

# REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS 2019

92nd CONFERENCE

15 – 17 MAY 2019







Established 1 October 1918

# REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

## 92nd CONFERENCE 2019

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**A full list of all Resolutions, Policy Statements and Conference Decisions  
has been made available to all Officials and Members  
in the booklet 'Record of Decisions 2019'**

**This is also available on the fbu website [www.fbu.org.uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk)**





Established 1 October 1918

# **92nd CONFERENCE 2019**

**BLACKPOOL**

**15-17 MAY 2019**



## MORNING SESSION

### THE PRESIDENT:

There's two absences that I need to report to you this morning as the first day of business. The first is the National Officer Sean Starbuck who unfortunately has injured his ankle and as such is on sick leave. The second is the EC member for London. He is currently suspended from his union duties in accordance with our rules and as was reported to you at your delegation meetings, as such I want no mention of him or anything that may compromise the integrity of the ongoing process. So I would ask you all to be mindful of that when speaking today.

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, Conference, good morning.

The Standing Orders Committee seeks your cooperation with regard to conference credentials. Would all delegates and officials please make sure they have filled in their details on their credentials so stewards can identify them. The Standing Orders Committee stress the importance of delegates stating their name and brigade or section when addressing conference as this assists the President and the verbatim report. We also ask you to speak clearly into the microphone at the rostrums.

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

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

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

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

The Standing Orders Committee must report once again that the whole of the Imperial Hotel is a no smoking building and trust this will be adhered to. Also, may I request that all delegates, officials, stewards, visitors and observers switch off mobile telephones, laptops, tablets and any other portable devices whilst conference is in session. Only members of staff attending from the FBU head office media & research department are allowed IT equipment on whilst conference is in session.

May I remind you that Conference is in session from 9.30 am to 5.15 pm every day. 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. Tea and coffee for all is to be served in the hotel reception area.

I bring to your attention the provision of meals. Breakfast for those staying in the Imperial Hotel will be available from 7 am in the Palm Court, which is situated directly opposite this room from the corridor behind you. Breakfast for those staying at the Grand Hotel Blackpool, that information will have been explained in your hotel welcome packs. Lunch for all is at 12.45 pm today and every day. The evening meal for all is from 6.30 until 8.30 pm. All lunches and evening meals are here in the Imperial Hotel and are served in the Washington Suite, which is located through the doors behind you, turn left along the corridor, pass through reception and follow the corridor to the left, through the door on the left which is clearly marked "Washington Suite". On Friday there will be a packed lunch provided for all by the Imperial Hotel. If business is to work through lunch on Friday there will be a short break to allow everybody a comfort break.

The list of Scrutineers and Tellers has been circulated; the list of the Final Appeals Committee has been circulated.

Can you now turn to the list of the Final Appeals Committee, please. Region 6: delete Adam Taylor; insert Mark Redford. As I stated, the list of Scrutineers and Tellers has been circulated and you've now got the updated Final Appeals Committee List. These lists will now be placed before Conference for endorsement.

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

Can you now turn to your delegates list. Scotland: delete Jamie McCallum; replace with Denise Christie. Scotland: delete Alan Still; replace with Brian Cameron. Merseyside: delete Tommy Hughes; replace with Mark Rowe. Greater Manchester (on your list it says GMC): delete Paul Davies; replace with Rosa Crowley-Bennett. Leicestershire: delete Graham Vaux; replace with Pete Traynor. Staffordshire: delete Michael Mosley; replace with Rich Williams. Warwickshire: delete Steve Rule; replace with Kev Matthews. West Midlands: delete Billy Holland; replace with Stephen Gregory. West Midlands: delete Alex Wilson; replace with Aaron Pell. Mid & West Wales: delete Deiniol Lloyd; replace with Gail Smith. North Wales: delete Duncan Stewart-Ball; replace with Ruth Bateman. South Wales: delete Mike Alexander; delete Steve Saunders; replace with Gareth Tovin. London: delete Dave Young; replace with Chris Cheeseman. NWC: delete Kathryn Duncan; replace with Caroline Sturgess. ONC: delete Russell Byrne; replace with Phil McDonald.

Stall facilities. The Standing Orders Committee have agreed stall facilities for the following organisations at Conference: FBU Learning Fund, Firefighter 100 Lottery, Bookmarks, Stop the War, Frack Free Lancashire, Stand up to Racism, Force Car Direct and Chimera. The stalls will be situated in the Derby Room and in the hotel reception area. Please make an effort to visit all the stalls and show our support.

The Standing Orders Committee has agreed the facility of the FBU shop at this conference. It is located through the doors behind you, turn left along the corridor and through the door on your left which is clearly marked on your left hand side. Please visit Kim and spend as much as you can.

The FBU Media & Research Department are in attendance at conference. Whilst conference is in session they are at the back of the room; they are located through the doors behind you, turn left, carry on along the corridor, through the reception area and take your last door on the right, which is clearly marked if you wish to see them for any business you have.

Fringe meetings have been agreed for the following: Free Our Unions, Repeal the Anti-Union Laws. This will be after conference tonight. Also, Solidarity with Migrants. This will be held after conference tomorrow night. Both will be held at 5.30 downstairs in Imperial Suite 3 which is clearly marked off the corridor when you go out of here, on the left hand side. All flyers have been distributed. You should have them in front of you and they are in various places around the hotel. Please make every effort to attend and support these important events.

The Standing Orders Committee has received a number of emergency resolutions in line with the guidelines and instructions that were sent out from head office. Emergency Resolution 1 Fire Service Pay and the Future of the Fire & Rescue Service – Executive Council. Emergency Resolution 2 FBU Organisation and Structure Review – Executive Council. Emergency Resolution 3 New Zealand Terrorist Attack – B&EMM. Emergency Resolution 4 Venezuela Solidarity – Merseyside. Emergency Resolution 5 Defending Against Cuts in Greater Manchester – Greater Manchester. Emergency Resolution 6 Pay Strategy – Cambridgeshire. Emergency Resolution 7 Health & Care Work – West Midlands. Emergency Resolution 8 Blurring the Thin Blue Line – London. Emergency Resolution 9 Solidarity with Hereford & Worcester FBU Members – Hereford & Worcester.

Conference, for your information and recording, a number of resolutions have been withdrawn prior to attending conference. Depending on when they were withdrawn, some resolutions within the Final Agenda may not be in the Programme of Business. Resolution 61, Resolution 71, Resolution 72, Resolution 73 have been withdrawn. The Standing Orders Committee would like to thank those delegations for early withdrawals of business and assisting us with the smooth-running of conference.

Could you now turn to your Programme of Business, page 2: after Executive Council policy statement FBU Organisation and Structure Review insert Emergency Resolution 2 Executive Council. Resolution 82 has been withdrawn. Resolution 88 has been withdrawn. Page 3: Resolution 81 has been withdrawn. Page 4: Resolution 29 has been withdrawn, Resolution 12 has been withdrawn, Resolution 16 has been withdrawn to second Executive Council Emergency Resolution 1. After Resolution 17 amendment Merseyside insert Emergency Resolution 8 London. Page 5: Resolution 19 has been withdrawn, Resolution 20 has been withdrawn, Resolution 22 has been withdrawn, Resolution 26 has been withdrawn, Resolution 1 has been withdrawn, Resolution 2 has been withdrawn, Resolution 3 has been withdrawn to form Composite B, Resolution 4 has been withdrawn to form Composite B. Before Resolution 5 insert Composite B Continual Professional Development (CPD) – West Sussex. Page 6: after paragraph A5 insert Emergency Resolution 1 Executive Council. After Emergency Resolution 1 insert Emergency Resolution 6 Cambridgeshire. After Resolution 8 insert Emergency Resolution 7 West Midlands. After paragraph A12 insert Emergency Resolution 5 Greater Manchester. After Emergency Resolution 5 insert Emergency Resolution 9 Hereford & Worcester. Page 7: Resolution 31 has been withdrawn, amendment falls, Resolution 36 has been withdrawn. Page 8: Resolution 43 has been withdrawn to form Composite A. Resolution 44 has been withdrawn to form Composite A. Before Resolution 46 insert Composite A Fireground Welfare Facilities – Greater Manchester. Resolution 32 has been withdrawn, amendment falls. Page 9: Resolution 70 has been withdrawn. After Resolution 65 insert Emergency Resolution 3 B&EMM. After Emergency Resolution 3 insert Emergency Resolution 4 Merseyside. Page 10: no change. Conference, you are up to date now with the Programme of Business and the President will inform you how that is going to prevail as we carry on. OK.

Speakers' Times: Executive Council Policy Statement FBU Organisation and Structure Review, General Secretary 20 minutes. Executive Council Policy Statement Grenfell Tower – Never Again, General Secretary 20 minutes. Executive Council Policy Statement Rebuilding our Fire & Rescue Service – What We Need from a Labour Government General Secretary 20 minutes. Executive Emergency Resolution 1 Fire Service Pay and the Future of the Fire & Rescue Service, General Secretary 20 minutes. Executive Council Emergency Resolution 2 FBU Organisation and Structure Review, General Secretary 10 minutes.

I now go on to voting on a challenge to the Chair of Conference. May I draw your attention to Standing Order 15. The number of delegates to conference is 129. Therefore, the number of delegates voting to carry a challenge is 86. Please note that NRC delegates, ONC delegates, CSNC delegates, NWC delegates, B&EMM national committee delegates and LGBT national committee delegates, are all entitled to vote on procedural motions and challenges only. Regional officials who are not delegates have been issued with different credentials and they are not permitted to vote at all. May I remind conference that all credentials issued are the personal property of the 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 or you will be picked up at the rostrum if you've got the wrong credentials on. Fair warning given.

The Standing Orders Committee Election. This will take place first thing tomorrow morning. Completed nomination forms must be placed in the ballot box at the rear of the hall by 11 am. A vacancy needs to be filled which will be left by myself following this conference. I will be retiring shortly after conference and wish all the best to the delegate who replaces me through the election process.

President, that concludes the first Standing Orders Committee report to this conference. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thank you, Steve. Do we have any speakers? Is that report agreed? *Agreed*

Conference, we now move on to Section N Obituary. It's on page 117 on the Obituary section of the Annual Report. Before I ask you to stand for a minute's silence in memory of those members who have died over the last 12 months I would also ask you to remember the victims of many recent natural disasters and terrorist atrocities since the last conference met. Please could you stand for a minute's silence.

*Conference stood in memory of those who had died*

Thank you.

## THE VICE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. I now call President Ian Murray to give his Presidential address.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Morning, Conference. So here we are back at Scotchy old Blackpool. I'm sure Ma Kelly's will be hanging out the bunting for Regions 3 and 4, eagerly awaiting their return after their little vacation to Brighton last year!

We've got a lot of new faces at conference and quite a few old ones too around. Speaking of new faces, I'd like to congratulate Nicky Hobbs and Louise Connell on being elected the new chair and secretary of the National Women's Committee, along with Claire Hudson have taken up the reins after the massive change and upheaval they have seen within the section. On that subject matter, Conference, I was informed yesterday that for the first time in our union's history we have a joint team of a brigade secretary and a brigade chair who are both women. So congratulations to Karen Adams and Katie Scott of Dorset & Wiltshire on attaining that honour. *(Applause)* Sorry, that's what it says on my paper. I apologise for the wrong name, Kate.

Also, our B&EMM section has also had the same upheaval as the NWC with changes to its lead officials, so well done to Cameron Matthews and Joseph Mende on putting themselves up and being elected to the chair and secretary. I'm sure both sections will continue to thrive under their new leadership.

So here we are, Conference, after our little vacation to Brighton to celebrate our centenary year, and what year it was! I'd like to thank you all. You all played your part in recognising what is a remarkable achievement for our union. One hundred years as a trade-specific industrial union – an achievement many unions have failed to reach, and one that we should quite rightly be proud of.

There were quite a few markers for me personally in the centenary year and I'm sure you will have your own. However, one of them, the centenary film, has been a massive hit wherever it's been shown. I would encourage you all to still arrange screenings with members; get local politicians there if they haven't seen it. Arrange it with a 25 year badge celebration. Invite head office officials down. We'll come to it if we're available.

The reaction of members to the film has been fantastic. It moved some of them to tears, but generally it's an appreciation of what those who went before us have achieved and obviously what we all benefit from today.

As part of the centenary year we also launched the Red Plaque scheme. If there's one thing I'm extremely proud of our union for introducing, it is the Red Plaque scheme. We're now into double figures for the red plaques that have been unveiled for firefighters who have been killed in the line of duty. I attended quite a few of them, and I have to say they are among the most poignant but proudest events you'll ever encounter. The families of fallen firefighters really appreciate the recognition being given to their loved ones. And it's a visible reminder to the communities, a visible reminder that firefighters protect them on a daily basis, a reminder of the risks they face, and then sadly sometimes the ultimate price that they pay when doing just that.

There's one other event in our centenary year which I can't fail to mention and that was the October 13 Centenary Event. What an absolutely fantastic day that was! I pay tribute to every single person who attended and all of the organisers. Every person that I have spoken to since was blown away with the day itself and the wreath-laying ceremony at the firefighter memorial statue, which we believe is the biggest ever wreath-laying ceremony held there; the FBU's march across Millennium Bridge led by FBU's Pipe Band and the ceremony itself in Southwark Cathedral where many attendees were moved to tears by the moving stories read out brilliantly by our speakers. The whole day was everything we wanted and hoped to achieve. From politicians to chiefs, invited guests and our members, it laid a marker down. It laid a marker down that the FBU is the heartbeat and the backbone of the fire service.

As you will appreciate, these things don't just happen overnight. There was months, even years of planning went into this, but I think special mention has to be made to the Centenary Committee: the General Secretary, Andy Noble, Keith Handscomb and Tam McFarlane. They put in an unbelievable amount of hours behind the scenes, like you wouldn't imagine. Also, other officials in head office and the staff did their bit of graft in that. I know regions had their own centenary committees and held local events and got members involved, so a big well done to you all on that.

There's one other company I feel that I must mention the people. It's a company that Tam stumbled on accidentally. They took charge of a lot of management of the centenary project, or some of the events. They did masses for us for free. Even better than that, all the companies out there that we utilise, they got them to do it for free as well. So a big thank you to them. I'm sure that you'll agree the professionalism, the design at Southwark Cathedral that they came up with on the day made it the success it was. From all the members of the union I thank you all for making our centenary year the success it was in achieving all we sought to achieve.

There was one thing we wanted to come out of the centenary year and that was there had to be a legacy left over from it. I've already mentioned the red plaque scheme. Another legacy is the Firefighters 100 Lottery. We launched it as part of the centenary celebrations and the proceeds go to its five good causes, the red plaque scheme, assisting injured firefighters and their families, research projects into contaminants, into cancer in firefighters, donations to charitable causes, and the list goes on. However, for something that has got at its heart, and is there for the benefit of firefighters and their families in their hour of need, it could be better. We were hoping for an upsurge in support for our lottery from our members, especially during the centenary year, but in reality its plateau-ed. We still have less than 10% of our members signed up to the lottery. Possibly one reason for that is they've never been physically asked to join, or they've never had actually explained to them what it is all about. We can do leaflets, we can do social media clips, we can do articles in Firefighter magazine, but that doesn't beat getting in front of them and speaking to them face to face. So I would urge you to go to stations, speak to watches, get them to sign up as individuals, or if not, why not start up a watch syndicate? As I've said, it's there for the benefit of them and their families when they most need it. There are many good causes funded from it, and it would be an absolute travesty now if we cannot grow it to its full potential, or even worse, the amounts raised for the good causes shrinks. There is a stall outside and I would urge you to visit it. If there's one plea from me on leaving conference, it is please do your bit and try to get our members signed up to the lottery.

Conference, last year we held a special session on Grenfell – one of the most moving and emotional debates I've ever been involved in in the whole of my years coming to conference. I've heard it said that we shouldn't politicise the tragedy of Grenfell, but I tell you what, I and this union are certainly not going to shy away from or apologise for raising it politically. If by doing so it can stop that entirely preventable disaster ever happening again, then we will do what needs to be done.

We've now seen Phase One of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry concluded with our members giving their testimonies of that harrowing night. We don't know when Phase Two is starting, but we have been told it could be as long as a year away. I'll try to be a little bit candid here because the General Secretary has already got us in trouble once for this. It's absolute madness that the first question that was being asked was "what did you do to try to fight the fire?" when surely, to prevent a recurrence of that tragedy, the obvious and immediate questions that need to be answered are: what caused the fire, why did it go from the fourth floor to the top floor in 24 minutes, and why the hell did it spread to every flat in the building when it should have been contained to the one where the fire started?

In last year's opening conference address I also made reference to the first anniversary of Grenfell approaching and we'd seen no game changes in that time. "Game change" – a phrase that politicians were quick to quote to all of us in the immediate aftermath of Grenfell. Well, Conference, we're now fast approaching the second anniversary and disgracefully the only game changes that we're seeing are the ones that put our communities and firefighters at greater risk. Not the improvements we were all hoping for, but even more cuts, even more attacks on a service creaking at the seams. It is only the goodwill, resolve and empathy of our members that we know is keeping the fire service functioning.

Budgets are again being reduced by Central Government, we're seeing further cuts to frontline fire cover across the UK, and what is worse, we're now seeing the abhorrent practice of Fire & Rescue Services justifying their cuts by comparing themselves with other Fire & Rescue Services in what is a perpetual race to the bottom. They claim it's OK to drop from five riders to four riders because it happened in XY and Z Fire & Rescue Service. Chief fire officers say it's OK to introduce a duty system that gets rid of half the firefighters at a fire station and has to double the hours for a little bit more pay, but it's OK because they're doing it at a dozen other Fire & Rescue Services. They say it's OK to replace fire appliances with vans crewed with three or even two riders because of the way it's done in 30% of other Fire & Rescue Services.

Whatever happened to integrated management plans, plans that were supposed to match the resources required to the risk present? Disgracefully, the fire service management teams, as a result of government cuts, are matching the resources to the shrinking budgets and sod the risk.

On that point, I'd like to pay tribute to you lot, you officials who are there day after day on the front line fighting these cuts, fighting the reductions to fire cover on behalf of the communities we are here to protect, and fighting on behalf of our members whose jobs have once again become even more dangerous because of the relentless cuts we're seeing. Not a single other organisation in the fire service is standing up and fighting them, be it chief fire officers or other so-called representative bodies. These other organisations, who claim to represent the best interests of their members, just sit back and observe the decimation of the fire service before their very eyes. Even worse than that, Conference, they do nothing to defend their members' terms and conditions. Shamefully, they will sit back, rubbing their greedy little mitts, and take all of the benefits from our fights and our victories.

Talking of those fights and victories that the FBU have won, and that others have benefited from and fed off, there's a small amount of a couple of pension victories in the courts. The first one is discrimination. What a fantastic result that was for our members! The government have appealed the decision, so we're not counting all our chickens yet; we're just keeping everything crossed. But I'm glad we're in the position that we are: that we won and the government are having to appeal it rather than the other way round: that they won it and we're appealing it. It was only our union, it was only the FBU who mounted what we knew would be a costly legal challenge. However, it was a legal challenge we believed was a price worth paying for the theft of our members' pensions.

Let us not forget, it was the FBU members who had also taken 50 periods of strike action to defend the attack on fire service pensions. The FBU have led from the front on the campaign to defend public sector pensions, be it taking industrial action or mounting a legal challenge. Where many other unions fear to tread, the FBU boldly stepped up to that plate and deservedly won a victory. We know some of them are now planning their own legal challenges after our victory and we wish them the best of luck. It does give me great satisfaction when you see our members sharing on social media "if ever you ask the question what has my union ever done for me just throw the pension one back in their faces and thank God for the FBU", because we were and are the only union in the fire service who stood up to be counted in that, and come to think of it, any other battles in the fire service.

The other pension victory in Wales where the High Court ruled the additional pay allowances must count towards pensions was after the fire authority appealed the Pensions Ombudsman's decision to uphold the original complaint. Another fantastic result on behalf of our members in Wales, backed by the FBU, and also a fantastic result that has wider ramifications for a lot of our members.

I'd like to take this opportunity to applaud all the officials and all of the legal teams in both cases who have won significant pensions victories for our members. These are life-changing victories, so well done to all on that one.  
*(Applause)*

There have been some other local victories to celebrate as well. Let's not forget Merseyside who managed, after a sustained political campaign, to turn the chief fire officer's proposals of downgrading night time cover at City Centre and Wallasey Fire Stations into amended proposals that included maintaining the night time cover, increasing the number of firefighters from 26 to 30 and an increase of 22 firefighter posts on the establishment figure. Conference, if ever there was a template of how to run locally a perfect political campaign to oppose a chief fire officer's mad proposals, then the FBU over in region 5 ran one perfectly. So a big well done to Merseyside on that victory.  
*(Applause)*

Conference, pay is going to be a key debate later today, but I pay tribute to our members who responded to our ballot and resoundingly rejected the proposal from the employers and resoundingly supported continuing to back the union's strategy, a strategy that includes pay but just as importantly is a strategy about ensuring what we believe is the best interests in securing the future of the Fire & Rescue Service. Conference, the proposal we received with its non-exhaustive list was an insult to our members. The message we need to send out from this conference is: we're coming to the end of the line; it's time for the employers to stop insulting us and to get serious. Make a decent proposal, including improving pay to reflect the changes to the role map, or our members will return to what they're

contractually obliged to do, nothing more, nothing less. I'll say this to any employers if they're listening in: you've had our goodwill for far too long and it's got to the point where we say enough's enough. Goodwill doesn't pay the bills, so dig deep in your pockets or it's gone; you're no longer getting it for free.

So, in closing, Conference, the only way we are ever going to get out of this mess is with a change in government. The Brexit chaos that has been going on for far too long has to come to an end. The everyday running of our country has come to a grinding halt because of it, austerity isn't over as Theresa May announced – it's rife! But the Tories are that busy trying to save their imploding government and their imploding party that they don't care one iota about the suffering they're inflicting on the most vulnerable in our society.

Conference, I saw a news article this week where a school has had to start providing a laundry service to the parents of pupils for washing uniform. It's a school that also has its own on-site food bank for parents who can't afford to feed their kids. What the hell sort of country do we live in! Supposedly the fifth largest economy in the world and it appears that the only booming industry in our country at the minute is food banks. It's an absolute disgrace! We've got poverty levels we haven't seen since the Victorian era. As I said, I believe the only way to change it is let's have a general election, get rid of these Tories, get a Labour government in place who can start dealing with everyday issues which could mean the difference between our kids getting fed or starving.

Conference, I'll finish there. We've got a lot of business to get through. I want all debates to be conducted in a comradely manner and I want us leaving here on Friday unified in our campaign to get our members a pay deal they fully deserve and one that secures the future of the Fire & Rescue Service. One last thing, I would urge you to keep to your times. The VP is a little bit trigger happy with his lights and his timings, so one minute you will get the amber light. When you get the red light your time's up, and if you go beyond that he pushes the trapdoor button! Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Right, Conference, we now move on to Section M Financial Accounts para. M1, para.M2. I now call on the National Treasurer, Jim Quinn, to move the financial statement.

## **NATIONAL TREASURER (Bro Jim Quinn):**

Thanks, President. Morning, Conference. Now for the really exciting stuff! If anybody is interested, it starts on p.93 of the annual report. A lot of the work carried out on the accounts over the year in the FBU has been done by Nigel Headley here, and his team at head office. I can't thank them enough for their assistance in the preparation of this year's accounts. I'd also like to thank regional treasurers for the work they have done over the previous financial year, in particular for the work during the annual pre-audit frenzy which takes place between the actual year end and the period during which the auditors are active in head office.

It's important that the national treasurer doesn't just relay what the accounts say and read a list of figures to you, but tries to explain what they actually mean and how we should interpret them and the information that that relates to, and the situation that we find ourselves in. To prevent any misinterpretation of that situation, I will be as clear, concise and candid as I can. That's because, as ever, those numbers in front of you won't suddenly change. They are what they are, but we need to examine what they actually mean for us going forward.

Conference was informed last year that we were exploring the possibility of reformatting the way we present the accounts to conference and, by extension, to the members. So we have maintained that format. Conference also approved the appointment of new auditors last year and agreed to come to the last conference to reaffirm that decision to once again appoint the auditors.

We've maintained the formatting for a number of reasons but mainly because the divisional spreadsheet accounts can be difficult for some to comprehend fully, even for those of us who spend far too much time looking at them. The truth is quite often people simply look at the top line for income and expenditure and then go straight to the bottom for surplus or deficit. However, the real story is in the information that lies in between.

It's not just about how much we are receiving or spending; it's about what we're spending it on and what proportion of income it is, and are we spending more or less on a particular budget heading than we did in previous years.

That's the real story, and that's why, when you're operating in an extremely tight financial environment, you need to focus your attention. It's not solely presentational though. We're trying to enable a greater degree of understanding, and through that ensure a good degree of accountability.

Of course, there would be no point in making any changes, presentational or otherwise, unless there is a benefit in doing so. For us the main benefit is that the more accountable we are the better our forecasting will be for the future and the reality is the tougher the financial environment you're operating in the better your preparations need to be.

Additionally, this year for some ease we've added a new section entitled "General Fund Budget for 2019". This better outlines for the members our forecasting for the year.

I'll move to the accounts themselves now, President. In 2018 our income was £10.95 million, in 2017 it was £11.3 million. That's a small decrease of £353,000. Our running costs in 2018 were £10.47 million and in 2017 they were £9.96 million. Again, that's a small increase, this time of £511,000. This gave us an operating surplus of £481,000 compared with £1.35 million in 2017. That was before actuarial adjustments for pension liabilities.

Some of this difference can obviously be put down to last year's centenary costs. They were a one-off event and a one-off cost. The 2018 pension scheme actuarial adjustments were £744,000 favourable to the FBU. That was compared to £42,000 favourable to us last year which gives us an overall surplus of £1.22 million. That's not far off last year's £1.39 million. It should be noted, as pointed out last year, that these actuarial adjustments are outside of our control and are due to external factors which means they can vary enormously.

I will move on to the membership figures now. While the figures are still dropping they have slowed down again somewhat in 2017. This is borne out by the fact that our income from contributions fell by just £36,000 compared to £314,000 the previous year. We did, however, manage to achieve an operating surplus. The pie chart in the pages I referred to earlier shows a breakdown of our 2018 expenditure. It clearly shows that the three main areas of spending are staffing costs, running costs protecting our members' interests, and members' benefits. As a result of the 2018 overall surplus of £1.22 million, our total funds have risen from £7.26 million to £8.29 million. That's made up of Accident & Injury Fund £5.5 million, Political Fund £659,000, General Fund £3.21 million, and the Lottery Fund £113,000.

President, in conclusion despite the income from contributions still falling over the last number of years we have still been able to produce an operating surplus. We have provided, and will continue to provide, members with the same first-class service and benefits. This doesn't mean we can rest on our laurels and not continue to explore all the ways of reducing expenditure. In fact, not only is it likely that more work will have to be done, as in previous years, but we may have to make tougher and more difficult decisions this year coming if we are to meet our stated aim of our General Fund surplus equal to 60% of income. We are still some way off that position though. On that note, President, I move the accounts and move reference back to the issue of reaffirming last year's decision on the appointment of the auditors.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Jim. Is that report agreed? *Agreed*

I now move to the proposed alteration to the Standing Orders of Conference. I call Tyne & Wear to move their amendment to Standing Order 4 seconded by Durham. The EC are supporting.

## **BRO RUSS KING (Tyne & Wear):**

President, Conference, Tyne & Wear brigade committee fully understand the original concept of the Standing Order 4. However, we believe that this has now become a hindrance to conference skills. Conference, Tyne & Wear brigade committee fully believe that instead of a second bite at the cherry approach to resolutions we should be educating our officials in a conference skills course. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Durham to second.

**BRO JIM BITTLESTONE** (Durham):

We are seconding Standing Order 4. President, Conference, comrades, we need to get more organised on thinking about resolutions ahead of time, and more skilful with our wording. If we need a course on this then so be it, comrades. I suggest this is through the education officer and I'm sure we'll get that. Standing Orders Committee has enough to do without pandering to last minute changes and essentially doing our work for us. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

That's open for debate. Steve.

**BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT** (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I'm bemused I'm standing up here to be fair. We moved a resolution a couple of years ago which we believed was bringing democracy to this union. We've heard from Tyne & Wear and Durham that the reasons for removing this from Standing Orders is that it's a hindrance to conference skills, a second bite of the cherry, that our members need educating, need to be more organised and have more skills. Well, you heard the President, in his first address, applauding and recognising how hard the brigade officials are working, probably working harder than at any time in this union's history. Where do we get the time? Where do we get the money for these skills? Where do we get the time for the education? Conference, since this has been introduced there's been no problems whatsoever. I believe there was only four returned this year. Why should any resolution or motion be refused because of a grammar mistake or it's factually incorrect because you got the date wrong? We're a union with democracy. I don't think I need to talk on this anymore. I oppose this amendment to standing orders. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Any more? Any more speakers? I now put the amendment to Standing Order 4 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now move on to Section L Internal Administration para.L1. I now call Resolution 77 LGBT Inclusion moved by the LGBT committee. The EC are supporting.

**Resolution 77 LGBT INCLUSION**

***Conference notes with concern that the film commissioned by our Union to commemorate our Centenary omitted to have any mention or inclusion of our LGBT Section.***

***LGBT Members understand and accept that it is difficult to cover all aspects of our Union in a short film capturing aspects of 100 years of our rich and vibrant history. However for many of our Members being LGBT in the fire service and being out remains a taboo. An opportunity to display pride and solidarity with our LGBT Members has been missed.***

***Conference calls on the Executive Council to ensure that in future any publications and productions that encompass our Union's equality is inclusive of all three existing equality strands.***

**LGBT COMMITTEE**

**SIS MARIA BUCK** (LGBT):

Morning President, Conference, I am moving Resolution 77 for the LGBT Inclusion. Conference, may I start by congratulating all the members and officials who took part in the planning and delivery of the various events held last year to celebrate the hundred years of the union. For clarity, this resolution is not a criticism of the film that was produced as part of the commemoration. The film itself was a professional production that enlightened many on our union's history, and in no way is this resolution intended to take away any of the positive messages displayed in the film.

However, as an LGBT committee and representatives of our LGBT members it was with disappointment that we noted no inclusion of any mention of the existence of an LGBT section within our union structure. We understand that this is a consequence of an oversight, and the intention was not there to exclude our section within the film. Our union and the Fire & Rescue Services have played an important role in bringing the social acceptance of LGBT people, and this has happened as a consequence of the visibility of our members at Pride and other events.

Being out, being proud and being ourselves starts with coming out and we should not underestimate the powerful message that we send with our visibility of the LGBT firefighters, but also the message this sends to those who are thinking about or struggling with their identity. It's not just a message to those who are LGBT and those who support us but also to those who oppose LGBT equality. Our committee is here to advise and support our union on what will best serve our LGBT members. We ask that due consideration is given to utilising the advice that we can bring when continuing our fight and commitment to equality. We ask conference please support the resolution. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* Thank you. It's open for debate. Tam.

## BRO TAM McFARLANE (National Officer):

Just to be quick, Conference, I'm glad the LGBT committee have accepted that there was no intention to exclude them from the film. The film was actually made by In Focus Productions who are an independent film maker. We gave them the task to put together a film as part of the centenary. The briefing was to celebrate a hundred years of the union's history, to promote the union's role in shaping our profession, to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of fallen firefighters, and of course to celebrate the wider role of the Fire Brigades Union within the Trade Union Movement. Initially we gave them 40 minutes to do that in, so I think it was a bit of a challenge to start with. They came back to us during the course of that and said "there's just so much great stuff here we want to expand the film, but of course, your union is limited by all the resources that you have." The General Secretary, after a full briefing, agreed we would expand the film to an hour long.

So far the latest figures we've had from last November show we've had 2,611 people watch the film and that's not including the times we've shown the film at Union Schools, union events and indeed at conference itself. I think the overwhelming majority of people who have reacted to the film has been hugely positive. Where we have had criticism it is exactly as the LGBT committee has highlighted: it's about people who feel they are excluded from the film.

We have been working with the LGBT committee and having discussions with the secretary. The General Secretary has had a conversation with the film makers. We are currently trying to see if there are areas that weren't included in the film that talk about LGBT issues, with a view to seeing if it's possible to have a potential re-edit of that. I have to say, I can't give any guarantees on that, but just to give you that reassurance that it is something that we're looking to do.

In the interim, please (I back exactly what the President said there) go out and show the film as much as you can. It's had a huge impact on members and gives a definitive answer to anyone who says "what's the union ever done for us". Of course, do support the resolution. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tam. I now put Resolution 77 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 78 Social Media and Freedom of Speech moved by the LGBT committee. The EC support.

### **Resolution 78 SOCIAL MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

***Conference notes the importance of social media in promoting our Union's aims and objectives. Conference also notes the importance of the fundamental right of freedom of speech.***

***However, Conference expects elected Officials to act responsibly when commenting on social media whether in a personal or official capacity. Conference condemns the use of racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments by any Member or Official on social media whether in a personal or official capacity.***

***Conference instructs the Executive Council to review the existing guidelines for use of social media with a view to setting clear parameters on acceptable comment on social media when individuals are identifiable as an elected Officials of our Union.***

**LGBT COMMITTEE**

**SIS KAREN McDOWELL (LBGT):**

Conference, President, I am moving Resolution 78 Social Media and Freedom of Speech. Conference, social media is a powerful tool for promoting our union's aims and objectives. When identifiable as FBU elected officials and posting on social media we all have a responsibility to ensure that what we're communicating does not lead to unnecessary offence, that it does not contradict or contravene the rules of our union and that what we are communicating is true and factually correct.

Some would present an argument that we cannot interfere with an individual's right to freedom of speech, but as a union we have an obligation to protect our reputation. Other arguments presented focus on no-one has a right not to be offended. But what if some comments are so hurtful they have the potential to bring harm to the recipient? Also, some comments have the potential to incite physical attacks on others. Again, we need to be mindful of the impact of what we are potentially expressing.

During the recent debate on the reform of the Gender Recognition Act it was identifiable that some of the discussions on social media fell well short of what we should expect of our officials. An example was a retweet of an article from The Mail Online. The discussion was in relation to potential impact of changes to the GRA and how that could affect men claiming to be women having access to women's prisons. The Mail's article made claims that child murderer, Ian Huntley, was currently transitioning to be a woman and was demanding the right to be moved to a women's prison. This article was found to be totally false, and Ian Huntley has never stated any intention to transition. The production of the false story had the effect of inflaming opinion on the issue of gender recognition under a given scenario that was simply untrue.

Another example of misinformation was the retweeting of an article from The Spectator which alleged that a journalist had been arrested and was being questioned in relation to social media comments about a chief executive officer of a trans charity where it was alleged that the journalist had used the wrong pronouns in describing a trans female. The misuse of pronouns usually refers to where someone uses the original gender of someone who has transitioned when describing him. This story also turned out to be false. On fact checking, the police were investigating the social media comments of the journalist, but it was in relation to her making accusations against a trans charity CEO alleging that she had been involved in child abuse, surgical mutilation of a child, and forcing the child to take drugs. Such allegations create obvious damage to the reputation of the head of the charity and she has a right to request police assistance and the protection of her reputation.

These are just a couple of examples to assist conference understanding the reasoning behind our concern. Conference, this resolution is not about stopping debate; it's about ensuring debate is conducted respectfully and based on fact and protecting the integrity of our union and acting in the best interests of our union. Therefore we are seeking that the Executive Council review and, where necessary amend, the existing guidance to give clarity to officials of the FBU when making comment. Conference, I call on you to support this resolution. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder? Mark.

**BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):**

Conference, President, we are supporting the resolution. Freedom of speech can be viewed as including the right to offend but that doesn't mean you can actively seek to offend to make a point. It is a fact that controversy stirs debate. As an example, controversial comments always receive the most responses on social media. But we as officials have to recognise our responsibilities. I would suggest that a quick Google of anybody in the room would show press releases and the campaigns that we've been involved in, and the other stuff to do with the other trade unions that we're all engaged in, which shows that we are FBU officials. We simply can't hide from that fact. I'm sure no-one in the FBU deliberately goes out to make controversial comments to build social media profiles, but we do get embroiled in fierce debates, that's the nature of who we are as officials. We're passionate; we want to get our points across.

Our responsibilities go further than most people as officials. If somebody on your timeline makes clearly offensive or threatening comments you should be challenging it. After all, an act of omission is an act of commission.

Conference, these are my views. Your views may very well be different, and that's the point of the resolution. The resolution states that we need to review the existing guidelines for use of social media with a view to setting clear parameters on acceptable comments on social media when individuals are identifiable as elected officials of the union. That's a key point: when you are clearly identifiable as an elected official. This isn't an attack on freedom of speech. This resolution is about protecting the image of the Fire Brigades Union. It's a respected image that we've built up over a hundred years. Countless hardworking officials have built that reputation. That image that we hold should be cherished and protected. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

That's open for debate.

## **BRO JON LAMBE (London):**

Conference, President, I am speaking in opposition to this resolution. Conference, we condemn all use of racist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic comments, we condemn all types of bigotry whenever and wherever we encounter it. If an unacceptable comment is made it should be dealt with. If a complaint is made, the rule book is adhered to. If the rule has been broken the member should be dealt with accordingly. If the rules are not being enforced let's enforce them.

That's not what this resolution does. This resolution calls for the EC to decide what is acceptable comment on social media. Conference, does anyone here believe it's acceptable to be a bigot? Does anyone believe that you can be racist and not have broken FBU rules? I'll say it again: if you're being racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic you're in breach of the FBU rule book. This resolution will give the EC the ability to tell any official of the union what is acceptable for them to say on social media. It would give the EC the ability, if they wished to use it, to censor any official they wanted to. Most of our officials are lay officials, people who give up their time to keep this union running.

Conference, there are senior officials in this room who, if you went back to in or around the time of the national pay dispute, would have been rightly angered at the suggestion that the EC could decide what was acceptable for them to say or put to their membership and would have strongly opposed this motion. Conference, if an FBU official makes racist, homophobic, sexist, transphobic or bigoted comments on social media let's deal with them under the rule book. I urge conference to oppose this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Any more? General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

President, Conference, I think the points that Jon has just made do highlight some of the caution that we need to adopt in relation to this resolution. The Executive Council does support the resolution and it does reflect a lot of discussion that has taken place over the past year or more at the Executive Council since the growth and emergence of social media. It is mechanisms, the old Facebook and Twitter in particular, that many of our members and our officials engage with and use. I think it is a wider public debate about the impact that those forms of social media have on the conduct of debate. I think people are still coming to terms with how to take account of that, the impact on people's right to freedom of expression, freedom of opinion compared with the nature of social media and the nature of the way in which people debate on social media. Unfortunately, it does appear that when people engage in the use of Facebook and Twitter they say things often which they would never dream of saying to somebody face to face. I find young people will tweet us, make a criticism, you go and meet them at a branch face to face and actually the discussion is completely different from the one that takes place on Twitter, for example. So there is something which I think we all need to think about.

