

The Fire Brigades Union



Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions

87th Conference

15th, 16th and 17th May 2013

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 Conference 2013

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87th

Conference

Blackpool 2013

15th – 17th May

Day One – 15th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, we are just making sure that the technology is correct for you to test your keypads and then I'll start. From the delegation one of the delegates just left from, is there somebody else to test the keypad there from that delegation? Yes.

Conference I now call upon Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders Committee to give the Standing Orders report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you President, Conference, good morning. The Standing Orders Committee seeks your cooperation with 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 at the rostrum.

Visitors and observers to Conference are identified by different coloured credentials which must be displayed at all times. No visitors are allowed on the floor of Conference amongst the delegates.

Voting cards should have been obtained from the Standing Orders Committee by Regional officials and handed to leaders of delegations.

Access to the Standing Orders Committee room is through the doors behind you, turn left along the corridor, through the door on your right which is clearly marked.

Delegates that have business for the Standing Orders Committee should inform the steward of their business and wait to be called by Standing Orders.

The Standing Orders Committee must report to Conference that the whole of the Imperial Hotel is a no smoking building and trust this will be adhered to. Also, may I request that all delegates, officials, stewards, visitors and observers switch off mobile telephones while the Conference is in session.

May I remind you that Conference is in session from

9.30 am to 5.15 pm today and from 9.30 am to 5.15 pm tomorrow and Friday. Also, may I remind Conference of Standing Order 16 which clearly states assembly, adjournment and comfort break times, all of which must be adhered to.

May I bring to your attention the provisions for meals. Breakfast for all will be from 7 am in the Palm Court, which is situated directly opposite this room from the corridor behind you. Lunch for all is at 12.45 pm, and evening meal is from 6.30 until 8.30 pm in the Washington Suite, which is located through the doors behind you, turn left, along the corridor, pass through reception and follow the corridor to the left, through the door on the left which is clearly marked. On Friday there will be a packed lunch available in the Palm Court opposite. If business is to work through lunch on Friday there will be a short break to allow everyone a comfort break.

The list of Scrutineers and Tellers has been circulated. The list of the Final Appeals Committee has been circulated. The list of the Regional and Sectional Firefighter Magazine contacts has been circulated. These lists will now be placed before Conference for endorsement.

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. I will inform Conference of the changes. We rely on the Regional officials to exercise some influence in this procedure.

Can you now please turn to your delegates' list. Lothian & Borders: delete Andy Fulton; insert Ian McGregor. Strathclyde: insert Phil McDonald. Durham: delete Craig Faroe; insert Paul Dawson. North Yorkshire: delete Richard Stephens; insert Kelvin Thewlis. Staffordshire: delete Richard Williams; insert Rob Moss. Warwickshire: delete Marcus Giles; insert Dave Morton. Cambridgeshire: delete Clive Griffin; insert Martin Harding. London: delete Lawrie Brightman; insert Radcliffe White. London: delete Pete Richards; insert Paul Embery. East Sussex: insert Mark Brown. Buckinghamshire: delete Kieron Hall and James Wolfenden; insert Ricky Matthews. Isle of Wight: delete Matt Sainsbury; insert Spencer Cave. Avon: delete Gary Spindler; insert Adam Course. Devon & Somerset: delete Trevor French and Bob Walker; insert Helen Dickinson and Dave Chappell. B&EMM: delete Micky Nicholas. CSNC: delete Simon Jones; insert Amelia Diallo. LGBT: delete Stewart Brown; insert Pat Carberry.

The Standing Orders Committee has agreed the facility of the FBU shop at this Conference. It is located through the doors behind you, turn left along the corridor, through the door on your left which is clearly marked.

The Standing Orders Committee has received a number of Emergency Resolutions in line with the guidelines

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and instructions that were sent out from Head Office. All are being dealt with appropriately.

Closed Sessions. Conference, I will cover them during the next business I am about to report.

Could you now turn to your Programme of Business. Page 1 no change. Page 2: Resolution 44 from Merseyside has been remitted. Page 3: Resolution 50 – Electronic Voting, Bedfordshire has been withdrawn. From and including Paragraph G25 up to and including Resolution 49 we will be in Closed Session. Page 4 (I suggest you start at the top of the page, make some room): at the top of the page insert Paragraph B6 – Marauding Terrorism and Firearms Project; after Paragraph B6 insert Emergency Resolution 2 – Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA) Securing National Agreement, from the Executive Council. After Section D – Pensions insert Emergency Resolution 3 – Pensions, from the Executive Council. Resolution 24 from Cambridgeshire has been withdrawn. From and including Paragraph B6 up to and including Resolution 26 we will be in Closed Session. Resolution 1 from Strathclyde has been withdrawn, Amendments fall. Page 5: Resolution 3 from Durham has been withdrawn, Amendment falls. Page 6: Resolution 46 Lincolnshire has been withdrawn to second the Executive Council Policy Statement – The Future of the Fire & Rescue Service. Paragraph B6 – Marauding Terrorism and Firearms Project, delete. Page 7: no change. Page 8: no change. Page 9: after Resolution 30 insert Emergency Resolution 5 – Supporting Councillors against Cuts, from West Yorkshire. Page 10: after Emergency Resolution 1 (which is already programmed in) insert Emergency Resolution 4 – Defending Our Human Rights, from Bedfordshire. After Paragraph C14 insert Emergency Resolution 6 Campaign for Benefits Justice, from London. Page 11: no change.

Speakers' times: the Executive Council Policy Statement – Firefighters' Safety, the General Secretary, 20 minutes, to be moved on Wednesday after lunch. Executive Council Policy Statement – The Future of the Fire & Rescue Service, the General Secretary, 20 minutes, to be moved on Wednesday afternoon after tea and coffee. Executive Council Policy Statement – Future Structures of the Fire Brigades Union, the General Secretary, 20 minutes, to be moved on Thursday morning after tea and coffee. Emergency Resolution 3 – Pensions, Executive Council, General Secretary, 30 minutes. Emergency Resolution 2 – Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA) Securing National Agreement, from the Executive Council, AGS, 20 minutes, both to be moved during the Closed Session I have previously announced.

Can I now go on to voting on a challenge to the Chair of Conference. May I draw your attention to Standing Order 15. The number of delegates to Conference is 149.

Therefore, the number of delegates voting to carry a challenge is 100. Please note that CSNC delegates, B&EMM National Committee delegates, LGBT National Committee delegates, NRC delegates, NWC delegates, ONC delegates are all entitled to vote on procedural motions and challenges only. Regional officials who are not delegates have been issued with different credentials 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.

The Standing Orders Committee election will take place on Thursday morning first thing and completed nomination forms must be placed in the ballot box at the rear of the hall by 11 am. Paul Reames and Phil Jordan are eligible for re-election; Phil Jordan is standing down.

Voting at this Conference. The Standing Orders Committee informs Conference that electronic voting will only be used to replace the card vote. Electronic voting will only be used for this purpose if the President or the floor of Conference decides it is needed. Please note, you still have your voting cards as back up if voting cards are required because of electronic voting failure. The President will inform Conference of that.

Finally, President, Conference, can leaders of delegations please ensure you have your handsets available now because now is keypad testing time. Your keypad should state on it "Press any key". For testing that your keypad has synchronised with the voting system press any key now.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, comrades, 54 keypads have responded. There should be 58 keypads. There are three delegations who aren't here, that was what I was going to say, but thanks for that! Mascol, can you tell us who hasn't been able to press the keypad?

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

That all seems fine now! Conference, to test the keypad for voting purposes there is a question going to appear on the screen. Please do not press any keys until I give you the instruction. Conference, please press A for yes, press B for no, now. That falls! Thanks, Conference, that's the test complete and that's the way the system will work for voting during this Conference if electronic voting is required (let's hope not).

President, that concludes the first Standing Orders Committee report, thank you.

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THE PRESIDENT:

Sorry? Point of order before the challenge?

BRO PAUL EMBERY (London):

Just a brief point of order, President. We did request that Gordon Fielden be substituted on our delegation for Steve James and you didn't mention that, Steve, so I'd like you to confirm if possible that Gordon Fielden is registered as a delegate for London. We wanted to confirm that he is on the delegation because he's about to get up and challenge the Standing Orders report! Thanks, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Let's hope he's got his credentials, then.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Turn to your delegates' list, delete Steve James, insert Gordon Fielden, from London. Thanks for letting me know.

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

Thank you. President, comrades, Standing Orders notified the Control Staff National Committee that our Resolutions had been ruled out of order and claimed, incorrectly in our opinion, that we hadn't followed the guidance or the Standing Order rules. That was on 20th January. On 31st January we appealed the decision, we provided proof that we had actually followed the rules of Standing Orders and asked that our Resolutions be restored to the order paper. On 22nd March we were then notified by Standing Orders that our appeal had failed. Apparently the grounds for their decision is contained in Standing Order 5 and also a set of guidelines provided by them as per the Rule Book which is Rule 7(7).

So the guidelines actually say (just for those of you who can't remember) that "to ensure compliance with the Rule Book and Standing Orders the completed form should be returned electronically from either the Brigade or National Sectional Chairs or Secretary's on their email account to both [then they give a couple of email addresses] with a copy to the other named Brigade or National Sectional official on the form". We did that, we've got proof of it. Just because we didn't use the CC instead of the BCC facility on the email, they turned us down and they said that was the reason, because we hadn't actually complied with the rules. Well, we did and we've got the proof.

Standing Order 5 apparently is the reason. Standing Order 5 says: "Resolutions, amendments, amendments to rules and other business of Conference must be returned electronically by the Chair or Secretary of the

Brigade/National Sectional Committee by whom they are submitted." It also says about one subject only and not be of an omnibus nature. We did that, we've got proof of it, and we provided proof of that to the Standing Orders Committee.

So, Conference, we'd just like you to consider our appeal against the Standing Orders Committee's decision to remove our Resolutions from the order paper and have them restored. We believe that we complied completely with all of the rules that are contained within the guidelines and we'd like you to support our appeal. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Could you stay at the rostrum. I'm trying to make this easier for you. You didn't mention the word challenge once in that contribution; you were talking about an appeal.

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

OK, I shall be more specific. We would like to challenge the Standing Orders report, thank you.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Conference, the Standing Orders Committee ruled out of order three Resolutions submitted from the Control Staff National Committee on the grounds that the Resolutions submitted negate Standing Order 5, Rule 7(7) and guidance notes 1 and 13 for proposed Resolutions for inclusion in the preliminary agenda. These Resolutions were submitted by the National Secretary for the CSNC and copied to the Executive Council Member for the CSNC and NOT to the other named National Sectional official on the form submitted, and, as it clearly states in the guidance note.

Standing Order 5 states: "Resolutions, amendments, amendments to rules and other business for Conference must be returned electronically by the Chair or Secretary of the Brigade/National Sectional Committee by whom they are submitted." Guidance note 1 states: "To ensure compliance with the Rule Book and Standing Orders the completed form should be returned electronically from the Brigade/National Sectional Chairs or Secretary's email account to both Barbara@fbu.org.uk and dave.green@fbu.org.uk with a copy to the other named Brigade/National Sectional official on the form". Guidance note 13 states: "You are strongly advised to review the Resolution proposal to ensure compliance with Standing Order 5 and Rule 7(7)."

These Resolutions were submitted by the National Secretary and NOT copied to the other named National official on the forms submitted. As it clearly states in the

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guidance notes that I have just read out, the clear guidance notes formulated as per Rule 7(7) which accompany the forms to be used, have not been adhered to on this occasion. Conference, these instructions are important and were not adhered to. It is very important, as it confirms to the Standing Orders Committee that the business being submitted is genuine. And just as important Conference, it is backup for you, the officials named on the form acting on behalf of the Brigade/National Sectional Committee submitting business. Conference, the CSNC got it wrong on this occasion. They themselves must have accepted that they got it wrong and I'll tell you why, Conference. Because they have got Amendments to Resolutions and an Amendment to an Executive Council Policy Statement within the Programme of Business before you. How, you ask yourselves? I'll tell you how, Conference. They submitted them correctly, in line with Standing Order 5, in line with Rule 7(7) and the very clear instructions in the guidelines for submitting Amendments.

So Conference, if the Standing Orders Committee got it so wrong, why change the way you submit your business? Unless you got it wrong and do it correctly the next time you're submitting business. As I've explained Conference, the Resolutions were clearly submitted wrongly. I would hope that the CSNC could accept the decision that the Standing Orders Committee had to make on this occasion. If not, then I urge Conference to uphold the decision made by the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

There is no right of reply to that. I would be confident that you would have whatever paperwork you said you have, and the Chair of Standing Orders will have whatever paperwork he says he has. Conference will now be voting on the substantive matter of the challenge. That's the way we would do our business. There is a challenge to Standing Orders. All those in favour of that challenge please show. Those against please show. That challenge is *CARRIED*.

BRO GORDON FIELDEN (London):

President, Conference, I'm not going to go into a long debate, but the London situation is exactly the same as our colleagues from CSNC. I urge you to support this challenge and restore our Resolutions to the order paper as well.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

The Standing Orders Committee ruled out of order three Resolutions submitted from London on the

grounds that the Resolutions submitted negate Standing Order 5, Rule 7(7) and guidance notes 1 and 13 for proposed Resolutions for inclusion in the Preliminary Agenda. These Resolutions were submitted by the Brigade Secretary and NOT copied to the other named Brigade official as it clearly states in the guidance note.

Standing Order 5 states: "Resolutions, amendments, amendments to rules and other business for Conference must be returned electronically by the Chair or Secretary of the Brigade/ National Sectional Committee by whom they are submitted." Guidance note 1 states: "To ensure compliance with the Rule Book and Standing Orders the completed form should be returned electronically from the Brigade/National Sectional Chairs or Secretary's email account to both Barbara@fbu.org.uk and dave.green@fbu.org.uk with a copy to the other named Brigade/National Sectional official on the form". Guidance note 13 states: "You are strongly advised to review the Resolution proposal to ensure compliance with Standing Order 5 and Rule 7(7)."

These Resolutions were submitted by the Brigade Secretary and NOT copied to the other named National official on the forms submitted. As it clearly states in the guidance notes that I have just read out, the clear guidance notes formulated as per Rule 7(7) which accompany the forms to be used, have not been adhered to on this occasion.

The Brigade Secretary on this occasion explained in an email to the Secretary of the Standing Orders Committee, after the close of acceptance of Resolutions, that he had privately sent the Resolutions to the Brigade Chair. He also provided the Secretary of the Standing Orders Committee a copy of the email to the Brigade Chair. The email provided shows that it was actually sent the night before the email with the Resolutions attached, which was sent for submitting Resolutions. Furthermore, it clearly stated that "there may be Amendments before they can be agreed" and "the meeting in the morning before submitting them".

Clearly, the Resolutions were not copied to the relevant persons as per the very clear instructions within the guidelines. Clearly, the relevant persons weren't copied into the email for submitting Resolutions to the Standing Orders Committee so as they could be considered competent before being placed on the Preliminary Agenda. We know this because the email provided to us stated that.

These instructions are important and were not adhered to. It is very important, as it confirms to the Standing Orders Committee that the business being submitted is genuine. And just as important, it is backup for you, the officials named on the form acting on behalf of the

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Brigade/National Sectional Committee submitting business. Conference, the Resolutions were clearly submitted wrongly. Therefore, I urge Conference to uphold the decision made by the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

Point of clarification.

BRO PAUL EMBERY (London):

President, Conference, it would be useful for the Chair of Standing Orders to clarify, because we are unsure. Is he saying that the Standing Orders Committee's view is that the Resolutions that were submitted were in breach of Standing Order 5 specifically, or just in breach of the guidance? Because if it is in breach of the Standing Order I think he has got a case, but clearly if you read the Standing Order there's been no breach whereas if you look at the guidance around the Standing Order which was issued by the Standing Orders Committee (but, I have to say, has never been agreed by Conference and cannot be assumed to be incorporated into the Standing Orders) then you would be saying that it wasn't a breach of Standing Orders. So was it a breach of the Standing Orders or of the guidance? If the first, fair enough; if the second –

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I ask you, you are asking for a point of clarification then give it. You've asked for the clarification.

BRO PAUL EMBERY (London):

I think the whole question turns on that point.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Conference, I hope this is going to be clear. The letter that was sent to Paul on 28th January 2013 stated: "Dear Paul, Conference 2013. I am sorry to advise you that the Standing Orders Committee at its meeting on 21st, 22nd and 23rd January 2013, when considering Resolutions submitted for inclusion on the Preliminary Agenda of Conference ruled out of order three Resolutions received from the London Brigade Committee on the grounds that they were not in accordance with the clear instructions that accompany the guidelines in line with Standing Order 5 Submitting of Resolutions. I am sorry to have to advise you of this decision and trust you will understand and accept the reasons given. Yours fraternally, Dave Green."

So the clear instructions were given, Paul, within that letter.

THE PRESIDENT:

OK, Conference, that has been subject of a challenge to Standing Orders. Standing Orders has been challenged. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. The challenge is *CARRIED*.

BRO RUSS KING (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, Tyne & Wear are in a similar position to CSNC and London in terms of we had three Resolutions ruled out of order on Standing Order 5, on the guidelines that they were not clear on the copying of the other Brigade official. We have evidence to prove that we did copy the other Brigade official into it, and we showed Standing Orders this, but however they didn't change their minds. With that, we wish to challenge Standing Orders and we ask for Conference to support. Thank you.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee ruled out of order three Resolutions submitted from Tyne & Wear on the grounds that the Resolutions submitted negate Standing Order 5, Rule 7(7) and guidance notes 1 and 13 for proposed Resolutions for inclusion in the Preliminary Agenda. These Resolutions were submitted by the Brigade Secretary and NOT copied to the other named Brigade official as it clearly states in the guidance note.

Standing Order 5 states: "Resolutions, amendments, amendments to rules and other business for Conference must be returned electronically by the Chair or Secretary of the Brigade/National Sectional Committee by whom they are submitted." Guidance note 1 states: "To ensure compliance with the Rule Book and Standing Orders the completed form should be returned electronically from the Brigade/National Sectional Chairs or Secretary's email account to both Barbara@fbu.org.uk and dave.green@fbu.org.uk with a copy to the other named Brigade/National Sectional official on the form". Guidance note 13 states: "You are strongly advised to review the Resolution proposal to ensure compliance with Standing Order 5 and Rule 7(7)."

These Resolutions were submitted by the Brigade Secretary and NOT copied to the other named Brigade official on the forms submitted. As it clearly states in the guidance notes that I have just read out, the clear guidance notes formulated as per Rule 7(7) which accompany the forms to be used, have not been adhered to on this occasion.

On this occasion, unfortunately, Tyne & Wear got it wrong. The submissions received by the Standing

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Orders Committee stated that it was sent by the Brigade Secretary and only sent to Barbara, and only copied to Dave Green, not sent or copied to the Brigade Chair, who is the other named Brigade official on the form. These instructions are important and were not adhered to. It is very important, as it confirms to the Standing Orders Committee that the business being submitted is genuine. And just as important, it is back up for you, the officials named on the form acting on behalf of the Brigade/National Sectional Committee submitting business.

When checking the forms further, it became apparent that these submissions were sent one week before the closing date in time for submissions of Resolutions. Conference, as I stated previously, guidance notes 1 and 13 state within them, 1 states within it "with a copy to the named Brigade/National Sectional official" on the form; and 13 states within it: "You are strongly advised to review the Resolution proposal to ensure compliance". That's why the guidance notes are there, and for a week nobody in Tyne & Wear did that. The Resolutions were clearly submitted wrongly. Therefore, I urge Conference to uphold the decision made by the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

There has been a challenge to Standing Orders. All those in favour of the challenge please show. Those against please show. That challenge is *CARRIED*.

Is the Standing Orders report agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, I've got to make comment on what's just happened then, because I need to get a handle on it as the Chair of this Conference. You've just challenged your own procedural methods and the method that Standing Orders employ to sift out and to work on your Resolutions. In essence, you could have been seen to have challenged the interpretation of your own rules. I don't have a problem with the fact that Conference always gets things right, but I do now have a procedural problem. I've got to think of a way that those Resolutions are treated exactly the same as any Resolutions which came in on time and correctly filled in. As another aside, any business that comes to Conference, any business that comes to the floor of this Conference and therefore goes out of this Conference as policy of this Union has to be of a competent nature. So what I'm going to propose to do is to submit those nine Resolutions to Standing Orders, who will consider them the way they've considered everybody else's Resolutions. So you now have an even playing field, and Standing Orders will consider them in the same way as they've considered everybody else's Resolutions. The EC will then need to consider their position on those Resolutions now. I'm going to put myself into your

hands. I can adjourn Conference now. What I'm going to try to do is to get round it and do this, but you must appreciate that Conference may need to be adjourned for this to happen. Is that agreed? *AGREED*

Conference, we are on Section L – Obituary and I would ask you to stand as a Conference for a minute's silence. *(Conference stood in memory of those who had died)*
Thank you, Conference, please take your seats.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call upon the President to give his Presidential address.

BRO ANDY VINGOE (Suffolk):

President, Conference, on 2nd October 2012, while taking part in a day of swift water rescue training at Lee Valley Water Rescue Centre, Firefighter Alan Swords was suddenly taken ill. Despite the best efforts of his fellow watch members from Lowestoft, members of the training department and also paramedics, Alan died at the scene shortly after. The FBU were informed immediately and a flexi duty officer was sent to liaise with the turntable ladder which was being crewed at the time by the FBU Brigade Health & Safety rep. Our rep was picked up by that officer and transported by him to the Lee Valley site. In the meantime, our Assistant Chief contacted me to request that we could work together in the accident investigation, as we had done previously to good effect. I agreed and confirmed that our rep would be released from his watch in order to facilitate this.

This investigation has now gone as far as it can until the outcome of the Coroner's investigation is known. The outcome is expected at the hearing on 27th June, which we are obviously attending, and any findings which could have wider implications will be communicated immediately.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who sent messages of support at the time, those who travelled to Suffolk to attend Alan's Fire Service funeral, and also all your members who contributed to Alan's memorial fund which currently stands at around £5,000.

When the Brigade Secretary and myself met with Alan's family a few days after his death, we offered all the help we could at the time and explained about the Accident & Injury Fund and also that it was commonplace to set up a memorial fund. The family were very touched by this. There was however, a more difficult part of our conversation that day, which was having to explain that Alan had overlooked changing his nomination for the Accident & Injury Fund and that somebody whose actions had upset Alan and his family in the past (if they

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were to approach us) was entitled to a sum of money that the family would find extremely upsetting.

What I'm trying to do is to emphasise the importance of a message that I have heard here at Conference many times before. Please remind all your members to check that the person presently nominated by them to receive a sum of money if they should be unfortunate enough to die in Service is the person that they would now like to receive that money. If not, tell them to vary their nomination now. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, President, I would just like to echo the comments there about making sure that members' details and nominations are up to date. It's not the first time we've had to discuss this at Conference. We've had similar interventions from delegates previously and we have, on numerous occasions, published that advice in Firefighter and in circulars. So it is something that we need to build in regularly to our Branch meeting business, Brigade Committee meeting business and so on. I would echo the comments very strongly. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, welcome to the Fire Brigades Union's first ever biennial Conference. Nothing too contentious here this week, I would imagine. It's been two years since I gave my first Presidential address and being the kind of guy I am (glass half full) I figured when I left here that it was quite well received and that it was a brilliant Presidential address, certainly for a first attempt. Alas, that didn't seem to be true because there was some criticism by people levelled at me. As everybody on the Executive Council knows, I accept criticism very, very well! If they didn't nod when I said that, Conference, they're not on cue at all! The criticisms ranged from my old Region who were alarmed that I was prepared to finally declare my nationality on the result of a football match, criticism that I wasn't standing to deliver my address as President, someone accused me of moving an EC Policy Statement in my Presidential address; someone even accused me of looking too serious and snarly! Well, let's address the address.

On the nationality thing, I'm a Geordie, born north of the Roman wall if that helps. On standing up to deliver my first Presidential address, I'm from the old school, I always believe that when the President stands, Conference is adjourned. However, I'm prepared (as you see today) to take that on board and modernise. If it's

good enough for you, it's good enough for me! Too serious and too snarly? Come on, Conference, judge for yourselves. Probably the kindest face you'll see all week!

Never before Conference, has this Service been under such an attack, attack on all fronts: pay, pensions, jobs. When I stood up two years ago and was accused of moving an EC Policy Statement, what I said was: this is about pay, pensions and jobs. It hasn't gone away. They haven't let it go away and we can't let it go away. Also, the horrendous attacks on our members' health & safety. Once again in those two years the FBU has been the only voice of opposition, the only voice prepared to stand up against these savage attacks and fight, and fight we surely must, Conference.

This week we will take positions on a number of issues. I'm determined that this isn't going to be a one issue Conference. We're going to think about our position on Marauding Terrorism. It's a very, very serious business. But I'll tell you something else: we need to take a position, and we need to take cognisance of those people marauding around Whitehall at the minute in suits and ties who are doing us in at every single opportunity, every single opportunity to attack the public sector they are doing, and we are feeling the strain now and we're not having it! *Applause*

It must stop, they must be stopped. As I said, it can't be a one issue Conference. I'm sure with the passion and commitment it won't be. But inevitably, this week pensions and our actions on pensions will dominate the week. I don't want to influence your debate. I know that you're ready for that debate and ready for whatever action you need to take. But I'll say this, and I'll say this on behalf of these good people on the stage who I've worked with closely. We've won every argument on pensions, we've won every single evidence-based argument. We've taken part in their reviews and we've won the argument on their reviews. Doors are closing, doors are closing on this Union and that is what we need to address this week. We need to be able to make a deal on pensions. We need to be able to go and come away with a pension for our members that they started with expectations of. Our people, our kids, our children are around. When we retire from this Service the one thing we were certain of when we started, the one thing I was certain of as well, I won't be a pauper because I'll have that bit of Fire Service pension. These people are attacking it, and when they're attacking that, they're attacking you after your service and they're attacking your families: your wives, your partners, your children. That's absurd! That's absurd for a government in this country to be doing that, and shame on them! *Applause*

I'll finish because I don't want to necessarily talk about pensions. It's going to be the subject of debate on

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Thursday. I unfortunately had to go and speak to an ex-comrade of mine who was dying, a good friend, good comrade. I went to see him and he said what are you doing down at Kingston, what do you do? I said I'm President of the Union now. President, oh aye. He says (I'll not exactly use his terminology) you're not doing too well with the pensions at the minute, are you? I says: no, no. He says: well, I'll not be here to see that, and he isn't; he died. He said: I'll be in heaven. I said: are you sure you're going to be in heaven? He said: yeah, pretty sure, pretty sure I'll get there before you anyway. I said: what do you think heaven will look like, then? He said: I haven't got a clue what it will look like, I haven't got a clue what it will look like, but I know I'm going there and I know it's better than where I am at the minute. I kind of told him about the pensions and he said: it's a bit like heaven, isn't it, your pension thing? I said: what do you mean? He said: You haven't got a clue how it's going to end, but you know it's going to end better than where you are. You've got to make sure Conference, you've got to make sure that we're not damned by future generations in this job, by doing whatever we can to protect our pensions, to protect our Service and to protect our members. Thank you very much. Have a great Conference. *Applause*

I now call upon Dave Limer to give the Financial Statement. Dave will be taking the two years in the same contribution so that will cover Paragraph K2, Paragraph K3 and Paragraph K4.

BRO DAVE LIMER (National Treasurer):

Thank you, President, Conference, good morning. Before I move the Statement of Accounts for the year end 2012, I would first like to take the opportunity to thank the previous National Treasurer, Warren Gee, for all the work that he's done over the past few years. *Applause*

Conference, in moving the Accounts I'd first like to take us back to the financial statement given by Gareth Jones from Chantrey Vellacott, Auditors, at the special conference in 2012. Gareth highlighted the £1.8 million deficit in the General Fund and he gave us his professional opinion on three options for moving forward. They were: option 1 do nothing, but as he pointed out, that was a big gamble; option 2 he said restructure the finances of the Union and make them fit for purpose; or option 3 merge with a larger union. I hope I speak for all at Conference today when I say I want the FBU to remain a financially viable, independent Union. *Applause*

Given the level of the deficit the Executive Council and Conference have, over the past couple of years, had to make some very difficult financial decisions. They've not been easy decisions but they've been necessary. It has resulted in further savings.

I'll first talk to you a little bit about income. Our income is split between the General Fund, Accident & Injury Fund, and the Political Fund. Our total income for 2012 was £12,478,446. Comparing this to 2011 it has decreased by £193,979. Of particular concern was the decrease in contributions which make up the majority of our total income. Compared to 2011, we've seen a reduction of £242,368. Conference, this is the fourth consecutive year that contributions have decreased, and it just shows the pressure we're under locally with the cuts and subsequent loss of membership. On a more positive note, a greater proportion of Wholetime members are now paying the full rate of contributions.

Turning to expenditure, in 2011 the National Treasurer reported to Conference that the FBU was spending more than our income and this could not continue. Overall, our total expenditure for 2012 has decreased by £161,732. This is mainly due to lower administration costs and reduced Conference expenditure. These two areas alone have seen a £400,000 reduction in our expenditure from 2011. Expenditure has increased in some areas such as advertising for the cuts campaign, and the payment of Accident & Injury Fund claims.

I would also like to highlight the following areas of expenditure: salaries, national insurance contributions have reduced by 6% and we'd expect that to reduce further and this is mainly due to the lower number of staff now being employed at Head Office. Trade union leave costs have reduced and we're hoping for further savings in this area. Our pension liability has also reduced from last year.

Looking at all of the accounts: Accident & Injury Fund, Political and General Funds, we're showing a surplus for the year. Taking into account all our liabilities, or what we actually owe, the FBU net worth is up from 2011.

Turning to the Accident & Injury Fund, we received contributions of £1,570,906 and we paid out benefits of £1,208,337. After commission and administration it showed a surplus of £163,268.

Turning to the all-important General Fund, for the year end 2012 it is now showing a small surplus of £27,756. Conference, this is a big improvement on the £1,850,729 deficit it was showing at the year end 2011. This surplus has mainly been brought about by an improvement on the pension scheme actuarial gain, but also through savings I've already highlighted to you.

To conclude and sum up the financial position for the year end 2012, we are moving in the right direction. The General Fund is showing a small surplus. However, with income continuing to decrease we have to do more to reduce our expenditure and safeguard the future of the Union. As well as keeping the finances healthy, we also

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need to start building a financial reserve so unforeseen expenditure does not adversely affect the running of the Union. Ideally longer term, the reserve would be equivalent to nine months' current expenditure of the Union.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Regional Treasurers and officials who I know are working very hard to improve our financial situation. Thanks also go to Head Office accounts manager Nigel and Stuart, and our auditors Chantrey Vellacott. Conference, to conclude, I return to my opening statement: our aim is to maintain a financially viable and independent trade union. Conference, I move the Statement of Accounts. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That has taken account of Paragraph K1, Paragraph K2, Paragraph K3, Paragraph K4.

Section G – Internal Administration, Paragraph G1, Paragraph G2, Paragraph G3. I now call Resolution 47, Canvassing from Derbyshire, the Executive Council support.

Resolution 47 – CANVASSING

Resolution 72 passed at Annual Conference 2011, instructed the Executive Council to set up a Working Party to look at the possibility of introducing a form of regulated canvassing. Furthermore, the Executive Council were called upon to make recommendations with any possible rule changes, based on the content of the report, to the next Conference. This work has yet to be carried out.

Therefore, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to set up a Task and Finish Group to review the application of Rule 19A and bring any rule changes necessary to the next rule change Conference.

DERBYSHIRE

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I would just firstly like to say it's a nice change being up here so early, so welcome all. I appreciate the subject of canvassing may bring some differing views and opinions across the Union, hence the reason why rule 19A is there in the first place. What I'd like to urge Conference to look at is the actual wording of not only this Resolution but also the 2011 Resolution that it refers to. I'm asking for Conference to support this Resolution as it simply asks the Executive Council to carry out something that we've already passed and asked them to do. It then clarifies how it will be done and asks for any rule changes deemed necessary to be

brought to the next appropriate Conference. I don't believe we can continue to ask members at the foundations of this Union for participation in elections all the way up and down the Union structure when most of the membership are blind to what and who they are voting for, more importantly, as they don't know what they stand for. I believe that members who accept nominations for a post should make the members they are to be instructed by aware of what they propose to do in the position for the Fire Brigades Union.

We only need to look at the figures in Paragraph G3 (just referred to by the President) to see the evidence of disenfranchised members up and down the country. I hope the Task and Finish Group who carry this work out understand the intention of the Resolution, which is to engage the members in elections within our Union, and bring changes to Rule 19A. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder? Please come to the rostrum.

SIS JO BYRNE (South Wales):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 47 Canvassing. As the new Brigade organiser for South Wales I know how difficult it is to make mainstream progress in the Union when you're not only female but a member of Control staff to boot. I was thrilled last week when I managed to secure the position of Brigade organiser, not just because I know I'll bring more diversity to my Brigade Committee and inject a different take on various issues, but mainly because I was (as I'm sure is usual on most Brigade Committees) sat around a table consisting of a dozen or so male firefighters and me. When a vote was taken for who they wanted to be their Brigade organiser I wasn't sure how the vote would go because, as Joe McVeigh pointed out in 2011, Rule 19 makes it clear that it is not permissible to put yourself out there.

Even though the Brigade organiser position is decided at Brigade Committee level, it's taken me over five years of sitting on that committee as the women's rep to convince some of my male colleagues that despite being a female control operator I do have something to offer as a Brigade official. It becomes much more difficult when you want to stand for a position which requires a ballot of members though. If you can't tell people that you're interested in a position and give branches the opportunity to invite you to meetings so that they can see who they're voting for and what your views are on issues which are really important to them, then how can they decide who's the best candidate to elect?

After listening to the Treasurer's report too, are we not also missing a trick here? In times of dwindling numbers

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of FBU members, surely we should be taking every opportunity to get on stations and let members know what the Union has done for them, and what benefits it can offer in the future. It seems that what has happened historically is that some candidates will flout Rule 19 and canvass regardless, and others are more worried about being in breach of the Rule Book so they don't. This is clearly unfair to both the candidates involved and the FBU membership. If the Rule was changed to allow regulated canvassing then it would be a fairer and more level playing field for all concerned. UNISON, one of the largest trade unions in the country, allows regulated canvassing and I've lifted the following from their rule book (which I hope doesn't break any rules): "Members can of course canvass in their own workplaces on behalf of candidates but they should not go into other branches to canvass. Candidates themselves can visit branches but this must be at the invitation of the branch and only if all other candidates in the election have also been invited." This seems entirely reasonable to me. Everyone has the same opportunity and it's then up to the individual whether or not they make the effort and speak to the people they expect to vote for them.

So, Conference, it's time for the FBU to catch up now and give members the opportunity to find out who they're voting for and make an informed decision who to vote for. Please support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, that's open for debate. No? General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Just a very quick comment. I don't intend to address the issue of canvassing itself which will, as set out in the Resolution, be addressed by a working party or Task and Finish Group. I suppose it's just excuses time, as it were. We have been through a huge period of restructuring and change. That work was primarily carried out by the Executive Council's Finance and Administration Committee. That has involved, as you've discussed yourselves Conference, changes to our structures in many ways; changes to the structure of Conference; to our Regional and Sectional Committees. We will report on this in more detail later. There are changes to staffing arrangements, staffing policies and so on. So there has been a huge amount of work and that is, if you like, the reason why this particular area of work has possibly fallen off the agenda somewhat. I'm sure Conference will be aware that alongside that there's the real job that the Union has to do which is about jobs, pay and pensions, which attacks are at an unprecedented level. But with those thoughts in mind we will get on with the work set out at Conference 2011.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. I now put Resolution 47 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That *CARRIES*.

Tea break, Conference, 15 minutes.

Break for tea

THE PRESIDENT:

Can you take your seats please. Conference, come to order. We're on Paragraph G4 Industrial Disputes. Can you please come into the room late but quiet. Thank you. We're on Paragraph G5, Paragraph G6, Paragraph G7. I now call Resolution 16, Freedom of Movement – Fire Control Staff. That is from Lothian & Borders. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 16 – FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT – FIRE CONTROL STAFF

This Conference is concerned at the potential for false barriers to be put in place in the uniformed Fire and Rescue Service restricting the freedom of movement of suitably qualified staff between roles, both current and as part of restructure.

For example, in the build up to the development of a Single Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, trials are being carried out by Lothian & Borders Fire & Rescue Service for the position of Local Senior Officer and the surrounding uniformed support staff required. However, these supporting roles, in some services, have all been given an operational Firefighting commitment, whether it is a requirement to carry out the core function of the post or not. These new posts, which are multifunctional i.e. training, staffing, equalities and human resources etc, will all be carried out by the individual posts as opposed to previous single function posts. These unjustified commitments have therefore debarred all suitably qualified Fire Control Staff, who are mainly women, from even applying.

At a time where there is a potential for Fire Control mergers and staff reductions or redeployments, this practice, if developed and utilised, can only serve to further restrict the ability of the service to retain experienced and highly trained staff.

We call upon the Executive Council to conduct a review in all Regions and Brigades to identify any areas where this practice exists or is developing with a view to eradicating any discriminatory practices. In doing this, checking whether suitable Equality Impact Assessments have been conducted

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on such changes. This review is to form a report which should be published no later than May 2014.

We further call upon the Executive Council to ensure no such false barriers are agreed to, in any restructure or change to current or new posts, no matter where or in which constituent Government or Assembly the changes are taking place.

LOTHIAN AND BORDERS

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, the content of this Resolution is of concern to our members, not because the issue is new but because the subject matter is raising its head again and our Control members are rightly looking to their Union to support them, defend them and protect them. Let's be clear Conference, this Resolution is not about opening up the floodgates of anything that would attack Firefighters' posts; it's not about putting one set of members against another; and it's definitely not about turning the Fire and Rescue Service into a huge, non-uniform mass that outnumbers our members.

But what it is all about quite simply is it is a fact that not all posts in the Fire Service have a firefighting element to them, in human resources, equality departments, staffing, some elements of training departments etc. These posts at the moment are filled by both uniformed and non-uniformed employees. However, there are areas of the country that actually bar uniformed Fire Control staff from even applying for these posts. Conference, this cannot be right. We surely aren't going to say that we believe the skills of Fire Control staff are inferior to everyone else's because if you oppose this Resolution that's exactly what you will be doing.

For example, in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service prior to the move to the single Service most Brigades had departments that hadn't been scrutinised for anti-discriminatory practices and after ensuring that the skills of the personnel matched the skills required for the post advertised, after ensuring that there were no discriminatory false barriers, put in place – and remember, that's what we're talking about – false barriers, not genuine ones. Then in Lothian & Borders, as part of a trial that involves a move to using local senior officers, the posts that were created to support these officers were advertised and some Fire Control staff applied. They were swiftly told that as these posts were multi-functional then only those trained in firefighting could apply. So suitably qualified, skilled Control staff were not allowed to apply for jobs they were more than qualified to do. That is something this Union has been against for many years.

Before anyone says anything, Conference, it was raised at all appropriate levels in the Union and they have been

supportive on the principle we raise in this Resolution both locally and regionally. At a time when Fire Control staff are under threat and at a time of potential mergers and promises of protecting these people as much as possible, at a time when we're losing members instead of increasing them, then why oh why is the Executive Council asking for remittance or opposing this Resolution? We're not talking about Fire Control staff taking Firefighter jobs; we're not asking you to put Fire Control staff in Firefighters' posts and we're not asking for special treatment.

What this Resolution does call for, however, is that the Union give our Control members the same respect as Firefighters, the same level of protection as they do Firefighters, and that it acts in a non-discriminatory manner, the way it should always act. All we are asking is that the EC conduct a review, that's it Conference, a review, as it has agreed to do for many other subjects here, to get the facts about what is going on in relation to this Resolution and to identify where discriminatory practices exist, to ensure that a equality impact assessment has been carried out on the changes to post, and to publish a report no later than May 2014. What is to oppose about that?

If the EC find there are false barriers – I repeat, false barriers – then they should do something to ensure that those false barriers are removed, or better still, not allowed to be introduced in the first place. Conference, surely we're not going to abandon a particularly vulnerable group of our members, surely we're not going to support discriminatory practices in our workplaces, surely we're not going to support the EC's opposition to this Resolution. That message sent out would be appalling and wrong. Conference, I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

CSNC to second.

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

President, comrades, Conference, this may be something new to our comrades in Scotland, or obviously it isn't, but here in England we had this issue time and time again with the debacle (love that word!) that was Fire Control. We've sat in many meetings over the years and argued with senior managers, regional control directors, that there is no operational requirement for a certain role to allow Emergency Control staff to redeploy into. If you check our role maps for a watch manager you will see there is no difference, apart from WM7, lead and support people to resolve operational incidents. We could do – and we did, and we do. Control staff also deal with operational incidents. How do you think you get all the appliances, equipment

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and support services arriving at the incident ground in a timely fashion? Although Control staff like to think we're God, contrary to popular belief we don't have a stockpile of pumps and equipment in a just-in-case drawer; we aren't sitting with the knitting needles on the night shift making extra ones. We have them and they're usually available to you because we've managed the situation.

How are senior officers kept informed of a developing incident and at the same time assured that there's adequate fire cover in their Brigade? Is it them making the decision? Sir Ken Knight visited the Tyne & Wear Control and asked the old chief at what point would the control officer in charge consult with him over problems with fire cover. His answer was: "Me? I have no idea! That's what I pay her for!"

Then we come to the issue of if we allow you to redeploy into another Grey Book role we only need to pay you at 95% pay as you're Control staff. That does happen in some Brigades, not others. If Control staff are trained to instruct, and many have self-developed, and gained teaching certificates, why can they not redeploy into an instructor's role? In Cleveland there was a group manager who was a training centre manager who started life in the control room sitting next to me. Is she not up to the job? Where's her operational requirement? We've Control members who've moved into roles in fire safety, special project, dog handlers, we've even got an ACO! So if they can manage without an operational requirement why can't this happen in Scotland?

If Control staff are a member of an Equality Section and have worked tirelessly to further the aims of equality in their Brigade, usually through their Union role, why can they not apply for a role in equalities in human resources? Where is the operational requirement for that?

We've always asked for the equality impact assessment and been shown, if we're lucky, a very poor example of one which, funnily enough, doesn't have any impact on any protected characteristic. Well, there you are!

We know this government has stopped mandatory equality impact assessments for the public sector, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't still be doing them to prove our point. Support this Resolution and support your Emergency Control staff. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate, Conference. John McGhee to give the Executive Council's opposition.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Good morning, Conference. I should explain first of all the Executive Council did ask Lothian & Borders to remit

this motion. I think it's very important that you understand that some of the language that my good friend Denise used there is certainly not in the minds of the Executive Council, and that is that they absolutely respect and value the contribution that our Control staff make in the teams that we have out there resolving incidents on a daily basis. They will strive and do strive to protect those jobs and to protect those members at all times. So let's not misunderstand what the Executive Council are concerned about here.

There's a number of things. I could start off by saying why do we need a review? That would be a very simple opposition: you're creating work for work's sake. If there are discriminatory practices that are taking place out there, with or without this Resolution, I would expect each and every one of you, Brigade officials and any other officials, to be challenging them to make sure that people have got access and that there are no false barriers to people's employment, whether it's inside the Fire Service or outside of the Fire Service.

But there are concerns for the Executive Council that taking on this kind of work, we are trying very hard to protect all jobs, and we know that employers are using all sorts of tactics at the moment to bring in people on lower rates of pay. Let's be honest about it, that's what they're trying to do. So if they take a job and take away any kind of element that we fought hard for to get included into role maps, they take it out of there and then they can employ someone at a rate of pay not in line with our agreed role maps, and therefore the kind of pay that we're negotiating through the National Joint Council.

So it does not necessarily open floodgates, but it opens greater challenges for you out there if we're not careful about these things in arguing that barriers that are not false barriers in terms of safety of our personnel. If there's a job that's an equality job or a training job, then of course you should be challenging within your Brigade to make sure that people with the appropriate qualifications can get access to that. What Denise is talking about here is the jobs that, because they are multi-functional, there are certain categories of people not suitably qualified for applying for those jobs. That is something that we have to protect. We have to make sure that we're putting the right people in the right jobs at the right time.

The Executive Council agree with many of the sentiments that are in here. We will work hard to protect all of our members. I would point to a Resolution that's coming up and actually the Executive Council are supporting and that's the next one. That is talking about protecting Control staff jobs. The Executive Council are giving that full support. This is not about the Executive Council not being prepared to look after our Control

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staff, or our Control members; they are valued very highly, they're respected and are an integral part of this Union. As we have said in the past, they are a very important part of our team. I would ask you to oppose the Resolution and get back to your Brigades and make sure there are no false barriers for anyone. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Right of reply, Denise Christie.

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Lothian & Borders):

Just very briefly, President. I reiterate, we're only asking for a review here. If our Control staff are valued and respected and supported, let Conference send out a clear message to them. We're not making decisions here today. Let's take some time to go back, do a review, reflect on the considerations that need to be taken for Control going into these jobs. If there's problems or if there's issues, that will come out in the review, absolutely it will. So let's send a clear message of support here for our Control members, let's pass this Resolution and let's show support for our Control members and let's get that review done. Thanks. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 16, Freedom of Movement – Fire Control Staff to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against please show. That *FALLS*.

Paragraph G8. I now call Resolution 17, Future of Scottish Emergency Fire Control Rooms to be moved by Strathclyde. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 17 – FUTURE OF SCOTTISH EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROL ROOMS

This Conference notes the creation of the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, which replaces the eight previous Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland.

Conference is concerned over the maintenance of the existing eight Emergency Fire Control Rooms and also the maintenance of the current number of Firefighter Control posts in the new service.

Conference is opposed to the loss of any Emergency Firefighter Control posts and should the commitments given by the Scottish Government and the Fire and Rescue Board to protect the front line service during the transition and also their commitment to no compulsory redundancies not be upheld, through the transition period and beyond that the FBU will campaign against any

proposed reduction in Firefighter Control Posts using all means necessary, up to and including strike action.

STRATHCLYDE

SIS SANDRA BROWN (Strathclyde):

A little bit of history. As of 1st April this year eight separate Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland ceased to exist. Myself and all our other colleagues in Scotland are now direct government employees. In fairness, having seen how some local authorities treat their Fire and Rescue Services, our new employers are actually playing the game; they're being reasonable at present. However, we are aware that we're still very much in a honeymoon period with our new employers. As part of this honeymoon period they've made promises to us. They've given us assurances that there will be no compulsory redundancies and there will be no front line cuts. On the other side of that coin, they have clearly stated that they want to remove all duplication within the Service. Guess what? We've got eight Control Rooms in Scotland. That consists of quite a bit of duplication. It's been made quite clear by our new employers that the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will not contain eight Control Rooms.

Having introduced this uncertainty to our staff they then go on to say: we're not going to put this on the agenda; we're not really even going to look at this matter until 2015. 2015. They've introduced uncertainty into our lives and then they expect us to wait three years for decisions and information on what's going to happen to us. 2015, three years into our cumulative cuts, three years into attrition, three years into constant negotiation and consultation – every single element of our employment has to be renegotiated, every single policy, every single procedure. Three years is a long time into a honeymoon period for promises to hold good.

We all know that Controls are front line staff; we all consider them to be front line staff. However, employers have a history that where Control Rooms are concerned, they're only front line when they suit. We believe that all Control staff jobs should be defended as rigorously as any other front line jobs, and any move away from this stance should be resisted by all necessary means. We're asking that Conference will support our Control staff as front line staff and hold your employers to their promises well beyond the honeymoon, into the marriage that now exists. Any reduction in the number of Control Rooms that may be proposed should not necessarily mean a reduction in the number of front line Control Firefighters. Conference, we must unite to fight for every single front line job right across the Service, and that includes Control Room jobs. I urge you to support this Resolution. Thanks. *Applause*

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THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder? Come to the rostrum, Jo.

SIS JO BYRNE (South Wales):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 17, the Future of Scottish Fire Control Rooms. Working in a Control Room in Wales which, like Scotland, has a devolved administration, I feel really strongly about this Resolution and urge Conference to support it. I understand the concerns of the Scottish Control Room staff and their FBU officials. I worked through a smaller scale amalgamation in 1996 when the eight Fire Brigades in Wales became three, and my Brigade, South Glamorgan, joined with two others: Gwent and Mid-Glamorgan, to become South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Our Control Rooms remained in situ until March 1999 and then we were relocated to a newly built Control Room which was constructed on the site of the old Mid-Glamorgan headquarters. That caused problems in itself because we were in effect moving to the site of an existing Control, albeit in a new building. We'd also inherited the chief fire officer from Mid-Glamorgan and he seemed to want everything to morph into a greater Mid-Glamorgan Fire Service. He kept his headquarters, his control room, his workshops, all where they'd been before. I think you're probably getting the picture.

At that time, early retirement was offered to the three existing Fire Control officers, but by my reckoning at least another 12 Control staff retired on ill health, either before the move or very shortly afterwards. All of these were long-serving Control staff and in most cases couldn't face the upheaval of the move and the obvious effect the changes to their working lives would have on their home lives. That was in 1999. Now we all know that ill health retirement is practically unheard of now, and the only option that would be available to Firefighters Control in Scotland would be to relocate or accept compulsory redundancy. For the vast majority of staff neither would be an acceptable option.

Thankfully, there are no current plans to move to a single Service in Wales with all three Chief Fire Officers and Brigade Committees remaining vehemently opposed to any such merger, even though we've had Brian Fraser as the adviser to the Welsh Assembly government for the last few years. I'm pretty sure, though, that our National Issues Committee, which deals with the various collaborations between the three Welsh Services will be watching how things unfold north of the border, so watch this space.

Conference, please remember that experienced Control staff do not only protect the public; they also protect front line Firefighters. Their local knowledge, the information that they obtain during call taking, and the

subsequent decisions they make are vital to the safety of our front line crews.

I was completely gutted last night at my Regional delegation meeting to hear of the EC decision not to ballot Control members regarding the pensions issue. It may be too late for this last bit of my speech, but I'm going to say it anyway. Conference, you must demand that the EC make the right decision regarding balloting of Control staff in the current pensions campaign. We're all part of the same Union and we all have the right to a ballot form, regardless of whether we're in the same pension or not. If Control are not balloted and are subsequently unable to take part in industrial action in the future, all that Firefighters will ever remember is that Fire Control staff didn't support them, didn't join them and crossed their picket lines. They won't remember why. Conference, please support this Resolution and protect jobs and conditions for Scottish Control staff. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, can I remind everybody who comes to the rostrum to please stick to the subject of the debate. You know that pensions issues will be debated later in the week in closed sessions. All pensions issues will be debated later in the week in closed session. Please stick to the subject matter. That's open for debate.

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

President, comrades, I am speaking in support of Resolution 17. The CSNC wish to reiterate the sentiments of Strathclyde and Region 1 in doing all they can to protect Emergency Control posts in the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Unfortunately, we hear all too often that front line services will be protected, which in government speak means fire appliances. So where does that leave Emergency Control Staff? Control are classed as front line when it suits them and not when they want to make changes. All too often those changes are to our staffing numbers, terms and conditions, shifts and it goes on and on. We appreciate that Region 1 are in a delicate position dealing with the Scottish government regarding this change, so we just want to offer from the National Committee whatever help, advice and support that is required of us. Support the Resolution. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Dumfries & Galloway.

BRO SAMI CHAUDHRY (Dumfries & Galloway):

President, Conference, the amalgamation of eight Brigades into one Scottish Service has clearly got

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implications for the way we structure, locate and staff our Controls. It's highly unlikely the amount of Controls in Scotland will remain the same in the long term. This is particular acute and obvious in Dumfries & Galloway. That's the area that you travel through to get anywhere in Scotland. We've one of the smallest Brigades and Controls in the UK, and to our north is Strathclyde, the third biggest Brigade in Europe with a comparable Control. Our Control has also suffered from a distinct lack of investment over the years and will require a large investment just to bring it up to speed. That said, we have to date managed to resist any Control closures, even under sustained attack from the previous administrations and the likes of the MacDonald Martin report. Reform in Scotland has and will bring change but the Scottish government has given a very clear commitment to engaging with the FBU at the earliest opportunity with full consultation over the future of Controls in Scotland. The Scottish government has also made a firm commitment to no compulsory redundancies. Support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

The debate is still open. Anybody else? John.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thanks President. As I said when we were debating that last motion, the Executive Council are giving support to this, and not quite a qualification but an expectation that this just wouldn't apply in Scotland; that this is the way we would expect to protect our members anywhere in the UK. Of course, our comrades from Scotland I'm sure will remember the rousing speech that Fergus Ewing gave to us in Southport just a couple of years ago when he said he wouldn't support Regionalisation of Controls but he couldn't guarantee the number of Brigades. I hope you bear that in mind when we receive our politicians in future!

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. I now put Resolution 17, Future of Scottish Emergency Fire Control Rooms to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That *CARRIES*

We're on Paragraph G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14. I now call Resolution 40, Effect on Health and Safety of Firefighters due to cuts in Officer/Middle Manager Posts. That's to be moved by the Officers' National Committee.

Resolution 40 – EFFECT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY OF FIREFIGHTERS DUE TO CUTS IN OFFICER/MIDDLE MANAGER POSTS

Conference condemns the loss of any Grey Book posts. Day and Flexi-duty posts are being

particularly targeted, disproportionately affecting Officer Members. The loss of such posts severely impacts upon the safety of operational crews, through reduced support services and limitations on the availability of tactical incident command skills. It also places unacceptable workloads/stress upon the remaining Officer posts.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out urgent surveys of the present Officer establishments and any reductions within the last 3 years, including any reductions already planned.

It is vital that future campaigns against Fire & Rescue Service cuts specifically include arguments to support the maintenance of adequate officer posts, for the safety and benefit of all operational personnel and the communities we serve.

Conference requests that this work be carried out within the next 12 months.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO EDDIE BRENNAN (ONC):

Good morning Conference, whilst the number of Officer posts are reducing, the workload and responsibilities undertaken by those remaining increases dramatically, coupled with extended periods of continuous duties of which 80 hours is not uncommon, where those that are on duty are attending more incidents, they're travelling greater distances and they're remaining at those incidents for longer periods of time. All of this is rewarded with the expectation that they will be at their desks at the normal time the next day. Many even work their rota days – I don't see why.

I'm sure many of you will have witnessed in your own time at work where you've been on a night shift, been at the same incident with an Officer, you go back to the station following your relief; he remains there, you go home and then you come back on and he's still at his desk, bright as a button with nice red eyes, and he still may have 32 hours of duty left. The tired and fatigued Officer then has to attend more incidents and make risk-critical command decisions which could have a dramatic and negative outcome for the safety of crews attending and have an effect on the successful resolution of that incident.

The reduction in numbers also means delays in attendance of Officers that will result in specialist incident command and other skills such as Hazmats or Hempos or whatever you want to call them, not being available at the crucial and critical stages of an incident.

As well as adversely affecting the safety of attending crews, this places further demands on the more junior

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officers and deprives them of valuable support when it's much needed. On top of this, reports of recent serious incidents such as Shirley Towers have identified that incident command is a critical element in ensuring Firefighter safety. Moves to reduce any part of the incident command structure through the removal of Officer posts must be resisted.

In order to do that, however, we need to be aware of where we were, where we are now and where we will be in the future. I move to ask your support for this Resolution to provide your Officers with the information needed to protect those Grey Book positions and the health & safety of members at incidents. Thank you, Conference. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder? *Formally seconded* That's open for debate.

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, we are supporting the Resolution, but just to ask if the issue of A and B scale rates of pay could be included in the surveys. It's been Union policy for some considerable time to remove the A scale rate of pay, and it's not been forwarded over the last few years, despite bringing it up at every Conference. The reason for this, I think, is that I suspect in many Brigades restructure after restructure caused by the cuts employers have sought to remove or downgrade the B posts in our Service means a lot of our Officer members are having to work harder with more work and being financially penalised for that as well.

Could I also just take the opportunity to go off subject and encourage everyone to attend the fringe meeting to support the Shrewsbury 24 this afternoon. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Come to the rostrum, please.

BRO RICHARD LOCKWOOD (London):

Morning Conference. I am an Officer in London (boo, I know) representing Control. I've not prepared anything and I know that's poor form. I'm just asking you to support. All we're asking for is to look at a survey, for the Executive to look into the numbers. I'll give you the position from London. Yes, we've always had loads of hydrants and we've always had loads of Officers. That position is seriously being affected. Currently there's proposals for cash if we reduce the numbers of our Officers on duty at any one time from 35 down to 30. I know that's a significant amount compared to a number of smaller Brigades, other Regions. We are

stretched regularly in London. The arrogance is not always to go through cross-border assistance. But those Officers are expected to work for sometimes up to nine hours. I'm happy and confident in my position that I can challenge stuff under health & safety. I think a lot of our new Officers, particularly those now being asked to come in as station manager A doing perfectly the same role are not always that confident. So what we're asking for is to look at the survey, to give us the evidence and to take some action to protect our future Officers. I'm fine, I'm going in two years, but that's not why I'm here. I think we should be looking at the health & safety.

When I go to a shout I'm not there to save anybody's life who's actually in the fire; I'm there to make sure we've got safe systems of work in place for all our Firefighters. The best way of doing that is to have the maximum amount of number of Officers to look at the concerns for not just business continuity for everybody else but for our Firefighters and our FBU members. Money isn't the answer to everything. We've been asked to reduce the numbers and then do 91 extra grey days so we'll come in for a little bit of cash and always have the Officer numbers there. Some of the issues are consultative. I would just ask you to support this motion. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's still open for debate. No further debate. AGS.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, in addressing the Resolution I would just make a brief comment with regard to the sort of side issues which seems to have interjected itself there with regards to the A and B survey. I think that will need to be brought to the Executive Council perhaps by way of Resolution to the EC from the ONC in a defined way so we can consider it because it's off the point of the Resolution. That is a suggestion to you.

On the question of the Resolution itself, I think the points have been well made by the speakers. I think the Resolution itself is very clear. It's not an issue which is new to us. The implications of what is happening to Officer posts (I will call them Officer posts) is well known to us all. For that reason the Executive Council supports the Resolution, not least the fact of the additional issue which is the effect upon public safety with the problems that it has with regards to command and control and indeed when you're talking about, for example, those in fire safety or fire prevention departments, the effects on life for the public through the problems that can be caused by not checking up on building standards.

That said, there is – it's not a qualification, you will note though Conference - you have probably been told by

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your Executive Council Members that the Executive Council is trying to move away from giving qualified support when it is simply comment that we wish to make. The comment we wish to make with regard to this Resolution is to emphasise that, as the Resolution itself says, we need to carry out a survey. The EC has agreed that we do need to emphasise, it is necessary to emphasise to Conference, that we know what your workloads are but we do need all those surveys, in particular this survey, to be completed. This survey in itself will probably involve Brigade and Regional officials and Brigade and Regional Officer reps to assist us in that. I just want to emphasise the fact that we do need the survey to be completed.

Some time ago the President cast me in the role of the FBU's very own Hodges (the fire warden in Dad's Army), so I'll just give you fair warning that on a number of Resolutions I'll be speaking on I will be making the same point and it's consistent with that role the President gave me. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. I will put Resolution 40 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That *CARRIES*

We are on Paragraph G15. Yes, please come to the rostrum. Organising and Recruitment.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

President, Conference, Conference 2011 carried the Resolution Membership Recruitment that asked for the FBU website to be improved and to include the ability to download recruitment material, the ability to join online, or at the very least, to be able to register for an application form. Can we now ask for an update on this work?

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Morning Conference. It's nice to speak on something else apart from pensions for the last two years! First of all, the FBU do accept that recruitment is the lifeblood and it is a priority. We've done quite a few things over the last year or two to make sure that it is high on the agenda. Firstly, we've introduced the Brigade organiser role and we've given training, and we've also given a role description – not a role map; a role description on that as well. That does focus on recruitment. We've given training and we've took away ideas and some of the ideas have been around online joining and online

recruiting or online application. We took a paper to the Executive Council in June last year which looked at online joining but there's a couple of issues we've got to get around, mainly the nomination and the seconding which require rule changes, and then we've got to look at issues around people who are rejoining.

So we've already got ideas out of that conversation at the Executive Council, we got support for the next best thing, which is an online application, and the online application is work in progress. I'm not going to use any excuses, it is work in progress. That involves somebody applying to join the FBU getting contacted straight away by the Brigade organiser and followed up. So that's where we are on that, Dave. We've got a little bit more to do. The interim position will hopefully make it a little bit easier. The work we're doing with the Brigade organisers will make it a lot easier as well. But we do intend to look at online joining as a long-term project. So it's work in progress.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you for that, Sean. I now call Resolution 48, Membership, Staffordshire, the Executive Council support.

Resolution 48 – FBU MEMBERSHIP

In these days of dwindling resources and falling Union membership it is necessary to look to new and innovative ways of sustaining a robust and independent, fighting Union with a whole Fire Service approach.

