

Firefighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR OUR FUTURE

FBU launches the Firefighters' Manifesto

See p10

SCORCHED: WILDFIRES
AND FIREFIGHTERS

See p14

FROM FIRE ENGINE
TO RED CARPET

See p18

FBU CONSULTS ON
SCOTLAND STRIKE

See p4

Oct/Nov 2023



www.fbu.org.uk

This autumn, the FBU is launching a new national campaign: The Firefighters' Manifesto.

Although we do not know the precise timing, a general election is rapidly approaching, and it is now overwhelmingly likely that there will be a change of government. In the run-up to these events, it is vital that we set out a stall for the future of our service.

Under the Tories, it has become harder and harder for firefighters to do their jobs. One in five jobs have disappeared (more than 12,000), and our pay has been under attack for 13 years.

At the same time, we have seen ever more fragmentation of our service as standards are cut and then cut again. And rather than standards and policy being set in cooperation with firefighters, chief officers, the NFCC and employers have helped to undermine our profession by endlessly driving through cuts.

The Firefighters' Manifesto is about setting out a vision for a modern, resilient, joined-up service with the resources it needs and a seat at the table for firefighters.

To win that, we will need every firefighter in the UK to lobby, cajole and persuade their MPs and prospective MPs.

Our national rally on 1 November will be the start of this campaign – I urge you to take part in it.

MIDDLE EAST

As humanitarians, I am sure that all firefighters will be appalled at the events of recent weeks in Israel and Palestine.

Hamas's attacks on Israeli civilians were horrific and indefensible; they must be condemned. The mass displacement and killings of Gazan civilians and the siege of Gaza is a form of collective punishment.

For now, we need the



Matt Wrack

Our service – our future:
The Firefighters' Manifesto

violence to stop. In the longer run, this situation cannot be solved until there is a just and sustainable peace, with self-determination for everyone.

We send our solidarity to all of those who are the victims of the ongoing violence and injustice, including the many firefighters working round the clock to save lives.

The FBU's executive council approved a statement on the situation earlier this month, which can be viewed on our website. We have also made donations of £15,000 to Medical Aid for Palestinians and £10,000

to War on Want from the Firefighters 100 Lottery fund.

SCOTLAND – STEPPING UP THE CAMPAIGN

As we report in this issue, members in Scotland are now being consulted on the possibility of industrial action over the devastating package of cuts being imposed by the Scottish government. Firefighters across the UK will send their solidarity to our Scottish brothers and sisters as they prepare for the next phase of their campaign.

BIBBY STOCKHOLM

Members will be aware that the FBU has taken

legal action over fire safety concerns aboard the Bibby Stockholm barge, which is once again housing asylum seekers. These actions were vindicated by inspectors' reports which showed that there were significant safety failings on the barge. We are pleased that the government was forced to make changes as a result. We are proud of the role we have played in this episode and will continue to monitor the situation closely. We hold the possibility of legal action in reserve if further fire safety concerns arise.



Did you know ...?

... that the Great Pacific Garbage Patch – a vortex of debris floating in the North Pacific Ocean, made up mainly of plastic, spans over 600,000 square miles, from California to Japan with Hawaii in the middle – is now so huge and permanent that a coastal ecosystem is thriving on it



United: firefighters rally in Westminster in December last year

MARK THOMAS



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Firefighter

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NEWS

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FBU members raise funds with charity football match

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Now the worst since records began

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SCOTLAND



ORAN MCELLEN

FBU CONSULTS SCOTTISH FIREFIGHTERS ON STRIKE OVER 'THREAT TO LIVES AND HOMES OF EVERYBODY'

FBU Scotland has taken the first step towards strike action in opposition to a devastating package of cuts imposed by the Scottish government.

Firefighters across Scotland will be consulted in the first formal step towards a ballot, the FBU Scotland committee agreed unanimously.

John McKenzie, FBU regional secretary for Scotland, said: "The cuts we are seeing imposed by the Scottish government are a threat to the lives, homes and livelihoods not just of firefighters but of everyone in Scotland.

"Speaking to firefighters across Scotland, it is clear to us that there is a determined mood among members. After 10 years of cuts, our service cannot take any more.

"The public will not forgive the Scottish National Party government if

they allow this to end in strike action".

A projected five-year "flat cash" budget until 2027 has already removed 10 frontline fire engines, while 150 retained fire engines are regularly unavailable due to recruitment and retention issues.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has announced that it will need to save a minimum of a further £14 million next year, which would result in the loss of a further 339 firefighters and 18 fire engines, with more to come. Scotland has lost 1,200 frontline firefighters since 2012.

Firefighters have warned that cuts this year have already left them "robbed of adequate resources". One month after the town of Ayr had its height appliance taken off the run, a large fire broke out at a derelict hotel in the town centre.

Fifteen appliances were mobilised to tackle the blaze. Ayr's height appliance would have been one minute away from the fire, but firefighters were forced to wait for Kilmarnock's, 20 minutes away. When it broke down, they had to wait for one from the Glasgow area.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack called on Scotland's first minister Humza Yousaf to intervene, saying the cuts are a "threat to the safety of everyone in Scotland, and the Fire Brigades Union has a duty to oppose them. The Scottish government needs to listen to those in the front line of this vital service."

Scottish firefighters were due to stage a large protest outside the Scottish parliament in Holyrood in Edinburgh on 26 October, encouraging the public and FBU members from across the UK to join them.

Street protest backs FBU's clear alternative to dangerous cuts

Firefighters and supporters from across North Wales took to the streets of Wrexham to defend the region's fire service from cuts.

The protest of more than 100 people took place on the day that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service closed a public consultation on cuts to firefighters, fire stations and cover across the area.

North Wales FBU launched its "Save Our Fire Service" campaign in opposition to the options presented in the consultation, as all three would result in a reduction in fire cover. The union has put forward two alternative proposals for growth and investment in the service instead.

A petition opposing the official

options has more than 1,800 signatures.

Speakers at the rally included Plaid Cymru county councillor Carrie Harper, Wales TUC general secretary Shavanah Taj, councillor Dana Davies, representatives from Unite the Union, and FBU representatives including assistant general secretary Ben Selby.

Matt Ryan, North Wales FBU brigade secretary, said: "If any of the proposed cuts are implemented, towns and villages across North Wales will face a concerning reduction in fire cover. This means fewer firefighters and resources available to respond quickly to incidents like house fires. We have put forward clear alternatives to these dangerous cuts."



The Wrexham protest

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Firefighters rally against crew reductions

Cambridgeshire firefighters organised a rally outside a meeting of the Cambridgeshire fire authority on 4 October protesting against a dangerous reduction to crews.

Since 1 January this year, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) has cut the number of on-call firefighters attending incidents to three per crew.

CFRS argues that smaller crews will mean that fire engines arrive at incidents "several minutes faster". There is no evidence that this reduces response times, since a crew of three must wait for additional crews to arrive to tackle a serious incident.

FBU brigade secretary Mark Harriss said: "The service is cutting our crews because we're facing a crisis in recruitment and

retention. Making the job far more dangerous and stressful will only make this worse. Fire service employers must put a stop to this dangerous practice and staff our service properly."

The FBU opposes reduced crewing levels across the UK, with retained firefighters leading the fight against inadequate and dangerous crewing levels.

Sounding off



JESS HAFID

Concrete scandal

Our children deserve safe school buildings, says Daniel Kebede, general secretary of the NEU teachers' union

The situation with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in schools is a national scandal. But "crumbly concrete" is just the tip of the iceberg. Many buildings affected by RAAC also contain deadly asbestos.

The crisis highlights chronic under-funding of school buildings, which has left many unsafe and unfit for purpose. Aside from crumbly concrete, there are a myriad of other structural problems such as leaking roofs or collapsing ceilings – plus overcrowded classrooms, mould, damp, and insufficient learning resources, spaces and equipment.

Staff struggle every day with inadequate school buildings – and the nation's children lose out.

That is why the NEU has launched a campaign for action to ensure the school estate is upgraded and made safe for the 21st century.