I do agree with Jon in relation to the fourth paragraph of the resolution that actually if officials have or are alleged to have made racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments then in themselves those comments may well be a breach of the union's rules and policies in which case they can be dealt with in accordance with the rules and policies of the union. Let's just be clear about those processes. We have rules related to members, we have rules related to different levels of officials, and we have processes by which allegations made about the behaviour of a member or an official will be subject of an inquiry and may, depending on the outcome of that inquiry, be the subject

of a hearing. I have confidence in those processes and I'm sure that conference also has confidence in those processes. Sometimes those lead to hearings and sometimes the person making the inquiry concludes that no such offence has taken place, in which case no hearing takes place.

So there are already mechanisms by which racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or other such comments could be addressed within the existing rules. Nevertheless, it is true that the emergence of social media, the growth of the use of social media including by our officials has created some significant challenges for us. I'll just give one example. That's relating to our Comms team who are sitting at the back of the room. If officials make particular comments which begin to raise a wider public debate then actually we as a union at head office may be subject to queries and questions.

I suppose the question for people to ask is: is it a correct use of our resources that our communications team spend an entire day, for example, answering press enquiries as a result of a comment that someone may or may not have made on Twitter? I think that's a question of responsibility for all our officials to think about.

There is a challenge in this resolution: how we get the balance right between the points that have been raised about people's freedom of opinion and freedom of expression and the collective responsibility we face as officials of this union. This is a difficult challenge. Nevertheless, the Executive Council does support the resolution. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

LGBT committee right of reply.

## SIS KAREN McDOWELL (LGBT):

Conference, President, just as a quick recap. There has been sometimes officials or members making racist, sexist, homophobic and transphobic comments currently and these are said to be being exercised in a personal capacity. There is firmly a belief by some officials that it is all right to make such comments in this capacity. Conference, I would just like to again call on you to support this resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Resolution 78 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Could I ask the Tellers and Scrutineers to go to the back of the hall, please, to get their brief from the Chair of Standing Orders Committee. Thank you.

I now call Resolution 79 Branch Officials Handbook moved by Durham and Darlington. The EC are supporting.

### **Resolution 79 BRANCH OFFICIALS HANDBOOK**

***Conference recognises the Branch Officials Handbook has played an important part in helping Branch Officials to effectively run their Branches and carry out Union duties.***

***The handbook has also been an integral part of the introductory Branch Reps course teaching new Branch Reps about the role they have been elected to undertake.***

***Conference agrees that the present Branch Officials Handbook is out of date and not fit for purpose and calls on the Executive Council to update or replace the present handbook by whatever means necessary, this work to be completed by Conference 2020.***

**DURHAM AND DARLINGTON**

## SIS HOLLY FERGUSON (Durham):

President, Conference, the Branch Officials Handbook should be the central guide for any new union rep, so that they feel supported and are given a point of reference. This helps to understand the structure of union, the mechanics of conference, education available, etc, as well as what their role is. It is a shame, then, that it is so

underused. I know of many reps who have never even heard of it, let alone seen it. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the fact that it has not been updated since 2010. As it is now it states that Mick Shaw is our President, who, as we know, has been succeeded by two others; we have four national officers; brigade organisers are referred to as membership secretaries; we have 13 regions; we are not affiliated to the Labour Party so no political monies go to them; and there is no 2015 pension scheme. I am confident there are legal references also that need to be changed due to new legislation. I could go on but I'm sure that I've made my point.

This handbook needs updating, and its relevance increasing so that it can be referred to by our new generation of reps to enable them to be the best that they can be. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Tam McFarlane.

## BRO TAM McFARLANE (National Officer):

Just quickly. Thanks to Durham and Darlington for bringing this resolution. Actually, I think it's worse than that. I think it's 2007 it was actually written. That is something we're aware of. There is work currently taking place in regard to the branch officials handbook. It is getting led by the head of education, Lindsey McDowell and is something we will be assisting her through at head office. We currently have that work done by the timeframe you set out. The work is underway and it is something we are very aware of.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tam. I now put Resolution 79 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 80 Establishing a General Strike Fund moved by Cheshire. The Executive Council oppose.

### **Resolution 80 ESTABLISHING A GENERAL STRIKE FUND**

***Conference notes with alarm the biggest attacks in history on jobs, terms and conditions across UK Fire and Rescue Services.***

***Conference also notes recent cases of industrial action taken by other unions and their members whereby successful action was supported by their unions' general strike fund which resulted in great victories over those employers.***

***To this end, Conference instructs the Executive Council to create a general strike fund, separate to the Union's other funds, supported by Member contributions, to support Members engaged in industrial action.***

**CHESHIRE**

## BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):

Conference, President, we brought this back this year such is our strength of feeling that the union needs a general strike fund. The General Secretary, in moving the Executive Council opposition at the last conference, was nebulous to say the least. This resolution essentially calls for a new strategic tool in our opposition to cuts, to the fragmentation of our service, and to our demands for better pay and conditions. This fund would not be illegal, it would not be overly bureaucratic, and it would not be a retrograde step. It would in fact be a usually positive, progressive and important move forward for this union. As trade unionists we have studied, and we learn from disputes from the movement and from our history. Some of the most momentous disputes of recent history and their success involved workers taking strike action to win, and strike action that was supported by their union's general strike fund. The Birmingham refuse dispute lasted three months and they won. The BA cabin crew – 40 days of strike action and they won. Those funds were managed centrally, supported by their union and supported by membership contributions. It was not a well-meaning local hardship fund. We ourselves have seen from our pension dispute several years ago that local Fire & Rescue Services were stretched covering industrial action. They were relying upon small teams to provided (I'll resist the urge to say it) resilience. That was on the back of only small periods of strike action.

With a general strike fund, the government nationally or maverick chief fire officers locally would no longer be able to assume that they could starve our members back to work. The fund would, in reality, force employers to sit down and genuinely resolve disputes sooner, and one would hope with far better outcomes for members for fear of the consequences. I've not met a member yet that doesn't support the call for such a fund. Conference, please support this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder?

## **BRO MARK ROWE** (Merseyside):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 80. Conference, the availability of strike pay can be said to increase leverage at the bargaining table, and in some cases it may actually increase the probability of a strike, since the employers will be aware that we have a financial resource available to us if we choose to strike. A general strike fund isn't going to be the answer to all our problems, but nobody is saying that it is. What it does give us, though, is something additional to our campaigns when building for action, either local or national. The resolution does not mention a figure on a levy, nor does it state how much would be paid out in the event of members taking action. After all, that information is for us to know and to administer, and for chief fire officers to worry about.

With firefighter pay in freefall and attacks on conditions of service continuing, any additional weapon in our armoury has to be of a benefit, surely. A strike has a number of elements to it, as we all know, but the obvious main one is the ability to hold out, to lose pay but continue the action. Lots of other unions have strike funds. In France during recent strikes those strikers had a saying. The saying was: "Striking without a strike fund is like camping without a tent". The protection of a tent enabled them to endure the hardship longer.

A lot of unions with a general strike fund recognise that, and the donations that come in – not just when they're on strike – can be from appeals when we're building for action, from political groups, via social media, other unions etc – once that has been built up, allow strikes to keep going for longer. Conference, establishing a general strike fund is a statement of intent. Establishing a general strike fund sends a clear message to the employers that we're gearing up and we're organising for the long haul. Conference, support the resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

That's open for debate. General Secretary to outline the EC's opposition.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, the Executive Council are urging conference to oppose the resolution. I think the resolution might have some attraction on the face of it, but the Executive Council, which has had to manage these issues in the past, would alert you to some of those difficulties. For example, the resolution does not say where those funds are going to come from. It may have been a more clear debate if, for example, the resolution said that Cheshire proposes that the contribution rate of Fire Brigades Union members should increase by a certain amount and that certain amount should be allocated to a strike fund. But the resolution doesn't say that. So it doesn't address where the funds are going to come from to build a strike fund.

I think the examples that were used do not apply in regard to the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire & Rescue Service. Firstly, the law in France is entirely different from the law in the UK. There are issues that we've already had to deal with in terms of administering hardship funds within the Fire Brigades Union relating to the status of any such payments from the Fire Brigades Union to an individual, the implications of tax, national insurance and other such matters. Again, those are not addressed within the resolution but are very real issues that we have had to think about, and some of you on the ground have had to think about when making those payments from actual hardship funds in local or national disputes.

The National Treasurer set out some of the issues we had, and we continue to have, in relation to our own finances. We've spent more than a decade coming to this conference saying: we need to make changes to this union in order to keep ourselves financially viable. Yet the reality would be, to establish a serious strike fund (I'm not quite sure why it's called a general strike fund – a general strike is a strike of all workers, not just those within this particular union) that it would be a very, very considerable demand on resources indeed.

On the final point, in terms of strikes actually this union has one of the most militant records in British trade unions. We have a very proud record. Nobody wants to take strike action, but we have never shied away from taking strike action. The truth is this, the existence or non-existence of a strike fund has never ever been an obstacle to our members voting for a strike should a strike become necessary. In those circumstances, we have found ways of providing financial support to our members, normally through the use of hardship funds.

I'll finish on this one point. Probably the most significant strike ever in the history of this union was the all-out strike in 1977-1978. There was no strike fund in place at that time. Nevertheless, the members of this union took a decision that an all-out strike was necessary and once they took that decision they were determined to see that through. They didn't need a strike fund to do so.

Comrades, this will confuse issues, it doesn't address the detail that would be required, we urge conference to oppose the resolution. Thank you.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Cheshire right of reply.

## **BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):**

Thank you, President. Just a few points on the right of reply there. We haven't gone into specific detail around contribution rates because we believe that that would necessitate rule change. We deliberately allowed the Executive Council the autonomy to facilitate the general strike fund. That's why it's been done so.

The General Secretary mentioned different laws in France in relation to what Mark said in his speech. I'll reiterate: we have several major trade unions in the UK that have general strike funds. It has nothing to do with legislation.

Again, the term "general strike fund" was referred to. Matt thinks it intimates a general strike. There are several major trade unions in this country that have got general strike funds called general strike funds. It does not necessitate a general strike. In moving this resolution I've also identified some local disputes in different parts of the country, in different sectors, that use that fund. So with the greatest respect, I don't accept the opposition that's been put forward as entirely accurate.

We're here again at conference and we'll shortly be talking about preparing our members for industrial action on pay as part of a pay strategy. We're talking about that for the third year in a row. I would suggest that the shackles of fear would maybe be removed with a general strike fund and that would progress to where we need to be far quicker with members having full support and confidence. This resolution is a way of achieving that. Please support the resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, I will put Resolution 80 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. I'll do it again. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. Sorry, I'm looking at my plan to see where brigades are. Right, I'm going to do that one more time. So I'm looking where the brigades are. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. Card vote is called.

Could you all stay seated apart from the Tellers and Scrutineers. Conference, can you all take your seats please, apart from the Scrutineers and Tellers. Take your seats. Take your seats.

## **CHIEF SCRUTINEER:**

Conference, delegations that wish to vote FOR please come forward now. Place your cards in the box.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Can you all take your seats once you've cast your votes.

## **CHIEF SCRUTINEER:**

OK, delegations that wish to vote AGAINST please come forward now. That's AGAINST. OK, is that all votes cast?

Yes. The Tellers and Scrutineers with the Stewards can go to the Standing Orders room. Thank you very much. Thank you, President.

*A card vote was taken*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Right, Conference on that point we will break for tea break. Back in at 11.25 sharp.

*Break for tea*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, can you come to order. Conference, come to order, take your seats. Conference, take your seats, come to order. I now call Chief Scrutineer, Mark Rowe, to give the result.

**CHIEF SCRUTINEER:**

Thanks, President. Conference, as Chief Scrutineer I'm here to announce the result of the card vote for Resolution 80. The result is as follows: FOR 15,322; AGAINST 17,299. Therefore that FALLS.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

I now call the Chair of Standing Orders, Steve Shelton.

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

Thank you, President. If you just go to your delegates list, please. South Yorkshire delete Stuart Smith; replace with Daniel Ather. Programme of Business page 6: Resolution 52 has been withdrawn. Thank you, President.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *Agreed*

Right, Conference, it's my intention to take the Executive Council Policy Statement FBU Organisation and Structure Review and Emergency Resolution 2 FBU Organisation and Structure Review now. We will then jump back into the running order. Conference, for your attention, I would also inform you that we will be discussing pay straight after lunch.

I now ask conference to turn to page 2 in the Programme of Business. I call Executive Council Policy Statement FBU Organisation and Structure Review seconded by Avon, and Emergency Resolution 2 FBU Organisation and Structure Review in the same debate. That one is seconded by Devon & Somerset. General Secretary.

**Emergency Resolution 2 – FBU ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE REVIEW**

***Conference notes the contents of the Executive Council Policy Statement to Conference 2019 (issued to all Members in March 2019) which addresses, among other issues, the issue of National Officers and Head Office. It commits to report further to Conference on progress made by the task and finish group in addressing this aspect of the organisation and structure review.***

***Conference further notes the position detailed in the Executive Council Policy Statement regarding National Officers which followed the decision of Conference 2017 to instruct the Executive Council to appoint a temporary National Officer.***

***Conference notes that the task and finish group further considered how this arrangement had worked and took evidence from current national officials in post and from the temporary National Officer.***

***Conference agrees that the flexibility afforded by the current arrangement gives some encouragement that this could provide a blueprint for the future. This has been a new and different way of delivering work for the Union on a national basis and as a result the issues are complex and therefore the process of reviewing is not complete.***

***However, Conference is aware that this is not something that can be entered into without further work from the task and finish group, as well as further consultation with Head Office Officials, both permanent and temporary.***

***As a starting point for this further work, and recognising that the following needs to be developed, Conference resolves the following as a further interim position;***

- 1. The current situation with two elected National Officers based in Head Office shall be maintained***
- 2. The elections for these positions shall remain suspended for reasons previously agreed, aside from when a vacancy arises***
- 3. The position of a third National Officer, as set out in the Rule Book, shall be left vacant whilst the task and finish group complete their work and until Conference has the opportunity to further consider on the structure of Head Office***
- 4. The Executive Council shall appoint two Officials who would operate under similar arrangements and Conditions of Service to the current temporary National Officer***
- 5. The Executive Council shall consider the individual merits of each case and make an assessment, in consultation with the Officials concerned, what working arrangements would best suit the individuals concerned***
- 6. These positions would be open to any fully paid-up Member of the Union with at least five years' continuous membership***
- 7. The Executive Council shall have licence to appoint other Officials on a temporary basis to fulfil specific roles that have been identified from time to time***
- 8. The Executive Council shall make the necessary arrangements for these measures to be introduced and will report further to Conference in 2020, including with any necessary rule changes.***

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks, President. Conference, I draw your attention to the Executive Council Policy Statement FBU Organisation and Structure Review and to Emergency Resolution 2. To assist conference we will move them both in the same contribution and hopefully save conference time.

The question of the union's structure, restructuring, reorganisation has been a theme at least for a decade. It's an important one. It may not be the most exciting debate but it's absolutely central to the ability of this union to function and to operate and to organise and to represent and fight for our members. We are proud, as the President said in his presidential address, of the fact that we have maintained our independence as an industrial union for 100 years. We organise in a single sector, a single industry. In that regard we are somewhat unusual in the British Trade Union Movement. If you look at the history of the British Trade Union Movement it is a history of mergers. The big unions that we see today: Unite, Unison, the GMB, and others, are the result of decades of unions merging – sometimes through industrial change, often sadly driven by the decline and de-industrialisation of sectors of the economy, and often also driven financially. I think that's something that we always need to keep in mind. I think we can be very proud that we have actually confronted the issue of merging.

Some ten years or more ago we came to conference and said "Conference, you're going to have to think about whether you want to maintain a separate Fire & Rescue Service union and if we do then we're going to have to continue to make changes that are necessary" – and we've been able to do that.

Being a single sector union brings a great deal of strength. I think it brings a certain character to this union: that the Fire & Rescue Service is a close-knit sector, a close-knit workforce. The people working in fire stations and in controls know the job that each of us does and that gives a bond and it gives an outlook and a strength to our union. It has determined the character of our union over that past 100 years.

But it also brings with it the existence as a separate, industry-specific union, certain risks and weaknesses as well. That's become very noticeable over the past decade because it has meant that as our industry has shrunk as a result of job cuts then our union has shrunk also. Tam will come on to speak later in conference about organising

and in some areas it's not as good as it could be. We still, nevertheless, have high levels of union density, i.e. a high proportion of the workforce are members of the Fire Brigades Union. That means that when there are a job cuts that has an immediate impact on union membership levels and an immediate impact on the union's finances. So we need to keep those issues in mind all the way through these discussions.

The fact is that since 2010 and the election of the coalition government until today we've seen now almost a decade of austerity – absolutely unprecedented attacks on public services, including our sector of the public services in the Fire & Rescue Service. We've never seen before the scale of cuts and closures that we've seen in that nine year period. You have had to deal with that as local officials. The job cuts that you see are reflected in the membership figures in the annual report, and are reflected in each of the brigades that you work in, in terms of the closures, job losses that you've experienced at local level.

In that regard we have again returned to this theme constantly at conference that we need to adapt. We need to adapt the structures of our union to take account of those changing circumstances. It's only as a result of that adaptation and change that the National Treasurer was able to come and report that again for a second year running we've increased the surplus in the General Fund – the key fund to being able to function as a union.

I know it's been raised at conference on a number of occasions: when will this process end? I have to be frank, Conference, I don't think the process of reviewing our own structures, and if necessary changing them, will ever end. We need to review constantly whether our structures, our committees, our conference, our head office, our staffing arrangements are adequate for the challenges that we meet today. If they are found not to be, then we need to make the necessary changes. This discussion is part and parcel of that.

I think it is worth reminding conference (some of you have been here for a long time, others less so) of the stages that we've been through in making those changes. We've had some very difficult discussions here at this conference. We have made very significant changes, for example to this conference, the structure of this conference and the size of this conference. That was a decision that you took as conference and conference is changed as a result. We've taken decisions that have affected our regions, and some of those discussions continue. We've had discussions that have affected our sections; we've had discussions and changes that have affected the structure of head office, the number of officials that we have, that have affected our staff. All of these areas have been under discussion for a number of years and we've made very significant changes. Those changes have allowed us to continue to function.

The latest phase of that is reflected in the Executive Council Policy Statement that is in front of you. I would like to thank Dave Green, who led this bit of the work, and the Executive Council members who supported him in the task and finish group that is referenced in the EC Policy Statement.

We brought in an external consultant to assist us in that review. Again, I would also like to thank all the officials from regions and from sections who were interviewed by the consultant and gave frank views about your assessment of the state of the union, the strengths and weaknesses at a national level, the strengths and weaknesses in your brigades, in your regions and in your sections. You will find within the document at the bottom of page 1 and going over on to page 2 some of the key issues that were identified in the report that was provided to the Executive Council as a result of that, and that was presented by Simon Sapper, the consultant, to a meeting of brigade and sectional officials some weeks ago.

Some of the issues that are identified in that report relate to, for example, the age profile of officials. Again, we're dealing with the consequences of a decade of job cuts in the Fire Service. By and large, if you do not recruit for a decade then inevitably the workforce has aged, and so the age profile of the membership of the Fire Brigades Union has aged in that period. We've seen some recruitment in the past couple of years, but we haven't made up in any way for the ground that was lost during that period of job cuts. So the age profile of officials is something that we need to think about.

The findings pointed to an unevenness in our organisation: that we have areas where our branches are functioning; or some branches are functioning, some may not be functioning as well; where our brigade committees, for

example, might function well; our regions may. We have other areas where we face more challenges, where the structures, the organisation required by the rule book may not operate as effectively as it does elsewhere. We need to take account of that. That's not about point-scoring, that's about being frank with each other about how do we identify the issues and then how do we make the necessary improvement.

A number of respondents to that survey pointed to concern about capacity issues both at local, brigade, regional, sectional, and also particularly it was mentioned in relation to head office. That the scale of work that has been generated within the Fire & Rescue Service, the attacks on pay and conditions, the attacks on jobs, the attacks politically on the union and on our service are generating an unprecedented level of work at all levels of the organisation. Ultimately, that's reflected at head office with the full-time and national officials. Some concern was identified about the role and the different understandings among our brigade organisers about their role, their capacity, and the training that is needed for them.

Issues were raised (and this has been raised at conference before) about the timescales for conference. We still, by and large, run a conference that was designed for a period when actually everything was written on typewriters, put in envelopes, stamped and sent off. We've moved on since then, but we haven't necessarily fully adapted our processes in terms of conference to take account of the world that we're actually living in. Delegates have come to conference and raised questions about whether the timescales for conference can be adjusted.

The report also outlines the need for strategic planning by the Executive Council, which ultimately you as conference would be responsible for. We have done a lot of work at the Executive Council, bringing those discussions here to conference, to argue that collectively all of us need to be thinking strategically – not just about individual resolutions, but what is the overall picture facing our union; how do we plan not just for the immediate challenges that we're facing this year, that we are still viable and effective in five years' time and in ten years' time? Some of you, some of us, may not be here in this capacity then, but we need to be thinking about the people who are coming through who are going to fill your places and who are going to fill these places on the rostrum here. So strategic thinking and strategic planning needs to be built into that process.

A key element, therefore, of that policy statement is the work that was done around conference which is on page 2 of the Policy Statement. The recommendations set out in the Policy Statement are that we should move to alter our current arrangements in relation to conference, particularly in relation to the issue of timescales. Work was done, primarily by Dave, looking at what we do in this union and what other organisations such as the TUC but also other individual unions do, in terms of the time that they give to local committees or branches to submit resolutions, the time that they give to allow amendments to those resolutions, composites, the time that they give to the Executive Council to issue Executive Council policy statements or resolutions, and so on. Taking account of some of those, it is recommended that we believe that we could move to a tighter, shorter timescale for the organisation of conference.

As again set out in the Policy Statement, that would require brigade and regional committees to be aware of those timescales, and to plan the necessary meetings within the relevant timeframe that would be set out from head office in terms of a revised conference timescale. The proposal is that the relevant standing orders would be suspended for that period to allow us to make those changes, assess it yourselves as conference, and then make a final decision about how to undertake those changes.

I then want to move on, Conference, if I can to move the Emergency Resolution that followed the Executive Council Policy Statement. This relates particularly to the issue of National Officers and the national functions of the union, and how we provide that support. You will be familiar with the rule book requirement currently that there are three positions for national officers. Conference has agreed to review that. We had a resolution agreed by conference to appoint a temporary national officer. Tam McFarlane was appointed as a result of that decision. Again, I want to thank Tam for his role in this process, because we have undertaken quite a detailed discussion at head office, assessing the views of different officials, also the experiences of Brother McFarlane in terms of fulfilling that role but not being permanently based in head office. I think there's lots of lessons that can be learned from that process and that discussion.

So the recommendations in the emergency resolution aim to take us forward in terms of that national support. Points 1 to 8 set out on the emergency resolution would leave us with maintaining the position of two full-time elected national officers, that elections would remain suspended for those positions for reasons conference has previously discussed, unless a vacancy were to arise. We would move to a system of building towards two appointees. So the sort of position that Tam has fulfilled over the past period would be enhanced by a further official being appointed into a similar role. The Executive Council would be authorised to discuss, both with Brother McFarlane and with the additional person, the appropriate working arrangements for the official appointed into that position. As the resolution makes clear, that would be open to any member with five years' membership.

It also identifies another possibility that emerged out of these discussions of allowing the Executive Council, in certain circumstances, to appoint additional national roles to assist us perhaps on a temporary basis. Take, for example, something like the Grenfell Tower fire where we might need additional national support for a period but not necessarily permanently.

So those are set out, and the resolution makes clear that we would then report back to conference. In our view, Conference, these would enhance the capacity of the union at national level to address the issues that are raised through conference and through the structures of the union, it would allow us the flexibility that we think we will need. It's not a fixed proposal. We would assess and review at the end of that, report back to conference with recommendations about whether those mechanisms should be made permanent or other mechanisms should be put in place. We think that offers a way forward on the issues that have been previously identified to conference. On that basis, Conference, I move both the Executive Council Policy Statement and the Emergency Resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, I now call Devon & Somerset to second the Executive Council Policy Statement. Sorry, Avon to second.

## **BRO GARY SPINDLER (Avon):**

President, Conference, we are seconding the EC Policy Statement FBU Organisation and Structure Review. Conference, as the General Secretary has said, we are all aware that our structure has been an issue for many years. We've already made lots of uncomfortable decisions, removing EC members and merging regions. But many of us who are here were also at the meeting in Birmingham where we were given the report from Simon Sapper. This report covered many issues. Some of those are addressed within the Policy Statement, and we also have the Emergency Resolution from the EC on the same subject which is also going to be debated in this session. We urge conference to support both.

So what do we hope can be achieved through these? To put it simply: to make our lives easier. That's not wishing to be flippant, but as a brigade official, who wouldn't want that? If you can make something easier it's normally also more efficient. So with the workloads being generated in today's world and this disastrous Tory government hell-bent on destroying anything that's worth anything to the public, we must also put ourselves and others working on our members' behalf in a better position to be able to deal with the struggles that we all face.

How can we do that? Firstly, make conference arrangements quicker and simpler. Secondly, increase our capacity at a national level and ease the workloads by appointing two officials to work at head office. So if you want a structure that enables us all to be able to concentrate better on supporting our members, please support this Policy Statement. I second. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Devon & Somerset.

## **BRO SCOTT YOUNG (Devon & Somerset):**

President, Conference, we are seconding Emergency Resolution FBU Organisation and Structure Review. Conference, we are asking you to support this emergency resolution as it just makes sense. Why is that? (1) It increases capacity at a national level by appointing two officials to carry out work that is currently not being undertaken. Conference, a lot of this work is generated by decisions we make at conference which we should

bear in mind when looking at this Emergency Resolution. (2) We are not removing any national officers today. This decision is for another day, probably next year's annual conference. So, Conference, if you are against the removal of national officers, that is for next year not today, so please save your arguments. (3) This resolution also allows the EC to appoint another temporary officer to deal with issues such as Grenfell or unexpected issues. So a potential increase to three officials.

Also, Conference, let's be honest with ourselves. When conference agreed in 2017 to have a third national officer we didn't get a national officer; we got someone appointed using this process. He did not leave his Fire & Rescue Service. We do not have the pension liabilities. Ask yourselves: has that been a success? Our view is yes. Due to this we believe that one of the officials in this resolution should be the temporary national officer, subject to their agreement.

So with this in mind I ask you to support the Emergency Resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

## BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of both the Policy Statement and the Emergency Resolution. Brother Scattergood brought a resolution that was moved in 2017 to have a national officer and that is what this will do, just in a slightly different capacity. So we do support both, but also call upon the EC to look at the rest of the report and look at the capacity at both regional level and brigade level, and look to increase capacity in those areas in the future. In support, West Midlands. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? No. I now put Executive Council Policy Statement FBU Organisation and Structure Review to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now put Emergency Resolution 2 FBU Organisation and Structure Review to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, I will call Resolution 83 National Mutual Assurance Fund moved by Hereford & Worcester. The EC are opposing.

### **Resolution 83 NATIONAL MUTUAL ASSURANCE FUND**

***Conference applauds the excellent work that has been achieved through the Firefighters 100 Lottery. The money that has been donated to assist firefighters injured during their duties, or to the survivors of tragedies such as the Grenfell Tower fire has no doubt made a huge difference to those individuals and their families. This work shows exactly what the FBU are about and what we are striving to achieve. Conference also recognises the importance of the Accident and Injury Fund which many of our Members have signed up to.***

***Hereford and Worcester have a Mutual Assurance Fund which has been running for many years. The fund has many Members, made up of Green Book, Gold Book and Grey Book staff, each of whom have signed up to donate £10 in the event of the death of an existing member of the group. This equates to a substantial payment being made to a Member's next of kin in their hour of need. This money is of a great assistance to those families, and helps get them through those unthinkable but necessary tasks.***

***In the ten years preceding 2016 there were a total of 16 firefighter fatalities in England. If every FBU Member was a member of a National Mutual Assurance Fund those families could have benefitted from an amount of money that could have helped to cover costs, such as funeral arrangements and legal fees but also assisted those grieving families with mortgage payments, child care and unpaid absence from work.***

***Conference instructs the Executive Council to set up a National Mutual Assurance Fund, exclusively for FBU Members and to investigate other ways in which assistance can be provided to families grieving the loss of fallen comrades.***

## HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

### **BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY** (Hereford & Worcester):

President, Conference, comrades, we and our members work a hazardous occupation and due to a number of factors, including government funding, the change in focus from intervention to prevention, and the insufficient time allocated to safety critical training, it is evermore hazardous. The FBU has a longstanding tradition of supporting those in their hour of need, and not least our own. We would like to think that our loved ones would be taken care of if the worst were to happen. The FBU has been proactive in putting such things in place as the Firefighter 100 lottery and the Accident & Injury Fund.

Last year West Yorkshire moved Resolution 82 Fundraising Sites. In her speech, Sister Maggie made a very relevant point of the lack of an equality impact assessment for the Firefighter 100 Lottery that considers those who do not partake in gambling. A national mutual fund would offer a viable alternative for those who do not gamble. A set figure would be taken from each member in the event of a member dying. For example, if each of our 32,000 members contributed just 50p, surviving family members would immediately receive £16,000.

Comrades, support Resolution 83 and support a national mutual fund that would be open to all, fit within the FBU's existing methods of supporting fallen firefighters, and would see a payment made to the beneficiaries to help them through those unthinkable but necessary tasks such as funeral arrangements, and also assist grieving families with mortgage payments, childcare and unpaid absence from work. Comrades, I move. *(Applause)*

### **THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder? That's open for debate. Can I have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. General Secretary to outline the opposition.

### **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, I think we fully understand the motivation of Hereford & Worcester in bringing the proposal, and the points that Trevor made in moving. However, the Executive Council does have a number of concerns and therefore are asking you to oppose the proposal. We already do have mechanisms in place: the Accident & Injury Fund which makes payments on the deaths of members; and we have in place the Firefighters 100 Lottery, which has been developed over the past several years, and has been reported and discussed here at our conference.

I think one clear way in which the concerns raised by Hereford & Worcester could be addressed is either by proposing an increase to the Accident & Injury Fund fees, so that the payments paid out could be increased, or by work to improve the participation rates in the lottery.

The points raised regarding members who do not support/do not believe in gambling, for example, are understood. They were considered at the time of the launch of the lottery and the necessary protections are built into the processes around the lottery.

By the way, comrades, we charge one of the highest contribution rates of any trade union in the British Trade Union Movement. You have to think carefully where you are proposing increasing such contribution rates, and the impact of that on our members. Secondly, in terms of the strategy, the planning that we have had, this conference has already discussed another mechanism that we introduced which includes provision for the support of families of members who are killed. That is the Firefighters 100 Lottery.

The President mentioned earlier on the participation. We've done some fantastic work already with the lottery. We have provided support to those families in those circumstances already through the Firefighters 100 Lottery. But the reality is this: of our 33,000 members, some 3,000 are currently participating in the lottery. Imagine what we would be able to do if that was 10,000. Imagine what we would be able to do if that was 20,000, imagine what we would be able to do if that was 33,000!

In terms of the points we discussed in the previous discussion about capacity, the Executive Council is concerned that, it may well be a good idea, but by setting up another good idea which conference expects us to now implement, we would be tasked with the job of going off, establishing such a mutual fund and reporting back to conference the progress or not of our success in delivering that fund at the same time as we are trying to maintain and build the lottery which we've also already got in place.

So there are a number of very practical problems that the Executive Council see with the resolution proposed by Hereford & Worcester. Therefore, comrades, we would urge you to oppose Resolution 83. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Right of reply, Hereford.

## **BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY** (Hereford & Worcester):

President, Conference, having listened to what the General Secretary has just explained to us, and because of his explanation and assurances of the implications we would like to remit, please. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Trevor. Conference, I now call Resolution 84 Voting at Conference moved by Staffordshire, with an amendment from London. The Executive Council oppose.

### **Resolution 84 VOTING AT CONFERENCE**

***Conference notes that votes at FBU Conferences are taken immediately following the debate.***

***Conference believes that this practice stifles the democratic process and notes that at Labour Party Conference votes are taken at the subsequent session.***

***Therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to set up a task and finish group to explore how this could work at FBU Conferences including any necessary Rule changes and make recommendations to Conference 2020.***

**STAFFORDSHIRE**

### **AMENDMENT**

***Para 3 line 2 delete 'including any necessary Rule changes and make recommendations to Conference 2020.' Insert 'and report its findings, including identifying necessary rule or standing order changes, for regions to consider before Conference 2020 submissions deadline.'***

**LONDON**

## **BRO RICH WILLIAMS** (Staffordshire):

President, Conference, the intent of this resolution, as previously discussed within the Emergency Resolution, was to try to enhance how we do business at conference. I take on board that, probably from the resolution and why the EC have opposed it, the fact that it could have been more detailed and probably could have explained a bit more about what we wanted. But this is why we have opportunity to come to speak to conference, to explain why we want this.

Effectively, what we're saying is we don't have the answer to everything; we don't know exactly how this may work, but to have a working group set up to be able to explore how we may, for the more challenging resolutions, look into a different way of voting or a different way of conference having a look at stuff. Look at the resolution we had this morning where we've gone to a card vote. That's taken time for a card vote to kick in. If the opposition is that this is going to take time at conference for this additional voting to take place, well we've just done that this morning.

We did it as a delegation. What we're asking is you listen to a debate for a particular resolution and you start to think "that's a good idea", then the opposition comes from the EC and then you're not sure. By the time you get to the end of the opposition it's "can you vote, please". You're looking round the room thinking "who's voting for what". What we're trying to ask for is that actually you get a chance, following the debate on the more high topical

if you like – it doesn't have to be every single resolution. Maybe when you submit your resolution to conference maybe Standing Orders would assign whether there will be a voting opportunity for those resolutions. Then there is an opportunity for the resolution to take place, the opposition to be put by the EC and then the opportunity to go outside maybe after a tea break, then come back and we take the vote on it. It may actually give more democracy to the way we do things in here.

I'm just asking that people take that into account because if we don't, then how does it work when some brigades come with a mandate for how they are going to vote on a particular thing, and then actually when they get here and hear the debate and hear the resolution moved by somebody they think "I've been mandated to do that" but actually the EC are pressuring people – I take that back – are asking people maybe to change their position, or to support a particular resolution or not support something. Actually, if you've been mandated you can't do anything else. What we're asking is that people take the information, have a discussion and maybe then come to the official part of the resolution and understand where we're going. We might have had that change this morning for the first resolution. We've had a card vote on the first day.

We accept London's amendment and thank them for that. I think that's enhanced the resolution in its entirety. Thanks for that. Please support Resolution 84. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Rich. Does that have a seconder? Are you seconding and moving your amendment together?

## BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):

I thank comrades from Staffordshire for bringing this resolution. It was thought of by ourselves just before we came to conference. We did try to change Standing Orders to get this in this year but got ruled out of order. The amendment I'm speaking on is basically to speed up the process. It was an excellent resolution as written. However, it reported by next year, which is one of the problems I think we have at conference: we report back next year and then it takes another year to act on that report. So the amendment is to report back before conference and let us consider any changes that may come about.

Speaking in support of the motion, it was my first conference last year and the only thing that struck me was the fact that it was very difficult, as a large region strung out across two tables, to discuss the motions that came up, in exactly the same way that's just been mentioned. So you find people have written their speeches, taken their time, done their research, and then they come up here and present them to us. "Unfortunately we made our mind up last night in the bar!" There is a small amount of movement but we are looking for the task and finish group. That is all it is. It is just to go away and see if they can make recommendations for changes next year. Perhaps there is the ability for us to hold up a card and on that debate we can have the vote after the break, so we can fully consider what are your arguments.

We should always, as a union, be looking at ways to improve our debating, to improve our democracy. When I was discussing this exact resolution with someone who is in this room I said "what about we make changes to the way we vote" and they said: "You know what, that ain't a bad idea; let me think about it". I said "You've just proved my point, haven't you? You want to go away and think about it, don't you". Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jon. Does the amendment have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. General Secretary to outline the opposition.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

We keep doing this! Conference, I think it's welcome that brigade committees are discussing the structures and the processes in the union, and making suggestions and so on. That's always welcome. But I think the Executive Council does have a problem with this resolution and what it proposes.

I think, firstly, conference needs to be clear on a point that Rich made and is clear from the resolution. That is there is not actually a clear process set out of what the alternative would be. It is suggested that actually we set up a

task and finish group and come up with what the answers might be. I think a better way would be to come and say “Conference, we think this is the better way and this is how we should do it”.

In terms of the arguments in favour, on the second paragraph, I have a concern with the phrasing of the second sentence. It says that this practice, i.e. the practice that this union has had for a hundred years, stifles the democratic process. I have to say, I take some exception to that. The idea that the processes that this union has had for a hundred years stifles democratic debate, I don't accept and I hope this conference doesn't accept. This conference has had some very lively debates and very democratic ones. We don't always like the outcome, I don't always like the outcome, you might not always like the outcome, but that's the democracy of conference. I don't accept that democracy is stifled within this conference hall and the processes that we follow.

It argues that this is based on the Labour Party. Our view is that that is incorrect. Not all votes are taken in that manner at Labour Party Conference. I would remind you that one of the debates about Labour Party Conference is, under the Blair years, the stifling of internal democracy so that you end up with now only six contemporary resolutions – three from the trade unions and three from the constituency parties. That is a world away from the number of resolutions which come here as business. Therefore, the comparison is completely flawed between the Labour Party Conference and this conference of the Fire Brigades Union.

In terms of some of the points about democracy, nobody is afraid of experimenting. If you recall, a number of years ago we trialled electronic voting, which actually it could be argued completely enhances voting. There was a public record of how people voted so members can actually see in writing how their delegates voted at a conference. It could be argued that enhances democracy and accountability. We decided through conference not to continue with that trial.

The question of mandating has come up, and I think it is important to address that question. I think the correct interpretation of mandating is there is never an absolute mandate. Brigade committees, any committee in the Labour Movement, may mandate a delegate to vote a certain way. But the simple fact that they delegate someone means that they elect that person, with some confidence, to assess the debate at the conference and that may, if necessary, mean adjusting the position because things may have changed, new information may have come to light. Therefore, there is always the possibility of altering the position that a brigade committee or other delegating body sent the delegate with. That's the whole point and that's the whole tradition of Labour Movement democracy about sending delegates to something. The delegate is then accountable. When reporting back the delegate is then held accountable for the decision they made at conference. So yes, it is always possible that a delegation may adjust their position once they are at conference and once they hear the arguments of conference.

In terms of the point that Jon made about changing positions, this Executive Council, during my time here, has changed its position on numerous positions during conference. It's quite difficult to get round all of them, but we have managed to change our position on numerous occasions during the conference debate itself, having listened to the conference debate. On Jon's point about London, I have to say, Jon, I was a member of a London delegation that was more than 22 delegates strong, and we still were able to change our position during the course of conference discussions. So I don't accept that delegations can't change their positions having listened to the debate.