The benefits of FBU membership extended to ALL Fire Service staff would strengthen our hand in negotiations with Employers as we could represent an absolute majority of the workforce, not just uniformed staff.

Notwithstanding the difficulties envisaged in attempting to achieve this goal, whether separate sections and representation would be required, possible differing levels of contributions, to name but two, Conference demands that the Executive Council undertake a study into the feasibility of allowing Fire Service workers not conditioned to the Grey Book, to join the FBU. The findings of this study should be reported back to Conference at the earliest opportunity and not later than 2015.

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO BARRY DOWNEY (Staffordshire):

President, Conference, we bring this Resolution to Conference to ask the EC to carry out the work necessary to ascertain what steps would need to be

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taken to allow Green Book members of Fire Services throughout the country to join the Fire Brigades Union. Notwithstanding, as it says in the Resolution, the difficulties that might be envisaged, all we are asking for is that the EC do the work, decide whether it's of benefit to the FBU to allow Green Book members to join the Fire Brigades Union. What we are looking to do is to halt the inexorable slide in our membership. If you look at Paragraph G20 coming up in a minute you'll see that we've lost over 1300 members in 12 months 2011 to 2012. Some Brigades are haemorrhaging members – Grey Book to Green Book posts, that awful term “natural wastage” – the non-replacement of valuable operational staff. This Resolution hopefully will go some way towards halting that decline in the membership if we can allow Green Book Fire Service employees into the FBU. It would give us more influence over our local fire authorities and over government if we have a membership which is representative of the majority of the Fire Service workforce rather than just operational workforce. Conference, I ask you to support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, just a couple of points. The Executive Council is supporting Staffordshire's Resolution but I do want to flag up that this is not a straightforward issue. Barry wasn't saying that it was. There is a number of factors that need to be considered. I think the first point that the Executive Council would make is that there is no panacea here. The reason that membership has declined is for one reason above all others and that's job losses in the Fire and Rescue Service. So it's the cuts agenda that we face now, but also for the past ten years or so, that has put pressure on our membership. So we want to flag up that actually this isn't a panacea. It's something we need to consider, but it is no panacea to the threat to jobs in the Fire and Rescue Service. It needs to be part of a package and the prime emphasis is about opposing those cuts and fighting to defend our Service and fighting to defend jobs. I know Staffordshire wouldn't disagree with that.

But we do want to flag up some of the issues that will need to be thought about in this debate because we don't just take people into membership unless we can adequately represent them, unless we can provide a service, organise them and improve their conditions of service. So there are questions that will need to be addressed. What are the parameters about what the membership of the Fire Brigades Union would be? What contribution rates would people pay if they are on different rates of pay? Can we negotiate on issues such

as pay? These are the sorts of issues which we will need to think about. There is quite a substantial debate on the Executive Council about some of these matters. I'm sure that will be reflected again in your own Brigade Committees.

So the work will be done but I simply alert Conference to the fact that this is no straightforward process and it will need some considerable thinking about before we bring that report back to a future Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, General Secretary. I now put Resolution 48 to the vote. The Executive Council support. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph G16, Paragraph G17, Paragraph G18, Paragraph G19, Paragraph G20, Paragraph G21, Paragraph G22. I now call Resolution 13, Retention of Women Firefighters to be moved by the National Women's Committee. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 13 – RETENTION OF WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS

This Conference notes that the Government has removed its centrally driven equality and diversity strategy and as such has left the onus upon individual Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to develop and implement equality policies locally. Conference notes that many FRS are not prioritising equality and often use austerity measures as an excuse.

Women have been firefighters in the UK for more than 30 years but still only make up 4% of all firefighters. Many women have joined the Service, but numbers of women are still very low due to the Fire and Rescue Service being unable to retain women.

We therefore demand that by 2014 the Executive Council, in conjunction with the NWC, negotiates within the National Joint Council an effective strategy for Brigades to create a workplace environment which women are happy to work and remain in.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS SARAH GARTLAND (NWC):

President, Conference, we are considering this as a recruitment issue and a retention issue. The previous Westminster Labour Government introduced an equality and diversity strategy to help recruit and retain under-represented groups including women. This has now been scrapped centrally with the current government

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now failing to illustrate the statistics of how many women are actually leaving the Fire and Rescue Service. They do, however, tell us a percentage figure of how many personnel have left in total. Using this figure and based on the number of women we know have been recruited, we can determine that the percentage of women in the Fire and Rescue Service still remains at 4%, therefore illustrating that the retention of women is a problem and that women are in actual fact leaving.

I talked to many women members and can say from experience that most women appreciate having female colleagues. Being the only woman on a fire station can be a very isolating experience. Having the opportunity to work with other women and, for some of these women to be in different roles within the Fire and Rescue Service is very important. If employers make an effort to recruit, train and promote women this will result in the Fire and Rescue Service being more desirable to new women coming in, and an environment where women will want to stay and continue working throughout their careers.

If women are successfully being recruited into the Fire and Rescue Service it's not very useful if they leave soon after they join. Being a very visible minority can make it difficult for women to feel supported and valued within the workplace. Dignity within the workplace may be an issue for many women if fire stations are not equipped with adequate facilities. So too could returning to work after pregnancy, maybe because of limited facilities or conditions of work.

The UK Fire and Rescue Service is being attacked with cuts, including station closures, and as a result and where possible many Firefighters are being redeployed to other stations. We need to ensure that strategies are in place to ensure that the Firefighters being moved aren't always the women or the other under-represented members. We have evidence that when redistributing staff in a large Metropolitan Brigade, about 20% of those moved were women. This was a statistic that the FBU had to point out to the service management. We need fair systems in place to ensure this redeployment is based on every factor applicable to every individual.

We've got women members who, once they notify the Fire and Rescue Service that they are pregnant, are often excluded at work by management removing them from the watch and workplace without discussion, often ignored whilst on maternity leave and in some cases within the Retained Duty System, unpaid whilst on maternity leave. We can only deal with these issues if they are raised. Otherwise, women will feel isolated and left to deal with these issues alone and feel the only way out is to leave the Fire and Rescue Service. Are we monitoring the movement of women within the FBU?

When we look around there's now fewer women here at Conference than there has been over the last few years. What about education? Are the courses the FBU make available to members illustrating a positive representation of women, or has there been a decline? These are areas that we as a Union can measure and which can only support our point.

There are trends which indicate to us there are problems, and we are asking that these trends be considered when negotiating equality and diversity strategies. We feel especially with the government's removal of the equality framework there will be a significant lack of motivation and consideration in the implementation of these strategies due to the fact that this responsibility now lies locally with individual Fire and Rescue Services and Chief Fire Officers.

We are calling upon the EC to negotiate with the NJC and with the help of the National Women's Committee to ensure that effective strategies are put high on the agenda, and that excuses are not made by the employer due to cuts in budgets and general lack of interest. The challenge therefore is to ensure employers are providing effective strategies to create a workplace environment which women are happy to work and remain in, strategies that encourage women working within the Fire and Rescue Service to stay working within the Fire and Rescue Service, strategies that minimise the risk of discrimination and unlawful stereotyping of women; strategies that afford women dignity and respect within the workplace and on the fire ground. We need these strategies so women can continue to work within the Fire and Rescue Service for many years to come, so this is a job where women can encourage other women to join, a job where women can consider promotion, to make decisions based on the conditions afforded to them by an employer who values us not only as Firefighters but as women too. Please support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for that? Please come to the rostrum.

SIS NATALIE MORTIMER (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, as equal opportunities employers Fire and Rescue authorities acknowledge that more and more women are coping with the responsibilities of work and home. To this end Fire and Rescue authorities are committed to "creating a positive environment in which all employees are respected, provided with progression opportunities, and can make the most of their abilities within a team". That's Section 4 of the Grey Book Part D Paragraph 1. To me that statement seems hollow, especially now that the government's

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removal of the equality framework has left the responsibility to individual Fire and Rescue Services and Chief Fire Officers. It no longer seems to be that priority. We are all still fighting to get women specific PPE despite a Health & Safety report in 2006 stating that women will have a significant difference in burn injuries wearing the same design of PPE as male colleagues. This doesn't make us feel valued or respected. Some fire stations still don't have female changing or shower facilities, despite females being in the Service for over 30 years. That doesn't make us feel respected.

I am a full-time operational Firefighter and have had two children in the 11 years that I've been in the Service. It was a fight to achieve what I was lawfully entitled to from the very start. Some females don't have this fight in them, and nor should they. Neither of my pregnancies was a pleasurable experience in the workplace. I had to listen to comments such as "you shouldn't be in the job if you're going to have kids; if you're going to be a mother you shouldn't be a Firefighter". I was given larger male fit trousers to accommodate my bump. This doesn't make me feel like I was in a positive work environment and it didn't make me feel respected. The Fire Service needs a clear understanding of maternity rights and procedures, and managers need educating on those procedures.

The first sentence in Section 4 is the most significant: "more and more women are coping with the responsibilities of work and at home". We are all aware of the current austerity measures, cost of living, fuel, childcare costs, pension increases and of course the capability factor. We need to ensure that we support our 4% of females in the Service. We need to encourage promotion, and we need to provide a workplace that has a positive working environment, suitable facilities, uniform, PPE, maternity procedures and fire ground provisions. We need strategies to ensure this happens and only then do I think that the Service can truly say that Fire and Rescue authorities are committed to creating a positive working environment in which all employees are respected, provided with progression opportunities, and can make the most of their abilities within a team. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Lothian & Borders.

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, we are supporting this Resolution. When I joined the Fire Service 17 years ago there were only about 3% or 4% of women Firefighters. Unfortunately, there does not appear to have been any significant improvements since then. In my own Brigade we have seen the demise of the equality department in

recent years. We did have an outreach team whose job was to aim to improve the numbers of under-represented groups into the Fire Service. This included a proper monitoring and assessment process for recruitment and retention, and investigating the value of setting targets in order to underpin the commitments already expressed. Those posts have now disappeared, along with half the staff and most of the commitment to equality. Positive action days for recruitment are becoming fewer and fewer but clearly aren't effective enough when you look at the statistics showing percentages of women that are in the Fire Service. Not only is it important to improve numbers of under-represented groups at this stage, but also once employed, to retain them. I've witnessed at least half a dozen women leave Lothian & Borders alone in the last few years, with most of them citing the conditions and working environment as reasons, from lack of support and discrimination during pregnancy to straightforward bullying and harassment. This is really what's happening to our women members and this is the time when they need us most.

I'm sick and tired of hearing that equality has been done and everyone is on board. Sick and tired of hearing on the one hand how much we have improved our listening and on the other hand the pain and hurt some of our women members are experiencing. Improving welfare for everyone will enhance working standards which also shows services in good light when recruiting and retaining women. Unfortunately, the welfare of our women members is on the decline which in turn has a detrimental effect on their retention.

Conference, the low percentage of women Firefighters is not acceptable. We know Fire Services won't improve on their own. We need to start pushing at NJC and push hard, before we have another 17 years with a miserable 4%. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

London.

SIS SALLY HARPER (London):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 13. In London we have over 338 women Firefighters out of just under 6,000 and they are of all ranks and roles. People from the outside looking in may think that's good. Well, I'll tell you what good looks like. Out of those 338, 40% of them are not working on Fire Stations. The reason why? Because they're fed up with the discrimination that they face through management, through not providing proper equipment, through not providing proper fitting uniform, through not providing the same protection they get from their PPE as their male colleagues, they're fed up of sharing a locker room

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where they have to undress and have no dignity at all. One of the facts is that in the last five years, 28 women have left and only one of those has been through retirement. The statistics are shocking; they are definitely not good. The statistics are out there. If you do a little digging, ask the right questions, the facts are there. Let's have an effective strategy for Brigades to create a workplace environment where women are happy to work and happy to remain in. I believe that I have the best job in the world, and some of these women that I know have worked so hard to break down the barriers to becoming a Firefighter and yet when they get to station they just don't get on, they don't survive. Please support this Resolution. Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

ONC.

BRO PAUL DRINKWATER (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I am Regional Fairness at Work Coordinator for Yorkshire & Humberside, Leeds Division Chair and soon to be closed Stanks Station Branch Secretary. I'm supporting this Resolution 13.

Can I firstly say it's an honour to be addressing you and it's my first Conference. I'd like to apologise for my lack of activism in the past. The political system as a whole in this country has prompted me to get off my arse finally and do something about the problems we're facing, the struggle not only of Firefighters but of all working people against the greed and oppression of the free market system. That's my political bit. *Applause*

Thank you. You will note that I'm speaking from the left side of the house! When I was researching this motion I found out from official statistics there's about 4% of female Firefighters in the United Kingdom. You can compare this to the 26.5% of female police officers in England and Wales and from that you can probably conclude that we've had a remarkable failure to recruit and retain women Firefighters.

I'm passionate about equality issues, probably because I was brought up by a single, widowed parent and I never had the influence of any positive male role models in my life. So some people might say I'm a little bit confused, but I think that just makes me passionate about equalities issues.

My experience in the Fire Service is that it can be a misogynistic, bullying, oppressive place to work, and that's regardless of your sexuality, ethnic background or gender. The management culture is saddled with pseudo-military roots where senior officers are not to be questioned and demand respect for rank not competence, experience, ability to communicate,

fairness or skills. I'm not saying that I don't enjoy my job. The camaraderie and pleasure of working on a friendly, considerate, competent and understanding watch is something we can all probably relate to.

In the past I've had to request male colleagues to modify their behaviour following unacceptable jokes and comments based on gender and race, so-called banter, which has made me feel uncomfortable in my workplace regardless of the presence of females or black and ethnic minority members. This received varying degrees of success, depending on the watch culture and the individual's respect of others' feelings and opinions. I've had the privilege of working with several female Firefighters on shifts in the past and the look on young girls' faces during school visits or when you're out in the community when they suddenly realise that they can aspire to being a female Firefighter is something that I'll never forget and is a constant inspiration.

I've also had to endure the questioning of other male Firefighters regarding the physical and operational abilities of my female colleagues, especially when they were junior officers, which saddens me. Having spoken to several female Firefighters in recent pensions branch meetings I noted that several of them did not see the Fire Service as a career for life, mainly due to the imposition of the divisive and discriminatory fitness tests and the new Firefighters' Pension Scheme normal pension age of 60 which they thought was particularly unachievable for them as women. The NPA review clearly backs up that train of thought. Interestingly, the police aerobic fitness test shuttle run standard is equivalent to around 31 VO2 max compared with our current 42 and proposed 47 standard.

Nationally the CLG Equalities and Diversity strategy 2008 to 2018 states: "We will know we have succeeded when recruitment of women in the operational sector is at least 15% and rising". It goes on to say; "Levels of retention and progression for employees from all backgrounds and between men and women are comparable". Clearly, currently we are nowhere near the 15% target and our Women's Committee are expressing their concerns about retention of female members in the Service. Within my own Brigade in West Yorkshire the equalities and diversity department has suffered from the recent cuts, reducing in numbers to only one member of staff. I think this is a reflection of how serious the situation is.

Having tested this speech on my own shift on Monday whilst on modified duties due to a recently broken wrist (which should still be in plaster but obviously I know better than the doctors) it came to light about facilities for women within my own Division and my own Station. For example, the female shower now provided in my

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own Station was out of order. Despite it being reported, it's been like this for over two weeks. I think we'd all agree that if there were no showering facilities on a Fire Station, that it is a direct health & safety requirement and we would all be putting our foot down and making sure that that repair was done.

A visiting female crew commander, who I've known for many years, echoed the sentiments of this Resolution as we debated the need for a future culture change. She has experienced aggressive and repressive banter, intentionally or otherwise, from male colleagues who feel they can openly talk in this way in the workplace in the name of banter.

I understand that some female Firefighters resent the interference of the Union in pushing the fairness for women agenda in the Fire Service as they think it serves to reaffirm the distinctions between male and female Firefighters, and it can be sometimes seen as being divisive.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can you wind up, comrade. You're in Fergie time at the moment. We've given you an extra minute.

BRO PAUL DRINKWATER (West Yorkshire):

Sorry about that. Getting carried away. It's Dave's fault, he said it wasn't long enough. I've got an 18 year old daughter who's already had several experiences of abusive and sexually aggressive boyfriends, which makes me wonder if there's a culture shift amongst young people abandoning the advances in equality made throughout the past several decades. It's a worrying trend. I believe the Fire Service culture needs to change and the recruitment and retention of women is one of the key factors to changing it. We all need a more caring, thoughtful and happy working environment. I believe that Conference must support this Resolution and the EC must put forward an effective strategy for achieving it. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

South Wales.

BRO MARK WATT (South Wales):

We are supporting Resolution 13. Conference, the figure of 4% for female Firefighters is unacceptable in 2013. However, I have to report that in Wales the figure is nowhere near 4%. In fact, that figure across the Region is 2.7%. Retention is the key issue. More Wholetime female Firefighters are leaving the job than are being recruited. We all know how little recruitment is going on across the UK, and therefore this figure is only going to

decrease unless it is addressed. Interestingly, the retention of female Firefighters in South Wales on the Retained Duty System is not an issue. Why? Because Retained Firefighters are employed on a contract where they have an input into the hours they are available and thus can balance their priorities. There has to be some common ground here, and a way forward must be found through negotiation to make the Fire Service a more attractive proposition to females. Please support. *Applause*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, a number of points on this important Resolution. First of all, there were various references to the government in people's contributions. I think there's an important point which certainly three members of the Executive Council are always reminding me of and that is the Fire Service policy is a matter that is devolved in the UK and we're dealing with four different governments or administrations. So when we talk about the government abandoning centrally set targets and policies, we're talking about the CLG department covering English Fire and Rescue Services. There are, of course, the administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We shouldn't be letting them off the hook either, because Mark has just outlined that in South Wales the figures are worse than the UK average. We supposedly have a more progressive government in place, we should have more progressive Ministers in place. Those people should not be allowed to be let off the hook either, and we need to be pursuing this in all parts of the UK.

It was reported earlier that we now have a single Service in Scotland. It was reported that we have a honeymoon period with the new employer. We need to be demanding that those issues are raised with that new employer to ensure that equality and diversity is at the heart of the discussion for the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. And likewise in Northern Ireland. These issues need to be raised all across the UK.

Then we do come to CLG. The very first act – just think about it for the Fire Service – of the new Fire Minister following the General Election in 2010, the new CLG Fire Minister, was to announce that the CLG would no longer set any targets, the CLG would no longer advise Fire and Rescue authorities in England what to do about anything relating to how they recruit, promote or develop people. So we have a government in Westminster that has completely abdicated all responsibility for this issue. That is an utter outrage, and this Union needs to challenge it. We need to challenge it centrally through the Executive Council, but we also need to be raising it when we're doing lobbying, when we're talking to local MPs, when we're talking to Chief Fire Officers and saying that they need to be

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putting that pressure on CLG and on the Westminster Fire Minister as well.

But I think the Resolution is helpful in acknowledging that and we won't let up that pressure. The next stage of that campaign has to be saying to our employers that they have a responsibility. They all, on paper, signed up to equality; they are all, on paper, committed to equality and diversity and yet they seem to be doing nothing about it. Indeed, as one of the speakers said, what is happening is that equality departments are being wound down as the Service is indeed cut to pieces. So we need to be raising that with the employers.

But I'll give a warning even there that the National Joint Council – I can predict what the National Joint Council employers will try to say – will say that this is a local matter; it is not our job to tell local Fire and Rescue authority employers what to do. We're not going to accept that, but I think the point I would make is that therefore we need to challenge it again at local level. So we need to be operating on various levels within this discussion: at local level with Chief Fire Officers and Fire and Rescue authorities; at national level through the National Joint Council; and at government level in all parts of the UK. It is an important issue that's been raised with me by the NWC, raised at the National Women's School recently when I attended. It will be addressed as set out. We will produce that evidence, we will take it to the NJC, but don't leave it there; it's not the responsibility of somebody else to pursue these issues; it's everybody's responsibility and that needs to be done. I'm sure that the Resolution will be supported unanimously.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 13 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against please show. That *CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY*

We are on Paragraph G23. I now call Resolution 39, Rape Awareness Campaign, National Women's Committee, the Executive Council support.

Resolution 39 – RAPE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Conference is appalled to learn that the conviction rates for rape in England and Wales is only six percent, as reported by Yvette Cooper to the 2012 Labour Party Conference.

Conference is aware of the many campaigns being organised across the UK that deal with attitudes towards rape, such as the campaign "this is not an invitation to rape me" organised by Scottish Rape Crisis.

Over a number of years, various pieces of research have been carried out which have looked into professional and public attitudes towards rape. The results show that a significant amount of people surveyed have little sympathy for the survivors of rape and in fact often blame them for the rape taking place.

Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to organise a workplace campaign in 2013 that directly tackles and challenges the common myths and perceptions of the reasons why women get raped.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

President, Conference, ten top tips to end rape. I just wanted to make sure I had everyone's attention. I want to tell you why the National Women's Committee felt that this issue was important enough to be one of the three Resolutions that we brought to this Conference. The Scottish Rape Crisis campaign material came to the attention of one of our business meetings and frankly the statistics on rape and particularly the low reporting of rape and the extra low convictions rates shocked and sickened us. The fact that so many of the rapes and sexually violent attacks occur but go unreported is a desperate reflection on our society. Ministry of Justice figures from January 2013: every year 85,000 women and several thousand men in England and Wales are raped. Every year over 400,000 women are sexually assaulted. One in five women aged between 16 and 59 has experienced sexual violence at some point since getting to the age of 16. Looking at the number of delegates in this Conference, in all probability someone that you know will be affected by this issue. That's someone's sister, brother, daughter, friend or mother.

This is an excerpt from an anonymous account of sex assaults taken from the Everyday Sexism Project:

"Last night was at the work Christmas party. I was sexually assaulted by a fellow employee I'd never met before. When I challenged him he called me a freak and a weirdo. On reporting this to the other party goers including my manager I was told: well, we could ask security to get him thrown out but it's just your word against his; and today when I went to the police to report it an officer called me back later and asked: do you really want to go through the entire process of making a complaint, getting the CCTV (which, by the way had captured the incident) and then getting him arrested and possibly going to court? Then he said: or do you just want to leave it because there was alcohol involved? That is a pretty big assumption considering that I don't drink."

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That's the depth of the prejudice that is out there and that's what we want to try to influence. The Scottish Rape Crisis campaign is where the poster that we used in Siren magazine came from. I wanted to be clear: it's not an instruction on how a good person should behave. The poster speaks directly to the rapist and instead of perpetuating the victim blaming stuff, like telling your daughters not to go out wearing a short skirt because they might get raped, this campaign poster is turning it on its head. It is saying to the rapist not to rape, instead of focusing on the victim and what they could have done to prevent it.

This is why it's so important for us to talk about, because that's how we change attitudes. So many victims don't report a rape. There are a number and variety of reasons for that. Many people don't think that other people will believe them, and if they do believe them what then? A long and difficult path to a seriously small chance of a conviction. The Office of National Statistics reports that one in 12 people believe that victims of rape are to blame if they were drunk or under the influence of drugs. They believe that fewer than one rape victim in 30 can expect to see his or her attacker brought to justice. For every 100,000 rapes, 1,000 rapists are sentenced. There is so much prejudice out there, and with the media coverage of incidents like this (just look at the Jimmy Savile stuff) we need to make sure that victims feel that they will be taken seriously because it gives them the confidence to come forward, and it gives other people the confidence to come forward. I've had so many conversations with people who felt uncomfortable about that poster when they saw it in Siren, but for us the conversation is too important not to have. Feeling uncomfortable is probably the first step.

I hope I've gone some way to explaining why you should support the Resolution, and if anybody needs any more information or wants to have a conversation about it please ask us while we're at Conference. But the first thing you should do is to support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Do we have a seconder for that, please? Tyne & Wear.

BRO RUSS KING (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, we are seconding the National Women's Committee. It was interesting what Helen was saying there, especially the under-reporting. We as a Committee firmly believe it's the view of society that's to blame. There's a lot of rape victims out there, people suggest that they are actually partly to blame for them being attacked. In fact, there was a recent survey of Wake Up to Rape and that was forwarded by the

Metropolitan Police. They asked a thousand Londoners about their attitudes towards rape and it just goes to back up what Helen was saying. One in 10 believe the allegation was probably false. Over half of respondents suggest that the victim was to blame. Absolutely horrendous.

This has got to change, and the only way to change it is for us to start challenging it. When I was researching this I did a search on Facebook and the views on Facebook and the kind of terminology that gets used on Facebook. I didn't realise this, there's a term "frape" or "frap" and it's where somebody, if you leave your Facebook page open somebody goes on and puts a comment on. It's called Facebook rape. All that does is it lessens the term rape; it makes it some kind of cuddly little term. It's like putting LOL on the end of it: RAPE LOL; RAPE IMLFO. (I think I got that wrong, but something like that anyway. Sorry, I'm getting too old for these things).

There were plenty of pages, absolutely horrendously disgusting pages. One of them was called "Raping"; one of them was called "Drop kicking sluts in their teeth" and one of them was called "This is why Indian girls get raped". I mean, in the light of what happened on the bus, absolutely deplorable. These are aimed at young males on Facebook. Worryingly enough, all of them have got 4,000 likes!

Helen mentioned Everyday Sexism, and they're having fantastic results in Facebook. They challenge Facebook on these pages and Facebook itself said: nothing to do with us; sorry, we cannot do anything; it's freedom of speech and all that rubbish. So what they did is they started targeting the sponsors, because every Facebook page now has got sponsorship on it, so they're writing to the sponsors, they're getting in touch with the sponsors and saying: look, this is what you're sponsoring, these pages, and they've been instrumental in removing countless Facebook pages. However, once one gets removed, another one comes in its place.

Like I said before, this must be challenged. The last debate the lad from West Yorkshire was talking about the jokes and the debate round the tea table. Just ask yourself this, when you're sitting at home or sitting at work and you get that text, the joke, what do you do? Do you show it everybody, or do you think: I cannot show it to them, but I can show it to them? Just have a think about that. Conference, I second.

SIS SALLY HARPER (London):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 39. Rape. How to prevent rape. I'm the mother of daughters and one of the things that I've said to them is: when you go out, don't drink too much; when you go out,

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think about what you're wearing; think about your clothes, your skirt, the cut of your top; also, stay with your friends, don't go off on your own, don't go out to get a bit of fresh air on your own, make sure you've got someone with you; whatever you do if you're going out, make sure you've got enough money for a cab home, I don't want you getting on the night bus. I want them to be careful, and I think to myself what do I want them to be careful of? I want to make sure they don't get raped, I want to make sure they don't get attacked. But what happens if they were? Would they think about, because of what I've said to them, that somehow they haven't been careful, something they haven't done, was it what they were wearing, was it because they had spent their money and they had to get a night bus and they didn't want to tell me? Would it have been all of those things that would be going through their minds? Then would it be my fault for saying that to them?

I would say to them no, it's not their fault; it was the person who thought it was OK to rape them. So why don't we teach not to rape? That was what the campaign in Siren was about. Let's challenge the common myths of why women get raped. We've listened to a speaker about a workplace incident. As a Union rep I've had to deal with such an incident and I tell you, to our member it was life changing and still is. Support this Resolution please. Let's get a campaign out there that we can all hold our heads up high and let it be the right campaign. Please support this Resolution.

BRO DAVID HOWE (Cleveland):

Conference, President, I am speaking in support of Resolution 39. Conference, we in Cleveland hope that this Resolution gets unanimous support today. I'm not going to stand up here and try to preach or pretend that I know the full true impact of rape and the impact it has on a person or their loved ones, because thankfully I've never been affected directly by it. However, it's easy to see the devastation that rape causes. You see it every day on the news. Like Russ said earlier, Facebook, things like that, it's everywhere. There is significant evidence to suggest that attitudes to rape are not what they should be in a modern, apparently civilised society in which we are supposed to live. Therefore, something surely needs to change. There's been many campaigns, information leaflets etc that appear to help people, especially women, look after themselves and minimise risk and protect themselves against rape. Why, in a modern and apparently civilised society is there a need for that? Why do people need help, and especially women, to protect themselves against attack? I tell you why, because there are still people out there who will rape, and disgracefully there are still people out there who have little or no sympathy for the victims of rape, and an attitude that somehow the victim may be to blame.

Conference, rather than telling people how to protect themselves against attack, we should be educating and changing cultures so that rape is seen as the repulsive act that it is, and not acceptable to every single part of our society. Maybe then the prospective rapist may stop or, even better, never start. Conference, support this Resolution.

BRO GERRY McLEOD (Dumfries & Galloway):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of the Resolution. It's disturbing to hear that rape as well as domestic violence is becoming more and more accepted in our society. That common theme: oh aye, she must have asked for it, is simply disgusting. In the region of 400,000 in one year, one in five women between 16 and 59. A BNP statement four years ago: "there is no such thing as marital rape" is simply unhelpful. But it is not surprising coming from them. As my comrade who moved the Resolution said: this is our children; it's our mothers, our wives, our partners, our sisters, our friends that are all being affected. Based on the figures, as my comrade said, we probably all know someone that's been affected by this, but yet we probably don't know. If we support this Resolution as good people we can only make a difference for the better. Please support. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

Good afternoon, Conference, Bedfordshire supports Resolution 39 Rape Awareness by NWC. The issue of rape is one that is largely ignored and misunderstood by society. This Resolution is all the more important in light of the statement made by Home Secretary Theresa May two years ago on International Women's Day when she said that domestic violence was not a violation of a woman's human rights during a period of wartime; it was only applicable during a period of peace. Well, we haven't been at peace since 1945.

Despite the recent media onslaught which has framed the current debate, rape is something that transcends colour or culture. You may be aware of the barrister recently who said that we should lower the age of consent to 13 so we don't demonise old men. That's like saying we should change the definition of the word "no" so we don't demonise men who rape women. The current attitudes towards rape are cemented by the advertising industry. They sell women to us as products, casually portraying them as objects of desire, and all too often they demonise women who do not happen to be white by making them appear to be animals. The advertising industry sells these images and visions of women in 360 degree immersive advertising. Anyone that's seen the Unilever advert (that's the company responsible for Lynx) would understand what I mean. However, they are also the same company that make

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Dove and you may have seen some of the adverts that they make for women regarding the reality of beauty. If you haven't, you can check them out on YouTube and it's quite perverse to see the difference in the advertising that they are selling out there.

If you think I'm widely off the mark, the next time you're sitting in front of the social conditioning box and an advert featuring a woman appears, actually look and see what is going on with her. This, added to the constant sexualisation of our children at an ever younger age through the fashion industry, is it any wonder that we have a rape epidemic in this country that transcends colour and culture? Support Resolution 39. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

John McGhee.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, President. The Executive Council have given support to this Resolution, and also extending that to say this is not just about taking a workplace campaign but it's about making sure it's embedded in our education programme right across the Union. Why is it a workplace issue? What is that about? We've talked here of having 4% of our members being women, so the vast majority, 96% are not women. There was a young footballer in England convicted of rape, a young guy called Ched Evans who played for Sheffield United. After his conviction – and a rape victim is entitled to anonymity in this country so this is about the attitude that we have, not just the rape – there were several people felt it was OK for them to expose the individual and name the woman. I could give you her name because she's now had to have it changed, but I needn't anyway. They named her on things like Twitter and Facebook. Chants started in that football ground in support of Ched Evans that weren't stopped by the people in the ground. The club have now apparently taken a serious view of it.

I had a look on their website and looked back at their press releases to see what had happened when Ched Evans was convicted of rape. Their opening statement was how wonderful a football player Ched Evans actually was, and what a shame it was that his career was now blighted because he was off to prison for five years. I have to say that that's the kind of attitude that is expressed whenever we pick up our newspapers: what a shame for that rapist having to go to prison, forgetting about the victims; other people can then name the victims on social media websites, saying that the young woman who was raped by a footballer who happened to have a few quid in his pocket was nothing other than a money grabbing whore. That was the kind of thing that was being spread.

I have to say, I disagree with the last comrade who spoke there about the advertising. Whilst advertising may form a huge part of sexualisation of our children, our communities, it doesn't take away from the responsibility of stopping people raping. It goes back to one of the first speakers saying do you send your kid out with a short skirt, do you advise them not to wear a short skirt? No, we shouldn't have to, we should be able to say to our kids: you look marvellous, have a great night out. We should have an expectation that people will not rape them because they decided to wear a short skirt, or in fact no skirt. People should be free and able to go about their business without the threat of rape.

So the Executive Council do support this, and I'm absolutely sure this will pass unanimously. I certainly hope so. We will work with the NWC to make sure that we can get a campaign up and running and continuing, not just up and running but continuing. Thanks.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 39 to the vote. The Executive Council support. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That *CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY*

Thank you for that. Just before we break for lunch there are some logistical needs that you're going to have to bear with us with. Due to the challenges to Standing Orders today, the Executive Council need to consider a number of Resolutions which need to go on your order paper. The plan is – and you need to be pretty diligent with this – that you would reconvene here at 3.15. So you would reconvene here at 3.15. There will be no tea or coffee break, and at 3.15 we'll do the rest of the afternoon's business. Is that agreed? *AGREED*

The Executive Council, who are getting no choice in the matter, will be meeting at quarter to 2 in the Princes Suite. Conference is adjourned.

Break for lunch

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AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Can you take your seats and come to order, please. I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders to give the Standing Orders report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Would you please turn to your Programme of Business Page 4: Resolution 21 has been withdrawn.

Conference, can I bring to your attention that there will be a fringe meeting at 5.30 this evening named Shrewsbury 24 Campaign in Imperial Room 3 downstairs in the hotel, supported by the Executive Council and chaired by the President. Imperial Room 3 can be located through the doors behind you, turn left and through the doors clearly marked and down the stairs.

This evening entertainment in the form of a live musical documentary will be held by Will Kaufman starting at 9 pm in the Washington Suite, the same place you have your evening meal. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that agreed? *AGREED*

Can all Tellers and Scrutineers please report to Standing Orders immediately. Thank you.

Can I now ask Conference to turn to Page 8 of the Programme of Business. I now call the Executive Council Policy Statement – Firefighters' Safety, with the Amendment from the CSNC. Matt.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT FIREFIGHTERS' SAFETY

The safety and health of firefighters is a principal concern for the Fire Brigades Union. The health, safety and welfare of our Members, is one of the central reasons why this Union was established and why it continues to play an irreplaceable role in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

We are very clear that there is no contradiction between an active interventionist approach to fires and other incidents and protecting and improving firefighter safety. Such an approach requires:

Sufficient attendance that arrives quickly and with sufficient weight of numbers of personnel in order to effect an early and sufficient intervention with:

- Properly trained crews
- Well designed and well maintained equipment
- High standard operational procedures.

The FBU has been working with other key leads on the development of the Health and Safety Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service, which we were assured will be published in advance of our Conference.

Since the turn of the Century and with the introduction of so-called modernisation, there has been an alarming increase in firefighter fatalities during operations at fires. In particular, multiple firefighter fatalities took place in Warwickshire, East Sussex, Hertfordshire and London (after almost a decade of few firefighter deaths at work) which gave rise to the commissioning of the Fire Brigades Union's report *In the Line of Duty* published in 2008.

FBU report: In the Line of Duty

***In the Line of Duty* is the most comprehensive account of recent firefighter deaths produced to date. It is a national disgrace that it required the FBU to produce such a report because the Government, the Employers and the sector as a whole failed to do so. Although this report was widely welcomed within the FRS, the Executive Council believes that the lessons from this report have not been learned and that the safety of our members is still not being treated with the seriousness it deserves.**

***In the Line of Duty* incorporated within its recommendations;**

- There should be joint working between The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Devolved Administrations in order to achieve high standards of reporting and recording of firefighter fatalities and related matters.
- A common, consistent and comprehensive reporting system for fatalities and major injuries should be introduced across the UK.
- The Government should widen the definition of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), to include work-related road traffic accidents (RTAs) and heart attacks.
- A national independent Fire and Rescue Service investigation unit should be established, with the remit to examine in particular firefighter fatalities, major and serious injuries and near misses.
- There is an urgent need for centrally issued

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substantial, safety critical national guidance on the issues arising from recent fatalities.

- Fire and Rescue Services should have systems in place to learn lessons from fatalities, major and serious injuries and near misses, both from incidents within their Service and from others in the UK and abroad.
- The Government departments should seek to develop standards for individual integrated radio and breathing apparatus sets and individual locational tracking systems, to be introduced as early as possible.
- On a UK-wide basis the Governments and Assemblies should introduce a requirement on Employers, landlords and other responsible persons to submit in writing their fire risk assessments to the local Fire and Rescue Service.
- Fire and Rescue Services should initiate an internal training audit including individual comprehensive training needs analyses to identify areas where the FRS and individual firefighters require additional or refresher training, particularly for emergency response.
- On the incident ground only safe uninjured firefighters can deliver a service to the public. In developing IRMPs, Fire and Rescue Services must consider the risks to employees above anything else. They should develop suitable and sufficient strategies for safe systems of work and should ring-fence the financial, material and human resources required to deliver these strategies.

Lack of progress since 2008

The CLG, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and individual Fire and Rescue Services have made very little progress with these recommendations.

Since the publication of *In the Line of Duty*, further firefighter fatalities have occurred in Hampshire and in Lothian & Borders, as well as other fatalities in training and from cardiac arrest. FBU officials and members have worked tirelessly investigating the reasons for these deaths and the measures required that could have prevented them and that could prevent future recurrences.

We have witnessed the court cases in Warwickshire and in East Sussex. On the one hand, in the Warwickshire case, we have seen the Crown Prosecution Service bringing ill-founded and unsuccessful criminal proceedings against front-line personnel, in which operational fire crews were criticised for attempting to extinguish a fire. On the other hand, the Executive Council is alarmed that, in the recent High Court trial on Marlie Farm

(an incident where in our view firefighters were tasked to fight fire on a site storing explosives without adequate pre-planning, training, water supplies or incident command support to do so). East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have argued that FRS's do not have a duty of care towards employees for the actions of incident commanders on the fireground and, even more widely, that the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 does not apply at all to firefighters. In our view, this is tantamount to saying that firefighters are expendable.

The most significant improvement which followed the publication of *In the Line of Duty* was the introduction, by CLG, of a system for developing operational guidance. Such guidance is an essential tool for firefighters. It should draw on the latest knowledge and be based on best practice. It should enable firefighters to carry out their role effectively, professionally and safely.

Regrettably, Central Government at Westminster has increasingly sought to withdraw from any form of direct involvement in the Fire and Rescue Service and, as a result, has withdrawn from the structures created following the 2008 report and discussions. New structures are being developed by The Chief Fire Officers Association and the Local Government Association in which the FBU is participating and we recognise the efforts of the participants in their attempts to create the guidance. However, with inadequate funding and resources from Government departments the work is too slow. The Executive Council has expressed its concern at these developments and made clear that this work should be fully funded by Central Government.

The Executive Council is aware of the anger and frustration among Members at the failure of the Employers, Governments and other agencies to adequately address the numerous concerns which have arisen from the various tragic fatalities in our Service.

The Fire and Rescue Service is already suffering from cuts, inadequate training, inadequate planning and inadequate emergency response. These factors increase risk to the public and to firefighters and increase the losses suffered by local communities and by businesses. The under provision which already exists will exacerbate the risks we have identified in 2008 and after.

Resolution

The Executive Council commit to continue in our efforts and to increase the resources assigned to this task in order to force Government, Health &

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Safety Executive and the Employers to learn the lessons from the recent firefighter fatalities.

The Executive Council commit to produce a new report on firefighter fatalities and related matters, drawing together the lessons from recent trials, inquests and investigations, to supplement the findings of the *In the Line of Duty* report.

The Executive Council will make representations to Ministers, Chief Fire and Rescue Advisors, Her Majesty's Inspectorate Scotland and the Scottish Operational Guidance Board and Employers' organisations to speed up the process for learning lessons from the recent tragedies. Reports will be issued to Regional and Sectional Committees in due course and a report will be made to Conference as appropriate.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Amendment

Page 1, after 5th paragraph, Since the turn of the Century, and before heading *FBU report: In the Line of Duty*

Add

Modernisation has also affected our emergency control rooms with the ill fated 'FireControl' project and ensuing fallout, as highlighted in 'Future Control Room Service Scheme' – March 2013.

We have to ensure that we have enough properly trained staff on duty at all times to start the process of Fire Fighter Safety.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I would like to move the Executive Council Policy Statement on Firefighters' Safety. I don't need to tell anyone in the room about the importance of safety to our work and to our members. It's paramount for our Union and it always has been. The FBU fought in its early days to reduce the 72 hour working week that our members were then working. During World War II the Union's charter called for full pay when members were injured or sick. For half a century the Union worked with other professionals in the Fire and Rescue Service to produce essential and critical safety guidance for firefighters and for the Fire and Rescue Service. So safety and safety matters have been central throughout our history.

We need to remember that Firefighters don't go to work to be injured and don't go to work to die. We do not accept that there are accidents there just waiting to

happen. Accidents have causes, accidents have factors that need to be taken into account. They are better regarded as incidents which have to be investigated and lessons which have to be learned so the same mistakes are not repeated with the same terrible consequences.

I have to say that I take this issue somewhat personally. Twenty years ago or more when I was an Area official and a Regional Committee member in London I was tasked with carrying out an investigation into the Gillender Street warehouse fire where two of my colleagues, Terry Hunt and David Stokoe, were killed. I remember vividly the lessons about response times, about command and control failings, about BA training and BA failings. Tragically, those lessons have come up time and time again in other, similar investigations.

That FBU investigation was praised at the time, it was praised and supported by others within the London Fire Brigade and by the Health & Safety Executive, but that's no consolation whatsoever when the same mistakes and the same lessons keep being flagged up in subsequent reports, and when fire authorities and when Chief Fire Officers carry on making the same mistakes with the same results that our people are injured or even killed in the line of duty.

Conference will recall that we've had a number of discussions in recent years at Conference about the deaths of our members, including as recently as this morning. We were rightly concerned about a rising toll of Firefighters after the turn of the century, and particularly with the centrally driven so-called modernisation of our Fire and Rescue Service, which increasingly has led to a fragmentation within the Service. That's why five years ago we commissioned the Labour Research Department to conduct a thorough investigation of these issues. That report that we published called "In the Line of Duty" is the only significant study to be published on these matters. We can be proud, but not joyful, that the Fire Brigades Union had to lead that work and initiate that study and commission that report. By the way, I'm very pleased that now the researcher and the author of that report works directly for the Fire Brigades Union: Paul Hampton, in our research and communications department.

We've been praised for producing that report. Lots of senior managers within the Service refer to it and quote from it; academics have referred to it and accept that it's a thorough and professional piece of work. But as far as I'm concerned, as far as the Executive Council are concerned, and I'm sure as far as you're concerned it's not enough. It's not good enough that since that report a further ten Firefighters have died on duty, and that since that report a further three Firefighters have been killed at fires.

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There have been court cases in relation to some of those earlier deaths. We need to take stock of some of these because as far as I'm concerned that's unfinished business. We don't just produce a report and sit it on a shelf as a nice piece of work. It's something we have to use as a tool to campaign to change things and to improve things. We still want the government, fire authorities, fire boards, chief fire officers and other principal managers to take our safety concerns seriously.

I want to look at just some of those tragic incidents. Let's start with Warwickshire. It's now more than five years since the deaths of four of our members at Atherstone on Stour on 2nd November 2007. That was the worst tragedy in the Fire Service on a single day since the early 1970s. It made 2007 the worst year for Firefighter deaths for decades. It was, of course, a horrific and terrible tragedy for the friends, families and colleagues of John Averis, Darren Yeats-Badley, Ashley Stephens and Ian Reid. I, along with the President and the Assistant General Secretary and other officials, sat through the trial of our members. I have to say that justice has not been done in that case. It's a disgrace that senior political decision makers and principal managers have not been held to account for their roles and responsibilities in that tragedy. *Applause*

That is no justice for our members who were killed, or for their families. But also, it was an utter disgrace that three of our members were dragged through the courts in an attempt to make them take the blame. That was a scandal and an outrage. We defended them and fortunately those members were all acquitted in that court case, and quite rightly so.

I want to mention the earlier tragedy at Marlie Farm in East Sussex where Geoff Wicker and Brian Wembridge were killed in 2006. The owners of that firework factory that exploded have rightly been convicted for manslaughter. They broke the law on explosives. Why? For profit. They were rightly condemned for their behaviour, including immediately before the explosion. But the culpability does not end there. East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service still have serious questions to answer about their role in the deaths of our members. Their Chief Fire Officer and his principal management team have a series of questions still to answer about that incident and those deaths. There are vital matters of risk assessment, of training, of the weight of attack and response, and we have not properly learned the lessons from those tragic deaths.

I want to say something about Dalry Road where Ewan Williamson was killed in 2009. The Union has just published our detailed report following extensive investigation and that report again makes grim reading: vital information not passed on to incident commanders; Firefighters sent in in BA without enough time to

recover before re-entering; some of those committed while still in the development stage of their careers; not enough hot fire training taking place. But the biggest issue: institutional failure. Our officials believe that Lothian & Borders was not meeting its responsibilities to provide safe systems of work. Procedures failed. These are organisational issues, organisational causes. Rather than what we saw in Warwickshire, where the authorities and the Crown Prosecution Service in that case, tried to pin these issues on individual Firefighters and individual mistakes, we need a broader approach that looks at the failing of the system as a whole, because every single one of these tragedies comes back to systematic failure, and a failure to learn from previous lessons.

I can't say very much about Shirley Towers in Southampton, Hampshire where two of our members, Alan Bannon and Jim Shears, were killed in 2010. There are ongoing investigations from FBU officials. We do know some things because of the publication of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's report. One of the things that jumps out at me is Coroners in England issue what are called Rule 43 letters where they make recommendations about policy to different authorities about what lessons might be learned, or procedures changed as a result of someone being killed. In relation to Shirley Towers the Rule 43 letter from this incident, with two people being killed in 2010, draws attention to another Rule 43 letter. That Rule 43 letter followed the Harrow Court fatalities in 2005. It was a recommendation again made by the Fire Brigades Union, a recommendation regarding the use of plastic cables, cable ties and plastic trunking within high rise flats and refurbishments.

So we saw fatalities in 2005, a Coroner makes recommendations in a Rule 43 letter, and five years later there are more fatalities, and the same recommendation is raised in another Rule 43 letter to fire authorities. What an absolute and utter disgrace that people are being killed because those lessons are not being learned. That's something that's not acceptable to us; it won't be acceptable to you and we need to challenge that. It's an utter disgrace! The fact that the same mistakes are being made time and time again means this Union cannot let up in our struggle. We need to keep up that pressure on health & safety.

We are therefore proposing a number of activities from Head Office over the next year. One of these is the production of a further report on Firefighter fatalities and the issues surrounding them that examines the findings and recommendations of those recent reports which have either been concluded or are close to conclusion, the various court cases and Coroners' reports that have resulted from those incidents, and carries out a comparative study and analysis. We will use new

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research by academics and fire specialists. We've recently seen, for example, a US government funded report on high rise tower blocks, work that was undertaken with our colleagues in North America in the IAFF. That report concluded that firefighting crews with five or six members instead of three or four extinguish fires, rescue people, and perform much more safely than those smaller crews in dealing with high rise incidents. Intuitively, anyone in this room, anyone in the Service could tell you that was the case, but we need to produce that hard evidence to support our arguments.

The report that we intend to commission should give us the intellectual and evidential weight, nationally and locally, to renew our health & safety work. We will use it to press for operational guidance. The whole debate around operational guidance came out of our last report, five years ago and yet we still struggle to ensure that our views/concerns are adequately heard and that our officials are given release to participate in that essential work. We will campaign for better training, including for incident command and for BA. It will help us also to fight for a properly funded and resourced Fire and Rescue Service.

Before I finish, comrades, I want to just refer to one absolutely appalling story. Unfortunately, for legal reasons I can't at this stage go into the details of who, what and when (but we will do in due course). In relation to one fatal incident, and a recent hearing in a court, one Fire and Rescue Service has pulled what I think must be the worst legal trick I've ever seen. They've claimed in court that fire authorities do not have the same duty of care for Firefighters as they would for other workers. That was said in court on behalf of a Fire and Rescue Service. That's absolutely despicable and unforgivable; it's treating our members as little more than cannon fodder. I'm putting those people, both the authority and the individuals, on notice. Once those legal proceedings are out of the way we're coming for you because we're not going to let you off the hook on that. *Applause*

You will be held to account: the Chief Fire Officer and the Fire and Rescue authority on whose behalf you act. We won't be letting any excuses like "this is what I was told by the insurance company" or whatever it is they're going to come out with. It will be taken up.

I want to finish, comrades, by thanking all those officials who have undertaken these investigations because one thing the Executive Council has discussed recently is the huge pressure that is put on officials – volunteers – undertaking these investigations over a huge period of time, having to examine all the horrific details, having to deal with all the pressure and stress that that causes. We need to think, and we will think, about the support mechanisms we can put in place to assist those

officials. But they certainly deserve the thanks of the entire Fire Brigades Union, and indeed of the entire Fire and Rescue Service in the UK. *Applause*

Above all, we pledge here that we will not forget our fallen comrades. We will honour them by learning the lessons, and we will honour them by fighting to ensure that the same mistakes are not made in the future. Memorial events are an important tradition in our Service, and we should participate and pay tribute to those people who have died in the line of duty, but the greatest memorial we can build is to build a Fire and Rescue Service for the future that properly learns from those errors, properly learns from those mistakes, and ensures that they never happen again. That's the tribute that the Fire Brigades Union will build. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Lothian & Borders to second.

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, we are seconding the EC Policy Statement Firefighters' Safety. Almost four years ago Ewan Williamson was killed in a fire in Edinburgh. Four years and not one change of procedure from L&B management as a direct result of Ewan's death. That is a scandal!

When we started the investigation we looked at other investigations into our members' deaths. There were way too many. In 2004 Adam Meere and Billy Faust died in a basement in Bethnal Green in London. What happened in 2004 should not have been allowed to happen again.

Five years later Ewan Williamson died in very similar circumstances. When you get the chance to compare that report and the report into the death of Ewan, believe me it makes grim reading. The causes are very similar: inappropriate recommitment of BA crews; insufficient communications; no water applied to fire; unplanned ventilation causing rapid fire deployment; inadequate pre-planning; inadequate procedures; inadequate training. Five years between these incidents, and nine years on from 2004, every minute of every day that goes by our members' lives are being put at risk because of management and action and something needs to change.

I would like to quote from the FBU In the Line of Duty report. Remember, this was written in 2008, the year before Ewan died. Executive Summary:

"Investigations reports suggest that Firefighter fatalities are consistently related to failures in the risk assessment process. Firefighters have been committed

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into situations on the basis of inadequate assessments of the risks which contributed to the deaths or injuries. There are also concerns about some equipment, fire ground communications and about training.”

On 9th April 2013 the Crown Office in Scotland raised criminal proceedings against Lothian & Borders (now the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) in relation to Ewan’s death. It was no surprise to us that the charges are Section 2 Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, the general duties of employers to ensure that safety of employees whilst at work and regulation 3 Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations relating to risk assessment. We welcome that move, but now that means none of the issues that have now come from the incident will be addressed until after the charges are answered. Despite the criminal action the lessons are still not being learned, and every day our members are at significant risk.

We knew that Fire and Rescue Services were not assessing the risks properly. We knew that our members were not being trained properly. We knew that our fire ground communications were not adequate or appropriate enough. We raised that at every single level in our Brigade. We knew all that early on in our investigation. So we need to learn some lessons too. We recognise the help and direction that the FBU Serious Accident Investigation Manual gave us. However, it now needs an update. I would welcome a commitment from the EC to review the SAI manual.

We give a commitment that our investigation team will fully engage for that process. Within that review, any future FBU investigation needs to compile emerging issues and interim findings, and the EC needs to action those. Also, we need to retain control of the FBU investigation and where possible not be dictated to by prosecuting authorities. The Policy Statement gives us the opportunity to push our agenda to ensure lessons from all accident investigations are discussed with the relevant authority. We would encourage the EC to consider the aid of Thompsons making appropriate representations to the CPS in England and Wales, Crown Solicitor’s Office Northern Ireland, and Crown Office Scotland. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call the CSNC to move their Amendment. The EC support.

SIS AMELIA DIALLO (CSNC):

President, Conference, the Control Staff National Committee is behind the Policy Statement 100% and support it, but we felt that we needed to add the Amendment. As anyone who has served or is serving in

the Fire Service knows, the first point of contact for an emergency for the general public and operational crews is the Emergency Control Room. It is at this point that not only Firefighter safety starts but also the safety of the public we serve.

We don’t need to tell you about austerity measures, cuts, or financial restraints; they are affecting us all. But safety is not something to be played with. Unfortunately, this government are doing all they can to eradicate health & safety in the workplace, and this is being echoed by some senior managers in Brigades. The government’s own document: “Future Control Room Service Scheme”, March 2013 shows you how the fallout from the ill-fated fire control project has left Brigades scrambling to provide some form of updated Emergency Control Room. We now have mergers, collaborations, and here in the Northwest a complete outsourcing to a local authority control company called Northwest Fire Company Ltd – well, we will in April 2014.

We are also undergoing restructuring, which is a polite name for cuts, and the cuts are about staffing numbers. The argument is used time and time again that modern technology means we don’t need as many staff. Modern technology cannot speak to the public and get an address. We have Brigade buddies to take our calls in busy conditions, but if we are minimum crewing and they are at minimum crewing where does the call go? In a queue. This causes a delay in mobilising from time of call which in turn means you are attending a more advanced critical situation, therefore putting you and the public in more danger.

We must use all avenues open to us: IRMP, health & safety, risk assessments and so on, to ensure that there is the correct number of professional, trained, Emergency Control staff on duty at all times, not when the stats say we are busiest. A 999 call can come in at any time and develop into a major incident. History has shown us recently that Buncefield, 7/7 and the floods of recent years had not started at projected busy times. The Control staff on duty do not have to have to take radio messages but pass the information that occurred in Atherstone and Southampton. So we must ensure we do all we can to fight off the attacks on reducing our Emergency Control staffing levels. Believe me, it’s in your interests. I move the Amendment and support the Policy Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder for the Amendment?

BRO ANDY VINGOE (Suffolk):

President, Conference, we are seconding the CSNC Amendment to EC Statement. As many of you will

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know, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has not had its own Control Room for the last 18 months or so. We've been sharing Cambridge and Peterborough's Emergency Control Room at huge detriment to Firefighter safety in both Fire and Rescue Services, still. Don't get me wrong, this is not due to any fault from our members in that Control Room; it is due to a seriously understaffed room having to cope with two radio schemes, two sets of fire calls, two sets of procedures and two sets of local knowledge.

It's not just the health & safety of the Firefighters and Officers out on the fire ground that has been affected detrimentally, but also the Firefighters' Control. We have had members who finish their shift each day with the words "thank heavens we haven't killed anybody today"! The stress of not having time to provide the first-class professional service that they were accustomed to providing pre-cut over is sending our members to the edge. But they daren't go off sick at that time, due to fears of losing their jobs when Buckinghamshire withdrew to join the venture.

I urge you to support the Policy Statement with this Amendment from our colleagues in Control to highlight the risks that combined Controls pose to us all. I second.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

I'm going to open the debate Conference. Can you show me anyone who wants to contribute to that debate and I'll bring you up. Yes, please, Gordon? Yes, comrade, come to the rostrum. Thank you.

BRO TONY SMITH (Hertfordshire):

President, Conference, this is the bit where I'm supposed to say "it is with a heavy heart", but I'm not going to go there. But I am going to say that it is with an extremely frustrated and very, very angry emotion that I'm up here because here we are, still talking about this same issue. February 2005 where we lost firefighters Michael Miller and Jeff Wornham at Harrow Court incident – and I hope those two brothers are still resting easy – the Coroner's Inquest, I sat through that. I hear and I appreciate the words of the General Secretary because that was very, very stressful, very very frustrating. Those others that were there that saw how that process was manipulated by officers who wanted to hide what had really happened, and the way it appeared that the Coroner really facilitated that hiding process and the frustration of our friends from Thompsons that really were hushed, were quietened, were not allowed to speak, not allowed to speak out for our brothers that had given their lives. This is outrageous! What is more outrageous is the fact that 10/11 years on, we're back here talking about this continually.

Just to put a bit of flesh on the Rule 43 letters for those of you that aren't aware of this, and I think you do need this heads up, a Coroner who believes that action should be taken to prevent the recurrence of fatalities similar to that in respect of which the inquest is being held may announce at the inquest that he is reporting the matter in writing to the person or authority who may have power to take such action – "may have power to take such action", not necessarily take that action, as we've seen.

It's just saddening, it's just sickening that on 6th April 2010 we lost two more firefighters in the Shirley Towers incident. The similarities are striking. In fact, the list that Denise read out, you know, the similarities of that list to the list that came out of Harrow Court, that came out from Warwickshire, that came out from Shirley Towers is frightening. This mustn't be lost on you, Conference, it really mustn't.

The Rule 43 letter related to cabling around the Hertfordshire incident, and it was almost a repeat performance at Shirley Towers. I'm not going to read that because I think I'm going to run on and I don't want to do that. Almost 11 years after Harrow Court we were supplied with wire cutters and anti-entanglement protection on BA cylinders. Why did that take ten years? Why did that take ten years when basically we knew the day after that we needed that? This is outrageous.

There is an old adage that the best thing an old Firefighter can teach a young Firefighter is how to become an old Firefighter. I think the term old Firefighter is going to take on a bit more relevance now, isn't it? Maybe this is the government's way of making sure that we are thinned out, that they don't need to redeploy us, because we're all going to be killed in the same circumstances over and over again. I say that a little bit flippantly, but I don't mean it flippantly because these are important subjects. Conference, I urge you to support this EC paper unanimously today to send that message out to the government, to the HSE, to the senior officers of the Fire and Rescue Services in this country that they must learn the lessons, they must share those lessons, and they must share those lessons at the earliest opportunity. It's no good to keep hiding behind it because they're worried about covering their own arses, quite frankly, and that's not good. These incidents aren't about those people; they're about our brothers and sisters that gave their lives. They are the people that need the justice, and we're the people that need the protection. I think it's about time it happened. So I'm hoping, please, that you will carry this unanimously, and when you do I would like to pledge to the General Secretary the full support of the Hertfordshire team in any help and assistance that the EC would require on those reports or any other work around it. This means a lot to us; I know it means a lot

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to a lot of people in this room. Conference, please support unanimously on this one. We have to. *Applause*

BRO GORDON FIELDEN (London):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of the Executive Council Policy Statement Firefighters' Safety and supporting the Amendment from CSNC.

First of all, I'd like to place on record our thanks to the National Officers Paul Woolstenholmes and his predecessor John for the work that they've done and the support that they've given to the health & safety officials who have been dealing with the consequences contained within this Policy Statement. I would also like to place on record our thanks to the four wise EC Members who now have responsibility for health & safety, better known as the Four Wise Monkeys! Lastly, and more importantly, as was said by Matt, to all those unsung heroes who deal day to day with the engagement of health & safety matters across the UK Fire Service on behalf of this Union. *Applause*

This Policy Statement recognises in great detail the failures of our employers and the other so-called representative bodies who purport to deal with the safety of our members: CLG, chief fire officers' advisers around the country, and that group of other officers known as the Chief Fire Officers' Association who do so much work in furthering the safety of their employees – NOT!

The tragic events of our members in London in July 2004 (as was mentioned) Adam Meere and Bill Faust at the Bethnal Green incident are not forgotten. Only last year the Health & Safety Executive finally delivered an Improvement Notice to the London Fire Brigade outlining 13 key areas of improvement that were required. I will not go into why it took the health & safety executive seven years to conclude their investigation, and the excuses and the comments made by them to us, but it continues to show that we cannot rely as a Union any more on these organisations to step up to the mark and address these serious failures, the subsequent deaths of our members at Hertfordshire, East Sussex, Scotland, Warwickshire, and of course this latest tragic event in Hampshire. But also let's not forget those that have also had serious injuries which so easily could have been fatalities as well. Each time they occur chief fire officers and the lawyers representing their fire authorities express their deep concerns, their regrets, yet they continue to press ahead with policies which they know will not improve the situation. The similarities of the systematic failure in all these tragedies were avoidable and we are in no doubt where the blame lies.

It has only been this Union and the extensive commitment of those tasked with the investigating and trying to seek improvements via health & safety

legislation, discussions and dare I even say, threats of industrial action, that have made our chief fire officers wake up to the fact that the responsibility lies with them and their organisations. This Statement makes clear the many areas of concern that we have raised in London about failures to understand the importance of the individual Firefighters and the roles they play in a safe system of work.