We have joined eight other unions and the school governors' association, NGA, to press prime minister Sunak to set aside at least £4.4 billion in this year's autumn statement to fix our schools – and to continue that increase until we reach the £7 billion yearly spend recommended by the Department for Education's own officials.

We have launched a petition calling for the increase and greater transparency in how the government deals with the problem of crumbling schools. Please add your weight to our call by signing our petition and asking your family and friends to do the same. Scan the code to sign.



WEST MIDLANDS

Charity football helps fund DECON tests after bosses decline aid

More than 100 West Midlands firefighters took part in the latest DECON research in October, with health testing carried out by the University of Central Lancashire.

Results will be used to detect cancers and other diseases at an early stage, and to identify evidence linking occupational cancers with exposure to toxic fire chemicals.

Firefighters funded this round of testing through the union, as the West Midlands fire service declined to support the research financially.

FBU West Midlands and FBU East Midlands competed in a charity football match, with special guest appearances from former England footballers Tony Morley and Geoff Thomas. This stage

of the research project took place thanks to the generosity of Boldmere St Michaels football club, which hosted the testing.

Billy Holland, FBU West Midlands regional secretary, said: "Every firefighter taking part in this ground-breaking research in the West Midlands should be proud of their contribution to making the profession safer."

The FBU's DECON project is the first of its kind for firefighters in the UK and follows the World Health Organisation announcement that occupational exposure as a firefighter is carcinogenic.

So far, firefighters from Tyne and Wear, London, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Birmingham have taken part.



Project participants at Boldmere St Michaels football club

AVON

Union condemns 'dangerous, irresponsible' cuts

Avon fire authority has voted through proposals to cut 40 wholetime firefighter posts and reduce fire engine crews from five firefighters to four across the service.

FBU representatives who addressed the fire authority meeting condemned the cuts as "dangerous and irresponsible".

Chief fire officer Simon Shilton commissioned a project to make cuts, citing firefighters' pay and the latest pay award as a reason for slashing firefighter

numbers in the region.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack has called on the authority and its chief officer to "take responsibility for this situation and step back from the brink".

FBU South West has vowed to "do everything in our power to fight these dangerous cuts", with regional secretary Dave Roberts stating that "Avon Fire Authority has voted to put cost-cutting before public and firefighter safety".

In brief



FBU assistant general secretary Ben Selby presents Eliot Brown watches to firefighters Rebecca Openshaw-Rowe and Georgina Gilbert, members of Antarctic Fire Angels, who are preparing to become the first emergency services team to ski to the South Pole. Due to set off in November, they are training to ski 1,130 kilometres from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole in approximately 45 days – about 25 kilometres a day. Their journey will be unassisted and unsupported. They will pull 85+ kilo pulks (supply sleds) in temperatures as low as -50c with possible wind speeds of over 60 mph.

Hazards award

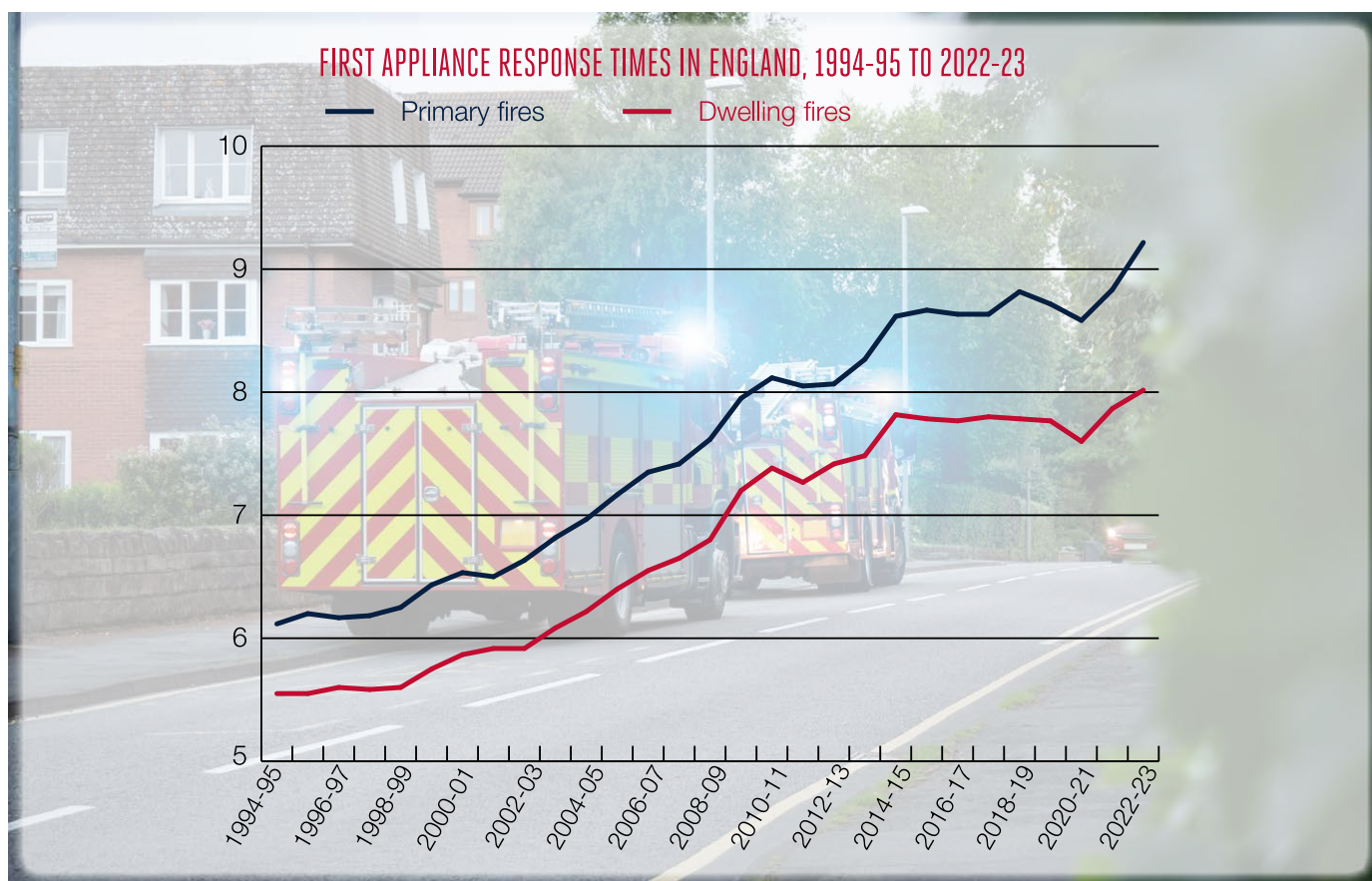
At this year's Hazards conference, North West region EC member Les Skarratts and national officer Riccardo la Torre, accepted the "certificate for excellence" award on behalf of the union for the FBU's DECON campaign.

New York hears about DECON

FBU EC member Steve Wright and national officer Riccardo la Torre were invited by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to attend its conference in New York earlier this year to speak on the FBU's DECON campaign. They told delegates about the research that has been undertaken and what has been achieved to date, and what the union's demands are: a UK wide prevention strategy, health monitoring, and presumptive legislation.

New FBU vice president

Southern region executive council member Steve Wright was elected to the role of vice president and took up this position on 8 September. Steve has been an FBU member for over 20 years, joining the service at 18. A dedicated FBU activist, he has represented members in many roles during his journey from branch rep to VP. Steve said: "I am honoured to be elected as the FBU's vice president and look forward to working alongside all FBU members in the pursuit of our union's industrial and political objectives."



Response times for fire incidents have risen to a decade-long high in fire services across England.

Home Office data for the year ending March 2023 shows a year-on-year rise in the time taken for the first fire vehicle to arrive at an incident.

The average total response time to primary fires in England was nine minutes and 13 seconds, the longest time seen since comparable records began.

Since last year, there has been an increase of 23 seconds in the average first appliance response time to primary fires, where people or property are at risk.

The largest increase was in primary outdoor fires with an increase of 1 minute 12 seconds. The average total response time to secondary fires (smaller outdoor fires) in England has risen to 9 minutes and 47 seconds.

