale that you can barely imagine, and indignity on a day by day basis. These are all things that are of vital importance to us. Our internationalism is very simple. An injury to one is an injury to all. It is not an attitude that stops at the Fire Station doors even though we fight injustice in our work place too.

Those 60 plus years of ethnic cleansing, land theft, occupation, has been tolerated and even actively encouraged and supported by most Governments, and

particularly Western Governments despite Israel breaching more international law than you could really shake a stick at, and the reason is dead simple. Israel is seen as a US proxy in the Middle East. It plays a crucial role in destabilising the region keeping control of the access to that most important of all resource these days, oil. Our Government does nothing to challenge that and nothing to advance an independent policy on Palestine and Israel simply because it is not going to go against the US. Even though that imperial policy that is there has been a disaster for the Middle East, it has been a disaster for the world, it has been a disaster in terms of preventing the development of secular political forces in the Middle East. It has been a disaster in terms of promoting hatred of the west amongst Arab peoples and justifiably so. It seems a litmus test amongst all of the Arab peoples in the Middle East as to how Western Governments have a completely hypocritical attitude towards the application of international law.

For all those reasons and for the fact that governments do so little, it is crucial that we have to start saying what will the people do? When governments don't act, the people have to. We have already got the template for this. This is what happened with South Africa. Governments were actively supporting apartheid South Africa. Britain's role in it again as in Palestine and Israel has been despicable. So it was the role of the Civic Society in advancing the call for a boycott of South Africa that really lifted the lid on what was going on and enabled the change and the process of change to develop. That is where we are today with Palestine. That is why it is so important that we start to say somebody has got to move to do this. Other unions have already done it in this country. We would not be the first, but if we are prepared to address that we have to say two things. First of all, you cannot underestimate the significance psychologically, if nothing else, to the Palestinians, who struggle on a day by day basis to maintain their dignity and their livelihoods against what are really terrible odds. That is really crucial and it actually will support those over 180 Palestinian Civic Society Organisations of their own that are calling for boycott and have been doing now for quite a few years.

Secondly, it will send a message to Israel. It is not a big one on its own if the FBU says something, but it will get that ball rolling that Israel cannot consider itself above the law and that any criticism of what Israel does is somehow anti-Semitic. It is a very powerful argument that has been used and everybody understands why with the oppression that Jews have faced over many centuries and in particular as a result of the holocaust. But nevertheless, Israel is not above the law. It should abide by international law and therefore it should do what it needs to do.

Conference please bear in mind that there will be a reaction to us if we vote through this proposal. Don't

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expect that we can just pass this policy and nothing will happen. We will get criticised. There will be a campaign against the Fire Brigades Union by the Zionist organisations, that is, those people that believe that the land of Palestine is exclusively there for Jews and that somehow we are mounting some sort of pogrom against them. That is nonsense but we have to be prepared for the criticism. On the other hand, it is crucial at this time for everybody's benefit, not only for Palestinians but actually for us as well to get peace, security and justice in that part of the world. Thanks very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Greater Manchester to second.

BRO ALAN ANDERSON (Greater Manchester):

I second Composite A. Before I tell you what this Resolution is about and before I ask for your support, let me tell you what it is not about. It is not about anti-Semitism. How could it be? Most of the people in the Middle East including Hebrews and Arabs are Semitic peoples. Nor is it motivated by anti-Jewish hostility. Many groups supporting this campaign are themselves Jewish. This Resolution is about opposition to apartheid, apartheid as demonstrated by the building of a barrier which separates communities from communities, farmers from their land, workers from their work places and even separates families from each other. It is apartheid as demonstrated by the building of a tramway in Jerusalem for settlers use only. It is apartheid demonstrated by the building of roads throughout the West Bank for settler use only as determined by the colour of vehicle number plates.

All of this and more was reported by officials sent by us to Palestine in June last year. All of this and more was reported by other delegations from the UK and elsewhere including one from the STUC in March this year. What they also report is the condition of the Palestinian economy. To be blunt, there is not one. Believe you me, Conference a boycott would not impact on Palestine. Delegations also report on progressive and anti-corruption forces within Israel. These are very thin on the ground and do not include the general federation of labour in Israel which was so clearly and openly in support of the slaughter we all saw in Gaza. This Union, and most importantly, the members of this Union, gave strong support for the boycott of the Apartheid State of South Africa. Eventually, what seemed to be, the whole world joined together in that boycott which was instrumental in bringing down the racist government of the national party.

Be under no illusion, the State of Israel is a racist state. It is racist in its original conception and inception. Zionism is first and foremost a political philosophy of statehood and separation. It is one reason many Jews

do subscribe to it. In fact, one of my local MPs Gerald Kaufman, himself raised as a Zionist, went further when he said in a speech to the House of Commons in January that excuses given by the Israeli Army for the killing of Palestinians in Gaza were the replies of Nazis.

This Resolution calls for supportive action, action not just by the Executive Council but action by each and every one of our members. A boycott of all Israeli goods until such times as the illegal occupation of Palestine is at an end. Likewise a campaign calling for sanctions on Israeli institutions. I urge you to support this Resolution unanimously but more importantly the action it calls for.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. Tayside to speak, please.

BRO JIM MALONE (Tayside):

Comrades, the links and contacts between Tayside and Palestine have been strengthened in the last 12 months. Councillors from Dundee's twin city for 30 years visited the FBU and were overwhelmed by the generosity shown to them by Tayside FBU members and solidarity, with promises to send fire kit to our fellow firefighters in the occupied territories. It is easier said than done. The Israeli election interrupted our plans. It may be the first time in history that a political party sought re-election by launching an attack on a people, a people already under siege in Gaza. It was an election campaign by Kadima to show they were tougher than Likud. They wanted to be the toughest persecutors of the Palestinian people.

Last year I called the Israeli state a fascist state and no doubt the friends of Israel in the hall took note of my name, but if they did not, it is Jim Malone. I repeat, the Israeli state pursues a policy akin to the Nazi persecution of the Jewish people in their treatment of the Palestinian people. This comment is supported by many independent bodies and individuals. Professor Richard Fock, the UN Reporter for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, compared the current horrors being inflicted on the Palestinian people with the treatment of the Jews in Nazi Germany. He states that the Israeli siege has a deliberate intention on the part of Israel to subject an entire human community to life endangering conditions of the utmost cruelty, a holocaust in the making. Comrades, the STUC passed a resolution this year in support of a campaign to support boycotts, disinvestment and sanctions against the apartheid regime that is Israel. Over 170 organisations including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions support this campaign. Supporting this Resolution puts the FBU at the forefront of this campaign, until Israel meets its obligations to recognise the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, fully complies with international law and accepts the state borders of 1967.

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Going back to the fire kit. We got the kit through but it went to Gaza not Nablus. Due to the destruction of the Fire Stations and fire engines in Gaza our comrades in Nablus decided the greater need was in Gaza. Can the FBU have put on record our thanks to Zazir Haida who drove to Gaza in a police convoy to deliver our kit and please also ask delegates to visit the Viva Palestina website for a full report on that successful convoy. Please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jim. Are there any speakers against Composite Resolution A. No. I am going to ask the General Secretary to speak.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, I think the points have been made but some do need re-emphasising. The facts are that for a generation or more the Fire Brigades Union has been at the forefront in the British Trade Union Movement of the fight for justice for the Palestinian people. Many of us here will recall notable visits and delegations and debates here at Conference over the years.

Most recently the attack on Gaza will have horrified and disgusted people in this country, and it has horrified and disgusted decent people throughout the world. I think one source of hope for me during that period was to see the large number of young people who turned out on the streets of Britain and around the world in protest at what was going on, the slaughter in Gaza, young people, many of whom had never been involved in politics or demonstrations before.

I think Dave Chappell was right to draw attention to the significant shift in the policy before you today. The call for boycott, disinvestment and sanctions is a significant development for this Union and it is going to be controversial. The Executive Council has considered this and the Executive Council supports the Composite but we do urge Conference to go into it with our eyes open. There will be a reaction, there will be controversy, there will be criticism. We are sure that Conference is up to dealing with that but nevertheless take note of the words that Dave said and what the Executive Council are saying. Support the Composite comrades.

THE PRESIDENT:

There were no speakers against. There will be no right of reply. The Executive Council are supporting Composite A. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions. That was *carried*.

We are now on to the Annual Report Paragraph C13. Parliamentary Group.

SIS HELEN YOUNG (CSNC):

This is my first time speaking at Conference. *Applause*. The CSNC would like to thank the Parliamentary Group for all their efforts in keeping the Control Campaign at the forefront in the political campaign. We would also like to express our thanks to Duncan Milligan for his co-ordination with this group and the timely Parliamentary questions. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

We are now on to Resolution 65 from Durham on Labour Party Disaffiliation. Can Durham come to the rostrum to move, please.

Resolution 65 – LABOUR PARTY DISAFFILIATION

This conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a study into the effects that disaffiliation from the Labour party has had on the FBU. This study to consider how disaffiliation has affected the ability of the FBU to engage and influence local and national Labour party politicians, and the effect disaffiliation has had on the link between the FBU and the wider working class Labour movement. This study to be completed and a report placed before Annual Conference 2010.

DURHAM

BRO DICK MORTON (Durham):

I move Resolution 65. The decision made by Conference to disaffiliate from the Labour Party reflected the mood, the anger and the feeling of the membership following the 2002/03 pay dispute. Our members felt it was the right decision to make at that time, but this decision has had a significant impact on our ability to engage fully and our influence on local Labour councillors, and Labour Party members. Disaffiliation has weakened our influence at local and national level and has resulted in a less effective representation for our members. Labour politicians both local and national that are sympathetic towards the aims and interest of the Fire Brigades Union have expressed their disappointment at our decision to disaffiliate and, as a result, they are less effective at influencing any policy that might have an impact on our members.

Conference, we are asking for a comprehensive study that would identify and quantify the effects of disaffiliation and any report produced would provide a balanced viewpoint for the membership to reconsider the benefits or otherwise of any future decision to re-affiliate. I move.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 65?

A DELEGATE:

This old baby again. I am not going to do my normal long drawn out stuff. I just think that we have had time to reflect. I do support the Resolution and I do think it is time we know the facts and figures of what is happening out there with the Labour Party. We certainly know at local level that it has caused some disgruntlement amongst people that we associate ourselves with. If that is the picture nationally, then all the Resolution says is let us have a look at it in a study, let us have the feedback, and if we need to change our mind and move forward in a different direction, then we need to do that otherwise the disaffiliation will remain. So I do not see that there is a problem with the Resolution in supporting that. It is not saying that you jump straight back into bed with Gordon Brown (it is a bad thought anyway!), but with the study it gives us that focus where we can say one way or the other whether we did the right thing or not, so I ask you to support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I see, please, those who wish to speak against 65? Can I see those who wish to speak in favour of 65. I am going to take one more in favour, the brother there in the very fine T-shirt. Can those who wish to speak against put their hands up again, please. I am going to take Gordon from Central, delegate from B&EMM and then we will hear from the Executive Council and we will move to the vote.

BRO DAVE HOWE (Cleveland):

I speak in support of Resolution 65. This will not take long either. Basically, Cleveland agrees with what Dick said and we would welcome a study into the effects, positive or negative, of disaffiliation from the Labour Party. As Matt said earlier today in a debate, this is just a study. We are not making a decision today. That would come after we see the results. It cannot do any harm. Let us find out once and for all whether disaffiliation has made any difference to our influence as a trade union. Please support.

BRO GORDON McQUADE (Central):

We are opposing Resolution 65. This one keeps coming back. We know what happened in 2002/2003. We know Tony McGuire gave the speech and he gave all the reasons, that we were fascists, we were friends of Saddam and we were all angry. Time has moved on. Not one member has approached me in Central Scotland

and said "I want to re-affiliate to the Labour Party." Not one. Now, do you think re-affiliating gets you influence? We have heard about Trident and the bank bail outs. There is no chance that you are going to have any influence on that decision. None whatsoever. If you hand money over to the Labour Party someone might use it to repay their expenses. That is what will happen.

The big unions give millions and they have no influence. You hear that all the time from them. So we are going to have no influence on what the Labour Party do now. What we do in Scotland is, locally I meet with Labour politicians. They are very good friends of mine. A Labour MP, Michael Connarty, is one of our FBU Parliamentary Group, got a political donation from us at the last election. So did other Labour MPs. So did SNP. So did the Socialist Party. People who are prepared to help the FBU deserve our support. There are many in the Labour Party who do not want to help us but we would be giving them our money. That is what would happen if you re-affiliate to Labour.

Finally, I would say let us stop having studies and working groups looking into it. Let us send a strong message to our membership. Can you picture the *Firefighter* magazine dropping through the door: *FBU reaffiliates to the Labour Party*. They will leave in their droves. That is what will happen. So send a strong message. Let us not take a massive step backwards five years. Let us not hand our members' money over to the Labour Party for them to do what they want. Oppose this Resolution.

BRO DAVE PAZIR (B&EMM):

I oppose this Resolution. Although we understand and support the sentiments and the intent of the Resolution, we are asking, do we actually need a study to know the effects of disaffiliation from the Labour Party. It will be time consuming, costly and if we find as a result of that disaffiliation that we have been affected and the ability to engage with and influence national Labour politicians has been affected, what leverage does that actually give us as a Union? How much more bargaining power would that give us? I would like to ask Matt if he thinks affiliation would have actually made any difference to the way the Labour Party behaved regarding the pensions' rights and injured firefighters.

To me it seems clear. Whether or not we are affiliated, if they want to take away our rights or cut the Fire Service to the point where our own mates are being killed and placed in a more dangerous working environment, simply because it costs less, they will do so and fight this Union all the way to the High Court and House of Lords, and they will twist and turn all the way. They will introduce legislation that is far removed from any socialist principles so why would we want to be affiliated to such a Party?

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Why would we want to give our money to a Party that fights us all the way before it is absolutely told by a Judge that what they are doing is wrong? The policies are a bold continuation of Thatcherite policy, and our recent victory shows that we don't actually have to be in it to win it. We oppose. Thank you.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council are opposing the Resolution. We are opposing it for a number of reasons. One is we believe that Conference has made its views clear not just in 2005 but also reaffirmed subsequently. More importantly, I think Dave touched on this and that is the idea of having a study. We see the idea in this case of having a study as completely and utterly unnecessary. I suspect what would happen if we did have a study is we would go to Brigade Committees and ask if it had any effect. Those who supported re-affiliation would say yes it has been terrible and those who oppose re-affiliation would say no, so we would end up back in exactly the same position which is that it is down to Conference to decide. This is where we have our debates. You bring forward your arguments. People who support the position of disaffiliation will maintain that position, and people who have changed their position or maintain that we should never have disaffiliated have got every right to argue. I believe we need to keep that dialogue open. We keep a very healthy dialogue with our Parliamentary Group who all, by the way, are Labour MPs and that needs to be remembered. All the members of our Parliamentary Group are Labour Members of Parliament.

In terms of the impact of disaffiliation, I would say in terms of the Parliamentary work at least our Parliamentary work today is stronger than it ever has been. The Group is well organised. The Group is doing fantastic work for us. The Group understands some of the internal debates in here and the decision to disaffiliate. They don't necessarily agree with it. John McDonnell has spoken here and spoken to many of you and believes this Union should be affiliated.

Finally, I think Dave asked the question about pension rights. Regardless of anyone's personal view, it does in terms of our members' perception, highlights very clearly why there was in 2004 an unstoppable force leading to that decision to disaffiliate. That is the Government that has treated our members in that way. That is the Government that has just told us that the Regionalisation of Fire Controls is one of their top 20 priorities despite all our years of lobbying, despite the fact that we have exposed it financially, technically, operationally and so on as a complete and utter farce, and a complete and utter disgrace, that Government is proceeding with that Regionalisation plan despite any logic. I just don't understand how we would explain that

to our members. The Executive Council are opposing the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Matt. Are Durham seeking to exercise their right to reply? A point of order. Second of the day.

A DELEGATE:

It is wrong. We have just allowed three oppositions to a Resolution without hearing any support from the floor.

THE PRESIDENT:

If I can point out to the delegate and to Conference, we had the mover, the seconder and one speaker in favour. We had two speakers against and the General Secretary against. I think that is a fairly balanced debate. In fact, in terms of the level of support, the level of supporting speakers in the debate, then we will see in the vote when it is taken. I did my best to try to ensure that it was balanced. Are Durham seeking to exercise the right to reply?

BRO DICK MORTON:

Just to make the point really, when we disaffiliated we did not disaffiliate from the Government; we disaffiliated from the Party. The matter of fact is the Government of the day, this Labour Government has been acting against the best interests of solid Labour Party members and activists for as long as I can remember, and the only way we will change it is by becoming more active in our constituency parties, affiliate and get rid of the MPs that we don't like. It is not about the Government; it is about being more involved in local party politics.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will therefore put Resolution 65 from Durham, Labour Party Disaffiliation, to the vote. The Executive Council are opposing. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *defeated*.

We have now reached 5 o'clock. Before we adjourn this afternoon's Session of Conference, may I remind delegates that there is the joint Cuba Solidarity and Venezuela Information Centre fringe meeting with free rum cocktails which I am sure will revive you. It is in the lounge up there. There is a bucket collection for the Justice for Colombia Campaign and the Colombian Firefighters Union. I urge you to give generously. Lastly, there is the Executive Council function here tonight and I look forward to seeing you all there. Thank you. Conference adjourned.

Conference Adjourned

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MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

If everybody can now please take their seats and finish their conversations, we will commence Friday morning's business. Good morning everybody. I call Steve Shelton, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, to give a Standing Orders Committee report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Good morning Conference. The Standing Orders Committee must report to Conference that there is a lot of business outstanding, as I am sure you know and suggest a change to speakers' times. Mover, 5 minutes; Seconder, 3 minutes; Subsequent Speakers, 2 minutes.

There have been some changes to delegates. Merseyside, delete Mark Dunne, insert Gary Bennett; Gloucestershire, delete Scott Turner, insert John Drake.

Can you now turn to your Programme of Business, please. Page 4. Resolution 25 has been withdrawn. Page 6. Emergency Resolution No 4, Fire Control Pay and Conditions, Greater Manchester, has been withdrawn with the right to speak to Emergency Resolution No 7. That concludes the report, President, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed*

Can I please ask that an exception is made for those speakers' time limits for the Emergency Resolution 7 on the Control Campaign. It is one of the major debates we are having at this Conference this week and I think we want a proper opportunity, so I would urge that we have the original speakers' times for the mover and seconder of that Emergency Resolution. Can that be agreed? *Agreed*

Thank you very much. Can we ask Conference to turn to Page 6 of their Programme of Business. We are on Paragraph G8, CRAG. Before I call Emergency Resolution 7, Greater Manchester have withdrawn Emergency Resolution 4 but have asked for the right to speak. Do they wish to exercise that now or after the Emergency Resolution 7 has been moved? After it has been moved? OK. I will therefore ask the General Secretary to move Emergency Resolution 7.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 7 CONTROL CAMPAIGN

Conference notes with alarm the comments by Cllr Derek Davis, chair of Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority in his press statement of 8th April 2009 in which he blew the whistle on the real agenda of the FiReControl Project for slashing terms and conditions and trade union recognition for emergency fire control staff.

This Conference reiterates its total opposition to the proposals to regionalise Emergency Fire Controls across England. The Fire Brigades Union has been proved correct at every stage of this disastrous project. Regionalisation will increase costs and will reduce the efficiency of our service. Despite these facts, the government in England continues to ignore the professional views of the practitioners in the Fire and Rescue Service and seeks to impose this unwanted project on local Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Conference agrees to continue our campaign of opposition and again calls on government to achieve our key objective to scrap this unnecessary and wasteful project. We call on others within the service to join us in these efforts.

In the event of the Westminster government forcing the project through unabated then Conference remains committed to securing the following:

- *Guarantees of no compulsory redundancy for any FBU member, to be achieved primarily through continued employment performing appropriate duties within their role or redeployment, supplemented by the use of voluntary severance or early retirement if this is necessary.*
- *NJC Grey Book conditions as a minimum including FBU recognition for all staff required to work in the proposed Regional Control Centres.*

The Executive Council and all Committees and officials of the Fire Brigades Union have been working tirelessly to achieve that objective and those aims. However, despite those efforts; we have seen a failure by our fire and rescue authorities, a failure by our national employers on the NJC and a failure by the boards of the LACCs to engage effectively in discussions to address the concerns of their employees.

If both of those objectives can not be achieved in relation to any LACC, the union should then demand that affected Fire and Rescue Authorities do not transfer members' employment to the LACC

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because of the impact on jobs, terms and conditions and the recognition of the FBU.

As a consequence, Conference has no alternative but to acknowledge that there is no will on the part of the employers to protect our members (their workforce). In view of that fact, Conference instructs the Executive Council to immediately implement the following course of action:

- 1. That the following demands are made of LACCs:***
 - ***No compulsory redundancies***
 - ***Recognition of the FBU***
 - ***Grey Book conditions for new and existing staff (unless changes agreed by FBU)***
- 2. In the event that any LACC fails to deliver each of the above demands, a separate demand will be made of each Fire and Rescue Authority in the region to be covered by that LACC that it will refuse to transfer staff to the new employer.***
- 3. In the event that any Fire and Rescue Authority refuses to give such a commitment by the date indicated by the FBU – then the Executive Council will take all necessary steps to initiate a ballot for strike action based on that refusal.***
- 4. That the Executive Council should initiate a membership awareness campaign around this strategy. This should include local events and a major national rally at an appropriate time.***

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Good morning, Conference. I'm going to take my tie off.

Conference recently had the great honour of being able to speak to events organised by the National Union of Mineworkers to commemorate the 1984/85 Miners' Strike. You will see we have included some coverage of that in *Firefighter* magazine this month, including some interviews and comments from members of ours who were also active in the strike at the time. Ken Cameron also attended and was particularly welcomed as an old friend of the NUM.

The fact is there are some marked similarities between our two unions. Both are based in industries where people face hazards and dangers. In both industries people face common risks and have to rely on each other, sometimes for their very lives. That close knit team work gives a certain character to both of our unions. Team work is central to our work in the Fire and Rescue Service. Chief Fire Officers will tell you that as well. You will learn it at training school.

For us that team is very broad. It includes people who work at Fire Stations, in Training Departments, in Fire Safety Departments and, yes, in Emergency Fire Controls. Our Emergency Fire Controls are at the heart and the start of the Fire and Rescue Service. For us, our Emergency Fire Control Staff are an essential part of that team. They are also central to the intervention role which we feel is being gradually undermined by the current approach we see from civil servants, particularly in the English Communities and Local Government Departments. But for some people Emergency Fire Control Staff are clearly not part of the team at all. This was highlighted recently in what might at first seem quite a trivial matter. The English Fire Minister Sadiq Khan was asked a question in Parliament about under Regionalisation will Emergency Fire Control Staff in the new Regional Controls receive the Long Service and Good Conduct medal. Sadiq Khan responded in this way. He said no, they won't because they will not be part of the Fire and Rescue Service. That is about a medal. In some ways that is trivial but it tells us something very clear about the agenda of this Government. It tells us something very clear about the agenda of the Regionalisation Project, and it tells us something about their attitude to our members working in those Emergency Control Rooms.

For us in this Conference and for our members out on the ground, they are very much part of the team. In this next phase of the campaign we intend to take that message to every Fire and Rescue Authority. We intend to take that message to every single MP, to every local community, to every local council because we believe Emergency Fire Control Staff are part of the team within the Fire and Rescue Service and we will be asking our communities who they agree with: whether they agree with us or the Minister and his gang of overpaid consultants. I know the answer already. Of course, it is not just about medals. That is just symbolic. The Regionalisation plan is about taking our Control Staff out of the team for good. It is about treating them simply as call centre staff. It is about slashing their jobs and it is about getting rid of their Union, the Fire Brigades Union. All of this has been confirmed very clearly, as if we needed it, by the actions of Councillor Derek Davies of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service who in a press release recently has exposed very clearly what Fire and Rescue Authority Chairs who sit on local authority control companies are saying behind closed doors. He made it very clear that these plans are being used, these plans are being drawn up to attack pay and conditions of Control Staff members once Regionalisation goes ahead. Derek Davies, I think, deserves the thanks and applause of FBU members and the thanks of this Conference, because he has behaved honourably, exceptionally honourably, compared with some of the other creatures we are having to deal with and we congratulate him for doing that.

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So their agenda is to slash jobs, terms and conditions, and our challenge is to fight them and resist them and to defeat them. And the key to that is the team work within the Fire and Rescue Service: that we are opposed to fragmentation that we are seeing in this Service under the so-called modernisation agenda. Emergency Fire Control Staff are essential to what we do and part of the team work within the Fire and Rescue Service.

Some time ago we circulated on our email system a link to an article in the *Guardian Magazine* on a Saturday and it was about a fire in Lancashire. Linked to that and I hope people took the time to listen to it, was an audio file of the tape of the call that was received in the Fire Control. What was happening was a young woman and her child were caught in a fire in their house. Our member took the call and talked to that member of the public throughout that incident and kept her calm, and kept her sense while the fire engines turned up, and she was rescued. I found it an extremely powerful and moving tape to listen to. What was clear, what we heard in that little incident – and it is not the only one, of course, but it is the only one I have seen in the newspapers – was heroism. We hear about firefighters who jump in rivers, firefighters who burst into burning buildings and so on. I think that is heroism as well. That is about protecting someone through an emergency and dangerous incident, to keep them safe while the other part of the team arrives to take them out of danger and to keep them safe and to save those lives. It is just one story but it tells us a huge amount. Two people in that case alive and safe today because of the work of one of our Control members. *Applause*

How dare anybody say, how dare anybody suggest that the role of that Control member was not equal to anybody else working in the Fire and Rescue Service in Lancashire on that day. It is an absolute disgrace if they try to do it. It is an absolute disgrace what they are doing too in terms of the threats that are being made. How dare they do that. How dare they suggest it.

That is the essence of the story we have got to tell over coming months. That is the essence of the story you have got to get out there and tell to the public and tell to our members: that they are part of the team and we are not going to allow that team to be broken up. It is part of the team in term of saving lives and as far as we are concerned also therefore part of the team in terms of pay, conditions of work, terms and conditions of service. The challenge before all of us is how we get that message across. The challenge before all of us is how we get that message across to our members and convince them that is worth fighting for; and how we get that message across to the public and convince them that if it comes to a fight, we are right. That is the challenge before every one of us because I think that

argument is unanswerable and if we can get that message across we can beat them on this issue.

So the campaign is about building the unity of our members to protect one section of that membership, but it is also about winning the public so that we do have their backing, and the Resolution outlines our strategy because it looks like we are coming towards an industrial battle. The strategy in terms of how that battle might unfold is outlined in the Emergency Resolution before you. We will go to the local authority controlled companies and demand that they give three simple commitments: no compulsory redundancies; recognition of the trade union the Fire Brigades Union; and Grey Book terms and conditions. That is not a huge demand. It is already in place and all we are asking them to do is to continue with what we already have. We are not asking for anything more. We are only asking for what we have already got. If they don't give that commitment then we will demand in the Fire and Rescue Authorities that our members are not transferred. We will demand in each and every Fire and Rescue Authority affected by Regionalisation that our Emergency Fire Control Staff should not be transferred to the new employer because security of employment under that new employer is clearly less than it will be under their current employer. The dispute therefore will be with the existing employer.

Why are we doing it that way? We are doing it that way because we need the maximum unity. We need the involvement of every single one of our members. This is not a Control members' fight. This is an FBU fight. It is not just of Control members. The EC believes that this is the best way to move forward towards possible industrial action should that become necessary and of course nobody wants to see industrial action in the Fire and Rescue Service, but nor are we willing to stand by and allow the terms and conditions of Control members to be torn up by these people up and down the country. Some people may be asking are we ready for a fight on that scale as yet? What I can say is the Executive Council will not take those steps until we are ready, but the challenge before you today comrades is to make sure we go from this Conference and we do the work on the Branches and we convince the members so that we will be ready for that fight when it comes. We will be campaigning around the idea, part of the team, that we are not seeing our team broken up, and we will take that into every Branch and then we will take it to the public.

You will see from the Resolution we also intend to hold a major rally and lobby of Parliament and we are in the final negotiations about that. It looks like that will be at the end of October. That event needs to be bigger than our very successful lobby of Parliament last year. It will be about Regionalisation. But it will also be about the other themes we have been campaigning around.

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Because what is happening to Controls is part of the wider agenda of what is happening to our Fire Service. It is about the fragmentation of our Fire Service. If they can say that the people who deal with emergency fire calls are not part of the Fire Service, what the hell sort of Fire Service do they intend to have for the future. It is absolute and utter nonsense. You know it, we know it and we are going to have to convince the public of it.

So it is about demanding standards in our Service instead of fragmentation. It is about demanding investment instead of cuts. So there will be something in that event. It all relates to every single one of us. We ask the Regions who are not directly involved in the Regionalisation threat to give a pledge here today that you are going to go back and take that same message, and you will tailor that for your own audience, but everyone has got a stake in this. Everyone has got a stake about avoiding and challenging the fragmentation of the Fire and Rescue Service. Everyone in this Union has got a stake in protecting the jobs and terms and conditions of Emergency Fire Control Staff in England who are under threat. It is a huge challenge and we need a huge show of unity and a huge show of strength. The general election will be approaching and we need to put a marker down to every single MP that we demand something off them. They will be coming after us asking for people to vote for them. Firefighters and their families need to be saying, fine, you tell us what you are going to do on this because we want something back.

We will be taking it to all the employers and we will be saying to the employers if you insist on this agenda then we will have a fight with you because it is not a fight we can afford to avoid. Those employers, those Chief Fire Officers have failed to stand up to the Government on this issue. We have exposed this Project for what it is. We have exposed the financial mess that it is in. We have exposed the operational mess that it is in. Everybody knows that. Everybody knows the real truth about the Fire Control Project but nobody else is willing to say it apart from ourselves and a few honourable exceptions among politicians in the Fire Service. Those people have failed to stand up to the Government. It is supposed to be a Service that is under local democratic control, but if you look at LACC there is no democratic control over an LACC whatsoever. It is effectively a private company and is the first step towards the privatisation of our Controls; the first step towards the privatisation of our Service; and we are not having it.

Our challenge therefore is to show very clearly what firefighters think, all of us in the Fire and Rescue team, what we think of their project, what we think of the threat to that section of our members. We also intend to show them who is it who speaks on Fire and Rescue Service issues for the public because it is not Chief Officers and it

is not, unfortunately, the Fire Authority politicians; it is the Fire Brigades Union, the only people who consistently defend our profession, the only people who consistently defend our Service because when these things are explained to the public the public will back us. So we need to build, comrades, a mighty campaign, a powerful campaign that will send such a message to our employers that they have to sit up and take notice and they have to start negotiating properly. If they do not, we are going to give them the fight of their lives. I move the Emergency Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Control Staff National Committee to second.

SIS SHARON THORNDYKE (CSNC):

I second the EC Emergency Resolution on the Control Campaign, and Matt you stole half my speech.

Conference, last year we saw a passionate debate on the Regionalisation of Controls. We reaffirmed our opposition to it. Much work has been done by officials at all levels of the FBU in that year, especially those in the first tranche. The difference this year is that they are dealing with local authorities and companies who are all taking differing approaches and there has been no central guidance for officials to refer to. We are told the project is in the Government's top 20 to push through but obviously not in the top 10.

The different case figures have finally been released and once again the FBU have been proven right when they have claimed a 30 per cent saving, to show it is wildly inaccurate. We have exposed the weaknesses in their arguments but still this Government continues to waste the taxpayers money on this bottomless pit of a project. Buildings that are costing a fortune to run every month but will not be used operationally for quite some time to come and perhaps never, but that is OK, but they are holding meetings in them now. Press coverage has been mostly local papers and the tabloids have not really grasped the reality of this project. Hopefully, this campaign will change all that, but I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Duncan Milligan and the many Regional Officials in trying to ensure that this has at least had some local coverage.

We have seen many mergers of local ambulance services. In my own Region we now have an East Anglian ambulance. We were talking recently at a CSNC meeting about the problems we are having with the ambulance services in our areas, delays in answering the calls, call takers who insist on going through long protocols before they even take the address of what is going on. We keep telling them it is a person who is

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reporting a house fire, we don't handle casualty details. This is the address. Are they conscious and breathing? It may not be enough. We don't know. So it goes on. The reason for this? They are agency staff who are employed to take the calls. They have got prompt cards they have to follow and they cannot deviate. They are not trained to. The call is then passed to another operator, who is an experienced call taker, to mobilise. There is no local knowledge, no using their own initiative, they just follow the cue cards. That is what they are trained to do. Why am I telling you this? Because the regional directors of the new companies are looking closely at how they operate to see if they can copy those procedures for Fire Controls.

They are also looking at the British Telecom system of queuing calls where the BT operator will filter the calls through to the regional control in case they cannot cope in state conditions. Where is the fantastic resilience that is being promised for these amazing new regional centres. We are also being told that if the call is not answered in the home regional control within so many seconds the call will automatically search around the regions to find an operator who is free to take the call. So you could have two people standing side by side reporting an incident, one would be answered in the North East and one could be answered in the South West. I can see a lot of mis-mobilising going on.

It is not only the impact on the public that these delays are going to cause problems for; it is you the firefighters. As we all know, any delay in mobilising is going to lead to more involved fire, more damage to property and more likelihood of fire death. You are going to turn up at the scene and you are going to be put at risk and we could see repeats of the incidents like we saw in Stevenage at Harrow Court where firefighters lose their lives trying to save members of the public.

In many Control Rooms it is the experienced staff who make mobilising systems work. They pick up when the system is showing inaccurate information and that is just not going to be possible in a large Regional Control. Many Fire and Rescue Authorities are looking to cut primary crewing on specials leading to complicated crewing arrangements and I should know because they do it in my own Brigade. This can often lead to mis-mobilising when the crew showing on an appliance you need is also the crew you need to crew the special too. Senior officers often show their ignorance of how computer systems work when they propose calling strategy and it is the Control Staff who have to make it work: a recipe for disaster when several Brigades are merged into one Regional Control Centre. But of course there could be another strategy here: harmonised procedures and lo and behold we have a Regional Fire Service. I am even more concerned that once the Regional Controls are up and running they are probably going to be sold off – in fact

most likely to be sold off – to a private company, and I have heard on the grapevine that we have got no worries, they are going to be Group IV.

Be under no illusions. This is the start of a privatised Fire Service. There are huge concerns and we will see Control Staff numbers cut in half. You only have to look at the minimum staffing figures for call centre staff in the South West: five on a night shift to cover six Brigades. No consideration at all for the welfare of the staff or their health and safety, meal breaks or anything else. Effectively, there would not even be five on duty if people are out on a break.

This campaign has been ongoing for seven long years and many members have put it to the backs of their minds, but for Control Staff the cut over date is looming ever closer, and some of my colleagues on the CSNC may not even be here at next year's Conference if things go ahead. We do not know what our terms and conditions will be but we probably won't like them; in fact, we definitely won't like them. So we continue to oppose. We cannot stop it. We need to ensure the best for Control Staff members that we can.

Finally, Conference, I urge you to go back to your Branches and explain what support Control Staff need, and let us see if we can achieve an even bigger rally in October than last November. We thank the EC for their Emergency Resolution and hold them to their promise of support and resources which has not always been forthcoming in the past. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sharon. Can I have an indication, please, of those who wish to speak in this debate because it is an important debate but we cannot have a limitless number. Can you keep your hands up. The four have got their hands up, if you come to one of the rostrums. Val from Greater Manchester. I will take Val first because GMC have withdrawn their Emergency Resolution and then the other four can speak afterwards.

SIS VAL SALMON (Greater Manchester):

I am heartened, I have to say, by the General Secretary's speech. I am one of the dead but won't lie down gang and I want to make clear that in putting the Emergency Resolution forward we were not making any criticism of any official of this Union. The statement from Derek Davies came as no particular surprise in that despite genuine and honest guarantees from some politicians, pay and conditions would not be honoured.

We spent years in the Controls observing firsthand the lies and deceptions that are now on the Control Project. New regional control managers have made it clear that

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they intend to recruit from a wider work force than the existing Emergency Fire Control. They have actually named the police, the AA, the armed forces and McDonalds. Given this is underpinned by Derek Davies's statement, it is clear that the intention is to force down wages and conditions to the lowest level. Regional pay bargaining can only assist this process where the lowest level achieved becomes the immovable bench mark for the rest and for the future.

I don't want people to hide behind the fact that negotiations are what Emergency Fire Control members want. Do you really believe they want to work for a private company at best, at worst lose their jobs rather than work for a Fire and Rescue Service. We have to fight for the 900 jobs and it will be industrial. If we are not going to do that we need to be honest and let people know that. Stop treating this as a Control issue. It is not. Privatisation by the front door not the back. Localised pay bargaining is an issue for all. Scotland and Wales, this does affect you because we have co-terminus borders with you. So it will eventually impact on you and Ireland you are lucky you are in Ireland, but we would appreciate your help. This is not a Control issue; this is a Fire Brigades Union issue. I have been a member of this Union for 32 years. I am calling on you now. You owe me. We deserve it. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

BRO ROGER MOORE (West Midlands):

For the record, I don't work in Fire Control. However, I wanted to raise a few concerns. I say concerns because that is how I feel some members are treating the issue of Regional Controls. A concern not a worry or problem. Why? Because, it does not yet directly affect them.

Regional Controls are not a concern; they are a threat to everyone in the Fire Brigades Union because it is the start of an erosion of the Fire Service as we know it. When we read Regional Controls, we should read Regional Fire Services. When we read closures of Controls we should read closures of Fire Stations. When we read Control redundancies we should read firefighter redundancies. The demand for no compulsory redundancies, the call for recognition of the Fire Brigades Union and the call for Grey Book conditions is not just a Fire Control issue, it is a threat that is coming to the Fire Station near you. Firefighters around the country should stand firm with Fire Control personnel as Control did with firefighters during the last threat to our pay and conditions. This is not Control's fight; it is our fight. It is not a case of I am all right Jack. Jack is in it up to his neck. Jack is not all right. We support.

BRO STUART WILSON (Strathclyde):

I speak vehemently in support of this Emergency Resolution. This is something we have to deal with. We

have to fight it if we can or get the best possible deal we can. Matt mentioned quite rightly the different arrangements that we have in different parts of the UK. That does not guarantee anything. There is nothing written in stone anywhere. Everything will be up for change in the future. You can guarantee that. Another thing you can guarantee is there will be 100 per cent support from Region 1 for the campaign and that is both organising, running and putting in place the campaign and the work getting done. That is the assurance from Scotland. Please support.

BRO JOHN DRAKE (Glos):

I support the Emergency Resolution. Some of you may have noticed that down in the sunny South West we are in the forefront of the campaign due to a quirk of Government that decided Region 13 was in the first tranche as they call it. The political campaign has been absolutely superb down in the South West. At the moment we still have not got one Authority that has agreed to sign up to Regional Controls and that has not happened by accident. That has happened because we have been constantly lobbying the Authorities within the Region. We have been chivvying and almost bullying, if I can say that, Fire Authority members not to agree to Regional Controls and they are getting the message. This has happened not just in Gloucestershire but throughout the South West. Local officials have been absolutely harrying authority members and we would urge you all to do the same in your Brigades.

The press strategy has already been mentioned. I think Sharon mentioned the huge vote of thanks to Duncan and the communications team. This press strategy has been successful in gaining public support for our position, not the position of CLG. Again, a massive thanks to Duncan and his team. Whilst the political campaign has been going on, whilst the press strategy has been successful in gaining public support, we have been working very hard behind the scenes to try and achieve the three bullet points within the South West. I must report to Conference that we are on the verge of getting Grey Book conditions of service for everybody working on the operational side in the Regional Control Centre, and also FBU recognition. We are on the verge of that. But also and as importantly, we have got one Brigade in the South West who has given a guarantee that there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of Regional Control. We are working extremely hard to get the guarantees from the other five authorities within our Region, that not one person will be made compulsorily redundant as a result of Regional Control, but at the same time comrades we are working extremely hard to scrap this misguided, this crap project that CLG are doing.

But there is a danger and that danger is that some of our members will be looking to the Tory Party because

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the Tory Party have said if they are elected at a general election that they will scrap Regional Controls if they are not “operational”. I must admit some of us in this hall are quite sceptical about what the Tories say and we have been pressing hard to try to get them to come out with a definitive statement about what “operational” means. Behind the scenes some of the senior Tories are saying actually it may well be that the project has gone too far down the line to be scrapped. So again, I would urge you all to start pressing the Tory members on your authorities – because there quite a few – and get them to come out with a statement that if they are elected at a general election that they will scrap this project. Conference, we urge you not just to support the Emergency Resolution but get out there and actively campaign against Regional Controls in your Regions.

BRO BRIAN STANFIELD (Northern Ireland):

I speak in support of the Resolution. We have heard many speakers here today. We all know the facts. This is against Regionalisation and an attack at the very heart of the Fire Brigades Union. We know in Northern Ireland, our members know in Northern Ireland, it is an attack on all of us. They are already looking at money for new technology, money for a new control centre in Northern Ireland. It will affect every Region. Whatever happens, we will support our colleagues. Region 2 will organise as will the other Regions. We will support the Resolution. We must support the Resolution. Colleagues, Northern Ireland support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. I will ask Matt to respond and then we will move to the vote.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Very quickly, John mentioned there that we are making headway here and there, and I will just say this. If one Fire and Rescue Authority in England can make a pledge of no compulsory redundancies, there is no excuse for every single other one making exactly the same pledge. I have got every confidence that this Resolution will be passed unanimously by Conference, but just before we do that remind yourselves what is in there. We are just committing ourselves to a campaign. We have committed ourselves to a major rally and lobby in October. To do that, to achieve it, to make it successful and powerful we have got to get that message on to every single Branch. The people in the front line, those first four Regions, need to start planning now. Every Region needs to start planning now for Branch meetings, for all delegates’ meetings, for mass meetings, because it is not just good enough to come to Conference and pass Resolutions and to make a few fine speeches. We need that but it is not enough. The

hard work begins now. The hard work of taking the message that we are all confident about, we are all in agreement with, but the real work starts now of taking that message back to every single member of the Fire Brigades Union. Let us go from this Conference with that message, with that unity, do the work and we will win.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I will now put Emergency Resolution 7 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions? No. That is *carried unanimously* and hopefully people are going to go away from this Conference to build and make sure that lobby of Parliament this Autumn is a major success, and to make sure that this campaign is a success, and that we properly look after all of our members in Emergency Fire Control Rooms in England.

Can I ask Conference to turn to Friday morning’s business on Page 15 on the Programme of Business. We are on to the Annual Report. Paragraph B17, National Framework. We are going to take the Executive Council Policy Statement – A Service for the 21st Century. Matt.

A SERVICE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

2009 will mark the fifth anniversary of the new legislative framework for the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK. During this period, rushed and ill-thought out changes have adversely affected the functioning and efficiency of our Service. The abolition of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC) and of the Scottish CFBAC eliminated a key element in the development of professional standards within the Fire and Rescue Service.

Professional standards are crucial to the ability of firefighters to perform their job efficiently, effectively and safely. Standards should provide an objective measure of quality by which both firefighters and the public can measure the effectiveness and efficiency of each Fire and Rescue Service. They are integral to a coherent risk reduction and risk management strategy. Professional standards should apply to all key areas of the work of the Fire and Rescue Service including:

- ***Training;***
- ***Equipment;***
- ***Operational Procedures;***
- ***Standards of emergency response;***
- ***Appointment and promotion systems;***
- ***Planning systems at local, regional and national levels.***

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Regrettably, since 2004 there has been no robust system for the development of such standards. This has led to the increasing fragmentation of the Service across the UK. While Government calls for greater resilience, the systems which developed this in the past have been abolished and not replaced.

The Fire Brigades Union is the largest professional body within the Service, representing the overwhelming majority of firefighters. The FBU has a central role to play in developing the professional standards to which our members are required to work.

In the past two years the FBU has highlighted a vacuum in the development of policy within our Service. This has been done in FBU reports on; Attacks on Firefighters; FRS response to floods; Firefighter fatalities. The same issues have been highlighted by FBU officials at a local and national level. Our 2008 report on fatalities (In the Line of Duty) drew attention to the crucial nature of this debate and its potential impact on the safety of members.

It is therefore welcome that as a result of campaigning by the Union, new arrangements are being developed to address the issue of the development of operational guidance and that research is to be undertaken on issues around operational training. These developments are welcome but are not sufficient to resolve the whole range of concerns of firefighters about the future of their profession.

Therefore the Union will continue to pursue the genuine modernisation of our Service and our profession and will address the issues which have been missed or deliberately ignored by Government. In particular we will highlight the need for:

- **Professional Standards**
Professional standards are key to a modern and efficient service. In recent debates about the NHS, there has been widespread public hostility to the idea of a 'postcode lottery' in relation to levels of service. Likewise, the public has a right to know that firefighters attending an emergency incident have received training to the highest possible standards and that this does not vary according to locality. The same principle should apply to the provision of equipment and to planning for emergency response.

Firefighters have the right to know that they have the best possible equipment, training and procedures. To achieve these aims requires the

creation of structures and committees where such issues can be thoroughly and professionally addressed. Most importantly, firefighters must have confidence in such structures. That means that their professional views must play a central part in the development of standards. The Fire Brigades Union must play a central role in all such processes if such processes are to have any credibility within the profession.

- **Preparation**

Fire and Rescue Services are primarily organised around three key areas of activity; Protection, Prevention; and Intervention. To ensure that each of these is properly integrated requires adequate preparation. It is the view of the Fire Brigades Union that this aspect has been lacking in recent years as the Service has attempted to cope with an ever wider range of incident type and with new roles and responsibilities placed on the Service by Central Government. Adequate preparation requires an integrated approach including:

- *The assessment of risk within communities;*
- *Planning for the response to risk at the local level;*
- *Training;*
- *Communication between different strands of the Service;*
- *Planning at a regional and national level;*

The FBU has criticised current standards of planning within the Fire and Rescue Service. All too often IRMPs are about cost-cutting rather than risk management. The public have the right to know that their Service is planning professionally for the various risks faced by the community. Firefighters have the right to know that the Service is planning adequately for incidents rather than deliberately under-resourcing them. Likewise, when firefighters are sent to attend major incidents in other parts of the country, they have the right to know that a robust plan has been developed and tested so as to ensure the safety and welfare of those concerned.

- **Public Engagement**

The Fire Brigades Union is the voice of the firefighters of the UK. In campaign after campaign we have also become the voice of the community in seeking to defend the best provision of services to the community. In many cases, local communities have complained about bogus 'consultation' processes which subsequently ignore the views of the very people they seek to consult.