We have also taken on board that our members need the correct training and short cuts are never the answer. Reducing Firefighter numbers does not mean you are able to carry out the safe system of work you did in a safe manner with fewer Firefighters. We must repel that fact. We cannot do this anymore. If they keep reducing us we are going to have to make changes to say we are not going to do things unless we get the right resources and the correct weight of attack. Circumventing safety procedures, some of which have been seen recently by us from the Chief Fire Officers' Association, continue with their complicit nature and their complete lack of understanding of why these safe systems have to be put into place. However, more importantly, we as a Union must continue to fight on a united front. If they can't write the safe policies or the safe systems of work, then we will write them for them, with our own best practice documents. Let's not accept the poor excuses that we have here anymore; let's put on record it stops here and we will not compromise our members' safety anymore. Conference, support the Statement. Let's make sure these avoidable tragic events never happen again. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Conference, I thought I'd get up to give you an update on what has happened in Hampshire since we received the Rule 43 letter following the Shirley Towers Inquest. Essentially, what we have now is a situation in Hampshire where we've successfully (and I say this with my management head on) shed 40 Firefighter posts in the last two years. We are currently looking at losing a fire appliance in Portsmouth at Southsea fire station. For those who don't know, Portsmouth has the most dense population of any city in England, even more so than London, and they're talking about removing a pump! At the moment there are three pumping appliances that service Portsmouth. Our Control has been pared to the bone and struggles on a day to day basis. Last week our group manager in charge of training, a very brave soul, approached me and told me that it was now impossible to provide risk critical training, including hot fire training, for all our Firefighters. We just do not have the availability since we lost the 40 Firefighter posts.

It just seems to me that the Rule 43 letter carries very little weight. The infamous Scissor Blocks, which are still

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there in Southampton (Shirley Towers being one of them) have had absolutely nothing in the way of improvements carried out. So the likelihood is that we will get another fire in one of them, we will be turning up, and we will be faced with exactly the same situation that Jim and Alan faced that night.

I don't know where we go with this really. I mean, all we can do really is just keep banging on and hoping and praying that somebody makes sense of this all. Our Chief Officer sent round an all employees email the other day stating that at last CFA have woken up and are now responding to the government's cuts. To me it's a little bit late for that now, and maybe they should have been doing it two years ago.

Sorry, I didn't prepare anything for this, but I just wanted to give you an update of what's happened in Hampshire: very little. Please support the Policy Statement and the Amendment. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, there was no opposition, but just picking up on a couple of the points that were raised, because they are extremely important. The EC does accept the CSNC Amendment. Gordon made reference to the Four Wise Health & Safety EC Members; I think they are known on the EC as the Four Sad Anoraks actually!

Serious points. Tony mentioned Rule 43 again. It is an essential issue that we need to grasp when the procedure is there whereby Coroners can alert other members of society, other authorities, other agencies to the need to learn lessons to avoid further fatalities in similar circumstances. Of course, one of the things that we've been through in the Fire Service is so-called modernisation. We used to have a body called the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council, and issues such as this would have been referred to the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council so that the firefighting profession collectively, with debate and with disagreement, what is the best way professionally that we as a Service can ensure that such tragedies are avoided in the future. Of course, what has happened over the past ten years is that all of those structures have been dismantled.

I mentioned earlier devolution, but just focusing for the moment on Westminster and CLG, we have a government that says they are not going to interfere in the Fire and Rescue Service, everyone should do it locally. Well, that is a recipe for the mistakes being made again and again and again. Who is going to ensure

that if a Rule 43 letter (or the equivalent elsewhere) is issued that Fire and Rescue Services do take account of it? Who is going to ensure that those lessons are actually learned? It's a challenge that we need to place before those in authority.

Just a final couple of points. When these tragedies happen – and I think you've seen in the debate the raw emotion that people still have about this – we hold back, we don't score political points because we're aware of the sensitivities of everyone involved: the families, the colleagues and therefore we don't issue the hard hitting comments that we might be perfectly entitled to do. But I think the quid pro quo for that has got to be that those people who sit in authority: the politicians, the chief fire officers, have got to actually sit up and take notice. I mentioned memorials. It's no good turning up to memorial events with flags and banners and saying nice words and in your best uniform if you don't actually do anything to change anything. I think my message to chief fire officers, politicians at national and local level is this: don't turn up to our events unless you're willing to sit down properly and change things, because memorials are not enough, fine words are not enough, flags are not enough. We want change. That's the message that's going from Conference. We want change and we want these lessons learned. Support the EC Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the Amendment from the CSNC to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now put the Executive Council Policy Statement as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That *CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY*

Thank you for that. Can I now ask Conference to turn to Page 4 of the Programme of Business. I intend to resume business at Section E, AIF. Section E, AIF. Section F, Legal Report. Come to the rostrum, please. Whilst the comrade is coming to the rostrum you will notice that Paul Woolstenholmes, who would normally deal with this, isn't available to deal with it, and the Assistant General Secretary will be dealing with it in his absence.

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I'm speaking on Paragraph of Page 99 of the EC Report 2013 entitled "Members poisoned during water training courses". This Paragraph reports a number of our members suffering illnesses to a life changing extent from water training. We've also heard the tragic events of our comrades which can only highlight the issue around the effects of water. Further

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to this, Resolution 12 from Annual Conference 2011 that was remitted to the EC asked for the following: “ the issue of water rescue to be raised at the NJC to identify where water rescue is required across the Brigades, and to agree a payment to be made to those carrying out these duties that are in addition to the NJC agreed role map”. President, I can’t find this Resolution referred to anywhere else in this year’s Report which is why I’ve raised it here. The illnesses suffered by our members is perfect evidence that Resolution 12 from 2011 should have been carried out already.

I would like to ask for an update on this Resolution, and an assurance that, if it has not begun already, it will begin as soon as practically possible following this Conference. Thank you. *Applause*

SIS AMELIA DIALLO (CSNC):

President, Conference, the CSNC would just like to inform Conference that this week a landmark decision was achieved in the employment tribunal for the Surrey/Isle of Wight outsourcing of Control function. This is a massive win for the FBU and Emergency Fire Control staff, and as we will hear later, has ramifications for consultation meetings that are ongoing in other Brigades. We would like to thank the two EC Members and Regional Secretaries from Regions 11 and 12, also John McGhee and Thompsons without whose help and dedication to the task involved, this could so easily have had a different ending. On behalf of all Control staff, thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

AGS, please.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, in relation to the question raised seeking an update with regard to the 2011 Resolution, frankly we haven’t progressed that work in any way, shape or form that would be satisfactory to Conference. Certainly I can tell you that prior to Conference there was a meeting of the four EC Members who did discuss the issue with a view to ensuring that a report is brought to the Executive Council in June to progress that work. The work has not been progressed; it will be progressed and we will report back certainly by next Conference, but given the nature of the issue we would intend to ensure that we report back to officials through the structures well before then.

If I may, whilst I am on my feet, President, whilst we are on the Legal Report, bring to the attention of Conference that there have been a number of changes that have been brought in by this government which will be important for this Union in terms of the way that we

work and provide legal services. I just want to comment at this stage on the question of employment tribunal arrangements. These will take effect and be implemented from July as a result of what the government has done. It means that there will be the introduction of fees when we lodge cases on behalf of our members. We have to take steps to protect the Union financially whilst ensuring that we provide the same level of service to our members. In effect the changes will mean that we have to bring forward the process by which we lodge those cases in order to minimise any financial impact on the Union.

We have guidance, now a little bit outdated, which we’ve sent to officials periodically in the past. That guidance will be updated. Certainly the necessity of ensuring that we do, as officials, be a little bit quicker in the way that we deal with these issues will be introduced into our training programme where appropriate, on the courses we have got, to ensure that it’s given focus and that people understand it. I just want to be clear, and the Executive Council wants to be clear, there will be no worsening of the legal services to members and nor will there be any cost implication to our members so long as they do strictly abide by the advice that we give them and that you give them. Therefore, as I say, this is actions that we need to take, that we will take, with no detriment to the members financially or in terms of service provision. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I call John McGhee to give answer to the CSNC.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you very much President, thanks Conference and Amelia, thanks for raising this. I could just say that Danni Armstrong and Ricky Matthews I don’t believe have yet joined Conference, simply because they are now making their way here from Southampton where the employment tribunal had been scheduled to last the whole week. The case that Amelia referred to (and we will circulate more details on this) we believe is very important for all of you. I spend quite a considerable amount of my time trying to resolve issues in Brigades where there has been insufficient consultation or indeed negotiation with our officials. This decision is an agreement we have reached, it’s been a settlement outside so there’s no judgment. However, our barrister said that it was the first time in her lengthy experience that she had ever managed to reach an agreement that had everything that we wanted, that our side wanted, from such a decision. It revolved around the merger of the Isle of Wight Control with the Surrey Control. The fact that both sets of management failed to abide by the

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law under TUPE regulations, and that they are duty bound to consult and share information with our officials, and with the officials that we determine – not so that they can decide who they will negotiate with; it's not sufficient for them to negotiate directly with the individuals that may be concerned in any kind of transfer. They are required by law to negotiate and consult and share information with us. They have accepted they were wrong.

I don't think it gives us any great pleasure, other than that we can say we will get some compensation out of this for some of our members. But a considerable sum of money, not short of six figures, is going to be paid to the Fire Brigades Union in compensation for their failure. But that money comes from the public purse. The lesson for the fire authorities where you may be facing a merger is that if they don't carry out their job properly they will be wasting the public service's money because we will take them on again if need be, to make sure that they consult with us as a Union and who we determine that's going to be.

I don't quite know if I would describe it as a landmark case, but however, if that's Amelia's words we'll take that. It's a very good victory. We will circulate the details in the coming days. I really want Conference to put on record thanks to Danni Armstrong and Ricky Matthews, along with the Brigade officials in both Isle of Wight and Surrey for the amount of work that they have put into this, helping and preparing the case for Thompsons solicitors. I also want to thank Bruce Robbins from Thompsons who was the solicitor that acted on this, who again has done well. I think he's beginning to get the reputation of earning money for the FBU because I think he dealt with the water rescue cases as well where we had considerable compensation paid to our members. So there has been great work by our members. Again, it shows to managers in the Fire and Rescue Services up and down the country that we won't let them off the hook, that we will be chasing them. So when we write to them saying this is who you have to consult with they better take notice of the letters that we send them, and they better take notice of you when you go knocking at the doors and saying you want consultation. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. I now call Resolution 51, Inquest Support from Hampshire. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 51 – INQUEST SUPPORT

Conference demands that, in the event of a Coroners Court inquest to determine cause of death of any FBU member whilst carrying out their operational duties, a National Officer must be

appointed to oversee FBU interests and involvement. Furthermore the appointed National Officer will be present for the duration of the court proceedings and will be available to assist Local and Regional Officials as required.

HAMPSHIRE

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Afternoon, Conference, it's me again. Last June, almost a year ago now, the inquests in the deaths of Jim Shears and Alan Bannon took place at Southampton Civic Hall. The inquest lasted for almost four weeks and was the longest Coroner's inquest to be held in Southampton for over 20 years. Jim Shears and Alan Bannon were the first Firefighters to be killed at an operational incident in Hampshire since the Second World War. Their deaths have had a very profound effect on their comrades county wide. Any inquest is a traumatic experience for those involved. Over that period of four weeks dozens of Firefighters, members of the public, and expert witnesses were questioned in great detail by the Coroner and the barristers who represented the families, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Southampton City Council. The inquest was also attended by scores of Firefighters who wanted to observe the procedure, as well as members of the national and local press and media. For the whole of the inquest there were at least two Local officials and a Regional official present, as were Paul McMillan and Dave Diamond who conducted the FBU accident investigation. During this time normal Brigade business carried on. I dealt with a serious Stage 3 discipline as well as attending an emergency conference which was held in this room last year.

Local and Regional officials did their very best to deal with a very arduous, highly emotional and very sensitive situation. It was certainly the most difficult of environments. I would like to put on record our thanks to Regional officials Ricky Matthews, Paul Watts and the Regional EC official Karl Horan.

However, in hindsight, the absence of a National Officer for the entire proceedings was noted by many members and officials. Whereas we understood how busy the EC are, the question being asked by many of our members was what can be more important than the findings of an inquest where the outcomes will have national ramifications for us all? The presence of a National Officer at any further inquest is highly desirable, not only to provide a level of expertise but also as someone who is well used to coordinating and organising. As a figurehead they will provide immediate support both for officials and members. They will also be used to dealing with senior management who may take the opportunity to attack the FBU and its barristers and officials during the inquest.

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Comrades, it's been said many times but I sincerely hope that none of you will have to go through the process of a Coroner's inquest to determine cause of death of one of your members. However, should that day ever come, it is vital for you to have a National Officer by our side for the duration of the process. Comrades, I move. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Do I have a seconder, Conference? Yes, from the rostrum, please comrade.

BRO ROY HUMPHREYS (Suffolk):

Mr President, Conference, we, like Hampshire, have recently suffered the terrible situation of losing a Firefighter on duty. This situation is one I hope you never have to face. Our current situation is that the Coroner's court date is coming up at the end of June. We all know that our comrades from Hampshire have been through this process and that their own circumstances and experiences may not be the same as we find ourselves in in Suffolk. But comrades, it only make sense when we have to deal with another fatality – for there surely will be one, although we hope not for a very long time – and when this truly awful situation occurs we appoint a National Officer to support and oversee the involvement of the Fire Brigades Union. This can only help to ensure our organisation (1) looks out for our members and their interests; and (2) supports those, us, who represent them. I think that sometimes we overlook that our officials are our members and they need looking after too.

Comrades, I think that having a National Officer present at the inquest and them overseeing the whole process is fundamental and plain common sense. I urge you to support this Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That is open for debate, Conference. No. Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think I would want to start by saying that probably for as long as any of us can remember, National Officials, alongside EC Members, have attended and provided a considerable amount of support for officials in these circumstances when these events occur, including attendance at inquests and indeed court cases where compensation cases are taking place, and also in respect of Atherstone on Stour when there was a criminal prosecution against our members.

I will be quick with the EC's position. That is support with the qualification that we cannot guarantee that

when we do what this Resolution says, we'll be able to provide the same National Officer all the way through, nor that we will be able to make an attendance there on every day of the event, whether that is an inquest or other hearing. So that is the qualification.

I just want to say quite openly on behalf of Head Office and the Executive Council in addressing what Paul and Roy said, we could have and should have provided far more support, including attendance for our officials and comrades in Hampshire. We are here to assist, and for whatever reasons (and I promise you this, there would have been good reasons but not enough reason) we did not provide that support during that period. We say that to Conference, we say it by way of apology to those officials who clearly do feel let down. We will ensure that the Resolution is enacted and implemented on every single occasion. Thank you, President. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Here's hoping it never has to be! Can I ask why you came to the rostrum? There's no right of reply, there's nobody spoken against it.

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

No-one has spoken against it, but what was being said was if you read the Resolution it clearly states for the duration of the inquest there will be a National Officer present. From what I've just heard you're saying that it may not be possible. That's my point really. Let's be sure on this one. I'm not stood up here to criticise our National Officers for not attending the inquest for the Shirley Towers fire. In fact, I was hoping that that didn't come out in what I said. We appreciate that the EC are extremely busy. The lessons we learned was that we should have a National Officer and we should have them there for the duration because there is the law of Sod that the day they are not there, something is going to happen. The Resolution is clear, it says for the duration of the inquest we seek to have a National Officer there.

THE PRESIDENT:

OK. I will give you an assurance. I don't often do it but I will. Where it is physically possible to have a National Officer at such an inquest I give you my promise that that National Officer will attend on behalf of this Union, where it is physically possible. *Applause*

I now put Resolution 51 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

We are on Section A Paragraph A1, Paragraph A2, Paragraph A3, Paragraph A4. I now call Resolution 2, Secondary Contracts to be moved by Durham. The Executive Council support.

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Resolution 2 – SECONDARY CONTRACTS

This Conference is alarmed at the rising number of Fire and Rescue Services throughout the UK who have introduced or who are attempting to introduce secondary contracts for Firefighters, Emergency Fire Control Staff and Officers. These secondary contracts are being used to cover shortfalls in staffing, detrimental to raising union membership and often fall outside the remit of Grey Book terms and conditions.

Therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council to:

- *Conduct a survey to find out which Fire and Rescue Services in the UK have introduced or are attempting to introduce secondary contracts, to what extent secondary contracts are being used and whether these contracts conform to Grey Book terms and conditions.*
- *Where it is identified that secondary contracts are in contravention to Grey Book terms and conditions, identify a means to challenge their use.*
- *Advise all FBU members via a circular and other media to the ramifications that working secondary contracts has and in particular to working a contract which is out with Grey Book terms and conditions.*

This work to be completed by June 2014.

DURHAM

BRO TONY CURRY (Durham):

President, Conference, we brought this Resolution here today, not because of the problems we feel secondary contracts cause for this Union but also because of the problems they cause for society as a whole. At this moment in time we have large scale unemployment in the UK, a problem the current government seems loath to tackle. This massive number of jobless people is something which I find totally unacceptable, as I'm sure you do. Included in these numbers is a generation of young people, some of whom may be the children of people in this room sitting here today. Secondary contracts are contributing to this problem by allowing Fire and Rescue Services throughout the UK to run understaffed, get rid of Grey Book posts and freeze recruitment. They also have a massive impact on the ability of our Union to grow in size and strength. At recent Conferences we've discussed and debated our Union's finances at great length, and the problems we face going forward. Our own members and other people taking up these second, third, and yes as we've recently found out, sometimes fourth contracts prevents new employees joining our Fire and Rescue

Services which limits our membership recruitment and in turn has a financial impact on our Union. These contracts are generally outside of Grey Book terms and conditions and this needs to be challenged nationally, because of the division in our membership, which is something we've seen clearly in Durham where we have members pitched against each other. Management are seizing upon this and are using it as a tool to widen these gaps. This is something we can really do without.

What we need, comrades, is a strong, clear message to all of our members, pointing out the problems and pitfalls associated with doing these secondary contracts, zero based hours contracts, additional voluntary hours contracts, call them what you want, they all serve the same purpose: job cuts and the erosion of our terms and conditions. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder. Come to the rostrum, please.

BRO PAUL DONNELLY (Strathclyde):

We are seconding Durham's Resolution. In Strathclyde we went through this and we were fighting them all the way. This was introduced in Strathclyde under the guise of keeping appliances on the run in remote RDS areas. It was also used, we were told, to assist in moving appliances. With some of the distance in our areas it can be two or three hours to move an appliance, so we were told that this would help to free up and make sure the appliances were being serviced. But it very quickly expanded, and we were beginning to find out it was getting used for overtime, which we were assured would never happen. It did. It then became quickly evident that what we were having was basically glorified van drivers. So we challenged them on this. We raised the issue. My colleague from Durham mentioned it. We asked what guarantee or assurance could they give on any Firefighter involved in a secondary contract that they would be covered by the compensation scheme if they were injured or worse? They were unable to give any guarantees on this. As such, I believe after they took legal advice, they withdrew the scheme.

If we allow these secondary contracts (call them what you want) to come, basically we're allowing another example of getting the Fire Service on the cheap. I ask you to support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate, Conference. No debate. I now put Resolution 2, Secondary Contracts to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

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I now call Resolution 8, Overtime, West Midlands. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 8 – OVERTIME

Many FBU members will be extremely concerned at attempts by Fire and Rescue Services (F&RS's) to introduce Shift and Duty systems which do not form part of, or comply with, the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

Some F&RS's are contemplating duty systems which require heavy use of overtime in order to make them work. As the bait on the hook to tempt members into accepting these duty systems some F&RS's are even contemplating an offer of flat/plain rate overtime in order to achieve their ends.

In the current economic climate of rising living costs, slashed public services, pay freezes and pension attacks, F&RS management clearly believe now is the time to press home further attacks on our terms and conditions of employment and that the lure of hard cash will help them to do so.

If F&RS's are successful in enticing Firefighters onto duty systems/shifts which require overtime to prop them up, the clock will be turned back. Jobs in the Fire Service will be lost.

We call on Conference and the Executive Council to reaffirm its commitment to National Joint Council pay and overtime rates and to condemn any F&RS which seeks to undermine those pay rates by the use of straightforward bribery.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO PAUL COCKBURN (West Midlands):

President, Conference, as we have been hearing in the previous Resolution, many of us today are aware and we are all concerned by attempts by various Fire and Rescue Services to introduce these weird and wonderful contracts, shift and duty systems and so on, none of which conform with our Grey Book terms and conditions. Some of the duty systems in particular require overtime to prop them up. As the bait on the hook to tempt our members into accepting these weird systems of work some of them are even talking about offering flat rate, claim overtime to prop them up in that way. In the current economic climate, we've had pay freezes, pension attacks, contribution hikes, it's clear that the Fire and Rescue Service management as a whole believe that now is the time to press home further attacks on our terms and conditions, and that the lure of hard cash is going to help them to do it. If they're successful in doing that, as we heard from speakers on

the previous Resolution, the clock is going to be turned even further back than it already has been in the last few years, and it's going to mean that more jobs in the Fire Service will be lost.

The West Mids motion calls on Conference and the EC to reaffirm our commitment to the NJC Grey Book pay and overtime rates and also to condemn any Fire and Rescue Service which seeks to undermine those pay rates by the use of straightforward bribery. It's as simple as that. I understand that, you know, lots of you out there may be aware that some of this may already be here. But it's just seeking a reaffirmation of what our policy as a Union is. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder, Conference? Seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. No debate. I now put Resolution 8, Overtime from the West Midlands to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 36 moved by Cheshire and the Amendment moved by the CSNC. The Executive Council support the Resolution and oppose the Amendment by the CSNC.

Resolution 36 – OVERTIME

Conference is extremely concerned with the increased use of overtime within the Fire & Rescue Service. Recruitment freezes have led to shortfalls in establishments and overtime is being used to cover these deficiencies on a daily basis. Local Officials are relying on overtime restrictions within the Grey Book and Working Time regulations to control the hours individuals are being permitted to work. Fire & Rescue Services are attempting to ignore the Grey Book restrictions on overtime and looking to negotiate duty systems that are reliant on pre-arranged overtime as part of their cuts agenda.

Therefore Conference demands the FBU stands firm on the matter of overtime and any attempts by the Employers, either locally or nationally to change or undermine the Rules, must be resisted. The FBU must continue to protect the health & safety of members as well as protecting jobs by ensuring the use of overtime and the hours worked by firefighters are controlled.

CHESHIRE

Amendment

Last paragraph, last sentence delete "firefighters" insert "members"

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

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BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

President, Conference, we are accepting the CSNC's Amendment. The cat is out of the bag, the lid has been left off the cookie jar, and the carrot of extra money has been dangled in front of our members. It is hardly surprising our members are taking the money and believe they can make hay while the sun is shining. After years of moderate to low pay rises followed by a pay freeze and now further pay restraint, our members see overtime as a way to pay some bills and keep themselves afloat. Management are ready to take advantage of our members' needs and their willingness to volunteer to work overtime to top up their wages or, in some cases, down to sheer greed. Management claim to have the interests of staff at heart and it's their generosity that will allow our members to earn a good wage. They also claim it's our members that struggle with the concept of a work/life balance, and the protection that the Grey Book and Working Time Regulations afford our members' health, safety and welfare.

Management are hell bent on breaking these rules, smashing this protection by allowing our members to ignore their rights. They clearly want and are openly encouraging a long hours culture for the Fire and Rescue Service. No longer is overtime earnings directly related to pay rises, as under the old 1978 pay formula. That greatly assisted our 25 year ban on pre-arranged overtime. However, we all know the overtime ban went a great deal further in protecting jobs, focusing on a fair wage for a fair week's work, as well as safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of our members.

Overtime will be used to drive down pay in the future, and without a shadow of a doubt the employers will use gross earnings as a way to hold down pay and prevent successful outcomes for our members in pay negotiations. As recruitment freezes bite in Brigades with staffing levels lower than for many decades, overtime is being used as a short term fix whilst authorities continue to down size their emergency response and Emergency Fire Controls to fit their plans. Overtime will be used whilst it is cost effective and it is cheaper. They describe overtime as a flexible resource. When they say resource they mean our members and when they say flexible they mean continue to casualise the Fire and Rescue Service. In the fullness of time I can see it being used as some sort of rewards. Management will begin to pick and choose who gets first crack at the overtime, and if your face doesn't fit you won't get any. It will also be taken away at crunch financial times, resulting in insufficient crews and pumps off the run.

This debate is happening on branches and we need to be influencing the debate to protect our members, albeit sometimes from themselves. We know flat rate overtime is on management's agenda. Wholesale use of

overtime, even at time and a half will be used to reduce establishments. They believe they have got it established; they want to go further and build it into duty systems and use it to cover planned shortfalls in overall staffing levels set out in their IRMPs. Local officials are reliant on working time regulations and the Grey Book to limit the problem, but Brigades are looking at ways to get around these constraints. More and more Brigades are looking to allow staff to sign opt outs from the working time regulations. Human resources and legal advisers meet regularly to compare notes. Chief officers will be lobbying employers to encourage opt outs and attempt to remove overtime restrictions from the Grey Book, or otherwise negotiate locally duty systems that fall short of the Grey Book.

We face the problem of overtime becoming a contractual requirement. I'm sure this is their intention, so officials need guidance and will need to tread carefully in negotiations. Therefore, we demand that locally we resist attempts to increase the use of overtime, educate our members and keep it under control, resist attempts to make overtime part of a duty system, or agree duty systems that are reliant on overtime to cover known deficiencies. Nationally, we continue to defend the Grey Book terms and conditions, do not allow employers to water down the rules on overtime, support local officials with duty system negotiations and collectively we stand firm and fight for jobs. Conference, support the Resolution. I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* I now call the CSNC to move their Amendment.

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

President, Conference, while we thank Cheshire for accepting our Amendment we thought we were going to be asked to withdraw the Amendment as the word Firefighter includes Firefighter Control as well, apparently. So as long as Conference and the Executive Council remember that in the future, and we think that you actually might regret that request, we are happy to withdraw the Amendment in the name of unity.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Mandy. Come to the rostrum, please. Anybody else?

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of the Resolution. There is a legal requirement under the

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Health & Safety Act on the employer to monitor hours worked. When we've recently changed shifts we had to issue a safety notice because the procedures in place were inadequate. Even when an opt out is signed out of the working time directive, certain rest periods can't be opted out of and this needs to be monitored too, so there's a whole range of issues that need to be addressed on this one. So we support this Resolution.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference – happy to see you in Sunny Blackpool, a very big surprise as apparently we've got flooding back in my Brigade! One of the things that I was most proud of when I joined this Fire Service and this Union – and we were unique, we should not forget that – is we were the only Union in the country operating a systematic overtime ban. That ban ran from about 1974 (I'm never quite sure whether it was 1974 or 1975 Conference) until, as you know, the dispute and then the National Agreement of 2003. It was one of the things that broke my heart, to see us give up that policy because we knew, we knew all those years that we fought to maintain it amongst the members, the ones that could see no further than their own noses, what the problems would be introducing systematic overtime. We've seen it; it's here. It's a bit dismaying to me to see how we are sort of going through the motions on this debate because we can see that there's not the stomach to do much about it at the moment. But that's part of our job: to turn that around. I really do think that we've got to start taking that battle back to the members. We've even got the point in my Brigade now where there's so much overtime that you can't get people to do it sometimes, which is almost a bizarre thing that is going on. I say that with no pride. What I know as a fact is that although we voted against that element of the 2003 agreement, I would be surprised if there is not a single Brigade in the country that does not have a pre-arranged overtime agreement now. It took us two years to negotiate ours. We tried to pin it down and screw it down as much as possible, and to keep it in line with the National Agreement.

So there's two things: that we've got a policy and we've all got agreements. Again, I will be very pleased to hear, but I doubt there will be many Brigades that are even working to their pre-arranged overtime agreements, that you have members who are taking up the option of overtime being offered, overtime outside of the policy. That makes it pretty clear that it is not for planned shortfalls, and that includes all sorts of things. Like I say, I'm not up here lecturing; we struggled to keep a lid on it in my Brigade.

But what are we doing about that? I've said for some time that we can't just blame the employers. The employers are employers. You sort of know what you're

going to get with them. What they're going to do is they're going to appeal to the worst instincts in our members; they're going to encourage them to be individualistic, to crap on each other, to walk over each other if they can. That's what they've always existed on. We're a Union and we're supposed to be different; we're supposed to look after each other. It's in our members' interests not to sell each other out. That's what all these debates this afternoon are about. I really think we've got to start making it clear to the members. If they do those things they don't get the cover. If you're working outside of Union policy, if you're working outside of the agreement that you've got, then you don't get cover it's as simple as that. If you're in on a pre-arranged overtime shift, when that overtime shift is about covering a planned shortfall because the watches are short, why are we giving people cover for it? Why don't we start saying we can't do that? That's maybe pushing the boat out, but it's good and proper to blame our employers who are always looking for a cheaper solution. But if we're a Union and we mean anything, it's about getting our members to stick together, it's as simple as that, and get the best deal for everybody. So I support the proposal fully, but let's also be clear: the big battle we've got is also with our members. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I now put Resolution 36 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 6, Nottinghamshire with the Amendment from Shropshire, Resolution 6, Shift Allowance. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 6 – SHIFT ALLOWANCE

Conference instructs the Executive Council to commence work on exploring options for a shift allowance payable to those personnel whose role includes working shifts. Final options to be agreed by the Executive Council and then raised at a future National Joint Council meeting.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Amendment

Final sentence, delete: "agreed by the Executive Council and then raised" Insert: "brought back to conference with a view to raising"

SHROPSHIRE

BRO PHIL COATES (Nottinghamshire):

President, Conference, first of all, all I'm asking the EC to do here is to explore options for a shift allowance. Firefighters on the pumps are probably the lowest paid in the Fire Service. We don't get nothing. We work

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nights, we work weekends, we don't get any payment for that. We must be the only people in this country who don't get a shift allowance for working those shifts.

We have civilian FP staff working 37 hours a week, Monday to Friday on more money than us. We go in there and risk our lives, they don't. The time is right to ask for a shift allowance. We aren't getting any pay rises.

I've noted that the EC have said that's going to open up further attacks on our shift systems. I mean, hello, we've all been under attack on our shift systems; most of them have gone. We've lost beds, we've lost stand down time. That's happened to numerous Brigades.

When we go back to that ill-fated campaign on the £30k we did a little count up then back in 2003 and we applied a shift allowance then that was being paid as an industry standard and it actually came out at more than £30,000. We deserve that, we're working that. I ask for your support on this. Like I say, all I'm asking for is for them to look and look for options on it, and bring it back to Conference. I'm happy to accept Shropshire's Amendment. Please support this. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Yes, come to the rostrum, please.

BRO TONY CURRY (Durham):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 6 from Nottinghamshire, Shift Allowance. We had a similar Resolution in but we withdrew it to speak and support Notts. We appreciate the EC's position on this, we do. We understand the difficulties around shift allowances, but one of the reasons that was given (and Phil touched on it as well) was the time: is it right to ask; is it right to go to government with it or employers with it? To say the country's in a state is an understatement, but it's not our fault. What hacks me off the most is it always seems the right time for our employers to take off us. They never seem to be bothered about the state of the country; they'll take what they want when they want. How many times have people in this room been in negotiations with our employers and service management and they always refer to the private sector: the private sector do this, the private sector that, we should be doing it? OK, then. This is about working unsociable hours. We work night shifts, we work Saturdays and Sundays. Private sector workers get well paid for this, substantial amounts of money, why shouldn't we?

We're told that the shift allowance was part of the 1977 pay agreement. I don't think there's many in the room today who were around when this was made – maybe

one or two. It's 36 years since that agreement. Time has moved on and so have we. It's hard to evidence that shift allowance or working unsociable hours has ever been included in pay talks or agreements. It's time we started asking, in fact I think it's time we started demanding a fair allowance for our members who work these unsociable hours, just like private industries. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I call Shropshire to move their Amendment. Formally Is that seconded? *Formally* The debate is now open. No. Gen Sec.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I think the Executive Council would ask Nottinghamshire to remit the Resolution, or would ask Conference to oppose it. I understand everything that's been said; I understand the frustrations that Phil expressed in moving it. Those frustrations arise out of a number of factors. They arise out of the fact that pay has not been keeping pace with the cost of living and therefore our members' living standards are falling; they arise out of the frustration that was also reflected in the discussion on overtime and on second contracts. Actually what we've seen (as mentioned earlier) is a growing fragmentation of pay and conditions structures within the Fire and Rescue Service. That is not acceptable; it's not what any of us want to see; and it's something we need to challenge.

But the Executive Council's view is that firstly, such an issue needs to be thought through very carefully and a strategy developed. That needs to take account of all the aspects that relate to pay and conditions. It needs to take account of the fragmentation issues; it needs to take account of what do we do to challenge overtime; it needs to take account of how we take account of second contracts; it needs to take also of some of the issues that again have been touched on about new roles, new work that our members are undertakings – sometimes not being paid the rate for the job for doing it. All of those things need to be built into a strategy.

Tony mentioned that the employers always seem to make use of difficult times and that's true. Employers in the private sector and in the public sector are exploiting the economic crisis in order to drive through attacks on wages and conditions. We shouldn't be surprised at that; that's what bosses do. Our job is to try to resist that.

We believe that we will need to address the issue of pay in a major way, but that will take some considerable thinking. It's something that I've been discussing with members across the country over the past couple of years, and the Executive Council discusses regularly.

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In terms of the issue of shift allowance itself, that is something that the Executive Council would consider, although we are currently not minded that it is the correct solution to the issues and challenges of pay that our members face. Our view is that decent pay for Firefighters should take full account of the conditions that they work in, including the fact that they work shifts and including the fact that they work unsociable hours, and including the fact that they work night shifts. That should be built into our pay structures, and that was the thinking in the past, that was the thinking in 1977 and in 2002 and so on. That needs to be our thinking today.

So there is no running away by the Executive Council. We are well aware that the issue of pay and all those other related issues: second contracts, overtime, fragmentation of conditions of service, need to be challenged. We need to develop a thorough going strategy that identifies the issues, comes up with solutions, prepares a claim around them, prepares the evidence to support that and then runs a campaign. For example, if we're going to win members around, we're going to have to convince them on issues like overtime because yes, some members are abusing that system. I think if we do the work and do the campaigning we can win that argument. The issue of overtime, the issue of second contracts can't be separated from issues like this. So I really would appeal to Nottinghamshire to remit the Resolution to the Executive Council. The Executive Council will address the concerns that you are raising within it, I assure you of that. Nobody is running away from the need to address that, but failing that, Conference, we would urge you to oppose the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the Amendment from Shropshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *FALLS*

I now put Resolution 6, Shift Allowance from Nottinghamshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *FALLS*

I now call Resolution 4, Pay, South Yorkshire. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 4 – PAY

This Conference condemns the vicious attacks by the Government on Fire Service and other public sector budgets in the name of austerity.

This Conference also condemns the decision by our employers not to implement a pay increase in 2010 and 2011.

Conference also notes that the one per-cent pay increase awarded in 2012 was almost negated by the pension contribution increase.

This Conference is of the opinion that the pay increases received over the last seven years, when offset against inflation increases over the same period, leaves FBU members in a worse financial position and as such has worsened their living standards.

This being the case and with more pension contribution increases being proposed, this Conference demands that discussions on any proposed pay increase for 2013 take these issues into account when considering any offers put forward by the employers and ensures that FBU members gain a pay increase in real terms when offset by any pension increases implemented.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO JOHN GILLIVER (South Yorkshire):

President, Conference. Thanks for your speech there, Matt, because you've basically said a lot of what I was going to say. I'll see you later!

We believe it's time Conference, to have a serious look at pay. From 2009 onwards we were asked by all the authorities and what have you, to undertake a pay freeze. This was because of the austerity that we find ourselves in in this country. "We are all in this together". We believed as Firefighters that we were going to contribute to getting us out of this mess. But has it really helped? Since then we've seen the removal of fire appliances, stations closing, Firefighters removed from front line not to be replaced and the ones of us that are left behind are being expected to take on more roles, longer hours, with inadequate and inappropriate equipment. We are consistently being told that the kitty is empty, whilst in South Yorkshire our reserves are drastically increasing as our Labour led fire authority are sitting pretty on around £20 million in their reserve pot! This is helped by the fact that they have budgeted for substantial pay rises but then, instead of passing that on to Firefighters, that's just been stashed away in their reserves.

So are we really genuinely all in this together? We had our first pay rise of 1% and we're expected to accept that year on year. Once again, what they give with one, they take away with the other, plus extras.

So with these imposed increases in pension contributions, and President, you did say in your address that our dispute is around pay and pensions and we seem to be a little quiet in accepting of the 1%. Conference, we ask that serious discussions take place

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around pay in the next increases that are due and onwards and that these should take into account, when considering any offers put forward by the employers, and ensure that FBU members gain a pay increase that is in real terms, that actually does reflect what we do, and that it offsets any pension increases that come off our pay. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for that? *Formally* That's open for debate. The Executive Council support.

BRO DEREK MacLEOD (Hertfordshire):

Conference, I am speaking in support of this Resolution, and thank you for putting pay on the agenda of this Conference and every Conference until we get a decent pay rise. It's a prickly issue. I hope more people are going to get up and speak in support of it but I'm going to say something, because we mentioned it at Region, about the 2003 pay dispute. We feel a little bit uncomfortable about pay. Who would have thought that 16.5% over three years, if a certain person could come back (and I'm not wishing that in any way!) and would deliver that deal! But you have to put it in perspective of where we are at now. People feel uncomfortable about the debate, but that's the solution to the austerity. When we realise it's about putting money in people's pockets, not a cuts agenda, we can turn everything around. We shouldn't be uncomfortable about pay; we're suffering real cuts and we need a pay rise. I welcome this Resolution at this Conference. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 4 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Merseyside to move Resolution 5, Pay and Conditions of Service – a short one, Les!

Resolution 5 – PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Conference notes the national employers 2012 pay offer and the intention to link pay with a review of Grey Book conditions of service. Conference deplores the opportunistic actions of the national employers who appear to be seeking to benefit from the public sector pay freeze by potentially eroding our national conditions of service; Conference rejects the employers' ambition to erode such conditions.

Conference therefore resolves that any such attempt to erode our national conditions of service is firmly

rejected and that this position is made clear by the Executive Council at the next relevant meeting of the National Joint Council or Joint Secretariat. Failure to abide by Conferences resolve will be met by a ballot for national strike action.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO LES SKARRATTS (Merseyside):

President, Conference, given the debate tomorrow and the subject matter of the Resolution has a potential for perceived division by some outside of this Conference floor, we're happy to withdraw this Resolution in the name of unity. Thanks, President. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Merseyside. I now call Resolution 14, Pay Negotiations from the Officers' National Committee. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 14 – PAY NEGOTIATIONS

Conference is aware of the pay settlement in 2012 and its inclusion of certain caveats affecting the Officers and Retained sections in particular.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to fully engage with affected groups prior to any discussions with the employers about specific terms and conditions of service.

Future discussions on pay must take into account any potential adverse effect on individual groups within the FBU.

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO JOHN DENVIR (ONC):

President, Conference, you will be aware of the massive pay rise that we got in 2012! As part of that some of you will not be aware of the fact that there was employers who wanted to have a review of mileage. This obviously had an effect upon the Officers, but also it had an effect upon the Retained membership for those who were going to courses and suchlike. Part of that was that we were not consulted as a Retained Committee or the Officers Committee, and we feel that the EC missed an opportunity there to get our opinions upon that. It is a relatively minor issue in the scale of pay, but we think it is quite important. As we move forward, we urge the EC to engage with all Sections who may be involved in any national agreement and seek their advice and guidance, and actually give the EC something that they may be able to go back and negotiate differently with the employers on. On the basis of that, we just want to ask for your support on this Resolution. *Applause*

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THE PRESIDENT:

Seconded? National Retained Committee to second.

BRO JOHN CATHERWOOD (NRC):

President, Conference, support this Resolution. This may not seem like it affects our RDS members, but there will be times when it does, and at such times it is important that any affected Section be consulted, especially if it involves any form of payment. I second, President. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate, Conference. Anybody come to the rostrum please.

BRO TONY SMITH (Hertfordshire):

Conference, just a quick point, it's a bit of a heads up really. Our Brigade, in an attempt to save money, are looking at running a Retained conversion course. I know there's going to be some talk and debate on that subject later on at Conference, and it is not that that I want to talk about. What I want to talk about is the fact that our chief officer has now openly put it to us that they are considering not paying those people for their six week training course. In other words, you come in in your own time and you don't get paid for six weeks of training. Tell me that's not a pay issue that doesn't affect our Retained. If he pulls that off, then what happens, next time we do a full Wholetime 20 weeks course of people lining up to get into this job (we know there's never any shortage of takers), will they be inclined to come in for no money for 20 weeks? The chief said to us: times are tough and we've got to look at every way that we can to save money. That's a heads up when you are negotiating over pay, the EC might want to be careful that you might find yourselves negotiating to actually be paid in the future! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

AGS to give the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, in some ways it's quite an unusual qualification. There were quite a few contributions there on issues around Retained members and their pay and conditions in relation to the pay settlement in 2012. I think there's some confusion. If you look at the 2012 pay agreement (I'm sure you will do) there was no reference at all to the Retained. During the course of the negotiations that year (I've got to say, as with every other year) the employers come with a list, we bat back the list and I will say there were some RDS issues, shall

we say, in there along with many other issues applying to others. We batted them off. Then it resulted in the wording that you saw which was, let's be frank, that we would be looking on a sort of more broader, general level on conditions with a view to future pay rises, not just related to the Retained and certainly Retained weren't within it. Those discussions aren't centred around the Retained.

The 2012 pay agreement did involve an issue of the mileage allowances. In that respect I can understand the Officers' National Committee who, if you like, make up the majority of the people that are affected by and receive mileage allowances. But it's not just confined to those within our Officer ranks or our managerial ranks as it is now. A number of Firefighters and lower grades, the watch and crew managers, also receive those mileage allowances. We haven't made any agreement on reducing those allowances yet. I have no doubt the employers are going to press for some answers, press for some progress on that at our next meeting, no doubt at all.

We just need to be clear: there were some requests by the employers to look at Retained issues, alongside a whole number of other issues in 2012 and we batted them off. I think it is important because I don't want that to get legs because it just is not the case. I'm sure you will go back and have a look at that Resolution.

It's qualified support, perhaps the longest qualified support anyone's given. I will be absolutely clear: the Executive Council do want to ensure that you do know and that you do understand that we will always take the views of all members and all Sectional Committees and all Regions, all Brigade Committees into account, as we did then as we will do in the future. Our qualification is that there were no Retained issues within the pay agreement 2012. Thank you, Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 14 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That
CARRIES

I now call Resolution 7, Working Week, Nottinghamshire. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 7 – WORKING WEEK

Conference agreed in 2009 that the Executive Council (EC) would explore options to reduce the working week for those members who work the 42 hour week. This Conference re-affirms this Resolution and instructs the EC to commence work on this straight away with an interim report being provided to a future EC meeting during 2013.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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BRO PHIL COATES (Nottinghamshire):

President, Conference, as you can see by the two Resolutions we put together, I'm following some advice that me dad give us. He says: listen, son, get as much money as you can for as little work as possible! So I'm happy to do that!

When we were in Scarborough I moved this Resolution and it got passed unanimously. It's basically just to reiterate and get the EC to do some work on this because it's four years since then and they haven't done anything. We're working a 42 hour week. I don't know anyone else who works a flat 42 hour week. Everyone else gets overtime after 37 hours or 39 hours. In fact, when I was an apprentice back at Parsons, back in the days of 1978, they went on strike, the engineers, for a reduction in hours and they got it down to 39. We're still here at 42 hours. It just doesn't add up. I know the EC are a bit worried about more attacks on our shift systems; I've already covered that. But what I will say is there's easy ways to get round that. We can still have a reduced working week but still work the 9/15 and still work even a 24/72 like Bedfordshire. So there are ways round that. I just want you to support this again and let's get the EC doing some work on it. I move. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder? Come to the rostrum, thank you.

BRO SPENCER LAMBERT (Leicestershire):

President, Conference, we are seconding the Resolution. Conference, if we cast our minds back over the last few years, our members in the Fire Service have received in real terms no pay rise. In fact, if we look back and take into account RPI, CPI, our pension increases, increases in fuel costs, living costs, our members have in fact taken pay cuts year on year.

In Leicestershire, our management in their wisdom have reintroduced some Victorian working practice by introducing a system called day crewing plus. This is a voluntary shift system which allows our members to volunteer to work up to five days continuously on 24 hour shifts. This was fought at every stage by our Union but to no avail. Our management have now rolled out the first two stations at Birstall and Open station, on 13th April, and over the next year to two years, four other stations are due to convert to this day crewing plus system.

We therefore, in lieu of no pay rise, ask that the EC explore the option to reduce the working week. I ask Conference to support. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I think in moving Phil was a little critical of the Executive Council for not producing some output on this issue which, if you think what his dad told him, is a bit rich! He works on the principle of doing as little as possible for as much as possible, but apparently the EC aren't allowed to do the same!

It is a very serious issue, and we welcome the phrasing within the Resolution that the Executive Council should explore the options, and we will do that. But and I think Phil is aware of these issues, we do need to flag up some concerns around this. Again, it is not as straightforward as we might at first think. Traditionally yes, trade unions want to reduce the working week, but there are specific issues within the Fire and Rescue Service that we need to think about, and particularly relating to duty systems. I'm not sure that Phil is right that the 2-2-4 or 2-2-3 system is actually gone from most Fire and Rescue Services. There are still thousands of Wholetime Firefighters working the traditional shift system; there are still thousands of Wholetime Firefighters with a stand down built into their work routines. We need to take account of those conditions of service when we're thinking about any issue relating to the working week. It may well be that we have chief fire officers who would love nothing better than to alter the working week because it may be – and we are unique in our industry – that a shorter working week might lead not to an increase in the number of jobs but a reduction in the number of jobs. We know that one of the agendas of chief fire officers is to reduce fire cover at night time. One mechanism that they could use to do that is a shorter working week.

So yes, in principle we support a shorter working week and that is Conference policy. The Executive Council will explore all those options, as the Resolution says, but we need to be careful what we wish for. What we won't do is stumble into any ill thought out campaign for a shorter working week which doesn't protect other conditions of service that we have fought for over many years. I'm sure Nottinghamshire aren't suggesting that. So that is the qualification or reservation that we put, that the Executive Council has in relation to the Notts Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, General Secretary. I now put Resolution 7 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Could I remind Conference that there is a set of Solidarity stalls in a room along the corridor there. They are well, well worth a visit. There is also an FBU shop in there. I would like to see some of the Conference

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delegates in there. We don't really want the people who have given up their time to be here not to have any visits from FBU delegates.

Could I also remind all delegation leaders to hand in their keypads as they leave, and remind them (if I can) to come in bright, breezy and early in the morning to collect those keypads because we really need to start the business with the keypads in hand tomorrow morning. Conference is adjourned. Thank you.

Conference adjourned

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MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference come to order. I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders Committee to give the Standing Orders report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you President. Good morning, Conference. Can you please turn to your Programme of Business Page 3: after Paragraph G24 insert Resolution 54, Control Room Closures, CSNC; after Paragraph G26 insert Resolution 56, Campaign Against Cuts, London. Page 4: after Resolution 26 insert Resolution 53, Pensions, CSNC; after Resolution 53 insert Resolution 58, Defend Firefighters' Pensions, London. Conference, Resolutions 53 and 58 will be in the Closed Session that I've previously announced. Resolution 23 from Merseyside has been withdrawn to support Emergency Resolution 3, Pensions, from the Executive Council. Page 8: after Resolution 38, amendment CSNC, insert Resolution 59, Cancers Within Control Facilities, from Tyne & Wear; after Resolution 59 insert Resolution 60, Firefighter Cancers, Tyne & Wear; after Paragraph J5 insert Resolution 57, Women's Uniform, London. Before we go any further, does anybody need clarification on the Programme of Business, or are you all happy? OK. Resolution 55 that you will have already had circulated, Equal Pay, CSNC has been remitted. The Resolution from Tyne & Wear, Information To Be Held at CLG, has been withdrawn as Tyne & Wear now believe that it may be factually incorrect as of now. Thanks, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can the Standing Orders report be agreed? *AGREED*

Can I now ask Conference to turn to Page 3 of the Programme of Business to Paragraph G24. We are now on Paragraph G24. I now call Resolution 54 Control Room Closures from CSNC, Executive Council support.

Resolution 54 – CONTROL ROOM CLOSURES

This Conference notes the number of local fire control rooms that are threatened with closure following the collapse of the FiReControl project and calls on the FBU to reiterate its commitment to campaign to keep open local fire controls that are put under such a threat, and also to protect fire control jobs.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

Good morning President, Conference. Since the catastrophic failure of the National Fire Control Project, the gone out of business sign has gone up in three Emergency Control Rooms and the for sale notices are going up in many more. The government's own document "Future Control Room Services Scheme" March 2013 shows us just where Brigades are trying to piece together an Emergency Control Room facility with the £81 million that was made available from central government. The buzz words in that document were "locally determined improvement"; "resilience"; "interoperability"; "improve efficiency"; "technical functionality"; "value for money". How was this to be achieved? Merging existing Control Rooms. Sound familiar? Establish partnerships between Brigades, the buddy system, provide cost savings without increasing risk, introducing data instead of voice, mobilising the most appropriate and nearest appliance (which I thought we did anyway, but never mind), standardise ways of working, implementing common systems of technology. In other words, there is no Plan B; Brigades have been left to decide what is their best option, and for the best read "cheapest".

The FBU for too long has been the lone voice in trying to save Emergency Control Rooms in each Brigade. We've had little or no support from our political masters in central government, of course, the FBU Parliamentary Group aside. So it's been left to Brigade and Regional officials to fight the fight, engage with local fire authority members, members of Parliament, and the general public to get the message out. Unfortunately, even though a well fought campaign was held in Suffolk, Isle of Wight and Cumbria, the outcome was that the Control Room closed with the loss of Grey Book posts. Obviously, in the Northwest that's going to be even greater very shortly.

So we're asking for this issue to be raised at the highest level by our General Secretary in his meetings with the Fire Minister and the various Fire Ministers, and to ensure that they are made fully aware of the potential for the lack of resilience and this race to the bottom. Our Fire Service is a Service to be proud of and that involves all areas. Remember, a Firefighter is a Firefighter, no matter where they work. So we must ensure that our Emergency Control Rooms remain part of the Fire Service and are not sold off to the highest bidder. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That is open for debate. No debate. The Executive Council support. I now put Resolution 54 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

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Paragraph G26. I now call Resolution 56 Campaign Against Cuts, London. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 56 – CAMPAIGN AGAINST CUTS

Conference welcomes the public campaign, launched by the Executive Council, against widespread cuts to frontline resources in the fire and rescue service. With the prospect of scores of fire station closures and the loss of thousands of Firefighter posts, and against the backdrop of a sharp increase in response times over the last decade, it is crucial that the campaign to defend our service continues apace.

Cuts cost lives, and conference believes that crude economic considerations should never compromise the ability of local fire and rescue services to protect the public from danger.

To that end, conference calls on the Executive Council to maintain the momentum of the anti-cuts campaign through effective use of the media, political and industrial lobbying, and engagement with other trade unions and community groups, and to encourage local brigade committees and activists to do the same.

LONDON

BRO YUSUF TIMMS (London):

In London at the moment we're facing a massive series of cuts at the moment. Our Brigade want to close 12 stations, get rid of 18 trucks with the loss of about 520 jobs. To nick one of Paul Embery's better lines, it's the biggest attack on the London Fire Brigade since we were bombed by the Nazis! In most cases we're talking about fire stations that have served their communities for over 100 years.

What we've tried to do in response to that is build a campaign around each of the 12 stations that sought to bring together Firefighters with local people, local trade unionists and politicians to sort of build a coalition to defend the stations. This has worked so far with varying degrees of success. We'll have to see how it all ends up, but in some places we've built quite successful campaigns, held local demonstrations around stations and so on and so forth. But we've also seen how politicians are prepared to play both ends against the middle and in some cases voting one way, for cuts on the London Fire Authority, and then coming back to their council meetings and voting against the closure of their local stations. So the extent to which we can rely on these people is variable, and it's really contingent upon the amount of pressure we are able to bring to bear by using our own activities and by getting the public involved.

Obviously, cuts are something that is affecting every single Region in our Union. The question of cuts is linked directly to a lot of the other stuff that we've been discussing, particularly pensions and the state of Union because as we are losing jobs in one Brigade after another we've been hearing about the effect that's been having on our own Union and obviously the effect that's going to have in terms of people paying into the pension and all the rest of it. Cuts is something that has to be taken seriously and has to be fought Region by Region where they come up. But it also needs a national response from our Union that can begin to link together all of these different cuts campaigns that are taking place in one Region after another and unite them in a national campaign against fire station closures and the attacks on the Fire Service more generally. So I would urge you all to support our motion. Thanks very much.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for that? Seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. No debate. The Executive Council support. I now put Resolution 56, Campaign Against Cuts to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph G27. I now call Resolution 19 IRMP Accountability to be moved by Cleveland. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 19 – IRMP ACCOUNTABILITY

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to pursue through the legal system, any Fire Authority or Chief Fire Officer within a Fire and Rescue Service, where an act or omission following the implementation of an Integrated Risk Management Plan can be shown to have contributed to the death or injury (physical or psychological) of a Fire Brigades Union Member.

CLEVELAND

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

President, Conference, in these austere times Brigades, Chief Fire Officers and Fire Authorities are always looking to restructure and remodel their workforce due to bizarre government funding schemes. This is usually to the detriment of the operational side of things. They often justify this by adjusting or renewing their integrated risk management plans. According to the FBU Executive Council's 2013 report an IRMP model should work like this. The risk defines the IRMP, the IRMP defines the configuration of the Fire and Rescue Service, this then defines the cost to the Fire and Rescue Service and this cost should be funded.

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We all know, don't we, that the government and the Fire and Rescue authorities have been inverting this model and it goes like this. The Fire and Rescue authority assess the cash it would like to spend or is told to spend, the Fire and Rescue Service configures its structure and delivery plan accordingly, they then call this an IRMP and the Fire Authority agree to this plan and they call it "risk based". So really it's a financial plan, a financial plan Conference, which has contributed to an unacceptable level of Firefighters losing their lives at work in the UK since 2003 and many more injured.

However, it's not only the deaths and the physical injuries that have taken their toll. There is also the psychological effects of such terrible events on our members; Firefighters and Control staff affected by the aftermath of such avoidable tragedy, FBU officials, health & safety reps, accident investigators directly involved with members and members' families. An injury is an injury, comrades, and an injury to one is an injury to all.

So, Conference, who is accountable? Who should be the person in the dock? It shouldn't be the foot soldiers making tough decisions out there in the field. Our members faced with what is called the operational imperative are forced to do something when there are not enough resources in place. Of course, we all know Fire and Rescue Services hide behind the panacea (good word, Matt, I know you used it a few times yesterday) called the "dynamic risk assessment", don't we? No, it should be the politicians, the executive directors, the fire authority members and bean counters who make those decisions in the first place, often using an outdated model called FSEC which determines what type or size of Fire Service we provide to our community. They are the people we should pursue through the legal system if any more of our members tragically lose their lives whilst doing their job. Please support the Resolution.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder? Could everybody run to the rostrum? *Laughter*

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

Don't be daft! You're only going to get one of them, I know, Conference. President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 19. I just had to make sure that it was 19 we are seconding and not 29 from Cleveland, but we'll have that debate later I've no doubt.

I will be quick, Conference, because I know we've got a lot of important business to deal with. Comrades, what can I say that hasn't already been passionately and emotionally said yesterday by our brothers and sisters during the debate on the EC's Policy Statement on

Firefighter Safety? All I can do is relate to you what's happening in my Brigade. In 2011 the first of our massive grant settlement cuts, elected members of West Yorkshire Fire Authority – many with little or no knowledge of how the Fire Service actually works and all of them refusing to meet with the FBU – agreed with the chief's plan for the future of the Fire Service in West Yorkshire. Instead of fighting the government alongside the FBU for no cuts to the Service, fighting back against the very same people that distribute the wealth, they decided to kick the people who they represent in the teeth. West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority agreed that the best way forward would be to close ten stations and build just five new ones, remove seven pumps, and shed 125 posts. This wasn't the best way forward, comrades; this was the one with the least resistance. The chief knew there weren't any local elections for a couple of years and he used that as a bargaining tool.

So in our response to the IRMP we spelt it out that closing stations, some in the highest areas of deprivation in West Yorkshire, meant extended travel times, which meant greater risk, greater fire spread, greater development, which put greater risk to members of the public and to their employees. Not content with the reduction in services already agreed in 2011, the elected members, when faced with a bigger reduction in our grant settlement in 2012, decided to close a further five stations. It would have been nine if it weren't for the fantastic campaign by the Brigade Committee and rank and file members. These further reductions came about without feeling the effects of the first lot of closures.

We made available to those elected members making these life changing decisions, the fantastic FBU publications that Mark mentioned yesterday; "In the Line of Duty" and "It's About Time". Some accepted them, some didn't; some read them, some didn't; some even asked further questions, some unfortunately didn't. However, comrades, one thing is absolutely clear in my mind: they are still unaware of their actions. They believe that providing the latest PPE, new fire engines and building new super stations (as they like to call them) will protect our members from the inherent dangers of firefighting. How deluded are they!

We know that it's vital to have early intervention, speed and weight of attack. That's what bring the risks dramatically down and is critical to the exposure of our Firefighters. The elected members' and chief fire officer's reluctance to accept, or even in some cases, listen to our arguments will be their demise. We will hound these people to the end of the world if their acts lead to injury or death or one of our members. It is our duty and we will not be in dereliction of that duty. Support Resolution 19. *Applause*

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THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate, Conference. The Executive Council support. I now put Resolution 19 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph G28. I now call Resolution 45 Social Media Guidance to be moved by Northamptonshire.

Resolution 45 – SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

This Conference notes the Executive Council meeting paper No. 180/10MW 'Social Networking, Internet Discussion and other Electronic communication.'

Conference asks that the guiding principles are reviewed and updated and an all members social media awareness campaign is carried out.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

BRO STEVE MASON (Northamptonshire):

President, Conference, with the increasing use of social media by everybody at the moment we need to make sure that members and officials have the knowledge and the confidence to deal with any issues that arise. The EC paper "Social Networking, Internet discussion and other electronic communication" that was passed about three years ago now needs to be reviewed and updated. In Northants a number of disciplinary issues have been brought to us by management around what they consider to be the improper use of sites such as Twitter and Facebook. To allow our officials to challenge these issues we need to, as part of our education programme, deliver the necessary training. We then need to embark on an all members social media awareness campaign. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? Yes, come to the rostrum, comrade. Don't run in flip flops!

BRO SPENCER LAMBERT (Leicestershire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 45. I'm sure we are all aware as we sit here today of our 24/7 modern society and the want for instant news and immediate social interaction between ourselves, friends and colleagues. As in Northamptonshire, in Leicestershire we've had recent discipline to deal with on the use of social media. It seems our members are not allowed a private life and the catch-all phrase of bringing the Brigade into disrepute is used to bring discipline cases against our members. We ask the EC for some clear guidance, to give our members some much-needed help and support in this matter. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate, Conference. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the President asked me for my advice on this because he doesn't understand any of these technological issues! I'm not an expert. I think there are two aspects of this that need addressing. The Executive Council does occasionally struggle to keep up with the times. There are those issues that affect our members in terms of their relationship with their employer; and there are those in terms of the Fire Brigades Union and how we communicate internally with our members, conduct debates and so on. The Executive Council is aware that we need to address both of those.

We have had a number of cases now where members have got into difficulties with their employers and face disciplinary action over the use of social media, including on a number of occasions when our members have been in dispute and have made comments about those disputes and have been accused of bullying and harassment and so on simply for expressing their views about industrial action. That's something that we do need to be aware of and we do need to issue guidance on.

The other aspect is the question of the Union's internal communications. I think the Executive Council is aware that we aren't fully up to speed in terms of the use of Facebook, Twitter and so on in terms of the Union communicating its message. But again, there needs to be some guidance and advice given about that, about how we conduct debates. For example, we have a closed session debate in Conference this afternoon (in fact, after tea break) and we wouldn't expect people to be sending out messages from a closed session debate. There have been occasions of that in the past. Also, we would expect people to conduct themselves in social media in the same way we would expect them to conduct themselves in a branch meeting. That means not abusing people, not using anonymity to abuse other officials for policies or views with which they disagree. Unfortunately there have been cases of that within the recent period.

So the Executive Council is aware of the issue. We need to improve our arrangements in terms of the use of the new technology and so on, and we need to issue guidance and support for our members. If you just give us a second, I'll just send my tweet out on that one! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Conference, and I knew what he meant by "tweet"! I now put Resolution 45 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

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Can I ask Conference to turn to Page 5 of the Programme of Business to Paragraph A5. We are on Paragraph A5. I now call Resolution 10, Retained Duty System Public Holidays Arrangements moved by Devon & Somerset. The EC give it qualified support.