North Yorkshire has been hit the hardest, with response times rising to 13 minutes



News Focus

Cuts drive response times to record high

and nine seconds. Firefighters in the region responded to 157 more fires than the year before, with fewer resources.

The report acknowledges the impact of record-breaking heatwaves last year. Primary outdoor fire incidents “increased by 45% from the previous year, reflecting the hot dry summer”.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack has pointed to cuts as vital context for the deterioration in response times.

“We’re seeing firefighters

pushed beyond acceptable and safe limits, responding to incidents across increasingly large areas”, he said.

“Meanwhile, the climate emergency is resulting in more frequent and extreme weather events and wildfires.”

One in five firefighters has been cut since 2010, with fire

‘We’re seeing firefighters pushed beyond safe limits’

engines taken off the run and fire stations closed across the country.

In a recent report, the London Fire Brigade admitted that while wildfires destroyed homes across London last summer, 39 of the city’s fire engines were sitting empty without enough firefighters to crew them. This slowed down response times while the fires spread, leaving firefighters battling huge blazes under enormous pressure and without sufficient resources.

Response times do not capture the impact of under-crewing. In several rural areas, chief fire officers are putting lives at risk by sending crews of only three firefighters to incidents. Even if they arrive quickly, firefighters then are forced to stand by and wait for another fire crew to arrive.

The FBU is calling on Westminster to “take responsibility for this negligence and reverse the cuts of recent years”.

FBU PHOTO COMPETITION 2023 **WINNER**

The winner – *Lonely Walk: Tyre recycling fire*.
The longest lasting fire in Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue's history, by Jazz Hayer – was a favourite of all the judges and an obvious winner. It combines technical excellence, great composition, clever use of reflection and, above all, captured the grim devastation caused by a major fire.

For news of the runners up – see Noticeboard, page 22.

The winner, runners up and finalists' photos will all feature in the FBU's 2024 calendar, available for pre-order here: shop.fbu.org.uk





THE FIREFIGHTERS' MANIFESTO

As we prepare for the 1 November national rally, FBU general secretary **Matt Wrack** introduces the Firefighters' Manifesto, which sets out our demands for our service, our profession and our conditions

On 1 November, FBU members from across the UK will rally and march in Westminster to launch the Firefighters' Manifesto – and that will just be the beginning of the campaign. Last year's pay campaign showed that, when we stand together, we can shift our employers and the government. But now we need to do something much bigger – win a future for the fire and rescue service.

We are in a unique moment. It is likely that we will soon have a change of government, and this gives us an enormous opportunity to fight for jobs, investment and a fire and rescue service that is fit for the future.

The Firefighters' Manifesto sets out our demands:

1. **Investment: stop and reverse the cuts to jobs**
2. **Fair pay: delivered through collective bargaining**
3. **National standards: on response times and crewing**
4. **A voice for firefighters: a new forum to set policy and standards**
5. **Climate action: a service fit for floods and extreme weather events**
6. **Democratic public service: accountable to our communities**
7. **Equality: an inclusive**

service, open to everyone

8. **DECON: health monitoring and recognition of occupational disease**
9. **The right to strike: scrap the anti-union laws**
10. **Occupational pensions: recognising the realities of firefighting.**

POLITICIANS NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU

In the coming months, firefighters and emergency control staff will be on the hunt for politicians. We are seeking to engage with current and future representatives at Westminster, as well as the devolved governments and assemblies.

We want an audience with councillors, mayors and other local bodies – and of course, with the wider

public. Firefighters have a message for politicians high and low, new and wizened: invest in our fire and rescue service, listen to the professionals, and help us make the UK resilient to any emergency that comes our way.

But the message alone is not enough. Politicians need to hear from firefighters. They need to hear the voices of FBU members, who know the job and carry the service through every shift. They need to hear directly from firefighters.

INVESTMENT

Almost everything depends on money. Fire and rescue is a £3 billion a year industry. That's a tiny percentage of government spending on public services – less than 1% annually. Across the UK, it costs around £50 per person per year to pay for fire and rescue. This is repaid several times over with lives saved, homes reclaimed, people rescued and businesses salvaged.

Politicians have starved us of resources. We've been a £3 billion a year industry for more than a decade. Spending has remained static while the cost of living has gone through the roof. Every year of inflation has eroded the funds available. Cuts have reduced the workforce by a fifth (20%). This dictates everything else.

Three-quarters of fire budgets are



EDDIE HOWLAND

Across the UK, it costs about £50 per person per year to pay for fire and rescue. This is repaid several times over with lives saved, homes reclaimed, people rescued and businesses salvaged



Together, FBU members
shifted the government and
employers on pay – lobby
of Parliament and pay
rally in December 2022

**Politicians need to hear
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spent on firefighters, so cuts to funding inevitably impact on the number of firefighters employed (see Figure 1).

WHY FIREFIGHTERS SHOULD MOBILISE

It is no surprise that, at the same time as cutting jobs, central government also attacked firefighters' pay. They cut budgets and cut our pay for 13 years. Investment in our service must also mean more money for firefighters' pay.

These cuts mean chief fire officers making preposterous and unsafe proposals to save money. Every firefighter knows you cannot put out a house fire safely without a minimum number of BA wearers and back up. Yet they increasingly tell us to ride three on a pump. They increasingly tell us to jump crew other appliances; all the time putting our safety at risk.

These cuts mean chief fire officers come forward to propose shift systems that reduce night cover. All the official figures show that during the night, fires and fire deaths are greater. The risks are greater when people are asleep. These are the ABCs of fire safety.

These cuts mean that, over the past two decades, response times to fires have slowed from an average of six minutes to nine minutes for primary fires. And this is just the first pump. They do not even publish figures for other appliances.

These cuts mean that, at major incidents, the service soon runs out of firefighters. We have seen in the wildfires last year, at recycling plant fires, floods and other major incidents, almost the entire shift is mobilised, leaving virtually no resources left for any other incidents.

On 1 November, firefighters are marching on Westminster to tell politicians what their cuts mean to our service. We are going to central government to demand the investment in our service that the risks warrant. The public deserves nothing less. And firefighters deserve much better.

ADVISORY BODY

Something else needs fixing too. For two decades, chief fire officers have had the ear of ministers. There is no seat at the table for the FBU. There is not even a table. Instead, a gang of chief fire officers tell each other they know best and tell ministers what they want to hear.

What does this arrangement mean for firefighters? For the past two decades, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and its predecessor, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), have been

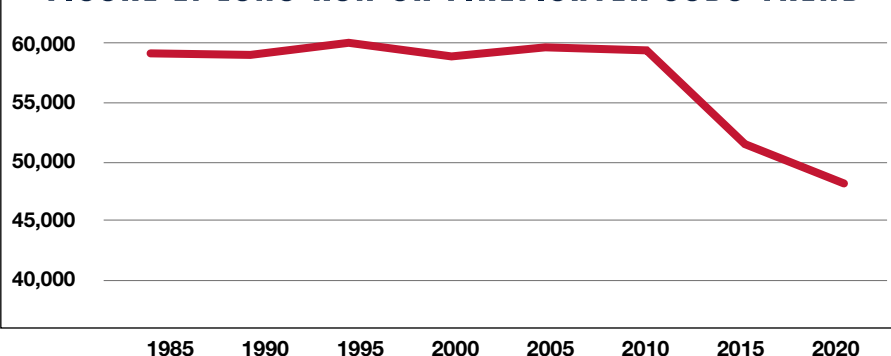


Firefighters and emergency control staff want dignity at work. Nothing less will do



Firefighters tackle every kind of emergency, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Firefighters receive the first call people make when it matters most and are the first line of defence when things go wrong

FIGURE 1: LONG RUN UK FIREFIGHTER JOBS TREND



asleep at the wheel in every major crisis facing the fire and rescue service.

They failed to warn about the building safety crisis and about the cladding that ruined so many lives at Grenfell Tower. Instead they proposed the "not-so-temporary" waking watches, where residents now have to pay untrained contractors while they rest their heads at night in homes deemed unsafe.

These policies mean some chief fire officers now want to send firefighters into high-rise residential buildings, when fires are blazing up there, without first starting up their BA. They think it is OK to break decades of safety procedures and put firefighters at risk of respiratory diseases or being overcome by smoke, instead of having enough firefighters to evacuate the block safely.