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The Fire Brigades Union seeks genuine public engagement. We are confident that when Fire and Rescue Service issues are properly explained the public can and will understand the need to defend and improve their Service rather than see it cut back further and further. To this end, we will seek engagement across the UK and within each locality with tenants and resident groups, community groups, local businesses and local trade unions so as to build an alliance to defend and improve our Service for the benefit of all.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to develop the work already undertaken around these issues and outlined above so as to develop further a strategy for a Service fit for the challenges of the 21st Century. This campaign should build on the success of our rally and lobby of November 2008 with further lobbying and campaigning events designed to draw the attention of politicians, the press and the public to the concerns of the Union outlined above and elsewhere.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think this debate accidentally, as it turns out, very much follows on from the previous debate.

Last November we held a lobby of Parliament and it was about firefighter fatalities, and I suspect that most if not all of you in the room were present at that event. But in the run up to that lobby of Parliament, myself and the President attended meetings all over the United Kingdom, and it told us a very clear story about what is going on in the Fire and Rescue Service, and it told us a story about what I mentioned earlier, the fragmentation of our Service under the so-called modernisation agenda. We shared stories about a complete mix and match approach to training, to how fire safety is dealt with differently in one Fire and Rescue Service to one next door. What we make the case for in the Executive Council Policy Statement in front of you, is for standards, standards in the Fire and Rescue Service, standards in relation to training, in relation to equipment and procedures, in relation to emergency response, in relation to appointment and promotion, and in relation to how the Fire and Rescue Service plans to deal with the incidents that it needs to plan for.

The truth is that modernisation, as they call it, has left a gaping hole in all of these areas. We used to have at this Conference reports from the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council and that Council played a key role, and the Fire Brigades Union played a key role within it, and it addressed all of those issues, training, standards, equipment and procedures. They abolished it. They abolished it and put nothing in its place. That is what has

left a gaping hole in terms of policy within the Fire and Rescue Service. Firefighters need those standards for their own health and safety, for their own protection. Firefighters need those standards so that they can professionally act as firefighters, so that the Service can professionally deal with the incidents that it has to deal with across the whole range of incidents that the Fire and Rescue Service is now asked to deal with.

But the public also need those standards because what we are ending up with is a postcode lottery. I do not just mean a postcode lottery in terms of emergency response where one Service says we will get there in five minutes and another Service says we will get there in 11 minutes or whatever. They just make it up as they go along. We are also seeing a postcode lottery in terms of what do they mean by sending a fire engine because we have got Chief Officers now who just invent their own fire engines and send them out, and we have got case after case by the way where they go out and spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on fire engines that don't bloody well work. That is because there is a lack of central standards and that is the fragmentation that this Statement is about challenging.

We hear a lot in the Fire and Rescue Service about protection, prevention and intervention: the three strands of activity within our Service. The paper again outlines a fourth area: preparation. Because if you are going to do those three strands properly you need to properly prepare and that is about training standards, and so on. The paper talks about public engagement. All politicians make great play about engaging with the public and how accountable they are, and then you speak to the public and the public thinks it is a complete and utter sham. In Brigade after Brigade every single one of you will have had experiences of this. They draw up IRMP plans and they involve cuts, and they put those IRMP plans out for public consultation. In every case the public say we don't want the cuts. And the Fire Authority meet and say well, you are having the cuts anyway. Thanks for your views. That is not consultation. Real consultation is what is called for in the Executive Council Policy Statement.

The Fire Brigades Union is the real voice, the real champion of the Fire and Rescue Service, and we in campaign after campaign, have proved that when we engage with the public, we can start to make progress. It is just worth mentioning one of those this year: the campaign for Balmossie Fire Station in Tayside. What a marvellous campaign we had engaging with the community. I went up to the march there, a wonderful march with a pipe band. A pipe band always gets the blood flowing. Remarkably and with great credit to them, the comrades in Tayside won that victory and defended that Fire Station. *Applause.* So the agenda here is to take those lessons and all of you have got

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little examples of it, and say how do we build on that alliance between firefighters and the public, between the Fire Brigades Union and the community? Not just to defend individual Stations, that is important, but to defend the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole. So the paper says that we need to build that in a more structured way. We will engage with the public directly. We will start to ask the public what sort of Fire Service do you want? What are the key things that you want out of your Fire Service, because I bet what they say is "I want fire engines and firefighters there as quickly as possible when I have a fire." We will be asking the public and we will be engaging with the public about that.

We have mentioned the lobby in October, and the lobby in October is clearly about the Fire Control Projects and Regionalisation, but it is about more than that; it is about the campaign for a genuine 21st Century Service and the Control Campaign fits wonderfully into that. It is about saying we want investment rather than cuts. We want standards for ourselves and for the public, and we want no more fragmentation of our Service. So I ask every single one of you here what are your local issues? Every Brigade will have local issues that are causing concern to our members. You need to identify those. You need to talk to your members. You need to use those issues to build for that event in October.

We are not going to turn the Fire and Rescue Service around overnight. They unleashed modernisation on us and we have seen where it is leading, to fragmentation and so on. We are not going to turn that round overnight. But the Government has been forced to respond as a result of what we did last year. We went to Parliament over fatalities and we produced a very powerful report, and we had a marvellous lobby of Parliament and hundreds of our members in the corridors of Westminster talking to MPs and we forced them to listen to us. The Government, hard as it is, have now created a new operational guidance programme board. So on operational guidance, one of the issues we raised, they now have a more structured method of addressing that issue. They have now set up, again as a result of our lobby, a research project into training in the Fire and Rescue Service. So you have achieved something already out of last year's lobby. We are going back this year in October on Control to challenge the fragmentation of our Service. We need to build on last year's campaign. We need to build for the future. We need to build a genuine 21st Century Service. I move the Statement.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Executive Council Policy Statement?

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

We support the EC Statement. We hear a great deal about other organisations claiming to be the professional voice of the Fire Service. But the Fire Brigades Union is the largest voice. I will tell you what: let us make it the loudest voice as well.

The difference is that these other organisations have absolutely no substance to them and us in the ONC know well about this having to sit with some of these idiots on the MMNB. The difference is that we raise the issues. We actually write them down and talk about them: issues like the firefighters' fatalities campaign; pensions' campaign; challenging work development issues. They are all there written down and we deal with them. The ONC are a big part of this team. We do not want change for change's sake just like any other part of this organisation. More than anything though we just want to make sure that everything is done properly and correctly so that we can move the Fire Service forward. We want to ensure that all our members understand the changing risks at all incidents; understand the planning and the command and control required as incidents develop; understand the need for good solid communications with clear intention. Incidents are changing. The role is changing. The pressures are changing. The FBU is the voice of the Officers. It is absolutely vital that we are involved in the strategy for the considerable challenges that we all face moving into the 21st Century. The three Ps are essential: preparation, professional standards and public engagement, for a safe, efficient and modern Fire Service of the future. The ONC support. We urge you all to follow our stance.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Martie, was there anyone seeking to speak on the Policy Statement? No. There has been no opposition. Therefore, there is no need of any right to reply. I will put that one to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Section F of the Annual Report – Legal and I will take Resolution 26 from South Yorkshire, Fire Service Drivers Afforded Legal Representation Funded by Employers. South Yorkshire to move please.

Resolution 26 – FIRE SERVICE DRIVERS AFFORDED LEGAL REPRESENTATION FUNDED BY EMPLOYERS

This conference demands, that as a consequence of the inclusion of element FF9 in the agreed NJC rolemaps and Fire Authorities increasingly requiring

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firefighters to 'drive, manoeuvre & redeploy' emergency vehicles on the basis they claim this is now contractual, the Executive Council immediately seek the employers agreement via the National Joint Council that should any driver be involved in any road traffic accident and subsequently require legal representation, the respective Fire and Rescue Service will be responsible for the provision and associated costs of any such legal representation.

Conference believes that driving emergency vehicles to incidents places additional responsibilities, stress and an increased risk of involvement in road traffic accidents on the driver, therefore the 'requirement to drive' which is being increasingly expected and utilised by Fire and Rescue Services now places the moral duty firmly with them to provide legal representation and support for their employees. At the same time the Fire Brigades Union will provide full support and advice/guidance to any driver member involved in any road traffic accident.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO NIGEL HODGES (South Yorkshire):

I move Resolution 26 that legal representation is funded by our employers. This Resolution was born from a Branch where a driver was involved in a road traffic accident or collision, whichever they want to call it now. First of all, the Brigade offered their solicitor to represent this individual who faced some trauma, having been charged with a criminal offence. They offered this lawyer from the Fire Service but so far along the road they thought no, we don't want to represent him, there might be some considerable costs here, find your own lawyer. We might fund that lawyer for you. So this individual not only faced the danger of losing his licence, faced the danger of losing his liberty, he was now in some serious financial danger of losing quite a substantial amount of money had the case gone the wrong way.

Before I brought this Resolution to Conference, it went through our Brigade Committee and one or two people said "Why is this Branch bringing this. We can't see the point in it." I will tell you why. Because our employers have found an order called the Local Government Order which prevents our employers supporting and funding legal costs in a criminal court. If you are found guilty, the individual will then be facing the bill of that case.

Our drivers are put under a lot of pressure by silly IRMPs demanding six minute response times for all life risks. Managers tell them you are exempt from road traffic regulations, don't worry about it, only to come hammering on my door when a serious occurrence happens saying "Why won't the FBU represent these

drivers?" "We don't employ these drivers. You do. You have the rolemaps that say they must drive. You are threatening our drivers putting them on development if they refuse to drive. You should be picking up the bill". What this Resolution is doing is asking the NJC to go back to our employers, say this is in our contract, it is within the rolemap, you are expecting our drivers to do this, should they have the misfortune of being involved in an accident where criminal proceedings are forthcoming you foot the bill, you support them. We are not advocating that our drivers have no moral responsibility for driving in a safe manner. I actively encourage that. We are fighting against policies in our Brigade where drivers and crews are told, "Don't bother wearing your seat belt. Your times are down. You are not meeting your times. We want the crews to get ready and dressed en route." The drivers don't realise again should any member of that crew be injured en route as a consequence of their actions, falling about in the back, they can sue them individually. So drivers are exposed to a lot of financial cost.

This Government order, a local members and officers' order of 2004, was designed to stop politicians and senior council officials using taxpayers money to support them during criminal court cases, not to prevent legal representation of Fire Service drivers and other emergency drivers. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Nigel. Was there a seconder for Resolution 26? *Formally seconded.* Was anyone seeking to speak?

BRO ANDY IMRIE (West Yorkshire):

Just supporting exactly what Nigel has been talking about regarding this so-called loophole in the law, it is mindful for Conference to be fully aware that not only is that law there for them to use voluntarily, it is actually there positively for those people, those employers to seek recompense off individuals. Therefore, the law is forcing the employers to do it. You know, it is not by choice. In West Yorkshire at the moment we have an awful case going off at the moment. I am not going to mention any details as such, but in the same manner that Nigel said, the pressure now has become so individual on that driver, it is incredible. As Nigel said, we are talking about the total financial loss of that individual: his home, his family, everything gone, if those criminal proceedings are taken up by the CPS, if that case is founded, that individual through driving to an emergency incident could lose everything. So we really do need to support this Resolution.

We need a full and absolutely concise directive from our employers that if a driver is involved in that accident, that they have got the financial support.

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By that same token we are not advocating bad driving or supporting illegal actions of drivers. Please support the Resolution.

BRO GORDON McQUADE (Central):

Supporting the Resolution. We had a Resolution on this and we have withdrawn it. We asked for guidance to be issued on the subject. Two years ago we had a driver who went through a red light and unfortunately killed somebody. That kicked it off in Central because management went round about telling everyone that the FBU don't represent drivers. We had to go round all the Branches. We took a lot of stick but we explained the situation to them. We explained that if you are driving for any company and you are involved in a crash your employer picks it up. That is what they pay insurance for. If the Union is to start picking up that bill obviously you would have to find that money somewhere so people understood once we explained it.

The simple fact is if you are driving for the Service and you are involved in any road traffic collision, they must pick up the bill. It is as simple as that.

Last year we had the terrible accident where a Watch Manager died. Again, the driver came to me that very day saying will you represent me. I had to go away and take guidance on it. I had to go and find out what we would do for that driver. So this is quite clear. If you are involved in a crash of any kind driving any Fire Service vehicle, they must pick up the bill. Clearly, if they turn round and say no, we are not going to do that, that is then when you need to get in touch with the National Officials or your Regional Officials. Please support this Resolution. Until it happens to you, you are standing there and you have got somebody who does not know where they are after the crash like you had last year. They must pick up the bill. We have a local agreement now in Central Scotland with the management that every time there is any kind of crash, no matter what, they will pick up the legal bill but we would like to see that obviously across the country. Support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Gordon. The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 26. There have been no speakers against. There is no need for any right to reply. I will put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We will move on to Resolution 73 from Lancashire, Emergency Fire Appliance Driving. The Executive Council are supporting. Can we have Lancashire to move.

Resolution 73 – EMERGENCY FIRE APPLIANCE DRIVING

It is now over 40 years since the first FBU conference policy was agreed that related to members not driving through red traffic lights.

Since this time, there have been numerous resolutions and conference debates, both supporting and opposing subsequent variations to the original resolution.

Conference is aware that this is a contentious issue, and many FBU members continue to drive through red traffic lights, albeit with caution, when responding to emergency incidents.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to undertake a full review of all issues relating to emergency fire appliance driving and related FBU policies, to report back with its findings to the FBU Conference in 2010.

LANCASHIRE

BRO KEV DEACON (Lancs):

I move Resolution 73, Emergency Fire Appliance Driving. This Resolution calls for the EC to undertake a full review of EFAD related policies and report back to Conference in 2010.

The present FBU policy relating to driving through red traffic lights is unclear. It is also contentious and it has not been adhered to by a large section of our members. This policy, I believe, was introduced in 1969 to protect our members from prosecution as there were not any exemptions from the Road Traffic Act for fire appliance drivers.

Reading through the debates from previous Conferences, it is clear that appliance drivers should stop at red traffic lights. However, our members are not clear whether the driver should wait for the lights to turn green before proceeding. Also it is a fact that when fire appliances do stop at traffic lights it causes confusion to other road users and can also be dangerous as other drivers expect fire appliances to proceed with care through red lights if it is safe to do so, and they stop and move out of the way accordingly.

In recent years training has been greatly improved for fire appliance drivers. Where before all training courses were at road speed and the vast majority of Fire Services utilise emergency fire appliance driver training courses that include blue light training and negotiating red lights safely which is contrary to our policy. In Lancashire this training has been delivered by qualified Grey Book driving instructors who, ironically, are FBU members. Contained specifically within the Traffic

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Signs Regulations and General Directions Act 1974 and the Road Safety Act 2006 are various exemptions specifically for Fire Service drivers as well as police and ambulance drivers. These exemptions include red traffic lights, statutory speed limits, directional traffic signs, flashing motorway stop signs, pelican crossings, audible warning devices, visual warning devices, parking in darkness and excessive exhaust smoke. Contained within other acts or exemptions regarding the wearing of seat belts, tachographs and motorway regulations.

At present the FBU policy would deny a member representation if a collision occurs whilst proceeding through a red traffic light even if it was accepted that the collision was caused by another driver. An example of this could be another driver doing 70 miles per hour in a 30 miles per hour limit that struck a fire appliance that was creeping through a red traffic light at 3 miles per hour. We accept that it is the employers' responsibility to defend employees in these cases and we should continue to argue that this is the case, but at present if one of our members that was involved in an accident at a red light but did not cause the accident, would find FBU representation denied when it was needed.

Conference, the exemption states under this regulation a red traffic light may be treated as a give way sign when observance would hinder the purpose for which the vehicle is being used and provided that no danger is caused to other road users, and that the driver of another vehicle is not caused to change speed or course to avoid an accident.

In Lancashire a four point stopping system is caught for negotiating red traffic lights. Whilst utilising warning devices, drivers should stop or be prepared to stop. There is no requirement to stop the wheels. However, if at any of the four points of transit progress is hampered or not safe, then the driver must stop. Whilst undertaking this review, we call on the EC to consider all the previous FBU Resolutions and the relevant exemptions contained within the various Traffic Acts. We ask that the current training given by different Fire Services is also considered and a policy is devised that sets minimum standards of EFAD training. This will allow Brigade Officials to negotiate a better standard in services that currently fall the level required, will give better protection to our members and to other road users.

Conference, I realise this is an emotive issue but this is an inclusive not exclusive Union. Driving fire appliances is now part of our rolemap and although it goes without saying that our policies must be safe, they must also be realistic. Support this review. Support this Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 73? *Formally seconded.* Was there anyone who wished to speak. The Executive Council are supporting. I will put 73 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. Were there any abstentions. No. That one is *carried unanimously.*

We are now on to Emergency Resolution No 11 from Lothian & Borders, Pandemic Flu – Accident and Injury Fund. The Executive Council are supporting.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 11 PANDEMIC FLU – A.I.F.

This Conference notes with concern the current outbreak of swine flu.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to examine and bring forward any necessary changes to ensure that the A.I.F. is protected from the potential impact of multiple claims that a pandemic could generate.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

The current outbreak of swine flu originated in Mexico earlier this year. This strain of the flu is most likely to affect between 20 and 45 year old people. The reported figures in Mexico are around 2,500 infected people and around 150 deaths. That is a mortality rate of around 6 per cent. Relating that to the Fire Brigade in the Lothian & Borders, we could lose more than 50 members. The claims that could generate for our Accident and Injury Fund could total well in excess of £1.5 million. That is one Brigade and that is just for firefighters. That does not take in family and dependants. Nationally, we could see a pandemic outbreak starts, we could see more than 2,500 claims. The liabilities for the Accident & Injury Fund could be in excess of £70 million.

Swine flu H1N1 is much less virulent than Asian flu H5N1. Some predictions for Asian flu put the mortality rate at up to 60 per cent. Those are claims that the AIF certainly cannot sustain.

This Resolution calls for the EC and the AIF Sub-Committee to investigate any changes that are required should the World Health Organisation increase the threat level to 6. This is to protect the AIF. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Was there a seconder for the Emergency Resolution? *Formally seconded*

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The Executive Council are supporting. I will put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried*.

Can I now ask Conference to turn to Page 2 of the Programme of Business. We are going back to Wednesday morning to Resolution 87 from Staffordshire, FBU Equality Education. Can I have Staffordshire to move please.

Resolution 87 – FBU EQUALITY EDUCATION

This conference notes that in 2008 the only specific national equality education that took place was the Equality Impact Assessment Training for Fairness at Work Reps in November.

This conference is very concerned that without a national education programme that deals specifically with Fairness at Work education, the FBU may take a backwards step from our current very positive record on equality.

Therefore this conference calls upon the Executive Council to develop with the National Fairness at Work Committee a programme of FAW education, which will include stage 1 and stage 2 FAW schools.

This programme of FAW education is to be developed as a matter of urgency and must take place within 2009.

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO BRIAN MOSS (Staffs):

This is another simple Resolution with no particular hidden agenda. All we are asking for is that we put fairness and equality in education back at the top of our agenda, and to do that we need to afford the necessary training and education. Having said that, I cannot really understand why we would have any opposition to the intent of this Resolution.

I do fully recognise and welcome, since we submitted the Resolution back in late December, that there has been a review and survey of our educational needs. As a result a programme of education has begun which, to be fair, does include a Fairness and Equality Update School that is planned for August. That alone, a two day School, does not meet the requirements of this Resolution. What we need is fairness at work education for all our reps and that has to be included in all the Schools that we attend.

I suppose we are all acutely aware of the problems that persist within the Brigades: discrimination, harassment and inequality are abounding within the Fire Service. We

have discussed it on many occasions. We need to set an example and continue to take the lead and tackle these issues. Education is the key to equipping our officials on how to deal with the situations they will be facing.

Yesterday the Executive Council supported the Resolution on equality reps and they are now bound to pursue the changes to legislation and secure the facilities and paid time in order for the Fairness at Work reps to carry out their duties. That being the case, I hope we are as equally committed to providing the necessary education that this Resolution seeks. That said and in recognition of the planned School that is taking place in August, I appreciate we have got a lot of business to deal with, I am prepared and I will remit this Resolution to the Executive Council and look forward to the provision of further ongoing fairness at work education but rest assured, if you don't deliver, we will be back next year.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. I will ask Sean Starbuck to respond to the points that were made.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, Brian, for remitting it but I do want to go through a few things anyway. Last year the national education programme delivered 15 National Courses. These catered for over 480 students. In addition to this, Head Office assisted with various Regional Schools. They assisted with Sectional Schools as required. In total we served 579 students which I think is quite a feat. This year to date we have already delivered 9 National Courses. We have got 11 planned plus any assistance for Regional or Sectional Schools. As you can see, it is pretty hectic at the moment.

This Resolution tends to indicate that national education programme does not deal with fairness at work. I can assure you that is definitely not the case. Consider the planned courses for the year and you will see that the Education Committee and the Executive Council about this when they are endorsing courses and they look at fairness at work, and the courses do reflect this. We have just had restructuring courses for looking at redundancies in Control. Anybody who attended this pilot came away from this with a really good understanding of the law on redundancy and how it works in practice. The Work Force Development Course is planned for June and July. This is the result of over a dozen Resolutions to Conference over the last few years plus quite a few phone calls and times I have been challenged on IPDS transferability. Again, fairness at work is a main driver. Equal access to training, development and equality of opportunity for all. I think that is fairness at work. Pension School we have got planned for later on in the year.

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Again there is a theme of equality running through it. RDS access to pensions just screams out fairness at work. Before the end of 2009 there will have been at least another two understanding equality impact assessment courses. These, like all other Schools, have attracted quite a lot of student interest. The first is already full and the Glasgow one is already over half full. The Education Committee and the Executive Council look at the requirements for education. They look at the requirements for next year and when they do they look at all the standard courses they have got to fit in as well, the courses for new officials such as discipline, consultation, negotiation courses,. We are already assisting Regions 11 and 12 with management, conference skills in Region 4 and countering the far right in Region 9. The Education Sub-Committee and the EC recognise fairness at work is a necessity and a dedicated Fairness at Work School, as Brian indicated, is already out there for the 11-13 August. Staffordshire, come on the School and see if it addresses your needs.

We take fairness at work very seriously and Conference you can be assured that fairness at work does not just run through our education programme; it is absolutely vital. Anybody who attends the Work Force Development School will see that equal access to training is fairness at work. Anybody looking at transferability, needs to understand fairness at work. Just because it is not called fairness at work doesn't mean to say it has not got a huge chunk of it within it. Officials need to be aware also that we sent out a questionnaire asking for your views. This was your chance to look at the list of courses available and tell us which ones you have been on and which ones you want to go on. The questionnaire gave us an opportunity to prioritise. These priorities show that the top three included equality impact assessment which is pleasing because that is one of the main things we have done.

The Resolution asks for fairness at work education to be developed as a matter of urgency within 2009, but we have already done that. The time scales for developing the stage one and the stage two is unachievable. Fairness at work is already a massive part of the education programme. It is already available out for Regions on an introductory level. Please use it. Please ask Head Office for support if you want to use it. Staffordshire, I am glad you remitted this but I think you will understand that fairness at work is a big part of the programme already.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. We are still on Wednesday morning's business. We are on Paragraph I2 of the Annual Report, Equality and Diversity Project Boards. Paragraph I3, Equality and Diversity Stakeholders Group. We are jumping about a bit on the Programme of Business. Can I now ask you to turn to Page 16. We are now going to

get ahead of ourselves and go on to Friday afternoon's business. We are going to take Resolution 72 from Cleveland, Survey into Personal Vehicle Insurance Financial Penalties. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I have Cleveland to move, please.

Resolution 72 – SURVEY INTO PERSONAL VEHICLE INSURANCE FINANCIAL PENALTIES

This conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a survey to determine if any FBU member has suffered any financial penalties on their personal vehicle insurance as a result of an on duty accident or incident whilst driving a fire and rescue service vehicle.

The findings of this survey are to be reported to Annual Conference 2010.

CLEVELAND

BRO DAVE HOWE (Cleveland):

I speak on Resolution 72, Survey into Vehicle Insurance.

In Cleveland over the last few years I have noticed quite a big increase in the number of members coming to me and colleagues asking about their personal vehicle insurances. The main question coming from EFADs is that if you have an accident whilst driving an appliance will it affect their personal vehicle insurance premiums. I have also had the same question from firefighters who are not EFADs but have to drive Fire Service vehicles day in and day out as part of their duties.

Another point that has cropped up more than once is if they get points whilst driving for the Brigade, then they believe this will also increase their premiums. These questions have become more frequent because as you will all be only too well aware the insurance companies these days ask far more and much more detailed questions than ever before. They ask everything from have you had an accident in the last five years to what colour underpants are you wearing.

The above instances all seem highly unfair if it is true that members are actually being penalised financially just because they have to drive to do their job, but the reason I say "if" is that even after asking questions of certain insurance companies myself about these potential problems, I have not had clear answers so I cannot give my members any sure advice on this apart from to tell the truth when you are taking out your policies. This is the reason for bringing this Resolution to Conference, basically to ask the EC for help, to ask the EC to carry out a survey along these lines and to get clear answers to our questions so that our members can be properly informed about the decisions they make about their personal insurances.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 72? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask Matt to outline that qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The qualification is about the evidence that we would require and the need for any such survey to be responded to. We are aware of cases where Brigade Officials locally have attempted to seek such information from members and come up with an absolute blank. There is no guarantee that even if we embark on this work we will be able to come back to Conference next year any clearer than we are now, but we are willing to explore the issues raised by Cleveland with that qualification.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. I will put Resolution 72 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

Can we have B&EMM please to move Resolution 56, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Black & Ethnic Minority Members. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 56 – REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 has strict limitations on disclosure of spent convictions. Some professions are exempt from the regulations on disclosure, including the Police and Prison Service. The Fire and Rescue Service however has no such exemption, and therefore should not be requesting information on spent convictions especially from new entrants.

Despite this, there is evidence that some Fire and Rescue Services are requesting disclosure of spent convictions during the recruitment process.

This conference therefore calls upon The Fire Brigades Union to;

- 1) Obtain the correct legal position on exemptions from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.***
- 2) Raise this issue at the first Practitioners Forum after Annual Conference 2009.***
- 3) Issue a Brigade Officials circular requesting information as to how many brigades are asking for spent convictions disclosure as part of their application process.***
- 4) Demand that CLG send out a guidance note to all Fire and Rescue Services on this issue.***

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

SIS SAMANTHA SAMUELS (B&EMM):

The essence of this Motion is that we need to ensure that Brigades are not requesting information that they are not entitled to and that when applying to join the Fire Service they are clear as to what information they must give, otherwise people are left to the mercy of unscrupulous employers.

Hopefully, when this Motion is passed Brigade Officials will be provided with the correct information so that they can monitor application forms for the information that is requested on there. Finally, the reason why we brought this Motion is that black and ethnic minorities are three times more likely to have spent convictions which they usually get at an early age and so it is a Motion that affects us.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sam. Is there is a seconder, please for Resolution 56? *Formally seconded.* I will ask Matt to outline the Executive Council's qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, President. Two qualifications. Firstly, in relation to points 2 and 4, it refers to the Practitioners' Forum and to CLG and, of course, as they quite rightly frequently remind me in Regions 1, 2 and 8, we have Devolution and we have other Administrations who deal with the Fire and Rescue Service, another advisory body so it would need to be raised in the appropriate forum in those Regions. Secondly, the second paragraph says there is evidence that some Fire and Rescue Services are requesting disclosure of spent convictions during the recruitment process. The Executive Council are not aware of such evidence. If the evidence is provided, that is not a problem, but in relation to that in terms of pursuing it, we would clearly need that evidence in the first instance. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. I will put Resolution 56 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are on to Emergency Resolution 12 from Hereford & Worcester, DNA Sampling. Can we have Hereford & Worcester to move, please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 12 DNA SAMPLING

Conference notes with concern the Government's proposal, announced last week, to retain DNA samples, taken from individuals arrested, for 6 years

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for non serious offences and 12 years for serious offences, even when the individuals are subsequently not charged or found guilty of the alleged offence.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to lobby Government so that all DNA samples of individuals not charged or found guilty of any offence are immediately destroyed.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

BRO JIM RICHARDS (Hereford & Worcester):

As you can see from my laughter lines and increasingly grey hair, it is my last time at Conference.

Throughout Europe an individual arrested on suspicion of an offence has a sample of their DNA taken. If consequently they are not charged or found guilty of an offence the sample is destroyed. In December 2008 an appliance from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service was sent to an incident on the M42. The driver, in accordance with standard operating procedures, adopted a fair enough position to protect the fire and ambulance crews working at the scene. Within minutes the appliance was reportedly hit by a vehicle and a passenger in that vehicle tragically died. The driver of the appliance, one of our members, was subsequently arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving. He was taken to the local police station, his DNA was sampled, he was photographed and questioned. Weeks passed and eventually the Crown Prosecution Service found there was no case to answer.

Had this incident occurred anywhere else in Europe his DNA samples would have been taken away and destroyed. However, as this has happened in the UK, the Government's proposal to retain DNA samples for 12 years in the case of serious offences even when the individual is subsequently not charged or found guilty of derogation, means our member, not guilty of any criminal act, will have his DNA sample retained as part of the criminal database.

We believe this is an infringement of his human rights and serves as an example of why DNA samples of individuals not charged or found guilty of any offence are immediately destroyed. This is why we ask for your support for our Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are supporting Emergency Resolution 12. Is there a seconder?

SIS SAMANTHA SAMUELS (B&EMM):

I know that time is of the essence but I just wanted to say that 6 per cent of the white population are on this

database and 40 per cent of black men are on the database. I just wanted to add that.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sam. Andy.

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

I would just like to highlight the differences of the legal system of Scotland. When the European Court of Human Rights declared that the UK DNA database was illegal it made an exception for Scotland. It commented that the Scottish system was fair and proportionate. We accept that the Resolution is important to the other countries in the UK but we suggest that if the EC are to lobby on this issue then they use the Scottish system as the basis for any campaign.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. The Executive Council are supporting Emergency Resolution 12. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

In order to utilise the available time to the best way we can, I am going to move you back to Thursday afternoon's business. Can you move back to Page 12 of the Programme of Business Please. Emergency Resolution 17 from Tayside.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 17 THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

This Conference welcomes the publication of the People's Charter in February 2009, which was borne out of the current economic crisis caused by numerous financial institutions.

Conference condemns the UK Government for bailing out the banks with public money and agrees that working class people must not have to pay for the recklessness of the bankers and the Government.

Conference acknowledges the role played by the Fire Brigades Union in developing the Charter and fully supports its demands.

Consequently, Conference agrees that all members and officials of the Union should be encouraged to sign the Charter and that the Union at both Regional and National levels should actively campaign to publicise and pursue the aims of the Charter.

TAYSIDE

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BRO JIM MALONE (Tayside):

It is with pride that Tayside moves this Emergency Resolution today, The People's Charter.

The Fire Brigades Union were involved in the launch and are at the forefront of this campaign for a million signatures to support the charter for change, a charter for working people for a fairer society, for decent homes for all, to protect and improve our public services, public ownership of our financial institutions and to bring our troops home, and end the cost in blood and money. This Labour Government has bailed out the banks with our money, our children's money and our grandchildren's money. We, the workers, who, believe it or not, voted in this Government three times have been left in the lurch. Our politicians have taken us for granted, they have refused to give us our trade union rights, they have given carte blanche to the bankers and financial institutions. They have taken their billions and they have left the taxpayer to clean up the mess. Tens of thousands of workers are on the dole. Millions of pensioners are forced to live with a decrease in income and the public services of course slashed. We can do something about this crisis. We can support the Charter in our work places and the pubs and clubs, on line and at stalls in the town and city centres.

Brothers and sisters in 1938 the Movement began. They fought for universal suffrage for all. They eventually won. We can win. Support the grass roots campaign. Go out. Get those signatures. Support a Charter for Change. The People's Charter. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jim. The Executive Council are supporting. Is there a seconder for the Emergency Resolution.

BRO JOHN CAIRNS (Strathclyde):

There are loads of pamphlets available at the door there and I think everyone needs to take them away with them, and if there are not enough I think Head Office needs to send them out to everybody. We can get over a million signatures, no problem, but we need the paperwork out there. Cheers.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. The Executive Council are supporting Emergency Resolution 17. I will put it to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Thank you. Can I see any against. Can I see any abstentions. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We will now break for tea. Please be back in your seats promptly in 15 minutes.

Tea Break

THE PRESIDENT:

If delegates can now take their seats please, end their conversations in order to listen to the report from the Standing Orders Committee, from the Chair, Steve Shelton. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

The Standing Orders Committee must report to Conference that there is still a lot of business outstanding and suggest a change to speakers' times: Mover 3 minutes; Secunder 2 minutes and Subsequent Speakers 1 minute. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed*

Thank you. We are therefore moving back to Page 3 of the Programme of Business, transporting ourselves back to Wednesday afternoon. We are going to Resolution 7 from Nottinghamshire entitled Working Hours with Amendments from Humberside and West Midlands. The Executive Council support as amended. Both Amendments can carry. Can I have Nottinghamshire, please, to move Resolution 7.

Resolution 7 – WORKING HOURS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore options for achieving a reduction in the working week for those members who currently work the 42 hour week. A Sub Committee of the Executive Council should be established and a report with any recommendations circulated to all brigade/sectional committees before Annual Conference 2010.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Amendment

After first sentence insert, "In exploring this issue the Executive Council should also give consideration to the need to support those members engaged in campaigns to defend the current shift duty system as outlined in Section 4 of the Grey Book. Nothing should be done to undermine the campaigns of these members. The Executive Council will need to consider in full the implications which a claim for a reduction in hours might have on the current Grey Book shift duty system."

HUMBERSIDE

Amendment

In line 2 after "working week" delete remainder of sentence.

WEST MIDLANDS

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BRO PHIL COATES (Notts):

I move Resolution 7 and accept Humberside and West Midlands Amendments.

At this Conference we have already talked about major issues of pay and job losses but I find it strange that as a Union we never seem to think that working a 42 hour flat week is a problem. I was always brought up to believe that a Union should campaign to shorten the working week for its members. As we all know, a shorter working week can protect and increase jobs and also increase the level of hourly pay. This is not a new issue for our Union as the front page from the *Firefighter* from November 1974 clearly shows. We were campaigning for a 40 hour week then. Thirty five years later we are still working 42 hours. I don't believe that is a good record.

As Brigades around the country look to change shift systems and many look to bring in annualised hours, we believe that as a Union we need to be in a position to reduce those hours. This does not have to be the end of the 2:2:3 shift system. There are ways to keep that shift system alongside a reduction in hours. Even if we only achieved a 40 hour week, this would equate on average to eight and a half days extra time off for firefighters. We work more flat hours than any other public sector workers. Can we really say the Union supports our members working long hours in 2009? We call on the EC to explore ways to reduce the working week and report back to Conference in 2010.

Now is the time to move forward and reduce those hours. It is the right time while pay settlements are historically low. We can achieve a higher hourly rate by reducing those hours. I urge Conference to support this Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 7? *Formally seconded.*

Can we have Humberside, please, to move Amendment 1 and can West Midlands get ready to move their Amendment, please.

BRO DANNY HIND (Humberside):

I am moving to amend the Resolution 7, working hours. We feel that consideration should be given to those members that are currently campaigning to defend their existing shift duty systems. Members across the country are fighting to stick to duty systems that are family friendly and that have worked in the past, and will work well into the future. We move that this Amendment should be carried to ensure that our

members can retain duty systems outlined in Section 4 of the Grey Book, and that the EC consider in full what a claim for reduction in hours may have on the current Grey Book duty systems. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder please for Amendment 1. *Formally seconded.*

Can I have West Midlands to move Amendment 2.

BRO DAVE STARNES (West Midlands):

Please support this Amendment to the Resolution. We believe that a reduction in the working week is the right of all workers within the Fire Service not just those on 42 hour work shift patterns. As firefighters we have slipped away from the average working week over the past years. Please support this Amendment.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Amendment 2? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting as amended. Matt, do you wish to speak to it?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

No.

THE PRESIDENT:

OK. There is no right of reply. There were no speakers against. I will therefore put, firstly, Amendment 1 from Humberside to the vote. Both Amendments can carry. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried*.

Amendment 2 from the West Midlands. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried*.

I therefore put Resolution 7 as amended by Humberside and West Midlands to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. Thank you. That is *carried*.

Now on to Resolution 10 from Cleveland, Study into the Effects of Pre-Arranged Overtime on Establishment Levels. There are Amendments from Strathclyde and the West Midlands. Also Resolution 11 in the same debate moved by Grampian, seconded by Suffolk with an amendment from Devon & Somerset. Only one Resolution can carry. The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 10 and its Amendments and opposing Resolution 11. So can I please have Cleveland to move Resolution 10.

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Resolution 10 – STUDY INTO THE EFFECTS OF PRE-ARRANGED OVERTIME ON ESTABLISHMENT LEVELS

This conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a study into whether the introduction of pre-arranged overtime has had any effect on establishment levels within UK Fire and Rescue Services. The findings of this study to be reported to Annual Conference 2010.

CLEVELAND

Amendment

After the word “levels” in line 3 insert “and also the effectiveness of current monitoring arrangements”

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

In line 2 delete “whether”, insert “what effect”, delete “any effect”.

WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 11 – OVERTIME BAN

This Conference notes that the Fire Service Pay and Conditions Heads of Agreement 2003 states that “pre-arranged overtime will not be used to make up any planned shortfall in the overall staffing level set out in the Fire Authority’s risk management plan.”

Conference also notes that FRS management in many areas have not complied with this criteria and have instead been reducing establishments and utilising pre-arranged overtime in order to manage establishment shortfalls.

Consequently, this Conference resolves to re-introduce a national Pre-Arranged Overtime ban, with immediate effect.

**GRAMPIAN
SUFFOLK**

Amendment

Delete last paragraph, insert new paragraph:

“Conference calls on the Executive Council to demand the National Joint Council Employers ensure their constituent members adhere to the national agreement on pre-arranged overtime, and inform them the FBU will ballot for pre-arranged overtime bans in every FRS that has failed to comply within six months, and if needs be move to reintroduce a national pre-arranged overtime ban from FBU Conference 2010.”

DEVON & SOMERSET

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

I move Resolution 10, Studying the Effects of Pre-Arranged Overtime on Establishment Levels and accepting both Amendments from Strathclyde and West Midlands.

Arising from the first national dispute of banning pre-arranged overtime came about lasting right up until the 2002/03 agreement. During that time firefighting recruitment was regular and established levels consistent. Then after the second national dispute part of the new agreement allowed the introduction of pre-arranged overtime working. The revised Grey Book was quite clear regarding this earlier, and it states, “Pre-arranged overtime will not be used to make up any planned shortfall in the overall staffing levels set up with Fire Authorities IRMPs.” So what happened next after that? Gradually establishment levels started to fall. Pre-arranged overtime was used extensively. Firefighters started to work longer hours when according to the Working Time Directive they should be working less. Some Chief Fire Officers and managers were saying that the need for overtime was due to the large number of unexpected retirements of personnel: unexpected – unplanned more like. So what happens when the money to pay for this overtime starts to run out just like it did in Cleveland. Our appliances started to ride four and four on pump ladders, when normally it would be five and four. This had a knock-on effect especially during the initial stages of any incident. This compromised firefighter safety, so much so that in 2006 we achieved a mandate from our members for industrial action over that very issue and others. Some other Brigades, I believe, came up with hair brained ideas such as tight response vehicles and riding three to incidents, once again compromising firefighter safety. So, comrades, all we are just asking from the EC is to look into this through a study. Has pre-arranged overtime had a detrimental effect, and if the findings of a study determine it has, then let us come next year and do something about it. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Brian. Is there a seconder for Resolution 10?
Formally seconded.

Can I have Strathclyde, please, to move Amendment 1.
Formally moved. Is there a seconder for Amendment 1?
Formally seconded.

Can I have West Midlands, please, to move Amendment 2.

BRO MARK FELLOWS (West Midlands):

In support of our Amendment we call upon the Executive Council to carry out this study into what effect

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the introduction of pre-arranged overtime has had on establishment levels within Fire and Rescue services. We believe that there may be, not only a significant effect on long term establishment levels, but also and perhaps even more detrimental, on short term staffing deficiencies in an attempt to introduce either changes in working practices or even changes of shift. We hold this view because we have firsthand knowledge and experience of how this works. In 2005 following the introduction of the West Midlands and Regional IRMP an ill-thought out unpopular, family-unfriendly shift system was introduced.

From day one operational support crew appliances (or OSCARS as they came to be known) were used. They were staffed at best on an ad hoc basis and at worst not at all. The Fire Brigades Union of course had opposed the introduction of these shifts and members refused to cooperate with, amongst other things, the transportation of kit. These are now infamous instances of kit arriving at West Midlands Stations by taxi. The death knell for this particular variation of shift came, of course, after the industrial action that followed. However, it has to be said that for a long time before all that came to a head, the system had been propped up by the use of pre-arranged overtime. Despite our efforts in asking members not to volunteer to keep the sinking ship afloat, for some non-members and members alike the bait was too good to refuse. There is no doubt in our minds that if it was not for the use of pre-arranged overtime the system would have collapsed around their ears long before we were compelled to work. We believe therefore that the introduction of pre-arranged overtime needs this report to look into the effects on establishment levels. It was a blatant attempt to manage a shortfall of staff. We ask you to support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Mark. Is there a seconder to Amendment 2?
Formally seconded.

Can I therefore have Grampian, please, to move Resolution 11.

BRO LEON MURRAY (Grampian):

I move Resolution 11, Overtime Ban. The 2003 Heads of Agreement state that pre-arranged overtime will be worked on a voluntary basis and will not be used to make up any planned shortfall in the overall staffing level set out in the Fire Authority's risk management plan. This will require the Fire Brigades Union to lift its current ban on pre-arranged overtime. This overtime ban was in place for a long time, long before most of us in this room joined the Fire Service and it was there for good reasons. It protected FBU members from working overlong hours, it protected the public with a hard-

fought for and won first class Fire Service and it protected jobs. The removal of the FBU's long held overtime ban is something that our employers wished for, for a long time and we have got to ask why they wanted it.

If you truly believe that overtime would not be used to make up any planned shortfall in the establishment, then why would it be needed in the first place? Just for a flu epidemic or may be an entire Watch gone down with food poisoning? No, the desire to see the overtime ban lifted was always driven by their modernisation agenda, their desire to reduce establishment levels to a point where they could go to the Government and show them what good boys and girls they had been by getting rid of some of them meddlesome and costly firefighters. The small matter of reduced fire cover, fewer appliances, lower crewing levels and a poorer service for the public, don't worry about that, they'll never notice. We'll paper over the cracks using overtime. Well, we noticed. We have seen for too long now Fire and Rescue Services up and down the country cutting establishments, cutting posts and relying on our members to make up the difference using overtime, recall to duty and an even greater commitment from our Retained comrades. They can dress it up any way they like, but the truth of the matter is we are dealing with job cuts and a cut in the service the public gets, and that is not acceptable.

If our employers had stuck to the agreement and used overtime in the manner that it was intended for, I wouldn't be standing here today; there would be no need. But they have not. They have abused it and they have used dirty, nasty tactics like moral blackmail to keep appliances on the run. I have seen letters from Chief Fire Officers which effectively tell our members that they must work overtime otherwise they are denying the public of a Fire and Rescue Service.

Many Chief Fire Officers may deny that they are relying on overtime to keep their Services afloat, but you only need to look at what has happened around the country when members of the Fire Service choose to stop working overtime. The Service, firstly, grinds to a halt, pumps go off the run and Stations are shut for the day. They tell the media it is the fault of the Fire Brigades Union. If you just tell the members to work overtime, forget about their families, forget about their friends, we could get back to normal. But it is not our members that have done this, it is them and I am sick of us being blamed for the mess that they have made. Any Chief that believes that the Fire Service is not being propped up by overtime should look at some of the disputes we have seen in recent times. During a period of industrial unrest in my own Brigade people are so incensed by the decisions taken by service managers that they took their own decisions to stop working overtime –

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THE PRESIDENT:

Red light now, please, brother, if you can start to wind up.

BRO LEON MURRAY:

Yes, I will do, President. More recently South Yorkshire members have told their employers that they will only work 9 hour days including their start and finish times and in addition no pre-arranged overtime will be used. If our employers believe they have enough staff, why would they be concerned about not doing overtime. It should make no difference. It exposes scandalous cuts. They know they don't employ enough people, not uniformed anyway. We don't need a review. We know what is happening. We need to stop the rot. We need to protect the public. We need to ensure that the FBU remains true to our principles of trade unionism and socialism and make sure our members get the best possible balance of work and home life. We must return to a policy of –

THE PRESIDENT:

You are over time now, brother.

BRO LEON MURRAY:

– not working pre-arranged overtime and we must do it now. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Suffolk to second.

BRO STEVE COLLINS (Suffolk):

I second Resolution 11, Banning Pre-Arranged Overtime. The reason for introducing a national ban on pre-arranged overtime is to maximise the total labour force in the Fire and Rescue Service around the country and this is a legitimate reason. The Grey Book is clear that pre-arranged overtime will not be used to make up planned shortfalls in overall staffing levels. However, that is the staffing level that is set out by each individual Fire Authority's own risk management plan. So with the services, having already had cuts, more facing cuts and the numbers of firefighters having been slashed in the last five years, the introduction of different shift systems, front line vehicles with reduced crewing, the question has to be asked what is a planned shortfall in overall staffing level? The answer will be set out by each individual Fire and Rescue Authority through their risk management plan. These plans come with shift systems to see the end of Watches and ridership factors, firefighters coming in on rota days on overtime to ensure sufficient numbers of people are on duty.

These are no longer deemed a planned shortfall but part of the new shift system.

Our members are being used by Fire Authorities to carry overtime to fit their own risk management plans and it is being used as an excuse to make cuts. Support this Resolution and reintroduce the national ban on pre-arranged overtime. I second.

THE PRESIDENT:

Before I ask Devon & Somerset to move their Amendment, can I remind delegates you did vote to reduce speaking times. We are now down to the Ted Rogers option, as it is known, 3 minutes, 2 minutes and 1 minute. So if you have prepared speeches for things you were going to move earlier in the week, you might have to revise them. Devon & Somerset please.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

We completely agree with the sentiments of the movers of the Resolution, and this is a really important issue, that we are in danger of not giving the due credit that is needed. We all know of the abuses that have been taking place all around the country now, I would say. We really do need to revisit the issue of whether or not the overtime arrangements that have been introduced since 2003 are working in accordance with the spirit or the letter of that agreement and they are not. So let us be clear. It is an issue that we do need to address. Our Amendment seeks to do that by saying it is not viable to say we have an immediate reintroduction of an overtime ban and I don't think we could do that in many ways, for legal or other reasons. But we do need to address it and since there is a national agreement on this, which all of our constituent employers have signed up to, it is for the NJC employers' side, and they must operate arrangements within that agreement. If they won't do that, that leaves the door open for us then to go to all of the Authorities that will not do that to move to ballot to reintroduce the bans.

