

Firefighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union

FAIR PAY

OR

FIRE STRIKE

Information and analysis from the FBU

See p4 and p10

LIKE A FAMILY – FBU
RETAINED MEMBERS

See p14

COMPLACENCY AND
CLIMATE CHANGE

See p16

JOE STRUMMER,
POLITICS AND THE FBU

See p 18

October/November 2022



www.fbu.org.uk

PAY

For the last couple of months, I've been on the road, meeting and talking to members as part of the pay campaign.

Up and down the country, members have told me loud and clear that they have had enough.

Enough of pay cuts, enough of being insulted by this government, and enough of being taken for granted.

We know that the mood is changing. Workers across every sector have had enough and are standing up to fight for what is rightfully theirs.

Firefighters and control staff are no different.

Through the strength and solidarity of our members we won a revised offer of 5% from employers, but it's still not good enough.

We're a democratic union and ultimately it is members who will decide on the strategy of the campaign, so we are launching a consultative ballot so that you can have your say.

The consultative ballot will begin on Monday 31 October and run for two weeks.

The result of the ballot will determine the next steps of the campaign and if there is a mandate from members to ballot for strike action.

This is your opportunity



Matt Wrack

Vote 'Reject'
to 5%

to have your say, to vote "Reject" to 5%.

Talking to members, I know there are concerns around the funding of any pay offer and talk from chiefs that this will result in cuts to resources and services.

For the union, firefighters' pay and decent fire and rescue provision should not be an either/or situation. Any attempt to paint it as such is entirely wrong.

We have always maintained that we need a properly funded fire and rescue service that includes fairly paid professional

firefighters and control staff and enough resources to tackle the challenges we face as a service. We will continue to fight for both.

The FBU commissioned Incomes Data Research (IDR) to assess the trends in firefighters' pay. IDR found that since 2009, using the CPI measure of inflation used by central government, firefighters had lost around £4,000 over that period.

WIDER ATTACKS

FBU members also face wider attacks. In May 2022, the Westminster government



Did you know ...?

Typical household energy bills could reach £4,347 a year from April 2023

Source:
BBC News

launched its white paper on "fire reform".

Ministers threatened to instigate a review of the NJC, with the chief fire inspector in England advocating a pay review body instead of the existing collective bargaining arrangements.

Ministers also want to impose new roles on firefighters, with no money offered in return.

They want to give chief fire officers a free hand to make firefighters do any work, irrespective of safety and training.

After savage cuts, reducing the workforce by a fifth, firefighters already face pressure to widen their role maps without any compensation, made to ride undercrewed fire engines, change their shift patterns and other attacks on conditions.

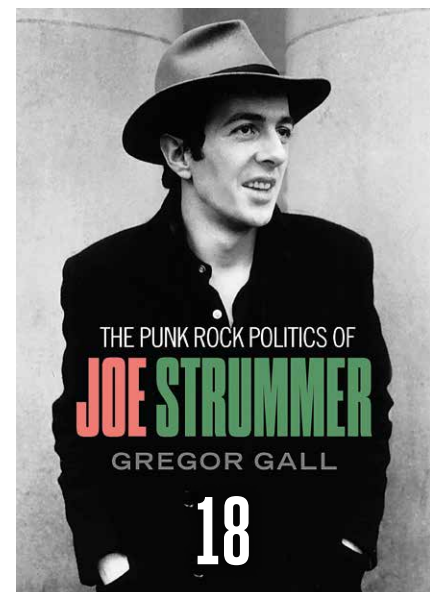
ACTION

The FBU is clear that this action is about need, not greed.

The union cannot stand aside while firefighters and emergency control staff face worse living standards now and for the years ahead.

Taking strike action is always a last resort. But our employers are increasingly leaving us with no choice.





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Firefighter

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CONSULTATIVE BALLOT ON 5% PAY OFFER

Ballot from Monday 31 October to Monday 14 November

VOTE REJECT

PAY

FBU MEMBERS WILL DECIDE ON 5% OFFER

FBU members are voting in a consultative ballot on a revised 5% pay offer.

After the union's executive council rejected a 2% offer after consultation among members, it decided to begin preparing a ballot for strike action.

However, fire service employers then came back with an increased 5% offer. The executive council decided that this offer should be put to members in a consultative ballot – although with a recommendation to vote to reject it and continue preparations for a ballot for strike action.

This ballot opens on Monday 31 October and will conclude on Monday 14 November. Members can vote online

or by post. This is not a formal strike ballot, so is not subject to anti-union laws which force unions to use expensive postal ballots to consult members.

Members who have not received their ballot should contact head office as soon as possible: memberships@fbu.org.uk

Announcing the executive council's decision to hold a consultative ballot on the 5% offer and recommend rejection, Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: "At a time of such high inflation the executive council recommends rejection of the 5% offer. The obligation to make an acceptable and reasonable offer lies with the fire service employers. FBU

members will decide what is and what is not acceptable."

Explaining the reasons for recommending rejection he said: "When we were offered 2%, we were told it was a final offer and employers had no more to offer."

"We are now told 5% is a final offer and the employers have no more to offer. The only reason for the revised proposal from our employers is the campaign of the FBU, the anger demonstrated by our members and their obvious determination to fight for better pay".

He pointed out that: "This [offer] follows years of austerity, pay stagnation and a decline in real wages".

Merseyside members vote on action short of strike

Merseyside FBU members are being balloted on industrial action short of a strike over attacks on their terms and conditions.

The ballot asks if members want to stop undertaking any pre-arranged overtime for up to six months. The ballot and any action that might follow are separate from the current national pay dispute. Issues which have led to the ballot are:

- Non-agreed expansion of the firefighter role in contracts for all new entrants
- An imposed reduction in night-time control staffing
- Introduction of new duty systems without negotiation

● Apprentices being required to attend the workplace outside core hours.

Ian Hibbert, FBU Merseyside brigade secretary, said: "Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's continued refusal to abide by locally and nationally agreed negotiation procedures has left Merseyside FBU members with little choice but to ballot for action short of strike. FBU members do not take industrial action lightly, but we can no longer stand by as our terms and conditions of service are attacked and eroded."

The ballot closes on Friday 11 November.



Ben Selby, FBU vice president, assistant general secretary (elect), and EC member for the East Midlands region, lays a wreath on behalf of the union at the Firefighters Trust Memorial on 4 September at its annual service of remembrance

CORNWALL

Control members' campaign derails closure plan

FBU members in Cornwall are celebrating a big step forward in their fight to keep fire control in the county and part of its fire and rescue service.

Chief fire officer Kathryn Billing told control staff that the service would be shut with all staff made redundant or redeployed and fire control for the county outsourced.

Members fought back with a campaign culminating in a mass lobby of councillors meeting to discuss the proposal.

The councillors did not approve the proposal and instead ordered an inquiry to consider options that

would keep control open and could see it receive extra funding.

Shutting control is not entirely off the table, but local FBU officials believe that the possibility has taken a significant hit.

Val Hampshire, EC member for the South West said: "The solidarity and strength shown by FBU members in Cornwall has secured this successful position."

The next fight for the FBU and its members would be to ensure that funding is found by Cornwall council to safeguard the future of fire control in its fire and rescue service.



