

The Fire Brigades Union



Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions

86th Annual Conference

17th, 18th, 19th and 20th May 2011

FBU – Campaigning For You



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions Annual Conference 2011

President: **Alan McLean**
Vice-President: **Jim Barbour**
General Secretary: **Matt Wrack**
Assistant General Secretary: **Andy Dark**
National Treasurer: **Warren Gee**

National Officers: **Dave Green**
John McGhee
Sean Starbuck
Paul Woolstenholmes

Bradley House
68 Coombe Road
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey
KT2 7AE

Telephone: 020 8541 1765
Fax: 020 8546 5187
e.mail: office@fbu.org.uk
website: www.fbu.org.uk

Executive Council



ALAN McLEAN
President



MATT WRACK
General Secretary



ANDY DARK
Assistant General Secretary



JIM BARBOUR
Vice President



WARREN GEE
National Treasurer



DAVE GREEN
National Officer



JOHN McGHEE
National Officer



SEAN STARBUCK
National Officer



PAUL WOOLSTENHOLMES
National Officer

Executive Council Members



RODDY ROBERTSON
Region 1



JIM BARBOUR
Region 2



ANDY NOBLE
Region 3



IAN MURRAY
Region 4



WARREN GEE
Region 5



DAVE LIMER
Region 6



ROSE JONES
Region 7



GRANT MAYOS
Region 8



KEITH HANDSCOMB
Region 9



IAN LEHAIR
Region 10



JIM PARROTT
Region 11



KARL HORAN
Region 12



TAM McFARLANE
Region 13



MICKY NICHOLAS
B&EMM



SHARON RILEY
CSNC



STEWART BROWN
LGBT



TAM MITCHELL
NRC



DENISE CHRISTIE
NWC



JACK FORD
ONC

Contents

Executive Council	iii
Day One	3
Day Two	35
Day Three	85
Day Four	129
Record of Decisions	143
Final Appeals Committee	168
Firefighter Representatives	168
Election of Standing Orders Committee	169
Officers of the Fire Brigades Union	171
Annual Conference: List of Delegates	178
Index of Proceedings	185
Index of Speakers	187



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

86th Annual Conference

Southport 2011

17th – 20th May

Day One – 17th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Could you make sure Conference, that all your mobile phones are switched off. Thank you very much. I now welcome Glen Williams, UNISON, who brings fraternal greetings. It's usually the job of Danny McGowan from Sefton Trades Council, but I figure that Danny's got the full set of steak knives and he's sent you for something. Glen is the Branch Secretary of Sefton UNISON, and he has a seat on the National Local Government Service Group Executive. Sefton UNISON, as you know, have supported and have been supported by the FBU in numerous industrial disputes, even sharing a UNISON branch office at one stage when the FBU officials in Crosby, Merseyside were locked out. Glen is extremely pleased to have been invited. We welcome you Glen, and welcome Conference to Southport. Here is Glen.
Applause

BRO GLEN WILLIAMS (UNISON):

Comrades, thanks very much for that warm introduction. I know what you're all thinking: now that I've stood up you can see me – bloody hell, it's Max off Eastenders! Can I just say on behalf of Sefton UNISON, (for those who haven't been here before, you are now in Southport which is part of the Borough of Sefton) a massive welcome. To any first time visitors or delegates to this part of the country, this part of the nation, a very warm particular welcome. Sefton has 22 miles of coastline, population of about 280,000, it combines extreme affluence with extreme poverty, urban and rural. The Iron Men exhibition, if you haven't seen it down the coast, is well worth seeing. There's 100 iron statues in the form of the sculpture, full life size, Antony Gormley. Recently somebody actually put a Chelsea shirt on one of them with a note attached to it saying that the statue has probably got better movement than Torres!

Seriously, though delegates, a real warm welcome to Sefton and to Southport. Some of you will know from the introduction there's a real history of absolute solidarity between our own local UNISON branch and the FBU. On many occasions your union has been a real inspiration to our branch, our members and our activists. In the year 2000, as a direct response to the evil evolution of the BNP in Southport, we established the Sefton Holocaust Memorial Project and worked very closely with members of your union. On many occasions your union was the first to put its name forward to join us in the actions opposing the BNP locally, regionally and nationally. Part of this work of the anti-fascist project was to take trade unionists and

young people, not easy young people but challenging young people, young people who had been in care and who were in care. First to put their hands in their pockets were the FBU, to sponsor those young people to come with us to Poland. First to come with us were the FBU activists and trade unionists. We took them on the coach, 32 hours each way. Let me tell you comrades, if you've ever sat with anyone for 32 hours on a coach, you get to know them incredibly well. I can tell you that they were an inspiration to the young people with whom we travelled.

We've taken and worked with FBU members from right across the country – from Manchester, Preston, Liverpool, London, Cumbria, Newcastle – the list goes on. We're really proud of that project. I'm looking round the room seeing faces of people who have had some connection with the Sefton Holocaust Memorial Project. What that's meant in real terms is whenever the BNP, with their filth and their lies, stand in our local community – two miles from this very conference centre the BNP stood in the local elections – we have a small army of people, who've stemmed from that project, who come out and leaflet, who come out and lobby, who come out and campaign against the EDL and against the BNP. It's almost always FBU representatives as part of that small army. For that, on behalf of Sefton UNISON, we say a massive thank you.

Over the years we've taken firefighters to Poland. For 14/15 years we've been doing it. I have to say there's a certain theme that has developed. The FBU activists are always first to the bar and always last to leave said bar. In 2005, as you've already heard, two of our full-time UNISON officials were sacked, sacked for opposing the privatisation of council housing stock. Four stewards were suspended. The FBU were the first trade union to take and threaten direct action in support of that, and they told Sefton Council who'd sacked our comrades: we will suspend our use of Southport Conference Centre unless this is resolved with urgency. I can tell you, comrades, as a direct result of the threat of losing nearly £2.5 million in 2005/6 that dispute was resolved far quicker than it would have been without your support. Again, on behalf of Nigel Flanagan, Paul Summers, and the four stewards who were suspended, that dispute has now been satisfactorily resolved because of your action. Again, a massive thank you.
Applause

September 2006 during the FBU dispute we offered our own small, but homely and warm, UNISON office and our facilities, as your elected officers, your representatives and activists had been barred from their own station premises. This actually motivated a lot of our stewards and activists to take part in the FBU rallies, to take part in the marches, to take part of the leafleting, picket lines have been shared. One of my proudest

Day One – 17th May

moments comrades, was actually leading part of the FBU march in Liverpool with our own little but proud Sefton UNISON banner. On that banner it says: "Fighting for jobs is not a crime". One of the proudest moments was being asked to lead into massive applause with the comrades carrying the banner, on the FBU march. I remember well those fantastic Carlsberg T-shirts: "Possibly the worst chief fire officer in the world". A great event, a great inspiration to our members who turned up in solidarity with striking firefighters.

Comrades, the new trade union movement message has to be to oppose capitalism and to oppose greed. It has to be to promote the knowledge of the false economy, to promote knowledge of the alternative economy, and to challenge what seems to be a mass hypnosis that has meant that too many people, too many trades unionists, too many of our members still believe that cuts in public services are inevitable. Jo Spears, none of you will know, is an ordinary woman, she's a single parent with six kids, she's a cleaner in a hospital and the service is being privatised. We worked out it would take her 270 years to earn what her chief executive earns in one year. There is a real alternative to this. That same chief executive refuses to pay Jo Spears any sick pay at all. Yet in his mansion he has 26 toilets! I ask you, comrades, how full of shit do you need to be to need 26 toilets? *Applause*

Brothers and sisters, there is a real alternative to these cuts. You know what happened in 1945. The deficit, as a percentage of the GDP, was far higher than it is now and yet we built a welfare state, we built schools, we built social housing, we created jobs. The situation then was better, the situation now is desperate. Every day in the media you will have that figure of £134 million which is the daily cost of the deficit and debt trotted out to you by the right wing media. This needs to be challenged. Even under Thatcher it was £174 million. So, comrades, there is an economic alternative. I urge you to visit the False Economy website and read the alternative budget that exists that certainly my UNISON, along with PCS and a lot of other public sector unions, are determined to get out there. It's not heresy; it's the truth.

Yes, 26th March in London was a fantastic day. Our unions must now build on the success of that. The coalition is flaky, the general public are beginning to understand what public services actually provide. Fibdems have been found out. Cameron and Nick – Camynickers as they're known – are fragmented. Public servants and trade unions are becoming organised, they are becoming united. There needs to be union in terms of the attack to our pensions, attacks to our pay, attacks to our jobs, and the safety of our communities. This will galvanise ordinary members, ordinary workers and ordinary members of the public. If you have children, for example, who are going to school and you have not yet

faced the threat of academies, it's a brand new threat in Sefton, there are 7 schools threatened with that. It is privatisation. I've learned today that the bloodsucking coalition are even looking to privatise the Blood Transfusion Service and the Transplant of Organs Service. How disgraceful is that! If there's any blood donor volunteers in here, you are volunteers, your blood will create profit for the Coalition Government if these changes go through.

I am genuinely proud to have been asked to speak to you today. In these parts of Merseyside FBU stands for "Frigging Brilliant Union". On behalf of Sefton UNISON I thank you for always being there to help us when we've been in dispute and in struggle, and when we've taken on the BNP. Your union really is an inspiration. Have a fantastic Conference, comrades, with thanks and in solidarity. Thank you. *Applause*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I think on behalf of the delegates we'd like to thank Glen for those kind words of welcome and assure him that we will continue to work with comrades in UNISON and the trades union movement locally. We've got a small gift which you can enjoy at your leisure. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you. President, Conference, good morning. The Standing Orders Committee seeks your cooperation with regard to your Conference credentials. Would all delegates and officials please make sure they have filled in their details on their credentials so stewards can identify them. The Standing Orders Committee stress the importance of delegates stating their name and Brigade or Section when addressing Conference as this assists the President and the verbatim report. We also ask that you speak clearly into the microphone on the rostrum.

Visitors to Conference are identified by different coloured credentials which must be displayed at all times. Visitors are not allowed on the floor of Conference. Arrangements have been made for tea and coffee for visitors to be served in the large hall to your right hand side.

Voting cards should have been obtained from the Standing Orders Committee by Regional Treasurers and

Day One – 17th May

handed to leaders of delegations. Access to the Standing Orders Committee room is through the doors on your right, up the stairs, clearly marked. Delegates that have business for the Standing Orders Committee should inform the steward of their business and wait to be called by Standing Orders.

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

The Standing Orders Committee are pleased to announce that this evening there will be a quiz night for Palestine, organised by Region 1, starting at 1930 hours in the Windmill Inn on Seabank Road. Flyers have been distributed. On Thursday night in the Fox and Goose pub on Cable Street starting at 8 pm there will be the Annual Conference Social Night. The FBU presents Mark Thomas plus DJ Alan Paterson. Flyers have been distributed.

May I remind you that Conference is in session from 09.30-17.15 hours. Also, may I remind Conference of Standing Order 16 which clearly states assembly, adjournment and comfort break times, all of which must be adhered to. May I bring to your attention that there will be a lunch provided for all in the large hall to your right hand side today, Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday there will be a packed lunch available in the large hall. If business is to work through lunch on Friday there will be a short tea break to allow the staff a comfort break.

Expense forms have been distributed and should be completed correctly and handed to your Regional Treasurers as soon as possible. The delegation fee is £20 per day (minus tax) for the period of Conference, including your day of travel.

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

The Standing Orders Committee must be kept informed of any changes to delegations, and we in turn will keep the Presidents list up to date. I will inform Conference of the changes. We rely on the Regional officials to exercise some influence on this procedure.

Stall Facilities. The Standing Orders Committee have agreed stall facilities for the following organisations to Conference: Bookmarks, Cuba Solidarity Campaign, Lifelong Learning, Stop the War Coalition, Palestine

Solidarity Campaign, Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, UIA Insurance Ltd, FBU Health & Safety, MPC, and of course the FBU. The stalls will be situated in the hall on your right hand side.

The Standing Orders Committee has received a number of Emergency Resolutions and will be dealing with them as soon as possible.

Could I now ask you to turn to your Programme of Business Page 1: no change. Page 2: Resolution 66, Membership, Humberside withdrawn to second Resolution 65, Amendment falls; Resolution 70, Feasibility Study Into Levying Non-Union Members, South Yorkshire, withdrawn; Resolution 69, National Fund, South Yorkshire withdrawn with the right to speak. Page 3: Resolution 71, Non Uniform FBU Membership, Essex, withdrawn. Page 4: (listen carefully) from and including Paragraph G26 Reorganisation Subcommittee up to and including Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union will all be in Closed Session. Within the Closed Session Resolution 61, Reorganisation Subcommittee Report 2010, Officers National Committee, has been withdrawn with the right to speak. Resolution 62, Accident & Injury Fund, Warwickshire, has been withdrawn. Page 5: Resolution 4, Pay Award 2009/2010, Hereford & Worcester, withdrawn; Resolution 8, Shift Allowance, Northern Ireland, has been remitted; Resolution 16, Supervisory Managers Pay, North Wales, has been remitted, Amendment falls. Page 6: no change. Page 7: Resolution 9, Nationally Agreed Wholetime Shift Duty System, Cleveland, remit with the right to speak; Resolution 10, Pre-arranged Overtime, Cleveland, remit with the right to speak, Amendments fall; Resolution 11, Secondary Contracts, Northumberland, withdrawn; Resolution 12, Water Rescue, Humberside, remit with the right to speak; Resolution 6, Redundancy Policy Retained Duty System, West Yorkshire, withdrawn. Page 8: no change. Page 9: Resolution 30, Public Sector Cuts, Lancashire, withdrawn to support EC Policy Statement: Fighting the Cuts Agenda. Page 10: Resolution 33, First Responder and Co-Responder Schemes, Essex, withdrawn; Resolution 34, Co-responding, Hampshire, remit with the right to speak. Page 11: no change. Page 12: no change. Page 13: Resolution 41, Control Staff Medicals, Tyne & Wear, withdrawn, Amendment falls. Page 14: no change. Page 15: Resolution 56, National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) on Pregnancy, North Wales, withdrawn. Page 16: Resolution 46, Tuition Fees, Shropshire, withdrawn to second the EC Policy Statement: Cuts, Austerity And The Case For An Alternative; Resolution 47, Dismissal and Re-Engagement, Shropshire, withdrawn with the right to speak, Amendment falls. Page 17: no change.

Would you now turn to your green coloured book entitled Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union.

Day One – 17th May

Conference will note that you have received some stapled rule changes from West Midlands, 8 altogether. Does Conference have that paperwork? OK. The West Midlands rule changes that are stapled should be kept with your green book. Apologies. This was due to an admin error at Head Office, as I'm sure you've had explained to you at your delegates' meetings.

I now move on to changes to delegates. Strathclyde: delete Michal McCulloch, insert Paul Wilson. Lothian & Borders: delete Gary Reid, insert Ruth Winters. Grampian: delete Leon Murray, insert Alan Paterson. Dumfries & Galloway: delete Gerry McLeod, insert Kerry Walker. Cleveland: delete Graeme Coates, insert Sarah Gartland. Humberside: delete Darren Smailes, insert Geoff Boville. West Yorkshire: delete Dave Benson, insert John Rankin. South Yorkshire: delete Phil O'Connell, insert Nigel Bailey. GMC: delete Peter Taylor, insert Dave Allsey. GMC: note John Roberts is absent today. GMC: delete Steve Wells, insert Damian Keenaghan. Merseyside: delete Brian Hurst, insert Kevin Hughes. Hereford & Worcester: delete Peter Hope, insert Eric Thompson. South Wales: delete Paul Davies, insert Nigel Mace. Bedfordshire: delete Malcolm Ball, insert Lee Moon. Bedfordshire: delete Jason Hollamby, insert Jamie Newell. Essex: delete Sue McGregor, insert Aston Everett. Hertfordshire: delete Stephen Duncan, insert Derek MacCloud. London: delete Sally Harper. London: Joe MacVeigh, Gordon Fielden and Laurie Brightman are now delegates. Kent: delete Robert Sherwood, insert Adam Wade. Surrey: delete Nigel Burchell, insert Stuart de Fraine. Surrey: delete Paul Greenwood, insert Dave Herpe. Isle of Wight: delete Pete Mawhood, delete Mark Deacon. Oxfordshire: delete Lee Swain, insert Steve Allen. Avon: delete Chris Jackson, insert Adam Course. B&EMM delete Ludwig Ramsey and Andre Fernandes. Control: delete Mandy Buchanan, insert Norman Rees. LGBT: delete Lloyd Ketcher, insert Ali Burrows. LGBT: delete Lucy Masoud, insert Kevin Gutherson. LGBT: delete Pat Carberry. NRC: delete Paul Brownhill, insert Paul Revell. NRC: delete Brad Tooke. NRC: delete Pete Preston. NRC: delete Harry Cotter. ONC: delete Gary Platts. ONC: delete Michael Osborne. ONC: Robert Sherwood, John Denvir, Martin Pottinger and Peter Moss are all delegates.

Closed Session. May I remind Conference, in particular visitors, that the stewards will carefully check credentials before the start of the Closed Session in order to only admit into the hall delegates, officials, members, solicitors, tutors and our visitors. Other visitors and the media will be excluded until after the conclusion of the business I have just detailed.

Speakers' times. Executive Council Policy Statement "Reorganisation of the Union" – General Secretary 40 minutes. Executive Council Policy Statement "Cuts, Austerity And The Case For An Alternative" – General

Secretary 30 minutes. Executive Council Policy Statement "Fighting The Cuts Agenda" – General Secretary 20 minutes. Executive Council Policy Statement "FBU Elections" – General Secretary 10 minutes.

Can I now go on to the voting on a challenge to the Chair of Conference. May I draw Conference attention to Standing Order 15. The number of delegates at Conference is 218. Therefore the number of delegates voting to challenge is 146. Please note, the Control Staff National Committee delegates, Black & Ethnic Minority Members National Committee delegates, Gay & Lesbian National Committee delegates, Women's National Committee delegates, Officers' National Committee delegates and National Retained Committee delegates are all entitled to vote on procedural motions and challenges only. Regional Officials who are not delegates have been issued with different credential cards and they are not permitted to vote at all. May I remind Conference that all credentials issued are the personal property of the persons to whom they are issued and cannot be transferred to other persons without the approval of the Standing Orders Committee. We therefore rely on the integrity of all to comply with this procedure.

The Standing Orders Committee election. This will take place this morning and Stewart Kinnon is eligible for re-election. The ballot box will be at the rear of the hall.

Finally, the Standing Orders Committee has received the following messages of support. "Best wishes to Conference to the future battles against this vicious government" from Mick Harper, retired President, and from Caroline. "Best wishes to Conference and fraternal greetings" from Alex and Ann Merry.

President, that concludes the first Standing Orders report. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Come forward.

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

President, I've got two challenges and one point of clarification. I'd like to take them separately, if that's OK.

THE PRESIDENT:

Yes.

BRO ANDY FULTON:

L&B submitted an Amendment to Resolution 39, Dynamic Risk Assessment. This Amendment was Ruled

Day One – 17th May

Out of Order because it was unclear in its intent. The Amendment changed the words in the Resolution. The first one it changed was in the first line “feels” to “reaffirms”; and in the second line it changed “safer” to “safe”. We believe this Amendment is clear and we ask Conference to uphold our challenge.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

The Standing Orders Committee did Rule Out of Order an Amendment to Resolution 39 from Lothian & Borders and it was on the grounds that the Amendment is unclear in its intent in that the instruction has grammatical errors within it which would obviously make the original of the Resolution unclear. It deletes words then it inserts words and then it states “the resolution now reads”. At that point there are grammatical errors within that. The Amendment is unclear in its intent and was Ruled Out of Order on these grounds. I urge you to uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I see those in favour of the challenge please show. Against. *Challenge falls.*

BRO ANDY FULTON:

Thanks Conference. L&B also submitted an Amendment to Resolution 51. Again it was Ruled Out of Order because it was unclear in its intent. Our Amendment deletes in the third bullet point “and only proceed in accordance with minor amendments of the law”. It deletes that part of the sentence. We believe that the Amendment is clear and we ask Conference to uphold the challenge.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Yes, the Standing Orders Committee Ruled Out of Order an Amendment to Resolution 51 from Lothian & Borders on the grounds that the Amendment is factually incorrect in that you cannot delete something that is not there. The Amendment refers to the second bullet point in line 3 to be deleted when actually it is quoting words from the first bullet point. The Amendment is factually incorrect and was Ruled Out of Order on these grounds. I urge you to uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, all those in favour of the challenge please show. Those against please show. The challenge *falls*. Have you got one more, comrade?

BRO ANDY FULTON:

I’ve got a point of clarification, President. Could the Standing Orders Committee clarify what its ruling is on EC Policy Statements and whether those Policy Statements are in fact Resolutions?

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

You get Resolutions to Conference, you get Amendments to Resolutions to Conference, you get Rule Changes and you get Executive Council Policy Statements. I don’t really know which part you don’t understand.

BRO ANDY FULTON:

I would like to draw Conference attention to Standing Order 7 which states: “Brigade, National and Sectional Committees shall not be allowed to submit more than three Resolutions. Similarly, the Executive Council shall not be allowed to submit more than three Resolutions.” We believe that the Executive Council have submitted four Policy Statements which are in fact Resolutions and we would like Conference to challenge the Standing Orders on that decision.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks for pointing out the Standing Orders and thanks for putting the words to Conference. The words are very clear: three Resolutions from Brigade Committees and no more than three from the Executive Council. These are Executive Council Policy Statements; they are Statements about Policies that you’ve already got in place; they are not Resolutions; they are Statements on Policy, EC Statements on Policy. That Standing Order doesn’t apply. Reject this challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

Now Conference I will be clear. Policy Statements from the Executive Council are not Resolutions. The Executive Council has the ability to put three Resolutions in every Conference. I don’t think we’ve done that ever, apart from Emergency Resolutions. I don’t think the Executive Council have ever, in my tenure certainly, put Resolutions in. They are different. Your challenge will go ahead, comrade. All those in favour of the challenge please show. Those against. *Falls.*

Is the Standing Orders report agreed? Conference, is that agreed? That is *agreed*.

Thank you very much. I now call Alteration to Standing Order 13 moved by the Executive Council. Matt.

Day One – 17th May

Standing Order 13

The Executive Council shall nominate two Tellers and two ballot Scrutineers from the names of delegates attending Conference. Names shall be submitted to the Conference delegates for approval.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks President. Conference, you will recall, I'm sure, the trial we ran last year on a new system for holding card votes whereby there are now two boxes: For and Against the Resolution. That trial was a success and we propose to continue with it. That requires only two tellers and two scrutineers. Hence the Amendment to Standing Orders. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Standing Order 13 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried*.

Can the following Tellers and Scrutineers be agreed.
Tellers: Graham Birtley, Russell King, Nigel Mace, John Ripley. Scrutineers: Brian Cunningham, Keith Naylor, Jamie Newall, Paul True. Are they agreed, Conference: That is *agreed*.

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

I now introduce to Conference Section L Obituary.
I would ask that Conference, guests, visitors, everybody in the auditorium stands for a minute's silence.

(Conference stood in memory of those who had died)

Thank you Conference.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

Conference, it now gives me great pleasure to invite our newly elected President Brother Alan McLean to give the Presidential address.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you Conference and good morning. It's a great privilege for me, certainly as an individual and certainly from the Region from whence I came, to be introduced to you for the first time as your President. Unfortunately, with that duty comes the necessity to report some sad news to you. Some of you may be aware but I'll make Conference aware because Mick wants it that way, Brother Mick Shaw who retired as President in December after 32 years of service, returned back from a holiday in Cuba about two weeks ago and he has been

diagnosed with tumours on his liver and his lungs. We don't know yet what the prognosis is for Mick or the diagnosis, and whether or not Mick will feel well enough to come to Conference at the end of the week. I very much doubt it. He does send his regards to you. I know that Conference will echo that back and send their regards to Mick. Best wishes to him and his family. If it's permissible, we will be sending a card round for you all to sign. We wish Mick all the very, very best in this big fight that he's about to embark on. I thank you for that, Conference. *Applause*

As the supreme governing body of the Union, Conference, you're here to make decisions which affect every single member on every single fire station, in every single control room. It is indeed an honour to be here doing that. There aren't any hard decisions to make, there are only the right ones. You usually find that you haven't made the right one somewhere further down the line.

In putting this address together I've actually ripped up more paper than the Union can afford! Every time I've considered I had an offering worthy of you, I quickly concluded that I didn't. Anybody who knows me, from Region 3 or anywhere in the Union, will know that I rarely go scripted, but on this occasion I figured I should. Veering off script is pretty much yet another of my personal problems and I apologise in advance to you for that. I'm sure I will.

When we look at this Union and its past we must be mindful of the work of the officials who have gone before. It is still very much their Union. A Union is like a child. We never own it, we borrow its custody and hope to God to pass it over to the next generation of officials. It is indeed a precious body and one which must be preserved at all costs, and I mean all costs. I've sat where everyone of you are sat today, from observer to delegation leader, to regional official (and I still don't know what I was doing as regional official at conference, forgive me for that). I still haven't found what I'm looking for either! I've sat here as the Executive Council Member and Vice President. I've been nervous, I've been disbelieving on occasions. As a younger man I even felt that those in power had lost touch with the membership. I have even, Conference, on occasion mistrusted the Executive Council!

It would be very easy for me to believe all I am told by the officials with whom I come into contact in this job. I've tried to take myself back in time and work out what I'd want from this Conference if I was on a fire station now. I firmly believe that our members are every bit as aware of the problems in this Service as anyone in the room here. After all, Conference, they live it on a daily basis. To that end I've sought to speak to members, old and new, on branches informally. It certainly did me

Day One – 17th May

some good. Some of the things I actually found out didn't do me too much good. I asked them if they knew who Matt Wrack was and half of them did. I asked them if they knew who I was and one of the lads got on to Control and said: look, we've got another old bloke who doesn't know who he is! By and by they're exactly the same as they ever were; it's just a few years further down the line. They may be more sophisticated, maybe more toys, maybe more mobile phones, but they want exactly what I've always wanted.

Yesterday I spoke to some good comrades who pointed out what the big debate was this week, the big debate. I wasn't surprised, but nonetheless I felt a bit downhearted that Reorganisation was a bigger issue than Pensions, Cuts, Pay and Redundancies. It further made me wonder as late as last night when I was being asked by people how I intended to Chair the debate on Reorganisation. The answer is this, Conference: the same as I Chair everything else – with mediocrity and, if I'm having a good day, very, very average.

You see, Conference, Reorganisation is not a big issue with any members on fire stations, you know that. Jobs, Pay and Pensions are. No ordinary members are banging on your doors demanding to know what you intend to do on Reorganisation. Reorganisation is merely a means to enable us to continue fighting and campaigning on the members' behalf as a Union, a proper Union, for Jobs, for Pay, for Pensions, Fighting Against Cuts.

I've got no doubt that you'll come to the right decisions for the membership of this Union, whatever those decisions may be. One of the decisions could be to provide us with an extra 4,000 members, but that isn't happening at the moment. All I ask is that you listen carefully to the debate and make your own judgements and make them wisely.

I could go on for ages about the perpetrators of the attacks on us. They are Dastardly and not-so-bright Nick. Someone referred to Nick as "Judas" the other day, someone on the Executive Council. That is wrong. Certainly after his betrayal Judas eventually did the right thing, and I cannot see Nick doing that! But the facts are there. The Tories are massing their forces, aided and abetted by the Liberal Democrats who are bereft of honour, bereft of integrity and cling on to their masters for dear life. It's all they've got and when that's all you've got you hold on. The object of their attacks is us and the public sector. The men and women that any decent society requires to be a major and integral part of their infrastructure. They see us as a burden, they see us as a threat, but most of all they see us as expendable. Our members are coming to terms with that realisation. Some of the members even voted for them. That's an education issue, Sean. Get that sorted!

The attitude of the Government frightens me. They've waited to do us in for ever and Labour has given them an opportunity. There needs to be an effective opposition in this country. To combat these attacks locally and nationally, the only show in town is the Fire Brigades Union. We've proven once again that when we stand together we're a formidable force. Our Union can indeed claim credit in the fight against Control Regionalisation. Without our voice articulating the flaws for all to hear, Regionalisation would have occurred. We knew however, that our victory would be short-lived as more assaults from mergers in Control are planned. Once more, once more, we need to hit the campaign trail.

At the NJC this Union is the only one laudable voice for workers in the Fire Service. Even our staunch political enemies acknowledge that. The Fire Brigades Union is relevant. The other scab organisations purporting to represent retained firefighters and officers alike are completely irrelevant. Not my words – Brian Coleman's words. The RFU don't have enough members to sit at the national negotiating table and FOA's only utterances at the middle management board of the NJC are to argue about who pays for the sandwiches. That's a fact and the officers will tell you. They are both indeed irrelevant, as Brian Coleman, the chair of the London Authority says.

I need to take some time here to pay tribute to our members in London and their actions. Without a doubt they have been a credit to this Union, a major credit to this Union. *Applause*

I put this to the London delegates: see what you can achieve when you get rid of your dead wood! *Laughter* The dispute had everything, it really did. A Bond style villain in Coleman; a suave, cool, sophisticated hero in Joe MacVeigh; and an Executive Council Member who was run over by a scab driver whilst trying to escape from a brief conversation with Andy Dark! *Laughter* This week you may come face to face with some of our employers; they may be in the hall, they may be around Southport. Make them welcome, have a word with them. They're not hideous individuals; they're not people bereft of morals and integrity, nor are they evil people who seek to bully and harass trade unionists. Some of the people they represent are and that needs addressing Conference. While they are at it, they can get Sian Griffiths back to work, protecting the good people of the Capital; it's where she should be; it's where she deserves to be. *Applause*

I also wish to welcome back to Conference Kevin Hughes from Merseyside. *Applause* I just noticed, Conference, I get cheap applause for mentioning people's names. I could be here all day! If anyone is testament to the resolve of this Union it's Kevin and

Day One – 17th May

employers need to take heed. We will never stand idly by while you persecute our officials. We protect our own in this Union. We'll continue to do so with every means at our disposal.

Getting back to campaigning Conference, 26th March saw the biggest assembly of our members in history on a non-FBU rally – 500,000 plus was and must be just the start of our pressure. One thing saddened me and it's of a personal nature and I really need to open up my heart to Conference. I'm the son of a proud Scotsman deceased, very proud of his Highland heritage. As a child I was brought up to be kind of Scottish but in Newcastle. I had to wear a kilt for weddings, or as friends down the street used to call me: "that lad in the checkie frock". I listened to Andy Stewart, Moira Anderson, Callum Kennedy, the White Heather Club, Jimmy Shand, when all me mates were wanting to listen to the Beatles. We didn't celebrate 1966, we celebrated 1967. I couldn't figure out why. But the one thing I had was my love of the bagpipes. I share that with the General Secretary. We've both agreed that whoever dies first the other one will pay the piper at the funeral. So I'm looking forward to that gig, Matt!

My only shame on that day of 500,000 people was when the pipe band which proudly led the FBU contingent away, when I looked at them and heard them playing I was so proud, I looked at their banners, Region 1, they came from Hull! That floodplain just south of Yorkshire. Shame on you, Region 1!

Before I close my address I'd like to thank some people. I'd like to thank Mick Shaw for the last four years and the incredible service that anybody who becomes President of this Union has to enjoy. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ruth Winters. I never had the chance to say thank you to Ruth, but that lassie put in one hell of a shift in a time that was very difficult for this Union. You certainly have my personal thanks, Ruth.
Applause

You had a round of applause, Ruth. I suggest you do what you taught me to do, just now that you're a delegate here, just sit down and agree with everything the Executive Council says, thank you very much!

I would like also to thank Region 3 for putting up with me mostly. They have indeed had a bit of a ropey ride with me as their Executive Council Member. They've always given me complete support. They've been a Region who have said: go out and do the job and if you get it wrong, we'll back you; go out and do the job and if you get it really wrong, we'll cane you! And they have. I'd like to make mention of the people who have paid for themselves to come here from my old Region. I'm thinking about my Regional Officials: Steve Gregg, Steve Watson and Steve Headley. I was trying to think of my

achievements in Region 3, all my achievements and I couldn't think of any. But one of them was to get rid of that disgraceful closed shop that says that everybody in the Region had to be called Steve. We now have a Peter, we now have an Andy, we now have a Kieran. We have a plethora of names in Region 3, they're not all called Steve. But they have meant a lot to me and the support has been a great comfort to me in many of the decisions I've had to take. Also, my first branch official came here. Keith Walters, he later became the Brigade Chair of Tyne & Wear. On that branch, on that watch, three people all became the Chair of a Brigade. Some of the bosses thought we were lazy; I just thought we were well organised! Every single year there were 8 or 9 or 10 Resolutions from that branch to Annual Conference. We had an exhaustive voting process and unfortunately at the time the abolition of the Royal Family didn't get through. That showed a great lack of foresight for me as an official because if that had happened we wouldn't have got a much prized holiday of a week and a half. We wouldn't have had Pippa Middleton Day.

The Union must move forward, but more importantly, it must be around for the next 100 years. I fully intend that that will happen. But at this moment you're in charge. Please use it well. Every official must come to terms with the job they've been elected to do. Internal bickering must stop and stop now. The Executive Council have a part to play as do you who inform them. Please don't send Executive Council Members into a debate with their hands tied by mandate. Instead, elect those you trust. We need an Executive which holds to account the leadership on your behalf. I promise you Conference, I will seek to achieve this. Please remember, we can't all be Ronnie Scott, we can't all be Ken Cameron, but being the best we can is enough. Have a good Conference, comrades. Thank you.
Applause

I'd like to inform Conference of my intention for the running of Conference this week. It's an attempt to break with the mould and to make it more effective. If it doesn't work, we'll quickly retreat. I'll be continuing with the next session's business if we manage to complete a session. The following Executive Council Policy Statements will be called at the start of a session. Executive Council Policy Statement Reorganisation of the Union will be called at the start of Tuesday afternoon's session. Executive Council Policy Statement Cuts, Austerity and the Case for an Alternative will be called at the start of Wednesday morning's session. The Executive Council Policy Statement Fighting the Cuts Agenda will be called at the start of Wednesday afternoon's session.

I introduce Paragraph K, Financial Accounts. Paragraph K1, Warren.

Day One – 17th May

BRO WARREN GEE (National Treasurer):

Thank you, President. Good morning Conference. In moving the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2010 I wish to make Conference aware of the following.

Income has increased overall to a consolidated figure of £12,936,731, a decrease of £581,758 on the previous year's figure of £13,518,489, with expenditure decreasing to £12,669,087 from £13,910,861 for the previous year, giving a total decrease in expenditure of £1,241,774. With a consolidated income of £12,936,731 and expenditure at £12,669,087, this gives a total surplus for the year ending 31st December of £267,644 compared to a deficit of £392,372 for year ending 2009. I would therefore ask Conference to note the following. The increase in surplus is due to the increase in surplus which has been forwarded from the Accident & Injury Fund and Political Fund over the last 12 months.

Moving to the Accident & Injury Fund and the Political Fund, both funds have shown an income of £1,652,238 and £285,103 respectively. The Accident & Injury Fund carries forward £4,283,961 of which £525,155 is the surplus for the year ending 2010. The Political Fund carries forward a surplus of £1,144,918 of which £35,524 is the surplus for year ending 2010. Therefore, both funds are financially healthy and are functioning on behalf of our members and the Union.

Cash in Bank. As of 31st December 2010 cash in bank is £1,763,410 compared to £2,170,305 for 2009. After deductions of current liabilities of £1,645,633 this only leaves a surplus of £117,777.

I now move to the General Fund. This has produced an income increase of £57,547 giving a total income of £10,262,839 with expenditure at £10,555,874. This gives a total deficit of £293,035 compared to a surplus of £33,082 in 2009. A deficit of £661,644 has to be brought forward from 2009. This then leaves a deficit of £956,679 to be carried forward from the end of the year.

I would ask Conference to note on income with contributions at £10,064,627 this is a decrease of £77,181 from 2009 due to the reduction in membership, and a decrease of £3,208 from investment income, sales of publications and merchandise, commission and VAT recoverable. The General Fund would show a decrease in income of £80,380 not an increase in income of £57,547, if it were not for an income to the General Fund of £137,936 from other income – a one-off reimbursement for protected pay.

I would ask Conference to note on expenditure that although expenditure has decreased overall by £1,241,774 (as I stated earlier), this is due to the decrease

in expenditure from the Accident & Injury Fund and also from the Political Fund. Our General Fund shows an increase in expenditure of £383,664 compared to 2009.

Conference, there are a number of areas that I would like to refer to. Motor expenses. The increase in motor expenses is due to the Union now paying tax and insurance on allowances. We have to show the gross amount paid in car allowances for 2010. This has shown an increase of £173,335. However, we have to take into account that the PAYE agreement payment of £130,566 was previously shown in other organising expenses and now is shown in motoring expenses. Communications. This has shown an increase of £58,406. This is mainly due to the membership software account. For example, the access system for post code bank details needed for our membership, and the anti-virus licences for our membership. This was previously shown in printing and stationery. Communications consists of all Regional and Head Office mobile phones, land lines, leased ADSE for computers, postage, licences (as I mentioned earlier). Licences alone are in excess of £23,000. Ballot expenses have increased. However, this increase will fluctuate dependent on the number of ballots held within that year, or whether they are postal ballots or not. Trade union leave is an ongoing problem for the Fire Brigades Union and with a further increase of £208,889 in 2010.

Even though we have made savings in a number of areas, taking into consideration our increase in trade union leave costs and the fact that we had a one-off injection of income of £137,936, we are now in a position where our expenditure exceeds our income. We already carry a deficit of £956,679 and this will increase drastically if measures are not put in place immediately. A large part of these savings are due to the movement of expenditure from one category to another. Therefore, these savings are not as large as we would like; they are just a movement of expenditure.

As I stated last year, we must make savings and maintain sufficient funds in reserve within the General Fund to keep the finances in a strong state. Disputes, campaigns – both nationally and locally – together with any other unforeseen expenditure should not impact on the running of the Union and should be absorbed by these reserves.

At this point I would like to offer my thanks to the Executive Council and the Finance Sub-Committee for all their work over the past 12 months; all the Head Office staff, in particular Nigel, the accounts manager; and Stuart, for all their work and support; our auditors, Gareth and Ben, who are here with us this morning; and last but certainly not least, our Regional Treasurers for all the work they have carried out over this year during these difficult times, managing our accounts. I move the Statement of Accounts. Thank you. *Applause*

Day One – 17th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Come forward.

A DELEGATE:

President, Conference, just a point of clarity really because I don't want to steal any thunder that we might have regarding the Emergency Resolution. The Firefighter magazine, can we just have it confirm that it cost £210,314? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Will you just bear with us, Conference. Warren is looking through his Firefighter magazine rack!

BRO WARREN GEE (National Treasurer):

Yes, just to confirm that is the cost of the Firefighter magazine. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. We're on Section G, Internal Administration. Paragraph G1, G2, G3. We are now on the Executive Council Policy Statement Elections.

FBU ELECTIONS

Annual Conference 2008 agreed to run all non-statutory elections for National Sectional Officials by postal ballot for a 12 month trial. This trial was extended by Conference 2009 with agreement that a report would be presented to Annual Conference 2011. Unfortunately, the Executive Council can report that the trial has once again been inconclusive.

The Executive Council recommends that the trial period be extended for a further two years or until such time as the Executive Council is able to propose a solution to the problem identified in 2008.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I'll be very brief in moving this Policy Statement. It follows on from previous decisions that we've made going back to 2008. If you recall at the time, we identified that there were a number of difficulties in relation to running work place ballots in National Sectional Elections. As a result of that, we agreed to conduct the trial using postal balloting. Unfortunately, during that period since 2008 we've only actually had one contested Sectional election held. The Executive Council therefore propose that we continue with that trial. The Executive Council will attempt to resolve this difficulty and make recommendations to Conference at the earliest opportunity. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

SIS CAROLE BROWN (B&EMM):

Although the response to the B&EMM elections, which were postal elections, have been quite disappointing the only way to ensure that constituent members will receive a ballot form is to send them to their home addresses. We second the proposal.

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate. No debate? I put the Executive Council Policy Statement to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried*.

I now bring Resolution 72, Canvassing, from London. The Executive Council give it qualified support. London.

Resolution 72 – CANVASSING

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to set up a working party on the possibility of introducing regulated canvassing for elections within the FBU Rule Book.

The Executive Council will then make recommendations with any possible rule changes based on the content of the report to the next Conference.

LONDON

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

President, Conference, just before I start I'd just like to thank you for those kind words reference Mick Shaw. As you're aware, he was a former EC Member from London and a Regional Official. On behalf of the London delegation I would like to thank Conference for the kind words that we've been receiving from the delegations last night and this morning. Thanks very much on their behalf.

Moving on, in the Rule Book, Rule 19 has 7 pages on elections and then Rule 19 here has over 3 pages on what happens if you break the Rule on canvassing. As somebody who has fallen foul of that Rule, probably on more than one occasion, I thought I'd better try to do something about it, as this is my last Conference. I would just like to thank Kevin Brown, wherever you are, thanks for the support, even though we lost. Thanks very much anyway for your support and your sterling efforts.

The Rule Book doesn't really reflect the society we're living in now with the change in communications with email and Twitter (whatever that is), the ability to use

Day One – 17th May

the internet for social networking sites (some of them we shouldn't really go on). We're certainly having problems in London at the moment with the use of Facebook, some people talking to our members and unfortunately we're probably going to find one or two discipline cases coming our way because of that particular networking site. The reason behind it is communication is much easier now. When this Rule was written (I don't know when it was written, to be honest with you) it does not reflect the society that we're living in today on the communications argument. It's farcical that you've got two or three candidates and can't talk to a branch or write to a branch about why they're standing.

I think the Resolution is quite simple in its actual content, but it is going to be quite complex to try to work it out because you've got to have weights and balances and that's why the regulation part is in there. That's the reasoning why we need to make sure that it's a level playing field for everybody concerned. I think every candidate should have the same amount of support, if that is what Conference decides, or ask the EC to try to work out what we are asking for within the Resolution. I think it's clear that it's about getting a report for next Conference (whenever that's going to be). I think the situation is that the Rule on canvassing is out of date and I think it needs to be changed, if not deleted altogether. I move. Thanks very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can we have a seconder, please? Could I also remind Joe that your badge is facing the wrong way; you should have a delegate's badge on, not an official's badge. Some eagle eye has spotted that, Joe, not me.

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

I am seconding Resolution 72. There is not a lot more we can add to what Joe said. I think everyone's had a few problems in the past regarding Brigade and Regional elections. We believe this is the way forward. Regulated canvassing is done in other countries; it's done in other unions so please support. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call the General Secretary to give the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive are urging qualified support for the Resolution. There have been debates on the question of canvassing on several occasions in the past here at Conference but Conference has concluded not to change the canvassing rules. You will recall in fact that the Executive Council commissioned a report on

canvassing back in 2005 which looked at various options. Again unfortunately that debate was inconclusive. So there are difficulties in trying to resolve the issue. Joe is right to raise it. It becomes more difficult as technology changes, mobile phones, text messages and so on have made the difficulties of administering that Rule more complex.

The qualification for the Executive Council is in relation to the working party. Most of you, I am sure, will now know that the Executive Council, as part of our own cost saving measures, has reorganised how we function. We have merged a number of subcommittees into one. There is now what is called the Finance and Administration Committee, and all reorganisation matters have been referred to the FAC (as it's called). Our qualification would be that the working party would be the FAC. The FAC will consider how to seek the views of Brigades, Regions and Sections. With that qualification we are happy to support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Open for debate. No debate. I put Resolution 72 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

We are on Paragraph G4. Yes.

BRO LES SKARRATTS (Merseyside):

President, Conference, I am speaking to Paragraph G4, the Merseyside dispute. We'd just like to put on record a few words, if we may President. As the Annual Report states, the Merseyside membership were balloted on the issue of job cuts and after a successful yes vote of 70%, an overtime ban came into Merseyside and that ban remains in place at the moment, but it's currently suspended pending further talks with the employer.

One important element of the trade dispute that wasn't covered in the Report but the President mentioned it before, related to the unfair dismissal of our Vice Chair, Brother Kevin Hughes. In the two ballots we ran on this issue we again achieved a big yes vote and a high turn out. That ballot and the determined action of the membership led the way for the achievement of the collective agreement that in 2009 we reached. That determined that if Kevin was found to be unfairly dismissed by a tribunal then he would be reinstated. After two years of that struggle and after victory in the Employment Tribunal, and as the President said, Kevin has now been reinstated back into Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. He has had full restoration of all pension rights and full reimbursement of all lost pay.

Without that solidarity comrades, without that yes vote, that agreement would not have been possible to

Day One – 17th May

achieve and Kevin would remain dismissed to this day. That solidarity and the ballot was reported in the press by the chief fire officer, Tony McGurk, as being pointless and needless. Again, I think that displays his in-depth knowledge of industrial relations and tactics of a trade union. Comrades, we are, as a union, the sum of all our parts. In this case the response from the Executive in favour of our strategy was superb I have to say. We thank them for that. We thank Matt and Andy, and, especially given the news, Mick Shaw for sticking by us every step of the way throughout this struggle. We thank the Region, we thank our legal team – Bernie Wentworth, who I know will be here tomorrow, John Benson of Atlantic Chambers (our counsel in this matter), and as ever Doug Christie who we hope to see this week. Most of all, we thank our members on Merseyside for an incredible show of solidarity against all the odds.

As the comrades in London and South Yorkshire have shown Conference, we must show that we have confidence in our members. We must trust our members. Although we must lead the members from time to time, those members will always stay behind us. We must have that confidence in them, especially with the struggles we've got in front of us. With that unity of purpose from us in the room, then the FBU generally is unstoppable. The only thing in our way is the confidence that we have as officials. If we rally behind our members, the members rally behind us, then we have a united FBU. As the President said, we're absolutely unstoppable. It's not jargon, comrades. Unity is Strength. Thanks for your time. Thanks, President. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Les. Sian.

SIS SIAN GRIFFITHS (London):

How old am I getting, I've got to wear glasses! Good morning, Conference, I am speaking to Paragraph G4. Obviously, I'd like to echo a lot of what Les has just said, the thanks and the support that we've got. But primarily what I'd like to say is a massive thank you for the incredible support for our Region's long and bitter dispute which was not just about the change to our start and finish times (which I know a lot of you have also gone through) but it was essentially about the despicable sacking of over 5,500 firefighters to achieve that aim. This is what we successfully fought against and on 5 May our next start and finish times of 13½ hour days and 10½ hour nights were introduced. It was an achievement on our part, without incurring casualties. London members lost over £500,000 in unfair stoppages, which we are challenging, and strike pay. Thankfully, our hardship fund, fed by the generosity of our incredible membership, was able to sustain the losses, and money

was donated not just nationally or by individuals but internationally, which was absolutely incredible.

However, we are now in deficit, so if you have a spare few bob, we would be most grateful to take it off your hands! As you're aware, several London members were suspended during the dispute including me. I'm very pleased to announce that all the others have been reinstated after a stage 3 wind your neck in, don't ever do it again hearing. However, it has been decided that my offences are that heinous I am to remain suspended until my stage 3 hearing, which I have been informed informally will happen in early July if we can get everybody together.

Whilst being suspended has its huge bonuses such as the extraordinary love and support that has continually been shown by FBU members, my family and my friends (and it has been incredible) it enabled me to continue my fight back against this vendetta against me for basically being a trade union member and daring to speak out, which is what I've done for the last 26+ years, also thanks to my suspension my garden is looking its best ever and my bedding plants (which normally die on the side because I never have time to get them in) are now blooming. My daughter, who has always wished for a stay at home mum, is glad to see the back of me this week. In reality, the suspension takes its toll as it's always hanging over you, and the thought is always there that you've got to do something about it, and what is going to happen to you.

But it makes me more determined too, with your continued support, to do the right thing. I know that whatever happens I won't lose. Thank you, comrades. You are amazing. Yours in solidarity. On behalf of London, thank you for all the support you've given us. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO KIERAN DAVIS (Essex):

President, Conference, in June 2009 Essex FBU members embarked upon what is to date the longest running lawful trade dispute ever registered with Essex Fire Authority. The aims of the members were clear: stop the wilful destruction of the Fire Service as we knew it by a senior management team who displayed total disregard for not only our members' safety but for the safety of the public. We returned a fantastic yes vote, and although not all our members voted, and not all voted yes, what has been displayed within Essex is high on two years of unwavering 100% support for the industrial action by members and some non members alike. For this our Essex brothers and sisters should be congratulated.

In response to this lawful action we have seen FBU officials employed by Essex Fire and Rescue continually attacked through not only the withdrawal of facilities but

Day One – 17th May

personally and publicly criticised using internal and external media. The most outrageous display of senior management's behaviour and total contempt for the FBU and democracy as we know it came when one member was summarily dismissed, three were suspended, and another 40+ were placed on discipline charges simply for writing to their local MPs, Councillors and Fire Authority members opposing the cuts and suggesting that money could be better spent on the front line. Following a further political campaign by Essex members, the sacked member was reinstated and the suspended three were returned to the workplace. But many members remain with written and final written warnings on their personal record files.

This is the current regime of fear, intimidation and bullying of our members and officials under which we are operating in Essex. I'd like to finish by urging our members to continue standing up for the Service they believe in and stand firm against the propaganda and slurs against the FBU, all of its members and officials. You are making a difference. Thanks also to our Region and EC Member for their unwavering patience and support. Thank you Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President, and thank you to the three delegates for drawing Conference's attention to those disputes. I would ask people to read the section in G4 on those industrial disputes in Essex, Merseyside and London. They are unfortunately a sign of the times, the sorts of attacks that we're facing up and down the country. I think hopefully, it is a message to our employers about the sort of response they can expect from our members at local level when they are attacked at local level.

I just wanted to comment on a number of aspects of it. On the London dispute you will see that there is the reference, for example, to the interim injunction when we got taken to court in November in the middle of the London dispute. There were a number of alarming aspects of that dispute. You will recall that the employer brought in a private strike breaking firm, AssetCo, to bring in so-called emergency fire crew, known as "scabs" to most people, to try to break our strike. There was an interesting debate on picketing which I know takes place every time we have industrial disputes. It was interesting to see how the mood of London members changed in relation to picketing. Originally huge opposition: we won't be picketing. As soon as people found out that scabs were going to be bussed into our fire stations and working from our fire stations, there was a huge reaction to that, and people said: no

they will not be coming on to our fire stations. It was like stepping back in time with spontaneous, obviously, flying pickets organised, people driving all over the capital to prevent the AssetCo strike breakers from getting on to our fire stations, with enormous success. Of course, the down side of that was that we ended up with an injunction against us in the High Court. There are some things we need to think about for the future.

Another aspect that has obviously come out very clearly is the question of victimisation, mentioned in relation to all three of those disputes. It is alarming when our employers seek to identify and target individual activists. It's for a very clear purpose. They pick on individuals to try to send a warning to the rest of our members: put your head over the parapet and we'll take it off. Our response has to be that if they go for any of our members we will stick by them 100%, right until the end. We've won some remarkable victories on that score. The Kevin Hughes case has been mentioned, but it is a remarkable result in the Employment Tribunal, a remarkable result to have a comrade dismissed in that manner and then to win that. I will remind Conference also of the Steve Godward case. Nine years ago Steve Godward was unfairly dismissed, but at the end of that, with the full support of this Union, we won full back pay, full pension rights and reinstatement, and Steve Godward is now retired on his pension. *Applause*

I think there's a message for our employers. I think this Union's got an outstanding record that we should be proud of, that we will stick by anyone you try to victimise, come what may, 100% until the end and we will win, as we did in Kevin's case, as we did in Steve Godward's case, and as we will in Sian Griffiths' case as well. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference adjourned for tea break. Be back at twenty past eleven.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

Comrades, can you come to order. Take your seats, please. Conference, I did note that you stole an extra three minutes there. I'll have that off you by the end of the week! We're on Paragraph G5. Sorry Steve. A brief report from Standing Orders first.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Following the decision Conference made this morning regarding the alterations to Standing Orders, a new set of Standing Orders as

Day One – 17th May

Amended 2011 has been circulated. In line with that, I now inform Conference of the changes to the Tellers and Scrutineers list previously circulated. Tellers are: Graeme Birtley, Fife; Russell King, Tyne & Wear. Scrutineers are: Keith Naylor, South Yorkshire; John Ripley, Kent. Regarding delegates, can I inform Conference that Pat Carberry (LGBT) is a delegate. Conference has been circulated with a leaflet informing them of a fringe meeting, Anti Cuts Campaigning, tonight at 5.30 pm at the Royal Clifton Hotel. Please note the leaflet states the Richmond Room; it is now going to be held in the Osborne Room 2. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Can that Standing Orders report be agreed? *Agreed.* Sorry, there's a question. Come forward.

A DELEGATE:

Just a quick one, Steve. You've referred to the amended Standing Orders of Conference. I don't know if it's just my copy but 26-30 seem to be missing.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Is it just Andy's copy? Excellent. Thanks for that. I will deal with the person responsible severely. Paul Woolstenholmes, my office.

THE PRESIDENT:

The report has been agreed. Thank you very much, Andy, for that. We are on Paragraph G5, G6. Sorry.

A DELEGATE:

This is about G5. (No recording) *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph G6, G7, G8, G9, G10. Yes, come forward, comrade.

BRO ROGER MOORE (West Midlands):

I'd just like an assurance really on the Firefighter magazine because my postman's getting a bit worn out delivering five at once! I notice that Warren had said that it's costing £50,000 more this year in communication. I know on the ONC we're running a little bit of a sweep as to who can have the most magazines delivered in one go. Currently it's running at six to one address. In our Brigade Committee I'm getting five, the Brigade Secretary is getting five and six magazines to the same address to the same person. I just want an assurance

that this is going to stop if we've got money shortages. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, Roger, for drawing that to our attention. I think the issue has been raised with myself and now with the research and communications team. I think there has been some sort of glitch which we are looking into so that the duplication of sending copies of Firefighter to officials should cease. What I would say is that if it does happen then people need to raise it through the structures. If we're not told it's happening then obviously we can't put it right. It will be put right.

In terms of the costs of Firefighter, if you look at the Annual Report, the costs of Firefighter have reduced by about £10,000 over the past year, not increased. The communications budget is different from the production of Firefighter costs.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I'll instruct the Officers' EC Member to have the costs of the Firefighter reimbursed and just make a cheque payable to me or cash, it's all accepted. Thanks for that though.

We're on Paragraph G11, G12, G13. I call Resolution 64, Retained Duty System Contribution Rate, Cumbria. Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 64 – RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM CONTRIBUTION RATE

This Conference notes that some Retained Duty System (RDS) members pay Retained subscriptions as set out in Rule 5 (1) (f), yet are working as many positive hours as Wholtime Duty System (WDS) members.

This Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to amend Rule 5 (1) (f), to state that those RDS members who work fully or partly WDS shifts pay contributions to reflect those additional hours.

CUMBRIA

BRO DEAN GREENWAY (Cumbria):

President, Conference, this is not just about the money. The intent behind this Resolution is quite simple: to align contributions with the appropriate rate of pay. As you are probably aware, there are basically three rates of the weekly contribution. Full time members pay 1% of

Day One – 17th May

competent rate of pay, Jobshare half a per cent of that, and Retained Duty System one third plus 3% of Wholetime contributions. The problems in Cumbria that led us to bring this Resolution to Conference are basically short term reduced hour contracts, job losses, crewing shortfalls and alternate or jump crew in. Yes, we're washing our dirty laundry at Conference.

Some of our members and some who are not (which does have a bearing on the situation) were working, rightly or wrongly, as many positive hours and sometimes more as Wholetime or regular, on additional hours above the Grey Book Retained Duty System. We accept to achieve our members paying contributions to reflect these additional hours could be complex. Is it fair that some of our members that work as a regular in one Brigade, Retained Duty System in another and also work additional hours on top of these, pay the same contributions as the regular 42 hour week member?

The situation described has changed as time has gone on and our county's proposals to meet the government spending cuts adds another dimension. Jobs have gone, crewing levels cut, four person crewing and alternate crewing are now a reality. I said at the beginning it wasn't just about the money. We could at least have made a few quid along the way. We understand work is ongoing on this issue and remit Resolution 64 to the hands of the EC. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks for that, comrade. We are on Paragraph G14, G15. Yes.

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

Mr President, Conference, I just want to take this opportunity here to reiterate what we've known for some time now. There's a common misconception around Fire Brigades around the country that you cannot be an officer and also a member of the Fire Brigades Union. That myth needs to be dispelled quite categorically and it is by the ONC. We currently have two area managers serving on the ONC. That is proof that the FBU should not be in any way detrimental to anybody's promotion within the Fire and Rescue Service. I can tell you now that the ONC will be fighting, as long as we are alive, to make sure that this myth is dispelled. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph G16. Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks President. Conference, organising has been a common word across the UK Fire Service for the last

few years. It's not a new initiative, it's something we've been doing for 90 years. The difference is we're facing a new type of enemy now and I think we've got to adjust the way we're organising our people. Since 2001 we have seen reductions in membership. A lot of this is down to the stealth attacks on establishments. As Warren said earlier about the Union's income coming mainly from subscriptions, we've got to step up on the organising to make sure in the future we protect the Union from further cuts. This Resolution is asking to widen the membership to non Grey Book. But we've also got to be aware that there's a lot of people out there who are in the Grey Book who we could be recruiting. We put a paper to the EC which had some fag packet workings out, and we worked out there was almost £3 million potential subscriptions out there from people who are already on Grey Book conditions. I know we're not going to recruit all these people, but if we recruited a third of them, that's £1 million a year which would go some way to resolving some of the issues we've got.

On a positive note, the RDS, where Daniel has been working since 2007, has shown an improvement. We've identified 730 new members since 2007 which is praise indeed. But it's not just down to Daniel, it's down to people who have been working with Daniel and encouraged him to come in and work with them. It's led to the RDS being the only duty system which has actually improved since 2007.

We want to ensure membership involvement, we want to ensure that we've got a rep on every station. What we've got to do is we've got to know where our members are and we've got to map them as well. Daniel's out there on his stall and he's got a couple of new posters which I encourage you to go and see him about. They're not just about RDS recruitment, they're about recruitment for all sections of the workforce. So if you can just take your time to go and have a quick word with Daniel, look at some of the organising strategies that have been prepared by people who have been working with him these years. They are not complex documents, they are simple documents giving a plan for the year ahead and giving some ideas on how we can recruit and retain members a little bit better.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sean. Conference, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to a new award for organising by the Fire Brigades Union. I call upon the General Secretary to outline that award.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, Alan. If I can just start Conference by echoing some of Sean's comments about the importance of organising. We've debated some of these issues around

Day One – 17th May

membership, about mapping our membership, around density levels and so on at Conferences over the past two or three years. As Sean said, it is something that has gone on throughout the history of the union but we are trying to make it more systematic, organised and structured. We have very high density levels in the Fire and Rescue Service. Among Wholetime firefighters one of the highest density levels of any industry in the UK and we should be extremely proud of that and work hard to protect it. Density levels are less high among RDS employees, so there is room for work to be done. There are nevertheless gaps in Wholetime membership here and there. So I think organising and recruitment is something that needs to be taken fully into the heart of all the work we do. I would encourage people to engage in that discussion with Sean and with Daniel around the organising agenda.

We're going to have the reorganisation. It's been referred to already. You've heard the financial issues discussed by Warren this morning. Obviously, overwhelmingly the only source of income we have is membership contributions. One way of increasing income is by increasing membership. I really would urge people to take that debate on board.

In order to try to highlight the role of our organisers we've introduced this new award sponsored by UIA Insurance. It's the first time we've done it. There were a number of candidates for the FBU Organiser of the Year. The eventual winner was Sarah Errett from South Yorkshire. Sarah is a Control member in South Yorkshire. She became the Branch Secretary at Control in South Yorkshire during the very bitter dispute in 2009. Subsequently she became heavily involved in the campaign against Regionalisation of Fire Controls at a Regional level, including the work around TUPE and so on. In terms of recruitment and organising she became the Brigade Membership Secretary in 2010 and has really taken that work forward in South Yorkshire, including updating the membership data and introducing a thorough and respected mapping process.

Sarah isn't here today at Conference, unfortunately. But I believe that Graham Wilkinson is going to come up and receive the award on Sarah's behalf. Could you acknowledge Sarah's award as Organiser of the Year.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

I call Resolution 63, Review of Union Contribution Rates, Central. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 63 – REVIEW OF UNION CONTRIBUTION RATES

FBU members are facing a possible pay freeze and a possible pension contribution rate rise, therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out

a review of ordinary members union contribution rates and the effects on the Fire Brigades Union if the Union contribution rate for full time members were to be reduced from 1% of a firefighter (competent) rate of pay to 0.75% of a firefighter (competent) rate of pay.

The review should be reported to Regional Committees by 1/12/11.

CENTRAL

BRO GORDON McQUADE (Central):

President, Conference, we've been asked to remit this Resolution which, after discussions, we're happy to do so. My understanding is that union contributions will be looked at as part of a wider review of the membership in the future, so if we're given that assurance we're happy to remit it.

The reason for the Resolution was simple really. We've recently had three members leave the Union because they say they simply can't afford £25 a month any more. Everything's gone up, pay freeze, all that kind of thing. So it's to make you aware that people may start leaving the Fire Brigades Union just simply because they can't afford £25 a month. All we were asking in this Resolution was a review of contribution rates just to make sure they were set at the right levels. We weren't actually asking for the contribution rates to be reduced. As I say, we're happy to remit with an assurance that the contribution rates will be looked at in the future.

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean Starbuck to give that assurance.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks for that, Gordon. The assurance is there and we've already been doing some work on this. What we've got to understand is that all our revenue comes from subscriptions so we can't just write off 25% like that. What we have been looking at, we've been looking at some sort of initiatives. Some of these initiatives are around different rates for people on development as firefighters, people on different rates when they're on trainee.

Thanks for remitting it. We are going to look at this. If there's any feasibility study on membership – and I know it's a Resolution which is coming on later on – then a big part of that feasibility study will be contribution rates.

THE PRESIDENT:

I call Resolution 67, Membership Recruitment, Cheshire. The Executive Council oppose. Correction, Conference, the Executive Council now support. Stewart Kinnon, see me in my room.

Day One – 17th May

Resolution 67 – MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Conference notes the work carried out by officials in recruiting new members into the FBU, but as the workforce nationally has been reduced, this is having a detrimental effect on membership numbers and the consequential drop in subscriptions which affects the finances.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to make the membership application process more accessible to new members and explore ways of expanding the membership.

CHESHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

President, Conference, this Resolution is more about improving membership density than recruiting from non Grey Book Fire Service employees. We believe that we should dedicate more effort into a recruitment strategy and build on the good work that has been done by Daniel Giblin and others up and down the country. Gone are the days when a new recruit would turn up at training school and the training instructor would say: oh, by the way, you need to join the Union. Far from it now. They're more likely to put barriers in our way. Getting in to see the recruits is difficult. At best it's during lunchtime. Ten minutes is all we're spared, some Brigades not at all. We accept you can't beat face to face when it comes to signing members up. The reason sometimes given for not being in the Union is: I've never been asked. It's not all about recruits. Members continuously question the value of being a member of a trade union. There is a job of work to be done convincing members that have not had a direct need for assistance from the FBU that their money is well spent.

Within the reorganisation paper there is to be an enhanced role for the Brigade Membership Secretary and the EC are to prepare guidance on the new role and responsibilities. I would suggest that recruitment is top of those responsibilities. Currently, there is nothing in the Rule Book under the duties of the Membership Secretary that it is his or her responsibility to maximise recruitment. It shouldn't just be the duty of the Brigade organiser; it should be incumbent on every official, every member to be constantly reminded that we should all be working towards an increase in membership. For that we need the tools. There should be a national recruitment DVD that is regularly updated and has the facility to include local Brigade information. The Brigade organiser should have a database of members and non members to assist with targeted recruitment.

Our recruit packs are very good, but they should be available online, and again information should be regularly

reviewed and updated. I did a trawl of trade union websites and we are in a minority of one trade union that does not include a section headed "Join" or "How to join the Union". Almost every home page has the facility to join online. It jumps out at you as soon you log on. Those websites that do have this facility to join online, then just one click on the homepage and instantly the application form comes up that can be printed off. Some unions are offering gimmicks to entice applications to join such as "join today and the first few months are free"; "join a friend, enter a prize draw". We are not suggesting we do that, as we believe the reasons for joining, and the service the FBU provides is more than enough to convince firefighters and control staff that they need to be lifelong members of the FBU. We do, however, need to redouble our efforts with recruitment. Membership should be a standing item on Brigade Committee agendas and be part of reports of Regional Committees. We urge the EC to take the lead, make member recruitment top priority. Support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* Open for debate.

BRO SIMON JONES (CSNC):

President, Conference, we are supporting the Resolution from Cheshire. The CSNC are only too aware of membership dropping in the fire control rooms over the last seven years. We've had the fire control project hanging over our heads, jobs were not safe, and our members kept asking the old chestnut "what's the Union doing for me?". We had the introduction of backfill staff – some joined, most didn't. We saw people on temporary contracts having their contracts constantly updated, extended, and so again staff felt that they did not need to join the Union. With these changes about to happen in every Fire Service due to budget cuts, we need to ensure that membership is strong and membership is in the majority of our branches. The CSNC has been working with Daniel Giblin, the FBU organiser, over the past four months on a document to encourage membership in control rooms called "Organising the Front Line". We had hoped that this document would be launched today but it will be coming to branches soon. We must ensure we increase our membership and protect the Union. Please support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

If I could I'd like to reiterate the EC support on this. It really is one of the most important issues we deal with, recruiting members and retaining members. I'd like to

Day One – 17th May

thank Dave for bringing it really. Some of the points he raised in his speech were the points we've been raising as well.

I know there is a problem with online joining and it's something we are looking at. We've got to get round a couple of things in the Rule Book and we've already looked at maybe having an online situation where, as an interim position we have an online position where we say: would you like to join the FBU, then you're contacted by somebody.

Dave also touched on the role of the FBU organiser which is going to be a very, very important role. I think we've got to make every opportunity available to the Brigade organisers. We've got to tell them exactly what we expect from them, we've got to give them a role map, and we've also got to give them the training. These are things we will be working on.

This is not just down to Daniel Giblin. I know Daniel's name is getting mentioned quite a lot. This is mainly down to the officials. Daniel is one person. He only really functions well when he gets involved with the Region and with the Brigade Committee. If you keep encouraging Daniel to get involved and keep assisting him in his work, then I'm sure we'll get to where we want to be.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sean. Paragraph G17. Resolution 68, Political Fund, Northern Ireland. The EC give qualified support. Sorry, Conference, the idiot who is now your President didn't take a vote on Resolution 67. I do apologise. It'll never happen again! Stewart Kinnon, don't bother coming to my room at lunchtime! Resolution 67. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Paragraph G17 Resolution 68, Political Fund, Northern Ireland.

Resolution 68 – POLITICAL FUND

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to launch a campaign illustrating the benefits of the Political Fund with a view to the recruitment of all members. This campaign should commence as soon as practicable.

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO SEAN PAUL BAILEY (Northern Ireland):

President, Conference, you may think this is an unusual Resolution since it's coming from Region 2, but given the political history of Northern Ireland I hope this is understandable.

Sisters, brothers, for many years this Union has been a strong political union. Our recent march on Parliament and our recent joining of the anti cuts demonstration are a clear example of just how politically aware and how politically active we all can be.

But Conference, why is it important? Why is the Political Fund so important? Let me tell you something. The FBU have many friends in Parliament across the entire political spectrum. Your Political Fund is not used to prop up any Parties, nor is it used to look after faceless politicians. Conference, what it is used for is to help your reps, your officials to carry out this vitally important work. When we need to speak to our politicians and because we are the decent well mannered people that we are, we would like to provide them with a cup of tea. Those very tea bags have to come from the Political Fund. When we have to write to our elected Members of Parliament to tell them how to do their jobs correctly the price of that stamp must come from the Political Fund.

We in Region 2 strongly believe that the members of this Union should be made aware of those facts. So let us launch the campaign. Let us construct this campaign and let us get stronger. Help us instruct our politicians on how to protect and strengthen this Union. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? Merseyside.

BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 68, Political Fund. Trade union legislation makes clear the right of unions to pursue the interests of their members through political activities, although when a union does so the law defines many ordinary campaigns, such as campaigns for better laws, better pensions, better public services and better health & safety laws, as having a political purpose and the cost must be met from a separate Political Fund and not from the General Fund. It's important to remember that the Political Fund belongs to us all and is there so that at all levels our members can engage in with the political process. The FBU cannot operate in a vacuum as the interests and welfare of our members are affected by events elsewhere including the state of the economy, the policies of local and central government, and legal provisions governing, for example, our employment.

The financial crisis has put massive demands on public services. There are cuts to many services and the threat of privatisation is everywhere. Politics within the UK are more turbulent now than they have been for many years, with the Tories back in power and the racist BNP seeking to raise its profile. The public mood is fluid and

Day One – 17th May

complex. Many people are rightly angry with the bankers and financial sector. Many people are expressing cynicism about the political system itself. Fuelled by the right wing press and media there is even stoked resentment towards the public sector workers. Now, more than ever, we need to be able to engage with and influence public opinion. Now, more than ever, we need to be able to engage with and influence political party positions and policy making processes to protect our members, and promote the values of the Fire Brigades Union. To do this we need an increase in the Political Fund membership to enable us to undertake campaigning activities in a concerted effort to shape the country's political decisions in the coming years. Attacks on many fronts require defence on many fronts and that costs. Support Resolution 68. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean Starbuck to give the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The EC are happy to support this with a qualification. The qualification is, I think it's important to emphasise while Northern Ireland have raised an issue, this issue might not be widespread throughout the UK; it might just be an issue which is specific to certain Regions. It's something we're going to have to investigate. So the first thing we're doing is investigating where there are shortfalls in people taking up the political levy, and from that point we'll be looking at what sort of campaign we have to run. We've got no problem putting something out which highlights the benefits of being in the Political Fund.

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. I put Resolution 68, Political Fund, Northern Ireland to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried*.

South Yorkshire have withdrawn Resolution 69, National Fund, with the right to speak. I now call South Yorkshire.

Resolution 69 – NATIONAL FUND

Conference demands that a £1.00 levy be deducted monthly from all FBU members to be collected and managed in a central fund.

This fund then could be utilised by its members either through its Brigade or Regional structures to help mitigate hardship felt by its members during times of strife brought on by lawful industrial disputes.

An understanding must exist whereby, any monies paid to members under the circumstances described

above, must be paid back into the fund upon a successful legal challenge or otherwise, where the money deducted is refunded to them from their employing Authority.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO KEITH NAYLOR (South Yorkshire):

President, Conference, withdrawing Resolution 69, National Fund. We would like to thank Standing Orders for being given the right to speak on our Resolution. Before I start, though, I'd just like to remind you the President has asked us to tell everybody that he was a canny footballer back in the day. He said I wouldn't say this, so I have!

Reviewing our Resolution, in hindsight it was a well intended aspiration. It was based upon our recent experience. We took the view that a fund of this nature would provide a support mechanism (some would call it a war chest) for all members being asked to take the ultimate sanction of strike action and suffer the subsequent hardships. However, on reflection in these times of austerity we have reconsidered our position. Given the additional financial burden this Resolution would place on our members, the logistics and cost of managing such a fund, and the question of legality of maintaining such a strike fund/war chest, our members have decided to withdraw this Resolution at this time with a view to presenting a more robust Resolution at a future Conference. Thank you Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Keith. We're on Paragraph G18, Paragraph G19, G20, G21. I now call Resolution 65, Northern Ireland, seconded by Humberside with the Amendment from Merseyside. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 65 – FBU MEMBERSHIP

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a feasibility study with a view to facilitating access to membership of the Fire Brigades Union to all employees of UK Fire and Rescue Services, the outcome of this study to be reported to Annual Conference 2012.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Amendment

Last line delete 'Annual Conference 2012' insert 'the next Conference of the Fire Brigades Union'.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO DAVID NICHOL (Northern Ireland):

President, Conference we accept the Amendment from Merseyside. Conference, you will all be too aware that

Day One – 17th May

uniform membership within the UK Fire and Rescue Service has been in decline for a number of years. The decline of uniform personnel within the Service has certainly impacted upon membership of our Union. Conference, we all must recognise that it is our membership who provide the finances that keeps the Fire Brigades Union in being.