I think it is critical that we have realistic time scale on that, which is why we have said that we give the NJC notice that we give them six months to make sure that the Authorities make that commitment. If they don't make that commitment, then that is when we move to reintroduce a policy national ban from next year. It is not viable to do it now. We have to actually start addressing it though. For clarification, we would say that the six months would start from the point at which the EC raised this with the NJC, not six months from the day the Conference finishes. We think that is a realistic time scale. But let us be clear. This is an issue that is not going away. The can of worms is getting even worse, so let us make sure we are starting to address it now.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Is there a seconder for the Devon & Somerset Amendment? *Formally seconded*

Are there any speakers on the two Resolutions? I will remind you that you have one minute each if you are. No. I will ask Matt to outline the Executive Council's position.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think that is a worrying comment in itself. We are debating an issue as important as this with people being asked to stick to one minute and I think that sums up some of the problems with the Resolutions.

If you look at our overtime ban from 1973/74 until 2003, it was a truly remarkable achievement by this Union. It is a credit to that generation of FBU members and FBU activists who went on to Fire Stations and convinced people of the need to ban pre-arranged overtime. The fact is that it was lifted in 2003. There are limits outlined in the Grey Book and in terms of abuses, and we are quite sure there are abuses taking place. Those abuses should be taken up, should be researched at a local level and should be challenged. Overtime clearly has a damaging effect. I think everybody is aware of that and that has been outlined very well this morning.

The Executive Council support Resolution 10. We do believe it is sensible to undertake a study and to use, by the way, the period of such a study to start to campaign among the members to convince them about these arguments. We think at this stage we are not in that position. We do not think, by the way at this stage, that we will be in a position in six months. We believe we need to do that thorough research, to report back to Conference and if we are going to embark on a campaign that starts to challenge pre-arranged overtime, that starts to talk about possibly balloting to ban pre-arranged overtime, that will take a significant campaign by this Union, just as it did in the early 1970s. So please, Conference, support Resolution 10 and we will conduct that survey in accordance with Conference's decision.

THE PRESIDENT:

Are Cleveland seeking to exercise their right to reply? No. Are Grampian seeking to exercise their right to reply?

BRO LEON MURRAY:

I agree with a lot of what Matt has just said, but I don't think that we need a review. We all know the position we are in. We had a debate yesterday where we spoke about a review when we spoke about disaffiliation from the Labour Party. We can review all we like; we are

going to be back here next year with the same problems. We know where we are today so let us just get it done now. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will now move to the vote and I will remind delegates of the position. We have two Motions being voted upon: Resolution 10 with Amendments from Strathclyde and West Midlands is being supported by the Executive Council as are both Amendments. Resolution 11 from Grampian with the Amendment from Devon & Somerset are being opposed by the Executive Council. They cannot both carry. I will put Resolution 10 and its Amendments first. If that is carried, then Resolution 11 and its Amendments will automatically fall.

First I will put Amendment 1 from Strathclyde to Resolution 10 to the vote. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see those in favour, please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *carried*

I will now put Amendment 2 from West Midlands to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *carried*

I will therefore put Resolution 10 as amended by Strathclyde and the West Midlands to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. Thank you. That is *carried*

Resolution 11 and its Amendment therefore *fall*.

We are now on to the Annual Report, Paragraph A5, Protected Pay Points. We will move to Resolution 17 from North Wales, Reduced Retaining Fees. North Wales to move please.

Resolution 17 – REDUCED RETAINING FEES

Following the success of the FBU in securing the 120 hour measurement for full retaining fees, many brigades have been adjusting the availability of new recruits so it falls just below 120 hours. This revised figure then allows them to pay a reduced retaining fee. This is resulting in many of our RDS members being in receipt of retaining fees that are below what was paid prior to the settlement of the 2002 pay dispute, often for providing a mere handful of hours less cover.

Therefore, this Conference demands that the Executive Council meet with the NJC and negotiate the removal from the Grey Book of the facility for fire and rescue authorities to reduce the retaining fee by up to 25%.

NORTH WALES

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BRO CHRIS BURNS (North Wales):

I speak on Resolution 17, Retaining Fees. This Conference demands that the Executive Council pursue through the NJC, negotiated removal from the Grey Book of the facility for Fire and Rescue Authorities to reduce the retaining fee by up to 25 per cent.

Comrades, the purpose of this Resolution is simple. It is to protect our members, especially those new members that come into our Brigades, from being exploited. In November 2003 when our pay structure was changed one of the benefits for RDS members was the lowering of the bar for the qualification of a full retaining fee from 168 hours to 120 hours. In my Brigade this changed allowance saw that nearly 85 per cent of our members went from being a reduced retaining fee to a full retaining fee. Over a period of time since, our Brigade and many others have started to recruit RDS firefighters on three quarter retaining fees only. Quite often these new recruits are told that the Brigades only need them for 118 hours a week or slightly less. Perversely they are then often quietly informed that if they want to boost their earnings they can always have more hours cover if they wish. The effect of this is that we are sometimes seeing RDS members who effectively fully retain cover for a fee that equates to less than what was paid to a Retained firefighter before the 2002 pay dispute. This cannot be just and this must be stamped out.

It has also become apparent that many Brigades are trying to establish rates for retaining fees that are way below those that are currently in the Grey Book. If Brigades are successful in bringing these lower rates in, they will become the de facto standard fees for the RDS firefighters they employ. Let us not kid ourselves. If your Brigade is given the opportunity to employ its Retained Duty System firefighters and the retaining fee is one quarter of that which is currently described in the Grey Book, will this be a temptation for them? That is a fee amounting to around £13 per week and is a constant rate before any tax deductions. Of course they will be tempted. They are always looking for ways of saving money and very often the RDS are one of their first ports of call.

In closing, I ask you to support our Resolution to remove this facility that allows unscrupulous Brigades to abuse our members. Instruct our Union to enter into negotiations to remove this unjust and outdated clause. Comrades, I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder, please, for Resolution 17? The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

BRO PAUL BROWNHILL (NRC):

I second Resolution 17. The NRC applaud North Wales for bringing this Resolution forward and urge you all to support it. A tax on firefighters' earnings can never be justified and it is costing our newer members money every day. If the situation is allowed to be unchecked we could see a time when RDS firefighters are only employed by a three quarter retaining fee at best. How will the retaining fee be explained to our newer members then? 75 per cent of 10 per cent of 100 per cent of a Wholetime duty system. If that is not complicated enough, there are a few Brigades out there that wish to bring in levels of retaining fee even lower than that: an eighth; a sixteenth of a retaining fee are often quoted. North Wales are right to point out that if such fees are allowed to creep in, this will become the normal standard wage for all firefighters. Please support the North Wales Resolution and get this outdated and often abused clause out of the way. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone wishing to speak on Resolution 17? I will ask Sean Starbuck to outline the Executive Council qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The qualification on this one is quite simple. Wherever we are challenged locally on things like this, we must put a challenge in locally ourselves. The Executive Council are quite happy to support this, but we do need a local challenge as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. Are North Wales seeking the right to reply? No. I will put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please of Resolution 17. Thank you. Can I see any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*

We will move on to Resolution 18 from the National Retained Committee, Retaining Fee. The Executive Council are again giving qualified support. NRC to move please.

Resolution 18 – RETAINING FEE

Conference demands that the Executive Council use all necessary resources to negotiate and agree a substantial increase to the Annual Retaining Fee paid to Retained Duty System (RDS) employees.

The current and inadequate Annual Retaining Fee can no longer be deemed acceptable as it fails to recognise the commitment of RDS firefighters, the

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disruption to their family life and the adverse effect on their primary employment, together with the increasingly high expectations from Fire & Rescue employers.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO PAUL BROWNHILL (NRC):

I move Resolution 18. It feels strange that in 2009 I have to stand before this Conference and demand an increase in our retaining fee. I thought we went on strike for this in 2002. That being said, the objective of a better retaining fee is a fair one but its achievability will be a difficult part. I for one won't argue with that point. I realise, as do all that we represent in the Retained, that this is not an easy journey, but it is one that must be asked for and is one we demand to be achieved. Let us face it: our employers are never going to offer us better pay. It is something that our Union must do on our behalf. It is also said that we are the victims of our own success. We now do fire safety, put up smoke alarms, etc. Nevertheless, our main job is to make ourselves available to save lives and protect property. Let us not be mistaken. The retaining fee is paid to us to make ourselves available 120 hours per week.

Our employers already know the commitment of the Retained section but do they respect, acknowledge, or care about us? No they do not. They agree to CPD payments of a minimum of 25 per cent of the equivalent of our Wholetime colleagues. That is because they say we work an average of 25 per cent of the hours of our Wholetime colleagues. If that is the case then the question to ask is why are we only worth 10 per cent of their annual salary? On a quick calculation, the retaining fee for Retained is approximately 44p an hour. This is payable for every hour we are available: 120 hours per week. This is an insult. It is inadequate. We want and we deserve better. When the figure was reached it did not take into account other factors in the life of a Retained member: your family life, your social life, if you are lucky enough to have one, and the impact on your primary employment, the loss of earnings, unless you have a good boss. This list is endless.

We are also told the establishment retention levels of Retained firefighters are hard to maintain. Well I think, you have to look at the reason why. Pay the Retained the appropriate percentage and treat them as valued members of our work force, and they will find that a happy work force is a good work force. Asking for money is always going to be contentious and will be difficult to achieve, but we need to remain focused, and we have determination to succeed, by remaining strong and united. We believe we have the leadership within the Union both Regionally and Nationally to win this argument. We deserve better. Better still, we are worth it. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Paul. Is there a seconder for Resolution 18? *Formally second.* The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I will ask Sean Starbuck to outline the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Conference, the EC agree with the sentiments of this Resolution. We acknowledge the commitment of people working the Retained Duty System or part-time as they are now known. All firefighters make a commitment and it is quite right that as expectations rise, so should the rewards. The qualification is quite simply, to progress this in the current climate, we do need organisation and we need evidence of this rising expectation. We require a concerted effort from the National Retained Committee to request, gather and collate this information from all UK Fire and Rescue Services. The Executive Council support this Resolution and with that information will raise it in the appropriate arena.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. I assume the National Retained Committee are not seeking the right of reply to that? No. OK. I will therefore put Resolution 18 to the vote. Can we see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to the Annual Report again, Paragraph A6, Middle Managers Negotiating Body. Paragraph A7, Revised Allowances Including Car. Paragraph A8, Technical Advisory Panel. We are now on to Resolution 22 from Strathclyde, National Joint Council Dispute Procedures. Strathclyde to move please.

Resolution 22 – NJC DISPUTE PROCEDURES

This Conference is concerned with the practical implementation of the disputes procedures by Fire and Rescue Authorities/Boards, as contained within the Sixth Edition of the NJC Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

These procedures, rather than affording robust and effective processes for resolving differences, have merely served to prolong issues and fail to resolve them.

Consequently, Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this matter at the next meeting of the National Joint Council, with a view to negotiating new, fairer and more robust dispute procedures.

STRATHCLYDE

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BRO MICHAEL McCULLOCH (Strathclyde):

I move Resolution 22. The current dispute procedure agreed in 2004 replaced a system that was clear, quick, fair and robust. The previous process allowed for agreements to be reached at various stages. Crucially, if there was a failure to agree at any stage the matter would be progressed on. During the process, the status quo would prevail. The new dispute procedures have ripped up all the previous safeguards. No longer is there anyone looking over the shoulders of management, leaving them with no incentive to agree anything. More concerning is that there is no final arbiter. If an issue goes as far as the NJC Joint Secs, we can no longer expect a final decision to be made either way. Instead, we are palmed off and asked to go back to our Brigades to try and sort it out. Even if the recommendation is made, there is no onus on the management or employer to comply. We have had recent experience of this in Strathclyde, as have Tayside and I am sure many others. Without the necessary safeguards, we are left exposed to imposition by management which leads to more confrontation and the matter being unnecessarily prolonged. We need a far more robust, effective mechanism for resolving our differences with managers and employers. We need to ensure that we can safeguard and protect our hard fought conditions, and we need to ensure that there is a clear final resolution facility available to conclude any issue under dispute. We urge the Executive Council to raise this matter, if not at the next NJC meeting then in the very near future and we seek their assurance. I move. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder to Resolution 22? *Formally seconded* The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask Andy Dark to outline the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

As Strathclyde said, it has been some time since we saw the ending of the old NJC disputes panel and the replacement with the current procedures. As the Resolution says, undoubtedly the current procedures, in some ways, and certainly for some of the cases that we have taken through those procedures, have done nothing more than prolonged the process. In some instances that does suit some of our Brigade Committees to have that effect.

It also needs to be said that those procedures do resolve a number of issues. However, correctly Conference focuses on those instances where we do not get resolution which is to our satisfaction, where it falls short of what we want. Clearly, I do think part of the process by which we can ensure that we get more out of those procedures is through the education

programme and without repeating much of what Sean said earlier, we have been doing that through the negotiation and consultation procedures.

Clearly though another part is the industrial response where they seek to impose and to end contracts and renew them with one which we have not agreed, and we are seeing that currently, specifically in South Yorkshire as the best example at the present time. That said, we do support the Resolution wholeheartedly. We do see that the current procedures do fall short of our expectations. The qualification is very much one of timing. The mere fact that these procedures, which we signed up to and agreed to at the end of the dispute, are not to our liking, is unlikely to mean that the employers are going to be keen or ready and willing to seek an alteration of that agreement that we reached with them. I do think part of the solution of this is not simply raising it at the NJC – and the qualification will be that we will not be raising it at the next NJC for the reasons I have outlined. Part of the solution is clearly creating an environment through that industrial response to create an appetite for the employers to get back to something which is worthwhile which is meaningful and actually does resolve disputes. With that qualification we support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. I assume Strathclyde are not seeking any right of reply. No. OK. I will therefore put Resolution 22 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

While we are discussing National Joint Council issues, I should point out to delegates that the Independent Chair of the National Joint Council, Monojit Chatterji has been in attendance at the Conference this morning and yesterday afternoon, and I am sure you would wish to welcome him to the Conference. *Applause*.

We are now on to Resolution 23 from Merseyside, Collectivism Versus Individualism. Can I have Merseyside to move, please.

Resolution 23 – COLLECTIVISM VERSUS INDIVIDUALISM

Conference is appalled by some local employers, notably Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, who are intent on acting in a manner which is fundamentally in breach of the guiding principles and conditions of the Grey Book, such as breaching the agreed conditions in relation to pre-arranged overtime (Section 4, Part B, Para 25), by requesting individuals to bypass this element of the Grey Book by voluntarily varying their contract; this despite

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those Authorities being a part of the constitutional membership of the National Joint Council along with the Fire Brigades Union.

The Grey Book places the Council as the supervisory body, from a national point of view, of all questions affecting Conditions of Service. Conference notes that those Fire and Rescue Authorities in breach, or intending to breach the Grey Book Conditions of Service fall within the scope of Paragraph 2 of the Preface of the Grey Book and as such Conference demands that action is taken by the Council to bring those rogue Authorities back in line with the national agreement as a matter of urgency (or in any case at the next NJC meeting or relevant sub committee), progress to be reported back to regional committees on a quarterly basis.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO LES SKARRATTS (Merseyside):

I cannot effectively make a case for this Resolution in three minutes. I would ask brothers and sisters to consider that. When Standing Orders ask us to vote a 3:2:1 we have to think very carefully because this does not assist us on the floor; it only assists them and I think we should think carefully on that one.

Comrades, I note the Executive Council are opposing this and are saying it is totally unachievable. It is not just unachievable but totally unachievable. We have got that proud distinction of being in a higher bracket of unachievability. I have to say I find that slightly puzzling because this week and in previous years the Executive Council has supported the end to the despicable blockade of Cuba. They have supported the State of Palestine quite rightly. We only ask for a number of points. I will try and keep it to these bullet points, and if you are with us on these comrades, surely you will be able to support the Resolution.

The whole relationship we have with the employers is within our national agreement of the Grey Book and I am glad that the NJC is here today. The whole basis about all of us trade unionists exists within our agreements. We may not like it. We may have problems with some of it, but it is our national agreement. It is our contract with the employers and the Grey Book says that the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services is the body responsible for all the supervision from a national point of view of all questions affecting the conditions of service of employees of Fire and Rescue Services. All we simply say is that we are the body responsible for policing those issues. If we have no Fire Authorities and no Chief Fire Officers we would attack both principles and surely that corporate body responsible has to have a point of view. It has to have some force. We ask simply that if a Chief Fire

Officer or a Fire Authority reneges or struggles to reach a collective agreement with us, as is the case and we have finally reached a decent collective agreement which benefits our members, benefits our conditions of service within Merseyside, and the very next day that very same Chief Officer sends his managers out to offer individuals £500 to act in breach of that collective agreement, all we are saying is we should have a point of view on it. We should be able to raise it with our employers and say that is not right, get back in the club. If some people say Chief Fire Officers might say we don't like the NJC any more, I say let us recall Conference and let us have a national strike to defend the National Joint Council rather than kowtowing to them and saying don't cause trouble, we will have to accept these. I don't accept that as a point of view.

I will say two things because I am now red lighted. If the answer to this question is Yes, I ask Brigade Committees and delegates to vote for this Resolution. Do we agree with the socialist tenet of collectivism? Do we agree with unity as strength and do we agree that an injury to one is an injury to all. If you think the answer to that is yes, vote for 23. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Les. London to second. You have got two minutes.

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

I will be very brief. I support Les. I think the title is appalling, Collectivism v Individualism but that is bye the bye. The situation is quite clear. I would urge Conference to oppose the Executive Council and support Merseyside simply because Merseyside have actually come to Conference for our help to get these bully boy Chief Officers of Fire and Rescue Authorities. They have come to this Conference floor and asked for support to say, "Right, we've had enough of you. We've got legitimate grounds." Where else are they going to go if the EC is not going to help them? For goodness sake, support the Resolution and back Merseyside on this. I support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Joe. The Executive Council are opposing and I will ask the General Secretary to outline the opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The smiling face of the EC against. Comrades, clearly there are rogue Chief Officers and there are rogue Fire and Rescue Authorities, and we are well aware, Les, and I am sure that everyone in this hall is well aware that probably the worst case is the one that you have to

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deal with day in, day out, and Conference understands that and the Executive Council understands that. The problem with the Resolution is in relation to the second paragraph and in particular the call upon the National Joint Council to take action against those rogue Authorities. We have been through some difficult industrial relations that we are all aware of. But currently the Executive Council is of the view that we would struggle. You have got to bear in mind the structure of the National Joint Council. It is an equal body between ourselves and the employers. We will not win a vote on it. We have to convince the employers' side. So the question is how do we convince the employers to take action against rogue employers? That is the first question.

Secondly, in terms of the Resolution calling on the National Joint Council to take action against those, even if we can convince the employers to do so, what action is Conference thinking the National Joint Council is going to take? That is, what action do you think employers are going to agree to take against other employers?

Thirdly, and this is the most dangerous bit we think of the Resolution in the current climate, is even if we were able to get over obstacle one and obstacle two, what would be the likely reaction? Our concern is that if you have got a rogue Authority like we have in Merseyside, one of the possible options that that rogue Authority will think of is OK, the NJC has given us a slap on the wrist or taken some other action, we will leave the NJC. The very wording of the Resolution in our view, brothers and sisters, raises the possibility of rogue Authorities actually seeking to withdraw from the National Joint Council and we are aware that Authorities in certain parts of the UK have already discussed those sorts of issues. We think that particularly because of the timing, where we have been over the past few years, where we are now, things have improved, things will improve. We understand, Les, fully the problems that you are raising and on Joe's point, nobody is saying don't bring these issues here. Nobody on the Executive Council whatsoever is saying don't bring these issues here. You should rightly bring those issues to be discussed at Conference.

What I will give Conference, to Les and to everyone else in Conference, is that we are happy to raise the concerns about the behaviour of individual employers. We do on a regular basis, by the way and we can sometimes achieve changes, shifts, in the stance taken by local management. In certain cases it is a lot harder as you well understand in Merseyside. We are happy to take those concerns forward. We are happy to discuss those with the Joint Secretaries. We are happy to involve the Independent Chair in those discussions and we hope gradually to start making progress on that. But

there are huge dangers, we believe, in the Resolution. So, Les, we would ask Merseyside to withdraw the Resolution otherwise ask Conference to oppose it. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Merseyside right of reply.

BRO LES SKARRATTS:

That was a long minute, Matt! We ask a point of clarification on what action can the National Joint Council do to satisfy this Resolution. I think that is a fair point, Matt. Certainly our Brigade Committee believes that at the very minimum the compilation of the naming and shaming list, so that our brothers and sisters know where we are in terms of the National Joint Council, we believe will satisfy the spirit and the intent of the Resolution. With that clarification given, I will simply ask the Executive now to change from opposition to support. We are certainly not going to withdraw the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Les. I will therefore put Resolution 23 to the vote. The Executive Council are opposing. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. A bit close that one, isn't it. That is *carried*.

We are back on to the Annual Report. Paragraph A9, Resolution Advisory Panel. Jim.

BRO JIM MALONE (Tayside):

I will be very brief. We would urge all delegates here today to have a look at that Paragraph. It is the result of a lot of hard work. As you can imagine, when they took Professor Willie Brown's judgment recommendations back to the management of Tayside, they told us we had a poor case. Nevertheless, previously what Alan put forward in the overtime Resolution, because the immediate response from members was to move overtime. In doing so, it took our EC Member, Roddy Robertson to ask our EC for permission to ballot. That brought Tayside Fire and Rescue's management to their very limited senses. What we were able to do then was achieve what I thought was an absolutely outstanding victory, but a victory that took four years from 2005 to this year and unfortunately, the sting in the tail was that the members who actually initiated this dispute have all retired, and it was at the expense of one or two days retrospective payments of the holidays they hadn't received, and it was resolved that the members affected voted and accepted. A sting in the tail, but I have got to take this opportunity to thank one particular retired member and that is out of trade member now, Bro

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Steve Mellon, who over four years provided outstanding solidarity as did the other retired members. I urge you to look at that Paragraph, at the recommendation achieved, and can I thank Andy Dark, can I thank all my Regional Officials as well for the help over those four years.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Jim. We are now going to move Resolutions 20 and 21. Resolution 20 from Derbyshire, Discipline Procedure. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Resolution 21 from Grampian seconded by London, the Executive Council are opposing. They will both be taken in the same debate but only one can carry. Can we have Derbyshire please to move Resolution 20.

Resolution 20 – DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Conference demands that the Executive Council address the ever growing problem of the application and use of discipline within Brigades.

Since the introduction of the new procedures more of our members have been disciplined and dismissed than under the old Fire Services Discipline Regulations. Conference is particularly concerned that in many cases of dismissal an appeal to an independent body outside of the Fire Service is not allowed.

Conference demands that the Executive Council report back, with recommendations, no later than Conference 2010 with a detailed report of the application of the Discipline Regulations across Brigades.

DERBYSHIRE

Resolution 21 – DISCIPLINE & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

This Conference notes that the Discipline & Grievance Procedures, as contained within the Sixth Edition of the NJC Conditions of Service (Grey Book), do not afford equitable or fair processes, and are contrary to natural justice.

These procedures have been used by Fire & Rescue Service managers to discipline an increasing number of members and award overly punitive punishments, including an unprecedented number of dismissals.

Consequently, Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this matter at the next meeting of the National Joint Council, with a view to

negotiating the introduction of a new National Fire & Rescue Service Discipline Code & Grievance Procedure, which will include the right of appeal to the Fire & Rescue Authority.

GRAMPIAN
LONDON

BRO MARK FERRON (Derbyshire):

It is quite a daunting thing being up here for the first time. *Applause*

I am moving Resolution 20. The discipline process is an issue that as representatives we always think about and it can take up a lot of our time. No-one is perfect or immune from making mistakes, but the discipline process should be used as a way of helping our members get back on track, solving the problems and showing what they need to do for the future expectations, and everything else, so it is about the little d rather than the big D. It should not be used as a way of punishing or imposing sanctions on our members or a way of trying to make an example of somebody. However, the present process is not working the way it should do. It has been used as a big stick to try and keep the work force down. It has been used in a way to bully our work force. So it makes them afraid to do anything. In a lot of cases it makes our members afraid to make decisions.

More and more of our members are being disciplined with sanctions being imposed on a regular basis. I myself have personally been disciplined four times in the last two years. It has become a regular thing for me and I just wait for the next envelope which actually arrived before I came to Conference. It is a way of making me defend my position and keeping me under pressure, and obviously preventing me from doing my duty. But the more alarming thing is we are seeing more of our members being dismissed and once they are sacked it becomes a legal issue, and then it is too late to get the job back. Even if the employment tribunal ordered reinstatement, the employer does not have to take them back. So it is becoming a problem and we really cannot allow this situation to continue in its present form. There is no natural justice, equality or fairness of treatment. It is becoming a tool for the senior managers to wield power just because they can. This power is in the hands of these managers who are attacking and wanting to change our conditions of service on a regular basis.

Then there is the appeal process. This goes to more senior managers and it is very unlikely that they would overturn this decision. In my experience, I would argue that they would never overturn a decision, so the appeals process is just a paperwork exercise.

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What should happen is that the appeal should go to an independent body, somebody outside the control of management, to make them accountable for their decision, which we have lost in our Brigade. What I am saying is you just cannot allow this situation to go unchecked and not monitored, and we need to look at this nationally, and sort of get an answer from the EC as the way forward with this. So I call upon Conference to support this Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. Is there a seconder to Resolution 20?
Formally seconded.

Can I have Grampian, please, to move Resolution 21.

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

I move Resolution 21 on Discipline and Grievance Procedures.

Prior to February 2006 we in Grampian had full right of appeal to our elected employers. Following one or two bloody noses, our Chief Fire Officer quickly moved to award himself full delegated authority to administer all discipline and grievance procedures. There would be no more access to the board unless you were a member of the corporate team. Apart from accessing Fire Board members, the procedures read well enough. However, slowly but surely we began to witness procedures being applied differently to different people in different positions in different ways. Our members were kept in check with overly punitive punishments awarded just short of dismissal. During a deputation we made to the Board in October 2007 we highlighted the fact that management were effectively working below the radar. Although it fell short of a full request, the Board did however, reinstate appeals following disciplinary dismissals only. Grievances were to be audited and reported only. We have yet to hear this back.

From there Conference may recall how our member, Kevin Ogilvey, was dismissed on the grounds of “incapability”. The management and clerk to the Board refused to utilise the discipline procedure which captures conduct and capability. Only due to the threat of industrial action and even an employment tribunal, did it bring about a settlement. Now we sit in fear waiting for the national employers to propose amendments to the NJC procedures to reflect the new shiny ACAS codes of practice that do little more than delay the burden on employment tribunals. Meanwhile this obviously delivers greater confidence and assurance to all Chief Fire Officers and their friends in HR. If they don't apply the procedures, then they face a wee financial hit at the most.

ACAS, the great champions of natural justice, are concentrating on reducing the great burden to ETs and management are desperate to live out the fantasy that Alan Sugar put over, “You're fired.” ETs are no saviours for our members anyway. You can't rely on them. Delivering a moderate monetary award while our member still holds his or her P45 is no more than a technical victory. I remember our old comrade Tony Maguire telling me once that they spent £1,000 to win a tenner. Let us not lose sight about the other part of this Resolution: grievance procedures. In our experience, if the complaint exposes management or any of their lackeys, then it is buried.

Again, are we going to spend a thousand quid to win a tenner? No. We need both procedures to include right of appeal to the Fire and Rescue Authority. It has no additional burden on ETs and besides if management are applying the procedures with natural justice in mind, then they have nothing to fear. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have London, please to second 21? *Formally seconded.* They are both open for debate. The Executive Council are giving qualified support to 20 and opposing 21. I will ask Andy Dark to outline the reasons.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

In terms of 20, the qualification is a fairly simple one which is to do with data. Conference will recall that this was very much the subject of a passionate debate last year. Certainly I explained on behalf of the Executive Council that what we would require in order to conduct that survey, that report, in order to come back to yourselves, we would need the data from Brigade Officials via the Regional Officials. We did attempt that last year and other things get in the way, I assume, but that information did not come in. I am confident that when we asked for the information, assuming this Resolution gets passed, if we offer the information this year, that information will come in and then we will get on with the job in hand. The qualification to the Resolution is that we need that information.

In terms of 21, we do ask Grampian, with the support for London that fell behind it, to withdraw simply on the basis that in order to conduct that review we need the information. To raise it at the NJC without that information would be foolhardy, so on that basis we do ask that Grampian withdraws and we give that qualification to 20.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. Are Grampian seeking the right to reply?

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BRO ALAN PATERSON:

Conference, we cannot withdraw this Resolution. Our comrades in Derbyshire only capture discipline. We are capturing discipline and grievance and we have already heard this week about the review process. If anyone thinks it is working properly, come up here and tell us it is working properly and we don't need that review. It should have been delivered by now anyway. If there is a problem, let us know and we will chase it up. We know it is happening. We don't need that review. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan, the Assistant General Secretary has asked to give a point of information.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

At the end of the day the Executive Council is about ensuring that we defend members and get the best for them. If it assists Grampian, we would conduct a similar survey at the same time with regard to grievance. The two are very much linked. We recognise that. As I say, the opposition to 21 was on the basis of raising it at the NJC. I hope that will be of assistance.

THE PRESIDENT:

Right. I remind you that the two Resolutions cannot both carry. Resolution 20 has the qualified support of the Executive Council. Resolution 21 is being opposed by the Executive Council. If Resolution 20 carries, then obviously Resolution 21 will fall.

I therefore put Resolution 20 from Derbyshire to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *carried*.

Resolution 21 *falls*.

We are now moving to Emergency Resolution 3 from Greater Manchester, Discipline and Grievance Procedure. Greater Manchester to move please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 3 DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Conference notes with concern the repealing in April of the Statutory Dispute and Dismissal Procedure and, along with it, the automatic unfair dismissal sanction should an employer fail to follow a fair procedure.

The Government has been opportunistic in pretending to heed calls from all parties, Employers

and trade unions alike, for clearer laws on discipline in the workplace their response being that workers have even less protection and access to justice.

Conference therefore calls on the EC to resist all attempts by the employers to alter the contractually binding discipline and grievance procedures detailed in the Grey Book Sixth Edition and attempts to replace it with the far inferior new ACAS guidance.

Conference also calls upon the EC to make every effort via the TUC, Parliament and any other appropriate body to campaign for the re-introduction of some form of automatic sanction should an employer not follow a just and lawful procedure that is accessible to all workers.

GREATER MANCHESTER

BRO DAVID ALLSEY (GMC):

In the interests of moving on Conference, I will cut this to the bone. We would like to make the point that we have a contractually binding discipline and grievance procedure which we know is not perfect, but it is still better than the effort that ACAS has just introduced. Recent case law has found that breaches of any contractual dismissal procedures can make any resulting dismissal unfair. So we don't want to throw away what we have got.

We would also like to make the point that the repealing of the statutory dispute and dismissal procedures has proved a real bonus for employers who can now do what they want as regards discipline procedures and slaps on the wrist if, and it is a big if, the employee is found to be innocent. That is not justice. We believe that they will be bringing back ducking stools next. Please support our Emergency Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution 3? The Executive Council are giving qualified support. *Seconded formally*.

Andy, can you outline the qualification, please.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, President. In terms of the general debate around grievance and discipline, certainly the Executive Council will resist any changes that are attempted by the National Employers to worsen our disciplinary and grievance procedures. Specifically on the Emergency Resolution in front of us, I would say that our qualification is the fact that the 2004 Regulations themselves were no panacea. They were not supported by the Movement itself, they were not beneficial to this

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Union. However, they clearly are far more beneficial to our members than what we are currently faced with. So that is the qualification: that the Emergency Resolution shows that we note with concern the repeal. They were not something that we supported wholeheartedly in the first place. That said, we do support the spirit and gist of the Resolution and with that qualification we support it.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will put Emergency 3 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 24 from the Officers National Committee, Loss Of Grey Book Posts. ONC to move please.

Resolution 24 – LOSS OF GREY BOOK POSTS

This Conference is concerned with the increasing number of Grey Book posts being re-aligned to other contractual conditions of employment.

This Conference instructs Brigade Committees to resist all attempts for such realignments and to ensure the Executive Council is kept informed of such attempts.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

I move Resolution 24, Loss Of Grey Book Posts. The ONC make absolutely no apologies for bringing back a Resolution which was similar to one that was brought last year which fell. In fact, many delegates have actually encouraged us to do so.

It is surely no surprise to see the human resources machine running away with itself in undying aims for modernisation but we need to ask the question where this is leading us. Are we modernising to improve? Or are we modernising just because we can? Are we preparing ourselves for the future or travelling headlong into a massive disaster? Sadly, I think most of us believe the latter to be true: people sat at desks with their suits on making decisions borne out of very little understanding, like in our wonderful cartoon world of the ADCs we are looking for Officers to lead us around the supermarket to move the fruit and vegetables. Or Officers to calculate how many sticky buns we might need for an airport convention. This is not fiction. This is not a story in OK about Jordan and Peter; it is far more serious than that. We need Officers to lead our crews at desperate times, times when the wrong decision could lead to disastrous consequences. We all deserve so much better.

What of the wonderful IPDS helix? Did it create a sudden stop? This was never explained to us when the brave new world began. So let us cut to the chase here. All around Brigades are managers with absolutely no fire related experience appearing in seats where once a proper Fire Officer sat. We were told that this was the way forward. This is progress. This is real modernisation. Quite clearly, comrades, it is not. Sadly, the figures of injuries and deaths to our brave front line crews prove this to be the case.

So let stop this stupidity right now before we really start to regret it. What we are asking for is fully qualified and professional Fire Service Officers at all levels in all Brigades as an absolute must. It is not a request, it is a genuine requirement. Please resist this erosion of our career prospects in the name of progress. Vote unanimously in favour of Resolution 24. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Marti. The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 24. Is there a seconder?

BRO ROGER MOORE (West Midlands):

I will make it short and sweet. I did have a speech, but we are moving on quite quickly. In the West Midlands 30 per cent of fire safety posts, Grey Book posts, have gone so this is not something that is new to us. It has been creeping in for years. Matt mentioned the fact that Union membership is going down and we are losing money. It is the same thing. More Grey Book posts go, more Union membership goes. I second. Please support.

BRO KEV HUGHES (Merseyside):

I speak in support of Resolution 24. Conference, this is not about just knocking out a couple of jobs here and there and getting a civilian to do it. It is not about 10 or 20 jobs. On Merseyside they have announced their intention to remove 35 jobs, mainly Watch Managers and above. This is job cuts and stifling and stalling the promotion prospects for all our members, not just our Officer members.

It is our duty to protect jobs. It is our duty. Please support the Resolution.

SIS SHARON THORNDYKE (CSNC):

I did have a speech prepared but I will make it brief. We have already got Control members who have been successful in promotions into Grey Book posts being threatened with having those jobs taken away and made green book. As a Union, we are going to be fighting for Control Staff to be redeployed into Grey Book posts.

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Don't let them use this procedure of turning jobs into green book to deprive those Control Staff of the opportunity to continue their careers within the Fire Service. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sharon. Before I bring in Andy Dark, I just make it clear to Conference it is my intention to finish the remaining five Paragraphs of Wednesday afternoon's business before we break for lunch.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thank you, President. I will be brief. I am tempted to say again this is calling upon data to be supplied by Brigade Committees. We will be asking Brigade Committees for that information as part of keeping a general database on Fire Service information effectively which will be coming out, I imagine, next week which will be asking Officials to fill in. The reason I am taking up Conference's time is that it is an extremely important survey that we have got for data. It does not just cover jobs. Clearly jobs is a key part of it. It includes appliances, stations and indeed different types of fire cover including the departments as well, what changes we are seeing there. It will come out with a circular but we do take this issue very seriously. Thank you, President. Thank you Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Can I see those in favour please of Resolution 24. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

Back on the Annual Report. Paragraph A10, Ad Hoc NJC Joint Working Party of the NJC/MMNB. It is the longest titled Paragraph in the Report, I think. Paragraph A11, Skills in the Workplace. Paragraph A12, Part Time Workers. Can Conference agree to suspend Standing Orders in order to complete Wednesday afternoon's business. Is that agreed? *Agreed*.

Andy.

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

Just last week I had a member working a ten duty system coming to me who is off on long term sick, asking what impact the part-time workers' decision has on his sick pay. I am just asking for some clarification. We have had the information coming through Regional Committees and it is just to see when the projected time scales are going to be finalised, if it is going to be finalised, and how long will the cases be assisted for.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I will ask Andy Dark to respond.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Certainly negotiations which are taking place, we look to have in place very soon and certainly to be agreed if we can on and by the June NJC for a 1st July implementation date, but clearly there would be some level of backdating as well, in effect. Certainly, the intention is that from 1st July there will be a sick pay procedure in place agreed with the employers, agreed by those who took the claims and ratified by the EC and recognised by the EC.

THE PRESIDENT:

On to Paragraph A13, Changes to Section 2 of the Grey Book – Fairness and Dignity at Work. Paragraph A14, Minimum Increases on Promotion-Taking into Account Continual Professional Development Payments. That concludes Wednesday afternoon's business. We are now up to lunch time. I am looking for a decision from you, Conference. Many people have got long journeys and have got trains to catch, and in the case of Region 2 have got planes to catch which means I know you all want to conclude business as soon as we can. The Standing Orders say we have an hour and a half break for lunch. I am proposing a 30 minute break. There are packed lunches available out there. Is Conference in agreement? *Agreed*.

Please be back in your seats promptly in 30 minutes time.

Lunch break

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AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

If delegates can all take their seats please and finish any conversations, I understand there was some problem with the packed lunches, i.e. not enough of them. Standing Orders Committee assure me they ordered enough so I don't know if it is the same problem we had with the yellow T-shirts, that some took more than one. Anyway, there will be further food prepared and what I would ask is if Regional Officials please and Sectional Officials can try and ensure that any of their delegates who did not get to eat, discreetly slip out and get the food for those who have not eaten, then hopefully we can get on with this afternoon's business without any disruption.

I am going to ask Steve Shelton, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee to give a final Standing Orders Report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee wish to announce another change of delegations. Avon, delete Chris Taylor and insert Justin Thomas; Northamptonshire, delete Gary Mitchell and Steve Mason, and insert Tom Morrie; Nottinghamshire, delete Ian Young, insert Claire Hudson. Can I ask delegations if you wish to withdraw any business can you do it now from the rostrum.

Yesterday's bucket collection raised £1,731. The Standing Orders Committee would like to thank all Head Office Staff and our Conference Stewards for their hard work and efforts this week. A special mention for Steve Cole and the Maskell team for their hard work and effort in setting up our Conference, and also thank you to the Spa Complex and their Staff.

President, that concludes my final report to Conference 2009. I wish you all a safe journey home. Thank you, Conference. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve, and on behalf of Conference I would like to thank the Standing Orders Committee as well for all their work behind the scenes ensuring that this Conference runs smoothly, and I am sure the Conference would wish to agree with me on that matter. And, of course, the Staff from Head Office who have come up here to run Conference who will be leaving the Complex shortly. I am sure you will all wish to convey your thanks to those as well. Can we formally agree the Standing Orders Report please? *Agreed.* Thank you.

Can we now turn to Page 6, Programme of Business. Transport yourself back to Thursday morning. Paragraph G7 of the Annual Report, Categories of Membership. I am now going to call two Resolutions in the same debate, only one of which can carry. There is Resolution 34 entitled Re-Employment from Grampian. The Executive Council are opposed. There is Resolution 35 from Northern Ireland, Pension Abatement which the Executive Council are supporting. Only one of the two can carry. Can we please have Grampian to move Resolution 34, Re-Employment.

Resolution 34 – RE-EMPLOYMENT

This Conference notes that many Fire & Rescue Services are offering members re-employment. Conference also notes that many members are taking up this option.

Conference notes that, due to Government driven modernisation methods such as the removal of arrangements under Section 19, Brigade Officials are now under increasing pressure to secure and improve upon establishment levels.

Therefore, Conference resolves that members will not be supported by the Union if their application for re-employment negatively affects the establishment of uniformed posts.

GRAMPIAN

Resolution 35 – PENSION ABATEMENT

Conference notes with concern the increasing trend whereby members are availing of 'Pension Abatement'. It is clear that this practice:

- ***Is detrimental to establishment levels.***
- ***Is outwith best practice with regard to recruitment and selection procedures.***
- ***Will undermine our ability to defend current retirement ages as outlined in the pension schemes applicable to Fire Service personnel.***

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to initiate a report to evaluate the continued merits of current policy, in the form of Resolution 83 from Annual Conference 2007.

This report, including recommendations, to be made to conference 2010.

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

Although Grampian intend to support Northern Ireland's Resolution on Pension Abatement, it should not be confused with this particular one on re-employment.

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Although there are many similarities with both Resolutions 34 and 35, delegates will observe the clear differences. While Northern Ireland's Resolution concentrates on the merits of the current FU policy forum from Resolution 83 from 2007, this Resolution concentrates on the expectations that will be placed on Fire Brigades Union Officials from any fee paying member. That fee paying member may fail in their attempts to seek re-employment. They may well then run a grievance with the expectation of having FBU representation. This then puts our Officials in a situation of perhaps accommodating the individual needs of the member while working against the greater good of the Fire Brigades Union. Yes, we have a general aim to serve our members as best as possible, but this is only automatic if it falls within the parameters of national policy. Therefore we need to carry this Resolution, a former policy that removes this particular dilemma for our officials.

Over the years Officials have become well accustomed to approaches from many disgruntled members seeking representation for a grievance that perhaps does not contravene the Grey Book, or is without sufficient evidence, or even against our Officials' advice. But because they have paid their dues it comes with entitlement. However, there are plenty of examples where our members concentrate on their own particular circumstances despite it being against the greater good of the Fire Brigades Union. That is when our policies can decide the matter. Today that can range from anything between co-responding and bullying, and harassment. On this subject of re-employment, we realise that this Resolution will carry or fall depending on where the sympathy of each delegation lies. Is it for individuals with their own personal circumstances, or with the greater needs of the wider membership? So what might the individual be after? He or she wants to continue working after the date they are expected to retire. Of course, thanks to the age regs of 2006, they can. They don't have to resign. Everyone can now achieve 40/60ths. However, without going into pension abatement yet, we all realise that this falls short of the ideal, the ideal being full pension providing a lump sum plus monthly pension, plus new wages without 11 per cent superannuation equals one happy bunny. Never mind a firefighter. What about a principal officer. Meanwhile, as Officials of the Fire Brigades Union we are expected to find the arguments for increasing the uniformed establishments while posts are being split into half or even civilianised. We would be expected to get industrial support from our membership on short term contracts, contracts that discreetly allow our management to hire and fire. Yes, we can see the kind of member we are creating there: members that no longer rock the boat, keep their head down and perhaps all of a sudden don't mind doing a little bit extra for nothing.

I am going to have to cut to the chase, I am afraid. Comrades, we can still fall in behind Northern Ireland's

Resolution, but I would urge you to support this Resolution to prevent damage in the meantime. If I can, I will second Northern Ireland's Resolution to carry on this part of the issue. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. Is there a seconder for Resolution 34? *Formally seconded.* Can I have Northern Ireland, please, to move Resolution 35?

BRO BRIAN STANFIELD (Northern Ireland):

I move Resolution 35. We in Northern Ireland have become increasingly concerned about members seeking to avail a pension abatement. We fully understand that there will be different views around this room here today. However, the Fire Brigades Union must take a collective view and a principled view in this matter. Let us not shy away from it. On behalf of our current members, on behalf of our future members, we believe the uptake of pension abatement will and must have a detrimental effect on our establishment. It will and must have a detrimental effect towards representative diversity and we know the progress the Fire Brigades Union have made on this in recent years. Another point that we all need to be very clear about is that pension abatement by its very nature, by its very uptake, will and must undermine the continual need for a dedicated firefighter's pension scheme, whether the FPS or the MPS. If firefighters can work on under Fire Service rules beyond retirement, what is the need, what is the rationale for a dedicated pension scheme within the Fire Service? Abatements undermine the very existence of the firefighters' pension scheme.

We in Northern Ireland knew it. Guess what? Martin Hill at CLG knows it as well, and at Conference we as a Union must waken up to it. The employers are happy with pension abatement, and we all know they will be happy with a cheaper service. The CLG are happy with pension abatement and what great fighters they have been to the firefighters and the Fire Brigades Union. Quite simply, we are making a crucial mistake by ignoring the employers' tool of pension abatement. If they like it, we all should be worried.

Fairness, diversity, jobs, not just now but for the future. These are not mere slogans; they are not sound bites. It is about socialism. It is about the very nature of the Fire Brigades Union. Conference, you have the Resolution in front of you there. Please think about it. Support Resolution 35. I move.

BRO ALAN PATERSON:

Point of clarification. We obviously think that these two Resolutions are completely different, completely

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separate from each other, and obviously the EC thinks differently. Can you explain why you see them as two Resolutions of the same nature?

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Alan: because they are both talking about the same issue about people who have retired and are then being given re-employment in the Fire Service. Yours commits Conference to a course of action. Resolution 35 from Northern Ireland calls for a report to next year's Conference with recommendations before Conference decides what to do, so the Conference has a clear choice between one or the other and that is why the ruling is that they stand in opposition to each other, and only one can carry. I therefore ask B&EMM to second Northern Ireland's Resolution.

BRIAN AMOS (B&EMM):

I would like you to look at point 2 of this Motion where it talks about the Fire and Rescue Services proclaiming best practice on recruitment whilst conducting the employment under current terms and conditions. This is not at all conducive to increasing recruitment, outreach activity or diversity in the Fire Service. Clearly, the process has not been quality assessed and as such is subject to bias and favouritism. We talked today about misuse of overtime, five Watch systems, loss of Grey Book posts and now pension abatement, all designed to reduce personnel and reduce jobs, playing into the hands of Chief Officers and, if left unchecked, this could have a detrimental impact on the diversity of our membership as well as adding to the decline of the FBU membership. The Executive Council must act. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. Can I see those who are wishing to come into this debate. Gordon.