Sounding off

Rwanda policy

Hannah Marwood, legal access manager for the Care4Calais refugee crisis charity, urges support for the campaign against government plans to offload refugees to Rwanda

At Care4Calais, we know from the refugees who we have worked with over the last seven years that people arriving in the UK have experienced some of the worst things imaginable – war, torture, slavery, and human rights abuses.

That's why we argue that the government's Rwanda policy is brutal and cruel. The idea that the UK would forcibly remove refugees to Rwanda, outsourcing our responsibilities under international law to offer sanctuary, is shocking. That they choose to do so when more humane and compassionate options are available, is a scandal.

Together with the PCS union, Detention Action and eight lead clients affected by the Rwanda policy, Care4Calais were in the High Court in September to challenge the policy.

On the first day, more than 600 trade unionists, politicians and campaigners gathered outside the court to protest against the policy. Inside, our lawyers presented comprehensive evidence that government officials had warned ministers about human rights abuses in Rwanda before it launched the scheme, and that the Foreign Office advised against the deal, citing extrajudicial killings, deaths in custody, enforced disappearances, torture and using refugees to conduct armed operations in neighbouring countries.

We do not anticipate a ruling on our case until later in the year. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) interim measure should prevent flights taking off before the final outcome of the case, however every day my team is contacted by more people who have received new Rwanda notices and are very scared.

All of us at Care4Calais appreciate the support and solidarity shown by the FBU and its members. I hope you will continue to support us at this crucial juncture in the campaign by visiting care4calais.org/stop-rwanda

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE



ANDREW WARD

FBU president, general secretary, national officers and officials, along with FBU staff, at this year's stand at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool

Labour backs FBU pay campaign

Labour Party conference delegates unanimously passed an FBU-supported motion backing firefighters on pay. Successful conference motions become Labour Party policy.

Labour leader Keir Starmer has failed to back striking workers and advised frontbench shadow cabinet members to stay away from picket lines.

The motion said: "Conference condemns the 2% pay offer made by fire

employers to firefighters in June this year" and "is appalled by the 12% real-terms cut in average full-time firefighters' pay (measured by CPI) since 2009".

It also committed "the Labour Party to vigorously campaign alongside the FBU in defence of firefighters and their service".

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "The Labour Party must stand by workers as they fight for

better pay. This is a significant step in the fight to make sure it does that.

"Firefighters are trying to protect the living standards of themselves and their families. They have seen years of disgracefully poor pay rises and have suffered from crisis after crisis, from the financial crash to austerity to the pandemic. They worked incredibly hard throughout the pandemic. Firefighters deserve fair pay and are preparing to fight for it."

EAST SUSSEX

Firefighters leaflet local residents over cuts

Firefighters stationed at Uckfield, Seaford and Newhaven community fire stations in East Sussex have been dropping leaflets through the doors of local residents to alert them to planned cuts to the fire service in their area.

One appliance at both Uckfield and Newhaven community fire stations would become a service spare and firefighter numbers would be reduced by 25%, drastically reducing availability to attend emergency calls.

Since the cuts were approved by the county fire authority, the Covid pandemic and, more recently, the summer's exceptionally hot

weather, have placed additional demands on resources.

The intended implementation of the approved cuts will affect the safety of both the public and firefighters.

Firefighters are asking local residents to contact local councillors directly to express their concerns.

South East regional secretary, Andy Petch said: "This great effort by firefighters to inform local people demonstrates just how important it is to them that they have the resources needed to serve their local community."

In brief

Grenfell Tower Inquiry drawing to a close

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry is due to hold its final hearings in November. Its final report is not expected until next year at the earliest. The FBU made another 50-page submission highlighting deregulation as the primary cause of the fire. The union continues to defend firefighters and campaign on Justice for Grenfell.

Two awards for FBU DECON project

The FBU won the TUC trade union communications awards 2022 best membership communication project category with the DECON project.

Firefighter magazine was "Highly commended" in the best union journal category. The head office communications team and national officers Riccardo la Torre and Tam McFarlane accepted the awards on behalf of the union.



The FBU's DECON project also won the best awareness campaign or advancement of a cause category at The Association Excellence Awards in London on 14 October. The awards celebrate the work of associations, trade bodies, professional organisations and chartered institutes. The award was collected by FBU assistant general secretary Andy Dark and campaigns organiser Gabriella Matkin, seen above with awards host Jess Robinson, right, and, left, Rory Ross Russell, co-founder of the awards.



At the seminar (l-r) CFO Chris Lowther, brigade secretary Wayne Anderson, Professor Anna Stec and DCFO Peter Heath

The FBU's DECON campaign is becoming an important part of fire and rescue across the country.

Events like a recent joint Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) and FBU seminar to embed the DECON campaign across the service show how this is happening.

Professor Anna Stec of the University of Central Lancashire, who has led on the scientific research for the project, explained how the impact of fire contaminants could be reduced.

HIGHER RATES OF CANCER

She and other researchers around the world are focusing on fire contaminants and their relationship with higher rates of cancer and other diseases in firefighters.

The FBU's DECON project is designed to protect firefighters from these health threats by providing guidance on cleaning, equipment, and more that helps reduce the impact of fire contaminants.

Riccardo la Torre, FBU national officer, said:



News Focus

DECON is becoming part of fire and rescue

"DECON gives services tools to do the urgent work of protecting their people. It has made a tangible difference in so many fire stations, with DECON posters across the walls and providing guidance that often wasn't in place before.

"We are very pleased to see Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service making use of DECON.

"We look forward to continuing to work with them in the future to further embed DECON."

DECON has become a part of Tyne and Wear Fire

and Rescue in various ways.

Specific equipment and facilities have been rolled out, DECON training has been put in place, and a new fire station is being designed in line with DECON principles.

The FBU will continue to work with Tyne and Wear as it looks to make some of the

'It's been so beneficial to our staff and without local FBU reps it wouldn't have been possible'

further progress that remains to be made.

Tyne and Wear deputy chief fire officer Peter Heath thanked local FBU representatives Wayne Anderson and Chris Cook "for all their hard work alongside us in getting this event set up. It's been so beneficial to our staff and without them it wouldn't have been possible".

PROUD OF JOINT WORK

Tyne and Wear brigade secretary Wayne Anderson said local firefighters were proud to see that joint working between the FBU and TWFRS is leading to enhanced protection from contaminants and improvement of working practices.

"We're looking forward to working together on the next phase," he said. "As the DECON project evolves, our members can expect to see this work continue and grow."

■ See details of the DECON campaign at fbu.org.uk/campaigns/decon-fire-contaminants



THE BIG PICTURE

Every picture tells a story

Since rejecting the fire service employers' original 2% pay offer, FBU members have been meeting in workplaces across the UK to show their determination to fight for fair pay.

These actions are registering across the fire and rescue service and impacting on wider society, with politicians, members of the public and others in the trade union movement commenting on the powerful photographs posted across social media of firefighters voting for fair pay.

To stay updated on the pay campaign attend all discussions at your workplace branch and join all members' online meetings.





5%

STILL

NOT

ENOUGH

FBU general secretary
Matt Wrack explains
the union's strategy for
achieving a fair pay offer

Following an FBU campaign and preparation for strike action, fire service employers revised their pay offer to 5%.