Many jobs that were previously within the uniformed domain have now changed to non uniform. We all know about the cuts agenda and the growing threat to uniform Fire and Rescue Service jobs throughout the UK. Conference, Northern Ireland are not looking to rush into anything, but we do now believe that the time has come to take stock of our membership situation and to give careful consideration to our future. We believe that many issues will require analysis before any decision to broaden our membership base or not is taken. Factors such as Green Book conditions, negotiation rights, membership dues, to name but a few, will have to be weighed up carefully. Conference, we're not naïve, we know that there may be risks associated with any broadening of our membership base. There may be some unions out there who have predatory intent upon our members. So we believe we need to go into any process with an open mind and an eye on our opposition. But Conference, there may be challenges; there are also opportunities.

We in Northern Ireland regularly represent non uniformed Fire and Rescue staff at discipline and grievances. We gain benefit from that in the willingness to support the Fire Brigades Union, providing us with information and assistance. We've also successfully represented non uniform staff elsewhere in more complex Green Book matters such as job evaluation. There is an interest in Northern Ireland in taking up full FBU membership on the part of members of non uniformed personnel. There is an interest in Northern Ireland from airport firefighters indicating their preference to join the Fire Brigades Union.

So, Conference, there are opportunities, there are risks. To properly inform any future decision, whatever that may be, we believe it is timely to carry out a feasibility study in this context. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? Merseyside.

BRO RICHARD WALKER (Humberside):

Conference, President, we are seconding the Resolution. There is not a lot to add to what's been said already. Obviously, there are potential problems with this. For example, will other unions see it as the FBU poaching their members? Will our officials have the skills

to be able to deal with the new range of problems? Will any extra income be offset by the extra outgoings caused by all the extra work?

I'm sure members in this hall can think of many more problems to add to this list, but before they all rush up here and enlighten us, I would just like you to look again at the Resolution. All it asks for is a study into the feasibility of opening the membership up. I'm sure members will have ample opportunity during the course of this study to put forward their opinions. I ask them to look at the Resolution and instruct the EC to carry out the study. Support the Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I call on Merseyside to move their Amendment. *Formally moved.* Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* Executive Council support. I'll open the debate. OK, I now put the Amendment from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against please show. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 65 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

We are on Paragraph G22, G23, G24, G25, G27. Can I now ask delegates to turn to Page 4 of the Programme of Business, Resolution 73, Annual Conference Organisation, Bedfordshire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 73 – ANNUAL CONFERENCE ORGANISATION

This Conference applauds the work that is done not only by the FBU, but also by the wider union movement. However, there is a concern about the amount of time at our Annual Conference that is allocated to issues away from the Fire Service and rank and file members.

Therefore, this Conference instructs that all subsequent Conferences are scheduled in a way that international issues are put to the final session of Conference and also ensure that if any session overruns and UK Fire Service issues, which would normally be put to the end of Conference (if time allows), are placed before the international issues session at the end of Conference.

This should also be done in conjunction with all business published in the original Final Agenda, that has been through the complete Branch and Brigade Committee deliberation process.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Day One – 17th May

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

Bedfordshire recognises the efforts put in by the President to the running order of this year's Conference. I am here today to move our Resolution 73, the organisation of Conference business. This Resolution sought mainly to deal with business of an international emergency nature that would take precedence over firefighter business that is on the agenda list but may not get heard as a result. Unfortunately we are in a minority. I look around and I see that there are many people in this room that are activists. They take the time out of their personal lives to raise awareness of issues for a wide variety of causes that occur around the world such as the Palestinian causes. There are people in this room, like myself, that take on feats or challenges to raise awareness for these issues. We are the minority.

For the majority of our brothers and sisters around the mess table the most important personal issues are those of their families' futures, this includes their pay and pensions which are intrinsically linked, and jobs. This is not to say that they do not care about what happens around the rest of the world, or are not deeply saddened by some of the travesties that occur. But it is human nature to react to what happens to you personally.

Last year I sat here as an observer listening to Emergency Resolutions read out on issues as "Help Haiti". Towards the end of the last year a young man stood to move his Brigade's Resolution to half an audience, and those that were left, were busy packing away their stuff. This year alone we could have international emergency resolutions on Egypt, Fukushima, Christchurch, and the ongoing sagas in Libya and Syria. If a Resolution went through to and was voted on at a Brigade Committee and made it through the stringent rules of Standing Orders to make it on a preliminary agenda list and final agenda list, this is good. For example, this year's agenda again sees a request for the Executive Council to work with our political allies, Resolution 48, with regard to Palestinian emergency workers. Haiti, however, is still in a mess but there is no sign of a Resolution being put forward by a Branch in any Brigade or Section. With Conference already looking to be held every two years, a dwindling membership, and an ever increasing need for aid around the globe, something needs to be put in place whereby we deal with the issues of our members as they are brought up through the Branch meetings and voted on at Committee meetings, so that they are heard and voted for here on the Conference floor with our full attention, or we risk losing their support.

We are elected and are here to serve the membership and not to serve ourselves. We are the minority. If this were not the case then there would be many people vying to come here each year. The Bedfordshire

delegation sees that the Union is at an important crossroads for its future with a potential for battles up ahead against this current government. The time for unity and strength among our membership is now. Only by sorting out our own house can we effectively deal with these emergencies as they arise in solidarity. Bedfordshire calls for Conference to prioritise firefighter business ahead of Emergency Resolutions of an international nature. I move our Resolution 73. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that Resolution seconded? *Formally seconded.* I'll open it up for debate. Anybody? Yes, Jo.

SIS JO BYRNE (NWC):

I am speaking in opposition to Resolution 73. President, Conference, the FBU has a proud history of solidarity with workers in struggle across the globe, one it shares with the whole of the UK Labour Movement. Over the years we have extended the hand of friendship to workers and trade unions abroad, and they too have reciprocated with support to the FBU and FBU members when we needed it most. Sian Griffiths outlined this, this morning, that London Region are living proof of the hand of friendship from abroad. At a national, regional and local level FBU members and officials are active in campaigning on issues from trade union and human rights to poverty, independence struggles, HIV/AIDs and global peace and disarmament. We are affiliated to, amongst others, Cuba Solidarity, Justice for Colombia and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Our international policy is determined by Annual Conference. Yes, that's us, comrades, by debating Resolutions brought by Branches, Brigades and Sections. Surely every Resolution which makes the order paper is entitled to an equal chance of debate regardless of whether it is about an international issue or a UK Fire and Rescue Service one. Every Resolution will have been debated, voted on and ultimately agreed by either a Brigade Committee or a Sectional AGM. It is also worthwhile noting at this point that 22 Resolutions were withdrawn from the order paper this morning and not one of these related to international issues.

If our President keeps order and ensures that speakers are timely, both from the platform and the Conference floor (which I'm certain he will) then every Resolution on the agenda will be heard and debated upon equally. It saddens me when I hear members and officials saying that rank and file members don't care about international issues. They clearly do. Look at the work carried out in Region 1 for the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Apart from the regular Annual Conference fund raising quiz nights, remember the eight Nablus firefighters funded and brought to the UK to receive intensive training in Dundee (which is twinned with Nablus) and Manchester.

Day One – 17th May

Think about the self funded expeditions to Palestine embarked on by Region 13 members, not only at personal expense but also personal risk, in an attempt to show support to our fellow emergency service workers who put their lives at risk daily trying to save others.

I could go on, but in the interest of fairness I guess the President will be calling time on me. I will finish with a famous statement attributed to Pastor Martin Niemoller in the late 1940s which roughly translates as follows:

“First they came for the communists and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn’t speak out because I wasn’t a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no-one left to speak out for me.” Bear these words in mind Conference next time one of your colleagues complains about the support we give to our international brothers and sisters, many of whom are at risk of death just because they belong to a trade union. Because if we don’t stand up and show support for them when they need it, who will help us in our time of need? Please join the National Women’s Committee in opposing this Resolution.

Applause

BRO JAMES SCOTT (Strathclyde):

I would be a liar to say that I’ve not heard the same argument in the station that my comrade on the left here has spoken about. I dare say everybody has heard that argument. But let’s use that argument in that discussion to educate members and to point out the proud traditions of the working class movement, the proud traditions of the Fire Brigades Union, engaging with people, engaging with international issues. We get support internationally from all over, so when their people need our support what we are going to say – we’re more interested in our own small, individualistic issues? They are very important, but so is the international. Please oppose. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Any more for debate? I call the General Secretary to give the Executive Council’s opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council are opposing the Resolution, although we have considered what the issues are which have motivated Bedfordshire to bring it. I think there is some confusion in the Resolution between international issues and emergency business for Conference. The Resolution refers to prioritising Fire Service issues above international matters in the order of Conference business, but clearly, as this year’s agenda shows, there may well be international matters

which have come through Branch and Brigade Committee structures to come here to Conference. What we couldn’t do is to prioritise the decisions of certain Brigade Committees over others. All Resolutions submitted in accordance with the Standing Orders of Conference have equal status, so the implication of the Bedfordshire Resolution is that those Brigade Committees who had submitted international matters as part of their Conference business actually would receive a lower priority than those who had decided not to submit such matters. So we think there is a confusion in there.

The comrade in moving made reference to Emergency Resolutions. Certainly Conference will recall that a couple of years ago there was some quite considerable debate about the number of Emergency Resolutions which had been submitted and which did in turn push other business to the end of Conference. I believe that matter has actually been addressed by Standing Orders and I think the discipline of Conference is reflected in there. So we don’t accept that the problem is there on the scale which it might have been on one occasion in the past.

We don’t think the Resolution is necessary or workable. I would ask comrades, including the Bedfordshire comrades, to think about this. What would we do if there was a major emergency internationally while this Conference was in session? I would hope that we would have something to say if there was another 9/11, if there was another war. I would hope that we would see that as a major international issue on which this Conference should discuss and make our views known. So we don’t think the Resolution is necessary, nor do we think it’s workable. I urge opposition.

THE PRESIDENT:

Bedfordshire right of reply.

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

With regard to the previous two speakers, the point we were trying to highlight is that if it came from a Branch, voted on and then taken to a Brigade Committee, it forms part of the agenda list and part of our business. Where there has been concern is that things happen of an international nature as an emergency after the cut off date then get wedged in and bump other stuff off the agenda list at the end of the day. This year, I’ve already congratulated the President on his running order and his commitment to the service. That’s all.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks for that. I put Resolution 73, Annual Conference Organisation from Bedfordshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That *falls*.

Day One – 17th May

Section E, AIF 2010. Section F, Legal Report. I now call Resolution 51 with Amendment from Bedfordshire. Resolution 51, Driving through Red Traffic Lights from Essex. Qualified support from the Executive Council and qualified support for the amendment.

Resolution 51 – DRIVING THROUGH RED TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Conference is concerned at the apparent expectation of some Fire & Rescue Services that their employees should drive through red traffic lights when proceeding to an emergency call. Conference is further concerned that Fire & Rescue Authorities then hide behind the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 and Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 and refuse to provide legal representation to emergency vehicle drivers when an accident occurs and criminal proceedings follow.

Therefore Conference calls upon:

- *Brigade Committees to raise the matter locally with a view to ensuring all relevant staff instructions and driver training make it plain that drivers should stop at red traffic lights on all occasions and only proceed in accordance with the minor exemptions of the law;*
- *The Executive Council to urgently research the current entitlement to state funded legal aid alongside the merits and potential costs of extending the FBU's legal services to include legal representation for members who drive emergency vehicles at work.*

ESSEX

Amendment

Insert third bullet point:

- *For the Executive Council to raise the matter at the NJC such that appropriate provisions may be jointly agreed with the employers, and then for joint representations to be made to government for appropriate exemptions to be made to the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004. These appropriate exemptions should properly support emergency workers who are trained and required to drive an emergency vehicle as a part of their contract of employment to 999 emergencies. The exemptions should permit the employer to fund full legal representation for their employee up to and including any further appeal.*

BEDFORDSHIRE

BRO KIERAN DAVIS (Essex):

President, Conference, Essex support Bedfordshire's Amendment. There have been a number of high profile

and serious accidents over recent years which have brought to the fore the argument regarding emergency response drivers proceeding through red traffic lights when proceeding to emergency incidents, and the level of legal support they are given following an accident.

I am sure you all know of incidents of this nature in your own Brigades that have caused unnecessary upset and distress to members and their families. Essex, and I am sure we are not alone in their approach to driver training, insist that trainee drivers proceed through red lights with caution and in accordance with the law. This procedure is then adopted when the driver goes on the run, and becomes common practice at station. This is further encouraged through driver refresher training where it is expected and required that a driver will demonstrate this practice under test conditions with the examiner present. In fact, it is even possible for a driver to be deemed non competent should they refuse to pass through a red traffic light with caution and in accordance with the law.

Conference, our members deserve to receive proper legal support, fully paid for by their employers if they are unfortunate enough to be involved in an accident whilst proceeding through a red traffic light in accordance with the minor exemptions of the law. As this is not the automatic position of our employers in all occasions, we ask Conference to support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

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

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

Conference, the Amendment to this Resolution is vital to at least try to gain our members some legal protection when carrying out driving duties and using the exemptions under the Road Traffic Act, that they are asked to use by our employers, trained to use by our employers, and once trained, then encouraged to use by our employers. Voting in favour of the Amended Resolution will go some way to ensuring our employers fulfil their legal and moral obligations to provide legal support to members when they perform the massive responsibility that is, driving emergency vehicles.

Conference will remember that last year I raised the issue of the incident that occurred on 11 September 2009 when a Luton pump en route to a persons reported house fire was involved in an RTC whilst they were progressing through a red traffic light. The result of the accident saw the driver of the appliance cautioned and subsequently charged with causing death by dangerous driving. Following a two year process and two different trials earlier this month, to everyone's

Day One – 17th May

relief, a jury found that he was not guilty. However, shortly after the incident occurred management immediately showed their hand and implied that our member would not receive any backing from the Service.

This prompted an immediate response from the rest of our members. The remaining drivers immediately asked for clarification on whether they had appropriate cover in case they were involved in an accident using the exemptions in the Road Traffic Act that they are asked to use by our employers, trained to use by our employers, and encouraged to use by our employers. If they weren't covered, then our members politely informed managers that they would no longer be in a position where they would drive under blue lights using the so-called exemptions and therefore would only drive at road speed to all incidents. It's amazing to see principal officers fall so silent except to seek us out as FBU officials and ask if we could help them with the legal support as that would take pressure away from them. These are the same principal officers that are supposedly well paid, well decorated and well educated. Two out of three ain't bad!

Obviously, our response as officials is the FBU has a national policy that we don't drive through red lights, and so whilst we supported our member our hands were tied regarding legal assistance. The principal officers backed down and did in fact provide legal support whilst the police investigation was ongoing, but they said they would reassess the situation at the appropriate time. The weeks and months passed which saw the driver put through a series of police interviews where he was treated like a convicted criminal, one of which was lasting five hours.

We also found out that the black box used during the incident on the appliance was actually showing the wrong date and that our managers authorised a re-enactment of the incident on the same stretch of road during a filmed simulation. We then found out the managers intended to use the Local Authorities Indemnities Order 2004 which states that public money cannot be used to both defend and prosecute an individual at the same time. Our member was charged in February 2010 but was lucky enough to be eligible for legal aid. Thanks to the work of local and regional FBU officials he continued with the same solicitors who had been representing him from the start. So managers used an interpretation of legislation to hold a position that they could not financially support our member once he had been charged. In essence, just when he needed the support the most, they dropped him.

Anyone who has driven to an incident on blue lights knows first hand the responsibility placed on drivers, and that this responsibility is intensified when driving to a

persons reported. Our employers train us to use exemptions under the Road Traffic Act, and they encourage us to do so when we are attending incidents in order to meet their attendance times. But when it comes to an accident occurring as a result of this training, they look to drop our members as soon as possible. This is not acceptable.

Beds agree with the Essex Resolution that we should review our current FBU position on driving through red lights as it's plain that all our members, including me, go against this policy. But our policy is there for a good reason. It should be our employers' responsibility to provide legal support when an accident occurs when we are at work. Driving appliances to emergency incidents is part of a driver's role map and driving through red lights is a foreseeable risk that occurs as a result of this. As for the so-called exemptions, if we're to be prosecuted as a result of doing something, that's not an exemption.

Conference, Beds aren't saying that our members should be given a get out of jail free card to plainly break the law. But when it comes to something that we are asked to do by our employers, trained to do by our employers, and encouraged to do by our employers, the employers should take their responsibility. Support the Amended Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Bedfordshire Amendment seconded? *Formally seconded.* I bring the General Secretary in to give the EC's qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. We welcome Essex and Bedfordshire bringing the issue to Conference for discussion. It's a matter that has been debated on several occasions at Annual Conference, although our policy dates back some considerable time. The Executive Council's qualification is that we believe the matter needs to be looked at in the round by a thorough examination of all aspects of the issue of driving to emergency incidents and driving through red traffic lights, and all related matters. The Executive Council has already agreed a Task and Finish Group headed by National Officer Paul Woolstenholmes to look at the issues that are raised in the Resolution and the Amendment, and related matters. That will examine this issue from a Health & Safety point of view, a training point of view, and a legal point of view as well. The qualification is that we would not implement any of the calls within the Resolution until we've concluded that work, including seeking legal advice on the issues raised. With that qualification we're happy to support.

Day One – 17th May

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate. Anybody?

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, we've got a slight potential problem with this Resolution. In Strathclyde what they teach our emergency service drivers is when they approach a red traffic light that they come to a crawl, not a complete halt. The reason that they do that is that they believe it spreads confusion in drivers if on all occasions we go blaring along with our emergency sirens on and all of a sudden we come to a complete stop. So based on experience of previous incidents, they believe that crawling through the red traffic light, if and when you've identified that it's safe for you to do so, is a safer way of proceeding. With that in mind I would just like to impress upon the EC that there are slightly different models out there, albeit I understand it's always been Conference Policy that we come to a complete stop at red lights. Thanks.

BRO KEVIN DEACON (Lancashire):

President, Conference, Lancs would just like clarification on to the time limits for the Health & Safety Task and Finish Group that was set up. In 2009 Lancs' Resolution 73 carried unanimously called for a driving policy review and we request an update of this. Last year we questioned this and we were told that the review was ongoing and was going to be reported back. Our Resolution instructed the EC to report back in 2010 and as yet we're still waiting for this review. So we'd just like a clarification of the time limits, please.

THE PRESIDENT:

Comrade, we'll have to check that out at the next Executive Council meeting. I certainly don't have that available in front of us at the moment. We may find it some time later today. Does that satisfy you? Come to the rostrum.

BRO KEVIN DEACON (Lancashire):

Yes. I would like to meet with relevant parties to discuss this.

THE PRESIDENT:

OK, we'll do that. Thank you, comrade. Still open for debate. I put the Amendment from Bedfordshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 51 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I call Resolution 52, Grant of Probate from Hampshire. Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 52 – GRANT OF PROBATE

This Conference instructs the Executive Council that, in the event of the death of a paid up member of the AIF (or a member who has retired and subsequently dies within 28 days of such retirement), Thompsons, if required, can be instructed to act for the personal representative of the member with regard to administering the Grant of Probate. This service will be provided free of charge to the personal representative and will be carried out as soon as is reasonably practicable.

HAMPSHIRE

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

President, comrades, following the tragic events at Shirley Towers last year, which resulted in the deaths of Alan Bannon and Jim Shears, it fell to local officials to support and assist their families and the partners of Jim and Alan. Some of this help was directed at helping the families to receive payments from the Accident & Injury Fund. Due to their understandable grief there was a delay in instructing respective solicitors to sort out the grant of probate. This, despite several gentle reminders from FBU officials, who were obviously operating in the most sensitive of arenas.

For those who don't know, grant of probate is required by the Rules of the Accident & Injury Fund to release payment to the nominated person. We have got no issue at all with the requirement for grant of probate. However, we're deeply concerned that the pressure to produce this document is placed on the bereaved at a time when they are particularly vulnerable. This may lead to them choosing at random a representative who may be someone who is literally picked out of a phone book and is not particularly sensitive to the issue or the situation at the time.

What we would like to see is the Fire Brigades Union instruct a solicitor through Thompsons at the very earliest opportunity who can act for the bereaved as soon as is possible should they be required. We would then ask that this solicitor deals with the grant of probate and that this service is then provided at no cost to the bereaved nominated person.

I was informed that in one instance grant of probate cost one of the bereaved partners several hundred pounds and took several weeks, if not months, to get accomplished. In her words this was something she had found extremely difficult to deal with, at a time when she was dealing with her own young family and her own grief.

Day One – 17th May

By providing a solicitor at this stressful time and at the earliest possible moment we can offer the service to the bereaved and relieve them and their families of having to deal with yet another hoop to jump through. We realise that there is a monetary cost, but I don't believe that there is a single person in here or anywhere within our Union who would resent this service being provided free of charge. We believe it's the least we can do and will enhance the reputation of the Fire Brigades Union to people who are in the most vulnerable of positions as well as our own membership. Comrades, I move.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

We are seconding the Hampshire motion. Just to lend support to what the comrade said, we had a similar case in London with a deceased member. The widow assumed, wrongly as it happens, that the grant of probate was going to be organised by Thompsons who were in fact representing her. We had a big bun fight about who was actually going to pick the tab up. It got resolved, but it was stressful in a situation that she didn't need at that particular time. So I understand there might be some cost implications but for the peace of mind of the relatives - and they don't have to use Thompsons, as the Resolution said but if they do use Thompsons it should be free of charge. We second.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary to give the EC's opposition.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Obviously, Conference, given the subject matter which lies at the root of a Resolution such as this, the death of a member, it gives me and it gives the Executive Council no pleasure to oppose a Resolution which is seeking, for all the right reasons, to assist those who are left behind by the member in the event of their death – or in this case an out of trade member in the event of their death. But there are reasons for it. They are reasons which may seem devoid of empathy or sympathy, but I assure you they are not.

In moving the Resolution Paul spoke to two issues, both the Resolution itself and a specific issue which was experienced within Hampshire and by our Hampshire officials. I will deal with both those issues, if I may. I will deal with the issue of what happened and what sometimes happens when it comes to the members' money within the Accident & Injury Fund in the event of

a member's death. I don't think it would be inappropriate to say that what the family did experience of one of the members was that they found that there was money coming from the insurance companies quicker than all of the AIF money was delivered. There is a reason for that. The insurance companies do not have to do what we have to do through the Accident & Injury Fund. It's not a question of the Accident & Injury Fund needing to be amended. The Accident & Injury Fund reflects the legislation which is specific to such funds where they are provided by a trade union. Not for the first time, comrades, the legislation governing trade unions is not helpful to the trade union or its members. It was a matter which we took up with the lawyers and said: have we been wrong here, are we being too restrictive in terms of our Accident & Injury Fund? The answer was clear, and it was evidenced as well. I will give an assurance to Conference. On that specific issue we will send a circular to Brigade Secretaries. I will discuss with the General Secretary whether we do it to all members, but certainly to Brigade Secretaries to assist you, so that if you are in that position, as our members in Hampshire found themselves, you can give the members of the family that advice.

The money does come through. Our Staff, our Officials ensure that as soon as we can, get the first £9,000 to the member, that's what we do, and then when probate is sorted we get the second amount of cash to the families as quickly as possible. I do want to address that issue, although it was addressed in moving the Resolution rather than in the Resolution itself.

In the Resolution itself the question of probate – again, is a very well intentioned Resolution. We know that, we recognise that. The initial legal advice that we've got is that this is highly problematic, hence the opposition from the Executive Council. The 28 day period is a notional period. The question would be asked: what happens on day 29 or day 30 if that's when our member should die? For ourselves we think that there needs to be a cut off date. The most logical, most rational cut off date, when we would supply this particular service, is when there is the transition from being an employed member to an out of trade member and that is the date of retirement.

The family, I have got to say, would be expecting that. I don't think it would come as a surprise. All families, in the event of bereavement in the normal way, would be working towards that cut off date, knowing that there is a cut off date from the service and from the Union as well.

What I would also say is that probate is not a simple process. Wills can be challenged by family members and by a whole range of different people – not just family members; in some cases by people not related.

Day One – 17th May

It isn't a simple process. Yes, the cost could be high. Actually, we're not looking at this from a bean counter point of view. We are looking at it from a practical point of view. I will say I have no doubt at all the Executive Council, in instances where there is a death in Service, a death on duty, a death at an incident ground, will not be able to help themselves, they will look at that with a different set of eyes in the way that we have many times. I won't give instances, but where there has been a question mark as to whether the actual subs that have been paid by a member who has died on the incident ground is quite right or not, we ignore that. You'd expect us to ignore that. This Executive Council will deal with such instances as appropriate.

I would ask Conference to oppose the Resolution for the reasons that I've stated. It is problematic and our initial legal advice is that it is very problematic for this Union to do so. With that, President, I will leave it there.

THE PRESIDENT:

It's still open for debate. Anybody else?

BRO MARK KINSALLA (Essex):

President, Conference, I, like the President, normally like to work from the notes that are in front of me, but I haven't made any on this subject. I'm just coming in on the back of the debate, so I hope this comes across as it should do. I'm a bit miffed by this one, what the opposition actually is. The way I read the Resolution it's not actually asking for a change to the Accident & Injury Fund, what it is asking for is that Thompsons pick up the grant of probate. Is this not a conversation that the FBU could have with Thompsons? I'm very ignorant on these things, but I'm quite certain we're talking of a few hundred pounds for a grant of probate to go through. I don't know. I'm quite certain that Thompsons get quite a few thousand pounds from us over the year. Is this not something that we could perhaps ask Thompsons to do in kind for us? I don't see where it is asking for a change to the Accident & Injury Fund. It seems to be something that Thompsons could do on our behalf. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Still open for debate. Right of reply. Did you want the right of reply there, comrade?

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Comrades, I think I need to stress, I've got no issue at all with the Accident & Injury Fund. I've got no issue at all with the fact that grant of probate needs to be obtained. I've got no issue at all with the 28 days that was referred to. What I do have an issue with is that

although I can imagine it will be problematic to deal with this issue, believe me it's a lot more problematic for the people who just lost their loved ones. *Applause* Having witnessed that – and I hope no-one here has to do that the same as we did – I've got to say that the EC's problems fade in comparison. I would urge you to support this. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I put Resolution 52, Grant of Probate to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Conference is adjourned for lunch. Back at two o'clock. Thank you.

Adjourned for lunch

Day One – 17th May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Conference. I now call upon the Chief Scrutineer.

CHIEF SCRUTINEER (Bro Keith Naylor):

Conference, I have the result of the Standing Orders Committee election. At close of nomination two candidates received nominations: Brother Stewart Kinnon, Strathclyde received 13; Brother Pete Smith, Humberside received one nomination. Brother Smith declined the nomination. I can declare Brother Stewart Kinnon re-elected to serve on the Standing Orders Committee for a further four Annual Conferences. Thank you, Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Could you please turn to your Programmes of Business Page 5: Resolution 53, the amendment from Grampian has been withdrawn. Just to inform Conference that Strathclyde has a change to delegate: delete Paul Finnigan, insert Sandra Brown. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Speakers? Is that report agreed Conference? *Agreed.*

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce John McDonnell, Member of Parliament for Hayes & Harlington. I don't think anybody at Conference doesn't know John or hasn't heard of John. He's the Secretary of the FBU's Westminster Parliamentary Group and a very, very great friend of this Union. He has been a tireless advocate of workers in Westminster since he was elected as MP for Hayes & Harlington in 1987. He was previously a GLC Councillor. He's a member of numerous campaign and community organisations. I can say this from the heart, if there were more MPs like John the world would be undoubtedly better. John McDonnell. *Applause*

BRO JOHN McDONNELL MP:

It's always an honour to be invited to give the Parliamentary Report and I never ever know where the microphone button is on this platform! Thanks a lot, President.

There are a number of new delegates here who may not know the role of the Parliamentary Group. We decided as a Union a number of years ago that we'd set up our own Parliamentary Group and we act as the voice of the Union in Parliament. There are 28 Labour MPs who are members of the Group. We work with other MPs beyond the Group on a cross Party basis. We work hard. I'm proud of the Group. They're effective; they use every Parliamentary mechanism possible to promote this Union and its ideas.

I just want to say a few thanks. We wouldn't be able to do that if it weren't for the support of the Union itself. I want to thank the General Secretary, Matt, who has assisted us all the way through, also the NEC Members, the Staff that we have and all of you. The information that we use in our debates, the ideas that we promote, come from our members, come through the Branches to Head Office, to the NEC and then on the Parliamentary Group. You set our agenda. I'm grateful for that support.

Can I also pay special tribute to Mick Shaw. Mick, when he was President, helped us set up the Parliamentary Group and worked really hard in our support. I just want to wish him a happy retirement. I heard today about his health problems, so I wish him a speedy recovery and best wishes for the future.

It's a year on since the Coalition was elected and since our last Conference, and the Government's agenda is clear. The economic crisis that was caused by the greed of the bankers and the speculators, with the assistance of puppet governments as well, will be paid for, according to the Coalition, by cuts in jobs, in wages, in pensions, in benefits, in services. Also, wherever possible, profits will be made by privatising our public services. It's the same across every public service. But our Service in particular is coming under attack. We've set out in the Parliamentary Report just some of the details, and you've had it in the Statement. The crisis is to be paid for by cuts in public expenditure on the Fire Service – 13% cut in central government grant, 25% cut in local government funding, and a two year freeze on the council tax. So in total, according to the Government's own review figures, it's a 30% cut over the next four years. So the crisis will be paid for by cuts, cuts in jobs in particular.

There is no point in asking the Fire Minister how many jobs will go. We tried that one at our last meeting with him. The Fire Minister refuses to monitor not just how many jobs will go, he refuses to monitor just how many jobs there are out there, refusing any attempt at national monitoring or standards. We think literally – and we need to explain to our members the consequences of these cuts – hundreds, maybe thousands of jobs are now at risk.

Day One – 17th May

Let me just say that Ministers tell us, part of the divide and rule tactic, don't worry, frontline jobs will be protected. I have to say I'm fed up with this spurious division between frontline and back room. Without our back room members we would not have the support to perform our frontline role. We shouldn't allow them to divide and rule workers in that way.

The crisis will be paid for, according to the Coalition, by cuts in wages. Remember, wage freezes for us with inflation letting rip again is a wage cut. It's strange, isn't it, our members are being told they'll pay for the crisis with wage cuts, and yet last week the figures came out about the wages of the directors of the top FTSE companies in this country. Last year all of them on average received a 45% wage increase! The bankers who caused the crisis, well you know, they're back to the bonuses: £6 billion last Christmas, and again the bonuses are flowing throughout the City on a regular basis. But they're transferring the bonuses now into wage increases to avoid any form of exposure. What's annoying is even in the banks that we've nationalised, bailed out and actually own, the bonuses started up again. My mum will tell me off for this, but to be frank that really is taking the piss, isn't it! It really is! It's happening in the City now on a scale pre-economic crisis, the wages that are being paid out.

The crisis is going to be paid for with our pensions as well. We saw the Hutton Report. As an aside, you may notice that virtually every ex New Labour Minister has suddenly found a job in a company that they awarded contracts to. It must be a complete coincidence, of course! The Hutton Report on pensions, as you know, basically said the crisis will be paid for by people working longer and pensions being cut. For our members, retirement age is going up to 60 which, with the greatest respect to some of our older members, none of us if we're caught on the fifth floor of a fire want to see a geriatric FBU member up at the top of the ladder saying: jump on my shoulder! It just doesn't inspire confidence.

Also, it will be paid for, as you saw, by cutting the rate of pension. In Parliament they switched on the calculation of the annual increase from RPI to CPI. Across the public sector on public sector pensions that's going to cost us £6 billion. Through our Group we forced the vote on that issue. Unfortunately the Labour Party abstained, but we forced the vote, and a number of our members voted against it, because it's a cut in what is the living standards of our members.

The crisis is also going to be paid for by privatisation. Government Ministers now are trawling over every possible service they can, to see what can be privatised and how they can do it. Fire Authorities, as you know, are working with the Government in this privatisation

exercise, and example after example has been brought forward.

Can I just say in London we have the example of AssetCo. When we met with the Minister we queried the ethics of a Government that's working with a private company, privatising our services, that is also at the moment being used by the Arab governments to suppress the Arab Spring with a brutality that we've not seen maybe for generations in the Middle East.

Can I also say I want to pay tribute to our London members for standing firm in that dispute when the bullying and victimisation occurred. There was a suggestion in one of the industrial meetings that we had in the preparations for the dispute that maybe we should vary our tactics and rather than come out on strike, offer another alternative tactic to pursue: maybe recruitment of a social worker and a doctor and have Coleman sectioned! That's another route that we might want to apply in another way!

There are other methods that they're using for privatisation, as we've seen in Cleveland. I think the development in Cleveland of the trading arm dressed up as a neutral, even though it isn't, to supply the mainstream core services of the Service itself is setting a dangerous precedent that we'll need to monitor and guard against if it's run out in other areas and run out for mainstream services.

Can I just make a comment on Essex as well. We've been trying to raise all these issues in Parliament as best we can, and with Ministers. But where our members are identifying attacks on their Service, and where they're identifying practices which are unseemly to say the least, it's a disgrace that when our members seek to expose that and what is going on on a regular basis within a Fire Authority that is unacceptable, when our members raise those issues with democratically elected councillors or MPs they become victimised. It's not acceptable in a democracy and we will not tolerate it and we will use Parliament as best we can to expose what's going on in places like Essex and elsewhere.
Applause

Can I say on the role of the Union in the face of these Coalition cuts, first, one of our roles is to expose what's happening. We rely upon you for the information on what's happening on the ground, and the Parliamentary Group will play its full role in exposing in Parliament what the Fire Authorities and the Government are doing. Then after that, having exposed it, we have to oppose and resist. That means public campaigning, the use of the media, demonstrations and lobbies, every creative method that we can possibly use. Of course, we negotiate where we can, but at times we have to take action. As a Union which provides emergency services

Day One – 17th May

we don't do that lightly, and we never ever forget the consequences of our actions. That's why, like in places like London where industrial action has had to take place, we've made solidarity with our members and we've gained the popular support of our local communities. When action has to take place we're determined and decisive and united.

I have to say this. On those marches during that dispute, and on those picket lines when we had members of the Parliamentary Group there, they were proud to be there, proud to be standing alongside you in that dispute and will be proud in the future if disputes are forced upon us.

The important thing about it, I think, is to recognise that we're not alone. It's not just us that's resisting these cuts; it's other trade unions right the way across the public sector and into the private sector as well. It's not just trade unionists either; it's the vast majority of our society because they're facing the same issue. What this Government is doing is dismantling the welfare state brick by brick. They're doing it systematically. They're destroying everything that this Union, working with other unions and with progressives over generations, have built up. They opposed it in the first instance, they hated the welfare state when we constructed it, they never supported it and now they're trying to wipe it off the face of the earth. They're creating a society which is going back with the market forces to the law of the jungle where the rich get richer, the poor get poorer and the poorest go to the wall.

Our job now, and we need to be clear about this, is to resist all we can. We have a responsibility to do that. I think we need to explain to people how we got here in the first place. It's worth looking back in our history. Alistair Darling, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the last things he said (it was about the only thing I ever agreed with him on) was that this recession we haven't seen on such a scale since the 1930s. That's true. It's an extraordinary coincidence that in the 1930s when the bankers and speculators caused an economic crisis, there was a coalition government – unfortunately it was a Labour/Tory coalition government. The first thing that they did was cut public services. They turned a recession into a depression. For ten years our country experienced high levels of unemployment, deprivation, and poverty, and across Europe it eventually resulted in fascism and the Second World War.

We learned a lesson during that period. We learned a lesson that never again would we allow that to happen. We constructed a welfare state under a Labour government, the Attlee government. The welfare state was simple: you put roofs over people's heads, so housing was a key element, council housing. Tomorrow in Parliament the Localism Bill is going through which is

effectively the end of council housing in this country. From tomorrow onwards, if the legislation goes through, no-one will gain a permanent council house. People will be on a two year licence renewable. Anyone above a certain wage will be asked to leave their properties. The housing benefit cuts means housing benefits will no longer cover people's rents, and if people can't make up the gap between benefit and rents, they will be forced out of their properties. I'm already dealing with evictions in my constituency.

The second limb of the welfare state in 1945 was health, we built the health service so that everybody could have access to health, free on demand. The Lansley legislation, whatever pause there is at the moment, is the full privatisation of the NHS. It is the privatisation of the NHS. This is the end of the NHS as we know it. In education, what the Tories have done in their recent legislation, we created education as a gift from one generation to another. What the Tories have done is turned it into a commodity where kids lose their EMA, if they want to go to university they will be charged £9,000 and then only two weeks ago you saw the Tories tried to sneak in, where rich kids could buy their way into universities in advance of the rest of our children.

Do you know, part of the welfare state was full employment. We've now got 2.5 million unemployed. Nearly a million kids unemployed, 1.7 million in forced part time or short term working. Last time we saw levels of unemployment like that was in the 1980s and whole communities never recovered for a generation.

Part of the welfare state that we constructed then was a welfare state based upon rights. There's further anti trade union legislation coming at us, possibly banning strikes in certain areas but also increasing the thresholds of industrial action ballots. But you know, we even had the access that we had before to the courts based upon legal aid. Three weeks ago the Government cut legal aid, which means, denies access to large percentages of working class people.

To be frank with you this is it; this is them dismantling everything we've worked for as a Union, as a Trade Union and Labour Movement, and as a class for generations. We have no other role to play than to say: this is it, this is a line in the sand that we can't allow them to cross. The good thing is that other people are making their minds up as well. When the students kicked off demonstrations against the Government last November I was on that march. We expected 20,000 kids to turn up at best. 50,000 turned up, and yes it got heated, and some of them smashed a few windows at Millbank and there was adverse publicity. But you know those kids weren't the criminals. The criminals were Tory Ministers who are destroying the futures of those children. That's who the real criminals were. *Applause*

Day One – 17th May

Then we had the march on 26 March. Again, I don't think it was half a million that turned out, I think it was nearer a million. I support UK Uncut and their direct action campaign, because as a Union with others we've been campaigning on tax justice for ten years and got no publicity. UK Uncut turn up, occupy a few Vodafone's and all of a sudden it's an issue on the agenda. I support those ones that went into Fortnum & Masons. The criminal damage to one chocolate rabbit – well, there have to be sacrifices in this Movement, don't there?

Laughter, applause

I joined the Hardest Hit march the other day, of people with disabilities. It was one of the most moving events I've been at. Literally hundreds, thousands of people with disabilities coming along. Why? Because this Government has employed a private company called Atos to cut their benefits and make profits from the benefits that they cut. Do you know, there was a group on that demonstration. I was proud of them. They were a group of people with T shirts on saying they suffer from Tourette's. You know what Tourette's is. It's a horrendous condition, it's horrible and it can destroy people's lives. People spontaneously can't control and shout abuse at times. I was so proud of them that they could come out and say: this is what we suffer from. What was good about it was one of them said it is a terrible condition, but it comes in handy when you're lobbying Tory MPs occasionally! *Applause*

I want to say this. Along with other trade unions now we're taking a stand. We want to work through the TUC of course, and make sure when we take a stand we take a stand together, whether it's a demonstration, supporting direct action, or, if we're forced into it, industrial action at times of course. It's important that we work together. What we've tried to do through the FBU is bring other unions together, into the TUC, working together. But also, if the TUC cannot move as quickly as we want, we've formed the Trade Union Coordinating Group – ten unions representing a million workers, coming together to coordinate their campaigning, their lobbies of Parliament. Yes, some of them on 30 June are coordinating their industrial action as best they can.

Sometimes this Union, because of the Service we provide, has to be careful of the campaigns that we wage and the action that we take. It will always be a careful judgement to make. But there will come times, you know, where we will have to stand firm and support others. There's a lot of people now, we have to recognise, will be in the frontline before us. The POA at the moment, who've had no right to strike for years, are having their prisons privatised. You know the story about the last dispute they had. They had no right to strike but they just came out. I got the phone call into my office to phone Jack Straw and tell him they're coming out.

When I phoned them they said: it's illegal. I said: who's going to lock them up? The POA are going to be under the cosh again. What we need to do, is do everything we possibly can to support them.

It may not always be industrial action. I give the example of when we had one dispute in the RMT and it wasn't necessarily overwhelmingly successful and people had to go back to work, and there was still the spirit of resistance. There was a woman who serves the manager his tea every day. She said: he thinks he's won, but I spit in his tea every morning! You just want to feel proud of them, don't you really?

This Coalition's prospects. People say: is this Government going to collapse? I think they're like drowning swimmers. They're clinging together as best they can because the Liberals know if they force an election they'll be wiped out. But there are divisions within the Government itself that we've got to exploit. Obviously Cabinet meetings at the moment are difficult with the splits that have occurred since the AV Referendum. Someone described it more like a West Ham annual dinner. Obviously people's minds are on other things, calculating their penalty points and things like that. I'm trying to avoid libel actions here! Nevertheless, you know as well as I do that governments usually don't fall as a result of some Big Bang theory. What normally happens is that they combust, they collapse because of their own contradictions. They collapse usually not because of one major struggle, but because they get defeated time and time again on a whole series of minor issues that build up into a climate of resistance and a climate of failure for the government. That's basically what we have to contribute to. We have to contribute to building up this climate of resistance, so wherever an MP that represents this Coalition goes, they are meeting people demonstrating, they're meeting people arguing with them, and they're meeting people and whole communities opposing them. In that way we will force them back, issue by issue, until we get rid of them.

I don't want to get rid of this Government to return to New Labour. I do not ever want to go back to the days where there's a Labour Government in office privatising our services and introducing policies that conflict with the interests of working people in this country. What we have to do is build up our alternative to what this Government is doing, and build confidence in the Movement so that if a Labour Government gets back into power, it has an agenda that we set for it. That brings us back to the direct action and the campaigning that we have to do.

I think this Union now needs to mobilise on a scale we've never mobilised before, to get our message across. I've seen in the NEC statements we're setting

Day One – 17th May

out our clear alternative. We have to be working in every possible community we can, working with other trade unions, yes, informing political parties of our views, and trying to convince them about the rightness of our views. What we have to do, our mission, is to protect our Service that's needed by our whole community. In doing so, we protect our members and protect the wider community. If we can protect the Fire Service it's no use if the Health Service is privatised. It's no use saving the Health Service if people haven't got a decent roof over their heads. It's no use protecting public services if we have nearly 3 million people unemployed by next year. We have to work together in solidarity, in the interests of our members, our Service, and also our country. That's what I pledge to do, working as a member of the Parliamentary Group alongside you, with you, in support of you. It's what we call solidarity.

Applause

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

John, I'm sure you can hear from the applause there the strength of feeling that we have in Conference and the support that you have here at the Fire Brigades Union. That will remain as long as you're there in Parliament fighting our corner. I think, comrades, Conference knows the work that John does, knows what the Parliamentary Group does. It's essential, central to the campaigning work that we do in trying to protect our Service, challenge the cuts agenda. John has played a central role for this Union but not just for the Union but across a number of trade unions, playing a similar role and playing a key role in coordinating among trade unions, particularly those on the Left. So it gives us great pleasure to hear you again. Once again, John, like normal, a gift for coming along. Thanks very much.

Applause

Conference continued in Closed Session

Day Two – 18th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Good morning, Conference. Could you please turn to your Programme of Business. You might want to pay close attention to this report. Page 7: Resolution 15, Redeployment, West Midlands withdrawn. After Resolution 18 insert Emergency Resolution 10, Day Crew Plus (DCP), Devon & Somerset. Page 9: after Resolution 26 insert Emergency Resolution 5, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Consultation, Lothian & Borders. Page 10: after Resolution 35 insert Emergency Resolution 4, Fire and Rescue Service Mutual, Cleveland. Page 11: (I'll give you a little tip here, you might want to start at the top of your page because this bit could get a little bit tricky) Section D, after Section D Pensions, insert Emergency Resolution 1, Attacks on Fire Service Pensions, Executive Council. After Emergency Resolution 1 insert Emergency Resolution 2 Attacks to Pensions, London. After Emergency Resolution 2 insert Emergency Resolution 3, Hutton – Pensions and Pay Intrinsically Linked, Cambridgeshire. Resolution 20 Firefighter Pension Scheme, Lancashire has been withdrawn to second Emergency Resolution 1 from the Executive Council. Page 16: after Paragraph C2-TUC 2010, insert Emergency Resolution 7 Royal Wedding, Hereford & Worcester. After Resolution 48 insert Emergency Resolution 9, Severing of Ties with Israeli Histadrut, Strathclyde. After Resolution 45 insert Emergency Resolution 6, Firefighter Magazine Publication and Distribution Costs, West Yorkshire. After Emergency Resolution 6 insert Emergency Resolution 8, GFIW Iraq, Greater Manchester. All the Emergency Resolutions will be distributed once my report is agreed.

Delegate change: Greater Manchester – Gary Keary absent until further notice. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody? Thank you, Steve. Can I now ask Conference to turn to Page 4 of the Programme of Business, Proposed Alterations To The Rules Of The Union. Sorry, can that report be agreed? *Agreed*. That's agreed, thank you.

Conference continued in Closed Session

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I now inform Conference we are out of Closed Session. I now call Resolution 53 with Amendments from Merseyside and Control Staff National Committee. Clarification, yes.

BRO ANDY DENNIS (West Midlands):

President, we've still got three Rule changes that we haven't dealt with from the additional bundle. We've got 8A(5)(a), 26A(1), 26A(4) which are all consequential of 8A(1)(a) which was carried by Conference previously.

THE PRESIDENT:

Comrade, could you read them out again slowly so we can check them.

BRO ANDY DENNIS (West Midlands):

I'm sorry, it's unnumbered.

THE PRESIDENT:

That means they're already carried, Andy. They are consequential. Rule 8A, you've tidied up the Rule Book. Rule 8A(5)(a) – they're all carried, they're all there. Sorted. Well done! For the record, Andy, I'm chalking that down as three wins! As I say, I call Resolution 53 with Amendments from Merseyside and Control Staff National Committee. If the Merseyside Amendment carries the CSNC Amendment also carries, they are the same Amendment.

Resolution 53 – TRAINING FOR ADVOCATES

Annual Conference believes that in the interests of achieving the best for its women members, training is needed to become advocates. This training is about complementing the role that the FBU solicitors currently take and assisting them with their workload. The FBU solicitors are not always freely available to members that need to discuss their case; the advocates can provide this service as a go between.

Annual Conference calls upon the Executive Council to immediately develop and implement appropriate training for FBU women members to become Employment Tribunal (ET) advocates. This will provide a pool of FBU advocates that can assist and advise members at ET cases, or before the decision is taken to pursue an ET.

This training should be made available within the next education schedule for 2012.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Day Two – 18th May

Amendment

Paragraph 1 line 2 delete 'women'.

Paragraph 2 line 2 delete 'women'.

MERSEYSIDE CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SIS HELEN TOOLEY (NWC):

President, Conference, we are supporting the Amendment. By better training and educating our members as advocates we will be providing a service that will be more accessible to all our members. Solicitors do not always have the time to offer their full support to our members for employment tribunals. We need to ensure that we offer the best service we can to all of our members, pushing to get their cases to the top of solicitors' workloads. We're not suggesting that we'll become experts overnight in employment law. However, a relevant, up to date and working knowledge of the employment tribunal process will complement the work done by our FBU solicitors and assist them with their workloads, helping to ensure an efficient service available to all our members.

As reps we need and want to assist our members to the best of our ability. However, we are not all experts and some of us may have little understanding of the employment tribunal process. Those of us who do have, unfortunately gained it through supporting members through the process. Not ideal, I'm sure you agree. If a mistake is made early in this process, this impacts on the outcome. Not good for any of our members.

We need to ensure our reps have the training and education to understand the process, to offer the best support we can in the worst of times for our members. The PCS already run trade union courses to train their reps to do just this. Therefore we know it is possible and it does work. Although initially there will be some financial cost for training, once carried out, this scheme will actually save the Union money from less time off required to resolving problems prior to resorting to employment tribunals. By having well educated advocates in case law and workplace employment law, they will be able to understand and explain all the options that are available to our members, giving the best advice and service at the right times.

We need to arm our reps so they have the tools and knowledge to bring about the best possible outcomes for our members in these horrendous situations. We ask the Executive Council immediately to develop and implement this training for reps to become employment tribunal advocates. This will provide a pool of FBU advocates that can assist and advise our members at ET cases or before the decision is taken to pursue an ET. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is Resolution 53 seconded?

SIS SIAN GRIFFITHS (London):

We are seconding Resolution 53. I think it's really important. This is an issue that's come up time and time again and it's very pertinent to me and my individual case. Apparently, because I'm so high profile and I know everything there is to know about equality and diversity, you tend to get neglected sometimes. So where you need those resources, sometimes they are not there because of your situation. You are also, even though you are quite knowledgeable about these issues, especially vulnerable when it's happening to you. You become upset, you get confused. So you really do need help. So if there isn't a pool of people or resources that can help you then sometimes you do things like miss deadlines, your grievance case can be neglected, you miss arguments. To have a pool of advocates is an incredible investment in this Union. That is at a time when our employers seem to be on a contemptuous crusade against their employees, we need to be ahead of the game and we need to be on hand to offer support more readily and probably sadly more often to our members than ever before. I think this pool of advocates could help us. It's a good business case because whilst we'll have to invest in the training and obviously that will cost money, hopefully it will help with the expediency of cases. We've already talked about how long things take to be resolved. We can also help to prevent people having to make awful decisions where maybe we can prevent people going to an employment tribunal where I think that nobody actually wins because it destroys a lot of people, having to take a case that far. I really urge you to support this Resolution so that we can move things forward and we can really be on hand to provide serious help for people when they need it so we have a larger pool of people to draw from. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Merseyside to move their Amendment. *Formally moved.* Thank you. Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* I open that up for debate. I call on Sean Starbuck to put the Executive Council's opposition.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, President. The EC are asking the mover to remit this and provide the evidence which it highlights within the Resolution. We've got no evidence that this is a priority issue and that it needs to be in the programme for next year.

We did a survey in 2009 asking people what they thought they needed from the education programme

Day Two – 18th May

and we never got one response highlighting that people have need of this. We also ask every student who comes on our courses what their future needs are, and again, we haven't had this highlighted once.

This Resolution also suggests that solicitors are not freely available to discuss cases with members. That's something I'm not aware of. If they provide the evidence that this is the case then obviously we've got to look at it. That's one of the reasons we're asking them to remit it.

Currently, if a case reaches the ET it's been dealt with internally by the official and externally by the legal representative. The advocacy at this moment in time is provided by the lawyer. What this seems to be suggesting is a backward step where our members don't get the same level of advocacy. They'd had an official dealing with it rather than a lawyer. I know you've highlighted about saving money, but there's areas where we need to save money and areas where we need to get it absolutely right.

From an education angle, the education programme is agreed through committees and eventually agreed by the EC. Like I said, we haven't had anybody come forward and say that they want this as an education programme for the future. So being a priority is a little bit of a hard argument to have.

What I'm going to say is the education budget is also set by the EC, so we'd have to cost this as well. I don't know if there is an advocacy course out there, and we'd have to task Trevor to go away and look at it, and find it. Also, like I said, that would have to be costed. Is there a requirement for this course? I'm not sure there is. If this motion is highlighting a deficiency in the education programme, then give us the evidence. If it's saying there's a problem with Thompsons, also we need this evidence. We've got to ask ourselves a simple question. Have there been any complaints? Have there been any complaints to Thompsons? I asked our legal department and what they told me was ball park figures, they run about 60/65 ETs a year. Last year we were successful in 58. What I'm going to say is that really doesn't suggest that there is any evidence that there's a problem with this.

I know how busy our officials are. I do think this would be quite a big input. We'd have to ask our officials: do you really want to take on this role when currently Thompsons are doing it for us? To finish, I'm not sure there's a demand, I'm not sure there's a problem, and the success rate we've had with the ETs seems to suggest that maybe there isn't. If there is any evidence please bring it to us because I'm not ruling it out. What I'm saying is: give us the evidence, remit it, give us the evidence and give us chance to look at it. I'm suggesting

you remit it. The EC are suggesting remit it. If not, we'd have to oppose it.

THE PRESIDENT:

Right of reply?

SIS HELEN TOOLEY (NWC):

Just to answer some of the points that Sean brought up, this Resolution has come up at the National Women's Committee AGM for the past four years. Therefore we do think there is a need and a priority. I think we'd all agree that we want the best for our members and we feel that this will help us to provide the best service to our members.

Just to clarify some other points. Training is provided by the TUC. There's a course already out there run by the TUC for the PCS, so costs would be minimal. We're not talking about replacing solicitors. We appreciate they have a high workload and we're looking to aid and work with the solicitors. It's not that we've got a problem with the FBU solicitors. Like I say, we just want to provide the best service for our members when they're going through a really horrendous time. I ask you to support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the Amendment from Merseyside to the vote. If the Amendment from Merseyside carries, the CSNC Amendment also carries. All those in favour please show. Those against. That *falls*.

I now put Resolution 53. Card vote has been called. Tellers and Scrutineers to their places, please. Conference, can you please make sure you stay in the room. Don't filter off. Thank you. Conference, watch me, Conference. That side there, my left, my left hand side, is FOR. That side there, my right, is AGAINST.

A Card Vote was taken

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, can you take your seats, please. Conference, come to order. There seems to be some confusion – but not from here for a change. Can I just make sure that everybody who has used their card vote has voted for the Amendment and not the Resolution, because the card vote was called on the Amendment? OK? Thank you. If everybody has concluded their vote, please feel free to go and have some light refreshments, tea or coffee break. Back at twenty past.

Tea break

Day Two – 18th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. I now call Keith Naylor the Chief Scrutineer to give the result of the card vote on the Merseyside Amendment.

CHIEF SCRUTINEER (Bro Keith Naylor):

Conference, I have the result of the card vote for the Merseyside Amendment to Resolution 53, Training for Advocates from the National Women's Committee. Those for the Amendment: 23,966; those against the Amendment: 19,090. Conference supports the Amendment. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 53 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That *falls*.

Could I just say Conference and I do need to say this, as far as we're concerned, the Vice President and myself, when we counted that, it looked like it fell convincingly. People on the stage are saying that not all people in delegations are voting. That's difficult with a show of hands. I do appreciate that Les was perfectly right to call a card vote on the Amendment. I would encourage delegation leaders to make sure that everybody in this room who has a vote votes. I think the members that you're representing certainly deserve that. I do apologise for the need for that. *Applause*

I now call upon Steve Shelton to give a quick Standing Orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks, President. Will you please turn to your Programme of Business Page 9: Resolution 26, Scottish Fire Service, Fife has been withdrawn. Page 11: Resolution 21, Pensions, Hereford & Worcester is withdrawn to support Emergency Resolution 1 from the Executive Council.

The Standing Orders Committee is pleased to announce and report this message from Region 1: "The Region 1 Palestinian fund raiser was a great success. Thanks to all who came along, and particular thanks to those Regions who donated money in attempting to deliver two appliances to Nablus in the West Bank. Region 1 are looking to sustain our support to Palestinian firefighters and the Palestinian people. Last night the fantastic sum of £3,230 was raised by FBU members. To Regions 5, 13 and 9, your generosity has greatly improved the chances of the appliances reaching Palestine. However, comrades, we will need to increase

our funds. If any Region would like to contribute, we would be delighted to take any donations during Conference."

Delegates change: West Midlands, delete Michael McKay, insert Rich Greensill, Wednesday afternoon only. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *Agreed*.

I now call the Executive Council Policy Statement Cuts, Austerity, and the Case for an Alternative, seconded by Shropshire with an Amendment from Merseyside. The Executive Council support the Merseyside Amendment. General Secretary.

CUTS, AUSTERITY AND THE CASE FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

The FBU is increasingly appalled by the Government's handling of the current economic crisis and continue to be disappointed with the quiet consensus at Westminster to insinuate that the cause of, and solution to, the crisis lies with public spending.

The FBU is by necessity a political organization. Our members and our families are affected in their daily lives by the decisions made by politicians. Our members' jobs and profession is shaped by political decision-making.

As a trade union we must not and will not pretend as others do that our activity in defence of firefighters and the fire service is somehow detached from politics.

As a consequence the Executive Council has identified that our beliefs and our policies should be drawn together into a singular statement upon which this union can campaign.

We did not create this crisis.

The economic downturn in the UK and world economy in recent years sets the context in which the Fire and Rescue Service operates. The political decisions which have been made and continue to be made by the coalition government at Westminster have created the most serious threat to our Service and to our conditions in recent history. It is essential the FBU is able to respond to the industrial challenges affecting the Fire and Rescue Service, but also that we are able to respond in the wider context within which such challenges arise.

Day Two – 18th May

The economic crisis which has unfolded since 2007 threatens FBU members and our families on many levels:

- *As public sector workers we face attacks on our pay, jobs, pensions and conditions;*
- *As working people we face increased taxation and rising prices;*
- *As citizens we face an onslaught on our public services which threatens to fundamentally undermine the way education, health and other key services are provided in the UK.*

Despite all the rhetoric about the excessive growth of the public sector, the real cause of the current budget deficit is not excessive government spending but an economic crisis which Britain's governments, and their advisors, entirely failed to foresee. The free market (neoliberal) model that has dominated in recent decades has been exposed as a failure.

For more than three decades, and particularly since 1979, government policy has reflected a firm and uncompromising belief in the efficiency and supremacy of the market. Policy has largely been based around:

- *Reducing taxation on the wealthy and on big business;*
- *Restricting the trade union and employment rights of working people as a mechanism to restrict wages;*
- *Restricting welfare rights and benefits which has encouraged the growth of low wage sectors of the economy;*
- *The deregulation of the finance sector;*
- *The privatisation of publicly owned industries and utilities and increasingly of public services.*

By allowing markets to operate freely, this approach it was claimed, would deliver permanent growth, security and increasing living standards for the majority. Now the living standards and security of the majority (Firefighters included) and of the next generation are increasingly undermined and insecure.

The Government's diagnosis is wrong.

The government says Britain's public sector debt is "too high". Last year, Britain's public sector debt was £890bn, equivalent to 62% of GDP. Of that total, £117bn was to fund the bailout of the banks. That level of debt is not high by international standards – Germany and Spain are the only major EU economies with a lower debt stock than Britain.

And historically, the debt is low. For the entire period 1916-1971, public sector debt as a share of GDP was higher than now. In 1947, public sector

debt was nearly four times its current level, or nearly 250% of GDP. What the post-war Labour government did was not to cut public spending. Instead it introduced large-scale nationalisation, expanded the welfare state and made big investments in housing and infrastructure. Because of the economic growth produced, the deficit halved as a proportion of GDP over the following ten years.

The government also argues that the public sector deficit is 'too high'. Again, this is false. In 1991, John Major's government racked up a budget deficit of 6.3% of GDP, almost the same as last year's 7% deficit, even though this Great Recession has been nearly three times as severe as that in the early 1990s.

The deficit comes not from government spending but a collapse in growth. It is the loss of tax revenues in this recession that is the real problem, not spending too much. Taxes would have been £103bn higher without the recession, comprising two-thirds of the entire deficit of £155bn in 2010-11. The bulk of the remainder is increased interest payments on existing debt. The deficit has arisen because tax revenues have collapsed in the recession.

Government policy makes things worse.

Since the economy went into recession in 2007, output has yet to recover to its pre-crisis levels, which means the slump has so far lasted two and a half years. It is now widely forecast that employment will not recover for a decade. There is no clear sign that an economic recovery is developing – and government policy has failed to resolve the fundamental problems facing us in terms of jobs, inflation and the budget deficit.

The government has introduced the deepest cuts since the Second World War. On 21 October 2010, they announced planned cuts in public spending of £80 billion, averaging 19% over all departments, over the next four years.

These cuts fall on services needed by working people across the UK. Half a million public sector jobs face the axe – including thousands within the Fire and Rescue Service. Communities and Local Government are to lose 37% over four years in real terms, far and away the heaviest departmental cut. Local councils will lose 7% every year for four years. The Fire and Rescue Service in England faces unprecedented cuts of 25% in grant funding over the same period. Reductions in funding for the devolved administrations will also result in significant cuts in services.

Day Two – 18th May

The cuts fall most heavily on those who can least afford to lose. An average family at the bottom fifth of the income scale will lose three times more as a proportion of its income (£7 out of £200 per week) than one at the top (£10 out of £1,000). Over £7 billion is to be taken out of welfare payments with the lion's share falling on housing benefits.

These are the most savage cuts in 50 years. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the years 2011-2015 would involve the "deepest sustained cut to spending on public services since 1976-80", when the UK was forced to borrow from the IMF. The Conservatives' plans "imply cuts to spending on public services that have not been delivered over any five-year period since the Second World War."

Alongside these measures, the government is now saying it will look at further tightening the anti-union laws and introducing legislation to reduce employment rights and make it easier for employers to sack workers. The attacks on trade unions will tie the hands of the very organisations best placed to defend workers from the cuts.

There are alternatives.

The cuts, criminally, undermine the most precious resource needed to exploit these strengths – the workforce. Investment in education, technology, sustainable industries and the arts will create a long-term alternative for the economy, reaping its rewards in the future.

The way out of the economic crisis is to get the economy growing sustainably and in a direction which benefits the majority. This means protecting living standards and investing in public services. It means investment in new green technologies to tackle poverty and climate change. It means investing in education and health so everyone has a future to look forward to. The measures outlined below are not claimed to be a finalised policy for managing the economy but they are the sort of measures which the Labour movement must campaign and fight for if we are to protect the interests of the vast majority.

- 1) **Tax big business, the banks and the rich**
The taxation system should be made more progressive. We demand higher taxes on the wealthy and less tax on workers.
 - **Clamp down on tax evasion, tax avoidance and uncollected tax – this would raise £123bn.**
 - **A top rate of tax of 60% (as it was under Thatcher) would raise £19bn.**

- **National insurance at a constant 11% would bring in £8bn.**
- **Restore corporation tax to 1997 levels – this would raise £18bn.**
- **A wealth tax of 10% – £8bn.**
- **Phase out VAT and other regressive taxes.**

- 2) **End the waste of public money on privatisation and war**
 - **Public services should be based on social needs, not on profiteering and war.**
 - **Scrap Trident and save £94bn.**
 - **Bring the troops home from Afghanistan – £2.6bn per year.**
 - **Stop wasted government spending on private sector consultants – £1.8bn.**
 - **Open the books – on public sector subsidies to private contractors, firms and pension funds.**
 - **Scrap PFI and end the privatisation of public services.**

Over the past thirty years many essential public services have been privatised. Corporate profiteering in health, education, social and other public services must end. Energy, transport, water and communications should be publicly owned and run democratically by those who use them and work within them. What is required is accountability; public control over public services.

- 3) **Public ownership of the banks**
UK taxpayers now own a large swathe of the banking sector after its £1,400bn bailout. Rather than returning these banks to the private sector at the earliest opportunity, the banking sector should be developed as a public service that provides funds at reasonable rates for infrastructure and construction projects, and loans to small businesses and to households.

The banks are awash with cash, as they continue to hoard money. The state controlled banks should be instructed to use this cash to invest in the key areas required; housing, transport, infrastructure and education. Other banks should be instructed to lend at low rates of interest for public projects or be taken into democratic public ownership to be run for the benefit of all.

- 4) **Protect and invest in our public services**
What is required is a programme of growth; organised so the public reaps the returns. This calls for public investment in advanced creative, sustainable and productive services

Day Two – 18th May

which are shaping the twenty-first century economy. It requires investment in equality to reduce the costs of welfare and ensure that those who benefit from Britain's wealth contribute equitably to the sources of that wealth. And it requires investment in the future, replacing the broken society of greed with new human values of respect, equality, care and sustainability.

- *Build one million new local authority-owned homes.*
- *Create one million new climate change jobs – as identified in the 2009 report by PCS, CWU, TSSA and UCU.*
- *Rebuild city transport systems and intercity high-speed networks under public control.*
- *Jobs for all. Reduce the working week with no loss of pay to create employment.*

5) Free education for all

The twenty-first century world is clearly moving towards a society in which higher education is universal. Yet tuition fees make Higher Education in the UK the most expensive in Europe. According to the OECD, every £1bn invested in higher education in a modern economy increases government finances through higher taxes and lower welfare payments by £3.3bn. Investment in higher education pays for itself. Higher education for all, free at the point of use, paid for out of progressive general taxation would be the most equitable and efficient system, just as it is for all public services.

6) Pay and pensions

Firefighters and other public sector workers face the prospect of a continuing pay freeze, alongside rising prices for basic goods, from heating bills to fuel, food and clothing. This means cuts in real wages and the creation of real hardship for hundreds of thousands. The same approach has already led to wage cuts for private sector workers. Wages and benefits should be pegged to a real cost of living index, so that at the very least our living standards are maintained.

Public sector pensions in the UK (including the Fire Service schemes: FPS, NFPS and LGPS), are the lowest relative to earnings in the OECD economies. The government claims there is not enough money to fund pensions. The truth is that the shortfall is due to outsourcing public sector jobs and leaving pensions to the vagaries of the stock and bond markets. A good quality state pension, together with

properly funded occupational pension schemes is the answer.

7) Unshackle the unions

In the face of the cuts and austerity measures, Firefighters and other workers need the right to organise more than ever. Our unions are our first line of defence against the coming attacks. Yet Britain has the most restrictive anti-union laws in Europe. These laws were imposed by Thatcher and never repealed by New Labour. The Con-Dem government plans to make it even harder for unions to take action to defend public services and public sector workers. We need the repeal of the anti-union laws and positive legal rights for workers to organise and take action.

The ideas outlined above are aimed at challenging the central political agenda we face – the agenda of cuts and austerity; an agenda which seeks to cut the wages of working people, to raise our taxes and to slash our services. It is an agenda which seeks to force the majority to pay for the failures in the banking system and the wider economy. It is an agenda which claims there are not the resources in our society to provide decent jobs and wages or to provide good quality public services for ourselves and for future generations.

These claims are all false. Our society is wealthy – but there is little or no democratic control over the use of that wealth. To change direction requires a sharp change in political thinking and the trade union movement should play a central role in developing such a debate. A change of direction requires a challenge to the political ideas that have dominated for the past thirty years. Those ideas have failed and we are now being asked to pay the price for that failure. Instead we need to build an alternative based on democracy, solidarity and the principles upon which our union and our movement were built as contained within our objectives:

“To this end the Fire Brigades Union is part of the working class movement and, linking itself with the international trade union and labour movement, has as its ultimate aim the bringing about of the socialist system of society.”

Conference agrees the principles within this statement and resolves that officials of the union will campaign at every appropriate opportunity and within every appropriate forum for those principles to be adopted by labour movement bodies with which we are associated or affiliated.

AS AMENDED BY MERSEYSIDE

Day Two – 18th May

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, this is an important debate that we're having here this morning. It reflects debates across the Movement, and indeed across society, about where we're heading economically and politically, and the challenges facing our Movement. I make no apology for the length of the Statement. I'm sure everybody was up very late last night reading it in great detail and every word.

We're sometimes asked by members why we're involved in political debate, political engagement, why we're involved in debating political and economic matters. The truth is that the central political debate today in Britain, and indeed across much of the globe, is about the future of public services and the future of those who work within those public services. It's about the future of welfare states, the future of publicly provided pensions and related matters. We face a huge onslaught on our livelihoods, probably the most serious such attack since the 1930s. The simple truth is that we won't beat those attacks by industrial means alone, even though industrial means are probably going to be necessary as well. They will only be beaten by a huge political shift and that requires the sort of debate that we're having today.

It's absolutely essential that we understand the scale of the attack that we face and develop a rounded answer to the arguments presented against us. This Statement addresses the kind of arguments we need to be having on fire stations, with our friends and families, in the pubs, and in our local communities, to convince our members and to convince working people more generally that there is another way, there is an alternative to the agenda set out by the Westminster Coalition.

It's also for us the starting point for campaigning. By setting out an alternative it provides us a base from which to approach individual questions. I say this, if we accept the logic of cuts, the need for cuts, then the next question is: which cuts do we make? That sets up division between different trade unions, between different parts of working people, about protecting ourselves and letting others go to the wall. The only logical position, comrades, is the one we adopted at Conference last year, that we reject the cuts agenda entirely.

This Statement therefore does three things. It explains why the Government is wrong in its diagnosis of the economy. It illustrates, secondly, why their plans will damage the economy if they get away with implementing their programme. It explains why they expect working people to pay for a crisis that we didn't create. Thirdly, it answers those cynics who say that we in the Labour Movement don't have an alternative to what Clegg and Cameron are saying.

This Statement is a contribution to that debate about a positive plan for the Labour Movement, another way to bring prosperity, to expand public services, and to sort out the public finances, and at the same time to improve working class living standards. The starting point for that debate is that we didn't create this crisis. The Government's peddling a series of myths, attempting to justify its austerity programme. We have to arm ourselves, we have to arm our people, with the arguments to answer these fables and lies. The first of those lies is that Britain's public sector debt is too high. Last year, public sector debt in Britain was £890 billion. Of that total £117 billion was a direct result of the bail out of the banks. That level of debt as a proportion of GDP is not high by international standards. Germany and Spain are the only European Union economies with a lower stock of debt than Britain. That debt is not high historically. For the entire period 1916 to 1971 public sector debt was lower than it is today. In 1947 public sector debt was nearly four times higher than it is today as a proportion of GDP.

Let's look back to what happened then. The Labour government elected in 1945 didn't slash and burn and increase unemployment and slash public services. The Labour government introduced large scale nationalisation of key industries, created the modern welfare state, created the modern national health service, and by the way yes, created the modern Fire Service that we've all grown up and worked in.

The second myth is the public sector deficit, government borrowing, is too high. Again, the argument is false. In 1991 John Major's Tory government racked up a budget deficit of 6.3% of GDP, only slightly lower than last year's 7%. The deficit does not, in the main, arise from Government spending; it arises as a result of the collapse in economic growth. It is the loss of tax revenues in this recession that is the real problem, not Government spending too much.

Taxes, tax income for the Government, the ability to pay for public services would be at least £103 billion higher if it hadn't been for the economic recession. That is two-thirds of the entire deficit for 2010/2011. The budget deficit has arisen precisely because tax revenues have collapsed during the recession. That brings us back to the fundamental point. It was the bankers that triggered the international crisis, not those people working on our public services, not the people who clean your kids' schools, or feed people in hospitals, or teach our kids, or perform our other public services. It was the bankers who caused the crisis and it's the bankers who should be made to pay for that crisis. *Applause*

The Statement secondly argues that Government policy will actually make things worse economically. We need to be clear about the consequences of the

Day Two – 18th May

Government's plans. The first thing is that working people will be the hardest hit as a result of their austerity measures. Half a million at least, public sector jobs face the axe and the same number in the private sector as a result of lost contracts as a result directly of Government cutbacks. One million working people to be thrown on the scrap heap as a direct result of Government policy. The cuts will fall most heavily on those who can least afford them. An average family in the bottom fifth of the income scale stands to lose three times more as a proportion of income than one at the top. They expect working people to pay the price for this crisis by pay cuts, by destroying our pensions, and by attacking welfare benefits. They expect working people to pay by suffering from poorer services, as our local authority services, including our own, as our education system and our national health service are dismantled and privatised. They expect working people to pay more through increased VAT, the most regressive form of taxation, while corporation tax for big business and the banks and the multinationals is cut back and reduced.

But even among working people, certain sections will be particularly hard hit. We know that women will disproportionately suffer from the cuts agenda. John mentioned the march this week of people with disabilities. What an outrage, what an indictment of a society that thousands of people have to struggle on wheelchairs to Westminster to outline to politicians the disgraceful and horrendous attacks that are being launched against people with disabilities in a so-called civilised society! We know that the elderly in particular will suffer from the attacks on pensions. Poverty among elderly people is already a major problem in this society. Don't forget the young. Teenagers already lost the education maintenance allowance, the EMA, and now face up to £9,000 a year in university fees and a lifetime of debt as a result of wanting to try to get an education. Meanwhile, in one of the most sickening proposals I've heard of from this bunch, they propose that there should be reserved places at universities specifically for those who can afford to pay, without any reference to ability, talent or exams passed, that a way of solving the problem is actually to reserve places for the rich. This Tory Government believes that wealth and privilege should trump ability and talent. It's an absolute disgrace, and it is part of turning the clock back from the gains that we made in the past.