In the wildfires last year, at recycling plant fires, floods and other major incidents, almost the entire shift is mobilised, leaving almost no resources left for any other incidents

PAL WOOD



MARK WALTON/AMV

Some chief officers now want to send firefighters into high-rise buildings, when fires are blazing up there, without first starting up their BA sets properly

The same chief fire officers have presided over a culture of harassment, discrimination and bullying, setting back the drive for equality and diversity. Warm words and paper policies have masked unacceptable behaviours – long warned of by FBU reps and now exposed by official reports. Firefighters and emergency control staff want dignity at work. Nothing less will do.

Chief fire officers failed to prepare for

The vast majority of firefighters belong to the FBU. To shut out the union is to deny firefighters our professional opinion

the Covid-19 pandemic. They provided no plans, no guidance and no training. When the FBU negotiated an agreement to help the public through the first year of the pandemic, some chief officers tore up safety agreements and put firefighters at risk.

For too long, ministers have relied solely on the NFCC. They have given chief officers millions of pounds of public money. But the chiefs have failed in their duty of candour. In the process they have increasingly excluded the FBU from almost every committee, every piece of guidance and almost every forum.

Firefighters are going to Westminster to tell politicians to listen. We are the professionals. Nobody knows the job better than those on the frontline. The vast majority of firefighters belong to the FBU. To shut out the union is to deny firefighters our professional opinion.

And the remedy is simple. Stop wasting public money on the NFCC. Set up a statutory advisory body with

the FBU on board at every level. We can then crack on with improving the service to the public and creating a world class fire and rescue service.

RESILIENCE

Firefighters tackle every kind of emergency, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Firefighters receive the first call people make when it matters most and are the first line of defence when things go wrong.

The UK fire and rescue service can mobilise 10,000 firefighters in a matter of minutes to tackle almost every emergency imaginable. Specially-trained firefighters are on duty at all times, ready for deployment to incidents, large and small. The arrival of professional firefighters swiftly and with appropriate numbers is of tremendous value, both to those immediate victims who need our help and politicians who are accountable when things go wrong.

For too long, politicians have ignored public safety. Firefighters are proud of the jobs we do and the communities we serve. We want to make our profession the best it can be. The risks are still there from fires and other incidents. We know there are significant new risks now and on the horizon. Whether it is climate change or the ageing population or the housing crisis, we know there are vulnerable people out there who need our help.

Firefighters want politicians to give us the tools to meet these challenges. There is a golden opportunity to change direction and make the fire and rescue service resilient in the face of today's emergencies. Firefighters have a vision of a better fire and rescue service. We have a union that articulates those views and stands together to improve our pay, pensions and conditions.

FBU members are heading for Westminster and other parliaments. We are heading for fire authorities and boards. We are talking about the job we love and the service we want to build. We need every member on board. Together, collectively, we aim to change things for the better.

See you in Westminster on 1 November. Contact your brigade officials for details on how to attend

SCORCHED

This summer saw more climate records broken.

Riccardo la Torre says heatwaves, wildfires and other extreme weather have serious implications for firefighters and the public

Firefighters face a cost of living crisis at home and a climate crisis at work. We are seeing, more than ever, homes, livelihoods and infrastructure lost, as wildfires now affect urban and rural areas.

Perversely we have witnessed firefighters injured and hospitalised in recent wildfires, while others call for backup that does not come, as fire appliances sit dormant in fire stations all over the country because cuts have left far too few firefighters to crew them.

We have even had reports of fire engines being used from fire museums as firefighters desperately battle without enough resources. Extreme weather events are a workplace issue for firefighters in the here and now.

The Met Office has confirmed that June 2023 was the hottest June on record for the UK. The average mean temperature of 15.8°C for June 2023 was the highest recorded since 1884, with England, Scotland, Wales and Northern

Ireland also reporting their respective warmest June on record.

It seems every year, one record or another is broken when it comes to the weather. Both the actual record and climate models point to changing patterns now and for the foreseeable future.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

More extreme weather clearly has massive implications for firefighters and the communities we serve. The FBU is working hard to get ministers, fire authorities and chief fire officers to face

these new risks and ensure the workforce, whether on the fire ground, in control or at training centres, are fully prepared and resourced to meet these challenges.

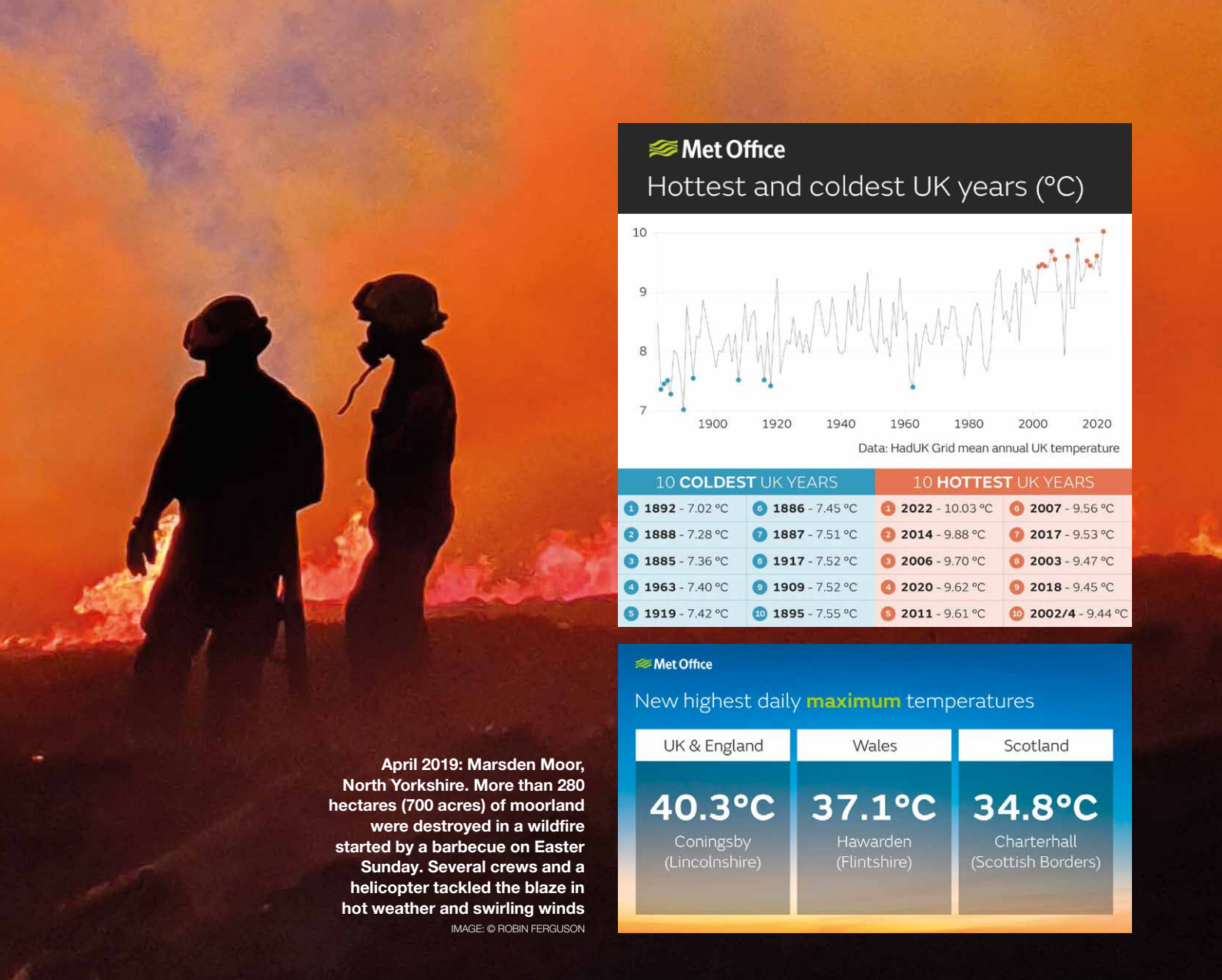
The UK's current highest temperature is 40.3°C, recorded at Coningsby, Lincolnshire on 19 July 2022, according to the Met Office. This was the first time 40°C was exceeded in the UK. The record high temperature in Wales is 37.1°C, recorded at Hawarden Airport, Flintshire, on 18 July 2022. The record high temperature in Scotland is 34.8°C, recorded at Charterhall, Scottish Borders, on 19 July 2022.