BRO GORDON McQUADE (Central):

We had a Resolution in this one. We have been raising this for three years in the Scottish Regional Committee and we have had a number of debates on it. We were approached by a DO who wanted to be re-employed and that DO wanted the full support of the Fire Brigades Union. He had been a good member for 30 years and on the picket lines, and he felt he should be supported. We decided in Central Scotland. We went away and had a Brigade Committee meeting and our decision was that he chose to retire and it is not our job to fight to get somebody their job back. That is our position. If somebody takes a grievance, fine, we will support them, but we don't fight to get people their jobs back when they choose to retire. That is our position just now. Our

Resolution called for the Executive Council to issue a national position on this. We either support it or we don't support. I would ask the Executive Council to discuss this and come forward with a position so we are all doing the same thing, because I have seen Officials, there was a bit of a spat went on and it was shut down by the GS or AGS. Some Brigade Committees are doing one thing and other Brigade Committees are doing another.

I would support the Grampian one, but I too think we could vote on the two of them. I don't agree with the Executive Council on that. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

If I can clarify, it is not an Executive Council decision as to whether or not business can carry or otherwise; it is the decision of the President and the Standing Orders Committee who have been elected by yourselves to run Conference.

Right. I will ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council position. I will then give Alan the right of reply and then we will move to the vote. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council position is to give support to Resolution 35, and in view of the President and the Standing Orders' decision that both cannot carry, we would therefore ask Grampian to either withdraw or ask Conference to oppose Grampian. Clearly, all the points that have been made in the debate reflect the concerns that are out there on the ground. We want to examine this issue thoroughly. I have to say that we are raising a whole number of these issues through the Firefighters Pensions Committee, but as some people have said in the debate, much of this suits the employers' agenda. So we do need to review it. We think Northern Ireland's Resolution 35 gives us the best opportunity to do that. Please support Resolution 35.

THE PRESIDENT:

Alan, are you exercising the right to reply?

BRO ALAN PATERSON:

We obviously support both Resolutions. We see them as totally separate but nobody challenged the Chair on that. Our final word on this is, I would like to read the last Paragraph in the foreword of our Rule Book. *To this end the Fire Brigades Union is part of the working class movement and linking itself with international trade union and labour movements has as its ultimate aim the bringing about of the socialist system of society.* We cannot see how lifting any pension abatement or re-employment can actually reflect that.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Alan. So we are going to vote on the two Resolutions: Resolution 34 from Grampian that the Executive Council are opposing and Resolution 35 from Northern Ireland which the Executive Council are supporting. If Resolution 34 carries, then 35 will automatically fall. Can I see please those in favour of Resolution 34. Thank you. Can I see those against. Thank you. That *falls*.

Can I therefore see those in favour of Resolution 35. Thank you. Can I see any against. Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now back on to the Annual Report, Paragraph G9, CSNC Report 2008, and I will now take Resolution 90 from the Control Staff National Committee, Involvement of Control Executive Council Member. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. CSNC to move please.

Resolution 90 – INVOLVEMENT OF CONTROL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER

Conference demands the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary or National Officer with a remit for Controls, invite the CSNC Executive Council Member to all meetings with relevance to RCCs. This invitation to be forwarded as soon as possible, so dates and times can be coordinated.

This is for involvement, information and representation purposes for the benefit of all FF/Control Room Staff.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS SHARON THORNDYKE (CSNC):

Conference, no doubt you are wondering why the CSNC still need to bring this to Conference. However, there have been many times over the past few years where there have been meetings held with Ministers, specifically around the Regional Control Project, that have been attended by the Officials of the Fire Brigades Union but not the Executive Council member. We have heard reports of these meetings and have asked for reports back, only to be told she was unaware of the meeting until after it had occurred.

Control Members have elected Sharon (Riley) to be our Executive Council Member so that she can give guidance and support on Control Room issues to the General Secretary and the Assistant General Secretary. Neither of them – and they have both admitted this in the past – have any experience at all of Control Rooms. They are both from London, they have had no involvement with

their Control Members in London because of the London set up. So she has been elected by our Control members to represent us, to make sure that all the valid points concerning Control Staff are got over at these meetings. I am sure that all of you would be concerned if there was an issue affecting your Region and your Regional EC Member was not involved. So, Conference, I ask you to support the CSNC in showing that either our CSNC member or our delegate, if she is unable to attend, are able to attend these meetings to ensure that the proper advice is given. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sharon. Is there a seconder to Resolution 90? Rose.

SISTER ROSE JONES (West Midlands):

I support Resolution 90. I can only say how disappointed I was to see this Resolution coming to the Conference floor. What message must it be giving out to the Government and CLG about our Control campaign? They will have seen fight the RCCs and then having this debate on this Resolution think we are in disarray. We have the Sectional EC Members to support the Gen Sec, the AGS and National Officers responsible for the Sections, to give them their expertise in their own area and also because they have the voice of the members they are representing. Why therefore would any of our Officials go into meetings without this expertise at hand? We acknowledge that occasionally discussions on RCCs may occur without prior warning or in an unexpected conversation and this opportunity should not be missed. But if meetings are pre-arranged or even come up at short notice, the EC Control Member should always be given the opportunity to attend or at the very least prepare a brief. If the EC Member cannot attend, why not utilise the CSNC Secretary or Chair or any experienced CSNC member to be a substitute or to be close at hand to assist you, and especially given the Emergency Resolution that was passed today. Despite hard work from the EC, CSNC and Control Branch Officials throughout the country, there is still an underlying feeling that they are a forgotten area of the FBU. This Resolution, sadly, only strengthens that belief. Matt and Andy, you should hang your heads in shame that this Resolution should ever have had to have been written. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone else seeking to speak on Resolution 90? I will ask Matt to respond from the Executive Council.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, there are various types of meetings that take place with Ministers and with other officials within

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the Government: formal meetings, informal meetings, and at virtually all of those, certainly with the Minister, I would attempt to take the opportunity of Regionalisation and our continued opposition to it. What I can be absolutely clear is, that there has been no meeting with the Minister on the issue of Regionalised Controls to which the Control Staff Executive Council Member has not been invited. I just need to be absolutely clear in terms of the comment that Rose made. That has absolutely not been the case.

The Executive Council are giving this qualified support because in terms of the wording of the Resolution, there is nothing that we can be opposed to, but there does seem to be some confusion about what actually has happened. As I say, all meetings with the Minister specifically on the issue of Regionalisation, meetings that we set up specifically on Regionalisation with officials of CLG, either the Executive Council Member or Officials of the CSN would be invited and have been invited, and for example, we recently organised a meeting with the Chairs of the local authority controlled companies and again that was a very short notice meeting attended by the Assistant General Secretary, but again the Executive Council Member and other Officials were invited to attend although on that occasion they were unable to do so. So we will and we do make those invitations on every occasion. That is the qualification: that we believe we are already achieving that.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Are CSNC seeking right of reply?

SIS SHARON THORNDYKE:

The CSNC would ask the President to ensure that in future, notice of more than 24 hours would be given for any meeting. I appreciate your explanation that very often you take the opportunity to bring up the Regional Control Project with Ministers when you are having meetings, but we are still of the impression that there have been occasions when you have either given extremely short notice to our Executive Council Member or only told her after the event.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sharon. I will ask Matt to give a point of information.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

We do need to be absolutely clear on this. We have been seeking through the NJC Joint Secretaries a meeting with the LACC Chairs for months and months. They agreed to do it. They never set it up. We then

raised it again with them, and we raised it with the LGA to complain about how we were being treated.

Eventually – and it was at very short notice and I think it was possibly 24 hours or so notice – we were invited to a meeting with the LACC Chairs, and as soon as that invitation came in the invitation was given to the Control Staff National Committee EC Member and or other Officials. As I say, on that occasion the Assistant General Secretary was on a week's leave and gave up his leave to go to that meeting because we felt it was so important. I do not want a ding dong about this, but that is the fact. It is simply every occasion when that has happened invitations have been given. We will continue to do that. That is the assurance I will give Conference: we will continue to give that information and invitation.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I will put Resolution 90 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on the Annual Report, Paragraph G10, Control Staff National Committee AGM 2008. Paragraph G11, Final Appeals Committee. Paragraph G12, FBU Website. We will take Resolution 83 from Derbyshire, FBU Policy Database. Derbyshire to move, please.

Resolution 83 – FBU POLICY DATABASE

Conference demands that the Executive Council look at relaunching and improving the current policy database that is on the FBU website.

Conference believes that the existing system is not user friendly and does not encourage Officials to submit information for inclusion.

DERBYSHIRE

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

As Officials, we are constantly being presented with draft policies and proposals from Brigade management. On many occasions they quote another Brigade or an agreement that is best practice on that issue. The fact of the matter is the management are, more often than not, networking as a Region to come up with policies which on many occasions have been rejected in other Brigades.

The idea of a policy database for Officials to use when negotiating is a good one. The ability to access and look at other similar ideas is a good one. The problem is the system we have established is not user friendly and policies are not always up to date. This is not a criticism of anyone. This is just a fact. Officials at all levels have

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never been so busy. Many Officials are not aware of the policy database and the profile on the website is not high enough. The Officials who have tried to access it have often complained that it is too difficult to get results and then not bothered using it again. If Officials are to use the database to its full potential, it needs to be easy to access and simple to get results.

Conference, what I am asking for is just to look again at the database, improve its functionality, relaunch it, raise its profile and make it easy to use. Let us use this valuable tool to its full effect and help our Officials. Once we get the confidence in the database, as a way of getting information it will be used again and again. Conference, I urge you to support Resolution 83 as a way of supporting our Officials all across the UK. I move Resolution 83.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder to 83? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Andy Dark to respond for the EC.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council are supportive of the Resolution. We have got no problem at all with the idea of the database being improved and re-launched, but I have got to say in terms of specific problems that have been identified and alluded to during the presentation of the Resolution, they have not been made known certainly to myself and I would imagine not to Head Office Officials either. Certainly, if that is something which is being said, we will look at that. We certainly do want people to engage with the database. We have taken a number of measures to ensure that, almost as part of an informal information strategy, we have got information to you, not least the fact that you can now access all Labour Research Departments information. John McGhee has ensured that we have got access to the Barber briefing databases and a number of other measures as well. Certainly, if this Resolution is passed and we imagine that it will be, we will engage, and carry out a user survey, which is a bit of a high flown title for asking you what the problems are. We will then discuss any outcomes from that with Labour Research to identify how to solve those problems also to have a user group meeting, and maybe some Officials, not least the movers of the Resolution, of any problems that they have specifically got and how they think it could be improved. The qualification is that the database does require Brigade Officials to upload it whether it is this version or a future version. It requires Officials to upload it, and I accept Brigade Officials in the main, especially, are extremely busy with the workload put on you by FRS management.

I would ask you to engage with the survey when we do it. We give the commitment that we will improve it

where it needs to be improved and where it can be improved, but certainly would also ask that in the meantime do not wait for the outcomes. There is information on that database so it is possible to upload and I would ask you to do so. With those commitments and with that qualification, we do support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I will put Resolution 83 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are on the Annual Report, Paragraph G13, *Firefighter Magazine*. Paragraph G14, Gay & Lesbian National Committee Report 2008. Now on to Resolution 53 from the National Gay & Lesbian Committee, Training on LGBT issues for FRS Staff.

Resolution 53 – TRAINING ON LGBT ISSUES FOR FRS STAFF

Conference is appalled at the ongoing issues of bullying and harassment faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans (LGBT) staff, within the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), highlighted in the recent firefighter survey by the CLG.

The issue seems to be one area where the FRS struggles in terms of Equality and Diversity. There is no proper way of recording any statistics on this, as many people are reluctant to report incidents, for fear of 'outing' themselves.

Conference therefore calls on Brigade Secretaries to enter into dialogue with FRS managers to establish a programme of training and education on LGBT issues. This will give all staff the tools and education to make informed decisions and therefore break the cycle of homophobia and transphobia currently faced.

Conference further asks that a way to monitor what individual FRSs around the UK are doing, be set up by the FBU through its Fairness at Work committee and this work to be reported to Annual Conference 2010.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

BRO NORMAN PERRY (NG&LC):

I move Resolution 53, Training on LGBT Issues for FRS Staff. I stand here at the FBU 2009 Conference and am saddened and ashamed to inform you that our LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans Members) not only do not feel safe at work but in many ways are not safe at work.

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With recent figures from the CLG showing that up to 80 to 90 per cent of LGBT staff are not out in the workplace, we have to look at why. Firstly, it is our choice whether or not we are out. More often than not, they are, we are, too scared to be out. Why is this? It is due to the continuous harassment and bullying we are faced with on a daily basis. What does this mean for an LGBT person? It means we have to take the decision to come out to the Watch and risk being persecuted, or protect ourselves, and live a lie by pretending to be someone we are not. Unfortunately for up to 90 per cent of our members and therefore the majority, the work place is not a safe environment to be out. This is possibly even higher for our male members.

With so much effort trying to protect our true self, how are we expected to give 100 per cent to our jobs. Clearly we cannot. This has a massive cost not only to ourselves but also to the work place. A recent survey by Stonewall found that nine out of ten teachers have witnessed homophobic bullying of secondary school children but too scared to do anything. One in five LGBT people have experienced homophobic bullying in the last two years. Two thirds of LGBT people will contemplate either self harm or suicide coming to terms with their sexuality. Exclusion from conversations and isolation, verbal abuse and even physical attack are just some of the issues our members are facing in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Conference, how many times should I apologise to a trainee firefighter who leaves the Service before even leaving a training centre because they cannot take the homophobic bullying? How many times do I apologise to the gay firefighter who is asked to sleep in a women's dorm because the men feel uncomfortable with a gay in their dorm? How many times do I apologise to the firefighter who has boiling water poured on him after coming out to the Watch after serving five years in the Service and being told he deserves it for lying to them about his sexuality. Conference, how many times?

Ignorance can no longer be used as an excuse. "Oh, I don't know that would offend or hurt" has been used far too many times. It is now time for the Fire and Rescue Service to put a stop to this. Inform and educate staff through LGBT specific diversity training so that excuses can no longer be made. Several Fire and Rescue Services have already implemented the training. It is now time for the remainder of them to follow. Make our work place a safe environment where people can be proud to be who they are and not one where they are scared or ashamed of who we are. Conference, I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Norman. Is there a seconder for Resolution 53?

BRO STEPHEN MITCHELL (Lothian & Borders):

We have just had a comrade tell us about some experiences of some members in the work place. This is bullying and harassment, some of it extreme. What needs to be tackled is the indirect actions that affect LGBT members daily. This may consist of language and attitudes which are displayed in work places. Some may refer to this as banter, innocent may be, naïve at best. But it does have an impact on members, both LGBT and straight. Comrades, our culture needs to change so that all members feel safe and valued in the work place. How do we achieve this? Through education. From our employers and from the Union. LGBT awareness is part of our diversity training, our Station Managers, our Crew and Watch Managers should be trained in issues, and we have an LGBT networking group in the FBU to assist. The Fire Brigade we participate in, we go with pride and we support our members, and this is all done with the support of our FBU in our Region. So we celebrate our diversity and we must nurture that in order for it to flourish for us all to be happy and safe in the work place. Only then can we break the cycle of homophobia and transphobia which causes our comrades pain, anguish and stress. Conference, I urge you to support this Resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 53. I will put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 54 also in the name of the National Gay & Lesbian Committee, entitled Disability Discrimination Act, Protecting Our Members' Rights. National Gay & Lesbian Committee to move, please.

Resolution 54 – DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT, PROTECTING OUR MEMBERS' RIGHTS

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans members of the FBU note with concern the recent decision by the House of Lords in the case of Malcolm v London Borough of Lewisham. The case involved an interpretation of less favourable treatment with regards to the protection afforded under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA). Although the case did not mention employment, it has had major implications for employment law as it cuts to the definition of 'less favourable treatment' within the meaning of the legislation.

Recently a member diagnosed with HIV took their employer to an employment tribunal as a result of the application of sickness and absence monitoring

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and the threat of disciplinary action for time off through sickness and treatment directly attributable to their HIV condition. As a result of the application of the interpretation of the DDA with the Malcolm case, our member was left without the vital protection that the DDA was intended to provide.

The implications of this new legal interpretation have far reaching consequences, not only for our members, but members of all unions.

Conference calls on the General Secretary to consult with our solicitors on how best to challenge the legal interpretation of the Malcolm case. As this matter concerns members of all trade unions, we also call on the General Secretary to raise this matter with the TUC General Council with a view to joint funding for any necessary legal challenge.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

BRO KEVIN GUTHERSON (NG&LC):

I move Resolution 54. The Disability Discrimination Act was brought to statute to protect people with disabilities from less favourable treatment. Recently a member with HIV was threatened with a discipline case due to absence from work directly associated with this illness. Michael was diagnosed with HIV on 02 August 2006. He informed his Manager the following day and went on sick leave until 11 August. Michael had further absences from work in September, October and December. In January 2007 Michael was told by his Watch Manager that advice needed to be taken as to how sickness monitoring was to proceed and whether there should be a discipline case. She also told him that even though his illness was covered by the DDA, he could still be found incapable of doing his job and sacked. In January Michael went sick with work related stress. In June last year following further periods of sickness Michael made a request for disability leave which was not granted. GMC justified this by saying they could not afford to pay for such leave. Michael later submitted his resignation on the grounds of ill health. This was not accepted by the Brigade. The stress of this has had an effect on Michael's health and as a result his immune system has been shown to be lower than it would normally have been even in light of his illness. The threat of discipline made Michael's condition worse.

Michael took his employer to an Employment Tribunal. However, whilst he was waiting for this to be brought, the Malcolm case was brought before the House of Lords. The Malcolm case has set a precedent. The House of Lords set out a new narrow test. It introduced the need to apply a comparator: there would be a non-disabled employee who had also been on long term sickness absence. In other words, the legislation ignored the direct link to the condition causing his absence.

Therefore, if you develop a condition recognised by the DDA and this condition requires that you take time off for treatment or due to illness directly attributable to the condition, your employer can apply absence and sickness monitoring policies introducing discipline up to and including dismissal. On the point of qualified support, we accept the need to have a legal case to pursue in order to set a new precedent. It was with this in mind that we called for the General Secretary also to raise this matter with the TUC General Council. This legal case need not be specific to an FBU member or any trade union affiliated to the TUC. We accept that the EC should consult.

Conference, we need some clarity here. We need to know that the DDA is going to furnish people with disabilities, the protection that it was designed to ensure, and that the damaging precedent set by the Malcolm case is challenged to ensure that those who are most in need of support and protection receive what is only right and fair. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 54?

BRO NIGEL HODGES (South Yorkshire):

All too sadly we could all spout cases where individuals have been persecuted. In South Yorkshire currently I am dealing with a case which is very close to my heart with the help of Samantha Samuels regarding a DDA member. This member asked for support and help from an organisation claiming to have core values, claiming to be diverse, welcoming people with diversities and even disabilities into the Service, and yet when this individual seeks the support of a Brigade he became the most tested, the most monitored and the most discriminated person I have currently had the misfortune to represent in these circumstances. I say "misfortune"; it is our misfortune that we have to represent these members. We have a Brigade claiming to be diverse, a Brigade claiming three star status on diversity, and yet they have not got the ability, the will or the gumption to support these people. I second. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Val.

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

Excuse me if I get emotional on this, because I represented Michael. I had the privilege to represent Michael through his tortuous route of the draconian absence management policy over a number of years, where he was constantly denied the right to recognition of his condition of DDA and threatened with discipline

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continuously. He was at the time trying to come to terms with what he had been told was a life threatening illness and also a breakup of his relationship. He ultimately went to the Employment Tribunal with a very strong case. Within the time span, as we have heard, the Law Lords changed the comparative to assess the DDA known as the Malcolm case and this totally changed the validity of Michael's case.

Michael conducted himself with quiet dignity and an inner strength you could only admire. We have started out on the absence management policy in the GMC, but the point is he should not have had to go through it. Conference, support the Resolution and stop it where it is. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Val. The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 54. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on the Annual Report, Paragraph G15, Gay & Lesbian National Committee AGM 2008. Paragraph G16, Retained Members National Committee Report 2008. We are now on to Resolution 52 from the National Retained Committee, Transferability, with an Amendment also from the National Retained Committee. The Executive Council are supporting with the Amendment. I ask the NRC to move please. If you could move the Amendment at the same time, that would assist progress. Thank you.

Resolution 52 – TRANSFERABILITY

Conference endorses the principle that a firefighter is a firefighter regardless of what type of duty system they work. In accepting this principle, it is necessary that all personnel working the Retained Duty System (RDS) have equality of access to all assessment and development opportunities relevant to their role.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council negotiate and agree a national policy whereby RDS personnel have the same opportunities to apply for a transfer to internal vacancies that arise for their role, regardless of the type of duty system.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Amendment

In Paragraph 2, line 1, after 'Council', delete 'negotiate'.

In Paragraph 2, line 1, after 'Council', insert 'develop'.

In Paragraph 2, line 2, before 'national', delete 'a'.

In Paragraph 2, line 2, after 'national', delete 'policy'.

In Paragraph 2, line 2, after 'national', insert 'guidance to facilitate local negotiations'.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO PAUL BROWNHILL (NRC):

Resolution 52 with Amendment. I have no doubt that everyone here will agree that in principle a firefighter is a firefighter. We all know there is no such thing as a Retained house fire, in the same way we all know that we do not have a big R on the back of our helmets any more than our Wholetime colleagues have a W on the back of theirs. We also know that when the public dial 999 in an emergency they quite rightly expect to receive the best possible service in the quickest possible time no matter where they live, and the best possible service including having properly trained, properly equipped firefighters who can and will be able to tackle any situation that they are faced with, and deal with that situation in a safe and professional manner. That is what the public expect from us and that is what we want to give them.

Why when we know this and the public expect this, do our employers continue to differentiate between firefighters solely on the basis of a shift system that they work? Why should firefighters who work the Retained Duty System be denied the same training assessment, development opportunities which are readily offered to our Wholetime colleagues? Why when a Law Lord in the highest court in the land, a Judge, says Retained and Wholetime firefighters are employed under the same type of contract and that Retained and Wholetime firefighters are not different from one another, our employers continue to discriminate against our members by treating them less favourably by not allowing them to do the same training courses by saying you are not allowed to attend these courses because you are Retained. The list goes. So the NRC demand that all Retained firefighters should have the same access to the same training, the same assessment as our Wholetime colleagues.

The NRC also further demand that the Executive Council negotiate a mechanism whereby qualified committed and professional firefighters do have the right and the opportunity to apply for internal vacancies, which they are often more than well qualified, as and when these vacancies become available. It is simply not right that my colleagues and I, having served as Retained firefighters for many years, are barred from even applying for positions which are advertised within our own Brigades. We are told you are Retained and these are only for Wholetime positions yet we are permitted to do exactly the same job as our Wholetime colleagues. We are all the same. Employers should be treating us all the same and if they don't then this

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Union, united and strong, will just have to make them treat us the same. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder to Resolution 52? *Formally seconded*. Is there a seconder to the Amendment to Resolution 52? *Formally seconded*. Was there anyone wishing to speak? Sam Samuels and then Gordon McQuade.

SIS SAMANTHA SAMUELS (B&EMM):

B&EMM have a number of concerns about this Motion, mainly being that we believe there needs to be an equality impact assessment around the process of transferability from Retained duty to Wholetime. Without a full equality impact assessment we feel Brigades may not even bother advertising externally for vacancies and promotions and if this happens we feel there will be a direct impact on the diversity agenda for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Just to inform you of some of the diversity figures for Retained Duty Staff, out of 14,166 Retained Duty Staff only 103 are black or ethnic minority. Out of 14,166 Retained Duty Staff, only 536 are women. Let us be clear. We are not saying that Retained Duty Staff should not be able to transfer from Retained to Wholetime. What we are saying is that there needs to be some equality proofing through an assessment and measures that need to be put in place before we agree on an FBU policy. Thank you.

BRO GORDON McQUADE (Central):

The Scottish Regional position here is to oppose this Resolution. In 2005 Central Scotland ran a pilot scheme and we took 5 Retained Duty personnel and we ran in house training for them on a four week training course. I supported that and Sam Mitchell was at the meeting and he supported it. We ran the course. They were all from different Stations and that course went from four weeks, to six weeks, to eight weeks, to nine weeks, to being sent to the Scottish Fire Service Training School for BA training. Central Scotland will never run their own in house training again. What they will do is, anybody who joins the Wholetime Service, will go to the Scottish Fire Service Training School.

Last week I witnessed an interview in a Retained Station for a job. The interview took 10 minutes and the boss at the Retained Station said that this person is going to get the job and he can give us 100 per cent availability. So because that person was next to the Retained Station they can then join the Retained and then go straight in a full time job. What about the person who does not live next to a Retained Station?

They have got to go through the whole selection procedure. They are saying a firefighter is a firefighter is a firefighter. That has been said for years and we have all had our debates about it. If I were to say to you a footballer is a footballer is a footballer, what would you say? There are different levels: some are full-time, part-time, different levels of skills, competence and training. I will leave you with that thought but the Scottish Region are opposed to this.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are giving support with the Amendment and I will ask Sean Starbuck to outline the position.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC can support this as amended. Some Brigades are using various tools for transferring. I think Gordon has just highlighted a problem there. Some Brigades are not using the national firefighter selection test properly and I think that is a problem which we raised last year under Resolution 40, and we said that there was an inappropriate use of the firefighter selection test and we asked for information. We still have not got information from every Brigade yet, but the Work Force Development Group are looking at a best practice document and this best practice document will be in place to help people who are faced by situations like this and faced by the real situation of transferring from Retained to Wholetime which we cannot deny is happening out there, and it is being consistently applied. So what the Work Force Development Group are doing is putting a document together which will give the best practice and take over and look at all the anomalies some of which have just been raised and some are really centred on Scotland. I would urge you to support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Point of clarification.

BRO JOHN CAIRNS (Strathclyde):

Central said that the Scottish Regional Committee has got a position. That is correct. The Scottish Regional Committee has got a position. However, when you come to Conference it is Brigade Committees that determine and that Brigade Committee tells their delegation we are going to vote one way, and that is the way we vote. Incidentally, we are opposing.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John, you are absolutely correct. All delegates here represent their Brigades, which are in the case of

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two Brigades are Regional Committees also, but for the other however-many-it-is, they are individual Brigades that they are representing, of course. Do the National Retained Committee seek the right to reply?

BRO PAUL BROWNHILL (NRC):

This is not a Resolution asking for preferential treatment. We are asking to be treated both fairly and not less favourably than any other full time colleagues.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will put the Amendment to Resolution 52 to the vote first. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *carried*.

I will now put Resolution 52 as amended to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. Thank you. That is *carried*.

We are now on to Resolution 58, also from the National Retained Committee, entitled Public Awareness Campaign. The Executive Council are supporting. The NRC to move please.

Resolution 58 – PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Conference demands that the Executive Council carry out a full survey of the day to day commitment given to the Fire & Rescue Services by members conditioned to the Retained Duty System. This should include the sacrifices made by their families and primary employers.

This information to be used to generate a National Public Campaign to highlight the value and contribution made by Retained Firefighters, in order to raise public profile and awareness of this essential element of many UK Fire & Rescue Services.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO RICK ARRAND (NRC):

I move Resolution 58, Public Awareness Campaign. We, the National Retained Committee, strongly believe that the Executive Council undertake a campaign on public awareness of the role within the Fire Service and, more importantly, within their communities of the work carried out by Retained firefighters. These firefighters are family, neighbours, work colleagues, whose main function is to stabilise and protect property. They are probably better known as the postman, the butcher, the builder, etc.

It may be shocking to some but we believe it would be fair to say that there are members within the Fire and Rescue Service, our own colleagues, who do not recognise nor comprehend the work and commitment carried out by members of the Retained section and the duties they fulfil. The general public see yellow and white helmets so to them a firefighter is a firefighter, and that is good enough for them. By the way, that is good enough for us too.

We demand that the Executive Council first of all carry out a comprehensive survey on the day to day commitment of Retained firefighters. This should include the sacrifices made to their families. We all remember the missed meals, reheating meals, wasted meals and lonely meals. The effect on our social life, if you are lucky enough to have one, and the outside interests, if you have time, all have to be sacrificed to give the commitment necessary to fulfil our contracts in the Service. Let us not forget about the boss. No, not your Station Manager, but the person who pays our wages weekly and monthly in our primary employment. Has anyone ever given them any thought? Has anyone ever spoken to them and asked how they cope when the alerter goes off and they lose a lot of their work force, maybe for hours? There is no question in our minds that the role of this section of the Fire Service should be highlighted and not taken for granted. We do not want a half-hearted pat on the back. We want an in depth professional campaign which shows us for what we are. We are members of our communities, we live and work in these communities, communities who have the benefit of having highly trained individuals who sacrifice a lot to keep their communities safe. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 58? *Formally seconded*. The Executive Council are supporting. I will put it to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on the Annual Report, Paragraph G17, Retained Members National Committee AGM 2008. Paragraph G18, Officer Members National Committee AGM 2008. I will now take Resolution 27 from the Officers National Committee, Motoring Allowances. The Executive Council are supporting. The ONC to move please.

Resolution 27 – MOTORING ALLOWANCES

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to undertake research into improving the mechanisms to enhance the reimbursements for all vehicle user schemes and to report the findings to Conference 2010.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

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BRO RUSSELL TROTH (ONC):

Can it be right that FBU members pay to work for a Fire and Rescue Service? Of course not, but many of our members whose daily work requires them to travel around their Brigades to fulfil their professional duties are doing that when either using their own car or their lease car. The current trends of Fire and Rescue Services to reduce the number of establishments, notably technical fire safety officers, mean that our members are being required to regularly travel across their county, which in some Brigades can often mean a single journey of 40 or 50 miles for a single journey, easily over a gallon of fuel costing upwards of £5. A lease car user may claim around £5, perhaps just covering the cost if they are using a small car. When driving to an incident under blue light conditions, an Officer member is expected to make maximum progress in order to assist and contribute to command and control, a safety critical matter. This means the MPG falls to closer to around 20 MPG, half the normal return. This effectively means Officer members are paying out of their own pocket to return home or, following a fire call, to return to their base.

Given the very serious reductions in Officer numbers, our members are being mobilised further afield and the problem is growing. We are not asking for the same level of travel costs that an MP might claim, just a fair rate from our employer. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Russell. Is there a seconder for Resolution 27? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting. I will put it to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against. That is carried unanimously.

We are now back on the Annual Report, Paragraph G19, Officer Members Seminar 2008. G20, Political Fund.

BRO JUSTIN THOMAS (Avon):

In Avon we have used our political fund in the fight against the BMP. We have also used it against the rise of fascism. We have used our fund to support other unions such as the Communication Workers' Union in their industrial struggles across the last 18 months. To that end Avon FBU commends the brilliant action of Bristol Communication Workers Union Branch members who have today refused to deliver British National Party leaflets across our area. *Applause*

Comrades, this has led to CWU members in Bristol and Bridgewater being attacked by Royal Mail managers, yet they have stood firm in their opposition to the extremist right wing politics. Conference, it would be great if all

FBU members support this CWU action across the country, if we should send solidarity delegations and support messages to our comrades who work in the postal service, and also we should encourage and support all CWU members and their comrades in that industry across the country to exercise their hard won conscience clause and not deliver the filth of the BNP.

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph G21 Re-organisation Sub Committee. We will now take Resolution 82 from London, Re-Organisation Sub-Committee. Joe.

Resolution 82 – RE-ORGANISATION SUB-COMMITTEE

This Conference instructs the Executive Council, under the auspices of the Re-Organisation Sub-Committee, to immediately seek the views of Regional Committees and Sectional Committees on all matters that they consider pertain to the re-organisation of the Union.

The Re-Organisation Sub-Committee will then produce a Report, based on the views received, which will include recommendations for any changes to the Union's Structures, Working Practices, Rules, Policies or Standing Orders, to Annual Conference 2010.

LONDON

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

I move Resolution 82. The Re-Organisation Sub-Committee was formed in 2004. That year the Regional Committee asked for submissions and got hardly any response, I believe. I think there were a number of reasons for that. We had just come off the back of the pay dispute. We had major upheavals with elections going on. Consequently, there were a number of reasons why we did not get involved in it, I believe. I think it is now five years down the line and we should have a look at where we are with the Re-Organisation Sub-Committee. It is only another small part in the Annual Report. I think any analyst would tell you now would be a good time to look back and see where we are. I think the fact is, as we all agree, the unions deal with different issues in different ways. I think it is now time to have a proper review of it and see if we can coordinate and conduct our business in a structured way. I do not think there is anything wrong with that. I think we talked about earlier questionnaires. It would be quite easy for Regional and Sectional Committees to get some form of questionnaire. I have noted a few things down myself as my thoughts and no-one else's, issues that affect trade union leave, expenses, allowances, work-life balance, training and education –

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the question we got from Shaun and Trevor I thought was a very good example of how you get the information back to Head Office. We talk about the frequency and role of Annual Conference. That would be a nice one to discuss, wouldn't it? What about the structure, role and membership of sub-committees? Future responsibilities of Devolved Regions, one, two and eight and possibly London. The financial allocation of Regions. These are all issues which we could be discussing. We have got Union Rules and Policies, Objects of the Union, Categories of Membership, Constitution of the Union and so on and so forth.

So I think these are some of the issues that the Re-Organisation Sub-Committee was brought into existence to look at. There are a lot of other subjects Sectional and Regional Committees could raise. I am well aware that we can submit stuff to the Re-Organisation Committee ad hoc at any time but I believe we should do it in a more formalised and structured way. What the Resolution is asking for, of course, is a review, if you like, come back to Conference and report next year and let us see where we are. Let us be honest, and I will put my own hand up and take the blame, we are our own worst enemies in some respects. We get that much work to do that some things get by-passed and clearly this was one of the issues that I and probably a lot of other Officials did not bother doing. Instead of looking backwards, I think we should be looking forwards. This is an opportunity, I think, to utilise the Re-Organisation Sub-Committee, and I think it would be a good idea if we did so. I will come back and see how much of a battering I get.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Joe. Is there a seconder for Resolution 82? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are opposing. I will ask Matt to give the opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Just to clarify the facts on the Re-Organisation Committee when it was set up. It was set up and agreed by Conference 2005. The Policy Statements came to Conference in 2005. It provided a report to Conference in 2007 and a further report in the Annual Report 2008 and, of course, 2009 as you can see. So the Re-Organisation Committee has reported in accordance with the wishes of Conference.

Just to be clear, in terms of the invitation to members: I had some dialogue with London about this. Two circulars at least were sent out, 22 July 2005, one to all Brigade Officials and all Regional Officials inviting submissions from all Committees of the Union with the statement attached, but also to all members. That circular on 22 July invited any individual member of the

Union to make a submission. Joe is correct however. I think we got something like 6 submissions in at the time. Joe says that we were all busy at the time. I have to say Joe, I don't see what has changed. We are probably even more busy today than we were then.

To be blunt, we put out numerous requests to Brigade Officials and don't always get a full response. To be frank, Brigade Officials are busy. Everybody is aware of that. What we don't see any logic in is, going through the same fruitless exercise again. The Re-Organisation Committee has continued to function and has, for example, suggested Rule changes, has discussed Devolution, including with the Regions in the Devolved Administrations. It has brought Rule changes regarding Retired and Out of Trade Member Sections, so the Re-Organisation Committee continues to function. We simply do not see any logic whatsoever in reopening a huge exercise in consultation when we have been through that already and we don't see any likelihood it will be a different response this time.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Are London seeking a right of reply.

BRO JOE MacVEIGH:

I understand what I said, Matt. I haven't got a problem with that. So far as I am aware, the opposition is that the work has already been carried out and that is why you are opposing. With Resolution 80 the work had already been carried out and you supported that, so I don't think there is any problem with the EC changing its mind and supporting this Resolution.

I think this is just basically a supporting measure for Head Office, for the Executive Council and the Sub-Committee itself, and I think it is just going to give us a clear indication of some of the major issues that we face internally. I would urge you to support the Resolution and onwards and upwards as they say.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Joe. I will put Resolution 82 to the vote. The Executive Council are opposed. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. I will take that once more. Can I see those in favour please. Keep your hands up. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *defeated*.

We are now on to Paragraph G22 of the Annual Report, RAFT. Paragraph G23 Regional Offices and Officials. Paragraph G24, Retired Officials. Paragraph G25 Membership Statistics. Two delegates indicated. Both come to the rostrum, please.

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BRO STEVE ALLEN (Oxfordshire):

In February this year the EC agreed a paper entitled *Proposal for a Concentrated Organising and Recruitment Campaign in Regions 9, 11 and 12*. Following this, with the assistance of the TUC organiser, Daniel Giblin, we embarked on a detailed Brigade-wide mapping of our membership. This allowed us to target areas of low membership density and following that we undertook a series of Station visits with the desire to recruit new members and organise existing ones. It is therefore pleasing to report that the FBU membership in Oxfordshire has increased following these meetings. In fact, Branches that previously had no representation have become engaged in the Union, have elected Branch reps and in some cases activists have been identified. However, the work has only just started. It has continued to grow and become stronger. A recruiting and organising campaign must persist. In the face of the comments by the General Secretary earlier on yesterday about membership being the life blood of the Union and debating issues such as Resolution 89, the role of the TUC organiser can be seen in a different light. It has become more crucial that the goal of recruitment in RDS rural areas should succeed the role of the TUC organiser. We therefore hope that the General Secretary will join us in thanking Daniel for his hard work and offer the Conference the assurance that the support currently available to Regions and Brigades will continue for the foreseeable future. Thank you.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I am more than happy to pass that on to Daniel, and I think there has been some outstanding work done throughout the Region there, and I would urge all Brigades and Regions to go away and think about similar types of campaigns. We have had some remarkable successes in various parts of the UK. Unfortunately, due to the time today we cannot see full reports of all of those, but there are some great stories out there. Discuss, make contact with Shaun and Daniel, come and arrange visits, work on a programme of recruitment and organising wherever you want.

BRO LUD RAMSEY (B&EMM):

The FBU have to look hard at the statistics and see exactly what they mean. If we look at the figures and look at London, they have got 5,700 members, almost 100 per cent. But when we look at some of these smaller Brigades, take Hampshire, they have got 536 Wholtime members, 94 Retained, 10 Control Room. This only means that they are representing 35.5 per cent of the work force. As soon as you go to talk to senior management they have got the upper hand. They are turning round and saying you are not speaking for the

work force; you are only speaking for this minority. The Resolution Hampshire brought this year they could have ruled out co-responding. They could have taken co-responding out of it. The reason they brought this was they wanted help. And they need help because their Officials are under serious attack here. The senior management team in Hampshire have used Officials, attacked Officials, they have even had to go to an Employment Tribunal just to arrange Branch meetings.

They have attacked the policies of the FBU. That is the way they are getting through. When the Wholtime-Retained was against Union policy, in Hampshire we had over 140 members doing it which was virtually 20 per cent of the membership. Now they have got co-responding, if you like, another way they are going to use to defeat the FBU. The FBU has got to put aside more time and more money and resources to stop the trend of losing members.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Lud. I will ask the General Secretary to respond to your points.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think they are very important, powerful points that Lud has made. We did have a very thorough discussion last year about membership and organising. It is the other side of the debate we had the other day about finances, because there are two ways you can deal with financial problems. All of our income, by and large, comes from membership contributions. There are two ways you can deal with problems. You can either increase your income, which means recruiting members, or you make cut backs. That is the only two things you can do. Clearly, the preferable one is to increase and recruit members.

I think everybody needs to think very carefully over the coming months about the points that have been raised there. Certainly in relation to Region 12, Sean Starbuck, National Officer, and Daniel have worked very closely. There is a programme of action in there. That will involve Hampshire. There are particular problems in Hampshire in terms of an anti-union stance by management, but that will be addressed. We will commit effort, time and resources to the work in Region 12 and in particular in Hampshire.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We are now going to take Resolution 78 from Greater Manchester, Recruitment and Organising-Training and Resources. The Executive Council oppose. Greater Manchester to move, please.

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Resolution 78 – RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISING – TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Conference 2008 agreed changes to Rule 3(1) whereby 'other categories of employees as determined by the Executive Council' may be organised by the Fire Brigades Union.

As a consequence a number of brigades have received requests from individuals or groups of individuals for membership to the Fire Brigades Union.

If/when accepted as members these individuals may be employed on conditions of service outside the National Joint Council Scheme of Conditions of Service for Local Authorities Fire and Rescue Services, and therefore on wide ranging different contracts of employment.

To enable full representation be afforded to these members, Conference instructs the Executive Council to produce clear guidance and resources for those officials who will be responsible for this representation, this guidance to be circulated no later than August 2009.

Conference further instructs the Executive Council to plan a series of training courses in representing members on other such conditions of service to commence no later than September 2009.

GREATER MANCHESTER

BRO ALAN ANDERSON (GMC):

GMC brought this Resolution to Conference following the Rule change that was accepted allowing persons who were not employed on our conditions of service to join the FBU. This was done last year. We actually voted against it.

Subsequently, we in Greater Manchester were approached by a number of airport employees from our local airport, wishing to join the Fire Brigades Union. We got to the point we were going to have a meeting with these people and the President was going to come down and talk to them, and we were going to see about getting them joined up. Their employers actually stopped them having the meeting and obviously put pressure on them, and they did not join the Fire Brigades Union.

All we were asking for was some training and resources from our Officials who would have been expected to deal with this wide range of new issues. GMC will withdraw the Resolution, but please can the EC explain their opposition to this.

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean Starbuck from the EC.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, Alan. Obviously, our position was to remit or oppose. The position we have got on this one is that we do recognise the Rule change. To date there have been no details of members presented. To produce guidance on understanding people's conditions of service we need to have a clear direction on the conditions of service. We have been representing FBU members on Grey Book for over 90 years, and I think part of your Resolution wanted some training by September. I thought that was unachievable. First of all, bring the information, we will sit down with Trevor Cave and whoever, and we will sort out any education when the need arises.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. Before we move to Resolution 80 on the title of Retired Members Section, I just bring to Conference's attention the fact that we have had two guests in the balcony all week from the National Association of Retired Firefighters: Frank Burn and John Jackson and I am sure Conference will wish to show their support for their attendance here. *Applause*

I will now take Resolution 80 from Lancashire entitled Retired Members Section. The Executive Council are offering qualified support. Lancashire to move, please.

Resolution 80 – RETIRED MEMBERS SECTION

At present, when FBU members retire from the Fire Service they can choose to become an 'Out of Trade' member of the Fire Brigades Union. However, as 'Out of Trade' members, they have very little interaction with the union after retirement.

It is recognised that many of these members were extremely active within the Union and would be willing to continue to actively support the aims and aspirations of the Union.

This conference calls upon the Executive Council to undertake a feasibility study into having a 'Retired Members' Section within the Fire Brigades Union structure.

It is understood that this would take extensive research and ultimately Rule changes, so the Executive Council should report back to conference as early as is reasonably practical.

LANCASHIRE

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BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancs):

I move Resolution 80. I was going to give you quite a big speech but in the interests of time I will not. But what I wanted to say is I took a phone call this morning from an Out of Trade Retired member who I have not spoken to for a couple of years and it is ironic that the question he asked me was is there anything I can do in the Burnley area to fight the BNP? I said, yes, of course there is. So I put him in touch with the anti-BNP coordinator. Then I said to him, by the way, while you are on the subject, Conference delivered over 8,000 leaflets yesterday in the Scarborough area, and he said to me, "Wow, that is good." Then he said to me, "Is there anything else I can do to help the FBU in general?" I said to him, "Well, you could help with the Control Campaign." He said, "That's great" so now we have got an extra bod on our Control Campaign in Lancashire.

Just one other thing. I know we have not put a time restriction on the Resolution as to a report back. All we are asking for is a review to look into whether it is feasible to have a Retired Members' Section, but just looking at the average age of Conference, don't take too long over it please. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Good point there, Steve. Is there a seconder for 80? Officers National Committee, please.

BRO PETER MOSS (ONC):

Briefly seconding Resolution 80. Amongst other reasons we wanted to second this Resolution as it is particularly relevant to the Officers National Committee with imminent retirement of our long standing Chair, Alan Guest, and dedicated Region 9 Officers rep, Dave Cain. I am sure Conference would join with the Officers National Committee in offering congratulations and our gratitude to Alan and Dave for all the fine work over the years. *Applause.* It is exactly with these people like Alan and Dave in mind that these Resolutions are initiated. We must not lose the skills and endeavour of such Retired Members any longer. Let us not continue to waste this valuable resource. Let us start to create the Retired Members Section as soon as we can. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pete. Mandy.

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

The CSNC support this Resolution. All too often we realise too late that the wealth of knowledge that we

rely on in meetings is no longer there just because that member has just retired from being an active trade unionist one day to being put out to grass the next. Don't lose this invaluable resource. Use them to encourage and assist you, the officials and membership of the Union. There is more to being an Out of Trade Member than payment to the FBU and magazine. As for funding, our Out of Trade Members have contributed to this Union for 30 years, or more if you are a Control Staff member. They have supported us. Now it is time to support them. So, just as a personal aside, in supporting the Resolution I just want to say, I am going to miss you Gregggy and I won't even get to see you at the football because we will be in different divisions.

THE PRESIDENT:

I think that is called a barbed wish! Rose.

SIS ROSE JONES (West Midlands):

I oppose Resolution 80. Although we understand the sentiments behind this Resolution, we feel we have to oppose it. With the recent Rule change we have now got Out of Trade and Retired members. Into action after retirement is up to the individual. If those Retired members who were active within the Union wish to continue their support and actively engage, they can do so without having to have their own Section. Aims and aspirations don't end the day you retire, and an activist will always be an activist; it is in the blood. But we don't feel the need, especially at this time, to spend FBU time and money having a study to see if it is feasible to establish this structure. It may even stifle progression if you feel that someone perhaps older and wiser is looking over their shoulder seeing how you are doing all the time. So we oppose this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask Matt to outline the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The qualification is, firstly, that the work is already under way under the Re-Organisation Committee. There has been some consideration of the Retired Members and a Retired Members Section. That is reflected in the Rule change that has already been mentioned that you have agreed earlier in the week.

In terms of Rose's opposition, I don't think there is any decision as yet or any firm views as yet as to what shape that Section might take. We are not necessarily talking about a Section in the same way as we have Sections within the current Rule Book. That all needs to be considered. But on that basis certainly there is a

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wealth of talent out there. On the Justice for Firefighters Pensions Campaign we did write to all Out of Trade Members and undoubtedly many of those engaged in lobbying wrote to their MP, emailed their MP and so on, so there is a valuable resource out there whether on that Campaign or, as has been mentioned, on the Control Campaign. So we would urge support of that Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Are Lancashire seeking a right of reply? Steve.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

Just a quick one. We are only asking for a feasibility study. It won't be compulsory to join, I imagine and we do need to maintain training of our new young officials.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will put Resolution 80 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. Thank you. That is *carried*.