Actually, comrades, there is a democracy point that I think we need to think about. The democratic debate of this conference takes place within this hall. Rich made an important point that people look around to see who's voting what way. Actually, comrades, the question of who is voting what way should be irrelevant to how you make your decision. Your delegates should decide on the basis of your assessment of what is the right and wrong answer to the question being put, and without any pressure (whether it's from the Executive Council or anyone else) you should make your decision. If that means you're in a minority of one, that's how you should vote. You should not be subject to pressure. Yet the process that is being proposed would allow people to leave this hall and have discussions which the rest of conference have not heard, and that would influence the decision-making. Actually, conference, I think that is a fundamentally undemocratic approach to decision-making. All the discussion about the resolution should take place in here so we can all hear it and people can answer it. That's the best way forward. We urge conference to oppose the resolution. (*Applause*)

## THE PRESIDENT:

Staffordshire right of reply.

## BRO RICH WILLIAMS (Staffordshire):

President, Conference, I thank Matt for his reply there. We're not intending to cause a divide here with this resolution. What we're trying to say is – and about the stifling of debate and that. OK, there are words in that resolution that maybe cause people to feel upset about that. I'm not saying we're looking round the room to see what London are voting or whatever. It's taken out of context. We're looking round to see maybe what the general feeling of the room is on a particular issue. People do that, whether that's the screens here or whether you turn your head round.

About people putting pressure on people, that happens all the time in terms of people being asked to change their view. When we got to conference yesterday we were asked about the position we're taking on certain resolutions. If that's not pressure I don't know what is.

We've got new representatives of brigades which we've talked about. We're trying to encourage people to be involved in the union. Lots of new reps at conference that maybe don't understand some of the stuff that's being talked about. Actually, when you sit here listening you don't know the full detail until you've heard it. Then when the back and forth goes you think "I could do with a bit more time to think about this". You've got to make a decision now; you haven't got time to think about it. You just need a few more minutes, 20 minutes or whatever, to have a cup of tea and think on the really hot topic ones. Like I said at the beginning, we haven't got the answer to everything and that's why a task and finish group would go away and deal with this. We'd ask the service management to do the same thing about a particular in brigades so I can't see why we can't do it as a union. Please support the resolution. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put the amendment from London to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now put Resolution 84 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call Resolution 86 Policy Audit moved by Essex. The Executive Council oppose.

### **Resolution 86 POLICY AUDIT**

***Conference notes with concern the inconsistent application of national agreements, guidance and Conference Policies across Fire and Rescue Services.***

***Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out an audit to assess the consistent application of NJC agreements and guidance and application of Conference policies across the UK.***

***The results to be reported via a Head Office Circular to Brigade Secretaries by November 2019, with the intention of developing a strategy to assist in negotiating consistent terms and conditions across UK Fire and Rescue Services.***

**ESSEX**

## BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

Conference, we were asked to withdraw the resolution on an audit on the basis that it's divisive and on the basis that we're highlighting failures in brigades. That's not the intention of what we set out to achieve. What we set out to achieve was an audit so that we all understand how we're doing in comparison to what we should be doing regarding conference decisions. We've got policies that we know, across the country, brigades and union officials haven't been able to hold the line on. In Essex we don't ride five on an appliance on all occasions. We accept the fact that that's something we can't achieve but we still continue to try to achieve it.

What we're asking for is to get a baseline of where we are, have a look at those areas where all of our brigades need assistance, work out a strategy and try to improve for our members the percentage of those policies and those decisions that we're trying to uphold. It's not to be divisive; it's not to point out failures; it is purely to give us something to build a strategy around to try to improve and achieve the goals and aims of the union. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. Does that have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Come forward Katie, get in!

## SIS KATE SCOTT (Dorset & Wiltshire):

Just in terms of this, we've been having a chat about it and although in principle it seems a good idea, our question would be back in Birmingham when we had our meeting recently it became evident that not all brigades have sent in information about Grenfell. That's probably the one most important thing we've had in recent years. So if brigades can't send in information about that, they ain't going to send in information about maternity or female fit firekit.

The other problem we've got with it is that if you send all these documents in, it's just highlighting worst case scenarios. How do we prevent that information getting to brigade management so that they can say "this brigade is doing this, let's do this"? Also, we've got the Grey Book so that should be the one place we're going to say "this is our line in the sand, this is what we're working to". We don't need to see what these people are doing over here and those people are doing over there. We need to stick to the Grey Book, fight for our members, and achieve what we've already set out. So rather than looking to other brigades, we need to just say: we need to get a bit of fight about us sometimes and say we've already got this, let's just try to achieve it. So we're opposed. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Kate. Anybody else? General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think Kate set out some very powerful arguments that we support in opposing the resolution. Just very quickly, Conference. First of all, rule C4 sets out the role of regional committees and that includes the supervision of industrial negotiations within the remit of the region. So this work should already be being done by every single regional committee in the Fire Brigades Union, and it should be an ongoing practice. So we should know already. If we've lost an issue like riding fives, for example, we should already know that. It shouldn't come as a surprise to us.

Rule C6 on the role of brigade committees again sets out the role and functions of brigade committees. All of us are required to attempt to implement the policies of the Fire Brigades Union on industrial matters in our negotiations. We know that that is not always possible, but those are the requirements on officials in terms of what they should seek to achieve in negotiations with their employers.

Kate has hit the nail on the head in terms of Grenfell. We have spent months – and it's something of an embarrassment if we're frank – seeking to identify the position in each Fire & Rescue Service in the UK regarding PDA's, responses and other questions in relation to fires in purpose built blocks of flats and we haven't yet got a full picture. So imagine trying to do that on the question of every single policy in relation to the Grey Book and Conditions of Service.

Secondly, any such audit would be immediately out of date because policies change all the time. So a one-off snapshot of what the audit would give actually doesn't help us the very next day.

The final point, which I think Kate touched on, is if we do this and publish this actually, Conference, we are doing management's job for them because they precisely want to know where people have got away with crewing issues, where people have got away with worse maternity policies. To put that in a brigade secretaries circular for all the world to see I think would be a mistake. Conference oppose. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Essex right of reply.

## BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

Comrades, the President set out in his opening address how we get our brigade management saying “why won’t you ride with three; they’re doing it in this brigade?” So we’re using the arguments that management use as a tool, but we already know it’s going on. The President of the union just acknowledged it in his opening address.

What we’re seeking is something to use as a tool to improve. It won’t be out of date because as soon as we start to work to this, as we get a new conference policy that we’re all aware of, if we’re not achieving it in the brigade it will just go on to the list. It will just go on and will go to other brigades that are achieving it and we can say “how did you achieve that?” and we will go back and try.

Not replying to information. That’s a two-way street. I know in our region we’re often waiting months and months for information from head office or the EC. But just because they don’t get a reply from Essex or Herts doesn’t mean they stop asking for information, does it? The next week we go in and there’s another four requests in our inbox. We can’t use the fact that we’re not replying to certain information as a reason not to ask.

I think we need a baseline somewhere, where we’re going to start from, some kind of audit so that we can see what we’re achieving, what we’re not achieving, what is achievable and what’s not achievable, to give the assistance to the brigade officials to negotiate better outcomes for our members. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Resolution 86 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now call para.L2, para.L3, para.L4, para.L5. I now call Resolution 87 Online Voting in Elections moved by London. The EC give qualified support.

### **Resolution 87 ONLINE VOTING IN ELECTIONS**

***As part of the functioning of our democratic Union, we have regular elections. These elections can be costly, but it is important that Members have a proper say in who represents them.***

***We recognise that the law requires elections in respect of certain senior positions to be the subject of a postal ballot only. However, we believe that the FBU must move with the times and facilitate online voting for the elections of Brigade, Regional and Sectional Officials. With most people having access to a mobile phone, email and the internet, this would save the Union money and potentially increase participation in elections.***

***To this end, Conference instructs the Executive Council to make the necessary preparations for future online voting, including recommending a definitive list of which Brigade, Regional and Sectional positions will be covered, and to bring any necessary Rule changes to Conference 2020.***

**LONDON**

## BRO JASON HUNTER (London):

Conference, President, voting in elections is vital for the democracy of our union. It is an unparalleled opportunity for members to be able to shape our union and decide who represents them. However, in this modern era of technology we do not have a process for online elections. During our most recent regional election in London we suffered from quite a poor turnout with the postal ballot. As we know, there can often be issues that stop the members from voting, details being incorrect, ballot papers getting lost in the post, or members simply not engaging. For this recent election 4,431 ballot papers were despatched by the scrutineers and they received back only 959. This equates to only 22% of the London membership. Conference, on this occasion nearly 80% of the London region, for whatever reason, did not vote.

I was a candidate in this election and I was shocked to find out that little old me had cost our union potentially £5,000 for the postal ballot process. Conference, we feel it is time to look at and address these issues. We believe this resolution will increase participation in elections and save our union money. Conference, with nearly all of us running our lives through our phones we need to move with the times and make online voting in elections commonplace within our union. Please support this resolution. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? A seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. Anybody? General Secretary to give the qualification.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, three qualifications, I think. First of all, just to be clear currently head office, for example, do not run brigade level elections. They are run within the regions so we would have to consider that and we would have to flag there would be major capacity concerns if head office were being asked to take on the running of brigade level elections.

The second point on the question of savings, I think the qualification would have to be that there may not be savings. There may, there may not be savings under such a proposal. In the recent consultative ballot that we held over pay and the future of the fire service we ran both online and postal ballots and there were additional costs as a result of both of those. So we would have to have the confidence because many people may use phones, many people may choose to do that, but 50% of the people responding in that ballot nevertheless used postal balloting. So I think we would have to take account of that. So there may not be savings.

The third qualification, President, is regarding statutory elections. Certain of our elections are covered by statute: the Executive Council, President, General Secretary and so on. The law requires in those circumstances postal balloting; it does not allow online balloting. With those qualifications we're happy to proceed with the resolution. Thank you.

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 87 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call para.L6. I now call Resolution 85 Regional Secretaries moved by Warwickshire. The Executive Council oppose.

### **Resolution 85 REGIONAL SECRETARIES**

***Conference applauds the work that our Regional Officials do on behalf of not only Brigade Officials, but the entire membership of the Region. Their advice, support and counsel is vital in the effective running of each Region.***

***Conference notes that Regional Secretaries interact with FBU Members at a variety of levels from informal conversations, Branch meetings and Brigade Committee meetings. Therefore, Conference agrees that Regional Secretaries have an excellent grasp of the feelings of FBU Members on a variety of subjects.***

***Conference agrees that Regional Secretaries should be able to contribute to debates held at Conference.***

***Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to bring the necessary Rule changes that may be required to allow Regional Secretaries to address Conference on all Conference business except resolutions that have originated from their Region. This must be done for Conference 2020.***

**WARWICKSHIRE**

## **BRO NEIL STUART** (Warwickshire):

Conference, President, I understand the EC's opposition to this resolution. It is on democracy and I think we will put it to the floor and let everybody have a vote. Regional officials have a good understanding of both the feelings of

members and the objectives of the EC. Regional secretaries can offer a balanced overview of subject matters being debated so as not to impede on democracy. We have included the caveat that they be excluded from addressing conference on resolutions originating from within their own regions. Therefore, it would be beneficial to conference if regional secretaries were allowed to address conference. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Neil. Does that have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. It's open for debate. General Secretary.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, the Executive Council are urging you to oppose the resolution. There are a number of points. First of all, this conference is the property of its delegates, not of other officials and that's an important point to make. In the rules conference is called the "supreme government of the Fire Brigades Union". Therefore the question of who participates and who can speak is an important matter. It is the property of the delegates elected by our members at local level through brigade committees or through our sections. The regional secretaries can be delegates if the relevant brigade committee sends them as delegates. Traditionally, often we have had the London regional secretary as a delegate to conference, the Northern Ireland regional secretary has often been a delegate to conference, and in more recent years the Scottish regional secretary has often been a delegate to conference, because they are single brigade regions. But in other cases, the role of a regional official or regional secretary, once they arrive at conference becomes somewhat different.

It's about democracy and accountability, because the democracy and accountability at that point lies with the bodies who have delegated people to come here. In the rule book that is the brigade and the sectional committees. In terms of voting on policy matters it is the brigade committees in which every single member of the Fire Brigades Union is represented through that brigade committee.

I think there is a concern with the resolution as to why it is regional secretaries. Why not other regional officials? If regional officials have a good grasp of the issues facing members, why aren't other regional officials included in the proposal? And, for that matter, why aren't sectional secretaries or sectional officials included in the proposal? So there are a number of weaknesses in that regard.

I think in terms of the democracy of this – and that's I think we were surprised to see the resolution – we were surprised to see that the delegates of conference would want to hand some of their authority to people who are not delegates to this conference, i.e. regional officials. At this particular point the regions effectively do not function and conference is supreme for the duration of conference.

Think about the timing of this and imagine the position of the President. If the President calls one regional secretary into a debate, is the President therefore, out of fairness, required to call 12 regional secretaries into the debate? How many delegates to conference would therefore be denied their opportunity to speak at conference? Conference, there is a whole number of reasons why we think it is a bad idea. We would still ask Warwickshire to consider withdrawing it. Otherwise, Conference, we urge you to oppose the resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Warwickshire right to reply.

**BRO NEIL STUART** (Warwickshire):

President, Conference, after that explanation we will withdraw. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Neil. Right, we're now on para.L7, para.L8, para.L9, para.L10, para.L11, para.L12, para.L13. Yes, Chris.

**BRO CHRIS TAPP** (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I didn't think it was right to let L13 (unfortunately labelled – I hope it's not bad luck for us) go by without saying something. A lot has been said already so I won't go over that. It was a fantastic event down in

London; it was a fantastic year; we've set up the legacies that we've talked about. Certainly on behalf of Derbyshire members I want to thank the committee that was set up to deal with, but on the day, Tam and Keith Handscomb were particularly visible around organising and helping people along. So our thanks go to them. I know that that's shared within our region. I was proud to be a part of the Region 6 delegation on a personal note, being able to lay the wreath as well. It's something we can all be proud of. I just wanted to share those comments with conference. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Chris. L14. Yes. Come down as well.

## **BRO JIM BITTLESTONE (Durham):**

President, Conference, I am speaking on para.L14 Firefighters 100 Lottery. It is with great pride that I tell union members in our brigade and the members of the public about the Firefighters 100 Lottery and the great causes that the lottery funds. In September last year we erected a plinth outside Peterlee fire station with an inscribed red plaque on it to remember and honour the sacrifice of two firefighters: Tony Hall and John Donnelly, who died in the line of duty. Tony and John both died on 5 September 1982 when their appliance was mobilised to a fire in South Headon and it unfortunately turned over. Tony's wife Gillian was four months pregnant at the time with their son Adam and John's wife Sue had only just given birth to their daughter Claire, four months previous to the accident. So it was a very tragic time for all.

It was with a great sense of pride that I welcomed the surviving families of Tony and John to the station that day to see the unveiling of the red plaque provided by the Firefighters 100 Lottery. This has made a phenomenal difference to the families of Tony and John, and provided a focal point for both families to visit for years to come. Indeed, they've already started doing that from as far away as Australia.

On Firefighters' Memorial Day we were again joined by four generations of Tony's and John's families at the station, with Gillian (who is Tony's wife) proudly wearing her FBU black ribbon badge. The service joined in with the idea of financing the plinth and refreshments on that day. Being part of that day meant that the service has renewed respect for this union and the great work that we are doing. I'm here to thank the committee of the Firefighters 100 Lottery on behalf of the families of Tony and John, and for all in Durham and Darlington for the work that they do, and to tell you about the phenomenal difference you're making with the red plaque scheme.

For those in the room considering applying for one, the process is very easy to follow. There's a great checklist there; you're well supported throughout. It's an opportunity to show members of the Fire & Rescue Service and the public exactly what we're all about. We are making a difference. This is a very noble and worthy cause. Please support the Firefighters 100 Lottery. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Jason.

## **BRO JASON HUNTER (London):**

Conference, President, just a quick note really on behalf of the region that we'd like to thank the committee for the work for the Firefighters 100 Lottery and in particular Keith Handscomb for all the great work that he's been doing on the red plaque scheme that's come via the Firefighters 100 Lottery. So on behalf of the London region we'd like to give him our thanks. *(Applause)*

## **BRO IAN McGREGOR (Scotland):**

President, Conference, I'd like to ask to some of the comments that have already been made by my colleagues about the Firefighters 100 Lottery. I have first-hand experience of the benefits and the fantastic that's been taking place in the UK in our various regions. In my region, region 1, we have three red plaques – one to be unveiled very shortly for Brother James Mair who died in 1889, and in my area of region 1 we have two plaques that have been unveiled: one for Brother John Noble who lost his life on 23 January 2008, and one that's close to my own heart and from my own station, Brother Euan Williamson from Tollcross in Edinburgh.

The red plaque scheme not only honours the memory of our lost comrades but also gives comfort to the bereaved family and friends of our comrades by giving them the last memory for the community.

I commend the good work undertaken by my comrades and colleagues in promoting the Firefighters 100 Lottery and I'm asking you to be tireless in your efforts and commitment to this worthwhile cause. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

General Secretary.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Comrades, I very much appreciate the words of the last three speakers. Just very quickly on the red plaques and the link to the lottery. Firstly, I just ask conference to think for a moment about the time that went into this. The red plaque scheme didn't just come out of the blue. It took a great deal of time, thought, planning, discussion including discussion with colleagues elsewhere in the world, for example, before we were able to develop it. It took a lot of work around the design of the red plaques. It was also part of a wider strategy about what this union represents and what we're trying to achieve in our role in the fire service, and the fact that the vast majority of those people killed in the line of duty are members of the Fire Brigades Union.

But I do want to pay tribute to all the members and committees who have initiated red plaques since it was launched. The truth is that whatever we do at head office, it can't be done by us; it needs you, it needs local people's buy in. I mentioned it earlier, I think attending some of those ceremonies when the red plaques are unveiled is fantastic. Those of you who have organised or participated in it know the impact it has on our members, their pride in their job, their pride in their union, their understanding and appreciation of the union. But also in terms of the wider community, the engagement with chief fire officers and politicians and so on, is really a powerful thing for us to undertake.

Mention was made of Keith Handscomb, who I think has stumbled into the room at the back there. Welcome to Keith. He has still not cleared off completely. I do want to finish on the point that was made by the speakers. Actually, none of that is possible without the lottery. The truth is we've done fantastic work with it, but currently we've only scratched the surface in terms of what we could achieve if we were all pulling together to make sure that our members understood the importance of the role of the lottery. I suspect members are attending those events, looking at a plaque saying "that's fantastic" but not realising that the whole thing is actually funded by the Firefighters 100 Lottery. So we need those members to understand that. I think that's a role that all of you can play. Hopefully we will take that back from conference. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

I'm now on para.L15, para.L16, para.L17. Conference, on that point we are going to break for lunch. Could you all gather at 1400 hours back in here. Thank you.

*Break for lunch*

## AFTERNOON SESSION

### THE PRESIDENT:

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

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

Thank you, President. I'll be very quick. Programmes of business, please, page 3 Resolution 76 has been withdrawn. Page 6: Resolution 11 withdrawn with the right to speak. Thanks, President.

### THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *Agreed*

Conference I now call Section A Pay and Conditions. Para.A1, para.A4, para.A5. Conference, I now call the following resolutions which will all be taken in the same debate: Emergency Resolution 1 Fire Service Pay and the Future of the Fire & Rescue Service, Executive Council; Emergency Resolution 6 Pay Strategy moved by Cambridgeshire (the EC are giving qualified support); Resolution 8 Pay from London (the EC are opposing); Emergency Resolution 7 Health and Care Work moved by West Midlands (the EC are seeking them to remit or they will oppose); Resolution 13 National Overtime Ban, Cleveland (the EC are opposing); Resolution 49 Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack moved by Essex (the EC are opposing). Emergency Resolution 1, Emergency Resolution 6, Emergency Resolution 7 and Resolution 13 can stand. Point of order, come on.

### BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

Sorry, President, the MTFA one from Essex isn't related to pay, it doesn't mention pay so I'm not sure why it's being taken in the pay debate.

### THE PRESIDENT:

Yes, on that it actually calls for an immediate withdrawal of MTFA, which stand in opposition to the EC emergency resolution. So if we pass the emergency resolution, then yours would automatically fall. So it's brought into the debate.

### BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

But it's not linked to pay. This is a debate on pay. We're not linking this to pay; we're just saying MTFA should be withdrawn. There's a whole raft of reasons that it should be withdrawn. Pay isn't in there though.

### THE PRESIDENT:

It's classed as the additional work. Conference, we'll start that again. Emergency Resolution 1, Emergency Resolution 6, Emergency Resolution 7 and Resolution 13 can all stand together. Emergency 1 and Emergency Resolution 6 stand in opposition to Resolution 49. So if Emergency Resolution 1 and Emergency Resolution 6 carry, then Resolution 49 falls. The Executive Council are opposing Emergency Resolution 7, Resolution 8, Resolution 13 and Resolution 49 and give qualified support to Emergency Resolution 6. I now call Emergency Resolution 1 Fire Service Pay and the Future of the Fire & Rescue Service moved by the Executive Council. General Secretary.

### **Emergency Resolution 1 – FIRE SERVICE PAY AND THE FUTURE OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

***Conference notes the result of the recent consultative ballot of FBU Members. The ballot consisted of two questions, firstly on the employers recent proposal on pay and, secondly, on the union's strategy around pay and the future of the Fire and Rescue Service. FBU Members endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Council overwhelmingly; by 97% in relation to the first question, and by 86% in relation to the second question.***

***Conference thanks and congratulates FBU Members for their participation in the ballot at short notice. These votes were a powerful endorsement of the strategy debated and agreed by Conference over recent years.***

***FBU Members sent a very clear message to our employers that the proposals on pay were unacceptable and, in particular, that FBU Members would not sign up for open-ended contracts in any form.***

***FBU Members also sent a message to the Fire Service employers and to governments across the UK that our service needs investment, including investment for pay. The Fire and Rescue Service has always changed and evolved and the FBU has often been at the forefront of such change. However, any change to the work activity of firefighters must be developed through negotiation and agreement conducted through our national structures – the National Joint Council (NJC). For the FBU, any development of the work of firefighters must also address concerns, including around health, safety and welfare, operational procedures, equipment, training, staffing levels and pay.***

***Conference is aware of the exercise carried out by the Union on work activity undertaken within each Fire and Rescue Service. This demonstrated very clearly that across the Fire and Rescue Service employers have been introducing new work activities at a local level – often without agreement. Conference agrees that this fragmentation must cease.***

***Conference agrees;***

- 1. To step up political lobbying, including of all governments across the UK for investment in the Fire and Rescue Service, including investment for pay***
- 2. That the Executive Council pursue the negotiations with the Fire Service employers with a view to seeking a resolution to the proposals made by the FBU (on 7 December 2018) in relation to pay and broadening of the role***
- 3. To reinforce the importance of NJC role maps and agreed contracts of employment. This will include, as a minimum, preparations for the withdrawal from all non-contractual, non-agreed or non NJC Role-map work activity. This should be done in each Fire and Rescue Service***
- 4. To take every step necessary to prepare Members for industrial action should negotiations with our employers prove unsuccessful. This will include regular reports to the Executive Council in regards to campaigning, state of readiness, balloting arrangements and related matters.***

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks, President. Conference, probably the most important industrial debate we're going to have this week. It's right and proper that we have a number of suggestions and proposals in that discussion. We're in 2019 and despite what the Prime Minister claimed a year or so ago, austerity continues, the pay freeze continues despite what is said and despite perceptions. I had the fortune or misfortune to attend a TUC delegation to see the Chancellor some months ago. They set out very clearly what government policy at Westminster is in regard to public sector pay. They said that public sector pay remains, from their point of view, fixed at one per cent increases, and if public sector employers wish to increase pay above one per cent, then they will have to find the funding to do that. That is a clear message that the only way increases in pay can be funded is by further cuts to public services, and by slashing the jobs of public sector workers. That is not something we're remotely interested in.

Austerity also continues in terms of the cuts to our public services: our NHS, to education, local government. Particularly in England local government is falling apart at the seams because of huge cuts to Central Government funding. Of course, our own Fire & Rescue Service has been hit particularly hard as well. We see station closures on an unprecedented scale, we see the loss of fire engines on an unprecedented scale, we see attacks on crewing levels like we've never seen before, we see attacks on our members' conditions that are driven by the austerity agenda where they try to introduce unlawful duty systems as a way of getting rid of half of the establishment at a particular fire station. They are all driven by that austerity agenda, and it's just different facets of that austerity agenda.

We need to remind ourselves, when we're discussing these issues, of the basics that this is an attack on working people in Britain, this is an attack on people who didn't cause a world economic crisis but are being asked to pay the price for it. The results of that are hitting our members, but they're also hitting millions and millions of other working people out there. A report just this week said that four million workers in Britain and their families are now living in poverty despite being in full-time employment. That's the impact of austerity policies on workers in the United Kingdom.

So yes, we have to be part of an agenda that seeks to defeat this government. The President mentioned it this morning. We need a replacement of this government. This government is a zombie government, a government in name only, and a Prime Minister in name only and unable to address any of the policy issues that need addressing, unable to address the issues of public services, of pay, of poverty, of education and health, and of course of the Fire & Rescue Service. So yes, we need to be part of a campaign to defeat the government, including defeating them on the question of the pay freeze which remains in place.

That is no easy task and the truth is this: that this government and its predecessor has unfortunately got away with now nine years, nearly a decade, of austerity. They've attacked and robbed people of their pensions, they've attacked public services, and they are attacking pay. The truth is that the trade union movement has not inflicted a crushing defeat on them in relation to those attacks.

Alongside participating in the wider Trade Union and Labour Movement to try to defeat this government, we have also looked at our own service, our own profession, to try to make the case for investment in our Fire & Rescue Service. In some ways this isn't a problem for trade unions to answer, but nevertheless we do need to think about it. If we want a pay rise the question arises where is the funding for that pay rise going to come from? We know that Fire & Rescue authorities or other Fire & Rescue services funded differently in the devolved parts of the UK rely on central funding. That is a key question that needs to be addressed. Anyone with different ideas I think needs to address the question of how are we going to force this government into investment in the Fire & Rescue Service, some of which needs to go to our members to improve their pay?

It is out of that discussion that we have, over the past few years, developed the strategy on the broadening of the role of the Fire & Rescue Service. I will come on to the fact that actually much of this is already in place, or elements of it are already in place. We sought to grasp the nettle and to discuss with our employers: "OK, if we're going to discuss this let's discuss this on a national basis through national collective bargaining". Out of those discussions we ended up with the employers' proposal. We didn't call it an offer, I don't think even they called it an offer. We then put it to a consultative ballot of our members.

I just want to make a couple of points on that. Within a short space of time we launched a ballot with just a week's notice. We didn't really launch a major campaign, we didn't really do a tour of the country. It was reliant on yourselves as local officials to get out to as many members as you could, and it relied on communications from head office and regions explaining the case why the Executive Council had put two questions on that ballot paper and asked people to vote yes and yes to each of those questions. I think therefore the Executive Council was remarkably pleased firstly at the outcome of the answer to both of those questions and secondly at the turnout to those ballots. I take no pleasure in this, but people may have noticed just recently that regrettably our comrades in the PCS have not been successful in a strike ballot because they haven't met the thresholds. That is obviously the case for repealing that bit of legislation, but it also should give us confidence that in our ballot at such short notice we nevertheless met the thresholds which would be applied if this had been an industrial action ballot. Those results were quite remarkable. 97% of people voted yes to reject the employers' pay proposal. You do wonder who the other 3% are, by the way. Nevertheless, 97% is an overwhelming endorsement.

Also interestingly and significant for this debate today, 86% of our members voted to endorse the strategy of this conference. That's not the Executive Council's strategy; that is the strategy agreed and endorsed and re-endorsed by this conference. That should be a remarkable vote of confidence in yourselves that conference has taken the right decisions over the years, and our members have endorsed that overwhelmingly.

I think I would say to conference this: conference is clearly the supreme government of this union, but our members have also spoken very clearly through that ballot that they endorse the approach that this conference has taken, and that this conference has then taken and put to our employers through our negotiating strategy and through our subsequent setting out the value of the additional work that we think needs to be reimbursed and how that should be done. The ballot of our members was a significant step forward and a significant turning point.

It is now the time to start to step up that campaign. That means we need to come out of this debate unified around a programme that seeks to challenge the employers, challenge the government, and unify our members for any

action that might be necessary subsequently. The resolution from the Executive Council therefore sets out the need to step up political lobbying, political campaigning, campaigning for resources and so on. I need to be frank with conference about this. We need to think about the impact which we have been juggling with for a long time in the Fire & Rescue Service, the impact of devolution on our profession, on our union and on our service. I believe we are the only remaining UK-wide bargaining arrangement in the public sector. The National Joint Council for local authority Fire & Rescue Services is unique in that regard. In any other area of the public services people are negotiating nationally. They talk about England or England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland dealt with separately. That's the position in most other public services. So we're dealing with a difficult situation where our policy as a union is to try to seek to maintain UK-wide bargaining.

But fire is devolved, so we have different fire ministers. I think English delegations in particular have to think about and take account of that. The situation is different in Scotland and the situation is different in Wales, and the situation is different in Northern Ireland. We have to take account of that as well. The truth of it is this. In relation to Scotland in particular we have a better dialogue with the employer on some of these issues, and we have a better dialogue with the Scottish government on these issues. We need to be frank and up front about that. Likewise in Wales, we have a better dialogue with the Welsh government over the issues that we are discussing than we do with government at Westminster.

Understandably, when the Scottish government is saying that it will put money into the Fire & Rescue Service, part of which can fund improved pay for firefighters, our members in Scotland want to know how that is progressing. As a result of that and as a result of the outcome of our ballot, we've now been asked by the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service for discussions on that. The first meeting on those discussions will take place next week.

I do want to make a number of points, and I discussed this with the Scottish delegation earlier. I do want to make a number of points about the role of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service employer. As I understand it, they are seeking to portray themselves as more magnanimous than the rest of the NJC employers. We need to remind our members that they were part of the national negotiating team for the UK wide employers, and when that proposal was put they were part of putting that proposal. So we need to challenge them and explain to our members they didn't go to that meeting saying: "I tell you what, we need to reduce that list; we need to get rid of non-exhaustive and we need to increase the pay rise". We will certainly be challenging them and asking them that, when we meet with them next Monday.

Secondly, it is an employer that constantly seeks to link the question of pay to what they call "transformation" in the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. Let's make no bones about what they mean by transformation. They mean attacking and undermining the Fire & Rescue Service. In reality they mean slashing jobs. This union and this conference will never engage in negotiations about trading off, getting rid of a thousand jobs here or a thousand jobs there to get a bit of a pay rise for the people who are left. That's not the principles of this union and those aren't the negotiations we will be engaging with. Conference needs to be aware of those discussions taking place.

In terms of what we do now and the issues that were reflected in the ballot, and the issues of those of you who attended the meeting in Birmingham recently. A key area of discussion revolves around this: what is the work that our members are doing when they go in to work for their employers for 42 hours a week? That is around issues of the role maps. What is and is not within the role map of a firefighter under the National Joint Council Conditions of Service? What is and is not contractual within the NJC conditions of service or what has been put in place locally? What payments are being paid? We found some staggering differences on different aspects, which might be line rescue or water rescue or other specific activities, where some of our members are not being paid at all, other members are being paid through an ARA or other payment. That needs to end, in our view. We need to raise the awareness of these issues with our members. Why should someone doing exactly the same work as their colleague 200 miles up the road be paid completely differently? That's the aim that we need to set ourselves.

I need to address the issue of chief fire officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council, because they have been sticking their noses into our business of our negotiations with our employers. As I say, we've also been seeking to negotiate or to make the case to four different governments (sorry, there's not one in place in Northern Ireland), three different governments and whatever the other bit is called, that they need to invest in the Fire & Rescue Service. Yet we have

chief fire officers making visits to the Home Office regularly saying as bluntly as this: “why would you pay firefighters for that when I can get them to do it for free”? Unfortunately, that’s the position that is happening across the country and that’s the fragmentation that we’ve identified, that we identified as part of the campaign around the ballot.

I think we need to face up to this issue: do we want to maintain national collective bargaining on these issues, or do we want local bargaining? I think the position that some comrades have would inevitably lead us towards local collective bargaining on these issues. Once you accept local collective bargaining or local bargaining on one issue it inevitably creeps into other areas as well. So the strategy that the Executive Council is setting out is about defending national collective bargaining through the NJC and challenging the fragmentation that is already in place.

Unfortunately, our experience since 2003 is that fragmentation has increased. I remember reading a quote at the end of the 2002/3 dispute from one of the employers, anonymously quoted. He said: “What we wanted to seek from that dispute was more local bargaining and we achieved it.” So they set out at the start of that battle to fragment and create greater levels of local bargaining, and that’s what we’ve seen. The race to the bottom which people refer to, that Alan referred to earlier on, that’s a direct result of those sorts of developments in 2003 and the years following. I don’t need to convince anyone here, but we need to go out from here and start to convince our members of some principles. When we go to work we will do the work that we’ve been trained for, equipped for, paid for and frankly nothing more than that. They have got no right to expect goodwill off our members any more when they’ve been treating us in the way that they have. We have to have that discussion with our members. It means our members understanding the importance of role maps, our members understanding the importance of contracts of employment and what is and is not within those contracts of employment.

We’re doing that work FRS by FRS. You will be aware of the survey that we’ve done on role map work and the sometimes alarming results we found from that survey. The emergency resolution discusses the action, including as a minimum preparations for the withdrawal from all non-contractual, non-role map or non-agreed NJC work. But that is not an easy task. Conference is one thing. Out there in the real world is another thing. We’ve got to then deliver it. That means preparing the ground. This union doesn’t go into ballots unless we are confident we’re going to win those ballots. We’ve got a fantastic record, by the way, second to none in the trade union movement of achieving success in ballots, of achieving yes votes, of achieving high turnouts in those ballots. But that means preparing the ground. What will our trade dispute with the employers say? What are our ballot plans? Are our matrices ready? Do we know where all our members work? Is that ready to stand up to scrutiny from the employer? What campaign do we need to undertake? What engagement with our members? That is something we need to win.

The resolution refers to industrial action. We believe our resolution keeps our options open. So we may be talking about work that is non-contractual and withdrawing from that. I don’t want to pre-empt other contributions in this debate. We may also be talking about overtime bans, but we know from previous experience that overtime bans have occasionally caused us some internal difficulty in this organisation. So we’re talking about a ballot for action short of strike. But we do need to alert conference to this. If that’s the route that we’re going down, the idea that employers will just sit back and allow our members to stop doing some of the work they’ve been doing for a long time would be naïve. They will respond. We know that the responses that they embark on are to dock pay or to send people home. Those are the two measures that they’ve adopted in the past. I don’t think we can just sit there and allow some of our members to be sent home or have their pay docked without ourselves then responding. So even a ballot for action short of strike immediately raises the question of what do we do in response to their actions. I think we would then, at that point, have to consider strike action. So even this debate today, even though none of the resolutions calls for strike action, strike action is inevitably something that we have to consider as part of this discussion.

In finishing, Conference, conference is one thing; the workplace is another thing. What resolutions we pass here have to be made relevant and living to the people out there, our members who pay their contributions and our members of our branches at local level. We have to build our members’ confidence not just for this campaign but for the future, that in the future our people will say: “You know what, boss, you know what, guvnor, I’m not doing that because I’m not paid to do that”. I don’t think we see enough of that in the Fire & Rescue Service today. That’s not an easy thing to do, but that’s one of the challenges: to rebuild that confidence whereby in the individual workplace people are prepared to say that. There is no point coming to conference with a resolution saying: we’ve been

asked to do this work; can conference help us out? We need to win those battles on the ground, in the individual workplaces and that's the task from this.

This is not an easy task we're setting ourselves. We're up against governments, we're up against the fire service employers, and we're up against chief officers who occasionally try to pretend they're our friends but have done absolutely nothing to assist us in getting investment and absolutely nothing to assist us in getting a pay rise. So it's only the Fire Brigades Union who can achieve that. But when I say "only the Fire Brigades Union", let's remember this: that without our control members there's not a call gets answered, and without our members there's not a wheel on a fire truck turns. Without us there isn't a Fire & Rescue Service. So we can be confident that if we campaign and win the arguments with our members we can go forward into this campaign, making the case, making the arguments for investment and for a pay rise and we can hopefully be successful in that. I move. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Point of clarification, come up.

## **BRO STEVE WHITE (London):**

Yes, point of clarification on bullet point 2 in Emergency Resolution 1 please. It refers specifically to proposals made in relation to pay and broadening of the role on 7 December 2018. Can you clarify precisely what those proposals were?

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Yes. Thanks for alerting us to the question earlier, Steve. I will be frank, we have had some difficulties with that. I can't answer the question in detail yet. It may well be that there is an error in the resolution. I can't confirm that or otherwise. When the resolution was written we asked for some clarification. What we're referring to is the letter to the employers which set out the case for 17% pay rise in response to their request as to what the value we placed on the additional work was. That's what we're referring to. I'm assuming, because of the source where it came from, that there is something on 7 December but we are aware that actually (and this is an error in the resolution) a letter was circulated on 18 October to the employers. Certainly an All Members Circular went out on 18 October. That is what we are referring, which I think is available through the website.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks. I now call Derbyshire to second. Just while Chris is walking up here, there were a few bemused looks when I sat here reading out what can stand and everything. I will repeat that before we actually go to voting on the resolutions.

## **BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):**

President, Conference, we are seconding the EC's emergency resolution 1 on the fire service pay and the future of the Fire & Rescue Service. Matt's gone into extensive detail about all the different aspects of this resolution, what each one means and the work that needs to be done, and the challenges that we face, the political landscape and everything else that goes with it. So there's no need for me to stand here and repeat that in a different format because Matt's already done that.

What I want to focus on really is why we withdrew our resolution, and why we felt that this resolution satisfied what we were seeking and in doing so we are seconding this emergency resolution. We withdrew our resolution on the role of a firefighter and role maps to second this. In a nutshell our resolution asked for the Executive Council to work towards stating what is and is not within the role maps, actually stating there, coming out with that, and giving us the tools to defend our Conditions of Service and make those appropriate withdrawals or refusals as required. There was lots of talk about it previously, but we didn't actually have that piece of ammunition. We felt we needed that as the creeping was starting to happen.

Once this is done we can actually begin to stop certain activities and resist the introduction of the new work with conference support, with any legal support that's required, and the support of a nationally agreed and hopefully unanimous position around pay and the future of the Fire & Rescue Service. This, in our view, makes chief fire officers and others think carefully before deciding on something, requesting us to do something, or reacting to something that we state we will or will not do. The emergency resolution from the Executive Council appears to be

the best and most appropriate way considering all the recent All Members meetings and the ballot result to achieve what our resolution set out to do in the first place.