Of the top ten hottest UK days on record, the top five have all been since the turn of the 21st century. Seven out of ten have been in the last 20 years.

The Met Office says that 2022 was the UK's hottest year on record, with an average temperature of over 10°C recorded for the first time in a 100 years.

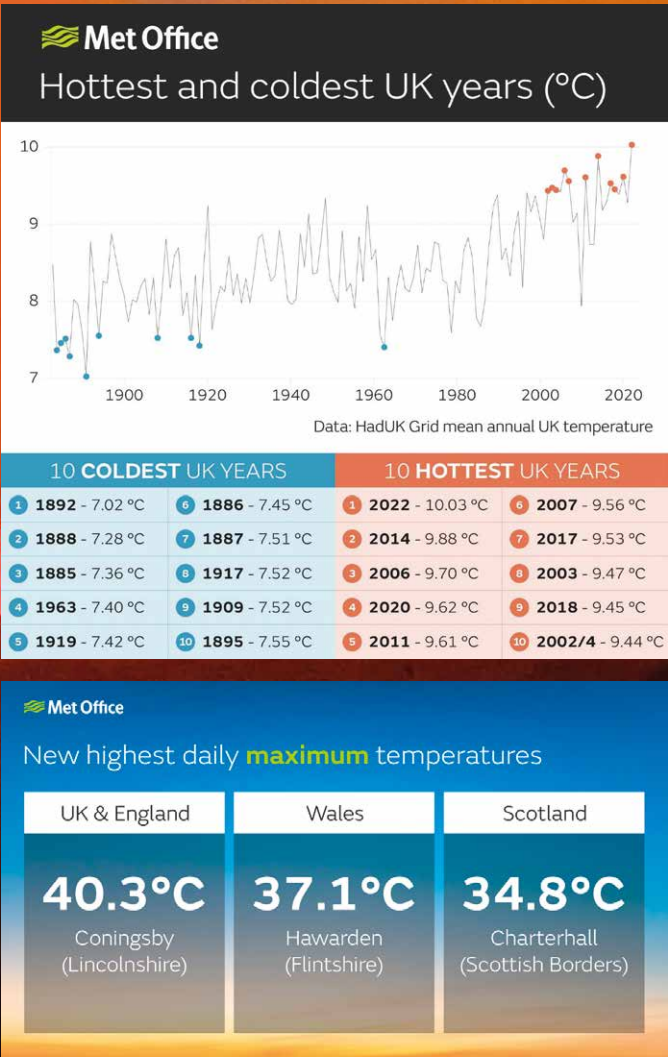
In addition, 2022 was also the warmest year on record in the Central England Temperature (CET) series. The CET began in 1659 and is the

2022 was the UK's hottest year on record, with an average temperature of over 10°C recorded for the first time in a 100 years



April 2019: Marsden Moor, North Yorkshire. More than 280 hectares (700 acres) of moorland were destroyed in a wildfire started by a barbecue on Easter Sunday. Several crews and a helicopter tackled the blaze in hot weather and swirling winds

IMAGE: © ROBIN FERGUSON



world’s longest instrumental record of temperature. The annual average for 2022 was 11.1°C. This is only the second time it has recorded 11°C or higher in its history (the other was 2014).

Every one of the top ten ‘hottest years’ on record have been recorded since 2003. By contrast, there has not been a top ten “coldest year” for 60 years.

The Met Office has made projections for the coming years. By the end of the 21st century, all areas of the UK are projected to be warmer. By 2070, if greenhouse gas emissions continue unabated, the average warming could be more than 5°C higher in summer and nearly 4°C higher in winter.

With future warming, hot summers like 2022 could become even more common by mid-century.

Hot spells, typically defined as maximum daytime temperatures exceeding 30°C for two or more consecutive days, are largely confined to the south-east of England at present. In the future under a high emissions scenario, the frequency of hot spells

increases. Despite overall summer drying trends, new data suggests future increases in the intensity of heavy summer rainfall events.

The FBU has produced many publications on climate change. The latest is *Scorched*, a report on wildfire risks in the UK.

Firefighters are on the frontline in every heatwave and at extreme weather events throughout the year. The fire and rescue service needs to adapt to climate change already baked in from past carbon emissions, and prepare for further changes in the future.

INVESTMENT IN THE SERVICE

The primary demand is for central government investment in the fire and rescue service, to ensure sufficient firefighters and emergency control staff are maintained and expanded to meet the risks.

The FBU is campaigning for UK-wide standards and funding for training to tackle wildfires, including command and control training for officers. This

should include:

- Rural-urban interface firefighting training
- Fuel removal/fire break tactics (such as prescribed fire) as part of emergency response
- Heat, illness preparation and awareness training
- DECON training to mitigate exposure to fire contaminants.

The FBU wants governments and fire authorities to invest in personal protective equipment and welfare facilities for firefighters tackling wildfires.

This should include research into firefighters’ health, safety and wellbeing, adequate procedures and facilities for DECON, body-worn physiological monitors, along with specialist PPE and respiratory protection suitable for the conditions.

Your branch copy of *Scorched* should be on your stations now to read or can be downloaded from: bit.ly/fbu-scorched or scan the code.



Building alliances, winning for firefighters

Each autumn, delegates from the FBU attend the conferences of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Labour party and others to put forward our case. *Firefighter* takes you through some of the highlights

Winning a sustainable future for the fire and rescue service – and decent pay and conditions for firefighters – cannot be done only through action in the workplace. It requires

firefighters to link up with other workers and trade unionists, and to build alliances with other workers to win political change.

This was likely the last “conference season” before the next general election, and so was a key opportunity to intervene on behalf of firefighters.

FIRE AND RESCUE

TUC congress took place this year on the banks of the Mersey in the ACC Arena in Liverpool between 10 and 13 September. Hundreds of delegates attended, between them representing millions of workers.

As well as intervening on a wide range of issues such as the climate emergency and the Covid 19 pandemic, the FBU submitted two main motions. The first was on the future of our own industry. It passed, meaning that the whole TUC is now committed to backing the FBU’s campaigning in our industry.

BEATING THE ANTI-UNION LAWS

The Minimum Service Levels Act is one of the worst attacks on workers in decades. It enables employers in key sectors – including fire and rescue – to



Top left: Jamie Newell, executive council member for Eastern region and (bottom left) EC member for East Midlands region Adam Taylor at the TUC

compel workers to attend work on strike days, despite there being a democratic mandate for strike action.

The FBU has mobilised with other unions to fight this law in parliament, and we are now leading the development of a strategy to rid ourselves of it: to get it repealed when the government changes and, in the meantime, to make it unworkable.

This is not about asking any set of workers to defy the law on their own, but to build a mass movement of non-compliance which could render it useless. TUC congress endorsed our strategy in Liverpool.

TUC PRESIDENT

At the end of TUC congress, Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, was elected to serve as the TUC's new president. He will chair the TUC general council for the coming year, and preside over congress in 2024.

He said: "On behalf of firefighters, I am proud to be taking up the role of TUC president at what will be a decisive moment for the trade union movement, in the wake of an inspiring wave of industrial action across the economy."

A NEW DEAL FOR WORKING PEOPLE

The Labour party conference took place on 8 to 11 October – at the same venue as the TUC. As the party prepares for the next election, we joined other unions to fight for workers' rights.

Under the Tories, wages have fallen



Eastenders actor turned investigative journalist Ross Kemp visited the FBU stand at the Emergency Services Show which took place in Birmingham on 18 and 19 September

and public services have been left starved of funding – as firefighters across the UK will testify.

The FBU helped to propose a motion that commits Labour to implementing a "new deal for working people", which was first launched last year.