Meanwhile, those who caused these problems are completely and utterly left off the hook. An annual read I'm sure people pick up every year, the Sunday Times Rich List to see if anyone in the room is in there (I have not seen any names that we know) came out last week. It said that these 1,000 multimillionaires over the past year are £60.2 billion better off than they were in 2010, and Cameron and Clegg tell us we're all in this together! Their wealth is now back at the levels it was in 2008

before the financial crash. That's not the same picture for the majority of working people whose living standards are falling at record levels. And Cameron tells us we're all in this together! There are 20 more billionaires on the Sunday Times Rich List this year compared with last year. And Cameron tells us that we're all in this together!

But even from the point of view of the economy, government policies will stymie growth, not assist it. Economists tell us that the way to get out of the recession is to invest, to create jobs, to get the economy moving. The truth is that cuts reduce economic growth. Cuts increase the deficit, meaning the economy will take longer to pick up, and public finances remain in deficit for longer. The Government's deflationary policies have already been a major driver of the recession. It's like wading through quicksand: the more they cut the more the economy sinks.

It's very different from the trajectory of other European economies. In Spain, for example, where there has been some government investment and expenditure, the economy is beginning to recover. But you look at the model for these people. Of course George Osborne, clever dick that he is, has praised the Republic of Ireland for its long term economic strategy of reducing corporation tax, deregulating and privatising and said that should be the model that the UK should follow. Well look at the state of the Irish economy today as a result of the cuts that they have made – far, far worse than many other European economies.

Under the last Labour government, for all its faults, economic stimulus did lead to some recovery. During the second quarter of last year the economy grew by 1.2%, the strongest growth rate since 2001. But under this Government the economy has flat lined. If you read the figures for economic output for the past six months, no growth at all. That means that they will not reach their targets for deficit reduction.

We need to realise and accept and understand what is going on. The truth is, this is class war declared by this Government against the majority of people, against working people in Britain. Over the last six months unemployment has grown, only by 65,000, far less than the job cull planned by the Coalition Government. Unemployment is set to rise significantly in the months ahead. But for the Government, and for the people who stand behind this Government, that is a price worth paying because they believe, to rebalance the economy, as they see it, we are the people who need to pay the price. It's important that we understand their agenda and their aims.

Opponents of the Government often say, and we may use these phrases about the cuts, the cuts are unnecessary and ideological, too fast and too deep, bad

Day Two – 18th May

for Britain and so on. But we need to look at what we really mean by that because there isn't a single Britain. There are two Britains. There's the Britain of the majority of working people, struggling to pay their mortgages, struggling to look after the kids, or worrying about what their parents will face upon retirement and in old age. Then there is the Britain of the multinationals, the bankers and the billionaires. They live in a completely different world from the majority of us. So there isn't a single national interest. There is their interest and there is our interest. The starting point of recognising how we fight back is recognising that division. They've got an agenda, they're going to make us pay, our agenda has to be to fight back and say: we are not accepting this, we will not pay for your crisis! *Applause*

This is an international agenda. People ask why we're internationalists. The same agenda is being faced across the world. Public sector workers under attack, pensions under attack. You can see it from Greece to the United States, exactly the same issues that we face here today are being faced by trade unionists and working people across the world. It's reflected in the policy advice that the IMF and the World Bank give out. God help any government who invites the IMF in to come and help them out. That will mean slashing of welfare state budgets and the privatisation of public services. So we face a war launched against working people on behalf of a Government working on behalf of the banks, big business and billionaires. It is indeed government of the rich by the rich and for the rich. That's what this Coalition Government is all about.

We need to argue very clearly that there is an alternative. Perhaps the most paralysing thing in the Movement is the idea that there is no alternative to the cuts agenda that we face. Thatcher famously bleated it out endlessly, and her successors today repeat it. We have to articulate that alternative to the Tory led Government. I have to say, we also have to go much further than the Labour leadership who regrettably are also saying that some cuts are necessary. I have to say, whether it's 25% cuts or 20% cuts that the previous lot were planning, it's unacceptable to me. I'm not willing to see this Service decimated by that scale and I hope that Conference will support us on that point. *Applause*

The way out of the economic crisis is to get the economy growing again sustainably. That means protecting living standards, not destroying them. It means investing in public services, not destroying them. It means investing in new and green technologies to tackle poverty and climate change. It means investing in health and education so that everyone has a future to look forward to.

There's three areas we believe we need to go on the offensive: on taxation, on waste, and on public

ownership. Everyone in the Trade Union Movement today supports a clamp down on tax evasion and tax avoidance. Experts estimate that up to £123 billion could be raised if we clamped down on that tax gap, almost enough to tackle the budget deficit. But we also need to go further than that. We need to raise the demands for a progressive tax system that doesn't penalise those of the majority, those at the bottom, that actually makes the wealthier pay their share of taxation in this society. I'm not talking about people in this room. I'm talking about people with vast wealth, with land and six figure incomes. Increasing tax on those people would bring in billions to provide investment for our public services. We should be against regressive taxes like VAT. The VAT increase will hit those at the bottom far, far harder than it hits those at the top, so it is inherently unfair.

We need to challenge waste in public expenditure. Some spending is wasted. Let's look at what it is. Billions of pounds wasted on private sector consultants brought in to tell Government how to sell off, privatise our public services. We had our own experience of it with Fire Control. You multiply that by a thousand times and you get the picture of what is happening in our health service and our other public services as these spivs come in and earn tens and tens of thousands of pounds for each project, and then tell policy makers how to privatise and cut back further on public expenditure. Huge sums spent and indeed wasted on nuclear weapons that can only bring destruction, not peace. We also need to open the books on private sector contracts with the public sector. We know the scandal of PFI. We know the role of privateers like AssetCo, people who take from the pot but put nothing back into it.

We need to put back on the agenda a debate about public ownership versus privatisation. When the economy crashed in 2008 the Government stepped in. It provided a little bit of socialism actually, for those at the top, because their losses were nationalised and we picked up the tab. A little bit of socialism for those at the top. But the intent was always, of course, to privatise the profits once profitability was restored. The banking bail out was a huge transfer of wealth from the majority, from those at the bottom to that tiny minority at the top, the biggest con trick in history.

We should aim and place on the agenda the idea of a new type of banking sector which is seen as a public service rather than a casino for the rich. A publicly owned banking sector, democratically accountable to society could be used to provide the investment loans for small businesses, good quality loans to working people for their housing, could be a major drive in investment to create jobs and a way out of the recession. But that requires a fundamental shift in political thinking. It requires challenging the mainstream ideas of the past 30 years. I don't think we in the FBU

Day Two – 18th May

should shy away from taking part and indeed leading that debate in the Labour Movement. Think how much easier it would be to tackle climate change and other ills if the energy and transport sectors were under public ownership and democratic control. Imagine how much cheaper it would be to heat our homes and travel round the country with a balanced energy policy, and an integrated, publicly owned and democratically accountable transport system.

We need to reopen the debate about the ownership and control of our economy. Not because we want to go back to the days of British Rail sandwiches, but because a planned and publicly accountable economy is a more rational way to run things than the so-called free market mayhem that we've seen in the past few years.

So the truth is, brothers and sisters, that our society is wealthy. The idea that Britain is broke is simply not true. It is a lie that they are repeating to try to force their cuts agenda through. The starting point has to be to say it is a lie, Britain is not broke, we can afford our public services, we can afford decent pay and pensions.
Applause

To change direction requires a sharp shift in political thinking, and the Trade Union Movement should play a central role in developing such a debate. A change of direction requires a challenge to the free market neo-Liberal ideas that have dominated for the past 30 years, and unfortunately have spread across the political spectrum to become the mainstream political ideas in society. Those ideas have clearly failed, and the failure is demonstrated in the banking crisis, the failure is demonstrated in poverty and unemployment. Those ideas have failed and have been proved to have failed.

David Cameron talks about the Big Society. I say let's take him up, let's have a debate about what sort of society we really want to live in. Do we want to live in a society where the rich get ever richer while the majority struggle? Do we want to live in a society where public services are increasingly handed over to spivs or are closed down completely? Do we want to live in a society where we see grotesque wealth at one end and increasing and obscene poverty at the other end? Do we want to live in a society where youth unemployment threatens to produce yet another lost generation as a result of the policies of this Government? A society where thousands of old people already die every year simply because of the cold. A society where the really important decisions that affect many of us, affect our lives, our livelihoods, our futures, on investment of jobs, are taken in places where there is no democratic accountability, in the board rooms and banks of the City of London and elsewhere. A society where millions worry about their kids or their jobs or their ability to hold on to their houses or to provide some dignity in

retirement for their parents. That's the sort of society these people are creating. It means turning the clock back decades. It means scrapping all the gains that our people fought for. The things your parents and grandparents fought and campaigned for are all going to be taken away from us if we allow them to do it. I say no! I say no, and I know Conference will join me in saying no. That's not the sort of society we want to live in. *Applause*

Instead, we want to build a society based on democracy, based on solidarity, based on the principles upon which our organisation, the Fire Brigades Union, and our Movement, the Labour Movement, was built. You know, they say there is no alternative. Well, we've always been told that. The bosses in work tell us that, the newspapers tell us that, the politicians tell us that. But if you look back through history, our people have been told it throughout history. There is no alternative; do as we say. We've only ever made progress when we've rejected that advice and when we've rejected that claim. If we'd listened to them in the past, our people would never have won the right to vote. If we'd listened to them in the past, our people would never have won the right to be in trade unions, women would never have won the right to vote. If we'd listened to them in the past we never would have won the National Health Service in the first place or the right to a decent education. We've only ever made progress when we've ignored them and got on with our fights and our campaigns.

So the starting point of this is we ignore them today. There is an alternative and we in the Fire Brigades Union will be part and parcel of building that alternative. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I call Shropshire to second.

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding the EC Policy Statement Cuts, Austerity and the Case for an Alternative. We withdrew our Resolution on tuition fees to support this Resolution and Section 5 is free education for all, which represents what we believe to be the right way for education, and obviously better explained what our Resolution did.

The reason we put the Resolution for tuition fees in – and I make no apology for concentrating on that particular part of it – is that we believe that tuition fees represents the embodiment of the ConDem ideology to the worst degree. Our members may say what have tuition fees got to do with us? At face value you might think that. But there's two ways it affects. It affects us

Day Two – 18th May

all. It affects us directly and it affects us indirectly. It affects us directly because we might not as individuals want to go to college or whatever but our family members will. I know I want my son and daughter to go to university. I know they won't be able to afford it, and I know I won't be able to afford to help them out to get there with £9,000 a year tuition fees. That's before you've even started. The other reason is indirectly (this is where the ideology comes in) it affects us all because what it's going to do is put the future of the working class in debt. It puts them in debt before they've even got to work. It puts them in debt, it makes them slaves to the employers. When these things that we keep trying to challenge come out, trying to oppose these things when you're saddled with debt is increasingly difficult.

Anyone who knows me might be surprised to learn I went to college! I went to college close to here, just up the road, and met my wife there. She was lodging in Southport. That's why I always like coming to Southport for Conference; it brings back old memories. But at 18 there was no way that I was looking to go to college; I was frightened by the debts then. There were no tuition fees then, but there were also no jobs. I applied and applied and couldn't get a job at that time. There was huge youth unemployment. My Dad said: I'll help you out, son, go to college. You know, we weren't wealthy. I said: all right, I'll go. I managed to get a place, went to college, got to college, signed the papers, there's a grant, they are paying me to go to college. Isn't that completely different! At the moment, they are looking to charge £9,000 tuition fees and when I went to college they were paying us to go.

The important point about this is Britain hasn't changed since then. It was a while ago, but Britain then and now is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. It can afford to send people to college, it can afford to give people free education. As one of the wealthiest countries in the world, it's got a social and moral obligation to provide the best education for all the people here. Not only that, there's an economic argument that needs to be drawn through here as well. If we don't invest in the future skills and education of the workforce of this country where are we going to be in 20 and 30 years time? It goes back to the Victorian ideal of keeping the working classes ignorant, and we've got to fight against that.

Another thing as well as tuition fees is the education maintenance allowance. Further Education Colleges have had massive increases in the enrolment to their courses and that's largely due to the education maintenance allowance. It's not just the amount of enrolment, it's the amount of attendance. They get high on 100% attendance at courses. Because of that, people leaving college at 18 years of age are leaving

with qualifications, they are leaving colleges with skills. We can't afford for any of that to be relaxed.

In the beginning I spoke about it being an ideology. I could go on about academies, but I'm going to move on a bit. I think I see tuition fees as the equivalent of Thatcher's council house sale. It's about putting people in debt, it's making them dependent, it's making them subservient, it's making them frightened. If you ever get the chance to see Michael Moore's film "Sicko", I strongly recommend it. It's about the US Healthcare. Although it's a different subject, the conclusions are exactly the same. In America you've got privatised industry, you've got big conglomerates. You have to pay for your healthcare, you have to pay for your education. The workers there are saddled with massive debt. They can't afford to protest, they can't afford to say no to their employers. That's what they really want with tuition fees. They want a workforce that is pliant so they can do whatever they want.

I have concentrated on the education aspect of it here. I don't make any apologies for that because I think as a principle it demonstrates what they're trying to do. I think the other things in the Document in terms of taxes, banks, pensions and the all the rest of it, are all the same things, trying to achieve the same aims, to make the workforce pliant so they can do what they want. So it's not just about supporting this Document. I'm sure it will go through unanimously, I've got no doubt about that. It's about going out there, signing petitions, joining the other campaigns, supporting the other campaigns against all the cuts. It's about getting out there and writing to MPs, lobbying, demonstrations, and getting involved with it. We have not just got to move this Resolution, we need to act as well. What we need to achieve is to make sure that all the other campaigns are successful as well, because we can't allow for them to just hit one section at the expense of another and save one thing at the expense of another. I know you're going to support the Resolution but it's also important to get out there and act as well. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Merseyside to move their Amendment.

BRO LES SKARRATTS (Merseyside):

President, Conference, we don't want to take too much of your time on this. We don't want to make a point of pedantry as a result of the Amendment. We simply wish that the Union's records and archives reflect the fact that the word "New" in New Labour is not an adjective but an integral part of the title of a Party within a Party. We feel that's fundamentally important to the issue. The Amendment ensures that the rank hypocrisy of New

Day Two – 18th May

Labour and the New Labour project is exposed, as previously the Labour Party had taken the decision to expel members of what they then considered to be a Party within a Party, that being Militant. One of those members expelled by Kinnock and his minions of course was former Executive Council member, Brother Terry Fields, who's no longer with us, sadly. Comrades, New Labour was a disgrace. It betrayed the working men and women of the country who clamoured for an alternative to the hardline of the Thatcher years. They were abandoned by Blair who continued the monetarist policies, continued the attack on the trade unions he despised. Comrades, it was a breathtaking act of class treason. Our records and archives should show the difference between the Labour Party and New Labour. We heard John McDonnell yesterday, and I have to be honest, I respect that man, I respect him for what he stands for, but with every bone in my body I despise New Labour. I move the Amendment. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Do we have a seconder for the Merseyside Amendment? *Formally seconded.* I'll open that for debate.

BRO JAMES SCOTT (Strathclyde):

Matt mentioned there the political shift that must happen, but that political shift can be influenced by combined trade union action, and it's when and how we do this. I was at a fringe meeting last night where our General Secretary was present, and he had a wee moment of Divine intervention. He was mentioning Jesus and a needle and a camel at one point. Now, if you accept that Jesus Christ's mother, also known as God, actually exists, you must accept Lucifer exists. What these people are doing to the working class – and make no mistake about it, it's a global attack on the working class – they don't care a monkey's about the masses; they only care about privatisation and profit for themselves. They have no capacity for empathy with any other human being. They're evil to the core.

Like most people, you always gather strength from some people in the past. I've always listened to people like Mick McGahey and so on that says: "If we stop running, they'll stop chasing." People like Rosa Parkes in America wouldn't sit in the back of the bus. Are we going to miss this bus here? We need to make sure that we join with the other trade unions on this major issue. This is a lifetime issue, not only for us but for our children and our children's children. *Applause* Nye Bevan says: who's got the power and how do we get it? I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else want to speak Conference? Come to the rostrum.

BRO YUSUF TIMMS (London):

I think Matt outlined well, the scale of the attack that this Government intends to launch or is launching on working class people, the fact that this isn't just about getting ordinary people to pay for the bankers' bail out, it's about using the crisis to fundamentally reorganise society in the interests of the most wealthy. That really raises the question of what we're going to do about it. I think it has to be said that if the Trade Union Movement in this country carries on with the same old tired tactics that it's used for 20 years, and a lot of bluff and bluster and fine words, and one day token strikes aimed at winning a compromise, we are going to get beaten. They have realised the game has changed, they are serious about these attacks. We have to be serious about defending ourselves. We've got an opportunity this week at this Conference to put this Union in the forefront of the resistance to this Government, which is exactly where it should be, with the debate on pensions. I think it's important that we take that opportunity to make sure that this Union wins a ballot for industrial action over pensions and stands shoulder to shoulder with the 800,000 other workers who will be taking their first strike out on 30 June. *Applause* Words will not be enough to see off this attack. We have to realise that we have to fight together. We can't allow ourselves to be in a position where we're left to fight on our own in six or 12 months down the line, and we've missed the opportunity to really bring the working class movement together, draw a line in the sand, and fight back against these people. So let's get this Union into this fight. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the Merseyside Amendment to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. I now put the Executive Council Policy Statement as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried unanimously*. I will have to check with Standing Orders whether we've carried whether Lucifer exists or not, Jim. I'll get to you after lunch.

Could you move to Page 5 of your Programme of Business, please. We're on Section A, National Joint Council, Paragraph A1, A2. I now call Resolution 5, West Yorkshire with Amendment from Merseyside, Voluntary Redundancy.

Resolution 5 – VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY – NATIONAL GUIDANCE

This Conference is deeply concerned at the implementation of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and its negative impact upon the British Fire Service.

Day Two – 18th May

We also acknowledge, and fully support, the FBU policy on compulsory redundancy.

However, we note that brigades are now increasingly considering options such as voluntary redundancies to balance budgets.

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to task the appropriate National Officer to produce guidance for Brigade Officials on negotiating with management terms of VOLUNTARY redundancy.

Issues within the scope of this guidance shall include guidance on:

- ***Selection criteria for candidates for voluntary redundancy;***
- ***The impact of Efficiency Retirements on members' pensions entitlements;***
- ***Negotiating an agreement with managers on voluntary redundancy.***

This guidance to be produced, approved by the Executive Council and circulated within 6 months of Conference 2011.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Amendment

Line 3 delete 'British' insert 'UK'.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO WILLIAM DELVE (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are accepting the Merseyside Amendment. Bearing in mind the EC Statement on redundancies, if we're given reassurances that this will be actioned, then West Yorkshire will be content to remit this Resolution. Redundancy for any union is a dirty word. The definition of redundancy is to reduce the workforce as the task no longer exists. In the Fire Service this is definitely not the case. I'm coming to Conference to ask for clear guidance to ensure officials are able to assist any of our members who might be thinking about the voluntary redundancy option. Engaging with management in sending our members down the road on voluntary redundancy, I feel, is a challenge, but it's an important issue that needs addressing at the earliest opportunity. The EC have nothing to fear from this Resolution. We're not challenging the current policy; we're asking for guidance for officials. We're in a climate of cut, cut, cut, and Brigades are trying to hide redundancies behind a variety of other guises. A neighbouring Brigade to West Yorkshire is talking about requesting expressions of interest for voluntary redundancy under the title "early voluntary release". Another asks for expressions of interest with no consultation with the FBU. When we asked for more information on this subject they didn't respond to the request and nothing further has been heard from the management.

The favourite management buzz word at the moment seems to be "expressions of interest". These expressions of interest can quickly become statements of intention. It won't be too long before voluntary redundancy comes to a Brigade near you. We must be ready as officials to meet this challenge head on, and be able to give members the best advice and the fairest opportunities to consider management proposals. Officials need the tools to be able to negotiate with management at a local level. If management are looking for 20 voluntary redundancies but received 60 expressions of interest, who will be chosen, and how will this be decided?

We as officials must be able to access details of the management criteria when choosing candidates for voluntary redundancy. We must ensure our members get the very best deal possible if they decide to accept any management offer. What will the impact of efficiency retirements on our members' pension entitlements be? Several firefighters within my own division in West Yorkshire have asked me if they would be accepted for voluntary redundancy, some with as little as ten years service. I've been totally honest and responded that I don't know as the issue has not been formally raised with the Union.

This is one of the reasons we're bringing this Resolution to Conference. We call on the EC to educate officials, to equip them to deal with this situation should it arise. Officials have received general information around redundancy as part of other seminars. We also call on the EC to act on this Resolution within six months of this Conference and to circulate the findings to Regional Committees as soon as possible. Very soon we could have members who've considered and accepted voluntary redundancy before we as officials have the skills and knowledge to ensure that we get the best possible deal for our members. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Could you come back to the rostrum, please, because I heard that you offered to remit it. Did you offer to remit it with assurances from the General Secretary there? So you've moved it. Is that seconded? *Formally seconded*. Can I have Merseyside to move the Amendment, please. *Formally moved*. Is that seconded? *Formally seconded*. I'll open up for debate. Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council is never unsympathetic to officials who are dealing with issues which we've never had to deal with before in many instances. Certainly for many years our historic policy, our traditional policy of opposing redundancies in any

Day Two – 18th May

form has served this Union well, such that we've never had to even consider the issue of guidance on this matter or indeed many others that are faced by particularly Brigade officials up and down the UK.

Certainly when it comes to the question of guidance on voluntary redundancy, again the EC is not unsympathetic to the position that Brigade officials find themselves in, particularly when not only is the employer trying to negotiate or to consult on those issues, but, as West Yorkshire said, when the employer isn't even attempting to notify, let alone discuss with you.

That said, we are looking for West Yorkshire to remit this, else we will be opposing. We'll give a clear commitment that we will give guidance to officials, but just as with this contribution, that guidance will emphasise the key issues which, let's face it, have so far been through the debates we've had, not least the last debate that we had with regard to cuts. The first position we adopt is to oppose those cuts, to fight those cuts. That will be a key part of that advice in the first instance. That said, we will give the advice on voluntary redundancy and redundancy arrangements, and, as appropriate, legislation as well and case law.

The reason we are asking you to remit or we will have to oppose is what signal does it send to our members most importantly that we are contemplating that we would contemplate redundancy? What signal does that send? Similarly, what signal does it send to employers? It would signal to them, wrongly, that this Union has changed its stance with regard to the issue of redundancy. We have formal policies around compulsory redundancy; we have informal policies and understandings which are based upon our commitment to jobs, and creation and retention of jobs, on voluntary redundancy as well.

With the assurance, I really would ask that West Yorkshire do remit this Resolution to the Executive Council. Otherwise, I would ask Conference to oppose. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

West Yorkshire.

BRO WILLIAM DELVE (West Yorkshire):

Yes, Mr President, we'd like a reasonable timescale but West Yorkshire are going to remit.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you for that, comrade. I now call Resolution 7, Voluntary Redundancy and Early Retirement Guidance, from Hampshire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 7 – VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY AND EARLY RETIREMENT GUIDANCE

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to ensure that proper guidance is available to enable Brigade and Regional Officials to negotiate with management on voluntary redundancy and early retirement issues.

HAMPSHIRE

BRO BRYAN STANISLAS (Hampshire):

President, Conference, first time speaker and first time at Conference. *Applause* Hampshire are facing redundancies. Our management have spoken about voluntary redundancies. We need guidance on what we need to ask for. We need to know what is best for our affected members. We need guidance as to whether or not we can accept voluntary redundancies. We need answers and we need those answers now. This problem is happening now.

We support West Yorkshire and for that reason we withdraw our Resolution in favour of theirs which has been remitted. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

To be clear, Conference, the Executive Council are seeking remit or oppose. He's withdrawn it, but I needed to get that right. The Executive Council position was to remit or oppose and he has just withdrawn it. Another typographical error. It's not a problem for me, but I'm sure it's a problem for you!

We're now on Paragraph A3 Pay and CPD 2010. Come up. I do beg your pardon, we're having problems with the paperwork. We are on Resolution 13, NJC moved by Cheshire. The Executive Council oppose. Can I say, we are having major problems here with the paperwork we've been provided with. The Executive Council give qualified support. I promise you, Conference, that this will be rectified in the lunch break.

Resolution 13 – NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL

Conference demands that all attempts to dismantle the National Negotiating Machinery and the National Joint Council (NJC) be resisted by the Executive Council in the strongest possible way.

Conference acknowledges that on occasions the NJC does not deliver what is best for members of the FBU but the principle of a National body to oversee the pay and conditions of Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff is one that must be

Day Two – 18th May

retained in order to protect members and the sustainability of the Fire Brigades Union.

CHESHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

President, Conference, the NJC and the Grey Book are the two most important aspects of the Fire and Rescue Service. There's not a day goes by that these don't impact on the Fire Service, on firefighters, control room staff and as brigade officials, every day they affect how we deal with matters on behalf of our members. As a trade union we are fully committed to the continuation of the NJC and the principle of national collective bargaining for the terms and conditions of our members. However, we are sceptical of the commitment shown by our employers, chief fire officers and some politicians as to the future of the NJC. We also sense that this lack of commitment goes even further and we now face a clear threat to the future of the NJC, certainly in its current format.

In moving the Resolution we welcome the Executive Council support and accept and recognise the need for the qualification. The sustainability of the FBU is not dependent on the future of the NJC. Regardless, the FBU will continue to function. The FBU would continue to protect our members, fighting for the best possible working conditions that can be achieved. However, we believe our task to achieve the aims and objectives of the Union are better served with the NJC in its present format. Many of the Rules of the FBU have evolved purely on the basis of the NJC being the governing body for the terms and conditions of those employed by local authority Fire and Rescue Services. We believe good industrial relations in the Fire Service are also better suited to a strong NJC with a commitment from both sides to work with mutual respect within the auspices of the NJC.

Unfortunately, in recent times far too many local officials have had cause to complain about the commitment of authorities to the Grey Book, and in particular to agreed protocols for consultation and negotiation as well as discipline and grievance procedures. Cheshire is not alone in bringing Resolutions to Conference regarding the blatant disregard of the Grey Book by senior managers. We had a period of time dealing with our previous chief officer and principal managers that a meeting never went by without being reminded by them that we pay your wages, and the constant threat of: if we don't get what we want we'll just simply pull out of the NJC.

As documented in the Annual Report there is now a further threat to the NJC through the Government's Fire Futures project. The Coalition's drive for localism and decentralisation agenda was clearly evident in the terms

of reference of the steering group. This will undoubtedly allow those politicians, motivated to abolish the NJC, an opportunity to influence this project and bring about, at the very least, changes to the NJC's current format. One option expressed is an England only NJC which will immediately spell the end of the National Pay Structure.

Whilst there currently appears to be some support for continuation of national pay bargaining, and the recognition that the current model has significant strengths, the project team will be looking to increase local negotiation, including greater local determination of pay and conditions. The FBU needs to use all of our political influence to argue the case for the retention of the current system and we need to resist any detrimental changes to the NJC by whatever means we can. Support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* I ask the General Secretary to give the EC qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. I thank Cheshire for bringing a very important issue to the attention of Conference. The Executive Council has one slight qualification. I think, to be fair, Dave actually addressed it. That is in the second to last line, the suggestion that the Fire Brigades Union relies on the National Joint Council for our own sustainability, but I think Dave has accepted that point, so we're happy, with that qualification, to support him. It is important that we fight to maintain the National Joint Council and national conditions of service.

I'm aware, and again Dave referred to this, that many brigade officials will have had local problems about how local employers interpret and try to avoid complying with national agreements and that is an ongoing problem. Nevertheless, the conclusion, I'm sure we all reach, is that even with those difficulties, even with those problems the national conditions of service and national arrangements for reaching those conditions of service is preferable to, for example, the idea of complete local determination of pay and conditions, which, in the case of pay and in the current climate would merely mean a nasty race to the bottom on firefighters' pay across the UK.

So yes, in terms of Fire Futures we actually fought a fairly successful battle through the Fire Futures debates to push back the idea that that should conclude in favour of scrapping the NJC, not that the question of the constitution or structure of the NJC is any business of the Fire Futures project, but the issue was nevertheless raised there. We are happy, with that qualification President, to support the Cheshire Resolution.

Day Two – 18th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Still open for debate, Conference. Anybody? I put Resolution 13 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Paragraph A3. Yes.

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, a couple of Conferences ago we moved a Resolution, which was agreed unanimously, to negotiate with the employers to remove the A rate scale of pay. I think Northern Ireland it was last year raised a similar Resolution. Can you just inform us what progress has been made with that, whether any action has been taken, or whether there is any plan to use that particular Resolution in the future?

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes. What I ask Conference to bear in mind is, to be blunt, any discussions on pay in the current climate are exceedingly difficult. The employers' stance (and we'll cover it in some of the Resolutions) is not to address any pay issues, certainly not in terms of a pay rise, but the structure of pay also. So it is an extremely difficult process. We will continue to pursue those issues. The employers have outlined that there is an openness to have some discussions on pay. Into those discussions will feed all the policy decisions that Conference has made. But I'm sure you don't expect, Matt, that it's going to be very easy to win those sort of improvements in the current climate. Nevertheless, in line with Conference decisions, we will attempt to pursue them.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 1, Cleveland, with Amendments from Strathclyde and Merseyside, and Resolution 2, West Yorkshire in the same debate. Only one Resolution can carry. Resolution 1 Pay, Cleveland.

Resolution 1 – PAY

This Conference is appalled by the decision of the National Employers to make a zero per cent pay offer in 2010. If the National Employers do not make an acceptable offer on pay in 2011, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to mount a campaign with the membership which, if necessary, should culminate in a ballot for industrial action up to and including strike action.

CLEVELAND

Amendment

***Insert new paragraph after end of resolution:
This pay campaign and any resultant industrial action to be co-ordinated with the campaigns of other public sector Trade Unions also being subjected to and challenging a pay freeze in 2011, as far as possible.***

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

***Line 1 after 'Employers' insert 'not'.
Line 2 delete 'zero per cent'.***

MERSEYSIDE

BRO DAVID HOWE (Cleveland):

Conference, President, I am moving Resolution 1 as Amended. Conference, I think everyone would agree that times are hard at the moment. We've had a zero per cent pay offer in 2010, inflation's rising, VAT's rising, pension contributions may be rising (hopefully not), food prices are going up, fuel prices, utility bills, even premium lager. They are all rising in cost. Conference, in 2010 the national employers took an opportunity to hammer us. They took an opportunity at a time when the Conservative Party had already started blaming the public sector for all of Britain's economic woes in preparation for their massive cuts agenda. The national employers knew that the public view on any industrial action, and the media view as well, over pay meant that it would have been suicide for our Union and our members to do so at that time. That's why they did it. And this, even though Brigades around the country had budgeted for modest pay rises. So the money was there.

Conference, I said that times are hard. If we have to suffer possibly another two years of no pay rises, then things really are going to get bad. It's not unreasonable to expect a living wage. It's not unreasonable to expect to be able to pay your bills. It's not unreasonable to expect to be able to put food on the table, clothes on your back and fuel in the car. Conference, now is the time to start the fight back, a reasonable fight back, a measured fight back. That's all this Resolution calls for: to build a campaign, to make the argument. As the Resolution says, only if necessary, take industrial action when our members are ready for it. Conference, please support. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

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

A DELEGATE (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, we are all in this together, you, me, the poor, the low paid, the working classes. Not Dave, Man of the People, Gideon, Nick, or the ruling

Day Two – 18th May

classes. But where are we now with pay? Last year there was no pay rise. There was expected to be 1.8%. VAT increased in January by 2.5%. Inflation, depending how you see it (RPI/CPI) is over 5½%. Our pay has decreased by 10% in the last year. We face a minimum three year pay freeze, an increase in our pension contributions of 28%, which is £1,000 off a firefighter's pay. We'll soon move back to poverty wages if our pay is eroded at this rate.

We did not cause the financial crisis. Dave Gideon and his banker friends caused this crisis. They are now cashing in with pay rises, bonuses and share issues. We get austerity, job losses and pay cuts. We call on the EC to mount a pay campaign in coordination with other public sector unions to ensure our members don't work for poverty pay. Support the Resolution as Amended because we are simply the best. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Amendment seconded? *Formally seconded*. Can I call Merseyside to move their Amendment. *Formally moved*. Is that seconded? *Formally seconded*. I now call Resolution 2, Pay, West Yorkshire. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 2 – PAY

This Conference notes with anger and frustration the National Employers position regarding FBU members' legitimate claim for a pay rise for the year 2010-2011, all this despite most brigades having prepared for such an increase.

Because of their uncooperative stance on this issue, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to make it explicitly clear in future negotiations with the National Employers on pay, that the FBU's position will be that the year from July 2010-2011 is considered as the first year of the Government's imposed 2 year public sector pay freeze within the British Fire Service.

If the National Employers are unwilling to accept this position by the time of the meeting of Annual Conference 2012 (or any national delegates meeting which might replace Annual Conference at that time), then the Executive Council shall prepare for that meeting to discuss and approve a campaign to immediately reintroduce an Annual Pay increase into the British Fire Service.

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, before we begin just a point of clarity. Apologies to our EC Member. It wasn't him we were referring to, he's an all round nice guy. That's that.

Comrades, here we are once again talking about pay, When I say "we" I mean West Yorkshire, because it's not the first time that I've stood at this rostrum demanding something realistic to pay. In recent years West Yorkshire has raised this issue time and time again at Conference, and we are at the forefront of a campaign that many Brigades always seem to want to avoid. Could it be that just our members in West Yorkshire talk about pay? I hope not, comrades. I wouldn't believe you if you told me that we are.

Let me take you back, comrades, back to a financial time when things were about to bite and bite hard. In December 2007 my members were instructing me to get to Conference with a very clear mandate: we want to maintain our standard of living. Nothing unrealistic like a 40% increase of pay, but a more modest raise of pay. All my members wanted at that time was that our pay rise should go up in line with inflation. At Annual Conference in 2008 we struggled to find a seconder on our Resolution on pay: Pay Future Pay Awards. Every delegation that we thought we secured to second it, mysteriously withdrew their support. After coming to it, we decided that we were going to withdraw from the rostrum. I just wanted to talk a little bit about how the debate went in 2008 Conference.

We should not forget, comrades, we are not actually to better our members' pay; all we are asking is to defend our members' pay and conditions. That is why we are elected. Then we talked about what other people were being offered. RPI at that time was currently standing at 4.2%. Now fast forward to the General Secretary's All Members Circular dated 15 May 2010: "The EC has given consideration to the issue of pay for 2010. Following this discussion it was agreed to submit a pay claim for 2010 as follows: that there should be an increase in all NJC rates of pay equal to the percentage increase inflation as identified by the RPI for June 2010."

I couldn't believe what I'd read, and neither could my members. Despite being told that it was unachievable at the start of these austere times, it was thought that it was achievable smack bang in the middle of these times of hardship. Anyway, it would seem our employers agreed the original position and it was unrealistic to ask for such an amount. The award being offered was zero, nothing, absolutely nothing, comrades, not even an offer to negotiate. Bearing in mind this came on the back of Government announcing an imposed zero per cent pay freeze for two years starting from 2011.

General Secretary's All Members Circular dated 16 June 2010: "This has obviously caused considerable alarm amongst the EC. We have made it clear to the employers that we do not accept that Fire Service pay

Day Two – 18th May

should be sacrificed as a result of the decision made by the new government.”

Comrades, let's be clear about this. This Resolution doesn't either accept that decision. Finally, General Secretary's comment in All Members Circular 5 October 2010: "All branches have discussed this attack on our pay alongside the other attacks we are likely to face." Comrades, my members have been discussing this attack on our pay and my members have sent me here again today with a very clear mandate, just as clear as the mandate I was given in Conference 2008.

We have to debate it here Conference, because as I understand it we have got assurances but it may not be minuted because it was in closed session, etc. Conference may take place, it may not, next year. We don't know. If it doesn't, we won't even debate it then. The mandate I have been given is that we don't accept the Government's imposed two years public sector pay freeze and we won't accept a zero per cent increase followed by another two years of nothing. It's all right sending out members circular rhetoric saying similar, but that's all my members are seeing: rhetoric. The only way my members believe that they will see a pay rise within three years is by forcing our employers to agree that 2010/2011 was the first year of the two year freeze. My members were right in 2008, and I believe they are right in 2011.

It's with a heavy heart, comrades, after all that, unfortunately (sorry, chair, I'm on my way) West Yorkshire have decided to withdraw Resolution 2 to support 1. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I call upon the General Secretary to give the Executive Council qualification regarding Pay, Cleveland.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks President. A number of criticisms have been made of the Executive Council about the handling of pay and I think I do need to address some of those points that have just been raised. Let's be clear about where we are and where our employers are on the question of pay. There is, unfortunately, some confusion out there.

We made, as Dave has just mentioned, a pay claim in 2010, we believe a very modest pay claim, simply to keep pace with inflation and that inflation should be measured by the retail price index, the normal, traditional measure of inflation. The employers, as you are aware and as was discussed through our structures for sometime, replied to us after the emergency budget saying that they are not in a position to make an offer on pay. So it is not a zero per cent offer. To be strictly

accurate, it's simply no offer on pay for 2010. That's all that the employers have so far said.

But it is important the stance that this Union takes in relation to that because if there is any indication that we accept that, that sends an absolutely unacceptable message both to the Government and to our employers that their pay freeze (and we'll come on to whose pay freeze it is in a minute) is in some way acceptable to the Fire Brigades Union. We have made clear to the employers that we do not accept any pay freeze for 2010, nor will we accept any pay freeze for 2011. That is reflected in the fact that there is no NJC circular on pay for 2010, because there has been no agreement reached. If this Union was to endorse or accept the pay freeze imposed by the employers, there would be a joint circular saying that we've accepted such a pay freeze. We've taken the stance. If anyone wants to suggest we should do something different, please get up and suggest it. We've taken the stance that we don't accept that pay freeze. I will tell you what we've said to our employers. We've said to our employers that our members, at a time of their choosing, will fight you on pay because we cannot accept the logic of pay freezes, we cannot accept the logic that we pay the price, as we discussed earlier in the previous debate and as the movers and supporters of Resolution 1 have outlined, that our members should pay the price for the economic crisis.

The qualification in relation to Resolution 1 – and I think Cleveland actually accepted this point – is the question of tactics that we pursue and how we pursue that aim. In any discussion about potential industrial battle, let's be clear what we're talking about. The phrase "up to and including strike action" is used in many Resolutions. If we're talking about taking on our employers on the question of pay, we're talking about a national strike. It is not up to and including, it's national strike action that we'd be talking about. We may also have other forms of action but we're talking about national strike action. There are a number of tests which the Executive would want, and which have been the tradition of how we would discuss any such issues. That is: are our members ready for such action, that it would be strike action, that our members are clear that it is strike action? On the point in the Strathclyde Amendment, in the Emergency Resolution moved at last year's Conference, we have made clear that that may well mean coordinated action with other unions if it comes to that.

I've been out doing members' meetings up and down the country on the question of the various attacks we have. I have very clearly put to members that we are facing attacks and freezes on pay and that we cannot accept that, and that they will need to decide the point at which we take that on and take the battle on, and that

Day Two – 18th May

will mean industrial action. So I've been very clear to members. You will tell me when we've reached the point where our members are prepared to take that action. The Executive Council view at this stage is that we haven't quite reached that. I'll remind Conference (and this will come up in relation to later debates) that we put out a model Resolution from the Executive. I think it was circulated in December 2010. It refers to a number of attacks: on jobs, on pay and on pensions, but it includes the question of pay. It asks members very clearly about the need to take industrial action, strike action, in defence of those areas of our Service and our conditions of service. So the Executive Council have been very clear about the level of action that may be necessary to defend ourselves on jobs, pay and pensions. I have to say, as yet, the feedback from the voting on that Emergency Resolution hasn't been concluded. That debate continues.

So we're happy to give that qualified support to Cleveland. I don't believe, having listened to the mover of the Resolution, there's any difference at all between Cleveland and the Executive Council. A fight on pay will be done when this Union is ready and prepared for that fight on pay. One of the things that I've said in speaking to members is that it is up to members to decide the point at which they're prepared for a fight. A strike in the Fire Service is an extremely serious step to take. Nobody does it lightly. The Executive Council wouldn't recommend it lightly, you as Conference wouldn't recommend it lightly, and our members wouldn't vote for it lightly. It's an extremely serious step. Just as working people, nobody wants to go on strike, and in the emergency services, in the Fire Service it's extremely serious because of the type of work we do.

But what I've said to members around the country is this. You hear from chief officers the old statistics: every time we advertise a job in the Fire Service we get X hundred or X thousand applicants. I'm sure you've all heard it at meetings from councillors and chief officers and so on. My answer to that is this: it hasn't always been that way, and you don't have to go too far back to find the time when it wasn't that way. You go back just to the 1970s and it wasn't that way, because what we had then was a low pay industry. That low pay industry was challenged by this Union in the 1977 strike. The truth is it doesn't take too many years of a pay freeze to start taking us back. We cannot be the generation that allows all those gains of the past that people fought for in 1977, in 2003 and in other fights and campaigns that we led, to allow this industry to go back to being a low pay industry.

So I suspect a fight is coming on pay. The qualification, and it is an important one, is you will decide the timing and strategy for such an industrial battle when it comes. With that qualification, comrades, we support Resolution 1. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I'm aware of the time, and I also am aware of the withdrawal. I want to move to the vote now. Is there any debate? No. Yes, come to the rostrum.

A DELEGATE (Bedfordshire):

Apologies, Conference, but dinner can wait a few minutes on such a serious issue. Bedfordshire members are really a bit disappointed that West Yorkshire withdrew their Resolution because we felt although the implications of the fact that it says that we have accepted a pay freeze, it is worded well enough to say that we clearly haven't. Our members are under the impression that our EC and National Officials have accepted a pay freeze. There's been no massive campaign or circulars or correspondence, emails sent out saying otherwise.

Also, we need to get out of the habit we've gotten into of perpetuating the propaganda and the newspeak, if you like, of a 0% offer. A 0% offer is nothing. All members, from whatever Region, whatever Brigade you speak to, are clear about the stance on pensions. Pensions and pay are the same thing. We all need to get it through to members the fact that if you're willing to go out the doors on pensions, you have to go out the doors on pay as well. They are exactly the same thing. I realise I'm speaking in support of it. I should have made that clear from the very beginning, I suppose. We have to get that campaign out there. There are Emergency Resolutions and I urge you to support the Emergency Resolutions on pay and pensions as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the Amendment from Strathclyde to the vote. The Executive Council support. Both Amendments can carry. I put the Amendment from Strathclyde to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried*.

I now put the Amendment from Merseyside to the vote. The Executive Council support. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now put the Resolution as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried unanimously*.

Adjourned for lunch. Please be back at quarter past 2.

Adjourned for lunch

Day Two – 18th May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Very briefly, change to delegates: Derbyshire – delete John Cook. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Speakers? Is that report agreed? *Agreed.*

Thank you. May I ask Conference now to turn to Page 9 of their Programme of Business. I now call the Executive Council Policy Statement, Fighting the Cuts Agenda, seconded by Lancashire. Matt.

FIGHTING THE CUTS AGENDA

The cuts agenda unleashed by the coalition government at Westminster threatens to devastate our public services and to destroy jobs, living standards and pension rights for millions of working people, including those working within the Fire and Rescue Service.

The FBU has been at the heart of the debate around responding to the cuts and at national and local level has been centrally involved in building the campaign of opposition. This has involved our work with the various official trades' union bodies (TUC, ICTU, STUC, Wales TUC etc), the Trade Union Coordinating Group, the FBU Parliamentary Group as well as the various local campaigning bodies which are emerging across the UK.

Central to defeating the cuts agenda would be a major shift in policy and the Executive Council will continue to develop strategies aimed at achieving this. The Executive Council recommends that political lobbying and campaigning around these issues is systematically developed and coordinated within every Region and by every Brigade Committee.

The Executive Council also recognises that the cuts agenda poses a number of potential industrial challenges to the FBU. The prospects for FBU members are threatened by attacks on:

- *Pay;*
- *Jobs (including the threat of redundancy);*

- *Pensions;*
- *Conditions of service.*

In each case, there is the possibility that the Union may be forced to call for strike action, either locally or nationally. As workers within an emergency service, FBU members will always be extremely reluctant to take strike action but we cannot allow the gains of the past to be dismantled as a result of the policies of the coalition government or the Fire Service employers.

In light of these concerns, in February this year the Executive Council issued a model resolution to Branches addressing these issues and seeking endorsement from members for a campaign which may lead to industrial action. This included the possibility that such action may be coordinated with other trade unions if appropriate. The Executive Council recommends to Conference that Brigade Committees take the necessary steps to ensure that every Branch meets to discuss these attacks and our response to them, including the consideration of strike action if necessary.

The Executive Council gives a clear commitment to Conference that it will continue to seek meaningful dialogue with the employers and with government on the issues of pay, jobs and pensions. Furthermore, if the employers or government persist with their attacks, the Executive Council will take the necessary steps to prepare for the possibility of national industrial action, including, if appropriate the re-calling of Conference.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, this morning we discussed the political and economic background to the situation we find ourselves in: the cuts agenda, austerity and the various attacks unleashed by the Government on public services and those who work within them. This afternoon the Policy Statement focuses more on the industrial, conditions of service and Fire and Rescue Service issues that we face as a result of that cuts agenda.

People will recall the statements that were made by politicians, including those in Government before the last election. Regrettably, there was a bit of a consensus across the board about the need to make savings, to make cuts and so on, to reduce the deficit, but they all went on about protecting the frontline. They made it specifically in reference to the Fire and Rescue Service. I don't know if you recall, but the night before the election I think it was, David Cameron actually turned up at Carlisle Fire Station and went round, shook people's hands, looked at BA sets and what have you, and told us again about his intention to protect frontline services.

Day Two – 18th May

Let's be absolutely clear, to ourselves, to our members, to the public and to politicians. There is and there has been no protection whatsoever for the Fire and Rescue Service in the comprehensive spending review or the allocation of funding to the Devolved Administrations, and in turn to Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The cuts are now being implemented. Up and down the country Fire and Rescue Authorities, I have to say meekly, are implementing cuts as a result of reduced government funding. Over the past year we have seen already something like 900 uniform firefighter jobs go as a direct result of the austerity and cuts measures introduced by the Government.

One of the things that strikes me when you hear people in chief officer positions and Fire and Rescue Authority politicians, is how meekly they accept the cuts agenda that is placed before them. I've heard a chief officer issued a press release and said he welcomed the comprehensive spending review as an opportunity for improving the Fire Service. How the hell you improve the Fire Service by cutting it by 20% I cannot get my head around. Unfortunately, that's the calibre of some of the people we have making key policy decisions in the Fire and Rescue Service.

I got invited to attend a meeting with the English Fire Minister (I keep having to say English Fire Minister to address Regions 1, 2 and 8) on behalf of the Metropolitan Fire Authorities. That is the Met apart from London, you weren't invited. We had a pre-meet. I said it's unusual for them to invite the FBU along to such a meeting but I need to be clear what is your position compared to our position; we might have a different point of view. They said: essentially our position as the Met is: we're getting the worst hit so we think they should cut London and the County Brigades instead of us! That's the sort of people we have running Fire Services in the UK. Our position at that meeting to them, to the Minister, and consistently is: there is no room for further cuts in our Fire and Rescue Service; we've been cut to the bone already and we can't take any more cuts.

We've seen something like 900 job losses over the past year. I just want to touch briefly on the debate that we had this morning about redundancy and guidance on voluntary redundancy and so on. That is important, that people are well trained, can give the best possible advice to our members. We've got clear policy and guidance on the question of compulsory redundancies. But I say this, Conference, the starting point on any job losses, the starting point on any discussion about any form of redundancies is we say no. We don't want any job losses, we don't want any redundancies, compulsory, voluntary or any form whatsoever. They're job cuts, they mean destroying our Fire Service.

The starting point for every single campaign that we launch against these cuts is we're not accepting the job losses in whatever form you want to try to present them to us. *Applause*

There's a term which I want to challenge because I have to say it's creeping in, even into our own circles. It's the term "natural wastage". There is nothing natural about destroying jobs. There is nothing natural, it's not a freak of nature, it's not a cyclone that comes along. It is policy decisions that are made by individuals, policy decisions that are made by chief fire officers and endorsed by Fire and Rescue Services. It's not caused by flooding, the weather, or climate change or whatever. There is nothing natural about job losses. People say sometimes: we've lost some posts; we haven't lost any jobs, we've just lost posts. A job loss is a job loss. What a way to talk about our people who retire. They've done 30 years' service and they're described as wastage, by the way. What an insulting term to use! Let us not hear anyone else using the term natural wastage when we're talking about job losses in the Fire Brigades Union.

When those jobs are lost – 900 already over the past year – what that means is that young people coming off the dole or coming out of school or college who might have had a career in the Fire Service will not have a career in the Fire Service as a direct result of those cuts that are being imposed by Fire Authorities up and down the country. So I appeal to Conference, let's stop us using that phrase and let's challenge them when they use that phrase.

The truth about the cuts in our Service is that they are being imposed in various ways. We are seeing threats to fire stations, we're seeing threats to fire engines, we're seeing threats of merged fire controls, we're seeing in certain areas RDS firefighters targeted, we're seeing in certain areas the whole officer structure being restructured and cut to pieces. They've got a recipe for every single part of our membership, and none of us are safe; we are all under threat. The truth is that every single way that they make the cuts will lead to a poorer service being delivered to the people out there. If you think about the service that we do deliver, an emergency service that is about protecting lives in the most dangerous and hazardous of situations, it is a national disgrace that they are getting away with slashing our Service to the extent that they are.

Crewing levels have been cut down. People are regularly being told to ride four on a pump, or even in some cases, people being forced out riding three on a pump. Relief policies are being scrapped so that our members are staying at fires for hours and hours on end. There are longer and longer delays. We've proved very clearly that the delays which have already resulted over the past ten years have meant a slow down in how

Day Two – 18th May

quickly the Fire Service gets to incidents. Even CLG's figures demonstrate that that will have led to increased deaths among members of the public unfortunately caught up in fire. So in our industry we can very clearly say: cuts cost lives, and the policies that this Government are pursuing will and have already cost lives. They put the safety of our members at risk, because people are increasingly asked to cut corners, or we waited longer and longer for the second machine to arrive. So our members are increasingly put at risk, as well as members of the public who dial 999 and, God forbid, they expect the Fire Service to get there quick. Of course, we have Chris Wormald in the House of Commons saying slower attendance times do not necessarily equate to a poorer service.

That agenda has to be challenged. I'm sure everyone here challenges it whenever you hear it bleated out, unfortunately now taken up by some chief fire officers, unfortunately now taken up by Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities. I wonder what the hell these people want a career in the Fire Service for if their agenda is just to destroy it. The best thing they can do is depart, say goodbye and leave it to us. *Applause*

The proposals that we face will lead to attacks on our members as well on a whole number of fronts. On jobs, we're seeing jobs haemorrhage. On the Service itself, and on our Conditions of Service. We'll debate later in the week some of the issues, the duty systems that are being brought in which are about turning the clock back 50/60 years that we're now facing as a result of these agendas.

I think the starting point for every one of us, the starting point for this Conference and the starting point for every single official in a Brigade Committee, is when these people bring us proposals to make savings we have to examine it and say: what is the impact on jobs, what is the impact on the service we provide to the public, what is the impact on our members' Conditions of Service, what is the impact on the safety of our members and the ability of our members to do their job professionally? If, on any of those points, it makes it worse, then the starting point for anything we do, the starting point is to say: we don't accept your conclusions, we don't accept these cuts and we'll campaign against you.

I'm not saying we can win every single battle, but if we start out from the agenda of: we're going to have to accept some of these cuts, then we've already lost. We have to start out saying we don't accept the logic of it. As we discussed this morning, we didn't cause this crisis and there's another way of doing it. I say to those chief fire officers and I say to those Fire Authority members: get off your arse and get back to Westminster and say to them that you can't run a Fire Service on the budgets this Government is now allowing

you to operate on! Do a bit of fighting instead of just passing on the cuts! *Applause*

Our starting point in every single case should be to oppose the cuts. We won't always win. You don't always win everything in life. But we start out looking at it from a professional point of view and we present a professional case. What should the Fire Service do? What do our procedures require us to do when we attend an incident? We've done that various work around IRMP over many years, and we've introduced now a new training package for officials on the question of IRMP and how we challenge the IRMP process. We need to challenge the cuts budgets that are being implemented up and down the country and throughout the UK. Again, we've introduced a new package of training for officials on the question of Fire and Rescue Service finances, how the budgeting process operates, to assist officials in developing that opposition.

Then, if they won't listen to those arguments (or maybe they will listen to some of them), we take it a step further and we campaign publicly. It's immensely pleasing to me to see up and down the country when people are facing cuts, closures or reductions in fire cover, that our people get out on the streets, launch petitions, lobby. I don't know how many times I've been to Humberside on marches that every proposal they bring there is a march and a lobby opposing them, or the battle to save Balmossie night time cover in Tayside. Those are the sort of battles that are taking place up and down the country and we need to make sure that every single cuts proposal is challenged, is opposed, is fought politically, professionally – and yes, if it comes to it, occasionally we will need to consider industrial action as well. *Applause*

The past five years have seen more industrial disputes than at any other time in this Union's history. That's a sign of the times. That's a sign of the fact that when some of these people thought this Union was on its back foot, our members locally have stood up and said: we're not having this; we're taking you on and we'll fight you politically, professionally and, if it comes to it, industrially. We've seen overtime bans, other forms of action short of strike, and of course a whole number of strikes at a local level.

Of course, we need to take that campaigning, lobbying and fighting on to a national level as well. We've organised over the past three years a series of our own national lobbies. I've been doing a series of meetings around the country. I say this to members. Sometimes people think: it's so big, is it worth getting off my backside to go to London or wherever to attend a lobby? Is it worth lobbying an MP? I can assure you, it has an impact. We know very well from the feedback we get from CLG officials, for example, that they monitor very

Day Two – 18th May

carefully whenever we go to lobby Parliament. They monitor very carefully how many people turn out, and where they come from, and what they're saying. They try to provide their counter arguments to MPs against what the FBU is saying. So it does have an impact.

Occasionally, we ask people to do some political lobbying and we put on the website please email your MP. I know it's a pain in the neck, but in reality as long as you can turn a computer on and off, it takes two or three minutes at the most – and that's for the slow people up here; I'm sure it's a lot quicker if you're more computer savvy than we are. It takes a few seconds or a few minutes for our members to send that email. It has an impact. We need to make sure that we are punching our weight, and we're fighting our corner and arguing our corner on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Service and on behalf of FBU members. That means asking every single member to play a role in that. We can't do it here on our own, you can't do it down there on your own. We need every single member. So we need those discussions at branches, we need those discussions round the mess table to say: look, get your finger out, get your letter sent off, get to see the local MP, or if we've got something on in Parliament, or one of the Assemblies, or the Scottish Parliament, we get involved in that.

We built for 26 March and it was outstanding. It is worth recording again the biggest ever attendance of FBU members on a Labour Movement demonstration ever. In terms of the demonstration itself by the way, at a time when we've had 25 or 30 years of decline in trade union membership, the biggest ever trade union demonstration in history called by trade unions in Britain. That is a remarkable achievement and we played a role in that. We had, I think, one of the higher proportions of our members on the streets on 26 March. So we can be very proud of that. Those lobbies and campaigning activities need to carry on at a local level as well. It needs to involve the Assemblies in Northern Ireland, Wales and the Parliament in Scotland.

I'm coming on to the issue of industrial action. But one thing I'd say to delegates here and I'd say to our members: we need to try every possibility before we get to industrial action. Our members would expect that. If we can possibly (and it's a long shot sometimes, I know that) influence politicians by lobbying them and by arguing with them, then that may assist us in potentially avoiding some battles, or potentially (if it gets into a battle) it may assist us in winning that.

The Policy Statement that we have in front of us highlights a number of potential industrial flashpoints. On the question of Pay, on Jobs, on Pensions and Conditions of Service. The truth is on every single one of them there is the possibility that we may end up in a

major industrial battle with this Government and with our employers. That is a very, very serious step to take. I hope no-one will ever underestimate how serious it is to take strike action in the Fire and Rescue Service.

I would remind people of the article which Ronnie Scott wrote on the question of the 1977 strike. It's worth re-reading because he makes very clear how momentous that decision was of walking out the doors for the first time, and the implications for our members but also the implications for the public. Nobody in this Union, I know, will ever take that decision, or the considerations in that debate around that decision, lightly. It is a very, very serious step.

As our members would expect, the EC Statement says that we want dialogue. This Government say they want dialogue. Fine, we'll have dialogue. We'll talk to anyone. We'll talk to our employers on these issues, we'll talk to this Government on these issues. We also need to have a dialogue with our members. That's the most important dialogue that needs to come out of the debate today. Many of you have set them up and arranged them. I've been on a bit of a road show, talking to members in local Brigades about all the issues that we face. It has been very useful for me to learn from our members about the problems they face, as well as for them to hear what the Union nationally is doing and is engaged in. I've said there, that one of the most important things that we can do as a Union is make sure that every single Branch meets, discusses and votes on the issues that we face. There is an enormous power in democracy, and the democracy of our membership.

We are going in to discuss with CLG officials, for example, on the question of pensions. You've all negotiated. You know the difference between whether they think it's just you, whether they think it's just Matt Wrack mouthing off again, or whether they think it's Matt Wrack backed up by 44,000 FBU members. They will be monitoring whether our Branches are meeting, discussing and voting. It makes a world of difference in those negotiations if we know and they know that our members have met, discussed, voted on the issues that we're facing. I would urge people as a practical measure, a practical step that we can take in the aftermath of this Conference, to go back into our Brigades, into our Branches and reactivate the debate around the EC's Model Resolution which was issued in December of last year. I know that's been discussed here and there, but that work isn't completed. It needs to be completed. That's the power of voting, that's the power of democracy. I ask people to take that issue back.

Comrades, we've made very clear that the attacks we're facing are unacceptable. They're unacceptable for our Service. As the people who deliver that service on the

Day Two – 18th May

frontline we know that they will undermine, weaken and devastate the service that we deliver, and they will undermine us as the professionals on the frontline who do that work on behalf of our communities. We give notice to our employers, to the Government, to the other Governments and Assemblies, that we will fight these cuts, politically, legally (where we can), and, if it comes to it, industrially. We know the seriousness of that step, but I believe that's the fight that's coming. I believe that fight is ultimately going to lead to strike action. The timing of that strike action is a tactical decision that we'll make in conjunction with yourselves.

But what we cannot allow is our Service to be dismantled. What we cannot allow is our pay to fall back to those poverty levels of the 1970s. What we cannot allow is our pensions to be dismantled, as is proposed by Hutton and by the Government in relation to the pension reviews. We're under attack on every single front, as we've said throughout this week. We need to respond on every single front. The EC Statement in front of you gives us the opportunity to develop and take that work forward. I know that you'll rise to the challenge. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Lancashire to second.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

President, Conference, we are supporting the EC Policy Statement, Fighting the Cuts Agenda. During the term of the previous Government there have been numerous attacks on the public sector with the likes of private finance initiatives, public/private partnerships etc. However, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out that this current Government has used the banking crisis as an excuse to implement its ideologically driven decision to make an all out assault on the public sector, so pushing the public services further into the hands of the private profiteers. Over the past seven years we have seen attacks on jobs, pay and pensions, we've seen our mobilising controls attacked, we've seen our health & safety and welfare attacked. In fact, the only section of the Fire Service that has not been attacked has been the chief fire officers' salaries where we have seen eye watering (if that's a word) obscene salary increases that have been readily agreed by the Fire Authorities.

The Fire Service has lost firefighter posts hand over fist as the Fire Service budgets have been squeezed even tighter. At Brigade level we have been involved in fights and disputes right across the UK, winning some battles and losing others, and in certain cases having to fudge compromises that have been far from ideal (I didn't mention Lancashire then).

As we have seen in the past month with the moorland fires, even with the current number of fire appliances and crews, many Brigades, including Lancashire, simply could not cope. When we ran out of appliances to send as relief crews it resulted in firefighters working excessive hours and their health & safety being compromised.

As I said at last year's Conference, if the Fire Service is not adequately funded then it is inevitable that there will be fewer fire appliances and fewer firefighters on those appliances, as well as response standards being worsened due to Fire Stations being downgraded. Most Resolutions submitted to Conference can be traced back to a lack of funding. Therefore, when we fight against cuts we are actually fighting for adequate funding. As we all know, you get what you pay for.

Since the Government announced its intention to cut 25% from the funding of the Fire Service, the threat is even graver. There is collective attack against each and every Brigade and we will need a united front if we're to fight back. In fact, as this attack is against all the public sector, then our best chance of success is a joint fight, coordinated with the other public sector trade unions. Following on from the TUC rally on 26 March it is essential that we continue to collaborate and coordinate with the other unions and, where necessary, this should include the possibility of coordinated industrial action. That is not to say that industrial action is the only way, or indeed inevitable. We must consider all strategies available to us, including new strategies. I'm not at this stage suggesting a work-in such as saw victory with the Glasgow shipbuilders in the 70s, but the time might be right to think outside the box and be a little more creative. However, notwithstanding that, industrial action is a tool in our armoury and it must be used if absolutely necessary. Support the EC Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Yes, come to the rostrum.

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

We are supporting the EC Statement. Conference, it's quite easy to sit here and just to nod this one through, but I think it's important that we stress the actual implications of this Policy. Also, the fact that these cuts are clearly ideologically, and the alternative to that as well. The challenge for us is to stress that point to members. As delegates we'll sit here and we'll nod this Policy Statement through, hopefully, in the vote. But then when we get back to Brigades we need to stress to members that the ideological choices that the ConDem Government are making are totally detrimental to all our members.

Day Two – 18th May

I'm quite proud of the fact that our Rule Book has the aims of this Union being to strive towards a Socialist society. The way we do that is by stressing the alternatives that are out there. These cuts are clearly detrimental to our members, clearly detrimental to the public. Support. *Applause*

BRO KEVIN NAPIER (Cambridgeshire):

Conference, Matt, we applaud your speech and your words, we understand your passion and your sentiment but unless it's just me, I'm suffering from déjà vu. We can't go away from this Conference with just words, and members are ready for us to take back, something a little bit more than that. We can't wait for biennial Conference to see when we're going to motivate and mobilise, we need to start thinking about it now.

As we speak, back in my own Brigade, senior management are addressing a press conference informing them of the £4.2 million cuts, and 45 firefighter posts that are going to be lost. Matt, you said we can't stand by and watch losses, yet we admit to losing 900 in the last 12 months. We are standing by, we are watching it, and it's all happening under our noses. We talk of voluntary redundancy, day crew plus, and all these other evils. But they're not coming, they're already here and it's happening around the country. They're picking on us one after one after one. We need to stop the pockets, we need to stop the splinters and the challenge is for you and the EC to bring this Union back to being national and to indicating that a fight against one is a fight against us all. We need to stand up and attack it all together and not wait for us to be knocked down one by one. Matt, we await the bugle call or the bagpipes, your choice. *Applause*

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

President, Conference, I'm speaking in support of the Policy Statement. I have to agree with the sentiments of all the speakers about what's been going on. Just on what the comrade said there. We had the problems in London and I did see this Union rally as one Union to our members in London when we were on strike and when we were threatened with job cuts. I agree with what you're saying, that it would be nice if we could all do it at the same time, but the tactics are there. The employers are being very smart. They're trying to pick us off one by one. I agree it should be a national dispute. Nothing is stopping you from balloting your members in Cambridgeshire or anywhere else. If you're under threat, do something about it! Go to the ballot box if you have to. We will all rally behind you if we have to. I completely agree with Matt that we're going to have to stand together eventually, but there's no reason why we can't do something now.

I'll be brief – last time at Conference! One of the things I wanted to say was, when we had picket T shirts made

up for the 2002 Pay Campaign or whenever it was, there was a great line from Percy Bysshe Shelley, the famous English poet, when he said "We rise like lions". I think that's what the FBU has really got to look forward to now. We have got to rise like lions, we've got to get out of the slumbers. We are many, they are few. Let's all stand together. Let's get behind this Policy Statement and let's make it work. Thanks very much and goodbye. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else wishing to speak? No? I put the Executive Council Policy Statement, Fighting the Cuts Agenda to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried unanimously*.

May I ask Conference to turn to Page 5 of the Programme of Business. Resolution 3, Pay Formula, Cumbria. Executive Council support.

Resolution 3 – PAY FORMULA

This Conference condemns the 2 year pay freeze imposed across the Public Sector. This pay freeze will have a long term effect on our members pay and pensions, therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate with our employers the re-introduction of a pay formula.

CUMBRIA

BRO ADRIAN KEVERN (Cumbria):

President, Conference, I feel proud and privileged to speak on behalf of the members in Cumbria. I would like to move Resolution 3 on the Pay Formula on behalf of them which states: This Conference condemns the 2 year pay freeze imposed across the Public Sector. This pay freeze will have a long term effect on our members pay and pensions, therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate with our employers the re-introduction of a pay formula.

What I'm about to say has been touched on by Matt and a number of other speakers before, but please bear with us. Comrades, there is an urgent need to reverse the haemorrhage of members' pay. By the end of 2012 our members will have been subject to a three year pay freeze resulting in the loss of at least £1200 in earnings per member over the three year period. Set this against inflation and our members will face further financial detriment, members with responsibilities for dependents, members who commute long distances and the financial costs they incur, members who are the sole earners in a household, and those members whose wives, husbands or partners also work in the public sector who are also subject to the pay freeze whilst working for diminishing pay.

Day Two – 18th May

Comrades, the 1978 Pay Formula, whilst not perfect, served us relatively well. It is with this in mind that the Executive Council is urged to negotiate the reintroduction of the Pay Formula commensurate to the level of pay of the professional roles that our members carry out. The FBU has a proud tradition of fighting for the maintenance and improvement of pay and conditions for our members. Conference, please support the Resolution. Thanks for listening. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Do we have a seconder for that? *Formally seconded.*
I'll open the debate. I bring the General Secretary in.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

It's not a qualification, the EC do support the Resolution. I just want to outline some of the issues surrounding it. It's quite right to highlight the agreement that was reached in 1978 after the 1977 strike. The Pay Formula that was achieved did stand the Union in very good stead for a long time. In 2003 we reached another agreement, a five year agreement. Of course what we would seek to do through implementing such a Resolution is to seek agreement with our employers. Our employers currently are very clear that they are opposed to long term pay formulas, long term pay settlements. What they point to is that elsewhere in the public sector or indeed in the private sector there are no longer any such formulas there. I know the mover didn't say anything contrary to this. I think we know the scale of the problem that we face. It is a huge problem. What I would say is that our position has always been, and is always whenever we meet the employers, whenever we discuss pay with the employers, that we think the best settlement on the question of pay is some form of long term pay formula.

If you think about it, the issues that we are debating today and the possibility on pay at some point of industrial action, what a way to run an emergency service where people potentially, if the employers have their way, every year are talking about taking industrial action. That's no way to run an emergency service. The only alternative to that is to provide long term stability, good quality pay, so that we are able to deliver a first class service. That's our position. It's very clearly not the employers' position, but it remains our position which we put. We will need to develop strategies to try to win that. I simply say that to alert Conference to the scale of the challenge that we face in terms of trying to win a long term pay formula, as is the aspiration of all of us and the Policy of this Union for a good time.

So yes, pay is going to be a long term challenge to us. We will have to develop that, both in terms of the immediate challenge on the question of the pay freeze

passed on by the Government, implemented by our employers, and the need for a long term pay formula. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I put Resolution 3 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried*.

Paragraph A4, Paragraph A5, A6, A7, Andy Dark.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

It's a very brief one, President. You'll read from the Annual Report that last year John Gennard, the independent Chair of the Technical Advisory Panel was seriously ill. It's with regret that we report that on 12 January this year John Gennard did die of a serious illness. He is a loss to this Union and to our members in terms of the service that he did try to give in a very independent capacity. He made decisions which weren't entirely to our liking at times, but he did make a genuine attempt to reconcile local parties, invariably because of changes that the employers wanted to bring. He did make a genuine attempt to make improvement to the changes that the employers tried to impose on our members. So it is with regret that I inform Conference of that passing. We did, of course, send the appropriate letters of condolence.

Also, just to update Conference with regard to the TAP, I think we have put a circular out to this effect, for the time being and certainly for the foreseeable future, we won't be readvertising as an NJC, that post of independent Chair, and that function is currently being filled by the, as was, sole Chair of the Resolution Advisory Panel, Professor Willie Brown. So it's just to update Conference on those two matters, President. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. Paragraph A8. May I ask Conference to turn to Page 7 of the Programme of Business. We are on Paragraph A9, Ad Hoc NJC Joint Working Party. Cleveland have remitted Resolution 9, Nationally Agreed Wholetime Shift Duty System with the right to speak. Cleveland.

Resolution 9 – NATIONALLY AGREED WHOLETIME SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to enter into negotiations at the National Joint Council on a nationally agreed whole time shift duty system. Negotiations should commence as soon as possible after close of this Conference and regular updates on progress be provided to members.

CLEVELAND

Day Two – 18th May

SIS SARAH GARTLAND (Cleveland):

President, Conference, we're remitting Resolution 9, Nationally Agreed Wholetime Shift Duty System. Things have actually changed in Cleveland since we brought this Resolution. We're now in consultation with our members over changes to current shift patterns. We still believe in the idea of a nationally agreed duty system but accept the argument of potentially worsening members' current conditions. We also believe that this is inextricably linked to a reintroduction of national standards of fire cover which is up for discussion when Lancashire bring Resolution 32 to Conference. We will remit this Resolution as we do accept that it could lead to the worsening of some members' conditions. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Cleveland has also remitted Resolution 10, Pre-Arranged Overtime with the right to speak.

Resolution 10 – PRE-ARRANGED OVERTIME

This Conference is concerned that a number of brigades are deliberately reducing establishment levels and are using pre-arranged overtime to cover for planned shortfalls in establishments. This is in breach of the Scheme of Conditions of Service 6th Edition, Section 4, Part B, paragraph 26.

Therefore, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to ballot the members on the introduction of a ban on pre-arranged overtime.

CLEVELAND

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

President, Conference, comrades, at the 84th Annual Conference Cleveland moved a Resolution asking for a study into the use of pre-arranged overtime and the detrimental effect it had on staffing levels, and it was carried. For your information Conference, an important part of that study was for Brigade officials to submit any detailed evidence regarding misuse of pre-arranged overtime and get it to the National Officer responsible in the EC to work with. I have to tell you that work was not forthcoming; we didn't get that information to them. So yes, we have agreed to remit this Resolution and we're sincerely hoping that assurances can be taken from the Workforce Development Group to take another look at this divisive and damaging practice.

The misuse of pre-arranged overtime enables Brigades to hide behind recruitment freezes; it enables Brigades to use existing staff to work longer hours to cover posts that have not been filled, sometimes for years. This is a practice that has been longstanding, especially in organisations such as

the NHS. We've got to play our part too if we want it to stop. If we have any evidence and if it's out there, we need to get it to the Workforce Development Group. They can't do their job unless we give them that information. All I'm asking is: let's do our job. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

We thank Cleveland for remitting that Resolution. It is an issue which comes up in relation to a number of Resolutions which are agreed by Conference which asks Head Office and the Executive Council to survey on certain issues. Those surveys are only of any use if officials respond to them. So yes, in trying to get a picture of the use of pre-arranged overtime, that was a serious issue in the fact that sufficient information was not forthcoming.