So Derbyshire thank the Executive Council and all union officials for gathering the information about what work is being undertaken and considering what is and is not in the role map. We appreciate this is a huge task, but one that could be pivotal in terms of going forward.

Conference, let me just be clear: whatever is negotiated or agreed via the NJC as described in the emergency resolution must still come back to our members in one form or another – whether that be conference or ballots or other things – ultimately to decide what is right for us, our members and this union. So this isn't the last debate; it isn't the last say we're going to have. It is important that this is just the next phase in what we're trying to achieve.

It has been made clear to me that the final decision will always come back to our members. On an issue that has sparked wide debate about whether we should or whether we shouldn't, what we should or what we shouldn't do, I'm confident this will always happen.

In seconding the emergency resolution I'm not giving any assurances as to Derbyshire's future positions or decisions on this matter. As I say, that debate, for me, is still yet to be had. But what we must do is see this strategy through to the end. I believe we are close to that and we must see this strategy through to the conclusion. The resolution talks about new work and how its introduction is a fragmentation that must cease. This we agree with, but how will it cease? That is the challenge that we face. For us in Derbyshire a fundamental part of establishing what is and is not in the role map is key to doing that.

Point 3 of the resolution is the part that satisfies the intent behind our resolution. The question is how will it be done? It's going to require discussion with our employers, a clear FBU position for all members to understand and get behind, again legal clarity and also political – behind all of this is an ongoing industrial campaign that prepares our members on action required from day one. Conference, members are quick to tell me what they want, what's wrong with the current situation, and what the FBU should be doing about it. However, as we all know so well, these very people are the FBU. I believe that on a national level, as described in point 3 of the resolution, it's time to inform them what they will be required to do to achieve an increase in funding for the fire service. That in turn enables them to do the work they want to do and be paid accordingly.

Conference, I believe the Executive Council is more in line with members' views than ever before seen previously here. Derbyshire welcome the resolution, thanks those that have been involved so far for their work around the role maps and urge conference to pass this emergency resolution unanimously. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Emergency Resolution 6 Pay Strategy moved by Cambridgeshire. The Executive Council give qualified support.

### **Emergency Resolution 6 – PAY STRATEGY**

***Conference notes the result of the pay consultation on 8th April, 2019, rejecting the employers' pay proposal and re-endorsing the Union's strategy which includes reining in local role-expansion through national negotiation.***

***Conference also notes the six Executive Council pay strategy recommendations, consulted on and agreed with Members between July and September 2018. In particular recommendations 4, 5 & 6 below;***

- 4. That a brigade level audit be undertaken of all work currently undertaken within FRSs in order to identify those areas which are outside of the agreed role maps – and which are therefore being undertaken either without pay or under inadequate pay arrangements.***
- 5. That plans are drawn up for a major campaign of lobbying at local and national level to highlight the gross underfunding of the fire and rescue service and to make the case for investment and for significant increases in pay for Grey Book staff.***

- 6. That members are consulted on the need to prepare for industrial action. This includes the need to prepare for strike action as well as developing plans for a withdrawal from all non-agreed or non-contractual work currently undertaken within the service.**

***In addition to this, Conference notes that, as per recommendation 4, a Brigade level audit has now been undertaken and responses received have been collated via a sub-committee appointed by the Executive Council.***

***Conference believes that given the derisory nature of the latest employer pay proposal, resoundingly rejected by the membership, and the stage that the pay strategy has now arrived at, it is now the time to commence withdrawal from all or any non-agreed or non-contractual work.***

***Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council act on the pay recommendations and instruct all Members to withdraw from all or any non-agreed or non-contractual work as decided by the Executive Council. Conference instructs the Executive Council to begin this immediately by whatever means necessary, including by way of lawful ballot if required.***

***This should also include the commencement of a publicly facing national campaign to highlight the state of firefighter pay along with a politically targeted campaign to highlight the situation to political representatives and demand the Central Government funding necessary to provide professional pay for a professional job.***

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

### **BRO GEORGE WHITE** (Cambridgeshire):

This resolution respects the recent results of the ballot on Pay Proposals and continuation of the strategy. It also complements the EC emergency policy on pay, but particularly the six EC pay recommendations completed last year that were consulted on and agreed by the membership nationally. This resolution recognises the fact that more than one of the recommendations are yet to be actioned by the EC. This resolution supports the pay strategy, reaffirmed by the ballot result, yet notes progress has hit a dead end on its current path, resulting in a recent derisory pay proposal from our employers. It therefore requires an urgent reconfiguration of the tactics used to deliver it. We welcome the positive assurances at the recent all officials meeting in Birmingham and our tactics would indeed be stepped up and that we would seek action on points 4, 5 and 6 of the consultative recommendations. We believe the EC emergency policy statement alone doesn't fully address this and is in danger of being a step back from the position we were consulted on last year. If this resolution isn't passed in conjunction with it, it speaks only of preparation for withdrawal.

Conference we have been preparing since the consultation last year in the work place as well as conference, as Matt says. The audit of non-contractual work has been undertaken, an EC sub-committee has been set up to collate these responses, and the EC have the mandate from the membership. When we consider that talking alone has only delivered the recent insult of an unfunded pay proposal, then we must ensure that the continuation of talks goes hand in hand with the withdrawal from any non-contractual work that the EC considers effective following the audit.

In line with the same agreed strategy and recommendations, we must also partake in a serious, organised and targeted media and political campaign. We have a situation currently where some of our members know more about guards on the trains of the CWU Four Pillars campaign than they do about the situation on firefighter pay. We must address this, and welcome the sentiment in the EC policy statement along with our own. All levels of our union, including us, must step up on this.

Comrades, how much have the industrial parameters now changed if we, the Fire Brigades Union, were to consider withdrawing from something we aren't contracted to do or are paid for to be in some way radical? It isn't radical; it is the absolute minimum we should demand at this point to support and strengthen the current pay strategy and associated negotiations.

The EC statement, if passed alone, could allow withdrawal to drift further and further away and could arguably lead us, standing here again at Conference 2020, having still not actioned it and still not having achieved a proper pay

offer. Our members, who are struggling to make ends meet, cannot allow for such a drift. This emergency resolution re-focuses and reinvigorates our energy and purpose and calls for action as soon as possible following conference.

Conference, we aren't asking for anything in this resolution that our members haven't already been consulted on and agreed with. So to oppose this resolution would be to oppose the members' will. Conference, please support. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, George. Does that have a seconder?

## **BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):**

President, Conference, we are seconding Emergency Resolution 6 Pay Strategy. Conference, this has been one of the most anticipated and longest awaited punches to be thrown in any industrial dispute that I can recall. We appear to have held back this blow at a time when Central Government and the employers have not held back theirs. They've been raining down blows on us for over a decade now. Conference, you might not thank me for what I'm going to say now, but we do need a reality check.

I'm sure the Executive Council would love to be in a position to be able to put out a kick-ass statement declaring we're ready for industrial action and that we're moving to ballot for sustained and prolonged strike action, but they can't. They can't, Conference, because we as a collective haven't done the work that would enable them to do that.

Conference, the EC members have to report back with depressing regularity that their region is not ready to embark on the type of industrial campaign that is necessary. Let's be honest, we all know what we need to do for us to stand any chance of winning the pay rise that we all know that our members deserve. Conference, the EC aren't weak on this; I'm afraid we are. Matt and Andy have to sit with employers week in week out trying to navigate through this, knowing that we're not ready. That's a difficult task. The General Secretary told us last year to go back and prepare for industrial action, and to be clear with our members that it is strike action that we're talking about if we want to deliver the pay rise that we think every single one of us should get. I said we needed a reality check and we do. The EC keep trying to build on the strategy until we're ready.

We need to be ready right now. We've done the surveys and the audits. We should be ready. But Conference, there's officials in this room who are providing non-agreed non-contractual responses and being paid for doing that. For God's sake, Conference, we have to stop this. Just because you can't be instructed to stop it doesn't mean you should voluntarily continue to do it. How do we ever expect our members to stop volunteering to provide these responses if we as officials are volunteering? We can all make the case why our brigades need a particular workstream. We provide a humanitarian resource within our communities. We want to help. But in doing so we're undermining our own strategy.

Conference, stop volunteering. We need to get a grip of our brigades when we get back as we're removing any leverage we have, and any leverage that the EC have, in their negotiations. I know members are being asked to give up money at a time when we haven't had a decent pay rise for almost a decade, but that's why we haven't. Employers are getting what they want on the cheap and for free in some cases.

Conference, go back to your brigades and prepare to stop any and all non-agreed and non-contractual work. Explain to your members this is short-term pain for long-term gain. Conference, this resolution is very clear in its intent. There's no ambiguity. The work has been done to enable us to commence – and that's the important word here – withdrawal from any and all non-agreed and non-contractual work. It's not agreed, it's not contractual, we don't have to do it. We can start with the easy stuff to extricate ourselves from, and progress over a period of time to the more difficult elements. But we need to start.

Why do you think we got such a derisory pay offer? It's because we've taken so long to respond. We've done the work; we're ready. Our members are fed up being punched. They're looking at you, Conference. Give the EC the ability to start fighting back by supporting this resolution. As the resolution says: "by whatever means necessary including by way of a lawful ballot if required". Conference, don't let our members down now. Support the resolution, go back to

your branches, do the work necessary to make members understand why volunteering is removing our leverage, get your members ready to withdraw from non-agreed and non-contractual work. Let's make sure that our first punch that we throw at government squarely connects with their jaws and knocks them right back into their corners. Now is the time for full unity and full strength in the Fire Brigades Union. Support the resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. I now call Resolution 8 Pay moved by London. The Executive Council oppose.

### Resolution 8 PAY

***Conference notes that, after 5 years, the workstream national pay strategy is yet to yield a significant pay offer or secure central funding for increased workloads and pay. Conference recognises the need to negotiate much of this work, some of which is already being undertaken by different Brigades and the necessity of incorporating this into a national framework, all whilst aspiring to address falling pay and membership decline.***

***Conference, however, believes that the complexity of the negotiations around workstreams is significantly hampering the progress of this strategy and notes Members' very real concerns around workloads, mission-creep, effects on fire cover, and the likely success of this strategy.***

***Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to;***

- ***remove Emergency Medical Response from the workstream negotiations until such time as firefighters core pay is addressed and an acceptable pay settlement is agreed by the membership***
- ***make a permanent pay formula integral to any settlement of the workstream negotiations***
- ***fully consult the membership on the fine detail of what each workstream includes and doesn't include and allow Members to decide what each workstream will entail.***

**LONDON**

## BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):

During the first ever branch meeting I attended I sat and listened to the rep deliver his information and I saw the Watch try to give their views back to the rep but he wasn't interested. Eventually, one of the old hands got up, walked out of the room and he said "don't worry, son, he's just a crocodile". After the meeting I said to the old hand "what did you mean by that?" He said "He's all mouth and no ears." Fair enough.

When I volunteered to move this resolution I was told by one of the reps to maybe bring a tin hat to prepare for possibly a battle. I questioned this accepted wisdom. All I perceive in front of me is a sea of comrades ready to listen in solidarity. I see no crocodiles here. The spirit of comradely debate and dialogue is the backbone of our movement and any collective. Listening to each other, and importantly our members, and having the ability to change our minds is oxygen to any union. The wider membership has spoken and London have listened to the result. We ask that you support our genuine concerns over EMR.

The ballot that was carried out, we've listened to the result. Unfortunately, a yes/no result doesn't allow us the nuances of the proposal that has been put forward and these workstreams. We've seen from the Brexit debacle that everyone's idea of yes and everyone's idea of no is completely different.

We have issues in London that still remain. Our members are concerned on mental health. Conference will note that there are still a number of resolutions about mental health that we're going to discuss over the course of this conference. We haven't sorted out our own mental health issues in the fire service, let alone taken on more from EMR. We had a spike of issues in London surrounding mental health during these trials. We've had members who have left the job during the trials and we still have members off sick – a direct result of co-responding. We represent varied opinions in London. Some would like EMR but the money that they are expecting is nowhere near the numbers offered. We feel that EMR is too complex to be included with all the other workstreams. When people do talk positively about EMR they often come from the angle that it will save pumps. To this I would say: Red One calls in the ambulance service have been rising at 5% per year over the last ten years on average yet

cuts to the ambulance service have been more devastating than ours. Ambulance work has not saved ambulances; it is folly to think it will save fire engines. Trade unionism, socialism and activism by great people like the ones in this room is what will save our service.

Let us be clear on what we are doing with the EMR workstreams. We should not kid ourselves. We are negotiating to add our labour to another arena. We are creating a market and pandering to free marketeers and a capitalist model. We are not the only region with this concern, as you may have noted when you read your agenda and some of the emergency resolutions. Some of the workstream duties are carried by the lowest paid British workers, who are not paid whilst travelling between properties and do not receive any travelling expenses. It is for conference and the membership to decide if this is right for them, but we should not kid ourselves and should be cautious about filling these gaps for our own benefit. History may judge us as facilitators of austerity.

London are not saying that regions should never do EMR. London are not saying that we shouldn't negotiate nationally. We are only asking for it to be withdrawn from the current workstream strategy.

In Nottinghamshire members were threatened with 7% pay deductions should they refuse to carry out EMR. An SM in London receives 7% for MCFA. It seems that we are now offering Tesco-style deals: buy two get three free.

Our motion calls for detail. This is essential not to repeat past mistakes, mistakes that have led us to this juncture. 2004 saw a blank cheque signed over to the employers and we failed to be clear enough on our settlement, and it has directly led to the workstream strategy we have now, and the NJC trying to put all those cats back in the proverbial bag. We must ensure that no room is left for mission creep or unscrupulous chiefs to manipulate, otherwise who knows what new workstreams we will be discussing in 2020 if we have finished discussing these workstreams!

Our motion asks for a pay formula. It's our final aim from this motion and it is a current aspiration of the union that any deal has a pay formula at its core. This should be the aspiration of us all, and stands with the FBU's aspirations. London stand here not as lecturers or dictators. We only ask that you understand our troubles with the EMR and you support us on it. Thank you, Conference, for your solidarity, time and consideration. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jon. Does that have a seconder?

## BRO KARL SORFLEET (GMC):

I am seconding the resolution. EMR brought frustration, anger and, for a number of our members, PTSD, ill health retirement. It didn't do well for us. We'll support the resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Emergency Resolution 7 Health and Care Work moved by West Midlands. The Executive Council are asking West Midlands to remit or they will oppose.

### Emergency Resolution 7 – HEALTH AND CARE WORK

***Conference is aware of the recent pay offer made by the employers which if accepted would have required the expansion of the role of the firefighter. Conference applauds the result of the recent ballot of our membership on this pay offer and the overwhelming agreement from our Members to continue the strategy to achieve a fair pay award.***

***However, Conference is concerned that the employers' pay offer contained an open ended list of extra duties designed to broaden the role of a firefighter. These included 'Health and Community', 'Activities which fall within the scope of adult social care, including slips, trips and falls' and 'Assisting faster discharge from hospital, transportation home including expanded safe and well checks'.***

***Conference agrees that care work in the home and patient transport are professions in their own right and should not be considered appropriate for the role of a firefighter.***

***Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to not include adult social care such as slips, trips, falls and patient transport within any future negotiations on the expansion of the role of a firefighter.***

**WEST MIDLANDS**

**BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT** (West Midlands):

Firstly, regarding the EC's emergency resolution, thanks for London seeking the clarity regarding the error in date, but don't worry Standing Orders still say that you would have been able to have a second bite of the cherry if it had gone through Standing Orders! So if the EC can get it wrong then us mere brigade officials might do too. *(Laughter)*, *applause*

Conference, firstly we support all the other resolutions that are in this current debate. This resolution is specific to one area and I will come on to that in a minute. In the West Midlands we had a trade dispute which was largely around issuing of catch-all contracts and non-contractual work, specifically health and care – just what the employers have issued as their pay offer to us: a catch-all contract to include health and care.

The General Secretary saw it first-hand, the anger of the membership in the West Midlands, about this type of work and the demands for it to be withdrawn, and the General Secretary did listen. So care work, health work, is that the role of a firefighter? Absolutely not! An example of this in Birmingham, we've got the Birmingham care workers' strike which is going on nearly two years now where in Birmingham we've lost thousands of care workers who go out into our communities and do the most valuable jobs. They are imposing draconian shift patterns on them and what do our employers want? What does the combined authority want? They want firefighters to go out there and take these people's jobs.

We shouldn't be taking underpaid careworkers' jobs. I believe it's a fundamental absolute principle of any trade union that one person has one job. To be specific to this resolution, it talks at the end "*Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to not include adult social care such as slips, trips, falls and patient transport within any future negotiations*" To be clear to the floor, I'm not talking here about safe and wells and it doesn't say safe and wells within this resolution. I'm talking specifically about falls response and patient transport. As we will be supporting the rest of these resolutions, I hope that you support this resolution as well. Care work is for care workers. We're firefighters. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. Does that have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. I now call Resolution 13 National Overtime/Additional Hours Ban moved by Cleveland. The Executive Council oppose.

## **Resolution 13 NATIONAL OVERTIME/ADDITIONAL HOURS BAN**

***This Conference is extremely concerned by the continuing position of the Conservative Government in its failure to recognise, with appropriate pay, the massively extended and broadened role of a modern firefighter.***

***Firefighters deal with, and take part in training for a much wider range of incidents than in the past and firefighters have not been properly recompensed for these extra responsibilities and skills.***

***The FBU has also been in discussion with employers at a national level to possibly further broaden a firefighter's role.***

***This Conference is concerned that the Conservative Government will continue to fail to meet FBU Members' expectations on pay.***

***This Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to use a National Overtime/Additional hours ban as a constant part of any industrial action that may happen as part of the current pay campaign.***

**CLEVELAND**

**BRO KARL WAGER** (Cleveland):

Conference, President, yet again I'm stood here trying to move a resolution about overtime ban. This has been done because our members in Cleveland feel so very strongly about having an overtime ban.

President, in your Presidential address you said a few things that pricked my ears up. You said it's time to protect the future of our fire service; it's the end of the line and enough is enough. Well, President, I know you are Northern-ish, but our members in the proper North don't use words like nebulous. They are clearly saying to us "we're getting the piss took out of us". Brigades across this country are on overtime. Now is the time to put pressure on brigades across this country. An overtime ban will hit hard, very, very hard with limited effect on our members. I don't need to explain to conference or the EC what overtime on the whole does to recruitment, to the health & safety and welfare of our own members and to pay.

Last night, as we were in the bar in Ma Kelly's, an official of our union who is in this room said to me: "You know what, mate, our members would absolutely love an overtime ban, but I can't support it because we've been clearly told by our EC member to reject it." Just a question to the room: since when did the tail start wagging the dog? The only voice that should be heard in this room is the voice of our members. Please remember that when you show your hands today.

This resolution is a pure, pure resolution. It came from Grangetown and Stranton FBU branch, it got passed at the brigade committee, and it was brought here today, exactly how a resolution should be written and should be brought. Please support the use of an overtime ban for our members. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Karl. Does that have a seconder?

**BRO STEVE HOWLEY** (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 13 from Cleveland, National Overtime Ban. As Karl put just then, this is about the third or fourth conference in a row that this overtime ban resolution has been brought. At every conference up to now we've said this isn't the right time, this isn't the right time. We've just heard the General Secretary go on about pay and the strategy and where we're at, and enough is enough. We've heard all the different debates around pay. What do we do? Where do we go? It's quite clear: overtime is a silent killer, as we've said before. It masks unfair pay, it masks the job cuts to both firefighters and control staff, it increases pressure on individuals, it breaches working time regulations because many of our members are doing that much overtime that they're not sticking to the Grey Book principles. It needs to stop and it needs to stop now. We need to make a decision at this conference to dovetail into the pay strategy that the members have voted to continue. We need to bring an overtime ban in at this conference. As Mark Rowe quite eloquently put it: enough is enough. We need to show leadership, we need to take ownership, and we need to get back into our members and we need to deliver this.

We introduced an overtime ban in North Yorkshire as part of our dispute a couple of years ago. It was massively successful. We then relinquished the overtime ban part of the dispute. Today, management are still saying to us: "You're quietly doing the overtime ban behind closed doors because your members haven't taken the uptake to continue to do overtime". Once the position is broken and members get used to not working overtime they get their lives back. They are happy to get their lives back and they find new ways of earning that extra cash. They are not beholden to chief fire officers any more.

Don't be afraid of it, vote for it, and let's get the overtime ban back in today. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. I now call Resolution 49 Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack moved by Essex. The Executive Council oppose.

**Resolution 49 MARAUDING TERRORISM FIREARMS ATTACK (MTFA)**

***Conference notes with concern the lack of progress in agreeing suitable and robust operational procedures, planning arrangements and also appropriate payments for the increased activity and potential risk with regards to MTFA incidents and training.***

***Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council, via a Head Office Circular, to instruct Members to cease all training for, and responding to MTFA incidents.***

**ESSEX**

**BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW** (Essex):

President, Conference, I am moving resolution 49 listed on page 8 of your Programme of Business under Section C Operational Health and Safety. I'm not sure why I'm doing it under Pay.

We submitted this resolution because members in Essex are fed up with not having the safe systems of work in place to protect our members. 7 February 2017 Head Office Circular 0088AD, this highlighted the need for national guidance, adequate training, suitable provision of equipment, ensuring that it is not done at the expense of existing activity. We're seeing pumps come off the run for MTFA issues. Going to Stansted airport. We're taking pumps off the run.

Adequate staffing for our control rooms. As we see our members in control coping with more and more work with fewer and fewer control operators. Suitable pension provisions, suitable compensation. As of now, I'm not aware of any of these arrangements being agreed nationally, giving our officials the framework under which we can make local agreements and local arrangements for MTFA.

I'm not quite sure why I'm standing here in the Pay debate Section A, but that's my fault for not challenging the Chair. It appears that the EC don't like this resolution. It appears that maybe we're forcing them to act on MTFA, something they have been avoiding for years. I'm not quite sure why a health & safety resolution falls if the EC resolution passes. But that's something that's been decided by Standing Orders and it's too late to challenge now.

I would urge the EC to consider their position. We can carry on with the pay strategy at the same time as withdrawing MTFA. MTFA is a health, safety and welfare issue. It's not directly linked to pay. The resolution we're putting forward is to look after the health, safety and welfare of our members. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Cheers, Alan. Does that have a seconder? Karl.

**BRO KARL SORFLEET** (GMC):

We are seconding the resolution on MTFA. We had a period in GMC where MTFA was a voluntary issue. It got to the point where we decided we were no longer volunteering for that and it became a very sticky and contentious issue to climb out of. I know in this union we've had loads of fights, we've won things, we've lost things. We've always done it together. Whatever the result is, we've done it together. Members in GMC withdrew from MTFA and faced the risk of partial performance pay, being sent home, all sorts of issues that came out of it. They stood the line and the result is that we don't have an MTFA capability anywhere in Manchester at all. We're reliant on a different region: Merseyside, I believe. We rely on them now.

My point is that GMC members are looking at other people to see what their response is. We thought we'd be doing it together. We've done it, we've done it alone. We support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Yes.

**BRO MARK ROWE** (Merseyside):

Conference, just a point of clarification on the last comment made from the GMC delegate. There is no FBU member in Merseyside that provides any MTFA capability. The MTFA capability is provided by several non-FBU members. I just thought it was important to make that point. Thanks, Conference. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Mark. Conference, that's now open for debate. Speakers? Yes. Denise. Come up as well.

**BRO ALAN JAYE** (Norfolk):

I'm supporting ER6 and ER1. Conference, last year Norfolk moved a resolution which was passed and which sought to address pay restraint and poor pay offers. We demanded that the EC immediately begin to formulate a wider strategy/campaign via membership consultation. We welcome that the EC have started this. We also demanded that all political and industrial avenues be considered and we did mention industrial action.

I spoke about how my uncle in the 1977/78 strike stood up for decent pay and conditions. Comrades, we need to stand up again now, OK? As Matt said, we had 86% in favour of the continuing current strategy. As brigade officials we are always pushing for this. Members were rightly asking when we are going to stop non-contractual work. I urge us all to demand that non-contractual work stops as part of the workstream strategy. We should also stop letting the employers take the lead.

Let's back the initiative, let's ballot on non-contractual work and start showing the employers that we are serious. Support ER6 along with ER1 which we believe complement each other. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT** (Cheshire):

Thank you, President. Before I start can someone pass comrade Karl a dictionary in case I'm about to use any big words!

Regarding MTFA, I've got a lot of sympathy with comrades from Essex. This is a really urgent issue of a real pressing nature. We've seen in the last week some of the services seem to think they can remove the F from MTFA and send us into warm zones with non-specialised teams. The advice is if you encounter any problems, run, hide and tell. I think that says all the government needs to think about on the safety of firefighters.

I just want to say that Cheshire really want to support the emergency resolution from the EC today, but we would just like some clarifications. We supported the position on the consultative ballot, but we do need some assurances specifically around timeline, a plan with dates on it that we can get members behind, particularly on bullet point 3. The resolution, if we're honest, hasn't really progressed us any further from when we were here talking about pay in 2016, 2017 and 2018. We can't afford to come back here or Brighton next year having the same debate. We do need to put some date/time stamps on it. So I'm hoping that the General Secretary can give us an assurance that the withdrawal from all non-contractual work following conference will be time bound. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO MARK McCARTAN** (NIFB):

I am here to speak in support of Emergency Resolution 1 and to talk on the other resolutions. We know, talking to our London colleagues, the difficulty you guys had with EMR. We appreciate it, we really, really do. I've had detailed conversations with you. You were treated appallingly. We support you 100% on that.

But let's not tie the EC's hands by removing it. The same I would say to our Essex colleagues. Do not remove the MTFA. Let's not tie their hands. Let's keep up the strategy that's going. It's the only one that we really have. Whatever the outcome of the votes here, whether we agree with it or we don't, we're a union, we stick together, and we go forward from today with whatever is agreed now. Let's stay together in unity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**SIS DENISE CHRISTIE** (Scotland):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Emergency Resolution 1 and Emergency Resolution 6. I think it's important that conference is updated on the work that's been carried out in Scotland by our officials and members tirelessly, since we started off the EC strategy on pay. Matt alluded to it when he opened up and talked about the impact of devolution and the challenges that we've had with that. Certainly, I would say we are in a different position within Scotland with a devolved government, we've got different industrial relations, we've got different political relations compared to other parts of the UK.

In December 2017 our members lobbied the Scottish government, and the General Secretary was at that lobby. We demanded investment in the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and demanded cuts to our industry. From that, that resulted in an extra £15.5 million in our budget. That was to support the negotiations going forward regarding pay.

In February 2018 the chief fire officer wrote directly to our members, directly to our members, with a supposed offer. But that offer had strings on it. It was cuts, it was jobs, it was station closures, it was reduced crewing, it was appliance availability. Our members were tremendous in their response. They ripped up that letter, they had pictures on that letter and sent it back to the chief saying: “you negotiate with our union, not directly with our members”.

From there, we were at conference last year and we brought an emergency resolution on pay. That resolution talked about looking at negotiations for Scotland but within the auspices of the NJC. We’re a national union and we still believe in national collective bargaining. We remitted that resolution as an act of solidarity, to keep the momentum going for the national pay strategy. From then in 2017, 2018 and 2019 our region provided briefing packs for our members and our officials. We’ve lobbied heavily MSPs and politicians for investment. That resulted in December 2018 an extra £5.5 million into the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service budget.

From there our members are still continuously lobbying. But I have to be frank with conference. The patience of our members is running out but we need to recognise the political engagement and industrial relations we have in Scotland and other devolved regions. It’s our duty as officials to utilise that, not just for Scotland but for every single other region in the UK. We need to believe in our motto here that Unity truly is our Strength. Scotland’s behind this national campaign, we’re behind this strategy. But we have to recognise the different political parties we have within Scotland and the industrial relations. Support the resolutions. Thanks. (Applause)

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Any more speakers? No? OK, I’ll now ask the General Secretary to give his right of reply and I will also ask him to give the qualification to Emergency Resolution 6 in that right of reply, and the opposition to the others.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks. President, Conference, in terms of a number of points that came out of the discussion, I will address the EC’s opposition or qualifications as I’m going along. In relation to the Cambridgeshire resolution, Emergency Resolution 6, I think the concerns that we have with the resolution, and why we are giving qualified support and asking conference to give qualified support, is this. It suggests that this may need a ballot, but it’s absolutely clear to us in terms of the discussions that we’ve had at the Executive Council, including with legal advisers, that to undertake this on a sustained basis would require a ballot. So we need to be absolutely clear. There may be elements of work that people can withdraw from now, but in general – and this has come back quite clearly from officials saying to us that members would want the guidance of a ballot – we need to be clear that we would require a ballot. Certainly we know from trade union case law that actually issuing any sort of instruction without a ballot would be likely to end up in court. So even at local official level, local officials on fire stations advising people in their capacity as union officials to do that could lead us into legal difficulties. So we need to be absolutely clear that this requires, in our view, a ballot.

I will come on to this in relation to Essex in a minute. That doesn’t mean that individual members on the ground, if they are not contractually obliged to do something, deciding this afternoon “I’m not doing that anymore because I’m not contractually obliged to do it”.

The second qualification, once we acknowledge that a ballot is required, is the question of timing. I suppose I’m sort of picking up on the points that Mark Rowe made. We cannot launch ballots that we are not going to win. The assessment of the Executive Council is we are nowhere near that position at the present time, if we are frank. You will get reports from the Executive Council at your committees, but it is clear that some brigade committees and some regions are arguing that that is the position, but that has not been the position reported in the majority across the Executive Council. We simply have to be frank about that. So the question of timing is the second qualification.

Moving on to London, the Executive Council is asking you to oppose the London resolution 8. Jon, in moving it, said we do need to listen to the members. Conference, I don’t believe the London resolution would mean we were listening to the members. The members have just voted in a significant individual members’ consultative ballot by 86%. If people in other unions were able to get an 86% yes vote on an industrial action ballot that met the thresholds they would be over the moon. Our members voted 86% to endorse the existing strategy, including

the five workstreams set out in existing conference policy. Conference, think of the dangers if, at this stage, our conference decided to ignore the votes of 86% of our members! Just think and ponder on that for a moment. It was 86% for a yes/yes position on the ballot.

Jon mentioned the points about mental health and so on. We fully acknowledge those. I think, looking back, in a number of the trials (and London was one of them) what we had was senior managers in fire services who operated, as they do on so many other things, thinking: “I’m in charge, I’m going to do this, I’m not going to engage with anyone, I’m not going to listen to anyone”. Inevitably they made mistakes as a result of that, and our members suffered in consequence.

But we also had other examples of better practice. Some of you who were here at the conference when we discussed the EMR trials will recall that we had some examples of very bad practice and we had some examples of very good practice, or better practice, on issues like mental health. I think Scotland was one of those that gave better examples about support on mental health in the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

Jon tried to argue that there was no evidence of EMR saving pumps. I have to say, I don’t think that is the reality on the ground across the UK. There is evidence that EMR activity has protected pumps in certain parts of the country.

Jon referred back to the 2003 settlement, which I think probably did mark a step towards the fragmentation that we see today. The differences in terms of the workstreams is the workstreams are done through the National Joint Council. The five workstreams have been jointly agreed. What we see from our survey across the country is that actually things far beyond what’s in the workstreams are already taking place in service after service to the degree that in some cases our members (and sometimes some officials) don’t even know what is and isn’t within the role map. That’s no criticism of anyone but that’s the position that we are in. The way we are arguing to get that back on track is through national collective bargaining through the NJC where the workstreams are agreed. I would ask you, Conference, to think about what would happen – bearing in mind that EMR was one of those workstreams from the start – having put in a letter to our employers seeking a 17% pay increase if we at this stage now said: “by the way, we’re scrapping that because one-fifth of those workstreams we are now not even talking to you about any more”. That, Conference, is a recipe not for altering the workstreams; it’s a recipe for completely destroying those discussions.

I think London region’s position on the ballot was they did describe the entire conference strategy as a failure. If that’s the position then argue that it’s a failure, argue the whole thing should be scrapped, rather than what’s in this resolution. This resolution seeks, in my view, to destroy the strategy of this conference but not saying so openly that that is in reality what it seeks to do. That would undoubtedly be the result of adopting that resolution.

I think we have more of a difficulty on Emergency Resolution 7 which Steve moved on behalf on of the West Midlands We’ve discussed this lots of times. Myself and Steve and other brigade officials in the West Midlands have discussed this lots of times. The President has been up there and the former President has been up there and we’ve seen some of the horrific positions that our members were put in. The difficulty, however, with the resolution itself – despite Steve’s clarification from the rostrum – is the phrase in the last sentence “such as”, because it instructs the Executive Council to not include adult social care “such as” which means that the following words are examples not that they are an exhaustive list (to use that sort of phrase). So the difficulty therefore with the terminology within the resolution is that it does not simply seek to exclude slips, trips and falls and patient transport. If it did, we may be in a different position. But the resolution does not say that. It says “such as” which clearly means that there may be more issues relating to adult social care. In fact, it clearly says that there are other issues relating to adult social care than simply the two examples given.

I do not criticise or dismiss the concerns of the West Midlands members at all. In terms of how we address that, those discussions are still ongoing between us and the employers. I will come back to this point in a moment. We are expected to get a pay rise by 1 July. In terms of timelines, on Andy’s point, we’ve got a couple of key points: the June NJC and the July pay settlement date. Clearly, those timelines mean that we are at a crucial stage of those discussions. In that regard, therefore, for us both the West Midlands emergency resolution and the London resolution actually endanger those discussions. Therefore, Conference, we urge you not to support them and to oppose them.

In terms of Cleveland's resolution on overtime I will just take up one point that I think Steve Howley made that this is about ending overtime. The resolution is very different from the previous Cleveland resolutions. I think Cleveland are well aware of that because in this case it is relating to using an overtime ban as a tactic in an industrial dispute about pay. I think Cleveland are clear about that. That is entirely different from the points that Steve made that overtime is undermining the fire service. It may well be, but address that through issues relating to the principle around overtime rather than what we are discussing today: using an overtime ban as a tactic within an industrial dispute.

On the issue of the overtime ban the Executive Council is not necessarily against an overtime ban. It is against the particular wording within the resolution which I will just ask conference to take note of for a moment. It calls on the Executive Council to use a national overtime ban as a constant part of any industrial action. Some of you were here during the dispute over pensions. As part of our actions short of strike, on various occasions we called overtime bans. I remember the conference where people were queued up at these rostrums to tell us what a problem they were having sustaining those overtime bans. So the idea that it's simple or straightforward to just ballot, call an overtime ban and that's it is naïve. We will use overtime bans as necessary. The Executive Council have been absolutely clear about that. If we're talking about action short of strike it can and will include bans on overtime, bans on secondary contracts, withdrawal from non-core activities and other actions that we may deem appropriate that fit in with a ballot for action short of strike. We're not remotely ruling out the suggestions made by Karl in moving. We're simply saying that that is a tactical issue and therefore we ask you to oppose the Cleveland resolution.

In terms of the Essex resolution 49, I know you say its Section C, Alan, but read the resolution on line 2. I don't involve myself in procedural debates, but in his comments about the order of business he said it didn't relate to pay. But if you read line 2 it very clearly says "and appropriate payments". So clearly there is a question of payments, unless the position of the Essex brigade committee is we do not want this involved in a discussion about core pay and what we want to do is to seek allowances for people doing that activity. That is not the position of this conference and is not the position of this Executive Council. Our position is to seek a pay rise for all our members and therefore appropriate payments are actually the N JC rates of pay that firefighters get. So it is relevant to this debate.

In terms of the action, if members are fed up, there is clearly no contractual obligation on anyone to undertake that training. If members are fed up, and I'm sure they are, as Alan says, then those individual members are completely free this afternoon to withdraw from that activity. They need to be advised that they are able to do so. In fact, I think Karl actually answered the point from GMC where members did precisely that, as he set out to you earlier in the discussion.

In terms of Andy's questions about the timeline, I think two clear points are the NJC meeting in June. There will be a number of discussions with the employers before then. And the pay settlement date in July. We need to take feedback from yourselves following this conference. We've already started the process of making these arrangements. We need to be out on the road, discussing face to face with our members (because some of these issues are complicated), making the case. At each stage, as the resolution says, that would allow us to assess the strength of feeling, assess the work done, assess region by region, brigade by brigade, where we are in terms of being able to deliver a ballot. That ballot would then be called at the point at which we think we're in the best placed position to win it.

Andy may want clearer detail than that, but I think currently that's as far as we are able to go. But I can give assurance, the resolution is clear. There is no shirking from that from the Executive Council. That's why this resolution has been brought here: to begin to set out in detail those timelines. But there's a very clear obligation on yourselves or your brigade organisers that Tam will be leading on the question of the brigade matrix, for example. Before we ballot anyone we're going to have to ensure that we've got the brigade matrix in place and we know where our members are working and so on.

So I think, Conference, we do need to come out of here with a unified position. In our view the Executive Council's resolution gives the clearest way forward on that. We are happy to give qualified support to the Cambridgeshire resolution and we urge you to oppose the other resolutions or emergency resolutions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Cambridgeshire right of reply.

**BRO GEORGE WHITE** (Cambridgeshire):

Conference, President, we welcome the EC support and qualifying points. We would assure the EC that as one of the most balloted regions in the FBU we fully appreciate the preparations and organisation required leading up to a ballot of members. Of course, we do not expect ballot papers to drop on to doormats on Friday afternoon. However, we reiterate that the intention of the emergency resolution is clear: that it should be as quick as practicable, timely and that no campaign should be open-ended and allowed to drift. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

London right of reply.

**BRO JON WHARNSBY** (London):

Just on some of the points that Matt raised. The 86% turnout on the yes, we had a conversation in our LRC meeting: can we say “yes/yes” whilst trying to amend conference policy on the workstream strategy? We came to the conclusion that was a no. I’m sure it sounds like other people in other brigades came to the conclusion that they could amend the workstream strategy whilst voting yes/yes, because we’ve had resolutions from two different brigades that want to change workstream strategy whilst still probably voting yes/yes.

Thanks for agreeing that we need detail in any final proposal, I appreciate that. It seems that the employer can add anything they like to the non-exhaustive list but we can’t change our minds in any way, shape or form. We do have concerns in London that this is a formula for the employers to get us to do anything. So the formula is now: we restrict their wages for a while, then we just give them some work to do, and then we offer them some money to do the work that they didn’t want to do in the first place. So we need to be careful that we don’t offer the employer a new formula for getting us to do anything. You may hear today or tomorrow work around policing and things like that. I hope that in 2020/2022 we’re not standing here discussing police work.

We do accept the result of the ballot, but obviously we have concerns around the fact that some brigades have definitely voted yes/yes towards it whilst trying to amend it. So if we can’t ever change this workstream strategy I think we’re in a dangerous position. If we can’t change our minds, and won’t change the subject then we’re just fanatics. Conference, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

West Midlands, right of reply.

**BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT** (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I just want to make it clear to the floor that this emergency resolution 7 can still carry with the EC’s resolution and with Cambridgeshire’s resolution which we support. It also won’t hinder those resolutions in what they’re trying to achieve.

On the General Secretary’s point, just to be specific here, the resolution states “Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to not include adult social care” it then goes on to say “such as” as Matt pointed out. What I’m saying here is – and this is your opportunity – adult social care should not form part of a firefighter’s role map. We experienced it in the West Midlands. Don’t let it come to any of your brigades. Support this resolution. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Cleveland right of reply.

**BRO KARL WAGER** (Cleveland):

President, Conference, just on what you said, Matt, it’s our members’ opinions that having an overtime ban as a constant part of the current industrial action called on pay will only strengthen our hand. Secondly, Matt, I accept that this is different from previous overtime bans. It is, it’s the way that it’s written, it’s the way that it’s worded. It is very different. But I make absolutely no bones about what I think and what our members think of overtime in the long-term, as I’ve said in previous years. I echo Brother Howley’s sentiments completely.

Just to sum up, comrades, an overtime ban as a constant part of this campaign will hit really, really hard. It will have the desired effect that we need at this current moment in time. It's a huge weapon that we have in our arsenal, one that our members are telling us we need to use now. Please support. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Essex right of reply.

**BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):**

Conference, I just want to pick up on one of the points that Matt said. It does mention pay in the resolution, but what it talks about is the lack of progress in agreeing suitable and robust operational procedures, planning and arrangements. We're talking about the health, safety and welfare of our members. We're not talking about a negotiating leverage for pay. What we're talking about is the health, safety and welfare of our members. They're looking for leadership. Yes, we can say that we will urge them, like we urged them back in 2017, not to do this. We can urge them. They're looking for leadership, OK? So when our members look for leadership they look through the structures and ultimately, when they look for leadership they look up there. They're the people who should be showing the leadership for our members. So what we're asking is for the EC to show the leadership that our members need to look after their health, safety and welfare, to ensure they're not put in situations that are endangering them without the appropriate training and equipment and procedures. I urge you, if they're not going to allow the EC resolution to stand if this is agreed, vote against the EC resolution and support this to support the welfare of your members. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, I did say I would give a re-run of the statement I made at the beginning, so I'll run through that and then we'll go on to the voting. Emergency Resolution 1, Emergency Resolution 6, Emergency Resolution 7, resolution 8 and resolution 13 can stand. Emergency Resolution 1 and Emergency Resolution 6 stand in opposition to resolution 49. If Emergency Resolution 1 or Emergency Resolution 6 carry then resolution 49 falls. The Executive Council oppose Emergency Resolution 7, resolution 8, resolution 13 and resolution 49. We give qualified support to Emergency Resolution 6.

Who shouted the point of order? Come to the rostrum.

**BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):**

Sorry, Mr President. I ask for clarification and explanation why the Essex resolution stands against and can't carry with the EC resolution on pay.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

I did give you that, Alan, when you first challenged it. It calls for industrial action to be implemented straight away whereas Emergency Resolution 1 is calling for preparing for industrial action.

Right, Conference, we now move on to the voting. I now put Emergency Resolution 1 moved by the Executive Council to the vote. If Emergency Resolution 1 carries then resolution 49 falls. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Resolution 49 falls.

I now put Emergency Resolution 6 moved by Cambridgeshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 8 moved by London to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now put Emergency Resolution 7 moved by West Midlands to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. Do that again. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 13 moved by Cleveland to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

Conference, that concludes the business on pay. We'll break for tea now. Could I have you back in the hall at quarter past 4.

*Break for tea*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Sorry for the delay, The General Secretary is just adjusting his new tiepin, the important stuff. We're now moving on to Section K Organising and Membership, para.K1. I introduce Tam McFarlane.

## **BRO TAM McFARLANE** (National Officer):

Thanks, Conference, just a quick update on the organising work that we've been doing and then, just when you thought it's not going to get any better, we're going to show you a short film as well. It's in colour and everything.

Just a point about the organising and membership side of things. I think the first point we want to make to you is that every official is an organiser. Every meeting, every discussion, every interaction, that's an organising opportunity, an opportunity to support and encourage members to build and strengthen the union. The reason I say that is I think there has been a bit of a trend to almost box organising off. But the truth is, based on the work that we've been doing over the last year or so, there's a reality check here. That is that the union I think we all grew up in is now faced with a far greater challenge than we had previously. This is in open session so I'm not going to give any figures. But at a recent brigade organisers' seminar we had a lot of discussion on density, i.e. the amount of members we've got within any particular area versus the amount of members that we could have. I've got to be honest, I don't think anyone can be complacent based on the figures that we saw there.

On top of that, yes, we face certain competition from other associations and bodies, but the first set of statistics that we did some work on showed that there's 10,884 firefighters and emergency fire control staff that aren't in any union whatsoever. They're not in the Fire Brigades Union, they're not in the Fire & Rescue Services Association and they're not in the FOA. So that's the sort of background to the work that we did.

In terms of organising, last year we had a brigade organisers' seminar. That was the first one we'd had for a while. On the back of that the Executive Council took on board some recommendations the organisers made and they set up a task and finish group. The task and finish group has two EC members on it: Pete Smith and Richard Vinnie Jones, and also at that time there were two organisers: Seona Hart from Region 1 and Leoni Munslow from Region 10. I really want to say a huge thank you to those four individuals. The amount of work they put into this task so far has been amazing and it is ongoing. On top of that, following a request from the National Retained Committee, we've now taken on Paul Revill on to the group to do some work as well.

The task that we were set at that time was to consider the issues relating to membership and organising, including resources, and policy implementation. It was a very wide task. We've done a lot of work to date. We've introduced and revamped a new system in regard to 25 year badges. That was based on a lot of concern that our members were raising with us at head office. We've introduced a new 40 year badge system that's come in. We've also introduced a new 40 year badge (you've probably seen the circulars) that members who do 40 years' service who are retired and out of trade get a badge; members who do 40 years' service still in the service, they get a special badge. So there are three different badges on the go.

We've done a lot of work around wholetime/retained, trying to identify where these members are, a lot of work on the Green Book route, and of course the subscriptions that was our bone of contention last year at conference. We've done a lot of work on online joining and also the outside companies that want to offer their services to our members. We've sat down and interviewed a lot. We've taken some on board and we've turned a lot more away.

Just specifically for this debate, we've been concentrating on what is effectively the best case scenario for us which is when an organiser goes into a recruits course and where they sign those recruits up. We did a review of resources, i.e. the PowerPoints that everyone was using. I think we got 36 PowerPoints in – kind of the same but also a lot,

lot different. We then evaluated the success of those PowerPoints. Some were more successful than others. We then went a stage further and we targeted groups of new entrants to the Fire & Rescue Service, some of whom had joined the union and some who didn't join the union and we went and discussed why they didn't do that. A lot of the feedback we got then helped us to develop what is our next task which is a best practice suite of documents.

Our whole point of doing this is to take the new recruits, as it were, on a journey through trade union membership. A lot of the work that we did talking to these people showed that the overwhelming majority had no real idea what a trade union was. They didn't know what its connection had to the industry, they didn't know the value of being in it. In fact, some of the ones that I spoke to came from an openly hostile family background to trade unions and felt that they didn't need to be in it whatsoever.

So we've been tasked to go away and develop these suites of documents and we've been doing that a lot. As I say, we want to take them through the initial journey, going into the meeting to start, showing them a presentation, giving them, as it were, a box of some sign up documents, some sign up suites that gives them hopefully a badge, etc to wear. And then taking them through their union journey after that.

We've been doing it by getting the work on board and then distance working. So the groups were going away and working in different areas. We then brought it all back together. Because we were working in that way we had to make it all look the same, bring it together, and we've been doing that through the good offices of people as well.

So that work is ongoing. I know there's been a little bit of frustration that you still haven't seen it all. We took it to the brigade organisers' seminar that we held a couple of months ago. We got a lot of good positive feedback from that as well, and we've now altered and we're revamping it to look the same. As I said, we start off by telling people what a trade union actually is, we then tell them what the Fire Brigades Union is, we then tell them why they need to be in the Fire Brigades Union and the benefits it will bring them, not just at that moment in time but also in the future. Then if they aren't convinced by the end of all that, we're going to let David hopefully convince them. We've got a short film here to show you.

*Film shown*

*(Applause)*

That video will be embedded as the presentation that we send out to everyone. I will say it publicly, a big thanks to David Badillo for agreeing to do that video. He is a great guy.

I just wanted to reassure you that the work is ongoing. It's quite a task for us but we are definitely getting there and making in-road across the whole area of organising. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tam. I now call Resolution 75 Retirement Presentation moved by Humberside. The Executive Council are opposing.

### **Resolution 75 RETIREMENT PRESENTATION**

***Conference recognises the hard work already undertaken by the National Officials, regarding the implementation of the new processes around the 25/40 year medals and certificates. Conference would like to add to these honorary milestones by adding a final gift on the date of retirement. Humberside's Education Officer believes that a professional quality Record of Achievement and Service folder, sporting the professional voice of firefighters' FBU logo, should be presented to all Members as they leave the Fire Service.***

***The FBU is a great organisation that has many assets to offer to our retired Members. Austerity has driven our numbers down, so retention of retiring Members is vital. Conference believes the Record of Achievement and Service folder increases our opportunity for retaining membership, by immediately placing a ROOT membership form in the folder.***

***The folder would be able to hold a CV, record of service, record of FBU posts held, a written reference from the service, a written reference from the local FBU Official, these would all be generated from templates supplied by the FBU.***

***A fact sheet would also be placed in the folder with information, guidance and contact details for mental health, FBU lifelong learning, local support networks and access to legal help etc. if they continue as ROOT Members. The folder would also store the Member's certificates.***

**HUMBERSIDE**

**BRO ADAM HAYTON** (Humberside):

President, Conference, conference recognises the excellent work carried out by the national officials with regard to the process of issuing 25 and 40 year badges and certificates. This new process will ensure that all members receive their badges and certificates when they should and that no-one will be missed. However, some members will retire before making the 25 year milestone for reasons such as transferring in from previous pension schemes. This means that members will be retiring from the service without any recognition from the FBU. So this is one of the things that we wish to change.

At the organisers' seminar earlier this year it came to light that there is already a pack available which is on request from head office which can be passed on to retired members. But very few people within that room at the time knew of its existence. I certainly didn't. This pack contains a retired and out of trade application form and a leaflet for the firefighters lottery. The aim is to simply expand on this and make the pack a more professional and personal retirement gift. Our vision is that our retired members can utilise this pack as a record of information and reflection well into their retirement. That can even be utilised as a record of achievement to help them secure further employment after retirement from the fire service.

The retirement presentation will also ensure that our members feel that their service is recognised, that their membership has been valued, and it will positively influence their decision to become a retired and out of trade member.

At a member's retirement do the service will present them with their axe or a similar gift; the sports and welfare section will normally present a tankard so let's take the opportunity to fly the FBU flag by having a local official present the retiring member with an FBU record of achievement and service folder.

Humberside officials and branch reps have been to many retirement functions over the years, as I'm sure we all have, and it is clear that we are missing an opportunity to recruit new members, retain existing members, and encourage retired members to become ROOT members.

Conference, this retirement presentation will have a positive impact on the retiring member and the FBU by confirming to our members upon retirement that their membership of the FBU has been recognised and valued and that this is recognised regardless of whether or not they have reached their 25 year milestone. It will have a positive impact on membership figures by encouraging members to become retired and out of trade members. Let's not forget that membership figures are continuing to decline due largely to government-imposed austerity measures. It will be a reminder to the member of the benefits of continuing to be a part of the FBU, benefits such as legal protection provided by Thompsons solicitors, the ability to still be eligible to receive the 25 and 40 year badges, and continued access to the FBU lifelong learning. It will encourage members to continue supporting the firefighters lottery, and it will give local officials a legitimate opportunity to promote the FBU at retirement functions Please support resolution 75. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Adam. Does that have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Nobody? Tam McFarlane to outline the Executive Council's opposition.

**BRO TAM McFARLANE** (National Officer):

To be honest, something I don't like doing is turning down initiatives. We think there's a little bit of a reality check with this one. We just outlined the amount of work that's going on amongst the task and finish group and others. To be frank,

we're not exactly sure that this is the area that we want to focus on in regard to ROOT. As Adam already said, ROOT members do get sent a pack. I will say this: we need to know that people are retiring first. The organisers sometimes find out somebody is retiring, they engage the member and sign them up to ROOT. Head office occasionally get to find that out through different mechanisms and we can then do it. We're working on a system where we will find out automatically when a member starts retiring and we can do that, but that's still a long way down the road.

In regard to how we do that, we have talked amongst the group and we put it out to the organisers' seminars as well, what sort of thing we would give retiring members. That work is still ongoing. We're not convinced a professional quality folder is exactly the thing that members would be looking for, although we take Humberside's point.

Just in regard to capacity, first of all, we'd have to get these things designed, we need to get them produced. We would also need to produce the templates that come with it as well. If you read the resolution we'd have to produce templates for the members' CVs, records of service, etc. To be honest with you, at this moment in time with the work that's currently ongoing, we just don't feel that this is the right path for us. So with that we'd ask you to oppose the resolution.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Humberside right of reply *Waived*. Conference, I now put Resolution 75 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I am now on para.K2, para.K3, para.k4. I now call Resolution 74 Recruitment and Organisation moved by the National Retained Committee. The Executive Council are supporting.

### **Resolution 74 RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION**

***Conference believes that a strong and organised Retained membership is an invaluable asset to this Union. Retained Duty System firefighters make up around a third of the UK's operational firefighters. Conference believes that in order to maintain an effective defence of all firefighter jobs and conditions all the FBU's Brigades, Regions and Sections must be fully recruited, maintained and serviced.***

***Currently the Retained Section of the FBU is not at full strength and has not been for some time. Therefore, Conference demands that the following steps be taken to address this situation in order to enhance the protection of all its Members.***

***The Executive Council set up a task and finish group to carry out a review that identifies the reasons for falling membership figures, establishes the level of engagement and representation that the Union is achieving with Retained Duty System firefighters and identifies opportunities for increasing the membership from this section of the workforce.***

***Conference also requires that the task and finish group produce a report to the Executive Council by the end of 2019.***

## **NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE**

### **BRO PHIL WILLIAMS (NRC):**

President, Conference, we could be about to undertake a huge battle with our employers on the issue of pay. Central to our success in such circumstances is an organised, informed and motivated membership. We cannot afford to be complacent or neglect to recruit, develop and maintain our membership when the need arises. The FBU has been aware that membership of the RDS section has been in decline for a number of years now. It has been believed by some that this decline can be attributed to the large increase in numbers of wholetime firefighters undertaking retained duties within their local communities. Some have concerns that lack of engagement with FBU officials and activists may also be playing a part in this decline. Some have raised concerns that the switch from check-off to direct debit as a means of collecting fees has contributed to the decline in membership. The truth is that at present no clear answer is available to us.

What we need to know is the RDS membership around the time of the conclusion of the 2002/2003 pay dispute was around the 12,000 mark from an establishment level estimated to be over 18,000. Today it is around 6,000 and an unclear establishment level of around 15,000. Clearly this rate of decline cannot be sustained and must be investigated further in order to address it.

It is for those reasons that the National Retained Committee feel the need to move this resolution to enable us as a union to get a clear and full picture of the scale of this problem. Support this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. Tam McFarlane.

## BRO TAM McFARLANE (National Officer):

I will be brief on this one, President. We absolutely support this. To be honest with you, a lot of this work is already getting done. We have set up a task and finish group. The NRC are represented on it and we've already given reports to the EC. That work will continue.

Just a brief note, however, one of our experiences when looking into currently serving recruitment practices, especially in regard to RDS stations, is that there's no magic and mystery about this. You've got to talk to them. A lot of retained members that we've engaged with said they simply hadn't seen an FBU rep for a considerable period of time and hadn't been asked to join the union. There's some really good practice out there. In Dorset and Wiltshire the organiser covering the Dorset area used potential changes to the RDS terms & conditions to engage with stations that were in neither union. You've probably seen in Firefighter last month, they signed up an entire station. We don't need task and finish groups to do this. Identify the stations that aren't in the FBU, go out there and engage with them and sign them up to the union. Thanks, President.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Any other speakers? No. I now put Resolution 74 Recruitment Organisation to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Para.K5, para.K6, para.K7. Yes.

## BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):

President, Conference, just providing an update of the work of the Officers National Committee. The ONC currently meet four times per year prior to middle managers negotiating board and NJC meetings. It is at this point I wish to thank the previous ONC secretary, Simon Amos, for the tremendous work he has done around organising the committee and increasing the officer membership, particularly in London, which covers from watch commander up to (and probably as we've heard, this being a unique union) ACO and chief officer level.

As a committee we will commit to continuing this progress that Simon has made and hopefully recruit colleagues who are not in the FBU and are still members of a diddy union or the Fire Officers Association who nationally at the last count (when I looked at the certification officers website) had 1100 members.

However, to do this we need your support. We as a committee need to be more representative of FBU members. Currently we have no women on the committee, we have no LGBT members on the committee, and no B&EMM members and it's not acceptable. We need to do more. So I need your help, not only just at regional level but to get into those brigade levels to get reps to do the succession planning to bring more officer members (particularly from those under-represented groups) on to the Officers National Committee. I would appeal to you if you could assist us in that work.

Currently just now we have no representation in Regions 3, 8, 11 and 12. I would invite regional delegations that are here to meet with us over the next couple of days because we do want to attend those brigade level meetings, we do want to attend those regional meetings. Within the next 12 to 18 months we do want full representation from all regional committees on the ONC.

With regard to the priorities over the next year, we have to deal with the benefit in kind change to the car leasing, issues around contaminants, and arrangements (with the assistance of the General Secretary who has been a great help) around casual overtime particularly with regard to end of shift overtime, public holidays and recall to duty. In addition, we're doing work on professional standards, standards of promotion and hopefully we'll see an achievement within the next 12 to 18 months. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Phil. I'm now on para.K8, para.K9. I now move on to Section B Pensions, para.B1, para.B2, para.B3.

## **BRO GAVIN MARSHALL (Humberside):**

President, Conference, you will be well aware that when becoming a full-time official it's very hard and a common term that's often used is that it's a thankless task. In November 2018 my phone did not stop after the FBU announced the great victory in the courts on our pension challenge. For the first time in a long time all calls were calls of thanks from the membership. Morale went through the roof that day on our landmark victory.

During my 15 year career as a firefighter it's this organisation, the FBU, who have given me so many memorable occasions, and in November 2018 this was one of them. Humberside officials, Humberside committee and Humberside members would like to take this opportunity to thank all those past and present that sit behind me today. A massive thanks for all the hard work that has been put into this fight, the fight that only one trade union, the FBU, took forward. Humberside membership would also like to thank Thompsons solicitors at the back of the room for all their guidance and support during this fight. But at this moment in time – and I'm sure the President and the General Secretary would agree – Humberside membership would like to say a massive thanks to everybody sat here in front of me.

After the last dispute there was a massive empathy amongst the membership and the officials up and down the country. Officials worked endlessly to motivate and mobilise members to the picket line and make this a successful campaign. It was this dispute that triggered me, and probably many more in this room, to make that giant leap from being an active member to an active official. I will always look back at this campaign with fond memories. The message was very clear from head office and as a newly voted rep at this time, a visit from a national officer on a picket line, of all places in Grimsby, on a dark, cold Christmas Eve went a long way with the membership, and a clear message that we were in this together.

Conference, Humberside membership would like you to go back and please pass on our thanks to all the officials, past and present, who organised and mobilised members to the demonstrations, but more importantly to the picket lines. This gave our national officials the much-needed leverage to secure this landmark victory.

I thought I would be speaking on this before the Pay so as a summary of the last paragraph I was going to stand here and talk about solidarity towards this union. If the membership or this conference decides to go in another direction regarding strategies on pay, I wanted to stand here in solidarity to say I believe in our membership, I believe in our conference, I believe in this union and I will do whatever is asked of me to mobilise and organise Humberside membership to make sure we stand in solidarity and defeat this government for a second time. Thank you, Conference. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Gav. General Secretary. Sorry, Lloyd. You're not speaking then? General Secretary. He was just passing through; you're all right.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Gav, thanks for those words. I think just a few comments on the pensions position in relation to the imposition of the new scheme. As Gav has outlined, we fought an industrial battle. We were up against it because the truth is if you look at those attacks on public sector pension schemes, a number of other unions actually signed agreements to introduce those schemes. We have never reached any agreement, we never endorsed the settlement in terms of the Local Government Pension scheme for our control members, and we were somewhat isolated in that respect. Of course, we said we would never agree to a scheme which worsened the conditions of our members.

People will remember the long-running campaign of industrial action and strike action that we participated in, and then the discussions with lots of lawyers. A number of people on the table here, and along with Sean, attended meetings with counsel and with Queen's Counsel to try to seek arguments that we could put to a court case to try to win some improvement. It was quite demoralising because in meeting after meeting we would put arguments, many arguments that had come up from our members – this can't be fair, this can't be unfair, this can't be lawful – to be told actually they can do this lawfully. Nevertheless, that persistence paid off and we found a team of lawyers who identified a case on transitional protection and we've been through that long process ending up with that victory on appeal.

As you know, the government has sought leave to appeal on that and we don't know the outcome of that. I think we were expecting to get some knowledge of the decision on whether they were being granted leave to appeal before this stage but we haven't. We have no control over that. It's as simple as this: if they get leave to appeal then that legal battle goes on and we will fight them again at that next appeal stage, and if they don't get leave to appeal then we're in a position whereby they have to start discussing how they correct the age discrimination that they have in place in terms of that transitional protection.

Just a couple of points in terms of the wider implications that people may have seen. Interestingly, there were press comments following an announcement in Parliament by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury which commented on that legal result and said that this was going to cost billions a year for the government. What became very clear was that they were not simply talking about the Firefighters pension, because that doesn't cost that much a year, they were talking about the implication for every single public sector pension scheme. So if we are successful in that appeal it will not just have an impact on the Firefighters pension scheme but potentially on every other public sector scheme. In that case, we may well have thrown a hand grenade in the middle of the government's entire pension reform.

We attended a meeting recently at the TUC where, to be frank, I think a number of the unions present were somewhat disconcerted at the outcome of our legal appeal. We robustly defended ourselves and said that our job is to protect our members. By the way, we think this will potentially protect other people's members affected similarly and made no apologies for that.

Finally, Conference, picking up some of the comments that Gavin has made there, the challenge on transitional protection is only one aspect of us trying to win back a decent occupational pension scheme. The truth is this: this case demonstrates that this union, unlike every other so-called outfit in the fire service and, to be honest, compared with many other trade unions in the British Trade Union Movement, will never ever give up on any score to fight for decent occupational pensions for our members. So that fight goes on. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now call Resolution 30 Fit for Purpose Occupational Pension Schemes moved by Cheshire with an amendment from Merseyside. The EC are supporting and are supporting the amendment.

### **Resolution 30 FIT FOR PURPOSE OCCUPATIONAL PENSION**

***Conference congratulates the Executive Council, National Officers and the FBU legal team for the huge amount of work and determination which brought about the landmark ruling on the transitional protection court case.***

***Whilst this victory should not be diminished, we should remember thousands of Members are faced with the possibilities of remaining in the 2015 scheme or returning to the 2006 scheme or modified scheme.***

***These pension schemes, whilst acknowledging some exceptions in parts of the UK with devolved governments, are not fit for purpose or schemes fit for our occupation. The Government's own review agreed that in the best case, 23% of current firefighters won't be able to maintain the required level of fitness until 60, whilst in the worst case 92% will not be able to do so. To have any pension scheme for our Members that has a normal pension age above 55, or arbitrary and severe penalties for retiring earlier than 60 is simply unacceptable. We must not allow a two tier workforce to exist in relation to pension schemes and retirement age.***

**Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council now pursue every possible avenue to reduce the NPA to 55 in all of the firefighters pension schemes.**

**CHESHIRE**

## **AMENDMENT**

**Final paragraph line 2 after '55' insert 'without financial detriment' Final paragraph line 3 delete full stop and insert ', including consideration of industrial action.'**

**MERSEYSIDE**

## **BRO JOHN WEST (Cheshire):**

President, Conference, good afternoon, comrades. Firstly, we're delighted to see the Executive Council supporting this resolution, and as is said within the resolution, we want to congratulate all those involved in the enormous task that was the pensions challenge. We always knew what the government did to our pension was morally and ethically wrong. We can now say it was unlawful. The government knew full well that the impact of their changes to our occupational-specific pensions would leave many firefighters, our members, without full access to their hard fought for and paid for pensions. That is why we must not allow thousands of our members to remain on the conditions of either the 2006, the modified or the 2015 schemes. Our union is known for its mantra "never leave a member behind". We go in together and we come out together. Comrades, this is why it is so important to see this challenge and this dispute through and make sure every firefighter has a national pension age of 55 without any reductions in pension benefits, parity for all members. Please support. I move. (Applause)

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder? Secunder? *Formally*. Thank you. Merseyside to move the amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* That is now open for debate. No? The EC are supporting it. I now put Resolution 30 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Sorry, Conference, rewind. I now put the amendment from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 30 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now move on to para.B4, para.B5, para.B6. Yes. Kate Scott, would you like to come to the front, please.

## **SIS KATE SCOTT (Dorset & Wiltshire):**

Katherine Scott, Dorset & Wiltshire Chair. (*Laughter*). Section B Pensions para.B6. This para is about eligibility to join the Firefighter pensions. We are, after all, control staff considered firefighters and face challenges different but equal to firefighters on the ground. Just as an example, before we came up here, when I was on duty, I had a very abusive phone call. I answered the phone "Fire & Rescue" and they said "Your mother's a dirty whore!" I said: "It's nice to speak to you, Dad, but can you call me at some other time"! So we do have different challenges, but they are the same. (*Laughter*) (*Applause*)

Therefore, it should stand to reason we are firefighters, we should be eligible to join the firefighter pension scheme instead of the LGPS. So can I just ask the EC, can you give us an update on the progress of the resolution we brought in 2017 to allow control staff access to join the Fire Service related scheme rather than LGPS. Thank you. (*Applause*)

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Katherine. General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks, Katherine. This remains a policy of the union. We've been frank with control members and with the CSNC. We have faced a whole number of obstacles. This is a government decision; it's set by legislation. We made the case for access to Firefighters pension schemes all through the pension campaign, we continue to do that. It may

be that opportunities arise if we are successful in our legal challenge. That may open further opportunities. If we are successful in that challenge then our assessment is the government would, at that point, have to sit down and start negotiating properly with us the question of how protection applies. That will give us the opportunity to raise other things. I just need to be clear with conference, and I know that our control officials are aware of this, that there are very significant obstacles in the way of achieving that aim of the Fire Brigades Union.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Matt. We're now on para.B7, para.B8.

**BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):**

Conference, comrades, obviously we note the good news of the revaluation of the pension scheme discussions coming on to the floor, the benefits coming to our members. However, I've got a question and that's the progress on last year's resolution that was moved by Essex on pensions that instructed the Executive Council to reinvigorate our political campaign and political work with sympathetic MPs and other representatives. It went on to mention Westminster and bits and pieces. So far the only things we're aware of is the day that we spent in Westminster where we produced this, which said we should get decent pay and pensions, and we produced this which said we should be able to retire at 55 on a decent pension. That is not really reinvigorating the campaign. Is there any chance that Matt can give us an update on the reinvigorated campaign? Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Alan. Matt.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

I understand the points Alan has raised but I don't think anyone in the hall, Alan included, underestimates the scale of what we're up against. We've got a government which has forced through pension changes on some five million public sector workers. Let's be clear, the legal case (to remind conference) is about transitional protection; it is not about the introduction of the schemes themselves which is why the Cheshire resolution is important that regardless of the transitional protection case, we need to carry on with our campaign in order to win a decent occupational pension for all.

The challenge is about transitional protection, and the truth is that the government has got away with forcing through changes to millions of public sector workers' pensions, and the might of the Trade Union Movement has not been able to stop that. That's the simple fact of it. Subsequent to that, we are unique in being the only TUC union which has continued to challenge that in any way. As we've just discussed, that's led to a current legal victory but we don't know the outcome. If we're successful there, I think that opens up all sorts of avenues to pursue other improvements.

What we do know from that case is that actually the arguments that we put to ministers during those discussions they were unable to answer. So publicly, you did lobbying campaigns and you would get a standard letter back which was basically cut and pasted from the advice they got off Central Government, but we know that their private advice internally within government was that they were unable to answer the logical, professional arguments that the Fire Brigades Union presented as part of that campaign.

So we're confident in the argument that was just raised by Cheshire in relation to fitness levels and the need for an earlier pension age. We intend to pursue that. I think there are two things I would flag up. I know Alan's not suggesting there's any instant fix to this. There's two particular areas where we are currently, in one case actively, in another case considering how we do it. One is, we haven't really discussed this publicly so far, the case of Grenfell. We've never raised the question of Grenfell in relation to pensions, but I ask you to think about this. If those hundreds of firefighters who attended the Grenfell Tower fire had all been of the age of 59 or 60 or whatever, then imagine the impact of that on those large numbers of firefighters. I think there is a cast iron reason we have physical fitness standards in the fire service, it is because of what you might be asked to do in the Fire & Rescue Service, Grenfell being a prime example but we have, day in and day out, other examples. So we need to develop a case around that.

The second is work that we are currently undertaking in relation to our dialogue with the Labour Party in terms of the future Labour Party manifesto. We are going to cover some of that later in conference in terms of what we want from a Labour Government. Part of that needs to be demands to review the whole application of public sector pensions as they apply in the Fire & Rescue Service. So it's certainly not off the radar at all. We have got a Tory government who are unlikely to shift. The degree to which we put effort in at this stage to try to lobby the government that has just forced through those changes, I have to say I'm not hugely optimistic that they are going to shift their position on that. The most likely outcome that would deliver some change would be with a change of government. I think that's fairly self-evident. That's why part of our work needs to be about what we would want from the Labour Government around future pensions. Thank you.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Matt. Right, Conference, since you've all worked extremely hard today and us being so generous on the top table, we're going to stand you down two minutes early. What I will do is remind you that we have got the fringe tonight for our union, downstairs in the Imperial Suite starting at half past 5. Let's not over-indulge tonight because we've got an early start in the morning. Conference is adjourned.

*Adjourned*



## MORNING SESSION

### THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. Morning *Morning*

### BRO RICH WILLIAMS (Staffordshire):

President, would I be able to reference back to para.B1 reference pensions, please?

### THE PRESIDENT:

Yes.

### BRO RICH WILLIAMS (Staffordshire):

Thank you. Conference, President, I just wanted to raise with brigade secretaries and officials a circular that came out on 2 May from Sean Starbuck regarding split pensions. It's a circular that highlights the opportunity from the pension scheme bulletin for this year. It gives opportunity for members to be able to split their pensions. We've got a lot of members in Staffordshire that have been affected by this. A number have been assisted by Brother Rob Moss in Staffs, and Sean, to allow them to appeal through the scheme to get them a split pension. We're talking in tens of thousands of pounds that is their pension. We have had retired members who have had £10,000 extra in their pensions that they were entitled to that the scheme had not allowed them to have access to prior to retirement. Now, with the work that's been going on in Staffordshire, we've now gained them that money that they were entitled to. So I just wanted to raise that with people. If you can look back at that bulletin, it was out on 2 May. It's the pension scheme bulletin that Sean sent out. Raise it with your local pension boards. It will assist members in service that could be leaving, and members who have retired as well. Thank you, Conference. (*Applause*)

### THE PRESIDENT:

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

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

Thanks, President. Morning, Conference. *Morning*

Programmes of business, please, page 5: resolution 28 has been withdrawn; resolution 10 Lancashire wish to remit with the right to speak. Page 7: resolution 39 has been withdrawn; resolution 42 has been withdrawn with the right to speak. Can I just clarify with Cumbria if they still wish the right to speak? Thanks.

Changes of delegates: West Yorkshire: delete Martyn Bairstow; insert David Gillian. London: delete Jon Lambe; insert Gareth Beeton; delete Chris Cheeseman; insert Dave Young; delete Dan Lawrie; insert Roy Humphries. Leicestershire: delete Mark Drinkwater; insert Graham Vaux. West Midlands: delete Stephen Gregory; insert Philippa Smith. LGBT: delete Karen McDowell; insert Lindsay Blake. Scotland: delete Simon Leroux; insert Jamie McCallum.

Conference, just a reminder (I mentioned in my report yesterday morning) about the stalls. The stalls are in the Derby room which is through the reception area. I would urge conference to visit the stalls. These people go out of their way to come to our conference and support our conference. Please go and support the stalls, please try to buy some books and other things that they have. (That's a reminder to myself to go visit them!) (*Laughter*)

Also, as a reminder, the Standing Orders election is this morning. The nomination papers are being put out now. I would urge conference, leaders of brigade delegations, to get those ballot papers in the ballot box at the back of the room as soon as possible, please. A reminder to the sections, they don't get a nomination. Thank you, President.

### THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *Agreed*

Conference, I now ask you to turn to page 4 of your Programme of Business. We're on to Section I Accident & Injury Fund para.I1. I now move to Section J Legal Report para.J1, para.J2, para.J3, para.J4, para.J5, para.J6, para.J7,

para.J8. We now move on to Section A Pay and Conditions and I now call Resolution 7 Retaining Fee moved by the National Retained Committee. The Executive Council are supporting.

## **Resolution 7 RETAINING FEE**

***UK Fire and Rescue Services are experiencing a crisis in relation to the recruitment of Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighters. Poor public sector pay rises have served to exacerbate the problems with recruitment and retention.***

***Conference recognises the levels of commitment demanded from RDS firefighters by the Fire Service employers has increased substantially since 2003, including increases in training and pressure to give more hours of cover, along with increased administrative work.***

***Conference affirms that the current retaining fee falls far short of adequately compensating our RDS Members for the commitment they make and instructs our negotiators to make achieving a substantial increase in the current Grey Book retaining fee a priority in order to better reflect the levels of commitment required.***

## **NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE**

### **BRO PAUL FARMAN (NRC):**

President, Conference, some may be surprised to see us here with yet another resolution on pay relating to the retaining fee paid to our RDS members. Sadly, there has been no change in the need to address this urgently. As reported in previous years at conference, many of our RDS members have seen their take home pay reduced by figures that in excess of 50%. Despite last year's pay increase this situation has not got any better.

The reality for retained firefighters is that many factors have influenced the cuts to our pay: the reductions in fire calls, the community fire safety agendas and initiatives, the aggressive management to automatic fire alarm calls – all of these are understood and, to a lesser or greater degree, accepted. We understand that undertaking this work would drive down calls. Of course no-one wants to see friends, families or members of their communities suffer the trauma and losses from having to deal with the after-effects of a fire.

As the drive for ever deeper cuts has reached further into our Fire & Rescue Services we have seen examples of this work being removed from retained fire stations, along with the scaling back of training days, the removal of special appliances and second pumps. There is nothing on this list that is new or of any surprise to any of us here at conference today.

For many RDS members these cuts have resulted in huge reductions to take home pay. Unsurprisingly, this has had a significant impact on Fire & Rescue Services' ability to recruit and retain their RDS firefighters. The massive decline in our own RDS membership figures is a stark indicator to this too and something that we cannot afford to ignore. As members leave, stations face increasing pressures and difficulties maintaining cover. This, no doubt, results in pumps being off the run, which in turn results in even further reductions in earnings for those affected.

I could go on, but I think you're getting the picture regarding the severity of the situation. This resolution is of huge importance to our retained members. The current retaining fee for a retained firefighter giving 120 hours full cover equates to a little under 48p per hour. The increase from that reported at conference last year is less than 1p per hour. To make matters worse, most Fire & Rescue Services are interpreting the 120 hours for a full retaining fee as a minimum amount of cover required. Consequently, it would appear that the majority of our RDS members are now being paid at a reduced rate, and this rate is barely level with the retaining fee paid prior to 2002. It is no surprise that the current retaining fee does little to retain the services of our RDS members.

Conference, RDS members must see a significant increase in the rate of our retaining fee. This must be given the utmost priority by our negotiators. Dealing with this cannot be put back any further. At the current rate of decline we will inevitably reach a tipping point with severe negative implications for RDS recruitment and FBU membership. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder?

## BRO GUY TIFFIN (Northumberland):

President, Conference, comrades, our service is much like any other service with a large retained staffing level. We find every single day a large number of retained stations are either closed, off the run, or having to have wholtime pumps split up to go and cover their areas or standby, leaving frightening gaps in fire cover in Northumberland and an ever-increasing over-reliance on pumps from Scotland, Durham and Tyne & Wear.

As we know, there are many reasons for the retained struggling to maintain their staffing levels at each station with employment difficulties in their villages and small towns etc., but what we find when we speak to our retained members is the biggest issue is pay. Quite frankly, having to give up 90 to 120 hours for (as our comrade from the National Retained Committee said) 48p an hour is a disgrace. Not only are they having to work for 48p an hour, they're having to stay within five minutes of a fire station, giving little work/life balance, having to leave their families – their wives, parents, partners to look after children. It's a massive burden on our retained service.

In an attempt to try to retain and recruit members in Northumberland we've negotiated with our management that our retained members get a £10 disturbance fee now for each and every call. It is in some way just trying to encourage retained recruitment. It has gone down well with members and we're finding that we've got an ever-increasing retained membership in Northumberland. But what I would say is: if we take this on board and really work at it and get a real, substantial increase in the retaining fee for our members, what better way to increase membership with the retained service than seeing the FBU negotiate a proper, real increase in the retaining fee? That would make the retained a more viable service going forward. If we don't, let's be honest, we won't have a retained service in ten years' time because it's just not worth doing.

Conference, please support. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. AGS.

## ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes. Conference, with this resolution the Executive Council do support. We are pleased that the NRC, within the contribution, voiced the issues which are well known to the NRC and to conference as well. It is that the issue isn't just one of the payment and not just one of the payment of the retaining fee. There is a whole range of other issues on the broader issue of recruitment and retention. It's a piece of work that I think we've done in dribs and drabs as a union. It's a consolidated piece of work and we do need to do it and we do need to do it quickly. That doesn't mean to say that us trying to address the retaining fee level needs to await some broader piece of work; it can be done in phases; it can be approached in phases. I just wanted to raise that point: that we are conscious that it isn't just the level of the retained fee which is a problem. A part of that work needs to be picking up those initiatives that have been adopted locally, perhaps by Fire & Rescue Services, but inevitably and invariably as a result of local officials pushing for and achieving improvements such as that described by Northumberland in terms of the £10 disturbance fee. We can do a trawl of that as part of that work, to come up with the best claim that we can. With that, President, the Executive Council do support. They are not caveats; they are additions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I now put Resolution 7 Retaining Fee to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 14 Grey Book Term – Family Friendly, moved by Cumbria. The Executive Council give qualified support.