Because of this work, the Labour party conference has now reaffirmed its support for collective bargaining across the economy; ending fire and rehire; repealing the Minimum Service Levels Act and the 2016 Trade Union Act; and much more.

The day before the main conference, Labour women's conference convened. The FBU was represented by executive council member Val Hampshire. The conference overwhelmingly voted to endorse the FBU's Equality Matters

campaign and our Fight for 52 campaign on maternity leave.

FRINGES AND STALLS

Not all of the action at these conferences happens on the main stage. The FBU ran a stall where members engage delegates and visitors on our campaigns.

The Fight for 52 campaign for maternity leave was very popular with delegates, as were campaigns around breathing apparatus policy, the Merseyside dispute and cuts in Scotland.

Activists from Scotland, Merseyside and elsewhere visited the conference in addition to the FBU delegation to talk to delegates about their campaigns.

The FBU also took part in a number of fringe meetings on workers' rights, immigration policy and civil liberties. Matt Wrack and other officials spoke at more than a dozen fringe meetings and rallies at the conferences, delivering our message to hundreds more trade unionists, politicians and decision-makers.

OTHER BIG CONFERENCES

As well as Labour and the TUC, the FBU also attended two other key conferences this autumn.

The national Hazards conference, which took place at Keele University in early September, is one of the biggest gatherings of trade union safety reps in the country. The FBU used it as an opportunity to speak to others about our health and safety campaigns, and we won an award for our work on DECON.

The Emergency Services Show in Birmingham in September was an opportunity for us to engage decision-makers in the fire and rescue sector. The FBU focussed its energies on the Fight for 52 campaign, which was popular.

The FBU is its members – and while the union does work lobbying work at a UK-wide level, it is down to firefighters on the ground to really push their local politicians for the change we need.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack speaking at the Labour party conference





Dave Turner at FBU special conference 2012 as delegate for the North East region



A still from the film showing Dave Turner as TJ and co lead actor Ebla Mari, who plays Yara, at the Durham Miners' Gala



The camera will always show who you really are

Dave Turner, former firefighter and FBU North-East regional chair, plays a key role in the latest Ken Loach film. He spoke to **Steve Morgan**

“It was the best job in the world,” says Dave Turner. “I worked with some of the best people you’d ever work with in your life.”

It will come as no surprise to those who know the star of Ken Loach’s film *The Old Oak*, that he is referring not to his part in Loach’s latest – and possibly last – cinematic offering, but the 30 years in the fire service that helped convince the veteran director Turner’s shoulders were broad enough to carry the film.

A 15-minute-plus standing ovation at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year suggests that confidence was well-placed.

The Old Oak follows the relocation of Syrian refugees to a Durham pit village that has been bruised, broken and downtrodden for decades; the kind of place Gateshead-born Turner knows well.

So well, in fact, that Loach and long-term scriptwriting collaborator Paul Laverty used him as their



On the red carpet in Cannes with film director Ken Loach (third from left)

taxi-driver-cum-guide for their initial location recce.

Like his character, T J Ballantyne, landlord of the pub that gives the film its title and that acts as the backdrop for two communities trying to get by, 60-year-old Turner has lived life close up.

He joined the service at 21 in August 1984, the year of the miners' strike, and rode a fire engine for 26 years, making the FBU journey from Tyne and Wear branch rep, to divisional, brigade, and finally, North-East regional chair.

LAST THING ON HIS MIND

Acting was the last thing on his mind when leaving the fire service in 2014. Role-playing scenarios at national school had been his sole public performances prior to turning up, close to his retirement, to a project looking to make a north-east based drama.

He had no idea 16 Films had anything to do with Loach, and largely went along as a favour to a contact who had passed

up the opportunity. "He'd said 'no, it's not for me'," he recalls. "So they asked him if he knew anyone who might be interested. They basically asked him: 'do you know any gobshites?' He naturally thought of me!"

An initial 45-minute meeting led to a couple of "read-throughs" and minor parts in Loach's previous two films *I, Daniel Blake* and *Sorry We Missed You*.

Turner clearly impressed with scenario workshops along the way, during which he had been told: "your wife's terminally ill, the water tank's burst in your house, there's water in the electrics, it's half-past-four on a Friday afternoon and you're ringing Northumbria water to complain."

The clincher, ironically, had him playing the part of an "old, jaded trade union official". Art, for once, not imitating life.

One of Loach's calling cards is his casting of non-professional actors – he believes the camera always shows who you really are. In Dave Turner he had struck gold.

As Loach intimated recently, Dave Turner isn't so much playing TJ Ballantyne – he is TJ Ballantyne. The Syrian refugees are Syrian refugees.

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Turner, an engaging, warm presence, admits struggling with imposter syndrome – a fear as challenging as any faced in his other working life.

There was also the dawning realisation that his part was meatier than he had expected – the nightly arrival of the next day's scenes contained more and more for him to do.

He had initially imagined himself playing one of the pub's regulars, juggling the film work while tending to

The experience was surreal – the cost of the BMW whisking him from Nice airport to his hotel could have paid six trainee firefighters' yearly salaries



Dave Turner in his firefighting days

his seriously ill father and working at a vehicle-hire company. By May 2022, it was clear the job had to go.

Turner's desire is that people will see *The Old Oak* as a message "of hope and humanity".

The experience was surreal – not least May's Cannes trip, where the cost of the BMW whisking him from Nice airport to his hotel could have paid six trainee firefighters' yearly salaries.

Though the project has been "an honour from start to finish", he's excited to "get back to normality" and his season-ticket watching his beloved Newcastle United. Home is where the heart is.

"I was more nervous about the Q&A at the premiere in Newcastle than standing up in Cannes. All the North-East FBU regional committee were there," he says. "As you'd expect, I've been mocked and ridiculed – I'd have been worried if I hadn't."

At 60, he is unlikely to change, but that "imposter syndrome" dies hard. "I've seen [the film] six times now," he says. "And every time, I see something else I think I've done wrong. I'm going to have to stop watching it."

If it is as wonderful and unlikely a success story as they come, Turner cannot quite comprehend it either.

"I've never had any ambition in acting whatsoever – and to be brutally honest, I still don't," he says. "I was chatting to Matt Wrack when he came to the premiere with a couple of executive-committee members – I said you should get that in somewhere: role playing at national school can lead to this ..."

With that, and one more hearty laugh, TJ, sorry, Dave, calls time ...



Disabled and neurodivergent members forum

Calling all disabled and neurodivergent members

Equality is a trade union principle and is a priority for the FBU. A core part of that commitment is to give a voice to under-represented groups in our union.

Following discussion at conference 2023, we are beginning to better understand how we can support another group of under-represented members: those who are disabled and/or neurodivergent (D&ND).

Our union, much like the communities our members serve, includes people with minds and bodies of all kinds and functions, whether they are disabled, with visual, auditory, physical, or psychiatric impairments, or neurodivergent, with autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, or Tourette's.

Unfortunately, D&ND workers are disproportionately likely to face

discrimination and harassment at work, as well as facing additional barriers and challenges caused by workplace policies and practices that are designed by and for non-disabled people. In the worst cases, some are unfairly subject to disciplinary and capability procedures.

For this reason, it is important that we organise and build our capacity to take on employers and demand that they remove the barriers, challenges and discrimination our D&ND members face.

We are building that capacity by training reps to understand and tackle the issues with our **Dyslexia and Neurodiversity in the Workplace** course (*pictures on this page*), but this is just the start of the journey and it is vital that our next steps are led by those who are experts in this field – *you*.

For this reason, we are running a **Disabled and Neurodivergent Members Forum** early in the new year in order to develop the union's approach to organising D&ND members.

It is an opportunity to share your experiences, raise issues that are relevant in your workplaces, and formulate collective demands.

This is a chance to be involved in one of the first forums of this kind anywhere across the trade union movement and we need you to be a part of it to ensure that the voice of D&ND members is organised and effective.

It will be a hybrid meeting, open to all members and officials who are disabled and/or neurodivergent.

Further information on dates and location will be available soon.





Meet the rep

Storms Mensi

Black and Ethnic Minority Members rep Region 12

1. What made you want to become a rep?

Overall, my decision to become a rep is driven by a combination of personal values, a desire to help others, bringing people together, and my commitment to workers' rights and well-being.