But I think there are provisions within the Grey Book, within the 2003 Agreement, against the abuse of pre-arranged overtime. What we would ask is that Brigade officials monitor very closely the establishment levels. I know chief officers increasingly don't use the term "establishments", but monitor the size of the workforce, monitor shortages in those workforces, ensure that discussions around those workforce numbers and shortages are regularly agenda'd at negotiation and consultation meetings. That's the way in which we can identify whether we believe that pre-arranged overtime is being used to undermine the number of people in work (what we used to call establishments). Then, if that is the case that should of course be challenged because that clearly is a breach of those agreements. There are a number of ways in which we can challenge them, including a way in which a number of Brigade Committees have done, and that is by challenging locally, balloting locally, and introducing a ban on pre-arranged overtime to undermine the very mechanism by which chief officers are attempting to reduce jobs and undermine our conditions. On that point, we welcome the remit and we will keep the item under consideration.

THE PRESIDENT:

We are on Paragraph A10, A11. Resolution 12, Water Rescue, Humberside. Humberside have remitted with the right to speak.

Resolution 12 – WATER RESCUE

Conference notes that Water Rescues are not a statutory duty of Fire and Rescue Authorities and that they receive no additional funding for carrying them out.

Day Two – 18th May

This Conference is of the opinion that the carrying out of water rescues is outside of the firefighter role map and therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise the matter at the National Joint Council (NJC) and where it is established by a Fire and Rescue Authority, there is a requirement for firefighters to carry out water rescue, then there should be an NJC agreed additional payment made to those carrying out these duties that are in addition to their NJC agreed role map.

HUMBERSIDE

BRO NEIL TRENCHARD (Humberside):

President, Conference, we've been asked to remit this and we're willing to do so. The reason for bringing this Resolution is that in Humberside they propose to bring in water rescue at two specialist stations. What they've actually done is rolled out water rescue throughout Humberside. We don't believe that water rescue is within the role maps of firefighters, and it's becoming more widespread throughout the country. Therefore we believe that it's time for a national negotiation on this matter.

Our Resolution was not intended to adversely affect Brigades who have successfully negotiated additional payments for water rescue. The intention is to maintain the national negotiation of terms and conditions of employment.

We've been pleased to hear of the General Secretary's continued commitment to nationally negotiated terms and conditions of employment so we're happy to remit. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thank you. The concern that the Executive Council had was around the issue of additional payments. If we're going to discuss with our employers – and I've outlined very clearly the difficulties that we face on that, a major uphill battle – then we need to discuss what is the best way for ensuring long term viability of our pay, the long term maintenance of standards of pay and that may not be by means of additional payments; it may be by means of increasing core pay. That's a matter the Executive Council have started to discuss. As I say, despite what the employers have done formally, the employers are open to discussions on pay and those preliminary discussions are likely to be set up very shortly.

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph A12. Yes.

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

Sorry, they said to shout because you can't see us in the corner.

THE PRESIDENT:

That's the way to do it!

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

We wanted to raise an issue under Paragraph A12 that's affecting women in the RDS part of our Service. Basically it's a pay issue. The situation has arisen because some Retained women, when they've become pregnant, have not been paid. The Grey Book is really clear. Part D Paragraph 6 says that when a woman who can no longer perform her current duties or current pattern of hours because she is pregnant, that she can continue to receive normal pay. This hasn't happened for some of the Retained women and because it hasn't been noticed, when they get to working out their maternity pay they're working it out on the previous 12 weeks' pay which has sometimes been nothing. So it's set out in Paragraph 6 in Part D and how to work out the pay is in Paragraph 36. What we would ask really is, because this situation comes to light occasionally and doesn't get much publicity, if all officials could go back and just check with their payroll departments if there is a mechanism in place when women announce that they are pregnant, if they would get pay. If you could check, it would be really helpful. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Helen. Paragraph A13, Andy Dark.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thank you, President. You'll have seen recently a number of circulars that have come out with regard to the part time workers' settlement – terms and conditions, not the pensions part (that is a different part of the report). You will aware that the RDS settlement has been a long time coming. I won't go into the history of it. You will be aware that it is now agreed. You will be aware that for our part as a Union we've put all the measures in place to secure what we believe to be a successful settlement for our members. It is amounts higher than the employers wanted to give, delivered more for those with longer service and for those with rank than the employers wanted to offer, and we've protected the bounty where it's been received by members – both from the employers and the CLG, each of whom were trying to reclaim it by offsetting it against the payments that would be received under the settlement. We were successful in seeing them off. So I think the Executive Council has been very successful in reaching that settlement.

Day Two – 18th May

We put the information on our website with Popularis who is doing a job for us because of data protection reasons. We put some information on the Popularis website and we've arranged a mechanism where members can either accept or express their views on the settlement, either online or via hard copy which they will receive shortly.

You will have seen circulars have been sent to inform members and there has been a Frequently Asked Questions sheet which is available online as well to assist members in clarifying what is quite a complicated, or seemingly complicated, settlement process. It is complicated because it is a legal settlement. It's not simply one that's been discussed between the employers and the Union in the normal way.

I will say this, there will be an updated Frequently Asked Questions early next week and there will be a circular to explain what I would imagine many of you are asking: why has there been a delay in the last couple of weeks. I will say that that delay partially, and only partially (and this is news to the Executive Council, I've just noticed) with regard to the Northern Ireland industrial tribunal because within the agreement we didn't use the words "industrial tribunal" as it relates to Northern Ireland; we used the words "employment tribunal", which is the English/ Welsh/ Scottish terminology. It was easily rectified, it has been rectified, no problem there. The most serious delay has been the employers. No surprise. We require the employers' data to work out the claim. We have also secured that we will get the employers' list of addresses of our members to compare against ours. That's particularly important for those members who are either Out of Trade or left the Fire and Rescue Service, because this claim started in 2001 and many of those people will not have updated their addresses with us. The employers have not been able to cope with what we consider to be a very simple measure: tell us how long your people have been employed, tell us what rank they are, and do a calculation. It's beyond their ken, it would appear. There have been those serious delays.

That circular will go out either later this week or early next week. In fact, I will say it will go out this week. We have spoken to Popularis as late as yesterday. We have now got the final set of data in from the final Fire and Rescue Service (Oxfordshire, for what's worth). The problem we have got, as you know, is because people can get a double claim, particularly where our RDS members work for two Fire and Rescue Services concurrently, or indeed where there has been consecutive service, we do need all the data in before we can send the letters out. We want to make sure that people get the right amount of money and that means maximising the amount of money. Those queries have been run now by Popularis to all the Fire and Rescue

Services. I don't want to make a promise I can't keep, but we're fairly certain those letters will start appearing and it will be online for our RDS members next week. That's as late as the discussion we had with Popularis yesterday.

I apologise to Conference and your members and yourselves for the delay and the anxiety that has been caused for the delay. I won't apologise for the delay; it lies at the doors of the employers. No surprises there. I think it is only appropriate to update Conference on those details. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I call Resolution 17, Injury Sustained on Duty, National Retained Committee.

Resolution 17 – INJURY SUSTAINED ON DUTY

This Conference recognises the pro-rata arrangement of injury benefit within the different pension schemes, in relation to Retained Duty System (RDS) members. We then call upon the Executive Council to negotiate a settlement, agreed through the National Joint Council, that allows for compensation in relation to loss of earnings in RDS members primary employment.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO PAUL REVELL (NRC):

President, Conference, I am a part time firefighter, and along with thousands of others throughout the UK, I provide cover alongside my primary employment. It's that primary employment that provides my family with 80% of its household income. So what would happen if I was to be injured on duty and unable to go to work in my primary employment? Am I protected against the loss of earnings? The answer is no, I don't think I am. We used to have this protection under Rule J4, but that's not there any more. Any RDS firefighter who is injured on duty will only receive a pro rata pension which, for most RDS, is next to nothing. Comrades, we just want peace of mind. We want to know that when we get on that fire engine, and if the worst happens and we are seriously injured, our families will not suffer financial hardship. The employers should be providing us with this protection. We call on the Executive Council to negotiate a settlement, agreed through the National Joint Council, that will provide adequate protection against loss of earnings for our part time members. Please support this proposal. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

Day Two – 18th May

BRO SEAN PAUL BAILEY (Northern Ireland):

President, Conference, we second this Resolution from the NRC. There is a pro rata arrangement built into the new pension scheme. However, there is no such thing as a pro rata injury. The NRC is entirely right that for all Retained members, their full-time employment is what looks after their household and themselves. If a Retained member is carrying out his or her duty with the Fire Service and the worst happens it's not right that our members have to worry about financial issues. We talked earlier on about the Accident & Injury Fund and about how important it is to have a financial supplement when the worst happens to someone. This Resolution should set a minimum benchmark for RDS members. We in Region 2 believe it's time to get it right now before we have to wait for somebody to be hurt and rely on it then. Please support it. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate Conference. The EC support. I put Resolution 17 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried*.

I call Resolution 18, Duty Systems by National Retained Committee.

Resolution 18 – DUTY SYSTEMS

This Conference demands that no new Retained Duty Systems (RDS) be introduced without full negotiations and agreement with the FBU and its RDS members, and that any new scheme does not constitute anything lower than Grey Book conditions.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO LYNDON JONES (NRC):

President, comrades, "This Conference demands that no new Retained Duty Systems (RDS) be introduced without full negotiations and agreement with the FBU and its RDS members, and that any new scheme does not constitute anything lower than Grey Book conditions."

Comrades, it is regrettable that more and more Brigades seem to be introducing a new duty system for all sections of our membership, at times forcing them upon our members with no consultation with either FBU or the membership that they represent. A number of these specially affect RDS members. The common thread is that most are just based on money saving schemes that disadvantage our members' pay and condition. We accept that sometimes changes can be made to assist in the recruitment and retention of RDS members. Resolutions like this have been passed and fully supported previously at Conference.

We demand that proper consultation be had with the FBU and the RDS membership to ensure that those directly affected are fully consulted to allow a considered position. Sisters and brothers, let's ensure that we all get the chance to control our future. Let's make sure that everyone understands expectations. We need to ensure that in every case the FBU is consulted. We need to ensure that the appropriate section of membership is fully consulted and involved in any proposed changes to the shift systems. This Resolution requires our Union to go to all employers and remind them of the need for consultation and negotiation, and the need to involve everyone to ensure fair and reasonable duty systems. Support these members and support this Resolution. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded*. I open to debate. I put Resolution 18, Duty Systems to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That is *carried*.

I now call Emergency Resolution 10, Day Crew Plus, Devon & Somerset.

Emergency Resolution 10 – DAY CREW PLUS (DCP)

Conference notes the letters sent on 6th April 2011 by Devon & Somerset FRS to all wholetime staff inviting "expressions of interest" from staff wishing to work a new duty system entitled "Day Crew Plus".

This system involves reducing the number of wholetime Firefighters on a station by around half by reducing the number of watches from four down to two. The Firefighters who are left will be expected to work between 84 and 96 hours on duty a week.

Conference believes that such a duty system is unprofessional, outdated and unfit for purpose. If implemented such duty systems will mean:

- ***Massive wholetime Firefighter job losses;***
- ***Resilience in the Service greatly reduced;***
- ***Fewer Firefighters during protracted incidents, particularly in smaller FRS's;***
- ***Reduction in Fire Cover as neighbouring stations have to provide cover across different areas when Firefighters reach exhaustion point.***

Conference notes that the letters requesting "expressions of interest" offer staff a 32% additional allowance to work the system and then go on to state that a "first come first served basis will apply". The letter further states that if there are insufficient volunteers from wholetime staff then applications

Day Two – 18th May

from the RDS may be sought. The letter then makes reference to the risk of compulsory redundancy for wholetime staff.

Conference believes that the contents of this letter amounts to a crude attempt to try and get Firefighters to sell out their colleagues jobs by offering second rate financial bribes and applying pressure through fear of job losses in an attempt to accept them. Conference condemns such letters as an attempt by Fire Authorities to undermine the Union's ability to negotiate on behalf of our members and urges all members not to sign any expression of interest.

Conference condemns the devastating impact such duty systems would have on the family lives of Firefighters and believes that such systems are not fit for purpose let alone the 21st century Fire & Rescue Service. They are:

- *Outside the Grey Book;*
- *Outside the Working Time Directive;*
- *Outside National Pay Rates.*

Conference notes that other Fire & Rescue Services have either implemented or are considering implementing similar duty systems and believes that this issue must be addressed as a matter of urgency at a National level.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council:

- *Tables this issue at the National Joint Council with a view to achieving a joint circular informing Fire & Rescue Services that such systems will not be supported by the NJC;*
- *Raises this matter with Thompsons seeking urgent legal advice regarding areas such as the Working Time Directive & Equality legislation;*
- *Sends out a circular to all members informing them of the dangers of such systems and urging them not to sign any "expressions of interest";*
- *Considers a strategy of co-ordinated action within the FRSs who are considering the implementation of such Duty Systems.*

DEVON & SOMERSET

BRO BOB WALKER (Devon & Somerset):

Conference, President, I'm sure a good many of you will already understand what Day Crew Plus is. For those of you that don't I'll give you a brief explanation. On a one pump station it reduces the establishment from 28 to 14. It increases the working hours from 48 to approximately 96 and increases a firefighter's wage by £9,000. But hey, that £9,000 don't amount to a lot, because all those extra hours you have to do at night

time amount to about £2.90 an hour, the change of day shift to 12 hours which many of us have fought off, and, just as a bonus, your family gets visiting rights from 8 o'clock in the evening till 8 o'clock in the morning, so they can come and say hello.

On 6 April Devon & Somerset set out in a letter, they called it an expression of interest. It outlined their proposal, but as always the devil is in the detail and it wasn't there. The FBU in Devon & Somerset have made its position clear on Day Crew Plus, as have many of our members. So in order that Devon & Somerset received enough expressions of interest, they ensured they included a paragraph on compulsory redundancies which I will read to you now:

"In the unlikely event that there are insufficient volunteers from Wholetime staff and the Fire and Rescue Authority agrees to move forward with this proposal, applications from Retained Duty System staff may be sought. However, in the first instance, in order to reduce the potential risk of needing to make compulsory redundancies for Wholetime staff we will restrict this to staff working the Wholetime Duty System."

That's the letter that landed on everybody's doorsteps. Understandably, a number of people expressed an interest. Firstly, because they were worried about their jobs; secondly, because they don't want to be transferred across a Brigade which is 10,00 sq km big; thirdly, because a few self seeking loose cannons just wanted the money. How do I know this? Because I've spoken to lots and lots and lots of them. The people that fall into the third category, I've told them they have no right to give their jobs away. They are just merely a post holder. Our children and our children's children that want to come into the Fire Service will have to sign a 96 hour contract in order to be in this job.

On 27th of this month the Fire Authority will vote on this. We feel that, when I get up and speak at that meeting, it will make those councillors think, if I can tell them that this is the national FBU position on Day Crew Plus. This Conference does not condone, I hope, the bribery methods that Devon & Somerset or any other Service may enter into. Selling out our colleagues is not something we will enter into.

The Resolution outlines the fact that we do not believe it complies with the Grey Book. In the Grey Book it quite clearly states four points which a duty system should be made around. Basic working hours should average 42. Obviously that ain't the case. There should be two periods of 24 hours free from duty. Possibly they can get away with that one. It should comply with the United Kingdom and European Law. European Law says 48 hours, you can opt out of that individually; 11 hours'

Day Two – 18th May

rest in every 24 hour period. You cannot opt out of that individually. That has to be collectively within the working time directive. And it should be family friendly – going back to the visiting rights!

Pay rates, they're offering £37,000. If they were offering our Grey Book pay rates for those many hours they'd be offering £56,000. The Resolution calls for Day Crew Plus to be tabled at the NJC with a view to achieving a joint circular informing the Fire and Rescue Services that such systems will not be supported, raise the matter with Thompsons regarding equality and working time directive, send out a circular to all members informing them of the dangers of such systems and urging them not to sign expressions of interest regardless of bribery, consider a strategy coordinating within the Fire and Rescue Service who are considering implementing such systems.

I do ask you very strongly to support this resolution. It's an attack fundamentally on our conditions of service and our working practices. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* I open it up for debate.

BRO ROGER MOORE (West Midlands):

I just want some assurances. I don't know whether the EC are opposing or supporting. This is already in in some Brigades and we've already discussed it in ours. As the previous speaker said, I've got footprints up my back for 32%. If it's already in and we pass this Resolution, I want to know what the consequences are for the people who are already working it. Does that mean we lose them as members? Is it detrimental to us as FBU? I totally agree with the last speaker but as it's in, does this Resolution and the consequences of the bullet points mean that some members will have to leave the Union because they're not complying with our policies? Thank you.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

Conference, President, we're supporting this Emergency Resolution on the understanding that the EC will enter into talks, not that we're going to get a policy on it at this stage; you're not going to vote on a policy opposing Day Crew Plus.

Lancashire is supporting this Resolution mainly because the Devon & Somerset authority have threatened the risk of compulsory redundancies. If this is the case, then it is not the Lancashire Day Crewing Plus model. I need to clarify some of the issues raised in the Emergency Resolution. We do not believe that some of the points raised apply to the Lancashire Day Crewing Plus. Lancs

Day Crewing Plus is a specific agreement that comes as a package. We are aware that other Brigades are cherry picking bits of the Lancashire model, yet are still referring to it as the Day Crewing Plus as per Lancashire. Lancs has had one of the lowest government grant settlements in the country for eight years on the trot now. As 80% plus of the budget is salaries, whether we like it or not, then the job losses were financially inevitable unless funding was increased.

To give you some history to the Lancashire case, as funding has not been increased the choice in Lancashire has been crewing appliances at four, pumps off the run at night or downgrading shift systems. We've opposed and fought off against our Fire Authority attempts to crew at four and they withdrew that proposal. We stopped their endeavour to take pumps off the run at night. However, on the issue of downgrading Stations, we had one Station in Lancashire which, for historical reasons, was Wholetime Duty System yet did fewer calls than many of our RDS Stations. In 2009/2010 it had 259 calls in its own station area. Normally this would have gone to the Grey Book Day Crewing System, but the problem was that they knew that they were not getting volunteers for the Day Crewing System as per the Grey Book. What we did agree to is a hybrid of the Day Crewing System which did attract volunteers from our existing members, and the agreement stipulated it must be voluntary and there was to be no redundancies which was agreed to. Also, firefighters can live in their own homes, albeit closer to the Station, so they don't have to live in the accommodation provided.

I don't have time to go into all the details. The FBU in Lancashire do not believe that the Lancashire model of the Day Crewing Plus is outside of the Grey Book, outside of the Working Time Directive, or outside of the National Pay Rates. Lancashire is aware that we may have to dispute our Day Crewing Plus at some later date, but at the moment we are not in that position. With reference to Page 2 of the Resolution, we support the issue being raised at the NJC, but any talks would also have to address the funding shortfall.

Conference should note that the FBU has already received and has available legal advice from Thompsons at local level. Notwithstanding what I've just said, and being mindful that some of our members have already volunteered to work the system, the Day Crewing Plus is not a one size fits all and we fully support our Devon & Somerset colleagues' decision to challenge and fight against the proposal that they are currently facing. We support. *Applause*

BRO MIKE TULLY (Gloucestershire):

President, Conference, we are supporting Emergency Resolution 10. I just want to make some points on legal

Day Two – 18th May

issues around Day Crew Plus. Standby time on a Retained Duty contract does not count as working time. But if that standby time is at your place of work then it does. This was due to a challenge in the European Court reference a doctor working in a hospital. Therefore, this duty system can only ever be voluntary because your employer cannot force you to opt out of the Working Time Directive.

As far as I am aware, the UK are the only country within Europe that is allowed to opt out of the Working Time Directive. Because the cash incentive is there for our members, people will do it. The EC Policy Statement on Cuts, Austerity and the Case for the Alternative actually talks about our campaigning to reduce the working week. What we need to do is to campaign that that opt out is taken out within the UK. That will make this policy high risk for Brigades because if a Brigade relies on Day Crew Plus to staff its fire appliances and the opt out clause is then removed in the European Court (which is likely), that will leave them high and dry.

In this month's Fire Magazine you'll see there's an article on Day Crew Plus and there's no mention there of the legalities around the Working Time Directive. Again, I urge you to support the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO TONY SMITH (Hertfordshire):

President, Conference, I've got a very good friend who's some time retired now from the Fire Service who grew up living on Finchley Fire Station and he was telling me some stories about that. Then I was reading some of the parts of Forged in Fire and I was reading some of the stories there, I thought: do you know what, we've heard the General Secretary warning us about the Government's moves to turn the clock back, undo all the hard work of the last 30/40 years. Actually day crew, la-las, whatever you want to call it, this is the jewel in the crown for them of turning the clock back. What it means is we're going right back to those conditions where we're living like Auf Wiedersehen Pet in a portakabin out the back of the Station. It's outrageous! We really have got to get a grip of this.

To some extent I know that the horse has already bolted in some Brigades, but it's important that we get this. It has been mooted in Hertfordshire. But when you look at the use they made in Merseyside of how many calls a Station does to qualify for LAS, actually every station in Hertfordshire qualifies. So what's the chances? We might get two Stations in the next couple of years on that and bean counters are going to look at this and say: yes, actually it did save a lot of money so let's have another two and another two, and another two. This is really important. We really do need to overwhelmingly support this and when we do (and I'm sure we will) I would also ask that we move quickly on this as well. The horse is about to bolt. There's a meeting tonight

roundabout 9 o'clock. The guys from Lancashire have agreed to meet with us and Cambs have got the same problem. Anybody else that's got this problem coming, anybody else from the Exec, we'd also like to invite, if we could, someone from Merseyside to meet with us as well. Let's get our heads round this quickly, let's get this tabled nationally, and let's put a stop to this ridiculous, outrageous turning back of the clock to archaic conditions, living on Stations. It's wrong and it's thousands of firefighter jobs. *Applause*

BRO MIKE TREMELLEN (Cornwall):

President, Conference, we are fully supporting the Emergency Resolution from Devon & Somerset and echoing the comments from the previous speakers. Just a word of caution for the Executive Council on reaching a national position. I'll use an example. Being from Cornwall it would be remiss of me not to mention offshore firefighting once every few years. We've had a National Policy on offshore firefighting since 1997. A few years ago this was reviewed and upheld when the National Maritime Incident Response Group was set up. The national position from that is that members shouldn't do it. Yet members have signed up across the country and are doing it, even in Cornwall. A major factor is the extra payments that are being offered to members.

Therefore, it's vital that a clear national position is produced following this Emergency Resolution that includes the coordinated action in the last bullet point of this Resolution. Otherwise there's a real danger that our members will be blinded by the money that's waved in front of them. So I urge the Executive Council to make sure the Policy that comes as a result of this (and I'm sure that it will go through unanimously) is effective so that our members understand it and abide by it. Please fully support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council are happy to support the resolution. One point of clarification – not a qualification just a clarification – and that's on bullet point 1. I'm sure Devon & Somerset appreciate this point but tabling something at the NJC with a view to reaching an agreement with them isn't the same as actually reaching an agreement with them. I know you fully appreciate that. I suspect the employers will take a very different stance from us on the question of Day Crewing Plus and these systems.

On a couple of the questions that came up from West Midlands, there is nothing in the Resolution that I believe would lead to individuals coming into conflict

Day Two – 18th May

with Policies of the Union, or expulsions, or people being required to leave the Union at all. I know that's not the intention of Devon & Somerset in bringing this Resolution. I think what they are talking about is trying to prepare the arguments and the background for a campaign against these sorts of duty systems. In terms of the impact on other Brigades (and I take note of what Steve said) local officials of the FBU will monitor very carefully any proposals. These duty systems that are creeping in are not the same in every case; there are variations. I have got every confidence that local officials will monitor them in relation to the impact on the Grey Book and National Agreement and in terms of legislation. Clearly in certain circumstances agreements can be and have been reached.

In other cases, Devon & Somerset being one, our officials have determined that the proposals are unacceptable and have therefore decided to fight them. I think the Resolution is about trying to coordinate that campaign, to provide the information, resources and coordination between the National Union and those Brigades facing these attacks.

The phrase was just used again. It really is staggering, some of the proposals that we're facing. It really is about turning the clock back to virtually continuous duty systems that this Union fought against 50/60/70 years ago. I think it is something that we need to take on. As I said earlier, every single proposal they bring, we need to examine it from the point of view of the impact on jobs, on the Service and on the health & safety of our members. If it doesn't meet those standards – and those standards should be broadly as set out in the Grey Book – then we need to challenge it and campaign against it. We have successfully in South Wales fought off a similar system. I am sure that the comrades in Devon & Somerset, Cambridgeshire and elsewhere who are currently facing these sorts of proposals will launch significant campaigns, and I'm sure we can be confident of success there. They will have the full support of Conference and of the Executive Council.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I put Emergency Resolution 10 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That is *carried unanimously*.

Adjourned for tea. Back at five to. Thank you.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order now will you please. Conference, I now call upon Steve Shelton to give a Standing Orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Can you please turn to your Programme of business Page 11: Resolution 23, Attacks on Pensions, CSNC, has been withdrawn to support Emergency Resolution 1 from the Executive Council, the Amendment falls. Page 13: Resolution 38, Unisex Fire Kit, NWC, has been withdrawn, Amendments fall. President, I have agreed to read a short message from Lancashire for information purposes. A speaker mentioned that Brigades with Day Crewing Plus were meeting with other interested Brigades at 9 pm tonight. The meeting is now taking place at 5.45 pm tonight at the back of the Conference hall. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *Agreed*.

I now call Resolution 19, Training Time, National Retained Committee. Are you moving it formally? You're remitting it? OK. Paragraph A14. I now call Resolution 14, Nottinghamshire, with Amendments from Lothian & Borders and Control Staff National Committee. Both Amendments can carry. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 14 – ADC PROCESS

Conference notes with concern the continued failings of the ITOP and ADC process, as it does not address the issue of firefighting capabilities.

Conference demands that the Executive Council carries out further research into ITOPs and ADCs, with a view to negotiating a national process of promotion that includes the recognition that firefighting capabilities must be included in the ITOP/ADC process.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Amendment

Paragraph 2 line 4 after 'process.' insert new sentence 'In doing so it should examine the inclusion of any promotion process ensuring that operational capability would make up at least 51% of the process and a pass would be compulsory.'

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Amendment

***Line 2 after 'firefighting' insert 'and firefighter (control)'.
Line 5 after 'firefighting' insert 'and firefighter (control)'.***

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Day Two – 18th May

BRO IAN YOUNG (Nottinghamshire):

Firstly, I'd just like to say that we welcome the Amendments from both Lothian & Borders and from CSNC. This proposal Conference, was remitted from last year. The purpose of the motion when it was brought was basically very simple. There was a strong feeling within Nottinghamshire that the promotion and progression systems in place are not adequate. Primarily the ITOP and the ADC process. In particular, we feel that they only take account of personal qualities and attributes and that the ADC process is not fire related. We're well aware, and we've been here before many times, that the ADC process does not necessarily have to be fire related because it's a personal qualities and attributes process. We would agree that that is the case. However, there is an absence of any other way for applicants for promotion to demonstrate their technical expertise and their competence. There is also an absence of assessing applicants' practical abilities.

Notts' concerns regarding ADCs is not and never has been an attack on the use of personal qualities and attributes. We accept that such assessment is valid and necessary, and does form part of the promotion process. Our concerns are that currently assessing PQAs via the ADC process is the only method utilised in deciding who is capable of being promoted to junior and ultimately senior management positions.

Historically, the Fire Service stood accused of relying solely on technical and practical ability of the applicants and therefore it was recognised by some that this was not adequate either, and perhaps did not produce the most rounded of individuals in all cases. We are quite happy to accept that that might be true. Ultimately, though, the view of our members is that as with any walk of life, the answer to a problem may not be 100% black or 100% white. There should be a middle ground that takes cognisance of all relevant factors: technical and practical competence as well as the personal qualities and attributes of the individual.

Last year we remitted the proposal following discussions with Sean Starbuck primarily, who informed us that he was currently undertaking work which would address the concerns that we had. Now we have faith in Sean and his undoubted ability and we expressed this last year. We know that in a moment he will reply and advise us as to the work that he has been undertaking in the last year. You may recall that last year I pointed out to Sean that whilst I sincerely hoped he would succeed, he was in fact attempting to polish a large piece of poppycock! If you need a definition of poppycock, then Matt is our expert on that particular thing. Basically, it's a weak, slurry based material.

Nothing would please me and the Notts members more than if Sean is able to come back today to furnish us

with a beautifully finely polished and honed crystallised solid fossil like material. I'm not quite sure if that's what slurry turns into after a thousand years. Whatever you've got I hope it's well polished. We are basically hoping he's going to furnish us with a quality system for ensuring the future promotion within the Service.

One thing that's of vital importance to us is that any proposed system which Sean outlines takes us forward, and it should be robust, practical, and take account of the three strands: technical ability, practical ability and personal qualities and attributes. Above all, it must be implemented in full and on a national basis. I move.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded.

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 14 from Nottinghamshire. Ian's already given us a full and robust case for the Resolution. This Resolution is solely about ensuring that the people we promote in the Fire Service have all the skills required, both as a firefighter and going all the way up to the top, and we're checking that all those skills are in place through the different strands. We must ensure that any process that we do adopt includes all the aspects required to be promoted to the next level, whatever that may be. We're ultimately going to appoint people to take responsibility for other people. Therefore, that person must know what is expected at that next level, what the safe practices are, and what the safe practices are for the people they are responsible for.

I can only speak for my Brigade in Derbyshire. We have made some progress in this area. It is a positive step in the right direction to ensure that firefighting capabilities are tested. It does give everyone a sense of confidence from the bottom up and the top down that the process is testing all the relevant aspects and we are identifying the right people. Hopefully, when we've gone through the process we have selected the right people, they've shown the ability to be competent at all levels, at all areas, including the essential firefighting skills, obviously.

I do sympathise a lot with Nottinghamshire's position on this one and the situation that they are in. I would urge Conference to support this Resolution and its Amendments. Conference, I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call the Amendment from Lothian & Borders. The EC support.

Day Two – 18th May

BRO BRYAN BANKS (Lothian & Borders):

Conference, our intention is to enhance the intent of the Resolution by firming up the commitment that the operational capability becomes the most important and relevant aspect of the ADC and ITOP process. We have seen an erosion of the emphasis on operational skills and competence. We believe this has to be addressed. You do not and should not only have to show operational standards are maintained, they must also run throughout all promotional processes. If it can't be shown, you don't get the promotion. Again, our Amendment states it must be 51% of the process. This will give it its proper emphasis. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* I now call the Amendment from the Control Staff National Committee.

BRO NORMAN REES (CSNC):

President, Conference, first time Conference, first time speaker! *Applause* Firefighter Control have difficulties in some Brigades at even being allowed to sit an ITOP or an ADC. Some Brigades used to allow Firefighter Control to sit the ITOP along with operational staff. Then it changed to Firefighter Control and Green Book personnel. Now it has changed to Firefighter Control on their own. Brigades are misusing the process and altering the system to suit their own needs. The process must have an element of operational capability in it. We see only too clearly what happens on a daily basis when it doesn't. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* I call upon Sean Starbuck to give the Executive Council's qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, President. Last year Nottinghamshire brought this Resolution to Conference and after a bit of persuasion agreed to remit it. I was sent away to polish the poppycock. I think this year you're sending me away to pull a real rabbit out of the hat! That's the qualification from the Executive Council. Before I give the qualification can I outline some of the work I and the Workforce Development Group have been doing this year to try to achieve some of the things outlined in this Resolution.

First of all, we've been raising all issues workforce development wise in the IPDS Working Group, which is a group set up as a sub group of the Fire and Rescue sector Vocational Standards Group (another sexy name there for you!). We've also been raising this issue as a

key part of our input into the Greenstreet Berman survey which CLG put forward, looking at the operational training people are getting in the UK Fire Service. I'm really pleased with the draft report from Greenstreet Berman. They picked up on nearly all the parts we raised. Ian will be pleased, I'm sure, that one part of it was a best practice from a Brigade where they said they put in an ADC process which did include fire related scenarios. So they are listening to us. We're waiting for the final version of this Greenstreet Berman report. We expect it next month, maybe the month after. We can use that as a real tool towards any negotiating position we take up.

The EC supported workforce development. As you know, we've run our workforce developments groups and we've supported training for all officials to come along. Some of the issues raised at Conference have come from these workforce development groups.

Health & Safety report backed up what we're saying and what you've been saying. In their Report in 2010 from the eight Brigades that the Health & Safety Executive went into, one of the key statements in their Report is: "In our view, the issue of competence is the biggest single operational safety challenge presently facing the FRS". So they are aware of it. We are aware of it. The problem – and this is part of the qualification – is that it's been passed from pillar to post. Nobody wants to stand up and take responsibility for it. This is something we've got to nail down. We will negotiate. We've got to find who to negotiate with first because everybody's trying to pass it on to somebody else.

The achievability was made a little bit more awkward when the English Fire Minister, speaking to the Fire Conference in 2010, gave the FRA some wriggle room. I'm not going to quote him word for word but he indicated that Brigades were best placed to recruit and develop their people themselves. You well know, some Brigades took this as a red light to IPDS and it was the end of it. We've managed to convince them that it's not, but the best we've got out of it is that people are still dealing with IPDS inconsistently. This is a big problem. If you cherry pick IPDS it won't work. We've got to make sure that they apply it holistically.

One other thing we're doing to push this forward is the improper use of development pay. I know there's quite a lot of Brigades now who are almost at a point where we can legally challenge people for unlawful deduction of wages, which has been backed by the Executive Council.

We're pleased to support this with the qualification. We've got big plans for workforce development. We do need people to get involved. We need people to get involved in the improper use of development pay on

Day Two – 18th May

promotion, so we're quite happy to give support with that qualification.

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

Mr President, Conference, I'm very pleased to see once again we've got a Resolution talking about advancement and promotion within the British Fire Service. What we need to be very clear on here is that there's more to it than just about advancement and promotion. Yes, it's about firefighting capabilities; yes, it's about operational competence, but more than that, it's also about command and control at incidents. What we are losing somewhere along the line within the British Fire Service and certainly some senior managers might be losing this, is that this is an inherently dangerous job. People carry out inherently dangerous tasks on occasion when required to do so. Therefore we need to ensure that any process that comes in fully supports everyone from every level within the Brigades that they work in.

One of the important things with this is that we need to make sure that we equip people from the earliest possible positions. So what we need to do is send our firefighters who will become Crew Managers on to Fire Stations with all the capabilities that they require to carry out the role of Crew Manager. Let's make that perfectly clear, that role of Crew Manager is suddenly moving up and up the scale in Brigades like mine where they are thinking of taking Watch Managers off the run and putting them into an office somewhere. So we need to make sure that the system is there for them. What we also need to ensure is that when they go through the system that it is a clear, open and transparent system of promotion and not one that can be abused by people within their own Brigades. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I remind Conference that both Amendments can carry. I now put the Amendment from Lothian & Borders to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now put the Amendment from Control Staff National Committee to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 14 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried*.

Can I ask Conference to turn to Page 9 of the Programme of Business. Section B Fire and Rescue Service Policy, Paragraph B1. I now call Resolution 31

with the Amendment from the Control Staff National Committee, Cuts to Firefighter Posts, North Wales. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 31 – CUTS TO FIREFIGHTER POSTS

This Conference demands that the Executive Council use whatever means necessary to protect all firefighter posts from the many proposed budget cuts that many Fire and Rescue Services seem intent on making as a result of the current economic situation.

NORTH WALES

Amendment

Line 2 after 'firefighter' insert 'and firefighter (control)'.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

THE PRESIDENT:

Formally moved. Do I have a seconder for that? *Formally seconded*. I call the Amendment from the Control Staff National Committee.

BRO TIM GERRARD (CSNC):

President Conference, this is a simple Amendment. Control Staff are facing cuts to jobs proportionally as great as operational firefighters. In some cases even more so. Any Resolution that talks about protecting jobs, indeed any Resolution that can affect in a positive way any member of this Union should be inclusive. I can't think, given the proposed cuts that the UK Fire Service is facing, of a more important Resolution at this moment than one that calls on us through the Executive Council to protect jobs. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does the Amendment have a seconder? *Formally seconded*. I now put the Amendment from Control Staff National Committee to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 31 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried*.

I now call Resolution 27, Tax Justice Campaign, Strathclyde.

Resolution 27 – TAX JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

Conference demands the Executive Council lobby the TUC and STUC to ensure the Trade Union &

Day Two – 18th May

Labour Movement launches a major campaign calling for Tax Justice aimed at ensuring a progressive taxation system applicable to all that provides a fair means of redistributing wealth and secures appropriate sustainable funding for high quality Public Services.

This campaign to:

- ***Illuminate corporate tax evasion and avoidance strategies that permit Trans National Corporations that make huge profits in this country to pay little or no tax on their profits and demand an end to the tax loopholes that permit this scandal that results in up to £120 billion pounds of unpaid taxes;***
- ***Expose and demand an end to the preferential treatment of so called Non-domiciled individuals;***
- ***Illuminate and demand an end to the tax evasion and avoidance strategies of wealthy individuals;***
- ***Demand the cancellation of the job cuts at HMRC and the robust application of existing tax law;***
- ***Support the campaign for a tax on all financial transactions to fight poverty at home and overseas (Robin Hood Tax);***
- ***Expose the vast windfall profits made by banks and financial institutions as a result of the UK Government's "quantitative easing" programme and demand these are subject to a windfall tax;***
- ***Support the action of UK Uncut in exposing the tax avoidance strategies of big business by non violent direct action.***

STRATHCLYDE

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

Conference, President, we keep getting told we're in the midst of the greatest government debt crisis since the 1930s. The mantra of cuts, cuts and more cuts to our essential public services and to people's welfare benefits and livelihoods has been repeated so often by the media that people are starting to accept it. Even amongst some of our own members this process has led to some of them feeling psychologically defeated even before the major impact of these cuts has started to bite. They've been listening to the millionaires in the Cabinet who've been telling them how there's no money left while at the same time hoping they're not going to be any of this for them and their rich friends who appear in the Sunday Times Rich List, the so called entrepreneurs and philanthropists. Their personal wealth now amounts to some £4,000 billion, the richest 10% of the super rich in this country. That is five times more than the combined debt of the UK. So you can see, a 10% wealth tax would almost solve the problem in its entirety.

Of course, there's another way of solving the problem. This nation with such incredible levels of personal wealth has adopted a scorched earth policy when it comes to maintaining decent public services and welfare standards. That's because these so called entrepreneurs and philanthropists are actually cheats and scoundrels who hide their personal income and their corporations' profits through complicated investment structures organised by advisers in a State within a State, the City of London – otherwise known as the Tory Party Financial Wing. These complicated investment structures usually terminate in a tax haven such as the Cayman Islands, which again is a UK dependency. They also have the brass neck to declare their companies as charitable trusts. These people know no shame.

The reality is if the super rich and these multinational corporations paid taxes at just the same rate as working people there would be no UK deficit and no need to make a single cut. In fact, we could properly resource our overstretched public services and provide decent jobs for our young people. Of course, rather than tackle these astonishing abuses, the neo Thatcherites that dictate economic policy in this ConDem Coalition are running frantically in another direction: to protect their corporate backers. Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs are primary targets for the cuts and have suffered over 25,000 job losses and the closure of 200 offices, meaning at least £11 billion of tax revenue went uncollected last year.

The Government went further. They've also closed down the specialist section of HMRC that targeted corporate tax evasion. The workers in that section were responsible for identifying and collecting more than £250,000 each in tax each year. Is it any wonder the UK deficit has grown when we've got a Government aiding and abetting corporate tax avoidance?

Our comrades in PCS today have voted for industrial action in response to these attacks on their pay, jobs and conditions and they will be balloting. Let's make sure we support them. But to go back to the tax justice today, the deal to allow Vodafone to avoid £6 billion in tax earlier this year shows how brazen this Government is in supporting what amounts to corporate theft. They are encouraging these corporate pirates to take advantage of the investment in public services and infrastructure that gives them access to an educated workforce and a consumer market in the UK, and then rush off to Treasure Island to bury their profits. It would be sweet justice if they ran into Long John Silver and his cronies.

Of course, the deficit was largely created in the first place by bailing out the financial industry. Their search for ever greater profits in the deregulated environment they always called for led to widespread bankruptcy.

Day Two – 18th May

Their greed blinded them to trading in worthless assets fuelled by the house price bubble. So now the public owns large parts of this financial industry, an industry that owes its existence to a massive public bailout, yet we find that these banks that we own have many large investments in companies registered in these very tax havens that have removed billions in taxes from the reach of the Government. In effect, we're paying the banks to help them avoid UK taxes, and to help advise wealthy individuals how to do so as well. Nothing is done to change this. The reverse applies. The signal to carry on is given by savaging jobs in HMRC. It's little wonder then that the banks believe nothing has changed and they can go on paying themselves massive bonuses for illusory profits that are largely based on little more than lending money received from the Bank of England for half a per cent to companies and individuals at 7% or 8%.

The debt, as we've heard already this week, remains nationalised, the profits stay privatised. In other words, socialism for the banks and raw edged capitalism for the rest of us. We bear all the risks, and the fall out from the cuts being made to pay for the bailout. It's obvious this Government is unwilling to tackle these abuses, but are desperate instead to use the debt crisis as an opportunity to destroy our public services and our welfare state.

So it falls upon the Labour and Trade Union Movement, in alliance with anti cuts coalitions and citizens groups that have sprung up organically like UK Uncut, to expose these practices and demand a just and progressive tax system based on ability to pay. Blatant unfairness in favour of the already wealthy such as taxing unearned income at just 18% and earned income at 32% has to be put an end to. This campaign has got to be a central pillar in the campaign against the cuts and in defending our welfare state. The direct action of UK Uncut has demonstrated how effective this element of the campaign can be and has got overwhelming public support. The public are joining in with these direct actions and support UK Uncut in their occupations of big business premises.

But the campaign has got to be a global campaign too, and one that the international Labour and Trade Union Movement is involved in. Closing down tax havens and ending the abuse of tax systems with corporations can only be achieved by international agreement. Developing countries are also suffering usually from corporate tax avoidance and evasion. That's got to be tackled as well. Developing a tax system that can generate money for global development through a financial transaction tax such as the Robin Hood tax also needs international agreement. The European Parliament has voted in favour of this already and decided it can be introduced without any global agreement.

Conference, I urge you all to play your part in supporting development of this campaign and naming and shaming the companies and individuals who benefit from tax avoidance and evasion, and also the financial organisations and advisers who help sustain it. Let's expose the true parasites threatening the welfare state that working people fought so long and hard for. I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? Do we have a seconder? *Formally seconded.* It's open for debate. The Executive Council support. I now put Resolution 27, Tax Justice Campaign to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried.*

Paragraph B2, B3, B4, B5.

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

President, Conference, our General Secretary mentioned earlier within his address on Cuts, Austerity and the Case for an Alternative, that cuts cannot be fought by industrial means alone. This Paragraph highlights an example of how we in Scotland have arrived at a position where we hope to best address the cuts by restructuring the Fire Services in Scotland. Grampian, as a result of consistent, constant consultation and a debate within Region 1, has lent its support to the Regional response to the Scottish Government's consultation process on the restructure of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

In Grampian, we've arrived at a decision, after much consideration, to work towards a single Service as providing the best opportunity at present of facing the current cuts that originate from Westminster. While this direction may unsettle some members, in the RDS, Control, and within our Officer Section, it's actually within our firefighter membership who have actually been witnessing the loss of uniform jobs since 2007.

To clarify for Conference, our position on a single Service comes from the belief that it can turn the attention first on the current eight corporate structures that, if removed, can help secure Grey Book condition jobs, and at worst, minimise the damage to our membership figures. We also hope in Grampian that opportunities will also become available to redress processes such as discipline and grievance, IRMP, IPDS, trade union leave and equality initiatives that are clearly failing our members under the current system. In fact, I know from a Regional position that the wheels on these type of issues are already in motion.

Just to reassure Conference from our response within question 1 of the consultation process that I referred to,

Day Two – 18th May

the FBU will oppose any reduction of any FBU uniform jobs. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO SAMI CHAUDHRY (Dumfries & Galloway):

Conference, President, I just wanted to read you Paragraph 7 on Page 31. "We may well be moving into unknown territory, but we go into the restructure strong, determined, and so long as we maintain our unity and strength of purpose we can be the significant players in shaping the Service of the future."

We often hear, whether we like it or not, that with every change comes opportunity. I think most of us would recognise that whilst this is sometimes forced upon us in a patronising way, it makes a no less truer statement: with change does come opportunity. Of course if we don't engage where and when we can, and if we don't keep our collective foot jammed in the doorway until it opens to us, and if we don't talk positively and constructively and with confidence at the table, then the opportunity that comes with change will not be ours to take. We become bystanders, and voids, as we know, will be filled.

The change we are facing in Scotland is massive and a wee bit scary. It's a shame that Fife withdrew Resolution 26 as I think it summed up quite nicely how Region officials have manoeuvred and positioned us into a strong influential place to the satisfying exclusion of CFOA. We are the main stakeholders of the Fire Service and we are the professional voice. I would like to recognise and extend my thanks to Region 1 officials on their work to date, and I would encourage their ability to continue in that vein, ensuring that everyone knows the FBU represents the best of the Fire Service, past, present and future. *Applause*

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

I think it's important to recognise where this restructure has come from. Like our comrades in England, we're facing year on year cuts within Brigades. The Fire Convenors in Scotland and the chief officers got together and plotted how they were going to implement these cuts. What we were facing were year on year cuts, Brigade by Brigade. Those cuts have already started. In year 1 in Strathclyde we lost 45 frontline posts. As a result of the Fire Group Duty System being implemented they told us there would be no job cuts. Lo and behold, as soon as the pressure come on financially, they said it's an optimum crewing system and we can let these 45 posts go.

In years 2, 3 and 4 they planned again to make further cuts. That was going to result in a further 200 job losses in Strathclyde. At this point the Scottish Government got involved and called for a restructure. Thankfully, we've

got Regional officials in influential positions with the Scottish Government who can help influence and shape that in the direction of protecting our members' jobs and conditions going forward. So we realise it's no panacea, this structure. We do realise it's financially driven, but if we stand apart from it we're going to get cut individually bit by bit. Going this way we've got the chance to protect our members better and to revisit some of the issues which we've had difficulties with in the past such as response standards for Scotland. Also, we will be in a position where we can justify to our members that we're doing all we can to protect their jobs, their pay and conditions right across the board. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Emergency Resolution 5 Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Consultation, Lothian & Borders. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Emergency Resolution 5 – SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE CONSULTATION

This Conference notes that on 10th February 2011 the Scottish Government began a Consultation on the Future of the Fire and Rescue Service in Scotland.

Conference also notes the Initial Options Appraisal Report which preceded the consultation.

This exercise by the Scottish Government is about cuts to Fire Service budgets in Scotland. This will result in threats to our members' jobs, particularly Firefighters on the retained duty system, officers and control staff.

This Conference calls on the Executive Council to commit to fighting these cuts, every job loss, including job losses from forced relocation of posts. This to be done within the framework of FBU policies, in particular Emergency Resolution 1 and Resolution 32 from Annual Conference 2010.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, if you didn't know already, there was a consultation on the structural change in the Fire and Rescue Service in Scotland and how that Service will be delivered. The consultation closed on 4 May. In the Consultation Document released by the Scottish Government it stated: "The Government believe that there are compelling arguments in favour of a single Service." But this process has been driven by the austerity agenda and the issue of finances. At the same time the First Minister in Scotland has instigated what

Day Two – 18th May

we know as the Christie Commission. This Commission is examining how Scotland's public services can be delivered in future, and to secure improved outcomes for communities across our country. Basically, a Local Government review.

This Fire and Rescue Service consultation has been conducted outside the Christie Commission. It's our fear that this could be the first step to removing Fire from Local Government. I'm not standing here saying that Fire Authorities deliver for our members, far from it. But this has the potential to remove any Scottish Fire and Rescue Service or Services from Local Authority control. That could remove Scotland from the NJC.

Back to the consultation. The consultation paper has given three broad options: One Service; a Regional Structure; or to continue with Eight Services with more collaboration work. There is no detail within that document. Despite that, our Regional Committee has discussed, agreed and submitted our response. Our Regional Officials have engaged with the Government and civil servants and have been involved and will continue to engage in the process at every level. Although this is a Scottish issue, we are also driven as a National Union by the same principles and policies in terms of protecting our members' jobs and conditions. These principles and policies are what we used to guide our response.

Conference, we may have a Devolved Administration in Scotland, and there may be other Regional variations across the country, so we accept that one method does not fit all. Comrades, trade union principles do fit all, especially when it comes to jobs, pay and conditions, no matter what region or what country. In Lothian & Borders one of our biggest fears of restructures has come from our control staff, our officers and our retained firefighters. But our firefighters are worried too. Ministers and government officials have given assurances they will do their best not to have compulsory redundancies. We believe that we should be protecting our members, whether it's a compulsory redundancy or a forced relocation.

To close, it is key to this Emergency Resolution and thus as a National Union that we not only protect what we have, but we use the lessons from the past to support our members and pre-empt any potential future attacks, to inform our current policy making position. There were two Resolutions that were on the agenda paper from last year on this. I mention Resolution 1 moved by the EC and carried by Conference: Defend Community Safety, Public Services and Jobs, and also Resolution 52 which looked to protect all control members throughout the UK. There are many more. Conference, this Resolution is about protecting jobs and it is about protecting our members. Please support. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder?

BRO MARK WATT (South Wales):

To quote the EC Member from Region 1 in the Scottish Herald on 5 February: "Lessons should be learned from Wales where eight Services were cut to three and authorities now wish they'd merged into one." I've researched this bald statement extensively and can find no person involved in the running of, or indeed employed by a Fire Authority in Wales, who can support this statement. I have spoken to the people who were involved in the 1996 reduction from eight Services to three and there was never a driver there for an all Wales single Service.

Comrades, make no mistake, there is absolutely no support for a single Service in Wales from any of the three chief fire officers in post, or from any of our three Brigade Committees. There may well, however, be a drive for this proposal from the new Fire Service adviser to the Assembly, none other than Brian Fraser. Yes, the same one who proposed that in Scotland, then promptly left. Comrades, we have experience of Mr Fraser in Wales. He was the chief of South Wales, and it would be fair to say that not many tears were shed when he left. We know how he works and we'll be ready for him and his ridiculous ideas.

In 1970 Sir Ronald Holroyd reported on the State of the Fire Services within the UK. Should you get the chance it's a decent read. It is a Document of great foresight and common sense. Had the powers that be listened in 1970 then a lot of our current issues would be non issues. The recommendations from Holroyd for the future of the Fire Service within Wales was a reduction to possibly five Services with the rider that all Services should be of around 1,000 to 1,300 men. This would allow the chief officer to stay in touch with the workforce.

This was based around each Service having an optimum station number of 30, with Wholetime Stations counting as one, and a Retained Station counting as a half. Comrades, you will not be surprised to hear that the three Services within Wales all fall within 10% of these targets and are all receiving positive reports from external auditing processes that we now go through.

For the record, this report recommended a reduction in numbers of services within Scotland to a level "that they are large enough to provide an adequate establishment of senior posts to cover specialist functions and offer reasonable prospects of promotion but preferably should not exceed a size over which the chief officer could not keep in touch with his men and be in effective operational control as distinct to being largely an administrator."

Day Two – 18th May

Comrades, take heed of Sir Ronald's advice. Be careful what you wish for. The Scottish Police Federation, I think it would be fair to say, voted nearly 8 out of 10 against a National Service. The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust went to a one Service structure some years ago and now goes locally by the dubious title of "We'll attend some time". In Wales we have tried the all service approach on various things such as standard operating procedures and standard appliances. It would be safe to say it has not worked. Why? The main reason is that the Brigade risk profiles are not compatible with the fastest growing capital city in Europe in the South, and the rural expanses of Mid, West and North Wales. Would this not be the same in Scotland?

Comrades, a question for the future. Where would this all end? After Scotland and Wales would the hatchet men of Downing Street not look at the possibility of Regional Services for England? I for one wouldn't be more than surprised if this did not mean further massive reductions in establishment figures across the board. A single Service will give a Regional Service in title only with a total reliance on local delivery. This therefore begs the question: why go Regional at all? Comrades, I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO NORMAN REES (CSNC):

I am speaking in support of Emergency Resolution 5 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Consultation. Conference, for the last few years we've stood here and talked about the English Fire Control project and how we wished England would take a page out of Scotland's book and squash the project. Well Conference, this year the tables have turned. This year England has dumped the Fire Control Project but Scotland is to get up again. Although the consultation is about the potential of one Fire and Rescue Service in Scotland, the decision on the Control Rooms isn't being taken until 2013. To only start talking about it then is too late. We are not saying Emergency Fire Control is a special case, but we are saying that we doubt there will be eight Fire Emergency Control Rooms in Scotland if it becomes one Fire Service.

At Conference last year there was a Resolution from Nottingham which stated: "The FBU will continue to mount a vigorous campaign against any form of Regionalisation of Fire Control Centres." This Resolution was carried. This year in Resolution 25 we talk about widening the existing campaign against Regional Control Rooms, to include merging, outsourcing. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Still open for debate. I'll ask the General Secretary to give the Executive Council qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. I think this debate reflects some of the difficulties and challenges that we're facing all over the UK. I know that the Scottish Regional Officials and the Scottish Brigade Committees and the Scottish Regional Committee have been debating and struggling with this issue for quite some time. I think as Alan outlined, the submission from the Scottish Region to the consultation is there and is available.

I just want to be clear on a number of points and to clarify a number of points by way of qualification. The Executive Council has taken the view that the primary role in responding to this consultation must clearly fall to the Regional Committee. The Regional Committee are well aware of the requirements to comply with FBU policies and decisions, and the Region 1 Committee have responded to the consultation. Just to be clear, that consultation has been discussed with and endorsed by the Executive Council. It does include challenging and opposing the issue of any job losses. That's clearly there in the response document.

What Region 1 have informed us throughout this debate is that they have sought for some time, as we all have, to take up the issue around standards, one of the issues that we've been challenging for the past six years under so-called modernisation. That is what we've described as the fragmentation of the Fire and Rescue Service. You've all experienced that in different ways: individual Brigades going their own way, developing their own policies, procedures, equipment, fire engines, and it has created a complete and utter mess in many areas. CARPS is one example where I know a number of Brigades have experienced that. It relates back to issues such as the abolition of the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council. Alongside those challenges we face the issue of Devolution and the fact that Fire is a devolved matter. That's something that the Union in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and across the UK has been struggling and developing policies and procedures to deal with. Region 1 have particularly engaged with the Scottish Government in debates around standards in order to develop arguments about the protection of the Fire and Rescue Service. They are to be commended in many respects. I have to say there are structures in place in Scotland which are not in place in England. That's to their credit and unfortunately to the loss of our membership in England. So I think it's in that context that we have to take this debate.

Day Two – 18th May

The other qualification is clearly while the Emergency Resolution refers to the particular threats to the Retained Duty System, Officers and Control Staff, and clearly there are threats there as there are indeed across the UK, the threat doesn't only lie with RDS members, Officers and Control Staff, we've already seen attacks on Firefighter jobs and positions on Fire Stations in Scotland. That's clearly a central part of that debate that needs to be taken forward as well.

So with those qualifications and clarifications we are happy to support the Emergency Resolution and to remind Conference that a number of the concerns expressed in the Emergency Resolution have already been discussed, have been addressed within the consultation response by Region 1 and endorsed by the Executive Council. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Emergency Resolution 5 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried*.

We're on Paragraph B6.

BRO PETER MOSS (ONC):

President, Conference, if Conference will just indulge me, this is a reminder for all officials to take action following the recent circular from National Officer Dave Green regarding the proposed closure and complete privatisation of the government owned Forensic Science Service. The Home Office has said that the Forensic Science Service is to be wound up by March 2012 with the loss of 1600 jobs. The Tory led Government wants private enterprise to fill the gap left by the closure. Of concern here is that there may be a window of opportunity for AssetCo to increase their income.

This proposal will obviously have ramifications for fire and arson investigation. Our members are involved in such activities, dealing with both minor and more complex issues and cases on a daily basis. We've worked alongside personnel from both the Forensic Science Service and private firms on many occasions. I know from my own experience and that of my colleagues the difference in quality between the two. We know who we would rather be meeting and working with on the fire ground.

Regrettably, the Association of Chief Police Officers are a leading light in pushing the idea that the private sector can pick up this work. Additionally, the Association of Principal Fire Officers, and the Fire Officers Association are doing what they do best: standing idly by and doing nothing. Once again, the FBU are the only professional voice in the Fire Service willing to do something.

We can only imagine what our forensic colleagues must be going through. We must do all we can to support them. We continue to communicate with Prospect, the union representing the vast majority of workers in the forensic service. We've raised this through the Fire Brigades Union Parliamentary Group and they are supporting the early day motion on the issue. As Matt said this morning about getting behind certain issues, please express your concern over this with our members, raise the issue with your chief fire officers, sign the online petition, write to the Home Office asking them to rescind the decision and that the work of the Forensic Science Service be kept in the public sector. Please revisit Dave's circular and take five minutes to support our brothers and sisters in the forensic service. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph B7, B8, B9, B10, B11, B12, B13, B14. I now call Resolution 28, Equality and Diversity Report from Durham. Qualified support from the Executive Council.

Resolution 28 – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT

This Conference is appalled at the Government's decision to scrap the annual Equality & Diversity Report and the national equality targets which were aimed at employing more of the under represented groups into the operational workforce of the English Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

This responsibility has now been handed over to the local FRSs who, before the targets were introduced, had never seriously attempted to make their workforces reflective of the communities they served.

The decision to scrap the report and the targets did not have an Equality Impact Assessment and will have a detrimental effect on the recruitment of the under represented groups in the FRS.

We call upon the Executive Council to:

- ***Continue to lobby Government to reinstate the National Equality & Diversity Report and the equality targets;***
- ***Put in place an FBU strategy for ensuring that we monitor the recruitment of the under represented groups in the FRS;***
- ***Assist our local officials in demanding that FRSs commit to previous local targets set, to ensure that workforces are indeed reflective of our communities.***

This to be implemented by May 2012 and a Brigade Officials circular issued to update on progression.

DURHAM

Day Two – 18th May

BRO TONY CURRY (Durham):

President, Conference, this Resolution is about making sure we never take our foot off the gas in pursuit of true equality and that this Union is always at the forefront of dragging our Fire Services into taking equality issues seriously and not just saying one thing and doing another. People don't generally like targets, even some of our members are sceptical that by having them means we don't get the right person for the job. We know that's simply not the case.

We are a public service which serves its communities so what is the problem with having a Fire Service which reflects its communities? Very few services will actively pursue equality and diversity issues without being pushed to do so. They will simply tick the box and place it on the back burner. The Fire Service needs to have its hand guided and that is done by having in place a full and thorough equality and diversity strategy which includes a full report, which highlights such things as equality schemes, analysis of employment data, and an overview of the performance of Fire and Rescue Services. This then makes them accountable. It makes them have to take equality and diversity issues seriously. It makes them tackle the issue of under represented groups and it's about changing the face of the Fire Service. This Government needs to reinstate the report and take back ownership. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO DALTON POWELL (B&EMM):

Conference, we are supporting Resolution 28. Conference, take a look at this book. This report came into being due to the fundamental failings of the Brigade over many years and was produced in consultation with FBU and in particular the Equality Section. For the first time it makes Brigades accountable. Some Brigades have made tremendous in-roads in terms of recruitment where eight Brigades have exceeded their 2013 targets for the employment of women in the Service, and three exceeded their targets for the minority staff. Some Brigades have applied for and received £42,000 to extend the minority targets and yet have not reached their predicted target but still have the money. Who will hold them accountable?

Still there are Brigades out there who have failed to enlist any BME members which, in this day and age, is a national disgrace. As the cuts agenda takes a firm hold the new Coalition Government has now put the onus on Brigades to keep their house in order and manage their reports. I assure you Conference, the equality and diversity report will not be on those Brigades' agendas.

I ask Conference to support this Resolution and call upon the Executive Council to continue to lobby Government to reinstate a report and a nationally agreed target. I ask you to support this Resolution. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. I call upon Dave Green to give the qualification from the Executive Council.

BRO DAVE GREEN (National Officer):

Thank you President. We give it qualified support. Clearly it's an important Resolution dealing with a very important subject. Our qualifications really revolve around the fact that actually this is work that we have been doing, it's been ongoing. In fact, the recent response that we submitted to the Fire Futures documentation made specific reference to the removal of targets by Bob Neill last summer. We say that "the FBU looks forward to the Minister addressing this in a substantial way in his response to Fire Futures, including mechanisms for monitoring and measuring performance and also promoting equality and diversity initiatives. We urge the Minister to reverse his position on employment targets." We will also redouble our efforts in this regard.

There is a further qualification I guess because the issue is somewhat different in the Devolved Administrations, different processes are in place regarding equality and diversity targets. Again, please support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 28 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried*.

I now call Resolution 40 Integrated Personal Development System, Northumberland. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 40 – INTEGRATED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Integrated Personal Development System was formulated to address Health and Safety issues that arose through firefighter deaths and injuries in the 1990s. Whilst we acknowledge that its implementation has been inconsistent, it is still fundamental to firefighter safety. The Fire Minister's statement that the Government will not be enforcing national policy upon Fire and Rescue Services has seen many seeking to dismiss the Integrated Personal Development System as 'dead', or at best to reduce the importance they place upon its delivery and workforce development.

Day Two – 18th May

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to campaign against any attempts to dilute the Integrated Personal Development System, and to ensure that officials have the knowledge and understanding to enable them to support this campaign locally.

NORTHUMBERLAND

BRO KIERAN BRENNAN (Northumberland):

President, Conference, last July the English Fire Minister, Bob Neill, gave a speech to the Fire and Rescue Conference in which he posed a question that he then answered when he said: Should we be telling you how to recruit and develop your staff? You are the employers and you should know best your workforce requirements. Many people, especially senior management, jumped upon this as the announcement of the demise on the integrated personal development system. Actually, what he said changed nothing. No two Services have ever developed their staff the same way. Only a very small number ever carried out identical recruitment, despite any national testing standards. A large urban Fire and Rescue Service will, by virtue of its organisational risk, have different development needs for its staff than one whose area is rural. How many staff would London Fire Brigade have to train in wildfire? Or Highland and Islands need to give underground railways training to, high rise, shipping, aircraft, railways, motorways? Many more areas are often local, if not service only development requirements.

The IPDS is designed to accommodate these differences and should be inextricably linked to the IRMP. It is also a key component of our conditions of service. It is the basis of our roles, how we are trained and assessed and how we move through our pay grades. Furthermore, the IPDS came into being due to the deaths and injuries of firefighters in the early 1990s and predates the pay dispute by a decade, much to many people's disbelief. It is the health & safety training system for the Fire and Rescue Service. Yes, it has been haphazardly applied, usually due to a lack of understanding by managers, but also as it will require investment of time and resources to implement correctly. The IPDS is fully supported by our own EC. We must defend it against the cost cutting moves of Brigade managers. We should be campaigning for it to be correctly implemented and supporting those in our individual Services who are trying to do so.

As union representatives we have a crucial role to play in ensuring the safety of our staff. We cannot allow ignorance or anecdotal evidence to dissuade us. Instead, we must identify what we should support and/or develop the processes to ensure the correct training and development of all our staff is delivered within framework of our health & safety approved code of

practice. The integrated personal development system is still alive. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Do we have a seconder? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council support. I open it for debate. I now put Resolution 40 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. That is *carried*.

Paragraph B15, Paragraph B16.

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, just a point of information. I was reading last week one of the recommendations from these Fire Futures documents and it stated in it that Shropshire Fire Brigade were carrying out home fire safety risk visit check type things as alone working. It also claimed that they'd negotiated this with the local FBU officials. I can tell you that they haven't. They have had it on the agenda for a long time. We are not doing lone working on fire safety risk visit assessments. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 32 with Amendment from Grampian. Resolution 32 National Response Standards, Lancashire. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 32 – NATIONAL RESPONSE STANDARDS

A fire in an average sized two bed-roomed semi-detached house is equally serious, irrelevant of whether the house is in London, Lancashire or Llandudno. Historically, the National Standards of fire cover allowed the attending fire crews to use tried and tested safe operating procedures, developed over many years.

Since the introduction of the Integrated Risk Management Planning, many Fire Authorities have chosen to downgrade their operational capability, whilst investing more money into other areas such as community fire safety.

Conference believes that this has led to a 'postcode lottery' of safety standards across the country, due to Fire Authorities having different mobilising arrangements and crewing levels. This is not only compromising the safety of the communities we serve, but also compromising the safety of firefighters.

Conference requires the Executive Council to instigate a study of the varying standards of fire cover that have now been introduced across the

Day Two – 18th May

country, and the methodology that has been used to determine the level of risk; this being with a view to presenting a case for the re-introduction of national standards of fire cover.

LANCASHIRE

Amendment

Delete 'London, Lancashire or Llandudno' insert 'England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland'.

GRAMPIAN

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

Conference, President, despite the fact that it doesn't rhyme, we are supporting the Grampian Amendment! If ever there was a Resolution put to this Conference that is stating the obvious, this has to be it. Last year the FBU published the "It's About Time" Document and you will have read the supporting article in the June 2010 edition of the Firefighter magazine, so I don't need to reiterate the arguments about the current post code lottery and why we need fit for purpose national response standards. As it says in the paragraph of the Resolution, a fire in an average size two bedroom semi detached house is equally serious, irrelevant of where it is. The previous national standards provided tried and tested safe operating procedures that were developed over many years.

Although the FBU has already undertaken a tremendous amount of work on this issue, this Resolution is simply aimed at continuing this essential work and taking the campaign forward. Despite taking many hits, with the infamous Day Crewing Plus being just one, Lancashire has more or less managed to maintain its crewing levels and response standards from pre-2004. We know that this has not been the case in some Brigades and the net is closing in on us all due to the savage budget cuts that we are now all facing.

We have seen changes in mobilising arrangements such as Fire Authorities not mobilising frontline fire appliances to certain AFAs or choosing to send little toy fire engines with a reduced crew to some secondary type incidents. With these changes in mobilising arrangements and the reduction in emergency calls, it is only a matter of time before the Fire Authorities propose a reclassifying risk areas downwards with the sole aim of reducing the response times, downgrading stations, removing appliances and shedding even more firefighter posts. If you read the reports by the likes of the LGA and the ex-Audit Commission there seems to be a race to the bottom with regard to standards.

But we must not let individuals and organisations that know nothing about firefighting dictate response standards. We must not let the bean counters and the

pen pushers compromise our safety. We should not accept a worsening of response standards for house fires and other serious incidents because a Fire Authority are manipulating the activity levels. It is important that we fight for national response standards that the public deserve and which allow us to do our job effectively. If the principle of standard response times can be achieved in Wales (talking about the principle here) it can be achieved right across the UK. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? Merseyside.

BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):

President, Conference, the removal of the national standards of fire cover, as we know, came as a direct result of findings of the independent review of the Fire Service which was published in December 2002. Importantly, that review was titled "The Future of the Fire Service, Reducing Risk, Saving Lives". Reducing risk, that is clearly the stated principle behind the review and the reason behind the subsequent removal of the national standards of fire cover. Reduction of risk applies to firefighters as well as the public. Is there anyone in this Conference Hall that believes that as a result of the change from national standards of fire cover to integrated risk management plans that the risks to firefighters has been reduced?

That review is ten years old next year. So this Resolution is a timely call, an opportunity to look at whether it has actually achieved what it set out to do and to look at whether, as a result of those changes, risks to firefighters have increased.

Section 3.19 to 3.26 of the review dealt specifically with the national standards of fire cover and crucially, what was outlined within them and what was intended by those eight paragraphs has not and is not reflected in what chief fire officers and Fire Authorities are doing throughout the UK. There is no mention in those eight paragraphs of efficiency savings by reducing the amount of firefighters. There is only mention of allowing the services to provide an effective Service. An effective Service requires an effective and adequate response to all incidents.

We have UK standards that dictate requirements in relation to PPE, our fitness, our procedures, our appliances, how our stations are built, and the firefighting and rescue equipment we use. Yet, when all that is put together and we drive off the forecourt to a house fire we have no national standards of fire cover outlining the predetermined number of appliances to arrive within a predetermined time.

Day Two – 18th May

The intent of the review findings was to allow, without the requirement for the Section 19, the movement of firefighters, appliances and fire stations to areas of higher risk, not for Brigade wide reductions in numbers of firefighters. So have new fire stations been built in high risk or high population dense areas to reduce risk? Have, again to reduce risk, the firefighters numbers been increased, for example in the City of London during the day when there are over half a million people and presently there's a very real risk of a terrorist attack? Has the risk to firefighters attending building fires in areas of social deprivation or high population density reduced? Have Fire Authorities reduced the risk to firefighters generally? The answer to all of those questions is sadly no, as the systematic reduction of firefighter numbers only ever increases the risk to firefighters.

Individual chief fire officers in redirecting money away from the frontline should not be allowed to reduce crew numbers to four and four, or even lower in some Brigades to four and three just to balance their books. This was not what was intended when the standards were removed.

Crewing levels must be nationally set, speed of response must be nationally set, predetermined attendances must also be nationally set. All this should be incorporated into the reintroduced national standards of fire cover. Support Resolution 32. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Grampian to move their Amendment. The Executive Council support.

BRO JOHN BROWN (Grampian):

President, Conference, I appreciate Lancashire's alliteration, it was brilliant! But we did feel a bit left out in Scotland. We're moving the Amendment to Resolution 32. In 2009 Grampian Fire and Rescue Service management decided to introduce a new response standard within Grampian. Given the lack of central guidance on this, they looked into existing policies around the country. They chose a standard that would require a minimum of work and a minimum of change for themselves. They took an existing policy, Lancashire's, they tippexed out "Lancashire" and they inserted "Grampian". After adopting these standards, so similar to Lancashire's, they then divided Grampian into a number of smaller bite sized chunks and somehow categorised these into one of five risks from very low through to very high. It's worth noting that to arrive at these categories, amongst other things, they managed to ignore two-thirds of the data available to them that dealt with RTCs. On the basis of Lancashire's policy they then proceeded to use this to start moving pumps and

thus fire cover around in order to satisfy their requirement for an integrated budget management plan.

So in Grampian we now have a map with pretty colours on it, that details the risks that seemingly have been arrived at by some arbitrary means. Even within the City of Aberdeen we now have a post code lottery for standards, a post code lottery for fire cover and hence the worth of a life, even within one city.

I'm not naïve enough to think that we can turn every fire station and every pump into a wholetime fire station or a wholetime pump, but I do think we can and I do think that the people of the UK deserve a national standard of response upon which they can rely, a standard professionally arrived at, and a standard that this Resolution can help usher in, a standard national for Northern Ireland, for Scotland, for Wales and for England, protecting firefighters and the public we serve alike. This would be a standard across the country, regardless of your post code, a standard based on a robust, resilient and evidenced system, independent of budget planning, a standard that recognises that a life is of equal worth wherever it resides within the Isles. Please support the motion with Grampian's Amendments. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for that Amendment? *Formally seconded*. It's open for debate.

BRO RICHARD JONES (Surrey):

We are supporting the Resolution and the Amendments. I'm not going to go over what's been said before. Totally agree with everything. Just a point. What it's actually asking for here is to instigate a study of the varying standards of fire cover. I totally agree with that, but what we should also be doing is asking if our Brigades are complying with those standards because it's come to light recently that the majority of Brigades are not complying with the standards they put in place. So I think we also need to build that into the Resolution and make sure we do that. In the meantime, I would urge all of you to go back to your Brigades and see the proof if they are complying with the standards they put in place or not. That's it. Cheers. *Applause*

BRO PAUL PRYCE (CSNC):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 32. Emergency Fire Control Staff view with dismay the vast difference between Brigades nationally in their response standards, most of which have been driven down. As a former firefighter and a member of Emergency Fire Control for over three decades I personally am appalled at some of the initiatives which have been implemented

Day Two – 18th May

under the guise of IRMP. My own Brigade removed both pumps from virtually all of our two pump retained duty staff stations and replaced them with something called “XL cabs” – one pump per station. These pumps were capable of carrying nine crew. The difficulty we had was how we were going to mobilise them. Obviously, we asked the question. The response was as follows. Listen carefully because I’ll say this only once. Eight to nine crew counted as two appliances, seven to five crew counted as a rescue pump, four crew counted as a water ladder, three crew counted as supernumerary and could be mobilised as long as the OIC and the driver were different people, and simply two to nought was off the run.