We are now on to Emergency Resolution 15 from Humberside, Organising and Recruitment. Humberside to move please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 15 ORGANISING AND RECRUITMENT

Following the pilot Activist Academy course in Humberside and the Humberside FBU Organising Strategy completed in April 2009, Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out an immediate survey and mapping exercise to identify areas where the TUC Activist Academy course would benefit FBU Officials and members and assist in organising and recruiting new FBU members.

Furthermore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to encourage and support the use of local organising strategies as part of a national roll out organising programme in every Brigade within the UK Fire & Rescue Service. The Executive Council will provide a progress report on the use of Brigade Organising Strategies to Annual Conference 2010.

HUMBERSIDE

BRO ASHLEY OLDFIELD (Humberside):

I move Emergency Resolution 15. Last year I was looking to take part in the Activist Academy course with a wide range of Officials from Humberside. These members ranged from Brigade Officials through to active members from our Branches. This was part of the

intention, of course, to try and bring through new members and become active within the FBU locally. The results of the course have been published for Conference and will be put to the Executive Council, and we are hoping to get their endorsement. This report is available for you. If you see Daniel, that report is available and I do believe he has got some freebies as well if you would like to see him.

We do think it is important that you have a look at this report and see how it helps us in Humberside to become more organised and better capable of doing the job that we are elected to do by our members.

Following this course, we would like to urge you all to support our Resolution and take the opportunity to develop your own Organising Strategy with the support from your Region and from the EC. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ashley. Is there a seconder to Emergency Resolution 15?

BRO GARY BENNETT (Merseyside):

This Resolution is simply about organising and educating our members at grass root levels, for instance our Branches. We, on Merseyside, are about to start own FBU Activist Academy as we believe this will become an excellent and invaluable tool to recruit, organise and educate our members. Conference, I second.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see those in favour please of Emergency Resolution 15. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now back on the Annual Report, Paragraph G26, Union Trustees. Paragraph G27, Women Members National Committee Report 2008. Paragraph 28, Women Members National Committee AGM 2008. Section J. Health and Safety. Paragraph J1, Introduction. I will now take Resolution 28 from the National Women's Committee, Personal Protective Equipment. NWC to move please.

Resolution 28 – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

This Annual Conference is appalled that many Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) have adopted a "one size fits all policy" in regard to the provision of some items of personal protective equipment (PPE). Women members are often excluded from specific workplace activity such as water rescue and

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chemical incidents due to the PPE provided being too big for them to wear safely.

This situation is unacceptable and therefore Conference demands that the Executive Council:

- ***Urgently seek to rectify this negative situation affecting our women members by raising this issue at the National Joint Council as well as any other relevant national forums.***
- ***Mount a campaign in Firefighter and any other written form, to highlight and encourage our members to report ill fitting PPE as a near miss.***
- ***Set up a data base to monitor and assess the situation within each Fire and Rescue Service.***

Conference further instructs the Executive Council to report back any progress made to the National Women's Committee within 6 months of Annual Conference 2009.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS EMMA DAVIS (NWC):

I propose Resolution 28 PPE. We all know the UK Fire and Rescue Service has a problem recruiting and retaining women firefighters. So with the Government targets in England of an increase from the current 3 per cent to 15 per cent, what are they actually doing to address this problem? Are they providing adequate women's facilities, decent maternity provisions and comfortable fitting working uniforms across the board? Importantly, are they ensuring the correct health and safety of all personnel by providing correct fitting PPE? In most cases we don't believe so.

There have been operational women firefighters in the Fire Service over 30 years yet still many women have personal protective equipment that doesn't fit properly, compromising its effectiveness and firefighter safety. The one size fits all approach that some Brigades adopt sees too many items of PPE unsuitable for women, as one size fits all tends to mean extra large which can be too tight for some larger firefighters, which drowns most women. There are many women who don't have women's fit fire kit, to give the protection and movement in the correct places, or gloves that are small enough, which makes gripping, lifting, knot tying, etc, more difficult. Our members have experienced water based training with dry suits that are too big and been laughed at by others when they get wet from the lack of a seal. I don't remember a time ever when a firefighter's safety was ever funny.

Some of our members have even been told that they cannot participate in boat rescue because the Service has not provided the correct sizes. Gas tight suits seem to come in a size 10 boot only and some rescue helmets don't adjust small enough. I could go on but

I think you get the gist of the extent of the problem. I am sure you can think of at least one area of PPE that needs addressing in your Brigade.

In a fire situation, a firefighter with ill-fitting PPE has two options: wear it and be unable to work effectively and efficiently and put themselves or other firefighters at potential risk, or be excluded from the incident. So it is a no win situation. Either take a chance that it all goes okay, or be seen to be making a fuss and make yourself stand out even more than usual. Why should our women members and other small or extra large members be put in this position? And how is it helping the Fire and Rescue Service recruit women firefighters, and even more importantly retain the ones it has already got? So I ask you to support this Motion, but not just with a show of hands. Look in your own Brigade and see how they are failing in the health and safety of your members with your ill-fitting PPE. Then raise the issue and support a campaign to encourage the reporting of near miss incidents with PPE until this issue is rectified. Let us make a career in the Fire Service a safer career for everyone no matter how big or small. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 28?

BRO GRAEME LESTER (London):

The subject of inadequate ill-fitting PPE for women firefighters has been around for far too long. Fire Authorities have been dragging their feet for far too long and it has to stop. In London the struggle to get adequate PPE and facilities has been a long and arduous struggle for the women firefighters. Good progress has been made by the Women's Committee but there is still a long way to go. Out of 5,911 operational personnel in London, 223 of those personnel have inadequate, ill-fitting PPE.

Emma is right. Firefighter safety is no laughing matter. Firefighter safety is being compromised by ill-fitting PPE and we should not let this happen to our members and colleagues. Emma stated that firefighters with ill-fitting PPE have two options: first one, wear it and possibly risk their own safety or their colleagues' safety and quite frankly this option should be non-starter, or two, be excluded from the incident or the training session. By not having the correct PPE for women firefighters, Fire Authorities are clearly excluding them, thus discriminating against them on the grounds of their sex by not allowing them to fulfil their role within the UK Fire Service due to substandard PPE. I urge you to start recording near misses after every drill, every shout, even when carrying out day to day routines. If someone is restricted from carrying out their role within the Fire Service because of inadequate PPE, then we need to record it as a near

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miss, make management sit up and listen and, if we need to, take discrimination cases to Employment Tribunals. Support the Resolution Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Resolution 28 is being supported by the Executive Council. I will put it to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are on the Annual Report, Paragraph J2, Regional Health and Safety Co-ordinators. Paragraph J3, Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Group. Paragraph J4, TUC Union Health and Safety Specialists. Paragraph J5, Generic Risk Assessment. Resolution 31 from Northumberland, Risk Assessments. Can I ask Northumberland to move, please.

Resolution 31 – RISK ASSESSMENTS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a national survey of Fire and Rescue Services to establish what work has been, and is continuing to be carried out on risk assessments in relation to each individual fire authority's IRMP. The survey should identify whether or not all risks to life, property, heritage and the environment have been adequately assessed and that:

- ***Appropriate and acceptable control measures are put in place to deal with all identifiable risks.***
- ***Sufficient resources are available to deal with all identified risks, at all times.***
- ***All equipment and safe systems of work to deal with those risks are fully risk assessed by competent persons.***
- ***Risk assessments are being regularly reviewed and consultation on such is taking place with FBU Brigade Officials.***
- ***Whether any best practice can be identified or concerns highlighted.***

The survey to be completed and a report made available to Brigade Officials prior to Annual Conference 2010.

NORTHUMBERLAND

BRO COLIN JAMES (Northumberland):

I move Resolution 31, Risk Assessments. This is Northumberland's IRMP for 2008-2011. Eighteen pages, nice glossy paper, plenty of colour photographs in there. The odd generalised statement here and there. They have even highlighted some of the shortcomings from previous IRMPs. However, as an IRMP it is lacking in care, detail and how all the risks have been assessed. As we know, health and safety legislation dictates that

all risks should be assessed, and the risk assessment consulted on and regularly reviewed. It is a huge task for any Brigade if it is done properly, but that is the nature of IRMPs. It is all very well claiming that an IRMP has been effective and done its job in reducing deaths and injuries and the number of incidents that we are called to. That is, until something goes wrong and it is then up for scrutiny, but by then it is too late. What this Resolution is stating is that behind every IRMP there should be a complete suite of risk assessments that covers the work we do. The previous Resolution on PPE is just one example of that.

So in effect what we are asking the EC to do is to collate all Brigades' IRMPs, which is work we already carry out, but all the Brigades' risk assessments that should be there to underpin those IRMPs and also evidence to show that those risk assessments have been regularly reviewed and fully consulted upon in accordance with legislation.

It is a complete cop out for Chief Fire Officers to say here is our IRMP, it is out for consultation, we want your views as part of our consultation process. It is difficult to provide comments and feedback on a document that says so little. This is the FBU's National IRMP document, 144 pages, so we have already done some of the work. Let us have a closer look and see if Chief Fire Officers have done all of theirs and that we use this process to continue the campaign to protect the public, continue the campaign to protect our members' jobs and continue the campaign to protect our members' lives. This Resolution ties in with some of the EC Policy Statement on A Service for the 21st Century and some of the other Resolutions we have heard this last week. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Colin. Is there a seconder for Resolution 31? *Formally seconded*. The Executive Council are supporting. I will put 31 – I am sorry, Control Staff National Committee wish to come to the rostrum.

SIS SHARON THORNDYKE (CSNC):

I will be very brief, Conference, I know you are all chasing to get off. We don't want to put a fly in the ointment, but just be aware of something here. If Regionalisation goes ahead, you can forget about your local IRMPs. The calls won't be taken by your local operators with their local knowledge and you are just going to have to hope that the data migration kit has worked and that the correct PDA is mobilised.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sharon. The Executive Council are supporting. I will put 31 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please.

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Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Paragraph J6 of the Annual Report, Negotiating Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Rights. We now move to Emergency Resolution 6 from Kent, Post Natal Depression. Kent to move please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 6 POST NATAL DEPRESSION

Conference is aware of recent discussions held at the NJC in March regarding maternity provisions. Conference also notes with concern the increasing numbers of post natal depression cases affecting our members on returning to work.

We call upon the EC to negotiate a national monitoring system upon returning to work, to identify and allow post natal depression to be properly and acceptably dealt with.

KENT

BRO IAN YOUNG (Kent):

A bit of disappointment here. Unfortunately, due to the fact that we are running out of time, Sister Jenny Impey could not actually read this Resolution out, so it has been left to me so just imagine that it is Jenny. Jenny suffered this so it is personal to Jenny.

I urge everyone to support this as well. It is about two women firefighters in Kent who have been affected by the illness post-natal depression. It can range in severity from a mild, normal period of mood disturbance called baby blues through to post natal depression and the most rare form, post natal psychosis. There are numerous methods of early detection. The primary one used by the NHS is called the Edinburgh Scale Questionnaire. This is only carried at health clinics which not all women attend so our members can be missed. We have all seen the news reports about the terrible price some children and parents pay for mental illness not being diagnosed early enough. This Resolution calls for an early detection system to be put into place upon a woman's return to work after maternity leave. Please support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ian. Seconder for Emergency Resolution 6?

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

I second the Emergency Resolution on post natal depression. Maternity leave is not sickness absence and pregnancy is not an ailment. That is a fact. It is a biological condition with physical signs and symptoms and an end

product which is usually timed and barely predictable. Post natal depression can be very different. It has got a variety of signs and symptoms and they are nowhere as easy to identify to the sufferer or for the confused onlookers. Post natal depression can appear up to four years after childbirth and goes undetected in hundreds of women. For FBU women members, sickness absences can stack up making a confusing and difficult situation impossible and, as the mover of the Resolution stated, Jenny from the Women's Committee, and also a previous member of the Women's Committee, Pauline, have suffered quite seriously from PND, so much so that Pauline is not here anymore on the Committee – she has left the Fire Service, that is what I mean!

Jen was going to give you a glimpse into her experience of PND and what she has been through, and the thing I was going to highlight really is that Jen highlighted a positive out of what could have been a very negative situation. As a sufferer, she now is better placed to spot this in other people or to help spot it. Considering we are all battling up and down the country to get the employers to look after their women in the stages of pregnancy while they are still at work, it is even harder to make them look at the women and look after them for any length of time when they come back to work. Fire Services seem to look at women returners from maternity leave as a list of things to do: pregnant woman, baby out, time off, return to work, retrain and 1, 2, 3, you are back in the Room just like you'd never been away. It is not that straightforward. Often women are coming back to work earlier than they wanted to for financial reasons, before they want to and so problems occur, and because women can suffer anything from a mild lack of confidence to acute psychosis and being completely unable to care for themselves with their babies, we really have to do something.

Can I ask you to do one thing as officials and representatives and that is go back and put this on the agenda for your next management meeting? Ask your managers what they are going to do should the situation arise. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Helen. The Executive Council are supporting. I will put Emergency Resolution 6 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Paragraph J7, Branch Health, Safety and Welfare Representatives Toolkit.

A DELEGATE:

It has been a difficult year in our Region again post Warwickshire, but we are getting there. The toolkits

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have arrived. These have revitalised reps on the Stations, getting their heads round trying to get their members safety sorted out. This year the HSC are coming to see us. They have posted the list. We have got the office assurance inspections. There are HSC elements in that as well for us to deal with. We have got the GRA process going on. We are involved with that because the employers have realised that we are experts. I have been quick to criticise in the past for failings of this area of the Union. This year we have had a Union School on Health and Safety. I would like to thank John, and we ask for his continued support from the EC on Health and Safety issues. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John to respond.

JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, Mick. If I could very briefly say a few words about the toolkits, I want to thank the support of the Executive Council and the commitment and the finances that have gone in to funding health and safety, and I think it shows the seriousness in which the Union have taken the subject. We agreed to make these toolkits for every work place in the country and issue them out through the Health and Safety Reps themselves, Brigade Safety Reps, rather than just sending them to the Branches. We currently have distributed upwards of 1,400 of the packs to Safety Reps in the UK which I think is quite a phenomenal achievement. We are aware that a number of the TUC colleges around the country are now picking them up from our Reps and using them as a best practice toolkit themselves which I think gives credit to the Union.

I hope that some of you have had the opportunity to look at the stand out there over the last couple of days where we had some of the toolkits on display, and if there are any Brigades that still have not ordered them and want them for their Branches, then just simply drop me an email, tell me where you want them delivered and we will arrange for that to happen. If I can say, one of the other benefits of the toolkit is, somebody rightly praised the work that Daniel is doing in terms of the organising, because I think we must use the health and safety as an opportunity to organise the Union, and I know that Daniel has found the packs beneficial, and has taken them everytime he goes to a new Branch, and given those new members the opportunity to pick up something that starts immediately to help them make themselves and their colleagues safer. So I am pretty sure the Executive Council are going to continue to support the field of health and safety and the School itself this year for Brigade Officials I think was very successful. We are still collating the feedback from that, but anecdotally from the evidence there it is a very good response. We are at the moment developing an

accident and investigation course for serious accident investigations, and we are working on a protocol that we will hopefully deal with you, and distribute to you, in the not too distant future in order that you can try and establish the protocol with your own Chief Officers. So in the area of Health and Safety, I think we are still moving ahead pretty well as a Union. Thanks for that.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. We will take Resolution 30 from Northumberland with an Amendment from Devon & Somerset which the Executive Council are supporting, both the Resolution and the Amendment. I ask Northumberland to move please.

Resolution 30 – HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING – TIME OFF

Conference recognises the vital role played by FBU Health & Safety Representatives in making our workplaces safer and reducing accidents and injuries. Conference further recognises the increasing workloads being placed on Health & Safety Representatives at Regional, Brigade and Branch level, together with the importance of training for those Representatives to keep their skills up to date.

Consequently, all the necessary training that is required can significantly add to the workload and already high level of commitment of each Health & Safety Representative. Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to seek an agreement with the NJC which reinforces a Health & Safety Representative's right to paid time off to attend training courses by recognising that any time spent on a training course during a day off from work, shall then be classed as part of that Representative's normal working hours.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Amendment

Add third paragraph:

"Conference also calls on the union to campaign at all levels for the Government to amend the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees' Regulations 1977 (as amended) to ensure that safety representatives' functions undertaken outside their working hours are legally recognised as work time, whether or not they are paid for these duties."

DEVON & SOMERSET

BRO COLIN JAMES (Northumberland):

I move Resolution No 30, Health and Safety Training – Time Off, and accepting the Amendment from Devon & Somerset.

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Conference, we have already recognised the right to paid time off to undertake Health and Safety Reps functions which includes training as stated in the SRSC regulations. This has not always been achieved due in some part to FBU Health and Safety Reps, mainly lay officials, and probably mostly working a shift system.

As a consequence, Health and Safety Reps often attend training courses on a day release basis some of which are over a 12 or even 36 week period and many of those are on off duty days. Whereas Reps from some Brigades may be compensated for that commitment, many are not and it is often to the amazement of Health and Safety Reps from other work places who have their time off included as part of their normal working week that firefighters' working shifts do not.

I work closely with our Brigade Health and Safety Rep and I am aware of the many days he has spent on both FBU and TUC training courses. Again, the vast majority are having to be on his time off. In addition to the time spent on training in the last two or three years, he has been involved in over a hundred different work schemes as the role of the Health and Safety Rep is now ever increasing.

A lot of that work resulted in new Brigade policies. That needs our Health and Safety Reps operational experience, determination to protect our members' safety at work and the commitment to do all the necessary training in the first place. We already have national agreements and protocols on joint working for the benefit of Fire and Rescue Services, and it is in the best interests of all the Brigades that there are sufficient numbers of trained FBU Health and Safety Reps to make our work places, wherever that may be, safer or, when things do go wrong, and sometimes with tragic consequences, that fully trained Safety Reps are available to investigate and make those recommendations to improve our safety at work.

Our members who work shifts and undertake health and safety training should not be at detriment by doing so by having to sacrifice their rota days or annual leave when there is legislation that should cover this matter. We therefore call on the EC to seek discussions at a national level to remedy that situation and have the right to paid time off fully recognised, and all time spent on health and safety training courses classed as part of the normal working week. I am sure that such recognition and agreement if achieved will encourage more Reps to come forward and that is important for the future of this Union. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Colin. Is there a seconder for Resolution 30, please? *Formally seconded.* Can we have Devon & Somerset to move their Amendment. *Formally moved.*

Is there a seconder for the Amendment? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting in which case I will put them to the vote.

Can I see those in favour of the Amendment from Devon & Somerset please. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried*.

Can I therefore see Resolution 30 from Northumberland as amended by Devon & Somerset. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Paragraph J8 of the Annual Report, Workplace Facilities. It is now 3 o'clock. The centre can have tea and coffee available for us for 3.30 so you are going to have to wait another half hour before you get a break and we will plough on and see what we can get done in that time.

We are going to take Resolution 32 from the National Women's Committee, Implementation of the FBU Minimum Workplace Facilities, Best Practice Document. National Women's Committee to move please. And if you could move the Amendment at the same time, that would assist.

Resolution 32 – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FBU MINIMUM WORKPLACE FACILITIES, BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENT

This Annual Conference notes that the Executive Council at its meeting held on the 16th – 18th September 2008 endorsed the FBU 'Health, Safety and Welfare Minimum Workplace Facilities, Best Practice' document and agreed to publish and circulate it to Brigade Officials.

To ensure that further implementation of it is carried out, Conference calls upon the Executive Council to:

- ***Negotiate at the National Joint Council for better facilities within Fire and Rescue Service workplaces using the FBU Health, Safety and Welfare Minimum Facilities, Best Practice Document.***
- ***Highlight at the National Joint Council the problems faced by our***
- ***members regarding inappropriate facilities in the workplace.***
- ***Carry out annual workplace surveys, via Health & Safety Representatives, to determine the standards of the facilities in each Fire and Rescue Service and***
- ***Regularly review and update where necessary the FBU Health, Safety and Welfare Minimum Facilities, Best Practice Document.***

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

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Amendment

Insert new bullet point between bullet points 2 and 3 to read:

- **Educate FBU members continuously regarding the reason and need for separate facilities and why those facilities need to be respected.**

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS SAM RYE (NWC):

I move Resolution 32 with the Amendment, and apparently the longest Resolution title on the agenda so thanks to Cleveland and ONC for pointing that one out for us.

By now I hope you should all have seen a copy of the Health and Safety Welfare Minimum Workplace Facilities Best Practice document, and it looks like this. Now the document is out there, you could be mistaken and think that all the hard work is done. But the answer, I am afraid, is that this is where the hard work really starts. With the use of this document we need to make sure that it is implemented across the British Fire Service in full. It is no longer an excuse that Fire Services up and down this country say that they cannot afford these upgrades even with the ongoing and worsening recession crisis. In recent months the CLG has released over £78 million for use on Station upgrades with Fire Services across the country sharing this pot of money. This is in addition to the £500 million released for PFI Stations. Even the Fire Minister has indicated that this money should be utilised to address the gender imbalance on Stations and on the fireground when it comes to facilities.

What is the point of Fire Services spending money on recruitment of under-represented groups only to throw them, like a lamb to the slaughter, when it comes to providing for them? Why should a woman be made to feel that she is being difficult when it comes to having somewhere to change that is not in front or in full view of her male work colleagues? Is it really that hard to understand. But this is the problem that our women members are facing on a daily basis. This problem is further compounded with a lack of understanding from some of our managers, laughing at the very question of wanting some privacy. After all, unisex facilities are the best way to integrate men and women at work! So say some of our managers. However, I bet no-one remembered to tell the newly recruited woman that to become a fully competent firefighter you have to undress in front of a man first. I could go on talking about the individual horror stories but over the years at Conference, facility issues have been spoken about quite a lot. This is where we now have the perfectly opportunity to stop talking about it and finally put this to rest once and for all. This is not just about women's privacy either; it works both ways. For men and women to truly feel integrated at work, it is about dignity at all times.

A lot of what we are talking about here is quickly remedied by supporting this Resolution to educate and negotiate and to implement this best practice document in full. This is not about niceties but basic requirements. Please support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 32? *Formally seconded.* Is there a seconder for the Amendment? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting the Resolution and Amendment. I will put the Amendment to the vote first. Can I see those in favour please. Can I see any against. That is *carried*.

I put Resolution 32 from the National Women's Committee as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Were there any against? That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Paragraph J9, Fire Crew Cab Safety. Paragraph J10, Channel Tunnel Incident 11 September 2008. Paragraph J11, Warwickshire – Atherstone on Stour. Paragraph J12, Marlie Farm – East Sussex. Paragraph J13, Stevenage – Harrow Court. Tony.

BRO TONY SMITH (Herts):

I am sure Conference is well aware by now that Hertfordshire have been served with an Improvement Notice on the basis of breathing apparatus training and breathing apparatus refresher training. Herts have received this Improvement Notice having narrowly avoided prosecution. They are not my words. They are the words of the Health & Safety Executive. Yet in the week following the issue of the Improvement Notice, the Herts Chief Fire Officer circulated a memo to all personnel stating that there was no link between that Improvement Notice and the Harrow Court incident. I think that is absolutely disgraceful.

I am disappointed to be in the position where really the lessons of Harrow Court do not still seem to have been learned by our employers. I just find it absolutely incredible. This is not just a Hertfordshire problem; this is a national problem of total disparity in breathing apparatus training, breathing apparatus refresher training and compartment fire behaviour training. This type of training, this subject, is a complex subject for our members to be constantly tackling what really ought to be viewed as the bread and butter of our work, and yet we are still in the position where our employers cannot supply us with the proper training, and the proper training across the board, so that we are all getting the same training and the same quality of training. Again, I find it absolutely incredible in light of that incident and subsequent incidents.

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Another issue has also arisen on the back of that, and that is with relevance to the technical specification of firefighting equipment that we are now being supplied. Again, I think this comes out and we have heard talk over Conference, of those national committees and now we are in the realms of anybody can design a bit of fire kit and just punch it out there to us and expect us to buy it. It is just not good enough.

Were the deaths at Harrow Court in vain? That is the question I find myself again asking and I am loath to ever think the answer to that question would ever be yes, but we are still struggling to get the evidence that that is not the case. So I would certainly like to thank John for the work he has done so far at national level. Paragraph J13 refers to the problem we had with the distressed signal units, and it is nice to see that the wheels are finally starting to turn on that issue, but I would also like to seek the assurances from the EC Member with the HSE reference that he is taking these other issues of BA refresher training, compartment fire behaviour training, at those relevant meetings at a national level with a view to our employers actually one day meeting their obligation. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tony. I will ask John to respond.

JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, Tony, for raising those issues. I think we all don't want to see any more fatalities amongst the members but we certainly expect to see that lessons are learned, distributed and acted upon as quickly as possible. I think you can take back to your Brigade that these deaths have not been in vain and we are making improvements, albeit they might be slow and Mark referred earlier to the Programme Board that has been set up, The Operational Guidance Programme Board. We have made big inroads into not just the Health & Safety Executive but to CLG. We are fully involved in the review of all the generic risk assessments and a project has just kicked off finally, and that is the review of technical bulletin one 1997. That project to last for about a year and that Improvement Notice that Tony talked about for training, he is absolutely right.

That is not just an issue for Hertfordshire. That is why we circulated that Improvement Notice to every Brigade Secretary and asked you, as Brigade Secretaries, to raise it with your management and ask, first off, did they comply with what was being asked by the Health & Safety Executive. We are pretty sure that there will be very very few Brigades around the country who will be able to answer that question in a positive. These are things that are very difficult for us because we see the results coming very slowly, but despite the unfortunate

tragedies we have had over the last number of years, we have been able to put pressure on the CLG. Again, Matt referred to the successful lobby we had in November and we really cannot underestimate the impression that had on the Government, which passes then on to CLG, and they sat up and started to listen to what the FBU have got to say, and we have been invited into all these areas.

There is a positive sign as well, of course: for the first time in many years we have now got a series of inspections taking place in eight Brigades around the UK starting this week in Hampshire. We have already had a talk with the Hampshire Officials and we will be getting them support in terms of how to deal with the HSE when they are in their Brigades, and we will be seeing the other seven Brigades individually in order to make sure that we get a coordinated response to the Health & Safety Executive and we make sure we give them our evidence. I would say to all of you in the realms of health and safety, you must leave paper trails. Please don't just have conversations with your managers on a promise that something is going to get done. Follow it up with sending them your request in writing and the discussion that you have had, because when it comes to these tragedies or serious accidents we need to be able to find the paper trail in order to evidence what we have been saying, and particularly if we are going to finish up in court.

There is a positive. The Health & Safety Inspector that served the Improvement Notice in Hertfordshire, is leading the inspections across the other eight Brigades in the country. Already I have had the opportunity to go and meet with all the inspection team. They had a couple of days training at the Fire Service College and invited the FBU to go along there and talk to them for a couple of hours, and lay down exactly what our expectations are of those inspections, and we have given a guarantee that there will be proper consultation with our Health and Safety Representatives in each of those eight Brigades.

I am reasonably confident, because the Health & Safety Executive are not going to get in there and wave a magic wand and solve everything for us. But I believe they are taking very seriously the situation inside the British Fire Service and training was something that we raised with them a number of years ago when Ian Copeland, the then Head of the Health & Safety Executive for Fire came to the coordinators' meeting. This was before some of our tragic accidents occurred and now, of course, we are presenting them with the evidence that training is lacking there, and we have got to come back to a better balance between fire prevention and intervention and, of course, the training and skills that our members need for that. As I say, I am confident that the Health & Safety Executive are taking

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it seriously. We will not take our eye off the ball and we will keep them under as much pressure as we possibly can, and with your help of course.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. We are on to Paragraph J14, English Wildfire Forum. Paragraph J15, Buncefield. Paragraph J16, Confidential Stress Help Line. Paragraph J17, Assaults on Fire Crews. I will now take Resolution 33 from West Yorkshire, Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse- National Guidance. The Executive Council are supporting. West Yorkshire to move please.

Resolution 33 – DRUG, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE – NATIONAL GUIDANCE

This Conference recognises the increasingly stressful circumstances faced by FBU members not only at work but in their day to day lives and its impact on those members.

At the same time Conference notes the corresponding rise in the number of issues relating to drug, alcohol and substance misuse dependency being negotiated on by officials, many of whom are not fully cognisant of the causes, effects, scope or support and assistance available to affected members. This is unacceptable.

This conference demands that the FBU undertakes a study incorporating within its span the extent, causes and effects of such dependencies, whilst auditing existing Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policies, both within the British Fire Service and in the workplace in general, thus establishing best practice.

The findings of this study to be used to produce a national guidance document to assist officials in negotiations.

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO BILL DELVE (West Yorks):

I move Motion 33, Drugs Alcohol and Substance Misuse – National Guidance.

In my caring family-friendly Brigade in West Yorkshire over the last two years there have been three dismissals where the member had alcohol dependency and one dismissal for drug misuse. Nationally, how many more members have been affected by drugs, alcohol and substance misuse resulting in their dismissal or disciplinary action? There are dangers that management will try and hijack this and use it as an excuse to test everyone as, and when they please. But that is a poor

argument to use and it is up to us as a Union to take the lead on this, and not to shy away, and hide from this increasing problem.

A recent Labour Research document has identified the areas of concern over the handling of such cases and how employers fail to recognise this serious illness. Organisations such as the Royal Mail and Corus offer help, support and rehabilitation counselling, to their work force and not the sack. It is Government policy to provide rehabilitation, not sacking.

My own Brigade offers high profile advice and guidance to employees who wish to quit smoking and to those who seek help with drink and drugs dependency. It is always going to be down to the individual and their responsibility to admit that they have a problem, but if there was a better system in place, this might happen sooner rather than later. Where the issues of drugs, alcohol and substance misuse are unable to be resolved with rehabilitation, medical help and support, a medical discharge should be the norm, not dismissal and throwing them on the scrap heap. Many of these illnesses are addictions, which are stress related and our job, coupled with life stresses, and relationship problems, bereavement, your family's health etc, can all contribute to this, and none of us can honestly say it will never happen to me. We are all human and who knows, the next bad fatal job that you go to you will turn round and your next best buddy will be a bottle of booze or a bottle of pills.

With this in mind, Conference instructs the Executive Council to undertake a study, incorporating all available information to assist it in producing a national guidance document that Officials can use in future related negotiations. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 33? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see those in favour please. You want to speak in opposition? Come to the rostrum, please. Two delegates in opposition.

BRO MICK ? (London):

This is probably the most important decision on a Resolution that we are going to make because it can actually lead to an attack on our basic human rights, our right to a private life and it can also lead to a rake of dismissals. This is a Resolution which could lead to many of my colleagues being dismissed. I have been asked to speak at the end of the day, I have been put under time pressure to oppose a Motion which is being supported by the EC. I hope that this is not a deliberate ploy. We were nearly not given the chance to oppose.

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We nearly went to a vote without allowing us to oppose. I am not opposing a drug and alcohol policy. I am opposing a sensible drug and alcohol policy. I have not got time to describe to you the abuses of drug and alcohol policies. I will give you one example: pre-screening for recruitment to identify pregnant women so they are not given employment. It is a can of worms. The Trades Union Congress has a website called *Hazard*. I could talk for two hours about abuses of drugs and alcohol policies. I have been given a minute. You have not got the information to make a vote and support this. You have been denied the opportunity to debate and it is being railroaded through.

Let us look at – sorry you have red lighted me. Let us look at the actual Resolution. The title is *Drug and Alcohol Misuse*. The first paragraph will be read by Human Resources Departments as this. “The Fire Brigades Union accepts that stress in our members’ day to day lives leads to drug and alcohol misuse. We therefore feel the urgent need to implement a drug and alcohol policy and here it is.” I hope that you do not go back to your Brigades and find that your HR have adopted that stance and now you have been given the policies. Why bother to make their own one up. They can borrow London’s one.

The second paragraph, if you read it, it does not make sense. They say it is unacceptable that there is a rise in issues relating to drug and alcohol policies. Of course there is because there is an increase in drug and alcohol policies. That is called mathematics. It is not acceptable. It then says that many Officials are not cognisant of the causes and effects and scope and support available to affected members. It is acceptable that we have not got the knowledge because it is a specialised subject.

Paragraph three. We want a report. We demand a report. It has already been done by the Rowntree Institute. It is a beautiful report, it is concise and it gives guidance for employers and employees to follow a policy. It has been done.

The final paragraph: The final study to be used to produce national guidance. The Irish Labour Court have made a ruling with European-wide ramifications. It says do not come to us and say this is a health and safety issue. This is a human rights issue. They actually ordered the reinstatement of a member in Dublin and they said we will hit you with the biggest financial rewards we can because you are using a policy designed for health and safety to infringe people’s civil rights.

Basically, we do not need a report. It exists. We do not need national guidance; we have European guidance. We do not need to give HR Departments the green light to attack our members human rights. I oppose.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mick. I can assure Conference that there was no attempt to deliberately try and stifle debate on this. It was scheduled for Thursday morning. It has ended up being put back to this afternoon. You have agreed the speakers’ times. We were very flexible with the amount of time allowed for that. I hope that is not going to be taken as the template for everyone else. You have got a minute.

BRO DAVE ALLSEY (GMC):

Thank you. I speak in opposition of Resolution 33 today. In Greater Manchester we have had the threat of a drug and alcohol misuse policy for a number of years which we have managed to fight off as these policies will be used as a tool to dismiss and discipline our members. We cannot afford to give management any more ammunition to sack our members. Whilst we understand the sentiments of this Resolution and will give our support to more training, education and guidance to all our members and officials, we must stay clear of an audit of any existing alcohol and substance misuse policies within the Fire Service or with any other industry until the correct level of support and backing is in place for all members of the Fire and Rescue Service.

We feel that this is a dangerous weapon to give management and Fire Authorities. Please oppose this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. I will ask John McGhee to outline the Executive Council position on the Resolution.

JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Really we cannot ignore the situation that we have got out there. We are aware of a number of Brigades and that is the reason West Yorkshire brought the Resolution in the first place, that we have a number of members out there who have dependencies on alcohol and drugs. You can call it misuse if you want. If we want to ignore that we are going to ignore and allow some of our members to ruin their lives. If you ask your colleagues around here, just look at the number of suicides we have of our members. Have you ever thought how high it is for firefighters and just what is going on inside some of the complicated lives that our members lead?

The reason the Executive Council agreed to support West Yorkshire is, it is not going to lead to us designing a policy that supports the sacking of our members for having an illness that has resulted in them having dependencies or the misuse of drugs and alcohol. That is just simply not the case. What we want to do is look

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to see, because we know there are already a number of Brigades and other industries as well that have policies out there, whether it includes compulsory testing, random testing, all these things. We want to look at them, we want to audit them and we want to come and give some guidance to the Officials that are having to negotiate these policies. What we have done with everything else, whether it is the work place facilities, whether it is maternity or paternity leave, we are going to look to produce something that can be considered best practice for our Officials and for our members to make sure that we look after our members. It would protect them and improve the health of their lives, and would allow them to live normal lives without dependencies on drugs and alcohol, not to use it as a tool to make sure that they lose their job because they have had a few drinks, because there wouldn't be many of us left up here would there?

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. West Yorkshire to reply.

BRO BILL DELVE (West Yorks):

In response to London, we are only asking for FBU guidance to better represent our members with an addiction. Paragraph 2, we have had Schools for other issues before but we always refresh our skills and that is what we are asking for in that paragraph. GMC in reply to you, because we have not got any guidance that is the reason why we have poor policies. We are not asking for a policy, just guidance. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will put Resolution 33 to the vote. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *carried*.

If you can turn to Page 12 of the Programme of Business. We are now moving to the Thursday afternoon business that was uncompleted. We are on Section B of the Annual Report, Fire and Rescue Service Policy. Paragraph B1. We will now take Resolution 36 from North Wales, Impact of Working Time Legislation. North Wales to move please.

Resolution 36 – IMPACT OF WORKING TIME LEGISLATION

This conference demands that the Executive Council set up or delegate a sub committee to assess the potential impact of existing and impending working time legislation on the UK Fire & Rescue Service. That this sub committee produce a report to focus on the potential impact on all duty systems, in particular the Retained Duty System, and that this

report be presented to Annual Conference 2010. Should any recommendations or issues be identified that require action prior to this date, the Executive Council will initiate the appropriate actions.

NORTH WALES

BRO CHRIS BURNS (North Wales):

This Conference demands that the Executive Council set up or delegate a sub committee to assess the potential impact of existing and impending working time legislation on the UK Fire and Rescue Service. That this sub committee produce a report to focus on the potential impact on all duty systems, in particular the RDS, and that this report be presented to Annual Conference 2010. Should any recommendations or issues be identified that require action prior to this date, the Executive Council will initiate the appropriate actions.

Comrades, this Resolution is being brought as a direct result of a lack of information available to both our members and officials in respect of this issue. In our Brigade, and indeed across others in our Region, we have been receiving frequent requests for information and advice on this subject from our members. As officials, we have little available to reference for tackling this and informing our members. Both management and other bodies that claim to be representative have been spreading many rumours or causing uncertainty among our members regarding this issue. What we require is a concise and easy-to-read document that explains clearly the issues and potential issues from the current and proposed working time legislation and associated legislation.

In closing, I ask you to support our Resolution to help ensure that officials are not compromised when dealing with members' enquiries by having to resort to that most infamous of replies, "I will have to get back to you on that one." Support the Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 36?

BRO BOB DEWIS (NRC):

I second Resolution 36. Among our RDS members and on many RDS Stations, there is confusion and uncertainty surrounding this issue and its potential impact. Support this Resolution and give our officials and reps the information to go out and address our members concerns. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are offering qualified support. I will ask Andy Dark to outline the qualification.

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THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

To keep you briefed, the qualification is that the Resolution calls for the publication of the reports to be made to Conference 2010. The qualification we make is that we will certainly want to report it back to the Officials of the Union, we may not actually want to publish simply because there may be aspects which may not be to the liking to ourselves as Officials in terms of giving ammunition to those employers who are looking to change shift systems, whether it is RDS, Wholetime or Flexi-Duty. That is the qualification. Certainly it is not an indication that we will not publish it. It is just a qualification that if the outcomes are such that we might not want to, we will do it through structures rather than through published paper work.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I will put 36 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We will now break for tea. I would suggest a ten minute break. If necessary, bring your cups and saucers back here so that we can get business concluded. Thank you.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

If delegates can take their seats, please, we will reconvene for the final Session of Conference. Will delegations finish their conversations. We have got a significant amount of business outstanding and it is in your interests to conclude the business otherwise all matters get referred to the Executive Council that have not been dealt with.

We are on Resolution 44 from Shropshire, Fireguard. I have been informed that Shropshire are going to remit the Resolution but are seeking the right to speak. Shropshire.

Resolution 44 – “FIREGUARD”

This conference is dismayed at the introduction of “Fireguard” at a cost of £10 million per annum and believes that this provision will be used to break strike action anywhere in the UK.

Therefore in the event of “Fireguard” being used in areas where our members are on strike, this conference will be recalled with a recommendation for national strike action.

SHROPSHIRE

BRO ANDY BROWN (Shrops):

We agree to remit Resolution 44 but would like to speak. Fireguard has become defunct apparently at a cost of £10 million a year to run. I never saw anything from it, any exercises or anything else, floods, nothing. There have been questions in the House about its cost and £10 million was the disclosed amount, but I think our Government can be a little bit elaborate with its mathematics.

I was down in January at Westminster 2008, the NJC meeting for industrial relations. How can you have an agreement on industrial relations which you have something like Fireguard in the background? What was the purpose of Fireguard? I think some of our colleagues here know what it was. Has it just failed because there were no disputes in 2008? Where did the funding come from? Is it public money or did certain Brigades part fund?

When you wind up a company there are always assets. I would ask that we look where the assets are and whether they are going to be mothballed. We don't want any surprises in the future. Or they could sell those assets off to pay their legal fees to the pensions court case. That money could have been spent on water rescue which would have equipped Brigades for water safety. It could have done training manuals, national guidance, a number of hundred firefighters posts. It could have run the FBU for 12 months. Or if they wanted me to throw it away they could have put it into the RCC project. I put it to you that the project was as much good as a chocolate fireguard.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. We are back on the Annual Report, Paragraph B2. Paragraph B3. Paragraph B4. Cerith.

BRO CERITH GRIFFITHS (South Wales):

In recent months our four Regional Officials have made significant progress and gains in relation to FBU representation within the Welsh Assembly Government. Recent meetings between all four Regional Officials and Dr Brian Gibbens, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government with responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales, proved extremely productive and a further meeting is planned for September. In addition, our Regional Officials took the initiative at a recent dinner to ask for the attendance of the newly appointed Fire and Rescue Adviser Mr Paul Young. Our Officials took the opportunity to meet with Mr Young prior to his first meeting with the three Welsh Chief Officers, thus laying the foundations on behalf of the membership at the outset.

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Initially, the FBU had been offered the opportunity to comment on agendas for weekends and to inform the department of any particular subject matter we may be interested in becoming involved in with subsequent minutes and decisions made by forums in Wales being forwarded to us. The FBU in Wales felt that we needed to be fully involved in the process. Therefore, representations were put forward because the major stakeholder and only body that truly represents firefighting staff in Wales, the FBU, required full access to participation in any forums that affected our membership.

I am therefore pleased to inform Conference that discussions at meetings with the Welsh Assembly Government Officials has resulted in the FBU gaining seats on the Fire and Rescue Consultative Forum alongside the three Chief Officers. This development and concession by Assembly Officials is extremely welcome and we would like to thank Dr Gibbens for his foresight and recognition of the positives of this approach. I think Conference will agree that this bodes well for future development of the membership in Wales because previously under the revamped National Framework Document for Wales we had no such representation.

The Regional Secretary and Chair also recently made representations in meetings with Joanna Jordan, Assembly Head of Community Safety Division, and Kingsley Rees, Head of Fire and Rescue Services Branch, Welsh Assembly. These meetings have resulted in the confirmation that, following a request, the FBU have an open invitation to attend the consultative forum and particular working groups which will cover firefighter fatalities, attacks on firefighters, fire safety and proof of the RDS is still in Wales. In addition, the Regional Officials will also be addressing the issue of the Regionalisation of Controls with the Welsh Assembly Government. Therefore, I can assure Conference of the Welsh Region's full support regarding that campaign. That is why we have to keep doing this type of work so that eventually the message does get through. As a consequence of this work, it is envisaged that the FBU will have full involvement in policy making for the future of the Fire and Rescue Service in Wales, which will hopefully benefit the future of our membership.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Cerith. Paragraph B5. John.

BRO JOHN CAIRNS (Strathclyde):

How much time do speakers on Paragraphs get? I am only kidding. I will be very very brief.

In No 1 Region within Scotland we are having continued success to deal with the Scottish Government, the

Ministers and Officials. Unfortunately, the people are dealing with them, our Regional Officials, cannot speak at Conference so what we are looking for is Standing Orders to be changed for next year's Conference so that Regional Officials in the Devolved Areas can speak directly about the matters they have conducted at the Scottish Parliament etc.

THE PRESIDENT:

I seem to remember you tried that last year John and got defeated, but you are more than welcome to try again.

Paragraph B6. Paragraph B7. The Officers National Committee wish to speak.

BRO RUSSELL TROTH (ONC):

CLG projects on fires and car parks have the potential for UK firefighter fatalities. As the Fire Brigades Union representative who has worked on this project over the last two and half to three years, I want to make you aware of the positive benefits of our attendance via comments and technical advice as a serving firefighter who has attended this type of incident, and as a serving technical fire safety officer who is frequently arguing with the builders, developers, fire safety consultants, for improved and compliant firefighting facilities in existing and new buildings.

I would like to thank Dave Sibert, the FBU full time IRMP and Fire Safety Adviser, for his support and assistance on this project. The FBU's continued attendance and involvement at these types of projects where many of the attendees do not have a practical understanding of the hazards involved is essential in supporting the stated aim of the Fire Brigades Union to reduce firefighter fatalities. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Russell. Paragraph B8. Paragraph B9. I now move on to Resolution 40 from West Yorkshire with an Amendment from Kent. The Executive Council are supporting both. West Yorkshire to move please.

Resolution 40 – COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY – STUDY

This Conference notes the continuing government targets for local Fire and Rescue Services within the national framework for community fire safety and the corresponding increase in Home Fire Safety Visits done by our members.

Conference seeks to support such Community Fire Safety policies where they strive to save lives and

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reduce damage to properties whilst reflecting and incorporating the policies of the FBU.

However, in implementing these policies employers must ensure safe places of work for our members. It should be the aim of this union to seek to eradicate the risks posed to our members whilst working on Home Fire Safety Visits in domestic properties.

Examples of these risks being:

- ***Working at Height.***
- ***Exposure hazards to substances contained within building fabric and materials in domestic premises.***
- ***Safe methods of fixing smoke alarms and detectors in domestic premises.***
- ***Insurance provision for personnel whilst carrying out Non-Emergency Duties in domestic properties.***

Conference demands that a study be undertaken by the FBU of all elements of work carried out as part of Community Fire Safety Home Fire Safety Visits and their associated hazards. The findings of this study to be used to create a best practice document to aid Officials in negotiating and enforcing such policies.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Amendment

After line 11, insert new bullet point:

- ***Lone working***

KENT

BRO DAVE BENSON (West Yorks):

I move Motion 40, Community Fire Safety Study. We accept the Amendment from Kent.

Since 2003 we have been putting greater emphasis on community fire safety due to pressure from central government and civil servants. As a result of this, it raised many issues: lone working, working at height, risk assessments in adequate or non-existent, less intrusive methods of fixing smoke detectors, exposure to hazards (like asbestos, electricity). In West Yorkshire it has taken 10 years to get a guidance note for fixing detectors. This was down to management not acknowledging the issues and concerns that were raised by the FBU but also the fact that we were already exceeding the targets.

Lone working was an issue. No policy. Management thought we did not need one till we got the first complaint about one of our members under the spotlight on suspicion of theft. This policy took till 2006 to arrive in March, and it produced a health and safety guidance note. Some of these issues were suitability of the worker to carry out the job, the fitness of personnel doing the job (some of these employees were

operational firefighters who had been injured), equipment required and maintenance of it, a means of communicating and locating the worker whilst carrying out the duties, provision of treatment for injuries sustained, access to a first aider and first aid kits, emergency accident procedures and recording them. Even a simple task like delivering a leaflet is fraught with danger. In some homes our customers don't want one and having delivered a leaflet one day, the leaflet overtook me before I got to the gate. In our Brigade we have seen members being attacked by dogs whilst posting leaflets through the letter box.