In June, they offered a 2% annual increase. The shift is the result of hard work by FBU members and officials and because of the strength of feeling that members demonstrated.

But it is still not enough. The executive council recommends that members reject this latest offer.

The union's next step is a consultative

STEFANO GARDIN



ballot of members on this offer which will open on 31 October and close on 14 November. Look out for ballot papers to your email, or through your letterbox.

Over recent months, the Fair Pay or Fire Strike campaign has sprung into action, with FBU members demonstrating anger and a determination to fight for better pay.

Hundreds of branch meetings have taken place in brigades across the UK.

CONSULTATIVE BALLOT ON 5% PAY OFFER

Ballot from Monday 31 October to Monday 14 November

VOTE REJECT

FBU members at the TUC's March for the Alternative protest against austerity in March 2011

At these meetings, we heard loud and clear the feeling of members that enough is enough and that now is the time to stand strong and fight back.

There are rightly questions and concerns about taking industrial action, and we want to ensure that all members' views are heard.

The union's executive council, whose members represent firefighters and control staff from across the country, is recommending that members reject this pay offer and >>



>> continue with our pay campaign.

The reasons get to the heart of some of the tensions we are seeing across the movement.

Perhaps most importantly, we are clear that 5% would be a further real terms pay cut, with inflation currently around 10%.

It would be the biggest cut in firefighters' income in a single year for many years. That's after more than a decade of stagnating wages, with firefighters having lost nearly £4,000 from their annual salaries in real terms.

Real term pay cuts such as this not only affect you during your career in the fire and rescue service. Since your pension is calculated on your pay, this will affect you for every single day of your retirement.

Central government has deliberately underfunded our service. This has meant cuts in services and jobs and squeezing pay for professional firefighters and control staff. We know that our employers have approached the government, which has done nothing.

Of course, it is not just in your pay packets that you are seeing the consequences of being deprived of what you need.

Firefighters have been working harder for less, with the fire service cut to the bone. We will continue to see more wildfires, major floods and other new and growing risks.

The government must invest to deliver a fire service that both works for the public and pays its firefighters fairly. Without this, firefighters will not be able to keep the public safe or live on their wages.

What is alarming is that the situation could get even worse. The government's fire and rescue service white paper proposes weakening the say firefighters have over their pay and other terms and conditions.

EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

It also proposes other changes. Chief fire officers, many of them already paid more than the prime minister, could see their powers boosted.

Ordinary firefighters would likely see their pay suffer even more. Public safety could be hit, with the number of firefighters, night cover and response times all facing adverse impacts. We must oppose this every step of the way.

We cannot go on like this. Firefighters are struggling to pay for

energy for their homes and put food on the table.

In one of the richest countries in the world, for workers who go to work every day to save lives, and risk theirs in the process, this is an utter disgrace.

Firefighters and control staff were some of the key workers the then prime minister used to stand outside every week and clap for.

We played a key role in protecting this society during a pandemic that has killed 208,000 people in the UK. Yet a real terms pay cut is how we are thanked.

What would be an acceptable offer, then? Do I or the executive council have a particular figure in mind? The real figure that matters is what employers offer and what you, the members, decide is acceptable. That's for you to decide.

We have been through other pay campaigns in the past, and we are seeing other unions taking action now with various figures flying about.

FBU MEMBERS DECIDE

The vital thing that matters is that, when employers make an offer, FBU members assess it at that point and decide whether it is good enough or not.

On this occasion the executive council's assessment is that 5% is not good enough and that we should continue the fight. But it is up to you, the members, to decide.

Alongside this consultative ballot, we have been continuing our preparations for strike ballot, in line with the decisions of the executive council.

We will continue to stand firm in our fight for fair pay for firefighters and firefighter control staff.

FBU members, who risk their lives to save others, should not be queuing at food banks.

I know that every FBU official and member will always be committed to making sure that is not the case – that firefighters and firefighter control get the fair pay they deserve.

London firefighters on the picket line during strikes in November 2010 against the threat of sacking for refusing to accept changes to working conditions

PAUL MATTSON/REPORTAGE PHOTOGRAPHY



Hundreds of thousands of people assemble for the TUC's March for the Alternative protest against austerity in March 2011



FBU members, who risk their lives to save others, should not be queuing at food banks



STEFANO CAGNONI/REPORTAGE DIGITAL.CO.UK



STEFANO CAGNONI

Q&A

WHAT IS A CONSULTATIVE BALLOT? HOW DO I VOTE?

A consultative ballot is a test of members' views. This one will run from Monday 31 October to Monday 14 November. It is a formal ballot and will be conducted by an independent scrutineer. We want to know what members think of the 5% offer. How members vote will help us determine the next steps of the campaign. Unlike a ballot for strike action, a consultative ballot can be held online and by post, so keep an eye out for relevant emails and letters from the union.

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER THE CONSULTATIVE BALLOT?

The assessment of the EC is that the issues in this dispute are so serious that, if the members reject the 5% offer in a consultative ballot, it will warrant a ballot for strike action. We need to show the strength of anger of FBU members and make it clear to our employers how serious we are about the need to achieve a fair pay settlement. However, as in previous disputes, an additional ballot for action short of strike would also be under constant consideration as the dispute develops.

WHAT DO WE WANT/WHY AREN'T WE TABLING A FIXED PERCENTAGE COUNTER-OFFER?

The obligation to make an acceptable and reasonable offer lies with the fire service employers. FBU members will decide what is – and what isn't – an acceptable offer. It is not for the executive council or any individual official to decide that for them. We are a democratic union. That's why we will be launching a consultative ballot for members to have their say.

The cost of living crisis is pushing up inflation rates rapidly and any pay claim made by the union could quickly be out of date.

We have learnt from past campaigns that setting "top lines" in negotiations is not always an effective negotiating tactic and can work in the employers' favour.

Other unions in recent pay disputes have not set out fixed claims. We are clear that it is down to the employers to react to the concerns and demands of FBU members and to improve firefighter and firefighter control pay urgently.

WHO WILL DECIDE HOW LONG THE STRIKES ARE AND WHEN THEY HAPPEN?

Every member can input into the strategy and tactics of our action through their branch and the structures of the union. We take our democratic structures extremely seriously and want to hear the views of our members fed through their branch, brigade and regional structures. The executive council will then decide the strategy and tactics of any strike or industrial action, having considered these views on a UK-wide basis. Please make sure you have your voice heard by attending meetings and having your say.

IF WE GO ON STRIKE, DO I NEED TO PICKET?

Yes. Maintaining a high visual presence will assist us in our fight to have a fair and appropriate pay offer. Forming a picket, which we are legally entitled to do, will increase the visibility of our dispute and give the public and supporters a place to come to us and discuss our issues. This is something that rail workers and Royal Mail workers have done so successfully.

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

Stay informed and discuss the issues with your workmates. Go to fbu.org.uk/campaigns/fair-pay-or-fire-strike to get all the latest resources.

Update personal details

If you haven't already done so, update your details (personal email, home address, workplace) with your brigade organiser or by emailing memberservices@fbu.org.uk and ensure all members at your workplace have done the same. In order to identify members correctly, please also include your date of birth, brigade and membership number (if you know it) in the email.