Resolution 10 – RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM PUBLIC HOLIDAYS ARRANGEMENTS

The Scheme of Conditions of Service, Part C – Leave, Paragraph 25 states;

“An employee in the role of Station Manager or below (but not on the flexible duty system) who is required to work on a public holiday shall be paid double the disturbance and activity payments at Part B paragraphs 10 to 13 of this Section (which shall not be pensionable).

In addition, the employee shall be granted a day's leave in lieu in respect of which the employee shall not be required for duty and shall receive 1/7th of their average weekly wage. Average weekly wage shall have the meaning given to it in Appendix C, paragraph C. A volunteer carrying out operational fire fighting duties shall be paid at double the appropriate hourly rate.”

Conference agrees that this wording means that all Retained Duty System members will receive a day's leave in lieu irrespective of if they have been required to work on a Public Holiday.

This matter is to be raised at the next National Joint Council (NJC) meeting and progressed until a NJC Joint Circular is produced confirming the above.

DEVON AND SOMERSET

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Morning Conference. Do you mind if I address the next Resolution as well, Resolution 11 in this, to make it simpler, because I wanted to address Paragraph A5 too?

THE PRESIDENT:

Yes, I've called the Paragraph so you can address the Paragraph.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

It's going to address that as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

Carry on.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

OK. It is all dealt with in the same way. I think, Conference, it's worth reflecting on this. Cheer up!
Laughter/applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Get on with it!

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Big smile! Comrades, it's worth just reflecting on some issues around the development of the part time workers' compensation settlement because we all know – I've been in the job long enough to have known – that we have had divisions between Wholetime and Retained in the past which have been really unhelpful to us, not only in the service that we provide but in the Union as well. I know some of you will have had your own examples of that. One of the things that the Union can be sincerely proud of is the fact that we put a lot of effort into trying to equalise the arrangements between Wholetime and Retained. We've seen significant benefits there, and despite all the detractors, all the people that want to drag us down, all the people that want to try and build on those divisions and drive wedges in, we've achieved enormous things. So I do take my hat off to all those in the Union, particularly at national level, who have fought to get the settlement that we got. Let's not forget, this took eight years to achieve, eight years. It meant us going to the House of Lords, and all the way through that, our employers, who said they are Retained-friendly employers, wanted to promote the Retained Service and actually blamed (to some extent) the Union for being part of the problem behind the Retained issues that we know are there. They fought all the way, wasted taxpayers' money in fighting these issues. Even at the end of that, when we get the settlement, they are still trying to throw up obstacles. That's really important when you look at the context of all this stuff.

The reason is when I'm addressing the issue of the Retained access to public holiday leave, even after we win the settlement and get a commitment that they will equalise arrangements for public holidays, you all know what the national employers' position is, which is that for Retained Firefighters you don't get a day's leave in lieu for a public holiday; their position is you will only get a day in lieu if you actually get a call on a public holiday. It's a disgrace!

I do know there's at least one Brigade in the country that has done the right thing and said that Retained Firefighters will get a day's leave in lieu, the same time that a Wholetime operational member will get. We're a 24/7 Service. If you're rostered for duty it should not

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make a difference, frankly. The situation is one for the Retained. Our employers, who say they are Retained-friendly, even at this late stage, having wasted millions of pounds of money in the process of us having to fight them, are still trying to throw up obstacles. It is quite frankly a scandal! But we've got to insist that that is addressed and that Retained Firefighters get a day's leave in lieu of a public holiday in exactly the same way as Wholtime Firefighters do. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does Resolution 10 have a seconder? Please come to the rostrum.

BRO LYNDON JONES (NRC):

Morning Conference. President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 10. Conference, at the NRC there's an agreement with our comrades in Devon & Somerset in their interpretation of the wording of this agreement. At present some Fire and Rescue Services are choosing to interpret this to mean that our Retained members are required to provide operational cover on public holidays and they shall not be entitled to a day in lieu for this day's cover unless they have a call during the hours that they are providing this cover for. The Part Time Workers (Prevention Of Less Favourable Treatment) legislation is clear in its intent. Part time workers, our RDS. Workers, must not be treated less favourably than their Wholtime colleagues or Wholtime members.

I would ask you to consider the following scenario and ask yourselves how acceptable it would be for yourselves and our Wholtime members. Imagine the prospect of working a shift on a public holiday and if there's been no call during that shift that you are not entitled to a day in lieu for working that public holiday. An absolute nonsense and rightly so!

Bizarrely, this is what is currently being enforced for many of our RDS members and this needs to be addressed now. Conference, support this Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Conference, that's open for debate. No debate. The Executive Council give this qualified support. I ask the AGS to give the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council fully understands and agrees with the demands in the Resolution regarding PH lieu's for RDS members, irrespective of whether reporting for duty or being available for duty on PH days.

To that end you will be aware that the Executive Council has raised the matter with the employers and that work has been done. We are currently in the midst of trying to find a resolution to our claim. I think that's the first qualification.

The second qualification, I think, is perhaps more fundamental. Much as the Executive Council would like to bring this to a conclusion at the next NJC, as required by the Resolution, the real essence is to make sure we get a successful outcome, rather than just fixing a timetable. So that's our second qualification. I think Conference needs to be conscious of one thing. I think it is a major thing to bear in mind. The whole issue of the part time workers revolves around the law, the interpretations of the law. What appears easy, what appears simple, what appears obvious – ie the wording within the Grey Book – is not so clear when you compare it against the other parts of legislation, including the working time regulations and indeed the part time workers' regulations themselves. I think we need to be clear, as was mentioned, it took eight years to get that settlement. As it went through the judicial system it swung back and forth, losing and winning. It wasn't a straightforward case. The Executive Council is fully behind the demands of the Resolution, as I say. The employers are not yielding easily. We rub their nose in it by taking a case, and we have cost them millions. They are fighting every inch of the way not to give our RDS members any more.

One thing we are very conscious of, not only do we not want to put RDS members through another eight years of it, but if we had to perhaps we would, but one thing that we will not allow the employers to do is to use this as a vehicle to go back to the courts, some other judges, to revisit the issue of the part time workers' settlement. As I said earlier, it can swing backwards and forwards.

But let's be clear, the Executive Council are fighting hard to ensure that we win this demand, but we need to make that qualification: it has got to be based on the best legal advice we've got, and the best legal advice we've got is the legal advice that allowed us to win the case in the first place. With those qualifications, President, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 10 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

And now the reason I wouldn't take them together: because the Executive Council oppose this one. I now call Resolution 11, Part Time Workers' Settlement – Wholtime Firefighters who have left the Retained Duty System, to be moved by Devon & Somerset.

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Resolution 11 – PART TIME WORKERS SETTLEMENT – WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTERS WHO HAVE LEFT THE RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM

Conference agrees that Firefighters who have left the Retained Duty System role but are still employed on the Wholetime Duty system are eligible for compensation as laid down in the Part Time Workers Settlement.

This matter is to be raised as a matter of urgency at the next National Joint Council (NJC) meeting and following this, progress on this matter is to be reported to every subsequent Executive Council meeting until agreement is reached and a joint NJC circular is circulated confirming agreement.

DEVON AND SOMERSET

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Hello again. Alan, sorry, did you say that the Executive Council are opposing this? We were told they were giving qualified support. Anyway, it doesn't really matter.

THE PRESIDENT:

I think it does! Comrade, can you give us your name, please?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Dave Chappell, Devon & Somerset. Thank you Conference. Just to be brief then, some of you will have seen the circular that appeared I think it was yesterday or the day before (but I saw it yesterday) which has just come out on this very subject. It deals with one of the issues that has arisen from the part time workers' settlement which is the compensation payment for stage 1 which relates to things like sick leave and annual leave. There is a stage 2 payment which is for pensions as well. But in this case it's really important for those people who left the job as a Retained Firefighter but may still be in service with a Fire and Rescue Service somewhere. There are a number of those. The employers' position once again has been to say that they will not be eligible for the payment. So it's really important that this is one which we don't forget, for all the reasons about equality and payments for those people that are entitled to it.

I'm not trying to play games about whether it's qualified support. We will withdraw the proposal given the circular, but there are some questions that I'd like to ask, which is why I was addressing A5 as well. The circular actually says there are some exemptions within this agreement. I have a feeling it's probably too late to get anything better, but you need to know what the

exemptions are. The exemptions are that if you moved your employer, so you've gone from one authority to another (you may have been a Retained Firefighter and got a Wholetime position in another authority, or even a Retained position in another authority) you don't get the payment which to me seems unfair because you were a Firefighter during the eligible period; you're still in service. But that circular says you don't get that. In addition it says that you have to be a still serving employee to get it. Now the agreement on this was reached in 2011; we have had two years (as most of you will know) trying to get the employers and the organisation that was contracted to do the payments to cough up, and there are still people waiting two years on. So it seems unfair to me if we've got people who would have been eligible in 2011 when this was all agreed and are now being told, as part of this circular that's come out, that you will no longer get it because in the following two years you've left the job.

So those are two qualifying points which I must admit I'm not very happy about, unless Andy can give us some assurances that those are just things that we cannot change, or frankly they can be addressed. It looks to me like the agreement that we've got, the circular that we've got, effectively says that's tough, those people miss out on the payment. That's going to be uncomfortable for us to say to some of our members, I think. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I be clear, Dave, have you withdrawn that or not?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

If Andy's going to answer those points then we will withdraw it.

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder? You haven't withdrawn yet. *Formally* Any debate? AGS.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes President, Conference, the reason for the opposition from the Executive Council, with a request to withdraw I suppose, is the fact that the circular is out; the circular reflecting the agreement that has been reached with the NJC is out. Dave correctly says that there are some (I think he calls them) exemptions or exceptions. It's undoubtedly true that there are certainly ex-members who will not be covered. As I said in the response to Resolution 10, the employers are not minded to do our people any favours because of the success, for the reasons I said earlier. They therefore are narrowing the number of people to whom they would make the

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payment to as few as possible to be the right side of the regulations and what the regulations require in terms of current employment status. Be clear that within those exemptions anyone who was a claimant and is no longer in service will still get the money. But those who have changed employer, that new employer on the Wholetime status does not have the obligation for the member's service as a Retained Firefighter with another employer. It is unfair; it isn't right; but it's one of those things which frankly is just something that we can't get round because of the way that the law is worked. I emphasise again, however unsatisfactory that is to Devon & Somerset, however unacceptable that is on ethical grounds to Conference, as I said before, this is based upon the advice from our lawyers, a first class set of lawyers that we had working all the way through this, who are continuing to work. For that reason, we cannot achieve more and therefore to ask us to achieve more really does require the Resolution to be opposed. We cannot achieve what cannot be achieved. Thank you, Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Right of reply, Dave.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Thanks. Just briefly then, Andy, can you also confirm that the circular seems to suggest that this payment will only apply to Wholetime members who were RDS if they are still in service now, if they are serving employees at this moment, and not within this two year period since the agreement was reached? That's critical as well. Is that the case that if people who would have been eligible in 2011 are not still serving now they won't get it?

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

On that point of clarification, it all goes back to the reference date within the settlement, so those people will have some cover. Those who have left service beyond that point, as I say, if they were claimants will get payment as well.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

OK, thank you for that clarification. Resolution withdrawn.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, comrade. *Applause*

I am now on Paragraph A6, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14. Before I call the next Resolution could I just ask Conference to check that all Brigades have a ballot paper for the Standing Orders election, and if not, please

see the stewards at the back of the hall now. Could you raise your hands if you haven't got one? Just Brigades, the leaders of the delegations.

Chair of Standing Orders.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Conference, just quickly, the stewards are having problems dishing the nomination papers out. Apparently they were given at the end of the rows for each Brigade, OK. So can you just check the leaders of delegations have got these nomination forms. If there's any leaders of delegations that haven't got them (I've got a rough idea who hasn't, I just don't know who they are) can you indicate now, just Brigades not Sections. Thanks. Just give me one minute, President, please.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Come back to order, Conference. I now call Resolution 9, Continuous Professional Development to be moved by the West Midlands. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 9 – CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

The introduction of the Continuous Professional Development payment (CPD) in 2007 also came with some national guidance from the FBU. In the time since then considerable local variation in the interpretation of this guidance will have crept in, not least from unscrupulous Fire and Rescue Services seeking to cut their wages bill.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to examine some means of providing and sharing information between FBU Officials in various Brigades, perhaps by the use of a central information point, electronic library or database available via the FBU website. This would assist local Officials and give them the information they need to help ensure that local variations do not depart too far from the national position. A similar facility on other national matters e.g. IRMP responses, which have local variations would also greatly assist FBU Officials.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

Good morning. President, Conference, CPD. Since the introduction of CPD to the Fire and Rescue Service in 2007 Brigades have developed their own interpretation of how this is awarded. Many individuals have had their payments withdrawn, often unfairly. In our Brigade, and

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I'm sure others, this has become an annual battle with management for the right of our members to receive their payment and see the process carried out in a fair and equal manner across the board. Even though the FBU provide guidance and information which is available to our members and officials, I believe that a central database should be set up and available via the FBU website, which could be expanded for advice and other vital information to be shared such as the IRMP. This will assist members and officials in gaining information and evidence to support what has become a yearly battle to make sure our members receive the pay they are entitled to. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder, Conference? *Formally* That's open for debate. No debate. The Executive Council support. I now put Resolution 9, Continuous Professional Development to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph A15, A16, A17, A18, A19, A20, A21. Can I now ask Conference to move to Paragraph B1, Paragraph B2, Paragraph B3, Paragraph B4, B5, B6, B7, B8, B9, B10, B11, B12, B13, B14, B15, B16, B17, B18. I now call Resolution 52, National Media Campaign, Social Enterprise Mutualisation to be moved by Cleveland. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 52 – NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN, SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MUTUALISATION

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to launch a National Media Campaign following the close of The Fire Brigades Union 2013 Conference in opposition to the transformation of any United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Service into a Social Enterprise Mutual.

CLEVELAND

BRO DAVID HOWE (Cleveland):

Conference, President, I'm sure you're all aware of what's been proposed by senior managers in Cleveland. Just so everyone's clear, here it is in a nutshell. Our senior managers, in cahoots with and being led by central government ideology are proposing to create a social enterprise mutual company. They've already set up a community interest company and they want this company to swallow up the brigade and carry out the contract to provide the core Fire and Rescue Services in Cleveland amongst other things. They want this despite the risks and despite the known facts that the government have quite openly said that there will be no protection against privatisation; there will be no guarantees against privatisation.

We all know the problems that we the workers will face if we spend the next 5, 10, 15 years being pushed from one contract to the next, potentially working for three or four different companies with the terms and conditions that will be unrecognisable by then.

More importantly, the service that the public expect and deserve will be exposed to the whims of the private sector, dependent on making a profit, whether a social enterprise mutual company or a private company. It doesn't make any difference. My question then would be: what happens if that company doesn't win contracts to carry out all sorts of outlandish jobs that senior managers might decide we need to do on their behalf to make money? These jobs are not even tenuously linked to the core Fire and Rescue Service work, but they'd have us doing them, and it would have a detrimental effect on that core Fire and Rescue Service work. The answer is it either down sizes because it's not making a profit and does exactly the same as we're having to do now because of the need to make budget cuts, or it goes bust. If it goes bust, what happens then? We've been told that it would hand responsibility back to the local authority. What good does that do? It hands responsibility back to the local authority in a worse state than when it took it away? It doesn't make sense; it certainly doesn't make sense to me.

So instead of knowing the amount of finance (and I know it's not ideal but we know the amount of finance that we're going to get year on year and trying to do each annual budget on the level of money that we get) the whole thing would then just depend on whether or not that company could make a profit.

Comrades, I make no apology for saying that we're staring down the barrel of a gun that is going to kill off the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK. We're campaigning vigorously in Cleveland with members, councillors and MPs and soon the public. But this is not just about Cleveland; it's about everybody; it's about the whole of the UK, because if it happens in Cleveland it will happen everywhere, simple as that.

I'd like to thank our Regional and National officials for their assistance that we've had up to now, and the work that has already been done. We're fighting this politically and have received great support, but the time is nearing when we might have to fight this industrially. Before we need to do this, we in Cleveland would ask that through this Resolution our Union embark upon a high profile local and national media campaign to attempt to inform the general public. I know it's difficult because our media in this country at the moment is very difficult to get support from. But to attempt to inform the general public of what this government and some, or maybe it's more than some, Fire Service senior managers are attempting to do to the public's Fire

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Service and that we, the FBU, will not allow that to happen. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Do we have a seconder for that? Yes, please, come to the rostrum Bedfordshire.

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

Morning Conference, we are seconding the Resolution from Cleveland on the media campaign. The Rupert Murdoch media empire is the single most fascist organisation we've got in the UK at the minute, and they're setting the agenda in politics and they've been doing it for decades. Social media is probably the strongest tool in our box in fighting against it. Unfortunately, it's not that well understood. We've got the managers clamping down on us, curtailing our freedom of expression and speech. In supporting that move for a larger campaign on this situation I'd like to announce that on 22nd May (I believe it is) I'm going to be pushing a toy fire engine that's been decorated in stickers with different privatisation companies such as AssetCo, Babcock, and it's got some Coca Cola signs on it as well, trying to raise the situation regarding privatisation. We're pushing it from 10 Downing Street to the Bank of England, the home of the corrupt lawmakers and the home of the banking terrorists that are ruining this country and this world. That is just a little nod that we're trying to raise the situation in Bedfordshire. There's another guy who is going to be pushing a toy pig, symbolising pigs at the trough of politics and money, siphoning it off to the private sector for their mates and their rich corporate friends, and he's doing a campaign against the NHS privatisation. So support the Resolution and if you're not busy at 8 o'clock in the morning on 22nd May, and you find yourselves outside Downing Street come and support the walk or the crawl, shall I say. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Jamie. I've just seen 100 people fill their diaries for that date! Dave Chappell. It's open for debate, yes.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, I think it's really important to discuss this in a little bit more detail. I'm fully in agreement with the proposal, but we've got a really weird situation that's developed, where David Cameron, who is an arch Tory (I don't care what anyone says) whose friends are in the banking and the finance industry and want to deregulate everything, is saying he wants us to have more mutual and cooperatives running things. Come on! We all know there's something funny

going on here because that would be a very strange arrangement, wouldn't it? And of course it is; it's a Trojan horse, we know that. Like many of you, I'm in the cooperative movement; I'm actually standing for election in my local area committee of the Co-op because I do believe, and I know the Trade Union Movement does believe that the Cooperative Movement has been a very important part of our development as an attempt at the alternative to the greed that we've seen operating almost everywhere else. That's why it's really important that we get this right. We're not against mutual; we're not against social enterprise. What we are against is attempts to undermine a democratically accountable public service arrangement that has stood the test of time and has provided us with a means of delivering good quality services to the public with good conditions for the people that work in them, and handing them over to an organisation that will literally be the slippery slope down to privatisation. That's the key thing here. I think it's really important when we run the campaign that we are not seen to be anti-mutuals in themselves. My bank is a mutual. It's a much better arrangement than having your money with the people that we know have blown all the country's finances. So let's get the tone right in this.

I will just let you know what I said in my election address, just so you can see that it's important to get the tone right. I can't find it.

THE PRESIDENT:

You can't remember what you're promising them, Dave?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Yes. *Laughter* Some of you will know, by the way, that the Co-op has actually had a really bad year because funnily enough, it did exactly the same thing in its banking section as all the others did: PPI misselling, bad loans and it's now really on its uppers. What I said is: despite or because of current problems the Co-op should continue to look at how to promote the cooperative model in suitable new products and services but it should resist moving into areas of public sector provision only to become a fig leaf for government policy aiming to break up and privatise public sector provision.

We've got to get that message to the Co-op and people who work in areas of mutuals. They are well-meaning people; we do not want them trying to take over public services. Thanks very much. *Applause*

BRO PAUL DRINKWATER (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I just want to echo Dave's sentiments. Really, the motion is about a media

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campaign, and we need to highlight and explain to people exactly what mutuals and cooperatives are. They are a favourite of socialist business, if you like, and not a bad thing. But in essence this is privatisation by the back door, and we need to remember that.

I had a recent discussion with Hilary Benn, the Leeds MP about this and he sort of suggested that if the Fire Service had been based on the mutual and cooperative model then we wouldn't be having the debate of whether it was a good thing or a bad thing, but quite frankly we need to remain a public sector industry. We need to be accountable to everyday people; we need to be well funded and well planned. The problem is that the only way to provide a cheaper service (which is what the aim of mutualisation and cooperative is in this particular agenda) is to cut training and to provide us with worse equipment, and to provide us with worse pay and conditions. We need to let people know that, and we need to make sure that the cooperative and mutual model isn't held up as the panacea (again, use that word) for a cure-all for all the country's problems.

I've got a friend who works in adult social services provision within Leeds City Council and they're also looking at mutualising parts of their service, but they are doing it because they haven't got the money to fund it. That's the only reason they're looking at it. So we don't want to let this agenda happen as creeping privatisation, and we must make sure that we publicise and there is a strong media campaign to explain exactly what mutualisation and cooperatives within the Fire Service mean. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Any further debate? AGS.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, we think it right and appropriate on an issue such as this and the threat that it poses to this Service that the Executive Council clearly should make comment. We addressed and agreed our policy position on the issue last year. I've got to say that since that time at all levels of the Union there's been a great deal of activity, campaigning, lobbying and educating the members of the public, politicians and indeed our members. I've got to say that the work has centred mainly around Cleveland where, as you know and as has been outlined, the authority has been fooled on the issue by some at least of its Brigade managers up there. As has been explained, the entire Fire and Rescue Service faces the threat of being converted into a mutual as a first step, undoubtedly, to a privatised Service.

We are clear that our members are opposed to it on the basis of a professional basis that it's no good to the

Service and also for employees. I'm trying to keep this short; I'm just aware of the discussions today. I just want to say this. The Resolution addresses itself to the media campaign. We have taken some steps already along that road. We are aware very much that the government does not intend to bring this to the attention of the public; it does intend to introduce it by stealth, to try to get it under the radar. We have taken some initial steps along the road of doing this, but I do think it is important just to emphasise and recognise the work that has been done by the officials in Cleveland and in Region 3 which has been absolutely tremendous, in terms of meeting with MPs, county councillors, borough councillors, fire authority members. So much so that alongside the work that they have done with Dave Green, with our Parliamentary Group and the Labour front bench to the point where the Labour front bench has now supported our position (quite unusual given their position on the question of mutualisation a few years ago when they introduced the concept to a degree). I think that is absolutely tremendous, that our officials in Cleveland, in Region 3 with the assistance of Head Office have got the Parliamentary Labour Group, our Parliamentary Group, but more importantly, the Labour front bench to support our position and produce a campaign pack for their own MPs. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 52 to the vote. The Executive Council support. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY*

Paragraph B19, B20. Now on Section H – Education, Paragraph H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10. Now on Paragraph J1. I now call Resolution 35 moved by Northumberland with the Amendment from Shropshire. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 35 – TOXINS

Conference recognises previous research undertaken on behalf of the FBU with regard to the potential effects of exposure of toxins to Firefighters. Despite this research, there remains no accredited report in the UK to support a possible link between that exposure and work related cancers.

Conference demands that the Executive Council instigates further research into toxins with a view to establishing any possible link to work related cancers arising from firefighting duties and a subsequent report to be circulated to Brigade Officials within 12 months after the close of Conference 2013.

NORTHUMBERLAND

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Amendment

6th line, after “toxins” add: “and carbon monoxide absorption”

End of 6th line, add: “and other illnesses/conditions”

SHROPSHIRE

BRO IAN DICK (Northumberland):

President, Conference, comrades, I remember attending my first house fire as a probationary Firefighter some 25 or more years ago in a run-down area of Blyth, Northumberland. In order to shake off the often-given tag of “blister”, ie appears after the work’s done, new starters were advised to get in amongst the debris, soot and smoky interior to gain some experience. Of course, the conditions were choking, hot, uncomfortable and eye-watering, but a couple of good lungfuls of smoke seemed like a job well done. Grass fires and car fires came and went without the protection of a BA set, and nothing much was thought of smelling of smoke for the rest of the day. It wasn’t until fairly recently that we’ve become more and more aware of the effects of toxins on our bodies produced by the products of combustion, and now we’re much more attuned to using PPE and BA when damping down and turning over, or at smaller fires.

As a safety representative it’s apparent to me, when watching news snippets and colleagues in action, that we still have lessons to learn about the dangerous environment in which we work. This is in no small part due to the fact that we have still no definitive research in this country and resulting protective legislation for Firefighters on the effects of this aspect of their work on their health.

In 2007 I attended the Hazards Conference in Manchester and was impressed by the FBU stance on communicating the effects of toxins to our members, which I believe will begin to change the whole culture of the way in which we think about toxins. On the back of this action I decided to present my own research project to our Health & Safety Committee, though I found that much of the information came from Canada and the United States. It emerged that there were four types of cancer more prevalent to Firefighters in addition to the added threat of breast cancer to female Firefighters. I also heard through the grapevine that a number of other representatives have undertaken similar research in the last few years, and indeed have had some copies sent to me.

The title of my document was fairly basic, being “Don’t swallow your snot for three days” – a piece of advice given by American Firefighters to their probationers on their first fire call. I had to curtail my typing finger after 36 pages to get around the document which, as my fellow safety anoraks will tell you, was quite unusual for

me! I offered it to my managers for their opinions and possible action and the result was predictable and of no great surprise and remains their answer even today. The first thing was: “this will open a bit of a can of worms” and the second one was “well, it’s not really our call”, and there was also “there’s no definitive research in this country, so pardon us if we just pop it in the back of one of our filing cabinets”.

Conference, there’s a well-polished saying: “Lies, damned lies and statistics”. But the one statistic I can see is that 100% of us just do not know the full effects that the toxic products of combustion have on our bodies. The Fire Brigades Union has proved time and time again to be the only organisation in the fire sector seriously concerned with our members’ health, safety and welfare. Once again, we need to take the lead in campaigning for changes in the law and exposing the increasing dangers in the current climate due to the toxic by-products of combustion materials. Our government won’t do it; the employers won’t do it; so it’s up to us to pool our considerable knowledge, get some research done on this ever-present threat to our health, and press for the same rights and legislation that Firefighters in other developed countries have against occupational cancers and other illnesses caused by our working practices.

We can start by reissuing our advice given all those years ago, which constitute the basic prevention strategies involved such as personal protection and personal hygiene. Then we need to look at the lead taken by some States and provinces in the US, Canada and Australia in looking after those affected by illness and injury. But most of all, comrades, we need to blast wide open this can of worms and form strategies with our employers to prevent this happening with a greater awareness of protective measures. It is a problem that is poorly resources and will cost money and should be part of every IRMP and every strand of Firefighter safety. Unless we do it on a national basis the file will end up in a drawer in that warehouse next to the Lost Ark. Once again, it is up to the FBU to be the innovators and catalysts for change in the way we deal with this problem as others will continue to rest on their laurels until we act. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Do we have a seconder for that? *Formally* I will call Shropshire to move their Amendment. The Executive Council give qualified support to both the Resolution and the Amendment.

BRO STEVE MORRIS (Shropshire):

President, Conference, the reason we wanted to include this Amendment was due to some findings that our BA

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trainers discovered when they were carrying out some exercises with an ambulance heart team. There was considerable concern raised that they were being unduly exposed to carbon monoxide absorption and we wanted some further investigation into this. However, we've since been informed that carbon monoxide is a toxin and provided that the EC can assure us that carbon monoxide will be included in the research outlined in the Resolution we will be happy to withdraw our Amendment.

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Please come to the rostrum.

BRO RUSS KING (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, President, we are remitting our Resolution 60 on Firefighter Cancers to support Northumberland's, with the right to speak as well, please. Conference, I was one of the original guinea pigs in the toxins study so many years ago, and when my findings came back it was absolutely blooming frightening! At one time I thought, when the lights were off, I was going to glow, it was that bad!

We believe, in Tyne & Wear, that toxins are directly responsible for many of the cancers Firefighters are getting these days. In fact, it was the Special Conference last year where we got up and talked about one of our members who had recently died. I've got to say, the response of Conference was absolutely amazing. There was a bucket collection at the end and we made an absolute fortune for the widow and kids.

However, moving on from that, two months after Conference one of my good friends and Natalie's work colleagues and good friend also died of acute leukaemia. However, he battled and he won the initial battle, but then he got a secondary cancer and he died. Such a fit young man! Within a year in Tyne & Wear we had three deaths from cancer, all different kinds of cancers. They were all young, all under 40, very, very fit – two of them were triathletes and Rob was a fitness coach. You couldn't understand how they got these cancers. However, when you sit round the tea tables and you talk about cancers there's a lot of anecdotal evidence – "I know so-and-so, that lad who retired, he's got testicular; what-do-you-call-it's got brain". We've got the officer in charge of Control who's got breast cancer "oh, so-and-so from Control had breast cancer as well". It's massive. You don't realise because there isn't any studies done on how many people are affected when they retire. We don't know how many people are dying through cancer. We get a note on our email system, so-and-so has died, the burial is going to be held at this, that and the other – nothing more, no reason why they died.

What we were asking was if there is any pockets within the Fire Service of what kind of cancers – and we know that the brain, the testicular, the breast (especially in Control) – how does that compare with people who aren't in the Fire Service, the national statistics? I tried to find this, and it is quite difficult to find national statistics on cancer. You've got to do a good trawl.

With that, I would just like to fully support Northumberland's Resolution and I hope Conference supports it as well. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's still open for debate, Conference. Anybody? Sorry, I didn't see you. Thanks.

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Conference, two years ago at the Southport Conference I noticed a lump on my neck and didn't think a great deal about it, the usual stress-related lumps and bumps coming up, but it hadn't gone down within two weeks, so I went to my doctor not really expecting a great deal to be said to me and they rushed me straight up to the hospital, got some tests done and within two or three weeks they told me I had tonsillar cancer. I replied, really in shock, no, you've got it wrong cos I had the buggers out when I was 5 years old. Unfortunately, I was the one that was wrong; I did have tonsillar cancer. After 32 sessions of radiotherapy treatment and some seriously aggressive chemotherapy treatment I'm here still today and I'm in remission. However, nobody has actually ever been able to tell me why I got tonsillar cancer. I've never smoked, not one fag in my entire life, I've drunk probably as much as some of you but probably not as much as some of the rest of you! *Laughter/applause* Certainly, on the evidence of last night anyway!

For 13 years I was in the London Fire Brigade, and for 13 years I never wore BA to a car fire, I never wore BA into a rubbish fire, a grass fire. You know, the usual paraphernalia of stuff that we never used to wear BA to, many years ago. I moved to Hampshire where, luckily at the station I was at, health & safety was taken very seriously and they basically said to me: you will wear BA at car fires. I don't know if my ex-colleagues in London still don't wear BA to car fires, but I would urge you now to make sure that everybody is wearing BA in the right places.

I'm still waiting to understand why I got cancer, and I'm still living on a bit of a tightrope because I don't know if that cancer will ever come back. I urge you to support this Resolution because until you get something like this you don't really understand it. I'm sure most of us have been touched by cancer in some way. One in four of us

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will get cancer, so again, I urge you to support this Resolution because it's very dear to my heart. Thank you, Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much, Comrade. Shropshire have withdrawn their Amendment. I now call Paul Woolstenholmes to give the qualification on the Northumberland Resolution.

BRO PAUL WOOLSTENHOLMES (National Officer):

Good morning Conference, the qualification is it is the Executive Council's view that the government and the employers should be carrying out these studies. We will take that on board, though, that the Union will get something underway. Depending on the evidence available, the timeframe is a little bit tight, so I think Conference needs to be aware that this sort of study may well take much longer than reporting back in 12 months. Thanks to Shropshire for withdrawing that Amendment and I can confirm that carbon monoxide will be included in that study. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 35 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 38 moved by the National Women's Committee with the Amendment from the CSNC. Tyne & Wear have just indicated that they wish to remit both their Resolutions with the right to speak in this debate. Helen.

Resolution 38 – WOMEN AND CANCER

Conference is growing increasingly alarmed at the high rates of cancer cases relating to FBU Members, current and retired, being reported.

Although Conference recognises that cancer is affecting all members there appears to have been high numbers of women contracting women specific cancers.

In order to evaluate the current picture regarding cancer of FBU Members, Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out an investigation with immediate effect. This investigation must take into consideration, gender, ethnicity, age and where possible include Retired Members.

The findings from the investigation should establish whether there are any trends within specific workplaces, geographical areas or related to the

nature of work being carried out e.g. hot fire training and report back to the Executive Council by 2014.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Amendment

3rd paragraph, line 4 after "age" insert ", workplaces"

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

President, Conference, so as not to duplicate, quite a lot of the points that I was going to make have been made by my colleagues. The issue was raised by women, particularly in the North East, and the Resolution came to our Women's AGM last year and the women in the North East feel that the numbers of women with cancer are disproportionate in their area. The speakers yesterday made loads of points and Conference wholeheartedly supported their wish to retain women in the Fire Service, so all the issues we discussed yesterday like facilities being poor, and women leaving the Fire and Rescue Service because of ill-fitting PPE and potential redundancy for Control staff, cancer has the potential for a higher and infinitely more damaging level on our women. So we're asking the EC to find the evidence that we've identified a trend for. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* I now call the Amendment from the CSNC.

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (CSNC):

President, comrades, this is the bit where Natalie panics in case I nick all of her speech! Our Amendment was really just to highlight that the type of workplace and the facilities within the workplace can actually cause some of the cancers being suffered, and it appears that some research which is being done in Denmark and has been ongoing for over ten years now is starting to hold that theory up. I've got a huge list of people in Tyne & Wear Control since 2002 that have had serious illnesses and particularly cancer. I'll let Natalie go through those, but there was one in particular that sticks in my mind because she actually went on the sick exactly a week before we were due to go out on strike in 2002 for the first time. Two years later unfortunately she passed away. She had breast cancer which was extremely aggressive and it spread to her liver and then her bones and her brain at the end. She was my officer in charge. She blamed the workplace and the equipment within it, and was once upon a time she was absolutely the most vehement supporter of the Fire Brigade; she lived and breathed the Fire Brigade. After she got the breast cancer she actually advised us all (ten years ago now) to

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find another job! I wish it was that easy because I think I would have taken her up on that. She was about ten years older than me. Now, some of the girls who currently have breast cancer within the Tyne & Wear Control are the same age and younger than I was then and it's now my turn to be sitting looking to think who's next? The girls who are younger than us are also sitting there, and they're frightened and they want something done about it.

So the workplace and this research that's going on in Denmark, it's known as the Hansen Research Project, and it looks into the effects and risks of the suppression of melatonin which is something that you produce when you're asleep. So if you have shift work that disrupts your sleep pattern (and our shift patterns unfortunately probably do that more than most) it means that you're exposed to artificial light between the hours of 10 pm and 6 am and that suppresses your melatonin production and that can potentially cause cancer. The increased risk is after 20 years and is about 8%. By the time you get to 30 years or more of working these shifts the increased risk of having this cancer develop is more than 40%. So we do need to start to look at the figures and look at ages, numbers and various different things. It may very well be that we just reflect society, but we need to have a look at it. The people who are best placed currently to do that study accurately and correctly and without prejudice are the Fire Brigades Union, because the employers aren't going to do it in that way. In Tyne & Wear they only class that they've ever had two cases of cancer, they're currently stating that those two people who are still at work are the only cancers that they've had in their statistics. There you go!

I could go and on and on and on and I'm not going to, because I'm sure that other people have got plenty more to say about this thing, so please support our Amendment and support the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Amendment seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate. I call Tyne & Wear.

SIS NATALIE MORTIMER (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 38, Women and Cancer. In Tyne & Wear we have had a very depressing and concerning list of Control members suffering from a wide range of cancers, as Mandy said. In the last ten years alone we've had six breast cancers, with others such as ovarian cancer, liver and bone cancers also diagnosed. Sadly, a number of these cases have resulted in the deaths of our members. This certainly appears to be a disproportionate amount and is a matter of concern to current Control members within Tyne & Wear.

Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service have recognised the concerns and are trying to identify specific points that have been raised by Control Room members such as a number of those members in Control that suffered from cancer have been the officer in charge. However, the information from the occupational health department in Tyne & Wear is that these numbers of cancers in Control merely reflects the same amount in society.

What we are asking for is that an investigation is undertaken to establish if that position is correct, or if the number of cancers in Control are in excess of what we should reasonably expect. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else Conference, want to contribute to the debate? No. I'll give Paul a chance to give the qualification on the Resolution.

BRO PAUL WOOLSTENHOLMES (National Officer):

Thanks President. I just refer back to Resolution 35, Northumberland. We fully intend to include Control in that survey as well, for Conference information. The qualification on this one is there is a substantial body of evidence out there. Unfortunately it's not in the UK; it's Australia and U.S. that are leading the way on research into cancers in the firefighting industry. We've got a meeting of the Regional Safety reps straight after Conference scheduled in, so there will be a Task and Finish Group set up and the survey will be carried out taking into account specifically gender, ethnicity, age etc, and the Group will report back to the EC with recommendations.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Paul. I now put the Amendment from the CSNC to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. The Amendment *CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 38 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. It *CARRIES UNANIMOUSLY*

Conference, I'm going to break for tea now. What I intend to do is to break for 25 minutes, the sort of guy I am! Will you please be back in your seats ready for closed session to start in 25 minutes.

Tea break

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MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, can I please just remind Conference to pick your keypads up from Mascols at the door. Thank you very much. Anybody who hasn't got them, please pick them up. Could I have the Buckinghamshire delegate to go and take possession of his or her keypad, please. Is the Buckinghamshire delegate anywhere near? Just for Mascol, East Sussex will not be in Conference this morning. Conference, thank you for bearing with us. I do apologise. We need the delegate here to test all your keypads as was raised yesterday. I do apologise for the problem we're having. Just talk among yourselves, thank you. Conference come to order. Can I ask Conference that Mascol, the suppliers of the electronic voting equipment, are allowed to test the keypad of Buckinghamshire? Is that agreed? *AGREED* And East Sussex's. In that case, Conference come to order. I now call Sarah Gartland, Chief Scrutineer to give the result of the Standing Orders election. Sarah.

CHIEF SCRUTINEER (Sis Sarah Gartland):

Conference, President, I have the result of the Standing Orders Committee election. It's my pleasure to announce at the close of nominations Standing Orders received four nominations. Two nominations were declined. I therefore announce Brother Paul Reames re-elected and Brother Alan Chinn-Shaw elected to the Standing Orders Committee. Thank you President, thank you, Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

I'll just change it round, President. We might as well get the keypad test out of the way first. Keypad test, please. Your keypad should state on it "Press any key". For testing that your keypad is synchronised with the voting system press any key now, please. OK, Conference, that's fine. To test the keypad for voting purposes there is a question going to appear on the screen. Please do not press any keys until I give you the instruction. Can I have the question please, Steve or Rob. Thank you. Conference, please press A for yes, B for no now.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, this is very important. We're waiting for numbers 4, 21, 36 and 46 and they're not here.

Could you reveal the vote of Conference, please, on the screens.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Dermot, stay away from that bell!

THE PRESIDENT:

Anything to say, Dave Chappell? *Laughter* Thank you, Conference. Carry on, Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks, Conference, that's the test complete and that's the way the system will work for the rest of the day if we require electronic voting.

Conference, an update from South Wales, very important. Conference will be aware that at approximately 10.55 yesterday station 39, Blaenavon were involved in a serious RTC whilst responding to a fire call. All crew members sustained injuries of varying degrees. Unfortunately, Brother Paul Roberts was trapped for over an hour after the impact. He was released by supporting crews and transferred to hospital by air ambulance. The medical update is that he's out of immediate danger but he's critically ill but stable. South Wales officials would like to thank Conference for all the good wishes and offers of help and support. Thanks for that, Conference.

Can you please turn to your list of delegates. London: delete Neil Walker; insert Daniel Giblin. London: delete Ben Sprung. Dorset: delete Simon Dennett. South Wales: delete Mark Watts, Vaughan Jenkins and Jo Byrne, who have all had to leave Conference because of the business that I've just reported to Conference.

Can you please turn to your Programme of Business Page 3: Resolutions 43 and 49 will now be taken in open session. We are no longer in closed session. Thank you President, thank you, Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Standing Orders report agreed? *AGREED*

Thank you Conference. I've not much to say to you Conference, but as we slept, a new report on the Fire Service came out by Sir Ken Knight. I just want to assure Conference that that already has been started to be scrutinised by the Fire Brigades Union and I just feel that we need to be very measured in our response so I won't make comment on it. I honestly believe that we should scrutinise it fully before any responses are made to that.

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With that, I will ask Conference to turn to Page 3, Resolution 43. I remind Conference you are now in open session. I call Resolution 43, Retired and Out of Trade Members, West Yorkshire. The Executive Council give it qualified support.

Resolution 43 – RETIRED AND OUT OF TRADE MEMBERS

This Conference notes that time off for trade union duties is getting harder in Brigades as staffing figures fall and austerity kicks in. Conference applauds Officials and Members who toiled tirelessly for the Union in previous years and who have subsequently retired.

It is apparent by the numbers of Retired and Out Of Trade Members that there is still that massive strength of feeling for the Fire Brigades Union. Therefore this Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a feasibility study into having a retired and out of trade network. This study should take no longer than 12 months and reported back to Brigade Committees for them to consider what to do next.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Amendment

In last sentence, after “study”, insert: “is to include recommendations into the structure, responsibilities, effectiveness and operation of such a network and”

SHROPSHIRE

BRO DAVID WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are accepting Shropshire's Amendment. Comrades, it's no surprise to us here that trade union agreements are being looked at up and down the country. Matt mentioned it yesterday. This comes on the back of years of lobbying by the Taxpayers' Alliance and their scaremongering annual report: Taxpayers' Funding of Trade Unions. The key findings of this research shows that trade unions received £113 million in 2010/2011 and again in 2011/2012. But what this report doesn't mention is just how much the trade unions save employers.

Funnier still, in the 2011 report it shows that the £113 million spent by the taxpayers equates to at least 2,840 full time public sector staff. Yet in 2012 the same amount of money, £113 million, equates to 3,041 staff which, in my view, the taxpayers are getting more staff for the same money.

This rhetoric has been jumped on by this Tory led government who have produced three papers – well, three that I know of anyway. The first paper was

published by Eric Pickles on CLG in December 2012 entitled Fifty Ways to Save and gives examples of sensible savings in local government. There are several good examples in there, President and Conference: 20: cancel away days in posh hotels and glitzy award ceremonies; 23: share senior staff; 24: scrap the chief executive post entirely. However, there are more sinister examples too: 34: stop translating documents into foreign languages; 25: introduce a recruitment freeze; 32: charge for collecting trade union subs; 31: scrap trade union posts.

If I may, Conference, I just want to read exactly what it says in this document about scrapping trade union posts, bearing in mind this is a CLG document, not something that's been lifted from the Daily Mail. They say: “Get rid of unnecessary non-jobs such as taxpayers fully funded full time trade union pilgrim posts.” Well, Conference, if I'm doing an unnecessary non-job in a pilgrim post, then I absolutely despair with this government, I really do. Shame on them!

This was quickly followed up with another report in March 2013 entitled “Taxpayer funding of the Trade Unions”, so as well as pinching the Taxpayers' Alliance title, that weren't the only plagiarism that went off within this CLG report. There are several references lifted directly from the Alliance's 2012 paper. This was then jumped on by Brandon Lewis who, on 14th March, sent a letter out to the leaders of councils and chairs of Fire and Rescue authorities in England. In it he makes the ten following commandments – sorry, recommendations! He says (1) councils should save taxpayers' money by significantly scaling back the cost of trade union facility time; (3) employees should not be spending all or the majority of their working hours on trade union duties. Conference, I've been full time seconded since January and I have not had time to breathe, so if they want us to stop spending all our time on trade union duties then I suggest they stop giving us so much crap to deal with! *Applause* (4) Time off for trade union activities should be unpaid; (7) restrictions should be placed on the use of office facilities for trade union representatives; (8) political materials or materials which incite industrial action should not be produced or distributed on or using taxpayer funded facilities. Again, shame on them!

I'll move on, President, because I know we're busy. I've got to say, I've been fortunate enough to be a rep or official of this Union since I joined the Service 15 years ago, and since that time I've been fortunate to have learned my trade, and still do learn my trade, from some fantastic FBU officials – not only in this room but that served in West Yorkshire, reps and rank and file members. Yet I've been disappointed to see these inspirational figures just slip into a well-deserved pension, and retirement, without them being asked if

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they would like to be still active in the Union and contribute further in any future campaigns. That's a real shame, it really is.

I just want to be clear, Conference, because I do understand the qualified support from Head Office (and it's not very often that I'll say that) this motion isn't calling for a Section as per Rule Book, and it's not calling for our Retired and Out of Trade members to pick up all our work that we should be doing. But what it's asking for is this work, which I understand Conference passed in 2009 asking for similar sort of network, to be carried out and get back to us. That will do. Thanks very much. Support motion 43. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? Are you coming to second, comrade?

BRO PETE GREEVES (Norfolk):

President, Conference, I'll be as quick as possible. I am speaking to second Resolution 43. In Region 9 we already have a ROOT network up and running, perhaps not as smoothly as it could be, but it's there. Our former Regional Secretary Dave Caine is our Regional ROOT coordinator. He, along with Dave Beverley, attends the National Pensions Committee in East Anglia which they report back to the Regional Committee. We have a coordinator in every Brigade because we realise there is a massive untapped resource of knowledge for us to use. They also have the ability to lobby MPs, fire authorities and even chief fire officers, putting forward their views which (surprise, surprise) are usually the same as ours. They can do this with no fear of repercussion for what they say; they won't face any form of discipline, which happened to the Essex members; they won't be told: be careful what you say as it could affect your promotion; and they have no fear of losing their jobs in the next round of cuts. Many of our ROOT members are former officials and activists, people like Tennison, Graham Noakes, Graham Tranquada. They are committed and enthusiastic, and many are also connected to or leading Trades Councils. But in truth, we still probably don't use them enough. They are an invaluable asset which we should be using, especially when we could be entering into a time of dispute. Conference, support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Shropshire to move the Amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally*

That's open for debate, Conference. Is there any debate? The Executive Council give qualified support. Sean, can you give the qualification, please.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Yes. Thanks Dave, for outlining all attacks on trade union leave. I think what you've got to understand is that we're already using Retired and Out of Trade members quite a lot. We've been using them quite a lot on the pensions campaign, lobbying, writing letters to MPs, but we can use them more, I understand that. The EC are happy to support this Resolution and will be doing the work. But we have got a couple of qualifications. One of them is about structure, because obviously any study will be seen by the Executive Council before it goes back to Brigade Committees. The second one is we've got to be really careful that we don't play straight into their hands with this, that we don't try and undermine elected officials by getting people to do the work which elected officials should be doing. So yes, we support from the Executive Council.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you for that, Sean. I now put the Amendment to Resolution 43 to the vote. The Executive Council support. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 43 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 49, National Officers to be moved by Shropshire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 49 – NATIONAL OFFICERS

This Conference recognises the need for the Union to adapt to the changing financial situation that it faces. This Conference also recognises the need to continue to reorganise its structures and how it operates.

To this end, Conference instructs the Executive Council to implement changes to National Officer employment contracts so that future National Officers are seconded from their Service, rather than directly employed by the FBU. In so doing the Executive Council will identify and bring forward the necessary changes to the Union Rules to implement such a change.

SHROPSHIRE

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

As we've heard over several Conferences now, the finances of the Union are a real problem and will continue to be so for some considerable time. Falling membership due to the cuts, facility time costs and employment liabilities such as underwriting possible

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pension costs are the biggest strains on our finances. This Resolution looks to address one of those strains: that of the National Officer pension liabilities. The Resolution clearly states “future National Officers”, so that in no way impacts on the current National Officers. Instead, the idea of this Resolution is that anyone in future elected to a National Officer post would be seconded from their Brigade rather than have to resign and be directly employed by the Union, which is what we do at present.

The disadvantages of the present system are, firstly, having to resign from your Brigade carries the risk of being deselected five years on and being left without a job, which could put many people off. Alternatively, and especially with the current pension position, it could possibly attract people with a more mercenary attitude, being paid at a more reasonable rate of pay and retire in five years’ time could be a superlative plan with only two minor drawbacks: (1) there are no National Officer elections; and (2) there are no National Officer elections. I know technically that’s only one minor drawback, but I thought it was worth mentioning twice! *Applause*

Either way, when a National Officer gets deselected through election it’s expensive for the Union, but in our Resolution in the instance that they were seconded and then deselected they would return to the Brigade from whence they came. The FBU obviously picks up the employment costs for the period of office but then the huge liability of the pension provision returns with them to their Brigade.

You will recall the controversial debate we had here last year with the Reorganisation Document. Effectively, that document puts the National Officers on hold indefinitely and at the whim of the Executive Council and for us that’s not good enough. We need to have a plan going forward that doesn’t compromise the democracy of the Union because for those of you that also recall the debate that we had in Conference in Scarborough, there was an idea floated that one of the National Officer posts could become an unelected employee. If you remember the outcome of that debate, Conference decided it was important to have National Officers accountable to the membership and therefore that they should all be elected positions.

This Resolution provides a satisfactory answer to both the issue of finance and the issue of democracy, and it has no timescales or restrictions. I have to say also that we do welcome the restricted use by the EC of giving qualified support to Resolutions at this Conference. I think that’s very helpful. But I do think also in our Resolution it does not require qualified support for them to be able to implement. It’s very open in its terms of implementing the change to National Officer contracts, and the timetable of elections. All that would still be in

the hands of the Executive Council, so I don’t understand why they are opposing it. I therefore urge Conference to support our Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* That’s open for debate. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council are asking Shropshire to withdraw or asking Conference to oppose the Resolution. We think it is misguided and risky, the suggestions that are outlined in the Shropshire Resolution. The Union’s Head Office is called Bradley House, and it’s named after someone called Jim Bradley who was the second General Secretary of the Union. Jim Bradley was never a Firefighter; he was a park keeper and he was elected first of all as the branch secretary of a forerunner of the Fire Brigades Union. They chose Jim Bradley, a park keeper, for one reason: to prevent victimisation of members of the Union as they tried to organise Firefighters, because they saw the need to be able to organise independently and to have people working for the Union who could not be subject to victimisation. That’s why the structures emerged as they have done, and that’s why every trade union in the country emerged to have full time officials which we spoke about the other day. The Fire Brigades Union has a very small complement of full time officials: the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary and four National Officers. What is proposed is that four of those should not be full time officials but should be effectively seconded lay officials.

There are risks in relation to that. Apologies for being late, Conference, but I’ve just been on the media this morning and we’ve just sent a National Officer to do one as well. What would happen with a National Officer going on television criticising Ken Knight, criticising chief fire officers and potentially that employer determining we’re now going to end that secondment arrangement with the Fire Brigades Union? We can’t afford to put at risk the structures and organisation of the Fire Brigades Union at the whim of employers. So the proposal doesn’t make sense for the Executive Council.

In terms of the points that Matt made about elections, and it is an important point and I think we addressed it yesterday in the reorganisation debate, Conference has endorsed that decision in relation to the election of National Officers. It is not a decision anyone takes lightly. The Executive Council understand the importance of elections. It is something we’re very proud of in this Union. But Matt correctly outlined the financial risks if someone were to be challenged in one of those elections and to lose that election. We have huge

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liabilities currently. I suspect it's not something anybody knew about several years ago, but it's a clause that exists in contracts. We're talking about hundreds of thousands of pounds in terms of the cost of voting out a National Officer. Those costs stay with us for the foreseeable future. That's one of the reasons why the Executive Council felt that we needed to bring to Conference, for Conference to agree, that those elections should be suspended. In terms of the point that Matt made about elected National Officers, actually the Executive Council didn't propose anything other than having elected National Officers; we were very clear about that. What we did propose and what Conference agreed (and it's Conference policy and Conference decision) is that we should move from four to three. The Union has not always had four National Officers. At one point we had no National Officers; at one point we had a General Secretary and as we have built the structure we have had more National Officers. But as part of that wider restructuring debate we're saying we need to consider how to organise. That might mean that some of the work that's currently done by a National Officer might be done by members of staff. Why would we not learn lessons from other union structures? We've not come to any conclusions on that, but it's certainly something that is worth considering.

But in terms of the proposal in front of you, it really is a dangerous proposal and I would urge Matt to withdraw it on behalf of Shropshire. Otherwise Conference, I would strongly urge you to oppose it. Thank you.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Shropshire right of reply.

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

I'd just like to come back on a couple of those points. All our EC Members are already seconded from their posts so I don't see that there's a great difficulty in having the same apply to National Officers. Surely we should be able to design a contract with the employers that would stop the employers from vexatiously pulling our National Officers back. I think that's something, if it did happen, that perhaps we ought to deal with when it did happen rather than run scared from it.

I think the other point that you're saying about the liabilities we have at the moment, our Resolution doesn't put any timetable on the elections, and it still doesn't take away the EC being able to determine when those happen. It doesn't impact on that at all.

Just finally, I think the important part of our Resolution is that it addresses two important things: the democracy of the Union and the finances of the Union. I don't think

we should be scared of holding National Officer elections because of the cost. Support the Resolution.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Conference. The Executive Council oppose. I now put resolution 49 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *FALLS*

Can I ask Conference to turn to Page 6 of the Programme of Business, please. Section B – Fire and Rescue Service Policy. I now call the Executive Council Policy Statement: The Future of the Fire and Rescue Service, to be seconded by Lincolnshire. General Secretary.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT THE FUTURE OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Fire and Rescue Service represents exceptional value for money as a public service. Annually, at a cost of still less than £3bn (on average less than £50 per adult per year in the UK), firefighters across the UK provide a 24 hour/365 day comprehensive service dealing with a wide range of emergencies.

Despite taking on a number of additional activities such as responding to major flooding and dealing with terrorist incidents, the Fire and Rescue Service has faced cuts for over a decade from Central Government.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century up to 2010, the total number of firefighters was reduced by around 2,000 for the whole of the UK.

The advent of the Coalition Government in 2010 saw an acceleration of cuts to the funding of the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Government's own figures for England show the annual cuts in revenue spending power (which is a combination of central funding plus the local council tax revenue).

Revenue Spending Power

Year	% cut
2011-12	-2.2
2012-13	-0.5
2013-14	-4.7
2014-15	-3.3

Their own figures show that they have cut every year of this Government and that the cuts have been backloaded, so the next two years will be worse than the last two.

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Figures for the central grant show that the bulk of the cuts have come from reductions in central funding.

Central Formula Grant

Year	% cut
2011-12	-6.7%
2012-13	-1.0%
2013-14	-8.7%

If the final year of cuts is as bad as next year, they will have reduced central funding by 25%, as they promised to do in 2010.

It is important to recognise that central edicts have also restricted local funding. The Coalition Government has offered financial incentives to Local Councils to freeze council tax at the same time as reducing central grants. This has given local Fire Authorities less room to deal with the central cuts.

These cuts have had a devastating impact on the number of firefighters. In 2011-12, the first year of the cuts, over 1,500 frontline firefighter jobs were lost. These job cuts have affected all parts of the Service. This will also adversely affect the equality work that has been ongoing in the Fire and Rescue Service in the past twenty years.

The Government has not yet published figures for the second year. However when they made their plans to cut the Fire and Rescue Service in 2010, the FBU estimated that 6,000 jobs were under threat. Unless the cuts can be reversed over the next two years, that figure is likely to be confirmed.

The FBU has been the highest profile organisation within the Fire and Rescue Service campaigning against these cuts. While politicians and senior managers accused the Union of scaremongering, they are now admitting we were accurate with our warnings.

In 2012 the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities and The Chief Fire Officers Association both published briefings warning of cuts to firefighter jobs, fire station closures and the loss of appliances. In March 2013 the Local Government Association (LGA) also warned of a £600m shortfall in Fire Service funding.

Politicians at Westminster have argued that the historical fall in fires and fire deaths is an excuse to make cuts. They have ignored the wide range of other work that firefighters undertake that is not counted in these figures, including the fire prevention work that lies at the heart of these trends. This work is also threatened by cuts to the Service.

The argument is also wrong because even if a station has experienced a reduction in calls, for those affected by the incident the rapid response of the Fire and Rescue Service is just as important as it ever was. Even if it is one household or business that has to call, the speed and weight of the Fire and Rescue Service response is still absolutely critical.

The FBU has exposed the slowing of response times by over two minutes, so that many of the targets set by individual brigades fall well below the national standards that were in place a decade ago. Slower response times have increased the risk to the public and firefighters. Every second counts in a fire or other emergency, so we cannot accept their argument for fewer firefighters, fewer appliances and fewer fire stations.

CAMPAIGNING FOR OUR SERVICE

In order to defend our Service and develop it for the future we need to address

1. Campaigning against cuts and for adequate funding
 2. The changed and changing role of our Service
 3. The roles, responsibilities, pay and conditions of service of firefighters arising from such changes.
1. The cuts in our Service have been so severe that other voices have increasingly been heard expressing concern alongside that of the FBU. This has included some of the Fire and Rescue Service Employers and some Chief Fire Officers. Where appropriate the FBU is willing to work together with others in the Service to make the case for adequate funding and investment.

Unfortunately however, the FBU is often left as the sole organised voice standing up for our Service. The Executive Council has agreed to allocate additional resources to this campaign over the next two years as we face a further spending review and as we approach the general election in 2015. This campaigning will require lobbying and public activity at national and local levels.
 2. The debate about funding has highlighted that Central Government has not adequately acknowledged the changed role of and demands upon the Fire and Rescue Service. This stands out most sharply in relation to issues of national resilience. For example, large scale flooding incidents are an increasingly important area of work but this is not

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recognised properly by Westminster, nor is it adequately funded. There are many other areas of work now undertaken by firefighters which are not properly recognised by Central Government, or by the Employers.

The Union is involved in a project with others in the wider fire sector to develop models which assess the cost of fire to the economy. The Union will also undertake additional research on this and on the value of our Service to our communities at local and national level. This will need to address the expanded roles and activity already undertaken by our Members.

3. The Fire and Rescue Service has changed and developed throughout its history and the FBU has often been at the forefront of this, for example our role in fire safety inspections or at road traffic accidents. Firefighters have been willing to take on such roles but expect that such developments should include:
 - Full and adequate planning and training
 - The best available equipment and resources
 - Negotiations on roles, responsibilities and payments
 - The necessary funding to provide all of the above

It is unacceptable to change the role of firefighters and of our Service by stealth and by refusing to negotiate. It is also unacceptable to allow the continued fragmentation of our Service through an endless drift to ill thought out 'localism'. To be effective our Service needs to be both a national and local Fire and Rescue Service; a national Service delivered locally.

As part of this process the Executive Council will undertake a review of all the additional roles and responsibilities and all additional work already taken on, or proposed, at local level. Brigade Officials are asked to fully cooperate with this. The Executive Council will discuss the issues of new challenges, roles and responsibilities (including those already taken on) with Employers and with Governments but expects recognition of the need to address such developments through full discussions and negotiations at national level. This is the best way to ensure professional, interoperable standards and fair rewards. This also allows our Members to determine what is and is not acceptable, the roles we may undertake now and in the future and the pay and conditions which we expect in return.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, President, the Fire and Rescue Service is at a critical turning point in its history and it is perhaps apt that the day we discuss this, a further report, shall we say a further hatchet job, is produced by a former chief fire officer making the case for further cuts and cutbacks and austerity within our Service, the Ken Knight review which has been published overnight, embargoed until 6 this morning, to prevent people (including the journalists) getting their heads around what's being said in it, in order to attack us and attack our Service. I'll come back to that in a moment.

We have already seen some of the most vicious attacks on Firefighters that we've ever seen, on cuts, pensions, privatisation, a whole host of other issues that we've discussed this week. We have to take stock, soberly assess where we are and where we are likely to be heading. We have to face reality squarely, head on and then we have to plan our strategies and campaigns so we can attempt to direct events and directions.

It is perhaps a good time for looking back for me personally. I was 50 last year. I know you can't believe that, looking around the table here. It's a big landmark as I'm sure people in the audience know. I also joined the Fire Service 30 years ago this year. If you look at the changes that have taken place throughout our history and in that particular period, the Fire Service changed from being a private insurance Brigade in the 19th century, from the patchwork quilt of Fire Services that we had before the Second World War, changed during the Second World War when it was nationalised, when we saw a huge influx of auxiliary including women Firefighters for the first time, it changed again in the post-war period, and of course it changed massively following the modernisation that we've discussed for the past ten years or so. All through that, our Union has changed too because we have to try to adapt to those changing circumstances or face the consequences.