We have not been given the correct training to do this, yet if you are an employee of Royal Mail or Yellow Pages, training is given to you. We have seen one of our members fall down a space saver flight of stairs. The Station Manager said it was a near miss. I said it cannot be, he has hit every one on the way down. The last two issues highlight a great cause for concern, the concern of provision of insurance for our members carrying out non-emergency duties in domestic premises. At present we are all partially covered by Brigade insurance policy and told to claim from the householder's own insurance. But recent events have shown that there are not many houses who have full insurance let alone third party cover.

We have the Occupiers Liability Act. Under the Act the occupier is deemed to have a common duty of care, putting the onus on the occupier to inform you of any risks or hazards present that they are aware of. That would be a first.

So this Conference demands that a study be undertaken by the FBU of all the elements covered in community fire safety and home fire safety visits and their associated hazards, the findings to be used to produce a best practice document and this could then be used to assist Brigades and Officials in their negotiations with management to produce better guidance and policies for the health, safety and welfare of our members. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 40? *Formally seconded.* Kent to move their Amendment please. *Formally moved.* Is it seconded? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting both.

I will put the Amendment from Kent to the vote first. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

I will put Resolution 40 as amended by Kent to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Paragraph B10.

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BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

I seek clarification on Paragraph B10. Because it sticks in my craw when I hear or read of CFOA being portrayed as some body of excellence or expertise, why are the FBU sitting at their table as opposed to sitting at perhaps a Joint Working Group?

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. I will ask the General Secretary to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think the facts are that we sat. The Paragraph says we did sit previously on it following 2002 and that would have been reported to Conference at various times since then. This is simply reporting to Conference that CFOA has discontinued the work of that committee. So nobody has been sitting on it because it has not been meeting.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will move on to Paragraph B11. Paragraph B12. Paragraph B13. Paragraph B14.

BRO GRAEME WILLIS (North Yorks):

I feel I have to speak on Paragraph B14 to bring to your attention to North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority's insistence on staffing front line appliances with less than four riders, a position which Conference will roundly condemn.

Conference deplored the actions of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority in introducing reduced crewing levels for operational firefighters with two or three riders for an initial attendance at an incident. In light of the increase in firefighter fatalities nationally, we find it abhorrent that a Fire and Rescue Authority is prepared to operate such a reckless practice which blatantly disregards the rights of our members in terms of their health and safety. This practice also moves away from the recognised principles of safe working for breathing apparatus contained within Technical Bulletin 197. Furthermore, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority have consistently failed to provide evidence of any satisfactory risk assessments, policies, procedures or training for our members in relation to this dangerous practice. They explain everything away with the infamous phrase, do a dynamic risk assessment.

The intentions of the Fire Authority will inevitably lead to increased pressure and expectation being placed upon crews attending incidents and may force them to act outside a safe working environment due to necessity

and moral pressure. The Authority has arrogantly ignored the recent firefighter fatalities campaign and has obviously taken little heed of Improvement Notices recently served on Brigades including Hertfordshire. Therefore, this Conference asks that the EC continues to vigorously campaign against this practice to underline and reinforce the current Union position. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask John McGhee to respond.

JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

They have got to give you the risk assessment, so you go back to them and you insist that they give you the adequate risk assessments, and the review of all their policies, and standard operating procedures that they have produced in the past. If they are going to decide that they are dropping down the number of firefighters on a crew, they are going to have to test every single policy that they have at the moment to make sure that they can be complied with, with the number of firefighters who are going to be sent along there.

We are aware that IRMPs have been used in such a way to cut the number of firefighters on front line appliances and we emphasise there, we are on about paper trails. Make sure that every question you ask them, you ask them in writing and if they are not prepared to give you the risk assessment then we start to write to the Health & Safety Executive as well. If you want to supply me with any of the information on this, I will give you all the assistance I can and I know Vic is not here this week, but if you want to go through that with your Regional Safety Coordinator, we will give you as much assistance as we possibly can. IRMPs are not designed to determine that we can send a smaller number of firefighters on appliances. They have got to be designed to make sure that proper risk assessment is carried out.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. We will now take Resolution 37 from Tyne & Wear, Elected Fire Authority/Board Members IRMP Information Pack. Tyne & Wear to move please. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Resolution 37 – ELECTED FIRE AUTHORITY/BOARD MEMBERS IRMP INFORMATION PACK

Conference requires that all elected members of fire and rescue authorities/boards are provided with an information pack, which clearly indicates the obligations they have, not just to FBU members, but the public they are elected to represent and

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themselves when considering proposed IRMPs. This information should also be accessible to the general public.

This information to clearly indicate that any IRMP is the property of the authority/board that approves it and not that of the senior manager who proposes it; consequently issues which arise as a result of an inappropriately designed IRMP are also the responsibility of that authority/board and not the senior manager involved.

The purpose of this resolution is to provide information which should focus the minds of those responsible for the potential introduction of measures, which may have a detrimental impact on the safety of firefighters and communities.

TYNE & WEAR

BRO ANDY NOBLE (Tyne & Wear):

The basis of this Resolution was determined when the General Secretary made a visit to Region 3 and gave a presentation in the run up to Safer Firefighters Safer Communities Campaign. The first one was that the FBU can become involved and can endorse the principle that lies behind IRMPs but only when it is going the right way like John has just said subject to suitable risk assessment.

The second one was that the Chief Fire Officers have basically perverted this methodology and on too many occasions have used it simply to justify further cuts in service provision, all too often aided and abetted by Authority and Board members. I am certain that most of us have sat in Board and Authority meetings where cuts have been agreed, they have gone through on the nod and there has not been a whimper of protest from elected members. We need to remind these people that the IRMP is the property of the people who adopt it, not the property of the person or the Chief Fire Authority who proposed it.

The information packs that we request in this Resolution would be an effective means of achieving this. The Resolution also calls for this information to be made accessible to the public. After all, they have got a right to know what those elected, have a responsibility to do. When Matt moved the EC Statement this morning on A Service for the 21st Century, he placed great emphasis on meaningful public consultation. Accepting this Resolution can only assist in that process. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder please for Resolution 37?

BRO GORDON RICHARDSON (Bucks):

Comrades, in seconding this Resolution I would like to bring your attention to the booklet you have been given on IPDS Code of Practice. On page 8 under IRMP there are five points. It states: "Identifies the work force profile or the number of staff and the roles which people occupy which are required to provide an effective service." This requires a budget to fit the needs, not an IRMP to fit the budget. Within the Tyne & Wear Resolution it reads "Consequently, issues which arise as a result of an improperly designed IRMP are also the responsibility of the Authority/Board." This means if they backed the Chief Officers, they take the blame. There is now permitted a greater allowance for corporate manslaughter charges. This should be clearly explained to these Fire Authorities. Support the Resolution. Last time speaker at Conference. Good luck to the rest of you for the future.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Gordon. The Executive Council are giving qualified support to 37. Were there any other speakers. No. There is a qualification from the Executive Council and I will ask Andy to give the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The qualification is a minor one and that is simply that not all members of the Boards are actually elected. As part of this, we are working on it already, Dave Sibbett is assisting myself in doing that work, but more importantly we have actually produced a document which has been to the IRMP Board and has now gone through the Executive Council. It is currently with the printers and we hope to have it ready in time for the new Fire Authorities when they are elected in England. But obviously of use across the country, is the FBU's IRMP/IRRP Framework document which will clearly give guidance to supplement our national document produced some years ago, on exactly how you put together an IRMP.

The reason that was felt necessary is because we have been to a number of events where those officers, those managers, who are responsible for constructing an IRMP have in the presence of CLG said, "I haven't got the first clue of where I start", and I think that is why we end up with these comic books that were referred to earlier and we have been discussing at Conference for some time. That is currently at the printers.

In terms of the wider pack, we are currently working on that. With that, President, we support the Resolution.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I will therefore put 37 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. That is *unanimous*.

We are now moving to Resolution 38 from Tayside, Minimum Attendance Standards. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. There is an Amendment from Strathclyde. Tayside to move please.

Resolution 38 – MINIMUM ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to undertake a campaign in support of a return to minimum attendance standards in the UK Fire and Rescue Service. Conference acknowledges and welcomes the commitment given by the Scottish National Party to reintroduce minimum attendance standards applicable to the eight Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland.

TAYSIDE

Amendment

In line 2 after the word “to” insert “robust and effective”

STRATHCLYDE

BRO JOHN DUFFY (Tayside):

Comrades, I am sure Conference welcomes any commitment given to introduce a minimum attendance standard. What we need to do now is to move to ensure that any standard that is developed and we seem to be one stage closer to this in Region 1, determines the required resources for each Brigade whilst there is inconsistency across the UK. As you set out the determined levels of attendance, it should set out call handling and mobilising times. It should set the weight of response for any given incident, the arrival time of that response and set levels for supervisory officers ensuring safe incident command and control. That is what we are working towards in Region 1. You have our support working towards that throughout the rest of the UK. Comrades, we support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Is there a seconder for 38? *Formally seconded*. Strathclyde to move their Amendment please.

BRO STUART WILSON (Strathclyde):

I think we all know what we are talking about here, and I think John Duffy covered the basis of it and the core of it very well. I know that Tayside are heading up to attend a celebratory function as regards the magnificent victory

in Balmossie, and that was a fantastic campaign which was ultimately successful. I am here to tell you that there was also a fantastic campaign run in Strathclyde and it was run very efficiently and led by my friend and comrade, John McFadden. It is great to be celebrating victories. I think we should also appreciate the hard work that goes in and sometimes we don't get the result we want. I would ask Conference to show its appreciation for the hard work that John put in. *Applause*

I would also point out that there is one Chief Fire Officer at least in Scotland, who recognises attendance times and that is Brian Sweeney in Strathclyde. He gave a presentation at the Fire Board Meeting justifying the case for closing Parkhead and it looked great. There was a number of colours in this power point presentation, but it was all gobbledegook honestly. Unfortunately, the standard he used was 8 minutes. That is in the East End of Glasgow, one of the poorest districts in the UK who will now be losing their Fire Station. This is a ludicrous case that has been put forward by a Chief Officer. So attendance times, yes and all the other aspects that John Duffy was saying there. We are under attack folks and if we are going to come through with proposals for closing Fire Stations or changing crewing levels or reducing the health and safety, each and every one of has to find an instance. We need to fight it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded*. I ask Matt to give the Executive Council position.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Qualifying support, President and the qualification is that clearly it depends what those minimum attendance standards are. I think Stuart has just outlined one of the problems that if national minimum attendance standards are used to downgrade fire and emergency cover standards, then we would not necessarily endorse them. We have done that work already. Our minimum attendance standards are outlined in the Cast Planning Scenario, so that is the qualification. With that, we support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I will therefore put the Amendment to the vote first. Can I see all those in favour of the Amendment from Strathclyde. Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried*.

Can I therefore see those in favour of Resolution 38 from Tayside as amended by Strathclyde. Please show. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

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We now move to Resolution 41 from Greater Manchester. The Executive Council are supporting. GMC to move please.

Resolution 41 – AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT 2008

Conference notes with concern the publication, in December 2008, of the Audit Commission Report 'Rising to the Challenge'.

Those brigades praised by this report have achieved 'modernisation' by making savings via:

- ***Changing shift duty systems***
- ***Depleting frontline fire cover***
- ***Cutting establishment figures and other such draconian measures.***

The use of league tables produced in such reports as a measure of performance cannot be sustained and as seen when used in other public service industries, only leads to employers competing to slash standards to the detriment of the public and employees alike.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to mount and co-ordinate a national campaign of opposition to the use of such reports as a basis for standards of fire cover, and re-iterate the requirement for a risk based, properly resourced fire service.

GREATER MANCHESTER

BRO ALAN ANDERSON (GMC):

Conference, we have seen league tables fail in every work place: schools, the police force, prisons, hospitals to name a few. This Government and successive Governments have had a fixation with league tables that don't work. League tables demoralise employees. They allow good performing work places to slacken off and they do nothing to encourage poor performing work places.

I come from one of those Brigades praised in the Audit Report. I know exactly how those savings have been made: by cuts, cuts and more cuts. We are well ahead in the table of cuts: in fire cover, in establishment and in training. If you asked the building insurance companies where Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service were in their league of high costing Fire Authorities, they would probably come top. When the HSE come into the Brigade later this year, I would not put any money on them winning any prizes. In fact, partly because of the cuts in training and lack of procedural training, we have a firefighter now who is likely never going to be operationally fit again. I believe it is more to do with good fortune and luck that Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service have not added to the tragic list of firefighter fatalities in recent years.

I know the EC are rightly supporting this Resolution and hopefully you will give it unanimous support, but don't just leave it there. The EC and all of us have a job of work to do to make this Resolution work. We have started the campaign in Manchester and we know we have a long way to go, but with your help and the national campaign starting the support for this Resolution we can win. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. Is there a seconder for Resolution 41?

BRO BEN SPRUNG (London):

It is no exaggeration to say that the root cause of all the disputes we are having and are going to be having in the future stem from the Audit Commission. They are the driver for change in the public sector in this country, and it is clear that their agenda is a cost cutting one. We know this but what are we doing about it as a Movement? I think it is worth mentioning. I am not suggesting that my other colleague from London that it was an attempt by the EC to do it, but it is a bit of a shame that it is debated last thing on Friday because, you know, it is a serious and important issue. It is not good enough for us to wait for them to pick us off Brigade by Brigade and issue by issue. We need to be proactive and take the fight to them. This can only be done with the campaign in education for officials and members focusing on this report.

The tools the Audit Commission to justify cuts, as the comrade said, are league tables and targets. This is dangerous for the public and for our members. While the link between the larger issues such as establishment and pension for the Audit Commission is clear, I would argue that the Audit Commission's tentacles reach into everything that we do. An issue that I have dealt with quite a bit in London is targeted calling. The Brigade has a clear policy on targeted calling that should be used as a last resort. However, management continually attempt to break this policy. There is no concern for the quality of the visit. All they are interested in is the number completed. In this target driven age, meeting a target is met with one thing: a new and bigger target. London's target for this year for home fire safety for visits has gone up by 50 per cent. What are London doing about this? We are working to the target. The faster the music gets the faster we dance. We need to educate them about the impact the target driven age is having on working lives and the service we provide.

Since I have been in the brigade it has changed in one clear way. It has been computerised. Everything now goes on to computer. To some people like management, this computerisation is more important than reality.

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Managers don't care about the quality and quantity of things like training. All they care about is the records are in place. If they are done, they are going to be happy.

Everything we do in London is meant to be recorded on this electronic diary. All incidents we now attend and the resources that were used. Where does this data go? It goes to the Government and then they put it in reports like the Audit Commission Report.

THE PRESIDENT:

You are on red, Ben. Please wind up.

BRO BEN SPRUNG (London):

It is literally turkeys waiting for Christmas and often what happens is people cut corners because it is such a long process to give people this information so we are giving them false information with which they then hang us. We definitely need the campaign to educate our members and officials about this and as well as the campaign I think we need some sort of education and it needs to be done at national level because we are snowed under and we are not having time to get to the stem of the problem. I second.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are supporting. Can I therefore see those in favour of Resolution 41. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We will now take Resolution 42 from Cheshire, Audit Commission Report (TRVs) Cheshire to move please.

Resolution 42 – AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT (TRVs)

This Conference is alarmed at the cost cutting measure contained within the Audit Commission's report "Rising to the Challenge", of replacing conventional pumps with Target Response Vehicles (TRVs).

TRVs are designed to deal with small known fires and not to replace pumps.

Smaller crewing levels and the limitation of equipment means they are not capable of replacing pumps, without seriously increasing the risk to the safety of firefighters, members of the public and property.

To date no adequate evaluation of these vehicles and the increased risks have been carried out and therefore have not been factored into the exaggerated efficiency savings contained within the report.

We call on the Fire Brigades Union to continue to highlight our safety concerns regarding these vehicles and to produce our own report that challenges the credibility of this cost cutting Audit Commission report.

CHESHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

I move Resolution 42. We are asking for a report attacking the credibility of the Audit Commission's report *Rising to the Challenge*.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service was cited for their use of target response vehicles (TRVs), or as management now describe them "midi fire appliances". Replacing second pumps. If this was applied in other Fire Services, between £5 and £6 million could be saved over a ten year period. It also claimed there would be a considerable reduction in CO2 emissions. The savings per vehicle was estimated at around £50,000 to purchase and a further £83,000 in running costs over the 10 years.

The report also had the rider that these savings could only be realised if TRVs replaced pumps and were not used as additional vehicles to deal with small fires. The report is flawed because these vehicles were intended to be additional vehicles freeing up conventional pumps to deal with property fires and in these circumstances there are increased costs not savings. The savings on fuel and CO2 emissions have been exaggerated as evidence is showing that running costs are not half of the standard appliance. In fact, fuel consumption is very similar as these vehicles will be operating right on their upper axle weight limits despite the TRVs not carrying anywhere near as much kit or water as the conventional appliance.

We all know the real reason why these vehicles are being pushed. They are being used to introduce reduced crewing levels and shared jobs, firstly, in the guise of dealing with small fires and then to introduce crewing levels inferior to those laid out in the Cast Scenarios. We highlighted to Conference in 2007 our health and safety concerns with these vehicles being used for small fires, and now they are widespread in the Fire and Rescue Services for dealing with these small fires. There is no need to repeat the shortcomings of these vehicles as they are evident to every firefighter, but they are putting finance before the risk to life and property.

However, we now face a greater threat to firefighters' safety, public safety and loss of property with the Audit Commission championing these vehicles, because they are cheaper, without any due consideration to the safety and their inability to deal with incidents. Even dealing with small known fires, they are far less efficient. There have already been many occasions when these vehicles have been sent to incidents and have been found

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wanting. Fire and Rescue managers are determined to press on with these vehicles, particularly now they have attracted the attention of the accountants within the Audit Commission and CLG. I therefore move that the Fire Brigades Union continue to highlight our safety concerns, the limitations of these vehicles, challenge the Audit Commission's ability to recommend that as best practice and flawed financial savings, and, more importantly, their total disregard to firefighter and public safety, and to reiterate our opposition to these vehicles. Support the Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. The Executive Council are supporting. Merseyside to second.

BRO KEVIN HUGHES (Merseyside):

I second Resolution 42, Target Response Vehicles (TRVs), call them what you like. In Merseyside we call them exactly what they are: transit vans with blue lights on. The use of these vans and the intent of the Chief Officers is quite clear. Last year there was downgrading of fire cover on Merseyside. The employers had to admit and they were quite brazen about this, that the calls on Merseyside attended by these transit vans come off the yearly stats for fire calls in that Station Area. These calls are not recorded for the Station Area at all. In fact, they just disappear. These transit vans are on the run when front line appliances are off the run due to insufficient staffing.

If a Chief Fire Officer wants to downgrade your Station, all he needs to do is knock a few hundred calls off your stats by putting this van in for a month or two and then use these manipulated figures to justify either removing the appliance altogether or downgrading the Station. This is not just a case of maybe. This will happen. It is happening now. Support the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Kev. The Executive Council are supporting. I will put 42 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Emergency Resolution 13 from Strathclyde, Changes to Duty and Shift Patterns. The Executive Council are opposing. Strathclyde to move please.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 13 CHANGES TO DUTY AND SHIFT PATTERNS

Conference notes the announcement in the recent UK Government budget, of cuts in Public Spending,

in particular to identify savings within Fire and Rescue Services through changes to duty systems and human resource levels.

Conference demands that the Executive Council enters into negotiations with our national employers to ensure that the introduction of any proposed new operational duty system is fully compliant with the agreed national Conditions of Service (Grey Book) and with all equalities legislation and does not constitute a barrier to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce. Furthermore, such proposed changes should not be agreed if they are being utilised to reduce establishment levels.

Conference demands that all members are kept informed of developments and that progress is reported through the recognised structures.

STRATHCLYDE

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

I move Emergency Resolution 13. Comrades. After the recent budget announcement on public spending cuts, a Minister quoted that two areas where savings could be made were the Civil Service and the Fire Service. Their contribution was duty shift changes as highlighted by the Audit Commission.

The employers have also noted the savings that could be made with the introduction of a five group duty system. This duty system is being introduced on the back of a 2.2.3 duty system and let us be clear, 2.2.3 remains but we become flexible and be available for duty on what was previously a rota day and we fill in the gaps. Let us not be fooled into thinking that any proposed duty systems are not purely financially motivated and are for the benefit of our members. These duty systems are a mechanism to slash jobs and services, to provide cuts in the Fire Service spending. We should never be afraid of change but any change must be for the benefit and advantage of our members, not just the employers. If our employers want to bring in a five group duty system or any other change of shifts, then it should be on our terms and should include proper remuneration for participation in being flexible, the amount of flexible days being no more than 5 per cent and should be allocated at the beginning of the year in advance, any shift of duty or introduction is family friendly, as we understand it, and not the bully version as employers envisage. Any duty system proposed is not a barrier for applicants with primary care responsibilities or single male parents and equally for all others with care responsibilities. Removal of proposed introduction of short call late notice. We cannot have firefighters receiving 90 minutes notice to be available for duty. We feel that this is potentially discriminatory

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against females as primary carers. All existing annual leave be maintained as per current conditions of service and all other current conditions of service remain untouched. This list is not exhaustive.

With this in mind we would urge that regular updates are promulgated to members from the Executive Council on the progress or indeed the lack of, and should there be any imposition of draconian duty systems or shift changes or reduction in establishments, then we respond appropriately and that should include everything up to ballot for industrial action.

The employers are introducing this in a drip feed manner, service by service, the domino effect. We either stand together and reject these proposals or negotiate the introduction to our members' satisfaction. With this Resolution you are putting the ball back into the Executive Council's court for leadership and to start the fight back.

I will finish on this. Ironically, the five group system in its purest form with no pay back is a 2,2,3 duty shift with a 35 hour week. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alex. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution 13? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are opposing. I will ask the General Secretary to outline the opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, Alex quite adequately outlined the threat outlined in the budget document about shift changes. If you think about it, the only way they save money through shift changes is by getting rid of jobs. That is what the real agenda is. It is about getting rid of jobs.

The Executive Council understand fully the concerns that Alex has just outlined, but are concerned about the proposal in the Resolution to calling on us to enter into negotiations. We believe that entering into negotiations actually opens up the whole debate around shift systems across the whole United Kingdom and actually plays into the employers' hands. We have got Brigades in a number of parts of the UK who are resisting shift changes. We have got South Yorkshire who have just balloted successfully and fought off shift changes. For us to go in and start opening that debate at the National Joint Council we think would be a significant tactical mistake. We believe the way to address that is through our own internal guidance. That work is already under way. Some of you have already been contacted by the Labour Research Department. LRD are currently in the process of producing a document for us on shift and duty changes within the Fire and Rescue Service, so

internal guidance, support from the National Union, but not negotiations. We would urge opposition to the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Do Strathclyde wish to exercise their right to reply?

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

Thanks, Matt. I will say bizarrely in Strathclyde just now we crew 5 and 5. The Chief Officer actually uses that as part of his reason for going to the 5 group duty system. Unfortunately, this is the mechanism that when he departs his successor may not be so likeminded. By allowing this in this is going to, as Matt said, massively cut the number of firefighters on duty. This is going to spread like a virus throughout the Brigades and I don't want to come back next year and say I told you so. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alex. I will therefore put Emergency Resolution 13 to the vote. The Executive Council are opposing. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *defeated*.

We are now back on the Annual Report, Paragraph B15. Paragraph B16. Paragraph B18. Paragraph B19. We are now on to the Executive Council Policy Statement on The FBU and Climate Change with an Amendment in from Strathclyde. The Executive Council support. I ask Matt to move the Policy Statement.

THE FBU AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1) *Background science*

Climate change is probably the greatest environmental threat facing humanity at present. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report (2007) concluded that increases in temperature are "very likely" due to increased greenhouse gas concentrations resulting from human activity. Global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750. Between 1906 and 2005 global average temperature may have risen by as much as 0.92°C. The IPCC also predicted that if greenhouse gas emissions continue at current rates, temperatures will rise by at least 1.1°C but may rise by as much as 6.4°C by 2100.

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In 2002, the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) produced climate change scenarios, which estimated that temperatures in the UK will increase by up to 3°C by the 2050s. They expect greater warming in the summer and autumn, and more summer warming in the South East than the North West. There are also likely to be changes in rainfall, with winters being up to 25% wetter and summers possibly being up to 40% drier by the 2050s, though snowfall will significantly decrease. Sea level is expected to rise, especially in southern Britain. UKCIP predicted that the number and intensity of extreme events will increase, including heatwaves, downpours and storm surges.

The Pitt Review into the 2007 floods across the UK also made the connection with climate change. Pitt concluded: "The scale of the problem is, as we know, likely to get worse. We are not sure whether last summer's events were a direct result of climate change, but we do know that events of this kind are expected to become more frequent." The Pitt Review update of the Foresight: Future Flooding Study concluded that, "the effects of climate change may be more extreme than had previously been estimated". In particular the potential increases in rainfall volume and intensity and temperature, are greater; and there is a greater risk of extreme sea level rise. It found that the risk of flooding, included urban flood will increase.

2) UK politics and climate change

In the UK, climate change has become a central debate within mainstream politics over the last decade. In 2008, the Climate Change Act committed the UK to a cut of at least 26% by 2020 and 80% by 2050; created a carbon budgeting system to cap emissions over five year periods; and established an expert body, the Committee on Climate Change. The UK government created its own Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in 2002 and since 2007 UK energy companies have participated in the European Union ETS. In 2008 the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) introduced mandatory emissions trading for large non-energy intensive commercial and public organisations. The aim of these schemes is to create a market for carbon. However market mechanisms such as permit trading schemes and price rises have not reduced emissions, have provided windfall profits for energy firms and increased costs to workers' energy bills.

The Stern Review (2006) described climate change as "the greatest and widest-ranging

market failure ever seen". The report warned that the UK was vulnerable to both drought and flooding. It warned that the costs of not acting to reduce emissions could reduce income per head by "between 5 and 20%" and that "the poorest countries and people will suffer earliest and most". It mentioned the Philadelphia heat health warning system, which included increased staffing for the emergency services, as an example of good adaptation practice.

There are a number of contentious political issues relating to climate change. In 2006 the government signalled the go ahead for new nuclear power stations to be built by the private sector. The government has supported the expansion of Heathrow airport, including a third runway and sixth terminal. It is also considering permission for new coal fired power stations, beginning with Kingsnorth in Kent.

3) The Fire Service and climate change

In 2006, the CLG published a report, Effects of Climate Change on Fire and Rescue Services in the UK. It suggested significant impacts for fires, floods, drought and storms. On fires, the report accepted that there is "a clear and demonstrable link between hot dry summers and the number of fires", particularly secondary and forest fires. The CLG estimated an extra workload of up to 50% more incidents would, "stretch the resources of the Fire and Rescue Services". It acknowledged that, "Fire crews will be tired from attending more incidents, sickness and injury levels may rise due to fatigue, and equipment will be under more strain due to increased usage." The report estimated that the increase in workload will have "the largest impact on rural Fire and Rescue Services" and "on firefighters working on the retained duty system".

On floods, the CLG report pointed to flooding in Cumbria in 2005, when heavy rain fell for 36 hours, flooded nearly 2,000 properties in Carlisle and affected some 6,000 people. It argued that the role of the Fire and Rescue Services during flooding fell into three main areas: emergency response and rescue; damage mitigation; and (when the floodwaters are subsiding) making flooded areas safe before residents are permitted to return to them. The report said that if flooding becomes more frequent, "Fire and Rescue Services may have to consider adapting their capabilities to allow for a greater flood rescue response

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capability". It listed possible changes to: appliances, equipment, training, health implications, additional pumping capability and greater Emergency Fire Control capacity.

On drought, UKCIP estimated that summer rainfall would decrease by between 20% and 50% by 2080. The CLG report argued that water shortages would affect brigades' training and demonstrative capabilities. Water companies are expected to reduce the pressure in their mains supplies to minimise leakage, so firefighters may have to relay water across longer distances from alternative water sources and could expect changes in training, tactics, procedures, and equipment. On wind and storms, the report cited the 1987 storms as examples of what to expect. Firefighters would be expected to rescue people during these events, as well as to removing fallen trees, which will require specialist equipment and training.

The report concluded that as a result of climate change, "for Fire and Rescue Services in the UK there is potential for increased workloads all year round". It recommended that the UK Fire and Rescue Services "begin to plan for climate change and to have an awareness of climate change when decisions are being made".

- 4) The trade union movement and climate change
Since 1989 the TUC Congress has recognised the importance of global warming and called for steep cuts in emissions from greenhouse gases as well as legal rights for environmental workplace representatives. In 1998 the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC) was established by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as the main forum for consultation between government and trade unions on environmental issues. The TUC supported the Climate Change Act and has been represented at international conferences on the issue.

The TUC is in favour of a balanced energy policy. This includes support for renewables, carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology and nuclear power. There are significant disagreements between unions over the issue of nuclear power.

The TUC supports an integrated transport policy and public ownership and control of the national railway system. Unions have also supported green travel plans such as car

sharing, more cycling, travel pass loans and other methods of encouraging the use of public transport. However, there are differences between unions over airport expansion, particular at Heathrow.

The TUC has proposed the idea of a "just transition" to low carbon economy, to ensure that workers do not pay for the effects of climate change or the costs of government policies to deal with it. This would include investment in green technologies and the creation of decent, green jobs connected with energy efficiency, renewables, recycling and other tasks. It would also include a package of retraining, compensation and other benefits for workers adversely affected by climate change and the policies that are implemented to combat it.

- 5) FBU policy and campaigning
Conference agrees to make climate change an integral part of the FBU's political and industrial strategy in the coming period and instructs the Executive Council to pursue the following:

Nationally:

- To campaign for the legal rights for trade union environmental reps, with similar powers to safety reps.
- To campaign for the public ownership of major energy sectors, a shorter working week and longer holidays with no loss of pay, as well as a low cost public transport and increased cycling facilities, as part of the transition to a low carbon economy.
- To ensure that demands for a "just transition" involve a substantial element of control by workers in relation to changes to jobs and to the development of alternative production.
- To oppose market mechanisms such as permit trading, higher prices of fossil fuels and regressive taxes, as ineffective means of tackling climate change. These measures merely force working people to bear the costs of change while making huge profits for energy firms.
- To oppose building new runways and terminals at Heathrow and Stansted.
- To oppose the building of new nuclear power stations.
- To campaign for any new coal-fired power stations to be designed ready for carbon capture and storage (CCS) and with a commitment to retrofitting.
- To affiliate to the Campaign Against

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Climate Change Trade Union Group and encourage members to take part in its events, conferences, demonstrations etc.

Fire Service:

- *To demand an up to date assessment of the risk and uncertainty associated with climate change in the UK and its implications for the Fire Service from CLG, the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly.*
- *To campaign for a UK Fire and Rescue Service climate change adaptation strategy with guarantees on staffing, IRMPs, training, equipment and health and safety (e.g. PPE, temperature and heat stress).*
- *To campaign for a fully funded national capability for flood rescue with Fire and Rescue Authorities playing a leading role, underpinned by a statutory duty (as suggested in Recommendation 39 of the Pitt Review).*
- *To campaign within brigades to reduce the carbon footprint of the Fire Service.*
- *To support union environment reps in carrying out green audits and negotiating environmental agreements, in order to improve energy efficiency at work.*

Within the FBU:

- *To appoint an officer responsible for climate change policy.*
- *To participate in TUSDAC.*
- *To provide training for all Union reps on climate change.*
- *To elect environment reps at Brigade and Regional level.*
- *To consider how to integrate environmental campaigning within the existing Union structures.*
- *To carry out an environmental audit of FBU premises.*

Amendment

At the end of the statement within section 5) FBU policy and campaigning; subsection within the FBU the following bullet point:

- ***To ensure that FBU travel arrangements have a minimal carbon footprint impact as possible.***

STRATHCLYDE

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, if you consider the subject matter in front of you and the issue of speakers' times we are in a situation where quite literally we have got three minutes to save the world.

The issue of climate change is not some sort of trendy issue for a bunch of tree huggers. It is an issue which is at the heart of the Fire and Rescue Service. It is about safety and resources in our profession and our Service. If you look at the 2007 floods throughout various parts of England and read the Pitt Report into those floods, what climate change experts say is that you cannot identify any particular extreme weather event as being directly caused by climate change. What happens is that you are more likely to see such extreme weather events. In those floods we saw the Fire and Rescue Service stretched massively: firefighters from all over the United Kingdom sent into Humberside and South Yorkshire and then later into the South West; firefighters with inadequate personal protective equipment; firefighters who were sent for days on end to deal with those floods having to stay away from home at no notice whatsoever.

In 2006, a year earlier, we had the opposite: a high number of grassland and heathland fires. We can also, according to predictions, expect increased periods of drought and increased extreme storms. All of these impact on the work of our members and the Fire Service is therefore at the front line of what is described as adaptation: climate change which may now be unavoidable, we need to adapt to as a society and the Fire Service is in the front line of that.

The Statement itself deals with a wider range of issues than simply the Fire Service. It deals with climate change in a wider political context. It looks at it in relation to the debate in the Trade Union Movement. It identifies and clarifies policies on a number of areas such as energy, carbon trading, airport expansion, nuclear power and clean coal technology.

In relation to the Fire and Rescue Service itself, it makes the case for investment in our Service and ties into the wider debates that we have had all week here in Scarborough, so this agenda, this EC Policy Statement is also about protecting our members' jobs for the future, and that message needs to be taken back loud and clear. It does not answer every question in detail, but it provides a framework for future work.

Just in closing, there is of course a bigger issue of climate change, because the debate that is taking place is not just how do we adapt to it, but how do we try to prevent further climate change. The approach of this Government and the approach of governments throughout the western world is to use market mechanisms. They say that the market can be adjusted to prevent further climate change. The Statement is quite clear in opposing such mechanisms, such as permit trading, price increases or regressive taxes which are all about making working people pay the price for climate change. That is the agenda, unfortunately, that

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the Government is following. The argument, effectively is, that big business can solve the problems of climate change when big business multi-national capitalism has played a significant part in creating climate change in the first place. In the disaster of the financial and economic crisis, why the hell would anyone dream of letting the bankers deal with climate change? Absolutely not. So our solution is a different way forward. Our solution offers a way forward to what we call a just transition to a low carbon economy that protects the interests of working people, that says working people should not have to pay the price for climate change and so on, an agenda that puts working people in the driving seat.

Three minutes, world saved, I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Is there a seconder for the EC Policy Statement? South Yorkshire to second.

BRO NIGEL HODGES (South Yorkshire):

Yes, South Yorkshire was massively affected by the floods particularly in the area where I lived and many of my colleagues from around the country came to support and help the people of that area which are still affected by the floods, some still living in the camper vans provided.

We may be the only creatures that have a concept of what future can behold us. We have a duty to support any worker campaigns that educate and address the future we all don't want to befall our children and their children. I second the EC Motion.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Nigel. Strathclyde to move their Amendment.

A DELEGATE (Strathclyde):

When I brought this to the Brigade Committee, I was maybe the last person to advise the working class to get on their bikes, so at the risk of being identified with Thatcher's bother boy, I urge Conference to support the Amendment.

The Caribbean has been devastated by hurricanes every year now and is prone to flooding. There is increasing risk from droughts and water scarcity. I ask this Conference when making our travel arrangements as Union Officials and as individuals we ensure we use the least polluting option whenever possible. Budget airlines are union busters and they don't recognise trade unions so you have got to consider that as well. Get on the train and support the RMT. There are alternatives out there. It is about preplanning, planning ahead, so I ask you to support the Amendment and the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment?
Formally seconded.

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

I support the EC Policy Statement, FBU and Climate Change. The Policy Statement informs us that here in the UK our summers are getting drier and our winters are getting wetter. This in turn directly affects ourselves and the job that we do with forest and wild fires rising and we all know flooding incidents are increasing. You may ask yourself what can I do about it, surely it is just nature's way. Or is it the effects of climate change. You may ask yourselves what can I do with the industrial monsters of China and USA when they keep churning out large amounts of pollution and emissions? You can do something comrades. You can start today in your control rooms, your work offices, your union offices, your fire stations and your homes. You can start by making your home and your work place greener. You can change to low energy light bulbs. You can drive less and ride to work. Has your Brigade got a ride to work scheme? You can recycle more. You can turn your lights off when they are not in use. You can use less hot water and you can turn your PCs and monitors off when not in use. These are just a few short measures that can significantly reduce carbon. So let us be part of the solution, let us get involved and be active. I urge you to support this.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. Val please.

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

Conference, I won't take much of your time. GMC are supporting this with reservations. Given some of the earlier debates this week regarding the finances of this Union, we were not supposed to be able to afford the National Officer. I would really like to know how we are going to afford an Officer by whom and by what method and all the environmental reps at Brigade and Regional level that are going to be generated from this Resolution. Also, I always thought inadequate equipment came under the remit of health and safety negotiations, and if you look at fairness at work now, ethical buying and sourcing is actually fairness at work reference, so I am a little bit perplexed about what they are going to do as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Val. Andy.

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BRO ANDY IMRIE (West Yorkshire):

Supporting the EC Resolution, I have just got some concerns about the wording from Strathclyde. I totally appreciate the intent behind it. What is worrying me is when at the end of the bullet point it says, the minimal carbon footprint impacts as possible. I have got some concerns about the FBU being able to achieve that and what it will mean structurally regarding transport and everything else to do with that. If “as possible” wasn’t in it I can see it, but it does concern me how we are going to actually achieve that. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I will ask Matt to exercise right of reply and then we will move to the vote.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Just very quickly on a couple of the questions. The EC are supporting the Strathclyde Amendment. In relation to Val’s points, we already have existing policy on environment reps so that came to Conference either last year or the year before. There will be issues that we need to be careful about in terms of resources and so on, but as a National Trade Union I think it would be a huge error not to have a clear policy on climate change. It is a key political debate in the United Kingdom and across the world. We need to play our role in that debate so I understand the reservations, but we strongly urge Conference to support the Statement.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I will put the Amendment from Strathclyde to the vote first. Can I see those in favour please? Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried*.

I now put the Policy Statement as amended by Strathclyde to the vote. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is *carried*.

Resolution 50 from Hereford & Worcester has been withdrawn. The Amendment from the West Midlands therefore falls.

We are back on the Annual Report. Paragraph B20. Paragraph B21. I am now going to take the Executive Council Policy Statement on Workforce Development and Vocational Qualifications and again there is an Amendment from Strathclyde.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The FBU’s position on workforce development, assessment, vocational qualifications and related

matters has developed continually since this debate emerged in 1994. It evolved further with the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement, the introduction of the Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition 2004 and, most recently, when various concerns were raised by delegates at Annual Conference 2008. These concerns resulted in resolutions being either carried or remitted for the FBU Workforce Development Group (WDG) to consider in more detail.

The WDG has continued with this work throughout the past year and was assisted by the production and distribution of an Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) Code of Practice document. This Code of Practice, developed by the now disbanded IPDS working group (on which the FBU was represented) outlined a best practice guide for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in relation to areas including Assessment Development Centers’, vocational qualifications and the Initial Test of Potential process.

To assist the WDG a Head Office Circular (2007HOC0693SS) which asked officials to give some information on available vocational qualifications within their respective FRA was issued. Initial reports showed that out of the fifty responses only eleven FRAs were not using Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs) in some guise. It also showed that in all but three of those FRAs using S/NVQs, they were being used to measure competency in role. Many indicated that they were mandatory for new entrants to the service. The information received also highlighted that many FRAs using vocational qualifications were not applying them consistently. For example many did not offer vocational qualifications to the entire workforce but ignored members working the retained duty system (RDS) completely and were only offering them to new employees on the wholetime duty system (WDS). This apparent misuse was taking place without FBU approval or involvement. This information and the concerns raised at conference indicated that a structured FBU involvement in the processes around workforce development and vocational qualifications was necessary. To highlight this, conference should be aware that there are at least thirty eight FRAs currently using vocational qualifications. In some instances this is in FRAs where other sections of the workforce are being discriminated against because of their role, length of service and/or duty system in which they are currently employed.

Elsewhere officials have reported concerns with how competence in role is achieved, either by using

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the NJC rolemap or the vocational qualification 'Operations in the Community.' These issues include the perceived lack of technical input individuals receive. The Executive Council has considered all these concerns and has acted to assist officials. This action includes authorising an education course 'Understanding Qualifications and Workforce Development in the UKFRS' which will be available to officials during 2009. This course is designed to refresh officials' knowledge of areas such as IPDS and vocational qualifications, using all the resources available. This will include an FBU guidance document based on the IPDS Code of Practice. This resource and the related course will also enable officials to challenge management on all areas of workforce development whether it is related to competence, vocational qualifications, IPDS or the way in which promotions are assessed and managed.

To enable officials to be confident that within their FRA there is a consistent approach to competence they must be confident that there is an agreed level for all to work towards. They must also be confident that when this level is achieved the individual is both confident and competent to carry out their role safely. This level is nationally accepted as the relevant NJC agreed rolemap but information has shown that in practice the 'Operations in the Community' level 3 vocational qualification is often being used to measure firefighter competence. Although this raises other issues that will need addressing such as ensuring that a robust assessment and verification is in place, it may assist in other areas where disputes of competencies are ongoing, such as when transferring from RDS to WDS is being discussed.

In order to monitor and influence the way that competence is achieved and assessed, FBU officials must firstly understand the workforce development processes. It is only then that improvements in their delivery and consistency can be achieved.

Robust systems of workforce development are essential to the genuine modernisation of the UK Fire and Rescue Service and, if members can achieve a vocational qualification whilst performing their role, we should not oppose this. Our concern is to ensure that the systems around any qualifications within the service are robust, respected and understood.

The Executive Council is acutely aware that the task of influencing the implementation of vocational qualifications across the UK Fire Service is not going to be a straightforward process. There is currently considerable variation between FRAs around these

issues. There is no suggestion that vocational qualifications (especially as currently established) will be the 'cure all' remedy for competence within the UK Fire Service. Nevertheless the debate around these issues can allow the FBU to argue for a benchmark to be laid down and can give us an opportunity to address the inconsistencies that remain within and between FRAs. For this reason officials should be encouraged to attend the 'Understanding Qualifications and Workforce Development in the UKFRS'

Considering the details in this statement Conference is asked to agree;

- *That Brigade Officials commit to attending the course 'Understanding Qualifications and Workforce Development in the UKFRS'. This will be organised through Head Office and delivered to Regions;*
- *That Conference does not oppose vocational qualifications which have been subject to agreement with the FBU through the national processes available;*
- *That local Officials will challenge areas of inconsistency in the ways in which workforce development is implemented within each FRA;*
- *That the FBU should continue to focus on the need for Fire & Rescue Services to provide high quality training for Firefighters to carry out their duties safely and in the professional manner we have come to expect;*
- *That the Workforce Development Group will continue to monitor progress around these issues so as to assist the Executive Council in providing further advice to officials.*

Amendment.

On final page, third bullet point, after "development" insert "and the arrangements for achievement of competence"

STRATHCLYDE

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

It is frankly impossible to do any justice to this topic, which is a huge topic, in the time that we have got, so I hope comrades have read the Policy Statement carefully and I am sure that you are fairly familiar with the issues, but work force development is a priority for us and was a cornerstone of some of the issues around the firefighter fatalities campaign and lobby last year. It is about ensuring the safety of our members and adequate training of our members. Over the last number of years Resolutions have come to Conference regarding training and development, IPDS and so on, and as a result of that we established a Work Force Development Group from the Executive Council. That has been working all year on the various Resolutions which have been raised

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at Conference, all of the concerns that have been raised either through Conference or through other means.

The Statement mentions the IPDS Code of Practice which we assisted in developing, and that Code of Practice is an extremely helpful document which advises Fire and Rescue Authorities on how to implement IPDS correctly ensuring that our members are recruited, developed, promoted and assessed etc with a specific emphasis on safety. Unfortunately, it seems to have gone pretty much unheeded by most Fire and Rescue Authorities who have tended to implement IPDS very inconsistently to the detriment of our members. I mentioned the CLG review of training and a key focus of that review is around IPDS. I can tell you very clearly that the expectation within CLG, the expectation even from CFOA is that when that review reports back over the next year or so they will find a complete mix and match approach to IPDS across the Fire and Rescue Service.

One of the key issues discussed within our Work Force Development Group has been the vocational qualifications and that is one of the points that is clarified within the Statement. Our research through surveying Brigade Officials has shown that 39 of the 50 Brigades who responded were doing vocational qualifications and most of these were insisting that that was a route to competence. Even among these 39 there were massive inconsistencies and many, for example, did not offer a vocational qualification to Retained Duty System firefighters. The firefighter vocational qualification was also being amended and we took an opportunity to ensure that the operations in the community absolutely mirrored the firefighter rolemap as agreed by ourselves in previous negotiations. Those discussions and negotiations took a year of hard work by Officials.

We are now satisfied that either the NJC rolemaps or the operations in the community vocational qualification can be used to measure competence. We produced in that respect a guidance document which has been circulated I think to you today, and I hope that Officials will find it extremely useful. I think it addresses many of the questions, many of the concerns and many of the Resolutions that have been brought here over the past few years. At the same time we have designed a pilot course on work force development and vocational qualifications. That is scheduled for 22 June and a further one planned in July, So I hope that Brigade Officials involved in these discussions at a local level will attend those two courses and again hopefully will provide people with the tools, training and skills to be able to take on those issues at local level.

The Executive Council recognise that vocational qualifications are not a cure all for competence concerns, we are not saying that there will not be

continuing problems with consistency. What we are saying is that the ops in the community VQ reflects what a firefighter should be doing, and that using the guidance document which has been issued should allow Officials to challenge areas where we have concerns.

Comrades, there is further work to do. There has been a huge amount of work within the Work Force Development Group, I am sure you will appreciate that is reflected in the document just issued. Just to speed things up, we support the Strathclyde Amendment as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Is there a seconder please for the Policy Statement?

BRO PETER MOSS (ONC):

I support the Executive Council Policy Statement on Work Force Development and Vocational Qualifications. The Officers National Committee have been extensively involved in consultation on amendments to the National Occupational Standards in fire safety, fire investigation and incident command. These Standards are to reflect the function of our members performing their roles. We are not involved in any attempt to amend the NJC roles but simply re-write the current standards to ensure they better reflect the job they do. Competence in roles is, I am sure you are aware, a major talking point, so Officials must be fully aware of rolemaps and have the skills and abilities to be able to challenge as and when things are not being implemented correctly and consistently.

The Officers National Committee supports the move to vocational qualifications, but want the FBU to be fully involved to ensure they contain our safeguards and reflect the role our members perform. High quality training is necessary. We all need to better understand IPDS and ensure it is applied consistently. We are professionals. We need professional training assessed and verified. We therefore welcome vocational qualifications. Please support the Executive Council Statement.

THE PRESIDENT:

Strathclyde to move their Amendment please? *Formally moved.* Thank you. Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded.* It is open for debate. I will therefore put the Amendment from Strathclyde to the vote. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried*.