The make ups could also be equally interesting, as the mobilising system couldn’t cope with this, so we had to remember the various scenarios. It all depended if the make up was for water, BA or staffing. So we could have a scenario when you had a make up requesting an extra five pumps, you’d actually get three pumps turning up because the staffing was deemed to be sufficient. However, if you make up for water, you’d have five pumps with up to 45 personnel. Good. There’s more.

We also have a station that shows three pumps on the mobilising system but in reality if you go into the appliance bay you only ever see two. As the staffing falls on the second pump, it changes gradually again, becoming a water tender and then a water carrier. Mercifully, our attendance times remain reasonably intact so far. However, we need to protect the national standards and to bring back the A, B, C and D risks and the rural risks attendance times and standards, and revise them if necessary but with caution. They stood us in good stead for many years.

Fire Control staff are left to balance the requirements of the Brigade’s new practices against the safety of crews and members of the public. After all, we’re not a banana republic used to frittering away the safety of crews and the community; we are a very rich nation. In throwing away the bath water, Brigades have failed to check if the baby is still in it. Conference, we need national standards of fire cover for a country that deserves the best Fire Service we can give. We support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the Amendment from –

BRO BOB WALKER (Devon & Somerset):

Hello! I know everyone wants to go but I want to point out something.

THE PRESIDENT:

Bob! Because I think the world of you, please continue.

BRO BOB WALKER (Devon & Somerset):

Thank you very much, President. Conference, Devon & Somerset are supporting the Resolution. I just had to point out that since the abolition of the standards, we in Devon & Somerset have introduced our own. We’ve got five standards. We’ve only actually met and achieved one of those: the RTC collision on a multi carriageway road is eight firefighters in 15 minutes. We’ve only achieved that 44% of the time and the target is 60%. From the time of call to a domestic fire is 10-13 minutes with nine firefighters and two pumps, but we’ve only achieved that 86% of the time. And 13 minutes or over it’s 12 firefighters whenever they can get there! Cheers! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Bob. You forgot to mention your mate’s birthday, didn’t you? I now put the Amendment from Grampian to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 32 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Conference adjourned

Day Three – 19th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you President. Good morning, Conference. Could you please turn to your Programme of business Page 15: Resolution 37, Equality and Diversity Strategy, LGBT has been withdrawn. Conference please note the flyer distributed yesterday for the Unite Against Fascism fringe meeting at 1 pm today states that the venue is Southport Convention Centre, Upper Bar. The Standing Orders Committee have been informed that the venue has been changed to Southport Convention Centre Theatre, which is situated through the doors on your left hand side. Changes to delegates: Control: delete Norman Rees, insert Caroline "I can boogie" Saunderson. Grampian: delete Alan Paterson, insert Alan Taylor. Nottingham: delete Phil Coates, insert Claire Hudson. Central: delete Gordon McQuade. Cambridgeshire: delete Kevin Napier, insert Adrian Clarke. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Speakers? No. Is that report agreed? *Agreed.*

Thank you. May I ask Conference to turn to Page 10 of their Programme of Business, Resolution 34 Hampshire has been remitted with the right to speak. Hampshire.

Resolution 34 – CO-RESPONDING

This Conference asks the Executive Council to progress talks with the National Joint Council on the issue of co-responding in the Fire and Rescue Service. It is recognised that co-responding is becoming more prevalent in Fire and Rescue Services up and down the country with variants and inconsistencies. A national approach would protect our members who wish to partake, and safeguards could be put in place to protect the current role maps.

Co-responding should remain outside of the current role maps, but a safe system of working should be agreed. These measures put in place to prevent Fire and Rescue Services from dividing our workforce. Currently our Control Room members are still required to mobilise to incidents and the lack of a nationally agreed position marginalises our brothers

and sisters. Our Retained Duty System staff are used to provide crew for co-responding schemes, thereby preventing them from having FBU protection and membership.

As a responsible trade union we cannot continue to ignore such a contentious issue without having meaningful dialogue and resolution that would ultimately protect and increase our membership.

HAMPSHIRE

BRO CONRAD JORDAN (Hampshire):

Morning, Conference, President, the co-responding policy is no longer fit for purpose and needs looking at. It's been around a while and co-responding has moved on. But in truth our Resolution is not about co-responding but rather about an opportunity to increase our membership of the Fire Brigades Union. Our Retained firefighters are primarily the target for Fire and Rescue Services to recruit for co-responding schemes, so therefore they are the most vulnerable to exploitation from the Fire and Rescue Services. In Hampshire we have over 150 RDS working in co-responding schemes. Potentially the income from them, if they were members, is around £18,000 a year.

That means that as a Union if we do not revisit this policy we are not supporting our Retained colleagues. In a time when we have won a great victory through an employment tribunal for part time workers being treated less favourably, what kind of message does that send to our employers?

Our Control staff have no choice but to support the mobilising systems within their Fire and Rescue Services which include co-responding. So technically they are working against our Union Policies. That cannot be right or fair to them. In a time when Fire and Rescue Services are paring us down to the bone, can we afford to turn away membership? We should be actively recruiting more of our Retained staff. We should be giving them safe schemes of working. We should be leading the way in good working practices. If we do nothing about this now, our Union will become smaller and smaller. Increased membership would give us greater income, greater strength, greater unity.

Currently the RFU welcome co-responders with open arms. If we do nothing to stem this flow, we allow the RFU to become stronger within the Fire Services and continue to undermine our good work as the one and only true Union that should be representing firefighters and control staff. Forget our old prejudice about co-responding, move forward and be part of the solution to safe working practices. Protect our role maps, protect our members, protect our future members. We remit this Resolution to Conference. Thank you. *Applause*

Day Three – 19th May

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, Conrad. I just wanted to say a couple of things on this Resolution. We thank Hampshire for remitting it. Conference will recall that three years ago Conference made its views very clear to me on the question of co-responding so we do have very clear policies. However, the Executive Council are happy to consider the concerns that are expressed by Hampshire and other Brigade Committees in relation to the issues that were raised around Control, and particularly about how different types of this sort of initiative are being introduced in various Fire and Rescue Authorities. So the EC will consider that.

Just one point to take slight issue with Conrad and that's on the possibility of the RFU growing. I see no possibility of that at all. If you look at the RFU's returns to the certification officer, they have lost swathes and swathes of members over the past four years, something like 25% of their members. I suspect that will continue. I don't think I need to tell anyone here, but in terms of their performance, they claim to be a union, I've sat at various meetings with these clowns and to be honest they say absolutely nothing on behalf of Retained firefighters. There's only one voice for Retained firefighters and that's the Fire Brigades Union. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you Conference. Could I ask the controllers of the lights stage front to dim them slightly just before Take That come on! I really do need to see how the delegates are voting if that's at all possible. Thank you. I now call Resolution 35, Privatisation within the UK Fire Service, London. The Executive Council support.

Resolution 35 – PRIVATISATION WITHIN THE UK FIRE SERVICE

This Conference condemns the disgraceful attempt by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority to replace striking operational firefighters with strike breakers employed through Asset Co.

This Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to set up a working party to research the issue of privatisation throughout the UK Fire Service with a view to presenting a report to the Executive Council.

The Executive Council will then make recommendations based on the content of the report to the next Conference.

LONDON

BRO BEN SPRUNG (London):

President Conference, good morning. Conference, London disputes of autumn 2010 was the first time since the days of insurance plaques that a private Fire Service answered emergency calls in this country. It's worth remembering that the London Fire Brigade paid an initial £9 million of taxpayers' money to AssetCo for this contract. In a message to potential investors on its website AssetCo is very clear, it aims to be able to provide a private Fire Service. The London dispute was no doubt seen by the likes of Coleman and AssetCo executives as an ideal opportunity to prove to the City and the Government that they were up to this task.

Without proper training and non-existent command and control, they rode the 27 fire engines stolen from Londoners. When faced with a fire they were severely lacking. In one case, residents watched in horror as a scab crew struggled for 20 minutes to get water to work, only for crews at the front and the back of the building both to manage to squirt water over the house without actually hitting it!

Since the dispute AssetCo have faced a winding up order in the High Court due to unpaid taxes, which it survived by the skin of its teeth due to a reissuing of shares. The share prices tumbled, losing 90% from its high. When I wrote this speech it was at 5p a share; it's now gone down to under 4p a share. It's pretty much a junk bond.

Conference, you would think I would therefore be able to report that we've seen the back of AssetCo and that London Fire Brigade has learned the lessons about what privatisation in a Service like ours does. Sadly, I cannot. London has just shortlisted three bidders as it plans to privatise training within the Brigade. According to a Brigade statement last week, all three bidders "their financial standing is said to be sound". One of these bidders, you guessed it, is AssetCo. What makes this more alarming is that in the shareholders note issued the day before the Brigade statement the company stated that they are in breach of their banking arrangements as they are still able to pay interest on loans but are unable to repay the capital. Indeed, their financial director resigned yesterday.

But it's not just about AssetCo. One of the other companies shortlisted is a company called Serco. What experience they have of training firefighters, I cannot tell you. They did previously win a contract with Norwich City Council to outsource their housing maintenance only to decide that it was not lucrative enough for them and walked away from the contract, leaving council residents in Norwich without any maintenance provision. What is there to stop them doing it in the Fire Service?

Day Three – 19th May

A lot has been made about fat cat chief officers' salaries in the last few years. Serco's CO is on £14,000 a week. If London manages to privatise training I would argue that this will have a bigger long term impact on London members than the recent shift dispute and perhaps even the Hutton proposals that we're going to debate later on. By their nature private companies' main objective is to make money for their shareholders. Quality of training in this case will always be secondary. They want to trample on our members' terms and conditions. The irony is that this doesn't even provide value for money for the taxpayer. While an initial capital outlay is not necessary, the 40 year contract ends up costing more in the long run than any in-house solution. So, worse terms and conditions and worse service for the public and more expensive? Who wins? It's clear, isn't it? We know. It's the retiring politicians and senior officers who just happen to land themselves a job with a company that they've awarded a contract to.

Privatisation that started under Thatcher was accelerated under New Labour, If this current Government get their way, the whole of the public sector will be privatised. Their friends in the City will demand it, they need to. Historically, they've made money from manufacturing. That's now gone and they've turned their attention to services. Where are services most ripe for the picking? In the public sector. They will aim to smash decent terms and conditions, erode pensions and make way for the fat cat pay and shareholders' bonuses.

So what are we going to do about it? First, we need to highlight the effects of privatisation of the Service. That's why we call upon you to pass this motion. Obviously that will not be enough. We need to develop a political campaign that can engage the public and start putting the Brigade under serious pressure to back away. However, if this is not enough we need to be prepared to take industrial action to defend our members' terms and conditions, to defend standards of training and to defend the idea that public services should be run for the public and not for private profit. Support the motion. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council support. I'll open it up for debate.

BRO TIM GERRARD (CSNC):

President, Conference, we are speaking in support of Resolution 35. Earlier this year London Fire Authority took the first steps to privatise its Control Room. It took the decision to consider a full range of options in terms of who provides the service. The Fire Authority, would play the lead commissioning role, while the day to day service delivery would be outsourced in order, as they

put it, to drive out further efficiencies. It talked of community organisations, mutual approaches, or the staff themselves seeking the responsibility.

The decision follows on from the Fire Futures report and the Government's response to it. Both stated that Fire and Rescue Authorities should be required to consider commissioning their Fire and Rescue Service from other providers. In doing so, it would break the link between commissioning and service delivery, something the Government is keen to actively encourage, and which is being put into practice by Tory run councils up and down the country.

But this is not the first attempt to privatise Control Rooms. The local authority controlled companies, set up to run the now defunct Regional Control Centres were in effect private limited companies. Their main purpose was to drive out further efficiencies by attacking pay and conditions of staff working in the RCCs. No doubt the same aim will apply to this new attempt at privatisation.

For all the talk of community organisations and staff taking over the running of the Control, this will be no attempt at a workers' cooperative or a way of providing a higher standard of service to the public. The public already get the highest standards of service, or they would do if this Government reversed the cuts that the UK Fire Service is now facing. The bottom line would be the bottom line. Whoever can offer to provide the service at the cheapest price will win the contract. We all know, from the history of privatisation, what that means. The danger of just such a step in a risk critical Service such as the Fire Service was only last week highlighted by the prosecution in the Potter's Bar rail crash.

Despite what some people may think, Emergency Fire Control Rooms are not call centres. I mean no disrespect to anyone who works in such an environment. You cannot outsource to anyone willing to provide the service at the cheapest cost to the Fire Authority without the threat of the standard and quality of the service being eroded.

Conference, it is clear that privatisation of the UK Fire Service is on the agenda of this Tory Government. That wasn't a slip of the tongue. It began with the debacle that is AssetCo and it seems set to continue with the London Fire Control Room. Where London lead others may follow. I urge you to support this motion. *Applause*

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

President, comrades, we are supporting Resolution 35. Clearly, privatisation is bad, but we would like to request clarification from the EC to ensure that the Working Group will look at all aspects of the Fire Service,

Day Three – 19th May

including the back room support staff such as workshops, training centre and control rooms. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, comrades. I'm happy to give Bedfordshire that assurance. I just wanted to make a few comments about this Resolution because I believe it is very important in terms of the direction that our Service is moving in under this Government in particular. AssetCo, just to remind people, now own and manage the fleets in London and in Lincolnshire. The AssetCo contracts there I think raise some fundamental problems about Fire Service policy and what sort of Fire Service we want and who's in control of it. What we've raised with Ministers is: how can you sensibly run the fleet for an emergency service like the Fire and Rescue Service when the ownership and management of that fleet is at the whims and the ups and downs of the stock market? It's absolute nonsense to rely on a firm which is now in major financial difficulties, where the liabilities of that firm may be taken over in the event of that firm going bankrupt.

By the way, I've never seen so much interest among FBU members in investor websites and so on. There are websites where AssetCo investors discuss what's going on in AssetCo. You will be pleased to know that the FBU are hate figures among AssetCo investors. They blame us for the fall in the share price. *Applause* We just got an email this morning that it's 3.55 pence now. You win some, you lose some, don't you!

There is another aspect of this that I think is also scandalous. If you look at AssetCo's web page it boasts about their various successes and that includes various contracts and business that they are trying to "grow" as they say in these circles, in the Middle East. One of the contracts they have is with the military in the United Arab Emirates. Of course, later today we'll be hearing about the Arab Spring, as it's been described, the movement for democracy across the Middle East. One of the countries where we have seen demonstrations and protests for democracy is in Bahrain. You will have seen, I'm sure, some of the repression, people being shot for demonstrating on the streets of Bahrain, and the support that has now been sent in to prop up the regime there, including from the United Arab Emirates, the same military organisation that AssetCo has contracts with. I think that's a sickening scandal for a humanitarian service to have contracts and links with an organisation that has contracts and links with a vicious and repressive military regime. Absolute scandal. We've written to David Cameron about that. This

Government that claims to support democracy all over the world just fobs it off as it's not that important and AssetCo aren't selling arms. I think that's an absolute scandal. It's a scandal that the chief fire officer in London and the Fire and Rescue Authority in London accept that sort of behaviour on behalf of somebody who they've got contracts with. This is a humanitarian service. It shows, once again comrades, that the only people who will stand up for decency in this Service is the Fire Brigades Union and those of us on the frontline who deliver that service.

We fully support the London Resolution. The EC will be commissioning work on privatisation and the threat of privatisation. I think our message to London, to Lincolnshire, to this Government is to get the spivs and pirates out of our Fire and Rescue Service. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 35 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried unanimously*.

I now call Emergency Resolution 4, Fire & Rescue Service Mutual from Cleveland.

Emergency Resolution 4 – FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MUTUAL

Conference is extremely concerned that Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) has established a Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) approved "trading arm." The stated purpose of this "trading arm" is to attract alternative funding in the guise of a profit making social enterprise company, whereby any operating profit would be reinvested in CFB. The stated long term aim of this project is that CFB will no longer remain a local authority Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) within the public sector, but would become a Social Enterprise Mutual.

Conference notes that the proposals as reported in the Guardian newspaper on the 19th of April 2011 do not at this time relate to core FRS activity, but are connected with other safety critical tasks currently undertaken by private contractors in the petrochemical and other similar industries.

Conference is alarmed that this move towards privatisation may at some time in the future also include those FRS functions which are a requirement of FRA's under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Furthermore we see this as confirmation that funding within the UK FRS is totally inadequate and therefore call on government to review funding arrangements for the whole of the UK FRS.

Day Three – 19th May

Conference will oppose any such scheme which involves the undertaking of any functions currently provided by a local authority FRS's and commits to campaigning both politically and industrially where necessary, in the event that such schemes are proposed which impact adversely on members' jobs and conditions.

CLEVELAND

BRO DAVE HOWE (Cleveland):

Morning Conference, President, I'm not going to stand up here and pretend that I'm an expert on this subject, because I'm not. Things have moved very quickly in Cleveland in the last few weeks. That's why we've brought this Resolution to Conference. We in Cleveland are extremely concerned by a proposal from our chief fire officer to transform Cleveland Fire Brigade into a social enterprise mutual company. We are concerned about what it means for our members' terms and conditions, we're concerned about what it means to us as a Union in Cleveland, and the wider FBU, we're concerned about the effect that it would have on the public of Cleveland and their safety with regard to what type of Fire Service would exist under this mutual company. Conference, we believe that the setting up of the trading arm, which is a separate company and has just been set up in the last few weeks with a view to eventually changing the full Brigade into a mutual, are the first and second steps to the privatisation of our Brigade.

Conference, we're not here to make profits, we're not here to tender for contracts. We should not be exposed to market forces and economic conditions. We're here to provide a service free of charge to everyone and we're rightly proud to do that. The UK Fire Service is woefully under funded, we all know that. We've spoken about it so many times this week. Going private certainly is not the answer to that. We as a Union have to take a clear and strong stance on this threat and this Emergency Resolution is the beginning of that stance. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

Conference, mutuals, done, experienced by two or more in relation to each other, company or business. A mutual exists with the purpose of raising funds from its members or customers which can then be used to provide common services to all members or society. I'll say to you, Conference, we've already got that. It's called a Local Authority Fire Service, and it's funded by its members, by you and me, via our taxes. So Matt

was absolutely right when he said yesterday that some of our chief fire officers have got to step up to the plate now and they've got to turn round and they've got to say: I'm sorry, I can't run this Fire Service with £2/3/4/5 million less every year. They're got to step up to the plate and do that for us, for their mutual, their Local Authority Fire Brigade.

The final thing that needs to be said on that article in the Guardian on 19 April, chief fire officers said it was time to end this old woe is me attitude and roll our sleeves up and do something about it; there is a real buzz around the organisation. I'll tell you, I think it's very easy to have a buzz when you're earning a six figure salary, very easy indeed. The only buzz I'm hearing around my organisation is firefighters telling me that they can't pay their mortgage or their utility bills or they can't put clothes on their children's backs because they haven't had a pay rise for two years. That's the only buzz I hear. So support this Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I open that up for debate. The Executive Council support. I will put Emergency Resolution 4 from Cleveland to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Paragraph B17, Dave Green.

BRO DAVE GREEN (National Officer):

Thank you, President. I think that it's appropriate to speak on a Paragraph which in five paragraphs says an awful lot. It refers to the demise of the Fire Control Project. I think it's important to place on record before Conference the thanks of the Executive Council for the work done by officials, both in Regions and also in the CSNC. We place on record formally the thanks to people who worked on GRAG, but particularly I have to say, officials past and present of CSNC for the work that they did over a period of seven years. Seven years they were fighting against this, the longest dispute that the Fire Brigades Union has ever known. It came to a successful conclusion. I think it's really important that we recognise that. I really am pleased that I'm able to say that from the rostrum.

We recognise that there are further battles ahead. Sometimes it's difficult to say that's great, we'll move on from that, but on the other hand, we have further battles. I think it's important that we place on record today our thanks to everybody involved in that. Well done. *Applause*

BRO TIM GERRARD (CSNC):

President, Conference, we won! *Applause* This is the only place we're allowed to say it. After seven long, hard

Day Three – 19th May

years of the campaign, the longest campaign this Union has seen in its 90 years, we won. We told them it wouldn't work, we told them it wasn't the way forward, and we told them it would not give a better service. The CSNC was at the forefront of this campaign, fighting in every corner for the rights of our Control Staff and to preserve our Grey Book terms and conditions.

This could not have been achieved without the stalwart efforts and help we received from various areas: the Regional officials, especially those in the first tranche, who I'm sure would agree that this fight took a massive amount of their time; our Parliamentary Group, keeping Fire Control on the agenda in Parliament; Head Office, and various members of staff there; Thompsons solicitors, particularly Richard Arthur and his invaluable help with TUPE; also Brigade Officials and our members, without whom we may not be here today, so thank you.

Although we may have won the battle, the war is just beginning. We may have won the battle, but in this Region and the Northwest we might have to fight that battle all over again, because Regional Control is still on the agenda in this Region. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 24, Future of Fire Service Emergency Controls, Control Staff National Committee.

Resolution 24 – FUTURE OF FIRE SERVICE EMERGENCY CONTROLS

Conference is alarmed at recent developments regarding the future of the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK and the potential impact on Emergency Fire Controls.

Regardless of any future changes to the Fire and Rescue Service, Conference demands that there should be no compulsory redundancies and that all Fire Control employees currently on Grey Book Conditions of Service remain so.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO TIM GERRARD (CSNC):

You'll be getting sick of the sight of me, but this is the last one, I assure you. President, Conference, last year the Government announced the Fire Futures project to examine the future direction of the Fire Service. The subsequent report and the Government's response proposed wide ranging change as to how the Fire Service should be delivered. Last December the Government also finally announced that the Fire Control project was to be cancelled, and that it would issue a consultation document on the future of Fire Service

Control Rooms. Both the Fire Futures and the consultation document had the potential for far reaching and negative effect on Fire Control Rooms and the provision of Fire Control Services, and will impact greatly on control staff. That impact is already being seen. The Fire Futures report proposed flexible staffing, shared services, and voluntary amalgamations. But if operational crews are the frontline, then it can be said with some justification that control staff are the frontline of the frontline. It's an often repeated mantra that control staff are the public's first point of contact with the Fire Service. But what is not often understood by chief fire officers and local councillors when they look at slashing control room jobs is the full range of the work undertaken by Control Staff. In short, no-one gets anything or goes anywhere without us.

While the news of our Fire Control was long awaited and welcomed by all FBU members, it served as a green light for Fire Services up and down the country to review their control room staffing levels and propose drastic cuts, shift changes and in some cases self rostering. Using the comprehensive spending review as both the justification and the spur, and in advance of the results of the government's consultation document, chief fire officers and their political masters see control rooms as an easy target, one that is, as it were, hidden from the public.

In both Nottinghamshire and Hampshire, control operators were issued with at risk notices, and others may follow. These are difficult times for Control Staff. In fact, they have been for the last seven years. The threat of redundancy has been hanging over us since Fire Control was first suggested. But what we should make clear to our employers is that whatever the future holds, that future does not include compulsory redundancy.

However, the threat of redundancy is not the only threat that Control Staff may face. Like our jobs, our conditions of service may also be under threat. The establishment of local authority controlled companies to run the proposed regional control centres had the purpose of taking Control Staff out of the Grey Book Conditions of Service and undermining the pay, conditions and, we believe ultimately, the pensions of Control Staff. It also aimed at destroying the effectiveness of this Union by splitting the Control Staff away from its Operational and Officer Members and Retained, so that we could no longer support each other should those conditions of service need defending.

It is possible that our employers may attempt to do so again. The Fire Futures document states that the National Joint Council should adopt a framework approach to conditions that can be adapted to fit the needs of local IRMP and industrial relations. There may come another time in the near future when our

Day Three – 19th May

employers will try to take Control Staff from underneath the umbrella of the Grey Book. Any such attempt must be vigorously resisted. They don't belong to us, we are just their custodians. They belong both to the Union members who fought more than 30 years ago to get them in the first place, and future Control Staff who should get the opportunity of the benefits they afford us now. Conference, support this Resolution. I move.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Do we have a seconder for that?

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Morning comrades. Since the cancellation of Regional Control Rooms Hampshire management have turned their attention to reducing the numbers of its Control Room Staff under the guise of the spending review and their own staff review. Around 30 Control Room Firefighters have received at risk from redundancy notices. Despite the best efforts of Hampshire officials, our senior management seem hell bent on going ahead with plans to make redundant Control Firefighters. Collective consultation has begun and is ongoing. Despite assurances that management will attempt to avoid compulsory redundancy, this option remains a very real threat.

Brigade officials continually remind management that these job losses are unnecessary, ill thought out, and dangerous to both firefighters and the public, but it appears to us that management have identified our Control Room Firefighters as an easy target. They have already removed our Control Firefighters from out of the Grey Book arena. We must not allow them to be an easy target. All Fire Brigades Union members must stand fully in support of our Control Firefighters. Should one of them be made redundant we have warned our management of the consequences. They must be in no doubt not only of Hampshire's resolve, but of the national support that we shall receive from the Fire Brigades Union. Comrades, please support unanimously. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I open that up for debate. The Executive Council support. Yes.

BRO IAN YOUNG (Nottinghamshire):

Morning Conference. To borrow a phrase from the Executive Council, Notts give qualified support to the motion. I'm here to explain why it's qualified. Historically Notts moved the original EC Resolution resulting in the FBU policy regarding the Recall of Conference in the

event of any compulsory redundancies within the Fire Service, and of course we stand by those principles and by that Resolution. However, in recent months, as you've already heard, as a result of the collapse of the RCC project, Notts management could not wait to declare compulsory redundancies amongst our Fire Control Staff. This was announced on 23 December 2010, and the redundancies were to be implemented by 31 March 2011. Immediately, the Notts officials began the task of fighting compulsory redundancies and the following three to four months were without doubt the most difficult and stressful that any of our Nottinghamshire officials have dealt with. When you consider what we've gone through over the last few years, 90 days notice of 90 days notice of termination of everyone's contracts, difficulties regarding shift change and the battles we've had with co-responding down to the High Court in London, that will give you some idea of just how difficult the redundancy process was within Notts. I'm not ashamed to say certainly that our Brigade Secretary who is a strapping fellow, on many occasions was reduced to tears over this issue. It's been very, very emotional.

In Notts, however, we received 100% support from all of our branches who were willing to give support up to and including strike action in support of control colleagues and in support of the Notts officials. The support within Notts and the support of the wider Union, yourselves, through this policy, and the EC, was absolutely invaluable to us. Indeed, Andy Dark was despatched and he spent an afternoon explaining to our chief the exact ramifications of compulsory redundancy; it was very helpful.

It enabled us to press the Notts management into a position whereby ultimately we were able to secure a conclusion to the issue. We ensured that there were no enforced compulsory redundancies. You'll notice I used the phrase "we secured a conclusion". It wasn't a satisfactory conclusion and it's the most hollow victory I think we've ever had.

Why the qualification? It's simply this: that what we ended up accepting was that in some cases some of our members were willing and wished to leave the Service. They've had years and years of going through the RCC project and for want of a better phrase they were battle weary; they were happy to go. It was in their interests that they went. But it wasn't in their interests to take voluntary redundancy; it was in their interests to take compulsory redundancy and it had legal ramifications.

In another case, we were able to secure the possibility of alternative employment within the Brigade for one of our members for personal reasons who basically failed to engage in any process that we had. It meant that we

Day Three – 19th May

had the possibility of asking the EC to invoke National Policy when in actual fact the person concerned was not helping us and working with us or the management. It put the EC in a very awkward position.

To summarise, we still accept and stand by the principle of defending compulsory redundancy where this is not in line with the wishes of those concerned. However, in our experience it may be necessary to ensure full communication and agreement of the relevant individuals to ensure the individual's wishes are met, but also to ensure that the EC and the wider Union are not placed in a position of implementing National Policy when in actual fact it's unnecessary and untenable. Thank you. *Applause*

SIS ALI BURROWS (LGBT):

President, Conference, speaking in support of our CSNC colleagues. The National LGBT Committee would urge you to support this Resolution. Speaking personally as a member of Hampshire Control, along with 31 other colleagues having been given our risk of redundancy letters, this is my risk of redundancy letter right here, we know only too well that this is a very real and current threat to your colleagues, your Grey Book colleagues, who are at immediate risk of losing jobs, your control rooms are at immediate risk of being merged, undermined and understaffed, therefore putting your safety and the public's safety at immediate risk. Please support this Resolution and fight to keep your Fire Controls local and your colleagues' conditions of service secure. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I just wanted to make a couple of comments on the Nottinghamshire issue that Ian raised. We welcome the comments and the frank explanation of the difficulties we recently had in Nottinghamshire. I want to congratulate the officials and the Brigade Committee for the hard work that they put in dealing with a very difficult situation. What it highlighted is that there are some difficulties with the precise implementation of redundancies, and on individuals' requirements and wishes when faced with those circumstances. So the Executive Council and Notts Brigade Committee fully support and intend to implement the National Policy. What we faced and had to navigate around was the precise details. To be honest, it was uncharted territory for us. It's issues we've not had to deal with before. As explained, eventually, as Ian explained, it came to a satisfactory conclusion, although something of a hollow victory, that satisfied those members involved.

So the Executive Council will keep that issue under review. We are aware there are now a number of Fire Authorities who are considering similar steps, either in relation to control members or in relation to other members as well. So it's a matter which Conference is well aware of, the threats in relation to job losses and redundancies and the implications of the Union's previously stated and clarified two years ago policy on compulsory redundancies.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 24 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried unanimously*.

I now call Resolution 25, Mergers/Outsourcing of Fire Control Functions, by Control Staff National Committee. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 25 – MERGERS/ OUTSOURCING OF FIRE CONTROL FUNCTIONS

Emergency Fire Control Staff perform a vital role and attempts to outsource/merge Fire Controls would be to the detriment of public and firefighter safety.

Conference re-iterates its opposition to the merging of any Fire Controls. The current provision of Fire Control must remain in the respective Fire and Rescue Service.

We therefore call upon the Executive Council to:

- ***Oppose the merger of any Emergency Fire Control Room;***
- ***Widen the existing campaign against Regional Control Rooms to include outsourcing/mergers of Emergency Fire Control Functions;***
- ***Mount an immediate campaign against such mergers up to and including a ballot for industrial action.***

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

BRO PAUL PRYCE (CSNC):

President, Conference, today I'm speaking on the new threats that once again are being faced by our Fire Control Members in England. On 20 December 2010 after nearly seven years of tireless work by union officials and our members I was pleased to finally hear that long awaited and long overdue statement from the English Fire Minister stating that the Regional Control Project was now scrapped. I've got to say that I was involved with some of the work with EADs and I worked with some of the CLG secondees from Fire Brigades. I have to give them some support and praise because they challenged all the rubbish that was coming out of EADs time and time again.

Day Three – 19th May

I got involved with that process because rather than standing outside the building throwing stones at the windows, I felt it was better to be inside, ripping out the power supplies and flooding the basements. It seemed to have an effect. But let's be very clear. We've won the battle but we have not won the war. Unfortunately, seven years of little or no investment in Fire Control Rooms find our Fire Control operators using computerised mobilising systems that need upgrading and replacing, and do very little to support them in the job that they're trying to do.

When the Fire and Rescue Service are dealing with cuts something has to give. Unfortunately, we seem to be the bit that's going to give. Once again, some chief fire officers and Fire Authorities, instead of asking for investment in the Fire Control Rooms are now looking to outsource their fire control functions to other Brigades. We're very well aware of some of the mergers and effects that that's having. In the next few months Fire Control operators on the Isle of Wight are being outsourced to Surrey Fire Control; Suffolk Control Staff have been moved and the work outsourced to Cambridge Fire Control; Hampshire Control Staff have been issued with at risk notices; Devon & Somerset's two Control Rooms look likely to be merged in the near future. I call upon the Executive Council to oppose the merger of any Fire Control Rooms if it threatens members' jobs and puts firefighter safety and the community in which they serve at risk. I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO ANDY VINGOE (Suffolk):

President, Conference, 20 December 2010 Suffolk County Council's scrutiny committee sat at 10 o'clock in the morning after the original decision to go into partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Service was called into question. The first question asked by a Labour councillor was whether or not the chief of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service could give any further information about the future of Regional Control, as this partnership was intended to be a temporary measure to fill any gap between Suffolk Fire Control having to move off its present site due to it being sold, and cut over to Regional Control. The answer was no, despite him having been called to CLG the week before to be told: we have reason to believe that Fire Control was over.

As expected, the meeting concluded with the original decision being ratified and the section 16 agreement to combine Suffolk and Cambridge and Peterborough Control Function for an interim period was given the go

ahead. Within minutes of me leaving that meeting the phone started rattling in my pocket and barely stopped for the rest of the day, as everybody was congratulating everybody else on the final demise of the Regional Control project, and quite rightly so for it was a huge achievement.

Despite small glimmers of hope offered by CLG by withdrawing their offer to pay any redundancy due to all funding of Regional Control being removed, the project moves on at a pace which, out of necessity, is probably too fast. We're now just beginning to consult on TUPE and getting the best deal we can for our Control Room members, many of whom are facing compulsory redundancy as soon as October this year. So a difficult decision for the FBU under our present policy.

At this point I must thank Adrian Clarke, our Regional Secretary, and Richard Arthur from Thompsons solicitors for their ongoing help. Alongside this, we're wondering how setting up a control room running two different sets of procedures, with two different sets of PDAs, two different radio schemes, and coping with over 2,000 calls a month on average with only five staff in the room can be seen as increasing resilience. However, the Local Government Association document entitled "Fire & Rescue Services – Going That Extra Mile" that is exactly how this venture is being described. It is being held up as an example to other Services around the country and is reported to be "entirely complementary with the future vision of fire control held by CLG".

This, or something very similar, will be coming to a Brigade near you very soon. Indeed, we are told that the Suffolk/Cambridgeshire partnership is already in talks with Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service with a view to bringing them into the partnership. In my view, this is a national problem which is just as ill conceived and burdened with risk as the national fire control project was. I therefore ask you to support the Resolution, not just by raising your hands here, but also in actions back in your Brigades. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'll open that up for debate.

SIS HELEN DICKINSON (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, when the Government at long last realised that their ridiculous, dangerous and criminally expensive Regional Control project was doomed, we breathed a big sigh of relief, after we did a bit of shrieking first though! That big black cloud that had been hanging over us was gone. Everything was going to be all right. Wrong! Because instead of learning the lessons of RCC, that bigger isn't better and that local staff who know their patch so that even when the GIS

Day Three – 19th May

maps fail or the caller is on a mobile and has no idea where they are, we're still not appreciated. Now Brigades are putting their Control Staff under new stress with threats to their jobs and talks of mergers. In Devon & Somerset, although we are one big happy Brigade, we still have two Controls. We will find out very soon what our future is going to be, but it does seem that the new combined Control will not be in the big, empty, no expense spared RCC building, thankfully. That was one of the ideas. Whether it is in Devon or Somerset, obviously one set of staff is going to be happy and the other not so happy. We don't know the details of staff numbers yet. More worry after all the years we've just been through. Leave us alone and let us get on with the jobs we're good at. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

BRO ADRIAN CLARKE (Cambridgeshire):

President, Conference, speaking at Conference for the first time in a long time, so don't all groan at once. President, I want to start by issuing my thanks. I want to issue my thanks to the men and women of the control room who stood resolute behind the Fire Brigades Union, they maintained their faith in the Fire Brigades Union for seven years, they knew we would continue the fight for them. We did; they didn't leave our Union and they're still members of this Union and they still deserve our full support. *Applause*

Conference, there's a simple reason that you've got to listen to me today. I've got to substitute for the Brigade Secretary of Cambridgeshire. Kevin's got a lot of urgent business now to deal with because yesterday Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service held a press conference while we were here, and part of the detail of releasing that was to release the papers for next week's Fire Authority meeting.

One of them is this paper here. It's the combined control project with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, proposed early transfer of undertakings. What it says in the purpose is it's proposed to transfer the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Control Function to staff at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service from midnight on 31 July this year! It's only just around the corner. It says that this proposed date should provide sufficient time for the consultation on potential redundancy, early retirement and employment opportunities and selection to be completed prior to the proposed cut over date of 25 October.

What we can tell you, in both of those Brigades, they're both looking at wide ranging cuts. There is no employment opportunities. All they're doing is to look to cut every part of the Service. So the reality is redundancies and compulsory redundancies will be facing us very shortly.

As part of their background in the paper they state: Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service must relocate its Fire Control from its existing site in the Colchester Road site in Ipswich. They're in the process of selling the site off, originally in anticipation of relocating to the Regional Control Centre at Waterbeach. What a shame! We mucked their plans up!

The reality is, and the message that I send out to the management of Suffolk, that's what happens when you involve yourselves in PFI plans, and that's what happens when you decide to sell off fire stations as part of PFI plans!

Suffolk and Cambridgeshire say they both acknowledge that this collaboration will not result in any increased risk to either the community or the Fire and Rescue Service. They say there will be no impact on the number of appliances or attendance standards to incidents. They're busily changing their attendance standards to make them all fit together. The Fire Brigades Union has made it very, very clear to both of these authorities that we believe this will be detrimental to both public and firefighter safety.

They say there will be a requirement for Cambridgeshire Fire Control operators to develop new ways of working, and for Suffolk crews to adopt new call signs. For example, Suffolk County consists of areas of coastline, and the crews are trained in offshore ship firefighting. This will require Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Control operators to learn new mobilising standards and radio procedures and terminology. Again, more and more risk to our members. I'll be very brief.

THE PRESIDENT:

You're about a minute over, comrade. I really ask you to wind up.

BRO ADRIAN CLARKE (Cambridgeshire):

OK. Quite simply, we stood behind our Control Room operators for seven years over the RCC. Cambridgeshire and Suffolk will stand behind our Control Room operators once again. I ask you all to support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I call Dave Green to give the Executive Council qualification.

BRO DAVE GREEN (National Officer):

Thank you, Adrian. I will be a bit briefer than that. It was just basically the last bullet point about mounting an immediate campaign against such mergers up to and including a ballot for industrial action. Clearly such a

Day Three – 19th May

ballot would have to include all members of the Brigade concerned and not just the control members. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 25 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Can I ask Conference to turn to Page 11 of the Programme of Business. Section D Pensions, Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks President. Last year can only be described really as quite a busy year. I'm not going to touch on the Hutton proposals or the increase in contributions because Matt will be covering that when he moves the EC Resolution. I'll give an update on other issues.

The RDS pension, we all know it's been a long drawn out process. The current position is that the framework for the modified scheme is with CLG's legal team. When we get a chance to see this – we're expecting to see it mid-June – we'll be able to comment on it before it goes out for statutory consultation. The EC have already recommended this position and members will get an option to give their views on it at that point.

The Fairer Commutation campaign, that's been ongoing as well. It's still with the Pension Ombudsman. We've highlighted six test cases. The Pension Ombudsman is investigating the Government Actuaries Department for potential maladministration. As soon as we get an update on that a circular will be coming round.

You may be aware that the FBU has launched a legal challenge on the indexation, the change from RPI to CPI, along with five other unions. The list of interested unions is growing as we speak. There's various areas for this challenge ranging from the legitimate expectations of what members thought they were going to get, to members who actually bought in additional pension when it was based on RPI rather than CPI.

Age discrimination, I've still got questions about age discrimination, what's happening next with that. It's quite simple. All the controversial issues have been discussed out. It's now with CLG's solicitors who are looking at an amendment to rule G2. As soon as that's been amended then they can either pay back the monies or they can give the breaking contributions for the affected periods.

We've had a course this year for officials who deal with members' medical issues. It's an update really on the new processes. That went really well and I think it was important that we stressed the difference between non

medical appeals and medical appeals, and also the fact that we need to get our officials involved very early in this process to avoid problems at a later date.

Recent changes to the FPS commutation rates took me by surprise and I think they took a few other people by surprise. This was down to the change from CPI to RPI, and also the change to the discount rates. What we've tried to do all year is try to communicate the changes to all three schemes in simple terms to members. We have worked with other unions. A good example of this is where we've put out the LGPS leaflets, the myth busting leaflets, and the ten reasons why it's not a gold plated scheme.

We're dealing with issues around pensionable pay which is going to be quite a big issue, and the knock on effects of that if we don't get that right are quite dramatic. I know we've got some testing times ahead which Matt is going to cover when he moves the EC Resolution, but I've got to say that the arguments we put into Hutton through the round table and through the submissions were right.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Emergency Resolution 1, Executive Council; Emergency Resolution 2, London; Emergency Resolution 3, Cambridgeshire in the same debate. Emergency Resolution 2 stands in opposition to Emergency Resolution 1 and Emergency Resolution 3. Emergency Resolution 1 and Emergency Resolution 3 can both carry. I now call Emergency Resolution 1.

BRO PETE GREEVES (Norfolk):

President, I'd just like some clarification on why the London Resolution can't run in conjunction with either of the other two Emergency Resolutions.

THE PRESIDENT:

The reason London's Emergency Resolution stands alone is because it calls for immediate ballot for strike action whereas the Executive Council's and Cambridgeshire's both wish to plan and prepare for campaigns leading up to strike action. That's the clarification.

BRO PETE GREEVES (Norfolk):

Challenge.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

Conference, the Chair has been challenged. No debate will now take place. I remind you of Standing Order 15 which states that two-thirds of the voting members of

Day Three – 19th May

Conference are required to carry a challenge to the Chair. That is 146 delegates. I now put that challenge to the vote. All those in favour of the challenge please show by hand. Conference, that fails miserably.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Emergency Resolution 1 moved by the Executive Council and seconded by Lancashire. General Secretary.

Emergency Resolution 1 – ATTACKS ON FIRE SERVICE PENSIONS

On 10th March 2011 the final report of the Independent Public Service Pensions (Hutton) Commission was released. This report contained 27 recommendations that were accepted as a basis for consultation by Government in the Budget speech delivered on 23rd March 2011.

The key recommendations included introducing a new structure for pensions schemes by 2015 with a move to career average schemes from final salary schemes, an increase in the normal retirement age in line with the state pension age with an exception in the case of the uniformed services where it will be set at age 60, tiered contributions for higher earners and a fixed cost ceiling to minimise the cost risk to taxpayers.

These proposals follow on from an earlier decision by the Westminster government to increase employee contribution rates in public service pensions by around 3% across the range.

Conference recognises that these proposals constitute a sustained attack on public service pensions and reiterates its opposition to any detrimental changes to pension schemes within the Fire and Rescue Service.

The FBU has raised concerns about the proposals with Ministers, at the Firefighters Pension Committee and with officials of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The union will be fully involved in these talks and will continue to protect the pension provision of FBU members and will continue to challenge the claim that public sector pensions are unaffordable and unsustainable.

Conference agrees to continue to campaign against any detrimental changes to the fire service pension schemes (FPS; NFPS; LGPS) by any means required. This will involve:

- *Encouraging members to participate in the members' survey launched this week;*

- *Ensuring that every branch meets to discuss and vote on the model resolution circulated by the Executive Council;*
- *Continuing to lobby politicians at national and local level.*

Conference is committed to seeking genuine dialogue and negotiations with government. FBU members will always be extremely reluctant to take any form of industrial action. However, we cannot allow our pension schemes to be dismantled and therefore if such negotiations and campaigning are not successful, Conference recommends that members prepare for national strike action. As agreed at conference 2010 this will include coordinating action with other unions where possible and appropriate. Conference instructs the Executive Council to begin to make preparations for this following annual conference.

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
SECONDED LANCASHIRE**

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrade President, comrades, this is probably the central issue that our members on our branches are discussing regularly, and their most immediate cause of concern about the future of their conditions of service within the Fire and Rescue Service. It's been a matter that's been debated for many years, the question of the future of our pensions. 15 years ago or so you will recall the talk and the articles about the so-called pensions time bomb. During the last government it was about so-called reform, and it was about attacking ill health retirement rights, and about raising the retirement age. You recall 2005 and 2006 we campaigned against the last government. We recalled conference and we came very close to taking strike action. The government backtracked somewhat, but we did end up with a new scheme, a two tier pension scheme which none of us support and none of us wanted. That new firefighter pension scheme includes, for example, retirement at 60 as the norm. I just want to be clear to Conference, we opposed it then, we still oppose it. There is no logic to support retirement at 60 in the NFPS, there is no evidence to support it. We are clear, for our members who are in the NFPS, that we will continue to campaign for a reduction in the retirement age in relation to NFPS members.

We had quite a lot of debate yesterday Conference, about the economic crisis following 2008 and the austerity measures and the attacks on public services and those who work within them. This debate fits very much into that. I noticed very rapidly after the banking crisis that in sections of the media there was almost an immediate launch of a campaign raising the question of public sector pensions, these so-called copper

Day Three – 19th May

bottomed, gold plated, pensions that working people who happen to work in public services supposedly enjoy. It's been a sustained campaign, so that after the general election very quickly the new government moved on to the next stage of the attack on pension rights for those who work in public services. They appointed the so-called Independent Public Service Pensions Commission. Supposedly independent. You'd think if it was independent you'd wait until the outcome of such a commission before you reach decisions on what you were going to do about pensions. As the Resolution said, that commission reported in March 2011, yet in the comprehensive spending review October 2010, while the commission was still supposedly considering its independent thoughts, the Government announced that those of us who work in public services will have our contributions increased by an average of 3%.

We need to be absolutely clear what that contribution rate is about. The debate in pensions is all about life expectancy supposedly. Well, the contribution increase announced by George Osborne has got nothing to do with pensions, it is about deficit reduction. He has stated he wants to raise £2.8 billion off the backs of people who work in public services by increasing their pension contributions, £2.8 billion, nothing to do with your pensions, simply about paying off the debts incurred by the bankers back in 2008, attacks on people who happen to work in the public services. They call it a pension contribution, I call it something else. It is just daylight robbery. This time the robbers come in ministerial cars. Our members are facing robbery in terms of the contributions increase.

We've got an attack on another front which Sean mentioned: the shift from RPI to CPI. How our pensions are uprated. As we discussed in relation to pay, if you don't get an increase in pay and prices go up, you've had a pay cut. That's the impact of the pay freeze that this Government is attempting to impose on public sector workers. The same thing applies to pensions. If your pensions aren't increased then you've had a cut in the value of your pension. So the question of how pensions are increased is very important. As you well know in this hall, CPI tends to be lower than RPI, and it's estimated that over 20 years the value of pensions can be reduced by something like 15%, again, robbery of our pensioners, robbery of people on State pensions, robbery of anyone in a public sector pension scheme.

So their plans are to increase those contribution rates, to shift the uprating mechanism from RPI to CPI. We've made very clear to members that we will challenge this on every possible front: legal, political and industrial (which we will come to in a moment). But on a legal matter first, as our members would expect, we have

looked at every possibility of how to challenge the attacks on pensions and whether there are legal avenues, particularly in relation to the uprating mechanism between RPI and CPI. I have to say at first call it was looking quite difficult to identify a challenge. In meetings with other unions in the TUC, there wasn't great optimism. But I'm very pleased that we in the FBU are part of a group of four unions who have, we believe now, found a strong legal challenge on the question of the change in the uprating mechanism, and that legal case is launched and we're very pleased to be part of the forefront of that legal challenge as well.

Just so Conference is clear what the Government's plans are, the Government's plans are to increase the contribution rates for that three year period. Their plan then is to close down all public sector schemes and push everybody on to new schemes, new schemes which we don't yet know the details of. But we do know the broad outline, and that's outlined in the Hutton review. It's about working longer, paying more and getting less at the end of it. They say it's about reducing the costs, the burden to the taxpayer, supposedly, of public sector pensions. Yet the evidence clearly shows that the proportion of GDP going to pay public sector pensions is estimated to fall in the future. So the problem, if it existed in the first place, has already been solved.

They say it's about increasing life expectancy, as though working people are supposed to apologise for not dying soon enough. That's what we get off this Government. But in any case, as we made the case to Hutton, in the Fire and Rescue Service, life expectancy is not the only issue when it comes to pensions. A key aspect in relation to our Service and our profession is the ability to do the job. There is no evidence that firefighters will be able to perform operational duties at the age of 60 and beyond. This issue came up in relation to another legal case and campaign that we ran some years ago, the so-called London Three case. Three members who ended up having their pensions taken off them because of the ill health definitions but where the employer refused to give them a job as well.

When we discussed the whole question of retirement age with CLG officials, what they say is people who, as they get older have physical problems, can be redeployed into other roles. We've said: where are these other roles? Even the employers have been forced to say: there are no other roles to redeploy people into. So it's a complete con trick, it's a complete lie. So the issue of retirement age is obviously fundamental to this debate, and what we would face if they get away with this in due course is the London Three problem on a mass scale – hundreds, thousands of firefighters being unable to do their job and effectively being dismissed on capability grounds.

Day Three – 19th May

The Government talk about doing this in the interests of the people, in the public interest, the taxpayer interest and so on. They talk about democracy. Let's ask the public what sort of Fire Service they want. Do they want firefighters, as John McDonnell said the other day, at the age of 60 and above coming out to try to put out fires and rescue people from buildings?

They talk about the contributions increase and what is glossed over by Ministers, but what is raised on every branch I attend and every members' meeting that we've had recently, is that our members are already paying very high levels of contribution. The majority of our members are still paying 11% pension contributions. The idea that these are some sort of gift from our employer, or some sort of gift from the Government to firefighters or other people who work in the public sector is a complete lie. We pay our share of our pension contributions already, and we already pay more than enough, thank you very much.

So the question that members ask – and I've done lots of meetings on pensions over the last few months – is how the hell is this lawful even? How the hell is this fair? I joined the Fire Service and I was told: that's what your pension is. You pay this and at the end of the time you will get this as your pension. Then this lot come along and say: sorry, boys and girls, we may have told you that when you joined but we're now ripping up that contract effectively, and what you will get is now something completely different. The tragedy and the disgrace is that yes, unfortunately it does appear that it is lawful to do that, to rob from working people in that way.

That means that we have to fight and campaign on the issue, and we have to take them on on the issue. The Union has been campaigning for some time. We've challenged Hutton, as Sean said, face to face and in writing, and you'll be familiar with the reports that we submitted to the commission. This week we launch a new member survey. One of the key debates with the Government is about the potential for members in our schemes, the FPS, the NFPS and the Local Government Pension Scheme, the possibility of members opting out as a result of a pension contribution increase. That is, the money that the Government claims it wants to raise being reduced because of individuals choosing not to pay that increased contribution. That's an important debate, and it's a question that will be asked on that survey.

Members have been informed this week at home of that survey and I'm sure that delegates will ensure, back on your Brigade Committees, that you encourage members to participate in that important survey which is an important aspect of our campaigning.

The EC has issued a Model Resolution. That's out on branches. It outlines I think very clearly the challenges

that we're facing, on pensions in particular but on other issues as well. I think it touches on many of the debates that we've had over the past few days here at Conference. It's about political campaigning. It's about preparing for national strike action. We're absolutely clear in the Executive Council Resolution: it's national strike action. I think as I said yesterday, we need to stop using this phrase "up to and including". We're talking about national strike action. There's no getting away from it. If it's this serious, and it is, then the only answer will be national strike action. *Applause*

It talks about coordinating that action with colleagues in other unions. We raised that point at Conference last year in the immediate aftermath of the general election, that yes, we are likely to consider national strike action. And if we do so, and we're facing similar attacks to brothers and sisters in other trade unions, then we will work with them and join with them to coordinate that action as appropriate.

We've played a key role, for example, in pushing the TUC to convene a meeting of General Secretaries to discuss the industrial challenges that we all face. We've worked very closely through our brothers and sisters in the Trade Union Coordinating Group to discuss the attacks on public services, the cuts, and in particular the attacks on pensions and how we can support each other. You will be aware that some unions already are now planning for industrial action on 30 June. We discuss very closely and continue to discuss very closely with those comrades in those organisations.

We've held open meetings for members in a number of Regions already, to gauge members' views, concerns, and willingness to get involved in that campaign and take action. So I'm confident that when that work is done our members will rise to that challenge. I mentioned yesterday the article in one of our publications that Brother Ronnie Scott wrote about 1977. I discussed it last night with Ronnie. The view of people then was yes, this is a grim decision, but it's also unfortunately unavoidable because of the situation we've been put in. I think that grim determination is out there on our branches today about a determination not to be robbed by this Government, a determination not to see the gains of the past taken away, a determination not to see our living standards destroyed, a determination not to allow our pensions to be dismantled and destroyed.

This Government is trying to drive a nasty wedge between people who work in the public sector and those who work in the private sector. It's one that I think people will reject. I say this about private sector pension schemes, there are some people who've got very good pension schemes in the private sector. It's the bosses, the people in the board rooms. They've got very

Day Three – 19th May

generous pension schemes. Where pension schemes have been destroyed – and it's a national disgrace – it's by companies in the private sector for their workers. That's a scandal. What we say to those people working in the public sector is yes, we support people getting organised, we support people fighting for decent pensions whether they're in the public sector or in the private sector. We stand together, because we reject the idea of this race to the bottom where what they're saying to us is people in the private sector have had their pensions taken off them, so it's only fair, isn't it, that we come and take them off you as well. That's a disgraceful argument to put forward and we reject it entirely.

Yes, we are prepared to fight. I'll be clear again. We are prepared to take national strike action. That is what this campaign now moves on to, to prepare our members, prepare our structures for that fight that is coming. We stand on the shoulders of previous generations, people who fought and campaigned for everything that we've got, the generation who fought in the spit and polish strikes, the generation who fought in 1977. Nothing ever has been given to us, as working people as a whole, or in the Fire and Rescue Service. Nothing has ever been given to us on a plate. We had to fight for it and campaign for it and push for it, and gradually win improvements in hours, improvements in equipment and training, improvements in pay, and yes, improvements in pensions. What we say to this Government, and what we say to our employers is we will not allow you to take those things off us. We will get organised, we will fight back, and if that means a strike, then you will have a strike. Go back from here, stand up, get organised, and fight back. That fight back starts here. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Lancashire to second.

BRO KEVIN DEACON (Lancashire):

President, Conference, as Matt has already covered all the areas of attack relating to our pensions I will concentrate on the age related aspect only. Conference, our initial Resolution focused on the severe financial penalties that firefighters in the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme already faced if they unfortunately had to retire early. Most of us here do not believe that it is feasible that the majority of firefighters should be riding frontline fire appliances or indeed will still be capable of riding frontline appliances up to or beyond the age of 60. We understand the extreme physiological demands that are placed on firefighters. We witness at first hand the additional stresses and strains that firefighters are subjected to as they get older. On occasions, firefighters choose to work past 30 years. Indeed, a minority of firefighters now choose to work past 55. However, this

is the exception rather than the rule. We know that most firefighters will struggle to maintain operational fitness up to the age of 60.

The concern raised in our Resolution was: what will happen when a firefighter cannot fulfil their operational duties? The current employers' position appears to be that all firefighters must work until they are 60. If they can't, due to age related fitness, with no redeployment opportunities, the employers are making it clear that they will attempt dismissal on the grounds of capability. Alternatively, if the firefighter is over 55 years old, then they can choose to retire early and lose up to 50% of their pension.

Another way of looking at it is that they can be sacked, or having paid into the pension scheme for 35 years, paying nearly 90% of their contributions, they can see 50% of it unjustly stolen. This will lead to firefighters attempting to stay on as operational firefighters despite struggling with fitness, simply to provide for their families. This will pose a risk to themselves, their colleagues and to the public.

If the majority of members of a pension scheme cannot get through to the normal retirement age, it must be argued that the scheme is not fit for purpose. Government Ministers stated that they were satisfied that with improved standards of fitness and good quality occupational health arrangements, raising the normal pension age from 55 to 60 in the NFPS was justified. Now, according to the Hutton report, they are also looking to raise the retirement age of all firefighters to 60.

Conference, we know this is nonsense and that a normal retirement age of 60 is unsustainable for firefighters and simply wrong. The Emergency Resolution encompasses the unacceptable attacks on all the Fire Service pensions schemes: the LGPS, the FPS, the NFPS. Since the publication of the Hutton report we are now all fully aware that their ultimate aim is to close all of our pension schemes.

Conference, we must fight to ensure that all the Fire Service pension schemes are fair and fit for purpose. We believe that the EC's Emergency Resolution provides the best strategy to achieve this aim. Support this Emergency Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, in order to see this debate through we would request that you suspend standing order 16 to enable us to go through the tea break. Is that agreed? *Agreed.*

Thank you. I now call Emergency Resolution 2 moved by London.

Day Three – 19th May

Emergency Resolution 2 – ATTACKS TO PENSIONS

Conference condemns the attacks on public sector pensions and those recommendations contained in the Hutton report (especially the increase to pensionable age), which if implemented by this Government may detrimentally affect FBU members' pensions (FPS, NFPS, LGPS).

Conference both notes and supports those trade unions such as PCS, NUT, NASUWT and the POA, who have either balloted or are considering balloting their respective members for industrial action up to and including strike action, which if successful would be coordinated with other trade unions who have already successfully balloted their members in defence of their members' pension entitlements and benefits.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council immediately following this Conference, commences a ballot of all FBU members for industrial action up to and including strike action, which if considered appropriate by the Executive Council should be coordinated with those trade unions that have successfully balloted their members in defence of their pension entitlements and benefits.

LONDON

BRO BEN SPRUNG (London):

Conference, I think London feels that we need to come away from Conference showing clear leadership to our membership. We need to send a clear message to Government and to the other unions. London recognises that our Resolution calls for a ballot to commence immediately following Conference. However, we know that this is a long process, and don't see us being ready to take action in June. Action must be measured and action must be thought out.

We've recent experience of dispute in London and we know the implications of one day strike action, so we're not calling for that. The reasons we feel it's necessary to pass this Resolution are several. Firstly, what it does is it ensures we are committed to taking action in the autumn. I think it will give a boost to other unions who are taking action in June to show that we're committed to it. It will strengthen our hand in talks, but obviously within talks the important thing is that the other side is listening and if we are going through the process this will ensure that it will enhance any talks. I think also it's important that the message comes from the floor that Government and elsewhere see that that's the case. I think most importantly what our Resolution does is that it means that we leave Conference knowing exactly

where we are, knowing exactly what we're doing. It gives our membership that clear lead. To reiterate, we're not talking about taking action in June.

There's been a lot of talk about how we're at the forefront of the union and at the forefront of this Movement. Let's do that and show that right now. I urge you to look at your newspapers that have all been placed in front of you. It says PCS throws down the gauntlet because they've decided to take action and commit to a ballot. Let not tomorrow's headline be that the FBU launches an online survey. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is Resolution 2 seconded?

BRO STEVE ROBERTS (Warwickshire):

Conference, President, I'm speaking in support of Emergency Resolution 2. Everyone here is in agreement that the attacks on our pensions and pay freeze are totally unacceptable to us and our members. I think we should all go back from this Conference and, I was going to say fire up our members, but I think they're fired up already! Maybe some of them will need a little bit more education as to the true impact of all these attacks on us and what they're going to be. Pensions and pay are two of the things that can unite us all on a national level. The Government and the employers are treating us and fellow public service workers with utter contempt. Let's stand together with them, let's fight back. Let's have a ballot for industrial action and use it if we have to. Conference, it's time to put our teeth back in and start to bite! Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Emergency Resolution 3, moved by Cambridgeshire.

Emergency Resolution 3 – HUTTON – PENSIONS & PAY INTRINSICALLY LINKED

Conference notes the recommendations of the Lord Hutton's Final Report on Public Service Pensions released on 10th March 2011.

Conference recognises the attack this report recommends on our members pensions. We also recognise our pensions are our life-long pay and that the pensions we eventually receive are intrinsically linked to our pay whilst in work.

Lord Hutton's final report has implications for every FBU member whether working retained, wholetime, officer or in control.

Day Three – 19th May

Contained within the Hutton report are recommendations for our members to pay increased pension contributions which will need to be found and afforded from our members pay packets. It has always been the case our pensions and pay are intrinsically linked.

Hutton also recommends our future pensions should be based on the average salaries our members earn whilst working. If the Hutton recommendation concerning average salaries is introduced, this will mean the current pay freeze is already adversely affecting our future pensions. Conference also recognises the pay freeze is already affecting the final salary pensions received by our members who have recently retired or who may retire before we achieve our next pay rise.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to remind our employers, the Government AND DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS that our members' pay has already been frozen for 22 months since our last negotiated "CATCH-UP" pay rise in July 2009.

Conference further calls on the Executive Council, Regional Committees, Sectional Committees and all Brigade Committees to initiate and support a membership campaign drawing attention to the Hutton recommendations and highlighting the fact that our pensions and our pay are intrinsically linked. The campaign should be aimed at building support to oppose any detrimental changes to our pension schemes and for achieving appropriate levels of professional pay befitting our members' contribution to public service. The campaign should be clear that, if necessary, we shall call on all FBU members to support and carry-out industrial action up to and including national strike action in pursuit of these fundamental aims.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

BRO PHILIP McQUILLEN (Cambridgeshire):

President, conference, before I move Emergency Resolution 3, can I ask for a point of clarification, please, on Standing Order 22, which is the mover of a Resolution and the times? Is that still seven minutes? Have I got seven minutes?

THE PRESIDENT:

Yes, that is still seven minutes, and you now have still seven minutes! Starting now.

BRO PHILIP McQUILLEN (Cambridgeshire):

Six minutes and counting! President, Conference, ever since the Government launched the Hutton review of

public service pensions our members in Cambridgeshire have been expecting bad news and have been readying themselves for the fight. As expected, that bad news arrived, Hutton recommended we should pay more, work longer, get less. It trips off the tongue quite nicely now, doesn't it?

The Government, their rich friends and the greedy bankers expect you and I to pay for the financial crisis that they quite clearly caused. Our members in Cambridgeshire are not jumping for joy and looking forward to taking on the Government, but they're under no illusions about the wrath we can expect to be unleashed on us by the right wing press, and indeed perhaps the level of public sympathy we might attract. Nevertheless, our members fully expect the Fire Brigades Union to call national strike action to defend our pensions. It may not be publicly popular, but it's quite simply too fundamentally important an issue for us to shy away from. Our pensions quite simply provide the lifelong pay that we and our families expect to live on when we retire. We simply cannot shy away from the fact that the lifelong pay that we get when we retire is intrinsically linked to the pay we can achieve whilst we are in work.

So why is it we seem ready to face public criticism and take strike action over our pensions, and yet so reluctant even to mention fair pay? It may not be popular, it may even be uncomfortable but it is a fact. If we wish to benefit from fair pensions when we retire then we also need to fight for fair pay whilst we are in work.

As we've said in the Resolution, our pay has already been frozen for 22 months since July 2009. The pay freeze is already affecting the final salary pensions received by every member who has recently retired, or who may retire before we achieve our next pay rise. If Hutton's career average salary schemes are imposed on us, then the pay freeze will also have longer term effects on our future pensions.

The General Secretary has spoken in very positive tones this week when moving EC Policy Statements on cuts, austerity and the alternative and on the cuts agenda, etc. I'll give him 8 out of 10. I think that's Matt getting back to his best, doing what he does very well a la Barnsley September 2009. He clearly says that we'll fight. However, when we then look at Emergency Resolution 1 it seems we're not quite so keen on a fight, but we'll go all out for a survey of the members. Conference, we don't need a survey of our members. We have the answer. Indeed, in the President's opening address he said he'd been up and down the country, speaking to our members, and that (and I quote from a fairly reputable newspaper) "the rank and file members' concerns were the same ever: pay, pensions and protecting jobs".

Day Three – 19th May

Emergency Resolution 3 simply says that if we're going to fight and take strike action over our pensions, then it makes common sense to have the same unflinching attitude to fighting for fair pay. The Resolution seeks to remind our employers that our pay has been frozen for almost two years. It calls upon all of us here to go back to our branches and highlight that intrinsic link between our pensions and our pay, and if necessary (I think we all agree it's necessary) to organise industrial action up to and including strike action.

So let's not be shy. Let's have the courage of our convictions. It is time to expose the elephant in the room. Support Emergency Resolution 3. I move. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO PETE GREEVES (Norfolk):

President, Conference, we are seconding Emergency Resolution 3. Conference, contrary to popular belief within Norfolk and in Region 9, are not mad, delusional or simply living in a bygone age. We and our members have our feet very much on the ground. We, as do you all, engage with our members on a daily basis and our members are constantly telling us that the pay freeze introduced by the current ConDem Government is hurting. Nor have they forgotten that the pay freeze was introduced by our employers prior to the two year timeframe, despite our Union tabling a legitimate pay claim on behalf of our members. They have not forgotten the difficulties in securing fair pay for them and their families, but they are now saying enough is enough. Our members have realised the link between pay and their future pensions. They realise that this does not really mean that all workers are in this together, and if we allow this to continue we are all going to be in this until the day we die. As I said, we are not mad. But by introducing this Emergency Resolution to Conference our comrades from Cambridgeshire told you they sought to introduce the elephant in the room. In seconding this Resolution we seek to let the cat out of the bag! Let's let it out.

Inflation announced this week up to 4.5%. If we look at RPI and not CPI, then that figure is as high as 5.1%. The top wage earners are getting richer and still getting their pay rises, and stuffing their pockets with their bonuses. Petrol at record high prices – many family cars costing just over £80 just to fill the tank with petrol. Gas and electricity tariffs due to rise by 15% by the end of the year, a disgraceful hike in prices that will see the elderly turn the heating in their homes off for fear of the bills. Some will die in their homes, as much a victim of greed of the private profit making energy companies as a

victim of the poor pensions provision and as a victim of the cold. Is this what we want for our pensioners and our future pensioners? The cost of the weekly shopping is going up and up. And now proposals to take even more out of our frozen take home pay to fund our pensions, to have to work longer to get them, and when we do eventually retire we get less.

Just the further financial pressures our members are facing. The saving grace for many is the fact that the interest rates have stayed low means that they can survive, but for how long? If the pundits are to be believed, the rates are soon to rise and the household incomes will fall again. But their pension contributions will still need to be paid.

Please, don't tell me or our members that pay and pensions are not intrinsically linked. Whilst that link is broken even for a short time, our pensions go backwards. The time is right. The time is now to go out and lead our membership on this issue. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Conference. Before I open the debate could you stay in your seats, indicate you want to speak and I'll call you to the side of the stage to try to get as many comrades in as we possibly can.

BRO JOHN DRAKE (Gloucestershire):

President, conference, we are supporting the Executive Council Resolution. There's a first, Matt! Conference, first of all I think we need to dispel this myth about gold plated public sector pensions that gets put around. Matt's already touched on the division that the right wing press are trying to cause between private sector pensions and public sector pensions. The average public sector pension is £4,000 a year, less than £80 a week to live on in this day and age. That is an absolute disgrace for the third richest country in the world.

I must admit, I too looked at the Sunday Times Rich List when it was published. I couldn't see any of my mates on these. I couldn't see any public sector pensioners on there, and yet that is a myth that is being pedalled.

Gloucestershire has looked very carefully at London's Resolution but we think that it's just asking for a commencement of a ballot too soon. I think we do need to work carefully in getting our members to a position where we will win a ballot handsomely.

We also need to think strategically and tactically about this battle on pensions. I think the online survey is an important tool that we can use. This Tory led Government are going to demonise the FBU and any

Day Three – 19th May

other trade union that takes strike action or is prepared to take strike action as a self interest group. At the moment, we're trying to position ourselves as guardians of our public services, but the Tories are going to say: same old trade unions as they were in the 70s and 80s, looking after the interests of their members. But surely that's our job, that is our job, just as the Tories seem to think it's their job to rob, to lie and to cheat us and our members out of our pensions. But I've got a message for the Tories and their little lackeys up in Government: you certainly have got a fight on your hands on this one. FBU members will, I'm sure, respond to the leadership being shown from the Executive Council, from Regional officials and from Brigade officials and will vote in huge numbers to take strike action to defend what is rightfully theirs. *Applause*

Comrades, this is a battle we will have. This is a battle we must fight, but this is a battle we will win. Support the EC Resolution. *Applause*

BRO DAVID NICHOL (Northern Ireland):

President, Conference, I am speaking in opposition to Emergency Resolution 2. Conference, this Emergency Resolution is simply not realistic or achievable. We do not believe that a successful ballot would or could be achieved if Conference supports this Resolution. Conference, the Executive Council Emergency Resolution 1 is correct. It calls on the Executive Council to make preparations. If we support Emergency Resolution 2 no preparations will be put in place. We would be commencing a ballot for industrial action on Monday, Monday Conference, just after this weekend.

Conference, there is a saying as true today as when it was first spoken: fail to prepare; prepare to fail. Conference we urge you to oppose the Emergency Resolution from London. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO RICHARD JONES (Surrey):

We are supporting the EC Resolution and opposing London's. The reason for the opposition is over the timescales. We just feel it's unachievable to ballot that soon. Yes, we know our members are opposed to these cuts, but we do need a bit more time, we need a bit more campaign material coming out. We need the help to build them up and get them understanding everything about it.

I was at the pension course this year that was mentioned earlier. There we saw a fantastic Powerpoint that Ivan Walker talked us through and it was really enlightening. We said at that course that we wanted to see that video going out to all members with Ivan talking through it, because it opened up so many arguments that we hadn't seen before. Our members need to see

that. We need time to educate our members with the full arguments, not just headline stuff.

The Yougov survey has gone out today. We need that. We know what it's going to come back and say. We know it's going to say that our members are opposed to the cuts, but what they say will give arguments to our EC and Sean etc to go and fight the Government with. So we need this time to build the campaign.

There is also one other point I wanted to mention on the legal challenge. We got the CPI/RPI challenge going on. There was talk some months ago about the fit for purpose which was mentioned earlier: can firefighters really reach 60 and be in the pension scheme? I've also been told there's data out there which says that this is detrimental to women, that far fewer women will be able to reach age 60. I would have thought that would form the basis of another legal challenge. I think we need time to get the legal stuff in order as well as just going ahead with the ballot. So support the EC. *Applause*

BRO PAUL PRYCE (CSNC):

We withdrew Resolution 23 to support Emergency Resolution 1, but respecting also Emergency Resolutions 2 and 3. Just a little bit of personal background, I've been in the Fire Service both as a firefighter and firefighter control for 34 years. I was on the strike of 77, and believe you me it was no easy decision to make. But by strange coincidence, we went out on strike then because of a change to the promise of a pay rise that suddenly ended up in a pay freeze. So it's a little bit of déjà vu, standing here today.

I will try to be brief. What we must do is fight these cuts, particularly pension cuts, but respecting also it's intrinsically linked to pay. What we must do is educate, inform and mobilise, all three things are important as well as calling for strike action.

On the point of education, our pension scheme in Fire Control is the Local Government Pension Scheme. This is one of the schemes that the Government have called the gold plated, unaffordable, unsustainable, etc. Delegates, I lost my right eye in an accident 30 years ago. They say that the body compensates for the loss of one sense by increasing another. In my own case it was a sense of smell. I can smell a rat at 200 metres! The particular rat I can smell at the moment is called Hutton. He said all sorts of things about the unsustainability, the unaffordability of local government pensions, but strangely enough, even he has said "but it is wrong to say that public service pensions are gold plated. These pensions provide a modest, not excessive, level of retirement income. I also reject the argument that the downward drift of pensions in the private sector is

Day Three – 19th May

justification that the pensions in the public sector must follow the same course. I reject the race to the bottom.”

Sadly, his assurances are about as much use as a banana fritter to a starving elephant, and will be dismissed by Cameron & Co without a second thought.

My own mother died at the age of 88 on a local government pension. It was £50 a week. It didn't keep her in the lap of luxury, we are led to believe; it gave her some respect and some dignity in her retirement. I urge delegates to support Emergency Resolution 1 to look after ourselves, those who come after us, but most importantly, those who have gone before us and fought for what we have got today. I support. *Applause*

SIS SAM RYE (NWC):

President, Conference, we are supporting Emergency Resolutions 1 and 3. I joined the Fire Service at the tender age of 18. I wasn't thinking much about my future, just about getting through my 20 weeks training. Like everyone else that joins the British Fire Service I signed on the dotted line for a pension. My future, I thought, was secure. Whilst my friends were drinking and partying their money away, I was at least saving for my rainy day of retirement. Fast forward some considerable years later and my plan for that rainy day is potentially left in tatters. My paying a large lump of my monthly wage was to secure my future, allow me not to suffer poverty at a pensionable age like so many women before me. I was lucky to hold down a good job which afforded me a decent pension. How wrong was I!