### **Resolution 14 GREY BOOK TERM – FAMILY FRIENDLY**

***Due to the constant attacks on terms and conditions and duty systems the term 'family friendly' needs to be more transparent.***

**The term family friendly is a key factor in negotiating shift patterns as per Section 4, Part A, Paragraph 3 (4):**

***'It should have regard to the special circumstances of individual employees and be family friendly.'***

***This term is vague and is interpreted by the employer to suit the Fire Service needs or even ignored by services and occasionally by independent chairs at Technical and Resolution Advisory Panels.***

***Therefore, Conference demands that the Executive Council negotiates with the NJC to clarify and provide a guidance document on what the term family friendly actually means and an appendix containing that guidance be included within the Grey Book.***

**CUMBRIA**

**BRO ED BURROWS (Cumbria):**

President, Conference, Cumbria last year attended a Technical Advisory Panel on duty systems that our management are proposing for our county. We successfully fought off 12 hour shift patterns, but unfortunately the independent chair decided to take assurances from management team that conditions could be met without any evidence being offered up for an eight hour duty system. The key part of this hearing is to make sure the shift pattern meets the full criteria set out in the Grey Book Section 4 Part A.

*"(i) Basic working hours should average 42 per week;*

*(ii) There should be at least two periods of 24 hours free from duty each week;*

*(iii) It should comply with relevant United Kingdom/European law including the Working Time Regulations and Health & Safety at Work legislation." And just as important,*

*(iv) It should have regard to the special circumstances of individual employees and be family friendly."*

This is talking about the shift system, not just individuals, the whole shift pattern.

Subsection (iv) highlights that family friendly, but there is no guidance for anyone of what this is or could be, even though we proved it was not family friendly for child/family care. It was ignored. Most family friendly descriptions or examples rely on specific concerns in a working life balance. None of these are related to the whole shift pattern. The argument that individuals can have special regard to their particular circumstances falls, as this leads mainly to individuals having to work part-time hours, leading on to an unfair forced reduction in pay.

We call for the Executive Council to negotiate with the NJC to clarify and provide a guidance document on what the term "family friendly" actually means, and provide an appendix containing that guidance to be included within the Grey Book. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. No? AGS.

**THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, with this resolution it's not for the first time that there has been a problem, not just with regard to the issues around family friendly, but also an equally important issue and that is the fact that Fire & Rescue Services either don't comply with the requirement to do an equality impact assessment or where they do, they are poor beyond belief. In fact, they contradict what we would say is an equality impact assessment. Equality impact assessments *per se* are required in England, they are still required in Wales, but the process UK-wide, actually if you look at that wording (as I'm sure you know) within your equality legislation is very clear. It's an equality impact assessment by any other name. The processes, the requirements that the employer has to meet is exactly the same. But they fail to do it time after time, not just in the case of the Cumbria shift system change which we attended last year.

The real issue and the qualification is certainly not any sense of not agreeing with the principles behind the resolution. It is simply this: when in 2003/2004 the Grey Book was changed to bring in the process of the Technical Advisory Panel, it was a specific and clearly intended form of words which the employers insisted upon, which this union agreed through its processes. That was that it was a distinct difference between, for example, a requirement to comply, a requirement to observe legislation, a requirement to take certain measures into account when devising a shift system. It simply says “pay due regard”. It’s a flaw within the scheme, we know that; we have seen it on many occasions.

The qualification is this: it is not going to be easy, probably it is not achievable, to get the employers to want to change something which is in their interests. That’s a fact. That’s the qualification. That does not mean to say that we will approach it in that way when we meet the employers, but we need to be honest with conference.

In the same vein, the idea that we will be able to get the employers to write a guide which we would want to put our name to as to the meaning of that last section of paragraph (iv) is extremely unlikely. What we would not want to do is to put out an NJC guidance which is so watery that we would not want our name put on the end of it because it will be used against us to say that there isn’t a real need to take account of both individual circumstances and general family friendly issues. So that’s the qualification. It’s not that we won’t try. We’re just being clear with conference it will not be an easy task to achieve. I need to be frank on that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

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

I now call Resolution 17 Grey Book Terms and Conditions moved by Derbyshire with an amendment from Merseyside. The Executive Council are opposing.

### **Resolution 17 GREY BOOK TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

***Conference recognises that the current Grey Book Terms and Conditions for the Retained Duty System are in need of an update, to take into account changes in legislation and terminology encountered in the modern age.***

***Conference instructs the Executive Council to set up a task and finish group to carry out a review of the Grey Book Terms and Conditions to identify where updates and additions are needed in accordance with changes agreed in legislation, terminology or at the NJC.***

***Conference requires that the task and finish group produce a report to the Executive Council by the end of 2019. If the task and finish group report identifies that changes to the Grey Book are required, they shall be tabled at the NJC as soon as practically possible and an updated version will be published thereafter.***

**DERBYSHIRE**

### **AMENDMENT**

***Paragraph 1 line 2 delete ‘an update’ insert ‘revision’ Paragraph 1 line 2 after ‘changes in legislation and terminology’ insert full stop. Delete ‘encountered in the modern age.’***

**MERSEYSIDE**

## **BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):**

President, Conference, we are accepting the amendment from our comrades in Merseyside. Thank you. I think that just tidies it up a bit. Thank you. Conference, our resolution is mainly about the longevity of what this union has fought hard to win, and also the education of our members and officials. It’s been nine years now since the Part-Time Workers’ Settlement. In addition, it’s been ten years since the Grey Book has been updated with current legislation, practice and terminology. We’re asking the Executive Council to carry out the work and the research required to revise and update the Grey Book.

We argued in the Executive Council to come to a decision about if and what revisions are required so I don't think this is about instructing definitely what has to take place post that work being done. It's about looking at what may be required and making a decision.

The resolution, in my view, is almost non-binding in the way that it's written. It's important that all officials, both now and in the future, have up to date information and the tools to carry out the work that we all do. Many officials that were around at the time when the Part-Time Workers' Settlement and the updates to the Grey Book in 2009/2010 have moved on to pastures new, retired or stepped down from various posts. So it's time to refresh everybody's knowledge and understanding of the foundation of our terms and conditions, the Grey Book. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Chris. Does that have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* Merseyside to move the amendment. *Formally* Does that have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Anybody? No? AGS.

## **THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, I certainly have had a prior discussion with Derbyshire on that and I'm very grateful for that discussion. Clearly, the intent of the resolution is to ensure that our part-time members, particularly our retained members, do not lose out on terms and conditions. We fully support that. However, it's the wording of the resolution which is the basis on which we're looking for withdrawal or we oppose. That's simply that it's calling for a task and finish group to look at issues that may be a problem within the Grey Book. It's that issue which is the problem.

We don't want to go looking for problems because we don't believe there are problems. When we won the Part-Time Workers' Settlement we went through the Grey Book with a fine toothcomb, with the lawyers – theirs and ours – through quite an elongated process with the then EC member for retained there. We really did go through a lot of work on that. We're quite confident that the Grey Book was compliant following that, and that there have been no other changes to legislation which means that more changes are required.

So what we don't want to do is to set up a task and finish group to see if there are problems where no problems have been identified and we are very confident there aren't any to be identified. I think towards the end there Chris was very clear. I think the real problem is that there has not been a consolidated Grey Book published for some time. Therefore, you have to go between a Grey Book and a circular and try to work out exactly what is intended by those amendments in the circular.

So I think there are two jobs. One is for us to get on with the job, if we can't publish a new consolidated Grey Book with the employers, and to publish our own so that it is readable. Secondly, to do a guide, to issue a circular – maybe a booklet, maybe a bulletin – to explain those changes for newer reps that have come into post in the last ten years. I think they're the practical steps that the resolution really does require. I'm asking Derbyshire if they will withdraw because we don't want to oppose. But for the reasons that I've said, we would have to because we would not want to commit resources and time to a task and finish group when the objectives can be achieved by those immediate and more practical measures. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Derbyshire right of reply.

## **BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):**

President, Conference, yes, I think Andy, Assistant General Secretary, has grasped the concept of what we're trying to achieve here. I welcome the practical steps that you're looking to take in terms of publishing guidelines and even the suggestion of our own version, if you like, of the terms and conditions. That will give our officials the education and the information that I think we all need. I do accept the potential problems with looking for problems and setting up task and finish groups. So on that basis I'm happy to withdraw the resolution based on the assurances that the AGS has given around those two practical aspects that will be carried out by conference next year, I'm sure. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks for that, Chris. I now call Emergency Resolution 8 Blurring the Thin Blue Line moved by London. The EC are seeking remit or they will oppose.

### **Emergency Resolution 8 – BLURRING THE THIN BLUE LINE**

***On 9th April 2019 the Telegraph reported that in Devon and Somerset, firefighters are being trained as Special Constables. This has brought the continued and worrying trend of blurring the line between the UK Fire and Rescue Service (UKFRS) and Police into the national consciousness.***

***The FBU recognises the extremely important role the Police play in British society. The FBU is also painfully aware that the Police have suffered the same cuts, falling real term pay, increased stress and workloads as FBU Members. Conference sends its solidarity to the Police in fighting needless and damaging austerity.***

***Conference and the wider FBU membership are extremely proud of our privileged place in society and recognise that the bedrock of the public's love and trust is our impartiality. It is this trust that often allows UKFRSs to protect the most vulnerable people in society and carry out our humanitarian role effectively, reaching communities that may (rightly or wrongly) mistrust other authorities.***

***The continued amalgamation of the two services may also increase dangers faced by Members as attacks on firefighters increase as our impartiality is lost in the minds of the public.***

***At times we may carry out our core work alongside the Police in protection of life and property but Fire Service personnel have no role in the preservation of the peace or prevention or detection of criminal offences (save those directly linked to fire and rescue as fire investigation, expert witness, arson prevention etc).***

***Therefore, to maintain our invaluable impartiality, Conference instructs the Executive Council to;***

- Issue clear guidance to Regions, Reps and Members of what is required of them within current National Joint Council (NJC) rolemaps. Communicate to Members it is outside our role and, in Conference's opinion, detrimental to the Service to undertake any work, paid or voluntary that crosses the line into policing, that isn't directly and unequivocally linked to fire and rescue duties within current NJC rolemaps, whilst on duty as Fire Service personnel***
- Issue advice to Members that the FBU may withdraw trade union support for any Member who encounters issues or problems requiring FBU assistance whilst performing these roles***
- Issue advice to Regions on how to resist sharing of facilities with Police Forces or those that are construed with policing (British Transport Police, Special Constables, immigration agencies etc.)***
- Immediately raise Conference's concerns with all UKFRSs, all relevant political representatives and all political partners to clearly set out the damage the FBU feels will be done to our ability to effectively serve all the community should the continued conflation of our two services be pursued by them.***

**LONDON**

## **BRO JON WHARNSBY (London):**

Conference, President, we thought we'd bring something uncontroversial to conference. It seems we're not able to do that. I've served with pride in Hackney, London for 18 years. It's one of the most vibrant and sometimes challenging boroughs in the country; it's also one of the most diverse boroughs in the country. My first introduction to the difference between ourselves and the police force was in my first year of service when I was stood on a barrier because there was a person threatening to jump. At one end of the barrier there was a young police officer who was stopping people from going through. I noticed the marked difference between the pair of us where when that officer stopped a member of the public their reaction was of anger and "why are you doing this", and when I stopped them the reaction I got was: "OK, fair enough; what's going on; is everything all right?" That's what drew my attention to the difference between us and the police service in the eyes and minds of the public.

I've been welcomed and respected almost universally because of the uniform I wear, I've benefited from the reputation of those who have gone before me. Truly we stand on the shoulders of giants. They have earned and won the respect of the public.

Over time I grew up and I became more aware of the struggles of my brothers and sisters that don't share my cultural background, and I realised how privileged I was as a white man to walk into the homes of people that do not share my background. I was kind of moved by that, especially being a man in uniform. Some of these people have come from countries where they are fleeing men in uniform. But it's not just immigrants or refugees. There are groups of people in our broken and austerity-damaged society that are marginalised. They trust us and they allow us into their homes to do our jobs. The bedrock of that is trust, and the foundation of that trust is our impartiality and our solely humanitarian role.

The humanitarian spirit of the fire service has been typified recently by the most courageous actions of many of our comrades, but most notably Brendan Woodhouse and Miguel Roldan to whom, please, I would like us to send some solidarity. Conference, would you please take a moment to acknowledge the courage, fortitude and bravery of Brendan and Miguel who stand against unjust laws for their fellow humans. *(Applause)*

Thank you. Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities because it is the quality that guarantees all others. It is no mistake that in polling firefighters are always top and police, unfortunately, don't have it. Many of us are painfully aware that police do not have the same trust. Although individual police officers are decent and hardworking, the nature of their role is inherently controversial. Add to that scandals such as Stephen Lawrence, Hillsborough, Orgreave, spying on union officials and we kind of understand that this culminates in the mistrust by the public.

The trust we have, Conference, is a delicate and precious thing, trust that takes a lifetime to build, moments to destroy and forever to repair. We have been bequeathed a beautiful and delicate thing by our forebears. We must keep it safe and protect it. Conference, in solidarity with Devon & Somerset who have approached us to remit this, we will remit this motion. However, I did want to get up and speak about the dangers of us crossing the line and doing police work. It seems that there is no workstream that we cannot get a grip of at the minute.

We remit it to the EC on the understanding that they realise our concerns about doing police work and crossing that line. We are the guardians of this trust so can we please try to protect it. Conference, we remit. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks, Jon, and thanks London for remitting and thanks for your contribution. I didn't disagree with anything that Jon said in his contribution to conference there. He recalled an experience as a firefighter dealing with an incident with the police. I recall one of my early experiences with the police was being smacked in the gob by one at the picket line at Wapping!

Jon raised an important point about neutrality. I will come on to the particular concerns we had with the resolution. The issues that are being raised are absolutely vital for us to discuss. We have raised these with ministers, we've raised these with the employers, and those of you who have been around for a while remember we had many of these debates in the 1980s and 1990s. The Fire Service had many of these debates in the 1980s and 1990s. Unfortunately, the current generation of politicians and the current generation of chief fire officers seem to have completely forgotten many of the lessons that the Fire & Rescue Service learned in the UK over many decades.

We learned lessons from our experiences in Northern Ireland. Comrades from Region 2 could give a great deal of experience to conference in terms of that: the need for the fire service and for our members and the job that we do on the ground to be clearly seen as neutral. We learned from the inner city disturbances of the early 1980s where firefighters ended up in very dangerous positions, and this conference had to discuss how we dealt with that, how we addressed the question of our ability to engage with communities and how we dealt operationally with those

sorts of situations. We discussed issues around prison riots, the Strangways riot where unfortunately fire hoses were seen responding to a prison riot on one occasion. This conference then discussed these things, addressed policies, took those into the fire service and argued strongly for that neutral role. It is essential that we address some of the points in the resolution and reinvigorate that debate and that discussion.

The truth is, partly under pressure from the Westminster government in their drive for collaboration, their drive for PCC takeovers, their drive for joint controls, joint headquarters and so on, we are under pressure and we are under financial pressure. We now have buildings which are called Joint Fire and Police Stations. If we're trying to look neutral, I have to say, how does it look neutral when the police car and the fire engine turn out of the same building? How does that not undermine our ability to engage with certain age groups or certain communities?

I think one of the problems we had was the specific mention of a particular brigade where a problem has occurred. The truth is these problems are not limited to one brigade; these problems are happening all over the place. We have been contacted as a union at head office as a result of firefighters assisting the police to address people protesting in support of Palestinian rights on the top of a factory, and Palestinian campaigners contacted this union to complain about what our members were doing in that situation. We have been contacted with complaints about firefighters engaging in attempts by the police to tackle fracking protesters. I have to say London, we've also been contacted because of London firefighters standing by when bailiffs were seeking to evict people from their homes as part of a council regeneration project. So there's nobody exempt from this problem.

We need to have that debate and discussion, firstly with our members to convince them why we need to be very clear on our neutral role; we're not the police; that's a separate role and that's their job to do that; we have a separate role and we protect and defend that neutrality. We need to raise that with our members, and then we need to be addressing that with our services. We need to be saying: "Actually, you know what chief, you shouldn't be sending our appliances to that incident and if you're going to carry on doing it, frankly we're going to tell our people not to attend them". That's the sort of issue that we need to start taking up with our members: we will not be attending to assist the police dealing with protesters. That would send a very sharp message.

So we have no problem with the resolution in general. I think the particular problem we had was in relation to the second bullet point about the possibility that "we may withdraw support". We would always consider those issues. Support for members is at the discretion of the union. But in this particular case that is referred to, for example, these people are carrying out those activities under separate contracts. I suppose it raises the question what do we do if we have members who, as part of their core function, are acting in ways which compromise that impartiality in our view? So we will take it away. It is an important issue that London have raised. We will take it away and we will address the issue and issue guidance as requested in the resolution.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I'm now going to take Resolutions 18 and 21 in the same debate. Both can carry. So first I call Resolution 18 Collective Agreements with Alternative Trade Unions moved by Leicestershire with an amendment from Merseyside. The Executive Council are supporting.

### **Resolution 18 COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ALTERNATIVE TRADE UNIONS**

***Conference notes the many introductions of duty systems that fall outside of the nationally agreed Grey Book. It is with deep concern that some Fire and Rescue Authorities are seeking collective agreements with alternative Trade Unions at a local level to continue or introduce these duty systems, which on most occasions these Trade Unions do not represent any of that specific workforce. This is done against the will of the FBU and is in some cases underhand, which is likely to be legally challengeable.***

***Therefore, Conference instructs all Brigade Officials where their respective services are seeking these alternative Trade Union collective agreements to write to their respective governances asking them to desist in doing so. We also instruct the Executive Council to do everything within its power and remit to prevent these Trade Unions pursuing these collective agreements.***

**LEICESTERSHIRE**

## AMENDMENT

***Resolution title, delete 'Alternative' insert 'Other' after 'Trade Unions' insert 'and Associations'***

***Paragraph 1 line 3 delete 'alternative' insert 'other'***

***Paragraph 1 line 4 after 'Unions' insert 'or associations'***

***Paragraph 1 line 4/5 after 'these' insert 'other' after 'Trade Unions' insert 'or associations' delete 'any' insert 'employees'***

***Paragraph 1 line 5 delete rest of paragraph after 'workforce.'***

***Paragraph 2 line 2 delete 'these alternative Trade Union' after 'collective agreements' insert 'with other Trade Unions or associations'***

***Paragraph 2 line 3 after 'governances' insert 'informing them that the FBU, and only the FBU have collective bargaining rights for Grey Book employees.' Delete rest of paragraph***

**MERSEYSIDE**

## **BRO PETE TRAYNOR** (Leicestershire):

Conference, President, we support the amendments. Conference, we applaud the important legal victory in South Yorkshire against the close proximity crewing duty system. We have the same problem with our day crewing plus system in Leicestershire. The duty system must change, it must change, but some of our members wish to continue with DCP. This is a difficult situation to balance.

Leicestershire has wrongly heavily invested in DCP with over a third of our fire stations currently operating this duty system. Most of these stations have been completely rebuilt in the last five years and they now offer hotel-style accommodation within a station. We have an IRMP this year, and there's no easy answers.

This situation becomes further complicated and confused for our members where management suggest that a collective agreement could be made with another trade union, one that does not currently represent any of our staff. Effectively, our managers are saying: find someone who will represent you and we can do a deal. This is wrong and it cannot be allowed to continue; it must not continue. All this has also not gone unnoticed by other unions such as the Frightened Officers Association (to quote Simon Amos).

In October 2018 they produced a circular that, amongst other things, states: *"It is generally taken that a collective agreement has to be with the FBU but that is not the case and an agreement with another union could allow such duty system variations to continue"*. A clear grab for our members. Conference, this also cannot be allowed to continue.

This resolution calls upon brigade officials to order management immediately to desist if they are attempting to seek collective agreements in this manner. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Pete. Does that have a seconder? Are you moving the amendment at the same time, Mark?

## **BRO MARK ROWE** (Merseyside):

President, Conference, we are seconding the resolution and moving our amendment at the same time. It appears we've amended the resolution a lot. There is only really one amendment and that was to add "associations" and the rest of the amendments are consequential as a result of that initial amendment.

The amendment was to focus on who we are actually talking about here. There are associations who make no attempt whatsoever to subscribe to the principal tenets of trade unionism. They are not trade unions. Merseyside members believe associations such as FOA are simply management groups who act as a front for senior managers

to undermine the Fire Brigades Union and our ability, locally and nationally, to negotiate and represent our members. Some brigade management teams have a rubber stamp with the FOA rep's signature that they use on agreements and collectives designed to undermine us.

The FBU is the only professional voice of UK firefighters and managers. I don't actually know who FOA represent other than themselves as managers the vast majority of the time. I'll be frank, comrades, Merseyside members want to see the back of FOA and any other organisation or association which deliberately sets out to undermine us. The FBU and only the FBU has collective bargaining rights for Grey Book employees. Management need to be informed that we do not recognise any other union or association as representing firefighters collectively. We do not sign joint agreements, we do not attend meetings where other unions purporting to represent collectively are attending.

I recently saw an old FOA bulletin from 2014 on a noticeboard that commented on our pension's dispute at the time, saying that it was going nowhere and it criticised the EC, saying that they were asking FBU members to continue taking industrial action without the possibility of ever being able to win against the government. I think that alone shows how clueless they are! They have a no strike policy for a reason. That is to let us fight their fights for them.

Conference, don't recognise them, don't engage with them. Take our members back off them if our members have gone to them. Move towards 100% FBU membership in your brigades. That's how we deal with people who undermine us deliberately. I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. Does the amendment have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* Thanks.

I now call Resolution 21 Close Proximity Crewing moved by Hereford & Worcester. The Executive Council oppose.

### **Resolution 21 CLOSE PROXIMITY CREWING**

***Conference applauds the result of the High Court ruling on Close Proximity Crewing and the efforts of the South Yorkshire Brigade Officials in representing their Members against a hostile Brigade management.***

***Conference recognises the impact this ruling has had on other Brigades where similar duty systems are in place. FBU Members in Hereford and Worcester have volunteered to work a system called Day Crewing Plus (DCP) since 2014. This was introduced as a result of FBU Members throughout the Service actively protesting the proposed removal of two fire appliances from the two cities.***

***DCP in its current form is liked by all who work it in Hereford and Worcester due to the flexibility it provides and the additional remuneration. For many this is a solution to years of austerity imposed upon us and a way of retiring at an age they intended to prior to their pensions being torn up in 2015.***

***However, due to the High Court ruling, the lawfulness of duty systems such as DCP have been brought into question. Therefore, in order that our Members are best protected and to save the irreversible loss of frontline appliances, Conference instructs the Executive Council to look into ways of bringing these duty systems within the parameters of the law and to agree an alternative duty system as a matter of priority and without delay.***

## **HEREFORD AND WORCESTER**

### **BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY (Hereford & Worcester):**

Can I start with the old adage "don't shoot the messenger"! Conference, President, comrades, I would like first to make clear what this resolution is asking for. It is simply asking for an agreed basis from which brigade officials can negotiate. The base level would take account of the legal ruling given in the High Court, and the particular regulations within the Working Time Regulations.

This resolution is not asking for close proximity crewing or any derivative of it in any form, or to form part of the Grey Book. It will be used in specific circumstances on a voluntary basis, clearly outlined by the shift pattern working group. This would allow brigade officials to negotiate different shift patterns to meet local needs, enable officials to represent all of our members, and be proactive in the maintenance of members' terms and conditions.

It would also give brigade officials a potential way to secure fire cover in areas where brigades are reducing it. Hereford & Worcester, for example, are looking to replace the existing and lawful system with a day duty system and have that appliance crewed by an understaffed and already overstretched retained unit in the evening and throughout the night.

On 7 May Hereford & Worcester entered into a six week public consultation which asked exactly for that. If the result of this process is a day duty system, the communities of Hereford & Worcester will see a reduction of fire cover during the night and firefighter safety will be jeopardised.

Conference, when I speak to new starters or potential new members, I am keen to highlight that the FBU consistently led in the evolution of the fire service. There were many examples of this given in the centenary celebrations last year, and we should continue to do so. We need to lead and not be led. In the last three years the settlement funding assessment for Hereford & Worcester reduced by 21%. Nationally almost 20% of frontline jobs have been cut since 2010. The devastating impact of austerity has meant brigades have had to look at alternative duty systems which give rise to crewing systems such as close proximity crewing. It is no coincidence that similar duty systems have been adopted across the UK.

The people that work these systems are not self-centred individuals or doing it just to boost their pensions. The majority of them are strong and proud FBU members, working a system that maintains a suitable level of fire cover for the communities we serve. In doing so, they are conscious they are working outside the Grey Book terms and conditions, and management have used this as part of their divide and conquer tactics.

Conference, we ask that you support Resolution 21 to provide a viable alternative to prevent the reduction of fire cover, to ensure that all members are working duty systems that have the backing of their union, and to prevent management trying to drive a wedge between FBU members. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Trevor. Does that have a seconder? Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Who said that! Thanks. That's open for debate. Denise, yes. Denise, just wait on. Resolution 18, the Executive Council are supporting; Resolution 21 the Executive Council are opposing. AGS do you want to detail the opposition? Yes, AGS.

## **ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

In respect of Resolution 18 I want to thank Leicestershire for bringing the resolution. We have put a circular out on the issue but it is worthy and necessary for the discussion to take place at conference and for it to be reported to conference. The fact that Fire & Rescue Services, having been exposed yet again for introducing an unlawful duty system, turn to other unlawful measures shall we say, in terms of, on the one hand, trying to get a workforce agreement with the employees direct (despite the fact there is clearly an existing collective bargaining arrangement with the Fire Brigades Union) and where that doesn't work, or as an alternative to that (and in some cases at the same time) trying to find another collective arrangement with another so-called representative body. We put advice out on that and I'm glad that it's being taken up by brigade officials. As Leicestershire said, we are urging brigade officials to pursue the protection of our collective bargaining arrangements with Fire & Rescue Services.

In some ways I think it should have been qualified support because it then goes on to urge the Executive Council to find and make agreements with those other representative bodies or associations, as Mark correctly points out in the amendment. That has little chance of success; that does not mean to say that we won't do it. It does have little chance of success, as I'm sure you know.

I think we do need to go further on the Executive Council and that is to say that in requiring brigade officials to approach Fire & Rescue Services again and to keep pursuing the protection of our collective bargaining

arrangements where Fire & Rescue Services are seeking to undermine them, the Executive Council would want to, and will and is giving an assurance that will give you the tools and further tools to do that job. Indeed, we will continue to oppose CPC in its entirety, whatever it may be called in different Fire & Rescue Services.

In terms of Resolution 21, be gentle! I think it is unfortunate that the resolution has now been seconded by a Met. I think that's going to be a problem when it comes to the Report of Proceedings, but there you are. We have to be clear. Clearly the brigade committee has formed a view and formed an opinion, and they've got every right to do that. Their delegates to this conference have every requirement and right to reflect the view and bring the view of that brigade committee.

But we need to be clear. Essentially, what the resolution is saying in essence is that we should change our policy of opposition to day crewing plus. It doesn't say that explicitly but that's the implication because of course what the resolution is saying is that the obstacle, the legal obstacle, to making these duty systems lawful in the main is the fact that we are withholding our agreement. Us withholding our agreement in those Fire & Rescue Services is a consequence of that conference policy. So in essence it is asking us to change that policy. That in itself doesn't make it wrong to bring. It certainly would make it wrong to agree.

Let's be clear. When we agreed our conference policies, time and again, and fought for them, it was before we had the additional problems that we have been exposed to. The greatest example of that I think is the Grenfell fire. I am not convinced that those firefighters, if they were on the back end of an 84 cycle shift, would have come out, all of them. No-one will convince me of that.

Grenfell fires do not come around very often, but serious fires do, long protracted incidents do. You cannot and will not (and this conference has been very firm on this) put our people in a position of danger, and it is a position of danger.

There is the issue of jobs undoubtedly. Half the workforce at those stations are being dispensed with, people being moved around. Those are all absolutely correct and vital reasons why we created the policy and should maintain it. But we also have to bear in mind that the crucial issue is our people's health and safety.

Who knows where the negotiations are going to go? A central part of the broadening of the role negotiations is attendance at MTFA incidents. In the US they were there for days and days and days. Would those people be there for days and days and days, having just done an 84 cycle of firefighting?

I've got to applaud the brigade officials in Hereford & Worcester for representing their brigade committee, but I do hope that Hereford & Worcester will withdraw, and having heard the debate, I would hope that the seconder would withdraw so we don't need to put it to a vote. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Point of order, come forward.

## **BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):**

President, Conference, I just want to address the AGS's remarks regarding a metropolitan brigade seconding it. Firstly, I just put it on record that the West Midlands completely and utterly oppose that resolution. The reason why I seconded it was what I believe was democracy. The Hereford & Worcester officials, our comrades, have been put in a very difficult position where their membership have mandated them to bring that. I'm sure they share the same views of this resolution as I do. I was just allowing it to go to the floor so that it could be democratic. From the AGS's vast experience, I'll take it on board and I will withdraw the seconding of that resolution. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. Conference, I know sometimes I shout for a seconder and I have to shout again and we get a formally, but be clear: if you're seconding something you can't really then vote against it in the rules of debate. So think about what you're saying. Denise.

**SIS DENISE CHRISTIE** (Scotland):

I'm speaking in support of Resolution 18. I suppose it's a good news story, comrades, because we are currently negotiating for RDS terms and conditions. The Scottish Fire & Rescue Service informed us that we're also negotiating with the RFU – I mean the FRSA. So we went into the first negotiating meeting and, as our comrade said earlier on, we made it very clear that the FBU are the only negotiating union within our Grey Book and our terms and conditions. We sat in that meeting and we told the employers' side that: if you want to negotiate you're only negotiating with the FBU, not another union. So they turned round and they tried to call our bluff and said: That's fine, FBU, on you go, away you go, we'll negotiate with the FRSA. I said: Fine. We walked out of the meeting and within a week we got a letter from the director of HR saying "Can they change their minds a wee bit here; can you come back to the negotiating table and they're not negotiating with the FRSA."

So when the AGS says it's going to be a difficult task, comrades, it can be sometimes, but stick to your guns and believe in what you're doing and fighting for your members. Support the motion. Thanks. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, because Resolution 21 has now not got a seconder, that resolution falls. So therefore we won't be taking any speakers on Resolution 21; we'll just take speakers on Resolution 18. Sorry! Any more speakers? Any more speakers on Resolution 18? No? Conference, I now put the amendment to Resolution 18 from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 18 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 23 Off-Duty Days Lost to Leave moved by Northern Ireland. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

**Resolution 23 OFF-DUTY DAYS LOST TO LEAVE**

***Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate through the NJC, that off-duty days that fall within a period of annual leave 'are not' counted as Scale A leave (See Conditions of Service, Section 4, Part C – Leave, Paragraph 2).***

**NORTHERN IRELAND****BRO MARK McCARTAN** (NIFB):

Conference, the National Joint Council scheme of conditions Section 4 Part C Leave paragraph 2 states: "*Off-duty days that fall within a period of annual leave count at Scale A leave.*" There are many many different interpretations of this paragraph throughout the UK Fire & Rescue Services but no matter what the interpretation is the fact remains that our members lose leave for days when they would not have been on duty. I can think of no other job (I can be corrected) where this happens. If you told any other worker that they would lose leave for days when they were off work, in other words if somebody is off for the weekend that they would lose a day's leave for the Saturday or the Sunday, they would be appalled. Yet this is a longstanding practice throughout many UK Fire & Rescue Services and no-one bats an eyelid; we just accept it.

The reason for this paragraph is unclear. We have asked around and no-one seems to know why it's there. Again, maybe somebody could enlighten us. Most firefighters don't actually know that it's there. They just know that they lose leave. The only people who really gain from this are the employers. But I would argue that they don't actually gain as much as they think. Leave is vitally important for the well-being of our members. It provides respite away from the stresses and strains of work. When people return they come back better motivated. Ultimately, they come back more productive. The theft of these days cannot be justified any longer.

Conference, we are calling on the Executive Council to negotiate through the NJC that this paragraph be changed to address this issue so that all off-duty days are not to be counted as Scale A days. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder? A seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. AGS.

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Yes, with this one certainly I think it is true to say that there are different, not so much interpretations but implementations taking place around the UK on the question of Scale A leave. That's because there have been improvements agreed locally upon the national minimum in the Grey Book. So whilst it is true to say there are different arrangements in some places, not many, in the main all Fire & Rescue Services implement a system whereby Scale A leave is sacrificed to normal off-duty days.

The question was asked: where did this come from? People have asked around and said where did this come from? It's been there since the days when the old king died. It has been there that long, certainly since 1981 when myself and Matt started kicking around. It's been there since then, it was there long before that as well. So the original justification, if there ever was one, isn't known to us. Certainly, it's come to conference many times during that period and probably before as well. Our position will continue to be that all leave should be taken on on-duty days.

The qualification, quite simply, is achievability. We just need to be clear with conference that it is not an easy or quick ask. I don't think there is any prospect of a ready and willing yes from the employers. So I just want to be clear with conference that is the qualification to the resolution but the EC do support.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Any more speakers? Yes.

**BRO DEREK MacLEOD** (Hertfordshire):

Conference, I am speaking in opposition to this resolution. As an official I have had to deal with a situation where we are talking about members' leave and enshrining their leave period taken over their rota day (which is what we are basically talking about). Why are we taking our leave for days when we would be off-duty? It was quite simple when we didn't have things like wholetime/retained duty systems. Life was a lot easier. But now we have all sorts of variations in crewing models so we need that period free from duty. So if you're wholetime/retained carrying out those activities, on that annual leave, in theory and in practice, you should be free from duty. So you shouldn't be booking on and making yourself available for your retained duties when you're on annual leave from your wholetime duties. So our leave period, which was hard fought for and won, we need to enshrine it. That's why I would speak in opposition to this policy, because we've actually done it.

**BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW** (Essex):

Conference, I just want to clarify a few points around this. I think it was back in 2013 head office issued guidance via Thompsons to interpret the Working Time Regs that said that firefighters should not be taking annual leave when they would not be at work. So what we've got is we've got a Grey Book that tells us how much leave we get, but when you do the calculations, a firefighter on a wholetime duty system, not including PHs, gets 19.6 days annual leave a year. The statutory minimum is 20 days. So whilst I understand the achievability issue – and I'm not saying that we should all go out there and nail this one – taking into account what Hertfordshire have said, our members are getting the statutory minimum plus PHs for a profession that is risk-critical. Let's be clear, we should be fighting to improve the terms and conditions of our members. Saying that we don't really think it's achievable to improve on the statutory minimum isn't acceptable for the Fire Brigades Union conference. Support. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Any more speakers in the debate? Northern Ireland right to reply. Two seconds, Mark. Point of clarification from the AGS.

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Point of order or point of clarification is that, big applause I know, but that was totally inaccurate, that was totally inaccurate in terms of the number of leave days that we get. If you're going to quote the Working Time Regulations

you've got to read the Working Time Regulations. Much as I don't want it to be that way, all leave that you do get, unfortunately, is counted towards leave under the Working Time Regulations. So in the real world, Bank Holidays (we call them Public Holidays) are added into it. So your days off, plus days off that you get as PHs count towards that 28 days minimum in the Working Time Regulations.

The reason I'm raising it isn't to point-score; it's because I don't want you going back believing that that is the accurate position and embarrassing yourselves with your management. Thank you.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Point of order.

## BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):

Conference, sorry, Mr President, AGS, if you had listened to what I actually said it was statutory minimum plus PHs. So I get that we're not on the statutory minimum. Again, it isn't acceptable, because lots of employers don't include PHs. I accept the fact that they're statutory minimum at 19.6 and we get PHs on top of that, and for those who get long service leave it's more than the statutory minimum. What I'm arguing for is an improvement on their terms and conditions.

So I accept the fact that it's 19.6 days that we are entitled to, we get 20 through the calculation, plus PHs. But what I'm saying is we shouldn't just be sitting back and going "well, it's difficult so we're not going to do it". I think we should be trying to improve our terms and conditions and improving the leave for our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## BRO MARK McCARTAN (NIFB):

I'd like to thank Essex for their support, thank you. *(Laughter)* Nothing in life worth having comes easy. We know this is not going to be an easy one. The achievability is obviously an issue, but that doesn't make it wrong. This is the right thing to do.

As far as the retained question that was thrown up, I know in our brigade if you're on a retained/wholetime you're on two separate contracts so you have two separate groups of leave. That's a local issue. Different brigades will run different ways.

The other thing about achievability is that part of the union policy is that controls get the same pay parity as operational crews. Achievability is difficult, but we won't stop fighting until we get it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. I now put Resolution 23 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, I'm now going to take Resolution 24 and 25 in the same debate. Both can carry. I now call Resolution 24 Reclaiming Leave Lost Due to Sickness moved by Shropshire. The Executive Council give qualified support.

### **Resolution 24 RECLAIMING LEAVE LOST DUE TO SICKNESS**

***Conference believes that all leave provided for by the Grey Book is of equal importance and that, in the event of being on certified sickness absence when their scheduled leave is due, Members should be able to reclaim that leave at a later date.***

***Currently some employers are using the guidance set out in Circular NJC/03/13 to prevent the reclaiming of all leave and only allowing the statutory minimum to be carried forward.***

***Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this issue at the NJC to seek agreement that all contractual leave not taken due to certified sickness may be taken at a later date.***

**SHROPSHIRE**

**BRO SIMON MORRIS** (Shropshire):

President, Conference, in 2017 our brigade management took the opportunity to update the internal order relating to leave provision. In doing so they used the guidance of the NJC circular 03/13 to restrict the amount of leave that the member could reclaim, rather than extending time that leave could be carried forward beyond 31 March of the year. As it stands, we have to apply to the chief to carry forward lost leave if we have the misfortune to be sick, but only the statutory minimum may be considered and all other contractual leave is forfeit. You would almost think the chief has to pay for it out of his own pocket.

Each case that we have raised a grievance has had the same outcome: No joy. Conference, the NJC circular is about ensuring that staff who have the misfortune to lose out on leave due to health problems are able to carry over leave beyond 31 March, not, as we believe, a method for brigade management and HR departments simply to reduce the amount of leave that we are contractually entitled to. We feel that this is another example of the gradual erosion of our conditions provided for by the Grey Book. Section 5 Part B of the Grey Books deals specifically with this issue of sickness while on annual leave. This is the issue that we think should be raised at the NJC.