I therefore put the Executive Council Policy Statement as amended by Strathclyde to the vote. Can I see all

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those in favour please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is *carried unanimously*.

Right Conference. I am now in your hands. We have four outstanding Resolutions. We have two outstanding Paragraphs. I have to put the Paragraphs to you and the Annual Report for a final vote and we can then deal with whatever Resolutions we can fit in before 5 o'clock or we can suspend Standing Orders until we have dealt with the four remaining Resolutions and the two outstanding Paragraphs. Can I see those in favour of suspending Standing Orders please. Thank you. Can I see those against. Right, we will suspend Standing Orders and try and get them all.

We are on to Resolution 46 from Shropshire, Assessment and Development Centres. The Executive Council are opposing. Shropshire to move please.

Resolution 46 – ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

This conference believes that Assessment and Development Centre (ADC) tests have reached a point where they desperately need increased funding or will be in danger of complete failure in the Fire Service.

Therefore this conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate with the appropriate bodies to ensure that adequate funding for ADCs and the associated tests are provided.

The outcome of this negotiation is to be reported back to Brigade Secretaries within six months after Conference 2009.

SHROPSHIRE

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

Firstly, can I thank Sean and the Work Force Development Group for putting together a guidance document. It is very helpful to have these types of documents for us to be able to negotiate with management on these types of subjects.

Apparently the EC's concern about our Resolution is concerning achievability and the time scales that we set out, and I have to say that our concern is also time scales and our concern with the time scales is with the issue. We believe that the many problems and issues with the ADC problem mean that the whole system of ADCs is in imminent danger of complete failure, and our members are still at this time being put through a completely flawed process which is rapidly losing credibility.

The National Officer assures me that he will be pursuing the problems identified outlined in our Resolution and

because of these assurances we will remit to the Work Force Development Group. Can I just add that we do feel that this needs to be dealt with quickly and I could threaten to bring it back to Conference next year but I do think it may well be too late by then.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much. I will call Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

I met Skills for Justice who are the new sector skills council looking at IPDF. I raised that issue with them. The only problem we had was we were in their hands a little bit for timescales. We are going to deal with this.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Sean. We are therefore now going to take Resolution 49 from the Control Staff National Committee, Professional Development. The EC are offering qualified support. CSNC to move please.

Resolution 49 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fire Control staff are currently supported through a range of development schemes, IPDS and established training courses for professional development and career progression.

This is developed by in-house FRS departments and specialist external contractors. The courses are delivered to mixed groups from all areas of the FRS in order to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of a diverse workforce.

In line with the "twin-track" approach CSNC call for negotiations to begin with any future employer, alongside negotiations on contractual matters, to make arrangements with a host FRS to provide career development courses and professional support for Fire Control personnel. The outcome of these negotiations to be reported to the Executive Council member for Control.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

President, comrades. In 1994 or 1995 at the CSNC AGM in Leeds, Region 3 moved a Resolution demanding that Emergency Control Staff be afforded the same opportunity as firefighters. We wanted a mechanism in place that recognised our professionalism and our skills. It was a hard fought battle and in time honoured tradition Region 3 once again turned over the EC's opposition which by the way was on the grounds of achievability.

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For the most part firefighter controls are now not only afforded the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification but are also included in the ADC process along with our station based colleagues. It is not without its problems however and in some Brigades firefighter controls are being classed as non-operational, corporate or even green book employees with some Brigades taking advantage and lowering the conditions for some posts. While I have often regretted pushing so hard for recognition for qualifications and especially over the last three and half years during which I have had to supervise and assist eight NVQ candidates with another two or three on the horizon, and have nursed nervous ADC candidates through success and failure, I have not actually regretted it for very long. What will be a matter for regret will be the loss of those opportunities currently afforded to the majority of our Control members, those people who may eventually transfer across to the RCCs still deserve the chance to prove they are highly professional and skilled individuals. They also deserve the chance to follow up within the Fire Service structure should they so wish including applying for promotion to roles outside of Control just as we can now. Those senior managers who are currently claiming that will remain part of the Grey Book and Fire Service family, need to put their money where their mouths are. The LACC need to be strongly encouraged to maintain our rolemaps and to recognise our rights to career development and our current employers need to be strongly encouraged to join in providing some of the opportunities. These negotiations need to start now. They need to go hand in hand with negotiations for recognition at the NJC and this needs to be done quickly. Some of us are already at the consultation stages. The RCC is sitting on our shoulder right now. Next year it might be too late and parts of the CSNC delegation could be having a farewell tour and that includes me. We want the EC to fully endorse this Resolution, commencing negotiations in National and Regional arenas. Current employers have to be dragged kicking and screaming towards recognition for our skills. Future employers cannot be allowed to let that recognition disappear. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mandy. Is there a seconder for Resolution 49? *Seconded formally.* The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask Sean Starbuck to outline the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, Mandy, you covered one area of qualification in your speech, that these negotiations should already be taking place with current employers. The second qualification is on the last line it talks about reporting it to the CSNC EC Member. It has got to be reported to

the whole of the EC really. That is just our qualification and we are happy to support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Are you seeking the right to reply, Mandy?

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN:

Surely reporting to the EC Member for Control would result in a report to the full EC. By reporting to our EC Member we can go into far more detail, she will collate all of this information and then summarise it for the full EC. After all, we are not trying to bypass anyone or exclude them. We are just trying to find the most efficient method.

THE PRESIDENT:

It may well be reported to Sharon first but it will obviously be reported to the full Executive Council and hopefully the rest of the Union as well. Right, I will put Resolution 49 to the vote. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried unanimously.*

We are on to the Annual Report Paragraph B22, New Dimensions Sounding Board. I am now going to take Resolution 39 from Tyne & Wear with an Amendment from Strathclyde. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I have Tyne & Wear to move please.

Resolution 39 – UNFUNDED FRS ACTIVITY

Conference demands that the Executive Council secures from all UK fire and rescue services, by any means possible, data which accurately indicates any costs associated with the provision of "New Dimensions" activities, in excess of that which is funded by CLG and costs incurred for providing other services without fire service statutory obligations, for which the individual FRS concerned is not funded.

These costings should focus on two main areas:

- 1) Actual financial outlay associated with such work, which is unfunded through normal means.***
- 2) Estimated amount of hours allocated to such work, or associated training, development or research.***

TYNE & WEAR

Amendment

In Line 4 after CLG delete "and", insert "and other devolved administrations the"

STRATHCLYDE

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BRO GORDON CHALK (Tyne & Wear):

We accept Strathclyde's Amendment. In the UK Fire and Rescue Service, the provision of New Dimension is now well established. Most of our Fire Services have some appliances and associated equipment for New Dimension activities. This means throughout the UK we have a lot more new equipment creating a lot more logistical issues. This is used for training, staffing of appliances following that training, cover for staff when training and this means movement of staff, detachments, effective shift patterns, time off, leave, cover for sickness, the list goes on. In my Brigade alone, Tyne & Wear, we have numerous appliances, high volume pump, a number of mass decontamination appliances too. All of these come with their logistical problems I have just mentioned. The question is, is the money given by CLG and other Devolved Administrations enough to cover all the issues? We now need to look at this concern and ask the right questions all around the UK Services. Conference, how much New Dimension is happening and what is it costing?

Throughout the UK can we now find out the costs of everything associated with New Dimension Activities and any other unfunded activities? How much work are we in the UK doing with this new equipment and how much work is unfunded? Is the funding adequate? Does it cover all the associated costs? Is New Dimension becoming a drain on our budget to provide our statutory Fire Service obligations? Conference demands the Executive Council now finds out the costings as mentioned in Resolution 39. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Gordon. Is there a seconder for Resolution 39? *Formally seconded.* Strathclyde to move their Amendment? *Formally moved.* Have you got a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting both.

I will put the Amendment from Strathclyde to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Any against. That is *carried*.

I put Resolution 39 from Tyne & Wear as amended by Strathclyde to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on the final Paragraph of the Annual Report. Paragraph B23. And on to our final Resolution, Resolution 51 from Devon & Somerset, Aerial Appliance Crewing. Devon & Somerset to move please.

Resolution 51 – AERIAL APPLIANCE CREWING

This conference deplores the growing national trend of reducing dedicated Aerial Appliance crewing. Conference instructs the Executive Council to implement an urgent review into the implications of this for Firefighters and communities, this review to be completed and reported back no later than FBU Annual Conference 2010.

DEVON & SOMERSET

THE PRESIDENT:

It has been formally moved. Is Resolution 51 seconded?

BRO MICK ROGERS (Essex):

I second Resolution 51. Essex are facing the biggest raft of cuts the Service has ever seen. The IRMP 2009/2012 set out to modernise the way our five aerial appliances are crewed and in doing so bring about a reduction in the number of front line firefighters. The Service has now decided that the most modern way of crewing is to move away from primary crewing and use a system some Brigades have used for the past 20 years. This move will cut 44 front line firefighter posts to be used in a mixture of ways, including managed vacancies, so money can be pumped into a new IT system and other white elephants. This has never been about improving the service to the public or making them safer. By their own admission, there will be an increased risk and heavy reliance on the expertise of our local control. But when the dedicated crewing arrangement is referred to as a luxury in today's modern standards by our Chief Fire Officer, then what hope do we really have? What will happen if the Regional Control comes on line when the local knowledge and expertise is lost? Will that provide a safer community?

Once again it is the FBU who will fight for what is right and for the public to be properly protected in Essex. That is why I have to inform Conference that Essex Officials have met with the President and General Secretary whilst here at Conference and have been granted permission to ballot our members over this very issue. *Applause*

Apparently, at least 20 rescues carried out by 5 ALP's within the three year period in addition to numerous incidents where ALP's have been used to restrict fire spread and prevent our members facing unnecessary punishment are not enough to warrant them remaining primary crewed. If you do the maths and assume that had these 20 rescues not taken place and all had to become fatality statistics then it would cost the public purse approximately 7 times more than it would have to maintain primary crewing on the ALP's over the same period. Our members working within the Fire and

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Rescue Service are renowned for their ingenuity and adaptability at overcoming difficulties when we don't have the right equipment to do the job required of us, but this is different. No other piece of equipment provides us with a replacement for an ALP and when you need one you need one. It is no good sat in the appliance bay simply because you do not have enough firefighters on duty to crew and mobilise it. Primary crewing is the best option for our members, primary crewing is the safest option for our members. Primary crewing provides the best service to the public. Conference, I urge you to support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are giving qualified support to Resolution 51. I will put Resolution 51 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

Before we move to vote on the Annual Report, I have got a couple of announcements to make. One is that there are a number of officials and delegates at this conference who will not be coming back to next year's Conference, and it is traditional to wish them well in their future endeavours. From Region 3, Regional Secretary Steve Gregg won't be coming back, nor Telfer Whitfield, the Chair of Cleveland. Region 9 have got two former Regional Secretaries both retiring this year, Dave Cain who was also a representative on the Officers National Committee, and Graham Noakes. In Region 7 Executive Council Member Dave Whatton is retiring along with Mark Fellows the Brigade Chair of the West Midlands and Dave Starnes from the West Midlands Brigade. From the Officers National Committee, Allan Guest is retiring. From Region 10 Simon Wakefield the former Regional Fairness at Work Official. From Region 13, Joe Tray, Brigade Secretary of Wiltshire, and from Region 12 Gordon Richardson from Buckinghamshire and I am sure we wish them all well in their future lives.
Applause

I have had a request from the Standing Orders Committee for Regional Treasurers to please ensure that the Brigade voting cards are put down the front of the hall on the table there in front.

I now move to formally vote on the Annual Report. Can I see those in favour please. Thank you. Were there any against. No. That is *carried unanimously*. It now only remains for me to thank all the delegates to Conference for your cooperation this week and for having a successful Conference. I wish you all a good journey home. We have taken some important decisions. Please ensure that we implement them successfully. Thank you very much.

Conference Closed

Addendum

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

STANDING ORDERS REPORT DURING CLOSED SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Now please everyone be seated and cease their conversations, and listen to the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee who will give a report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks, President. Will you turn to your Programme of Business, please. Page 4. After Resolution 21 insert Emergency Resolution No 3, Discipline and Grievance Procedure, Greater Manchester. Page 6. After Resolution 66 insert Emergency Resolution No 5, Gurkhas' Right of Residence, ONC. After Paragraph G8 insert Emergency Resolution No 7, Control Campaign, Executive Council. After Emergency Resolution No 7 insert Emergency Resolution No 4, Fire Control Pay and Conditions, Greater Manchester. Page 8. Before G26, insert Emergency Resolution No 15, Organising and Recruitment, Humberside. Page 9. After Para J6, insert Emergency Resolution No 6, Post Natal Depression, Kent. Page 12. After Resolution 68, insert Emergency Resolution No 9, Sri Lanka, NWC. After Para C12, insert Emergency Resolution No 10, Afghanistan, NWC. After Resolution 62 insert Emergency Resolution No 18, Palestine, Tayside. After Resolution 65 insert Emergency Resolution No 17, The People's Charter, Tayside. Page 15. After Resolution No 73 insert Emergency Resolution No 11, Pandemic Flu-A.I.F., Lothian & Borders. Page 16. After Resolution 56 insert Emergency Resolution No 12 DNA Sampling, Hereford & Worcester. That concludes the report, President. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee Report agreed? *Agreed*



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Record of 2009 Annual Conference Decisions

Scarborough

Record of Decisions

Motions Carried ...

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE EMBEDDING UNION LEARNING IN THE FBU'S FUTURE

Following the unanimous passing of Composite Resolution A at Annual Conference 2007 and recognising Resolution 65 of Annual Conference 2004, the Executive Council (EC) set up a working group to discuss and make proposals regarding the embedding of Lifelong Learning within the FBU.

The composition of the FBU's Embedding Lifelong Learning Group (ELLG) is:

Chair – Vice President

National Officer with Education and ULF remit

Two EC Members

Two Regional Education Officers

Two ULF Regional Co-ordinators

ULF Manager

ULF Finance Manager

FBU Education Advisor

The ELLG discussed the issues and recommendations contained within the EC report of embedding learning and have sought information from a number of sources including other trade unions. ELLG members spoke with a number of officials at all levels of the FBU and have taken on board a wide range of views as to how the union should embed lifelong learning and considered the current role and status of Regional Education Officers and explored any financial implications for the union. The work of the ELLG was considered at the meeting of the Executive Council at its meeting in February 2009 where it was agreed that an EC Statement would be put to the FBU's Annual Conference.

The Executive Council recognises the importance of mainstream trade union education and the vital role it plays in ensuring union officials have the skills and opportunity to access quality education. The Executive Council have been mindful of the importance of ensuring that embedding lifelong learning would not have a detrimental effect in the delivery of trade union education and to ensure that it would enhance the delivery of trade union education; it would also help increase the skills base of officials, giving them the opportunity to improve their skills.

Union Learning Reps and the position of Brigade Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator were adopted into the union's rule book in 2006. Due to gaining further funding (ULF) across the UK the original decision not to incorporate a regional position within the rule book has not been altered. However, the funding situation is due to change in 2010 and the FBU needs to have a policy

which takes into account this changed background. Having considered all of the options the Executive Council recommends that the role of the Regional Education Officer is widened to include lifelong learning and that the post is renamed the 'Regional Education and Learning Organiser' (RELO).

The proposal would add further strength to the union's current organisation structure in relation to education and learning. The RELO would have responsibility on behalf of the Regional Committee to organise learning and FBU education within Regions.

This would help to ensure that ULRs who may be new union officials are encouraged to take up a more active role within the union. The position of the branch and brigade ULRs will be considered further prior to Annual Conference 2010.

The Executive Council acknowledges that to achieve this and for the eventual regional postholders to gain the understanding that current regional ULF Co-ordinators have, there will need to be a handing over period. The Executive Council proposes that the new RELO post be created as soon as possible after Conference 2009 and that the postholder 'shadows' the ULF co-ordinator until Annual Conference 2010 where the EC proposes the appropriate rule changes.

The Executive Council considers that by carrying out the above changes the role and status of Education Officers will be enhanced and enable the delivery of a quality overall education and learning package to officials and FBU members whilst at the same time ensuring that our education and learning provision takes place; this at the same time ensures a robust future for the Fire Brigades Union.

The Executive Council has reviewed the number and method of employment of ULF project staff. The FBU learning centre staff continue to be employed through the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) they work in and moves are ongoing to secure their future through 100% management support. The ULF manager is now employed on a fixed term contract by the FBU thereby ensuring he is answerable to the General Secretary and EC. Four regional co-ordinators are employed on a consultancy basis with the others seconded from their own FRS. At present there is no indication from the Government of further ULF funding past 2010.

The Executive Council has considered the impact of lifelong learning and the various issues associated with Workforce Development. The ULF manager is now invited to attend the Workforce Development Group under the National Officer. There is a close relationship between Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs), FRS qualifications and Lifelong

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Learning – especially in relation to Key Skills/Skills for Life. The group recommends that the EC continue to support the role that the current ULF project plays in supporting members in Workforce Development under the guidance and instruction of the National Officer.

Financial costs to the union in embedding learning are negligible. ULRs are already recognised within the rule book and apart from the costs of training and attending events, work within their branch.

The proposed 'Regional Education and Learning Organiser' is not an additional official but the extended remit of the proposed RELO position may require the post holder to increase travel/attend additional meetings. There is, therefore, the possibility of a small increase in travel and subsistence expenditure within the regions. There would be no correlating increase for attending the current national education officers meetings.

Conference is therefore asked to agree:

1. to extend the remit of the Regional Education Officer to include Lifelong Learning and that this position becomes 'Regional Education & Learning Organiser' (RELO). The position to be filled in line with current union rules - appointed by Regional Committee;
2. to have these posts in place following Annual Conference 2009 and the appointed person 'shadow' the Regional ULF Co-ordinator;
3. that the EC will bring the necessary rule changes required to fully embed the above position and other appropriate changes to Annual Conference 2010;
4. that continued funding from central government and/or FRSs be further explored;
5. during the transition, that the ULF project staff continue to help and advise the union on lifelong learning matters linked to Workforce Development under the appropriate National Officer. The position to be reviewed by the Executive Council.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE FBU ELECTIONS

Annual Conference 2008 agreed to run all non-statutory elections for National Sectional Officials by postal ballot for a 12 month trial period. During this period, only one such election took place.

Between Conference 2009 and Conference 2011 there are a further five non-statutory elections for National

Sectional Officials scheduled to take place. The Executive Council recommends that the trial period be extended until Rule Change Conference 2011. During this time, the Executive Council will monitor all aspects of these elections so as to provide the basis for a report to Annual Conference 2011, with any proposals that may be appropriate for Conference to consider.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE A SERVICE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

2009 will mark the fifth anniversary of the new legislative framework for the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK. During this period, rushed and ill-thought out changes have adversely affected the functioning and efficiency of our Service. The abolition of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC) and of the Scottish CFBAC eliminated a key element in the development of professional standards within the Fire and Rescue Service.

Professional standards are crucial to the ability of firefighters to perform their job efficiently, effectively and safely. Standards should provide an objective measure of quality by which both firefighters and the public can measure the effectiveness and efficiency of each Fire and Rescue Service. They are integral to a coherent risk reduction and risk management strategy. Professional standards should apply to all key areas of the work of the Fire and Rescue Service including:

- Training;
- Equipment;
- Operational Procedures;
- Standards of emergency response;
- Appointment and promotion systems;
- Planning systems at local, regional and national levels.

Regrettably, since 2004 there has been no robust system for the development of such standards. This has led to the increasing fragmentation of the Service across the UK. While Government calls for greater resilience, the systems which developed this in the past have been abolished and not replaced.

The Fire Brigades Union is the largest professional body within the Service, representing the overwhelming majority of firefighters. The FBU has a central role to play in developing the professional standards to which our members are required to work.

In the past two years the FBU has highlighted a vacuum in the development of policy within our Service. This has been done in FBU reports on; Attacks on Firefighters; FRS response to floods; Firefighter fatalities. The same issues have been highlighted by FBU Officials at a local and national level. Our 2008 report on fatalities (In the Line of Duty) drew attention to the crucial nature of this debate and its potential impact on the safety of members.

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It is therefore welcome that as a result of campaigning by the Union, new arrangements are being developed to address the issue of the development of operational guidance and that research is to be undertaken on issues around operational training. These developments are welcome *but are not sufficient* to resolve the whole range of concerns of firefighters about the future of their profession.

Therefore the Union will continue to pursue the genuine modernisation of our Service and our profession and will address the issues which have been missed or deliberately ignored by Government. In particular we will highlight the need for:

Professional Standards

Professional standards are key to a modern and efficient service. In recent debates about the NHS, there has been widespread public hostility to the idea of a 'postcode lottery' in relation to levels of service. Likewise, the public has a right to know that firefighters attending an emergency incident have received training to the highest possible standards and that this does not vary according to locality. The same principle should apply to the provision of equipment and to planning for emergency response.

Firefighters have the right to know that they have the best possible equipment, training and procedures. To achieve these aims requires the creation of structures and committees where such issues can be thoroughly and professionally addressed. Most importantly, firefighters must have confidence in such structures. That means that their professional views must play a central part in the development of standards. The Fire Brigades Union must play a central role in all such processes if such processes are to have any credibility within the profession.

Preparation

Fire and Rescue Services are primarily organised around three key areas of activity; Protection, Prevention and Intervention. To ensure that each of these is properly integrated requires adequate preparation. It is the view of the Fire Brigades Union that this aspect has been lacking in recent years as the Service has attempted to cope with an ever wider range of incident type and with new roles and responsibilities placed on the Service by Central Government. Adequate preparation requires an integrated approach including:

- The assessment of risk within communities;
- Planning for the response to risk at the local level;
- Training;
- Communication between different strands of the Service;
- Planning at a regional and national level.

The FBU has criticised current standards of planning within the Fire and Rescue Service. All too often IRMPs

are about cost-cutting rather than risk management. The public have the right to know that their Service is planning professionally for the various risks faced by the community. Firefighters have the right to know that the Service is planning adequately for incidents rather than deliberately under-resourcing them. Likewise, when firefighters are sent to attend major incidents in other parts of the country, they have the right to know that a robust plan has been developed and tested so as to ensure the safety and welfare of those concerned.

Public Engagement

The Fire Brigades Union is the voice of the firefighters of the UK. In campaign after campaign we have also become the voice of the community in seeking to defend the best provision of services to the community. In many cases, local communities have complained about bogus 'consultation' processes which subsequently ignore the views of the very people they seek to consult. The Fire Brigades Union seeks genuine public engagement. We are confident that when Fire and Rescue Service issues are properly explained the public can and will understand the need to defend and improve their Service rather than see it cut back further and further. To this end, we will seek engagement across the UK and within each locality with tenants and resident groups, community groups, local businesses and local trade unions so as to build an alliance to defend and improve our Service for the benefit of all.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to develop the work already undertaken around these issues and outlined above so as to develop further a strategy for a Service fit for the challenges of the 21st Century. This campaign should build on the success of our rally and lobby of November 2008 with further lobbying and campaigning events designed to draw the attention of politicians, the press and the public to the concerns of the Union outlined above and elsewhere.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE THE FBU AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1) Background science

Climate change is probably the greatest environmental threat facing humanity at present. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report (2007) concluded that increases in temperature are "very likely" due to increased greenhouse gas concentrations resulting from human activity. Global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750. Between 1906 and 2005 global average temperature may have risen by as much as 0.92°C. The IPCC also predicted that if greenhouse gas

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emissions continue at current rates, temperatures will rise by at least 1.1°C but may rise by as much as 6.4°C by 2100.

In 2002, the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) produced climate change scenarios, which estimated that temperatures in the UK will increase by up to 3°C by the 2050s. They expect greater warming in the summer and autumn, and more summer warming in the South East than the North West. There are also likely to be changes in rainfall, with winters being up to 25% wetter and summers possibly being up to 40% drier by the 2050s, though snowfall will significantly decrease. Sea level is expected to rise, especially in southern Britain. UKCIP predicted that the number and intensity of extreme events will increase, including heatwaves, downpours and storm surges.

The *Pitt Review* into the 2007 floods across the UK also made the connection with climate change. Pitt concluded: "The scale of the problem is, as we know, likely to get worse. We are not sure whether last summer's events were a direct result of climate change, but we do know that events of this kind are expected to become more frequent." The Pitt Review update of the Foresight: Future Flooding Study concluded that, "the effects of climate change may be more extreme than had previously been estimated." In particular the potential increases in rainfall volume and intensity and temperature, are greater; and there is a greater risk of extreme sea level rise. It found that the risk of flooding, including urban flooding, will increase.

2) UK politics and climate change

In the UK, climate change has become a central debate within mainstream politics over the last decade. In 2008, the Climate Change Act committed the UK to a cut of at least 26% by 2020 and 80% by 2050; created a carbon budgeting system to cap emissions over five year periods; and established an expert body, the Committee on Climate Change. The UK government created its own Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in 2002 and since 2007 UK energy companies have participated in the European Union ETS. In 2008 the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) introduced mandatory emissions trading for large non-energy intensive commercial and public organisations. The aim of these schemes is to create a market for carbon. However market mechanisms such as permit trading schemes and price rises have not reduced emissions, have provided windfall profits for energy firms and increased costs to workers' energy bills.

The *Stern Review* (2006) described climate change as "the greatest and widest-ranging market failure

ever seen." The report warned that the UK was vulnerable to both drought and flooding. It warned that the costs of not acting to reduce emissions could reduce income per head by "between 5 and 20%" and that "the poorest countries and people will suffer earliest and most." It mentioned the Philadelphia heat health warning system, which included increased staffing for the emergency services, as an example of good adaptation practice.

There are a number of contentious political issues relating to climate change. In 2006 the government signalled the go ahead for new nuclear power stations to be built by the private sector. The government has supported the expansion of Heathrow airport, including a third runway and sixth terminal. It is also considering permission for new coal fired power stations, beginning with Kingsnorth in Kent.

3) The Fire Service and climate change

In 2006, the CLG published a report, *Effects of Climate Change on Fire and Rescue Services in the UK*. It suggested significant impacts for fires, floods, drought and storms. On fires, the report accepted that there is "a clear and demonstrable link between hot dry summers and the number of fires", particularly secondary and forest fires. The CLG estimated an extra workload of up to 50% more incidents would, "stretch the resources of the Fire and Rescue Services." It acknowledged that, "Fire crews will be tired from attending more incidents, sickness and injury levels may rise due to fatigue, and equipment will be under more strain due to increased usage." The report estimated that the increase in workload will have "the largest impact on rural Fire and Rescue Services" and "on firefighters working on the retained duty system."

On floods, the CLG report pointed to flooding in Cumbria in 2005, when heavy rain fell for 36 hours, flooded nearly 2,000 properties in Carlisle and affected some 6,000 people. It argued that the role of the Fire and Rescue Services during flooding fell into three main areas: emergency response and rescue; damage mitigation; and (when the floodwaters are subsiding) making flooded areas safe before residents are permitted to return to them. The report said that if flooding becomes more frequent, "Fire and Rescue Services may have to consider adapting their capabilities to allow for a greater flood rescue response capability." It listed possible changes to: appliances, equipment, training, health implications, additional pumping capability and greater Emergency Fire Control capacity.

On drought, UKCIP estimated that summer rainfall would decrease by between 20% and 50% by

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2080. The CLG report argued that water shortages would affect brigades' training and demonstrative capabilities. Water companies are expected to reduce the pressure in their mains supplies to minimise leakage, so firefighters may have to relay water across longer distances from alternative water sources and could expect changes in training, tactics, procedures and equipment. On wind and storms, the report cited the 1987 storms as examples of what to expect. Firefighters would be expected to rescue people during these events, as well as to removing fallen trees, which will require specialist equipment and training.

The report concluded that as a result of climate change, "for Fire and Rescue Services in the UK there is potential for increased workloads all year round." It recommended that the UK Fire and Rescue Services "begin to plan for climate change and to have an awareness of climate change when decisions are being made."

4) **The trade union movement and climate change**

Since 1989 the TUC Congress has recognised the importance of global warming and called for steep cuts in emissions from greenhouse gases as well as legal rights for environmental workplace representatives. In 1998 the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC) was established by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as the main forum for consultation between government and trade unions on environmental issues. The TUC supported the Climate Change Act and has been represented at international conferences on the issue.

The TUC is in favour of a balanced energy policy. This includes support for renewables, carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology and nuclear power. There are significant disagreements between unions over the issue of nuclear power.

The TUC supports an integrated transport policy and public ownership and control of the national railway system. Unions have also supported green travel plans such as car sharing, more cycling, travel pass loans and other methods of encouraging the use of public transport. However, there are differences between unions over airport expansion, particularly at Heathrow.

The TUC has proposed the idea of a "just transition" to low carbon economy, to ensure that workers do not pay for the effects of climate change or the costs of government policies to deal with it. This would include investment in green technologies and the creation of decent, green jobs connected with energy efficiency, renewables, recycling and other

tasks. It would also include a package of retraining, compensation and other benefits for workers adversely affected by climate change and the policies that are implemented to combat it.

5) **FBU policy and campaigning**

Conference agrees to make climate change an integral part of the FBU's political and industrial strategy in the coming period and instructs the Executive Council to pursue the following:

Nationally:

- To campaign for the legal rights for trade union environmental reps, with similar powers to safety reps.
- To campaign for the public ownership of major energy sectors, a shorter working week and longer holidays with no loss of pay, as well as low cost public transport and increased cycling facilities, as part of the transition to a low carbon economy.
- To ensure that demands for a "just transition" involve a substantial element of control by workers in relation to changes to jobs and to the development of alternative production.
- To oppose market mechanisms such as permit trading, higher prices of fossil fuels and regressive taxes, as ineffective means of tackling climate change. These measures merely force working people to bear the costs of change while making huge profits for energy firms.
- To oppose building new runways and terminals at Heathrow and Stansted.
- To oppose the building of new nuclear power stations.
- To campaign for any new coal-fired power stations to be designed ready for carbon capture and storage (CCS) and with a commitment to retrofitting.
- To affiliate to the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group and encourage members to take part in its events, conferences, demonstrations etc.

Fire Service:

- To demand an up to date assessment of the risk and uncertainty associated with climate change in the UK and its implications for the Fire Service from CLG, the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly.
- To campaign for a UK Fire and Rescue Service climate change adaptation strategy with guarantees on staffing, IRMPs, training, equipment and health and safety (e.g. PPE, temperature and heat stress).

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- To campaign for a fully funded national capability for flood rescue with Fire and Rescue Authorities playing a leading role, underpinned by a statutory duty (as suggested in Recommendation 39 of the Pitt Review).
- To campaign within brigades to reduce the carbon footprint of the Fire Service.
- To support union environment reps in carrying out green audits and negotiating environmental agreements, in order to improve energy efficiency at work.

Within the FBU:

- To appoint an officer responsible for climate change policy.
- To participate in TUSDAC.
- To provide training for all Union reps on climate change.
- To elect environment reps at Brigade and Regional level.
- To consider how to integrate environmental campaigning within the existing Union structures.
- To carry out an environmental audit of FBU premises.
- To ensure that FBU travel arrangements have as minimal carbon footprint impact as possible.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The FBU's position on workforce development, assessment, vocational qualifications and related matters has developed continually since this debate emerged in 1994. It evolved further with the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement, the introduction of the Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition 2004 and, most recently, when various concerns were raised by delegates at Annual Conference 2008. These concerns resulted in resolutions being either carried or remitted for the FBU Workforce Development Group (WDG) to consider in more detail.

The WDG has continued with this work throughout the past year and was assisted by the production and distribution of an Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) Code of Practice document. This Code of Practice, developed by the now disbanded IPDS working group (on which the FBU was represented) outlined a best practice guide for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in relation to areas including Assessment Development Centers', vocational qualifications and the Initial Test of Potential process.

To assist the WDG a Head Office Circular (2007HOC0693SS) which asked officials to give some

information on available vocational qualifications within their respective FRA was issued. Initial reports showed that out of the fifty responses only eleven FRAs were not using Scottish/National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs) in some guise. It also showed that in all but three of those FRAs using S/NVQs, they were being used to measure competency in role. Many indicated that they were mandatory for new entrants to the service. The information received also highlighted that many FRAs using vocational qualifications were not applying them consistently. For example many did not offer vocational qualifications to the entire workforce but ignored members working the retained duty system (RDS) completely and were only offering them to new employees on the wholetime duty system (WDS). This apparent misuse was taking place without FBU approval or involvement. This information and the concerns raised at conference indicated that a structured FBU involvement in the processes around workforce development and vocational qualifications was necessary. To highlight this, conference should be aware that there are at least thirty eight FRAs currently using vocational qualifications. In some instances this is in FRAs where other sections of the workforce are being discriminated against because of their role, length of service and/or duty system in which they are currently employed.

Elsewhere officials have reported concerns with how competence in role is achieved, either by using the NJC rolemap or the vocational qualification '*Operations in the Community*'. These issues include the perceived lack of technical input individuals receive. The Executive Council has considered all these concerns and has acted to assist officials. This action includes authorising an education course 'Understanding Qualifications and Workforce Development in the UKFRS' which will be available to officials during 2009. This course is designed to refresh officials' knowledge of areas such as IPDS and vocational qualifications, using all the resources available. This will include an FBU guidance document based on the IPDS Code of Practice. This resource and the related course will also enable officials to challenge management on all areas of workforce development whether it is related to competence, vocational qualifications, IPDS or the way in which promotions are assessed and managed.

To enable officials to be confident that within their FRA there is a consistent approach to competence they must be confident that there is an agreed level for all to work towards. They must also be confident that when this level is achieved the individual is both confident and competent to carry out their role safely. This level is nationally accepted as the relevant NJC agreed rolemap but information has shown that in practice the '*Operations in the Community*' level 3 vocational qualification is often being used to measure firefighter

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competence. Although this raises other issues that will need addressing such as ensuring that a robust assessment and verification is in place, it may assist in other areas where disputes of competencies are ongoing, such as when transferring from RDS to WDS is being discussed.

In order to monitor and influence the way that competence is achieved and assessed, FBU officials must firstly understand the workforce development processes. It is only then that improvements in their delivery and consistency can be achieved.

Robust systems of workforce development are essential to the genuine modernisation of the UK Fire and Rescue Service and, if members can achieve a vocational qualification whilst performing their role, we should not oppose this. Our concern is to ensure that the systems around any qualifications within the service are robust, respected and understood.

The Executive Council is acutely aware that the task of influencing the implementation of vocational qualifications across the UK Fire Service is not going to be a straightforward process. There is currently considerable variation between FRAs around these issues. There is no suggestion that vocational qualifications (especially as currently established) will be the 'cure all' remedy for competence within the UK Fire Service. Nevertheless the debate around these issues can allow the FBU to argue for a benchmark to be laid down and can give us an opportunity to address the inconsistencies that remain within and between FRAs. For this reason officials should be encouraged to attend the 'Understanding Qualifications and Workforce Development in the UKFRS'.

Considering the details in this statement Conference is asked to agree:

- That Brigade Officials commit to attending the course 'Understanding Qualifications and Workforce Development in the UKFRS'. This will be organised through Head Office and delivered to Regions;
- That Conference does not oppose vocational qualifications which have been subject to agreement with the FBU through the national processes available;
- That local Officials will challenge areas of inconsistency in the ways in which workforce development and the arrangements for achievement of competence is implemented within each FRA;
- That the FBU should continue to focus on the need for Fire & Rescue Services to provide high quality training for Firefighters to carry out their duties safely and in the professional manner we have come to expect;

- That the Workforce Development Group will continue to monitor progress around these issues so as to assist the Executive Council in providing further advice to officials.

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NJC AND NEGOTIATIONS

Resolution 1 – PAY PERCENTAGE 2008

Conference notes the 2008 pay offer of 2.45% accepted by the Executive Council on behalf of the membership. However, we demand to see evidence that the calculation and figure was that which the National Pay Formula agreed in the 2003 Pay Agreement would have produced.

We further call that the information used to calculate the annual rise be sent to the membership as soon as it is available.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Resolution 5 – PAY

This conference believes that the “A” pay scale introduced as part of the 2003 agreement is unnecessary and has been used by employers as a divisive tool to unsettle our members.

This conference also notes that the guidance issued to determine “A” and “B” pay scales was wholly inadequate and has been applied differently in each service.

This conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to negotiate with the employers to seek the removal of the “A” pay scale and ensure that all applicable pay points revert to the agreed “B” scale pay rate.

SHROPSHIRE

AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 6 – LOSS OF PAY

Conference deplores the actions of Fire and Rescue Authorities who remove members from their place of work as a result of the employer unilaterally deciding that the member has breached their contract of employment, this without any disciplinary investigation, hearing or appeal.

Conference reaffirms that the discipline procedures as contained within Section 6 of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition 2004 are the only agreed procedures that have a process that includes possible loss of pay which can only be enacted after full investigation, hearing and appeal.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to enter into discussion with the employers’ side of the National Joint Council with immediate effect with a view

to reaching agreement which will be circulated to Fire and Rescue Authorities instructing those Authorities that the only punitive procedures to be used regarding employees covered by the Grey Book are the agreed discipline procedures, or agreed procedures that carry equivalent rules, protections and provisions for natural justice as in the discipline procedures. Progress on this issue is to be reported back to Annual Conference 2010.

MERSEYSIDE

AS AMENDED BY DEVON & SOMERSET

Resolution 7 – WORKING HOURS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore options for achieving a reduction in the working week. In exploring this issue the Executive Council should also give consideration to the need to support those members engaged in campaigns to defend the current shift duty system as outlined in Section 4 of the Grey Book. Nothing should be done to undermine the campaigns of these members. The Executive Council will need to consider in full the implications which a claim for a reduction in hours might have on the current Grey Book shift duty system. A Sub Committee of the Executive Council should be established and a report with any recommendations circulated to all brigade/sectional committees before Annual Conference 2010.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

AS AMENDED BY HUMBERSIDE AND WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 10 – STUDY INTO THE EFFECTS OF PRE-ARRANGED OVERTIME ON ESTABLISHMENT LEVELS

This conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a study into what effect the introduction of pre-arranged overtime has had on establishment levels and also the effectiveness of current monitoring arrangements within UK Fire and Rescue Services. The findings of this study to be reported to Annual Conference 2010.

CLEVELAND

AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE AND WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 12 – SICK PAY

This conference notes the continuing problems our members are facing since the introduction of finite sick leave payments.

The present Grey Book [section 5 part B – Occupational Health – Paragraphs 10 & 11] allows an authority to pay full sick pay for 12 months if the illness or infirmity is Due to Service [DTS] and 6 months if Not Due to Service [NDS].

Record of Decisions

This then reduces to half pay after either 12 months DTS or 6 months NDS. After another period of six months our members' pay is then reduced to nil even with the caveat that fire authorities can extend sick pay [Section 5 Part B Para 12].

Unfortunately experience shows us that most, if not all fire authorities, only allow this discretion extremely rarely.

Members who are off with long term sickness often drift into the half/nil pay arena due to the slow service of the authorities' medical advisors and then with a lengthy treatment process that takes many months.

This conference calls upon the Executive Council to meet with the employers to discuss and come to an agreement to increase the time scales for sick leave payments to 18 months full pay for DTS injury/illness and 12 months NDS injury/illness.

By increasing the sick pay time scales it allows our members a proper period of treatment, rest and recuperation thus allowing a return to work without the added burden of financial penalties.

LONDON

Resolution 13 – CPD REMOVAL AND PAY

This conference calls on the Executive Council to negotiate the end to the perverse practice of removing CPD payments from our members whilst they are undertaking temporary promotion, acting up, under development or following a disciplinary award.

BERKSHIRE

Resolution 16 – CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This Conference demands that the Executive Council starts negotiations with the employers to ensure that Continual Professional Development payment is not lost on temporary or substantive promotion.

WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 17 – REDUCED RETAINING FEES

Following the success of the FBU in securing the 120 hour measurement for full retaining fees, many brigades have been adjusting the availability of new recruits so it falls just below 120 hours. This revised figure then allows them to pay a reduced retaining fee. This is resulting in many of our RDS members being in receipt of retaining fees that are below what was paid prior to the settlement of the 2002 pay dispute, often for providing a mere handful of hours less cover.

Therefore, this Conference demands that the Executive Council meet with the NJC and negotiate the removal from the Grey Book of the facility for fire and rescue authorities to reduce the retaining fee by up to 25%.

NORTH WALES

Resolution 18 – RETAINING FEE

Conference demands that the Executive Council use all necessary resources to negotiate and agree a substantial increase to the Annual Retaining Fee paid to Retained Duty System (RDS) employees.

The current and inadequate Annual Retaining Fee can no longer be deemed acceptable as it fails to recognise the commitment of RDS firefighters, the disruption to their family life and the adverse effect on their primary employment, together with the increasingly high expectations from Fire & Rescue employers.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Resolution 20 – DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Conference demands that the Executive Council address the ever growing problem of the application and use of discipline within Brigades.

Since the introduction of the new procedures more of our members have been disciplined and dismissed than under the old Fire Services Discipline Regulations. Conference is particularly concerned that in many cases of dismissal an appeal to an independent body outside of the Fire Service is not allowed.

Conference demands that the Executive Council report back, with recommendations, no later than Conference 2010 with a detailed report of the application of the Discipline Regulations across Brigades.

DERBYSHIRE

Resolution 22 – NJC DISPUTE PROCEDURES

This Conference is concerned with the practical implementation of the disputes procedures by Fire and Rescue Authorities/Boards, as contained within the Sixth Edition of the NJC Conditions of Service (Grey Book). These procedures, rather than affording robust and effective processes for resolving differences, have merely served to prolong issues and fail to resolve them.

Consequently, Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this matter at the next meeting of the National Joint Council, with a view to negotiating new, fairer and more robust dispute procedures.

STRATHCLYDE

Record of Decisions

Resolution 23 – COLLECTIVISM VERSUS INDIVIDUALISM

Conference is appalled by some local employers, notably Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, who are intent on acting in a manner which is fundamentally in breach of the guiding principles and conditions of the Grey Book, such as breaching the agreed conditions in relation to pre-arranged overtime (Section 4, Part B, Para 25), by requesting individuals to bypass this element of the Grey Book by voluntarily varying their contract; this despite those Authorities being a part of the constitutional membership of the National Joint Council along with the Fire Brigades Union.

The Grey Book places the Council as the supervisory body, from a national point of view, of all questions affecting Conditions of Service. Conference notes that those Fire and Rescue Authorities in breach, or intending to breach the Grey Book Conditions of Service, fall within the scope of Paragraph 2 of the Preface of the Grey Book and as such Conference demands that action is taken by the Council to bring those rogue Authorities back in line with the national agreement as a matter of urgency (or in any case at the next NJC meeting or relevant sub committee), progress to be reported back to regional committees on a quarterly basis.

MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 24 – LOSS OF GREY BOOK POSTS

This Conference is concerned with the increasing number of Grey Book posts being re-aligned to other contractual conditions of employment. This Conference instructs Brigade Committees to resist all attempts for such realignments and to ensure the Executive Council is kept informed of such attempts.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 26 – FIRE SERVICE DRIVERS AFFORDED LEGAL REPRESENTATION FUNDED BY EMPLOYERS

This conference demands, that as a consequence of the inclusion of element FF9 in the agreed NJC rolemaps and Fire Authorities increasingly requiring firefighters to 'drive, manoeuvre & redeploy' emergency vehicles on the basis they claim this is now contractual, the Executive Council immediately seek the employers agreement via the National Joint Council that should any driver be involved in any road traffic accident and subsequently require legal representation, the respective Fire and Rescue Service will be responsible for the provision and associated costs of any such legal representation.

Conference believes that driving emergency vehicles to incidents places additional responsibilities, stress and an increased risk of involvement in road traffic accidents on the driver, therefore the 'requirement to drive' which is being increasingly expected and utilised by Fire and Rescue Services now places the moral duty firmly with them to provide legal representation and support for their employees. At the same time the Fire Brigades Union will provide full support and advice/guidance to any driver member involved in any road traffic accident.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Resolution 27 – MOTORING ALLOWANCES

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to undertake research into improving the mechanisms to enhance the reimbursements for all vehicle user schemes and to report the findings to Conference 2010.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Record of Decisions

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE

Resolution 28 – PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

This Annual Conference is appalled that many Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) have adopted a “one size fits all policy” in regard to the provision of some items of personal protective equipment (PPE). Women members are often excluded from specific workplace activity such as water rescue and chemical incidents due to the PPE provided being too big for them to wear safely. This situation is unacceptable and therefore Conference demands that the Executive Council:

- Urgently seek to rectify this negative situation affecting our women members by raising this issue at the National Joint Council as well as any other relevant national forums.
- Mount a campaign in Firefighter and any other written form, to highlight and encourage our members to report ill fitting PPE as a near miss.
- Set up a data base to monitor and assess the situation within each Fire and Rescue Service.

Conference further instructs the Executive Council to report back any progress made to the National Women's Committee within 6 months of Annual Conference 2009.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Resolution 30 – HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING – TIME OFF

Conference recognises the vital role played by FBU Health & Safety Representatives in making our workplaces safer and reducing accidents and injuries. Conference further recognises the increasing workloads being placed on Health & Safety Representatives at Regional, Brigade and Branch level, together with the importance of training for those Representatives to keep their skills up to date.

Consequently, all the necessary training that is required can significantly add to the workload and already high level of commitment of each Health & Safety Representative. Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to seek an agreement with the NJC which reinforces a Health & Safety Representative's right to paid time off to attend training courses by recognising that any time spent on a training course during a day off from work, shall then be classed as part of that Representative's normal working hours.

Conference also calls on the union to campaign at all levels for the Government to amend the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees' Regulations

1977 (as amended) to ensure that safety representatives' functions undertaken outside their working hours are legally recognised as work time, whether or not they are paid for these duties.

**NORTHUMBERLAND
AS AMENDED BY DEVON & SOMERSET**

Resolution 31 – RISK ASSESSMENTS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a national survey of Fire and Rescue Services to establish what work has been, and is continuing to be, carried out on risk assessments in relation to each individual fire authority's IRMP. The survey should identify whether or not all risks to life, property, heritage and the environment have been adequately assessed and that:

- Appropriate and acceptable control measures are put in place to deal with all identifiable risks.
- Sufficient resources are available to deal with all identified risks, at all times.
- All equipment and safe systems of work to deal with those risks are fully risk assessed by competent persons.
- Risk assessments are being regularly reviewed and consultation on such is taking place with FBU Brigade Officials.
- Whether any best practice can be identified or concerns highlighted.

The survey to be completed and a report made available to Brigade Officials prior to Annual Conference 2010.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Resolution 32 – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FBU MINIMUM WORKPLACE FACILITIES, BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENT

This Annual Conference notes that the Executive Council at its meeting held on the 16th – 18th September 2008 endorsed the FBU 'Health, Safety and Welfare Minimum Workplace Facilities, Best Practice' document and agreed to publish and circulate it to Brigade Officials.