With escalating costs across the board, every household is feeling the squeeze. To increase contributions at a time of escalating costs, zero per cent pay rise, any disposable income I had has gone. And then to expect to work for another ten years is simply unacceptable.

The pension scheme has been changed already. They had their chance to reform it and they did. The banking crisis was not our fault. Why should our pensions be the first port of call to prop up the economy? I'm a hardworking citizen, contributing to my community in what can be a physically and mentally demanding job. I and we deserve to get what we signed up for and that's to retire with our health intact and draw a pension I paid into. Our women members are angry at this injustice and we as a Committee will work alongside other officials to mobilise our members in line with Emergency Resolutions 1 and 3. *Applause*

BRO KEVIN HUGHES (Merseyside):

President, Conference. *Standing ovation.* Thank you. Conference, President, we are supporting Emergency Resolution 2 by London. Conference, I won't take too

long on this because I would really hope that you wouldn't need too much encouragement to back a Resolution like this. Let's not forget: pensions are pay. An attack on pensions, the attacks that we are now facing, relates to theft. That's what it is, it's theft. We've all seen the Hutton report. I don't know what the shock and horror is all of a sudden. We've all seen it, we all knew it was coming, we all know what those attacks are. Pay more, work longer, and get less. It's nothing new. We've all seen it. We've been campaigning, we know how our members feel about it.

I know that this stands in opposition to the EC Resolution, although everything Matt said was right. But if you look at their Resolution it says "Conference is committed to seeking genuine dialogue and negotiations with Government". Conference, there's nothing to talk about. Which part of pay more, work longer and get less is up for negotiation? We don't want any dialogue with Government over our pensions, there's no debate to be had. Matt said it himself yesterday: we only achieve or have achieved when we don't listen to the employers, government, to them. So why are we going to talk to them if we're not going to listen?

Conference, let's not send the wrong message to them and let's not send the wrong message to our own members. We don't have to go away and have a think about what they're going to do. We know what they're going to do. We need to move forward now, not go away and have a chat about it. Let's not miss the boat on coordinated action. You've seen the Morning Star, you've seen another big union there now saying we're going to go on strike to defend our pensions; we're balloting our members now. Let's not allow ourselves to be picked off one by one.

Someone mentioned yesterday about rising like lions. Yes, let's rise like lions, let's roar like lions from this Conference today and send them the message that we won't stand and allow them to steal our pensions and our pay. I urge you to support Emergency Resolution 2. *Applause*

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

Conference, President, I'm speaking in favour of Emergency Resolutions 1 and 3. Conference, I think it's worth underlining the ideological nature of this attack again. This attack on working people under the guise of an ex-New Labour Minister is designed to do one thing. It's designed to undermine our pensions and keep our pay down in order for the privateers out there and asset strippers to come in and take over the running of public services.

These changes in public sector schemes are designed to save some £4 billion a year. The richest 10%, the

Day Three – 19th May

value of the tax relief on their pensions because they get it at a higher rate, is worth £8 billion a year to them. If they limited that tax relief to the tax relief we get on our pensions of 22% a year, that would save over £4 billion. So they're not attacking them, they're protecting them and they're attacking working people. We've got to bear that in mind.

In relation to the Resolution, it's quite clear from going round the branches that our members have been a bit slow to anger on this, partly because of the recruitment freeze we've got in place in Strathclyde. That is providing large volumes of overtime to supplement the fact that we've not had a pay rise for two years. I'll be honest, our members want to know, because we tell them, if they're coming for us in this forum then it's clear that we should be asking our members to take strike action in defence of what is after all deferred pay. They're robbing us blind. However, they do want to know what are the specific implications of these changes to the three Fire Service schemes? They want to know the answers to that before they back our campaign.

Yes, we do have to provide those answers before we can ask them to place X on a ballot for strike action. It's clear that when we talk to Government we're not to get any radical change to this. We might get marginal changes that might help one or two of our members, but the broad thrust of the attack is coming.

Some of our members on branches are also talking about pulling out of the Fire Service schemes because they don't ever see them getting a pension. They see the fitness standards, they see the use of discipline, they see the use of capability, and they think: I'll work 30 years, I'll get turfed out of this when I'm 50 and at that age who else is going to employ me? I have to wait until 65/67 to get a pension? Is it worth me being in this pension scheme? We've got to give them the confidence that we can fight and we can win for them. Otherwise, the future of public sector pension schemes is going to be completely undermined.

So Conference, support Emergency Resolutions 1 and 3, make sure our members know why they're going out to fight, and what we are fighting for is realistic and achievable. I move. *Applause*

BRO MARK KINSALLA (Essex):

President, Conference, I am speaking in opposition to Emergency Resolution 1. Comrades, there are a number of reasons why this Resolution should be challenged by Conference. Firstly, it does not mention pay. When the EC talk about pensions and the attack waged upon us they inevitably talk about pay, If they don't they should be. The two are inextricably linked, and at this time one cannot be discussed without the other. They may not

want it brought into a national dispute, they may be very nervous of such an eventuality and we all know why. But they should take some comfort in the fact that we are in a time of hardship and we cannot afford to end their terms of office as we did with their predecessors.

Secondly, there is a need to restore our members' faith in the process of Conference and in our National EC. There appears now to be a genuine and well grounded need for urgent and decisive action. Let's let the bear out of the cage, lead from the front rather than being pushed along from the back, as normally the case.

Thirdly, the Resolution doesn't really say what we as a Union, facing the gravest attack we've ever seen on our pensions, are actually going to do. I can tell you now Conference, that our members back in Essex will not accept this wishy washy Resolution as an intention to do anything new. It reaffirms what the national FBU officials should be undertaking anyway on our behalf, and gives no commitment as to what we do, nor when we do it? What are we: the tortoise or the hare here?

It calls for members for prepare for strike action, and even then, that will only happen following an unsuccessful period of negotiations and campaigning. This does not call for a ballot at all and neither does it set down time limits or a clear process through which the National Union will mobilise when the EC believe it appropriate.

Fourthly, quite frankly, the second line of the final paragraph, we find it outrageous and insulting to our members. Since 2004 we have seen disputes in Brigades up and down the country where previously we hadn't. Paragraph G4 lists three of the larger Brigades who have been or still are in some form of trade dispute or another. In Essex we have seen a two year dispute run alongside a second dispute regarding the health & safety concerns of our members working over the border during the London dispute. Would it be fair or accurate to say that our members are extremely reluctant to take any form of industrial action? You have heard our General Secretary tell Conference that there have been more disputes in the last few years than ever before in the history of the FBU, but yet the EC feel it appropriate to make this statement. It is an outrage and an insult to our members, many of whom have lost pay and promotion opportunities to stand shoulder to shoulder with their brothers and sisters. For our EC to be telling our employers that FBU members are extremely reluctant to take industrial action over their pensions or pay or cuts to their Fire Service is unhelpful at best, and undermines any action that we may take before it is even called.

There are other, better worded Resolutions on the floor that are clear in their intent, which call for positive and

Day Three – 19th May

decisive action giving our members some reassurance that the Fire Brigades Union of which they are immensely proud to be a part, will fight before there is nothing left to fight for. I urge you to oppose this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, could you please try to keep to the lights. You do have your Standing Orders which we're adhering to. You do need to keep to the light system to give everybody the opportunity to contribute. We've tried very hard to do that in this debate.

SIS PAULINE PERRY (Berkshire):

I am speaking in support of Emergency Resolution 2 from London. I am sure that the majority of members in this Conference Hall are in double figures of service and as such have paid your pension contributions. There are some, no doubt, who are close to retirement and are looking forward to receiving your long earned pensions that you've contributed to, but must now feel the real threat of pension changes being proposed by this Government. Along with the threat of cuts and changes to our working conditions and contracts, how much more can or must our members take? I can remember a time when jobs were deemed secure for life and being in the Fire Service was one of them. How sure are we now? If that's the case, unless we fight the disgusting threat to the proposed pension changes, it's plain and simple. We made a unified stand with everybody else on 26 March to say no to cuts, no to austerity, and hands off our pensions. There's a saying: once it's gone, it's gone. I tell you what, the Government might think they can pickpocket our pensions, but with greedy hands the size of theirs, we see you coming.

PCS have thrown down the gauntlet already. Can we not do the same in time to join them on 30 June? I urge you to stand unified to protect what we have now and for the future. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

We are supporting Emergency Resolution 2 from London. It was our intention, Conference, to support all three Resolutions, but as we are being forced to make a decision, we have to go by the one which reflects our members best and that's London's Resolution. It may not be perfectly worded, but the intent is clear and it's the same as our members'.

The EC Resolution talks about continuing a campaign, and we agree with that, but we've been campaigning about this for ages. The TUC demonstration against the cuts saw a massive turnout by the FBU and most of the placards from our members were about pensions.

In fact, I urge the EC and Cambridgeshire to withdraw their Resolutions to fall in behind London's.

London's Resolution doesn't mean that we have to post the ballot papers out tomorrow. In fact, London clarified a minute ago that there is no mention about timescales at all. But it sends a clear message to our members and to our employers: hands off our pensions. *Applause*

BRO MIKE TREMELLEN (Cornwall):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of London's Resolution 2. Conference, if you vote for Emergency Resolution 2 we can still achieve most of what's on Emergency Resolution 1. The only thing we don't need is another survey. Members have had surveys over the last couple of years. Members are less likely to fill in surveys. They are more likely fill in, in the correct way, a ballot form if we get that out to them now. Members are telling us that if there's one thing that they will take industrial action over, strike action, it's pensions. It mentions on the Emergency Resolution 1 that we're always extremely reluctant to take any form of industrial action. Our members are telling us this is one thing they will take industrial action over. Come on Conference, let's get behind Emergency Resolution 2 and see the headline tomorrow: the FBU throws down the gauntlet but harder and further. Thanks. *Applause*

BRO ROY HUMPHREYS (Suffolk):

President, Conference, we are supporting Emergency Resolution 3, Hutton and Pensions Intrinsically Linked. Conference, since 2009 our members have not had a pay rise. Our members who have retired now have a worse pension because of this. All members will have a worse pension because we have not had any pay rises. As a Union we must be clear: pay and pensions are the same issue, they are intrinsically linked. We must ensure that as officials of the Fire Brigades Union we raise this link with our members at every opportunity, and that talking pay at meetings, around the mess tables, wherever, is not seen as a dirty word by our members. Conference, now is the time to say in no uncertain terms to our employers and the Government: keep your grubby fingers off our pensions and out of our pockets. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Right of Reply, General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, it's been a very useful, very important, very lively debate as we would obviously expect. It is the most urgent and pressing issue facing our members. We welcome the comments and the contributions from

Day Three – 19th May

everyone who has participated. Particularly from the EC, the number of comrades who said support the EC, which is a welcome comment.

In terms of the reference to me speaking in Barnsley, I hope that wasn't a reference to the donkey, but we'll see!

The concerns that the EC have with the London Resolution are in relation to the reference to immediate ballot. I think the concerns have been expressed by other delegates. I would ask London to think very carefully about the concerns, not just expressed by the Executive Council but by other delegates speaking on behalf of their Brigade Committees and memberships in their Brigades back home.

I have to say, in moving the Resolution Ben, I felt, undermined the need for the Resolution in the first place because he seemed to argue that when the London Resolution says immediate, they don't actually mean immediate. If it doesn't mean immediate, let's not say the word immediate. He did argue, I think usefully, that balloting and so on would strengthen our hand in negotiations, which again does seem to suggest that London do support us discussing with Government. We are discussing with government officials, as you would expect us, and I have to say, as our members would expect. Our members expect us to explore every avenue to try to defeat this. Unfortunately yes, that includes speaking to Government Ministers who we have no time for and don't agree with on anything.

In terms of the Cambridgeshire Resolution, I'm quite happy to give the Executive Council's assurance that we will take up the issue of pay. Just from a personal point of view, those of you who have held membership meetings over the past couple of months where I have attended will know very well that I have very much raised the question of pay on every single occasion, and made very clear to members that those issues are linked, and made very clear to members that there will be a time which they will determine when we will need to fight on pay. But it was useful, and it is useful, for the Cambridgeshire comrades to outline and remind people that a pay freeze does immediately affect final salary pension schemes. In addition, of course, a pay freeze at the time when they want to increase pension contributions is a double or indeed a triple attack on our members.

Just on the question of the survey, I want to be clear on that. The survey is not a delaying tactic; it is not an alternative to industrial action. The survey is a campaigning tool that we want to use. It's a campaigning tool to allow us to identify certain information in terms of specific challenges which the Government have thrown down to us in discussions

that we've had where we want to be able to answer them. So it's a very useful aspect of our campaigning and our discussions (let's call them that) with the Government. Yes, it may well be, and we expect, that those discussions will not lead anywhere. But I repeat, our members expect us to explore every possible avenue. I think again a useful contribution made by John McFadden: our members also expect more detail on the pensions proposals, and that detail currently isn't there.

In terms of the Executive Council's position, the Executive Council are entirely clear. I made this point several times today. There are several Resolutions, including both the Cambridgeshire one and the London one, where the phrase "up to and including strike action" is used. I don't think it's a helpful phrase to use. I think we need to be clear to our members, and I think that phrase potentially spreads confusion. I've had similar discussions with Brigade Committees again where the phrase has been used on occasion. The truth is when we ballot we have an option. We either ballot for strike action – there's no ballot that ever says "up to and including strike action" – or we ballot for action short of strike, ie industrial action that isn't a strike. Those are the only forms of industrial that we can lawfully take.

The Executive Council is absolutely clear and we believe is clearer than the London Resolution. To be honest, I think it's more hardline in that respect than the London Resolution. We're saying that when we ballot it will be a ballot for national strike action. We want to be clear to our members and we want to be clear to the Government about that. *Applause*

I have to say in that respect to London: you've heard some of the reservations others have expressed here at the rostrum today. I really would urge London, in the interests of unity, we want to come out of this with a unanimous vote on Emergency Resolution 1 and Emergency Resolution 3. I would urge London to withdraw their Resolution.

It's an important point that John Drake made. The Government will attack us on the question of being a so-called narrow, sectional interest. They'll say this is the old trade unions, just feathering their own nest, looking after their own members. Firstly, I don't think we should apologise one iota for that. We are there to defend our members and we are proud to do so. I tell you what we say to people who aren't in trade unions: if we've got better conditions, if we've got better pensions because we're in a union, then go and join a union and fight back and defend your pay and conditions as well. *Applause*

Finally, defending good quality public services also means paying the people who work in and deliver those public services, decent pay, and providing them with decent pensions. We make no apology for fighting to

Day Three – 19th May

defend our pensions. It is part and parcel of fighting to defend the Fire Service that we are proud to deliver. We are the only people who speak up for the Fire and Rescue Service. We make no apologies for doing that, and we make no apologies for throwing down the gauntlet to this Government that we will fight tooth and nail to defend our pensions and the pensions of our members and for those who follow us. Thank you.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

London, do you want to exercise the Right of Reply?

BRO BEN SPRUNG (London):

Just obviously we were clear. It's not about action in June. I think regardless we're going to be taking action at the same time. It's not about being gung ho, it's about leadership, it's about having faith in our membership, it's about sending a clear message from this Conference that we're standing shoulder to shoulder with all the other unions, it's about having confidence and it's about going into this dispute on the front foot. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Cambridgeshire.

BRO PHILIP McQUILLEN (Cambridgeshire):

President, Conference, clearly it won't matter how our pension is calculated in the future if we don't raise the subject of pay, because clearly the pension will be worth nothing if we're continually on pay freezes. That's why I urge you to support our Emergency Resolution 3, which addresses both issues and highlights that intrinsic link between them.

Conference, be sure, the vultures are circling. If we don't put down the marker on pay and pensions, the fight to take everything away from us will escalate. Matt has given us assurances as to action from the EC, but we do feel that that link between the pay and pensions must stay out on the floor. I urge you to support Emergency Resolution 3. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Emergency Resolution 1 moved by the Executive Council to the vote. If Emergency Resolution 1 carries, Emergency Resolution 2 moved by London falls. All those in favour of Emergency Resolution 1 please show. Against. That is *carried*. *Applause*

I now put Emergency Resolution 3 moved by Cambridgeshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried*.

I call Resolution 22 from Dorset, Pensions in the Fire & Rescue Service. Sorry Conference, if I could ask, what I intend to do here is to take this and then adjourn Conference till 2 o'clock, if Conference accept that. Otherwise, we will be taking a tea break and coming back for ten minutes. I didn't really think that Conference would want to do that. It still is a pensions debate. Is that agreed? *Agreed*.

Thank you. I call Resolution 22, Pensions in the Fire & Rescue Service, Dorset. The EC give it qualified support.

Resolution 22 – PENSIONS IN THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Conference condemns proposals from H.M Treasury to increase employee contribution rates to pension schemes within the Fire & Rescue Service and also to introduce a tiered employee contribution rate from 2012. Conference notes that in addition to these proposals, Communities and Local Government representatives have outlined that from 2014 pension benefits would be reformed, including potential increases in retirement age and moves to end final salary schemes, replacing them with career average schemes.

Conference reiterates the opposition of the Fire Brigades Union to any detrimental changes to pension schemes within the Fire & Rescue Service and agrees the following:

- ***In the event of imminent legislation which would increase the retirement age within the Fire & Rescue Service, the Executive Council shall instigate a recall of Conference with a recommendation for national strike action.***

Conference recognises that arguments to increase the retirement age in the Fire & Rescue Service are undermined by Members who work past their applicable retirement age and calls on all Members not to do so.

DORSET

Amendment

In bullet point after 'Fire & Rescue Service' Insert 'of any existing pension scheme'.

GRAMPIAN

BRO SIMON DENNETT (Dorset):

President, Conference, we accept that the majority of our Resolution has been addressed by the debate we've just had. Our only addition is that we want to send a message to our members that they should stop working past the normal retirement age. Members need to take responsibility for their actions. Think of the future and stop giving the Government ammunition to undermine

Day Three – 19th May

our pensions. Members should retire at the age that previous generations fought for. If they do not, then our members are giving the Government evidence in favour of increasing the retirement age for future generations. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* Open for debate. Sorry, there is an Amendment from Grampian. My fault Conference. I ask Grampian to move their Amendment.

BRO JOHN BROWN (Grampian):

President, Conference, obviously we've just heard a lot about pensions and rightly so, because they're a huge concern for our members. Some of our members, through their naïve actions, are helping this threat to our pensions. As the comrade rightly pointed out yesterday, and it's been pointed out again today, pay and pensions are the same thing. Pay is the fruit of our labour. We work and we toil and literally we sweat, and pay is our reward for that. Pensions are also a reward for that labour, not least because we pay for our pensions out of those fruits whilst we can still graft, in order to provide for our future.

I do understand the real fear that my members feel when they hear of the onslaught that their pensions are to be subjected to. At most of the branches one thing can induce red faced anger and apoplexy and that is the threatened theft of their hard earned pensions. At times it's our own members who inadvertently contribute to this threat. That said, and in a quick aside, the recent Firefighter cover featuring our illustrious Prime Minister dipping into a firefighter's pocket provided some much needed levity. It was very well received. So thank you for that.

I represent members who, as best as I can tell are contributing into one of three pensions schemes. They are contributing their hard earned fruits of their labour. Three schemes that have been put in place in order to try to drive wedges and divide us. They sacrifice a proportion of their pay now to ensure that when they can no longer work they will still be provided for. Let's face it, at time they risk their lives for that pay, or subject themselves to mental stress. No-one would suggest that any of our members should be performing these services on the incident ground or in the control room for free, are they? No-one would say that our skilled and professional control members, who remain calm in the face of panicked victims, terrified victims, and offer them hope, should be doing their job for free. Likewise, no-one would argue that our members on the fire ground, who put themselves in harm's way, should be working for free. So why should they try to deny us our deserved, our earned and paid for, our rightfully ours, pensions? Our members have counted upon and made life plans

around these pensions they signed up to, they've paid into and they've sacrificed for. They've got dependents who factor into their plans for their retirement. I have one member who has always planned to care for his father when he eventually reaches 55 and retires. Now, because some rich, greedy bankers couldn't control their greed, his father's future – all our futures – are up in the air.

It's been said before, but who wants a zimmer riding firefighter in BA to rescue them? Who wants to be a 60 year old firefighter worried whether they can make it up to the umpteenth floor via staircase and then tackle a emergency, dangerous, physically demanding situation?

With all the cuts and savings that are going to be made, there is going to be no other options for firefighters. Sometimes we have to help the membership help themselves. It doesn't matter which pension scheme you are on. They want to steal our money and years of our lives. Please support the Amendment and the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Amendment seconded? *Formally seconded.* I now open up for debate. I now put the Amendment from Grampian to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 22 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. That is *carried*.

Conference, I've misled you somewhat. I have sinned. We have a guest here today and we were unaware that he needed to be somewhere else. He's travelled from Egypt to address Conference. I would hope that Conference would indulge me and welcome our guest on the stage now, Kamal Abbas. *Applause*

As I say, Conference, Kamal Abbas has travelled a long way to be with us this morning. Kamal is General Coordinator of the Centre for Trade Unions and Workers' Services, the CTUWS, an umbrella organisation for independent unions in Egypt. He was leader of the 1989 Helwan Steel strike and has been arrested numerous times. The CTUWS have had repeated harassment and attack by the Mubarak regime. They played a leading role in the overthrow of the old order. He has begun to organise one million workers into new independent unions in Egypt. He has received wide international recognition for his union and civil society leadership. I'm very proud to ask him to address this Conference. This is the first speech of his visit. Conference, Kamal Abbas. *Applause*

BRO KAMAL ABBAS (CTUWS):

Thank you very much. President of the Conference, dear comrades, brothers and sisters, I'm happy to speak to

Day Three – 19th May

the firefighters' delegates, firefighters who sacrifice their life for the sake of duty. When I think back to when I started my life as a worker in the iron and steel industry I remember when I took part in leading the great strike in 1989 and how me and my colleagues stayed strong and resisted in prison. We did this because we believed it was our duty.

I remember my journey in building the Centre for Trade Union and Workers Services as an organisation advocating and fighting for worker rights. Above all, worker rights to build their own independent union and the right to strike. For the sake of those two rights we went through many battles, we faced many obstacle. Each time I found myself in front of the interrogators I said to myself: I'm doing my duty.

I knew when participating in the revolution from the beginning we passionately wanted workers to play their role in its victory. We released statements, we organised meetings, we played our full role in the revolution. In the last days of the revolution we used the weapon of strikes and we felt that we had done our duty. After the revolution we moved toward forming more independent unions. We toured around Egypt and the steel cities to help and encourage workers to form independent unions based on democracy, unions dominated by workers and capable of defending their rights. And when we did this, we thought we were doing our duty.

And today I trust that as you meet together in this Conference you will discuss how to defend the right of firefighters, those heroes who lay down their lives as the price for doing their duty. To all of you I pay my regards and respects. *Applause*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, you don't often get the chance to see live on television a revolution overthrowing a vicious dictatorship. I'm sure everyone in this room, and people throughout the world, were inspired by the events in Egypt. I mentioned the other day the attacks being international and the attacks on working people being international. One of those I mentioned was in the United States, and people may have seen the struggle in Wisconsin where public sector workers are having their trade union rights taken away and have waged a magnificent struggle there. One of the most fantastic photographs I saw of the year was a worker in Tahrir Square in Egypt during the course of that revolution with a placard saying: "Wisconsin, we are with you". What a magnificent demonstration of internationalism! People engaged in their own bitter and heroic struggles for democracy and freedom to express that solidarity with people across the world.

The Fire Brigades Union has a strong tradition of internationalism. We are very deeply honoured to have comrade Kamal Abbas with us today. We'd like you to take back to Egypt the best wishes for the future from the Fire Brigades Union. We have a gift which may turn out to be useful. It is a firefighters' axe. *Applause*

BRO KAMAL ABBAS (CTUWS):

Every time when we organise a strike they accuse me of destroying the stability of Egypt, but now with your gift, I'm going to be more than destroyer! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, thank you very much for that. Before we adjourn I just need to remind you that a Scottish select 11 are going to be playing against le Hare's lions on a field along the road. At the end of that I will decide for certain which is my nationality! Conference is adjourned. Back at 2 o'clock. Thank you, Conference.

Adjourned for lunch

Day Three – 19th May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Changes to delegates: Hereford & Worcester – delete Eric Thompson, insert Sophie Harris. Devon & Somerset – delete Andy Gould. Cambridgeshire – delete Adrian Clarke, insert Jeremy Corney. GMC – insert Gary Keary. Could I ask you now to turn to your Programme of Business Page 14: Resolution 43, Firefighter Safety in High Rise Buildings, Staffordshire have remitted with the right to speak, Amendment falls. Page 16: Emergency Resolution 7, Royal Wedding, Hereford & Worcester has been withdrawn. Staying on Page 16: Resolution 45, Reaffiliation to the Labour Party, Greater Manchester is withdrawn to second Resolution 44. Conference, I have a point of information to read out from Region 7. Unfortunately Region 7 delegates were unable to attend the fund raising quiz night on Tuesday evening organised by Region 1. However, Region 7 would now wish to pledge £500 towards the fund formed for our comrades in Palestine. *Applause*

President, can I apologise to Conference for misinforming them in my first report when I announced that there was an FBU stall. Unfortunately, that's not the case due to the person who usually runs the stall unable to come to Conference due to workload. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *Agreed.*

Conference, before we start the business, it's my job and duty to give you the result of the big match today. The game ended in a 1-1 draw, an honourable result, I think. Basically, the highlights are that the boys from south of the wall took the lead, a brilliant goal by the fleet footed Joe MacVeigh and Scotland snatched a lucky equaliser late into the game. Scotland bought the ball and bought the trophy. I think it's only fair that we award it to the delegated man of the match. This is a person that I would pay money to watch on any football pitch anywhere. He really had a storming game, filled the strip very well. That's Joe MacVeigh. Would you just like to come to the side of the stage. *Applause*

Also, just before we commence business, there's been a bit of an ongoing saga with regard to my gait in this chair. There's been problems. The chair has been risk assessed by various health & safety coordinators from all around Conference. They've all shook their heads, they've all decided that they'll come back with a report at next Conference on it. I just wish to applaud the actions of one particular delegation and that's Lothian & Borders who came up with a remedy which I really can't – *Laughter, applause*. I thank them for that! The spring that's coming out of it is actually starting to let it down, so we'll proceed.

May I ask Conference to turn to Page 11 of the Programme of Business. Section H Education. Paragraph H1, H2, H3. I now call Resolution 49, FBU Education Programme, Black & Ethnic Minority Members. The Executive Council oppose.

Resolution 49 – FBU EDUCATION PROGRAMME

B&EMM does not believe that the current FBU Education programme addresses the lack of knowledge and expertise within the Union on two key equality and diversity issues, namely, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) and All Different All Equal (ADAE) investigations.

EIAs are an important tool to ensure that the vital services we deliver to our communities are supported by the correct Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) policies, procedures and custom and practices. We need officials who are fully aware of this and who are trained to ensure that EIAs are carried out in order to challenge discriminatory and potentially detrimental FRS policies.

ADAE investigations are vitally important in ensuring that all our members receive a fair adjudication prior to full representation from our Union. We do not believe that enough has been done to ensure that all investigators receive the correct training in order to produce a thorough and fair investigation.

To rectify this issue, Conference agrees that a specific stand alone school be added to the FBU education programme with these two subjects as the core and with the aim of giving the appropriate training and education to:

- ***Enable the FBU to have qualified expert Equality Impact Assessors;***
- ***Ensure that reps/officials who are likely to be ADAE investigators have the appropriate skills.***

This to be included in the 2012 National Education programme.

BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Day Three – 19th May

BRO MARK BROWN (B&EMM):

President, Conference, our motion was about two key equality issues which we feel need to be dealt with effectively and in depth from a national level. If we can be assured by the EC that the Education Committee will be given the opportunity to properly consider the issues, we would like to remit our motion.

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

President, we were offering the remit position on this simply because we wanted some evidence presenting to back up some of the things which were claimed in the Resolution. I've got to say that we have really prioritised equality impact assessments for the last few years. We've never had any bad reports back from the courses. I've got to say that, saying that people are carrying out All Different All Equal without the correct training – we couldn't let that go without a challenge.

What I've got to say about it is that one of the reasons we run All Different All Equal back in Regions is because we understand how important it is that people have a say in when they're run rather than the education programme telling them when it's run, and also so we can actually expand it out for more and more officials to get the opportunity to come on it, and also because we'd need the Regional Secretary to be part of the training because they have a key role in it. But, like everything, we always consider all our courses through the National Education Committee which is representative of all Sections and all Regions. So we will discuss it at that meeting and I'll discuss it further with Trevor Cave.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Paragraph H4. I now call Resolution 50, LGBT School, Supporting our Members Needs. The Executive Council give it qualified support.

Resolution 50 – LGBT SCHOOL, SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS NEEDS

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual & Trans (LGBT) members congratulate the officials responsible for organising the successful LGBT school in October 2010. The school was a great triumph, despite a large number of our members from London being unable to attend as a result of London Fire Brigade withdrawing trade union leave facilities as a consequence of the industrial action taking place over imposed changes to duty systems.

Our members have benefited from access to an annual LGBT school for over a decade. Although the function of the school is primarily trade union education it also provides a unique opportunity for our members to access their officials and discuss issues in a safe environment. For many members, the school has been the first step in a process of 'coming out' and for many of our officials their first active trade union involvement has been at the school.

In previous years, as a result of financial hardship to the Union, the LGBT school has had to be cancelled. Last year again faced with financial constraint, the LGBT school had its budget cut by 50%, the largest reduction applied to any education event. The impact of such a reduction meant the promotion of the school was reduced and student numbers greatly restricted.

LGBT members call on the National Officer with the remit for education, and Executive Council, to ensure that prior to future cuts in education, that full consideration be given to the function of the LGBT school not only in terms of education but also support, LGBT members ask that consideration be given that we have already received the heaviest burden in requirements to make savings in education and ensure the LGBT Officials tasked with planning the school are fully consulted on any efficiencies that need to be made.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANS MEMBERS

SIS ALI BURROWS (LGBT):

President, Conference, many of our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members still suffer discrimination and harassment bullying in the workplace. We know that the majority of our members are not out at work. This is due to the fears that they face. As well as being a highly beneficial educational event, our Annual School provides the only opportunity for these members to discuss their worries and issues, to meet other LGBT colleagues, and for support and understanding in a safe environment and in a place where confidentiality is paramount.

Our School has been instrumental in bringing LGBT members into active involvement in our Union. Our School budget has been cut by 50%, placing pressure on costs, and as a direct result, meaning a restriction on how many members have access to this vital educational and supportive School.

We're not demanding complete exemption from cost savings but we ask for consideration that we have already paid a heavy price with one School previously

Day Three – 19th May

being cancelled due to lack of funds. In order to ensure functionality we request early consultation with our Committee and that will assist us in planning our School. Please support this Resolution. I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* Qualification from General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks President. A couple of qualifications from the Executive Council and a couple of points of clarification. On the third paragraph, the reference to the School having been previously cancelled. Just to clarify that the position was that the Executive Council took the decision in 2006 and all National Education was cancelled including other Sectional Schools and National School as well. So there was no singling out of any particular event, that was an across the board decision.

In terms of budgeting, we've mentioned in the Reorganisation Document that we are actually improving and extending budgeting processes. So the truth is that in reality, for up until last year there weren't thorough budgets for any of our education events. We've now got to a position where we've got very well planned budgets for education. That's the context in which we are discussing this.

I'm sure the delegates will accept this point: in the fourth paragraph the reference to the National Officer. The Executive Council is slightly concerned that this does personalise the matter somewhat. These are not decisions of the National Officer, they are decisions of the Executive Council and the Executive Council want to make that clear. All decisions made around the education programme, around budgets and so on are those taken by the Executive Council. National Officers obviously work under my direction to implement the decisions of the Executive Council.

So with that qualification we are happy, as always, to engage in that dialogue with members of the National Committee around education for the future.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 50 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Paragraph H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10, H11. Can I now ask Conference to turn to Page 13 of the Programme of Business. Section J Health & Safety, Paragraph J1. Yes, come to the rostrum.

BRO SCOTT McCABE (Fife):

President, Conference, if you read through Section J of the Report you can see that the FBU is involved in all areas of health & safety, from branch inspections to national generic risk assessments, from looking at unisex fire kit and the reasons as to why it's wrong, to welfare facilities for its members, and sadly towards the end of the Section, investigating as to why our members are killed at work.

Conference, firefighter safety and building a Fire Service on risk and not budget has been and will continue to be a focus. However, it's our view that there are still areas of concern and room for improvement. The concerns are the attitude of the Tories towards the Health & Safety Legislation, reductions in fire budgets and Health & Safety Executive budgets. There seems to be a myth getting perpetuated by a lot of chief officers about risk aversion and how health & safety is there to hinder us as opposed to assist us. They do that from the comfort of their big offices with leather recliners. For the FBU, recruitment and retention of health & safety reps at all levels in our organisation again seems to be an issue and a problem that we've highlighted, specifically issues relating to time off, access to information, carrying out inspections and facilities which all reps are entitled to legally under the safety reps legislation.

Conference, what we think we need to do is to refocus our efforts and consolidate our position, particularly on health & safety. It's probably going to be one of the best arguments that we've got in terms of tackling the cuts agenda. What we're asking for is that the EC, in conjunction with the Regional Health & Safety Coordinators, and in line with the Reorganisation Paper that was passed earlier this week, produce a comprehensive Policy Statement for the next Conference to try to address as many of these issues as possible. Cheers. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Certainly, as Scott has outlined, we have given a commitment as part of the reorganisation work to look at all areas of work of the Union including IRMP and, in this case, health & safety. I don't think it will be any surprise to say we will also be addressing the clear links between IRMP and health & safety.

In terms of the request that's been made, certainly that is the declared intention of the Executive Council to do that work, to carry out that review, that audit. Yes, we can give that commitment quite happily. Thank you.

Day Three – 19th May

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 29, Lord Young's Report, Durham. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 29 – LORD YOUNG'S REPORT

This Conference condemns the dilution of safe working practices by Fire and Rescue Services across the United Kingdom citing Lord Young's report "Common Sense, Common Safety" as justification.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the level of threat to our member's health and safety in the workplace as a result of this Coalition Government sponsored publication.

DURHAM

BRO TONY CURRY (Durham):

President, Conference, we bring this Resolution to Conference after alarming statements made by some of our management in Durham. This issue was first raised during a Standard Operating Procedure Review Group meeting. On the agenda was an item entitled "Lord Young's Report Common Sense Common Safety – Bridging the Gap". Very interesting, we thought. When asked to explain, the service manager in question (in fact, he's not a service manager, he's a watch manager who dropped out of the FBU because he thought it would fast track his career – in my eyes, as bad as a scab, if not worse) said: well, some SOPs are a bit restrictive. For example, sewer rescues. If we pull up at a job and a dog is stuck in a sewer and we can hear it barking, do we need to use gas detection or wait for other crews? In fact, do we need to use BA?

That this came as a bit of a shock is an understatement. In fact, we thought he was barking! We challenged this and were given assurances that this wouldn't happen, but we all know what service assurances are like or worth. Our concern is that in this time of austerity, services try to use this report and others like it to dilute our safe working practices and gamble with our members' health & safety and ultimately their lives. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO RUSS KING (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, when we saw this in Tyne & Wear we got very worried about it. What we decided to do was put it as an agenda item on our Joint Health & Safety Committee. Thankfully, our management agreed

with us that this is a really severely worrying document. So what I would suggest Conference, is that when you go back to your Brigades, add this as an agenda item, get it on the table and talk to them about it. When I knew Tony was going to bring it up I thought I'll go and prepare my speech. I got me laptop, Googled health & safety gone mad. You get the list you know – conkers, fire poles. But what I did find was a quote from a chief fire officer. This is from a big Brigade. What he was doing, he was talking about the HSE's paper Striking the Balance. They produced this paper and what they said was they wanted to clarify the position with regard to protecting employees. So they sent it out to all the Brigades. All the Brigades looked at it. This chief fire officer said: "The paper encouraged a creeping culture of risk aversion in the Fire Service." Then he goes on to say: "That doesn't serve anybody well. It doesn't serve the public well and it doesn't serve to create an environment within which firefighters feel free to do their job and that can't be safe for the whole of the UK. They are preventing and compromising our ability to save life." It doesn't mention anything in there about trying to keep firefighters safe. Absolutely ridiculous!

That is our management. This new ConDem Government are using this Red Top politics, getting out in the paper. So when it comes to the person in the street, it's almost believable for them. If you actually look at the report, David Cameron's done a foreword in it. He's quoted in this report as saying that they want in this report to challenge the compensation culture. What I would say is: don't injure our members, don't injure our workers and you wouldn't have a compensation culture. I move. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'll open up for debate. Yes.

BRO TONY SMITH (Hertfordshire):

President, Conference, less than two years after our firefighters' fatalities campaign, is this the response from the Government? This is the response: what we're going to do is we're going to reduce health & safety standards even further. Absolutely unbelievable. Conference, we should be appalled at this.

What I would say is this, God forbid that it happens again, but the next time one of us has to go and deal with the families, the children, the widows, the loved ones of a firefighter that's killed on duty, perhaps we might invite Lord Young along to that meeting.

THE PRESIDENT:

I'll ask the Assistant General Secretary to give the Executive Council's qualification.

Day Three – 19th May

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, when we first heard of Lord Young's inquiry (and I think many of you may be aware of this) certainly the General Secretary called for an immediate meeting with Lord Young, which we weren't quite sure if he would agree to meet with us. Certainly the TUC did. We did meet with Lord Young. I think there were three of us in the end: the General Secretary, myself and Dave Green in the capacity of the Political Officer, just to find out what was the scope of his work, what were his terms of reference, and where did this demand for this review that he was carrying out come from?

We also met with the TUC, Matt met with the TUC General Council and discussed it. I myself met with key colleagues from the TUC, particularly the ambulance unions, and we had a meeting with the Police Federation as well for a joint approach. Also, as you can imagine, we had many informal meetings and briefings with, let's say key colleagues within the industry as well, to try to get a joint approach, which was to some extent quite successful.

We have been successful in beating back some of the worst excesses of what Lord Young intended to do. I think we do need to recognise that. The review itself, you'll recall, whilst it was brought into being once the Government had taken office, they actually called for that review whilst the Tories were in opposition. In other words, they thought they had a blueprint already written, just ready to go through the farce of Lord Young with no staff whatsoever, so he could just dust off a previously written report and present it.

Our qualification, I've got to say, is not that we have managed to beat off the worst of what he intended to do. Our qualification is that, bearing in mind the work which the Health & Safety Coordinators do under the guidance of the Executive Council and through the National Officers, it is a huge workload and certainly the review that was agreed to in the last discussion on the Paragraph will add to that work. So be it, that's what we do. But it's a huge scope of work that the Resolution is calling for. I suppose it's that qualification. We don't believe that we can come back with a comprehensive report immediately or in the near future, and we may need to address how we do portion up that work rather than come back with a report that is comprehensive all at the same time in the way that the Resolution calls for. That's the qualification. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I now put Resolution 29 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried*.

Paragraph J2. Yes.

BRO GORDON FIELDEN (London):

Chair, Conference will remember last year that Emergency Resolution 4 came to Conference. First of all, we had to get it past Standing Orders because they rejected it. Then it came to the floor. The Executive Council, in its wisdom earlier on, decided that they were not going to support it, and when it became clear to them that they were going to lose that on the floor, they gave it qualified support. If you remember, I questioned that qualification, whether that was right or wrong. The fact is that we believe that it was a delaying tactic on behalf of them. I've not see the paper produced that Conference agreed last year regarding that, remembering that this Emergency Resolution was about the protection of health & safety of our members in terms of respirators.

I ask in the future that if you give qualification and that qualification is that you do the work, that you actually produce the paper and bring it to Conference. It is unfair to firefighters out there that this Union does not have a Policy yet. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, as Gordon says, there was quite a – let's just say – pointed debate at last year's Conference around the Emergency Resolution 4. I've got to say that the Executive Council has, to the best of its ability, ensured that work has been at least progressed. Gordon and others on the Regional Health & Safety Coordinators Committee have been working hard on that document. A draft report was put to the last meeting of the coordinators for comment, observation, amendment and so on. I've got to say it's not quite ready yet for presentation to the EC. As a result of the scope of that work, and also the fact that we have been a National Officer down, we haven't been able to meet the timetable that was outlined within the Resolution. That said, Conference made a decision last year. We have attempted with the Coordinators to meet the decision of Conference, as we always do, but no, we have not managed to achieve that result just yet. It's in a draft form and we hope to get it to the Executive Council as soon as we practically can. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 42, Specification for Vehicles Being Driven by Flexi Duty System Officers, North Yorkshire. The Executive Council support.

Day Three – 19th May

Resolution 42 – SPECIFICATION FOR VEHICLES BEING DRIVEN BY FLEXI DUTY SYSTEM OFFICERS

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to produce a report which focuses on the minimum specification/standard required for vehicles being driven by Flexi Duty System (FDS) officers whilst responding to incidents on blue lights. The National Policing Improvement Agency has identified a number of vehicles in use by Police forces as being appropriate for response driving, taking account of New Car Assessment Programme safety ratings and certain modifications including the upgrading of braking and suspension systems. FDS officers are currently responding to incidents in vehicles that may not be suitable for emergency response driving and a national standard should be adopted in consultation with police and ambulance partners.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

BRO SEAN ATKINSON (North Yorkshire):

Conference, President, Conference will no doubt be concerned about the apparent lack of any minimum standard specification for vehicles being driven by our officers whilst responding to emergency incidents. As in many other Brigades, North Yorkshire has chosen to operate a car lease scheme for station managers and above who are required to attend operational incidents as part of their roles. Most officers now carry a vast array of equipment and this additional weight places a greater load on the vehicle's tyres, suspension and braking systems. So what is an acceptable standard specification for an emergency response vehicle?

The National Policing Improvement Agency has identified a number of vehicles currently in use by police forces as being appropriate for response driving, taking into account the Euro NCAP safety ratings and certain modifications including upgrading of braking and suspension systems. North Yorkshire has taken advice from the NPIA and has now decided that the Volkswagen Golf estate should be the bare standard vehicle taking account of its five star Euro NCAP safety rating.

Conference will agree that anyone who is required to respond under blue lights to emergency incidents, whether they are police, ambulance or fire, should have a vehicle which is fit for purpose and not selected based upon its cost. Conference calls upon the Executive Council to produce a report which focuses on the minimum specification required for vehicles being driven by flexi duty system officers whilst responding to incidents on blue lights. Fire officers all over the country are currently responding to incidents in vehicles that may not be appropriate for response driving and a

national standard should be adopted in consultation with police and ambulance partners. Conference, I move.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO PAN POUILLAIS (London):

Mr President, comrades, did I tell you it is my last Conference? In London we do have some issues regarding the specifications of the vehicles that are currently in use by our officer members when responding to emergencies. We currently run three schemes in London and they are lease, essential car users and the fleet vehicles supplied by the Brigade. London is by no means unique in having differing car schemes. However, the fleet vehicles are fitted with blue lights within the front grills, on the sides of the vehicles, on the roof gantry, all around. So when they're responding to emergencies these vehicles are clearly seen, making that journey safer. However, these fleet vehicles are only given to those officers who are in a temporary position or on development. As soon as they're promoted to a substantive position they are compelled to enter either the lease or the essential car user scheme.

In retrospect those on the lease and essential car users are provided with a single magnetic roof-mounted strobe flashing light as the acceptable standard, and two tones and that is it. For all intents and purposes they are ordinary vehicles. There is evidence that this provision is inadequate and has caused accidents where our members' vehicles have not been seen, resulting in our members suffering as a consequence as well as compromising the safety of the members of the public.

The reasons for this disparity in that emergency equipment on those vehicles is purely based on cost. The Fire Authority do not want to pay for a better, safer system or standard. They will only apply a minimal standard, if they can get away with it. Even the Met Police, who we come across regularly in London, have some reservations about our vehicles. They're really shocked that we've only got a single blue magnetic light on the roof of the vehicle. Ironically, those fleet vehicles are owned by AssetCo! There you go. All singing, all dancing! So at least AssetCo have got one thing right, haven't they? Indeed!

Therefore, an agreed national standard needs to be applied to ensure that our members are safe when responding to emergencies. We've already heard from Essex earlier on this week in Resolution 51, of the difficulties encountered by our members when involved in accidents and the lack of support from the Fire Authorities. Comrades, let us ensure that our officer

Day Three – 19th May

members and any of our members that use emergency vehicles to respond to emergency are safe. Please support this Resolution. I second it. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO PETER MOSS (ONC):

Conference, President, in principle the Officers National Committee support this Resolution, but we do have a number of concerns, as such a report does have the potential to impact on our members in both a positive and a negative manner. There may also be a wider range of our members involved in this, not just the Flexi Duty officers that are referred to in the Resolution. Therefore the Officers National Committee will welcome the opportunity to assist in producing the report in whatever manner is seen fit. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 42 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried*.

Can I ask once again Conference, that everybody in here votes. There are some people who just aren't voting. You're not here to abstain, I'm sure you're not here to abstain, but some of the hands are really lazy and I really need to get an account of that. Please Conference, everybody in the delegation, please vote. Thank you.

Paragraph J3, Paragraph J4, J5, J6, West Yorkshire.

BRO JOHN DURKIN (West Yorkshire):

Conference, Serious Accident Investigation. As a newly qualified health & safety rep, following my completion of the TUC diploma course at Leeds College, nothing could have prepared me for my first serious accident investigation involving a West Yorkshire member. The enormity of the responsibility as our member clung to life in a Leeds hospital weighed heavily upon me. However, I was not alone. EC Member Ian Murray helped me with the phone calls and the setting up of the FBU Serious Accident Investigation team. Ian McGill Region 5 and Alistair Biggs, North Yorkshire, all helped share the burden. My Brigade Secretary secured my time back, Thompsons solicitors also advised me. In short, Conference, should you find yourself in a serious accident investigation, help is available. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph J7, J8, J9. I now call Resolution 39, Dynamic Risk Assessments, Northumberland. Executive Council give qualified support.

Resolution 39 – DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

Conference feels that thorough pre planning for incidents through Generic Risk Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures provide safer systems of work for Operational Firefighters and Control Staff. These procedures and assessments are often being undermined with Brigades utilising Dynamic Risk Assessments to the detriment of members' health, safety and welfare.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to conduct an investigation into the inappropriate application of the Dynamic Risk Assessment process in Fire and Rescue Services; the results to be published 12 months from this Conference.

NORTHUMBERLAND

SIS AMANDA CREGIN (Northumberland):

President, Conference, according to the 1998 publication Dynamic Management of Risk at Operational Incidents – the only guidance on the process – a dynamic risk assessment is defined as “the continuous process of identifying hazards, assessing risk, taking action to eliminate or reduce risk, monitoring and reviewing in the rapidly changing circumstances of an operational incident.”

Whilst this statement is relevant to the work of firefighters at operational incidents, it appears that the use of dynamic risk assessments has become an ad hoc version of risk assessment which leaves us ill prepared for the dangerous conditions we face on a daily basis.

In the past, firefighters and control staff have planned and trained meticulously for incidents and pre-planning for worst case scenarios through generic risk assessments, adaptation of CAST planning scenarios and familiarisation in training, crews have been prepared for all manner of incidents. However, the push for the modernisation of our Service, the cost neutral efficiency saving IRMP strategies of our Fire Authorities, and the imbalance of our prevention versus intervention strategies, has inevitably led to the watering down of our members' training time. The resultant pressure to cover our requirements has given way to the increasing use of dynamic risk assessment as a kind of suck it and see assessment of risk on operational incident grounds.

The FBU publication In the Line of Duty comprehensively deals with the outcomes of the recent shift in Fire Service core activities. This leads me to ask the question: what exactly is a dynamic risk assessment? Is it an ad hoc, on the scene attempt to mitigate risk despite a lack of knowledge, pre-planning, adequate training and adherence to practically tested

Day Three – 19th May

and applied procedures? Or is it a way of feeding knowledge gained at previous incidents into our plans and procedures for future incidents through fully accountable command and control structure?

At present I believe as FBU officials, as FBU members, and, in the case of Fire Authorities as employers, we just don't know. Until we do, we are at risk of losing lives of our members at an increasing rate. Conference, it is that simple. A little knowledge has dangerous potential and far reaching consequences for our colleagues and friends. We need to fully analyse the use of a dynamic risk assessment and we need to do it now. Conference, please support this. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Secunder, Marty.

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

Mr President, Conference, dynamic risk assessment, another acronym in the Fire Service, probably used in a very ad hoc manner and used as seen fit for the purpose. Or is it also just to devolve responsibility to a position where further assistance and a more structured command and control structure are completely lost? If we asked 100 firefighters in this room now what was meant by a dynamic risk assessment we'd probably get 100 different answers. Should it not be the case that the initial officer in charge carries out an operational risk assessment and then is backed up by the full structured command and control system operated within the scope of the IRMP within that individual Brigade?

Our senior managers cannot use IRMPs to tell us how to cut our Service and then use them on the other hand to ignore basic command and control procedures. All our staff deserve better. Please support. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

BRO PAUL PRYCE (CSNC):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 39, Dynamic Risk Assessment. In these very turbulent and changing times Emergency Fire Control staff usually end up right in the middle of it. Very rarely do officers in charge of Control dynamically assess the situation in Control. I would suggest that senior brigade management never assess the risk. All too often we hear in our meetings that Emergency Fire Control Rooms run under crewed, not enough staff to allow meal breaks or meaningful training outside the Control Room. Since senior brigade management thought their Control Room would be lost to the Fire Control Project,

various things have happened. There was little or no recruitment of Control staff, substantive promotions were very rare, senior management preferring to act up indefinitely to make it cheaper for redundancy. So we were sometimes left in Control with only two personnel. This is particularly true of my own, where last week, for two out of the seven shifts, we acted with two personnel although they were competent. The week before, we dropped down to two personnel on one of the night shifts with only two control operators, with one acting up. Acting up Conference, on reduced responsibilities which I've still got to find out exactly what that means.

These are not the best of scenarios, I think you'll agree. When a fire appliance is under crewed it is taken off the run. When a Fire Control Room is under crewed it still manages. The only losers are the staff. No real meal breaks, no time for training, no relief crews. The welfare of staff is completely disregarded. That is not to say the competency of the acting rank is not taken into account. That is unfair to the individual and the crew on duty. There are issues of health & safety and welfare for the crews there out on the Stations and on the incident grounds.

Let us not fall into the senior brigade management trap of saying Brigade Controls can't cope. This will only give them the green light to introduce satellite controls, day crewed controls with calls being transferred elsewhere at night. The way to cope is to ensure that staffing levels in Fire Control are not compromised, and the level of competency and supervision is not compromised. In essence, make sure there are enough competent staff on duty to ensure safe systems of work. So when you're looking at risk assessments of any kind, don't forget your comrades in Control. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'll ask the AGS to give the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, we do welcome the Resolution and it certainly does dovetail with much of the work and the approach that we've been engaging in nationally as a Union across the UK through the various projects that are ongoing. We do agree that where the Resolution calls for there to be an investigation, there will be a lot of benefit by bringing a lot of that work together into one place. I suppose our qualification is simply this. There is an awful lot of work ongoing through the various projects, as I say. We're actually implementing the intent of the Resolution and the intent of the position, whether through the GRAs, whether it's in England or whether it's in Scotland or the other

Day Three – 19th May

Devolved Countries. It may well be that by concentrating on producing the investigation it may interfere with the work that we are doing implementing what the Resolution is calling for and what it hopes to achieve.

So it is a simple qualification in some ways, and that is that we just wouldn't want to give a false promise or a false assurance that we will complete that report within 12 months. That is the qualification, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 39 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried*.

Paragraph J10. Yes, yes.

BRO DAVID BENNETT (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, this review of Technical Bulletin 1/97 is long overdue. As the Report says, there are still areas of concern but the review does cover the welfare of BA crews. For us this is a crucial part of ensuring a safe system of work and will provide our members with greater protection when being committed in BA. Could the EC give some indication as to when the guidance will be issued? Thank you. *Applause*

BRO GARY BENNETT (Merseyside):

President, Conference, could I ask for a quick update on the status of the revised 1/97 Document. We are aware that the Document is locked in a committee stage, but the section regarding rapid deployment is increasingly important to us, especially in the fight against riding four and four. Currently, we are fighting the issue of riding four and four and we have the employer admitting that we have to sit outside burning buildings if the circumstances are deemed as being exceptional. This is the first time we have had the service managers admitting that we don't have enough staff to fight fires safely. The revised document details rapid deployment more stringent than ever and will only serve to help us in this fight. As such, it will be incredibly useful to be able to plan for the implementation of the revision. Any information will be gratefully appreciated. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Just on those two points of clarification and information being sought, the review of TB 1/97 has been going on for some time. You will be aware through the various

reports in the publications and through the reports back from the Executive Council that the Health & Safety Coordinators have been highly instrumental and highly involved in that work. It has taken up a great deal of their time and activity. The report itself is currently with CFRAU and there are areas of concern which we've still got which we've raised, which aren't quite ironed out. That includes the issue of rapid deployment.

In terms of the publication, the publication is in the hands of CFRAU. That will very much depend upon how they address some of those outstanding issues. It is expected – I don't want to say imminently but we've been expecting and hoping for it to be published for some time. I will give an assurance to Conference that when we get back we will chase up with CFRAU exactly where they are with those issues, we will consult with the Health & Safety Coordinators and the key EC Members that are assisting Head Office with that work at the current time, and will put a circular out to Brigade Secretaries to give them that information.

THE PRESIDENT:

We are on Paragraph J11, J12, J13. Yes.

BRO STEVE ROBERTS (Warwickshire):

President, Conference, three and a half years down the line a £4.5 million investigation has resulted in three FBU members being charged with gross negligence manslaughter which, in a worst case scenario, could result in up to 15 years in prison. Warwickshire County Council have also been charged with breaches of health & safety legislation. This court case will have huge ramifications for the Fire Service nationally. The FBU are still working tirelessly on behalf of the members involved as well as all the families, which is a very difficult balancing act.

Our findings contained in our report will only be released following EC and legal agreement. We hope there will be some resolution and closure to this tragic event some time in 2012. Warwickshire FBU would like to thank the membership generally and Region 7 and the EC for the continued support in these difficult financial times. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. I do want to just take a couple of moments on this issue. As Steve has outlined, we are three and a half years on from the worst tragedy we've seen in more than 30 years – and it really is an appalling

Day Three – 19th May

situation for everyone concerned. The Union has got a multiple responsibilities in these circumstances. First and foremost, of course, to the bereaved families. A huge amount of work has been done to try to support and liaise with the families. The Regional Secretary, Chris Downes, has led on that. Of course, we provide legal assistance for the families who clearly are seeking to find out what happened and seeking justice. We fully support them in that and will play the key role in that.

The issue is hugely complicated by the investigation which has taken a great deal of time, as Steve has outlined, and has now resulted in charges against three members. I'm sure it's not lost on anyone the significance of that. Four Fire Brigades Union members killed at the incident, and now three Fire Brigades Union members facing very, very serious charges – unprecedented in the recent history of the Service.

This case is going to take a very long time, unfortunately. Both the members charged and the families concerned have had to be made aware of the scale and therefore the time that's going to be taken to deal with the trial. Of course, we provide separate conflict solicitors, legal representation to the three members who now face charges. I have met in turn the families and the three members facing those charges.

It really is a difficult situation all round, particularly for the Brigade and Regional officials who are dealing with the issues on a day to day basis. It does strike me very clearly that this will be a very significant potential turning point in the Fire and Rescue Service. I think there is a whole host of questions which will be asked in the course of that trial. We don't want to pre-empt anything that will come out in there, but there are clearly a whole number of issues that will inevitably be asked about the Fire Service, about Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Fire Service more generally. I just give notice to Conference that I expect this to run for some considerable time.

If I can just take the same opportunity to raise another related matter on health & safety. Steve mentioned that the employer, Warwickshire County Council, is also facing a charge under the Health & Safety at Work Act. I don't know if people have picked up on this yet, but in the aftermath of the London 7/7 inquest there were some questions around the role of the emergency services. I think the Coroner helpfully praised all those in the emergency services, and particularly those in the London Fire Brigade and said that Londoners and the London Fire Brigade should be proud of their employees who responded on that day.

However, on the following Saturday there was an interview in the Telegraph with the chief constable of the Metropolitan Police who argued that actually

health & safety legislation should be withdrawn from those working in the emergency services. I have to say that having just visited Warwickshire to see the opening day of the trial of three of our members, I just found that sickening and appalling. Effectively, the result of that, by the way, would be that while there are concerns raised about how Warwickshire County Council, and the institution itself in the Fire Service is being dealt with, there is at least some mechanism for holding the employer to account. The implications of what the chief constable is saying is that we would lose one of those mechanisms for holding employers to account in such circumstances. It strikes me the only remedy then would be precisely about holding individuals to account and we would be likely to see more such cases.

In my view, I have to say the comments of that very senior police officer are ignorant, ill informed, and not representative. He doesn't speak for the Fire and Rescue Service, he certainly doesn't speak for firefighters who, as we have heard and as you read in this Report, have had more than enough tragedies in the course of our work. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph J14 ,Lothian & Borders.

BRO DAVID BENNETT (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, just to give Conference an update on the investigation, we're nearing the end of what has been a difficult, demanding, frustrating investigation. We will be visiting the EC in June to give them an update on where we are. But we can see progress. We can see some light at the end of the tunnel. Lothian & Borders has a new chief officer from the chief that was in charge in 2009. Some of the issues that were raised at the very start of the investigation we're now able to talk about them. For any other officials in the unfortunate position of carrying out an investigation, all the other agencies that are involved in these investigations – from the police to the HSE to the brigade – it's very frustrating at times trying to progress some of the serious issues that are highlighted. I think the events in Warwickshire frustrated our investigation even further because of the difficulty that our Brigade could see coming to them. They thought they were under the spotlight, and they are under the spotlight. We will make sure that they improve their procedures, they improve the equipment and the training that our members get, to prevent another Dalry Road happening. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph J15. Yes, come forward.

Day Three – 19th May

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Conference, I'm not going to prolong my stay up here. Just to let you know the investigation of Shirley Towers is still ongoing. What I would like to say is last year I was probably in a bit of a state of shock still from the events at Shirley Towers and possibly didn't get across my thanks to you all for your messages of support. I'd like to do that right now. I'd also like to thank the EC and Regional officials for all their support which has been absolutely fantastic. Hopefully, this whole issue will be investigated properly (I'm sure it will) and we'll get the right answers from it. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Staffordshire have remitted Resolution 43 with the right to speak. Staffordshire.

Resolution 43 – FIREFIGHTER SAFETY IN HIGH RISE BUILDINGS

We call upon Conference to accept that following a series of tragic firefighter deaths in high rise buildings, that any current procedures adopted using the same in built firefighting facilities will not offer the necessary levels of health and safety to protect members at such incidents.

We have to accept that low pressure dry risers and the procedures required to maintain and guarantee their use together with the use of low pressure main jets in compartment fires within high rise buildings, is an out dated approach to firefighting based on a lack of adequate firefighting facilities within such buildings.

With this in mind, we ask that the Executive Council adopt this position and work with Government and the Fire Service to push for a system of secured high pressure hose reels to be installed within all high rise buildings for use on each floor, similar to those facilities used on pumping appliances for compartment fires.

This would alleviate the burden of cumbersome procedures to address the current problems of inadequate in built firefighting facilities, and offer the necessary means for protecting members engaged in firefighting duties.

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO RICHARD WILLIAMS (Staffordshire):

President, Conference, in light of new technical information gathered Staffordshire are remitting their Resolution, although we still believe this is a very important issue. On the back of Shirley Towers,

Harrow Court and many other instances where members of the public and our members have been injured or sadly killed in work, we believe that current procedures that are in place and equipment are not adequate. Across the country there are different training standards, different procedures in place at different Brigades. We need to introduce a national standard across all Brigades across the country. We would like assurances from the EC that they will refer this issue to the Generic Risk Assessment Group, the subcommittee of the Health & Safety Committee, and we'd like feedback on this at the earliest convenience. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

It's quite useful actually that the Resolution has been remitted. There was, as identified, a problem with just one of the paragraphs within it which would have made it quite problematic. We may have needed to change our position as an Executive Council. That would have been really unhelpful because the Resolution itself seeks to achieve something which we were very pleased to see on the order paper. I'm sure that Conference will agree with that.

We can give the commitment. In terms of the precise timing and order in which we progress the intent of the Resolution, I can't give that commitment. I think we'd need to discuss that with the Health & Safety Coordinators and discuss that as an Executive Council how we progress the Resolution. So we won't give that clear assurance on the methodology today. But I think what you said at the end there, what we will do is ensure that you're made aware of that once those tactical decisions have been made. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

We're on Paragraph J16, J17, J18. John.

BRO JOHN DRAKE (Gloucestershire):

President, Conference, for those who don't know, the reason I'm speaking on this is because the Fire Service College is in Gloucestershire. This happened a few years ago when the former Regional Secretary of Region 7, Brother Tony Nutting, in an act of pure socialism, engineered a redistribution of territory rather than wealth, and managed to give the administration of that from Region 7 down to the Southwest, despite the fact that it's actually closer from the College to the Scottish Borders than it is to Cornwall. There you go. Thanks, Tony, for that!

Day Three – 19th May

As I said, it's administered from Region 13 by Kev Herniman, the fourth Regional official. I'm also starting to build a business case to retain our fourth Regional official down in the Southwest. So thanks to Kev for the work he does at the College. *Applause*

What I would ask comrades, is that we do have members from all Brigades attending there, either as secondees or as students, and there are problems that arise from time to time. It is important that we need to speak with and get information from individuals' home brigade. I would ask you that if you do get a call from Kev regarding the Fire Service College, it's obviously about one of your members, so give him the assistance that he needs to resolve those issues. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph J19. Adjourned for tea break. Half an hour. Thank you.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference come to order. Thank you. I now call upon Steve Shelton to give a brief Standing Orders Committee report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Changes to delegates:
Merseyside – delete Kevin Hughes, insert Gary Bennett.
Northern Ireland – delete Rod O'Hare, insert Steven Boyd.
Cheshire – delete Lee McGarity, insert Stuart Guy.
Can I also announce that Region 3 have also donated £500 towards the Palestinian fund raiser held on Tuesday. *Applause* Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *Agreed.*

Can I ask Conference to turn to Page 15 of their Programme of Business, please. Section I Fairness at Work Paragraph I1 Paragraph I2. I now call Resolution 54, West Midlands with the Amendment from North Wales. Resolution 54 All Different All Equal. The Executive Council support and they support the Amendment from North Wales.

Resolution 54 – ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL

This Conference recognises the importance of the need for the All Different All Equal policy of the Fire

Brigades Union in defending the dignity of our members whilst at work.

However, this Conference feels that the Policy requires reviewing and updating not only to fully support all our members, but also to improve the Policy to make it more 'user friendly' for both FBU Representatives and members.

Therefore, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to review the Policy. This review must include a cross section of FBU Representatives and Officials, including Sectional Representatives and Officials. This review must commence immediately following Annual Conference 2011 and report on their recommendations no later than 1st January 2012. This Conference further instructs the Executive Council to submit any required Rule Changes to the next Conference of the FBU.

WEST MIDLANDS

Amendment

Paragraph 3 line 3 after 'including' insert 'Regional Secretaries responsible for implementing the policy,'.

NORTH WALES

SIS JAYNE MASON (West Midlands):

President, Conference, we are accepting the Amendment from North Wales. Firstly, we want to reassure Conference that this Resolution is not about weakening or removing the All Different All Equal Policy. This is an important Policy that supports the rights of FBU members to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. We are asking for a review and an update of the Policy by involving a cross section of officials and representatives. The review must ensure the Policy complies with the Equalities Act 2010, and furthermore, timelines.

Anyone that's undertaken an All Different All Equal investigation understands the problems we face. A timeline of 14 days is near enough always unachievable. It can take 14 days to convene a Regional Executive Meeting to ask for an extension of time. Investigating in other Brigades often incurs travel times, meeting retained members who also have full time work commitments, firefighters on leave, all extending timelines.

A Rule change brought to Conference asked for a timeline to be introduced to six months for internal disciplines. This was defeated and opposed by the Executive Council, yet All Different All Equal asks for 14 days before asking for an extension.

Therefore, support our Resolution in asking for a review to improve our All Different All Equal Policy and reduce the pressure on any investigation team appointed by the Regional Secretary. I move. *Applause*

Day Three – 19th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? Gordon.

BRO GORDON CHALK (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, our Policy on All Different All Equal has, for many years, assisted our Union in protecting and upholding the rights of our members. However, since our All Different All Equal Policy was implemented, times have changed, and more importantly, the laws have changed. Some laws, especially the Equality Act, means we should now review and update our Policy. Conference, I second and support Resolution 54. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call North Wales to move their Amendment. *Formally moved.* Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* I'll open debate.

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 54 and the Amendment. Conference, in 2010 we moved a Resolution on All Different All Equal and that Resolution fell. The arguments that were used last year have been used again this year. We don't want to be here again at the next Conference so we are asking you to support the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

Conference, I am speaking in support of this Resolution but with one caveat that I hope West Midlands will understand. It says that the review must include a cross section of FBU representatives and officials. We believe that this report lies where it was incepted which is at the Fairness at Work Committee, that the work is done there in consultation with the Regional Secretaries. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

I am speaking in support of the Amended Resolution 54. President, comrades, it would be crazy to have a review on a Policy without consulting the very people who actually implement the Policy. It's the same as all officials ask for back in Brigades, you have to include the Regional Secretaries on this review. However, we also recognise that if the review finds there is no requirement to change the Policy, then we don't have.

Also, we applaud the fact that the result of any review, and if changes would be necessary, it would be Conference that would decide on the right, fair and just process which is representation for all members. But representation is not a defence. Comrades, we need to

look closer at our own Internal Union Discipline for members that don't share our ideals of justice, equality, dignity and fairness. Support the Amended Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Dave Green.

BRO DAVE GREEN (National Officer):

Thank you, President. Just to clarify the point made by Val Salmon regarding the Fairness at Work Committee. They will be included in the process and it will go through the same procedure as it did at its inception. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put the Amendment from North Wales to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 54 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

Paragraph 13. I now call Resolution 36, LGBT with Amendment from B&EMM. Resolution 36 Defending Equality for LGBT Members. The Executive Council support, and the Amendment.

Resolution 36 – DEFENDING EQUALITY FOR LGBT MEMBERS

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual & Trans (LGBT) members of the FBU recognise the economic constraints that the Union faces as a result of reduced income at a time our members are under attack and campaigns in defence further add to the financial burden.

Under the previous Government, our members witnessed great advances towards LGBT Equality; but note that during this period, the Conservative Party consistently opposed such advances. Now that we have a Coalition Government with the Conservatives holding the power, LGBT members are fearful of the attacks that are being mounted against Equality.

Since the General Election, the new Fire Minister has sent a clear message that Equality in the Fire Service does not matter and has scrapped the Fire and Rescue Service 10 year Equality Strategy.

Not only is this Government intent on smashing Trade Union rights, but also has little regard for Equality. It is now that our LGBT Officials must work hardest to ensure our rights are not eroded.

Day Three – 19th May

Conference calls on the Executive Council to ensure that any internal financial savings applied, do not impact disproportionately on our LGBT Officials ability to continue to defend our members' rights. If financial savings must be applied, it should be across the board to all officials, all sections and regions in a fair and equal manner.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANS MEMBERS

Amendment

Title delete 'LGBT' insert 'Sectional'.

Paragraph 1 line 1 delete 'Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual & Trans (LGBT)' insert 'Sectional'.

Paragraph 2 delete 'our members' insert 'LGBT members'.

Paragraph 4 line 2 delete 'our LGBT' insert 'all sectional'.

Paragraph 5 line 2 delete 'LGBT' insert 'sectional'.

Paragraph 5 line 5 delete 'equal' insert 'equitable'.

BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

Conference, President, we are accepting the Amendment from B&EMM. Conference, people who are LGBT have gone through oppression for centuries. It's only in recent years that we've really seen positive change. Homosexuality was only decriminalised in England in 1967, which happened to be the year I was born, which I'm quite thankful for that they should take such a step to accommodate me!

Under the Labour Government we all could see where they were going wrong and what they did wrong. But we should also remember some of the good things that came from their moment of office. We had 12 specific Acts of Parliament specific to LGBT protection and recognition – to name just a few: an equal age of consent, a lifting of the ban of gays and lesbians serving in the Armed Forces, recognition of relationships by way of civil partnership, equal access to pensions, protection against discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation. These are but a few. This level of progress for any community was unprecedented. Certainly in my lifetime I never thought it could be achieved.

I think we need to think about how we got to where we are. The reason why we managed to achieve it – and I've got to point the finger – it's you, it's what you did, it's what the unions did by supporting and lobbying and campaigning to bring about these changes. By supporting your members who were at the forefront, we were able to lobby successfully to get those things through. Those changes may not seem important to many here, but for those who were affected by it, it made an enormous difference to their everyday lives.

For the LGBT community it was our renaissance, our honeymoon. Well, the honeymoon is over. This ConDem Government have already begun the process of deconstruction of the advances that were made. We're not alone in this. The Government have already been scaremongering around such issues as immigration, the Prime Minister's announcement on the failure of multi culturalism is cause for us all to be concerned. Yesterday Matt, our General Secretary, alluded to the fact that the austerity measures were further adding to the pay gap for women and further disadvantaging women in the workforce.

So you might say we're all in a bucket of poppycock. Well, I would say we're all in this together. Let me say this: don't let the Tories steal a phrase like that. That is the language of socialism and trade unionism. It is when we accept we're all in this together and realise our common goal that we can move on and realise this is an injury to one and an injury to us all. By working together that's where the strength will come to combat these attacks.

When you vote on this Resolution today, remember this. The FBU is a great Union, a great Union to be proud of. When it comes to delivering progress in the field of fairness and equality, we all need to feel pride in what we have achieved. Conference, support this Resolution, support equality. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? B&EMM to move their Amendment. OK, move your Amendment and second then.

SIS CAROLE BROWN (B&EMM):

Conference, President, we support this Resolution and second it and move our Amendment, which simply include all Sections. With this Government's total disregard for equality, all our Sectional officials, representatives and members are right to feel vulnerable in the current climate. Fire Services will no longer be monitored with regard to their equality targets. They are already downgrading their equality departments. There is no longer a need to show how involved they are in improving their Service by employing a workforce which is diverse and represents the community it serves. It's likely that trade union facilities for Sectional reps granted by Fire Services will be reduced. If the targets are no longer important why should they care about the recruitment, retention and promotion prospects of minorities? Where are the benefits to the organisation in allowing Sectional reps to continue their work for the Union on Fire Service time?

Now, when our Sections need to be most vigilant and proactive to protect their members' rights, when our Sections need to work more to ensure the continued

Day Three – 19th May

practice of changes we helped to bring about, it's important that changes to this Union's structure do not have a disproportionate impact on our Sections. This is the time when our Sections need to know that we have the full support of our Union, a time when we need to know that the work we have done in the past, we're doing now, and what we hope to achieve in the future has the full support of our Union. Our Sections need to feel their worth within this Union. Please support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

It's open for debate. No debate. I now put the B&EMM Amendment to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 36 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now call Resolution 55, B&EMM with the Amendment from Merseyside. Resolution 55 Equality and Diversity. Executive Council support.

Resolution 55 – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This Conference condemns the difficulties that Government economic policy has placed upon the Fire and Rescue Service's (FRS) ability to recruit new staff.

We also condemn the current Government policy that has seen the equality and diversity agenda downgraded.

Despite this, we still need to ensure that the UK FRS continues to employ a workforce that represents the communities we serve.

The Equality Act 2010 supplements all existing anti-discrimination laws, and the FBU needs to have a coherent strategy in place to make sure that:

- ***All our reps and officials who represent on equality issues understand the Equality Act 2010 and receive the appropriate training;***
- ***There is an FBU procedure in place in every FRS to ensure that the Act is being complied with;***
- ***Our Union continues to place equality and diversity high on the agenda at every level in every FRS;***
- ***Our Union continues to demand that every FRS commits to the local recruitment targets for Black & Minority Ethnic groups that were agreed in the last Communities and Local Government Equality and Diversity Report (2009).***

This strategy needs to be outlined and implemented by Conference 2012.

BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Amendment

Last line delete 'Conference 2012' insert 'May 2012'.
MERSEYSIDE

BRO COLIN JARRETT (B&EMM):

Conference, President, we are accepting Merseyside's Amendment. Our Union consulted on the production of the Equalities Act 2010, a supplement to all existing anti discrimination laws. With the new government taking a leap back and no longer monitoring the Fire and Rescue Service equality agendas it is now more important than ever that our Union ensures the Fire Service continues to employ a workforce that represents the communities we serve. In order to continue the work being carried out by our reps and officials in their Brigades we have to provide them with the right support. We need to have a current and coherent strategy in place. We need to provide training on the Equalities Act for reps and officials. We need to gather information from Brigades using agreed templates in order to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Services have made the relevant changes in order to comply with the Act. We need to negotiate with Brigades with regard to their future targets for recruitment. This applies particularly to those Brigades who have pocketed money and financially benefited from funding to help them achieve said targets.

We, the Union, need to make sure that equality and diversity stays high on our agenda and is maintained and monitored at and through every level of the Fire and Rescue Service. If we neglect to do this, we'll go back to playing catch up with our management. So I move. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded*. I call the Amendment from Merseyside. *Formally*. Is that seconded: *Formally seconded*. I now open the debate. I now put the Amendment from Merseyside to the vote. All those favour please show. All those against. That is *carried*.

I now put Resolution 55 as Amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried*.

I now call Resolution 57, Equality Targets, National Women's Committee.

Resolution 57 – EQUALITY TARGETS

Annual Conference is appalled at the Coalition Government's scrapping of centrally driven 'equality

Day Three – 19th May

targets' for under-represented groups in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Instead, this responsibility has been handed over to the control of local Fire and Rescue Authorities, sending out a clear message that a centralised equality strategy for the UK Fire and Rescue Service is unimportant to this Government.

Fire and Rescue Services have been historically reluctant to actively recruit women firefighters and are renowned for using positive action solely as a tick box exercise to achieve a 'gold standard' in auditing processes. The removal of centrally driven targets has not been equality impact assessed and will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on women.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to actively lobby Government to reinstate reflective targets and closely monitor the recruitment and retention of women firefighters within the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS SAM RYE (NWC):

President, Conference, it should be no surprise to anyone that this Resolution has hit the order paper with the Coalition hell bent on giving back the power to the people, but what it's really saying is that it's not important to them how organisations run as long as it is done at half the cost. Just look at the order paper and the Resolutions on equality after just one year in power. They talk about efficiency savings and streamlining as a way to get us out of this recession that was caused by frivolous bankers. But it's a careless attitude to making organisations accountable to its public by giving back ownership. There are a lot of people I know out there that do not agree with targets and will say it's the best person for the job, irrespective of gender. But with a job like the Fire Service that is so inherently male dominated, the only way to force change is by targets. England had targets, and I know the Devolved Governments didn't take them up. This is about reinstating them and making a difference to the face of the Fire Service.

Before the scrapping of the targets there was a will by Fire Services to try to recruit more women, and although for some it was a tick box exercise to achieve a gold standard, there were some that took it seriously. With a single blow, this devalues the equality agenda and leaves it in the hands of the lethargic Fire Services. It sends a clear message that equality issues are not important and so demeans us as women. It sounds dramatic but it's the stark reality.

Life in the Fire Service can be an isolating place for a woman, with ad hoc support, weak policies, ill educated

personnel departments which don't seem to have the will to support us even though most of them tend to be women. To have a representative workforce that mirrors society and reflects the communities in which we work is not a big ask. There will be tax payers out there that feel that as long as a fire engine turns up, who cares? I care and it does matter.

How can we engage in our communities if we look nothing like them? The military services have been able to change their make up radically by maybe not 50-50 but certainly a steady, progressive move to a more diverse workforce. So why is the Fire Service failing? That is why it is so important that our EC is instructed to lobby actively the Coalition Government to reintroduce reflective targets and closely monitor recruitment and retention, as this is the only way in which to force the hands of the people that run our Fire Services and make sure that the equality agenda is not sidelined in the name of streamlining and ownership. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

BRO GRAEME McCLOUD (Staffordshire):

President, Conference, I'm here to second the National Women's Committee on Equality Targets. Comrades, we must ensure that these targets that have been established and adhered to, not just monitored, should be increased. In our profession we deal with a diverse community and we have a diverse workforce. Some chief fire officers will be happy that they no longer need to adhere to these targets. They will say they will monitor these targets, but can we trust them? I don't think we can.

We are now in the 21st century, even though the ConDems would like us to go back to the days when the actual Liberals were in power. How will we be able to look our Sectional members in the eye if we don't fight to ensure the reinstatement of national targets? We have, over the years, fought for our members to be treated with dignity and respect. If these targets are now only to be monitored, they will be forgotten. This will see our Sections slowly and surely eroded until there's no Sectional members left. This is what the Government wants. We don't. Please support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Yes, please come.

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, we're speaking in support of this Resolution and it's already been said at this rostrum,

Day Three – 19th May

there are no targets in Scotland. All the officials in Scotland need to start lobbying when hopefully this Resolution is passed, lobbying the Scottish Government to start to try to introduce targets within Scotland. Thank you. *Applause*

SIS AMANDA CREGIN (Northumberland):

President, Conference, I'm speaking in support of Resolution 57. I know a lot of members and managers still have difficulties in understanding the need for equalities targets, but I'm not going to stand here and preach to the converted. What I will ask is that we take this conversation back to our shifts and remind our members why it is important. The lack of understanding of these targets can end up being very divisive within our own workplaces. Please go back and discuss and debate this issue. I support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? Dave.

BRO DAVE GREEN (National Officer):

Thanks, President. I think it's important that I get up on this again. The fact is that we've got two or three of these Resolutions on the order paper and that indicates the importance. Andy mentioned about the situation in Scotland. They do have targets in Wales, they are called performance indicators. So it's not a universal issue. That said, when Bob Neill got rid of the targets last year as part of the ridiculous localism agenda, I think his terminology was that we give the responsibility to Local Authorities and Fire Services. I'm afraid that doesn't really inspire us with any confidence at all.

I think what we have to do – and certainly from Head Office, we give a commitment to assist in this process – we have to go back to every single Brigade and insist that they meet those targets, they strive to achieve the targets that were set and in effect do what they should be doing as part of the national structure anyway. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 57 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against please show. That is *carried*.

Conference I wish to divert from your Programme of Business and call Dave Green to discuss tonight's International event.

BRO DAVE GREEN (National Officer):

It's not really a discussion actually! You're probably aware, some flyers went out regarding tonight. I think

we call it a gig, I don't know. Mark Thomas anyway is performing at the Fox & Goose. If you can take that along, because it is an FBU only event, you'll get in. I guess most people will get in anyway. The fact is that I would like most people to be there to get in. Mark Thomas is giving his time free. He's travelled up today, he goes back first thing in the morning. He's in the middle of a tour. So I think we really need to appreciate his time by showing that we do support him and his causes and turn up in numbers.

He will be starting the show at 8 o'clock, so can I ask that you arrange to get there for 8 o'clock, if not just before. There will be seating at the venue. I will have to say this: it is in a pub, but when he's on there will be no beer served. It is important that we sit down and we listen to his show. It's an incredibly crucial subject that he's on about, interspersed obviously with his inimitable wit, but it is an important subject and I would like you to be there to listen to him. So please try to attend for 8 o'clock.

Also, I've received ticket money from five Regions so far. I am asking that people turn up. This is a concept that is not new to the Fire Service. This is an honesty box, if you like. If you can give your Regional Treasurer £10 and then they can pass it on to me, I will give it to Mark Thomas and his cause and also we'll split it 50-50 with the Egyptians as well. We'll send them a load of money. So please support it. See you all tonight. Cheers. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, because of we are where we are with the business, and certainly my expectations (speaking to Standing Orders) we do really need to have some business tomorrow. Conference is adjourned until tomorrow morning.

Conference adjourned

Day Four – 20th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

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

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Good morning, Conference. Changes to delegates: Northern Ireland – delete Sean Paul Bailey; Nottinghamshire – delete Claire Hudson, insert Philip Coates; NRC – delete Paul Revell, insert Sean Paul Bailey; Derbyshire – delete Christopher Tapp; insert Paul Revell; Derbyshire – delete Neil Shepperd; ONC – delete John Denvir; Northern Ireland – insert Nial Warnock; Tyne & Wear – delete Brian Harris, insert Natalie Osborne; West Midlands – delete Jayne Mason, insert Steve Price Hunt; Cambridgeshire – delete Jeremy Corney, insert Kevin Napier.

Speakers' times. The Standing Orders Committee are keeping a careful eye on the progress of Conference business and suggest the mover should be 45 minutes, the seconder 30 minutes and each subsequent speaker 15 minutes. *Laughter.* I'm only joking!

The Standing Orders Committee would like to thank all Head Office Staff and our Conference Stewards for their hard work and efforts this week. Thank you. *Applause*

A special mention to Steve Cole and the Mascol team for the hard work and efforts in setting up our Conference, thank you. *Applause*

And a special thank you from the Standing Orders Committee – because we have messed them around a few times this week – I would like also to thank the Conference Centre Staff and Management Team for their assistance. Thank you. *Applause*

I wish you all a safe journey home once Conference is over. President, that concludes my final report to Conference 2011. Conference, President, thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is that report agreed? *Agreed.*

Can I ask Conference to turn to Page 16 of the Programme of Business, Section C, TU and Labour Movement. Paragraph C1, C2. I think I was a bit quick. C1. Thank you.

BRO DEREK McCLOUD (Hertfordshire):

Conference, speaking on the last day of my first Conference here. Paragraph C1 and its introduction. The FBU has supported many campaigns including those initiated by the TUC such as the Campaign Against Cuts. I don't want to keep us too long on this issue, but we'll appreciate the relationship between the cuts our members face and the funding that this Conference has set out. It's important that we do so, not just that we say no to cuts, we do, but we actually produce an alternative, which we've done at this Conference. I thank the members from Strathclyde for bringing Resolution 27 about the Tax Justice Campaign. When we affiliate by association with companies that have avoided paying tax we're not doing the right thing. I'll give an example of Vodafone, which was mentioned during that speech on Resolution 27. Vodafone, the rule applied to them was not the same rule applied to our members (thinking of RDS members). If they sit in front of the tax man they are asked for every single penny. They don't just come to a compromise; they're asked for it all. The crisis that we face, we need that funding to avoid these cuts. President, I ask if the EC can, at the first opportunity reconsider the association with our mobile phones with Vodafone and look to procure companies that actually go about paying their tax. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes. Conference, Derek in particular and Hertfordshire, Head Office do review all of our contracts, all of our suppliers on an ethical basis all the time. That's why we associate ourselves with particular insurance companies such as UIA. They've got to be ethically based.

In terms of the contract with Daisy which uses the Vodafone supplier, we will look at that. One thing we do need to stress, though, is that not all the other suppliers are free of the same accusation. We'll give that commitment. It's something we readily do, it's something we keep under review at all times. Yes, undoubtedly we will do that.

THE PRESIDENT:

We're on paragraph C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7.

SIS JO BYRNE (NWC):

President, Conference, I was elected on to the Wales TUC Committee in May 2010. At the first meeting I attended in June 2010 the Committee were informed by the Chair that the three Equality Committees had been

Day Four – 20th May

temporarily suspended by the General Council in order to save money. As a Committee we agreed to carry on the work we had committed to on a voluntary basis at no cost to Wales TUC. This demonstrates our own personal level of commitment to our women members, a commitment sadly not echoed by Wales TUC General Council.

Following the Women's TUC Conference in March, it was reported to the TUC Women's Committee earlier this month that there had been a reduction in women delegates with the highest percentage reduction in black women. This caused concerns at the TUC Women's Committee and the Committee will be asking the question why.

As part of the FBU reorganisation our delegation to the Women's TUC Conference this year was cut by 50% by the Executive Council, again due to finances. We need to be mindful that we don't cut all areas of equality in the name of saving money. The TUC Women's Committee held its 81st Conference this year. This Conference was hard fought for and was there because there is a need for it. If it continues to be reduced our fear is that it will disappear altogether. Matt has mentioned several times this week how the austerity cuts are having a disproportionate effect on women in society. The Women's TUC is the platform for that information, and the TUC Women's Committee advises the General Council on all matters relating to women. We urge the EC to continue its support for the TUC Women's Conference and our representation on it. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, Shropshire have withdrawn Resolution 47 with the right to speak. Shropshire.

Resolution 47 – DISMISSAL AND RE-ENGAGEMENT

This Conference sees the practice of issuing 90 day notices as an outdated, repressive and unethical measure.

This measure has been threatened on FBU members in London and South Yorkshire recently, which resulted in industrial action being taken by our members.

We demand that the FBU engage with the TUC to mount a campaign to overturn this legislation.

SHROPSHIRE

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, I'll only be brief. What we had intended to do with the Resolution was not to withdraw

the legal protection that 90 day notices give. It was just to try and restrict the employers' disgraceful use of that as a tool for repressing our members.

Originally, when the Resolution was brought to our Brigade Committee I was against bringing it here on the grounds of whether we'd be able to achieve such a thing. In my mind was if we can only get 84 Labour MPs to support John McDonnell's Lawful Industrial Action (Minor Errors) Bill, what chance have we got of getting this one. On reflection, I think it's important to try to push the pressure back towards the employers. I think there's pressure on our protections with odious groups out there like Tax Payers Alliance and the Adam Smith Institute chipping away at our rights as trade unionists, looking at 40% thresholds of ballots and 50% across the workforce to achieve strike action. So although we have withdrawn it and it's something that is perhaps a bit hopeful, it is something we should be pressing to try to remove the employers' ability to oppress our workers using this legislation. Thank you for that. I just wanted to explain it. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President, and thanks to Shropshire for raising the issue. I think everyone will share the sentiments that Matt has just outlined, the disgraceful way to treat people in the Fire Service. We've seen it now in South Yorkshire and then in London, the threat to dismiss and re-engage as a way to try to force change through.

The clarification, just so that the point is clear to Conference, is that the 90 day Legislation, Section 188, is indeed a limited form of protection that forces employers to go through that consultation process as opposed to the even worse position of simply doing it without that consultation. So the target is the employers' ability to force contract changes through rather than the limited protections we have under the law.

Just on the use of Section 188 Notices, it's disgraceful! You look at Local Authorities now throughout the UK using that process to force through either mass redundancies, or the termination of nationally agreed conditions of service in local authority employment as a result of the cuts agenda. So it's an important issue. We've had our taste of it, other workers elsewhere are having even worse than we are. So it is something the Movement needs to take up. We've stood up to it every time it's happened to us, in South Yorkshire and London and we will of course do so again.

Day Four – 20th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph C8, C9, C10, C11, C12. I now call Resolution 48 Palestine from Wiltshire.

Resolution 48 – PALESTINE

Conference is appalled at the constant danger faced by Palestinian Emergency Service Workers on a daily basis as they attempt to rescue sick and dying casualties whilst under attack from Israeli Occupation Forces.

The Fire Brigades Union has a long history of supporting people in struggle throughout the world in general and Palestine in particular. Even though the FBU faces unprecedented attacks on its members as a result of the ideologically driven cuts, we should not stop our international work.

All Emergency Service Workers in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank are under constant threat of violence from Israel and have seen hospitals, fire stations and emergency service vehicles directly targeted resulting in the destruction of vital infrastructure and deaths and injuries of workers.

Conference urges the Executive Council to work with political allies to exert continued pressure on the UK Government to not only impose sanctions against Israel, but also to provide support to Emergency Service Workers in East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Occupied West Bank.

Conference further instructs the Executive Council to investigate a further project, in conjunction with other UK Trade Unions where possible, which will provide physical support for Palestinian Emergency Service Workers.

WILTSHIRE

BRO TONY LITTLER (Wiltshire):

President, Conference, the Fire Brigades Union has a long and proud tradition supporting those suffering across the globe. From Western Sahara to Columbia, from South Africa to Burma, we have campaigned on behalf of those people seeking social justice and freedom from oppression and occupation. Palestine are suffering at the hands of a Zionist Israeli State that is grabbing land at a rate that, if it were to continue, would see the entire West Bank disappear within decades. Even when times are good, it can be difficult to do the right thing. Our support for the Palestinian people has seen severe criticism from some quarters. Our motion to Congress two years ago was seen in Palestine as a huge step in the BDS campaign, and again we were heavily criticised for it.

However, is it not also the right thing to do when times are less good? We're certainly heading for times that are less good soon. Two years ago, Region 1 along with Region 5 organised for eight Nablus firefighters to come to the UK and receive training to enable them to go home and train other firefighters in the latest Fire and Rescue techniques. Great friendships were made, and the FBU does indeed have a Nablus branch, albeit unofficial. This was a fantastic example of practical support for firefighters in Palestine. It benefited the safety of firefighters and it enhanced the firefighting provision for the citizens of the Nablus governorate.

While in the UK, our comrades from Nablus saw at first hand true solidarity for the Palestinian cause. This in turn gave hope to other Palestinians when they returned home and spread the word. At the last National School, Sharon Lock told us of her example of providing physical support for the Gaza emergency workers during Operation Cast Lead. It is not just firefighters suffering from targeting of fire stations, other emergency services suffer too. The close cooperation we have with the ambulance and paramedic workers in the UK, they also have in Palestine. So if times are hard for the FBU, then let's work with other unions such as Unison who have the resources and will work on joint projects that improve the lot of the emergency service workers in Palestine. I call on you to support the motion. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded?

SIS HELEN TOOLEY (NWC):

President, Conference, Occupied Palestinian Territories have been dubbed the most dangerous place in the world to work as a rescuer. Since the uprising in September 2000 Israeli occupation forces have killed and injured huge amounts of emergency service workers. Israel regularly refuses to allow Palestinian emergency workers access to the injured, and attacks them if they try to go without permission, or sometimes even when they've given them permission!

Two surviving firefighters of such an attack reported how they had stayed back after arriving at a burning shop because a gun battle was still going on. The crew chief, wounded by shrapnel to the face and a bullet wound in his leg, said: we stopped in a safe place, but thousands of people were shouting at us, saying the shooting has stopped, why aren't you going in? About seven minutes after the crews entered and began their work they were shot at. It was an Israeli trick. One firefighter and three children died that day.

In the West Bank City of Nablus, power cuts and water shortages are common. At times like these, all

Day Four – 20th May

the emergency services do what they can to help. During one water shortage fire crews were mobilised with their water bowser to take essential, life saving water to the hospital. The bowser, en route to the hospital, came under fire from Israeli troops and the driver was shot, shot while attempting to save lives. Ravi Antar, the driver, a friend of the FBU, survived but he now has a large hole in his shoulder for his efforts.

This type of event is common. When FBU members went to Nablus in 2008 they saw fire engines riddled with bullet holes, they witnessed emergency crews en route to incidents being stopped and delayed at checkpoints. It is not just firefighters who are regularly attacked; all emergency service workers are under constant threat of violence. These attacks prevent workers accessing the wounded, those who need help, causing needless death and destruction. As individuals we can make a difference. As a Union we have already made a difference. Let's continue to make that difference. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. I put Resolution 48, Palestine to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That is *carried*.

I now call Emergency Resolution 9, Severing Ties with Israeli Histadrut, Strathclyde.

Emergency Resolution 9 – SEVERING OF TIES WITH ISRAELI HISTADRUT

That this Conference notes:

- ***the collusion of the Israeli Labour Organisation Histadrut in the ongoing brutal violation of human rights of Palestinians;***
- ***the policy positions adopted by Histadrut which endanger regional peace;***
- ***the appeal from Palestine civil society for "broad boycotts and disinvestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era", which was signed by over 170 Palestine organisations, including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions;***
- ***the recent call from the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions for National Trade Union Federations and Congresses to derecognise Histadrut as a National Trade Union Federation and labour movement partner;***
- ***Histadrut's links with the Jewish National Fund, whose acquisition and control of land in Israel and the occupied territories actively discriminates against Palestinians.***

Conference demands that the EC lobby the TUC and STUC to:

- ***sever all ties to the Israeli Histadrut and derecognise them as a Trade Union and Labour movement partner until this organisation supports the application of international law and guarantees human and trade union rights to Palestinians and Palestinian workers.***

STRATHCLYDE

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

Conference, President, Histadrut is the Israeli trade union confederation. It claims to campaign for peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians and to help create a two state solution and permanent peace. Outside Israel it is recognised as a legitimate trade union confederation by the International Federation of Free Trade Unions and has fraternal links with the TUC and STUC. But the Histadrut has never been part of the solution. In fact, since its existence it's been right at the heart of the problem.

Histadrut was established in 1920 to represent Hebrew workers, and rapidly evolved into one of the key organisations tasked with implementing the Zionist project to colonise Palestine and banish Palestinians from their own land. Histadrut set out to prevent Palestinians from accessing the economy by implementing a boycott of Arab produce and campaigning for a boycott of Arab labour. Its activists were behind many attacks on businesses employing Arab labour. The aim was to impoverish Palestinians and force them to sell their land to Israeli and emigrate.

Where exclusively Jewish employment wasn't achievable by Histadrut they campaigned for higher wages for Jewish workers. Histadrut also seized the opportunity to replace striking Arab labour with Jewish labour when Arab workers went on strike at the port of Jaffa. Histadrut, with the support of the British occupiers of Palestine, set up Tel Aviv as an alternative port. So far from being a principled trade union Histadrut is in fact a racist scab organisation.

After the catastrophe of 1948 when 800,000 Palestinians were driven from their land to create the Zionist State of Israel, Histadrut then took over the running of many parts of the Israeli State, including the utilities and construction companies. In this role, Histadrut has built many of the illegal Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories. Histadrut companies also built the electronic wall between South Africa and Namibia to keep the ANC out and supported the racist apartheid regime by supplying steel and weapons, bypassing international sanctions.

Day Four – 20th May

Histadrut eventually decided to admit Arab workers in 1959 in the State of Israel, but they were confined to an Arab section and headed by a Jewish official.

Conference, Histadrut remains a key part of the apparatus of the Israeli apartheid state, created to exclude Palestinians from the economy in their own land. Conference, the FBU has been a leader in the boycott and sanctions campaign. We think that the time is right to lobby the TUC and STUC to sever all ties with Histadrut and to campaign for their derecognition as a Labour and Trade Union Confederation internationally. We think it's time to remove the veneer of respectability and help destroy the credibility of this organisation. If we, as a trade union, are sincere about opposing the occupation and supporting justice for Palestinian workers, I believe we have to do this.

The Palestinian coalition of trade unions contains almost all the constituent unions of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. Their stance could not now be clearer. They wish all links with Histadrut to be severed and for international trade unions to condemn the role of Histadrut in supporting the occupation and exploiting Palestinian workers.

The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions is in a very difficult position. They have to lobby Histadrut to help support Arab workers in Israel. They trust trade unions internationally to make the right decisions to reflect the values of the trade union movement. Those core values of justice, equality and solidarity point, we believe, in only one direction: for this Union to again take a lead and answer this legitimate call from the representatives of the Palestinian workers in civil societies.

Conference, given the fact that this issue is such a sensitive and complex one, we believe that on reflection we should take further consideration and cognisance of the fact that other unions have recently returned from Palestine and they are reporting that the Palestinian trade unions and civil society want to continue to have a link with Histadrut, although they recognise that they are not part of the solution. With that in mind, Strathclyde has agreed to remit this Resolution to the EC on the basis of the assurances that we have been given that this will be dealt with by the EC's International Committee almost immediately after Conference, and Region 1 will have the opportunity to influence that debate. We believe that the right thing to do is to take full cognisance of the view of all Palestinian workers in civil society before we take this next, what we believe is a logical, step in supporting a boycott, displacement and sanctions campaign. With that in mind we remit this Resolution to the EC. Thank you.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Point of clarification. Come forward.

SIS RUTH WINTERS (Lothian & Borders):

Conference, point of clarification, President. Once the International Committee of the Executive Council, in cognisance with talking to Strathclyde, have made the decision on this, and given that we've been promised our Conference next year mainly based around industrial issues, if the International Committee of the Executive Council don't decide to go along with the basis of this Resolution can we have a guarantee that it will be put to any special Conference reconvened next year?

THE PRESIDENT:

You have a guarantee of that, Conference. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Firstly, we would like to thank Strathclyde for that decision. The matter is an extremely important one. There are a range of views on the Executive Council, as on all other issues. Where the Executive Council were unanimous was that we were concerned at taking a decision of this magnitude by means of an Emergency Resolution. As John has helpfully outlined, other TUC organisations have, for example, taken decisions to suspend links with Histadrut (Unison being one). Unison, for example, subsequently sent a delegation to investigate issues on the basis of that resolution and suspension and reached very different conclusions from those reached in the emergency resolution. So it is an extremely complex issue. We would want to give it the due weight and consideration that we think it deserves. That would mean seeking the views of those most closely involved, the Palestinian trade union organisations. With that in mind, in terms of Ruth's clarification, yes we can assure Conference that that matter will be raised at that Conference and will be immediately addressed through the International Committee. We will of course seek the input from both Strathclyde and from Region 1 as appropriate.

We do think that is the best decision for Conference to make. Once again, thank you to Strathclyde for a very carefully thought through discussion that you've had over last night and this morning. Thanks very much.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Paragraph C13, C14. I now call Resolution 44, Tyne & Wear, seconded by Greater Manchester. Resolution 44, Labour Party Re-Affiliation.

Day Four – 20th May

Resolution 44 – LABOUR PARTY RE-AFFILIATION

Conference recognises the frustration and resentment towards the previous Labour Government felt by some within this Union and the wider Trade Union movement.

However, Conference must acknowledge that time has moved on and we are now nearly 10 years from our national pay dispute and we are facing challenges as never before under this Government. Now is the time to re-affiliate to the Labour Party, as affiliation will afford us a greater opportunity to influence the direction of the Labour movement and a potential future Labour Government.

Conference calls upon this Union to re-affiliate to the Labour Party at the earliest opportunity.

TYNE AND WEAR

BRO DAVE TURNER (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, this Resolution has also got a danger of becoming a standard agenda item, yet I make no apologies for moving this Resolution and I'm proud to do so. There was much debate at our AGM in December when this Resolution was discussed, particularly as we remembered and were fully aware of the outcome when our comrades from Northumberland raised a similar Resolution last year. It's also fair to say we weren't expecting much EC support.

However, just because something isn't easy or popular doesn't mean you shouldn't try if you believe in it. So here we are, asking for your support. A lot has changed since the decision to disaffiliate was taken in 2004. When I started writing my speech I thought it would be helpful to go through the record of proceedings and the reported Decisions of Conference for 2004. I'd like to remind you of the position and environment we were in at that time.

The employers had failed to pay the second 3.5% instalment of the agreed pay rise for over seven months. They had brought spurious arguments such as stand down time into the negotiations. They had been malicious, dishonest, and were morally corrupt. Such was the level of our anger we adjourned Conference after one day at Bridlington so we could go back and consult our members. The speeches from that time are extremely emotive and powerful and a sharp reminder of the struggle we had faced over two long, hard years of anger and recrimination when we seemed to spend almost as much time fighting amongst ourselves as we did the enemy. Overturning the EC and challenging Standing Orders almost became an Olympic sport.

However, I want to take the emotion out of the argument. This is a purely practical and pragmatic position. When the issue was discussed in 2004 speaker after speaker got up and spoke from the heart and laid bare their disappointment with the Labour Government and the shameful treatment we had received. Anyone reading the speeches cannot fail to be reminded of the cynical, treacherous nature of Blair, Brown, etc. But talk of being stabbed in the heart was of that time. We must move on.

When Matt spoke on this matter at Bridlington before Conference was adjourned, he said: "The enemy of this Union is the Fire Service employer, led by Labour I have to say. The enemy of this Union, the Government, a Labour Government I have to say." I agree, but Tony Blair was never the Labour Party, John Prescott was never the Labour Party, and Nick Raynsford certainly was never the Labour Party. It would be ludicrous to associate the current Labour leadership with our treatment in 2002-2003, or to frame the decision in terms of the treatment we received almost a decade ago. It would be tantamount to comparing our current leadership with decisions taken at that time.

During the debate on Northern Ireland's Resolution in Southport 2004, Mike Fordham drew the analogy between members' anger with the Labour Government and members' anger with the leadership of our Union. Those angry with Andy, Ruth etc, didn't resign and walk away from the FBU; they fought for and brought about change. When going through the speeches in 2004 it's impossible not to recall the anger at the time. However, it's also impossible not to realise how much the political map has changed and time has moved on.

Comrades spoke in 2004 about looking at alternative Parties such as the Respect Party. We must be pragmatic. The Labour Party was the only show and is the only show in town and we must be inside, not outside looking in. In Tyne & Wear we have branches wishing to forge links with MPs and formalise relationships with local politicians and CLPs. We're being prevented from doing so as we're not affiliated nationally. How is that of benefit to our members?

We have many brand new Labour MPs craving information, supporting this Union and its members, asking why we aren't affiliated. They want us back in. The current leader of my Fire Authority asks me on an almost weekly basis to reaffiliate. We have Ed Milliband coming to the Durham Miners' Gala in July, the first Labour leader since Neil Kinnock in nearly 30 years to attend this traditional Labour, working class event, one of the biggest political events in Europe. Tony Blair's constituency was about ten miles away. As leader, he refused every invitation to attend. The current leader is coming at his first opportunity. There's

Day Four – 20th May

new leadership in place, put there with the help of the Trade Union Movement. This is the time to get back in, forge formal alliances, to affiliate both nationally and locally.

During the debate last year a comrade from Northern Ireland said we shouldn't affiliate until the Labour Party was fit for purpose. I would argue that is now. Please, those wishing to oppose the Resolution (and it's a safe assumption there may be one or two) don't repeat the arguments that won the debate in 2004. They are not relevant here and now. Oppose the Resolution, that's your right, but let's have the discussion about current, relevant concerns.

The then President, Ruth, said in her opening address in Bridlington 2004 that we were engaged in a war, a class war. If that were true then, it's even more so now with the ConDem Government. There is a party established by the workers for the benefit of the workers and we should be back inside, fighting if need be, arguing if need be, but we should be back inside.

This decision needs to be made with a view to the best way forward for the members of the FBU, not merely because we are still angry at events that took place nearly a decade ago. Those events must never be forgotten but they must not be a millstone round our necks. Now is the time to move forward. I urge you to support Resolution 44. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Greater Manchester to second.

BRO GARY KEARY (GMC):

President, Conference, I think I may have picked the wrong T shirt for this! *Laughter. Applause*

Conference, we all know what happened in 2002 and the treatment we received at the hands of a so-called Labour Government. I understand the strength of feeling that led to our disaffiliation. But things don't always go our way. On Tuesday a document was passed that didn't have the support of a lot of people here. I am sure, though, that next week these people are not going to go back home and leave the FBU. No, they will stay, stay to play their part in ensuring the future of this Union. I believe this same principle must apply in our political allegiance.

At a time when we face the fiercest of attacks by this Government, attacks against all that we stand for, we must step up to the mark. I have heard it said this week that the Fire Brigades Union punches above its weight. Then surely it's time to stop shadow boxing in the changing room and step into the ring to fight.

John McDonnell spoke on Tuesday. He talked of the brilliant work done on our behalf by the Parliamentary Group, a Group predominantly made up of Labour politicians. It is time now to put the past behind us and once again have a voice in the future of the Party created by our Movement.

The current Labour Party leadership may not be the ones who will provide us with what we want, and it may take some time, but in the same way that we intend to pass this Union over to the next generation in good shape, so must we hand across a Labour Party shaped by the ideologies of the Trade Union Movement, to allow it to be formed once again to be the guardian of working class people.

In my opinion it is only a matter of time before we are once again reaffiliated. We should not delay the work that must be done. Support Resolution 44 today and let us reclaim our Party. GMC seconds. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Comrade, and comrade from Strathclyde.

BRO JOHN BROWN (Grampian):

President, Conference, I am speaking against Resolution 44. We have spoken about this in our branches within our Brigade. We do recognise the fact that you need to be in it to win it so to speak, but now is not the time to reaffiliate to the Labour Party. The Labour Party had a perfect opportunity just recently to show us that they really wanted to look out for the Labour Movement, to reclaim our trade union for example, and they chose not to take it. They didn't elect Diane Abbott as Party Leader, they didn't nominate John McDonnell as a candidate for the leadership of the Labour Party. They still don't recognise that they are a Party that potentially can look after us. They chose not to do that. We've had New Labour, now we've got Blue Labour, we've got Purple Labour, but we still don't have True Labour that looks after us, the workers. So I'm sorry, my members are clear to me and I have to say I wholly agree with them. Now is not the time. It might become the time but they haven't reached out to us yet. I urge you to oppose Resolution 44. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO STEPHEN BOYD (Northern Ireland):

President, Conference, we are opposing the Resolution. The Resolution talks about a greater opportunity to influence the direction of the Labour Movement. Comrades, throwing money at a Party does not do that. Joining the Party, getting involved with the Party, campaigning with the Party and working with the Party, that's what makes the changes. That's what you lot have been doing here this week.

Day Four – 20th May

Last year we stated that disaffiliation has not damaged the Fire Brigades Union. That's still the truth. We can and have had tremendous influence over those who make decisions locally and nationally, but only when we get out there and do the work.

We all agree that it's unavoidable that we're going to fight for our pensions and for our pay, but surely, comrades, everyone agrees that this can only be achieved first politically and then, only then, industrially. Conference, please do not take our members out the door without having lobbied every one of your MPs, your elected representatives. Regardless of what you may think of them, meet them, have them make informed decisions regardless of what Party they belong to. Do not tie our hands behind our backs at a time when we know we will need the widest possible span of political support. Do not reaffiliate to a Party we hope has changed its way. They haven't. Oppose the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO KIERAN BRENNAN (Northumberland):

President, Conference, as my colleague from Tyne & Wear has alluded to, we brought this Resolution to Conference last year. As my predecessor stood here and moved the Resolution I was sliding off my seat to try to crawl under the table to try to get out of the Conference because the mood at the time was not for reaffiliating.

Comrades, Harold Wilson once said: "A week is a long time in politics." Comrades, a year is a long time, a very long time. Times have changed. We need to move on. This Government, with their cuts agenda, on public sector workers' pay, pensions, tuition fees, national health service, if you thought New Labour were bad (and yes, they were bad) the Tories and Lib Dems will be a lot worse. Over the next four years we're going to have deeper and more savage cuts, mind, like we've never known before. Comrades, I urge you to support this motion. We need to reaffiliate. *Applause*

BRO JAMIE NEWELL (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, I am speaking against Resolution 44. This is only my second time at Conference and my first as a delegate. Having been in only four years, I missed the struggle that took place in the previous pay dispute between FBU and Labour. However, as a member of the working class I saw that the elections of Tony Blair were the elections of a wolf in sheep's clothing and nothing has changed. Labour are just one side of a mask shared with Lib Dems and Tories. Over the week it has been said time and again that as a Union we accept no cuts whatsoever, not cuts over a longer period of time. So why should we reaffiliate to a Labour Party that has said there must be cuts, only slower?

The biggest transfer of power from the poor to the rich was the bailout of the banks, and this took place on Labour's watch. More importantly, our members do not want to support the new Labour Party. If we support a political party it must be one that supports our ideas and ideals. This is our task. The Labour Party are not that Party. We should, however, continue to support those MPs that share our ideologies. I do not believe the membership are ready or willing to reaffiliate to Labour. We deserve better and the country deserves better. *Applause*

BRO JIMMY SCOTT (Strathclyde):

Much thanks to Tyne & Wear for bringing this Resolution to Conference, giving us an opportunity to debate. I would like to bring you some news from Scotland. A couple of weeks ago we had elections and the Scottish people have decided to move on from New Labour. They won 69 of the available 129 MSPs, giving them a majority in a Parliament when everybody says it wasn't possible, it wasn't designed for people to have a majority. The SNP took 8 MSPs in the City of Glasgow, when only a generation ago the SNP were considered Tartan Tories and, to a big extent, that's due to the work that the Scottish Region has done by engaging in the Parliament.

As I say, I think the question is wrong. It's not really up to us to reaffiliate to the Labour Party. The Labour Party needs to reaffiliate with us! *Applause*

Not only did the SNP gain a majority in the Scottish Parliament, the Liberals took a bit of a kicking as well. They went from 17 MSPs to 5, because obviously they're pals with the Conservative Party – everybody now sees their true colours. They're a bunch of sell outs, and they've sold out for about 20 jobs. They don't care about their ordinary members.

This is the thing about the Labour Party still. I know there's fantastic comrades in this room that are members of the Labour Party. I'm not talking about them and we're not talking about them. We're talking about the people that sit with suits on. I'll give you an example. You saw the big demo that most of you went to a couple of weeks ago. Miliband wouldn't even walk the route. He wouldn't walk the route. He turned up at the park and said: we are not as bad as them; they're doing it too quick, too soon. There is not a cigarette paper between them! So why should we reaffiliate to this sell out bunch of bams! Why should we? *Applause*

One of the last speakers made comments in regard to the only show in town. Comrades, we must get a credible socialist left coalition going so it's a credible alternative for working class people. Thank you. I oppose. *Applause*

Day Four – 20th May

BRO JOHN DRAKE (Gloucestershire):

President, Conference, apparently the President sent me over here because I was scaring London on the other rostrum before! President, Conference, we are supporting the motion to reaffiliate. I've got to say, Gloucestershire is not known for its socialist heart. Prior to the General Election we had two Labour MPs and I guess you could say this is the difference between our Labour Party and New Labour's Party. We had a good friend and comrade, David Drew, who unfortunately lost his seat despite the backing of the FBU, despite the donations of money and the physical support by FBU members in Gloucestershire. We also had the New Labour ex Fire Minister, Parmjit Dhanda standing in Gloucester, so the two MPs that we did have showed the difference between real Labour and New Labour.

The previous speaker said we should look at getting a socialist coalition, or a coalition of socialist groups. Have we not tried that, comrades? Have we not tried to do that in the past? We've had the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Party, TUSC, Socialist Alliance. There's been a plethora. The only thing we haven't tried is the Judean People's Front! *Laughter*

Conference, it is about whose side are you on. Tony Benn, who is a political hero of mine and I guess of many people in this room, said the Labour Party has never been a Socialist Party. It's been a Party with Socialists in it, but it's never been a Socialist Party. It's about who do the FBU stand with? Currently, we can support any candidate whose aims and objectives we share. In the last local elections the FBU in the Southwest did support Labour candidates, but also we supported candidates for trade union/socialist coalition, TUSC candidates. I've got to say, we managed to get three of our Regional Committee elected on to Local Authorities. None of them were the TUSC candidates, they were all Labour candidates. It's important that we push forward that message.

I'd like to say from the rostrum that two members of our Regional Committee are Labour Councillors now: Leigh Redman (NRC rep Region 13) is a Labour Councillor in Sedgemoor District, so congratulations, Leigh. Also Joe Tray, the Fairness at Work rep for our Region, is a Labour Councillor in Swindon Borough. But our jewel in the crown, if you will, is an ex Regional Committee Member, Chris Jackson, ex Brigade Secretary of Avon who retired on 31 March and is now on Avon Fire Authority. I think that's a fantastic achievement to have an FBU representative on a Fire Authority. We aim to try to replicate that in Devon & Somerset with Leigh and in Wiltshire with Joe. *Applause*

But I tell you what, comrades, it's only going to be Labour. You can support TUSC, you can support your

socialist alliance, you can support all you want, they are never ever going to be in a position where they're going to be able to represent the FBU on Fire Authorities. Comrades, there is going to be opposition from the top table, I'm sure, but you know this is the right thing to do. Support this motion. *Applause*

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of this Resolution. It's been nearly ten years, comrades. Yes, we were angry. But you know, this Union punches well above its weight, and you know it does. Can you imagine what influence we would have if we reaffiliated to the Labour Party? As someone said earlier, you've got to be in it to achieve anything. Come on, please, let's support.

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

Joe MacVeigh, speaking for the last time at Conference and Man of the Match. *Applause*

I've got some sympathy for the comrades from Tyne & Wear and the other speakers who have spoken in support of the motion. The problem is that, believe it or not, we do sit around the mess table and we do talk about things apart from football. We discussed this before I came up here. I said: what about reaffiliating with the Labour Party. I got covered in spaghetti bolognaise, to be honest with you, they were throwing things left, right and centre at me! So I don't think the mood's quite there yet. Ed Miliband – jury's still out on him. He was elected on a trade union ticket. I think he made all the right noises to get elected. Hopefully I'll be seeing him at the Durham Miners Gala as well. I'll be putting the FBU's position to see what he's going to do about moving towards us. I think Stevie Boyd is right, you've got to do the political work etc.

At the end of the day, it's not about us going to the Labour Party, by the way. I think it's the other way round. Don't you think the speaker is right: it's about the Labour Party coming to us, begging for forgiveness in some respects, and asking us to reaffiliate. It shouldn't be the other way round. We shouldn't be going to them; they should be coming to us. Oppose the Resolution and goodbye. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary to give the EC's opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, it always livens things up, that debate! The Executive Council are urging opposition to the Resolution. However, we do welcome the debate.

Day Four – 20th May

I think it was last year somebody said let's not see this Resolution here again. We fully support the right and decisions of Brigade Committees to send whatever Resolutions they wish. It's clearly an important, central debate to be had about the future political direction of our Union. We've discussed earlier in the week how all the decisions that are being made that are affecting our members are political decisions.

In moving Dave outlined the heated debates at the time, a very heated time in the aftermath of the bitter 2002/2003 debate. However, one point that I think strikes me is that whatever stance people took on the issue itself, what you couldn't say is there hadn't been a thorough discussion about that issue on Fire Stations, in Fire Controls up and down the country. It was a question that members were asking, that when we're being treated like this by a so-called Labour Government and by Labour employers in many cases, why are we affiliated? So whatever stance people took on the debate, it was a thorough, democratic discussion among our members.

I think the same requirement would apply today. Clearly, having taken the decision to disaffiliate, even if we were to take a decision to reaffiliate, that would require a very thorough discussion among our members. The Executive Council is of the view that that discussion hasn't really taken place, and to take a decision of that magnitude at this time without having such a dialogue thoroughly with all members would be a mistake. Our assessment is that the views of members are very clearly against a decision to reaffiliate. That is the main reason behind our opposition.

I will make a couple of points on the question of moving on. There clearly has been change of personnel, but I think that some of the decisions, some of the stances that the Labour leadership and the Labour Party have taken over the past two years and since the General Election are appalling. We've just discussed one of the attacks on our pensions, the shift from RPI to CPI. The Labour leadership in Parliament couldn't even bring themselves to vote against that. That's an absolute scandal and a disgrace! An attack on people on benefits, an attack on people working in the public sector. They abstained on one of the major attacks on public sector workers in recent years.

I mentioned 90 day notices. We've got Labour councils all over the UK issuing 90 day notices to every single one of their employees, to rip up their terms and conditions. You challenge them and they say: we've got no alternative, we've just got to do it. One of the loudest voices in the Fire Service shouting for cuts – and I have to go to some of these conferences with these people – the voice that shouted when I opposed the cuts at one of the Fire Conferences, "Let's stop whingeing and get

on with making the cuts" – one of the leading Labour politicians in the Fire Service today. I question how much things have moved on, unfortunately.

Of course, we do support our Parliamentary Group who are all Labour MPs, who are Labour MPs who stand by this Union, Labour MPs who stand up for Labour Movement principles and policies, and we backed them in the General Election last year, and we will continue to support them and to support and work with the left and with socialists in the Labour Party. The Executive Council view is it's the wrong time and we would need that thorough debate. So we urge Conference to vote against the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Tyne & Wear, right of reply.

BRO DAVE TURNER (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, President, earlier in the Conference, when Northern Ireland moved Resolution 68 the Political Fund, they talked about how it was to assist in local political campaigning. That's all our Resolution aims to do. In seconding Resolution 68 Merseyside talked about working and influencing politicians and parties. That's all we want to do. I've got to say that the comrade from Northern Ireland who said: not being in Labour hasn't damaged the FBU, how he could make that statement we don't know. You can't prove a negative.

We walked away from Labour. We've got no right to complain about the way they've behaved since that point. If you walk away from an organisation you have no influence. Therefore, you can't complain about what they do. If they're not nice to you, get back in and make your argument.

The comrade from Strathclyde talked about a left wing socialist coalition. With respect, we've been there before. In 2004 Respect was the Party talked of. There is no viable alternative to the Labour Party. You cannot complain about an organisation's behaviour and conduct if you're walked away from that organisation. The Labour Party is not great. Those of us who went through 2002/2003 remember it painfully. All I'm asking is for people to look forward. We have a chance to get back into an organisation, a Party, that was established for the workers. We shouldn't just walk away because we're unhappy with the way it's behaving. Get back in there, fight for the soul of it, and make it ours again. I urge you to support Resolution 44. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 44 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Against. That *falls*.

Day Four – 20th May

I now call Emergency Resolution 6, Firefighter Magazine – Publication and Distribution Costs, West Yorkshire. The Executive Council give qualified support.

Emergency Resolution 6 – FIREFIGHTER MAGAZINE – PUBLICATION & DISTRIBUTION COSTS

Following the publication of the Annual Report 2011, this conference is perturbed by the annual cost of £210,000 approximately, for the publication and distribution of Firefighter magazine, at a time when we are considering the need to make stringent cuts within the Fire Brigades Union.

We call on the Executive Council to urgently enquire into how these costs arise and where savings can be made. For example, are there benefits to be gained by promoting the option of registration for electronic distribution of Firefighter magazine amongst members and Retired and Out of Trade Members to save on production and distribution costs?

The potential advantages of this being both environmental and financial.

A report back to Regional Committees on the findings of the survey, complete with recommendations, should be made within 6 months of this conference, and steps to apply the conclusions to be implemented immediately on their approval.

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I'm determined to get one through at Conference this year. Firstly, I'd like to thank Standing Orders for allowing me this opportunity to see you on Friday afternoon where you're all browbeaten and just want to go home and you'll just nod this one through. Thanks for that.

Comrades, let me make one thing clear from the outset, this Resolution is not about scrapping the Firefighter magazine. Far from it. In fact, West Yorkshire would like to congratulate all those involved with winning the Trade Union Magazine of the Year award at the previous year's TUC Communication Awards.

What I am asking you to consider is this. Is the enormity of the bill, an amazing £210,000 at least, money well spent at this time? As my comrade from West Midlands alluded to earlier, how many times have we as officials received two, three or four times the same document? Believe it or not Conference, we got another one in the last couple of days. Phenomenal!

We've seen the outcome of the Reorganisation Subcommittee. We've seen the easy cuts, Annual Conference being the first to go. But what about trimming the fat first? The Reorganisation Paper says "proposals and initiatives must be costed and budgeting needs to be developed across all areas of work". Do this Subcommittee honestly expect this Conference to believe that they have examined the Firefighter magazine's costs and found that there are no savings to be made? Or, is the Committee supportive of spending £210,000 on a publication that we believe has varying degrees of readership?

Comrades, I believe there are three types of people who read this magazine. There are people like you and I who will read it cover to cover; there are people that will look on the back page to see if their photograph's in and maybe read what Matt says on the front page; and there are those that have no interest whatsoever.

What I'm asking of you by supporting this Emergency Resolution is: do you believe that receiving a glossy magazine, at least one per the nine issues that were delivered to your door last year, plus at least another four copies sent to your workplace, is money well spent? Comrades, I'm not going to try to bamboozle you with figures. I think Warren does a fantastic job of that at the start of Conference. What I do want to draw your attention to is that it is delivered to an amazing 55,000 addresses, 55,000 different addresses, comrades. There were nine issues last year. Times that by 55,000 and it works out (if you just get one copy) at 495,000 copies printed last year. Even if that was sent second class (and I do take on board that we may have a deal with Royal Mail) and we're talking about nine issues times 36p, that's £3.24 per address just for delivery. If that is correct, that would work out at £178,000 per year.

Comrades, the other thing about the Firefighter magazine is how many times as officials have we been asked: do you have any interesting stories for the Firefighter magazine? Do we really need nine issues per year? As my fag packet calculations referred to earlier distribution costs. We have already discussed modern ways of communication in relation to accepting canvassing. Has the Reorganisation Group looked at the potential savings of sending this publication electronically? I think not. Has the Reorganisation Group looked at generating funds from advertising from ethical and Fair Trade organisations? Again, I think not.

Like I said, comrades, this is not about scrapping this publication or its sister publications, far from it. All I'll ask you to do at this stage Conference, is please support this Emergency Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

Day Four – 20th May

BRO MIKE MCKAY (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I am formally seconding Emergency Resolution 6, Firefighter Magazine. Firstly, we want to reassure Conference that this Resolution is not about knocking all the good work that the Firefighter magazine does. It's simply down to money, plain and simple. As we've already heard over the last few days, we've been asked for alternatives. So why are we wasting money in duplicating Firefighter magazine to home, work and Regional offices? So, with Matt asking for alternatives, here's a few.

In today's age everyone at work and at home has access to email and the internet. So why don't we cut the postage costs and just send the magazine to branches and to Regional offices, therefore sparking debate on the Fire Stations? The amount of times that people have had the Firefighter magazine at home, read it, and the ones at the Fire Station just get bunged in a corner collecting dust when real debate should be on the Fire Stations where the issues count. Therefore, support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. We are giving qualified support.

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

President, Conference, we are actually not opposed to this Resolution, but it's just a point to note that in Region 1 we carried out an online survey on the benefits of the Firefighter magazine and the survey scored very highly. I'd like Conference to know that point. Thank you.

BRO JOHN DRAKE (Gloucestershire):

President, Conference, the intention of this is honourable and right, but I think we do need to think through the consequences. At a time when our brothers and sisters in the Post Office, CWU workers, are facing huge attacks, the fact that almost half a million of these magazines are delivered, there could be an impact on the viability. I'm not saying that Firefighter magazine is going to save the Post Office, but I do think we need to consider it when the EC look at this.

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary to give the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, it might be a new category called very qualified support actually. I was surprised to see this Resolution on the order paper, to be honest. I was disappointed in some of the things Dave said. Dave said

he's not knocking the magazine or the people who produce it but effectively people only read the back page, my comments occasionally, or not at all. I don't think that's the case, and that's not the feedback we have. We get lots of feedback on Firefighter. We have put a lot of effort into improving the quality of Firefighter, into focusing on issues, particularly related to members' employment. We know that we use it for campaigning, that Brigade Committees use it for campaigning. That's what the Union's magazine should be about.

The costs actually are pretty good value. It works out at about 50p per member per time, £5 a year. Our members are paying a very considerable contribution. I think one issue that Conference needs to think about is if we are making savings, I have to say, I think direct services to the members should be one of the last things that we're starting to cut back on. If individuals want to say they don't want to receive Firefighter, if Dave doesn't want to receive Firefighter, that's fine, we can put that on an email version to individuals straight away.

In terms of the costs it's been suggested that we haven't looked at it. Here are the costs for the past three years. 2008: £236,000; 2009: £220,000; 2010: £210,000. So we've made significant savings for the past three years on Firefighter magazine. So we reject the idea that we haven't been considering the costs of Firefighter magazine. We've made significant savings already. The Executive Council has already, in terms of the reorganisation, made decisions in relation to this year. That is to reduce the number of Firefighter publications by one this year. That, unfortunately, will be a reduction in the service provided to the members. It's not something we wanted to do, but it's because we have indeed, as has been asked, looked across the board at how to make savings, and we've tried to reduce expenditure at Head Office by something like 10% across the board in all areas and that includes Firefighter.

So the qualification is that we will look to reduce costs of Firefighter, but what we won't do is reduce the quality and support we're providing and the service we're providing to our members. We're very proud of Firefighter. It has won awards, it has significantly improved in the past few years. We're very proud of that, and I have to say we get very positive feedback from members about Firefighter and the successes we've achieved. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Emergency Resolution 6 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Those against. That is *carried*.

I now call Emergency Resolution 8, GFIW Iraq, Greater Manchester. The Executive Council support.

Day Four – 20th May

Emergency Resolution 8 – GFIW – IRAQ

Conference strongly protests against the Iraqi Governments decision to withdraw recognition of the GFIW and appoint partisan officials to take over union structures and assets and oversee deeply flawed union elections. This worrying interference in the internal affairs of unions is a breach of International Labour Standards.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to bring political pressure to bear, by whatever means possible, on the Iraqi Government to repeal its repressive decrees, to restore recognition to the GFIW and its structures.

Furthermore, conference calls on the Executive Council to continue support for Iraqi Trade Unions during these difficult times.

GREATER MANCHESTER

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

President, Conference, comrades, when I first saw the position of the Emergency Resolution on the order paper I groaned. Last Resolution on the last day. What I would ask you, is to pause, before you get ready for your trip home, and decide whether the FBU is a good or bad Union, and whether you've had a good or bad week. At least you've got the luxury to do that. Pause in your packing and spare a few moments to listen.

The Fire Brigades Union was the first UK trade union to make links and visits to Iraq in 30 years. The US, having brought war to Iraq's door, left a devastated population, struggling with the aftermath, including the horrific consequences of depleted uranium that are now going into the next generation. Not for the first time, the General Federation of Iraqi Workers found itself the target of the Iraqi government. Their offices have been raided and equipment seized by both Saddam's troops and latterly US troops.

In May this year the Iraqi government once again interfered in the affairs of the trade unions and the unions need our help. The Iraqi government has withdrawn recognition of the General Federation of Iraqi Workers and appointed partisan officials to take over the union structures, its assets and oversee deeply flawed elections.

So what must we do? Re-establish links with the General Federation of Iraqi Workers and the Kurdistan Workers Union, continuing FBU support, continued political pressure through our friends in Parliament, and engage in online petitions, write to the Iraqi government. These won't cost us much as an association or as individuals, but their impact on the Iraqi government

means so much to them that they intend to pass a new labour law in order to stop global trade union pressure. Insist that the Iraqi adhere to ILO Convention 98 signed by Iraq in 1949 but ignored since then.

The struggle in Palestine is in the forefront of our minds and rightly so. However, we are one, if not the only, trade union involved in Iraq. Don't forget our comrades. Please support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that seconded? *Formally seconded.* I open that for debate. I now put Emergency Resolution 8 to the vote. The Executive Council support. All those in favour please show. All those against. That is *carried*.

Conference, I've got some sad news to report. We just had some sad news that one of our members from Lothian & Borders, Brother Brian Fairbairn, passed away today. Brian was seriously injured responding to a fire call. He was knocked down and has been in a permanently vegetative state for over three years. Our thoughts are with his family and friends today.

I'd like to call Dave Green to report on last night's International night.

BRO DAVE GREEN (National Officer):

Thank you, President. I just want to say a few words. Many thanks to those who attended last night. I much appreciated seeing a full house for a not EC do, formerly known as the EC do. For those who didn't make it, you missed a cracking night, it was really good. Thanks also to Alan Paterson for the sounds. I really appreciated that as well. *Applause* I'm pleased to report that so far, and I'm still getting money in, we've raised £1,940 from the International night which I'm really pleased about. If any Regions that haven't yet given me any money for tickets that weren't distributed, the £10, please get it to me as soon as you can.

The money will be split equally between Region 1's Nablus Fire Engine Project and also support for the Egyptian Centre for Trade Union and Workers Services. Many thanks indeed. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'd like to take this opportunity, Conference, to thank all our visitors to Conference this week, too numerous to compile a list. I'd like to make special mention of Ken Cameron and Ronnie Scott. It's not often you get the chance to walk around and meet, shake hands and talk to your heroes, but certainly a few people here have done that this week. I thank them for attending and long may that continue. I'd also like to make special mention

Day Four – 20th May

of someone I just spotted in the audience, Sister Sue Offland, personal friend of mine who's had a serious illness over the last six or seven months. Welcome back, Sue, very very pleased to see you. *Applause*

I'd like to also echo Standing Orders' thanks to the Staff of the complex who have been messed around a bit by us. They've managed to come up with the goods. Also, a special mention to Head Office Staff who have soldiered on through the week and done what we know they do brilliantly when they come up here. Thank you, Head Office Staff, and have a safe journey back home. *Applause*

I'd also like to give thanks to Standing Orders. I think they do a fantastic job in the organisation of this Conference. They're a fantastically hardworking committee and have worked one down. So to the Chair of Standing Orders and his team, especially Stewart Kinnon who's had the luxury of doing my Presidential Timetable this week, I give you my sincere thanks.

Last on the thanks, Jim Barbour. You've have two new rookie officials here. Jim is the Vice President who's been keeping time. I notice that there were no challenges on the timing you've been keeping, only a couple of remarks. For those of you who don't know Jim, he's probably been on Chico time since 2004!

Mostly, Conference, I'd like to thank you. I thank you for your conduct, I thank you for your warmth and thank you for the decisions that you've made this week. I said at the start that there are no hard decisions, there are only the right decisions and you've constantly come up with the right decisions, Conference, no matter what they are. I applaud you.

We have also an opportunity now to mention the following retired or retiring officials of the Union. From Region 4: Billy Delve is retiring; it's his last Conference, likewise Mark Wilson from Region 4. Region 7: Chris Downes, Mark Rattray, Colin Jarrett. From Region 10: Pan Poullais and Joe MacVeigh. From Region 8: Mike Smith. Mike will be invited back to Conference and I'm trying to make him come back to Conference, but Mike will be missed on the Executive Council. He will be really missed. It's impossible to fill his shoes. I'm sure the new EC Member will have a great attempt at that. Mike's attention to detail, his personality is bubbly, very consistent guy and he's a personal friend of mine. I wish him well. I hope he plays a lot of golf and he enjoys his retirement. He's a true friend and a true comrade. I thank you, Mike. *Applause*

Also, a final thanks from Region 1 who are heading back over the border with a total of £6,000 for the appliances to Palestine trip. Thank you for that, Conference. *Applause*

Lastly, I seek endorsement for the Executive Council's Annual Report. Is that endorsed? *Agreed.*

Conference is closed. Have a safe journey home.



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Record of 2011 Annual Conference Decisions

Southport

Record of Decisions

Motions Carried ...

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE FBU ELECTIONS

Annual Conference 2008 agreed to run all non-statutory elections for National Sectional Officials by postal ballot for a 12 month trial. This trial was extended by Conference 2009 with agreement that a report would be presented to Annual Conference 2011. Unfortunately, the Executive Council can report that the trial has once again been inconclusive.

The Executive Council recommends that the trial period be extended for a further two years or until such time as the Executive Council is able to propose a solution to the problem identified in 2008.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE REORGANISATION OF THE UNION

Annual Conference in 2010 endorsed the Executive Council's report on reorganisation. This report highlighted that circumstances had changed since the process began in 2005. Most importantly, the Executive Council recommended that the remit of the review should be broadened so as to include a thorough re-examination of all aspects of our organisation, including the financial implications of all structures and decisions. The central aim of this process is the strengthening of the structures of the FBU to build, protect and improve our capacity to campaign on behalf of FBU members on the key challenges we face in relation to jobs, pay, pensions and conditions of service.

The review began the process of examining all aspects of the union's structures. Currently conclusions and recommendations have been made which primarily relate to the lay structures of the union and to the union's conference. The other key aspects of our structure are our head office (including our staff) and our full-time elected officials. Since discussions around both of these areas involve employment rights, salaries and pension rights of individuals it has been recognised that such discussions need the full involvement of those concerned. Initial discussions with employed officials and with staff have taken place but no final conclusions have been reached. These two discussions will be the most important aspects of the next phase of the reorganisation process.

Protecting the independent future of the Fire Brigades Union

Conference in 2009 heard a report on behalf of the Executive Council which clearly outlined the aim to maintain the Fire Brigades Union as an independent and specialist Fire Service union. The reorganisation debate

is about ensuring the long-term viability and sustainability of the FBU. This will need to be done by improving our mechanisms for budgeting and long-term planning and by ensuring that our structures are efficient and effective.

The Executive Council has concluded that long-term financial planning must become an integral part of the work of the union and that significant savings will be required. Proposals and initiatives must be costed and budgeting needs to be developed across all areas of work.

A great deal of work on this has already taken place. In 2005 a series of new financial controls were introduced at Head Office and gradually other aspects of financial planning have been introduced. This has included:

- Spending limits on officials and employees at Head Office and the introduction of new systems of authorisation;
- The gradual introduction of budgets for different aspects of the union's work (for example education);
- The introduction, for 2011, of a new purchase order system which will significantly improve both accountability and budgeting systems.

Specific savings measures at Head Office or introduced by the Executive Council have included:

- Significant reductions in the spending on vehicles for the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary and President;
- An increase in the length of time before all vehicles are replaced;
- An ending of the use of first-class travel;
- The central provision of mobile phones for officials, leading to reductions in expenditure for the union as a whole;
- The central provision of photocopier machines for Regional Offices, leading to reductions in expenditure for the union as a whole;
- A review of contracts for goods and services within Head Office, including the various professional services and advisors we use. This has already produced significant savings and the process is ongoing.

Measures addressed by the Reorganisation Committee

In December 2009, the Executive Council instructed the Reorganisation Committee to re-examine all areas of the organisation. This was reported and reiterated in the Executive Council policy statement carried by Conference in 2010.

The Reorganisation Committee has continued to review all current structures and practices including those in the areas of education, resources, finances, research,

Record of Decisions

publications and other communications whilst ensuring that the structures of our organisation are adequate to provide sufficient support to officials and service to members.

The Reorganisation Committee reported to the Executive Council in November 2010 with a series of recommendations. These recommendations were then discussed by the union's Committees and, following this consultation, a series of recommendations have been agreed by the Executive Council. These fall into two categories:

- a) proposals which may be implemented by the Executive Council;
and
- b) proposals which require a change of Conference policy or change of Rule.

The Executive Council has now begun the process of implementing those decisions which do not require changes to Conference policy or Rules.

Decisions made by the Executive Council which have been or are currently being implemented include arrangements for:

- a. Reducing or re-negotiating trade union leave payments;
- b. Arrangements for reimbursing officials working RDS;
- c. Reduction in delegation sizes for external Conferences;
- d. The provision of offices for Regions and Brigades;
- e. Discussions with other unions regarding similar restructuring/reorganisation processes;
- f. Discussing the issues of reorganisation with staff and with Head Office officials;
- g. A policy whereby vacancies at Head Office are not automatically filled – this has resulted in one post remaining vacant;
- h. Trial alterations to the arrangements for Executive Council meetings;
- i. A reduction in allowances of 5% for Executive Council Members, Regional Officials and Sectional Secretaries;
- j. A reduction in allowances for Sectional Chairs to the level of allowance provided to Brigade Secretaries and Chairs;
- k. A reduction in the number of meetings scheduled for national committees and Executive Council advisory bodies and sub-committees;
- l. A move towards a 'task and finish' approach to addressing issues rather than necessarily through standing committees;
- m. The merging of three Executive Council sub-committees (Reorganisation, Finance and Staffing) into a single Finance and Administration Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONFERENCE

The General Fund balance: a key target

On behalf of the Executive Council, the General Secretary reported to Conference 2010 the need to make long-term financial planning a central aspect of the union's work and the need to make significant long-term savings. A target of between £1million and £1.5 million was agreed by the Executive Council and was reported to Conference. As budgeting measures are improved it will be possible to present a more detailed set of targets to the union for the future.

In 1991, the surplus on our General Fund was equal to approximately 60% of a year's income to the General Fund (at the time approximately £3.7 million). Today the income to the General Fund is significantly higher in monetary terms but the surplus which existed twenty years ago has been lost. Between 2002 and 2005 deficits were created in each year on the General Fund which meant that by 2004 there was an absolute deficit. A great deal of effort since 2005 has been taken simply to eliminate annual deficits.

RECOMMENDATION RE THE GENERAL FUND BALANCE: A KEY TARGET

The Executive Council now recommends that the union should move to a new phase of consolidating the union's finances, budgeting and planning for the long-term. This should include an aim to create a surplus on the General Fund of at least the equivalent of 60% of a year's (General Fund) income. This should be achieved as soon as possible and budgets and financial planning should be developed to achieve this.

Annual Conference

Our Conference is an essential aspect of the democracy of the union; it is the 'supreme government' of the union and the mechanism by which policy is set and by which elected officials at a national level are held to account. On the other hand, Conference is also a costly event. For example, costs for Conference 2010 were approximately £302,000. The Executive Council is therefore recommending changes to the arrangements for our Conference.

RECOMMENDATION RE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

- a) After considering various options, the Executive Council recommends that the union moves to a system of a biennial Conference with a Rules change Conference every four years;
- b) Delegations should be based on one per 500 members, with a minimum of two, plus two delegates per Section. This would reduce the numbers of delegates significantly and thereby reduce the costs of Conference;
- c) That two Regional and two Sectional Officials per Region/Section attend and observers and

Record of Decisions

guests would be a matter for the Executive Council to determine;

- d) This revised structure should be reviewed thoroughly after 4 years (2015);
- e) In view of the serious discussions around a revised structure for Conference and the possibility of a move to a biennial system, the Executive Council has not taken steps to arrange a venue for a Conference in 2012. It is therefore recommended that whatever decision is taken in relation to Recommendation 2 a) there should be no Conference in 2012 (unless there is a need for a Recall Conference).

Regional and Sectional Officials

A consideration and discussion took place regarding the current structure of the union in relation to the number of officials in Regions and Sections, including the demands on the time officials, workloads and the costs of servicing officials (allowances, trade union leave, expenses etc.).

RECOMMENDATION RE REGIONAL AND SECTIONAL OFFICIALS

On the basis of this it is recommended to reduce the number of officials as follows:

- a) The Regional Official position (fourth official) should in general be phased out;
- b) This change should not apply in Regions 1, 2, 8 and 10;
- c) The Executive Council should be authorised to allow the creation of Regional/ Sectional or Brigade Officials' positions, with appropriate allowances as necessary, based upon a business case presented by the Region or Section.

Brigade Organiser

Resolution 69 carried at Annual Conference 2010 called on the Executive Council to review the role of the Brigade Membership Secretary with a view to taking account of the need to build organisation and membership. The Executive Council considered this in the context of existing work around Organising.

RECOMMENDATION RE BRIGADE ORGANISER

- a) That the Brigade Membership Secretary should be renamed as the Brigade Organiser;
- b) That the Executive Council should prepare guidance on the role and new responsibilities;
- c) That training should be provided for the new role;
- d) That a new allowance should be introduced to take account of the new role and responsibilities;
- e) This should initially be set at £800 and the Executive Council should ensure that it is gradually increased to the level of allowance paid to other Brigade Officials.

General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary and National Officers

There are a number of complex issues discussed as part

of the reorganisation process, which relate to the position of the employed elected officials (General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary and National Officers). The most complex relate to pension provision and the provision of arrangements for officials defeated in election. In the case of the six employed elected officials, defeat in election also means the termination of employment. There have been preliminary discussions about how this might be addressed but the issue has not yet been resolved. The Executive Council believe that it would not be fair on individuals to stand for election to a post when discussions, which may impact on their terms and conditions of service, are underway.

In order to allow these discussions to continue it is proposed that a temporary suspension is agreed to certain election processes. The elections for General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary are covered by statutory requirement and there can be no departure from these. However, subject to the agreement of Conference, there is more flexibility in relation to the four National Officers.

RECOMMENDATION RE GENERAL SECRETARY, ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY AND NATIONAL OFFICERS

- a) That all elections for the position of National Officer be suspended until the next Conference of the Union;
- b) That the Executive Council should use the intervening period to finalise all outstanding matters with the elected officials relating to pensions, conditions of service and termination of employment due to election.

The reorganisation of the Union has been and will continue to be a difficult process. The Executive Council thanks all those who have participated in the discussion around these challenging issues and recommends endorsement of this report.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE AS AMENDED BY MERSEYSIDE – CUTS, AUSTERITY AND THE CASE FOR AN ALTERNATIVE

The FBU is increasingly appalled by the Government's handling of the current economic crisis and continue to be disappointed with the quiet consensus at Westminster to insinuate that the cause of, and solution to, the crisis lies with public spending.

The FBU is by necessity a political organization. Our members and our families are affected in their daily lives by the decisions made by politicians. Our members' jobs and profession is shaped by political decision-making.

As a trade union we must not and will not pretend as others do that our activity in defence of firefighters and the fire service is somehow detached from politics.

Record of Decisions

As a consequence the Executive Council has identified that our beliefs and our policies should be drawn together into a singular statement upon which this union can campaign.

We did not create this crisis

The economic downturn in the UK and world economy in recent years sets the context in which the Fire and Rescue Service operates. The political decisions which have been made and continue to be made by the coalition government at Westminster have created the most serious threat to our Service and to our conditions in recent history. It is essential the FBU is able to respond to the industrial challenges affecting the Fire and Rescue Service, but also that we are able to respond in the wider context within which such challenges arise.

The economic crisis which has unfolded since 2007 threatens FBU members and our families on many levels:

- As public sector workers we face attacks on our pay, jobs, pensions and conditions;
- As working people we face increased taxation and rising prices;
- As citizens we face an onslaught on our public services which threatens to fundamentally undermine the way education, health and other key services are provided in the UK.

Despite all the rhetoric about the excessive growth of the public sector, the real cause of the current budget deficit is not excessive government spending but an economic crisis which Britain's governments, and their advisors, entirely failed to foresee. The free market (neoliberal) model that has dominated in recent decades has been exposed as a failure.

For more than three decades, and particularly since 1979, government policy has reflected a firm and uncompromising belief in the efficiency and supremacy of the market. Policy has largely been based around:

- Reducing taxation on the wealthy and on big business;
- Restricting the trade union and employment rights of working people as a mechanism to restrict wages;
- Restricting welfare rights and benefits which has encouraged the growth of low wage sectors of the economy;
- The deregulation of the finance sector;
- The privatisation of publicly owned industries and utilities and increasingly of public services.

By allowing markets to operate freely, this approach it was claimed, would deliver permanent growth, security and increasing living standards for the majority. Now the living standards and security of the majority (Firefighters

included) and of the next generation are increasingly undermined and insecure.

The Government's diagnosis is wrong

The government says Britain's public sector debt is "too high". Last year, Britain's public sector debt was £890bn, equivalent to 62% of GDP. Of that total, £117bn was to fund the bailout of the banks. That level of debt is not high by international standards – Germany and Spain are the only major EU economies with a lower debt stock than Britain.

And historically, the debt is low. For the entire period 1916-1971, public sector debt as a share of GDP was higher than now. In 1947, public sector debt was nearly four times its current level, or nearly 250% of GDP. What the post-war Labour government did was not to cut public spending. Instead it introduced large-scale nationalisation, expanded the welfare state and made big investments in housing and infrastructure. Because of the economic growth produced, the deficit halved as a proportion of GDP over the following ten years.

The government also argues that the public sector deficit is 'too high'. Again, this is false. In 1991, John Major's government racked up a budget deficit of 6.3% of GDP, almost the same as last year's 7% deficit, even though this Great Recession has been nearly three times as severe as that in the early 1990s.

The deficit comes not from government spending but a collapse in growth. It is the loss of tax revenues in this recession that is the real problem, not spending too much. Taxes would have been £103bn higher without the recession, comprising two-thirds of the entire deficit of £155bn in 2010-11. The bulk of the remainder is increased interest payments on existing debt. The deficit has arisen because tax revenues have collapsed in the recession.

Government policy makes things worse

Since the economy went into recession in 2007, output has yet to recover to its pre-crisis levels, which means the slump has so far lasted two and a half years. It is now widely forecast that employment will not recover for a decade. There is no clear sign that an economic recovery is developing – and government policy has failed to resolve the fundamental problems facing us in terms of jobs, inflation and the budget deficit.

The government has introduced the deepest cuts since the Second World War. On 21 October 2010, they announced planned cuts in public spending of £80 billion, averaging 19% over all departments, over the next four years.

These cuts fall on services needed by working people across the UK. Half a million public sector jobs face the

Record of Decisions

axe – including thousands within the Fire and Rescue Service. Communities and Local Government are to lose 37% over four years in real terms, far and away the heaviest departmental cut. Local councils will lose 7% every year for four years. The Fire and Rescue Service in England faces unprecedented cuts of 25% in grant funding over the same period. Reductions in funding for the devolved administrations will also result in significant cuts in services.