Organise watch, workplace and branch meetings. These are the most important meetings in the union and they make sure that every member is kept informed and can input into all the decisions of the union.

When the consultative ballot lands in your inbox or through your letterbox, vote to reject the 5% offer and let's take this campaign forward.



Retained duty crews at a wildfire in the Isle of Skye

It's like a family

Issues facing retained duty firefighters – pay, crewing and the impact of more floods and wildfires – are the same as those affecting full-time members of the FBU – as RDS members told **Will Stone**

UK villages and towns are protected by an 18,000-strong force of hidden heroes. They might work in healthcare, education or hospitality by day, be students or past retirement age. But they are all firefighters providing essential cover through the retained duty system.

Mark Thexton, who has been an FBU retained rep for Crook in County Durham for 11 years, works as a warden for the local council. “I work on quite a busy retained station with about 300 plus shouts a year, other stations might only get 50 – but we need those retained stations just in case,” he says.

“Predominantly, we get calls to small rubbish fires, garden fires, house fires and rescue jobs. It’s rewarding but it can be extremely hard.”

Mark recalls that this summer’s heatwave and drought saw him and his colleagues working “day in, day out” all over the county on 11 to 12-hour shifts tackling grass and other wildfires.

A firefighter working on the retained duty system (RDS) will usually have agreed when they signed up to the number of hours they can be on-call.

They have received all the training of a full-time firefighter. So when they get that call to their pager, they leave their other employment behind and become professional firefighters.

Mark, who is on-call 110 hours a



Strachur community fire station in Argyll, Scotland



The message is clear in Burford, Oxfordshire

week, admits that it can be a “massive strain” on a firefighter and their family.

“When you’re on call you can be called up at any moment, so you can never really relax,” he says.

“It can affect your mental health and can affect people’s partners, as when the pager sounds, all they see is you going out the door, not knowing if you’ll come back in one piece.

“We won’t know the severity of the call-out until we get to the station.”

But he says the real barrier to recruiting retained firefighters is pay.

“Pay is the massive one across the board, including full time,” Mark says. “I’ve always been a big advocate of the RDS, but people don’t realise how poorly paid we are.

“You could be on-call on Christmas day but only be paid 50p an hour. When people hear that, they’re shocked.

“I always say it’s not a job where you’re going to make a fortune, but you will make a difference.”

‘It’s not a job where you’re going to make a fortune, but you will make a difference’

“The benefits outweigh the negatives.”

Steve Mattinson is a retained rep in Cumbria, based at Lazonby fire station, which gets around 60 to 70 call-outs a year, while nearby Patterdale station may only have 12.

Sometimes his crew can be at a fire for 20 minutes by themselves before the next pump arrives, due to the distance between fire stations, forcing very rural fire crews to think differently.

Steve says: “My view is to get a fire stabilised until the next pump arrives. But due to cuts, we are often left for long periods to deal with it by ourselves.”

He also recalls responding to big events like the Carlisle floods of 2015, when crews were there for 16 hours a day, helping to evacuate homes while whole roads were under water.

But he says the big issue for most rural areas is crewing. Weekends can particularly be a struggle as people want to get out, which you can’t do if you’re on call.

He says: “Retained is still a buzz. The retained up here is a big community

thing, it’s hard to take that away.

“A couple have done 40 years, and some between 20 to 30 years.”

Sam Paul, a retained rep in Lancashire based at Earby, has had to rush away on a call-out just as he is about to speak to me.

He had to respond to a fire at a converted barn where the electrics went, gutting an entire wall.

“They overdid the wiring,” he says.

“It was in a closet in the main door but it had gone up the wall and into the loft.

“Luckily Colne fire brigade were doing training drills nearby and arrived quickly to put it out.

“If they hadn’t been, the whole roof would have gone by the time we got there.”

Sam was a computer animator before becoming a retained firefighter and liked it so much he decided he wanted to leave his more sedentary job behind and go full-time.

THE HARDEST THING

He also says his area struggles with recruitment, saying: “The hardest thing is recruitment and keeping people interested.

“We compensate for less exposure with training. Earby is very proactive with training and drilling and does extra drills as much as we can.

“We’ve got fewer people working.

During Covid, one local business closed down and we lost some of our retained staff, it was really sad.

“We do get recruits who leave because it’s too much of a burden on the family because the partner wasn’t fully on board. The job affects the whole family.”

Yet Sam has the last word on the strengths of the job: “At retained stations you’re a lot closer and more integrated with each other’s lives. It’s like a family.

“Most people who do it do it for the love of it. It’s not without its challenges but it’s changed my life.”

Climate: government is asleep at the wheel

TOM NICHOLSON/REUTERS/ALAMY

As world leaders gather once again to discuss the climate crisis, **Helen Hague** looks at its impact on a UK fire service crippled by cuts

July saw the temperature in parts of the UK exceeding 40 degrees centigrade for the first time in recorded history. In the driest July since 1935, wildfires flared in tinder-dry fields and rail tracks buckled.

In London, Leicestershire and South Yorkshire, fire brigades declared “major incidents”. Even for hardened climate change deniers, the events of summer 2022 should be a wake-up call.

For the firefighters called out to wildfires, chasing flames across arid fields carrying heavy hoses, the experience of dealing with the fallout from a heating planet is all too real.

And, after a decade of fire service cuts, so too is the glaring lack of a properly funded strategy to cope with the ever-increasing effects of human-induced climate change.

As the threat of wildfires and floods has grown, the UK firefighter headcount has fallen by more than a fifth since 2010. Yet firefighters increasingly find themselves on the climate change

frontline in an under-resourced service as they face the mounting challenges of more wildfires, more floods and the effects of global heating on infrastructure not designed for ever higher temperatures.

Government and fire chiefs have had ample warning: heatwaves have been on the National Risk Register since 2008 and wildfires since 2013. But, in the words of FBU general secretary Matt Wrack, there has been a “horrible complacency”.

NOT JUST ONE-OFFS

The word “unprecedented” has become overused. In these extraordinary times, extreme events are not just one-offs – grouped together they are the reality climate change. This summer, a golf course caught fire in Birmingham and flames rampaged through fields in West Cornwall.

London firefighters had their busiest day since the Second World War on 19 July. In Wennington, East London, two rows of terraced houses were destroyed by fire.

Only days before, the National Joint Council made a pay offer of just 2% to firefighters and control staff. An insulting offer, showing no recognition of the increased workloads of FBU members.

Record temperatures twinned with lack of rainfall provide the perfect backdrop for wildfires – and Britain is having to get used to both. In August, drought was officially declared in eight English regions – and the whole of Wales followed in early September, before the thunderstorms came.

And this pattern will not be ending any time soon. Climate scientists have



19 July: a grass fire in Wennington, East London, destroyed houses before firefighters could bring it under control

a stark warning: heatwaves are likely to become more common and more extreme globally as human-induced climate breakdown intensifies.

The horrendous effects and human suffering that can result are beamed into British homes through television news bulletins and online platforms.