Our members, having lost out on their leave through no fault of their own, should not have to become involved in arguments with management to gain the right to take their leave. All our leave is of equal importance, all our leave is provided through the Grey Book. All our contractual leave should be available to be carried forward when on certified sickness absence. Please support this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* I now call Resolution 25 Sick Leave moved by Merseyside. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

**Resolution 25 SICK LEAVE**

***Conference is aware of the provisions contained within the Grey Book (Section 5, Part B, paragraphs 10-12) in relation to sick leave. The provisions state that an employee on authorised sick leave shall be entitled to full pay for six months in any twelve-month period and that if the employee is on authorised sick leave as a result of an illness or injury arising out of authorised duty that they shall be entitled to full pay for twelve months. In both instances full pay is reduced to half pay for six-months upon the expiration of the full pay period. Conference acknowledges the Grey Book provision that allows Fire and Rescue Authorities to exercise discretion and extend the period of sick pay in exceptional cases.***

***Conference notes that the roll-out of Universal Credit across the UK is more advanced in some geographical areas than others and that Universal Credit is gradually replacing income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) as the main benefit to claim if you can't work because of sickness or disability. Most people who would have qualified for ESA now have to claim the limited capability for work and work-related activity element of Universal Credit.***

***This benefit, paid under Universal Credit, has proven to be substantially less than that paid under the previous ESA resulting in increased financial hardship to those on half pay sick leave.***

***Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise this matter, as a priority, with the NJC. Conference further instructs the Executive Council to secure improvements to the Grey Book sick leave provisions to make sure no FBU Member suffers increased financial hardship as a result of Universal Credit replacing ESA.***

**MERSEYSIDE**

**BRO MARK ROWE** (Merseyside):

President, Conference, as officials we deal with members who've been placed on sick pay with sometimes depressing regularity. However we've always been able to advise our members they were also entitled to claim employment support allowance, ESA, which would take their earnings up to, over the six month period, not far off full pay. Conference, no more is this the case across the UK. Universal Credit is one system to replace six benefits:

child tax credit, working tax credit, housing allowance, job seekers allowance, income support and employment support allowance. 37% of claimants are actually in work. Iain Duncan-Smith launched this in 2013 supposedly to make work pay. So if you're claiming any of these six benefits mentioned, you've either been moved on to Universal Credit already, or will be moved on to Universal Credit in the next few years.

This change affects anyone who's a low earner, disabled, jobless or sick. That's the key point for us, Conference. That's the point that affects us. As of September 2018 1.2 million people, mostly new claimants, have been put on to Universal Credit already, depending on where and when it was introduced in their local job centre. It started rolling out across job centres, as we say, in 2016 at a rate of around 50 a month. It's going to be offered in every job centre for new claimants by December 2018 (just gone) and three million people are supposed to be on it by December 2019. Granted, there is now a delay in that roll out. However, it hasn't stopped.

The amount you get is worked out through quite a complex formula, essentially means testing. Current claimants get an average of £630 per household. So what does all this mean for us? This is a real example that occurred in Merseyside. A watch manager in an area where the Universal Credit had been rolled out was placed on half pay after six months due to sickness. He applied for Universal Credit as ESA had gone, and was informed he was not entitled to any money, nil, nada, nowt, nothing at all, as even as a watch manager his wage was deemed to be above the threshold needed to be met for a Universal Credit payment. It was only the brilliant AIF that kept him afloat doing that period. That's another point, Conference. We need to get all of our members on to the AIF and we need to be getting out and asking our members why they are not on it. Half pay in some areas of the country now means exactly that: half pay, no other entitlements, no other ESA.

Conference, this needs raising with the national employers and the Grey Book as it can possibly affect anybody in this room, any one of our members. Merseyside understand this is a difficult ask under achievability, but nevertheless it's something that needs to be raised anyway. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. AGS to give qualifications to both resolutions.

## ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, thank you President. On Resolution 24 we clearly understand the objectives of the resolution. As you know, it is the rights within the Grey Book which was to take leave which was outstanding until 31 March. That became amended, modified and improved as a consequence of the European Court of Justice ruling, in respect only of those days which were up to the statutory minimum, and that could extend further into the year.

I will say that we can raise it with the employers. The qualification, as I'm sure you know, is the question of achievability because the ECJ judgment was only in respect of statutory days. That was the claim by the union representing members. That's what they took to the court and that's what the court found. They did not find, and they weren't asked to find for statutory leave. The case was taken in respect of the Working Time Regs. So we haven't got a legal position, or any case law that we can fall back on, or point to. It comes down to the ability of us to achieve that with the employers, to see if we can get an appetite from the employers for making that agreement. That is the qualification with regard to 24.

With regard to 25, certainly we do need to go through this with the Merseyside officials. As Mark said, it's one of those issues, achievable or otherwise, that has to go to the NJC. I think that probably is the case. It's not one of those "what do you do when they say no?" We would take it on the basis of "is the employer actually saying that the essence of the agreement, when reached, has now been changed or should be changed in effect, that our people end up on no money at that much earlier stage?"

The qualification again is achievability. With those assurances and with that qualification we do support both resolutions. President.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Any more speakers? No? I now put Resolution 24 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 25 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, we are going to break for tea break now. However, before you move, can you all ensure you have completed your ballot papers and placed them in the box at the back of the hall as you're leaving to go for your coffee. Tea break, back at quarter past 11.

*Break for tea*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, come to order. Conference, we're now coming to a special part of the day's events and it will be my great pleasure if we could give a warm welcome to Miguel Roldan and invite him up to the stage. Miguel. *(Applause)*

Conference, it's my pleasure and it's my privilege to introduce Miguel and invite him to address our conference. Miguel is a firefighter from Seville in Southern Spain who has helped save many lives of people who were at risk of drowning in the Mediterranean. The Italian authorities have accused him of aiding illegal immigration and working with human traffickers and as a result of that, Miguel faces up to 20 years in prison if he is convicted. The FBU are 100% in solidarity with Miguel. Last week we organised – ably organised by Riccardo La Torre – a demo outside of the Italian Embassy to show our solidarity with Miguel, and also that firefighters across the world are 100% behind him.

The charges against Miguel must be dropped. Firefighting is a humanitarian profession and Miguel was carrying out humanitarian work, saving the lives of people fleeing horrors that we can only ever imagine in our worst nightmares. So we cannot stand idly by while one of our own is being punished for trying to save lives. Conference, give a warm welcome to Miguel to address you. *(Applause)*

## THE INTERPRETER:

Good morning. Can you hear me? Yes. I just want to give a very quick apology. As you can hear, my voice is due to leave the building before I am! I assure you, that was the case before last night! I'm going to be helping Miguel communicate his message. It's a great honour and privilege for me. So without further ado.

## BRO MIGUEL ROLDAN (through interpreter):

Good day to all. In the first instance I'd like to say thank you very much for this opportunity for having me. This is a great honour to be invited to England to be able to share my story with you. I present myself. My name is Miguel Roldan. I'm a firefighter from Seville and in 2017 I was with an organisation non-governmental to save migrants in the Mediterranean. In every instance we followed the regulations provided by Rome. We were always in international waters and we were never in Libyan waters. This is important detail because they're trying to accuse us of having in some way or form not followed the regulations and the rules of the activities we were doing. In every case we had to seek clarification with the transport division of Rome, and seek permission before we made any movements in the sea.

My story begins as a crew member of a fishing boat which was repurposed as a rescue boat, and our mission was simply to help people crossing from Libya, trying to get into mainland Europe. These distances, in the best of cases, were 2,500 km and in the worst over 6,000 km travel distance. *(Photograph)*

Apologies, correction from before. In distances starting from 250 km people were travelling in boats designed for 30 people and over 300 people were crammed into these boats without any floatability or flotation device and it consisted of months and months of travel to get from the coast of Libya. *(Photograph)* In the situation there was very little resource to carry out rescues when over 300 people fell into the Mediterranean. We as firefighters had very few resources in order to carry out rescues. There were times when I had to leave behind my official role as a firefighter or rescuer and had to make the decision to take the role of judge upon myself. When 300 are drowning, if you decide to go to the left or to the right you might miss the ones who are drowning on the left or you might miss the ones who are drowning on the right, and if you decide to go to the front, the people behind you have already drowned.

It's important again to reiterate that we followed the rules, such that whenever we saw one of these boats leaving full with migrants we had to communicate that to Rome. If Rome did not give you authorisation to continue, you had to stop and we did stop. The photo that you can see is a clear example of what can happen. We had to wait for authorisation from Rome whilst we were watching people drown and die in front of our eyes.

It's incredible to me that on top of us having to respect the norms up until the point where people are dying in front of you, they now want to prosecute me for doing so. We always rescued the people in the water, taking them to larger boats which were owned by organisations such as Médecins sans Frontières and other non-governmental organisations.

OK, that's all I'm going to say about the situation I was in and the fact that I'm now being accused of human trafficking by the Italian authorities. I now want to speak to you about the real important issue at hand and the one most close to my heart. I want to speak now about the story of immigration in the 21st century, which is not a story about a better future, but a story about survival itself. We're now talking of people who are fleeing their places of birth because of wars and conflicts and unjust and inhumane treatment. They have to go through month-long journeys, suffering danger and beatings, just to get to another shore which is equally unsafe.

Today, because of the criminalisation of humanitarian aid in the Mediterranean there are no rescue boats. The only hope these people had of having a better life has been taken away. I know that the four non-governmental organisations in the Mediterranean are not the solution to this, but whilst the governments in Europe do not put adequate measures in to solve this crisis, the NGOs in the Mediterranean are invaluable.

I think we should work to create a world in which the empathy with others is one of our most valued values. It's not fair that just for arbitrary reasons such as your place of birth people should have to suffer such injustices and don't have the opportunity to live fulfilling lives. I'm conscious that what I'm saying might sound Utopian, but I do think it is our responsibility to at least give a hand to those who need help most. *(Photograph)*

I don't want to live in a world where, in the future, we can look back on what's happening now in the Mediterranean and compare it to the atrocities of the Third Reich and things that happened in Nazi Germany in good conscience. Today in the modern world, in the situation we are in Libya is the only gateway to a supposedly safe place because other countries (because of their politics around immigration) have made it impassable. So the only option they have is to go via Libya. Because of these policies on immigration adopted by the Third World and the First World, we are condemning these people to slavery, to sexual slavery, to mistreatment, to torture and to death.

I want to end with this and just encourage everyone to try to give their grain of sand to this cause, to not look the other way. Those other human beings only have one life, just the same as us. It is beholden to us to give them the best chance at that life, especially if we're in a more privileged position. Once more, thank you very much for your time, for this opportunity and I hope you take something away about the story of the Mediterranean which I think is one of the greatest injustices of our time. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, I will now invite the General Secretary to say a few words.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, comrades, the story that Miguel has just set out I think is a hugely important one. We should take a few minutes to think about it. Miguel, we were earlier discussing the issue of the role of firefighters and their neutrality in that we're not the police, we're not there to enforce laws; we're there to render humanitarian services. That's something we have to think about here and internationally.

Comrades, I'm sure everyone in the fire service is proud of the job that we do. There are some amazing stories. There are also things that make us think about the times when you had to stand up and do what you think is right. If you Google, you can find a picture on the internet of Alabama 1963, the height of the civil rights movement. It is of the Birmingham Alabama Fire Department turning their hoses on black children protesting for civil rights. There, if you like, is the lowest ebb of fire service intervention in a political debate. Then, on the other hand, in fact Miguel can see Maria's T-shirt at the front. Here is a T-shirt that we adopted because of a previous Spanish firefighter. Many

of you will remember Roberto Rivas who came to this conference. Again, under the impact of austerity policies, firefighters in Spain were being asked to evict people from their homes. Roberto refused to engage in that work. A truly humanitarian role, standing up for fairness and for justice.

There are other stories. Some will recall the article that Riccardo wrote in Firefighter about Italian firefighters in the war using their equipment to assist Jews to escape persecution, and allied POWs to escape.

There's a film about Occupied Paris during the war. It's called *The Roundup*. The Vichy collaborator government rounded up Parisian Jews and put them in a velodrome. They were then sent to concentration camps ultimately. The fire department, led by Henri Pierret, actually turned up and were appalled at the sight of 13,000 of their fellow citizens, locked up in the cycle stadium. They breached the instructions of the riot police and the German authorities and provided water, and also smuggled messages out of the velodrome to alert the world to what was going on.

So we have, on the one hand an appalling example in Alabama in 1963, but we have numerous examples of firefighters actually standing up for justice. I think that's exactly what Miguel and our own Brendan Woodhouse have done in terms of their solidarity and their intervention in the refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean.

As Miguel has set out, we need to think about why these issues even happen. Why is it that people will risk their lives and risk the lives of their families, of their children, to get in a boat to try to sail across the Mediterranean to Europe? Clearly, because they are fleeing something that is far worse than the terror of facing the sea. Fleeing war, fleeing terror, fleeing torture and persecution.

I think we have to ask, in the middle of this debate that we face in Britain today and across Europe on some of these issues, why some of those crises exist. I remember marching against the invasion of Iraq, for example. But British politicians and other European politicians helped to create the crisis in the Middle East that we are now seeing playing out year after year in war, civil war and terror and repression that creates that refugee and migrant crisis. We have here in this country a very nasty politics emerging that seeks to blame minorities, seeks to blame refugees, seeks to blame migrants for the problems that we face. You will recall, during the EU referendum for example, the poster that Nigel Farage stood in front of. "Breaking point", he described it, playing on people's fears to create this nasty and divisive politics.

The traditions of this union are entirely different from those traditions. We stand for solidarity, we stand for internationalism, we stand for humanity. That's why we stand shoulder to shoulder with Miguel and with other people doing the same work. It is the noblest of work that could be done in those circumstances. Therefore, Miguel, on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union we send a very clear message that the Fire Brigades Union, representing firefighters across the UK, stands with you in solidarity.

Comrades, I will just finish on this one point. Miguel mentioned being accused of being Utopian for wanting a better world. Actually, if you think about it, anyone who ever wants any change faces that accusation: "you can never achieve any change". If you think about it the people who wanted to end slavery were dismissed as Utopians. But they fought and they did achieve that. When ordinary people didn't have the vote, they were dismissed as Utopians. But we fought and we won the vote. When women didn't have the vote they were dismissed as Utopians for wanting the vote. But they fought and they won the vote.

So we never accept those people who seek to divide us and those people who dismiss us because we want to change things for the better. Those are the best principles around which we can organise. We stand with you. Thanks very much for coming. I've got one gift. I have to say, very appropriately, this is based on a Victorian painting. It's called "Saved". I think nothing could be more appropriate. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

He just wants to say some more words.

**BRO MIGUEL ROLDAN** (through Interpreter):

I never thought, when I started doing this humanitarian work, that it could turn into such a transcendent example and have such repercussions for myself. I never do this for personal glory or to feel myself a hero or to be a martyr.

I only do it for my own conscience and because I want to do it. When I see that even just with tiny grains of sand of help I can reach so many people and have such support and response from you all since I've arrived here, it's a source of tremendous pride for myself. So in this difficult period for me, to see the amount of support I have from you all, and receiving this coverage, it really emboldens me and lifts my spirits. It inspires me to keep fighting with you all. Thank you very much and in Spain you've always got a friend for whatever you might need. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

We are going to do a photo and it's going to get a bit complicated, we think. First of all, you've got 150 people booking a villa next year, I think Miguel. We are going to try to do this photograph and Steve is going to explain how we're going to do it because we're all going to be facing that way and it's going to be taken from up on the balcony. Over to you, Steve.

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

Thank you, President. As the President's leaving to go that way I'm going to try to coordinate this. Everybody else can stay in their seats, please. Executive Council to make your way to the back of the hall, please. Then Stefano, who is up there at the top, is going to coordinate that end of the room for the photo opportunity. Thank you very much. With Miguel, with Miguel.

OK, Conference, whilst the Executive Council are walking to the back of the room, you should all have some placards in front of you. The banner for the Executive Council please. Very carefully, Conference, because there are glasses and bottles on the tables, if you wouldn't mind standing up and facing me with the placards. Stand up, please. Thank you. Can we show the placards in the air? Then very carefully, so you don't knock any bottles or glasses over, turn round and face the camera which is up top. Thank you, Conference.

*A photograph was taken*

Thank you, Conference. If everybody could return to your seats, please. Carefully put the placards down. You can keep the placards. Can the Executive Council make their way back, please? Thank you, Conference. I will now hand back to the President.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Right, Conference. Now back to business. Sorry, about that. First bit, can I remind you that the Standing Orders ballot closes at 12.30 so if you haven't submitted your ballot papers, get them in ASAP. Also, I'll give another reminder and a plug for tonight's fringe meeting, Solidarity with Migrants, which Miguel is attending and speaking at. So could you all make the effort and get to that.

Conference, now turn to page 5 in your Programme of Business, I'd like to call Resolution 27 Childcare Subsidies moved by Hampshire. Executive Council are giving qualified support. Thank you.

### Resolution 27 CHILDCARE SUBSIDIES

***The Fire Service, in line with other public sector services, has carried the financial burden of austerity to prop up the UK economy. A burden that has left firefighter pay far behind the cost of living.***

***Firefighters face increasing pressures to raise and support their own families as costs rise and pay in real terms falls.***

***Conference recognises the pressures of balancing childcare with shift work and instructs the Executive Council to work towards achieving subsidies for public sector workers childcare costs, by raising the issue within relevant forums which would include;***

- ***the FBU Parliamentary Group***
- ***our employers at the earliest possible NJC meeting.***

**HAMPSHIRE**

**BRO MARK CHAPMAN** (Hampshire):

President, Conference, the sacrifice each and every firefighter on the frontline has made in the face of austerity is no stranger to us. The true and tangible burden that has been placed upon our families, partners and children alike, weighs heavily on our shoulders. This has never been more evident than in the clear and present disparity of our pay and the rise in cost of provision of childcare. The pay caps endured by our brothers and sisters and our families is not breaking news to anyone here today. Successively year on year we have heard at conference how pay has stagnated, the cost of living has risen, and that firefighters are struggling. Yet each and every one of us still gives 100% to our communities when required. We are a proud bunch, pushing on through tough times, shrugging off hardships, and putting a brave face on matters that are close to our hearts.

Conference, our members have a right to childcare provision in the same way in which we provide a response to our communities, a right to support our families in the way we support our communities. In the last ten years our pay has fallen in real terms by approximately £5,000 yet the cost of childcare has risen exponentially. In 2009 childcare in the south cost on average £199 for 50 hours per week. In 2018 the cost for the same level of childcare is now £267, rising by 34%. Plain and simple, after years of successive pay caps our income has not kept pace. As a direct comparison for those same years, firefighter pay has only increased by 7%.

Worse still, when we look at regions such as London this issue is exasperated even further. In 2009 childcare in London on average cost £226 for 50 hours per week. In 2018 the cost of the same level of childcare is now £342 per week, rising by 51%.

Conference, this disparity is simply unsustainable. In economic terms firefighters are being costed out of having a family. Firefighters are literally at breaking point with salary and costs of childcare making them question the validity of being at work at all. Furthermore, these costs are for regular childcare, falling on the same days per week, week in, week out for pre-prescribed terms. Conference will be no stranger to our shift systems, their complexities, and the frustrations we all experience when aligning such shift systems to family life or plans. The same frustrations are unfortunately experienced when sourcing a provider who delivers the flexibility required to cater for our childcare needs, resulting in firefighters paying premium rates to a minority of care providers, should they be lucky enough to find one who can facilitate such childcare.

On average, a day's childcare can cost between £50 and £60. A childcare provider who offers the flexibility to match our shift system costs between £80 and £90 per day. This isn't just costing firefighters; it's affecting our employers and the public purse too. Recruitment and retention is now a far greater challenge than ever before as the divide makes a career in the fire service less appealing. Not only that, but the investment put into each and every firefighter by local authorities degrades in value with each and every firefighter who leaves in pursuance of better pay and a better standard of living for them and their families.

Conference, firefighters and families are using leave in the absence of affordable childcare provisions, provisions that aren't getting any more affordable. The majority certainly don't offer the flexibility required to cater for our shifts without paying through the nose. Many are being forced to work second or third jobs resulting in firefighters seeing less of their children, falling deeper into the vicious circle of chasing their tail to make ends meet and provide for their families. It is time that this disparity is recognised and recompensed – recompensed not in pay which is being campaigned and lobbied for as a separate matter – but in the form of care and provision subsidies afforded to us as public sector workers.

Conference, if society only knew the true burden we carry, they would reach out to support us as we have supported them. Subsidies are a small ask for the work that we do, the way we serve, and the weight we have carried for far too long. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder? Yes, Nicky.

**SIS NICOLA HOBBS** (NWC):

We would like to second this motion and fully support this resolution and recognise the hardship our members suffer, such as maternity pay not consistently being looked at across the country and with the cost of living. This

resolution has an effect on resolutions relating to flexible working and duty systems. It has a knock-on effect on all resolutions that have been mentioned previously. We second this motion. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Any speakers? General Secretary to give the qualification.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. The Executive Council support the resolution but with a couple of qualifications. The issue of pay needs to be addressed. Clearly the mover outlined the impact that years of austerity, pay freeze, has had on our members' living standards and the fact that that is exacerbated by increased childcare costs. Clearly, that does need to be addressed. Part of that is the debate we've had regarding pay.

But I think the other issues that the Executive Council just wanted to raise within this discussion is that the question of the provision of quality childcare is not simply a matter of seeking financial subsidies for individuals; it is also a wider question of the provision of good quality public childcare facilities, whether that's nurseries or others. That is a matter which we think we need to feed in through the Labour Party manifesto discussions that we're facing.

While obviously this is directed particularly at the Fire & Rescue Service and at the National Joint Council, clearly it is a much wider debate in society. It is not simply – and the resolution itself refers to – public sector workers. They go beyond the Fire & Rescue Service so it is not simply a Fire & Rescue Service matter. It is a matter that needs to be addressed politically for working people in general. With those qualifications, President, we support the resolution.

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 27 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now move on to para.A2, para.A3. I now call the following resolutions which will all be taken in the same debate: Composite Resolution B Continual Professional Development (CPD) moved by West Sussex, seconded by the ONC; Resolution 5 Continual Professional Development moved by West Midlands. The Executive Council oppose Resolution 5; the Executive Council support Composite B. If Composite B carries then Resolution 5 will fall. I now call Composite Resolution B.

## BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

Conference, President, I want some clarification on why if Composite B carries Resolution 5 falls. Composite B: *"Conference calls on the Executive Council to discuss with the NJC the need to equalise CPD payments across the UK, to the highest rate currently paid and making CPD core pay."* That is two questions for Composite B to be decided by conference. One is to agree that we should all receive the highest rate of CPD. I'm sure we all support that. Secondly, that it should be core pay. There may be a pensions regulation issue with that. So my resolution is simply calling for people who are working part-time to receive full competency pay. It's nothing about the equalisation of pay, and it's got nothing to do with it being core pay and pensionable. It's simply if people are away from work, for example on maternity and then coming back to work part-time whilst looking after their newborn baby, that they would receive the competency pay the same as everybody else. I question that if Composite B carries then Resolution 5 falls on the grounds that they are two completely separate conference resolutions. Thank you.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Steve, on that, if the Composite passes, then CPD will become part of core pay. Your resolution calls for CPD payments to be the same as their full-time colleagues. There will be no CPD payments if it's brought into core pay.

## BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):

President, Conference, yes, President, I absolutely accept your point there, but it would have to be renamed something else, wouldn't it, because it wouldn't be CPD; it would be core pay. It would just be your salary. CPD is like an additional payment. I understand what you're saying but I don't believe that to be correct. I believe they are two separate resolutions and that both should be heard separately and neither should have the negative of falling if the other carries.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Steve, that's why the wording of resolutions is very important and that's my ruling. OK, I now call Composite Resolution B Continual Professional Development moved by West Sussex, seconded by the ONC. The Executive Council support.

### **Composite B – CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)**

***Conference believes that the way CPD has been implemented across UK Fire and Rescue Services is haphazard at best.***

***For many years the introduction of this unfairly defined payment has been in place and has resulted in a postcode lottery that has led to substantial differences in the level of pay received by our Members undertaking the same role.***

***Conference recognises that this bizarre inequality in our Members' pay, must be challenged and resolved without any Member receiving a loss in pay.***

***Conference calls on the Executive Council to discuss with the NJC the need to equalise CPD payments across the UK, to the highest rate currently paid and making CPD core pay.***

**WEST SUSSEX**

## **BRO MICK CAMBERS (West Sussex):**

President, Conference, in my opinion not one of our finer achievements, CPD, so I'm going to start with an apology. I was brigade chair in 2007 and this is when this unfair payment (in my view) was negotiated and agreed, so I was party to that. I apologise. I find it baffling that this union has let this situation continue without any sustained challenge on its clear inequality. The unfairness of CPD is reflected across the UK in our wage slips every month.

What do I mean by that? We have members who receive around £300 a month; we also have members who received over £1,000 a month. Not only is that embarrassing and hard to accept, this inequality also follows our members into their retirement, which will result in substantial differences in retirement earnings. So we have a situation where we have members in the UK employed to be firefighters, performing the same tasks and roles, but being paid different wages. This has gone on for 12 years. That doesn't sit well with me. We must, as a union, fight to address this inequality.

Again, this must be an apology speech. I find myself apologising again because this fight must be taken on by the current members and delegates here that are now in post. It's taken too long for me to come to conference and bring this situation to your attention. I am retiring next year and so I'm asking you guys to take on the fight. Don't let this fester any longer, address this inequality with CPD. Remember, we all perform the same roles regardless of where we work. Therefore, we should receive the same rate of CPD payment.

Conference, take this fight on because it is the right thing to do. Please support Composite B. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

ONC.

## **BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):**

President, Conference, we are seconding Composite B from West Sussex on continual professional development pay. Conference, as you've just heard, throughout the UK Fire & Rescue Service we have a huge variance in the payments that are made to our members. They range from £303 per year to £1,019 per year. Remember, Conference, why these payments are made. They are made for demonstrating competency against the national standards and performance criteria as laid out within the national occupational standards. CPD payments are routinely removed from members in some of the following circumstances: for acting up for a shift, for long-term temporary promotions, for substantive promotions until a competency portfolio is produced and signed off; and for sickness. Surely under these circumstances members are continually, professionally developing their careers.

Conference, all our members on a day to day basis are continually developing themselves. My own experience within the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service after the amalgamation of the eight legacy brigades was policies and procedures coming out day after day after day. Technical bulletins, operational bulletins, personnel and admin bulletins. It was overwhelming. The practice of removing CPD payments must stop. The way to achieve this is incorporating CPD into our core pay with a nationally agreed CPD payment. The only reason at the ONC that we can think why these payments would be removed in a haphazard way is for money-saving, nothing else. Let's get it into core pay, let's protect the money that we are due. Conference, we support. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Resolution 5 Continual Professional Development moved by West Midlands. The Executive Council oppose.

### **Resolution 5 CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)**

***Conference notes the changing way that Members of the FBU choose to work. Members may wish to use their right to request flexible or reduced hours of work for many reasons, however Conference notes that childcare arrangements or looking after other family members is normally the main reason.***

***Conference is concerned that even with our Members changing their working arrangements, Grey Book Policy has not kept up with this, particularly with regard to CPD.***

***Conference agrees that there is no such thing as half a firefighter, and therefore there should be no such thing as half CPD payment. Firefighters who are deemed competent are no more or no less a firefighter based on the hours they undertake.***

***Therefore, Conference demands that the Executive Council urgently raises at the NJC, the issue of reduced CPD payments to Members who are deemed competent and have chosen to work reduced hours to ensure that these Members receive the same CPD payments as their full-time colleagues.***

## WEST MIDLANDS

### **BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):**

President, Conference, I will move it. Firstly, Conference, to be clear this resolution does not mandate change. All you're voting for is to allow the Executive Council to explore the opportunity of pay parity – a basic and fundamental principle of trade unionism. The clue is in the title: "continual professional development". This is not about the number of hours worked. In our brigades up and down the country, whether you work one hour or 42 hours a week, you still have to demonstrate the same competency.

This recently came to our attention in the West Midlands with a female firefighter returning to work following the birth of a child. She chose to work pro rata some of the week so she could stay at home with her baby. We approached the brigade about not taking away the CPD payment, or part of the CPD payment, because the female firefighter was demonstrating competency, the same as everybody else on her watch, station and in the brigade. The brigade answer was you only use your competency half the time so therefore you only get half the competency pay.

Allow the EC the opportunity to explore the fundamental right of pay parity. Firefighters, firefighter control operators, wholetime or retained, we're all the same. If you are competent then you are competent. There is no such thing as half a firefighter. A firefighter is a firefighter. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Nobody? Yes.

### **BRO PAUL FARMAN (NRC):**

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Composite B Continual Professional Development. Conference, the National Retained Committee have noted and welcomed this resolution on CPD. We believe this system of

payment has never really been fit for purpose for our retained members. The current rate for RDS members is pegged at 25% for 10.5 hours of activity per week, averaged over the pay period with provision for a pro rata increase to be applied as and when this average is exceeded. Due to the complexities involved in monitoring and managing this, we do not believe that it is being correctly applied across all Fire & Rescue Services and as such is being denied to many of our members.

Additionally, RDS members are very much aware of the wildly differing rates paid depending on which Fire & Rescue Service they work for. Some RDS members are of the view that this payment has been used as a lever to support localised methods of payment, particularly aimed at the RDS workforces. It has the stench of localised pay all over it, and as such should be something that the FBU fights to address, based on our core principles alone. Post code lottery rates of pay have no place in the UK Fire & Rescue Service.

We also note that some Fire & Rescue Services have gradually increased the timescale required for eligibility to apply for this payment, in some cases up to seven years is required. It has been reported in some of the Fire & Rescue Service circles that on average retained firefighters remain in service for around seven years. This alone would make this payment merely a theoretical payment for our RDS members. Merging CPD into core pay would be a way of redressing this issue too.

Taking into account our employers' reasoning for the removal of the long service increment after the 2002/2003 pay dispute, this seems to be a direct replacement in all but name, with significant additional hurdles to qualification introduced. Support the composite resolution. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Any other speakers?

## **BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):**

Thank you President, Conference, I just want to speak in support of the West Midlands resolution. This issue also came up in Cheshire this year, again a female firefighter returning from maternity. They had looked at it historically and realised that they had paid full CPD payments and then said: you now owe us several thousand pounds and we're taking it off you. It isn't about the hours worked, is it? Our point was if you're getting CPD it's for attending the mandatory courses, your refreshers, some development. You've done that same activity as a colleague. It's not about the hours worked. By passing one and that failing, we're not going to address that issue at this conference. It's another 12 months. Also, when you think about it, this could be having a disproportionate effect on our female members and female members of the Fire & Rescue Service because predominantly we know that most part-time working and job share opportunities are taken up by our female staff. So it really does need addressing and I think it's a very important point. I support West Midlands. *(Applause)*

## **SIS CAROLINE STURGESS (NWC):**

I just want to check for clarity: if we were to support Composite B and it was injected into your pay formula, and when individuals do go off on maternity, or individuals do go off on flexible working arrangements, does this mean that that percentage, which we would see as CPD as a separate payment, would then go down at the same time as your pay?

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

The General Secretary will cover that in his response. Nobody else? General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

CPD. Just in terms of Mick's moving it, it is worth refreshing ourselves on how we created CPD. I think the frustrations that people have with CPD are certainly shared up here and they are very much shared by myself and the AGS who are the people who have to talk to our employers about these issues. I can assure conference, the issue of CPD and the level of payments, the hurdles, the withdrawals, the equalisation, all these issues are raised very regularly with our opposite numbers representing the employers. So the frustration that you have at local level is very much understood and echoed here.

But we have to remind ourselves why we got here actually. The principle of CPD was agreed in 2003, and it was agreed by this conference. This conference agreed to introduce CPD. This conference agreed that as part of that pay settlement the previous long service pay arrangements should be scrapped and should be replaced with CPD. In retrospect (and there was a debate at the time) what we didn't do was ensure that the arrangements for CPD were put in place before conference was asked to agree that. So actually in 2005, myself and the AGS were part of an Executive Council team who then began to try to negotiate in that somewhat difficult situation. We had already agreed that long service pay was to be scrapped, we had agreed a timescale for it to be scrapped, and nobody had agreed what CPD actually meant or how it would be applied. But the principles were that it would be applied service by service, and the previous payments paid to wholetime firefighters in receipt of long service pay would be shared out among the entire workforce, including retained firefighters, on the basis of CPD. That's how the inequalities arose immediately. The single factor that leads to the discrepancy brigade by brigade is one factor. That's the number of retained employees within that Fire & Rescue Service. That is the only reason for the discrepancies in terms of the level of CPD payments.

Because those principles have been agreed by conference in 2003, that's how we've ended up with different Fire & Rescue Services paying different rates of CPD. We have argued consistently with the employers since then that that should not be the case. We have argued consistently with the employers that we should try to raise CPD to the highest rate. We have argued consistently with the employers that that could be done in a phased mechanism, for example, raising the lowest levels of CPD to a new minimum. The truth is the employers have completely refused to budge. So the complexities that people are raising are well understood. The question is how can we try to move this on?

We think Composite B offers a way forward. We do want to make one point about the final sentence of Composite B and that's about the need to equalise CPD payments and at the current highest rate paid, and then making it part of core pay.

Let's think about what the aims are in doing that. The aims by building it into core pay are to remove some of the hurdles that currently exist to people achieving CPD payments. Clearly, we want it at the highest rate. The difficulty with the issue as set out there, however, is that one relies on the other. Bringing CPD into core pay also relies on equalising it at the highest rate. Otherwise, the introduction of CPD into core pay would simply create 50 different rates of pay under the National Joint Council. Clearly we don't want that. So conference needs to appreciate that both of those tasks need to be undertaken together.

In terms of the issues raised by the NRC and by the West Midlands, we can certainly take those issues into our discussions: the concern particularly about the impact on women firefighters undertaking part-time work, and the impact on retained firefighters. We can certainly take those into the discussions.

I suppose the final point, President, would simply be that Mick's right this isn't the fact that these things haven't been raised with the employers; this is simply that the employers have refused to move on the issue throughout that period. So I think the discussions that we're having more broadly on pay are an opportunity to seek to improve things, are an opportunity to seek to discuss a new pay structure. That's within the NJC agreement in terms of broadening the role. I think that's why the whole importance of our tactics in how we pursue those discussions is so very important.

If Composite B carries, the resolution from the West Midlands will fall, but nevertheless I give Steve the assurance we will take the concerns raised within the resolution into those discussions at the NJC. Thanks.

### **THE PRESIDENT:**

West Midlands, right of reply.

### **BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):**

President, Conference, first I'd like to thank Andy and Cheshire for supporting our resolution. Secondly, I'd like to thank Matt for the assurances he's given about pursuing this in the future. I would presume that Composite B will carry and ours will fall. I disagree with the decision but I accept it. Good luck in your brigades trying to pursue pay parity with our brothers and sisters who are working part-time and pro rata. We can't achieve it now, I'm afraid. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, if Composite B carries then Resolution 5 falls. I now put Composite Resolution B to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Resolution 5 falls.

Conference, we're going to break for lunch so see you back in here at 1400 hours. Thank you.

*Break for lunch*

## AFTERNOON SESSION

### THE PRESIDENT:

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

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

Thank you, President. Programmes of Business, please, page 5 Resolution 6 has been withdrawn. Delegate changes: Leicestershire: delete Pete Trainor; insert Mark Drinkwater. Surrey: delete Jamie Devey; insert Graham Whitfield. Warwickshire: delete Kev Matthews; insert Adam Hemmings. Bedfordshire: delete Mark Lee; insert John Blackmore. Thank you, President.

### THE PRESIDENT:

Is that report agreed? *Agreed*

Conference, I now move on to Section F Trade Union and Labour Movement para.F10. At that point I'd like you all to give a very warm welcome to Shadow Fire Minister Karen Lee. *(Applause)*

Conference, obviously I'm very pleased to introduce Karen, Shadow Fire Minister. Karen was elected MP for Lincoln in June 2017, kicking out the sitting Tory MP. She was appointed as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell before getting the top job of Shadow Fire Minister in January 2018.

I'm pleased to say Karen had a proper job before becoming an MP. She worked as a nurse at Lincoln Hospital for 14 years and was a Unison rep. Since being elected to Parliament Karen has continued to work for the NHS as a nurse. Karen is a regular attendee at our FBU Parliamentary Support Group meetings. As we all know, she's a very good friend of the FBU. Without further ado, we'll have a warm welcome for Karen. Thank you. *(Applause)*

### SIS KAREN LEE MP (Labour Party):

Thank you all so much for that. Chair, President, thank you very much for inviting me to speak to you all today. Just before I speak I just have to pass on something from Jeremy Corbyn. We have a Whatsapp group and I put it on it this morning "Just travelling to Blackpool for the FBU conference" and he asked me to pass on his love and solidarity, and he wanted to remind you that the Firefighter mannequin that you all gave him stands proudly in his meeting room. So he's not here in body but he's here in spirit!

I wanted to say as well, I've been to so many Labour Party conferences and other events in Blackpool, it's really nice to have a reason to come back here. I actually love Blackpool, so thank you for asking me to come.

Conference, I was appointed as Labour's Shadow Fire Minister 16 months ago and I want to thank you all for the warm welcome you have given me since. I received loads of support from the Executive, regional brigades and the FBU Parliamentary Group. It's a real privilege to fight for firefighters in Parliament. It's a proud public sector profession and it's central to the safety of our communities up and down the country.

I've travelled to Crewe, Avon, Nottingham, London, Yorkshire, the Northeast, right across the country in fact, and everywhere I've been has been really friendly and very welcoming. The aim of my trips was to find out from the firefighters what the issues are that concern you the most. I could easily get my staff to do me a briefing but actually I thought it was a much better idea to get out there and talk to people on the ground, and find out directly from you. I wanted to be clear what Labour's priorities must be when, and not if, we win the next General Election.

I'm proud to be closely affiliated with a union. I'm actually quite defiant when Tory ministers mock my affiliation with a union in the chamber. I asked a question a couple of weeks ago about female firefighters' maternity pay and I got mocked by the Tory minister. But whatever! The Labour Party and the FBU share the common aim of a fully

resourced, staffed and paid for Fire Service. As we can see, from the past nine years of governance, the Tories' approach is absolutely the opposite. Instead, they choose to inflict austerity on the public sector and working people because of the failures of the financial sector. I stand by the FBU and put the firefighters first. When I say this I mean all firefighters: those on the frontline, those in the control rooms and those in a support capacity. A united workforce is the only way we can successfully advocate for better working conditions.

Conference, I'm proud to be part of a Labour Party which will scrap the Trade Union Act and it will roll out sectoral collective bargaining. As a fellow trade unionist I say to you: Unity is Strength. I support and welcome the work of the FBU. They've a proud record of campaigning against cuts and they've worked tirelessly to defeat the discriminatory pension policy and unfunded pay offer.

The representation given to members at the Grenfell Inquiry has been invaluable, and it's great to see such clear signs of solidarity there. I popped in there. I went in for one day and it was just heart-breaking to listen to some of it. It was just really not good.