The cuts fall most heavily on those who can least afford to lose. An average family at the bottom fifth of the income scale will lose three times more as a proportion of its income (£7 out of £200 per week) than one at the top (£10 out of £1,000). Over £7 billion is to be taken out of welfare payments with the lion's share falling on housing benefits.

These are the most savage cuts in 50 years. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the years 2011-2015 would involve the “deepest sustained cut to spending on public services since 1976-80”, when the UK was forced to borrow from the IMF. The Conservatives’ plans “imply cuts to spending on public services that have not been delivered over any five-year period since the Second World War.”

Alongside these measures, the government is now saying it will look at further tightening the anti-union laws and introducing legislation to reduce employment rights and make it easier for employers to sack workers. The attacks on trade unions will tie the hands of the very organisations best placed to defend workers from the cuts.

There are alternatives

The cuts, criminally, undermine the most precious resource needed to exploit these strengths – the workforce. Investment in education, technology, sustainable industries and the arts will create a long-term alternative for the economy, reaping its rewards in the future.

The way out of the economic crisis is to get the economy growing sustainably and in a direction which benefits the majority. This means protecting living standards and investing in public services. It means investment in new green technologies to tackle poverty and climate change. It means investing in education and health so everyone has a future to look forward to. The measures outlined below are not claimed to be a finalised policy for managing the economy but they are the sort of measures which the Labour movement must campaign and fight for if we are to protect the interests of the vast majority.

1) Tax big business, the banks and the rich

The taxation system should be made more progressive. We demand higher taxes on the

wealthy and less tax on workers.

- Clamp down on tax evasion, tax avoidance and uncollected tax – this would raise £123bn.
- A top rate of tax of 60% (as it was under Thatcher) would raise £19bn.
- National insurance at a constant 11% would bring in £8bn.
- Restore corporation tax to 1997 levels – this would raise £18bn.
- A wealth tax of 10% – £8bn.
- Phase out VAT and other regressive taxes.

2) End the waste of public money on privatisation and war

Public services should be based on social needs, not on profiteering and war.

- Scrap Trident and save £94bn.
- Bring the troops home from Afghanistan – £2.6bn per year.
- Stop wasted government spending on private sector consultants – £1.8bn.
- Open the books – on public sector subsidies to private contractors, firms and pension funds.
- Scrap PFI and end the privatisation of public services.

Over the past thirty years many essential public services have been privatised. Corporate profiteering in health, education, social and other public services must end. Energy, transport, water and communications should be publicly owned and run democratically by those who use them and work within them. What is required is accountability; public control over public services.

3) Public ownership of the banks

UK taxpayers now own a large swathe of the banking sector after its £1,400bn bailout. Rather than returning these banks to the private sector at the earliest opportunity, the banking sector should be developed as a public service that provides funds at reasonable rates for infrastructure and construction projects, and loans to small businesses and to households.

The banks are awash with cash, as they continue to hoard money. The state controlled banks should be instructed to use this cash to invest in the key areas required; housing, transport, infrastructure and education. Other banks should be instructed to lend at low rates of interest for public projects or be taken into democratic public ownership to be run for the benefit of all.

4) Protect and invest in our public services

What is required is a programme of growth;

Record of Decisions

organised so the public reaps the returns. This calls for public investment in advanced creative, sustainable and productive services which are shaping the twenty-first century economy. It requires investment in equality to reduce the costs of welfare and ensure that those who benefit from Britain's wealth contribute equitably to the sources of that wealth. And it requires investment in the future, replacing the broken society of greed with new human values of respect, equality, care and sustainability.

- Build one million new local authority-owned homes.
- Create one million new climate change jobs – as identified in the 2009 report by PCS, CWU, TSAA and UCU.
- Rebuild city transport systems and intercity high-speed networks under public control.
- Jobs for all. Reduce the working week with no loss of pay to create employment.

5) Free education for all

The twenty-first century world is clearly moving towards a society in which higher education is universal. Yet tuition fees make Higher Education in the UK the most expensive in Europe. According to the OECD, every £1bn invested in higher education in a modern economy increases government finances through higher taxes and lower welfare payments by £3.3bn. Investment in higher education pays for itself. Higher education for all, free at the point of use, paid for out of progressive general taxation would be the most equitable and efficient system, just as it is for all public services.

6) Pay and pensions

Firefighters and other public sector workers face the prospect of a continuing pay freeze, alongside rising prices for basic goods, from heating bills to fuel, food and clothing. This means cuts in real wages and the creation of real hardship for hundreds of thousands. The same approach has already led to wage cuts for private sector workers. Wages and benefits should be pegged to a real cost of living index, so that at the very least our living standards are maintained.

Public sector pensions in the UK (including the Fire Service schemes: FPS, NFPS and LGPS), are the lowest relative to earnings in the OECD economies. The government claims there is not enough money to fund pensions. The truth is that the shortfall is due to outsourcing public sector jobs and leaving pensions to the vagaries of the stock and bond markets. A good quality state pension, together with properly funded occupational pension schemes is the answer.

7) Unshackle the unions

In the face of the cuts and austerity measures, Firefighters and other workers need the right to organise more than ever. Our unions are our first line of defence against the coming attacks. Yet Britain has the most restrictive anti-union laws in Europe. These laws were imposed by Thatcher and never repealed by New Labour. The Con-Dem government plans to make it even harder for unions to take action to defend public services and public sector workers. We need the repeal of the anti-union laws and positive legal rights for workers to organise and take action.

The ideas outlined above are aimed at challenging the central political agenda we face – the agenda of cuts and austerity; an agenda which seeks to cut the wages of working people, to raise our taxes and to slash our services. It is an agenda which seeks to force the majority to pay for the failures in the banking system and the wider economy. It is an agenda which claims there are not the resources in our society to provide decent jobs and wages or to provide good quality public services for ourselves and for future generations.

These claims are all false. Our society is wealthy – but there is little or no democratic control over the use of that wealth. To change direction requires a sharp change in political thinking and the trade union movement should play a central role in developing such a debate. A change of direction requires a challenge to the political ideas that have dominated for the past thirty years. Those ideas have failed and we are now being asked to pay the price for that failure. Instead we need to build an alternative based on democracy, solidarity and the principles upon which our union and our movement were built as contained within our objectives:

"To this end the Fire Brigades Union is part of the working class movement and, linking itself with the international trade union and labour movement, has as its ultimate aim the bringing about of the socialist system of society."

Conference agrees the principles within this statement and resolves that officials of the union will campaign at every appropriate opportunity and within every appropriate forum for those principles to be adopted by labour movement bodies with which we are associated or affiliated.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE FIGHTING THE CUTS AGENDA

The cuts agenda unleashed by the coalition government at Westminster threatens to devastate our public services and to destroy jobs, living standards and

Record of Decisions

pension rights for millions of working people, including those working within the Fire and Rescue Service.

The FBU has been at the heart of the debate around responding to the cuts and at national and local level has been centrally involved in building the campaign of opposition. This has involved our work with the various official trades' union bodies (TUC, ICTU, STUC, Wales TUC etc), the Trade Union Coordinating Group, the FBU Parliamentary Group as well as the various local campaigning bodies which are emerging across the UK.

Central to defeating the cuts agenda would be a major shift in policy and the Executive Council will continue to develop strategies aimed at achieving this. The Executive Council recommends that political lobbying and campaigning around these issues is systematically developed and coordinated within every Region and by every Brigade Committee.

The Executive Council also recognises that the cuts agenda poses a number of potential industrial challenges to the FBU. The prospects for FBU members are threatened by attacks on:

- Pay;
- Jobs (including the threat of redundancy);
- Pensions;
- Conditions of service.

In each case, there is the possibility that the Union may be forced to call for strike action, either locally or nationally. As workers within an emergency service, FBU members will always be extremely reluctant to take strike action but we cannot allow the gains of the past to be dismantled as a result of the policies of the coalition government or the Fire Service employers.

In light of these concerns, in February this year the Executive Council issued a model resolution to Branches addressing these issues and seeking endorsement from members for a campaign which may lead to industrial action. This included the possibility that such action may be coordinated with other trade unions if appropriate. The Executive Council recommends to Conference that Brigade Committees take the necessary steps to ensure that every Branch meets to discuss these attacks and our response to them, including the consideration of strike action if necessary.

The Executive Council gives a clear commitment to Conference that it will continue to seek meaningful dialogue with the employers and with government on the issues of pay, jobs and pensions. Furthermore, if the employers or government persist with their attacks, the Executive Council will take the necessary steps to prepare for the possibility of national industrial action, including, if appropriate the re-calling of Conference.

Record of Decisions

NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Resolution 1 – PAY

This Conference is appalled by the decision of the National Employers not to make a pay offer in 2010. If the National Employers do not make an acceptable offer on pay in 2011, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to mount a campaign with the membership which, if necessary, should culminate in a ballot for industrial action up to and including strike action.

This pay campaign and any resultant industrial action to be co-ordinated with the campaigns of other public sector Trade Unions also being subjected to and challenging a pay freeze in 2011, as far as possible.

CLEVELAND

AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE AND MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 3 – PAY FORMULA

This Conference condemns the 2 year pay freeze imposed across the Public Sector. This pay freeze will have a long term effect on our members pay and pensions, therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate with our employers the re-introduction of a pay formula.

CUMBRIA

Resolution 13 – NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL

Conference demands that all attempts to dismantle the National Negotiating Machinery and the National Joint Council (NJC) be resisted by the Executive Council in the strongest possible way.

Conference acknowledges that on occasions the NJC does not deliver what is best for members of the FBU but the principle of a National body to oversee the pay and conditions of Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff is one that must be retained in order to protect members and the sustainability of the Fire Brigades Union.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 14 – ADC PROCESS

Conference notes with concern the continued failings of the ITOP and ADC process, as it does not address the issue of firefighting and firefighter (control capabilities).

Conference demands that the Executive Council carries out further research into ITOPs and ADCs, with a view

to negotiating a national process of promotion that includes the recognition that firefighting and firefighter (control) capabilities must be included in the ITOP/ADC process. In doing so it should examine the inclusion of any promotion process ensuring that operational capability would make up at least 51% of the process and a pass would be compulsory.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

AS AMENDED BY LOTHIAN & BORDERS

AND CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 17 – INJURY SUSTAINED ON DUTY

This Conference recognises the pro-rata arrangement of injury benefit within the different pension schemes, in relation to Retained Duty System (RDS) members. We then call upon the Executive Council to negotiate a settlement, agreed through the National Joint Council, that allows for compensation in relation to loss of earnings in RDS members primary employment.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Record of Decisions

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

Resolution 22 – PENSIONS IN THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Conference condemns proposals from H.M Treasury to increase employee contribution rates to pension schemes within the Fire & Rescue Service and also to introduce a tiered employee contribution rate from 2012. Conference notes that in addition to these proposals, Communities and Local Government representatives have outlined that from 2014 pension benefits would be reformed, including potential increases in retirement age and moves to end final salary schemes, replacing them with career average schemes.

Conference reiterates the opposition of the Fire Brigades Union to any detrimental changes to pension schemes within the Fire & Rescue Service and agrees the following:

- In the event of imminent legislation which would increase the retirement age within the Fire & Rescue Service of any existing pension scheme, the Executive Council shall instigate a recall of Conference with a recommendation for national strike action.

Conference recognises that arguments to increase the retirement age in the Fire & Rescue Service are undermined by Members who work past their applicable retirement age and calls on all Members not to do so.

**DORSET
AS AMENDED BY GRAMPIAN**

Resolution 24 – FUTURE OF FIRE SERVICE EMERGENCY CONTROLS

Conference is alarmed at recent developments regarding the future of the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK and the potential impact on Emergency Fire Controls.

Regardless of any future changes to the Fire and Rescue Service, Conference demands that there should be no compulsory redundancies and that all Fire Control employees currently on Grey Book Conditions of Service remain so.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 25 – MERGERS/ OUTSOURCING OF FIRE CONTROL FUNCTIONS

Emergency Fire Control Staff perform a vital role and attempts to outsource/merge Fire Controls would be to the detriment of public and firefighter safety.

Conference re-iterates its opposition to the merging of any Fire Controls. The current provision of Fire Control must remain in the respective Fire and Rescue Service.

We therefore call upon the Executive Council to:

- Oppose the merger of any Emergency Fire Control Room;
- Widen the existing campaign against Regional Control Rooms to include outsourcing/mergers of Emergency Fire Control Functions;
- Mount an immediate campaign against such mergers up to and including a ballot for industrial action.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 27 – TAX JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

Conference demands the Executive Council lobby the TUC and STUC to ensure the Trade Union & Labour Movement launches a major campaign calling for Tax Justice aimed at ensuring a progressive taxation system applicable to all that provides a fair means of redistributing wealth and secures appropriate sustainable funding for high quality Public Services.

This campaign to:

- Illuminate corporate tax evasion and avoidance strategies that permit Trans National Corporations that make huge profits in this country to pay little or no tax on their profits and demand an end to the tax loopholes that permit this scandal that results in up to £120 billion pounds of unpaid taxes;
- Expose and demand an end to the preferential treatment of so called Non-domiciled individuals;
- Illuminate and demand an end to the tax evasion and avoidance strategies of wealthy individuals;
- Demand the cancellation of the job cuts at HMRC and the robust application of existing tax law;
- Support the campaign for a tax on all financial transactions to fight poverty at home and overseas (Robin Hood Tax);
- Expose the vast windfall profits made by banks and financial institutions as a result of the UK Government's "quantitative easing" programme and demand these are subject to a windfall tax;
- Support the action of UK Uncut in exposing the tax avoidance strategies of big business by non violent direct action.

STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 28 – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT

This Conference is appalled at the Government's decision to scrap the annual Equality & Diversity Report and the national equality targets which were aimed at employing more of the under represented groups into

Record of Decisions

the operational workforce of the English Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

This responsibility has now been handed over to the local FRSs who, before the targets were introduced, had never seriously attempted to make their workforces reflective of the communities they served.

The decision to scrap the report and the targets did not have an Equality Impact Assessment and will have a detrimental effect on the recruitment of the under represented groups in the FRS.

We call upon the Executive Council to:

- Continue to lobby Government to reinstate the National Equality & Diversity Report and the equality targets;
- Put in place an FBU strategy for ensuring that we monitor the recruitment of the under represented groups in the FRS;
- Assist our local officials in demanding that FRSs commit to previous local targets set, to ensure that workforces are indeed reflective of our communities.

This to be implemented by May 2012 and a Brigade Officials circular issued to update on progression.

DURHAM

Resolution 29 – LORD YOUNG’S REPORT

This Conference condemns the dilution of safe working practices by Fire and Rescue Services across the United Kingdom citing Lord Young’s report “Common Sense, Common Safety” as justification.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the level of threat to our member’s health and safety in the workplace as a result of this Coalition Government sponsored publication.

DURHAM

Resolution 31 – CUTS TO FIREFIGHTER POSTS

This Conference demands that the Executive Council use whatever means necessary to protect all firefighter and firefighter (control) posts from the many proposed budget cuts that many Fire and Rescue Services seem intent on making as a result of the current economic situation.

NORTH WALES

AS AMENDED BY CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 32 – NATIONAL RESPONSE STANDARDS

A fire in an average sized two bed-roomed semi-detached house is equally serious, irrelevant of whether

the house is in England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Historically, the National Standards of fire cover allowed the attending fire crews to use tried and tested safe operating procedures, developed over many years.

Since the introduction of the Integrated Risk Management Planning, many Fire Authorities have chosen to downgrade their operational capability, whilst investing more money into other areas such as community fire safety.

Conference believes that this has led to a ‘postcode lottery’ of safety standards across the country, due to Fire Authorities having different mobilising arrangements and crewing levels. This is not only compromising the safety of the communities we serve, but also compromising the safety of firefighters.

Conference requires the Executive Council to instigate a study of the varying standards of fire cover that have now been introduced across the country, and the methodology that has been used to determine the level of risk; this being with a view to presenting a case for the re-introduction of national standards of fire cover.

LANCASHIRE

AS AMENDED BY GRAMPIAN

Resolution 35 – PRIVATISATION WITHIN THE UK FIRE SERVICE

This Conference condemns the disgraceful attempt by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority to replace striking operational firefighters with strike breakers employed through Asset Co.

This Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to set up a working party to research the issue of privatisation throughout the UK Fire Service with a view to presenting a report to the Executive Council.

The Executive Council will then make recommendations based on the content of the report to the next Conference.

LONDON

Resolution 36 – DEFENDING EQUALITY FOR SECTIONAL MEMBERS

Sectional members of the FBU recognise the economic constraints that the Union faces as a result of reduced income at a time our members are under attack and campaigns in defence further add to the financial burden.

Under the previous Government, LGBT members witnessed great advances towards LGBT Equality; but note that during this period, the Conservative Party

Record of Decisions

consistently opposed such advances. Now that we have a Coalition Government with the Conservatives holding the power, LGBT members are fearful of the attacks that are being mounted against Equality.

Since the General Election, the new Fire Minister has sent a clear message that Equality in the Fire Service does not matter and has scrapped the Fire and Rescue Service 10 year Equality Strategy.

Not only is this Government intent on smashing Trade Union rights, but also has little regard for Equality. It is now that all sectional Officials must work hardest to ensure our rights are not eroded.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to ensure that any internal financial savings applied, do not impact disproportionately on our sectional Officials ability to continue to defend our members' rights. If financial savings must be applied, it should be across the board to all officials, all sections and regions in a fair and equitable manner.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANS MEMBERS AS AMENDED BY BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Resolution 39 – DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

Conference feels that thorough pre planning for incidents through Generic Risk Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures provide safer systems of work for Operational Firefighters and Control Staff. These procedures and assessments are often being undermined with Brigades utilising Dynamic Risk Assessments to the detriment of members' health, safety and welfare.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to conduct an investigation into the inappropriate application of the Dynamic Risk Assessment process in Fire and Rescue Services; the results to be published 12 months from this Conference.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Resolution 40 – INTEGRATED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Integrated Personal Development System was formulated to address Health and Safety issues that arose through firefighter deaths and injuries in the 1990s. Whilst we acknowledge that its implementation has been inconsistent, it is still fundamental to firefighter safety. The Fire Minister's statement that the Government will not be enforcing national policy upon Fire and Rescue Services has seen many seeking to dismiss the Integrated Personal Development System as 'dead', or at best to reduce the importance they place upon its delivery and workforce development.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to campaign against any attempts to dilute the Integrated Personal Development System, and to ensure that officials have the knowledge and understanding to enable them to support this campaign locally.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Resolution 42 – SPECIFICATION FOR VEHICLES BEING DRIVEN BY FLEXI DUTY SYSTEM OFFICERS

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to produce a report which focuses on the minimum specification/standard required for vehicles being driven by Flexi Duty System (FDS) officers whilst responding to incidents on blue lights. The National Policing Improvement Agency has identified a number of vehicles in use by Police forces as being appropriate for response driving, taking account of New Car Assessment Programme safety ratings and certain

Record of Decisions

modifications including the upgrading of braking and suspension systems. FDS officers are currently responding to incidents in vehicles that may not be suitable for emergency response driving and a national standard should be adopted in consultation with police and ambulance partners.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

TRADE UNION, LABOUR MOVEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Resolution 48 – PALESTINE

Conference is appalled at the constant danger faced by Palestinian Emergency Service Workers on a daily basis as they attempt to rescue sick and dying casualties whilst under attack from Israeli Occupation Forces.

The Fire Brigades Union has a long history of supporting people in struggle throughout the world in general and Palestine in particular. Even though the FBU faces unprecedented attacks on its members as a result of the ideologically driven cuts, we should not stop our international work.

All Emergency Service Workers in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank are under constant threat of violence from Israel and have seen hospitals, fire stations and emergency service vehicles directly targeted resulting in the destruction of vital infrastructure and deaths and injuries of workers.

Conference urges the Executive Council to work with political allies to exert continued pressure on the UK Government to not only impose sanctions against Israel, but also to provide support to Emergency Service Workers in East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Occupied West Bank.

Conference further instructs the Executive Council to investigate a further project, in conjunction with other UK Trade Unions where possible, which will provide physical support for Palestinian Emergency Service Workers.

WILTSHIRE

Record of Decisions

EDUCATION

Resolution 50 – LGBT SCHOOL, SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS NEEDS

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual & Trans (LGBT) members congratulate the officials responsible for organising the successful LGBT school in October 2010. The school was a great triumph, despite a large number of our members from London being unable to attend as a result of London Fire Brigade withdrawing trade union leave facilities as a consequence of the industrial action taking place over imposed changes to duty systems.

Our members have benefited from access to an annual LGBT school for over a decade. Although the function of the school is primarily trade union education it also provides a unique opportunity for our members to access their officials and discuss issues in a safe environment. For many members, the school has been the first step in a process of 'coming out' and for many of our officials their first active trade union involvement has been at the school.

In previous years, as a result of financial hardship to the Union, the LGBT school has had to be cancelled. Last year again faced with financial constraint, the LGBT school had its budget cut by 50%, the largest reduction applied to any education event. The impact of such a reduction meant the promotion of the school was reduced and student numbers greatly restricted.

LGBT members call on the National Officer with the remit for education, and Executive Council, to ensure that prior to future cuts in education, that full consideration be given to the function of the LGBT school not only in terms of education but also support, LGBT members ask that consideration be given that we have already received the heaviest burden in requirements to make savings in education and ensure the LGBT Officials tasked with planning the school are fully consulted on any efficiencies that need to be made.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANS MEMBERS

LEGAL

Resolution 51 – DRIVING THROUGH RED TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Conference is concerned at the apparent expectation of some Fire & Rescue Services that their employees should drive through red traffic lights when proceeding to an emergency call. Conference is further concerned that Fire & Rescue Authorities then hide behind the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 and Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 and refuse to provide legal representation to emergency vehicle drivers when an accident occurs and criminal proceedings follow.

Therefore Conference calls upon:

- Brigade Committees to raise the matter locally with a view to ensuring all relevant staff instructions and driver training make it plain that drivers should stop at red traffic lights on all occasions and only proceed in accordance with the minor exemptions of the law;
- The Executive Council to urgently research the current entitlement to state funded legal aid alongside the merits and potential costs of extending the FBU's legal services to include legal representation for members who drive emergency vehicles at work.
- For the Executive Council to raise the matter at the NJC such that appropriate provisions may be jointly agreed with the employers, and then for joint representations to be made to government for appropriate exemptions to be made to the Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004. These appropriate exemptions should properly support emergency workers who are trained and required to drive an emergency vehicle as a part of their contract of employment to 999 emergencies. The exemptions should permit the employer to fund full legal representation for their employee up to and including any further appeal.

ESSEX AS AMENDED BY BEDFORDSHIRE

Resolution 52 – GRANT OF PROBATE

This Conference instructs the Executive Council that, in the event of the death of a paid up member of the AIF (or a member who has retired and subsequently dies within 28 days of such retirement), Thompsons, if required, can be instructed to act for the personal representative of the member with regard to administering the Grant of Probate. This service will be provided free of charge to the personal representative and will be carried out as soon as is reasonably practicable.

HAMPSHIRE

Record of Decisions

FAIRNESS AT WORK

Resolution 54 – ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL

This Conference recognises the importance of the need for the All Different All Equal policy of the Fire Brigades Union in defending the dignity of our members whilst at work.

However, this Conference feels that the Policy requires reviewing and updating not only to fully support all our members, but also to improve the Policy to make it more 'user friendly' for both FBU Representatives and members.

Therefore, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to review the Policy. This review must include a cross section of FBU Representatives and Officials, including Regional Secretaries responsible for implementing the policy, Sectional Representatives and Officials. This review must commence immediately following Annual Conference 2011 and report on their recommendations no later than 1st January 2012. This Conference further instructs the Executive Council to submit any required Rule Changes to the next Conference of the FBU.

**WEST MIDLANDS
AS AMENDED BY NORTH WALES**

Resolution 55 – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This Conference condemns the difficulties that Government economic policy has placed upon the Fire and Rescue Service's (FRS) ability to recruit new staff.

We also condemn the current Government policy that has seen the equality and diversity agenda downgraded.

Despite this, we still need to ensure that the UK FRS continues to employ a workforce that represents the communities we serve.

The Equality Act 2010 supplements all existing anti-discrimination laws, and the FBU needs to have a coherent strategy in place to make sure that:

- All our reps and officials who represent on equality issues understand the Equality Act 2010 and receive the appropriate training;
- There is an FBU procedure in place in every FRS to ensure that the Act is being complied with;
- Our Union continues to place equality and diversity high on the agenda at every level in every FRS;
- Our Union continues to demand that every FRS commits to the local recruitment targets for Black & Minority Ethnicities that were agreed in the last

Communities and Local Government Equality and Diversity Report (2009).

This strategy needs to be outlined and implemented by May 2012.

**BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS
AS AMENDED BY MERSEYSIDE**

Resolution 57 – EQUALITY TARGETS

Annual Conference is appalled at the Coalition Government's scrapping of centrally driven 'equality targets' for under-represented groups in the Fire and Rescue Service.

Instead, this responsibility has been handed over to the control of local Fire and Rescue Authorities, sending out a clear message that a centralised equality strategy for the UK Fire and Rescue Service is unimportant to this Government.

Fire and Rescue Services have been historically reluctant to actively recruit women firefighters and are renowned for using positive action solely as a tick box exercise to achieve a 'gold standard' in auditing processes. The removal of centrally driven targets has not been equality impact assessed and will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on women.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to actively lobby Government to reinstate reflective targets and closely monitor the recruitment and retention of women firefighters within the UK Fire and Rescue Service.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Record of Decisions

INTERNAL

Resolution 65 – FBU MEMBERSHIP

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a feasibility study with a view to facilitating access to membership of the Fire Brigades Union to all employees of UK Fire and Rescue Services, the outcome of this study to be reported to the next Conference of the Fire Brigades Union.

**NORTHERN IRELAND
AS AMENDED BY MERSEYSIDE**

Resolution 67 – MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Conference notes the work carried out by officials in recruiting new members into the FBU, but as the workforce nationally has been reduced, this is having a detrimental effect on membership numbers and the consequential drop in subscriptions which affects the finances.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to make the membership application process more accessible to new members and explore ways of expanding the membership.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 68 – POLITICAL FUND

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to launch a campaign illustrating the benefits of the Political Fund with a view to the recruitment of all members. This campaign should commence as soon as practicable.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolution 72 – CANVASSING

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to set up a working party on the possibility of introducing regulated canvassing for elections within the FBU Rule Book.

The Executive Council will then make recommendations with any possible rule changes based on the content of the report to the next Conference.

LONDON

Emergency Resolutions Carried ...

Emergency Resolution No. 1 ATTACKS ON FIRE SERVICE PENSIONS

On 10th March 2011 the final report of the Independent Public Service Pensions (Hutton) Commission was released. This report contained 27 recommendations that were accepted as a basis for consultation by Government in the Budget speech delivered on 23rd March 2011.

The key recommendations included introducing a new structure for pensions schemes by 2015 with a move to career average schemes from final salary schemes, an increase in the normal retirement age in line with the state pension age with an exception in the case of the uniformed services where it will be set at age 60, tiered contributions for higher earners and a fixed cost ceiling to minimise the cost risk to taxpayers.

These proposals follow on from an earlier decision by the Westminster government to increase employee contribution rates in public service pensions by around 3% across the range.

Conference recognises that these proposals constitute a sustained attack on public service pensions and reiterates its opposition to any detrimental changes to pension schemes within the Fire and Rescue Service.

The FBU has raised concerns about the proposals with Ministers, at the Firefighters Pension Committee and with officials of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The union will be fully involved in these talks and will continue to protect the pension provision of FBU members and will continue to challenge the claim that public sector pensions are unaffordable and unsustainable.

Conference agrees to continue to campaign against any detrimental changes to the fire service pension schemes (FPS; NFPS; LGPS) by any means required. This will involve:

- Encouraging members to participate in the members' survey launched this week;
- Ensuring that every branch meets to discuss and vote on the model resolution circulated by the Executive Council;
- Continuing to lobby politicians at national and local level.

Conference is committed to seeking genuine dialogue and negotiations with government. FBU members will

Record of Decisions

always be extremely reluctant to take any form of industrial action. However, we cannot allow our pension schemes to be dismantled and therefore if such negotiations and campaigning are not successful, Conference recommends that members prepare for national strike action. As agreed at conference 2010 this will include coordinating action with other unions where possible and appropriate. Conference instructs the Executive Council to begin to make preparations for this following annual conference.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Emergency Resolution No. 3 HUTTON – PENSIONS & PAY INTRINSICALLY LINKED

Conference notes the recommendations of the Lord Hutton's Final Report on Public Service Pensions released on 10th March 2011.

Conference recognises the attack this report recommends on our members pensions. We also recognise our pensions are our life-long pay and that the pensions we eventually receive are intrinsically linked to our pay whilst in work.

Lord Hutton's final report has implications for every FBU member whether working retained, wholetime, officer or in control.

Contained within the Hutton report are recommendations for our members to pay increased pension contributions which will need to be found and afforded from our members pay packets. It has always been the case our pensions and pay are intrinsically linked.

Hutton also recommends our future pensions should be based on the average salaries our members earn whilst working. If the Hutton recommendation concerning average salaries is introduced, this will mean the current pay freeze is already adversely affecting our future pensions. Conference also recognises the pay freeze is already affecting the final salary pensions received by our members who have recently retired or who may retire before we achieve our next pay rise.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to remind our employers, the Government AND DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS that our members' pay has already been frozen for 22 months since our last negotiated "CATCH-UP" pay rise in July 2009.

Conference further calls on the Executive Council, Regional Committees, Sectional Committees and all Brigade Committees to initiate and support a membership campaign drawing attention to the Hutton recommendations and highlighting the fact that our pensions and our pay are intrinsically linked. The

campaign should be aimed at building support to oppose any detrimental changes to our pension schemes and for achieving appropriate levels of professional pay befitting our members' contribution to public service. The campaign should be clear that, if necessary, we shall call on all FBU members to support and carry-out industrial action up to and including national strike action in pursuit of these fundamental aims.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Emergency Resolution No. 4 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MUTUAL

Conference is extremely concerned that Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) has established a Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) approved "trading arm." The stated purpose of this "trading arm" is to attract alternative funding in the guise of a profit making social enterprise company, whereby any operating profit would be reinvested in CFB. The stated long term aim of this project is that CFB will no longer remain a local authority Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) within the public sector, but would become a Social Enterprise Mutual.

Conference notes that the proposals as reported in the Guardian newspaper on the 19th of April 2011 do not at this time relate to core FRS activity, but are connected with other safety critical tasks currently undertaken by private contractors in the petrochemical and other similar industries.

Conference is alarmed that this move towards privatisation may at some time in the future also include those FRS functions which are a requirement of FRA's under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Furthermore we see this as confirmation that funding within the UK FRS is totally inadequate and therefore call on government to review funding arrangements for the whole of the UK FRS.

Conference will oppose any such scheme which involves the undertaking of any functions currently provided by a local authority FRS's and commits to campaigning both politically and industrially where necessary, in the event that such schemes are proposed which impact adversely on members' jobs and conditions.

CLEVELAND

Emergency Resolution No. 5 SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE CONSULTATION

This Conference notes that on 10th February 2011 the Scottish Government began a Consultation on the Future of the Fire and Rescue Service in Scotland.

Conference also notes the Initial Options Appraisal Report which preceded the consultation.

Record of Decisions

This exercise by the Scottish Government is about cuts to Fire Service budgets in Scotland. This will result in threats to our members' jobs, particularly Firefighters on the retained duty system, officers and control staff.

This Conference calls on the Executive Council to commit to fighting these cuts, every job loss, including job losses from forced relocation of posts. This to be done within the framework of FBU policies, in particular Emergency Resolution 1 and Resolution 32 from Annual Conference 2010.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Emergency Resolution No. 6 FIREFIGHTER MAGAZINE – PUBLICATION & DISTRIBUTION COSTS

Following the publication of the Annual Report 2011, this conference is perturbed by the annual cost of £210,000 approximately, for the publication and distribution of Firefighter magazine, at a time when we are considering the need to make stringent cuts within the Fire Brigades Union.

We call on the Executive Council to urgently enquire into how these costs arise and where savings can be made. For example, are there benefits to be gained by promoting the option of registration for electronic distribution of Firefighter magazine amongst members and Retired and Out of Trade Members to save on production and distribution costs?

The potential advantages of this being both environmental and financial.

A report back to Regional Committees on the findings of the survey, complete with recommendations, should be made within 6 months of this conference, and steps to apply the conclusions to be implemented immediately on their approval.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Emergency Resolution No. 8 GFIW – IRAQ

Conference strongly protests against the Iraqi Governments decision to withdraw recognition of the GFIW and appoint partisan officials to take over union structures and assets and oversee deeply flawed union elections. This worrying interference in the internal affairs of unions is a breach of International Labour Standards.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to bring political pressure to bear, by whatever means possible, on the Iraqi Government to repeal its repressive decrees, to restore recognition to the GFIW and its structures.

Furthermore, conference calls on the Executive Council to continue support for Iraqi Trade Unions during these difficult times.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Emergency Resolution No. 10 DAY CREW PLUS (DCP)

Conference notes the letters sent on 6th April 2011 by Devon & Somerset FRS to all wholtime staff inviting "expressions of interest" from staff wishing to work a new duty system entitled "Day Crew Plus".

This system involves reducing the number of wholtime Firefighters on a station by around half by reducing the number of watches from four down to two. The Firefighters who are left will be expected to work between 84 and 96 hours on duty a week.

Conference believes that such a duty system is unprofessional, outdated and unfit for purpose. If implemented such duty systems will mean:

- Massive wholtime Firefighter job losses;
- Resilience in the Service greatly reduced;
- Fewer Firefighters during protracted incidents, particularly in smaller FRS's;
- Reduction in Fire Cover as neighbouring stations have to provide cover across different areas when Firefighters reach exhaustion point.

Conference notes that the letters requesting "expressions of interest" offer staff a 32% additional allowance to work the system and then go on to state that a "first come first served basis will apply". The letter further states that if there are insufficient volunteers from wholtime staff then applications from the RDS may be sought. The letter then makes reference to the risk of compulsory redundancy for wholtime staff.

Conference believes that the contents of this letter amounts to a crude attempt to try and get Firefighters to sell out their colleagues jobs by offering second rate financial bribes and applying pressure through fear of job losses in an attempt to accept them. Conference condemns such letters as an attempt by Fire Authorities to undermine the Union's ability to negotiate on behalf of our members and urges all members not to sign any expression of interest.

Conference condemns the devastating impact such duty systems would have on the family lives of Firefighters and believes that such systems are not fit for purpose let alone the 21st century Fire & Rescue Service. They are:

- Outside the Grey Book;
- Outside the Working Time Directive;
- Outside National Pay Rates.

Record of Decisions

Conference notes that other Fire & Rescue Services have either implemented or are considering implementing similar duty systems and believes that this issue must be addressed as a matter of urgency at a National level.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council:

- Tables this issue at the National Joint Council with a view to achieving a joint circular informing Fire & Rescue Services that such systems will not be supported by the NJC;
- Raises this matter with Thompsons seeking urgent legal advice regarding areas such as the Working Time Directive & Equality legislation;
- Sends out a circular to all members informing them of the dangers of such systems and urging them not to sign any "expressions of interest";
- Considers a strategy of co-ordinated action within the FRSs who are considering the implementation of such Duty Systems.

DEVON & SOMERSET

Motions Remitted to the Executive Council ...

Resolution 5 – VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY – NATIONAL GUIDANCE

This Conference is deeply concerned at the implementation of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and its negative impact upon the British Fire Service.

We also acknowledge, and fully support, the FBU policy on compulsory redundancy.

However, we note that brigades are now increasingly considering options such as voluntary redundancies to balance budgets.

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to task the appropriate National Officer to produce guidance for Brigade Officials on negotiating with management terms of VOLUNTARY redundancy.

Issues within the scope of this guidance shall include guidance on:

- Selection criteria for candidates for voluntary redundancy;
- The impact of Efficiency Retirements on members' pensions entitlements;
- Negotiating an agreement with managers on voluntary redundancy.

This guidance to be produced, approved by the Executive Council and circulated within 6 months of Conference 2011.

WEST YORKSHIRE

Resolution 8 – SHIFT ALLOWANCE

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to immediately enter into negotiations with our employers to secure a shift allowance for Firefighters and Firefighters (Control) in all roles who work anti social hours.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolution 9 – NATIONALLY AGREED WHOLETIME SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to enter into negotiations at the National Joint Council on a nationally agreed whole time shift duty system. Negotiations should commence as soon as possible after close of this Conference and regular updates on progress be provided to members.

CLEVELAND

Record of Decisions

Resolution 10 – PRE-ARRANGED OVERTIME

This Conference is concerned that a number of brigades are deliberately reducing establishment levels and are using pre-arranged overtime to cover for planned shortfalls in establishments. This is in breach of the Scheme of Conditions of Service 6th Edition, Section 4, Part B, paragraph 26.

Therefore, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to ballot the members on the introduction of a ban on pre-arranged overtime.

CLEVELAND

Resolution 12 – WATER RESCUE

Conference notes that Water Rescues are not a statutory duty of Fire and Rescue Authorities and that they receive no additional funding for carrying them out.

This Conference is of the opinion that the carrying out of water rescues is outside of the firefighter role map and therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise the matter at the National Joint Council (NJC) and where it is established by a Fire and Rescue Authority, there is a requirement for firefighters to carry out water rescue, then there should be an NJC agreed additional payment made to those carrying out these duties that are in addition to their NJC agreed role map.

HUMBERSIDE

Resolution 16 – SUPERVISORY MANAGERS' PAY

This Conference demands that the Executive Council negotiate with our employers at the NJC to secure recognition of the difference in responsibility that the development roles of supervisory Crew and Watch Managers entail, and that this recognition is reflected in the difference in remuneration for these roles by way of an increase. On many stations (particularly RDS stations), there is very little appetite to take on such roles when the increased levels of responsibility are not reflected in the difference in pay.

NORTH WALES

Resolution 18 – DUTY SYSTEMS

This Conference demands that no new Retained Duty Systems (RDS) be introduced without full negotiations and agreement with the FBU and its RDS members, and that any new scheme does not constitute anything lower than Grey Book conditions.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Resolution 19 – TRAINING TIME

This Conference demands that the Executive Council negotiate with our employers at the National Joint Council to ensure that all Brigades provide Retained Duty System Staff with a minimum of 3 hours for weekly Drill nights to allow Firefighters to achieve and maintain competency.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Resolution 34 – CO-RESPONDING

This Conference asks the Executive Council to progress talks with the National Joint Council on the issue of co-responding in the Fire and Rescue Service. It is recognised that co-responding is becoming more prevalent in Fire and Rescue Services up and down the country with variants and inconsistencies. A national approach would protect our members who wish to partake, and safeguards could be put in place to protect the current role maps.

Co-responding should remain outside of the current role maps, but a safe system of working should be agreed. These measures put in place to prevent Fire and Rescue Services from dividing our workforce. Currently our Control Room members are still required to mobilise to incidents and the lack of a nationally agreed position marginalises our brothers and sisters. Our Retained Duty System staff are used to provide crew for co-responding schemes, thereby preventing them from having FBU protection and membership.

As a responsible trade union we cannot continue to ignore such a contentious issue without having meaningful dialogue and resolution that would ultimately protect and increase our membership.

HAMPSHIRE

Resolution 43 – FIREFIGHTER SAFETY IN HIGH RISE BUILDINGS

We call upon Conference to accept that following a series of tragic firefighter deaths in high rise buildings, that any current procedures adopted using the same in built firefighting facilities will not offer the necessary levels of health and safety to protect members at such incidents.

We have to accept that low pressure dry risers and the procedures required to maintain and guarantee their use together with the use of low pressure main jets in compartment fires within high rise buildings, is an out dated approach to firefighting based on a lack of adequate firefighting facilities within such buildings.

With this in mind, we ask that the Executive Council adopt this position and work with Government and the

Record of Decisions

Fire Service to push for a system of secured high pressure hose reels to be installed within all high rise buildings for use on each floor, similar to those facilities used on pumping appliances for compartment fires.

This would alleviate the burden of cumbersome procedures to address the current problems of inadequate in built firefighting facilities, and offer the necessary means for protecting members engaged in firefighting duties.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Resolution 49 – FBU EDUCATION PROGRAMME

B&EMM does not believe that the current FBU Education programme addresses the lack of knowledge and expertise within the Union on two key equality and diversity issues, namely, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) and All Different All Equal (ADAE) investigations.

EIAs are an important tool to ensure that the vital services we deliver to our communities are supported by the correct Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) policies, procedures and custom and practices. We need officials who are fully aware of this and who are trained to ensure that EIAs are carried out in order to challenge discriminatory and potentially detrimental FRS policies.

ADAE investigations are vitally important in ensuring that all our members receive a fair adjudication prior to full representation from our Union. We do not believe that enough has been done to ensure that all investigators receive the correct training in order to produce a thorough and fair investigation.

To rectify this issue, Conference agrees that a specific stand alone school be added to the FBU education programme with these two subjects as the core and with the aim of giving the appropriate training and education to:

- Enable the FBU to have qualified expert Equality Impact Assessors;
- Ensure that reps/officials who are likely to be ADAE investigators have the appropriate skills.

This to be included in the 2012 National Education programme.

BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Resolution 63 – REVIEW OF UNION CONTRIBUTION RATES

FBU members are facing a possible pay freeze and a possible pension contribution rate rise, therefore this Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a review of ordinary members union contribution rates and the effects on the Fire Brigades Union if the Union

contribution rate for full time members were to be reduced from 1% of a firefighter (competent) rate of pay to 0.75% of a firefighter (competent) rate of pay.

The review should be reported to Regional Committees by 1/12/11.

CENTRAL

Resolution 64 – RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM CONTRIBUTION RATE

This Conference notes that some Retained Duty System (RDS) members pay Retained subscriptions as set out in Rule 5 (1) (f), yet are working as many positive hours as Wholtime Duty System (WDS) members.

This Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to amend Rule 5 (1) (f), to state that those RDS members who work fully or partly WDS shifts pay contributions to reflect those additional hours.

CUMBRIA

Emergency Resolution No. 9 SEVERING OF TIES WITH ISRAELI HISTADRUT

That this Conference notes:

- the collusion of the Israeli Labour Organisation Histadrut in the ongoing brutal violation of human rights of Palestinians;
- the policy positions adopted by Histadrut which endanger regional peace;
- the appeal from Palestine civil society for “broad boycotts and disinvestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era”, which was signed by over 170 Palestine organisations, including the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions;
- the recent call from the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions for National Trade Union Federations and Congresses to derecognise Histadrut as a National Trade Union Federation and labour movement partner;
- Histadrut’s links with the Jewish National Fund, whose acquisition and control of land in Israel and the occupied territories actively discriminates against Palestinians.

Conference demands that the EC lobby the TUC and STUC to:

- sever all ties to the Israeli Histadrut and derecognise them as a Trade Union and Labour movement partner until this organisation supports the application of international law and guarantees human and trade union rights to Palestinians and Palestinian workers.

STRATHCLYDE

Record of Decisions

Motions Defeated ...

Resolution 44 – LABOUR PARTY
RE-AFFILIATION

TYNE AND WEAR

Resolution 53 – TRAINING FOR
ADVOCATES

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Resolution 58 – RE-ORGANISATION
SUB-COMMITTEE

GREATER MANCHESTER

Resolution 59 – ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SHROPSHIRE

Resolution 60 – RE-ORGANISATION OF
THE FBU

BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Resolution 73 – ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ORGANISATION

BEDFORDSHIRE

Emergency Resolution No. 2
– ATTACKS TO PENSIONS

LONDON

Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union

RULE 7

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CARRIED

RULE 5 (3)

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND
CONTRIBUTIONS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 6 (2)

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8 (6)

CONSTITUTION AND POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8A (5) (a)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8A (5) (c)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8A (7)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8B (4)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 10 (1)

PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 12 (5)

THE NATIONAL TREASURER

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

Record of Decisions

RULE 13 (7)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8A(1) (a)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED

RULE 17

THE TRUSTEES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8A (5) (a)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 19A (8)

CANVASSING

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 26A (1)

MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 20 (3) (a)

REGIONAL COMMITTEES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 26A (4)

MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 20 (6) (a)

REGIONAL COMMITTEES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 18 (1)

REGIONAL OFFICIALS

CARRIED

RULE 26 (4) (b) (ii)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 18 (5)

REGIONAL OFFICIALS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 26 (4) (b) (iii)

INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 20 (6)

REGIONAL OFFICIALS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 28

HONORARIA AND EXPENSES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 21 (3) (b)

BRIGADE COMMITTEES

CARRIED

RULE 29

AFFILIATION

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 5 (1) (c)

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND
CONTRIBUTIONS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 33

RULES AND ANNUAL REPORTS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 5 (1) (h)

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND
CONTRIBUTIONS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 35

ALTERATION OF RULES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 5 (8)

CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND
CONTRIBUTIONS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

Record of Decisions

RULE 18 (4)

REGIONAL OFFICIALS

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 20 (3) (d)

REGIONAL COMMITTEES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 28

HONORARIA AND EXPENSES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 30 (4) (c)

ACCIDENT INJURY AND DEATH BENEFIT FUND

CARRIED

RULE 30 (6) (d)

ACCIDENT INJURY AND DEATH BENEFIT FUND

CARRIED

Proposed Alterations to the Standing Orders of Conference

Standing Order 13

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CARRIED

Standing Order 13

The Executive Council shall nominate two Tellers and two ballot Scrutineers from the names of delegates attending Conference. Names shall be submitted to the Conference delegates for approval.

Record of Decisions

Final Appeals Committee

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	Paul Wilson
Region 2	Jim Quinn
Region 3	Pete Wilcox
Region 4	Graham Wilkinson
Region 5	Steve Shelton
Region 6	Tom Murray
Region 7	Brian Moss
Region 8	Cerith Griffiths
Region 9	Adrian Clarke
Region 10	Joe MacVeigh
Region 11	Mark Simmons
Region 12	Alli Burrows
Region 13	Phil Jordan
NWC	Kerry Baigent
LGBT	Pat Carberry
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	Ludwig Ramsey
ONC	Peter Moss
CSNC	Sasha Farley

Firefighter Representatives

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	John Duffy
Region 2	Dermot Rooney
Region 3	Paul Reames
Region 4	Ian Watkins
Region 5	Steve Harman
Region 6	Gary Mitchell
Region 7	Pete Goulden
Region 8	Chris Burns
Region 9	Kevin Napier
Region 10	Paul Embery
Region 11	Danni Armstrong
Region 12	Eduardo Cardoso
Region 13	Val Hampshire
NWC	Jo Byrne
LGBT	Lucy Masoud
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	Ludwig Ramsey
ONC	Martin Pottinger
CSNC	Sharon Thorndyke

Record of Decisions

Election of Standing Orders Committee

Re-Elected

Brother Stewart Kinnon (Strathclyde) for 4 Annual Conferences



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union and List of Delegates

May 2011

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

REGION 1

Mr R Robertson
4th Floor
52 St Enoch Square
Glasgow
Scotland G1 4AA

REGION 2

Mr J E Barbour
FBU Regional Office
14 Bachelors Walk
Lisburn
Co Antrim BT28 1XJ

REGION 3

Mr A Noble
24 Dunelm Drive
Houghton Le Spring
Tyne & Wear DH4 5QQ

REGION 4

Mr I Murray
44 Beech Avenue
Bilton
Nr Hull
East Yorkshire HU11 4EN

REGION 5

Mr W Gee
FBU Regional Office
The Lighthouse
Lower Mersey Street
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire CH65 2AL

REGION 6

Mr D Limer
FBU Regional Office
Above Dawsons
Little Tennis Street South
Nottingham NG2 4EU

REGION 7

Ms R Jones
4 Whitebeam Close
Clayhanger
Walsall WS8 7QR

REGION 8

Mr G Mayos
4 Gwalia Road
Tywyn
Gwynedd LL36 9DH

REGION 9

Mr K Handscomb
FBU Regional Office
28 Atlantic Square
Station Road
Witham
Essex CM8 2TL

REGION 10

Mr I Leahair
FBU Regional Office
John Horner Mews
Off Frome Street
Islington
London N1 8PB

REGION 11

Mr J Parrott
FBU Regional Office
Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way
Woodingdean
Brighton BN2 6AH

REGION 12

Mr K Horan
62 Bourton Road
Buckinghamshire MK18 1BE

REGION 13

Mr T McFarlane
17 Woodlands Drive
Ruishton
Taunton TA3 5JU

B&EMM

Mr M Nicholas
William Rust House
52 Beachy Road
London E3 2NS

CSNC

Ms S Riley
4 Stoke Wood Cottages
Droxford
Southampton
Hants SO32 3QY

LGBT

Mr S Brown
26 Strickland Row
Wandsworth SW18 3JD

NRC

Mr T Mitchell
49 Kirkton Street
Carluke
Lanarkshire ML8 4AD

NWC

Ms D Christie
31 St Francis Rigg
Glasgow G5 0UR

ONC

Mr J C Ford
74 Woodford Road
Bramhall
Stockport
Cheshire SK7 1PB

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL / NATIONAL SECTIONAL SECRETARIES

REGION 1

Mr J Duffy
FBU Regional Office
4th Floor
52 St Enoch Square
Glasgow G1 4AA

REGION 2

Mr J Quinn
FBU Regional Office
14 Bachelors Walk
Lisburn
Co Antrim BT28 1XJ

REGION 3

Mr P Wilcox
8 St Stevens Close
Houghton Le Spring
Tyne & Wear DH4 7SJ

REGION 4

Mr P Smith
96 Station Road
Stallingborough
Grimsby
South Humberside DN41 8AP

REGION 5

Mr K P Brown
FBU Regional Office
The Lighthouse
Lower Mersey Street
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire CH65 2AL

REGION 6

Mr G Mitchell
204 Rowlett Road
Corby
Northants NN17 2BX

REGION 7

Mr C Downes
316 Blenheim Road
Kingswinford
West Midlands DY6 8SL

REGION 8

Mr C J Howells
21 Princess Street
Llanelli SA15 2TB

REGION 9

Mr A Clarke
FBU Regional Office
28 Atlantic Square
Station Road
Witham
Essex CM8 2TL

REGION 10

Mr J MacVeigh
FBU Regional Office
John Horner Mews
Off Frome Street
London N1 8PB

REGION 11

Ms D Armstrong
FBU Regional Office
Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way
Woodingdean
Brighton BN2 6AH

REGION 12

Mr R Matthews
55 Quantock Crescent
Duston
Northampton NN5 6DN

REGION 13

Mr J Drake
FBU Regional Office
158 Muller Road
Horfield
Bristol BS7 9RE

B&EMM

Ms S Samuels
The Feathers
102 Molineux Street
City Centre
Wolverhampton WV1 1RY

CSNC

Ms S Farley
28 Elford Grove
Birmingham B37 7RN

LGBT

Mr P Carberry
44 George Street
Leighton Buzzard
Bedfordshire LU7 3JX

NRC

Mr P Preston
20 Victoria Road
Old Colwyn
Colwyn Bay
Clwyd LL29 9SN

NWC

Ms K Baigent
17 Woodlands Drive
Ruishton
Taunton TA3 5JU

ONC

Mr M Pottinger
15 Minsterley Drive
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS5 8QU

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL / NATIONAL SECTIONAL CHAIRS

REGION 1

Mr A Paterson
96 Stockethill Crescent
Aberdeen AB16 5TP

REGION 2

Mr H B Stanfield
11 Vermont Avenue
Conlig
Newtownards
Co Down BT23 7PF

REGION 3

Mr D Turner
6 Southend Terrace
Sheriff Hill
Gateshead
Tyne & Wear NE9 6QL

REGION 4

Mr I Watkins
12 South End
Bedale
North Yorkshire DL8 2BN

REGION 5

Mr I McGill
15 Singleton Way
Fulwood
Preston
Lancashire PR2 9PX

REGION 6

Mr T D Murray
60 Ethel Street
Northampton NN1 5ES

REGION 7

Mr B Moss
4 Wentworth Drive
Kidsgrove
Stoke on Trent
Staffs ST7 4SU

REGION 8

Mr C Griffiths
73 Llanon Road
Llanishen
Cardiff CF14 5AH

REGION 9

Mr B Hooper
5 Rainsborowe Road
Colchester
Essex CO2 7JT

REGION 10

Mr G Fielden
FBU Regional Office
John Horner Mews
Off Frome Street
Islington
London N1 8PB

REGION 11

Mr M Simmons
7 Cooper Road
Chatham
Kent ME5 8DH

REGION 12

Mr S Allen
13 Foliat Close
Wantage
Oxfordshire OX12 7AP

REGION 13

Mr P A Jordan
38 Goddard Way
Tuffley
Gloucester GL4 0YA

B&EMM

Mr L Ramsey
19/5 Mill Lane
Edinburgh EH6 6TJ

CSNC

Ms K Smith
16 Fairfax Avenue
Bispham
Blackpool FY2 0DA

LGBT

Ms Y Dubois
Flat 3
4 Preston Park Avenue
Brighton
East Sussex BN1 6HJ

NRC

Mr D H Cotter
37 Waveney Avenue
Ballymena
Co. Antrim BT43 5AZ

NWC

Ms D Feltham
8 Rokescroft
Basildon
Essex SS13 3EA

ONC

Mr P Moss
501 Garstang Road
Broughton
Preston
Lancashire PR3 5JA

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL TREASURERS

REGION 1

Mr P Wilson
FBU Regional Office
4th Floor
52 St Enoch Square
Glasgow G1 4AA

REGION 2

Mr S Boyd
Fire Station
92 Newtownards Road
Bangor
Co. Down BT19 1SZ

REGION 3

Mr K Brennan
29 Queensbury Gate
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE12 8JW

REGION 4

Mr G Wilkinson
17 Ansten Crescent
Doncaster
South Yorkshire DN4 6EZ

REGION 5

Mr S Shelton
26 Arbury Avenue
Stockport
Cheshire SK3 0QA

REGION 6

Mr P Wilkins
The Old Post Office
176 Main Street
Stanton Under Bardon
Markfield
Leicestershire LE67 9TP

REGION 7

Mr P Goulden
7 West Drive
Doveridge
Ashbourne
Derbyshire DE6 5NG

REGION 8

Mr C J Howells
21 Princess Street
Llanelli SA15 2TB

REGION 9

Mr D Godfrey-Shaw
Beechcroft
Woodham Road
Battlebridge
Essex SS11 7QL

REGION 10

Mr L Brightman
FBU Regional Office
John Horner Mews
Off Frome Street
Islington
London N1 8PB

REGION 11

Mr B Woodfine
FBU Regional Office
Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way
Woodingdean
Brighton BN2 6AH

REGION 12

Mr P Watts
12 Keston Close
Caversham
Reading
Berkshire RG4 5DZ

REGION 13

Ms V Hampshire
40 Jasmine Way
Trowbridge
Wiltshire BA14 7SW

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL OFFICIALS

REGION 1

Mr J Malone
FBU Regional Office
20 Hebrides Drive
Dundee
Scotland DD4 9SD

REGION 2

Mr F Rooney
36 Pinewood Hill
Warrenpoint
Co Down
Northern Ireland BT34 3RH

REGION 3

VACANT

REGION 4

VACANT

REGION 5

Mr S Harman
12 Wrights Fold
Leyland
Lancs PR25 4HT

REGION 6

VACANT

REGION 7

Mr M Giles
57 Parkfield Road
Coleshill
Birmingham B46 3LD

REGION 8

VACANT

REGION 9

Mr N Day
16 Glebe Close
Thetford
Norfolk IP24 2LJ

REGION 10

Mr P Embery
Southerly Cottage
20 Norwich Road
Brooke
Norfolk NR15 1AB

REGION 11

Mr J Tigwell
31 Shackelford Road
Old Woking
Surrey GU22 9DE

REGION 12

Ms A Burrows
18 Carnarvon Road
Gosport
Hampshire PO12 3QP

REGION 13

Mr K Herniman
FBU Regional Office
158 Muller Road
Horfield
Bristol BS7 9RE

List of Delegates

REGION 1

Central	Stephen Thomson
Dumfries/Galloway	Sami Chaudhry Kerry Walker
Fife	Graeme Birtley Scott McCabe
Grampian	John Brown Alan Taylor
Highland & Islands	Marty Cooper Andy Johnstone Deryck McKay
Lothian & Borders	Bryan Banks David Bennett Andy Fulton Ruth Winters
Strathclyde	Sandra Brown William Coats Melanie Gibb Philip McDonald John McFadden Ross Paterson James Scott Alan Stewart Paul Wilson
Tayside	Ronnie Costello Ralph Norrie Terry Whyte
Regional Secretary	John Duffy (Acting)
Regional Chair	Alan Paterson
Regional Treasurer	Paul Wilson
Regional Official	Jim Malone

REGION 2

Northern Ireland	Steven Boyd Brian Cunningham Paul Gould Dermot McPoland David Nichol Lynda Rowan O'Neill Nial Warnock
Regional Secretary	Jim Quinn
Regional Chair	Brian Stanfield
Regional Treasurer (and Delegate)	Stephen Boyd
Regional Official	Dermot Rooney

REGION 3

Cleveland	Sarah Gartland Brian Gibson Dave Howe
Durham	Tony Curry
Northumberland	Amanda Cregin
Tyne & Wear	Gordon Chalk Russell King Natalie Osborne David Turner
Regional Secretary	Peter Wilcox
Regional Chair	Steve Watson
Regional Treasurer (and Delegate)	Kieran Brennan
Regional Official	Vacant

REGION 4

Humberside	Geoff Boville Neil Trenchard Richard Walker
North Yorkshire	Sean Atkinson Edmund Billing
South Yorkshire	Nigel Bailey John Gilliver Keith Naylor
West Yorkshire	William Delve John Durkin Andrew Imrie John Rankin David Williams Mark Wilson
Regional Secretary	Pete Smith
Regional Chair	Ian Watkins
Regional Treasurer	Graham Wilkinson
Regional Official	Vacant

List of Delegates

REGION 5

Cheshire	Lee McGarity Andrew Price Dave Williams
Cumbria	Dean Greenway Adrian Kevern
Greater Manchester	Dave Allsey David German Damian Keenaghan John Roberts Valerie Salmon
Lancashire	Kevin Deacon Mick Drake Steve Harman Chris Molloy Kevin Wilkie
Merseyside	Gary Bennett Mark Rowe Les Skarratts
Regional Secretary	Kevin Brown
Regional Chair	Ian McGill
Regional Treasurer	Vacant
Regional Official	Vacant

REGION 6

Derbyshire	Paul Revill Neil Shepperd
Leicestershire	Chris Argent Carl Doughton Roger Hawes
Lincolnshire	Chris Hides Craig Tuck
Northamptonshire	Sheldon Fenning Steve Mason
Nottinghamshire	Alan Coates Philip Coates Ian Young
Regional Secretary	Gary Mitchell
Regional Chair	Tom Murray
Regional Treasurer	Pete Wilkins
Regional Official	Thomas Neal

REGION 7

Hereford & Worcester	Steve Gould Sophie Harris
Shropshire	Matthew Lamb Steve Morris
Staffordshire	Graeme McLeod Robert Moss Richard Williams
Warwickshire	Mark Rattray Stephen Roberts
West Midlands	Rodcliff Barrett Paul Cockburn Andrew Dennis Michael McKay Roger Moore Steve Price Hunt
Regional Secretary	Chris Downes
Regional Chair	Brian Moss
Regional Treasurer	Pete Goulden
Regional Official	Marcus Giles

REGION 8

Mid & West Wales	Roger Curran Mick Higgins Lawrence Larmond Gareth Lewis
North Wales	Chris Burns Michael Davies Arwel Roberts
South Wales	Rob Bishop Ciaran Gibbons Nigel Mace Alex Smith Mark Watt
Regional Secretary	Grant Mayos
Regional Chair	Cerith Griffiths
Regional Treasurer	Vacant
Regional Official	Chris Howells

List of Delegates

REGION 9

Bedfordshire	Lee Moon Jamie Newell
Cambridgeshire	Phil McQuillen Kevin Napier
Essex	Kieran Davies Aston Everett Mark Kinsalla Mick Rogers
Hertfordshire	D MacLeod Tony Smith
Norfolk	Peter Greeves Jamie Wyatt
Suffolk	Roy Humphreys Andy Vingoe
Regional Secretary	Adrian Clarke
Regional Chair	Brian Hooper
Regional Treasurer	Del Godfrey-Shaw
Regional Official	Neil Day

REGION 10

London	Gareth Beeton Simon Chapman Greg Edwards Sian Griffiths Chris Higgins Katy Lane Richard Lockwood Pan Poullais David Shek Ben Sprung Yusuf Timms Neil Walker Dan West
Regional Secretary (and Delegate)	Joe McVeigh
Regional Chair (and Delegate)	Gordon Fielden
Regional Treasurer (and Delegate)	Laurie Brightman
Regional Official	Vacant

REGION 11

Kent	Stuart Becks Robert Chilmaid Jenny Impey John Ripley Adam Wade
Surrey	Stuart De Fraine Dave Herpe Richard Jones
East Sussex	Matthew Dale Simon Herbert
West Sussex	Francis Bishop Mick Cambers
Regional Secretary	Danni Armstrong
Regional Chair	Mark Simmons
Regional Treasurer	William Woodfine
Regional Official	James Tigwell

REGION 12

Berkshire	Pauline Perry Mark Stollery
Buckinghamshire	Matt Bliss James Wolfendon
Hampshire	Conrad Jordan Bryan Stanislas Paul Trew
Isle of Wight	Mark Deacon Matt Sainsbury
Oxfordshire	Rachel Dobson Steve Allen
Regional Secretary	Ricky Matthews
Regional Chair	Steve Allen
Regional Treasurer	Dave Dymond
Regional Official	Alison Burrows

List of Delegates

REGION 13

Avon	Adam Course John Maggs Chris Taylor
Cornwall	Dominic Mark Keen Mike Tremellan
Devon & Somerset	Helen Dickinson Trevor French Bob Walker
Dorset	Karen Adams Simon Dennett
Gloucestershire	Michael Tully
Wiltshire	Tony Littler Brent Thorley
Regional Secretary	John Drake
Regional Chair	Vacant
Regional Treasurer	Val Hampshire
Regional Official	Kevin Herniman

B&EMM

	Carole Brown Mark Brown Colin Jarrett Dalton Powell
National Secretary	Samantha Samuels
National Chair	Vacant

CSNC

	Tim Gerrard Simon Jones Paul Pryce Caroline Saunderson
National Secretary	Sasha Farley
National Chair	Kath Smith

LGBT

	Alison Burrows Kevin Gutherson
National Secretary	Pat Carberry
National Chair	Yannick Dubois

NRC

	Sean Paul Bailey Lyndon Jones Leigh Redman
National Secretary	Vacant
National Chair	Vacant

NWC

	Jo Byrne Helen Harrison Sam Rye Helen Tooley
National Secretary	Kerry Baigent
National Chair	Dona Feltham

ONC

	John Denvir Robert Sherwood
National Secretary	Martin Pottinger
National Chair	Peter Moss



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Index

Index

INDEX OF PROCEEDINGS

(R)	= Resolution
(ER)	= Emergency Resolution
(CS)	= Closed Session
(ECPS)	= Executive Council Policy Statement

A

Addresses:-

Abbas, Kamal. (Centre for Trade Union and Worker Services, Egypt)	109, 110
McLean, Alan (President)	8
McDonnell, John (Member of Parliament Hayes & Harlington)	30
Williams, Glen (UNISON)	3
ADC Process (R14)	69
AIF 2010 (Section E)	25
All Different All Equal (R54)	122
Annual Conference (R59) (CS)	
Annual Conference Organisation (R73)	22
Appointment of Tellers and Scrutineers	8
Appreciations:-	
Barbour, J. (Vice President)	142
Conference Centre Staff and Management Team	129
Conference Hall Staff	142
Delve, B. (R4)	142
Downes, C. (R7)	142
Head Office Staff	129, 142
Jarrett, C. (R7)	142
MacVeigh, J. (R10)	142
Poullais, P. (R10)	142
Rattray, M. (R7)	142
Smith, M. (E.C. Member)	142
Standing Orders Committee	142
Steve Cole and Mascole Team	129
Stewards	129
Wilson, M. (R4)	142
Attacks on Fire Service Pensions (ER1)	96
Attacks to Pensions (ER2)	100

C

Canvassing (R72)	12
Card Vote	38
Co-Responding (R34)	85
Cuts, Austerity and the Case for an Alternative (ECPS)	38
Cuts to Firefighter Posts (R31)	72

D

Day Crew Plus (ER10)	65
Defending Equality for LGBT Members (R36)	123
Dismissal and Re-Engagement (R47)	130
Driving Through Red Traffic Lights (R51)	25
Duty Systems (R18)	65
Dynamic Risk Assessments (R39)	117

E

Education (Section H)	111
Elections (ECPS)	12
Endorsement of the Executive Council's Annual Report	142
Equality and Diversity (R55)	125
Equality and Diversity Report (R28)	78
Equality Targets (R57)	125

F

Fairness at Work (Section I)	122
FBU Education Programme (R49)	111
FBU Elections (ECPS)	12
FBU Membership (R65)	21
FBU Organiser of the Year Award	17
Fighting the Cuts Agenda (ECPS)	55
Financial Accounts (Section K)	10
Fire and Rescue Service Mutual (ER4)	88
Fire and Rescue Service Policy (Section B)	72
Firefighter Magazine – Publication and Distribution Costs (ER6)	139
Firefighter Safety in High Rise Buildings (R43)	121
Future of Fire Service Emergency Controls (R24)	90

G

GFIW – Iraq (ER8)	141
Grant of Probate (R52)	27

H

Health and Safety (Section J)	113
Hutton – Pensions and Pay Intrinsically Linked (ER3)	100

I

Injury Sustained on Duty (R17)	64
Integrated Personal Development System (R40)	79
Internal Administration (Section G)	12
Israeli Histadrut (ER9)	132

L

Labour Party Re-Affiliation (R44)	134
Legal Report (Section F)	25
LGBT School Supporting Our Members Needs (R50)	112
Lord Young's Report (R29)	114

M

Membership Recruitment (R67)	19
Mergers/Outsourcing of Fire Control Functions (R25)	92

Index

N

National Fund (R69)	21
National Joint Council (Section A)	47
National Joint Council (R13)	49
Nationally Agreed Wholetime Shift Duty System (R9)	61
National Response Standards (R32)	80

O

Obituary (Section L)	8
----------------------	---

P

Palestine (R48)	131
Pay (R1)	51
Pay (R2)	52
Pay Formula (R3)	60
Pensions (Section D)	95
Pensions in the Fire & Rescue Service (R22)	108
Political Fund (R68)	20
Pre-Arranged Overtime (R10)	62
Privatisation Within the UK Fire Service (R35)	86

R

Reorganisation of the FBU (R60) (CS)	
Reorganisation of the Union (ECPS) (CS)	
Reorganisation Sub-Committee (R58) (CS)	
Retained Duty System Contribution Rate (R64)	16
Review of Union Contribution Rates (R63)	18
Rules of the Union – Proposed Alterations (CS)	

S

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Consultation (ER5)	75
Severing of Ties with Israeli Histadrut (ER9)	132
Specification for Vehicles being Driven by Flexi Duty System Officers (R42)	116
Standing Orders Committee Election	30
Standing Orders of Conference – Proposed Alterations	8
Standing Orders Committee Reports	4, 7, 15, 16, 30, 35, 38, 55, 69, 85, 111, 122, 129

T

Tax Justice Campaign (R27)	72
Training for Advocates (R53)	35
TU and Labour Movement (Section C)	129

V

Voluntary Redundancy and Early Retirement Guidance (R7)	49
Voluntary Redundancy – National Guidance (R5)	47

W

Water Rescue (R12)	62
--------------------	----

Index

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

A

Abbas, K. (International Guest, CTUWS)	109, 110
Assistant General Secretary (A. Dark)	28, 48, 61, 63, 113, 115, 118, 119, 121, 129
Atkinson, S.	116

B

Bailey, S. P.	20, 65
Banks, B.	71
Barbour, J. (See Vice President)	
Bennett, D.	119, 120
Bennett, G.	119
Birtley, G.	123, 140
Boyd, S.	135
Brennan, K.	80, 136
Brown, C. (Sis)	12, 124
Brown, J.	82, 109, 135
Brown, M.	112
Burrows, A. (Sis)	92, 112
Byrne, J. (Sis)	23, 129

C

Carberry, P.	124
Chalk, G.	123
Chaudhry, S.	75
Chief Scrutineer (Keith Naylor)	30, 38
Clarke, A.	94
Cregin, A. (Sis)	117, 127
Curry, T.	79, 114

D

Dark, A. (See Assistant General Secretary)	
Davis, K.	14, 25.
Deacon, K.	27, 99
Delve, W.	48, 49
Dennett, S.	108
Dennis, A.	35
Dickinson, H. (Sis)	93
Drake, J.	102, 121, 137, 140
Durkin, J.	117

F

Fulton, A.	6, 7, 75, 126
Fielden, G.	115

G

Gartland, S. (Sis)	62
General Secretary (M. Wrack)	4, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 24, 26, 34, 42, 50, 51, 53, 55, 61, 62, 63, 68, 77, 86, 88, 92, 96, 106, 110, 113, 119, 130, 133, 137, 140
Gee, W. (National Treasurer)	11, 12
Gerrard, T.	72, 87, 89, 90
Gibson, B.	13, 62, 137
Green, D. (National Officer)	79, 89, 94, 123, 127, 141
Greenway, D.	16
Greeves, P.	95, 102
Griffiths, S. (Sis)	14, 36

H

Harman, S.	59, 67, 81
Harrison, H. (Sis)	63
Howe, D.	51, 89
Hughes, K.	104
Humphreys, R.	106

J

Jarrett, C.	125
Jones, L.	65
Jones, R.	82, 103
Jones, S.	19
Jordan, C.	85

K

Kealy, G.	135
Kevern, A.	60
King, R.	114
Kinsalla, M.	29, 105

L

Lamb, M.	45, 51, 80, 130
Littler, T.	131

M

MacVeigh, J.	12, 28, 60, 137
Mason, J. (Sis)	122
McCabe, S.	113
McCloud, D.	129
McCloud, G.	126
McDonnell, J. (MP)	30
McFadden, J.	27, 73, 75, 104, 132
McKay, M.	140
McLean, A. (See President)	
McQuade, G.	18
McQuillen, P.	101, 108
Moon, L.	25, 59, 87, 106, 123
Moore, R.	16, 67
Moss, P.	78, 117

Index

N

Napier, K.	60
Naylor, K.	21
Newell, J.	23, 24, 136
Nichol, D.	21, 103

P

Paterson, A.	74
Perry, P. (Sis)	106
Pottinger, M.	17, 72, 89, 118
Poullais, P.	116
Powell, D.	79
President (A. McLean)	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 37, 38, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 99, 100, 101, 102, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141
Pryce, P.	82, 92, 103, 118

R

Rees, N.	71, 77
Revell, P.	64
Roberts, S.	100, 119
Rowe, M.	20, 81
Rye, S. (Sis)	104, 126

S

Salmon, V. (Sis)	123, 141
Scott, J.	24, 47, 136
Shelton, S. (Chair of Standing Orders)	4, 7, 15, 16, 30, 35, 38, 55, 69, 85, 111, 122, 129
Skarratts, L.	13, 46
Smith, T.	68, 114
Sprung, B.	86, 100, 108
Stanislas, B.	49
Starbuck, S. (National Officer)	17, 18, 19, 21, 36, 71, 95, 112

T

Tapp, C.	70
Timms, Y.	47
Tooley, H. (Sis)	36, 37, 131
Tremellen, M.	68, 106
Trenchard, N.	63
Trew, P.	27, 29, 91, 121
Tully, M.	67
Turner, D.	134, 138

V

Vice President (J. Barbour)	8, 95
Vingoe, A.	93

W

Walker, B.	66, 83
Walker, R.	22
Watt, M.	76
Williams, D. (Cheshire)	19, 50
Williams, D. (West Yorkshire)	52, 139
Williams, G. (Unison)	3
Williams, R.	121
Winters, R. (Sis)	133
Woolstenholmes, P. (National Officer)	8
Wrack, M. (See General Secretary)	

Y

Young, I.	70, 91
-----------	--------