When I was born there had been a Tory government for a decade. In the Fire Service national structures were in place, the National Joint Council, Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council, National Standards of Fire Cover, a whole range of structures for negotiation, for producing guidance and for the involvement of the work force through their trade union. There were 150 Fire Brigades in the UK. Trade membership of the Fire Brigades Union was 27,000. We only had 6,000 Retained members in the Union. The Union at that time organised into 15 Districts. There was a bloke called Barber on the Executive – different spelling, and he was from the northwest of England. At Head Office we just had a fire, embarrassingly, and Head Office was being refurbished. In terms of echoes of today's discussions there was a debate reflected in the annual report about qualifying

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injuries for pensions, and there was a debate in the Union about whether we should be responding to road traffic accidents.

You then look to 30 years ago when I joined the Fire Service. Membership 42,000, 14 Regions and 64 Brigades. The Executive Council interestingly reported pension battles about pension age and also pension battles about pensions for Retained Firefighters or Firemen as they were called in the report. Echoes of today again. It was a difficult time, difficult full stop. High unemployment, a hostile government, falling living standards, and unions in retreat and decline. But we managed to hold our own through campaigning and putting forward the case for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The last bit of that history perhaps we need to think about: the past decade, the period of so-called modernisation, first under the Labour government and now under the Tory led Coalition – steaming into our Service and wreaking havoc. These are the facts that Ken Knight is reeling out in his report today, and we need to take account of them. Dwelling fires down something like 40% since the turn of the century; car fires down almost three quarters since the same time; fire deaths have fallen; fire deaths have more than halved since I joined the Service, and they are down by nearly a third since the turn of the century; deaths from car fires down by two-thirds since I joined the Service; non-fatal casualties also down since 2000.

Of course, we don't just intervene in fires, we don't just intervene; we do other work as well. Road traffic collision incidents also dropped by nearly a quarter since the turn of the century. Other incidents: lift releases; spills; leaks; hazardous materials also down. But it's not that straightforward. Other types of incidents have increased. We know that flooding, something we've campaigned on over the past four, five, six years, has increased dramatically. Flooding more than doubled in a year, just last year. Many of our members are at the forefront of responding to those major flooding incidents.

We need to be clear that those changes, in our view, are in no way a justification for cuts. They take no account of other work that Firefighters are doing; they take no account of the amount of time Firefighters spend at incidents; they take no account (an important point which I suspect you won't read in Ken Knight's review) of the number of people rescued by emergency intervention by our members every single day of the year, every month, every week. 10,000 rescued annually from fires, a similar figure to that which existed ten years ago. That's people who are alive, or safe, or not injured as a result of the emergency intervention work that our members do every day of their working lives.

We should celebrate it because unfortunately government don't, chief fire officers don't. They want to wipe away the fact that we intervene and attend fires and rescue people. Yet it remains the core of what we do. We know that the official figures only capture one in five of actual fires that take place because in many cases people don't call the Fire Service.

Of course, there are other changes, societal changes that have influenced our industry and our Service. When I was born 60% of men and 40% of women smoked. When I joined the Fire Service it was about a third of all adults smoked. Now only 20% of men and women smoke, and they smoke fewer cigarettes than ever before. Other changes are down to the changes and campaigns and different regulations that we fought for. On the radio just this morning on the Today programme they mentioned that this is down to societal changes, for example changes in foam filled furniture. Well, let's remember the campaign around foam filled furniture. Who led that campaign for those regulations? The Fire Brigades Union led the campaign for safer regulations for foam filled furniture. Applause Who opposed it? Who opposed those regulations? Right wing free market Tories opposed it, including Francis Maude who is now again attacking our pensions. So we won't take any lectures off those clowns about public safety! *Applause*

There is a great debate around prevention, and prevention does make a huge difference. Who's doing that prevention work? It's our members doing that prevention work. When I joined the Fire Service, something like 8% of households had smoke alarms. The figure today, according to statistics, is 86%. Five years ago, half a million home fire safety checks, last year three quarters of a million. Of course, we have all the other arson reduction schemes, youth engagement schemes, and we need to remind these people who does those schemes, who initiated them, who goes out talking to those young people. It's our members, Fire Brigades Union members who are doing that work. So if they want us to do the fire prevention and community engagement work, then that has to be counted as part of our work as well, so they can't simply count the number of fires that we're attending or other incidents. They have to count the whole range of work that we are carrying out.

But we also know better than anyone else the limits of prevention. Sprinklers don't rescue people from fires; they often only slow the spread of fires. Smoke alarms are vital, but smoke alarms don't rescue people from fires; smoke alarms do not put out fires. What do the statistics say on smoke alarms? Government figures: in 27% of dwelling fires smoke alarms fail, and if they are battery powered smoke alarms, in 40% of cases when there is a fire the battery powered smoke alarm fails.

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So the idea that you can cut the Fire Service by giving everyone a free smoke alarm is utter nonsense and is dangerous and is bad public policy, and we will oppose them on that as well.

We know that intervention is absolutely essential. As long as there are lives to be saved, homes to be protected, businesses and workplaces to be protected, our role is irreplaceable. We know in many places the number of larger incidents is actually increasing. We know that currently we're debating cuts in London where they actually predict fire deaths will increase. What a bizarre way of improving public safety when you know that deaths will increase as a result of your plans! We also know – and this did rile me on radio 4 this morning – Ken Knight is making the case for increased on call Firefighters. We answered him by saying we represent on call Retained Firefighters. He said they are unlike Wholtime Firefighters who are sitting and waiting for calls. What an absolute insult, what an absolute disgrace for someone who has built a career in the Fire and Rescue Service, then as a Chief Fire Officer, then as a Chief Fire and Rescue adviser, what planet is he living on, and where has he been for the past 20 years, where has he been for the past 40 years? Applause The idea that our people are sitting around waiting for fires to happen is an utter disgrace, and we need to hammer him on it, both nationally and locally. It is an utter disgrace.

We also know that actual response times have got worse under so-called modernisation. Remember the National Standards of Fire Cover? We know that in virtually no part of the UK are the current locally determined standards as good as the National Standards of Fire Cover that we had pre-2004. We have to take on their arguments and their case that they're making in terms of the cuts.

Let's look at some of those cuts in terms of the Service and the jobs. In 2010 the new Tory led government announced it would impose 25% cuts in central grants over four years. I won't repeat the figures; we've published them; you've got them. Those funding cuts are now taking place, so it is a fact, the Fire and Rescue Service is facing the worst cuts it has ever faced in its entire history, and they can't be allowed to escape from that. We don't know what will happen in future years. We do know that they're playing around with figures so it's harder and harder to track down what central funding means to Fire and Rescue Services, but if they get away with it they will have cut central funding by 25% over that four years. That obviously has a massive effect on our Service, a massive effect on jobs. We know under the last government under modernisation 4,000 jobs went in the Fire and Rescue Service. We know that a thousand more went in the first year of this Coalition. We know that last year something like 1200 jobs were

cut across the UK. So overall, the picture is extremely bad. There are more and worse cuts to come this year and next year.

We predicted in 2010 that if these cuts went ahead something like 6,000 Firefighter posts would be under threat, with the consequences in terms of delivery of the Service. What did Ministers say? What did CLG Ministers say? They said we were scaremongering. Well, actually the trend shows that far from scaremongering it might be worse than we warned at the time. Our worst fears are coming to fruition. So we have to work and campaign and fight like never before to turn the tide on these cuts before it's too late, before we don't really have a Fire and Rescue Service in the UK any more.

We have had some very effective campaigns around the country. I mentioned some the other day: West Yorkshire, Devon & Somerset, London and elsewhere. Our members engaging with local people saying we don't want to see our Fire Service cut to pieces, we don't want to see our fire engine axed, we don't want to see our fire station closed. We will need to step up that fight. We will need to build local support groups around any fire stations that are facing the threat of cuts or closure in any way. Nationally, we know that the comprehensive spending review is coming forward in June, and again it is no surprise that Ken Knight's review has come out today – (1) because the Fire Brigades Union were away in Blackpool at Conference to try to prevent us from responding. Well, they didn't succeed in that. (2) Because they are preparing the ground; they're trying to soften up the public and soften up the politicians nationally and locally for when they announce the next round of cuts in June, so that people say: oh well, we've got to do it. Well, we need to be challenging the case in the Ken Knight review, challenging the case that they're going to make in terms of the comprehensive spending review, and make the case for a genuinely modern, effective, professional Fire and Rescue Service.

As part of this process the Executive Council proposes in the paper to undertake a review of all the additional roles and responsibilities that we've taken on because it is a mess out there. You reflected this over the past five or ten years. It's part of the fragmentation of our Service, and the obsession with so-called localism, that everyone does their own thing. Then Ken Knight's report today apparently says some Fire Services are doing one thing and it costs this; some Fire Services are doing something else and it costs that. What the hell did you expect when you abolished national standards? What the hell did you expect when you abolished any inspection regime? What the hell did you expect when you fragmented the Service and abolished the CFBAC and so on? What the hell did you expect

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but fragmentation and everyone doing things differently? And now they come along and complain about it. It's absolutely bonkers! It is not good public policy. *Applause*

You've outlined your frustrations over recent years at the additional roles, and work, and areas of activity that your chief fire officers or fire authorities have asked people to do, your frustration at the way they've failed to negotiate it, at the way they've got volunteers, and they've often got volunteers on the cheap, and have got volunteers doing that without agreement or safety or training put in place for them. So we will undertake a review of all those areas of work including areas that the government or employers say we should be doing. But let's look at the ones we've been campaigning on too. We've been campaigning for recognition of our role in flooding, campaigning consistently, and opposed by CLG up to now, opposed by Ken Knight (of all things) up till now. We want recognition of the role the Fire Service plays. It's recognised in Scotland, for example, already. We want recognition in England, for example, of the role the Fire Service plays in terms of flooding, and the key emergency response we have to play in regards to major flooding incidents.

The Executive Council will then discuss these issues with employers, with government. We expect recognition of the need to address such issues through full discussion, through proper negotiation at national level, through proper funding mechanisms. That's the best way to ensure professional, interoperable standards; that's the best way for us also to ensure fair rewards for what we're doing. This also allows our members collectively to determine what is and what is not acceptable, what roles we may undertake now and in the future, and the pay and conditions we expect in return for doing them. We're asking Conference to allow us to proceed in that way.

We have to adapt in order to survive and the Fire Brigades Union has always done that. I'm confident we can adapt in these times of austerity, these very difficult times, to defend our Service and to defend our members. This Union has got a proud history of pioneering the genuine modernisation of our Service and our profession. It was this Union who campaigned for Firefighters to take on the fire safety role, to get out inspecting workplaces and public buildings. There was opposition in the Union then, but the leadership and Conference recognised the benefits. But we understood, back then in the 1950s and 1960s, that we couldn't just say: we fight fires and that's it. We campaigned for the role of the Fire and Rescue Service in terms of road traffic accidents. We campaigned for that to be recognised as part of our role. We understood back then in the 1970s and 1980s that we couldn't just say we fight fires and that's it.

So we will look at our role. Our role has adapted throughout its history. We have taken on many more things. We discussed another one that's a bit of a mess the other day, the whole question of responding to terrorist incidents. But the truth is they want it all on the cheap, they want it all done locally so they don't have to give a pay rise for it. Well, I think Conference needs to send a very clear message to them: that is not on. We will change, we will develop, we have done, but in turn we want the equipment, the training, the resources and yes the pay that goes along with it. By the way, if they don't negotiate on these things then they may find that many of the things they assume we'll do we're no longer doing them if it comes to it. I say no more Fire Service on the cheap, no more extra work on the cheap, no more extra hours on the cheap. If you want it done you can pay for it. I move the Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Lincolnshire to second.

BRO KARL McKEE (Lincolnshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding the EC Policy Statement, The Future of the Fire and Rescue Service. Conference, as I'm sure one or two of you have noticed, Lincolnshire Brigade Committee put forward a Resolution on Co-responding. This has now been withdrawn to support this EC Policy Statement. My Regional Secretary suggested I shouldn't bring up co-responding up here, but I didn't want to shy away from the issue. In Lincolnshire it is a real issue. Essentially, we barely have an ambulance service. We regularly have to wait for up to an hour for the arrival of an ambulance, with Firefighters sometimes left doing CPR for that entire period, sometimes in front of family members, only for the paramedic to confirm what is already plainly obvious to both the Firefighters and the family members: the casualty is already deceased. This is plainly unacceptable.

You'll notice that the Resolution was deliberately drafted in such a way as to be neutral. It was intended to encourage democratic debate about the pros and cons with all members' views taken into account. One thing is certain: Lincolnshire would always seek to support the best collective position on an issue such as this, and avoid a situation in which we became isolated or divided. Obviously, the ideal answer is an adequately funded ambulance service serving those communities. Lincolnshire were happy to withdraw their Resolution, this partly on account of the fact that it forms part of a wider debate, that being about the remuneration for skills, responsibilities we take on and how these are introduced and managed.

The EC Policy Statement makes reference to the endless drift towards localism, this being one of the Tory

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led Coalition government's main drivers for cutting back public services. When I hear "localism" I automatically think "individualism". Although I understand the need for local flexibility in Fire and Rescue Services and FBU officials alike, plainly the issues facing Lincolnshire were somewhat different from those facing London. However, there is one definite common theme and that is the sustained attack we all face from this government. What does concern and frustrate my members (and I sense this is the case with other officials I talk to) is that locally we are being divided and weakened from the bottom up. No longer as Brigade officials do we just ensure that the Grey Book is adhered to by Fire and Rescue Services. We now negotiate on a myriad of different duty systems, sometimes with pensionable allowances, allowances for additional skills, roles and responsibilities. It's clear that senior Fire and Rescue Service managers, when agreeing these local agreements, are themselves not always aware of the complexities of what they have signed up to. To be fair, I don't think always as officials we do either. I am thinking particularly about the pension implications of allowances attached to duty systems, and the potentially catastrophic impact this could have on our pension scheme, which is already under attack.

The problem with this local approach is there are winners and losers. What this really does is break down the FBU's collective national approach and again divides us from the bottom up. This must in turn weaken our negotiating position nationally. Lincs believe we need more central control on these big issues to ensure we keep operating as a collective and not broken down into self-serving entities. Lincolnshire believe this EC Policy Statement will begin to address this issue. The government talk of falling fire calls and then use this as justification to cut Firefighters, appliances and stations. We know this is wrong and just a cover for cuts and the politically driven ideology. I explain to members of the public that I speak to when I'm out and about. I say this: you may only ever really need the Fire Service properly once in a lifetime and that's if you're unlucky, but when you do, those vital few minutes really are the difference between life and death. If we operate as we can and should do, and save you or a family member's life, the impact of that will stay with you forever. That's why we fight to protect the Fire Service from government attacks and cuts. They generally respond: I get it when you put it like that.

The continued squeeze on budgets is affecting Lincolnshire the same as all over Fire and Rescue Services. In Lincolnshire this is manifesting itself with more bizarre and dangerous ideas coming forward from the service management team. These are generally devised to try to address the appalling number of Retained appliances that are regularly off the run. They include: riding with crews of 3, driver/JO's, and the

latest proposition that we have been fighting (and with some success) Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue thought it was acceptable to have two BA wearers fresh out of training school riding 1 and 2 BA with absolutely no practical experience! Plainly, the FBU challenged this robustly and we now have some backtracking taking place. What amazes and disappoints me is under the threat of budget cuts how low they are willing to sink if not for the FBU.

We also have a memorial board of all the Firefighters we've lost in Lincolnshire over the years. I regularly remind them, much to their displeasure, the second they take their eye off the ball and take Firefighter safety for granted, we'll be the next Fire and Rescue Service to lose Firefighters and add names to that memorial board in headquarters. The FBU in Lincolnshire will not sit idly by and allow that to happen.

To conclude, Lincolnshire fully support the EC Policy Statement, The Future of the Fire and Rescue Service. It's crucial that we not only fight for fair future recognition and remuneration for additional skills and responsibilities, but also seek to redress some of the iniquities that have evolved nationally with regard to additional skills and pay that are outside of role map. We should all be working collectively for the common good. Whilst Lincolnshire have withdrawn our Resolution to support the EC Policy Statement, we would like an assurance that all options are left open for the review, including the potential for provision of some sort of medical assistance by Firefighters at incidents. We must ensure the Fire Service and FBU have a viable future. Please support the EC Policy Statement. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, that's open for debate. Are there any speakers? I'll take the first three in this. Yes, Bedfordshire.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, unfortunately for you lot this isn't the last time you'll be seeing me stood up here today, but there you go. We are supporting the EC Statement on The Future of the Fire and Rescue Service, but with a few words of caution, if I may, President. West Yorkshire look at this, if you like, as qualified support in the fact that the EC Statement, there are some good bits and there are some bad bits, as we historically know. West Yorkshire ask Conference's patience with West Yorkshire on this and ask for a bit of poetic licence really due to Hampshire withdrawing their Resolution on Co-responding.

Yorkshire and Humberside have historically opposed what Hampshire were supporting in the original motion

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and have withdrawn now to support the EC Statement. I may not be able to speak as eloquently and passionately as some, Brothers Ian Murray and Andy Emery are two that immediately come to mind, but I will do my best.

In 2004 our current EC Member moved a Resolution demanding that EC reiterates opposition to first and co-responding as outlined in a Statement to Conference way back in 2001, comrades. It was amended by GMC and seconded by South Yorkshire. The Resolution carried. In 2005 we saw an Emergency Resolution calling for a revision of the co-responding policy from Lincolnshire, and seconded by Cleveland. That was defeated. The same year we had another Emergency Resolution from Humberside calling to maintain our current policy as agreed by Conference 2001, seconded by London and supported by South Yorkshire. That carried. In 2009 it was Hampshire's turn. They brought it to Conference when Merseyside and West Yorkshire vehemently opposed it and Hampshire withdrew from the rostrum. In 2010 Tyne & Wear brought to Conference Paramedics Staffing Deficiencies. This called for a campaign with other unions for the compulsory inclusion of at least one paramedic per ambulance. Honourable, comrades, but in Yorkshire it's come to bite us on the backside and I'll talk a little bit about that in a minute, if I may. 2011 Hampshire had another go. This time it dressed it up as a way of increasing our RDS membership, but once again decided to remit it from the rostrum, so here we are again, 12 years after our original policy statement against co- and first responding.

Can anybody tell me if co-responding has suddenly become part of our role, or has it changed in some way that would provide a better service for the members of the public, or for our own members? No, of course not. That's why we need to be clear, Conference, this is not the role of the Fire and Rescue Service. Not content with allowing some well-meaning RDS staff to play at being paramedics, managers at Yorkshire Ambulance Service, in a bid to save money, have introduced emergency care assistants. These are to work alongside the qualified paramedic, the difference being that these emergency care assistants have to undergo six weeks training, some of that EFAD training, comrades, whereas a paramedic has to undergo a two year degree course. But it gets worse, because Unite had audacity to raise patient safety concerns, the managers at Yorkshire Ambulance have decided to derecognise the union – the biggest union in the country and they've been derecognised because they raised patient safety.

Comrades, I will finish by saying that when looking at this and deciding if it is part of the role of the Firefighters, if it's decided that it is not part of the role of a Firefighter, we do not encourage our members to poach other public sector jobs, not now during these austere times, not ever. Support the EC Statement. *Applause*

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, we are also offering qualified support to the EC Policy Statement. Bedfordshire members note the EC Statement and what is described in it as basically the controlled demolition of the Fire and Rescue Service as we know it. Bedfordshire members understand the need to campaign on the future of the Fire Service and also the obvious links to pay and conditions. To give a little bit of background to why we are speaking on this, Region 9 is covered by the East Anglia Ambulance Service and recent media campaigns by MPs, Fire Ministers, every man and his dog, have put them under considerable pressure due to waiting times for ambulances at incidents. This has led to what I think is now a covert attempt to create some form of blue light merger with the Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service. We don't believe that to be a good idea. We believe we should have a bespoke Fire Service and a bespoke Ambulance Service, and no-one seems to be getting to the bottom of the problem as to why the ambulances are taking so long to get there now. Some are saying it's because of the A&E waiting times, others are saying it's because there are not enough ambulances and they keep moving the goalposts as to why that is the case. More worryingly, when you do get an ambulance across the region in Region 9 we notice now that when they do turn up a lot of the times they can be private ambulances and that may mean that they do or do not have medical qualifications. That puts additional strain on the Fire and Rescue Service when they are in attendance because they then become primary carers until such time as a paramedic arrives. It's causing all sorts of problems.

The qualifications is that on behalf of the Bedfordshire members I'm seeking an assurance from the General Secretary that prior to any agreement being reached on any significant change to the role of the Fire and Rescue Service in either the Grey Book or the NJC role maps, is brought back to this Conference for the decision to be made, or a Recall Conference, for any changes to the pay and conditions. Could I have that assurance, please?

BRO TONY SMITH (Hertfordshire):

President, Conference, no surprise I'm up here in support of this when we're talking yet again about cuts. Hertfordshire have got an anniversary next year, we're in ten years of cuts and I know a lot of my comrades here are in that same position after lots of conversations, telling each other horror stories round the camp fire last night. But I think you're absolutely right, General Secretary, that this Union has always adapted to take on these fights in every way, shape and form. I want us to adapt further. I want for this Union to start to embrace social media, and I have had this conversation with a

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few of you. I fully understand the reservations that many of you have, particularly in light of the most malicious cases that are being pursued against your members basically against their freedom of speech by your managers who decide that they are going to march these people out of their jobs for speaking their minds, for telling the truth, for telling the story as it is. Never mind all this spin, we know the story. Well, we talk about Ken Knight, this morning on the television, and I heard the General Secretary saying we've got to destroy his arguments. General Secretary, President, I've got some good news for you. It's happening as we speak. Anybody who isn't proficient with Facebook and really wants to just have a look at something just to get a taste, have a look at BBC Breakfast News Facebook page this morning. Ken Knight is being torn up for arse paper on there this morning and quite rightly so!

Applause

Thank you, Conference. That's how it is and do you know why? Because it's all these arguments that we're hearing, all these sound arguments like our pensions arguments, like our arguments against LARS and all these other crazy, hare-brained, half-baked ideas. The colleague from Bedfordshire said the controlled demolition of the Fire Service. If any of you thinks for a minute that this is controlled, for God's sake tell me who's controlling it because it looks like a shambles to me from start to finish! But what social media is going to do for us is it's going to allow us a platform for all those good arguments, all those winning arguments. Do you know what, all these politicians are tied into these social media: they have to tweet, they have to Facebook, they have to respond. Somebody said to me this morning: they'll shut that BBC site down. No they won't; that's not on the agenda; they'll let it run and we will destroy them. This is going to work, I know it is. I have a very strong feeling about this. A lot of people are very proficient in this – oh, there's someone on my watch that's very good, you know, we are going to hammer them on this and that's how we're going to do it. I want everyone to embrace that.

We've been to Parliament over the last couple of years, we've been in and I've had a look at some of these politicians and I had some conversations last night –

THE PRESIDENT:

Can you wind up, comrade.

BRO TONY SMITH (Hertfordshire):

This is my last point. Some of these people in Parliament, Cameron and his cronies. They are the guys that have picked the fight. Well, I'm on a different team and I want you to look around the room and look at the team we've got. Who's your money on? *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Devon & Somerset.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, it's not just ex-chief officers we've got to worry about, I'm afraid, as you well know. In Devon & Somerset we're now dealing with the biggest cuts we've ever had to face, five times anything we've had in the past, 20% of the uniformed Wholetime establishment set to go in two years, and that's just phase one. We've already had some references to that. Basically, it's the loss of six full time crewed fire appliances, more than a third of our full time establishment in fact.

I think what underpins all of this is the attitude of our managers to this. We've been mounting, I think, in local areas a very good campaign, undermined right from the start to a large degree by our own chief officer who wrote to all of the MPs and said that as far as he was concerned the proposals would have no adverse effect on either public or Firefighter safety. So how these people can say this, I don't know. It's just absolutely disgraceful. We know the opposite is the case. We also know that the politicians couldn't care less and lie through their teeth. David Cameron, as we know, on the 2010 eve of election in Salford fire station swearing there would be no cuts in front line service. We even had it lately on the eve of the May elections, the local government elections, some of you may have seen it: Nick Clegg in Taunton fire station, which is set to lose half of its full time cover, refused to answer the question about how the government can endorse cuts of £5.5 million in the local Fire Brigade. They're running scared in some ways, but they just hope everybody will put up and shut up.

Beneath all of this is the big issue which has been addressed; the Fire and Rescue Service is nothing if it's not an Emergency Service. They play with all these other things, and I'll give you some figures in a minute to demonstrate what's happened in our Brigade. As far as being an Emergency Service is concerned, we know the strains are showing more and more. I will give you an example. We've had a two year battle in our Brigade to get our authority to even publish the full attendance standards. We've got emergency response standards like you. They're endorsed in the corporate plan and the IRMP. They will not publish them. All they will publish is the response time for the first pump. For those of you who are lucky enough to have better standards, our attendance standards are for a domestic fire first in ten, full attendance (which is normally two) in 13. That's the standards we're trying to meet, and that's a lot worse than some of you have got with these local standards. But if I tell you that as far as those response standards are concerned for domestic fires first attendance we're making on 65% of occasions, full attendance less than

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60%. For RTCs we're looking at attendance times of around 60%. For multi-carriageway RTCs (which is to get the first in 15 and a full attendance of three appliances with ten people, in 18 minutes) less than a third of the time. Bear in mind, we're the Brigade that had the tragic fire and RTC on the M5 last year. That's why these issues are so critical to us. But we've spent two years trying to get them to even publish the figures because they don't want the public to know. That's been a big battle for us.

One of the things I said is I would give you some figures because we're fighting the corporate plan proposals at the moment, and to be frank we all know it's driven underneath by government policy. We are not going to beat the government in terms of its spending plans on our own, which is why we've got to be part of a wider movement to challenge the whole austerity programme which is designed to destroy the public service. That is what it's really about, we know that.

In our Brigade we discovered that since combination with Somerset (Devon and Somerset combined in 2007, the first Brigade in the country to do so) it was sold to us on the basis that we would get economies of scale, no reduction in front line. Since then, what do you think has happened? Only the front line has been cut, we've lost 47 jobs, the corporate side of the organisation, far from being shrunk, has gone up by 67 jobs. The increase in budget on the corporate side from £6 million to £10 million, a 60% increase!

THE PRESIDENT:

Comrade, can you watch the light and stop please.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

I am watching it. Thank you, President. Please support the Executive Council Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, before I bring in the General Secretary, just so that you are aware, we have a lot of business to get through. The Vice President is keeping the time. All I would ask is that you keep to the times that you've agreed. He will show you when you've got a minute to go by flashing amber and then red means you leave the rostrum. We really do need to get as many debates in as possible. You don't want to be remitting business to the Executive Council, I wouldn't imagine. Please, Conference, just keep to the times. Thank you. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, in view of that, I'll be very quick hopefully. In terms of the discussion on co-responding, just to clarify a few points. Dave mentioned our existing policy on

co-responding. Just to be very clear, the existing policy on co-responding is not some sort of absolute policy; it sets out reasons why we reached the conclusion we did. We need to assess the whole of that policy.

In terms of poaching jobs, clearly this Union is not going to be poaching jobs. We would not be involved in that at all, but even the debate among unions is not that straightforward on co-responding. This Union has run industrial action against co-responding. I've been involved in one campaign myself when I was an official in London. We won a ballot, we took industrial action and we fought it off. We've also had members who took that for a year, got their pay docked for a year in Region 6. We then won a significant court case over it.

I spoke to an official in the largest union covering ambulance service workers and had a long discussion about this and asked them what their approach to co-responding was and they said we don't have an absolute opposition to co-responding. So we have a bizarre position in some cases where our members are taking industrial action supposedly to protect the jobs of another service, where that union doesn't necessarily support the same policy that we do. I'm not saying we're wrong; we defend our position, but it is not as straightforward as it might at first appear.

So in terms of the position of Conference, of course any proposals to change Conference policies will need to come back to Conference. But this, Conference, is about getting a grip on the fragmentation that is already there. You've reported it year after year about the roles that our members have already taken on without agreement and without proper rates of pay. It's already happening out there, not just in relation to co-responding but in relation to a whole range of areas of work that we need to get a grip on.

We also need to be making a case that there may be areas of work where we want to be asked to be dealing with. Flooding is probably the prime example where we believe the Fire Service should play a central role. That's an expanding area of work, and we want that recognised in terms of our statutory role and in terms of our negotiations with government, and in terms of funding and of course in terms of pay. Support the Executive Council Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put the Executive Council Policy Statement The Future of the Fire and Rescue Service to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

Conference, I'm about to call Strathclyde to move Resolution 18. I would ask that you help by suspending

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your own standing orders in order to take Resolution 18 and Resolution 20 and that will take us into tea break. You'll have the full tea break but I'm asking you to suspend your standing orders so that we can take both of them and then go into tea break. Is that agreed? *AGREED*

Thank you. Strathclyde.

Resolution 18 – PRIMARY RESCUE SERVICE

Conference recognises the public expectation of the Fire & Rescue Service as the "can do" primary rescue service for emergency incidents related to rescue.

Conference recognises that the appropriate training, resources, funding, remuneration and safe systems of work need to be provided by our employers and the UK Government and devolved administrations to fully meet this public expectation and to permit the UK Fire & Rescue Service to become the world class primary rescue service our communities expect and deserve.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council (EC) to identify the range of emergency rescue functions in addition to core functions currently being carried out within the UK Fire & Rescue Service. Conference further instructs the EC to consider any additional functions that may also be required to support the development of the UK Fire & Rescue Service as the primary rescue service and to set up a working group to produce an EC policy statement outlining:

- *Any required and/or recommended legislative changes.*
- *Any required adaptations to the agreed role maps.*
- *Any potential for encroaching on the work activities of other trade union members involved in the provision of rescues.*
- *Recommended PPE, training and qualifications requirements for each identified and any new recommended specialist skills required to perform additional functions as appropriate.*
- *The impact of any new recommended additional functions (if any) on existing FBU policies.*
- *Consideration of Funding/Resource requirements of introducing any additional recommended functions or recommending the appropriate development of existing functions.*
- *To also consider and recommend where the UK Fire and Rescue Service may be best placed to act as the coordinating service rather than the primary rescue service for specialist rescues for any existing or additional functions.*

- *Appropriate remuneration for each of the range of additional specialist skills currently performed and any further additional specialist skills required to perform additional functions.*

This EC policy statement to be submitted for the consideration of the next FBU Conference.

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

Final sentence, delete "... the next FBU Conference." Replace with "... Brigade Committees within 12 months."

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

Conference, President, as we've already heard, the Fire and Rescue Service has always been a reactive Service. We've adapted to new and emerging risks because we're a humanitarian Service and we want to give people the opportunity to be rescued, whatever the circumstances are. We always make the best attempt we can.

It's clear that since 2003 and the introduction of IRMP we're supposed to now be a proactive Service. So we're supposed to scope risks, we're supposed to consider policies, procedures, PPE, equipment we need to meet the risks within our area. But of course it hasn't been happening to a large degree because for budgetary reasons the Fire and Rescue Service either avoids identifying the risks, or they decide to enter into memorandums of understanding with other providers to meet those risks.

We have had two recent very high profile tragedies which Strathclyde attended which have changed things a bit in terms of the politicians' view of what we should be doing. First of all, there was an incident in Loch Awe where four fishermen were lost in the fog. It took four hours for a rescue boat to get there, and ultimately they couldn't be saved because of that delay. We then had the Galston mine incident which many of you will be familiar with, when Alison Hume tragically lost her life. Again, the Fire Service was on the scene. It was an individual who had fallen into a collapsed mine shaft which was unstable, which we weren't trained to deal with. But we were on scene and there were Firefighters there anxious and willing to try to make a rescue with limited equipment and very limited training they had in terms of SWAH gear. The incident commanders on scene decided no, we've got a memorandum of understanding with police mountain rescue, they're the experts on this, they're trained, we'll await them. However, what they'd failed to do was to test that resilience. It took the police mountain rescue team almost three hours to get on site. Unfortunately, by the

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time they did manage to rescue Alison Hume she had a heart attack as she was being brought to the surface and suffered cardiac arrest and died. Again, there was a very high profile fatal accident inquiry, and out of these two fatal accident inquiries came the Torrie Report and the Tomkins Review. We've recently had the recommendations of those reports adapted into the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service framework from 2013. What that says is that the Fire Service will be the champions of rescue, and the coordinators of specialist rescue, and we will also adapt and improvise in difficult to define circumstances to make rescues. I think that is an absolute disgrace. There's no recognition of extra funding; there's no recognition of extra training; there's no recognition of the fact that all the incidents we attend are foreseeable risks and should be getting properly scoped, properly addressed as part of our IRMP.

Applause

Strathclyde have introduced water rescue, swift water rescue and tidal rescue. We actually (going back to what Matt said about the PVCC statement) have got more fatalities on the Clyde than we have in fires in Glasgow, quite considerably more actually. So the risks are changing as is our response.

We've also introduced a line rescue team but that was a really fraught process. It was very difficult to identify what were the correct procedures, what was the correct PPE, how we keep people safe. It was only with the assistance of our comrades in this room who had some line rescue response already that I managed to achieve a robust and credible line rescue response, and also the commitment of the crews themselves, because they were quite clear: we will not attend any line rescue unless we've got 100% resilience, i.e. we've got two teams there and if that first team gets into difficulty the second team will be there to rescue them, rescue the rescuers. Thankfully we've now managed to achieve that. We've also had reasonably decent ARAs, but again this is different for different Fire and Rescue Services.

So as a Union we have to start addressing these issues. We can't let the politicians' expectations and the public expectations lead us and our members into difficult and dangerous situations we don't have the procedures, equipment or training to deal with. So I urge you to support our motion. It's not about co-responding because we do not support co-responding, but it is about adapting our Service to ensure we have got the funding, resources and remuneration as well for our members to adapt the Service. It is not adapt to survive; it's adapt to thrive. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* I now call Dumfries & Galloway to move their Amendment. *Formally* Is that

seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate. No debate. I now put Resolution 18 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 20, Increased Responsibilities to be moved by Cheshire. The Executive Council support. (Point of order from the floor)

I do apologise Conference, and I do thank you for that point of order. I'll go back to the vote on that, Conference. I put the Amendment from Dumfries & Galloway to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That *CARRIES*

I now put the Resolution as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. That *CARRIES*

Thank you for that help, Conference. I call Resolution 20

Resolution 20 – INCREASED RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Service nationally is under the largest scale attacks in a generation and as a result the battles faced by FBU Members across the UK are numerous and not without casualties.

We fully accept that a Public Sector Service should be efficient and meet the needs of the public and communities it serves. However FBU Members are being asked to take on more and more responsibilities, quite often for no reward and we are in danger of allowing non-FBU Stakeholders to take the lead on these matters.

We feel the time is right for national discussions to take place between the employers and the FBU to find a way forward for areas of activity that currently lie outside of the role map.

We can no longer resist the changing face of the UKF&RS but that does not mean we shouldn't be taking the lead. Failure to be part of the discussion, risks both the future of the UKF&RS and in turn the FBU.

CHESHIRE

BRO STUART HAMMOND (Cheshire):

President, Conference, for decades members of the Fire Brigades Union have trained and adapted to become the ultimate professionals within constantly changing times. Most noticeably, lowering numbers have created these changes – fewer staff, more work. Members recognise and accept the efficiencies the public sector requires. However, with the right FBU involvement both member and community could benefit. Today, the modern British

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Firefighter and Control operator can and do adapt their skills to perform all manner of tasks, both reactive and preventative. Changes already made have meant increasing workloads, more complex training, new high tech introduced, and this is just the basics. In all Fire Services around the country new ideas, activities and responsibilities have been negotiated locally. Some Services then introduce them and some oppose them. It is this that has created a division and confusion to officials and members alike. The actual ideas and responsibilities, whether new or old, are not for today. However, it is the point in the process at what level we must engage and taking the lead on new ideas. This has to be done at a national level to give continuity, fairness and a single standard throughout the country. Engagement has to take place from the very start to stop employers gaining any advantage at the inception of ideas. Any divisive measures must be stopped.

Times have changed, continually do so, and before we are left wanting we must change. The time is right to engage nationally and have a say in the future shaping of the UK Fire and Rescue Services. Members and officials realise our need to move forward with the role map and now possibly introducing new activities and responsibilities from outside the role map. They just need clear guidance and parameters to work within, and this must be at national level. Leading on new ideas will involve members from the start, so they can see how the FBU is shaping their future. This Resolution ensures our involvement at all stages and will provide a base to negotiate terms and conditions from the outset. It will continue to establish national standards, uniting members and not allowing employers to divide and lower conditions in differing Brigades.

We cannot just sit back while members have their job roles diminished, or opportunity for private services to take the lead in any area at members' expense. Therefore we must engage nationally. To this end I move this Resolution for Conference to support. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Do we have a seconder for that? *Formally* The Executive Council support. Is there any debate? I now put Resolution 20 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Conference adjourned for tea. Can you be back in your seats for 25 past. That gives you a little bit extra tea break. Thank you.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

I call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders to give the Standing Orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Change to the delegates' list: Buckinghamshire: delete Ricky Matthews. Conference, I am pleased to announce last night's bucket collection for Rape Crisis raised just over £600 and the Executive Council have agreed to round it up to £750. *Applause*

The Standing Orders Committee would like to thank all Head Office staff and our Conference Stewards for their hard work and efforts this week. *Applause* A special mention to Steve Cole and the Mascol team for their hard work and efforts in setting up our Conference. Thank you to them. *Applause* And a very special thank you from the Standing Orders Committee because we really have messed them around a few times this week, to Alison, Fiona, Steve and all the team and staff at the Imperial Hotel for their help and assistance, thank you. *Applause*

I wish you all a safe journey home once Conference is over. President, that concludes my final report for this Conference. Conference, thank you and thank you President. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Standing Orders report agreed? *AGREED*

Thank you. Can I ask Conference to turn to Page 8 of the Programme of Business, Paragraph J2. I now call Resolution 37 moved by Shropshire with the Amendment from South Yorkshire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 37 – BRIGADE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

This Conference believes that Brigade Health and Safety Representatives have insufficient means of contact, which is having a detrimental effect on the ability of the Union to deal with Health and Safety issues.

In order to be able to deal with Health and Safety issues more effectively, this Conference demands that Brigade Health and Safety Representatives be issued with mobile phones which have e-mail facility.
SHROPSHIRE

Amendment

Second Paragraph:

Second line after the word 'that' (insert) 'each'

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Second line (delete) letter 's' from the word 'representatives'

Third line after the word 'with' (insert) 'a'

Third line (delete) letter 's' from the word 'phones'

Third line after the word 'which' (delete) 'have' and (insert) 'has'

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO STEVE MORRIS (Shropshire):

President, Conference, speaking on our Resolution Brigade Health and Safety Representatives with regard to the provision of mobile phones. We all know the Union's reduced income and some of the painful changes we've had to make to Union structures. But we still need to work effectively to do our jobs. In doing so that means we require the proper means. Otherwise, we might as well not do it at all. It can make us look pretty foolish to our members and employers when we try to do something under health & safety which is so fundamental to us and then possibly fail through lack of resource.

Health & safety, is very important to our members, to our reps and indeed to this Union, we get some of our strongest rights and powers from the health & safety legislation and as a result our members should be safer, injuries reduced and deaths reduced. That also would benefit our employers, though to be fair sometimes their attitude makes you think they don't quite believe it.

Essentially, we're saying this is not a job we can afford to skimp on. Our health & safety coordinator in Shropshire doesn't have an FBU laptop, or access to any other device, to gain access to an FBU account for emails and calls etc. What this Resolution calls for is for the health & safety coordinator in each Brigade to be issued with a facility to access those vital emails and calls. I wouldn't have thought provision of these types of devices would be exceptionally expensive these days. But as we have been made aware, the EC have already done some provisional work with a view to obtaining devices for health & safety reps and we are happy to remit this to the EC. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you for that, comrade. The Amendment falls. We are on Paragraph J3, J4, J5. I now call Resolution 57 Women's Uniform to be moved by London. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 57 – WOMEN'S UNIFORM

Conference remains committed to ensuring that women's health, safety and welfare is never compromised at work, particularly in relation to work wear and personal protective equipment.

An ongoing concern is that women who wear men's uniform at work are exposed to a higher level of risk than those with properly-fitting, gender-specific uniform. As well as compromising safety, the additional discomfort and restriction that ill-fitting kit brings to any employee can be debilitating and is itself unacceptable.

In order to properly map the gap in good, gender-specific provision of uniform and properly address the deficiencies, this conference demands that the Executive Council:

- ***Carry out a national audit to establish a picture of where women's health, safety and welfare is being compromised as a result of uniform concerns***
- ***Raise these concerns at all relevant national forums***
- ***Provide information and support to officials to ensure that this issue becomes a local priority health and safety item***

We call upon the Executive Council to report progress to members within 12 months of this conference.

LONDON

SIS SALLY HARPER (London):

President, Conference, how on earth can anyone possibly believe that there is such a thing as unisex fitting fire gear, or unisex work wear? It is well researched and documented that when men's or unisex fire kit has been fitted on a female mannequin that mannequin was prone to 20% more burns than when it was tested with the correctly fitted women's fire gear. On Thursday morning we heard about toxins and cancers. I have to wear a white shirt. It doesn't make me a bad person, but I do. I have to wear it on the fire ground and it's not practical as most incidents I attend I have to drive back in my dirty fire tunic because I can't take it off due to the fact that my white shirt has gone transparent! London will not provide me with a fleece or anything to cover up because I'm not of the right role. You have to be a fire safety officer or a USAR specially trained to be eligible to get a fleece in London.

The discomfort and restriction that ill-fitting uniform brings to any employee is not acceptable, yet we have members in ill-fitting uniform. We must fight and challenge this attitude all the way and at all levels; we must fight to defend properly fitted PPE and properly fitted work wear uniform. It's not about cost, it's about lives.

What this Resolution calls for is a national audit to establish a picture of where women's health, safety and welfare is compromised as a result of uniform concerns. Conference, I urge you to support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

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THE PRESIDENT:

Seconded by the National Women's Committee.

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 57, Women's Uniform. The issue of ill-fitting work wear and PPE didn't really feature in my life in the early years of my career, and then boom, in 1999 I joined the Women's Committee and from then onwards really it has evolved as a constant recurring irritation to me and to many others. Since 1999 I have advised, assisted, argued and harangued women, managers, supplies officers, PPE managers, health & safety officers, chief fire officers, and even representatives of national clothing projects. Cast your mind back to Wednesday when Matt moved the EC paper on Firefighter Safety and when Sarah and Natalie were talking about the Resolution on Retention of Women. PPE, good fitting PPE, surely is a health & safety issue. It's not a perk; it's a basic requirement. If these issues are as important to us as we say they are then we need to get it sorted and get it sorted soon. I really don't understand why in 2013 we're still talking about it. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. No debate. The Executive Council support. I now put Resolution 57 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph J6, J7, J8, J9, J10, J11, J12. Come to the rostrum, thank you.

BRO IAN MCGREGOR (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, I would like to update Conference on the status of the Dalry Road investigation. Our FBU report is complete and at the turn of the year we decided that we needed to set a date to release this report. We felt it was important to release our report before 1st April, which saw the end of Lothian & Borders and the start of the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Throughout our investigation we have maintained the commitment that anything and everything we do must not negatively impact on any potential future court action.

On 27th February 2013 the FBU were served with a warrant to release the report and all supporting documentation to the Crown Office. We fully complied with the terms of this warrant and on 1st March we handed over copies of all our information and everything involved with that. The warrant did not prohibit us from releasing the report, but we decided

that it would not be prudent, for the investigation and our own protection, to proceed with the intended release. On 9th April the Crown was granted an application to raise criminal charges against Lothian & Borders Fire and Rescue Service. The application contained two charges under health & safety legislation, a breach of Section 2, Health & Safety at Work Act, and a breach of Regulation 3, Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations. Section 2 Health & Safety at Work Act relates to the general duties of employers to ensure the safety of their employees whilst at work. Regulation 3 of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations relates to risk assessment. Criminal liability has now been transferred to the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. These charges only indicate that court proceedings will take place and they do not state what specific breaches are alleged. Only when the Crown release the full petition will we have a better understanding of what the general charges mean. Thanks for allowing me to update. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, comrade. Paragraph J13, paragraph J14. We are on Section I, Paragraph I1. I now call Resolution 12 moved by B&EMM with the Amendment from Shropshire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 12 – UK FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – 'JOB MIGRATION'

The Government's austerity measures have led to massive budget cuts and job losses in the Fire Service. Most Brigades now have limited finances and are circumventing normal processes to achieve certain objectives especially in the recruitment of operational staff.

B&EMM fully support maximum establishment for all Brigades. In recent times many Brigades have been using the 'migration' policy of recruiting retained operational staff into full time posts. The overwhelming majority of these employees are white male – there are less than 1% BME in retained roles. The migration of retained into full time posts ensure even less opportunity for our BME communities to find employment in the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS), this despite the UK FRS calling itself an Equal Opportunities employer.

This Conference calls upon the FBU to reject job migration within the UK FRS as a means of recruiting for operational vacancies as it is unfair and discriminatory, and to publish guidance for FBU Officials in demanding proper processes for filling vacancies.

B&EMM

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Amendment

End of resolution, add: “This guidance to be issued by December 2013”

SHROPSHIRE

BRO LUD RAMSEY (B&EMM):

President, Conference, last time speaker. Before I move this Resolution I just want to thank all my friends and colleagues in the Fire Brigades Union for helping me get through this Service because at the end of this year they will probably see me finishing doing my time. *Applause*

I am moving Resolution 12. Everyone's aware of the savage cuts made by this government. It has a massive impact on the public sector, on our Fire Service and the communities that we serve. Some fire authorities just cut jobs and put lives at risk. Current government austerity measures underpin some of the decisions that we historically have campaigned against.

After the Thematic Review in 1999, Fire Services were set targets for BME and women for ten years to improve the figures. Loads of Fire and Rescue Services, all they did was complain. They thought there's no way we can achieve this, but some Fire and Rescue Services did do stuff. In London they have done a lot of work and they have reflected some of the communities that they serve now.

A diverse workforce is a progressive and informed workforce. Diversity is a strength. Different people from different cultures bring different ideas and fully make the Fire and Rescue Service reflect the communities that we serve. We've got less than 10% BME in the UK Fire and Rescue Service. We've seen over the years many Fire and Rescue Services do a number of initiatives to try to address this issue and try to encourage BME people to make the Fire and Rescue Service the job of their choice. The Fire Brigades Union has supported this position. But what we're going to see over the next 10/15 years is a gradual decrease in the numbers that we've got now. Most of the Fire and Rescue BME Firefighters joined in the mid to late 80s early 90s. So we're going to see 2% leaving every year. Nobody is going to be addressing that. There is less than 1% in the Retained Section. Again, not many Services have ever done anything to look at or even address that problem.

What we want to see is an open and transparent process. We don't just want to see jobs for the boys. We want to make sure that this is open so that everybody can see what is going on, because that's not happening. The Fire Brigades Union has, for too long, campaigned on equality and diversity issues. We can't turn the clock back now. If this motion isn't passed, what we could find is a number of Brigades who have

never done anything, we will be helping them by stealth. They've never done anything, they never wanted to do anything, and now they don't have to do anything.

We know what some of these chief fire officers are like. My colleague from Hertfordshire, I was chatting with, he's laughing at us. He's saving money because he doesn't have to run a recruitment campaign. So he can go and tell the fire authority: I'm saving money. He can then go and tell them: I'm only going to be recruiting from the Retained Section. So I'm going to save more money because we don't have to go through no process; they are already in the system. Then he's going to tell them: I'm going to save even more money because I'm not going to pay them while they're training. Me, I thought slavery was finished 200 years ago, but obviously this chief fire officer wants to bring back slavery in the Fire Service now in 2013. *Applause*

I don't know how he can sit down at home, having a big fat steak saying: this is nice; I wonder what those recruits are going to be eating; they might have to go to Tesco's and see if they can get a Value loaf of bread and maybe a Value tin of beans. How could he sit there and let this happen? How could we sit here as a Union and accept it? Conference, I need you to think carefully about this motion, what it says, because we don't want this to keep going on. Please support the motion. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is that seconded? Come to the rostrum, please.

BRO PAUL DRINKWATER (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I fully support the sentiments and statement of Lud and the B&EMM members. Once again, the members of our least represented communities are being penalised by this policy. I appreciate that it's difficult for the EC because of the work that they've done having the rights of Retained Firefighters acknowledged. After all, we do have the same skills, the same qualifications and the same training and we should be treated on an equal footing. But I don't believe that this Resolution actually undermines that work whatsoever. We should be demanding an equal and level playing field for all our communities' members. This is not only a B&EMM issue, but it affects all inner city communities everywhere which is not within the turn in of an RDS station. So it affects not only black and ethnic minority communities but any and most of our poorest communities that we should be representing.

CLG has an equality and diversity strategy 2008 – 2018 which points out we will know when we are achieving our goals when recruitment of minority ethnic employees

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is at the same percentage or higher than their representation in the working age population. Clearly, it's not and we're failing. We all know that national targets have been scrapped for the employers, but as a trade union we shouldn't be going along with that.

In my experience working with young people I organise training and coaching at a local BMX club. If any of you know, BMX clubs tend to be in the middle of massive council estates because they are seen as a good form of youth distraction. Where we work, it's in between three of the biggest council estates and probably the poorest areas in Leeds. What strikes me about the young people in these communities is the lack of aspiration. I don't think it's their lack of aspiration; I think it's the lack of opportunities that their families are afforded and the lack of opportunity that they see within their own communities. I don't think many of them know any Firefighters, let alone think they can achieve the impossible task of becoming one.

We also have the young Firefighter schemes which encourage engagement amongst our poorest communities, but that seems like it's just a carrot that we dangle in front of them now, a tantalising carrot that they're never going to be able to achieve, certainly in the short term.

I don't want to see a return to Victorian class attitudes where we doff our caps to employers and we take exactly what we're given. We're starting to see that with the panacea of youth apprenticeships. We're starting to see those apprenticeships creep into the Fire Service. If that's all we can offer our young people – £99 a week and no promise of a job at the end, then we should be doing something about it.

I went to a recent Apprenticeships Award Ceremony with my daughter who's done an apprenticeship in dental health nursing. Sir Keith Pearson, who's Chair of the Health Education Board in England suggested that bands 1 to 4 of all jobs within NHS should be apprenticeships. A quick search of that showed that administration workers were getting £99.34 a week. Before I joined the Fire Service, that's exactly what I did. I was an administrative officer and I earned more than that, and the kind of training I got lasted about two weeks. So I don't think we can justify anything like that as an apprenticeship.

I want the workforce within the Fire and Rescue Service to be truly representative of the communities in which we serve and I second this Resolution to promote fairness and equality for all. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have Shropshire to move their Amendment.

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, in submitting the Amendment our aim was to make sure that the guidance on job migration that is called for in the Resolution is forthcoming and not at the bottom of a To Do list for ever and a day. I have to say, I expect many of our Retained members may not quite understand the intent of the Resolution. We've got plenty of Retained members in Shropshire, of course. But I think this is the important point. Brigades around the country seem to be all over the place on this issue, especially now with the financial pressures of the cuts. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service did some job migration some years ago for some specific posts which were Retained Support Officers, and it seemed to make sense at the time. But I certainly regret allowing the Service to use job migration then. We have stopped them repeating the exercise by insisting that they produce a Brigade policy before any further job migration is embarked upon. Unsurprisingly, they have yet to produce a policy. But they would have been happy enough to put something through if we hadn't insisted.

This is the crux of the issue. I've got some very clear ideas about what should and should not be allowed for people to migrate across different Brigades and different shift systems, but then so has everybody else in the room. That's why we need a coherent FBU policy to be drafted so that the Union in each different Brigade has the same approach, and the sooner the better because the pressure from the Fire and Rescue Services to use job migration is increasing. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Shropshire Amendment seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate. Devon & Somerset.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, unfortunately, I am having to speak against this. I want to say to B&EMM, especially in light of the vote we had earlier in the week over Resolution 42 on voting rights, please don't think this is in any way against all the work we should be doing to promote an increased involvement and representation of the underrepresented Sections in all of our Services. I absolutely endorse that, and all the work that we need to be doing. We've got a much more active Section in my Brigade. I don't think the Union is as proactive as it should be. But there's loads of work to be done there. But you have to look at the wording of the Resolution which says to "reject" job migration. We need to consider that because we cannot just reject job migration full stop. We do need guidance on better selection procedures and we do need to keep advancing

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our processes so that we've got a level playing field. But let's just consider what it might mean when you look at that in a bit more detail.

We fought, and we have been at the head of that fight, to get Retained members equality within the Service. So they are a Section in themselves that we have to consider. If the selection procedures, the IPDS arrangements are equivalent we cannot simply say to Retained Firefighters that they will not be allowed to migrate into another position, be it Wholetime. We cannot do that. It would be against our policies, and I think we would struggle to do it perhaps even legally.

Then you've got to consider other underrepresented Sections within the Service. Let's take women, for example. In my Brigade we have more women – it's still low, I appreciate, as a density – in the Retained Section than we do in the Wholetime side. Some of those have been able to migrate, i.e. through proper selection procedures, into Wholetime positions. Are we going to say that we will not allow that to be a facility within the Service? Actually, it is one of the ways that women can become engaged in the Fire and Rescue Service and then advance their involvement. If we're going to reject migration per se then that will stop.

So I do think the issue is a bit more complicated than we might want it to be. It is really important to get the tone right, because the Union is in a bit of a state over what we do about advancing our equality agenda and I absolutely agree with that. There is loads more to do; we have to try to get a grip on that. But this proposal, I am afraid, is going to run into the sand for all sorts of reasons. I have to say sadly that we can't support it for that reason. *Applause*

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Conference, President, we are supporting Resolution 12, Job Migration. Just like Lud, I am also a last time speaker at Conference. What I would also like to do is to thank Lud for all the work he has done for B&EMM and for the FBU. I know Lud was a Hampshire official for many years and he really did a huge amount of work to progress the recruitment of Black & Ethnic Minority Firefighters into Hampshire.

However, since the government abolished targets at the beginning of 2010 I believe Hampshire, like many Brigades, has essentially wrapped themselves in the banners of diversity and equality but totally neglected to actually actively recruit from those communities. Just before I came to Conference I wrote to our workforce planners and I said: can you give me a breakdown of BME Firefighters in Hampshire, please? I got a very panicky reply back to me saying they didn't know but they'd get back to me fairly quickly. We are just about to

start recruiting from Retained into Wholetime. I questioned this with them, and I sort of put forward the argument that this would actually not help our ability to encourage recruitment from Black & Minority Ethnic into the Fire and Rescue Service. I was told that it wasn't their fault that Black & Minority Ethnic don't live within four minutes of Retained stations. That was the only answer they could give me back: it wasn't their fault that that was the case.

It struck me that they have no intention to actively seek to recruit from the black and ethnic minority population of Hampshire. They use the fact that we don't have these people in Hampshire; how can we recruit from them? If I tell you that St. Mary's has a Retained pump, and St. Mary's fire station is an inner city fire station that sits within an area of high density black & ethnic minority population; there is not a single black Firefighter at St. Mary's.

If we don't resist – and I do understand Dave's arguments against this; I think he makes some very valid points – this will just be the very cheap option for Fire and Rescue Services; they will just seek to recruit from their Retained workforce, many of whom, 99% as Hampshire tell me, are white Anglo Saxon male. Support the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO DEREK MacLEOD (Hertfordshire):

Conference, we are voting against Resolution 12. I'm sent here to vote as we are mandated to vote, and we're actually doing this in Hertfordshire, so that's one of the reasons why we vote accordingly. But in voting against, I'm just going to tell it to you the way it is and then you can make up your own minds. Thank you for bringing the Resolution here.

Our chief said that we're doing it because "it's my job to save money". Bottom line. In Hertfordshire our Retained stations are in more rural locations, expensive to live in, and exactly the same as Hampshire in the makeup of the workforce there. You are absolutely right: we know what we're going to get if we allow this migration through. If I'm sounding like I'd like to vote a different way, OK.

With regard to the equality issue, because obviously we raised this. It goes beyond that, this saving money; this is the same chief that wants to do a Wholetime course unpaid. When we said what sort of Firefighter are you going to get; are you worried about the sort of Firefighter you're going to get, either through the migration RDS to Wholetime or an unpaid Wholetime recruit course? He said: I tell you what we're going to get; we're going to get a really dedicated Firefighter working for nothing, aren't we! I was sitting by and didn't say nothing but I had to speak on that. I said: I tell

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you what you're going to get, it is those people who would bust their guts to be a Firefighter that can't afford to do it, unpaid disadvantaged, need an income. How are they going to be able to do it if they're the sole provider in a household? You're disadvantaging them, if you recruit from the RDS. In Hertfordshire, we're doing it, we are disadvantaging it. That's what happened. So I'm mandated to vote one way; I thought I'd get up here say why we're voting and actually tell you not that this will happen but in Hertfordshire, as our brother said, this is happening. We are voting against this Resolution and we understand the EC's point when it doesn't offer support. *Applause*

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I agree with a lot of the sentiments expressed already up here on both sides of the argument. But I have to say, particularly with the comrade from Avon. Migration, we've worked hard already both nationally and in Derbyshire for migration. I see migration as an opportunity for all. It doesn't just consolidate the Retained and say: you've got to be from here, there or wherever to migrate. Migration is an opportunity for everybody, whether you're from the B&EMM Section, a woman or LGBT. It gives you an opportunity to join the Retained Section and then move through into the Wholetime Section. Or you can join the Wholetime Section like other people have done. So it's an extra opportunity, it's more opportunity. If we do as the Resolution suggests – and I think that's the point that's been made – the problem with the Resolution is it just says let's reject migration. I just don't think we can close the door and turn our backs on our brothers and sisters from the Retained Section and say: we've worked really hard in Derbyshire, or whichever Brigade or nationally, on migration but now that's it; you're done for. I don't see how we can go back on everything we've fought for for part time workers. Speaking from Derbyshire and the views from there, it's the issue with the actual wording of the Resolution and all the hard work that's already gone in to putting migration in place in Derbyshire and it's literally just started to happen. So for me to go back now and say I've supported a Resolution to knock that on the head, I simply can't do that.

As I've already said, I do see migration as an extension to recruitment opportunities for everybody, so speaking from Derbyshire and mandated to vote the way I am, I do support that position. In representing the views of my members, I oppose from Derbyshire. We oppose the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I'll call the National Retained Committee and then I'll call the AGS to give opposition.

BRO LYNDON JONES (NRC):

President, Conference, we are opposing Resolution 12. Conference, first let me point out that the NRC supports the excellent work that has been undertaken by our Equality Sections on behalf of our members both present and future, especially in relation to the important work that has been done addressing the disparity between the demographic footprint of the UK Fire and Rescue Service when compared to that of the UK population and other public services.

The NRC see this Resolution as being well intentioned, but however feel it is ultimately flawed on several levels. This Resolution, if passed, will be seen as flying in the face of all FBU work that has been done to campaign on behalf of RDS members and our victory establishing that RDS Firefighters are in fact part time Firefighters and are now afforded the same rights as our full time colleagues.

The Resolution's sole concern is in regard to RDS Firefighters wishing to migrate or transfer to Wholetime positions within the UK Fire and Rescue Service. We know that the current makeup of the UK Fire and Rescue Service is less than 4% of women and even a smaller percentage for minority members. This is clearly not an acceptable position and the government's decision to remove the targets should quite rightly be condemned. But given the current state of affairs on this issue we find ourselves perplexed by the omission of all members of the Fire and Rescue Services being within the scope of this Resolution. After all, the vast majority of our full time Firefighter members are within the stereotypical group of white male, the very target area that the Resolution is trying to address. We are not saying that all transfers across the Services should be curtailed in this way as this would surely cause as many, if not more, problems than it would attempt to solve.

We are also concerned that the Resolution as currently written can be interpreted to be saying that although attaining improved diversity targets is an essential goal for the UK Fire and Rescue Service it is of little or no consequence when it comes to other Services that are predominantly made up of RDS Firefighters. We believe that this is a totally wrong message to be sending out, whether intentionally or otherwise.

We have listened to the debate on Resolution 13 and reference to increasing the retention of RDS Firefighters in my Service. The fact of these increases in RDS would suggest that more consequence should be given to the RDS element in the UK Fire and Rescue Service and not less, as is being implied by this Resolution.

I would urge B&EMM to reconsider and withdraw the Resolution, or remit to the EC for further work. If it is

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unable to do this, regrettably I have to oppose this Resolution. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I think that debate reflects something which I know the Executive Council, and I am sure Conference, appreciates and that is that this Conference has and continues to do two things. One is shows its absolute commitment to equality within this Union but more importantly within the Fire and Rescue Service, and also examination of the detail of those issues within the debate. I think that's really something which is important that this Union continues to do. We don't just focus on issues such as pensions, such as pay; we also think about the people on the ground.

I do want to say this. I know it was said by a number of speakers, particularly Dave Chappell, with regard to the signal that it sends. What I do want to emphasise is that the part time workers case that we ran for that full eight years (I know we always say eight years but it was a long, hard struggle against the employers) did establish correctly the equality status of Retained members as part time workers. The Resolution clearly would undo this and would be a major step backwards, and would send all the wrong signals.