To ensure that further implementation of it is carried out, Conference calls upon the Executive Council to:

- Negotiate at the National Joint Council for better facilities within Fire and Rescue Service workplaces using the FBU 'Health, Safety and Welfare Minimum Facilities, Best Practice' document.
- Highlight at the National Joint Council the problems faced by our members regarding inappropriate facilities in the workplace.
- Educate FBU members continuously regarding the reason and need for separate facilities and why those facilities need to be respected.

Record of Decisions

- Carry out annual workplace surveys, via Health & Safety Representatives, to determine the standards of the facilities in each Fire and Rescue Service and;
- Regularly review and update where necessary the FBU 'Health, Safety and Welfare Minimum Facilities, Best Practice' document.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

AS AMENDED BY THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Resolution 33 – DRUG, ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE – NATIONAL GUIDANCE

This Conference recognises the increasingly stressful circumstances faced by FBU members not only at work but in their day to day lives and its impact on those members.

At the same time Conference notes the corresponding rise in the number of issues relating to drug, alcohol and substance misuse dependency being negotiated on by officials, many of whom are not fully cognisant of the causes, effects, scope or support and assistance available to affected members. This is unacceptable.

This Conference demands that the FBU undertakes a study incorporating within its span the extent, causes and effects of such dependencies, whilst auditing existing Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policies, both within the British Fire Service and in the workplace in general, thus establishing best practice.

The findings of this study to be used to produce a national guidance document to assist officials in negotiations.

WEST YORKSHIRE

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

Resolution 35 – PENSION ABATEMENT

Conference notes with concern the increasing trend whereby members are availing of 'Pension Abatement'.

It is clear that this practice:

- Is detrimental to establishment levels.
- Is outwith best practice with regard to recruitment and selection procedures.
- Will undermine our ability to defend current retirement ages as outlined in the pension schemes applicable to Fire Service personnel.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to initiate a report to evaluate the continued merits of current policy, in the form of Resolution 83 from Annual Conference 2007.

This report, including recommendations, to be made to Conference 2010.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolution 36 – IMPACT OF WORKING TIME LEGISLATION

This Conference demands that the Executive Council set up or delegate a sub committee to assess the potential impact of existing and impending working time legislation on the UK Fire & Rescue Service. That this sub committee produce a report to focus on the potential impact on all duty systems, in particular the Retained Duty System, and that this report be presented to Annual Conference 2010. Should any recommendations or issues be identified that require action prior to this date, the Executive Council will initiate the appropriate actions.

NORTH WALES

Resolution 37 – ELECTED FIRE AUTHORITY/BOARD MEMBERS IRMP INFORMATION PACK

Conference requires that all elected members of fire and rescue authorities/boards are provided with an information pack, which clearly indicates the obligations they have, not just to FBU members, but the public they are elected to represent and themselves when considering proposed IRMPs.

This information should also be accessible to the general public. This information to clearly indicate that any IRMP is the property of the authority/board that approves it and not that of the senior manager who proposes it; consequently issues which arise as a result of an inappropriately designed IRMP are also the responsibility of that authority/board and not the senior manager involved.

Record of Decisions

The purpose of this resolution is to provide information which should focus the minds of those responsible for the potential introduction of measures, which may have a detrimental impact on the safety of firefighters and communities.

TYNE & WEAR

Resolution 38 – MINIMUM ATTENDANCE STANDARDS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to undertake a campaign in support of a return to robust and effective minimum attendance standards in the UK Fire and Rescue Service. Conference acknowledges and welcomes the commitment given by the Scottish National Party to reintroduce minimum attendance standards applicable to the eight Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland.

TAYSIDE

AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 39 – UNFUNDED FRS ACTIVITY

Conference demands that the Executive Council secures from all UK fire and rescue services, by any means possible, data which accurately indicates any costs associated with the provision of “New Dimensions” activities, in excess of that which is funded by CLG and other devolved administrations the costs incurred for providing other services outwith fire service statutory obligations, for which the individual FRS concerned is not funded.

These costings should focus on two main areas:

- 1) Actual financial outlay associated with such work, which is unfunded through normal means.
- 2) Estimated amount of hours allocated to such work, or associated training, development or research.

TYNE & WEAR

AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 40 – COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY – STUDY

This Conference notes the continuing government targets for local Fire and Rescue Services within the national framework for community fire safety and the corresponding increase in Home Fire Safety Visits done by our members.

Conference seeks to support such Community Fire Safety policies where they strive to save lives and reduce damage to properties whilst reflecting and incorporating the policies of the FBU.

However, in implementing these policies employers must ensure safe places of work for our members.

It should be the aim of this union to seek to eradicate the risks posed to our members whilst working on Home Fire Safety Visits in domestic properties.

Examples of these risks being:

- Lone working
- Working at Height.
- Exposure hazards to substances contained within building fabric and materials in domestic premises.
- Safe methods of fixing smoke alarms and detectors in domestic premises.
- Insurance provision for personnel whilst carrying out Non-Emergency Duties in domestic properties.

Conference demands that a study be undertaken by the FBU of all elements of work carried out as part of Community Fire Safety Home Fire Safety Visits and their associated hazards. The findings of this study to be used to create a best practice document to aid Officials in negotiating and enforcing such policies.

WEST YORKSHIRE

AS AMENDED BY KENT

Resolution 41 – AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT 2008

Conference notes with concern the publication, in December 2008, of the Audit Commission Report ‘Rising to the Challenge’.

Those brigades praised by this report have achieved ‘modernisation’ by making savings via:

- Changing shift duty systems
 - Depleting frontline fire cover
 - Cutting establishment figures
- and other such draconian measures.

The use of league tables produced in such reports as a measure of performance cannot be sustained and as seen when used in other public service industries, only leads to employers competing to slash standards to the detriment of the public and employees alike.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to mount and co-ordinate a national campaign of opposition to the use of such reports as a basis for standards of fire cover, and re-iterate the requirement for a risk based, properly resourced fire service.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Resolution 42 – AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT (TRVs)

This Conference is alarmed at the cost cutting measure contained within the Audit Commission’s report “Rising to the Challenge”, of replacing conventional pumps with Target Response Vehicles (TRVs).

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TRVs are designed to deal with small known fires and not to replace pumps. Smaller crewing levels and the limitation of equipment means they are not capable of replacing pumps, without seriously increasing the risk to the safety of firefighters, members of the public and property.

To date no adequate evaluation of these vehicles and the increased risks have been carried out and therefore have not been factored into the exaggerated efficiency savings contained within the report.

We call on the Fire Brigades Union to continue to highlight our safety concerns regarding these vehicles and to produce our own report that challenges the credibility of this cost cutting Audit Commission report.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 49 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fire Control staff are currently supported through a range of development schemes, IPDS and established training courses for professional development and career progression.

This is developed by in-house FRS departments and specialist external contractors. The courses are delivered to mixed groups from all areas of the FRS in order to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of a diverse workforce.

In line with the “twin-track” approach CSNC call for negotiations to begin with any future employer, alongside negotiations on contractual matters, to make arrangements with a host FRS to provide career development courses and professional support for Fire Control personnel. The outcome of these negotiations to be reported to the Executive Council member for Control.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 51 – AERIAL APPLIANCE CREWING

This Conference deplores the growing national trend of reducing dedicated Aerial Appliance crewing. Conference instructs the Executive Council to implement an urgent review into the implications of this for Firefighters and communities, this review to be completed and reported back no later than FBU Annual Conference 2010.

DEVON & SOMERSET

Resolution 52 – TRANSFERABILITY

Conference endorses the principle that a firefighter is a firefighter regardless of what type of duty system they work. In accepting this principle, it is necessary that all personnel working the Retained Duty System (RDS) have equality of access to all assessment and development opportunities relevant to their role.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council develop and agree national guidance to facilitate local negotiations whereby RDS personnel have the same opportunities to apply for a transfer to internal vacancies that arise for their role, regardless of the type of duty system.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

AS AMENDED BY THE NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Resolution 53 – TRAINING ON LGBT ISSUES FOR FRS STAFF

Conference is appalled at the ongoing issues of bullying and harassment faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans (LGBT) staff, within the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), highlighted in the recent firefighter survey by the CLG.

The issue seems to be one area where the FRS struggles in terms of Equality and Diversity. There is no proper way of recording any statistics on this, as many people are reluctant to report incidents, for fear of 'outing' themselves.

Conference therefore calls on Brigade Secretaries to enter into dialogue with FRS managers to establish a programme of training and education on LGBT issues. This will give all staff the tools and education to make informed decisions and therefore break the cycle of homophobia and transphobia currently faced.

Conference further asks that a way to monitor what individual FRSs around the UK are doing, be set up by the FBU through its Fairness at Work committee and this work to be reported to Annual Conference 2010.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

Resolution 54 – DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT, PROTECTING OUR MEMBERS' RIGHTS

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans members of the FBU note with concern the recent decision by the House of Lords in the case of *Malcolm v London Borough of Lewisham*. The case involved an interpretation of less favourable treatment with regards to the protection afforded under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA). Although the case did not mention employment, it has had major implications for employment law as it

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cuts to the definition of 'less favourable treatment' within the meaning of the legislation.

Recently a member diagnosed with HIV took their employer to an employment tribunal as a result of the application of sickness and absence monitoring and the threat of disciplinary action for time off through sickness and treatment directly attributable to their HIV condition. As a result of the application of the interpretation of the DDA with the Malcolm case, our member was left without the vital protection that the DDA was intended to provide.

The implications of this new legal interpretation have far reaching consequences, not only for our members, but members of all unions.

Conference calls on the General Secretary to consult with our solicitors on how best to challenge the legal interpretation of the Malcolm case. As this matter concerns members of all trade unions, we also call on the General Secretary to raise this matter with the TUC General Council with a view to joint funding for any necessary legal challenge.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

Resolution 55 – BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY MEMBERSHIP

The leaking of the BNP membership list in November 2008 exposed a minority of fire service employees who are members of that organisation. This Conference reiterates our abhorrence of that organisation's ideology. This Conference strongly supports the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the general statutory duty placed on Fire and Rescue Authorities to promote good race relations.

The FBU must continue to lobby the Fire and Rescue Service to make a clear statement to its current employees and new applicants, that members of these extremist organisations are not welcome in the Fire and Rescue Service.

We applaud those who have already made clear statements that these people are not wanted by their Fire and Rescue Service.

This Conference therefore calls upon the Fire Brigades Union to:

- 1) Clarify its policy on what action will be taken if any FBU member is found to be a member of a far right or extremist organisation whose policies are in direct opposition to the policies and Rules of the FBU.
- 2) Bring all relevant Rule Changes to Annual Conference 2010 allowing for the expulsion from the FBU of any member who is also a member of

the BNP and other similar fascist organisations.

- 3) Ensure that all FBU educational processes discuss the far right and the real threat they pose to democracy in the UK and Europe.
- 4) Lobby the Government to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service can have the same rights as the Police and Prison services to dismiss members of extremist organisations from their employment.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Resolution 56 – REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 has strict limitations on disclosure of spent convictions. Some professions are exempt from the regulations on disclosure, including the Police and Prison Service. The Fire and Rescue Service however has no such exemption, and therefore should not be requesting information on spent convictions especially from new entrants.

Despite this, there is evidence that some Fire and Rescue Services are requesting disclosure of spent convictions during the recruitment process.

This conference therefore calls upon The Fire Brigades Union to:

- 1) Obtain the correct legal position on exemptions from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- 2) Raise this issue at the first Practitioners Forum after Annual Conference 2009.
- 3) Issue a Brigade Officials circular requesting information as to how many brigades are asking for spent convictions disclosure as part of their application process.
- 4) Demand that CLG send out a guidance note to all Fire and Rescue Services on this issue.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Resolution 57 – RACIAL ABUSE WHILST CARRYING OUT DUTIES

During a routine home fire safety visit in Merseyside an FBU member was the victim of racial abuse and not for the first time. The police took no action against the perpetrator, as the law says it is not a criminal offence under the Public Order Act to verbally abuse anyone in your own dwelling.

Fire and Rescue Service members are not alone, as other public sector workers have also been victims of this form of abuse.

This Conference believes that this form of abuse should be classified as a hate crime and should be prosecuted as such.

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This Conference therefore calls upon the Fire Brigades Union to:

- 1) Instruct all our members not to continue with home fire safety visits in residences where members are abused, and to report any incidents through their incident recording mechanisms as well as informing the appropriate authorities.
- 2) Use their good office to lobby all appropriate bodies to launch a campaign calling for an amendment in the law so that perpetrators can be prosecuted.
- 3) Raise this at the Practitioners Forum as a Health, Safety and Welfare issue.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Resolution 58 – PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Conference demands that the Executive Council carry out a full survey of the day to day commitment given to the Fire & Rescue Services by members conditioned to the Retained Duty System. This should include the sacrifices made by their families and primary employers.

This information to be used to generate a National Public Campaign to highlight the value and contribution made by Retained Firefighters, in order to raise public profile and awareness of this essential element of many UK Fire & Rescue Services.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

TRADE UNION AND LABOUR MOVEMENT

Resolution 59 – CUBA

Conference congratulates Cuba on the 50th anniversary of the revolution, and celebrates Cuba's many achievements domestically and internationally. These achievements must be applauded even more in the context of the disgraceful commercial, economic and financial blockade of Cuba by the USA since 1962, and its many other efforts to undermine Cuba, including literally hundreds of attempts to assassinate President Fidel Castro.

This Conference notes that the new administration in the US Government is advocating change.

Consequently, Conference agrees that the opportunity must be taken to demand that the US Government finally ends its illegal trade blockade of Cuba.

The US Government must recognise that Cuba has the right to exist as an independent nation, and that the people of Cuba must be free to choose their own method of government, without duress or consequence from outside nations.

Conference therefore calls upon the UK and devolved governments to make the necessary representations to the US Government, demanding they immediately end their illegal blockade of Cuba.

**DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY
AS AMENDED BY DEVON & SOMERSET**

COMPOSITE A – PALESTINE SOLIDARITY

COMPOSITING MOTIONS 60 TAYSIDE, 61 GREATER MANCHESTER, 62 DEVON & SOMERSET AND EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 18 TAYSIDE

Despite international condemnation of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the continued disregard of UN resolutions and rulings from the International Court of Justice, which includes the building of more settlements within the 1967 Borders, Conference believes that Israel has consistently failed to uphold its duties under international law.

Conference supports the statement, made in December 2008 by Luisa Morgantini, Vice President of the European Parliament, when supporting the EU Parliament suspension of the vote on the upgrade of EU/Israeli relations, that "It's time for the Israeli Government to stop considering itself above the law and start respecting it, beginning by freezing all

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settlement – building activities and ending its siege on the Gaza Strip.”

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to support and promote throughout the Trade Union and Labour Movement a campaign to boycott Israeli Goods, disinvest from Israeli institutions and for sanctions to be taken against Israel, similar to those sanctions imposed by the international movement against apartheid in South Africa, until such time as Israel ends its occupation of Palestine and its oppression of the Palestinian people.

Resolution 63 – CND

Conference reaffirms its opposition to the UK’s nuclear weapons of mass destruction and notes the UK Government’s continued commitment to renewing Trident at a minimum cost of £70 billion.

This was a gross misuse of public funds prior to the economic crisis and would now represent an unpardonable folly at a time when public expenditure is due to face massive cutbacks.

Conference further calls for the labour and trade union movement to support CND by mounting a mass campaign of opposition to reverse current Government policy and have the renewal of Trident cancelled.

STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 64 – TRADE UNION RIGHTS

This Conference condemns the failure of the UK Labour Government to repeal the Anti Trade Union Laws, despite their promise when in opposition to do so, when they took power.

This Conference considers this to be entirely unacceptable and calls on the Executive Council to instigate and pursue a political and trade union campaign, exploring all possible avenues, to effect the revocation of the anti trade union laws.

FIFE

Resolution 66 – EUROPEAN ELECTION ‘HOPE NOT HATE’ CAMPAIGN

Conference reiterates its condemnation of the BNP as a far right racist organisation whose main policy is to incite hatred and division in society.

It is noted that the BNP will be standing candidates in the European elections on the 4th June 2009 and their leader, Nick Griffin, will be standing as a Member of the European Parliament for the North West.

Conference recognises the danger that this poses to the safety and security of all sections of our communities as the BNP attempt to gain a foothold in mainstream politics.

Historically, European elections have a relatively low voter turnout. Because the voting system for the European elections is a form of proportional representation, Conference recognises the importance of there being a high voter turnout in order to ensure BNP candidates do not win any seats on the 4th June.

To this end, Conference instructs the Executive Council to write to all FBU members immediately following Conference, reminding members of the importance of there being a high voter turnout, and to urge all members to physically support their local ‘Hope Not Hate’ Group in the final stages of the anti BNP European election campaign.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 67 – EQUALITY REPRESENTATIVES

Conference acknowledges the work of the Trade Unions, the TUC and Government in recognising, developing and supporting the work of representatives in the workplace with a specific role of progressing equalities issues. Many unions have specific Equalities representatives, in the FBU these roles are often covered by the Equality Sections representatives, including officials of the National Gay and Lesbian Committee.

One barrier these representatives constantly have to overcome is the lack of facility time provided by our employers.

Disappointingly proposals in the Single Equality Bill fail to provide equality representatives with legislative provision of time off to conduct their duties, similar to that of Health and Safety and Union Learning representatives.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to work with the TUC and affiliates in developing a campaign to bring about change by the Government to implement the required change to legislation that facilitates paid time off to carry out their duties, a report on progress to be provided back to Conference 2010.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

Resolution 68 – HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Annual Conference condemns the appalling and unacceptable escalation of human trafficking, which predominantly targets women and children.

Internationally, human trafficking is the fastest growing organised crime, with around two million people being

Record of Decisions

forced into the sex trade every year. This is nothing short of 21st century slavery and must be wiped out.

Therefore this Conference calls upon the Executive Council to:

- Campaign within the TUC and sister unions to seek adequate Government resources to prevent and deter the perpetrators, and to provide support and refuge for the victims.
- Publicise and oppose this form of exploitation and abuse.
- Work closely with organisations such as Amnesty International and other relevant agencies to highlight and to eradicate this slavery.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

Resolution 72 – SURVEY INTO PERSONAL VEHICLE INSURANCE FINANCIAL PENALTIES

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a survey to determine if any FBU member has suffered any financial penalties on their personal vehicle insurance as a result of an on duty accident or incident whilst driving a fire and rescue service vehicle.

The findings of this survey are to be reported to Annual Conference 2010.

CLEVELAND

Resolution 73 – EMERGENCY FIRE APPLIANCE DRIVING

It is now over 40 years since the first FBU Conference policy was agreed that related to members not driving through red traffic lights. Since this time, there have been numerous resolutions and Conference debates, both supporting and opposing subsequent variations to the original resolution.

Conference is aware that this is a contentious issue, and many FBU members continue to drive through red traffic lights, albeit with caution, when responding to emergency incidents.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to undertake a full review of all issues relating to emergency fire appliance driving and related FBU policies, to report back with its findings to the FBU Conference in 2010.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 74 – ACCIDENT AND INJURY FUND

This Conference notes the current rule book and the Accident and Injury Fund contained within.

Conference also notes that there are timescales for claimants but none for payments.

Consequently, Conference instructs the Executive Council to define workable timescales for initial payments, final payments to be made subject to the correct paperwork being supplied and verified, these timescales to be enacted from the time they are agreed by the Executive Council and then incorporated by change of rule at the next available opportunity.

FIFE

Record of Decisions

Resolution 77 – HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

This conference is appalled at the acts of genocide committed by Nazi Germany, and more recently in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur for example.

Since 2005, Holocaust Memorial Day has taken place on January 27th, and is the international day of remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust and other acts of genocide. January 27th is the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council and Brigade Committees to do whatever they can to support, and play an active part in, Holocaust Memorial Day.

CLEVELAND

Resolution 80 – RETIRED MEMBERS SECTION

At present, when FBU members retire from the Fire Service they can choose to become an 'Out of Trade' member of the Fire Brigades Union. However, as 'Out of Trade' members, they have very little interaction with the Union after retirement.

It is recognised that many of these members were extremely active within the Union and would be willing to continue to actively support the aims and aspirations of the Union.

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to undertake a feasibility study into having a 'Retired Members' Section within the Fire Brigades Union structure.

It is understood that this would take extensive research and ultimately Rule changes, so the Executive Council should report back to Conference as early as is reasonably practical.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 83 – FBU POLICY DATABASE

Conference demands that the Executive Council look at relaunching and improving the current policy database that is on the FBU website.

Conference believes that the existing system is not user friendly and does not encourage Officials to submit information for inclusion.

DERBYSHIRE

Resolution 86 – MEMORIAL FUNDS

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to set up and take responsibility for the management of memorial funds in the event of an FBU member's death on duty.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Resolution 90 – INVOLVEMENT OF CONTROL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER

Conference demands the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary or National Officer with a remit for Controls, invite the CSNC Executive Council Member to all meetings with relevance to RCCs. This invitation to be forwarded as soon as possible, so dates and times can be co-ordinated.

This is for involvement, information and representation purposes for the benefit of all FF/Control Room Staff.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

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Emergency Resolutions Carried ...

Emergency Resolution No. 3 DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Conference notes with concern the repealing in April of the Statutory Dispute and Dismissal Procedure and, along with it, the automatic unfair dismissal sanction should an employer fail to follow a fair procedure.

The Government has been opportunistic in pretending to heed calls from all parties, employers and trade unions alike, for clearer laws on discipline in the workplace their response being that workers have even less protection and access to justice.

Conference therefore calls on the EC to resist all attempts by the employers to alter the contractually binding discipline and grievance procedures detailed in the Grey Book Sixth Edition and attempts to replace it with the far inferior new ACAS guidance.

Conference also calls upon the EC to make every effort via the TUC, Parliament and any other appropriate body to campaign for the re-introduction of some form of automatic sanction should an employer not follow a just and lawful procedure that is accessible to all workers.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Emergency Resolution No. 5 GURKHAS' RIGHT OF RESIDENCE

This Conference deplores the actions of the British Government in their shameful decision of 25th April 2009, which was overturned by Parliament on 29th April 2009, to refuse to grant an equal right of residence to all Gurkhas and calls upon the Government to bring forward revised proposals that do grant that equal right of residence in the UK for all Gurkhas.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Emergency Resolution No. 6 POST NATAL DEPRESSION

Conference is aware of recent discussions held at the NJC in March regarding maternity provisions. Conference also notes with concern the increasing numbers of post natal depression cases affecting our members on returning to work.

We call upon the EC to negotiate a national monitoring system upon returning to work, to identify and allow post natal depression to be properly and acceptably dealt with.

KENT

Emergency Resolution No. 7 CONTROL CAMPAIGN

Conference notes with alarm the comments by Cllr Derek Davis, chair of Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority in his press statement of 8th April 2009 in which he blew the whistle on the real agenda of the FiReControl Project for slashing terms and conditions and trade union recognition for emergency fire control staff.

This Conference reiterates its total opposition to the proposals to regionalise Emergency Fire Controls across England. The Fire Brigades Union has been proved correct at every stage of this disastrous project. Regionalisation will increase costs and will reduce the efficiency of our service. Despite these facts, the Government in England continues to ignore the professional views of the practitioners in the Fire and Rescue Service and seeks to impose this unwanted project on local Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Conference agrees to continue our campaign of opposition and again calls on government to achieve our key objective to scrap this unnecessary and wasteful project. We call on others within the service to join us in these efforts.

In the event of the Westminster government forcing the project through unabated then Conference remains committed to securing the following:

- Guarantees of no compulsory redundancy for any FBU member, to be achieved primarily through continued employment performing appropriate duties within their role or redeployment, supplemented by the use of voluntary severance or early retirement if this is necessary.
- NJC Grey Book conditions as a minimum including FBU recognition for all staff required to work in the proposed Regional Control Centres.

The Executive Council and all Committees and Officials of the Fire Brigades Union have been working tirelessly to achieve that objective and those aims. However, despite those efforts; we have seen a failure by our fire and rescue authorities, a failure by our national employers on the NJC and a failure by the boards of the LACCs to engage effectively in discussions to address the concerns of their employees.

If both of those objectives cannot be achieved in relation to any LACC, the Union should then demand that affected Fire and Rescue Authorities do not transfer members' employment to the LACC because of the impact on jobs, terms and conditions and the recognition of the FBU.

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As a consequence, Conference has no alternative but to acknowledge that there is no will on the part of the employers to protect our members (their workforce). In view of that fact, Conference instructs the Executive Council to immediately implement the following course of action:

1. That the following demands are made of LACCs:
 - No compulsory redundancies
 - Recognition of the FBU
 - Grey Book conditions for new and existing staff (unless changes agreed by FBU)
2. In the event that any LACC fails to deliver each of the above demands, a separate demand will be made of each Fire and Rescue Authority in the region to be covered by that LACC that it will refuse to transfer staff to the new employer.
3. In the event that any Fire and Rescue Authority refuses to give such a commitment by the date indicated by the FBU – then the Executive Council will take all necessary steps to initiate a ballot for strike action based on that refusal.
4. That the Executive Council should initiate a membership awareness campaign around this strategy. This should include local events and a major national rally at an appropriate time.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Emergency Resolution No. 8 PAY

Conference notes with concern that the aim agreed last year by the National Joint Council to negotiate the basis for a pay settlement for 2009 and 2010 by March 2009 has not been achieved.

Conference reiterates its longstanding view that pay in the Fire and Rescue Service is best addressed by means of an agreed formula. The refusal of the Fire and Rescue Service Employers to consider such a mechanism is a recipe for industrial conflict and will do nothing to improve our service.

Conference endorses the stance taken by the Executive Council that the FBU is unwilling to trade conditions of service for fractional increase in pay.

Conference notes the report prepared by the Labour Research Department on the operation of the APT pay formula and agrees that in view of the rapidly changing economic position the FBU will need to carefully review wider trends in pay before identifying a longer term claim for a pay formula or other mechanism for resolving pay.

Conference notes the meagre and time-limited offers on pay made recently by employers to other local government workers. Any similar pay offers from our employers involving time-clauses for acceptance or links

to detrimental changes in conditions of employment would be considered derisory and inflammatory by FBU members. Therefore this Conference:

- Calls upon Brigade Committees to prepare members for a campaign leading to possible strike action in pursuit of an acceptable pay settlement and/or in opposition to detrimental changes to conditions of employment linked to pay;
- Instructs the Executive Council to continue pay negotiations with the employers whilst preparing the necessary steps in readiness for a trade dispute and ballot in the event of our employers failing to make an acceptable offer on pay. These discussions should seek to maintain the living standard of FBU members and their families and should seek to make up any lost ground resulting from previous below-inflation rises;
- Instructs the Executive Council to consult with the membership through the FBU committee structures before deciding on any percentage pay increase to the existing pay scales which the employers may offer;
- Instructs the Executive Council to reject any pay offer the employers may make linked to detrimental changes in conditions.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Emergency Resolution No. 9 SRI LANKA

Conference welcomes the Independent newspaper's front page coverage of the 19th April 2009 – highlighting the horrific situation confronting civilians in Sri Lanka, civilians who are caught between the forces of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and the Military.

Sri Lanka has experienced the depths of civil war for the last 30 years with in excess of 70,000 dead. Despite this horrific statistic there has been little international coverage of this conflict and the Sri Lankan people have received little support or assistance from the international community during this time.

Women and children have suffered acutely, with children being conscripted to fight by the LTTE and the human rights of women living on the front line being repeatedly violated by all sides. This includes rape, murder and the removal of their political voice. The removal of democracy and freedom has ultimately been endemic during these three decades of civil unrest.

Conference therefore calls upon the EC to use all means at their disposal to achieve:

- Greater awareness of the human rights abuses committed by all sides in this conflict.
- Support for the demilitarisation of the North and East of Sri Lanka.

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- The re-instatement of democracy and social justice to form part of any reconstruction process in the country.
- Supportive networks with sister organisations with the above common goals.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Emergency Resolution No. 10 AFGHANISTAN

Conference commends the courage of the many Afghan women who, on the 15th April 2009, protested against the new Shia Family Law legislation which was passed by the Afghanistan Parliament and signed by President Karzai on the 31st March 2009. These women were spat at and stoned by counter protesters, the majority of whom were men.

The new law will deny Afghan Shia women the right to leave their homes without their husbands permission, forbids women from working or accessing education without their husbands express permission; explicitly permits marital rape; diminishes the right of mothers to be their children's guardians in the event of a divorce; and makes it impossible for women to inherit houses and land from their husbands – even though husbands may inherit immovable property from their wives.

Conference believes that for a new law in 2009 to target women in this way is extraordinary, reprehensible and reminiscent of the decrees made by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the 1990s.

The Karzai Government has said that the Shia Family Law is being reviewed by the Justice Department and will not be implemented in its current form. However, Conference joins with the many governments and human rights groups around the world who are deeply concerned that the Afghanistan Government has drawn up legislation which fundamentally violates human and women's rights.

Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to urgently write to the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to urge him to:

1. Continue to express grave concern at the highest level over this issue and;
2. Use all available diplomatic means to press the Karzai Government to act in a way that is consistent with the UN Charter on Human Rights and the Afghan Constitution.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Emergency Resolution No. 11 PANDEMIC FLU – A.I.F

This Conference notes with concern the current outbreak of swine flu.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to examine and bring forward any necessary changes to ensure that the A.I.F is protected from the potential impact of multiple claims that a pandemic could generate.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Emergency Resolution No. 12 DNA SAMPLING

Conference notes with concern the Government's proposal, announced last week, to retain DNA samples, taken from individuals arrested, for 6 years for non serious offences and 12 years for serious offences, even when the individuals are subsequently not charged or found guilty of the alleged offence.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to lobby Government so that all DNA samples of individuals not charged or found guilty of any offence are immediately destroyed.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Emergency Resolution No. 15 ORGANISING AND RECRUITMENT

Following the pilot Activist Academy course in Humberside and the Humberside FBU Organising Strategy completed in April 2009, Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out an immediate survey and mapping exercise to identify areas where the TUC Activist Academy course would benefit FBU Officials and members and assist in organising and recruiting new FBU members.

Furthermore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to encourage and support the use of local organising strategies as part of a national roll out organising programme in every Brigade within the UK Fire & Rescue Service. The Executive Council will provide a progress report on the use of Brigade Organising Strategies to Annual Conference 2010.

HUMBERSIDE

Emergency Resolution No. 17 THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

This Conference welcomes the publication of the People's Charter in February 2009, which was borne out of the current economic crisis caused by numerous financial institutions.

Conference condemns the UK Government for bailing out the banks with public money and agrees that working class people must not have to pay for the recklessness of the bankers and the Government.

Conference acknowledges the role played by the Fire Brigades Union in developing the Charter and fully supports its demands.

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Consequently, Conference agrees that all members and Officials of the Union should be encouraged to sign the Charter and that the Union at both Regional and National levels should actively campaign to publicise and pursue the aims of the Charter.

TAYSIDE

Emergency Resolution No. 19 FIREFIGHTERS PENSIONS

Conference deplores the disgusting stance taken by the CLG legal team during the recent appeal hearing whereby the CLG skeleton argument to the appeal hearing was reversed to place our members back into the position of leaving our injured members with no pension and no job, a stance that was both recognised and challenged by the appeal court judges.

Conference further congratulates those who include the General Secretary, the National Officer for Pensions, the Executive Council, Thompsons Solicitors and the three London members amongst others who maintained their position to both challenge and win the right for our members to receive a medical retirement and to retire with dignity.

Conference demands that those who manufactured this scenario are held to account for the scandalous waste of public monies in pursuing their attacks on the dignity of our members to medically retire following injury.

Conference calls on the General Secretary and the Executive Council to ensure that:

1. The revised IQMP Guidance is made available to both the IQMPs and the FRAs.
2. Pressure is applied to the Fire Minister to ensure that those responsible in CLG are held to account.
3. We obtain and release to the media the frivolous and scandalous waste of public monies in defending their deplorable position.
4. Letters of thanks are sent to the three London members for continuing with their claims for the benefit of all members.
5. In the event that further attacks are made against our member's right to retire with dignity that we immediately initiate a campaign to defend those rights.

LONDON

Emergency Resolution No. 20 THE BNP

Following the astonishing attack on Dr John Sentamu by the Deputy Leader of the BNP Simon Darby in April 2009 when he described Dr Sentamu as being a "anti-British zealot" and an "ambitious African" this Conference both applauds and re-affirms its support for

the efforts of the Hope not Hate Campaign to challenge racist and fascist organisations such as the BNP.

Conference further condemns the deplorable unprovoked attacks on peaceful anti-fascist protesters which took place in Leigh on Friday 13th March 2009 perpetrated by supporters of the BNP who are trying to use the current economic crisis and the slogan of "British jobs for British workers" to make a breakthrough in this June's Euro elections.

Conference strongly supports the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the general statutory duty placed on the FRAs to promote good race relations. Conference believes that the trade union movement must mobilise its forces to stop the BNP from making an electoral breakthrough.

Conference further believes that membership of the BNP is incompatible with any role in the public services and with membership of the FBU.

Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to:

1. Encourage support with Unite Against Fascism, Love Music Hate Racism and other trade unions and anti racist groups to mobilise the biggest possible campaign to stop the BNP in the European elections.
2. Support and encourage FBU members to join the days of action called by Unite Against Fascism on 30th and 31st May 2009.
3. Widely publicise and donate to the cost of the Love Music Hate Racism festival in Stoke on 30th May 2009.
4. Campaign for the legal right of trade unions to expel known BNP members from their membership and if legally possible to bring forward the relevant Rule Changes to Annual Conference 2010 allowing for the expulsion from the FBU of any member who is also a known member of the BNP or other similar racist, fascist organisation.
5. Lobby the Fire and Rescue service to make a clear statement to its current and future employees, that members of racist, fascist extremist organisations are not welcome in the FRS.
6. Ensure that where appropriate, that the FBU educational processes discuss the far right and the real threat they pose to democracy in the UK and Europe.

LONDON

Record of Decisions

Emergency Resolution No. 21 YARLS WOOD – TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

Conference condemns the treatment of the children detained in Yarls Wood as revealed in the April report by Sir Al Aynsley-Green, the Children's Commissioner for England.

Around 2,000 children a year are held in immigration centres – half of those in Yarls Wood. Sir Al Aynsley-Green's investigation paints a shocking picture of neglect and even cruelty towards children trapped within the centre's razor wired walls and finds "substantial evidence that detention is harmful and damaging to children and young people."

He also identified that children held at the infamous Yarls Wood immigration detention centre are being denied urgent medical treatment, handled violently and left at risk of serious harm.

This bizarrely as the UK Government prepares to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The FBU Executive Council, all its Officials and members should unite in a call by whatever means possible to end the automatic detention of children, recognising the fact that children are best served by remaining with their families, and for urgent measures to ensure all detainees are treated humanely.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Motions Remitted to the Executive Council ...

Resolution 44 – "FIREGUARD"

This Conference is dismayed at the introduction of "Fireguard" at a cost of £10 million per annum and believes that this provision will be used to break strike action anywhere in the UK.

Therefore in the event of "Fireguard" being used in areas where our members are on strike, this Conference will be recalled with a recommendation for national strike action.

SHROPSHIRE

Resolution 46 – ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

This Conference believes that Assessment and Development Centre (ADC) tests have reached a point where they desperately need increased funding or will be in danger of complete failure in the Fire Service.

Therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate with the appropriate bodies to ensure that adequate funding for ADCs and the associated tests are provided.

The outcome of this negotiation is to be reported back to Brigade Secretaries within six months after Conference 2009.

SHROPSHIRE

Resolution 47 – PROMOTIONS

Conference demands that the Executive Council seeks through consultation and negotiation with appropriate bodies, the introduction of National Standards of Examination in order to achieve promotion within the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Resolution 48 – ITOP AND ADC

This Conference calls on the Executive Council to carry out an NJC level review of the ITOP and ADC process with a view to abolish this dangerous and unfair promotion system and explore alternative safe and fair methods for promotion.

The Executive Council to present the review to Annual Conference 2010 with recommendations.

BERKSHIRE

Record of Decisions

Resolution 79 – FBU MEMBERSHIP

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to look at the feasibility of allowing individuals from other fire services, such as M.O.D, airports etc., the opportunity to join the FBU. The Executive Council are to report back to Conference 2010.

HAMPSHIRE

Resolution 87 – FBU EQUALITY EDUCATION

This Conference notes that in 2008 the only specific national equality education that took place was the Equality Impact Assessment Training for Fairness at Work Reps in November.

This Conference is very concerned that without a national education programme that deals specifically with Fairness at Work education, the FBU may take a backwards step from our current very positive record on equality.

Therefore this Conference calls upon the Executive Council to develop with the National Fairness at Work Committee a programme of FAW education, which will include stage 1 and stage 2 FAW schools.

This programme of FAW education is to be developed as a matter of urgency and must take place within 2009.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Motions Defeated ...

Resolution 2 – PAY 2008
– CONSULTATION

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Resolution 3 – NATIONAL PAY LEVELS
HUMBERSIDE

Resolution 11 – OVERTIME BAN
GRAMPIAN

Resolution 14 – CPD SCHEMES
HUMBERSIDE

Resolution 15 – CONTINUAL
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 21 – DISCIPLINE
& GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES
GRAMPIAN

Resolution 34 – RE-EMPLOYMENT
GRAMPIAN

Resolution 65 – LABOUR PARTY
DISAFFILIATION
DURHAM

Resolution 82 – RE-ORGANISATION
SUB COMMITTEE
LONDON

Resolution 84 – ALL DIFFERENT ALL
EQUAL
WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 85 – FBU OBSERVERS
EXPENSES
STAFFORDSHIRE

Emergency Resolution No.2
– VACANCY FOR NATIONAL OFFICER
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Emergency Resolution No. 13
– CHANGES TO DUTY AND SHIFT PATTERNS
STRATHCLYDE

Emergency Resolution No. 14
– PAY
WEST YORKSHIRE

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Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union moved by Executive Council

RULE 5 (2)

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS

CARRIED

RULE 4 (B)

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

CARRIED

RULE 26 (11)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED

Brigade/National Sectional Committee Amendments to Executive Council Proposed Alterations

RULE 5 (2) (b)

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS

GREATER MANCHESTER

LOST

RULE 5 (2) (c)

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS

GREATER MANCHESTER

LOST

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Final Appeals Committee

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	Gavin Barrie
Region 2	Dermot Rooney
Region 3	Peter Wilcox
Region 4	Ian Murray
Region 5	Neil Thompson
Region 6	Dave Limer
Region 7	Chris Downes
Region 8	Chris Howells
Region 9	Adrian Clarke
Region 10	Joe MacVeigh
Region 11	Mark Simmons
Region 12	Paul Fletcher
Region 13	Phil Jordan
NWC	Kerry Baigent
NG&LC	Pat Carberry
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	Samantha Samuels
ONC	Dave Beverley
CSNC	Sue Offland

Firefighter Representatives

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	Ken Ross
Region 2	Dermot Rooney
Region 3	David Turner
Region 4	Ian Watkins
Region 5	Steve Harman
Region 6	Dave Limer
Region 7	Chris Wood
Region 8	Roger Perry
Region 9	Kevin Napier
Region 10	Paul Embery
Region 11	Danielle Armstrong
Region 12	Eduardo Cardoso
Region 13	Val Hampshire
NWC	Sam Rye
NG&LC	Yannick Dubois
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	Brian Amos
ONC	Dave Beverley
CSNC	Sharon Thorndyke

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Election of Standing Orders Committee

Re-Elected

Brother Paul Reames (Cleveland) for 4 Annual Conferences



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union and List of Delegates

May 2009

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

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Grampian	Leon Murray Alan Paterson
Highland & Islands	Martyn Cooper Kenneth McDonald Fraser Parr
Lothian/Borders	Bryan Banks Denise Christie Andy Fulton Stephen Mitchell
Strathclyde	John Cairns William Coats Melanie Gibb Michael McCulloch John McFadden Alex Miller Sharon Sales Mossop Paul Wilson Stuart Wilson (Chief Scrutineer)
Tayside	Jim Malone Ralph Norrie Terry Whyte
Regional Secretary	Ken Ross
Regional Chair	John Duffy
Regional Treasurer	Gavin Barrie
Regional Official	John Docherty

REGION 2

Northern Ireland	Joe Heron Noel Jordan Archie McKay Dermot McPoland David Nichol Rod O'Hare Lynda Rowan O'Neill
Regional Secretary	James Quinn
Regional Chair	Brian Stanfield
Regional Treasurer	Stephen Boyd
Regional Official	Dermot Rooney

REGION 3

Cleveland	Brian Gibson Dave Howe Telfer Whitfield
Durham	Richard Morton Kevin Shaw
Northumberland	Amanda Cregin Colin James
Tyne & Wear	Gordon Chalk Brian Harris Andy Noble Dave Turner
Regional Secretary	Steve Gregg
Regional Chair	Steve Watson
Regional Treasurer	Steve Hedley
Regional Official	Peter Wilcox

REGION 4

Humberside	Dan Hind Ashley Oldfield Neil Trenchard Richard Walker
North Yorkshire	Ed Billing Graeme Willis
South Yorkshire	Nigel Bailey John Gilliver Nigel Hodges Graham Wilkinson
West Yorkshire	Martin Bairstow David Benson William Delve Andrew Imrie Dave Williams Mark Wilson
Regional Secretary	Ian Murray
Regional Chair	Ian Watkins
Regional Treasurer	Pete Smith

List of Delegates

REGION 5

Cumbria	Dean Greenway Mally Hind
Greater Manchester	David Allsey Alan Anderson David Chrimes Paul Fogerty John Roberts Val Salmon Pete Taylor
Lancashire	Tony Cavanagh Kevin Deacon Steve Harman Ian McGill Russell Stephenson
Cheshire	Jason Darling Andrew Price Dave Williams
Merseyside	Mark Dunne Kevin Hughes Mark Rowe Les Skarratts
Regional Secretary	Kevin Brown
Regional Chair	Neil Thompson
Regional Treasurer (Chair of SOC)	Steve Shelton
Regional Official	Steve Harman

REGION 6

Derbyshire	Martin Cobb Mark Ferron Christopher Tapp
Leicestershire	Roger Hawes Neil Mayne
Lincolnshire	Chris Hides Craig Tuck
Northamptonshire	Steve Mason Gary Mitchell
Nottinghamshire	Philip Coates Robert Mould Ian Young
Regional Secretary	Dave Limer
Regional Chair	Tom Murray
Regional Treasurer	Peter Wilkins
Regional Official	Tom Neal

REGION 7

Hereford & Worcester	Peter Hope James Richards
Staffordshire	Graeme McLeod Brian Moss Robert Moss
Shropshire	Andy Brown Matthew Lamb
Warwickshire	Marcus Giles Steve Roberts
West Midlands	Michael Bell Sasha Farley Mark Fellows Colin Jarrett Rose Jones Roger Moore Pardeep Raw David Starnes
Regional Secretary	Chris Downes
Regional Chair	Brian Moss
Regional Treasurer	Chris Wood
Regional Official	Peter Goulden

REGION 8

Mid & West Wales	Roger Curran Lawrence Larmond Deiniol Lloyd Gordon Walker
North Wales	Chris Burns Tania Morris Arwel Roberts
South Wales	Rob Bishop Simon Fleming Cerith Griffiths Mark Holley Lyndon Jones
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Regional Chair	Roger Perry
Regional Official	Chris Howells

List of Delegates

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Cambridgeshire	Phil McQuillen Kevin Napier
Essex	Paul Adams Keith Flynn Andy Hull Nick Maynes Mick Rogers
Hertfordshire	Steve Duncan Tony Smith
Norfolk	Peter Greeves Jamie Whyatt
Suffolk	Steve Collins Andy Vingoe
Regional Secretary	Adrian Clarke
Regional Chair	Brian Hooper
Regional Treasurer	Del Godfrey-Shaw
Regional Official	Neil Day

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Regional Secretary (and Delegate)	Joe MacVeigh
Regional Chair (and Delegate)	Gordon Fielden
Regional Treasurer (and Delegate)	Laurie Brightman
Regional Official	Paul Embery

REGION 11

Kent	Stuart Becks Mark Brown Sharon Downie Jenny Impey Ian Young
Surrey	Paul Greenwood Tim Morris Mick Smith
East Sussex	Matt Dale Steve Huggins
West Sussex	Francis Bishop Mick Cambers
Regional Secretary	Danielle Armstrong
Regional Chair	Mark Simmons
Regional Treasurer	Steve Beckwith
Regional Official	James Tigwell

REGION 12

Berkshire	Eduardo Cardoso Mark Stollery
Buckinghamshire	Matt Bliss Gordon Richardson
Hampshire	Nigel McCullen Gary Sams Paul Trew
Isle of Wight	Mark Deacon Matt Sainsbury
Oxfordshire	Steve Allen Alan Sillman
Regional Secretary	Ricky Matthews
Regional Chair	Paul Fletcher
Regional Official	Dave Dymond

List of Delegates

REGION 13

Avon	Chris Jackson Steve Kendrick Chris Taylor
Cornwall	Terry Nottle Mike Tremellan
Devon & Somerset	Trevor French Leigh Redman Trevor Streat Bob Walker
Dorset	Karen Adams Diane Critchlow
Gloucestershire	Mike Tully Scott Turner
Wiltshire	Paul Lawler Joe Tray
Regional Secretary	John Drake
Regional Chair (member of SOC)	Phil Jordan
Regional Treasurer	Val Hampshire
Regional Official	Kevin Herniman

B&EMM

	Brian Amos Dave Pazir Carl Petch Lud Ramsey
National Secretary	Samantha Samuels
National Chair	Leroy Phillpotts

CSNC

	Mandy Buchanan Phil Poole Sharon Thorndyke Jean Westwood
National Secretary	Sue Offland
National Chair	Kath Smith

G&L

	Ali Burrows Kevin Gutherson Norman Perry Lisa Slevin
National Secretary	Pat Carberry
National Chair	Yannick Dubois

ONC

	Mick Coakley Peter Moss Martin Pottinger Russell Troth
National Secretary	Dave Beverley
National Chair	Allan Guest

NRC

	Rick Arrand Paul Brownhill Bob Dewis James Dykes
National Secretary	Peter Preston
National Chair	Harry Cotter

NWC

	Jo Byrne Emma Davis Helen Harrison Sam Rye
National Secretary	Kerry Baigent
National Chair	Dona Feltham



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

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(CR)	= Composite Resolution
(ER)	= Emergency Resolution
(ECPS)	= Executive Council Policy Statement

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