The floods in Pakistan – covering one third of the country and killing more than 1,600 people – and Hurricane Ian in Florida, which has also killed many, are just two startling examples of the devastation climate change is wreaking.

In California, the ever lengthening fire season, fuelled by tinder-dry vegetation and gusting winds, has already sparked deadly and destructive wildfires. The season is not over yet.

As more evidence unfolds, some people are changing their behaviour to

Over the summer, nearly all fire and rescue services in the most severely affected areas had to ask off-duty firefighters to come in for extra shifts

19 July: fighting
a gorse fire near
Zennor in Cornwall



The facts in figures

111

The number of days with conditions hot and dry enough for serious wildfires in the south of England will climb from 20 a year today to 111 by the 2080s

5X

"As temperatures rise and summer rainfall decreases, conditions highly conducive to wildfire could be nearly five times more common in some regions of the UK by the latter part of the century,"

34%

Parts of Scotland face a 34% increase in flooding in the next 50 years. In south east England an 18% increase is expected

7X

Extended periods of extreme winter rainfall are now seven times more likely (Met Office)

reduce the size of their carbon footprint – from cutting out meat to choosing to holiday in the UK. But it can't just be left to individuals. Global warming, bringing more floods, wildfires and wrecking crucial infrastructure is undoubtedly a worldwide problem.

World leaders are gathering in Egypt for Cop27 in November to try and agree a united approach to tackling the disastrous effects of yet more climate change, fuelled by carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels.

CLOSER TO HOME

But it is also up to the government of every country to ensure its citizens and their property are as well protected as possible as the planet heats. This brings the argument closer to home.

As the FBU leadership has pointed

out consistently, a properly resourced and staffed professional fire service must be a key component in any credible response. And, after relentless cuts, the FBU and its members can tell that we certainly do not have one at the moment.

The evidence is plain. Over the summer, nearly all fire and rescue services in the most severely affected areas had to call up off-duty firefighters and ask them to come in for extra shifts.

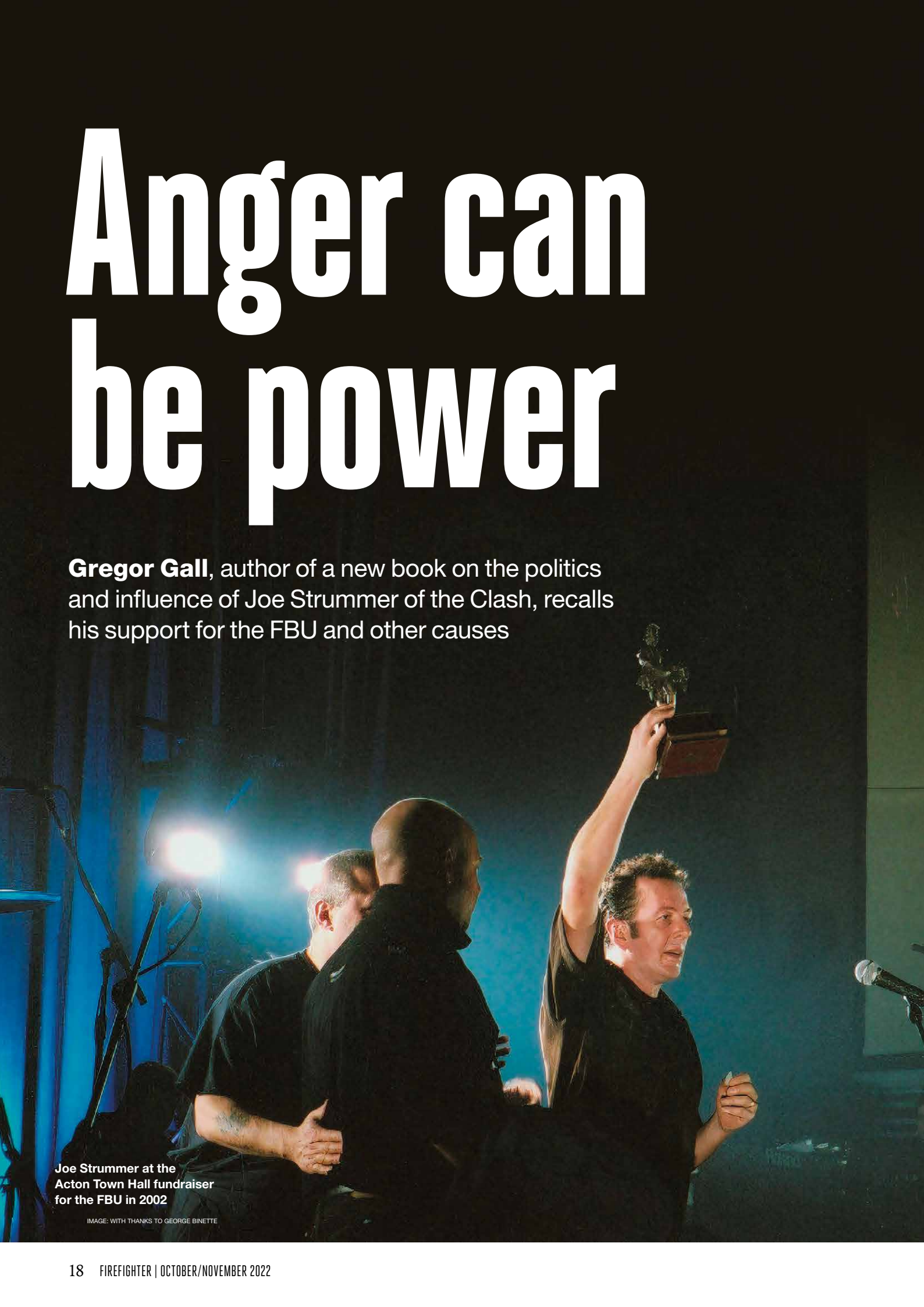
In London, at the height of the summer fires, 40 fire engines remained on station because of staff shortages.

The Conservative government is intent on yet more cuts in public services rather than a much needed investment boost.

As the world warms, firefighters – and the communities they serve – surely deserve better.

Anger can be power

Gregor Gall, author of a new book on the politics and influence of Joe Strummer of the Clash, recalls his support for the FBU and other causes

A photograph of Joe Strummer at a fundraiser. He is on the right, wearing a black t-shirt, holding a small trophy or award high in his right hand. He has a determined expression. To his left, two other men are visible, one with his back to the camera and another partially obscured. The background is dark with blue stage lighting. A microphone is visible on the right side of the frame.

Joe Strummer at the Acton Town Hall fundraiser for the FBU in 2002

IMAGE: WITH THANKS TO GEORGE BINETTE

The twentieth anniversary of two significant moments for many FBU members falls this autumn. The first is the benefit gig played for striking firefighters by Joe Strummer at Acton Town Hall in London on 15 November 2002. It was his last ever gig in London, his home town for many years.

The second was his death just weeks later on 22 December, only a few months past his 50th birthday. There was a palpable sense that “only the good die young”.

Strummer was – and still is – an inspiration and source of sustenance to many activists in the FBU as I found out when carrying out the research for my book on his politics and their influence on people.

He was often said to have changed people’s lives as a result of not only fronting The Clash but also by writing most of the lyrics for the band, especially the more political songs like *White Riot*, *Working for the Clampdown*, *Spanish Bombs*, *Washington Bullets* and *Know Your Rights*.