I also want to say something else. The use of the word migration is their term; it's the firm's term. In the Fire and Rescue Service it's about transfers – Wholetime members transfer between stations. Retained members should have that same right to transfer to Wholetime stations. We should always be mindful not to use their language.

But we are also mindful of what the Resolution seeks to achieve, and that is a reversal of the poor recruitment and retention policies of Fire and Rescue Services and frankly their two-faced statements of commitment which we know to be false. We support that and we know that Conference supports that. We do welcome the objective of B&EMM in this Resolution. I know it came up in the debate: the Equality Sections can only bring Resolutions related to the constituency of their Section. I have no doubt at all that the sentiments that B&EMM had when writing this Resolution also extended to women as well in terms of recruitment issues.

But it is the wording; there is a contradiction between equality recruitment issues for part time workers under equality legislation and those from the black & ethnic minority constituency and also for women as well.

I just want to say this. You know that we are opposing the Resolution for the reasons I've said. We will give this commitment. We will look at this, we will deal with the issues. It will be part of a wider project set up by the Executive Council which will address the concerns regarding representation in the Fire and Rescue Service as part of broader reflection of our serious concerns regarding this government's abandonment of commitment to equality initiatives. I don't think they ever had a commitment. And as part of a wider recruitment issue as well. That review will take views, will seek, encourage and assist the expression of views from all of the Equality Sections and the wider trade union. I do want to be clear, it is not about burying it; that is about saying a key theme will be a focus on the recruitment and retention processes and practices within the Fire and Rescue Services from an equality perspective.

With those assurances, and given the clear problem which has been recognised by a number of speakers, and I'm sure by Conference too, I would urge B&EMM to withdraw it, or regrettably, given the objective of B&EMM and the sentiment of the Resolution, we would have to urge Conference not to support the Resolution but to oppose. Our preference clearly would be withdrawal from B&EMM. Thank you, Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Right of reply from B&EMM.

BRO LUD RAMSEY (B&EMM):

Conference, in order for unity we will be prepared to remit this Resolution. *Applause*

But what we're going to need is an assurance from the General Secretary and the President that this will happen. We only have Conference once every two years now. Some Brigades can't wait two years because they need the guidance now, because this is going to happen more and more. Me personally, when I joined the Fire and Rescue Service, and I was the first black Firefighter to join Hampshire, I was thinking this is going to be a good move and just by being there I will encourage more people to join. But that never happened. As I said, I phoned up Paul and just wanted to know, what's the figures now. They couldn't even tell him. I said do they want me to lend them a few fingers? There's less than 10, and yet we've got Brigades who are a lot smaller than us who have done a little bit of work and done something to address this problem.

We still need to do work because the communities out there, if we have to take industrial action over pensions, we've got this stuff with Ken Knight now, we're going

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to have the government against us, the media are going to use all their nasty tricks against us. We're going to need the community behind us. When we last went on strike the BME community got right behind us. The Firefighters in St. Mary's in Southampton said: they'd never seen ethnic minorities, but when we were on strike they came, they gave money, they supported us. We need to support them just the same way. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much, Lud, and you certainly do have my assurance that everything that the AGS promised in his opposition will come to pass. I promise you that.

We are on Paragraph I2, Paragraph I3, Paragraph I4, Paragraph I5. I now call Resolution 15, Equality Impact Assessments, Lothian & Borders.

Resolution 15 – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
This Conference condemns the statement made at the CBI Conference last year by the Prime Minister announcing their intention to scrap Equality Impact Assessments.

This announcement only serves to bring our ongoing fears to fruition and confirms the Government's lack of understating on equality and discrimination issues.

Unions, in particular their equality sections, have worked tirelessly to ensure employers have written policies in place on structures and procedures, but also to attain accountable, measurable and transparent tools to defend equality rights across the board. Also tools to ensure that they will defend these rights and progressive changes already in place.

This cynical move by the current Westminster Government is irresponsible and retrograde and takes the equality agenda back decades.

We call on the Executive Council, in consultation with the equality sections, to work within the national structures of the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are defended. Also that the Executive Council work with the TUC and other equality organisations to campaign, lobby and fight to defend not only these assessments but all positive equality legislation currently in situ. This to be done as a matter of urgency with reports issued to the membership on a regular basis.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

BRO IAN MCGREGOR (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, progressing equality and tackling inequality and discrimination has always been a priority

for members and officials in Lothian & Borders. But challenging alone can be difficult without accountable, measurable and transparent tools. We all know the first thing that gets attacked when there's a squeeze on budget is the equality agenda. We've heard evidence of that this week. Defending equality isn't always popular but we should not be afraid to take the unpopular steps if they are the right steps. Conference, we should not underestimate the importance of equality impact assessments and how this valuable tool can not only be used to support conditions of service for underrepresented groups in the Fire Service, but will also help us in our daily challenges of the ongoing attacks to the Fire and Rescue Services we represent.

In his speech to the CBI last November David Cameron promised to call time on official tests to ensure that government policies comply with the equality laws. He said that there was too much bureaucratic nonsense and policymakers should use judgement rather than tick boxes. When you've got right wing policy makers that oppose gay marriage, and jobs for women of child bearing age I really have no confidence in their judgement at all. Scotland still carries out equality impact assessments and if we as a Union don't keep up pressure to fight to defend them then we may be in the same positions as our brothers and sisters in other parts of the UK. It is important for officials to note that under public sector equality duty a public authority must, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, victimisation that are prohibited by the Equality Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

In order to show due regard there needs to be documented evidence and equality analysis still needs to be carried out. Equality impact assessments were a tool used to document this evidence. That tool may be under attack by the Westminster government, but the law still requires a public authority to show due regard. The TUC have a brilliant toolkit that I urge you all as officials to have in your resources. I would also encourage Regions to include a session on equality impact assessments in their Fairness at Work Schools, and for the Executive Council to consider it in a session at National School.

So what does having due regard to equality mean? How can this help with the ongoing attacks on the Fire Service and our conditions of service? Let's say one of the local authorities is planning on closing down a fire station. It's a policy decision and therefore it has to show due regard to equality. The fire station may be in an area where there is a high percentage of elderly people who fall into the protected groups under the Equality Act. An equality impact assessment would then show a negative impact on this group and the public sector duty legislation can be used to challenge the

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closure legally through an equality impact assessment. It should be second nature to us as officials to be asking Fire and Rescue authorities or public authorities for an equality impact assessment as a basic way of checking that the duty to have due regard is being complied with.

Conference, we need every tool in the box to help us with the ongoing barrage of attacks on our Fire Services. Using equality rights and legislation isn't just a good thing to do; it's the smart thing to do. Please download the toolkit from the TUC website and please support the motion. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder?

SIS JENNY IMPEY (Kent):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 15. EIAs are a fundamental part of policy and decision making across the country. We use the process in negotiations with our Brigades to remind them of their legal obligations to ensure they think carefully about the impact their decisions have on particular groups who are often forgotten or ignored. Government guidelines stipulate that this should not be used as a tick box exercise. David Cameron, when addressing the CBI last November, said; "We have smart people in Whitehall who consider equality issues while they are making policies. We don't need all this tick box stuff. You no longer have to do them if these issues have been properly considered." Who by and how is that going to be done now, if it's done at all? Please support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council support. It's now open for debate. No. I now put Resolution 15 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Conference, it is now my great pleasure to welcome to the rostrum Frances O'Grady, the General Secretary of the TUC. Frances has been an active trade unionist all her working life and she's had many jobs, ranging from shop work to the voluntary sector. Before the TUC, Frances worked for the Transport & General Workers Union where she worked on successful campaigns (with a team, I would hasten to add) to stop the abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board, and for the introduction of a national minimum wage, equal pay for women and a range of industrial wage claims. In 1994 Frances was appointed as TUC campaigns officer and ran campaigns (with a team) for equal rights for part timers and against low pay. In 1997 she was appointed to head up the New Unionism campaign, and launched the TUC's Organising

Academy. Frances went on to head up the TUC's Organisation Department in 1999. She has been the Deputy General Secretary of the TUC since 2003. In January 2013 Frances became the General Secretary of the TUC, the first woman ever to hold this post.

Applause

Fair pay remains a core ambition of Frances. She's a strong believer in protecting the public service ethos. She opposes privatisation and leads the TUC campaign to Save the NHS. Frances is aged – I'm not going to tell you how old Frances is actually. Frances has been to the Executive Council and I made the mistake of getting her age wrong. I'm not going to tell Conference Frances' age. You can guess. She's very young! What I will say is, Frances is a very good comrade and a great friend to this Union. Frances, welcome. *Applause*

SIS FRANCES O'GRADY

(General Secretary, Trades Union Congress):

Thank you very much, Alan, for your hard work as President, and thank you to delegates for inviting me to address your Conference. I'm very proud to be able to bring greetings of solidarity on behalf of the whole TUC. I'm proud also to put on record our appreciation of the demanding, the difficult and often dangerous work that you do, whether it was dealing with the aftermath of terrorism in 2005, responding to the riots in 2011, or helping communities during the terrible flooding in 2012. FBU members have provided outstanding services to the people of Britain in the most challenging of circumstances. Each and every day on average you rescue 19 people from fires. That is over 7,000 lives saved each year – men, women and children. Over the past decade, thanks to your pioneering work on fire prevention, you have been able to cut the number of deaths by a third. We don't say it often enough in Britain, but Firefighters deserve more than our admiration; they deserve our respect.

Delegates, I want to begin by paying tribute to Matt for his outstanding leadership. For nearly a decade Matt has led this Union with great determination, dedication and dignity. Thanks to his work on the TUC Executive and the General Council, he has also made a huge contribution to the wider movement. So I was very proud, on behalf of the TUC, to nominate Matt for one of the employee seats on the Health & Safety Executive – a serving union leader who commands the confidence of the whole trade union movement, leading a union that commands the trust of the whole wider public, and a man whose knowledge and commitment to health & safety, in my experience, is quite simply second to none. I have to say, delegates, it was therefore a crying shame that the HSE and the government failed to appoint him – a reflection not on him but on them.

Applause

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In the Trade Union Movement we've always believed that health and safety was too important to play politics with. In fact, the TUC has been the greatest defender of the HSE. If only (I have to say) others showed us the same respect. Conference, you should all be tremendously proud to have Matt as your General Secretary.

Delegates, I also want to pay tribute to everything that the FBU has achieved as a powerful and principled voice of Firefighters, as a staunch defender of our public services, and also as a great champion of internationalism, because from Columbia to Cuba, be in no doubt your commitment to global solidarity is quite simply second to none. You are a professional union that speaks up for professional workers and for the profession as a whole. You've led the debate about integrated risk management plans, you've pressed the case for the need for national standards on response times, and years before anybody else, you were the first to expose the catastrophic failings of Regional Control. All this and more reasons to be proud.

But you know better than I these are profoundly difficult times for FBU members. Together you face some big challenges, and none is greater than that of pensions. With the Public Service Pensions Act now on the statute book, this is a critical time for you. Plans for a single firefighter pensions scheme from 2015 doesn't just mean paying more and getting less; it also means working longer. As you know, the government wants to impose a national pension age of 60. This is despite the fact that there isn't a shred of evidence medically to support such a move. This is despite the review by Dr. Tony Williams not supporting an NPA of 60 for current Firefighters, and despite the fact that older Firefighters would face dismissal on fitness grounds with no redeployment opportunities on offer.

I don't know about you, but I sometimes wonder whether those in power on high, taking those decisions, really understand what's involved in the job. Perhaps they should be made to get a little taste of the real world before they make those pronouncements from on high. I've been taking a look at the National Firefighter physical tests. In the interests of equality of application, perhaps we should see a few Cabinet members fair doing them! *Applause*

Maybe we could start with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, 61. Let's see if he can manage to drag a hose reel for 25 metres, then jog his way back! What about the casualty evacuation. Can he, dressed in full protective gear and equipment, drag a heavy casualty around a 30 metre course, walking backwards? How about one for George Osborne? I'd like to see him flailing around a crawl way without any proper vision, although thinking about it, that's how he spends his time in his day job! *Applause*

But delegates, the risks are clear for all to see: a pension scheme that clearly wouldn't be fit for purpose, a fitness regime that may discriminate against women and is simply not workable, and thousands of dedicated Firefighters facing the sack. Let's be clear, this is simply not acceptable. I want to make the promise to you today that the TUC stands ready to back the FBU all the way and in any way that we can. *Applause*

Conference, as the government threatens your pension rights, it is of course also making drastic cuts to the services that you provide. The facts speak for themselves. Central government funding for the Fire and Rescue Service is being slashed by 25% over four years. Some 1,500 Firefighter posts were cut in the first year of the Coalition alone. Response times are now two minutes slower than they were a decade ago – two minutes when we know that every second counts. Across Britain, nearly 70 fire stations are at risk of closure and many more likely to be downgraded.

Delegates, let's be clear, cuts cost lives. The British people want a Fire Service, not a funeral service. From Berkshire to North Yorkshire, from Kent to Dorset, every part of the country is at risk from this post code lottery of cuts and closures. In Devon & Somerset, which during the recent floods answered over 1300 emergency calls and rescued over 200 people in just five days, the Service is being cut by 10% from this April and 7% from next April. Frankly, it's a disgrace! *Applause*

Conference, nowhere is more affected by the cuts than Britain's biggest cities and none more so than London where 12 fire stations, 18 fire engines and over 500 Firefighter posts are being axed. Who's responsible? Boris the Joker Johnson. As a graduate of the Bullingdon Club, let's face it, destroying things is his specialist subject. What really grates is that the Mayor is acting in defiance of the democratic decisions reached by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. *Applause*

The cuts put nearly 5 million Londoners at risk in order to save £45 million – peanuts to the Mayor's banker friends in the City, but a matter of life and death to ordinary people.

So today let's say to Mr. Johnson: your cuts are wrong, we will fight them every step of the way! *Applause*

Delegates, if attacks on your pensions and cuts to services weren't bad enough in themselves, you also face the threat of privatisation. Of course, today we had the publication of Sir Ken Knight's report, providing in my book merely more evidence that the government is looking for an alibi. We know from the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis that the government wants to contract

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out the entire Fire and Rescue Service in line with the agenda set out in the Open Public Services White Paper. The danger is the planned so-called mutualisation of the Fire Service in Cleveland could be used as a test bed for the rest of the UK, despite opposition from local people in what is one of the highest risk industrial areas in Europe. The FBU is absolutely right to warn that privatisation will cost lives. Let's face it, after the shambles in London and Lincolnshire, you wouldn't put the likes of AssetCo in charge of a whelk stall, let alone a Fire Service! *Applause*

Fighting fires should be about public need, not private profit. So Conference, today let us say loud and clear to the government: our Fire Service is not for sale, not today, not tomorrow, not ever! *Applause*

Conference, privatisations that nobody wants, savage cuts nobody voted for, attacks on your terms and conditions that nobody supports. That's the industrial reality now facing you. Sadly, it's being replicated right across our public services right across the UK. The truth is what we're up against is one of the nastiest, the most ideological, the most right wing government that Britain has ever seen, a government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich! *Applause*

It is slashing and burning its way through a decade of depression, destroying public services that have taken generations to build, attacking not just the poor and vulnerable but ordinary working families too. All this as we live through the gravest economic crisis that any of us have seen, a crisis that wasn't caused by too much spending on schools or hospitals or fire stations, but by the greed of speculators in the City, by growing inequality in household debt, and ultimately by too much economic power being held in the hands of too few. But rather than addressing the root causes of the crisis, Ministers are now making it a whole lot worse. Borrowing is up, Britain has lost its triple A status, and unemployment is high, back up to a million for young people. As a quick glance at the Coalition government's policies shows, we are very definitely not all in this together. No mansion tax for the rich but a bedroom tax for the poor; no bonus cap for bankers, but a pay cap for teachers, nurses and firefighters; no VAT cut for us, but a millionaire's tax cut for them. Conference, you don't need me to tell you how difficult things are for working people. The average worker in Britain today is now worse off in real terms than they were a decade ago. The bills keep rising and for the first time ever this generation of young people is growing up worse off than their parents – ordinary people being clobbered by a government that doesn't care in an economy that's bust, in a country that can't go on like this.

As trade unionists, it falls on us, each and every one of us, to give a lead. It's not enough to set out the scale of

the problems. People want answers. The next General Election will be fought on either hope or, if the right gets its way, on fear. The right wants people to be scared; they want people to stop bashing the bankers, to blame migrant workers and welfare claimants, to believe that there is no alternative. But it's our job to give people the hope and the confidence that there is a better way. We need to build a single, united movement to defend our Services and our rights, a nationwide alliance of unions, communities, students, parents, NHS patients and faith groups.

That's why on May Day the TUC launched a campaign plan that will shape our work in the run up to the General Election and beyond. It's been agreed by the whole General Council, owned by the whole Trade Union Movement. I want all trade unionists to play their part. We'll be focusing on three top priorities. First, we'll be campaigning for jobs, for growth and for root and branch reforms of that banking and financial system. The government's Plan A has failed. Now we have to set out a credible alternative to austerity, one that provides decent jobs, greener growth and real opportunities and hope for our communities – whether it's a proper industrial strategy or a new State investment bank to fund the infrastructure, we know there's plenty we can do. Where better to start than with a massive programme to build the affordable homes, the council homes that millions of ordinary people across Britain so desperately need. *Applause*

Second, we'll be setting out our agenda for public services and for a welfare state that puts people first. With our schools, hospitals and councils all under attack, we need to start speaking up for our values and show how much better Britain can be. So instead of cuts that damage our services and hurt the poor, let's have fair taxes that the rich can't dodge, including a Robin Hood tax on the banks, so they start paying us back for the mess that they caused! *Applause*

Rather than privatisation and competition, let's have a little more faith in public ownership and public accountability. Instead of running down the NHS, let's celebrate Britain's greatest ever collective achievement and stand up for our values, values like taking care of the sick, the frail and the elderly.

Delegates, our third key priority, and I make no apology for this, is to build stronger unions and start winning higher wages for workers. Over the last 30 years we've seen two big injustices: growing pay inequality between those at the top and everybody else; and a falling total share of the wealth that we produce going to wages. Many economists now agree with us that it's this inequality that ultimately led to the crash and is now holding back recovery. It's time to get away from the debt fuelled growth of the past, drive the loan sharks off

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the high street, and ensure that people are fairly rewarded for the work that they do, not just a minimum wage, not even just a living wage, but a fair wage and fair shares of the wealth that we all produce. That will only happen if we have strong unions and if ordinary workers have a say over how companies and how our public services are run. How about we start with workers having a say over top bosses' pay? After all, who's a better judge of how those at the top perform than the workforce who create the wealth, deliver the services in the first place? The TUC's argument is simple: Britain needs a pay rise. Ultimately, that's the best way to get people spending, get our economy growing and get our deficit under control.

But, delegates, the aim of this campaign isn't just to shape the political debate in the run up to the election; it's also to show how we build a stronger, more democratic and more equal country for the long-term, a country where what matters isn't how rich you are, or how well connected you are, or what race, gender, sexuality, ability, age or class you were born into, but what we can achieve together through common endeavour to deliver decent work, decent services and decent living standards for all. Now is the time for real change, to build an economy that works for everyone, not just a few; to nurture a fair and just society; to show that only through collective action can we succeed in the years ahead. So let's stick together in solidarity; let's fight for what we believe in; and together, let's win a better future for all working people. Thank you very much indeed. *(Standing ovation)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Frances, I'm sure you will have seen by the warmth of the reception there the high esteem that our Conference holds you in. There's been ups and downs over the years in the FBU's relationship with the TUC. There are some famous pictures from 1977 of a quite angry picket outside Congress House of Firefighters frustrated at the strike and at what they perceived as the role of the TUC. I'm very pleased that things have improved significantly since then. People will remember that there was a great deal of support from the TUC in 2002/2003 with Brendan Barber and Frances playing a role in that, and Frances has assisted us since then in a number of our local disputes on a whole number of fronts.

So the Executive Council was extremely pleased, without any debate really, to agree that we should nominate Frances for the post of General Secretary of the TUC. I'm very pleased to support that at Congress and very proud to have supported that and see Frances in the role as the first woman to lead the TUC, which is an outstanding achievement which Frances can be extremely proud of, and the whole movement can be extremely proud of. *Applause*

As we go into struggles in the future, and Frances is aware of those struggles that we face on cuts and pensions as she's outlined, I'm sure that we can look forward to her support. Frances, on behalf of Conference, I would like to thank you very much for attendance and your speech here today. Please take with you the best wishes of the Fire Brigades Union in the campaign that the TUC is launching over the summer to change things for the better for working people here in Britain. Thank you very much. We've got a small gift which is a paperweight, I believe. You can put it on your desk, or I suppose if you get frustrated you can throw it around the office. Thanks very much, Frances. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I'm going to put myself in your hands once again. It's my intention to break for lunch now and to make that lunch period (packed lunch available for collection outside) half an hour. Also, Conference, you would need to suspend your standing orders to do that. Is that agreed? *AGREED*

One thing before I adjourn for lunch. I think that it's right and proper that I give my thanks to those Head Office staff who are leaving us around now. You will have seen them round the building doing the work of a lot of people – a lot of mine and certainly a bit of Matt's. That is Elaine Hawkins and Anna Zych. I'd like you to show your appreciation for them. Thank you very much. *Applause*

Adjourned for lunch, back at twenty past one, please.

Lunch break

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AFTERNOON SESSION

Any subsequent meeting to include representatives of the FBU Equality Sections.

B&EMM

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. Before we resume, Conference, I've been asked from the Greater Manchester delegation to send a message of solidarity to George Tapp, a 64 year old Unite member who is currently in Manchester Royal Infirmary. George was taking part in the Unite anti-Blacklisting picket against BAM, a proven blacklisting company, at Manchester City FC Academy yesterday evening. At around 5 pm a car was driven and at speed towards the picket line and hit George and two of the blacklisted workers on the picket. The car travelling at 100 mph with George on its bonnet failed to stop. George has sustained two broken legs, a fractured kneecap as well as cuts and bruises, while the other two Unite members have suffered minor injuries. Conference, please support our request for a solidarity message for George and the anti-Blacklisting campaign. Is that agreed, Conference?
AGREED

An update on Michael McKay, the West Midlands delegate who is still in hospital. Michael is undergoing an MRI scan some time this afternoon. Once again, our best wishes are with him. Is that agreed, Conference?
AGREED

Thank you very much. I now call Resolution 41, UK Fire & Rescue Service Equality Monitoring by B&EMM. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 41 – UK FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY MONITORING

This Conference condemns the coalition Government's removal of centrally set employment targets and other equality monitoring in UK Fire & Rescue Service (FRS). It has been shown historically that if Government does not equality audit the Fire Service the likelihood of progress is diminished. The removal of employment targets has also given the UK FRS a green light to reject the principle of making our Fire Services more reflective of the communities it serves.

Since Government policy on equality monitoring has changed there has been a steady decline in the employment of the BME community into the Fire Service. Any percentage rise is due to job cuts and the retirement of white male employees.

This Conference demands that Head Office request a meeting with the Fire Minister to raise the issue of equality monitoring and diversity in the UK FRS.

BRO DALTON POWELL (B&EMM):

President, Conference, when the last government introduced the equality framework for the first time it set out clear targets for the Fire and Rescue Service to achieve. The government recognised the failings of the UK Fire and Rescue Service in the recruitment and retention from the black & ethnic minority groups. With this in mind the Fire and Rescue Service was given an incentive. Many took the £42,000 on offer by the government in order to undertake positive action workshops and recruitment. Some Brigades have had a historically good record of recruitment programmes such as London while many have done absolutely nothing. Conference, it was hard just getting some Brigades to change their mindset on recruitment prior to the equality framework. Nevertheless, for the first time there was an accountability, so they had to be dragged from their sloth ways into the 21st century and try to have a Fire and Rescue Service that is reflective of the community that it serves. Appallingly, a number of Fire and Rescue Services took the money readily and still did absolutely nothing in trying to increase their numbers. Now the equality agenda has been put back in the hands of those Brigades by this new government. The good work that has been done has been undermined and put on the back burner, which is an utter disgrace. Brigades don't see the equality agenda as an issue. I ask that Conference requests that the EC seek a meeting with the Fire Minister in order to raise this issue on equality monitoring and diversity, and any meeting they have they ensure that they include representatives from the Equality Sections. Conference, please support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dalton. Is there a seconder? Pat Carberry come to the rostrum.

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

Conference, President, we are happy to second B&EMM's Resolution. This is a Resolution very similar to one that we submitted which was ruled out of order owing to a schoolboy error on our part. However, the sentiments of what B&EMM have put in their Resolution are very much the same as what we had in mind.

Before I give the argument as to why you should support this Resolution I'd just like to say that today is Idaho Day, 17th May every year is a day which is called Idaho. It's an international day against homophobia, a

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day where we remember those who have suffered in the past, and had their human rights violated purely based on their LGBT status. So I wish you all a Happy Idaho Day and I'd like you just to take a moment at some point today to remember those who have suffered. *Applause*

On to the Resolution. A good friend and fellow trade unionist once said to me: what don't get measured don't get done. That's the reality whenever it comes to equality. If there's no audit, there's no measuring, then there's no effort put in to actually achieving it.

The thing that spurred us on in the LGBT Section to put a motion in was a leaked report which was given to Channel 4 News back in November, which strangely enough has been buried. It referred to an equality audit that had been conducted in the British Army. The audit involved 6,000 personnel being interviewed, 400 of whom were women. The document that was leaked was a memo sent by Major-General Lorimer. In the memo he talks to another General and one of the references he makes is: "Every single female officer and other rank claims to have been the subject of unwanted sexual attention." That's every single one of them. It doesn't take a great deal of work to look at how our own Service has been drifting back towards that militaristic environment, how officers have started to want to wear the white shirts again and particularly the senior officers would all like the caps to come back. I'm sure they would like marching and saluting as well, if they could get it! We can see there is a link there between the attitude we get within our own Service and that has been identified in the past. The findings of that report in the military I do not think would be so very different from what you would find out in the fire stations.

However, it's very convenient for the employers and the government not to do anything because if you aren't actually looking at what's going on within your work force it's covering up what's actually happening in that environment. So, Conference, I would ask you to support the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, that's open for debate. Anybody? General Secretary will give the qualified support instead of John, who's unavailable at the moment. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, just a couple of qualifications. We've discussed it before. Clearly the decision by the Coalition government in relation to the English Fire Service to abolish equality monitoring and targets is an utter disgrace. It was one of the first acts of the new Fire Minister after the General Election. The qualification

is, however, about that specific point. The Resolution refers to the UK Fire and Rescue Service, the Coalition government's monitoring of equality within the UK Fire and Rescue Service. As we've discussed before, fire policy is a devolved matter so in terms of English Fire and Rescue Services, Westminster, the Department for Communities and Local Government is responsible and is the department that has abolished those targets and monitoring arrangements within English Fire and Rescue Services. There are different arrangements in relation to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I suppose the point the Executive Council would make is that should not be an excuse to let them off the hook either, nor should it be an excuse to let employers off the hook. We need to campaign on all those fronts, demanding that governments do take this issue seriously, employers do take this issue seriously.

The other qualification is in relation to the final paragraph about requesting a meeting with the Fire Minister. Well, first of all there are four Fire Ministers in the UK, and we would want to have those discussions with each of them. It may be appropriate, and we'll discuss this with the Equality Sections, to have representatives of the Equality Sections present at one of those meetings or more than one of those meetings, what we can't commit to is any subsequent meeting when that issue is raised that we would be able to arrange for equality representatives to be present. I give you a flavour of that. In relation to the RDS modified scheme, we have raised that point at every single meeting we've had with the Fire Minister in the past few months. So it's about having some flexibility around that. That's the qualification.

With those qualifications the Executive Council supports the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 41 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph 16. Section C, Paragraph C1. I now call Resolution 30, Political Engagement, Northumberland. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 30 – POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Conference applauds the previous work carried out by Members and Officials of this Union in engaging with Councillors and Politicians at a local and national level.

However, over the years both local and national disputes have shown that sometimes the political

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work we do has on a number of occasions proved ineffective in achieving a satisfactory outcome when campaigning to defend our service, protect our conditions or safeguard the public.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to carry out an immediate review of the political activity at every level in this Union with a view to making recommendations on the most effective and efficient method of lobbying MP's and Councillors in every UK Fire and Rescue Service, in order to resist further cuts to our already beleaguered service.

Conference demands that this review commences immediately with a report and strategy being made available to Brigade Officials before the end of 2013.

NORTHUMBERLAND

BRO IAN DICK (Northumberland):

President, Conference, comrades, we all know as union activists that the thread of politics runs through every action we take and the work we do for the Fire Brigades Union. Even our members who do not involve themselves with the running of the Union are affected by the political shape of local, regional and national administration and indeed legislation from Europe. Our FBU Schools emphasise that in order to progress our agendas on all issues from pensions to pay to health, safety and welfare and beyond, we need a political decision from someone. I don't need to go to our Rule Book to remind you that one of the main objectives of the Union is to bring about a fair socialist society.

My own political views were very much shaped by my family life. My dad was never heavily involved in politics, but his willingness to put others before himself and help other people meant that a career in public services always beckoned. Indeed, I've been a member of two unions: NUPE and of course the FBU, and have been involved in many political campaigns highlighting the struggle between the Haves and Have-nots. My abiding memory of the NUPE years was the pain etched on the faces of my fellow nurses as they worked long shifts to earn the money that had been taken from the pay packets of their husbands, locked out of our local pits for far too long by someone who similar nurses would have cared for in her life with the same dedication to duty as always.

So why am I telling you this? The Fire Brigades Union, I believe, as a whole does not consist of the membership of the same political mentality as when I joined 25 years ago. The political landscape for us has changed in so many ways and is still changing, locally and nationally, as we know, for the worst, unless some group stands tall for working people again. These factors mean that we must look carefully at the ways in which we deal with

politicians and the way in which we encourage our membership to deal with the continued attacks on our terms and conditions, both at local and national level.

This, by the way, is not an indirect appeal for the reaffiliation to the Labour Party, as Cleveland has taken over that Region 3 mantra this year.

I'll give you an example of what I see are the difficulties we face. In Northumberland we had a long, and ultimately unsuccessful, battle with the Labour administration that wanted two new PFI fire stations against the wishes of Firefighters, the public, and all other parts of Northumberland's Labour movement. In 2009 we successfully went to our local Labour groups and had these charlatans thrown out and pure grass roots Labour councillors elected. But what followed was the collapse of the Labour vote at the local elections due to Gordon Brown's national policies. We have just seen in the 2013 elections the recovery of those Labour seats, and we're building alliances again as traditional Labour philosophy still exists, backed up by strong Socialist MPs such as the Laverys, Ellisons and Campbells of this world. But now we have to convince our members that we have viable arguments to sustain jobs and conditions. We have had members come to us, extolling the virtues of UKIP, buoyed by the fact that two former Firefighters stood as UKIP candidates in our Brigade, though they were well defeated.

As our Resolution states, we need to review our political strategies, taking into account the changing political landscapes, the shifting view of many of the members who affiliate themselves to different political causes, and indeed the current dissatisfaction with politics. Many of our members perhaps just need further help in understanding our role as a trade union can do and has done, and the historical and moral reasons why the people here at Conference break their backs to keep what we've got, not just for who we are but for those for whom we are keeping the seats warm.

We need a common thread which binds us together as a strategy that will protect our Service from those who seek to destroy it. In political terms are we Daily Mirror or Morning Star? I hope to God no-one is Daily Mail, and if I see The Sun this year at a fire station it better be yellowy/orange and hot!

Our members need to be on board with us as IRMPs are about politics, pensions and pay are about politics, health, safety, welfare, equality and diversity all involve political strategy and knowledge. In short, we need to ensure that there is a more detailed and full comprehension of the political twists and turns we take and why we need to take them, and that it is fully explored through dialogue locally and nationally, and through a thorough review of our political work. Let's find a way we can educate everyone within the Union to

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influence the way the FBU deals with modern politics to give us a chance to secure our future. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded, Conference? *Formally* That's open for debate. The Executive Council support. I now put Resolution 30 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Emergency Resolution 5, Supporting Councillors Against Cuts to be moved by West Yorkshire. The Executive Council support.

Emergency Resolution 5 – SUPPORTING COUNCILLORS AGAINST CUTS

This Conference applauds the stance taken by some local Councillors who have stood up for their own principles and recently voted in opposition to the Government cuts to local authorities.

In Yorkshire and Humberside, Christine Beaumont (Labour Councillor, Maltby Ward, Rotherham Council) Mark Catterall (Labour Councillor, Langfield Ward, Todmorden Town Council) Gary Wareing (Labour Councillor, Drypool Ward, Hull City Council) Gill Kennett (Labour Councillor, Holderness Ward, Hull City Council) and Dean Kirk (Labour Councillor, Derringham Ward, Hull City Council) were prepared to stick their heads above the parapet and had the courage to take on the Government. The latter 3 Councillors, Gary Wareing, Gill Kennett and Dean Kirk defied the Labour whip and voted against the Council's plan to cut 600 jobs and raise the Council tax by 1.95% to tackle its budget deficit. However this led Gary, Gill and Dean being summoned before the Labour Group and a decision was taken to suspend all 3 Councillors.

This Conference is appalled that a party set up to protect the working class movement has decided to suspend elected officials for voting against the whip. This Conference also agrees with the Founding Statement of the Councillors against Cuts campaign, "We believe that close links are needed between Labour Councillors and the Unions in the public sector whether they are Labour-affiliated or not. We believe that, with the confidence that Unions are behind them, many more Councillors can be encouraged to refuse to implement cuts – and with the knowledge that Councillors will support them unequivocally, many more trade unionist will be prepared to fight back against cuts".

To that end this Conference wants to put on record it's thanks to all the Labour Councillors who have opposed these cuts in true opposition, Labour

fashion and that this Conference will offer its support both locally and nationally to those who take up such a position of opposition and fights back against all cuts to the public sector.

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, comrades, you'll hear Cleveland in a second moving a motion calling for reaffiliation to the Labour Party and I urge Cleveland to withdraw that, otherwise you'll hear West Yorkshire opposing. But that doesn't mean to say we are opposed to supporting some Labour councillors and MPs within the Party. Comrades, there are without doubt some fine Labour supporters, councillors and activists and MPs with traditional Labour Socialist values out there; some that have morals, dignity and respect, and have the courage to carry out their mandates to oppose cuts to their local public sector services.

One of the three councillors that I've mentioned in the Resolution (and I do apologise that I've not mentioned all of them but I kept it specific to the Yorkshire and Humber councillors), said "I won my election on a platform and a manifesto on fighting cuts which was previously implemented by the LibDems in Hull. I would have found it very hypocritical of myself if I were to vote for cuts when I won an election on fighting them." That integrity needs applauding, comrades. *Applause*

Unfortunately, these sorts of Labour councillors are very few and far between. These councillors that did oppose cuts imposed by a Tory led government then faced internal discipline. In the case of Gary Waring, Gill Kennett and Dean Kirk, they were all suspended. Gary and Dean were initially suspended indefinitely, Gill got three months. Following an appeal Gary and Dean got their suspensions reduced to three and six months. All were suspended for having the courage to say: we will not shed 600 jobs in Hull, an area that depends on the public sector for employment.

I first heard about the Hull Three after they came and spoke at a Labour Representation Committee that I attended in early March, but since then I've come across a recent mess – and it can only be described as a mess – by Labour councillors. In Southampton a former Labour councillor, Don Thomas and Keith Morrell have formed their own political group and now sit on the council as members of the Labour Councillors against the Cuts. This was after they were suspended and put under investigation for voting against cuts to a swimming pool.

I just want to read a little bit of the investigation that was carried out into these two individuals, if I may Conference. The facts in brief – and this is on the internet for all to read. It was a £7,000 investigation that

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concluded after this mess. "Councillor Keith Morrell sent an email to Southampton County Council Leader, Councillor Richard Williams, in which he tendered his resignation from the Cabinet post which he had occupied for less than two weeks. He said: 'Dear Richard, I wish to resign from the Cabinet. For some considerable time now I have attempted to come to terms with the fact that the leadership of the Labour Party nationally has abandoned even the pretence that they believe in socialism as an alternative to the market economy'. " He goes on and talks about the manifesto for the Labour council in Southampton and he goes on: "However, the manifesto also contains a willingness to countenance what amounts to effective dismantling of local government in favour of hiving off services, starting with adult social care and progressing to other key areas. My Cabinet role obviously requires me to be closely involved in delivering that agenda and I now realise that for me that step is too far. I was extremely uncomfortable with our visit to the LGA to meet up with the Conservative Leader of Swindon Council in order to use Capita user groups. Richard, I could try and bite on the bullet and stay on in the Cabinet, but I fear that at some point in the not too distant future I would be unable, in such a high profile role, to continue publicly endorsing or even defending the path the administration will be taking. So it is better that I stand down now without any fuss or media attention and hopefully without causing you any embarrassment'."

That was a Labour councillor standing his position down due to his morals!

Councillor Williams spoke to Councillor Morrell on the telephone that same evening, and funnily enough rung him the next morning. Following the second conversation Councillor Morrell agreed that the announcement of his resignation should cite health reasons rather than those set out in his email. He'd been got at by the Labour leader, got at to change his reason why he actually resigned.

The media statement by the Leader of the Council then said: "The Leader of Southampton City Council, Councillor Richard Williams, has announced the departure of Councillor Keith Morrell from the Council's Cabinet due to ill health. Councillor Williams said: 'I am very sad that I will not have the opportunity to work with Keith in the new Cabinet, and he has had to step down so soon after my group took over the leadership of the Council. He is an excellent councillor and I am sure he would have made an excellent Cabinet member'."

Shame on them to force him into doing that, absolutely disgraceful!

These fine councillors – and there are dozens more out there that I haven't named – were or still are Labour councillors. They've been disciplined and suspended by

the Labour Party for opposing the Tories' agenda of smashing the working classes and standing up to the millionaires in Cabinet's vision of a decimated and where possible privatised public sector.

I just want to finish off President, with a few quotes. Councillor Gary Waring from Labour Hull: "I will continue to fight against cuts with all the strength I have, alongside a determined and united Labour and Trade Union Movement." Councillor Don Thomas, Labour Councillors against Cuts in Southampton: "We support the union's view that council workers and their communities should not be made to pay for a crisis that they did not create." Finally, the Leader of the Labour Councillors against Cuts in Southampton, Councillor Keith Morrell: "We have supported 100% the workforce and the unions in their campaigns to win back the pay stolen from them by the Tories. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with them against any further threats to their jobs and to the public sector."

Comrades, these are the councillors we should be supporting, not just carte blanche Labour Party. That is the true voice of the opposition; that is what we should be supporting in whatever way we can. Support Emergency Resolution 5. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* It is now open for debate. No debate. The Executive Council support. I now put Emergency Resolution 5 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 29, Re-affiliation to the Labour Party to be moved by Cleveland.

Resolution 29 – RE-AFFILIATION TO THE LABOUR PARTY

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to re-affiliate The Fire Brigades Union to the Labour Party at the earliest opportunity following the close of the Fire Brigades Union 2013 Conference.

CLEVELAND

BRO DAVID HOWE (Cleveland):

President, please excuse me while I put this chalice down! *Laughter/applause*

Dave, West Yorkshire, I'm sorry but I'm a little bit more frightened of my members and reps back in Cleveland than I am of you, so I'm going to move this Resolution!

Conference, President, most, if not all of you in here, like me, will remember when and why we as a Union

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disaffiliated from the Labour Party. Well, Conference, I'm not going to rake over all that old ground because I think all it does is uncover all the old arguments. What I'd prefer to do is for us as the FBU to look at where we are now and where we want to be in the future and cut the past free and leave it all behind. I'm serious, mainly because of our current experiences in Cleveland. We're in a massive fight against social enterprise mutualisation, or privatisation because that's what it is. We've sought support in our fight from local councillors and local MPs and almost exclusively the Labour Party councillors and the Labour Party MPs are the ones who step forward and who have given us the support. Labour MPs in our area who believe in public services and a viable alternative to cuts, cuts and more cuts. That's the experience of us in Cleveland. I know it's different from what Dave was saying there, but I'm talking about up in Cleveland.

I want to place on record our thanks to those MPs: Alex Cunningham, Tom Blenkinsop, Andy MacDonald, Ian Wright, Dave Anderson, Ian Lavery – all Labour MPs who have been and continue to work on our behalf in Parliament and locally to prevent privatisation happening. Ian spoke very well about it the other day. That's without thanking all the local Labour councillors as well, who've given us the support and are working hard to try to prevent our fire authority members from voting this through at the whim of the chief fire officer. That's what they would have done if we hadn't put that political pressure on them via the MPs, via the councillors.

The only real support we've had on the pensions issue also has been from Labour MPs. I'm in a constituency where a steel works shut and they've now reopened. There was a protest vote basically against the Labour candidate who was in seat when the steel works shut. Well, Ian Swales of the Lib Dems has given us absolutely no support, none at all, and he won't be in that seat very much longer, I guarantee it.

These things have put into focus for us in Cleveland which major political party (and I say major) has the closest mindset to us and our struggles. Like it or not, that's the Labour Party. If you want a voice in Parliament, you've got to have numbers in Parliament. The Labour Party's got them. I say major because we need a voice in Parliament, and some of the parties we could mention are just not able to deliver that voice in Parliament. Conference, more and more we're a political Union. Everything we do can benefit from a strong voice in Parliament. Every single thing we get involved in, somewhere along the line is political.

We get asked by councillors and MPs all the time: is there any chance that the FBU is going to re-affiliate to the Party? They like to be associated to the FBU. That's their position. I'm quite clear about that. Right now, rather than two or four years down the road, right now

is the right time to reaffiliate in Cleveland's view. That's because of the General Election in two years' time – an opportunity to show our support to a Party that's supported us. Whatever we think, it can't get any worse than it is now under the ConDem government.

Conference, it's not the panacea! Let's close the wounds, let's leave it all behind, and let's look forward. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

You left your chalice! Is that seconded? Northumberland to second.

BRO KIERAN BRENNAN (Northumberland):

President, Conference, déjà vu! Here I am again. Comrades, we in the North East must be very lucky because we do have some excellent MPs, as Davy's already mentioned. You heard Ian Lavery the other day, who is a friend of mine, who is an excellent MP; Ronnie Campbell from Blyth Valley, excellent MPs. We need to be part of the Labour Movement; we need to be affiliated to them. We have a Parliamentary Group in the House of Commons who work on our behalf. Surely it would be much better if we could increase that group, surely.

I don't know what your experiences are around the country with MPs. I heard the Resolution before about rogue councillors. We had rogue councillors in Northumberland, rogue councillors who voted in PFI fire stations, who closed four fire stations, who lost jobs. We went out and we got rid of them. We went out and we canvassed against them and we got rid of them.

What I'm asking you to do is think long and hard, as Davy said. Think long and hard about it. The past is the past; we have to look to the future. I second this Resolution. Comrades, get ready because you're going to need it! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate, Conference. I don't want a huge debate on it. Neil from London and West Yorkshire. Stick to the lights, please will you, stick to the lights.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are opposing Resolution 29 and last time getting up, for this Conference anyway. Conference, it's already been said: another year, another Conference, same Resolution. I had a quick look. I applaud Region 3 for sharing their pain. Every single year – 2009 it was Durham, 2010 it was Northumberland and 2011 Tyne & Wear. It's admirable that they all take their share of this one.

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My T shirt makes reference to Old Labour, comrades. I've got to say, in my 43 years on this earth I can't remember ever having a decent Labour Party that I would really like to see now. As a 14 year old miner's son I remember my dad talking, not in such nice terms, about Mr Kinnock, and it seems to have gone from bad to worse from there, I'm afraid to say.

When discussing this motion with my members it was a bit like "do as I say and not as I do" because although I'm a member of the Labour Party myself, I could not recommend reaffiliation to my members at this time. Comrades, we've already talked about the Councillors Against Cuts and with time being short I'll skip that bit.

In 2011 Labour led, Labour majority fire authority in West Yorkshire agreed to shut 10 stations and build five new ones. This resulted in a reduction of seven pumps and 135 Wholtime job losses. Even though Tory councillors proposed an extension to the consultation for one station in a very high risk area and another in a medium risk area, the Labour led fire authority, Labour majority, opposed that consultation. Shame on them!

In 2012 the same Labour led Labour majority fire authority agreed to close a further seven stations and build just three new ones. This saw another ten pumps cut, and resulted in another 250 plus job losses. Shame on them!

All this agreed, despite feeling the ramifications of the first lot of cuts. It gets worse. I was invited to a Labour Council full meeting in which to ask for support and challenged a ward councillor about why she never complained about the closure of her station. She said she had sent out 300 letters. 22,500 people live in her ward, 10,000 dwellings, and she sent out 300 letters! So I asked her why she didn't take the lead in the opposition and she couldn't answer. Further to that, her husband – surprise, surprise – who sits on the fire authority and who also is a Labour councillor and a big trade unionist told me: "What could I do, Dave, they pulled the three line whip on me". Shame that he never had the courage that other councillors have had and he might have got a bit more respect.

Finally, on the Labour cuts and councillors in West Yorkshire, one of them who sits on the fire authority, a Labour councillor, is also a convenor for Unison at the largest teaching hospital in Europe. She voted to close fire stations, yet campaigns for a better NHS for which we will offer our support. Shame on her!

I'll just finish, Chair –

THE PRESIDENT:

You're over your time, comrade.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

Yes. Our very own Rule Book says in its Foreword: "The Fire Brigades Union is part of the working-class movement and, linking itself with the international trade union and labour movement, has as its ultimate aim the bringing about of the Socialist system of society". Unfortunately, I haven't seen this evidenced in the Labour Party. We'll be discussing the dreadful bedroom tax later. I just finish by two quick – Gerry Hicks stood as a candidate for General Secretary position in Unite. He says about the Labour Party: "We should only fund it – *(microphone switched off) Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Hold on a second. You're not on the clock, don't worry! Conference, there's a car and it needs to be moved urgently. It's a Kia Sportage MM08 HWL, Skoda Superb AF61 YCJ, they need to be moved immediately, please. We've got television interviews happening and people are blocked in, so if they are your cars will you please move them immediately. Neil, you've got three minutes.

BRO NEALE WILLIAMS (London):

Three minutes will be enough. Comrades, we are opposing the motion to reaffiliate to the Labour Party. Comrades, I'd have more sympathy and in London we'd have more sympathy for this motion if Labour was saying it would scrap the anti-trade union laws, scrap the attacks on workers' wages and benefits, and pump millions of pounds into the industry and services to get the economy going again. But the fact of the matter is that the front bench of the Labour Party is committed to keeping the anti-trade union laws, vacillates on the question of benefit cuts, and says Labour will impose austerity too if it gets into government. Unite is affiliated to the Labour Party and is the biggest funder of the Labour Party, some £6 million over the past four years. But when Len McCluskey, the leader of Unite, said that Labour austerity was unacceptable, Labour condemned him as being divisive in the press. When Unite members took strike action to defend their pensions Labour refused to back those strikes. So being affiliated to the Labour Party and pumping money into the Labour Party does not buy you any influence with the Labour Party at all; it's as abusive a relationship now as it was then. *Applause*

The PCS, the NUT and the RMT are all unaffiliated to the Labour Party, but no-one could really argue seriously that those unions aren't influential inside of their industries. Politics is important, and we understand why people are getting up here and talking about the need to have a political voice. It is important that our Union continues to campaign politically in order to change government policies which affect our Union and our class. But we

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should continue to support the politicians that support us, and the political campaigns which support the aims and objectives of our Union.

We've had two national strikes in our Union: one against Old Labour, and one against New Labour. If we look at what Miliband supports, then future Labour, there is a potential for us to be striking against them as well. We shouldn't affiliate to the Labour Party. Conference, I oppose. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary to give the opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, unfortunately due to time we're not going to be able to have a full debate, as this issue deserves. I will try to be as brief as I possibly can. I think the Executive Council's view is that we should oppose the Resolution. I think what's clear from the debate already is it would be extremely divisive for the Union to take a decision to reaffiliate to the Labour Party – certainly at this stage, and certainly without a full and frank debate throughout our membership. That debate hasn't taken place. The time it was debated was 2004, when we voted to disaffiliate. I think there was a very thorough debate amongst the members and there was a very clear decision made.

Just two quick points. Kieran mentioned the Parliamentary Group. Yes, we do want to build the Parliamentary Group. But I tell you what, we don't want Parliamentary Group members who stab us in the back at the first opportunity, who want the kudos of being associated with the Fire Brigades Union, but when things get messy, when things get sticky, jump ship. *Applause* That's not acceptable, and we have to guard the gates of our Parliamentary Group. Ian, John McDonnell, Katie Clark and others in the group are loyal comrades of ours who will stand by this Union if we go into battle in the next few weeks. But I tell you what, there will be a lot of Labour MPs who stay very, very quiet, unfortunately.

I think the thing that sums it up to me currently is the point that Dave Williams made in relation to the last Resolution that you've just agreed overwhelmingly. What a scandal that we have such Labour councillors. By the way, we have to try to build working relationships with all these people; this is not being anti any Labour councillor; we try to do that with the Labour authority members, in the NJC and so on. But when we see Labour led fire authorities up and down the country implementing cuts and in many cases implementing cuts in a more rigorous way than others, threatening to sack and dismiss and re-engage our members, as they

did in South Yorkshire, then you do have to question why people would not be challenging this Resolution.

I suppose the thing that sums it up to me is the people mentioned in the West Yorkshire Emergency Resolution are the people who should be the backbone of the Labour Movement, who should be the backbone of Labour representation in local government, building on the traditions of the councillors at Poplar whose slogan was "Better to break the law than to break the poor", who went to prison to fight for their principles as local authority councillors in the past. Those are the traditions of the Labour Movement we want to rebuild. People don't vote Labour, by the way, to see cuts implemented; people vote Labour because they want an alternative. Unfortunately, at the present time they are not getting it. Conference, there is a debate, and a debate on the Executive Council as well, but currently our view is Conference should oppose the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Right of reply, Cleveland.

BRO DAVID HOWE (Cleveland):

President, Conference, all I would say is that there are far more Labour MPs and councillors out there who would back our case against cuts and look for an alternative to the cuts agenda, and support us more than any other political party. That's all I'll say. Let's look forward, Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 29 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *FALLS*

Could I ask that even to joke about a card vote!

We're on Paragraph C2. I now call Resolution 32, Council Tax Freeze Grants, the Executive Council give it qualified support. It is from Lancashire.

Resolution 32 – COUNCIL TAX FREEZE GRANTS

Conference notes with concern that since the election in 2010, the Coalition Government has used Freeze Grants as a means of keeping down Council Tax. These are one-off Government payments to those Fire Authorities that do not raise their Council Tax, and will result in a year on year budget shortfall in future years when the grants stop.

Some Fire Authorities have accepted the freeze grant each year and plan to continue to hold the Council Tax levy at the 2010 rate for the remainder

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of this Parliament. In these cases, funding raised through the Council Tax could be left with a 'real term' shortfall running into millions of pounds when the freeze grants cease, this is on top of the 25% cut to the Government Grant Settlements that is already being imposed.

The Government is not being honest with the electorate and is playing short term politics. This will have long term repercussions to Fire Service funding, and lead to the loss of more Firefighter posts, appliances and stations. As part of the FBU's ongoing campaign against cuts to Fire Service funding, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to bring this issue to the attention of our political supporters in Parliament and to the National Employers, with a view to demanding that this funding time bomb is defused, and that at the very least, locally raised funding keeps pace with inflation.

LANCASHIRE

BRO KEVIN DEACON (Lancashire):

Conference, President, we also acknowledge the EC's qualified support regarding the issues of funding with the devolved administrations.

Conference, this Resolution asks the EC to raise the issue of freeze grants at national level, as it is important that all Brigades are aware of the local, silent killer. In addition to the 25% government cuts Brigades are currently facing (which is covered in more detail in the EC Policy Statement) the government's use of a one-off freeze grant to persuade fire authorities to hold down council tax is deliberately orchestrating a budget shortfall for the future. In simple terms, what has been happening is that if Brigades agree to not increase council tax then for that year only the government will top up the shortfall. However, as this grant only covers the shortfall for one year, there will be a year on year shortfall after that.

As we all know, Fire Service budgets are raised from two sources: government funding from basic taxation; and money raised locally through the council tax. If either of these income sources does not keep pace with inflation then this results in real time budget cuts. We are all very aware of the impact of the 25% cut to the government grant settlements, but what is not as obvious is that many Brigades have been accepting the one-off freeze grants offered by the government in order to hold down their council tax. An example of this is in Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. Despite inflation fluctuating between 2.2% and 5.2% throughout the term of this Parliament, by accepting the freeze grants the fire authority has held the council tax at the 2010 level. This could mean a shortfall of at least £3 million when these one-off freeze grants stop, which will be on top of the

£10 million budget cut we are already facing, and in real terms equates to three Wholetime appliances.

As fire authorities will be aware of the long-term financial implications of this practice, it is assumed that the motivation for such a short-term financial strategy is short-term political gain – ie to buy votes. We all want low council tax, but the electorate isn't stupid and they know that in general you get what you pay for. What they are probably unaware of is that their council tax is being held down by stealth and the long-term effectiveness of their local Fire Service is being put at risk. It is important that members at all levels are aware of this latest threat and campaign against the use of freeze grants as part of the wider campaign. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Can I ask the General Secretary to give the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Very quick three qualifications, President. First of all, the Executive Council (and the mover acknowledged it) would draw Conference's attention to the difference in policies between different parts of the UK, and differences in the way local authorities are funded. Secondly, that we would alert Conference that we need to be alive to the fact that the solution to the cuts is not necessarily the raising of council tax per se. I know that's not what the movers are suggesting. But it really comes down to the crux of the problem is the reduction in central government funding for local authority services. That has to be the crux of our campaign. Clearly, the freeze grant approach is a mechanism to try to force local authorities to make cuts, but the fundamental point which we need to campaign around is the cut to central funding arrangements for local authorities including Fire and Rescue authorities.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 32 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph C3, C4, C5. I now call Resolution 27, Scottish Independence Referendum to be moved by Central. Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 27 – SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

This Conference notes the agreement reached by the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments to hold a Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014.

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Conference is aware that the Scottish independence issue is emotive and politically divisive and therefore considers that for the Fire Brigades Union to express support for or against Scottish independence would be inappropriate, as this could alienate a significant number of our members and also be potentially damaging to the relationships our Union has with parties and individuals from across the whole political spectrum.

Conference therefore concludes that the Fire Brigades Union will remain neutral on this issue and not indicate support for or against Scottish independence.

CENTRAL

BRO STEPHEN THOMSON (Central):

President, Conference, as I'm sure you're all aware, in 2014 the electorate in Scotland will be given the chance to vote on independence. This Resolution is calling for the FBU to remain neutral on the issue. We believe that to take a position either for or against independence and influence our membership on that would be divisive. It would be divisive I believe for two reasons. The first reason is it would divide the membership in Scotland. It is a highly emotive issue; it is discussed on fire stations. So again, if we were to express an opinion, or try to influence one way or the other, it would drive out membership and we would haemorrhage members in Scotland. The second way it's divisive is that we have built up relationships with MSPs and local councillors from both the main parties in Scotland: the Labour Party and the Scottish National Party. Again, if we were to express an opinion either way, it would damage these relationships.

Nationally as well, as Firefighters there's more that unites us than divides us on this one. We all face the same challenges, face the same risks. As Union officials we face the same political challenges. So again, it doesn't matter what side of the political border we are on, we are united. I will say it again: there is more that unites us than divides us.

If you think this is maybe a moot Resolution and no need for it, I would draw your attention to a group of trade unionists in Scotland who are organising and are going under the banner of Trade Unionists for Independence. They are making moves to get us on board, and I believe it would be wrong for us to get involved in that and take that position.

I'm sure that the qualification will be to do with tying our hands. I believe this Resolution would not tie our hands, and I believe it would still afford the opportunity to robustly challenge both camps, ie the yes (for independence) and the no (against independence). I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate.

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

Sorry, Conference, just to reiterate, I think the polls show that the keenest people for Scottish independence may be south of the border! That being as it may, it does underline that this issue has got potential to divide. I think we really do need to recognise that we've got progressives on both sides of the debate, as we have reactionaries on both sides of the debate. The STUC put together a very important document on this, looking at the impact on working people of independence or indeed of staying united. That's basically on the social justice aspects. I think that's what should govern how we respond to this and how we should be questioning our politicians. When it comes to taking a stance, I think Central are quite right that we have to stay out of the debate in terms of backing or rejecting this as a trade union. Certainly there will be members who have their own personal views and they are free to carry them forward.

I think we can avoid division if we do that, and it's the best alternative for us, bearing in mind that the likelihood is that unless a Tory government is looking a certainty, independence for Scotland is not going to be achieved. Thanks. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. I now call the General Secretary to give the qualification from the Executive Council.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, President, Conference. We have had some discussion with the Scottish officials about this matter over some period. I think it is clearly a huge issue for the people of Scotland to determine their future in relation to the referendum. I want to be clear, that is a matter for the Scottish people to determine. The Scottish people have the right to self-determination in that respect. The concern that the Executive Council has, is in relation to the term "neutral". I suppose it depends what we mean by neutral in that respect. Currently, the Executive Council, with the support of the Scottish Region, have endorsed the approach taken by the Scottish TUC which is to raise a number of questions in relation to the independence referendum that working people should be interested in. That's not necessarily neutrality; it doesn't mean we're neutral on issues affecting working class people, on issues affecting what sort of Scotland people might want in the future. I suppose for us in the Fire Brigades Union, I would draw people's attention to the Preface to the Rule Book that has been mentioned a

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couple of times today setting out that clearly we are part of the international working class movement. I know people on both sides of the debate in Scotland wouldn't necessarily disagree with anything within that. The Executive Council's view is that we are not neutral in that sense. We want a Scotland, and we support a Scotland, and our Scottish Region supports a Scotland, which puts the rights of working people first; the investment in public services first; trade union rights, peace and so on, before the agenda that we see across the UK and indeed across Europe. So with that qualification we are giving support to the Resolution. I think it is a debate that will continue. There are clear implications for the Union in how we might operate in the future, for example, if there was a yes vote in that referendum. We'll have to monitor that closely and discuss how the Union would take account of that. It is clearly a huge matter, probably the central political debate in Scotland currently. We need to participate in that debate, but participate around trade union values and trade union principles.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. I now put Resolution 27 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph C6, Paragraph C7, C8, C9, C10. I now call Resolution 34, Stonewall: Supporting the Political Lobby for LGBT Equality, to be moved by the LGBT Section. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 34 – STONEWALL: SUPPORTING THE POLITICAL LOBBY FOR LGBT EQUALITY

LGBT Members remind Conference of the advances made with the introduction of legislative change to afford equal protection to people who are LGBT.

Stonewall have been a leading figure in the political lobbying to bring about the necessary changes. Stonewall are currently engaged in the fight to achieve recognition of same sex marriage as well as campaigning to combat homophobic bullying in both sport and schools.

Over the years more and more Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) have joined the Stonewall Equality Index and membership costs of the scheme have gone towards the financing of these ongoing campaigns. Currently the FRS is one of the largest contributors to Stonewall but with financial constraints being applied to our service many FRS are withdrawing from the scheme.

LGBT Members call on all Officials engaging in Fairness at Work consultation to encourage Fire and

Rescue Services to rejoin or continue to be members of the index to ensure this important work continues.

LGBT

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

Conference, President, the LGBT community and our LGBT members still remain quite a difficult minority group to engage with. I can remember in the early days when I first came out, and as a member of the Service – first of all, I was proud to be a Firefighter; secondly, I was proud of my sexual orientation. I remember we started off by going to Pride events and it was just a handful of us. We managed to get a Union banner which identified us as FBU, and we would march at places like London Pride and at Brighton Pride, but as I say, just a handful of us. Back then there wasn't the stomach for the Service to acknowledge that we existed. So things like wearing uniform, or identifying ourselves as being from specific Brigades was not permitted.

I'm glad that things have moved on and moved on enormously. We now go to events like Brighton Pride. You'll have in the region of five different appliances in the parade from five different fire authorities, the number of Fire and Rescue staff who march is in the hundreds; they're all wearing uniform and all very proud. That's a very good way to engage with the LGBT community.

One of the other ways which we recommend and have always supported is the use of Stonewall. Stonewall, whenever they do their index programme with employers, it tends to turn out to be a bit of a competition as to who can get the most points and who's the best LGBT employer. I haven't got a problem with that, because it does make employers think: how can I improve my working environment for my LGBT staff and what are their needs?