2. What is your proudest moment as a rep?

My proudest moment as a rep was the remarkable moment of unity and activism with the FBU during the salary negotiations with the government. Moments like that can indeed instil a deep sense of belonging and pride. Working together for that common cause was incredibly fulfilling.

3. Who are your ultimate heroes?

Dr Kwame Nkrumah (the first prime minister and president of Ghana, whose radical vision and bold leadership helped lead Ghana to independence in 1957), Nelson Mandela and my parents. These people have had a profound impact on my life and will always continue to inspire me through their contribution to humanity.

4. Describe yourself in three words.

Honest, self-motivated and disciplined.

5. What was the last conversation you had that made you think differently about something?

I recently spoke with a friend about climate change, and their perspective

on individual actions and their impact on the environment challenged my previous views and made me reconsider my own habits.

6. Which TV show could you not live without? What's your favourite band or musician?

The few programmes I watch on TV regularly apart from the news are exclusively sports related, particularly athletics and football. I believe I would miss *Match of the Day* the most. My favourite musician is Burna Boy an Afrobeats artist. Though I enjoy a wide range of music from different parts of the world, I listen to his songs the most.

7. If you weren't a firefighter, what would you be?

I would probably still be a service personnel in the army. Finding a job in the fire service was the reason I changed career.

8. If you could travel back or forward in time, where and when would you travel to and why?

I am curious about the future and would want to travel forward in time to see how technology, society, and the world have evolved. Time travel into the past for exploration, or to better understand the origin of the universe or study the history of the Earth could be a great experience too.



Legal Beagle

Parental leave

The FBU has launched a campaign for 52 weeks of full-pay maternity leave, and most firefighters already have improved parental leave and pay. But what is the statutory minimum for everyone in the UK? Jo Seery of Thompsons Solicitors, outlines what the law says

Maternity leave: Pregnant employees are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave, along with their normal contractual and related benefits, except pay. This right applies irrespective of your length of service. Following pregnancy, you are entitled to return to the same job with seniority, pension rights and terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied had you not been absent.

Paternity leave: Fathers, partners, civil partners and adoptive parents are also entitled to leave, provided they have 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before the due date, or by the week they are notified of being matched with a child. It is also available to certain qualifying foster parents and intended parents in surrogacy. If applicable, you have the right to take either one or two consecutive weeks of leave which must be taken within 56 days of the child's birth, parental order or placement.

Maternity and paternity pay:

Employees who meet qualifying conditions may also be entitled to statutory maternity or paternity pay.

Proposals for reform: New regulations are awaited which will provide for neonatal leave and enhanced redundancy protection for pregnant workers and those returning to the workplace after family related leave.

Contact

FBU Freephone legal advice:

0808 100 6061

In Scotland: 0800 089 1331

thompsonstradeunion.law/trade-unions/fbu



The winning entry (see p8) features on the cover of the 2024 FBU calendar, with more images from the photographic competition inside. It is available for pre-order at shop.fbu.org.uk

More images, more variety

Judges of this year's FBU photographic competition had even more images to look at than previously with more than 120 to study.

While most were of good quality and many were striking, that elusive combination of composition and telling a story was confined to a few.

Perhaps it is an indication of

the variety of work undertaken by firefighters that the judges found themselves discussing whether they could make a selection of winners that did not include an image of actual fire fighting – they decided they could not.

The winner: 'Lonely Walk, – Tyre recycling fire' is on page 8.

Runner-up: 'Vital water rescue training

– Initial Module 3, Leicestershire. 'Water Rescue is such an integral part of the fire service now and with the changing climate impacting everyone, it is vital that this training is undertaken. Initial training needs basic skills to be ingrained and then developed as much as BA and firefighting because water rescue environments are just as hazardous', by Ian Nuttall, came to the front after starting with less support, mainly because of its excellent composition, unusual viewpoint and perfectly timed capture, showing the shadows of the plunging firefighters. While pictures of training tend to be discounted by judges because they are easier to set up and to capture, the dirty green liquid the firefighters splash into was quite enough to convince them that this, as the title records, is a vital and serious activity.

Runner-up: 'Barn fire, Carr Vale, Chesterfield, Staveley on-call crew. We were there all night, making use of the water carrier. We used drag forks to turn over the hay to allow it to burn' by Zac Morris, captured firefighting at a basic level – and wearing the correct PPE. Excellent composition is combined with movement and we would all like to know why the central firefighter is looking behind him.

It is worth noting that judges agreed to pass over images that show, or appear to show, firefighters not wearing PPE in situations that may have required it.





Wrack on the Road



■ 8–11 September: TUC conference – elected to the role of TUC president

■ 25 September: London premiere of Ken Loach's film *The Old Oak*, starring former firefighter and FBU official Dave Turner

ANDREW WILKINSON



■ 8–11 October: Labour party conference

■ 22 October: Red plaque unveiling for Norman Nolan in Manchester

COMING UP:

■ 26 October: Rally at Scottish parliament against cuts to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

■ 1 November: Firefighters' Manifesto – Rally at Westminster

■ 2 November: Red plaque unveiling for Cyril Dutton in Manchester

We're a good team ...

Station Cat discovers firefighting history in France

How often have you heard a firefighter say what a good team they work in, what excellent equipment they have – but that there just aren't enough fires?

Station Cat is guessing that you don't hear it every day. But she spent her holidays in a small Normandy town called Clécy, where they have preserved their history by putting a plaque over the older houses, saying what those who lived there in the last century did for a living, what they were like, and how they lived.

And two of them it seems, combined their day job with being the town's firefighters.

Arthur Marguerite ran one of the town's two butcher shops from 1925 to 1955. During the German occupation in the Second World War, he and his wife Hélène, together with the town's other butcher, managed to hide enough meat from the occupiers to make sure the town was fed.

And he was also lieutenant of the town's pompiers – its firefighters. He was considered “un homme autoritaire” – a

bit of an authoritarian – and by 1955 he had been promoted to commandant.

These plaques give a sense of how a rural Norman community lived in the first half of the twentieth century. Many of the people your cat met there were descended from people who are commemorated in this way.

Lucien Fouques – slim, erect, lean and straight-backed, according to the plaque on what was once his shop – repaired shoes, round the corner from Monsieur Marguerite's shop. He reinforced their soles with iron, and his

repairs were made to last, because strong shoes were important to the children of the area. Some, from hamlets around the town, had to walk up to 12 miles to school every day.

Monsieur Fouques was also Monsieur Marguerite's deputy – he was sub-lieutenant of the town's firefighters, and it was he who, when asked how the firefighters were

doing, replied: “We're a good team, we have good equipment, but we don't have a fire often enough.”



Here is a passenger announcement: any hopes of a modern, integrated rail system will now terminate at Birmingham

25-year badges



Chris Wainwright (r), protection department, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andrew Faizey



Steven Andrews (l), community risk, North District, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Neil Bevan at Malvern



Neil Stanton (l), Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep John Bristow



Simon Uden (r), now retired, St Austell, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Gary Cotton, with his new on-call unit



Peter Donovan (l), Colchester, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Luke Beardmore with white watch colleagues (l-r) Adam Cornell, Justin Milne, Richard Swash, Alan Webb, Alan Dear, Micheal Gunther and Leigh Hosy-Pickett



Miles Wheeler (l), Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep John Bristow



David Rawlings (r), Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep John Bristow



Colin Butler (l), Billesley, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rob Hawkes



Kevin Wright (l), blue watch, Farnsworth, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Ross Strother with watch members looking on



Lee Lomas (r), red watch, Cheadle, Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Matt Fryer alongside colleagues from blue watch, Wythenshawe



Andrew Campbell (r), red watch, Hartlepool, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe accompanied by red watch Hartlepool colleagues



Garry Wilks (l), red watch, Redcar, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe with colleagues looking on



Nick Bates (l), blue watch, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe with colleagues looking on



Richard Basnett (r), technical rescue unit, Bickenhill blue watch, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from unit rep James Silver



Barry Whiting (l), Berkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser James Hunt



Ed Robinson (r), Berkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser James Hunt