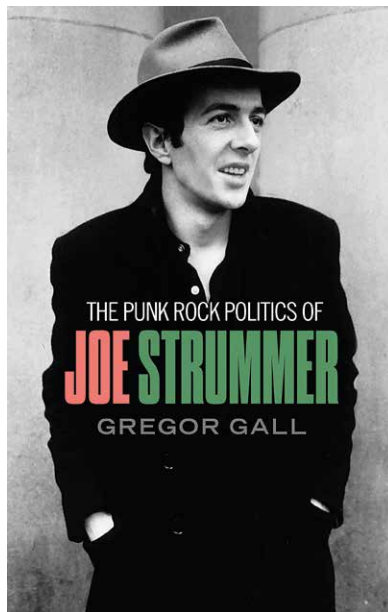
INSPIRED

Among those inspired and influenced by Strummer are the union’s current general secretary, Matt Wrack, and the union’s previous general secretary, Andy Gilchrist.

Others include former FBU national officer, John McGhee, and former FBU branch activist, Mark Bedford.

So, why did Strummer agree to play the benefit gig and what does this tell us about his politics and their influence on people, especially within the FBU?

Strummer was for the whole of his life on the left and for the left, even though he became somewhat disillusioned by ‘new’ Labour’s subservience to the Thatcherite agenda of free market reform.



Gregor Gall's book

When he was contacted while touring in Japan and asked if he would play the benefit gig, not only was he willing to do so but he re-arranged existing dates to make sure it could happen.

He had a long history of playing benefit gigs for progressive causes. His first gigs with his first band, the 101ers, were for political exiles from the Pinochet military coup against the democratically elected left-wing government in Chile.

With The Clash and then the Latino Rockabilly War and the Mescaleros, he played gigs for refugees, sacked miners, community causes and disenfranchised youth as well as against racism and fascism.

As Strummer said at the Acton Town Hall gig, public service workers like teachers, nurses and firefighters deserve to be paid decent wages and have decent working conditions because of the important work they do.

Those are words that will resonate with people 20 years on as public service unions ballot their members for strike action to gain pay rises that match the rate of inflation in the current cost of living crisis.

As youngsters, the likes of Matt Wrack and Andy

Gilchrist saw Strummer in The Clash when the band played live. His passionate performances meant that people took seriously what he was saying.

So, Strummer then played the role of an educator, opening their eyes to issues and events that were not covered at school. In an age before the internet, many went to local libraries to find out more about the Spanish Civil War or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

GET ACTIVE

But, more than that, Strummer encouraged people to do something about these causes if they agreed with him and felt strongly enough. He was never prescriptive. Individuals could choose how and what they got active in, whether it was a union, political party, social movement or community campaign. In addition to Wrack and Gilchrist, the general secretaries of the ASLEF, NUM and RMT unions have been followers of Strummer.

Strummer realised that music was a terrain which the left could use to fight right-wing ideas. This was because music is a mass cultural pastime, making it too important to be left to just lyrics about love and loss.

Instead, in his lyrics for *White Riot*, he sang “All the power’s in the hands of people rich enough to buy it” and then implored in *Working for the Clampdown*: “Kick over the wall, cause governments to fall. How can you refuse it? Let fury have the hour, anger can be power. Do you know that you can use it?”

When he was contacted while touring in Japan and asked if he would play a benefit gig for the FBU, not only was he willing to do so, but he re-arranged existing dates to make sure it could happen

Lud Ramsey when a Hampshire firefighter in Basingstoke (right) and the first black full-time firefighter in the county



Still much to be done

Retired firefighter Lud Ramsey championed equality and called out racist abuse throughout his career. Now as a Labour councillor and member of the Derbyshire fire authority his lifelong passion for justice remains undimmed. **Helen Hague** spoke to him

Lud Ramsey knows all too well what it feels like to be on the receiving end of racism. As a firefighter with the Royal Air Force in Hampshire, crews sent to attend royal flights got better pay and perks. In the four years he served there, Lud, the only black crew member, was never selected.

All went well when he joined the fire service in Basingstoke in 1988, the first black full-time firefighter in the county.

But when he moved to Andover, where there was very little ethnic diversity, things proved much tougher.

He was “about to throw in the towel” when life on station changed for the better.

He took part in the first ever *Gladiators* TV show – up against muscle-bound opponents – and won. He became a “minor celebrity” in Andover.

Lud got heavily involved in the union’s Black and Ethnic Minority Members (BEMM) section and became its national chair.

While Lud was chair of Hampshire

FBU, a firefighter standing for election as a British National Party candidate put a link to the Hampshire FRS site in his electioneering material.

Lud got the link removed – and national recognition for helping Hampshire fire service give its race equality policy a much-needed overhaul.

The BNP candidate did not remain with the service.

In 2008, Lud got a job with Lothian and Borders in Scotland – as equalities watch manager. Four years later the Scottish TUC gave him an equality award for his work.

Now, as a Labour councillor in

Chesterfield and member of the Derbyshire fire authority, he is as intent as ever on improving equality.

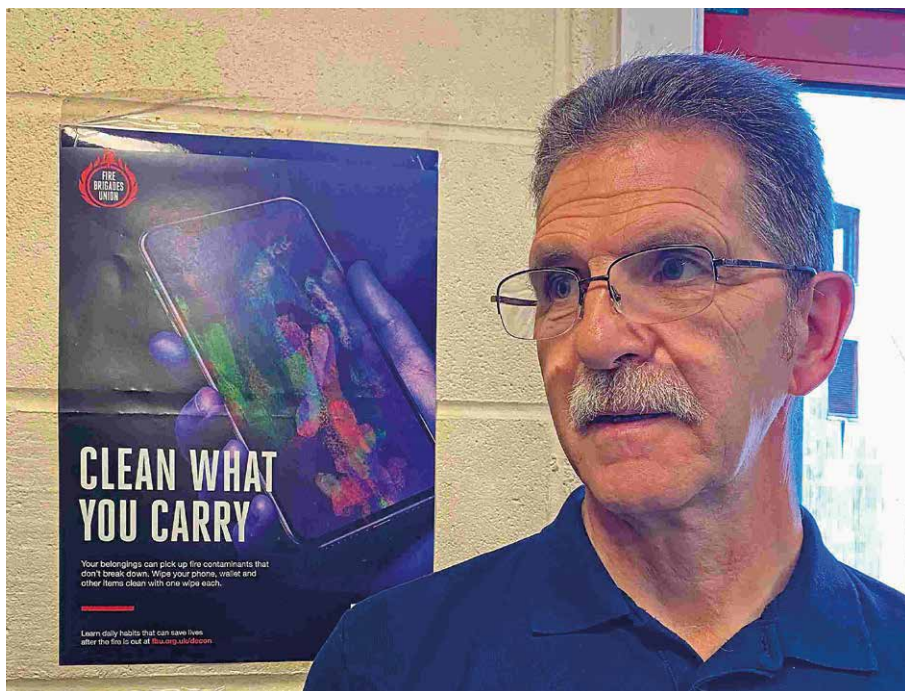
At his prompting, the fire authority is now partnering with a local independent equality and inclusion board, to help ensure the needs of all sections of the community are being met. The motion he submitted to the authority was passed unanimously.