To be a member of the scheme costs money. That money just doesn't go to finance the scheme; it goes towards the political campaigning of Stonewall, the lobbying for equality, it goes to finance projects challenging homophobic bullying, challenging homophobia in sport. We've been quite a major contributor. Since the scheme started in 2005 we had two Fire and Rescue Services join. We've been to conference and we encouraged equality reps to raise this with their equality committees and encourage their employers to join the scheme. So by 2009 that was 20 members, 2010 it was 30. Up until 2011 we had 31 Fire and Rescue Services part of the scheme. Over that period that raised in the region of £200,000 which is a decent amount of money to do some political lobbying and some good work towards challenging homophobia. The problem we have, and it kind of coincides with how

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politics change with a different government, is in 2012 that figure of 31 dropped to 20 and in 2013 it's down to 14 members. So we can see there's a definite drift away from Stonewall.

Yes, Fire Service budgets are being squeezed, but I still think there is scope for our Fire and Rescue Services to be members of this scheme. It is an opportunity for our equality reps to have a little poke and say: what are you doing about your LGBT engagement, and this is the way that you can demonstrate you are doing something.

Conference, I would ask you to support the Resolution and let's support Stonewall. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is that seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate. No debate. I now put Resolution 34 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph C11. I now call Resolution 33, Extremist Organisations to be moved by B&EMM. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 33 – EXTREMIST ORGANISATIONS

The publication in 2008, of a British National Party (BNP) membership list highlighted that some Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) employees were fee paying members of that fascist organisation. In recent times FBU Members, Reps and Officials have been targeted by the BNP for their opposition to, and campaigning against, the politics of hate and division.

We commend the Fire Services that have made clear statements stating that BNP members/supporters are not welcome in the 21st century UK FRS. We believe that the rest of the Fire Service should also condemn members and supporters of all extremist, hate mongering organisations and refuse them employment.

This Conference reiterates our abhorrence of hate politics and fully supports the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and its general statutory duty to promote good race relations in the public sector and our communities. We condemn the Government's attempts to repeal some of the statutory duties of this Act and current Equality Legislation.

We call upon the FBU to:

- ***Clarify what action will be taken if any member is found to be a member/supporter of the BNP or any other extremist organisation.***

- ***Ensure that all FBU educational events continue to educate members in highlighting the dangers posed by the BNP and other extremist organisations.***
- ***Continue to pressure the UK FRS to make clear its opposition to the politics of hate and extremism by excluding those who support that ideology.***
- ***Demand that the Department of Communities and Local Government give the UK FRS the same provision as the Police and Prison services to dismiss employees who are members of the BNP.***

B&EMM

BRO DALTON POWELL (B&EMM):

President, Conference, since the publication of the British National Party membership in 2008, five years ago, we commended the Fire and Rescue Service who stood up to be counted by making a clear statement that the British National Party members and supporters are not welcome in the 21st century Fire and Rescue Service. As we know, there are still Fire and Rescue Services throughout the UK who have yet to make some formal statement which beggars belief, years later. Why the reluctance? Are they afraid of a backlash from members within these organisations, or the fallout of being sued? While the political powers that govern our society have tried to repel some of the statutory duties that form the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which promotes good race relationships in our public sectors and communities, they have tried to undo the good work that has been built up over years but have played into the hands of those groups, through negative media coverage and lies. As an organisation we have a duty of care to every one of our members under the umbrella of the Fire Brigades Union to inform, support, rally, inspire and to protect; to work closely with other union groups and the government.

Conference, what message are we sending to the wider field of the union if we don't show intent also? The Fire Brigades Union Rule Book is our Bible, yet nowhere within its 98 pages is there a statement that says no member shall be part of the BNP or any extreme organisation. Conference, that should have been put in years ago. We don't want them as part of this Union, we don't want them within the UK Fire and Rescue Service. When B&EMM members are still being subjected to appalling racial intimidation we have to say enough is enough. Everyone in this room today has a part to play. I ask Conference to clarify what action will be taken if any member is found to be a member, supporter of the BNP or any other extreme organisation, ensure that all FBU education events continue to educate members in highlighting the dangers posed by BNP and other extremist organisations, and continue to

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pressure the UK Fire and Rescue Service to make clear our position on the politics of hate and extremism by those included in that ideology, demand that the Department of Communities and Local Government give the UK Fire and Rescue Service the same provisions as the Police and Prison Service, to dismiss employees who are members of the BNP. Please support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* It's now open for debate.

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, we support the Resolution put forward by B&EMM but what we would like to seek is assurances from the President and General Secretary that any of the work done (if the Resolution passes) is qualified with some of the terminology within the current Resolution. There are members out there that could be deemed extremist by the State or indeed by managers, as has occurred in Region 9 previously. It is just clarification and an assurance there that the work will take that into consideration. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. General Secretary to give the qualifications.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, I think Jamie just touched on one of the qualifications but there are several. The issue of how we might deal with fascists within the trade union has been the cause of some considerable debate within the movement and has ended up in the courts. I suppose one thing none of us want to do is if we did discipline somebody for membership of such an organisation, end up paying them thousands of pounds of compensation through an employment tribunal, for example. That was the whole background to the ASLEF case that ended up in Europe. The steps that the Union took following that case were brought to Conference and were discussed. It's probably worth just refreshing people's memories on that.

The Rule Book is very clear. The Rule Book sets out the aims in terms of the objects of the Union. The new object was brought in specifically to deal with this point. It is Rule 3.7 and it sets out one of the principles of the Fire Brigades Union: "To support and promote working class unity through the Trade Union & Labour Movement and therefore to oppose all forms of discrimination whether on grounds of race, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, or trade union membership." Related to that in Rule 26 one of the offences is that somebody "is or becomes a member of, or acts or campaigns on behalf of any racist or fascist

political party or organisation". So in that respect I think the Fire Brigades Union certainly has addressed the issue, based upon our principles but also based upon our legal protections as well.

The other qualification again is a point which I am sure is an oversight. Some of the comrades from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland do raise this point regularly with me, that the Department for Communities and Local Government does not cover the whole of the UK Fire and Rescue Service; it has responsibility for English Fire and Rescue Services only. We need to take account of that.

I suppose the final point is Jamie's one. The Executive Council are also concerned about the use of the term "extremist". I'll tell you one thing, Conference, if we go on strike in the next two or three weeks I tell you one lot of people that are going to be called extremists – it's you lot, it's this lot here, and it's our members that are going to be called extremists. That's why the wording in the Rule Book is very specific. We stand for working class unity, we stand against racism and fascism. Let's be explicit what it is we're opposing. But with those qualifications we support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 33 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph C12. I now call Resolution 28, Palestine to be moved by Lothian & Borders.

Resolution 28 – PALESTINE

This Conference recognises the suffering of the people of Gaza following the ongoing blockade and the continued occupation of the Palestine territory against them by the Israeli Government. We also condemn the recent and ongoing military assaults, which started on the 14th November 2012, which follows many years of oppression.

On June 14th 2012, 50 international charities and United Nations Agencies called for an immediate end to the blockade as well as recognising the violations of International laws affecting over 1.6 million people, over half of whom are children.

We further recognise the statement made by Valerie Amos, UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, who pointed out that more than 80% of families in Gaza are dependent upon humanitarian aid. She stated "This amounts to collective punishment of all those living in Gaza, and is a denial of basic human rights in contravention of International law."

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We therefore:

Condemn and call for an immediate and sustainable end to the air, any ground attacks and killings of the people of Gaza.

Call for a halt to the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Condemn and call for an immediate end to the siege on Gaza.

Given the current escalations of attacks on the people and workers of Gaza this Conference recognises, in particular the constant dangers and difficulties faced by Palestinian Emergency Service Workers on a daily basis as they attempt to rescue sick and dying casualties whilst under attack from the Israeli Occupation Forces. In doing so, we call upon the Executive Council to formulate an ongoing support strategy in conjunction with Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, to practically and financially support our sister trade unions in these services. This support strategy is to be reported to the membership immediately.

Support the motion on Palestine carried at Congress 2012, in particular a call for a delegation to visit Palestine. We would urge that the FBU does all it can to participate in this delegation as well as publishing a report on any trip to the wider membership.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, before I start I would just like to put on record our thanks in Lothian & Borders for the work that Lud Ramsey has done on behalf of B&EMM.

Conference, when this Resolution was brought to our Brigade Committee the discussion was not around whether we should be putting the subject matter to Conference but more about the fact that we already have supported Resolutions on the subject of Palestine. The debate then became more about practically helping our sisters and brothers in Palestine rather than just politically and academically showing support.

It has to be said, however, that when you talk to Palestinians they are quite clear that the biggest disservice we could do them is to let their struggle fall off the agenda and be forgotten. Given this Union's amazing past on its support for Palestine, it would be a sin not to do all we can to make sure that doesn't happen.

The people of Palestine have not only suffered in their land being stolen from them, their enforced incarceration, being forced to live under disgraceful apartheid conditions, to live surrounded by an illegal,

apartheid wall, they also periodically have to try to survive, raise families, earn a living and have some kind of semblance of community under a blockade – a scenario we here couldn't even begin to contemplate.

Add to that, massive military assault which does not discriminate between a military target and the general population of Gaza. In November 2012 once again they were subject to this kind of State terrorism. Not only must this be condemned from a political perspective, but we also have to lobby our own government to ensure that it is not only doing all it can to pressurise the Israeli government to desist from these atrocities, but also to ensure that no monetary or military support is given to them to oppress the people of Palestine.

On 14th June 2012, 50 international charities and United Nations agencies called for an immediate end to the blockade which is unprecedented, as well as recognising the violations of international laws affecting over 1.6 million people, over half of whom are children.

It also cannot be understated the importance of the statement made by Valerie Amos, UN Under Secretary of Humanitarian Affairs, who pointed out that more than 80% of families in Gaza are dependent on humanitarian aid. She stated "This amounts to collective punishment of all those living in Gaza, and the denial of basic human rights in contravention of international law." If for no other reason, Conference, we must support the boycott, support the end to the hideous oppression, and support the people of Palestine. We therefore must also call for an immediate and sustainable end to the air, air on ground attacks, and killing of the people of Palestine. The only way to support this is to call for a halt to the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

In terms of practical help we support the motion carried at the TUC Congress in 2012, in particular the call for a delegation visit to Palestine. These delegations are invaluable in showing support but also in seeing first-hand what is really happening to the human face of day to day living there. You will see the stark contrast of what it means to be Israeli and what it means to be Palestinian. Leading ANC officials from South Africa have quite starkly reported that the conditions that Palestinians are living under are undeniably those of apartheid, and if we don't take heed of what they say we should be ashamed of ourselves.

We call upon the EC to do all its in power to ensure we do all in our power to participate in this delegation, as well as publishing our report on any trip to the wider membership. The Scottish Region of the FBU has a long history of links with Palestine and no more so than over the last few years with the Palestinian Firefighters and emergency service workers and their trade unions. This has included trips with fire appliances and equipment

being taken to Palestine by our members and officials, as well as the visit and training of Palestinian Firefighters in Scotland. *Applause*

Conference, can I take this opportunity to say to Conference that we are requesting as much PBI Gold as possible. We have secured space in a diplomatic bag, quite a large space in a diplomatic bag, that's going across to Palestine. Can I ask Conference to contact their local regional officials in Scotland if they have any PBI Gold PPE. Remember, Conference, given the escalation of attacks on the people and workers of Gaza, we must recognise in particular the constant dangers and difficulties faced by Palestinian emergency service workers on a daily basis as they attempt to rescue sick and dying casualties whilst under attack from the Israeli occupation force. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

A DELEGATE:

Conference, the Resolution calls for us to supply solidarity with the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions and in particular emergency service workers. As Denise touched upon, there has been an ongoing solidarity project which has been driven in Region 1 with the support of Head Office. And the Scottish government did a lot of training for some of the Palestinian authority civil defence staff who are responsible for the Fire Service on the West Bank. That training has been very well received and those Palestinian Firefighters who attended have rated it as the best training that they have received.

The project was driven by former Region 1 organiser Jim Malone, who's been here observing this week. *Applause* It would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the huge contribution and ongoing contribution that Jim has made to the Palestinian cause over the course of 30 years.

I was lucky enough to accompany some of those Palestinian Firefighters when they visited the Scottish Parliament and were received by the Minister for Community Safety, Roseanna Cunningham and met the Palestinian Ambassador, Manuel Hassassian. But the most uplifting part of their trip actually came when we went to Edinburgh Castle. In Edinburgh Castle there are memorial rooms to the different Scottish battalions who have taken part in colonial campaigns – not something I'm particularly proud of! However, when the Palestinian Firefighters went into those rooms, and they saw inscribed on those walls "Palestine Campaign 1938" – I know that Britain has a huge responsibility for the difficulties in Palestine and the creation of the Israeli State, but they found that hugely uplifting: international

recognition that Palestine has existed, does exist and will continue to exist.

I would urge you all to support the Resolution, as I'm sure you will, and continue that work and solidarity with the Palestinians. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. The Executive Council support. That's open for debate.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

President, Conference, just very quickly, I was part of the delegation that went across with Jim Malone and I would also like to thank him myself – a fantastic effort, Jim. As I said at the fringe meeting the other day, Jim did achieve the impossible and we got the equipment across which he'd planned to do, which I thought wouldn't work at the time.

By the way, belated happy birthday, Matt. I'd also like to say that when we did get to Palestine, I spent my 50th birthday at Athens Airport in a queue with Jim Malone, living the dream! I went across to Palestine in 2006. The situation is even worse; the house building programme is greater, the wall is longer, there are more Palestinians in prison. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 28 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 31, Guantanamo – Save Shaker Aamer, from Lancashire.

Resolution 31 – GUANTANAMO – SAVE SHAKER AAMER

British resident Shaker Aamer has now been incarcerated in the United States detainment and interrogation prison camp at Guantanamo Bay for over 11 years and is the last UK resident still held; this is despite Shaker being cleared for release by the Bush administration in 2007.

Since his initial arrest, Shaker has not been charged with any offence, he has not received a trial and his British lawyer says he is totally innocent. During this time he has faced brutal treatment on an almost daily basis, which has affected both his physical and mental health.

This Conference reiterates its opposition to the US Government's illegal detention of all the prisoners at

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the Guantanamo military prison, and in the case of Shaker Aamer, calls on the Executive Council to:

- ***Support organisations such as Reprieve and Amnesty International who are fighting to secure the immediate release of Shaker so he can return to his wife and children in London.***
- ***Encourage FBU members to support the 'Save Shaker Aamer' Campaign.***

LANCASHIRE

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

President, Conference, I brought this Resolution. I run a local Amnesty group and we've been campaigning for Shaker Aamer for quite a while now. In 2008 I moved a Resolution to Conference which highlighted the injustice of the illegal prison at Guantanamo. At the time four British nationals had just been released. One of those was Moazzam Begg, Moazzam was building a school in Kabul, Afghanistan at the time in 2001. He met Shaker out there while he was building that school. He was released in 2008 after about seven years' imprisonment. He's since done talks and he's constantly campaigning for the release of the remaining prisoners.

When Lancs submitted the Resolution in January there was a very slim chance that Guantanamo would be shutting, albeit there was a possibility they were going to move the prisoners, not release them. But as I'm stood here obviously this did not happen and the campaign goes on.

Five years on, there are still 166 people held in Guantanamo. One of these is 44 year old Shaker Aamer who was arrested on 24th November 2001 following the US invasion. Shaker is from South London and he's married to Zin who is a British national. He has four children and due to his imprisonment in Guantanamo he's never even seen his youngest son, Faris. As it says in the Resolution, not only has he not been afforded a fair trial, or any trial, his British lawyer Clive Stafford-Smith believes that he is totally innocent. Despite the UK government's tentative support, and despite being cleared for release by both President Bush in 2007 and President Obama in 2009, Shaker has now been held in Guantanamo without trial for over 11 years. Much of this time he has been in solitary confinement. Shaker has been described as a charismatic leader who has consistently spoke up for and fought for the rights of the other prisoners in Guantanamo. Some people have speculated that this might be the reason for his continued detention. Amnesty International has stated that due to his lengthy spells in solitary and the torture he has endured, which has included beatings and asphyxiation when being interrogated, Shaker's plight has been one of the worst of all the detainees. Along with several other detainees Shaker has been involved in several hunger strikes

resulting in severe weight loss and the associated medical problems. He's on hunger strike at the moment; it's lasted over 90 days.

We all know the problems that lie ahead for the FBU, but this does not mean that we should stop our international campaigning. It is not a case of either/or. The FBU has historically been at the forefront of campaigns against injustice, whether this has been fighting against apartheid in South Africa or solidarity with the likes of Palestine, Cuba, Columbia, Venezuela. It's important that we keep up this tradition.

Incidentally, I notice we've not had any international speakers at this Conference. I'm hoping that's just a one-off. On 20th April this year, as part of the Save Shaker Aamer campaign, a petition closed with over 117,000 signatures which forced a debate in Westminster on 24th April. This was led by Shaker's MP, Jane Ellison. It's important that all FBU members are aware of the Save Shaker Aamer campaign in order to keep this pressure up, to get him home, get him freed, and get him back with his family. I move.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate. The Executive Council support. Could I apologise to Conference for my mispronunciation of Shaker's name. I've got a friend called Shaker, whose name ends in A so I took a punt. I'm sorry about that, Conference, I'm sorry about that, Steve. I now put Resolution 31 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now call Emergency Resolution 1, European Union to be moved by Shropshire.

Emergency Resolution 1 – EUROPEAN UNION

This Conference notes with concern the announcement made by the Prime Minister in late January, of the Conservative Party's intention to hold a referendum on UK membership of the European Union (EU).

Conference recognises the importance of EU legislation, particularly in regard to Human Rights, Equality and Employment Rights.

Therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council to devise and instigate a strategy to educate Officials and Members of the significance of EU Legislation and Directives and the impact that leaving the EU would have.

SHROPSHIRE

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BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, in January this year, David Cameron, in an effort to assuage his backbenchers' wavering support due to an onrushing clamour of UKIP's burgeoning call to exit the European Union, has promised an in/out referendum for the UK in 2017 if he gets re-elected. I've no doubt that for David Cameron this is purely electioneering and posturing to the right wing of his Party to prove his credentials on the matter. What is pervasively worrying, though, is not the possibility of a referendum but the growing disenchantment with the European Union by a growing number of the UK population, which will mean that this issue will have a large influence in the election in 2015 and may result in a swing vote to the right as the Tory based Nationals ramp up misinformation that discredits the European Union. This has been clearly demonstrated in the recent local elections where UKIP have taken a considerable chunk of the vote and I expect that many of our members voted for them by way of a disaffected protest against the established parties.

Clearly, there are plenty of things that need addressing about the European Union, and that's the same with any organisation. But what is never highlighted in the Tory right wing press is the positive legislation that has brought the UK a more egalitarian framework of human rights and worker protection. Why is this? It's because the real agenda behind the right wing attacks and the European Union is to remove these rights and create an employers' workforce, disparate, scared and subservient, so they can erode our pay and conditions and line their pockets with higher profits.

The Equality Act, Equal Pay, Working Hours, Information, Consultation, TUPE, Part time workers and the right to strike are all underpinned by European Union law. This ConDem government is under pressure from its friends to erode these rights. Just last week the Institute of Directors called for three bills to be included in the Queen's Speech, the third of which they call a "Midas" Bill. This is to strip back what they called gold plating of European directives that have been implemented far too zealously in their opinion. We know that that's not true. TUPE is pretty weak and getting weaker. The right to strike barely complies with EU law, and already the ink on the Equality Act was barely dry before they started to decompose the progress that it has made.

If we leave the EU our rights will be systematically removed, and it's important that our members are aware of what will happen because of that, rather than being influenced by stories in the Daily Mail and all about straight cucumbers, rhubarb and bananas, about double decker buses being banned, about corpses being liquidated and poured down drains, about children not allowed to blow up balloons, and alas, Firefighters' poles

being banned! Some of these stories may sound familiar, and they are just a few of the hundreds of myths designed by the Tory press to create nationalistic indignation and a populist wave of support for a right wing exit of the EU.

We need our members to be better informed and aware of the consequences. That's what this Emergency Resolution calls for. Every time we deal with our members, we need to show them how much more difficult it would be if these laws were to be repealed, what the consequences will be on the rights that are afforded to them under the protection of EU law when those rights have vanished and Britain heads back to a Victorian employer attitude. An example would be, when we're talking to our members, circulars or articles in the Firefighter magazine on part time workers, just a precursor to say that the rights that we've got through the part time workers are underpinned by EU law. I tell you, it won't take them the ten years that it took us to get those rights for our RDS colleagues for them to erode them.

Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that Resolution seconded? *Formally* The Executive Council give qualified support. That's open for debate now. Matt to give the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I think the Executive Council welcome the Emergency Resolution from Shropshire as it brings the issue to the attention of Conference. The Executive Council view is primarily that we need to do more work on this issue, and it is one of our outstanding tasks, as it were. What the Executive Council would wish to say is that we need to have a balanced debate around Europe. I think Matt has helpfully outlined some of the social gains that have been made using European legislation. There is another side, of course, to Europe and that is the implementation of neo-Liberal policies, there is the huge amount of waste within the EU, there is the huge amount of bureaucracy and the large lack of democracy within EU institutions. We can't ignore the role of EU institutions in enforcing austerity measures around Europe, the role of EU institutions, for example, in Greece in imposing austerity on Greek workers.

But Matt is correct to draw Conference's attention to the danger of a right wing and nationalist reaction to the European Union, pioneered and led by UKIP but clearly, we now see, the Tories pandering to that, in fear of losing some of their core support, and large numbers of Tory MPs now, including leading Cabinet members, increasingly calling for support for leaving the EU. I think

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the approach that we need to take is around building working class unity, as we mentioned in the previous debate. That's what the guiding principle for us should be. We work in Europe with the European Federation of Public Sector Unions and the EPSU Firefighters' network. We have common interests with Firefighters, but we also have common interests with tens of millions of other working people across Europe. We can see the impact of austerity across Europe. Also, we see the resistance to that growing there as well. It's interesting that in Greece and Spain, where there have been huge struggles against austerity, interestingly there are not huge calls to leave the EU. In Greece, Syriza, the coalition of the radical left which has emerged as a leading anti-austerity political organisation again does not call for leaving the EU.

So we have to take account of all of those issues. There are legal issues (as Matt outlined), our trade union links, but also the wider structures. If we want to build cooperation with other European nations and particularly with working people in other European nations, then we want to see a democratic Europe, we want to see a workers' Europe, we want to see a different Europe from the one that we have in place today.

So with those qualifications and the requirement to do further work and present further reports to the Conference, we give qualified support. Thank you.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Emergency Resolution 1 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show.
That *CARRIES*

I now call Emergency Resolution 4, Defending our Human Rights to be moved by Bedfordshire.

Emergency Resolution 4 – DEFENDING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS

Conference notes the difficult decisions that lie ahead in the coming weeks with regard to the attack on our pensions. Conference also notes that the UK has the worst record for workers rights in Europe, being the only country without the right to withdraw their labour, as recognised by the ILO. The subsequent attacks on our liberties and human rights by successive Governments are a danger to us all.

This current Conservative Party led Government has laid the battle ground for a referendum on Europe at the next general election, that will also lead to a move away from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) as announced by the Justice

Secretary Chris Grayling on March 3rd 2013 and echoed by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, on March 9th 2013.

Therefore we urge the Executive Council to:

- ***Mount a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of human rights amongst FBU members;***
- ***Support organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch;***
- ***Work with the TUC and other stakeholders to raise and challenge any future Government intentions to withdraw from the ECHR.***

BEDFORDSHIRE

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, Human Rights, without them none of us would be sat here today. This Tory led government have laid the foundation for the next General Election to be fought on welfare, immigration, culture, and the EU. They have been aided and abetted by the media, and more recently the election of UKIP. This is the history of fascism however, the allowance of right wing ideology to seep into mainstream politics and that has been explicitly demonstrated in the last couple of weeks. The media may not tell you what to think, but they do tell you what to think about.

Successive governments have been stealing away our freedoms and liberties with legislation that strikes at the heart of our basic human rights. We had TPIMS, the Terrorism Act and we've got the pending Data and Communications Bill. We just passed a couple of Resolutions, and we've had discussion and debate about it on the Conference floor this week, about using social media to get the messages out and these pieces of legislation run the risk of curtailing all our liberties and freedoms.

They have been doing this through the Trojan Horse of terrorism. Theresa May keeps talking about the man and his cat that can't be deported, she's been bleating on about Abu Qatada, you couldn't make it up! The Resolution also refers to workers' rights and ILO and obviously the debate we've had this week on certain issues and what you can and can't say in the build-up to certain action that may or may not be taken. So to keep it short, what we are asking for is for the EC to start the work, as the government have pulled the trigger and fired the starting gun to try to raise awareness of the membership on watches and branches. At the minute, it's being framed by the media and I think we need to try to get an early jump on the situation. To qualify that as well, a lot of us have got up here this week and asked for help from the EC or asked them to go and do some more work. Really, it starts with us first. So we need to get in there to do that. I move. *Applause*

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THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council give qualified support. Is that seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate. I now call upon the General Secretary to give the Executive Council's qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Two qualifications, President, first in paragraph one relating to the UK being the only country in the EU without the right to withdraw labour. The Executive Council is just concerned about the accuracy of that comment. Certainly, in our view, it's not the case in relation to Firefighters. There are many Firefighters across Europe who don't have the right to withdraw their labour, a minor point.

The other more substantial point is in relation to the second bullet point. It's helpful that the Resolution says "support organisations such as" because while the Union is affiliated to Amnesty International, you may be aware there has been some debate in the Labour Movement and internationally around Human Rights Watch, particularly around the question of funding. Amnesty International has very strict policies about its fund raising, to ensure that it is independent of any State. There are criticisms of Human Rights Watch in that respect. There are also criticisms of Human Rights Watch in relation to political stances that have been taken on various issues. So while we would maintain our support for and affiliation to Amnesty International, we are not convinced that we should consider firm, financial or political support for Human Rights Watch.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I now put Emergency Resolution 4 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

Paragraph C13, Paragraph C14. I now call Emergency Resolution 6, Campaign for Benefits Justice, to be moved by London. The Executive Council give that qualified support.

Emergency Resolution 6 – CAMPAIGN FOR BENEFITS JUSTICE

Conference condemns the Government's savage attacks on benefits, which will push millions further into poverty and despair.

Conference further condemns the disgusting bedroom tax, which will force tenants who claim housing benefit and have an additional room either to pay more rent or downsize to a smaller dwelling.

This has already led to the reported suicide of "Stephanie Bottrill" who killed herself because she faced an £80p/m rent increase.

We call upon Conference to:

- ***Support the Anti Bedroom Tax Federations that have been set up in Scotland, and England and Wales;***
- ***Affiliate to the Benefits Justice Campaign;***
- ***To call upon FBU members to join demonstrations and protests organised against the bedroom tax and other benefits.***

LONDON

BRO NEALE WILLIAMS (London):

Comrades, you might have seen in the papers and the media over the last week the stories about Stephanie Bottrill who was a pensioner from Solihull who sadly died when she threw herself underneath a lorry. Stephanie was losing £20 a week off her benefits because of the bedroom tax which penalises people on benefits who have a spare room. Stephanie was disabled and too ill to work. The council didn't have anywhere smaller for Stephanie to move to. She used hot water bottles all through this winter instead of central heating in order to save pounds. Stephanie told her neighbours she couldn't afford to live. In her suicide note to her son she wrote: "Don't blame yourself for me ending my life. The only people to blame are the government."

The bedroom tax affects some 650,000 households in Britain. Up to two-thirds of those people are disabled. The bedroom tax is part of a much wider government offensive on benefits, which is itself part of a much bigger attack on workers and our families to pay for the economic crisis which was caused by the bankers. It's a class issue and trade unions need to stand alongside all those who are building resistance to it. This motion seeks to achieve this by calling on our Union to support the anti-bedroom tax federations that have been set up in England, Scotland and Wales, and by calling on our Union to affiliate to the Campaign For Benefits Justice. It also calls on FBU members to get involved in the various protests and demonstrations that are taking place all around the country.

The NUT have already affiliated nationally to the Campaign for Benefits Justice and the EIS in Scotland is affiliated to the Scottish Federation. John McDonnell spoke at the recent summit of the Campaign for Benefits Justice, and what he said was that we had to start drawing lines of resistance throughout our class against Tory austerity. The political movement which is being formed against austerity, in the streets, against the bedroom tax, in our communities, against benefits cuts, has the potential to become as big and influential a

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political movement as the anti-poll tax federation was in the 1980s. We all know that that did for Thatcher. It's imperative that our trade union is involved at an early moment in the formation of these political movements against Tory austerity. It's our class. The rich don't use benefits, our class use the benefits. So we need to stand alongside working people. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally* That's open for debate. By the time you get to your seat, Neale, I may have some even better news for you!

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

It was qualified support, now it's just support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Emergency Resolution 6 to the vote. The Executive Council support. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That *CARRIES*

I now seek the endorsement of the Executive Council Report. Is that agreed? *AGREED*

It now falls to me to give a vote of thanks to everybody who has helped in the making of this Conference this week. To the Head Office staff who haven't previously been mentioned: Paul Hampton, Bob Burchill, who's been in charge of all the technology, and Frances Beckett who's been doing a sterling job in the Press office. *Applause*

To Standing Orders who make everything that happens in this building for the full week and everything that comes to you beforehand and everything that goes to you afterwards happen, I'd like to give my personal thanks, and I hope that you will give yours. *Applause*

I'd like to extend my personal thanks to the Chair of Standing Orders who has worked tirelessly on my behalf, and more than that, my hero Stewart Kinnon (his words, not mine) who has been dealing with my timetable and has to put up with most of my little strops and moods. I thank Stewart from the bottom of my heart.

On behalf of yourselves, I hope that we can thank the hotel staff. *Applause* We really have, on occasions, messed them about but I'm sure that their bar profits are more than adequate for that in the hotel.

I'd like to make mention of one individual on Standing Orders who is leaving and that's Phil Jordan. He has stood down to do a proper week's work in Region 13. He hasn't left the Fire Brigades Union, and you will see

him again, but he's leaving Standing Orders. For those of you who don't know who Phil is, he was a little head above a computer for a number of years in Standing Orders and I'll miss him terribly. So thank you very much for all your work, Phil. *Applause*

Talking about people who put up with me, I'd also like to extend my thanks to the Vice President of the Union who has been in there, keeping time, keeping watch, making sure that I didn't mess up too much and helping me whenever he could. I'd like to thank you for that, Jim.

Last, I'd like to thank Scotland, the number 1 Region, because when they leave today, the eight Brigades in Scotland will leave for the final time. They leave this Conference with a very proud history, a very proud tradition. They've provided General Secretaries, they've provided Presidents. Basically, I know that when they return as one Brigade, the Scottish Brigade, that will continue to happen in this Union. We are very proud of you all for everything you've done over the years and may you continue, long may that continue.

What I will say to Scotland is this. You're the only people in this room who can now keep your voting cards as a memento. The rest of you will need to hand them in at the door as you leave.

I think that it's right and proper to refer to yesterday when you made your momentous and historical decision. You voted on the direction that this Union may have to take. Conference, believe me, there can be no variance whatsoever from that path. We must break our backs, every single one of us, to achieve it. We can't afford to fail. We owe it to our past, we owe it to our present, we owe it to our future. I'll tell you what (and I mean this from the bottom of my heart), to do nothing would damn us, comrades. Please work as hard as you possibly can, and I guarantee you that the Executive Council will work as hard as it can to secure something for you in advance of what you may well have to do.

Last but by no means least, I'd like to thank those who have staffed the FBU shop on our behalf. Can I remind Conference delegates to hand in their key pads. Can I remind Regional officials once again to take their voting cards back to Standing Orders. Please have a safe journey home. Conference is closed. *Applause*

Conference closed

Addendum

THURSDAY MORNING

STANDING ORDERS REPORTS DURING CLOSED SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call upon the Chair of Standing Orders, Steve Shelton, to give the Standing Orders report. Thank you, Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Conference, there is a change to delegate. West Midlands: delete Mick McKay; insert Neil Johnson. Unfortunately, Conference, I have to report that this change has come about because Mick McKay has been hospitalised. Standing Orders is liaising with the Regional officials from Region 7 and we'll keep the President and Conference up to date with the situation. I'm sure Conference would like to join the Standing Orders Committee in sending our best wishes to Brother Mick McKay. *Applause*

THURSDAY AFTERNOON

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sarah. I now call Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders to give a Standing Orders report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. I'm just writing down a last minute withdrawal. I won't be a second. Can you please turn to your Programme of Business Page 4: Resolution 58, Defend Firefighters' Pensions, London, withdrawn; Resolution 25, Pensions, Devon & Somerset withdrawn. Conference, there will be a bucket collection when Conference adjourns this afternoon for Rape Crisis. Rape Crisis Helpline receives no designated funding and giving to this bucket collection will directly support the victims of rape and sexual assault. The helpline is staffed by volunteers, many of whom are survivors. Please support generously. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is that agreed, Conference? *AGREED*

Thank you. Before I go on, I have some news about the Chair of our Parliamentary Group, John McDonnell, which I haven't reported to Conference. John, as you know, works tirelessly on behalf of this Union and he's recently been taken ill, and as we speak he is being treated in hospital. I know that Conference will wish John a very, very speedy recovery and that he gets back in the saddle to do some great work once more for the Fire Brigades Union, but more so for socialists everywhere, and decent working people everywhere. John has always been a champion of those. I wish to send Conference's best wishes to him. Is that agreed? *AGREED*

Thank you. Equally a pleasure is to introduce to you a comrade of mine called Ian Lavery. A lot of you will know Ian, a lot of you know Ian because of his strength, his campaigning, but also because he's former President of the NUM. He is now the MP for Wansbeck. As you will have heard from some of the speakers from around the country, we're actually taking over. We're doing it by stealth. My son Geordie, at the back and Mandy – we're actually taking over the place. Ian will do us proud wherever he works. I've always known Ian as a man of great integrity. He's a local man, he's from a pit background (as he would be, coming from Ashington). He is also the Chairman of the Ashington Football team and he took what I would consider to be a completely decent stance when the idiots that I occasionally follow,

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the pit team who play in black and white decided to put "Wonga.com" on their shirts next year. As far as I'm concerned, for a football team who purport to represent working people in the North East it is an absolute and utter disgrace. You won't be seeing me back there in a hurry because of that as well. What I will say is that Ian has been forced to resign from his Shadow front bench position because of tabling an amendment against his Whip's instruction on behalf of the POA to the Public Sector Pensions Bill. So he's no stranger to radicalism or speaking his mind. It's a great privilege for me to have Ian speak to Conference. I hope you give him the welcome that you would have given John McDonnell. Ian Lavery. *Applause*

BRO IAN LAVERY (Member of Parliament):

Thanks very much for that, Alan. It's great being second reserve, you know, it really is, to any Conference. Not too bad being second reserve to John. I thank Alan and the delegates for their consideration. John's been a tremendous stalwart on behalf of, not just the FBU, but a lot of the unions within Parliament, if not all the unions in Parliament. It was sad to see him have a bit of a heart attack, that's what it's been related to me. Now he's at home, he's at home resting. So it's a great pleasure for me. I've got to say, I've got a 57 page document. That's my briefing for the day. Would anybody mind if I read it out word for word, or have you got more important business? Seriously, it's an absolute pleasure to address the Conference today. As I say, I've been drafted in late as a reserve, but nonetheless, it gives me a great opportunity, and comrades it's an opportunity I've been waiting for for nearly 30 years.

As Alan has mentioned, by profession I'm a coal miner and former President of the really moderate National Union of Mineworkers. I worked with Arthur Scargill for many years, some say as his henchman. I'm not too sure about that, but I learned a lot from the National Union of Mineworkers. I cannot begin to explain how much I personally, my family, and hundreds of thousands of miners valued the camaraderie, the friendship and the solidarity and the assistance afforded to us during the 1984/1985 Miners' dispute. That is nearly 29½ years ago. It was absolutely brilliant! The FBU was the Union that supported the National Union of Mineworkers. I've got an extremely strong bond because of that, as have many other people within the industry. I've worked closely with successive national officials and leadership of the Union over many years and I've listened to the tales of Scargill and Cameron – Scargill over a cup of tea and Cameron used to have a drink of whisky. They used to recite the tale when Cameron turned up at the NUM offices with a box of cash from the FBU. I think it's repaid, Matt? Them tales have become folk lore. I just think that the bond between the National Union of Mineworkers and the

FBU is stronger now than it's ever been, and it's due to the camaraderie over a whole number of years.

So, comrades, I speak on behalf of hundreds of thousands of people within the mining communities when I say a big thank you to everybody within the FBU – members who may have left over the period, but members who are still here and who fought alongside the National Union of Mineworkers in support, as we've mentioned. A real big thank you. It's took me 30 years to be able to say that to you. So I'm honoured and I'm privileged to do so. *Applause*

Thank you very much. I've got to extend greetings from the Parliamentary Group, from the Chair Kate Hoey and the Secretary John McDonnell, who it's been mentioned is unable to address Conference today. The government's programme is set to continue, as was announced in the Queen's speech only last week. It's cuts, it's privatisation, it's attacks on trade union rights; and it's attacks on safety and health. Nothing new there, then. The recurrent themes that the FBU Group has been working on throughout the year have been the cuts, pensions, floods and privatisation, among many other things. Cuts to the Fire Service is extremely important. It's really been at the top of the Parliamentary agenda. At February 2013 the local government settlement meant that every fire authority area in England faces a cut. The review of efficiencies will recommend further savings, paving the way for more cuts to come in the June Comprehensive Spending Review. In the previous year, April 2011 to March 2012, nearly 1500 front line Firefighters and over 700 support jobs were lost across the UK. Comrades, that's just something which we cannot afford.

I want to just mention at this juncture my view. When we mention front line jobs, yes, they're very, very important. You hear politicians and you hear trade union leaders mention the loss of front line jobs. I want to protect people not just on the front line but people in the back room. The people in the back room seem to be forgotten in all of this. It's all right to get rid of them as long as there's people on the front line. Well, it isn't all right to get rid of people, working people. They have got mortgages, they have got children, they want a life, and they certainly do not want to be on the unemployment queue, that is for certain.

The Fire and Rescue Service pensions again has been a massive issue. The Westminster Government's Public Service Pensions Act has imposed a normal pension age of 60 on Firefighters, despite the lack of evidence for fitness, capability in the Williams Review. Further increases in Firefighters' pension contributions are leading to opt outs which undermine the pension scheme. Comrades, like other organisations, like other public workers, we're suffering a great attack from this

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government. There's 450 people per day being sacked, public sector workers, there's 450 been sacked every day since the Coalition government. The pensions issue is extremely important as well, very important. I know it's a huge issue which Conference has been discussing and is likely to discuss later this afternoon.

But why should anybody have to work longer, contribute more, and get less out? It's something which, believe me, if we don't challenge, they'll destroy the public sector pensions. There isn't anything given to working class people because you make a noise. As Mick McGahey, the great NUM leader used to say: "If you keep running they'll keep chasing"! *Applause* So, comrades, of course it's difficult times, but to be fair, Mick McGahey's words are extremely important.

Another issue which the Parliamentary Group have been discussing is the floods. 2012 was the wettest year on record for England, and Firefighters turned out to nearly twice as many flood incidents as the previous year, highlighting the case for the Fire and Rescue Service in England and Wales to have the same statutory duty to respond to flooding as those in Scotland and Northern Ireland. I would just like to place on record my sincere thanks to the Fire and Rescue Service in my area, Northumberland. I see Kieran sitting there. The way in which they assisted in Morpeth in my constituency over a whole number of years has been absolutely outstanding. I think that the least we could be doing is for this statutory duty to be enforced, the same as it is in Scotland and in Northern Ireland.

I had a debate on it in Parliament and one of the Tories from one of the Shire constituencies said: "Well, you should just get people with buckets to help you because that's what we do in our constituency; we got on our horses"! That's just not like Wansbeck, I've got to be honest with you. I would much rather put my faith in the fantastic work of the people in the Fire and Rescue Service than some pompous so-and-so's riding round on horses with buckets. But there are other people got different views on that.

Another really important issue which was discussed this week was we had an adjournment debate on Monday night about the mutual's and privatisation. The Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis, wrote to the Regulatory Reform Committee seeking views to enable Fire and Rescue authorities in England to contract out the full range of services to a suitable provider. I'm on this Committee. There was a huge problem within Parliament because somebody leaked Brandon Lewis's letter. Well, it wasn't me, but I did, after the initial leak – and this is so serious and you cannot take it lightly – I think we made some progress, Matt. I think we have. It's not mutualisation, by the way, it's privatisation. That's what it is, that's what it means. Why would the

government send it to a Regulatory Reform Committee? It's certainly been called three times in the last three years. I forget what the first one was about. That's how important it is. The second one was about giving vets licensing, and the third one was about hallmarking gold across Europe. Why did they send this document, and it was a lengthy document, very important, to the Regulatory Reform Committee? I'm not sure, but we will find out in the very near future.

They've accused the FBU of scaremongering about privatisation, but on Monday night the question was put to them: if indeed Cleveland was mutualised would there be an agreement that in two, three, four, five years' time that that mutualised organisation couldn't then be put out to private tender? The answer was he couldn't give an answer. So the idea about mutualisation is about the next step to privatisation. There isn't any doubt about that, comrades. *Applause*

So you need to fight this one because privatisation is something which I'm sure you'll be discussing on the agenda at this Conference. As a group we've publicised many other issues such as the FBU response to granting of the preferred bidder status to Capita for the Fire Service College in December. Despite recent fears of a triple dip recession, sparking widespread acknowledgement that the government's austerity programme isn't working, and some signs of significant cracks appearing in the Coalition, they remain determined to decimate public services. The work in Parliament remains critical in ensuring that concerns of the FBU and members are heard by Members of Parliament.

We've been very active in the Commons; we've been involved in debates, opposing the Public Service Pensions Bill, arranging interventions in the House of Lords, all on behalf of the Firefighters. We've been tabling amendments in an effort to resist a rise in retirement age for Firefighters. We've been doing all sorts with regard to the FBU Parliamentary Group. It is one of the most respected groups in Parliament. It was set up in 2002/2003. It has got 32 Labour MPs. It's Chaired by Kate Hoey. John McDonnell is the Secretary and the Vice Chair is Ian Davidson. It's professionally supported by union services and Simeon Andrews is in the room somewhere. I've got to place on record my thanks and my gratitude to Simeon and his full team, because they do a fantastic job on behalf of everybody in this room. *Applause*

The group meets every six to eight weeks. We have briefings, and I'm sure you have briefings at the Executive Council meetings from John. We've established ourselves with a prominent reputation in Parliament. So all these issues are extremely important. We put Early Day Motions forward, we've asked

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questions, written questions, anything, we've had Ministerial debates. We had Brandon Lewis in a meeting only just two or three weeks ago with regard to the pensions and other things. I asked Brandon Lewis a question from the floor of the House on the mutualisation of Cleveland. I said something like "Can the Hon Gentleman" – I mean, that really pisses me off, you know, when you've got to call them honourable gentleman, and if you call them dishonourable you get chucked out! It's absolutely absurd but this is the Palace of Varieties which I'm now employed in! I says: "Will the Rt. Hon Gentleman agree that if everyone in Cleveland, every stakeholder, isn't fully in agreement with mutualisation, that it cannot take place?" He answered and I didn't have a clue what he meant. I seen him on the same night and he says: "Ian, can I have a word with you?" I said: "Yes." He says: "I'm sorry about that answer." I said: "Well, I didn't know what you meant." He said: "Ian, it was the answer to a different question. I thought you were going to ask something else so I answered that question." This is a Minister of State dealing with the Fire and Rescue Service. He did say that he would write to us and give us the answer to my question, but he hasn't done so.

We've had meetings with Richard Benyon, we've had meetings with Bob Neill, we've had lots of meetings with different Ministers to discuss the issues which I have outlined, many debates. To be honest, I'm not sure if we're making any progress, but we've got to make sure that we continue forging forward with the issues that are extremely important to the members of this fantastic Union.

I just want to say that this morning I've been at the POA Conference in Southport. One of the big things on their agenda is privatisation. They're privatising prisons, they're closing prisons, they're amalgamating prisons. The ones which they're not privatising, they're privatising services within the public sector prisons. They're facing an absolutely torrid time. I just want to end with the same message, if I can. Privatisation is the root of all evil within the public sector. I was a miner; I've seen what happens with privatisation. I've seen the threats that come on the lead up to privatisation, and I think mutualisation is the beginning, if not the near end, on the road to privatisation. The way in which wages, terms and conditions are threatened. Only this week I've had a meeting with the National Union of Mineworkers and the Shadow energy team, and we're talking about the last remnants of the coal industry. The coal industry this week could see the last pit since privatisation. I really wouldn't like to see anything happen with regard to privatisation in the Fire and Rescue Service. Comrades, please do me one favour and that is fight till your dying breath against privatisation. It's not only yourselves, it's not only your families that will suffer as a consequence of privatisation; it will be the general public who rely on

you to look after them. When you listen to the rhetoric: you're the ones that's running towards these disasters while everybody is running away – it's been an absolute pleasure speaking to you today. I wish I had more time. I haven't. I know you've got some very serious issues. So thank you very much, and I hope it's not another 30 years before I stand privileged to speak before you. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Ian, on behalf of Conference, I think the reception you got shows the warmth and strength of feeling that you have from the Fire Brigades Union. Ian said that he comes from a mining background and he's former President of the NUM. The NUM is a union that's at the heart of the whole history of the British Labour Movement, the backbone of the building of the British Labour Movement. It's no surprise there is that affinity. The NUM's strength and solidarity was built on the shared work that people did, the shared risks and sometimes the shared tragedies that people had in the mining industry. There are clearly close similarities between what our people do, on a different scale and in a different industry, but the shared risks and shared solidarity as the backbone of our Union, as they are for the NUM. It's therefore no surprise that in our education programme and in our National School a great deal of effort is put into discussing the history of the mine working industry, the NUM. I think our students at National School get a huge amount out of that process.

Ian mentioned the famous story about the 1984/1985 strike and when the NUM was sequestered. Various organisations came to their assistance, and famously cash was apparently handed over in a cardboard box (or a crisp box is one version of it). I did bump into Arthur at an event where we see Ian at often, the Annual NUM David Jones/Joe Green lecture. He immediately mentioned and I said "I've come for the crisp box back". We still haven't got it back!

Ian comes across as a rough, tough mining type, but from the world of Twitter I discovered something about him just recently, that he'd just opened a shop in his constituency. It was a fashion shop, and he made reference to the stuff they were selling in this shop, including fascinators. I had to look up what a fascinator was. I think it's these things that you put in your hair and dangle around or whatever. So we were going to get Ian a fascinator, but we couldn't find one so we have got a gift, which is a tankard, instead. Thanks very much, Ian, for coming along today. *Applause (A presentation was made)*



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Record of 2013 Conference Decisions

Blackpool

Record of Decisions

Motions Carried ...

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE FIREFIGHTERS' SAFETY AS AMENDED BY THE CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The safety and health of firefighters is a principal concern for the Fire Brigades Union. The health, safety and welfare of our Members, is one of the central reasons why this Union was established and why it continues to play an irreplaceable role in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

We are very clear that there is no contradiction between an active interventionist approach to fires and other incidents and protecting and improving firefighter safety. Such an approach requires:

Sufficient attendance that arrives quickly and with sufficient weight of numbers of personnel in order to effect an early and sufficient intervention with:

- Properly trained crews
- Well designed and well maintained equipment
- High standard operational procedures.

The FBU has been working with other key leads on the development of the Health and Safety Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service, which we were assured will be published in advance of our Conference.

Since the turn of the Century and with the introduction of so-called modernisation, there has been an alarming increase in firefighter fatalities during operations at fires. In particular, multiple firefighter fatalities took place in Warwickshire, East Sussex, Hertfordshire and London (after almost a decade of few firefighter deaths at work) which gave rise to the commissioning of the Fire Brigades Union's report *In the Line of Duty* published in 2008.

Modernisation has also affected our emergency control rooms with the ill fated 'FireControl' project and ensuing fallout, as highlighted in 'Future Control Room Service Scheme' – March 2013.

We have to ensure that we have enough properly trained staff on duty at all times to start the process of Fire Fighter Safety.

FBU report: *In the Line of Duty*

In the Line of Duty is the most comprehensive account of recent firefighter deaths produced to date. It is a national disgrace that it required the FBU to produce such a report because the Government, the Employers and the sector as a whole failed to do so. Although this report was widely welcomed within the FRS, the Executive Council believes that the lessons from this

report have not been learned and that the safety of our members is still not being treated with the seriousness it deserves.

In the Line of Duty incorporated within its recommendations;

- There should be joint working between The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Devolved Administrations in order to achieve high standards of reporting and recording of firefighter fatalities and related matters.
- A common, consistent and comprehensive reporting system for fatalities and major injuries should be introduced across the UK.
- The Government should widen the definition of reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), to include work-related road traffic accidents (RTAs) and heart attacks.
- A national independent Fire and Rescue Service investigation unit should be established, with the remit to examine in particular firefighter fatalities, major and serious injuries and near misses.
- There is an urgent need for centrally issued substantial, safety critical national guidance on the issues arising from recent fatalities.
- Fire and Rescue Services should have systems in place to learn lessons from fatalities, major and serious injuries and near misses, both from incidents within their Service and from others in the UK and abroad.
- The Government departments should seek to develop standards for individual integrated radio and breathing apparatus sets and individual locational tracking systems, to be introduced as early as possible.
- On a UK-wide basis the Governments and Assemblies should introduce a requirement on Employers, landlords and other responsible persons to submit in writing their fire risk assessments to the local Fire and Rescue Service.
- Fire and Rescue Services should initiate an internal training audit including individual comprehensive training needs analyses to identify areas where the FRS and individual firefighters require additional or refresher training, particularly for emergency response.
- On the incident ground only safe uninjured firefighters can deliver a service to the public. In developing IRMPs, Fire and Rescue Services must consider the risks to employees above anything else. They should develop suitable and sufficient strategies for safe systems of work and should ring-fence the financial, material and human resources required to deliver these strategies.

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Lack of progress since 2008

The CLG, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and individual Fire and Rescue Services have made very little progress with these recommendations.

Since the publication of *In the Line of Duty*, further firefighter fatalities have occurred in Hampshire and in Lothian & Borders, as well as other fatalities in training and from cardiac arrest. FBU officials and members have worked tirelessly investigating the reasons for these deaths and the measures required that could have prevented them and that could prevent future recurrences.

We have witnessed the court cases in Warwickshire and in East Sussex. On the one hand, in the Warwickshire case, we have seen the Crown Prosecution Service bringing ill-founded and unsuccessful criminal proceedings against front-line personnel, in which operational fire crews were criticised for attempting to extinguish a fire.

On the other hand, the Executive Council is alarmed that, in the recent High Court trial on Marlie Farm (an incident where in our view firefighters were tasked to fight fire on a site storing explosives without adequate pre-planning, training, water supplies or incident command support to do so). East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have argued that FRS's do not have a duty of care towards employees for the actions of incident commanders on the fireground and, even more widely, that the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 does not apply **at all** to firefighters. In our view, this is tantamount to saying that firefighters are expendable.

The most significant improvement which followed the publication of *In the Line of Duty* was the introduction, by CLG, of a system for developing operational guidance. Such guidance is an essential tool for firefighters. It should draw on the latest knowledge and be based on best practice. It should enable firefighters to carry out their role effectively, professionally and safely.

Regrettably, Central Government at Westminster has increasingly sought to withdraw from any form of direct involvement in the Fire and Rescue Service and, as a result, has withdrawn from the structures created following the 2008 report and discussions. New structures are being developed by The Chief Fire Officers Association and the Local Government Association in which the FBU is participating and we recognise the efforts of the participants in their attempts to create the guidance. However, with inadequate funding and resources from Government departments the work is too slow. The Executive Council has expressed its concern at these developments and made clear that this work should be fully funded by Central

Government.

The Executive Council is aware of the anger and frustration among Members at the failure of the Employers, Governments and other agencies to adequately address the numerous concerns which have arisen from the various tragic fatalities in our Service.

The Fire and Rescue Service is already suffering from cuts, inadequate training, inadequate planning and inadequate emergency response. These factors increase risk to the public and to firefighters and increase the losses suffered by local communities and by businesses. The under provision which already exists will exacerbate the risks we have identified in 2008 and after.

Resolution

The Executive Council commit to continue in our efforts and to increase the resources assigned to this task in order to force Government, Health & Safety Executive and the Employers to learn the lessons from the recent firefighter fatalities.

The Executive Council commit to produce a new report on firefighter fatalities and related matters, drawing together the lessons from recent trials, inquests and investigations, to supplement the findings of the *In the Line of Duty* report.

The Executive Council will make representations to Ministers, Chief Fire and Rescue Advisors, Her Majesty's Inspectorate Scotland and the Scottish Operational Guidance Board and Employers' organisations to speed up the process for learning lessons from the recent tragedies. Reports will be issued to Regional and Sectional Committees in due course and a report will be made to Conference as appropriate.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE FUTURE STRUCTURES OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

1. INTRODUCTION

Special Conference 2012 received a report on behalf of the Executive Council (EC) which continued the work in reorganising the structures of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in order to achieve the goal of maintaining our organisation as an effective, independent and specialist fire service Union. The EC continues to remain committed to this and to securing the future of the Union for those who will succeed us.

Aside from the crippling effect on fire cover and public safety, the continuing cuts agenda and the resulting financial squeeze means that the Union must continue to review all aspects of the way we operate. Our number one priority continues to be protecting the Union in order to best protect our Members both now

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and in the future.

The results of the various measures already implemented have assisted in reducing expenditure. However, the scale of the challenge remains considerable, as identified and reported to Conference over the years since 2005. The EC remains committed to the target set at Conference 2011 (to build a surplus in the General Fund equal to 60% of annual General Fund income). We continue to remain some way from that target and the financial challenges we face continue to increase in the context of further job losses and the continuing squeeze on pay.

Special Conference 2012 agreed a set of recommendations that continued the reorganisation/restructure project initiated some eight years ago. These fundamental aspirations remain the focus of reorganising and restructuring the Union, namely:

- Maintain an independent, financially viable and effective Union to represent the common aims and interests of our Members
- Provide the research, political and campaigning support to Officials nationally and locally against the most serious and wide-ranging challenges the Union has faced in our recent history.

In relation to all areas of the Union's structures and to the decisions already taken, reports on the financial and other consequences have been provided to the EC. This will continue to be the case so as to ensure that all areas of the Union's structure have been thoroughly considered as part of this process.

2. HEAD OFFICE, STAFFING AND NATIONAL OFFICIALS

2.1 Staffing and Head Office

Work has continued in this area and efficiency savings continue to be made. The number of staff employed by Head Office has continued to fall and savings in total salary costs now exceed a quarter of a million pounds per annum. With such reductions in employee numbers comes a necessity to restructure and reorganise Head Office functions. This continues to be done in conjunction with the recognised staff Union and senior managers within Head Office.

The EC can report the following progress in relation to Head Office from the report to Special Conference 2012:

- The near completion of the 'policies and procedures' manual;
- 'Expressions of Interest' from those staff who had identified themselves have been completed. This process has resulted in a significant alteration to the numbers and structures of the staffing arrangements at Head Office;
- Staff and GMB continue to be consulted over the

continuing restructure;

- Training needs have been identified and measures are in hand to give staff the necessary support.

Work is ongoing on the following:

- A review of Regional Offices and of administrative support available for Regions;
- The issue of Bradley House and a review of the suitability, location and cost of Head Office.

However the priority has been to consider such matters strategically and to ensure continuity of the Union's work.

The EC wishes to thank the GMB and all staff for their co-operation on this matter and for their appreciation that these measures are to ensure that the future of the FBU as an independent and viable Trade Union is maintained.

2.2 Recommendations Regarding Full Time Officials

Special Conference 2012 agreed that the number of National Officers required under Rule be reduced from four to three and that the EC be authorised to manage the reduction in number in the best interests of the Union, following further discussion with National Officers. It was recognised that such a change may not take place for some time due to the age and service profile of current post-holders.

Discussions have been held with National Officers, both individually and collectively. The EC recognise the uncertainty caused by this recommendation but remain committed to reducing overall salary costs. However, the EC has to take account of the ongoing restructure at Head Office and that departments need to adjust to the new working environment, often with reduced numbers. As a result of this National Officers are taking on aspects of work that might previously have been done by staff Members and they need to oversee their relevant departments as changes are implemented.

At this time therefore, the election processes for National Officer remain suspended to allow the various changes to be introduced and to limit the financial risk to the Union. Reports will continue to be presented to Conference on progress.

3. TRADE UNION LEAVE

Trade Union leave and facility arrangements continue to pose considerable challenges to the Union. The EC is aware of attacks on Trade Union facility arrangements throughout the Fire and Rescue Service which are part of a wider attack driven by Government and others such as the Tax Payers Alliance. The EC is of the view that good quality agreements on Trade Union facilities and leave are essential to the good operation of industrial

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relations in the fire service. The contribution of FBU Officials at local and national level also adds huge value to the service as a whole. The Union therefore rejects the approach of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which seeks to further attack facilities and to pass greater costs onto Trade Unions.

In response to these attacks the Union will prepare and issue guidance to local Officials. Fire and Rescue Service employers should be reminded of their obligations and the rights of Trade Union representatives provided by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act and ACAS Code of Practice. They should also be reminded of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services' Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire and Rescue Service including the commitment of employers to: "Put in place reasonable Trade Union facilities in accordance with statutory requirements and ACAS good practice guidance". Similarly, the Grey Book provides that: "Fire and Rescue Authorities shall therefore provide Officials of recognised Trade Unions with reasonable facilities necessary for them to carry out their Trade Union duties."

The EC believes that employers in the Fire and Rescue Service must accept their responsibility to provide good facilities for Trade Unions and should accept this will in various circumstances require full release from duties for certain Officials. Therefore the Union will not accept any automatic demands from Employers for payments for Trade Union facilities and will keep existing arrangements under review.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS ON EQUALITY SECTIONS

Special Conference 2012 recommended that the Union would provide guidance for Officials regarding the future organisation and functioning of the three equality sections. The EC has drafted a set of guidance that followed a period of consultation with Representatives of the three equality sections. This document was issued for consultation in March 2013.

The document will be a guide for Officials and Members to clarify the roles of the National Sectional Committees for the equality sections within the Union.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRADE SECTIONS

Special Conference 2012 agreed the following recommendation:

'that a task and finish group be established by the Executive Council, including at least one member from each Trade Section, to examine the industrial issues that the Trade Sections specifically face and the organisational structures and practices best able to respond to them. The task and finish group to report back to the Executive Council in time for a report or policy statement to be put to Conference

2013 with recommendations as appropriate.'

The EC set up a task and finish group and invited submissions from the three Trade Sections. Responses were received from all three sections and the EC thanks those sections for their contributions to the work of the group.

The Task and Finish Group considered the responses and noted that all three sections felt that the current structures were best suited in both representing the views of the Members of their section and in responding to the ongoing challenges that face them as Trade Sections operating within the Fire and Rescue Service. However, it was recognised that there is some ambiguity and confusion regarding their role within the FBU. In order to give clarity for all concerned the following recommendations were agreed:

- 1 Trade Sections are responsible for working with Regions in order to explore all options in the identification and recruitment of new Members and Representatives (as defined in the Rule Book). It is essential that this process involves the Brigade Organisers from within the Region and Regional Trade Section representatives.
- 2 Trade Section Committees will continue to hold their Annual General Meeting (AGM) in order to agree tasks for the forthcoming year and debate Resolutions for submission to the Union's Conference on a biennial basis. These meetings will be arranged by Head Office in conjunction with the National Committees. The process shall ensure that the National Officials responsible for the Trade Sections inform Regions of the arrangements. The Trade Sections may continue to extend their AGM to other Members of the section, nominations to be agreed by the Regional committees (a maximum of 3 per Region). This is to be coordinated by the National Official responsible for the Trade Section.
- 3 Where a Region has a vacancy for any of the three Trade Section Regional Representative positions, the matter should be discussed between the Regional EC member and the relevant Trade Section EC Member (in consultation with their relevant executives) to consider how best to address filling the vacant positions. Whilst a Region is carrying a vacancy in a Regional Trade Section position, on occasion, they may extend an invitation to a Trade Section National Sectional Official to attend their Regional meeting to ensure the views of the Trade Section concerned are represented and advice received.

The EC is clear that work on the Union's structure will need to continue. It will always be the case that our organisation needs to change and adapt to take account of the circumstances we face. That has been a feature of the FBU since our formation. Nevertheless, such

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discussions are often challenging but the EC congratulates Officials from all parts of the Union for ensuring that the campaigning work of the FBU has continued throughout this period of change. The EC will ensure that further reports are presented to Regional and Sectional Committees over the coming year and to future Conferences as required.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE THE FUTURE OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Fire and Rescue Service represents exceptional value for money as a public service. Annually, at a cost of still less than £3bn (on average less than £50 per adult per year in the UK), firefighters across the UK provide a 24 hour/365 day comprehensive service dealing with a wide range of emergencies.