Rich Bailey (r), green watch, Ely, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Ade Cummings with green watch colleagues looking on



Gary Cowling (r), green watch, Stanmore, London, receives his 25-year badge from London NW area organiser Brian Flanagan



Robin Munday (r), West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Pawel Kosla with white watch Crawley (l-r) Paul Trinick, Chris Barker, Callum Convey, Oli Leighton, Katherine Brookes, Harrison Dean and Russ Lang



Andrew Woolfrey (l), Berkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser James Hunt



Patrick James (r), Gloucester North, Gloucestershire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade official Ben Gwyer



Andy (l) and Nick Gregory, Caerphilly, South Wales, with their 25-year badges which were presented by brigade chair Gareth Tovey



Amanda 'Mandy' Wensley (l), red watch, control, West Yorkshire, receives her 25-year badge from West Yorkshire control secretary and brigade vice-chair Robert Rutter



Pete Twinn (r), East Grinstead, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Simon Phillimore, with East Grinstead crew, Laura Fitch, Dan Wright and Chris Dye



Daniel Janice (r), white watch, Godstone, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Simon Harris



Chris Sanders (l), Horsham, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Peter Horner



Gordon Storie (l), Ayr, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary and retained organiser Kerry McCrone



Daz Daibell (l), Normanton, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Ryan Binks



Paul McCarron (l), blue watch, Erdington, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Lyndon Flavell, with colleagues looking on



Conan Bluitt (r), white watch, Southgate, London, receives his 25-year badge from NW London area organiser Brian Flanagan



Martyn Petrie (l), green watch, Billingham, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe accompanied by station colleagues



Chris Knight (r), green watch, Hartlepool, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe with colleagues looking on

40-year badge



Andrew Horner, Selsey, West Sussex, receives his 40-year badge from his sons Peter Horner (l), and Nick Horner (r), with the crew from Selsey (back row l-r), Phil Pitham, Richard Walford, Jack Osbourne, Oli Harvey, Rob Munday, Mark Bateman, John Hicks, Frazor Sinclair, and (front row l-r), Peter Horner, Andrew Horner, Nick Horner, Chris Wetherell and Dominic Royffe



Steve Gould, (l), training centre, incident command team, Evesham, Hereford and Worcester, branch chair, brigade health and safety official, brigade chair, brigade secretary, receives his 25-year badge from FBU president Ian Murray at conference



Peter Baer (l), USAR dog handler, white watch, Droitwich, Hereford and Worcester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andrew Faizey accompanied by Radar the USAR dog

Please send high resolution digital files or prints to: firefighter@fbu.org.uk or Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE

For your image to look its best, we need the original, full-resolution image. One lifted from a website may not do justice to a unique occasion. We do our best with images that are low resolution, taken directly into a bright light or suffer from camera-shake, or have other problems, but cannot perform miracles. Please include details for each image – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where/when it was taken.

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Change of address or next of kin

Advise your brigade organiser of any change of address and head office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

England, Wales and N Ireland

0808 100 6061

Scotland 0800 089 1331

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues. For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

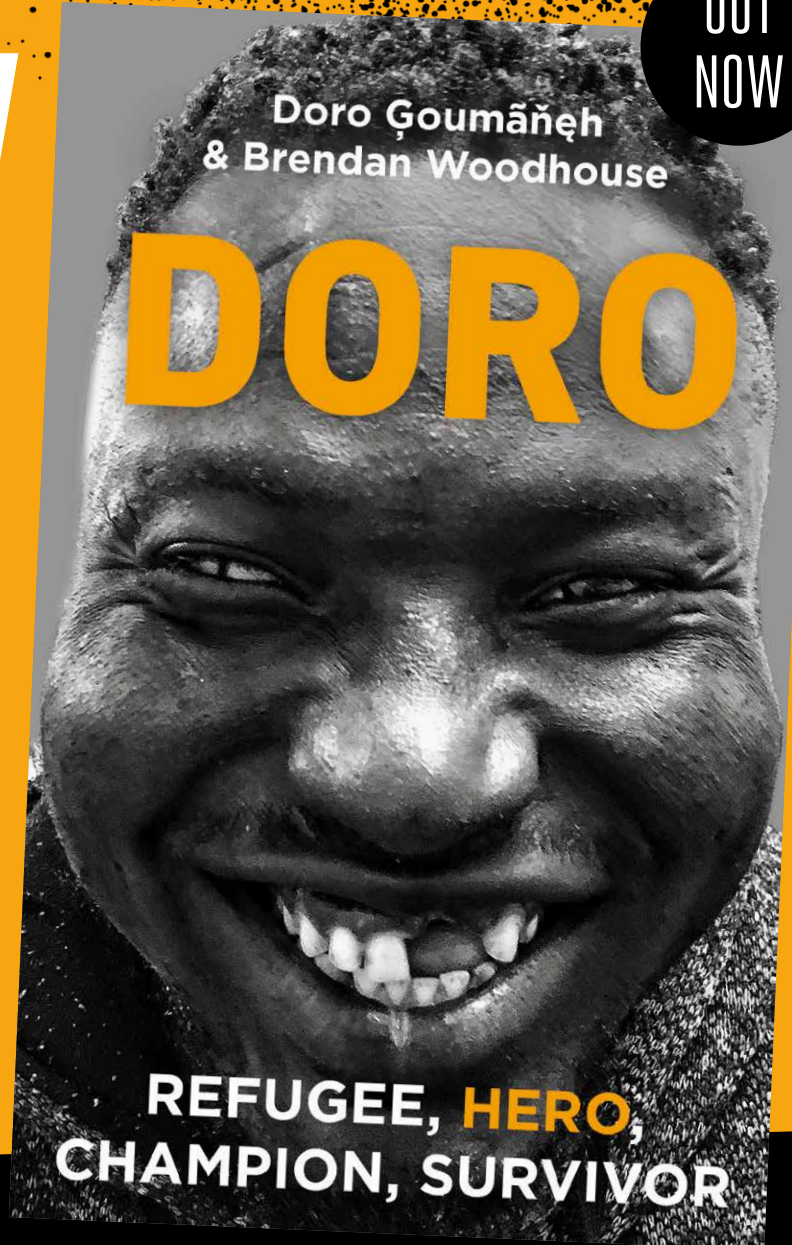


THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS

Humanity and hope

Written by FBU member Brendan Woodhouse, who also works with the organisation Sea-Watch (sea-watch.org/en) helping to rescue asylum-seekers in the Mediterranean.

Doro entrusted Brendan to tell his story – a story that details the harrowing journey he has encountered in his life so far.



Available to buy from the FBU shop – any profits from the sales will be given directly to Doro: shop.fbu.org.uk/products/doro-book

Praise for Doro

"Doro is a very moving piece of writing. We hear from Doro directly, in his own words, which puts the reader right at the heart of the events the book recounts – Doro's flight from Gambia, his unspeakable suffering at the hands of torturers in Libya and his many terrifying attempts to reach safety in Europe.

And yet, despite the terrible suffering Doro encounters, ultimately his story is an uplifting and enormously affecting story of resilience, kindness and survival, and of an unlikely friendship between two men – a British firefighter who helped save Doro's life, and Doro himself. They both deserve our thanks and admiration for having committed this important story to print.

It is through hearing stories such as Doro's, first-hand, that we are reminded that from great suffering can come heroism and that through appalling inhumanity the power of human kindness can triumph."

Lord Alf Dubs

"I said to him, when he asked me to help him write his story, that not everyone will be kind. That people will make hateful comments. I said I'm sorry that some people will say that he is not welcome. "Don't blame them" he said, "they have never suffered like this."

"I was one of the people who helped rescue Doro from a small, blue rubber dinghy which was trying to escape from Libya and make it to Europe.

"It was an encounter that will stay in my mind forever. I didn't know that we'd become friends. I didn't know what had happened to him. And I didn't know that a year later I'd be helping him to write his incredible story. All I knew was that there was a boat. A small boat, moving slowly through the waves. That people were on it, and unless they were helped, then, in all likelihood, they would drown. And nobody – nobody – deserves to drown at sea."

Author Brendan Woodhouse