Lud was proud to belong to a union that was “way ahead of the game” in setting up equality sections with representation at all levels of its structure. Many black members, himself included, benefitted hugely from the union’s pioneering stance.

He believes the fire service – and the union – “need more people of colour in positions of authority to attract a more diverse workforce”.

Lud loved his time as a firefighter and the part he was able to play in advancing equality. But, he adds: “There is certainly no room for complacency. There remains much to be done.”

Lud was proud to belong to a union that was 'way ahead of the game' in setting up equality sections with representation at all levels of its structure



Meet the rep

Philip Williams, retained rep East Midlands region

1. What made you want to become a rep?

I had an issue with my brigade and my regional FBU rep, Phil Coates, sorted the problem out. He was very professional and pointed me in the direction to become an FBU rep. After being a rep in my primary employment for 15 years with the National Union of Mineworkers, until the mines closed, I just needed the chance to start getting involved with the FBU as a branch rep, and all the opportunities the FBU has.

2. What is your proudest moment as a rep?

When I spoke at an FBU conference in Brighton for the national retained committee (NRC) moving resolution 34: Firefighters' Fitness Training Time. I was very nervous but the applause from the floor after I said "first time speaker" was overwhelming and got me through presenting the resolution. I was glad when I returned to my seat and took a big breath, but it made me proud.

3. Who is your ultimate hero?

Sir Trevor McDonald, he comes across as a real nice bloke, down to earth and a real gentleman.

4. Describe yourself in three words.

Passionate, committed and experienced.

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

After conducting an all different all equal (ADAE) enquiry, and listening to one side of a grievance then listening to the other side, made me think differently about how some of our members are being treated.

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

Police Interceptors and Queen, the band, and Brian May the musician.

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

I would possibly work for the ambulance service.

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

Don't dwell on the past, you can't change the past, only learn from it. Don't dream of the future, things would have changed when you reach wherever in the future. Now is the only time to make a difference.



Legal Beagle

In light of a possible national ballot on pay, **Neil Todd**, a trade union law specialist at Thompsons Solicitors, looks at the rights of members taking strike action

1. Duty to inform the employer

You do not have to inform your employer whether you intend to participate in strike action or not.

The only information the employer is entitled to under statute is from the union and is about those it intends to ballot and then subsequently call out to take action. These notices do not contain the names of any member.

2. Dismissals

A dismissal of an employee for taking industrial action within the first 12 weeks of the action is automatically unfair.

It may also be automatically unfair to dismiss the employee after those 12 weeks if the employer has not taken reasonable steps to resolve the dispute.

3. Picketing

It is lawful for members to picket their workplace in relation to the trade dispute to try to peacefully persuade people not to work on strike days.

The FBU will provide further detailed guidance on picketing in due course.

Contact

FBU Freephone legal advice:

0808 100 6061

In Scotland: 0800 089 1331

[thompsonstradeunion.law/
trade-unions/fbu](http://thompsonstradeunion.law/trade-unions/fbu)

FIREFIGHTER'S BOOK

Hilarious insight into everyday heroics

With a career in the fire service of 25 years and counting, plus a father and grandfather in the service before him, Leigh Hosi-Pickett really knows what it means to be a firefighter.

Russell Brand says Leigh's book, *Up In Smoke*, is "a hilarious insight into the everyday heroics of the firefighters who put their lives on the line for us all."

Up In Smoke focuses not only on the "heroism and bravery" element of being a firefighter, it also contains heart-warming to heart-breaking stories of cross-generational firefighter life, humour,



wit, culture, trust and camaraderie. In it, Leigh writes about his personal journey managing post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD.

"It's OK not to be OK," he says. "I wanted to be completely transparent and honest about my mental health and managing PTSD."

He dedicates the book "to all those at the end of the 999 number".

You can get a signed copy for £18.99, including delivery, from Big Green Bookshop: bit.ly/BGB-UpInSmoke or scan the code



Sales of FBU watch to aid stress support

The Rock2Recovery (R2R) organisation has received a donation of £1,435 resulting from the sales of the Thin Red Line watch commissioned by the FBU from Elliot Brown.

R2R's mission is to save and change the lives of members of the armed forces, veterans, people working in 999 services and their families who are affected by stress.

Its team of specialist change management coaches operate free clinics providing, amongst other services, long-term refocusing support for veterans with brain injuries and mental health issues regardless.

R2R currently works with about 50 fire service clients, supporting them and their families with their stress by working towards clearer, more proactive thinking.

Money from the Thin Red Line watch will go to continuing to provide this service.

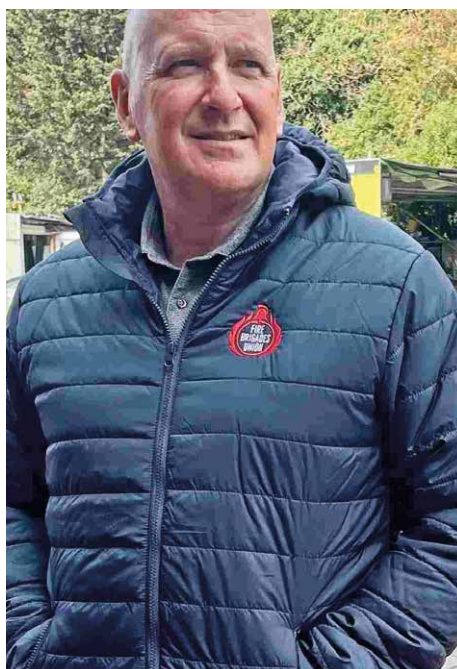
"We look forward to further cementing our relationship with the FBU and its members," R2R said.

MEDIA MENTION



Liverpool mixed martial artist Molly McCann, a former Cage Warriors flyweight champion, supported herself by working in Subway at the start of her fighting career – earning the moniker Meatball Molly. She took to social media to support the FBU pay campaign and those of other trade unionists.

SHOP.FBU.ORG.UK



A stylish hooded puffer with FBU logo – £49.99 with free postage



A3 calendar featuring entries to the FBU photo competition – £9.99 with free postage



Wrack on the Road



MARK THOMAS

■ At Labour Party conference – where an FBU motion on improving firefighters' pay was passed unanimously.



DARREN ROBINSON

■ Big turnout at a Manchester branch meeting on pay with Manchester mayor Andy Burnham as guest speaker.



■ A resounding NO to the employers' first pay offer of 2% at a branch meeting in Winchester in September.

■ Truth About Zane campaign – Matt joined the family of Zane Gbangbola to present a petition at 10 Downing St which has more than 110,000 signatures calling for an inquiry into the unexplained death of seven-year-old Zane after a flood near his home in Chertsey, Surrey, in 2014.

COMING UP:

■ More branch meetings to discuss with members the latest pay offer of 5% – and balloting for strike action if a consultative ballot rejects it.

Hard work

Station Cat on an unproductive meeting

Suddenly we have both a new king and a new prime minister. And, being a feline, your Cat was able to slip, unnoticed, into their first meeting. This is what she heard:

King: Now, we're both a bit new to this, but I think what happens at these meetings is that you tell me what's going on, and I ask searching questions and give you wise advice.