Despite taking on a number of additional activities such as responding to major flooding and dealing with terrorist incidents, the Fire and Rescue Service has faced cuts for over a decade from Central Government.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century up to 2010, the total number of firefighters was reduced by around 2,000 for the whole of the UK.

The advent of the Coalition Government in 2010 saw an acceleration of cuts to the funding of the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Government's own figures for England show the annual cuts in revenue spending power (which is a combination of central funding plus the local council tax revenue).

Revenue Spending Power	
Year	% cut
2011-12	-2.2
2012-13	-0.5
2013-14	-4.7
2014-15	-3.3

Their own figures show that they have cut every year of this Government and that the cuts have been backloaded, so the next two years will be worse than the last two.

Figures for the central grant show that the bulk of the cuts have come from reductions in central funding.

Central Formula Grant	
Year	% cut
2011-12	-6.7%
2012-13	-1.0%
2013-14	-8.7%

If the final year of cuts is as bad as next year, they will have reduced central funding by 25%, as they promised

to do in 2010.

It is important to recognise that central edicts have also restricted local funding. The Coalition Government has offered financial incentives to Local Councils to freeze council tax at the same time as reducing central grants. This has given local Fire Authorities less room to deal with the central cuts.

These cuts have had a devastating impact on the number of firefighters. In 2011-12, the first year of the cuts, over 1,500 frontline firefighter jobs were lost. These job cuts have affected all parts of the Service. This will also adversely affect the equality work that has been ongoing in the Fire and Rescue Service in the past twenty years.

The Government has not yet published figures for the second year. However when they made their plans to cut the Fire and Rescue Service in 2010, the FBU estimated that 6,000 jobs were under threat. Unless the cuts can be reversed over the next two years, that figure is likely to be confirmed.

The FBU has been the highest profile organisation within the Fire and Rescue Service campaigning against these cuts. While politicians and senior managers accused the Union of scaremongering, they are now admitting we were accurate with our warnings.

In 2012 the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities and The Chief Fire Officers Association both published briefings warning of cuts to firefighter jobs, fire station closures and the loss of appliances. In March 2013 the Local Government Association (LGA) also warned of a £600m shortfall in Fire Service funding.

Politicians at Westminster have argued that the historical fall in fires and fire deaths is an excuse to make cuts. They have ignored the wide range of other work that firefighters undertake that is not counted in these figures, including the fire prevention work that lies at the heart of these trends. This work is also threatened by cuts to the Service.

The argument is also wrong because even if a station has experienced a reduction in calls, for those affected by the incident the rapid response of the Fire and Rescue Service is just as important as it ever was. Even if it is one household or business that has to call, the speed and weight of the Fire and Rescue Service response is still absolutely critical.

The FBU has exposed the slowing of response times by over two minutes, so that many of the targets set by individual brigades fall well below the national standards that were in place a decade ago. Slower response times have increased the risk to the public and firefighters. Every second counts in a fire or other emergency, so we cannot accept their argument for fewer firefighters,

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fewer appliances and fewer fire stations.

CAMPAIGNING FOR OUR SERVICE

In order to defend our Service and develop it for the future we need to address

1. Campaigning against cuts and for adequate funding
2. The changed and changing role of our Service
3. The roles, responsibilities, pay and conditions of service of firefighters arising from such changes.

1. The cuts in our Service have been so severe that other voices have increasingly been heard expressing concern alongside that of the FBU. This has included some of the Fire and Rescue Service Employers and some Chief Fire Officers. Where appropriate the FBU is willing to work together with others in the Service to make the case for adequate funding and investment.

Unfortunately however, the FBU is often left as the sole organised voice standing up for our Service. The Executive Council has agreed to allocate additional resources to this campaign over the next two years as we face a further spending review and as we approach the general election in 2015. This campaigning will require lobbying and public activity at national and local levels.

2. The debate about funding has highlighted that Central Government has not adequately acknowledged the changed role of and demands upon the Fire and Rescue Service. This stands out most sharply in relation to issues of national resilience. For example, large scale flooding incidents are an increasingly important area of work but this is not recognised properly by Westminster, nor is it adequately funded. There are many other areas of work now undertaken by firefighters which are not properly recognised by Central Government, or by the Employers.

The Union is involved in a project with others in the wider fire sector to develop models which assess the cost of fire to the economy. The Union will also undertake additional research on this and on the value of our Service to our communities at local and national level. This will need to address the expanded roles and activity already undertaken by our Members.

3. The Fire and Rescue Service has changed and developed throughout its history and the FBU has often been at the forefront of this, for example our role in fire safety inspections or at road traffic accidents. Firefighters have been willing to take on such roles but expect that such developments should include:

- Full and adequate planning and training

- The best available equipment and resources
- Negotiations on roles, responsibilities and payments
- The necessary funding to provide all of the above

It is unacceptable to change the role of firefighters and of our Service by stealth and by refusing to negotiate. It is also unacceptable to allow the continued fragmentation of our Service through an endless drift to ill thought out 'localism'. To be effective our Service needs to be both a national and local Fire and Rescue Service; a national Service delivered locally.

As part of this process the Executive Council will undertake a review of all the additional roles and responsibilities and all additional work already taken on, or proposed, at local level. Brigade Officials are asked to fully cooperate with this. The Executive Council will discuss the issues of new challenges, roles and responsibilities (including those already taken on) with Employers and with Governments but expects recognition of the need to address such developments through full discussions and negotiations at national level. This is the best way to ensure professional, interoperable standards and fair rewards. This also allows our Members to determine what is and is not acceptable, the roles we may undertake now and in the future and the pay and conditions which we expect in return.

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NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Resolution 2 – SECONDARY CONTRACTS

This Conference is alarmed at the rising number of Fire and Rescue Services throughout the UK who have introduced or who are attempting to introduce secondary contracts for Firefighters, Emergency Fire Control Staff and Officers. These secondary contracts are being used to cover shortfalls in staffing, detrimental to raising union membership and often fall outside the remit of Grey Book terms and conditions.

Therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council to:

- Conduct a survey to find out which Fire and Rescue Services in the UK have introduced or are attempting to introduce secondary contracts, to what extent secondary contracts are being used and whether these contracts conform to Grey Book terms and conditions.
- Where it is identified that secondary contracts are in contravention to Grey Book terms and conditions, identify a means to challenge their use.
- Advise all FBU members via a circular and other media to the ramifications that working secondary contracts has and in particular to working a contract which is out with Grey Book terms and conditions.

This work to be completed by June 2014.

DURHAM

Resolution 4 – PAY

This Conference condemns the vicious attacks by the Government on Fire Service and other public sector budgets in the name of austerity.

This Conference also condemns the decision by our employers not to implement a pay increase in 2010 and 2011.

Conference also notes that the one per-cent pay increase awarded in 2012 was almost negated by the pension contribution increase.

This Conference is of the opinion that the pay increases received over the last seven years, when offset against inflation increases over the same period, leaves FBU members in a worse financial position and as such has worsened their living standards.

This being the case and with more pension contribution increases being proposed, this Conference demands

that discussions on any proposed pay increase for 2013 take these issues into account when considering any offers put forward by the employers and ensures that FBU members gain a pay increase in real terms when offset by any pension increases implemented.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Resolution 7 – WORKING WEEK

Conference agreed in 2009 that the Executive Council (EC) would explore options to reduce the working week for those members who work the 42 hour week. This Conference re-affirms this Resolution and instructs the EC to commence work on this straight away with an interim report being provided to a future EC meeting during 2013.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Resolution 8 – OVERTIME

Many FBU members will be extremely concerned at attempts by Fire and Rescue Services (F&RS's) to introduce Shift and Duty systems which do not form part of, or comply with, the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

Some F&RS's are contemplating duty systems which require heavy use of overtime in order to make them work. As the bait on the hook to tempt members into accepting these duty systems some F&RS's are even contemplating an offer of flat/plain rate overtime in order to achieve their ends.

In the current economic climate of rising living costs, slashed public services, pay freezes and pension attacks, F&RS management clearly believe now is the time to press home further attacks on our terms and conditions of employment and that the lure of hard cash will help them to do so.

If F&RS's are successful in enticing Firefighters onto duty systems/shifts which require overtime to prop them up, the clock will be turned back. Jobs in the Fire Service will be lost.

We call on Conference and the Executive Council to reaffirm it's commitment to National Joint Council pay and overtime rates and to condemn any F&RS which seeks to undermine those pay rates by the use of straightforward bribery.

WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 9 – CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

The introduction of the Continuous Professional Development payment (CPD) in 2007 also came with some national guidance from the FBU. In the time since

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then considerable local variation in the interpretation of this guidance will have crept in, not least from unscrupulous Fire and Rescue Services seeking to cut their wages bill.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to examine some means of providing and sharing information between FBU Officials in various Brigades, perhaps by the use of a central information point, electronic library or database available via the FBU website. This would assist local Officials and give them the information they need to help ensure that local variations do not depart too far from the national position. A similar facility on other national matters e.g. IRMP responses, which have local variations would also greatly assist FBU Officials.

WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 10 – RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM PUBLIC HOLIDAYS ARRANGEMENTS

The Scheme of Conditions of Service, Part C – Leave, Paragraph 25 states; “An employee in the role of Station Manager or below (but not on the flexible duty system) who is required to work on a public holiday shall be paid double the disturbance and activity payments at Part B paragraphs 10 to 13 of this Section (which shall not be pensionable).

In addition, the employee shall be granted a day’s leave in lieu in respect of which the employee shall not be required for duty and shall receive 1/7th of their average weekly wage. Average weekly wage shall have the meaning given to it in Appendix C, paragraph C. A volunteer carrying out operational fire fighting duties shall be paid at double the appropriate hourly rate.” Conference agrees that this wording means that all Retained Duty System members will receive a day’s leave in lieu irrespective of if they have been required to work on a Public Holiday.

This matter is to be raised at the next National Joint Council (NJC) meeting and progressed until a NJC Joint Circular is produced confirming the above.

DEVON AND SOMERSET

Resolution 13 – RETENTION OF WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS

This Conference notes that the Government has removed its centrally driven equality and diversity strategy and as such has left the onus upon individual Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to develop and implement equality policies locally. Conference notes that many FRS are not prioritising equality and often use austerity measures as an excuse.

Women have been firefighters in the UK for more than 30 years but still only make up 4% of all firefighters.

Many women have joined the Service, but numbers of women are still very low due to the Fire and Rescue Service being unable to retain women.

We therefore demand that by 2014 the Executive Council, in conjunction with the NWC, negotiates within the National Joint Council an effective strategy for Brigades to create a workplace environment which women are happy to work and remain in.

NATIONAL WOMEN’S COMMITTEE

Resolution 14 – PAY NEGOTIATIONS

Conference is aware of the pay settlement in 2012 and its inclusion of certain caveats affecting the Officers and Retained sections in particular.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to fully engage with affected groups prior to any discussions with the employers about specific terms and conditions of service.

Future discussions on pay must take into account any potential adverse effect on individual groups within the FBU.

OFFICERS’ NATIONAL COMMITTEE

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FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

Resolution 15 – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

This Conference condemns the statement made at the CBI Conference last year by the Prime Minister announcing their intention to scrap Equality Impact Assessments.

This announcement only serves to bring our ongoing fears to fruition and confirms the Government's lack of understating on equality and discrimination issues.

Unions, in particular their equality sections, have worked tirelessly to ensure employers have written policies in place on structures and procedures, but also to attain accountable, measurable and transparent tools to defend equality rights across the board. Also tools to ensure that they will defend these rights and progressive changes already in place.

This cynical move by the current Westminster Government is irresponsible and retrograde and takes the equality agenda back decades.

We call on the Executive Council, in consultation with the equality sections, to work within the national structures of the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are defended. Also that the Executive Council work with the TUC and other equality organisations to campaign, lobby and fight to defend not only these assessments but all positive equality legislation currently in situ. This to be done as a matter of urgency with reports issued to the membership on a regular basis.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Resolution 17 – FUTURE OF SCOTTISH EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROL ROOMS

This Conference notes the creation of the new Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, which replaces the eight previous Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland.

Conference is concerned over the maintainance of the existing eight Emergency Fire Control Rooms and also the maintainance of the current number of Firefighter Control posts in the new service.

Conference is opposed to the loss of any Emergency Firefighter Control posts and should the commitments given by the Scottish Government and the Fire and Rescue Board to protect the front line service during the transition and also their commitment to no compulsory redundancies not be upheld, through the transition

period and beyond that the FBU will campaign against any proposed reduction in Firefighter Control Posts using all means necessary, up to and including strike action.

STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 18 – PRIMARY RESCUE SERVICE

Conference recognises the public expectation of the Fire & Rescue Service as the "can do" primary rescue service for emergency incidents related to rescue.

Conference recognises that the appropriate training, resources, funding, remuneration and safe systems of work need to be provided by our employers and the UK Government and devolved administrations to fully meet this public expectation and to permit the UK Fire & Rescue Service to become the world class primary rescue service our communities expect and deserve.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council (EC) to identify the range of emergency rescue functions in addition to core functions currently being carried out within the UK Fire & Rescue Service. Conference further instructs the EC to consider any additional functions that may also be required to support the development of the UK Fire & Rescue Service as the primary rescue service and to set up a working group to produce an EC policy statement outlining:

- Any required and/or recommended legislative changes.
- Any required adaptations to the agreed role maps.
- Any potential for encroaching on the work activities of other trade union members involved in the provision of rescues.
- Recommended PPE, training and qualifications requirements for each identified and any new recommended specialist skills required to perform additional functions as appropriate.
- The impact of any new recommended additional functions (if any) on existing FBU policies.
- Consideration of Funding/Resource requirements of introducing any additional recommended functions or recommending the appropriate development of existing functions.
- To also consider and recommend where the UK Fire and Rescue Service may be best placed to act as the coordinating service rather than the primary rescue service for specialist rescues for any existing or additional functions.
- Appropriate remuneration for each of the range of additional specialist skills currently performed and any further additional specialist skills required to perform additional functions.

This EC policy statement to be submitted for the consideration of Brigade Committees within 12 months.

STRATHCLYDE

AS AMENDED BY DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

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Resolution 19 – IRMP ACCOUNTABILITY

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to pursue through the legal system, any Fire Authority or Chief Fire Officer within a Fire and Rescue Service, where an act or omission following the implementation of an Integrated Risk Management Plan can be shown to have contributed to the death or injury (physical or psychological) of a Fire Brigades Union Member.

CLEVELAND

the Part-Time Workers Settlement. We instruct the Executive Council to use all means at its disposal to ensure this matter is addressed and any progress or lack of progress be reported back to the members in the form of Head Office Circulars.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Resolution 20 – INCREASED RESPONSIBILITIES

The Fire Service nationally is under the largest scale attacks in a generation and as a result the battles faced by FBU Members across the UK are numerous and not without casualties.

We fully accept that a Public Sector Service should be efficient and meet the needs of the public and communities it serves. However FBU Members are being asked to take on more and more responsibilities, quite often for no reward and we are in danger of allowing non-FBU Stakeholders to take the lead on these matters.

We feel the time is right for national discussions to take place between the employers and the FBU to find a way forward for areas of activity that currently lie outside of the role map.

We can no longer resist the changing face of the UKF&RS but that does not mean we shouldn't be taking the lead. Failure to be part of the discussion, risks both the future of the UKF&RS and in turn the FBU.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 22 – PENSIONABILITY

Following the High Court Judgment into the pensionability of the Cheshire Day Crewing Allowance; Conference instructs the Executive Council to review and take legal advice into the pensionability of all fire service payments. A report should be produced within 6 months of Conference 2013 giving guidance to Officials involved in local negotiations.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 26 – PART-TIME WORKERS RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM PENSIONS CASE

This Conference recognises the anger, frustration and disgust felt by our Retained Duty System members at the lack of progress by this Government in implementing the Modified Pension Scheme as part of

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TRADE UNION, LABOUR MOVEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Resolution 27 – SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM

This Conference notes the agreement reached by the United Kingdom and Scottish Governments to hold a Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014.

Conference is aware that the Scottish independence issue is emotive and politically divisive and therefore considers that for the Fire Brigades Union to express support for or against Scottish independence would be inappropriate, as this could alienate a significant number of our members and also be potentially damaging to the relationships our Union has with parties and individuals from across the whole political spectrum.

Conference therefore concludes that the Fire Brigades Union will remain neutral on this issue and not indicate support for or against Scottish independence.

CENTRAL

Resolution 28 – PALESTINE

This Conference recognises the suffering of the people of Gaza following the ongoing blockade and the continued occupation of the Palestine territory against them by the Israeli Government. We also condemn the recent and ongoing military assaults, which started on the 14th November 2012, which follows many years of oppression.

On June 14th 2012, 50 international charities and United Nations Agencies called for an immediate end to the blockade as well as recognising the violations of International laws affecting over 1.6 million people, over half of whom are children.

We further recognise the statement made by Valerie Amos, UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, who pointed out that more than 80% of families in Gaza are dependent upon humanitarian aid. She stated "This amounts to collective punishment of all those living in Gaza, and is a denial of basic human rights in contravention of International law."

We therefore:

Condemn and call for an immediate and sustainable end to the air, any ground attacks and killings of the people of Gaza.

Call for a halt to the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Condemn and call for an immediate end to the siege on Gaza.

Given the current escalations of attacks on the people and workers of Gaza this Conference recognises, in particular the constant dangers and difficulties faced by Palestinian Emergency Service Workers on a daily basis as they attempt to rescue sick and dying casualties whilst under attack from the Israeli Occupation Forces. In doing so, we call upon the Executive Council to formulate an ongoing support strategy in conjunction with Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, to practically and financially support our sister trade unions in these services. This support strategy is to be reported to the membership immediately.

Support the motion on Palestine carried at Congress 2012, in particular a call for a delegation to visit Palestine. We would urge that the FBU does all it can to participate in this delegation as well as publishing a report on any trip to the wider membership.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Resolution 30 – POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Conference applauds the previous work carried out by Members and Officials of this Union in engaging with Councillors and Politicians at a local and national level.

However, over the years both local and national disputes have shown that sometimes the political work we do has on a number of occasions proved ineffective in achieving a satisfactory outcome when campaigning to defend our service, protect our conditions or safeguard the public.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to carry out an immediate review of the political activity at every level in this Union with a view to making recommendations on the most effective and efficient method of lobbying MP's and Councillors in every UK Fire and Rescue Service, in order to resist further cuts to our already beleaguered service.

Conference demands that this review commences immediately with a report and strategy being made available to Brigade Officials before the end of 2013.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Resolution 31 – GUANTANAMO – SAVE SHAKER AAMER

British resident Shaker Aamer has now been incarcerated in the United States detainment and interrogation prison camp at Guantanamo Bay for over 11 years and is the last UK resident still held; this is despite Shaker being cleared for release by the Bush administration in 2007.

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Since his initial arrest, Shaker has not been charged with any offence, he has not received a trial and his British lawyer says he is totally innocent. During this time he has faced brutal treatment on an almost daily basis, which has affected both his physical and mental health.

This Conference reiterates its opposition to the US Government's illegal detention of all the prisoners at the Guantanamo military prison, and in the case of Shaker Aamer, calls on the Executive Council to:

- Support organisations such as Reprieve and Amnesty International who are fighting to secure the immediate release of Shaker so he can return to his wife and children in London.
- Encourage FBU members to support the 'Save Shaker Aamer' Campaign.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 32 – COUNCIL TAX FREEZE GRANTS

Conference notes with concern that since the election in 2010, the Coalition Government has used Freeze Grants as a means of keeping down Council Tax. These are one-off Government payments to those Fire Authorities that do not raise their Council Tax, and will result in a year on year budget shortfall in future years when the grants stop.

Some Fire Authorities have accepted the freeze grant each year and plan to continue to hold the Council Tax levy at the 2010 rate for the remainder of this Parliament. In these cases, funding raised through the Council Tax could be left with a 'real term' shortfall running into millions of pounds when the freeze grants cease, this is on top of the 25% cut to the Government Grant Settlements that is already being imposed.

The Government is not being honest with the electorate and is playing short term politics. This will have long term repercussions to Fire Service funding, and lead to the loss of more Firefighter posts, appliances and stations.

As part of the FBU's ongoing campaign against cuts to Fire Service funding, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to bring this issue to the attention of our political supporters in Parliament and to the National Employers, with a view to demanding that this funding time bomb is defused, and that at the very least, locally raised funding keeps pace with inflation.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 33 – EXTREMIST ORGANISATIONS

The publication in 2008, of a British National Party (BNP) membership list highlighted that some Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) employees were fee paying members of

that fascist organisation. In recent times FBU Members, Reps and Officials have been targeted by the BNP for their opposition to, and campaigning against, the politics of hate and division.

We commend the Fire Services that have made clear statements stating that BNP members/supporters are not welcome in the 21st century UK FRS. We believe that the rest of the Fire Service should also condemn members and supporters of all extremist, hate mongering organisations and refuse them employment.

This Conference reiterates our abhorrence of hate politics and fully supports the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and its general statutory duty to promote good race relations in the public sector and our communities. We condemn the Government's attempts to repeal some of the statutory duties of this Act and current Equality Legislation.

We call upon the FBU to:

- Clarify what action will be taken if any member is found to be a member/ supporter of the BNP or any other extremist organisation.
- Ensure that all FBU educational events continue to educate members in highlighting the dangers posed by the BNP and other extremist organisations.
- Continue to pressure the UK FRS to make clear its opposition to the politics of hate and extremism by excluding those who support that ideology.
- Demand that the Department of Communities and Local Government give the UK FRS the same provision as the Police and Prison services to dismiss employees who are members of the BNP.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Resolution 34 – STONEWALL: SUPPORTING THE POLITICAL LOBBY FOR LGBT EQUALITY

LGBT Members remind Conference of the advances made with the introduction of legislative change to afford equal protection to people who are LGBT.

Stonewall have been a leading figure in the political lobbying to bring about the necessary changes. Stonewall are currently engaged in the fight to achieve recognition of same sex marriage as well as campaigning to combat homophobic bullying in both sport and schools.

Over the years more and more Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) have joined the Stonewall Equality Index and membership costs of the scheme have gone towards the financing of these ongoing campaigns. Currently the FRS is one of the largest contributors to Stonewall but

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with financial constraints being applied to our service many FRS are withdrawing from the scheme.

LGBT Members call on all Officials engaging in Fairness at Work consultation to encourage Fire and Rescue Services to rejoin or continue to be members of the index to ensure this important work continues.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANS COMMITTEE

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Resolution 35 – TOXINS

Conference recognises previous research undertaken on behalf of the FBU with regard to the potential effects of exposure of toxins to Firefighters. Despite this research, there remains no accredited report in the UK to support a possible link between that exposure and work related cancers.

Conference demands that the Executive Council instigates further research into toxins with a view to establishing any possible link to work related cancers arising from firefighting duties and a subsequent report to be circulated to Brigade Officials within 12 months after the close of Conference 2013.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Resolution 36 – OVERTIME

Conference is extremely concerned with the increased use of overtime within the Fire & Rescue Service. Recruitment freezes have led to shortfalls in establishments and overtime is being used to cover these deficiencies on a daily basis. Local Officials are relying on overtime restrictions within the Grey Book and Working Time regulations to control the hours individuals are being permitted to work. Fire & Rescue Services are attempting to ignore the Grey Book restrictions on overtime and looking to negotiate duty systems that are reliant on pre-arranged overtime as part of their cuts agenda.

Therefore Conference demands the FBU stands firm on the matter of overtime and any attempts by the Employers, either locally or nationally to change or undermine the Rules, must be resisted. The FBU must continue to protect the health & safety of members as well as protecting jobs by ensuring the use of overtime and the hours worked by firefighters are controlled.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 38 – WOMEN AND CANCER

Conference is growing increasingly alarmed at the high rates of cancer cases relating to FBU Members, current and retired, being reported.

Although Conference recognises that cancer is affecting all members there appears to have been high numbers of women contracting women specific cancers.

In order to evaluate the current picture regarding cancer of FBU Members, Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out an investigation with immediate effect. This investigation must take into consideration,

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gender, ethnicity, age, workplaces and where possible include Retired Members.

The findings from the investigation should establish whether there are any trends within specific workplaces, geographical areas or related to the nature of work being carried out e.g. hot fire training and report back to the Executive Council by 2014.

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
AS AMENDED BY CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

Resolution 39 – RAPE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Conference is appalled to learn that the conviction rates for rape in England and Wales is only six percent, as reported by Yvette Cooper to the 2012 Labour Party Conference.

Conference is aware of the many campaigns being organised across the UK that deal with attitudes towards rape, such as the campaign “this is not an invitation to rape me” organised by Scottish Rape Crisis.

Over a number of years, various pieces of research have been carried out which have looked into professional and public attitudes towards rape. The results show that a significant amount of people surveyed have little sympathy for the survivors of rape and in fact often blame them for the rape taking place.

Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to organise a workplace campaign in 2013 that directly tackles and challenges the common myths and perceptions of the reasons why women get raped.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Resolution 40 – EFFECT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY OF FIRE FIGHTERS DUE TO CUTS IN OFFICER/MIDDLE MANAGER POSTS

Conference condemns the loss of any Grey Book posts. Day and Flexi-duty posts are being particularly targeted, disproportionately affecting Officer Members. The loss of such posts severely impacts upon the safety of operational crews, through reduced support services and limitations on the availability of tactical incident command skills. It also places unacceptable workloads/stress upon the remaining Officer posts.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out urgent surveys of the present Officer establishments and any reductions within the last 3 years, including any reductions already planned.

It is vital that future campaigns against Fire & Rescue Service cuts specifically include arguments to support

the maintenance of adequate officer posts, for the safety and benefit of all operational personnel and the communities we serve.

Conference requests that this work be carried out within the next 12 months.

OFFICERS' NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 41 – UK FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY MONITORING

This Conference condemns the coalition Government's removal of centrally set employment targets and other equality monitoring in UK Fire & Rescue Service (FRS). It has been shown historically that if Government does not equality audit the Fire Service the likelihood of progress is diminished. The removal of employment targets has also given the UK FRS a green light to reject the principle of making our Fire Services more reflective of the communities it serves.

Since Government policy on equality monitoring has changed there has been a steady decline in the employment of the BME community into the Fire Service. Any percentage rise is due to job cuts and the retirement of white male employees.

This Conference demands that Head Office request a meeting with the Fire Minister to raise the issue of equality monitoring and diversity in the UK FRS. Any subsequent meeting to include representatives of the FBU Equality Sections.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

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INTERNAL

Resolution 43 – RETIRED AND OUT OF TRADE MEMBERS

This Conference notes that time off for trade union duties is getting harder in Brigades as staffing figures fall and austerity kicks in. Conference applauds Officials and Members who toiled tirelessly for the Union in previous years and who have subsequently retired.

It is apparent by the numbers of Retired and Out of Trade Members that there is still that massive strength of feeling for the Fire Brigades Union. Therefore this Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a feasibility study into having a retired and out of trade network. This study is to include recommendations into the structure, responsibilities, effectiveness and operation of such a network and should take no longer than 12 months and reported back to Brigade Committees for them to consider what to do next.

**WEST YORKSHIRE
AS AMENDED BY SHROPSHIRE**

Resolution 45 – SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

This Conference notes the Executive Council meeting paper No. 180/10MW 'Social Networking, Internet Discussion and other Electronic communication.' Conference asks that the guiding principles are reviewed and updated and an all members social media awareness campaign is carried out.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Resolution 47 – CANVASSING

Resolution 72 passed at Annual Conference 2011, instructed the Executive Council to set up a Working Party to look at the possibility of introducing a form of regulated canvassing. Furthermore, the Executive Council were called upon to make recommendations with any possible rule changes, based on the content of the report, to the next Conference. This work has yet to be carried out.

Therefore, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to set up a Task and Finish Group to review the application of Rule 19A and bring any rule changes necessary to the next rule change Conference.

DERBYSHIRE

Resolution 48 – FBU MEMBERSHIP

In these days of dwindling resources and falling Union membership it is necessary to look to new and innovative ways of sustaining a robust and independent, fighting Union with a whole Fire Service approach.

The benefits of FBU membership extended to ALL Fire Service staff would strengthen our hand in negotiations with Employers as we could represent an absolute majority of the workforce, not just uniformed staff.

Notwithstanding the difficulties envisaged in attempting to achieve this goal, whether separate sections and representation would be required, possible differing levels of contributions, to name but two, Conference demands that the Executive Council undertake a study into the feasibility of allowing Fire Service workers not conditioned to the Grey Book, to join the FBU. The findings of this study should be reported back to Conference at the earliest opportunity and not later than 2015.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Resolution 51 – INQUEST SUPPORT

Conference demands that, in the event of a Coroners Court inquest to determine cause of death of any FBU member whilst carrying out their operational duties, a National Officer must be appointed to oversee FBU interests and involvement. Furthermore the appointed National Officer will be present for the duration of the court proceedings and will be available to assist Local and Regional Officials as required.

HAMPSHIRE

Resolution 52 – NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN, SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MUTUALISATION

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to launch a National Media Campaign following the close of The Fire Brigades Union 2013 Conference in opposition to the transformation of any United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Service into a Social Enterprise Mutual.

CLEVELAND

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RESOLUTIONS PUT BACK ON AGENDA

Resolution 53 – PENSIONS

This Conference is opposed to the raising of the Control staff Normal pension age to 68. This Conference calls on the Executive Council to campaign to have the Normal Pension Age for Control staff set at the age of 60.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 54 – CONTROL ROOM CLOSURES

This Conference notes the number of local fire control rooms that are threatened with closure following the collapse of the FiReControl project and calls on the FBU to reiterate its commitment to campaign to keep open local fire controls that are put under such a threat, and also to protect fire control jobs.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 56 – CAMPAIGN AGAINST CUTS

Conference welcomes the public campaign, launched by the Executive Council, against widespread cuts to frontline resources in the fire and rescue service. With the prospect of scores of fire station closures and the loss of thousands of firefighter posts, and against the backdrop of a sharp increase in response times over the last decade, it is crucial that the campaign to defend our service continues apace.

Cuts cost lives, and conference believes that crude economic considerations should never compromise the ability of local fire and rescue services to protect the public from danger.

To that end, conference calls on the Executive Council to maintain the momentum of the anti-cuts campaign through effective use of the media, political and industrial lobbying, and engagement with other trade unions and community groups, and to encourage local brigade committees and activists to do the same.

LONDON

Resolution 57 – WOMEN'S UNIFORM

Conference remains committed to ensuring that women's health, safety and welfare is never compromised at work, particularly in relation to workwear and personal protective equipment.

An ongoing concern is that women who wear men's uniform at work are exposed to a higher level of risk than those with properly-fitting, gender-specific uniform.

As well as compromising safety, the additional discomfort and restriction that ill-fitting kit brings to any employee can be debilitating and is itself unacceptable.

In order to properly map the gap in good, gender-specific provision of uniform and properly address the deficiencies, this conference demands that the Executive Council:

- Carry out a national audit to establish a picture of where women's health, safety and welfare is being compromised as a result of uniform concerns
- Raise these concerns at all relevant national forums
- Provide information and support to officials to ensure that this issue becomes a local priority health and safety item

We call upon the Executive Council to report progress to members within 12 months of this conference.

LONDON

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Emergency Resolutions Carried ...

Emergency Resolution 1 EUROPEAN UNION

This Conference notes with concern the announcement made by the Prime Minister in late January, of the Conservative Party's intention to hold a referendum on UK membership of the European Union (EU).

Conference recognises the importance of EU legislation, particularly in regard to Human Rights, Equality and Employment Rights.

Therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council to devise and instigate a strategy to educate Officials and Members of the significance of EU Legislation and Directives and the impact that leaving the EU would have.

SHROPSHIRE

Emergency Resolution 2 MARAUDING TERRORIST FIREARMS ATTACK (MTFA) – SECURING NATIONAL AGREEMENT

At a meeting on 8th and 9th May 2013, the Fire and Rescue Service leads on 'Marauding Terrorist and Firearms Attack' MTFA, representatives of the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) and lead FBU representatives discussed significant issues that still require progress. At this latest meeting the fire and rescue service leads were emphatic that they genuinely wish to actively engage with the FBU with a view to reaching agreement. However, they were equally emphatic that because of the security imperatives of government that they will proceed with their plans for fire service MTFA activity even if such agreement cannot be reached with the Union. These matters were considered by the FBU's MTFA working group on 10th May and then discussed with relevant national officials at the weekend immediately preceding Conference. Having received a report on these issues the Executive Council feels that Conference has no other opportunity to ensure that the Executive Council is acting in accordance with the wishes of Conference on the issue of MTFA other than to do so now. The Executive Council feels therefore that it is vital that this Conference should, and would want to, consider the implications for our policies at the earliest opportunity given this unhelpful development. The Executive Council is also mindful that the issue of fire and rescue service involvement in MTFA has never formally been considered in detail by Conference, the supreme government of the Fire Brigades Union.

To this end the Executive Council recommends the following to our Conference in 2013.

The aim is to best inform members of the issues involved, to pursue satisfactory national agreements and in the meantime to agree a policy position reflective of the current situation to protect the union from the potential implications of MTFA involvement until such time as satisfactory, national agreements are achieved. In cognisance of what remains a fluid and on-going issue, Conference agrees that as and when these matters are satisfactorily addressed the measures within this policy position may be amended by the Executive Council.

Conference will be aware of the UK government's intention for the Fire and Rescue Service to have an increased role at incidents referenced as acts of MTFA. A similar aspiration is held by the governments in the three devolved administrations. The initiative was prompted by a number of events in the UK and abroad including Mumbai, Cumbria and the Northumbria Police Force Area.

Their intention is for the Fire and Rescue Service to deal with casualties and fires in the 'warm zone' at such incidents.

The broad definitions of the zones can be described thus:

- Cold zone – all areas where there has been no terrorist activity and is unlikely to become exposed;
- Warm zone – an area in which there is no terrorist activity or threat from terrorists, but is an area which has recently experienced such activity and one which remains vulnerable to renewed activity (whereupon it would become, once again, a designated hot zone);
- Hot zone – an area where terrorists are located and where the area which is within the reach of the effects of terrorist activity whether through the use of firearms or explosives.

There is a closely associated body of work taking place to review Fire and Rescue Service practice in the event of firearms incidents particularly where the shooting is continuous and/or randomly targeted.

MTFA and warm zone working necessitates multi-agency response and on-site collaboration.

The Executive Council has considered the issue on a number of occasions and has monitored the progress in exploratory national discussions between FBU officials at meetings organised for that purpose by fire and rescue service representatives.

There have been a number of circulars to brigade officials and members highlighting some of the serious issues involved.

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Conference is aware that our members face the prospect of being confronted with such situations as a consequence of attending calls where the nature of the incident is not known at the time of mobilising. FBU members will have followed the events in the USA, including firearms attacks over the last few months; notably the shooting of two volunteer firefighters in the town of Webster in New York State in December 2012 and the more recent bomb incident in Boston along with the subsequent shootings. As a consequence of the details that have recently come to light Conference is also mindful of the potential outcomes that could have transpired in Dewsbury had the attack planned to take place on 30 June 2012 not been averted.

Consistent with the aims and objects of the Union in our Rule Book, as the UK's principal Fire and Rescue Service professional body and primary representative body, our key concerns have been centred on three themes:

- Safety of our communities and the minimising of risk from these types of incident;
- Improvement of the professional standards in the service to meet its expanding role;
- Proper reward and recognition for our members for their commitment, activity and the risks they face.

Conference will recall that the General Secretary wrote to the national employers some time ago informing them that the FBU was open-minded to discussion on the principles involved in providing an MTFA response capability, but this was very much dependent upon there being robust planning that must deliver effective and safe operational procedures. These discussions must also include appropriate reward for the increased activity and potential risks.

Both of these aspects are particularly poignant at a time when pay awards are, frankly, miserly; when pensions (including those pensions payable to members and/or families in the event of injury or death) are the subject of attack; and when the fire service is suffering unprecedented cuts in the numbers of front-line personnel with the resultant worsening of service delivery and response which will limit the ability of the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a meaningful contribution to protecting life and property at such incidents.

There has been no movement on the issue of pay in respect of an extension of the role of Fire and Rescue Service personnel and there are no agreed operational procedures and standards in respect of MTFA. The FBU have been engaged in discussions at a national level with Fire and Rescue Service leads on the issues of operational procedures and planning but at a pace which both sides probably agree needs to be increased. The elements of discussion related to operational procedures are, for reasons of both safety and security, properly subject to appropriate and agreed levels of

confidentiality at this time. However, it is pertinent to highlight that there is mutual agreement that should the Fire and Rescue Service adopt a role in MTFA activity:

- It must conform to strict national protocols to ensure inter-operability and intra-operability between Fire and Rescue Services and other agencies;
- Under no circumstances will Fire and Rescue personnel work within the hot zone.

MTFA is different to most incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services in that they have the potential to be multiple, and to move, in location. The risk of death, serious injury and chronic ill-health is at the extreme end of tolerability. As a consequence, the procedures must be consistent in content and delivery across the UK without deviation.

It is appropriate to inform Conference that in one recent legal case involving injury and incident-ground deaths of our members, the employing Fire and Rescue Authority premised its defence in the most unequivocal and shameful way, asserting that a Fire and Rescue Authority did not have a duty of care towards its employees. The underlying argument the employer was promoting was that Fire and Rescue Services are not required to ensure the safety of personnel at incidents.

Similarly, it must be remembered that in the case of the Atherstone on Stour fire, the Crown Prosecution Service brought criminal charges of (alleged) neglect against incident commanders at Watch Manager and Station Manager level.

In both cases, legal teams funded by the Fire Brigades Union fought these attacks. We have been successful in the case of the prosecutions related to the Atherstone on Stour fire and we await the outcome of the other case mentioned above.

It is of no small concern that the legal processes and pursuit of compensation payments through litigation have taken many years and are still not settled. Throughout this period the families of those firefighters killed have been living on a reduced household income.

Conference notes that a number of members have volunteered on a temporary basis, to become involved in MTFA activities, including warm zone working at MTFA incidents. The Fire Brigades Union has provided UK-wide advice and information to officials and members consistent with the principles outlined above. It is imperative that members and officials observe such advice.

In spite of advice to members, which is based on sound, professional judgement, we note that some Fire and Rescue Services have attempted to introduce single service procedures. In April 2013, the Executive Council

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were informed by officials that one Fire and Rescue Service employer has embarked on a unilateral campaign to extend its list of volunteers, and that at least one other may also be suggesting that it will make involvement in MTFA activities compulsory. Also in April 2013, the Executive Council learned that a series of significant multi-FRS, multi-agency MTFA exercises were imminent.

Conference is clear – there is no contractual obligation and there has been no collective agreement with the FBU. Any fire service involvement must conform to national protocols and procedures which must be reached by agreement with the Fire Brigades Union at national level.

In relation to the above matters, Conference agrees the following:

1. Our local officials must continue to inform management that there is no collective agreement locally on warm zone working at MTFA, and that any agreement must be made nationally.
2. Our local officials must not agree local work practices or risk assessments in respect of local MTFA until national agreement is reached.
3. Members who have volunteered for warm zone working at MTFA must:
 - a) Regularly inform line managers in writing and verbally that any understanding between the individual and the Fire and Rescue Service is on voluntary basis only. Members should emphasise that this can and will be withdrawn, as appropriate, on the basis of an individual or collective decision.
 - b) Make a note of the date and time of any verbal communication and of course keep a copy of any memorandum or letter that is submitted.
4. National discussions should continue in respect of protection and enhancement of pay, terms and conditions of employment and pensions.

Given the recent developments; the absence of national agreement; and the risks to our members, we have to seriously consider the implications for both (a) the FBU's Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund and (b) the provision of assistance to members.

The Fire Brigades Union has a proud record of defending members against disciplinary action by Fire and Rescue Services. Equally the FBU has not hesitated from defending our members against criminal prosecution arising from their professional activity on the incident ground.

However members need to be mindful of the recent court cases mentioned above and that undertaking voluntary activities may leave them (and their families) vulnerable to unsuccessful compensation claims. Accordingly, Conference feels it appropriate to bring to

the attention of members the fact that the Executive Council must consider carefully the prospects for success of any compensation claim before pursuing it against an employer made in respect of MTFA activity.

The potential for serious injury to, and death of, members on a wide-scale at MTFA incidents is high. Satisfactory procedures agreed with the FBU will have the greatest likelihood of ensuring firefighter safety and reducing the chances of injury or death that are tolerable to members of the FBU.

The Executive Council also has a duty to ensure that the members' funds are protected. The Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund (AIF) is a members' fund which pays out in excess of £1,000,000 in benefits each year. It is imperative therefore that potentially excessive and unbearable burden is not placed on the AIF. Accordingly, we must ensure that the members' well-managed AIF is not placed in jeopardy as a result of a few members, however well-meaning their intentions, volunteering to involve themselves in MTFA operations when procedures have not been agreed with the FBU.

Therefore Conference agrees the following policy position shall apply **until such time as satisfactory, national agreements are achieved with the FBU** concerning MTFA:

- a. In respect of Rule 30(9)(d), any member who volunteers to undertake warm and/or hot zone working at MTFA incidents shall not automatically qualify for benefits under Rule 30 for any injury, disablement, illness, disease or death sustained or arising from undertaking such voluntary activities at operational incidents. For the avoidance of doubt:
 - i. This does not include injury, illness or death sustained during MTFA training events (unless occasioned by live gunfire);
 - ii. this does not include injury, illness or death sustained at an incident to which the member was mobilised without knowing it was an MTFA incident, or prior to it being determined as an MTFA incident.
- b. In accordance with Rule 25(3)(a), all members should be advised that FBU assistance to members is not automatic and that assistance may only be granted at the discretion of the Executive Council. In any case and given the current circumstances, members volunteering to undertake MTFA activities need to recognise their vulnerability and should be aware that common law claims are unlikely to be successful.
- c. The policy position and associated matters above shall be kept under review by the Accident and Injury Fund Management Committee and the Executive Council.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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Emergency Resolution 3 PENSIONS

Conference congratulates FBU members for their determination in campaigning for decent pensions. Conference notes that despite numerous assurances, neither the Westminster government nor the relevant ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have addressed the concerns of firefighters in relation to pension arrangements. This was clearly confirmed when employee pension contributions were again increased in all parts of the UK from April 2013.

For more than two years the FBU has presented a detailed and professional case for pension arrangements which take account of the needs of firefighters and of an effective fire and rescue service. This has included evidence on matters of fitness and fitness standards; occupational health and safety; and on the affordability and sustainability of fire and rescue service schemes. At no point during discussions has any other party been able to challenge, answer or rebut the case we have made.

The FBU has made the case that a firefighters' pension scheme, as an occupational scheme, must take account of the specific needs and demands of the occupation. Since firefighting is a physically demanding and hazardous occupation, the pension scheme must take account of this. The current arrangements proposed do not do so.

Conference notes that the currently proposed arrangements will lead to:

- Large numbers of firefighters facing the prospect of working longer and therefore facing the threat of capability dismissal as they age and as fitness levels decline with age. At that point significant numbers would face the prospect of no job and no pension.
- Increasing numbers of firefighters being unable to afford their pension scheme because of the high rates of employee contribution imposed.
- A threat to the sustainability of the 2015 pension scheme due to the imposition of an unrealistic cost ceiling which does not take account of the specific occupational needs of a fire and rescue service scheme.
- A significant worsening of the contribution ratio between employee and employer which unduly penalises firefighters.
- The undermining of the pension benefits of thousands of FBU members due to inadequate protection arrangements.
- A commutation rate which financially penalises firefighters because it does not in any way reflect the value of pension surrendered in the proposed firefighters' pension scheme (2015).

Conference notes that the FBU has attempted at every stage to discuss these concerns with Ministers.

Discussions continued over the weekend of 11 and 12 May 2013 which resulted in further clarification being available to the Executive Council for the meeting scheduled for 13 May 2013. However the proposals currently remain unfair, unaffordable, unsustainable and unworkable. They therefore remain unacceptable.

Conference does not accept a normal pension age (NPA) of 60 for firefighters. The FBU has fought a principled, evidence based campaign against its introduction. However, the Public Service Pensions Act is now in place. That does not mean that we will drop our opposition to the Act or accept that it is appropriate or safe to require our members to work to age 60. We will continue to campaign for the repeal of the Act as we are entitled to do and we will continue to make the case for a lower NPA. We will also campaign to ensure the effects of this legislation are reduced as far as possible.

In view of this, Conference instructs the Executive Council to immediately issue revised lawful trade disputes demanding that Government Ministers address the following:

- No further employee contribution increases
- An improved contribution ratio between employee and employer
- Improved protection arrangements for current scheme members
- Amendments to the scheme which remove the threat of: No Job and No Pension
- Flexible retirement from age 55 – with any pension adjustment arrangements agreed by the FBU
- Improved commutation (lump sum) arrangements which adequately reflect the value of pension surrendered
- A realistic cost ceiling which ensures that there are no reductions in member benefits.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to seek a positive response from Ministers to these concerns within 14 days.

Conference agrees that the FBU should remain ready to engage in genuine negotiations around the concerns we have raised and are willing to meet Ministers at any point with the aim of achieving improvements. Conference believes that as far as possible FBU members should have the same pension arrangements in all parts of the UK. Therefore, in order to ensure consistency and continuity, all negotiations will be led by the General Secretary and shall be reported at each stage to the Executive Council. This includes any discussion within any part of the UK.

In view of the position outlined above, Conference authorises the Executive Council to commence a ballot for strike action.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Record of Decisions

Emergency Resolution 4 DEFENDING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS

Conference notes the difficult decisions that lie ahead in the coming weeks with regard to the attack on our pensions. Conference also notes that the UK has the worst record for workers rights in Europe, being the only country without the right to withdraw their labour, as recognised by the ILO. The subsequent attacks on our liberties and human rights by successive Governments are a danger to us all.

This current Conservative Party led Government has laid the battle ground for a referendum on Europe at the next general election, that will also lead to a move away from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) as announced by the Justice Secretary Chris Grayling on March 3rd 2013 and echoed by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, on March 9th 2013.

Therefore we urge the Executive Council to:

- Mount a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of human rights amongst FBU members;
- Support organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch;
- Work with the TUC and other stakeholders to raise and challenge any future Government intentions to withdraw from the ECHR.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Emergency Resolution 5 SUPPORTING COUNCILLORS AGAINST CUTS

This Conference applauds the stance taken by some local Councillors who have stood up for their own principles and recently voted in opposition to the Government cuts to local authorities.

In Yorkshire and Humberside, Christine Beaumont (Labour Councillor, Maltby Ward, Rotherham Council) Mark Catterall (Labour Councillor, Langfield Ward, Todmorden Town Council) Gary Wareing (Labour Councillor, Drypool Ward, Hull City Council) Gill Kennett (Labour Councillor, Holderness Ward, Hull City Council) and Dean Kirk (Labour Councillor, Derringham Ward, Hull City Council) were prepared to stick their heads above the parapet and had the courage to take on the Government. The latter 3 Councillors, Gary Wareing, Gill Kennett and Dean Kirk defied the Labour whip and voted against the Council's plan to cut 600 jobs and raise the Council tax by 1.95% to tackle its budget deficit. However this led Gary, Gill and Dean being summoned before the Labour Group and a decision was taken to suspend all 3 Councillors.

This Conference is appalled that a party set up to protect the working class movement has decided to suspend

elected officials for voting against the whip. This Conference also agrees with the Founding Statement of the Councillors against Cuts campaign, "We believe that close links are needed between Labour Councillors and the Unions in the public sector whether they are Labour-affiliated or not. We believe that, with the confidence that Unions are behind them, many more Councillors can be encouraged to refuse to implement cuts – and with the knowledge that Councillors will support them unequivocally, many more trade unionist will be prepared to fight back against cuts".

To that end this Conference wants to put on record it's thanks to all the Labour Councillors who have opposed these cuts in true opposition, Labour fashion and that this Conference will offer its support both locally and nationally to those who take up such a position of opposition and fights back against all cuts to the public sector.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Emergency Resolution 6 CAMPAIGN FOR BENEFITS JUSTICE

Conference condemns the Government's savage attacks on benefits, which will push millions further into poverty and despair.

Conference further condemns the disgusting bedroom tax, which will force tenants who claim housing benefit and have an additional room either to pay more rent or downsize to a smaller dwelling.

This has already led to the reported suicide of "Stephanie Bottrill" who killed herself because she faced an £80p/m rent increase.

We call upon Conference to:

- Support the Anti Bedroom Tax Federations that have been set up in Scotland, and England and Wales;
- Affiliate to the Benefits Justice Campaign;
- To call upon FBU members to join demonstrations and protests organised against the bedroom tax and other benefits.

LONDON

Record of Decisions

Motions Remitted to the Executive Council ...

Resolution 12 – UK FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – ‘JOB MIGRATION’

The Government's austerity measures have led to massive budget cuts and job losses in the Fire Service. Most Brigades now have limited finances and are circumventing normal processes to achieve certain objectives especially in the recruitment of operational staff.

B&EMM fully support maximum establishment for all Brigades. In recent times many Brigades have been using the 'migration' policy of recruiting retained operational staff into full time posts. The overwhelming majority of these employees are white male – there are less than 1% BME in retained roles. The migration of retained into full time posts ensure even less opportunity for our BME communities to find employment in the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS), this despite the UK FRS calling itself an Equal Opportunities employer.

This Conference calls upon the FBU to reject job migration within the UK FRS as a means of recruiting for operational vacancies as it is unfair and discriminatory, and to publish guidance for FBU Officials in demanding proper processes for filling vacancies.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Resolution 37 – BRIGADE HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

This Conference believes that Brigade Health and Safety Representatives have insufficient means of contact, which is having a detrimental effect on the ability of the Union to deal with Health and Safety issues.

In order to be able to deal with Health and Safety issues more effectively, this Conference demands that Brigade Health and Safety Representatives be issued with mobile phones which have e-mail facility.

SHROPSHIRE

Resolution 44 – INCREASING THE FBU MEMBERSHIP

Conference notes that the issue of access to the Fire Brigades Union to all employees of UK Fire and Rescue Services has previously been debated by Conference. Conference further notes that with a dwindling Grey Book establishment due to the cuts agenda pursued by Government, and others, that FBU membership may be decreasing pro rata.

Conference therefore agrees that from this point that access to membership of the Fire Brigades Union for all

employees of UK Fire and Rescue Services be permitted and until such necessary rule changes are put in place that those employees, such as those conditioned to the Green Book etc, be considered by Conference as 'such other categories of employees' in line with the FBU Rulebook.

MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 55 – EQUAL PAY

This Conference notes the terms of the 2012 pay settlement.

This Conference calls on the Executive Council to include in the issues that the FBU raises with the employer's representatives, the issue of equal pay for Control specific roles with that of the equivalent Operational roles; with the aim of agreeing a review of Control staff pay based on the equal pay for work of equal value legislation.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 59 – CANCERS WITHIN CONTROL FACILITIES

Conference notes with extreme concern the numbers of control staff members in some control branches that have been diagnosed with cancers such as breast cancer.

With that in mind, Conference requests that the Executive Council investigates this further and commissions a report from the appropriate professionals into this. This report to be published not later than the next biennial conference in 2015 with recommendations, if necessary, for further studies to be carried out.

TYNE AND WEAR

Resolution 60 – FIREFIGHTER CANCERS

Conference demands that the Executive Council lead the way in undertaking a study/survey into all Firefighters, serving, retired and deceased who have been affected directly by cancer and how the results compare to the national statistics for the general population. This report to be produced before the next FBU conference.

TYNE AND WEAR

Record of Decisions

Motions Defeated ...

Resolution 6 – SHIFT ALLOWANCE

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Resolution 16 – FREEDOM OF
MOVEMENT – FIRE CONTROL STAFF

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Resolution 29 – RE-AFFILIATION TO THE
LABOUR PARTY

CLEVELAND

Resolution 42 – EQUALITY, VALUING
DIFFERENCE

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANS COMMITTEE

Final Appeals Committee

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	Paul Wilson
Region 2	Stephen Boyd
Region 3	Peter Wilcox
Region 4	Pete Smith
Region 5	Steve Shelton
Region 6	Tom Murray
Region 7	Brian Moss
Region 8	Cerith Griffiths
Region 9	Brian Hooper
Region 10	Gordon Fielden
Region 11	Mark Simmons
Region 12	Ali Burrows
Region 13	Val Hampshire
NWC	Kerry Baigent
ONC	Mick Higgins
CSNC	Sue Offland
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	Micky Nicholas
LGBT	Pat Carberry

Record of Decisions

Firefighter Representatives

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	John Duffy
Region 2	Dermot Rooney
Region 3	Paul Reames
Region 4	Richard Walker
Region 5	Steve Harman
Region 6	Gary Mitchell
Region 7	Andy Dennis
Region 8	Cerith Griffiths
Region 9	Roy Humphreys
Region 10	Paul Embery
Region 11	Danni Armstrong
Region 12	Paul Watts
Region 13	Kevin Herniman
NWC	Sarah Gartland
ONC	Mick Higgins
CSNC	Sharon Thorndyke
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	Micky Nicholas
LGBT	Lucy Masoud

Election of Standing Orders Committee

Re-Elected

Brother Paul Reames for 4 years

Elected

Brother Alan Chinn-Shaw for 4 years



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

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Officers of the Fire Brigades Union and List of Delegates

May 2013

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Region 1

Mr R Robertson

Region 2

Mr J E Barbour

Region 3

Mr A Noble

Region 4

Mr I Murray

Region 5

Mr K Brown

Region 6

Mr D Limer

Region 7

Ms Rose Jones

Region 8

Mr G Mayos

Region 9

Mr K Handscomb

Region 10

Mr I Leahair

Region 11

Mr J Parrott

Region 12

Mr K Horan

Region 13

Mr T McFarlane

National Retained Committee

Mr T Mitchell

Control Staff National Committee

Ms S Riley

Officers National Committee

Mr J Arnold

REGIONAL SECRETARIES

Region 1

Mr J Duffy

Region 2

Mr J Quinn

Region 3

Mr P Wilcox

Region 4

Mr P Smith

Region 5

Vacant

Region 6

Mr G Mitchell

Region 7

Mr A Dennis

Region 8

Mr C J Howells

Region 9

Mr J Wyatt

Region 10

Mr P Embery

Region 11

Ms D Armstrong

Region 12

Mr R Matthews

Region 13

Mr P Jordan

Control Staff National Committee

Ms S Offland

Officers National Committee

Mr M Pottinger

National Women's Committee

Ms K Baigent

LGBT Committee

Mr P Carberry

B&EMM Committee

Mr M Nicholas

National Retained Committee

Mr P Preston

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL CHAIRS

Region 1

Mr A Paterson

Region 2

Mr F Rooney

Region 3

Mr D Turner

Region 4

Mr R Walker

Region 5

Mr I McGill

Region 6

Mr T Murray

Region 7

Ms B Moss

Region 8

Mr C Griffiths

Region 9

Mr B Hooper

Region 10

Mr G Fielden

Region 11

Mr M Simmons

Region 12

Mr S Allen

Region 13

Mr K Herniman

Control Staff National Committee

Ms K Smith

Officers National Committee

Mr M Higgins

National Women's Committee

Ms S Rye

LGBT Committee

Ms Y Dubois

B&EMM Committee

Mr L Ramsey

National Retained Committee

Mr D H Cotter

REGIONAL TREASURERS

Region 1

Mr P Wilson

Region 2

Mr S Boyd

Region 3

Mr K Brennan

Region 4

Mr G Wilkinson

Region 5

Mr S Shelton

Region 6

Mr P Wilkins

Region 7

Mr P Goulden

Region 8

Mr A Roberts

Region 9

Mr D Godfrey-Shaw

Region 10

Mr L Brightman

Region 11

Mr B Woodfine

Region 12

Mr P Watts

Region 13

Ms V Hampshire

REGIONAL OFFICIALS

Region 1

Mr J McFadden

Region 2

Vacant

Region 8

Mr R Curran

Region 10

Mr B Sprung

List of Delegates

REGION 1

Central	Paul Donnelly Stephen Thomson
Dumfries & Galloway	Sami Chaudhry Gerry McLeod
Fife	Graeme Birtley Scott McCabe
Grampian	
Highland & Islands	Marty Cooper Deryck Mackay
Lothian & Borders	Denise Christie Andy Fulton
Strathclyde	Sandra Brown William Coats Paul Donnelly Phil McDonald John McFadden
Tayside	Ronnie Costello Terry Whyte
Regional Officials	Alan Paterson Paul Wilson

REGION 2

Northern Ireland	Archie McKay David Nichol Rod O'Hare Lynda Rowan-O'Neill
Regional Officials	Jim Quinn Dermot Rooney

REGION 3

Cleveland	Brian Gibson David Howe
Durham	Tony Curry Paul Dawson
Northumberland	Kieran Brennan Ian Dick
Tyne & Wear	Russell King Natalie Mortimer
Regional Official	David Turner

REGION 4

Humberside	Rob Vaux Richard Walker
North Yorkshire	Stephen Howley Kelvin Thewlis
South Yorkshire	Sarah Eratt John Gilliver
West Yorkshire	Martyn Bairstow Paul Drinkwater David Williams
Regional Officials	Pete Smith Graham Wilkinson

REGION 5

Cheshire	Stuart Hammond Dave Williams
Cumbria	Dean Greenway Ben Jones
Greater Manchester	Mark Bayley Dave German Gary Keary Simon Yaffa

Isle of Man

Lancashire	Kevin Deacon Steve Harman Kevin Wilkie
Merseyside	Mark Rowe Leslie Skarratts
Regional Official	Ian McGill

REGION 6

Derbyshire	Marc Redford Chris Tapp
Leicestershire	Spencer Lambert Graham Vaux
Lincolnshire	Chris Hides Karl McKee
Northamptonshire	Sheldon Fenning Steve Mason
Nottinghamshire	Alan Coates Philip Coates
Regional Official	Gary Mitchell Tom Murray

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGION 7

Hereford & Worcester	Steven Gould Julian Jenkins
Staffordshire	Barry Downey Richard Williams
Shropshire	Matthew Lamb Stephen Morris
Warwickshire	Brian Crow Marcus Giles
West Midlands	Paul Cockburn Michael McKay Steven Price-Hunt
Regional Officials	Andy Dennis Pete Goulden <i>Monday – Wednesday</i> Brian Moss <i>Thursday – Friday</i>

REGION 8

Mid & West Wales	Barrie Davies Lawrence Larmond
North Wales	Sandra Williams Shane Wyn Price
South Wales	Jo Byrne Vaughan Jenkins Mark Watt
Regional Officials	Cerith Griffiths Arwel Roberts

REGION 9

Bedfordshire	Lee Moon Jamie Newell
Cambridgeshire	Clive Griffin Cameron Matthews
Essex	Alan Chinn-Shaw Riccardo la Torre
Hertfordshire	Derek MacLeod Anthony Smith
Norfolk	Peter John Greeves Darren Rose
Suffolk	Roy Humphreys Andrew Vingoe
Regional Officials	Brian Hooper Jamie Wyatt

REGION 10

London	Gareth Beeton Laurie Brightman Gordon Fielden Sally Harper Richard Lockwood Peter Richards Ben Sprung Yusuf Timms Neil Walker Dave Waterman Neale Williams
Regional Official	Paul Embery

REGION 11

Kent	Stuart Becks Bob Chilmaid Jenny Impey
Surrey	Dave Herpe Richard Jones
East Sussex	Mark Brown
West Sussex	Francis Bishop Mick Cambers
Regional Officials	Mark Simmons Bill Woodfine

REGION 12

Berkshire	Cory Menke Robin Whitman
Buckinghamshire	Kieron Hall James Wolfenden
Hampshire	Nigel McCullen Paul Trew
Isle of Wight	Pete Mawhood Matt Sainsbury
Oxfordshire	Mark Ames Rachel Dobson
Regional Official	Steve Allen

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGION 13

Avon	Adam Course Chris Taylor
Cornwall	Tim Edwards Stuart Pulley
Devon & Somerset	Dave Chappell Helen Dickinson
Dorset	Karen Adams Simon Dennett
Gloucestershire	Nigel Morley Mike Tully
Wiltshire	Tony Littler Brent Thorley
Regional Official	Val Hampshire

B&EMM

	Micky Nicholas Dalton Powell
Sectional Official	Lud Ramsey

CSNC

	Amanda Buchanan Amelia Diallo
Sectional Officials	Sue Offland Kath Smith

LGBT

	Stewart Brown
Sectional Official	Pat Carberry

NRC

	John Catherwood Lyndon Jones
Sectional Officials	Harry Cotter Peter Preston

NWC

	Sarah Gartland Helen Harrison
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Sectional Officials	Kerry Baigent Samantha Rye
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ONC

	Eddie Brennan Robert Sherwood
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Sectional Officials	John Denvir Martin Pottinger Lud Ramsey
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THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

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