Truss: I have to lie to you as well.

King: That's a fairly new tradition – it came in with Mr Johnson. He was at Eton, you know.

Truss: I never minded that he'd been a schoolboy at Eton.

King: I wished he wouldn't come here and behave as though he was still a schoolboy at Eton. Now tell me. All these worker chaps going on strike, I hear.

Truss: British workers are the laziest in the world. Productivity is much higher in ... in ...

She coughs

King: I'm sorry, I missed that. Where is productivity higher?

Truss: It's higher in, well, other places. British workers need to graft more.

King: Yes, you were saying that on a video. Bit unfortunately it was leaked. Anyone who puts "Liz Truss more graft" into YouTube can find out just what you think of them. I suppose you

could say you were really talking about your predecessor.

Truss: What?

King: Mr Johnson. Not famous for grafting. It was a joke, Prime Minister.

Truss: Oh, a joke.

She laughs. It is a dreadful tinkling sound and lasts for exactly five seconds

King: Now, who are the latest to say they're going on strike?

Truss: Firefighters. They say the pay offer isn't enough with inflation at over 9%.

King: How awful. Do you know, the day before Mamma's funeral I went out of my way to go and thank the emergency services. Personally. Shook the hand of the top chappie and everything. And now they want to go on strike! Some people don't appreciate what one does for them. What are you going to do?

Truss: Fortunately, we don't need firefighters until there's a fire.

King: But what do we do when there's a fire?

Truss: The people who have done the right thing and got their bankers' bonuses will employ their own firefighters.

King: And the rest?

Truss: Will that be all, Your Majesty? I have to interview for a chief fire officer at Chequers.



UPH/ALAMY



I wouldn't go climbing any trees until the ballot result is out if I were you

25-year badges



Andrew Blackburn (l), Lincoln South, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Karl Keuneke



Dave 'Fitzy' Fitzgerald (l), Kentish Town, London, receives his 25-year badge (at his last roll call), from Greg Edwards, since retired



David Robinson (r), Feltham, London, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Pete Wolfenden (l), Mill Hill and Hendon, London, receives his 25-year badge from Greg Edwards, since retired



Jim McPartland (r), red watch, Tottenham, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Chris Poullais



Paul Dicker (r), blue watch, Hillingdon, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Beltran Perez with (l-r) Jack Revitt, Kieren King, Tim Harrison, Callum Pickford and Phil Barton



Richard Critchlow (r), Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Chris Craddock with orange and green watch, Burton, looking on



Dave Pike (l), Manchester brigade secretary, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Ross Strother alongside committee members



David Brown (r), Scottish Fire & Rescue training centre, Cambuslang, receives his 25-year badge from colleague Thomas Mortimer



Paul Newman (l), red watch, Toll, Crewe, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Ronnie Silverston



Paul Martin (r), West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Kevin Baugh



Gary Medhurst (r), blue watch, Chertsey, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Karl Jones, with Richard Penson and Paul Welland



Steven Snape (centre), green watch, Sandyford, Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Adam Bowen



Andy Reynolds (l), Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Gary Cotton



Russell Martin (r), Kent, receives his 25-year badge from group rep Sam Sellick, with (l-r), Julian Light, Tim Hyson, Mike Taylor and North McKenzie



Phil Baugh (l), Horwich Fire Station, Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Mark Gillard



Pete Medford (r), West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mick Mulcahy with members of Handsworth orange and green watch (l-r) Andy, Izzy, Ben, Clive, Paul and Neil looking on



Ian Archibald (l), with red watch Whitehill, Greater Manchester, receiving his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Matt Fryer



Jason Emery (r), Kings Norton, Birmingham, receives his 25-year badge from West Midlands brigade secretary Steve Price-Hunt



Andy Doel (r), blue watch, Heywood, Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Mike Taylor



Martin Peters (l), red watch, Poole, Dorset & Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from (since retired) brigade secretary Karen Adams, with Paul Corbin, Max Gooding, Dave Cartwright, Simon Upshall, Chris Jones, Carl Deacon, Matt Scott, Mark Downing, Ed Hamblett and Dave O'Bryan



Alan McGregor (r), Edinburgh community action team, receives his 25-year badge from Crewe Toll branch secretary Ronnie Silverston



Russ Edwards (c), Ladywood, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Richard Field



Steve West (l), Edmonton, London, receives his 25-year badge from borough secretary Gregg O'Brien



Scott Taylor (r), Ladywood, West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Richard Field



Raz Prince (r), red watch, Ely, Cardiff, receives his 25-year badge from South Wales brigade secretary Mike Alexander



Bob Hoskins (r), Hambleton and Richmond, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Paul James



Stuart Turner (l), blue watch, Edmonton, London, receives his 25-year badge from Enfield borough secretary Gregg O'Brien



Steve Seary (l), white watch, Harlow, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Ricky Pemberton with watch members (l-r), Catherine Smith, John Donovan, Adam Farrow, Matt Howard, Ciaran Seers, Jim Bland and Graham Clark



Graeme Smith (l), Essex training, Witham, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Dave Hellon with watch colleagues looking on



Darren Jackson (r), Staffordshire, receives his 25-year badge from officers' branch rep Derek Stoddart



Ross Birch (r), blue watch, Cheadle, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Matt Fryer



Philip Dermott (l), red watch, Hindley, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from brigade vice chair Kieran Roberts



John Carson (l), Richmond, North Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Paul James



Dave Hellon (r), Essex brigade chair, receives his 25-year badge from Brentwood branch rep Jamal Khan with Brentwood white watch looking on



Richard Barr (c), Barnsley, South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Tom Cook, with colleagues looking on

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co/Region 13 office

REGION 13 Avon, Cornwall, Devon & Somerset, Dorset & Wiltshire, Gloucestershire

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0117 935 5132, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

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
0800 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.



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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.

THOMPSONS FREE LEGAL SUPPORT FOR FBU MEMBERS AND YOUR FAMILIES

As a member of the FBU, both you and your family have access to a first-class legal package provided by the UK's leading law firm for trade union members, Thompsons Solicitors.

Why you should use the union legal service

- You will always keep 100% of your compensation
- You won't pay any legal fees
- You have access to experienced lawyers who understand your workplace and what FBU members want
- Your legal team will work with your union to increase the chances of your claim succeeding

You won't get these benefits with any other non-union law firm

Your comprehensive legal package

Your legal package covers:

- Personal injuries – at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads
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- Employment law (accessed via the union)
- Criminal injury claims
- Online wills service
- Special terms for clinical negligence claims
- Special terms for conveyancing, probate and power of attorney

Your family members are also covered for:

- Non-work related personal injuries
- Special terms for medical negligence claims
- Special terms for conveyancing, probate and power of attorney.

For personal injury claims, you have three years from the date of your accident to make a claim. We recommend you get in contact as soon as possible to give your claim the best chances of success.

To discuss a claim or seek advice from your dedicated FBU legal service, contact us on 0808 100 6061 or visit our website. bit.ly/3epU17W

In 2021, Thompsons
secured more than
£3.4m in compensation
for FBU members