But also, the FBU are an outward, internationalist union and from the union's support of Palestine (something close to my heart) to its current fight against the far right populism in places such as Brazil, it's got a proud history of standing up against injustice. I'd like to take this opportunity to send my solidarity to Miguel Roldan (who I've just seen) and to all of the firefighters who are rescuing migrants at sea, including the FBU's Brendan Woodhouse. Humanitarianism cannot only be applied when it's convenient. We must stand up against those on the right who want to divide and conquer, because together we're stronger.

I'd like to thank you all for the hard work that you do. You spend your entire professional careers dedicated to public service, and your daily work is characterised by selfless acts for the sake of others. I know what it's like to work in the public sector and as an ex-nurse I know that the job itself is more important than a pay packet at the end of the month. It's going home and knowing that you saved someone's life. That's what gets you up for work in the morning. I remember many times on a run of three or four 12.5 hour days waking up in the morning thinking "Oh my God, I don't want to get out of bed", but you do because you know what you do is valued. That's what gets you up for work and it's what drives you.

But let's be honest with ourselves. Under the current government your hard work is not being recognised and you should be properly resourced and rewarded for your courageous work. That brave work was demonstrated by the tireless efforts of the firefighters who responded to the Grenfell Tower fire. It was and it still is a national disgrace! Let me explicitly say this: it should never be allowed to happen again; and lessons have got to be learned.

I've been on the silent marches several times and I've seen the London Fire Brigade continue to support the people affected by the events of that terrible night. I visited the local community myself just really quietly the week after the fire. It was so clear to see that they were devastated. I went in the Latymer Christian Centre next door and they didn't know what the heck was going on. It was just awful to see.

I heard them as well when they came to Parliament just before Christmas in 2017, and it was really difficult listening to what they'd got to say, but it's so important that they're heard and that they continue to be heard by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Council and by the government. I'm not that clear that they're taking any notice, but they must be heard.

Two years on, the situation is dire and the re-homing of the survivors should have been completed within months. But instead, there are families still living in hotels or in short-term accommodation and it really is a damning indictment of the society that we live in that those who've lost everything are not provided with the support and the help that they need from their government.

The Fire Service response to the Grenfell Tower was nothing short of heroic, and the stories that I've heard from that night are horrifying. But the way in which the firefighters passionately committed to saving as many people as possible is inspirational. The building let the service down and firefighters' lives were endangered. But that didn't stop countless journeys of firefighters in and out of that building, which had become a death-trap. The picture of

firefighters sat outside the tower looking exhausted will always be in my mind. You only have to look at Matt's Twitter feed to see that picture right at the top. "This is what a trade unionist looks like." Never a truer word said.

For those who took the ultimate risk, they have been repaid with two years of restless nights by the Grenfell Inquiry, and it's completely abhorrent that firefighters are being used as the scapegoat for private companies, and the level of scrutiny has been unfair. I attended the Grenfell Inquiry, as I said earlier, to share solidarity with the Grenfell community and the firefighters who were testifying. What struck me was the tone and the inquisition afforded to the firefighters. Whilst I accept that no stone should be left unturned when trying to find out just what happened, the type of questioning was completely wrong.

The decisions on the night were made in a high pressure environment and every firefighter acted professionally and gave their utmost best to tackle that fire. Seeing firefighters breaking down in tears while giving evidence is heart-breaking and it's wrong.

Many parts of the media have used this display of emotion as an opportunity to attack firefighters for their response. I want to make this clear: the Labour Party and I stand in complete solidarity with the fire service. The inquiry has been set up in such a way that we hear about the night of the fire in phase one, and then the contextual information which led to the fire in phase two. This allows the inquiry and the media to round on the service rather than discussing how it was allowed to happen in the first place. This is why there's been a deafening silence on a reckless deregulation that enabled the building to be wrapped with combustible materials and left without effective fire safety measures such as sprinklers.

This inquiry needs to be asking, first of all, how has combustible cladding, the equivalent of 600 cars worth of petrol, been allowed to be installed as part of the tower's refurbishment? It needs to ask why are toxic retardants being allowed to be used which have left lasting poisonous damage to the surrounding area? It needs to ask why were panels installed in such a way that the fire climbed the side of the building. The list of questions is endless, but the Inquiry, after nearly a year, hasn't sufficiently answered any of those questions, or held those responsible to account for their decisions which created the disaster.

Urgent action was required immediately after Grenfell to safeguard communities at fire risk, but instead, two years after that fire, we've still got hundreds of buildings that are wrapped in similar dangerous, combustible materials. The government are aware of this but they're only taking slow, menial actions to safeguard the public.

The broken regulatory system poses a real threat to communities across the UK, but what's central to this increased threat is the surmounting reliance on the fire service to maintain public safety. You should be confident in your protocols and training when entering a building, confident in the regulations which are constructed to ensure that the building acts in a particular way when on fire. But instead, successive years of deregulation have created a situation of utter uncertainty. There should never been another Grenfell, but I've got to be honest here, there should never have been a Lakanal House or a Harrow Court. Lessons haven't been learned, and the government are showing no signs of addressing the fundamental issues which caused these fires. They must realise that the Fire & Rescue Services must be prepared for major incidents. Your safety shouldn't be left to the reckless hands of loose regulations which create dangerous situations. Fire services outside of London wouldn't have had the necessary capability to respond to a disaster like Grenfell, and it's important that we respond to the threat posed by reckless deregulation by considering what fire services across the UK would need to be prepared for another similar disaster, should that happen.

However, the government must urgently get to grips with the dangerous materials wrapped around buildings across the UK. The commitment last Thursday to fund the removal of private residential buildings' cladding wasn't good enough. It shouldn't be at the taxpayers' expense. Private companies should be footing the bill. The £200 million won't even cover the cost of remediation across the country. It's clear that the public's safety is not at the heart of any of government's fire safety policies because if it were, we would have had a root and branch review of the fire regulatory failures which actually led to Grenfell, and an assessment of what fire services across the country require to respond to a similar disaster.

The government knows that there is an immediate and life-threatening risk to communities across the country, but they still continue with their assault on fire service budgets. As I'm sure you'll know, central funding was cut by 30% between 2010 and 2015, with a further cut of 15% expected by 2020. It's disgraceful that you're expected to keep our communities safe on a shoestring budget. They disingenuously justify these cuts by pointing to reserves, rising reserves which obfuscate the financial state of the fire authorities. Whilst I believe that fire authorities should spend their reserves, I'd understand the rationale of the government if the fire service wasn't under such immense financial pressure because of cuts from Central Government, cuts which have led to fewer firefighters, fewer stations, fewer appliances, and increased response times, whilst also scrapping national standards of fire cover. Simply put, the funding model is broken.

The funding model is creating deep geographical inequalities across the UK, and the level of fire response a community receives shouldn't be a postcode lottery due to the government's policy of neglecting the need of councils. It's really important to note that we need local authorities to spend their reserves and resist the cuts to the service. We must use every weapon in our arsenal to oppose Tory austerity, and saving money cannot be justified whilst the service is being degraded and the public's safety being put at risk.

But I will tell you one thing, Conference, even though the workload has risen per firefighter, the wages certainly haven't and neither have the pension contributions. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that! While we observe issues with the fire service, the dedication and resilience of firefighters can never be brought into question, only the level of resources you are given to do your jobs.

For nine years, comrades, the Conservative Government has imposed their destructive austerity agenda on the fire service. This is not going to be news to anybody in this room, but the economic crash was not created by firefighters; it was the greed of the bankers and the establishment. The working people are being made to bear the burden.

The value that the fire service delivers to our communities is vital. This is something I fundamentally believe that the Conservatives don't understand. They either don't understand or they just ignore it. You can see this by the rationale of funding cuts. Their only response that I ever get on funding is: "fire incidents are reducing so funding is reducing". A bit like reserves and Nick Hurd, isn't it?

I've spoken to many of you up and down the UK, and I've received the exact same response to this stance that it doesn't tell the full story. You've responded to emergency medical incidents, you respond to road traffic collisions, you respond to terrorist emergencies, and you respond to flooding. You undertake fire safety inspections. You're a vital community emergency asset. Your value cannot be determined by fire incidents alone.

It's also important to acknowledge the threat of fire is changing. It's no longer restricted to traditional forms due to the effects of climate change. The UK has suffered nearly 100 wildfires in 2019 and it's only May. This is the worst year on record. It's concerning too that the previous record has only been set last year. There's a really dangerous trend emerging. Whilst there needs to be Central Government action on climate change in the form of a green deal, we can't sit back and let fire brigades in areas at risk be unprepared. The fire service response to the Saddleworth and Tameside Moor fire relied on firefighters across the UK. Whilst it's brilliant that firefighters were deployed so efficiently, such a large scale response put business as usual cover in jeopardy in other areas across the country. This threat has been created by the cutting of fire service resources to the bone for nine years and the subsequent loss of around 11,000 firefighter posts.

As I've already said, you're more than just a fire response unit; you're a community emergency asset and you respond to flooding. Rising sea levels will increase the threat and frequency of flooding and you must be prepared to respond.

Whilst the Labour Party is in opposition we must continue fighting the back door cuts to the service with all our energy. We must expose the cuts made by Central Government, resist integrated risk management plans, which downgrade our local services, and oppose the takeovers of fire services by police and crime commissioners. With a united front they cannot win. The Labour Party made clear commitments in the 2017 manifesto, but after almost a decade of sustained degradation by the Conservative Party we must go further.

In government Labour will halt cuts to the fire service, we will prioritise the public's safety and look to reinforce areas across the UK which have been devastated by years of underfunding. We will reinstate separate governance arrangements for the Fire & Rescue Service and the Police service. We recognise that the fire service shouldn't be a junior partner, and its reserves shouldn't be used to plug gaps in other services. To maintain public trust there must be clear operational distinctiveness between the two services.

Our last manifesto committed to recruiting 3,000 new firefighters, but due to the severity of the cuts in the last nine years Labour in government will undertake a comprehensive review into staffing levels. It's crucial that we ensure that the fire service has the personnel power that it needs to keep our communities safe.

As a proud trade unionist I fundamentally believe that you should be supported and rewarded properly for the work that you do. I'm working with both Matt and John McDonnell to look at how we create a fair pay system which rewards you for your dedication to public service. A fair pay award for firefighters is long overdue, and it's time that it reflects your vital importance in our society. It's not just your pay that should be improved. I've heard from many of you that you don't feel safe due to the cuts made in the name of austerity. As I referenced earlier, we must consider how we ensure a statutory fire regulatory framework which keeps firefighters and communities safe. Reforms must address loopholes which allow dangerous materials to be installed on buildings. As part of the Shadow Home team I'm discussing with Diane Abbott how the fire service's proactive work can be advanced and how the current fire inspector programmes may provide a foundation which can be built upon.

It's vitally important to acknowledge that your safety goes beyond just the building you enter. It's also the occupational hazards which affect your long-term health. As an ex-nurse I believe more can be done to prioritise the long-term health of firefighters. Cancer rates for firefighters are much higher than the national average, and you need effective medical support and screening which supports that risk.

Safety also relates to the level of firefighters riding appliances. I've heard from my MP colleagues that in some areas across the UK only three firefighters are riding appliances, and the expected five riders policy has been progressively degraded by integrated risk management plans which have been forced to respond to the savage Central Government cuts. Labour committed, in the 2017 manifesto, to consult on national minimum standards for the fire service and we stand by that commitment. This will inform our next steps for replenishing the fire service.

As I mentioned earlier in my speech, you respond to flooding, but I simply cannot believe that it's not the service's statutory duty to respond. How can you be expected to prepare effectively for flooding threats when the service isn't afforded the necessary Central Government support to do so? A Labour Government will give the Fire & Rescue Service a statutory duty to respond to flooding and include this within the remit of the service when undertaking future reviews.

I'm serious when I say this: a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour Party and a Corbyn-led government will not let the service down, I promise you that. You are integral to the public's safety and we recognise the importance of your outreach work. I look forward to working with the union in government and righting the wrongs of the past nine years. With a government in chaos we are building on the 2017 manifesto as we speak. Together we can build the world's finest fire service fit for the 21st century. We have the personnel to do it. Let's just make sure they've got the resources. Solidarity, comrades! *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks very much, Karen. I've dealt with lots of fire ministers – they come and go very quickly in certain governments. I've dealt with Labour fire ministers and Tory fire ministers, and I've dealt with Labour Shadow fire ministers before. Our Parliamentary Group that Karen referred to was always a bit of an outsider group, to be honest. As we know, John McDonnell was the founding secretary of it. I think many of them were seen a bit as troublemakers, to be frank. So it is a really weird position when actually at our Parliamentary Group suddenly the leader of the Labour Party just pops in to say hello and sit and listen to the discussion, or the Shadow Chancellor.

Karen, as the Shadow fire minister is a regular attendee at our Parliamentary Group, which means we can have that regular dialogue through our Parliamentary Group of MPs as well as the work that myself, the President, Dave Green and others do alongside your own lobbying and campaigning on behalf of your brigades, regions and sections. I think that relationship is really powerful. It is a real opportunity. We are going to go into a discussion after this on the question of our relationship with a future Labour Government. I'm sure conference appreciates the commitment that Karen has given. We look forward to working with her, first of all to see the back of this shower, who are creating utter chaos in Parliament currently, and the return of a Labour Government, and to see Karen Lee as the fire minister.

We've got a little gift for you, Karen, to lug home if you can manage to do that. Thanks very much for coming, on behalf of conference. Cheers. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, come to order. I now call Executive Council Policy Statement Rebuilding Our Fire & Rescue Service – What We Need from a Labour Government, with amendments from Hereford & Worcester, and Resolution 63 Labour Party Councillor Fire & Rescue Service Charter from Cheshire. The Executive Council support the resolution and the Hereford & Worcester amendments to the EC policy statement. They are going to be taken both in the same debate and both can carry as amended. General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks, President. I think it's very useful that Karen is here to hear this discussion of our conference deliberating on the state of our fire service and what we would like to see from a future Labour Government.

Conference, it falls to us, as the voice of firefighters across the UK, to ensure that our service and our profession has a viable and secure future. Our union is the professional voice of the Fire & Rescue Service because our members are the experts who work in it and who deliver that service across the country. We have to be that professional voice because, sadly, others have failed in their role in doing so.

What Tory-led governments have done to our service over the past nine years is an utter disgrace; they have wrecked our service. I have to say, much of that damage (and we don't shy away from saying this to Karen and to others) started under the last Labour Government. Karen made reference to the abolition of national standards, sadly, it was a Labour Government that abolished national standards in the Fire & Rescue Service.

It's also a disgrace that chief officers and principal management, through the guise of CFOA or now the NFCC, have overseen and compromised with and accepted a decade of austerity in the Fire & Rescue Service. We know that one in five firefighter jobs have gone, we know that every single service across the UK, every single duty system that our members work, have suffered as a result of those attacks.

The purpose of this Executive Council policy statement, however, is not to list a litany of failures and setbacks. Our job is to think about the future and think about how we can try to shape the Fire & Rescue Service for our communities under the potential of a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour Government. The Executive Council wants to update you on the work that is already underway.

The context in which we're discussing that is worth reminding ourselves. This union provided strong support for Jeremy Corbyn when he stood for leader of the Labour Party in 2015. We did so – and we debated it here several times – because Jeremy Corbyn and others around him including John McDonnell had stood with this union through thick and thin over many, many years. Even when it was unpopular in the Parliamentary Labour Party to do so, they stood with this union, they stood with our members.

You will remember also that in November 2015 our conference, a special conference, took a historic decision to reaffiliate the FBU to the Labour Party after a decade of disaffiliation following the anger that followed the 2002/2003 pay dispute.

Conference will also recall that this union stood firmly from the start side by side with Jeremy Corbyn when regrettably some Labour MPs tried to see the back of him, tried to depose him. We did so because we understood

that a Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn offered the best opportunity in a generation for the sorts of policies that we want to see, the sorts of policies that would improve the lives of our members, or other trade unionists and of working people across the country. That opportunity would emerge with a Jeremy Corbyn-led Labour Government.

We recognise that a Labour Government could not simply undo the damage done by previous Westminster governments, but could also put the whole service on an entirely new footing. Just think about the possibilities that that opens up for us. One of the outcomes of that work was the 2017 Labour manifesto. For the first time the Labour Party committed itself explicitly to supporting the Fire & Rescue Service, to investing in the Fire & Rescue Service, and to creating jobs in the Fire & Rescue Service. It committed to the idea of UK-wide standards, it agreed to look at all aspects of the service and to ensure that the voice of this union, the voice of the professionals delivering that service, was heard throughout that process. For the first time, we've had real commitments that a Labour Government will invest and will listen to the views of firefighters. That in itself is a tremendous gain, considering how we feel we've been treated by politicians over many, many years, and the views of many of our members' own politicians as a result of that treatment.

But we can't rest on our laurels. We have to think about a forthcoming election. We have to think about what we want to see in a manifesto from the Labour Party during such an election. With this policy statement: *Rebuilding Our Fire & Rescue Service – What We Need from a Labour Government*, we want to put on record some of the detailed key demands that we want of a future Labour Government. These indicate a wide range of issues that have been raised and carried at our conference over recent years which you as delegates, on behalf of your members, have instructed us to raise in various forums. We think that this document can be a big help to Labour in developing its manifesto and to a future Labour Government in implementing that manifesto. So that a new fire minister, hopefully Karen Lee, can crack on with that job from day one, because we need to move quickly to try to rebuild the service after years of cuts and devastation.

Of course, a manifesto is a short document; we can't have a huge document, but we need to go into the detail and develop the detail that we want from a future Labour Government and from a future fire minister. Discussions with the Labour Party are continuing, but we believe that they will go even further than they did in the last manifesto in making the sorts of commitments that we want to see to protect and develop our Fire & Rescue Service for the future. Those discussions will continue. But it's important for us as an organisation to put more detail into the proposals we are suggesting.

We also see it as important that you at local level, through our branches, brigade, regional and sectional committees, have a say in this process. So the policy is not just being decided from the top; the policy suggests a process by which we engage with you directly. I refer conference to the section at the top of page 2 assessing the needs in each Fire & Rescue Service. This policy document commits us to undertaking a review, through the structures of the Fire Brigades Union, into each Fire & Rescue Service across the country, to assess what we need as a minimum to start rebuilding our Fire & Rescue Service. It commits every brigade, sectional and regional committee, every official of this union to carry out that assessment and to work with us to produce the work necessary. We will compile that information and bring it together to allow us to have that discussion with the Labour Party and with the future ministers.

The sorts of things we want you to think about are these: if you've got an unlawful duty system in your service, then what would it take in terms of the numbers of jobs to be created to get rid of that unlawful duty system and at the same time protect 24 hour emergency fire cover? A very practical, realistic job that you can do, brigade by brigade, station by station, control room by control room. What would it need in each control room to provide the sort of safe systems that would allow us not to face the sort of criticism that we faced in relation to the Grenfell Tower fire in that public inquiry? We need safe staffing systems in our controls, on our fire engines and in our fire stations.

If we're going to expand, as we have, the sort of work we're doing, if we're going to take account of changes in how our buildings are built, constructed, then what sort of fire safety regime do we need? What sort of fire safety departments? What have they done to your fire safety departments over the past ten years? What do we need to do to start rebuilding? Again, that lies fundamentally behind the Grenfell Tower disaster.

If we're going to develop a new generation of firefighters, what do we need in our training departments, to provide in-house, publicly owned, publicly accountable training on a professional level to the Fire & Rescue Service? Let's get rid of the Mickey Mouse training courses that they are introducing in some of our Fire & Rescue Services. Let's find out which is the best standard of training provided to new entrants into the Fire & Rescue Service and demand that that is the level of training that we want to be applied across the board to new entrants into the Fire & Rescue Service. And what is the impact of that on our training departments? How many new trainers do we need as a result of that?

So we're asking you, Conference, to commit to that as a major piece of work, so that we've got an evidence-based case to take to the Labour Party, to take to the Shadow Fire Minister, and to take to Karen as a future fire minister.

In closing, Conference, if we do this right, we will have a much clearer plan of the work for a new Westminster government and, for that matter, for the devolved administrations as well. Actually, we'll have a much clearer plan to propose to any government in the Autumn when they begin to make their spending plans. To repeat, we have a unique opportunity to shape the political agenda for the coming years for the Fire & Rescue Service. We have a unique opportunity to put the Fire Brigades Union at the heart of that process.

Some of you will have heard Jeremy Corbyn making reference to the post-war Labour Government, the Attlee Government elected in 1945. That government also had a huge impact on what was then called the Fire Service. It created the 1947 Fire Services Act. That was the fire service that I joined, that others on this table joined. It was a fire service that was a world-leading fire service. People came from all over the world to Moreton-in-Marsh, an institution created at the pushing of this organisation, the Fire Brigades Union – now sadly privatised. I think Jeremy Corbyn's reference to that government gives us an opportunity to say to a future Labour Government: you should have the same vision of change that we saw in 1945, about creating new, democratic, publicly owned and publicly accountable public services for our local communities. The Fire & Rescue Service needs to be at the heart of that, and the Fire Brigades Union needs to be, and will be, at the heart of that discussion. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

I now call Hereford & Worcester to move their amendments. Trevor, are you going to move both of them together? Yes. For clarity, Conference, the EC are opposing amendment 1 and give qualified support to amendment 2. The GS will outline the opposition in the response to the debate.

## **BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY (Hereford & Worcester):**

President, Conference, Karen, I am moving amendments 1 and 2 to the Executive Council's policy statement *Rebuilding our Fire & Rescue Service – What We Need from a Labour Government*. Conference, the Executive Council are asking that you oppose both of our proposed amendments. Firstly, in terms of amendment 1 at the bottom of page 2 "to include metro mayors", the opposition will come from the view that conference does not yet have a position on metro mayors. As you are aware, GMC are under control of metro mayors, and other brigades are also under the threat. Brigade officials from GMC will tell you of the devastating effects their influence has had on the service and their members. This is made very clear in their emergency resolution.

Conference, whether we support metro mayors is indeed a decision for conference today, but surely by not including metro mayors in the policy statement it indicates our support. One way or another conference will decide today whether we support metro mayors or not. I urge you to support this amendment.

Secondly, amendment 2 and the addition of point 19 gives a direction that we would like to take in terms of pay. This is not asking too much, but importantly, a pay formula which supports a decent standard of living for all firefighters. The opposition for this amendment is likely to come from the idea that we cannot pick and choose who has a say in our pay, and that this is done at the National Joint Council. Conference, we acknowledge this, and any discussions that will take place around pay will continue to be done at the NJC. This policy statement is only what we would like from a Labour Government. The clue is in the title really.

As we're all aware, we can't improve our pay if an appropriate level of funding isn't released by Central Government. This was one of the main reasons that we didn't accept the 2% pay increase in September 2017, because that

would have had to have been funded locally and resulted in job losses. The General Secretary said that this is still an issue, when he moved Emergency Resolution 1. This gave way to a lengthy debate around pay and officials, when a number of brigades called for action and support of a pay campaign and included mention of a pay formula. So if we did have a Labour Government why shouldn't we raise the issue of pay?

Conference, we ask that you support amendments 1 and 2. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Cheshire to second the EC policy statement and also to move Resolution 63. We're getting a little bit confusing. I have got a seconder for the EC policy statement who is coming up now. I will get a seconder for the amendments.

### **Resolution 63 LABOUR PARTY COUNCILLOR FIRE AND RESCUE CHARTER**

***Conference recognises the budget pressures on Fire Authorities across the UK caused largely by the lack of a long term investment strategy by central Government to underpin the demands of a modern Fire and Rescue Service.***

***However, it is a source of huge frustration and quite often anger amongst our Members that Labour-led Fire Authorities sometimes appear to be leading the way in cutting establishments, closing stations, and reducing the number of frontline appliances and firefighters whilst ignoring the evidence presented locally and nationally by the FBU when carrying out these savage cuts, cuts often undertaken without adequately holding Chief Fire Officers to account.***

***Conference calls on the Executive Council to work with the Parliamentary Labour Group to establish a Labour Party Councillor Fire and Rescue Charter, specifically for those in elected office who take up a place of governance on structures relating to the Fire and Rescue Service.***

***This charter could include, for example, a requirement to engage in good faith with elected Officials, a duty to apply robust scrutiny to any plans presented by the Fire and Rescue Service or management and oppose proposals that would increase the risk to firefighters or the public.***

***This charter would encourage a policy of the FBU supporting only those Labour Councillors who will oppose the cuts agenda and work with the FBU starting at Constituency Labour Party level and also to actively promote Labour Councillors to gain places on Fire Authorities to support local Officials opposing reductions in establishments and fire cover.***

**CHESHIRE**

### **BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):**

Thank you, President, we are seconding the Executive Council policy statement Rebuilding our Fire & Rescue Service – What We Need from a Labour Government. Comrades, since our conference took the decision to reaffiliate to the Labour Party we have seen, I think it's fair to say, unprecedented access to and support from the leader's office and from many members of the Parliamentary Party right across the country. As has been said, we have a once in a lifetime opportunity for a Labour Government that's genuinely socialist in nature. Our links have enabled us to be at the heart of decision-making within the Party and means that we can be part of shaping future policy. But I do think it's absolutely right that we set out our demands in return. In return for our support, whether that's financial support or many members and officials that are out campaigning in elections, we do expect to see a future Labour Government deliver.

Our profession and our industry has, to be frank, been vandalised by deregulation and gross under-funding. To make matters worse, we not only have in effect four different governments overseeing the UK fire service, we then have a myriad of government models at local government level. This is simply not sustainable.

The demands set out within the policy statement are much-needed, and it also mandates and commits officials, through committees and structures to build on those demands. We support the statement. Let's all work to ensure

that we get a Labour Government, ensure it delivers the transformation for our industry that it desperately needs. I second. *(Applause)*

Turning to our Resolution 63, the intent of this resolution is to further the political support for our profession and our services at a local level, whilst also having a mechanism to replace those who are complicit in cuts and attacks on our members' terms and conditions. We know that local government has seen the worst cuts of all government spending, we know that this shambolic and failing government has continued to drive its austerity agenda, which is a political and ideological cause rather than an economic policy.

But that does not excuse the actions of some Labour councillors from our movement and our party from being complicit in those cuts and attacks. There are many areas of society whose value and contribution cannot be measured in cost alone. Some Labour councillors would do well to remember that.

We need a mechanism to hold Labour councillors in positions of power or elected office with a remit for fire to account. We need to bring about a requirement for them to sit down and work with the FBU, to examine every budget line, stretch every pound, to call out at local level the under-funding of their service rather than just implement the recommendations of chief fire officers without any robust scrutiny or challenge.

By having this charter, with the support of the Parliamentary Group, we can get local regional boards to adopt our policy and thereby bring about the much-needed accountability and responsibility through the party structures.

Conference, in our resolution we have a specific aim and we show how to achieve it. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, now the EC policy statement is seconded, is amendment 1 from Hereford & Worcester seconded? Steve.

## **BRO STEVE PRICE-HUNT (West Midlands):**

President, Conference, I'm speaking in support of Hereford & Worcester's amendment 1. In the West Midlands we're expecting the Statutory Instrument for the TUPE transfer to the combined authority to be laid in Westminster on 6 June of this year. There's a lot of work going on and we're hopeful that that won't be late. Conference, the Labour Party have got a clear position on the Police & Crime Commissioner. The Fire Brigades Union have got a clear position on the Police & Crime Commissioner. As Trevor said, we're yet to have a position on the combined authorities and the metro mayors. Now is the time to make that decision.

The threats from the Police & Crime Commissioner are very similar to those of the combined authorities. I have just literally written a few down here now: merging of roles, our role maps. I've already discussed at conference one job for one person. Our reserves will be at risk. Merging of estates, i.e. closures; threat to the NJC and our role when moving to combined authority within the NJC and the most important one, one that is fundamental to trade unionists – democracy. We in the West Midlands do not believe that the single employer model is democratic and it doesn't allow for accountability. Conference, support this amendment. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, do we have a seconder for amendment 2? Seconder? Seconder for amendment 2? *Formally* Thank you. We need a seconder for Resolution 63. Seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. Anybody? No? General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, as the President set out, in terms of the resolution from Cheshire, we support that. On amendment 1, the reason the Executive Council is asking conference to oppose that is that we think it blurs the particular point we have regarding Police & Crime Commissioners. It is a very explicit and particular point regarding the role and, as we discussed this morning, the neutrality of the Fire & Rescue Service. It's one where we have won that argument with the Labour Party leadership already.

In terms of metro mayors, the Executive Council (and I'm sure this will have been reported back) have a general position that we opposed mayoral systems full stop. So we opposed the shift towards the idea that a single mayor would have the powers that the mayors are increasingly getting in terms of the mayoral system in London and the mayoral system elsewhere. So we do have a general opposition to that approach in any case. We would certainly feed that through into any policy consultation.

But we are concerned that, particularly on the question of PCC's, which has been driven so hard by this government, we are in danger of watering that point down by means of the amendment. So we urge conference to oppose that.

In relation to amendment 2, we are recommending qualified support to that. The qualification is around some of the points that Trevor touched on himself. That is that the amendment says that a future Labour Government should reintroduce a pay formula. A future Labour Government cannot. Well, it could do if it altered the legislation on our bargaining arrangements. Under the current arrangements a Labour Government, or any government, cannot introduce a pay formula. If they did so, they would be taking away our bargaining rights. So it's an important point that we've made consistently with governments. Under the legislation a minister has the right to impose bargaining arrangements. We know that one of those threats is about pay review bodies. We're opposed to that. We're defending our national collective bargaining arrangements. I think that is an important point to make to a future Labour Government: that we don't want that interference in collective bargaining in the Fire & Rescue Service. What we do want is the necessary funding to allow our employers to introduce a pay formula within the Fire & Rescue Service. So I think there is an important difference between the two positions. We think we can live with qualified support in relation to amendment 2. Thanks, President.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put amendment 1 from Hereford & Worcester to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now put amendment 2 from Hereford & Worcester to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

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

I now put Resolution 63 from Cheshire to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, I now ask you to turn to page 5 in the Programme of Business. I now call Resolution 9 Pay Parity for Emergency Fire Control moved by North Yorkshire. The Executive Council are seeking withdrawal or remit. Sorry, the Executive Council are seeking remit.

## **Resolution 9 PAY PARITY FOR EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROL**

***Conference demands that the Executive Council mount an immediate campaign to raise political awareness of the lifesaving work of Emergency Fire Control, with the aim of achieving pay parity with equivalent firefighting roles, this should culminate in time for the 2020 NJC pay claim.***

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

## **BRO STEVE HOWLEY (North Yorkshire):**

Conference, I understand that a campaign to raise awareness and explore pay parity for control staff was agreed a couple of years ago at conference. However, this is no good if it doesn't culminate in something tangible for our sisters and brothers in control. Our members in North Yorkshire are disappointed with the silence on this issue and what seems to be a lack of movement.

Last year I, like the rest of conference, listened to the very emotional accounts of our control comrades who dealt with the terrible Grenfell tragedy. This brought many of us to tears. I do not think I, as a firefighter, could cope with

the stresses and pressures control operators have to deal with on a daily basis. I have no doubt control members save as many lives as firefighters year on year. I defy anybody to tell us they don't deserve the same pay. It's a disgrace we are here today and control operators are still not on equal pay as firefighters.

Conference, our control members in North Yorkshire do not believe there is a need to justify the work they do is equal to firefighters as they fully believe the evidence is already there, as I've commented, the Grenfell tragedy quite clearly points out. Control, like the rest of us, have also undergone countless years of cuts through the austerity-driven agenda of this Tory government. That has increased pressure on our control operators, and it has seen their workloads double.

Conference, this is about every member of this union standing in unity and demanding equal pay for the life-saving work that we all do. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Seconder? Yes.

## **BRO PHIL WILLIAMS (NRC):**

President, Conference, MP, we are seconding Resolution 9 Pay Parity for Emergency Fire Control. Conference, following the 2003 pay agreement, retained members finally saw parity of pay with our wholetime colleagues. Part of the campaign around this was for parity of pay for our fire control members too. We are here, over 15 years later and despite the work being done to progress this parity, it has not been achieved. It is consistently thrown up as an argument against such parity that their work is not the same as firefighters and therefore should not be paid at the same rate. Conference, this argument is flawed and looks at the issue from the wrong perspective. We are all aware that the job is different. It is, however, no less important than the roles that many of us here fill. We cannot do our job without them.

Many of us here today would have been at conference last year and cannot fail to have been moved by the speeches given by our control members then. The impact of having to deal with working in such stressful environments was clearly illustrated and left our committees and delegations under no illusion that there is only one moral position to take on this issue.

The NRC thank North Yorkshire for bringing this resolution to conference and would urge us all to support it unanimously. I second. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks. That's open for debate. Yes.

## **SIS CAROLINE STURGESS (NWC):**

I am speaking in support of Resolution 9 Pay Parity for Emergency Fire Control. Conference, let it be said: without the support of our emergency fire control room we would not be here, we would not be doing the job we do today. We all acknowledge that the horrendous things that they hear over the phone lines, in their control room is what we see on the incident grounds. If we can physically see and we can remedy our actions on the incident ground, this is what our control staff are not seeing until we get to debrief, or until we get to talk to them through the control lines. It's so important that we support this resolution right here. They are saving lives, they are firefighters with us all. I'd just like to support this resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Philippa, Jennifer, Kate.

## **SIS KATE SCOTT (Dorset & Wiltshire):**

Thank you, John. First off, who's running the book as to whether I get up more than Alan Chinn-Shaw! *(Laughter)*

Steve from West Mids said something this morning that I wrote down: pay parity – basic and fundamental principle of trade unionism. I think we can all agree on that. We've had a discussion about CPD. Whilst there's already a certain percentage of our members and our staff who aren't paid the same, it doesn't really sit well.

Regardless of pay parity, we do need to do more to raise the political profile of control staff, which this resolution does also talk about. The amount of times I hear that control staff have not been invited to or attended brigade committee meetings, or that their issues are regularly put at the end of agendas! As officials we need to work to raise the profile of fire control staff and ensure control members realise the options they have for raising their own profile. Otherwise, we risk control members leaving the FBU or just becoming disenfranchised.

Only this month an FBU member (I won't name and shame), in a misguided attempt at proactiveness emailed every single control room in the country suggesting they join a control-specific organisation with the aim of improving conditions for control staff. I did point out politely this is our job and as an FBU member maybe he should be getting involved in the ways that we're doing it.

We're obviously not doing it well enough. If we're not communicating how control staff can get involved in arguments, that's clearly on us. Control staff around the country are now not only doing their basic work; they are also monitoring CCTV, operating council car park barriers, taking out of hours highways calls, dealing with falls response, lifeline panic buttons. That's just touching the surface of what they are doing.

As officials we need to be challenging this. You can guarantee that when that type of rubbish comes into control rooms it starts creeping in for the rest of us as well. Control staff don't need pizza parties, certificates, or awards do's. They need sustained investment, appropriate crewing, respect and pay that reflects their work.

I know I normally give the EC a hard time, but they have actually been working with the CSNC on this, so I'm not going to say support or oppose because I am aware that there has been work done. So I'll leave that to Sherri. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):**

President, Conference, Honoured Guest, I'm speaking in support of Resolution 9 from North Yorkshire: Pay Parity for Emergency Fire Controls. Conference, to be clear, our fire control staff members are the frontline of the UK Fire & Rescue Service. They are the first point of contact for members of our communities in their time of need.

Conference, I've heard some of my own members say that the job's different, that the hazards and risks are different, and therefore our control staff shouldn't be paid the same as operational fire crews. But let's just put things into context. I look at my own service area of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. There we have a command and control room of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. I, from an officer section perspective, have watched commander members who over a day and night shift have the responsibility for the mobilisation of fire crews across 127 different stations, stations which protect over 2.4 million people spread over a variety of varied geographical locations, risks, including Scotland's largest city, Glasgow. They are there 24 hours a day supporting our operational firefighters and officers whilst providing lifesaving fire survival guidance in some of the most horrific, highly pressurised circumstances. We know that from the evidence that the London fire control operators provided at conference.

As incident commanders we would not be able to deal with some of the complex incidents that we deal with on a day to day basis. They are an integral part of the incident command system. Within our section we have control officers working the flexi-duty system across the UK – some mobilising as tactical advisers or crewing incident support rooms alongside operational officers.

Let's look at the managerial duties. We have watch, station, group and sometimes area commanders performing the same role as operational colleagues. Conference, please support this resolution, support our control members, and help deliver pay parity which has been long overdue. I support. *(Applause)*

**SIS SHERRI KITSON (CSNC):**

President, Conference, I'm speaking in support of the North Yorkshire resolution on pay parity and Steve, thank you for bringing it to conference, and Phil, thank you for seconding it. The Control Staff National Committee obviously wholeheartedly support the sentiment of the resolution. We respectfully ask North Yorkshire to remit. The reason is, like Kate said, the CSNC and the EC are doing work and by remitting it, it would allow that work to continue. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY** (Hereford & Worcester):

Conference, President, Karen, I wasn't going to speak on this but I should announce that I'm a firefighter – from control. 22 years I've been in fire control and I think it's really important that we get a grip on our control members. We're losing a lot of support in there.

My mate, who's just taken over from me in control as the secretary, is doing a fantastic job of getting people on side. We're 85% membership now. But I think it's very easy to forget the job we do. It's extremely easy to forget it. I think it's about time it was brought right to the forefront. We are firefighters. I get really cross when somebody calls me an operator because it's rank to role. I'm a firefighter brackets control. Please support this resolution. I think it's a worthy cause. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Dave Green, National Officer.

**BRO DAVE GREEN** (National Officer):

Thank you, President. A really interesting debate, some really important points. Honestly, we've been taking them on board for a while, which is why we've been working very hard with the CSNC to try to get some kind of resolution on this to bring it forward. I do appreciate CSNC asking for remittal. This is not about kicking the can further down the road. We have authorised and received an initial report from Income Data Research. They've produced a report which we're looking at currently. We held a meeting just prior to conference where we considered it. There are some areas that we need to firm up; there are some areas we need clarification on. Literally last week we received a further report with some amendments to it. So we need to convene another meeting with the CSNC and head office. What we're going to do then is to try to get a way forward.

The CSNC are aware of the obstacles that we have in this and we're trying to work hard to overcome those. I think just let us get on with this work. I can assure you that we will be reporting back with some definitive progress very shortly. That's a commitment that both myself, the Executive Council and also crucially the CSNC are giving. It does need to be resolved.

I am asking that North Yorkshire remit it and we will get on with the work, I can assure you. Thank you, Conference. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

North Yorkshire right of reply.

**BRO STEVE HOWLEY** (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, having listened to Dave and to Sherri I reluctantly remit this at this time. I appreciate the commitment that you've given us. What I would ask is that as soon as you've had this next meeting, you put something out to control staff so we can update them on the progress. At the minute, as it said in my resolution, it just seems that this work has been ongoing for some time and nobody feels that it's moving or where it's going. If you could just give us an update once you've got one that would be appreciated. I remit. Thank you for all your support on this resolution. I think what it has proved in the debate is it is a really important issue and something that we can't let go and can't keep leaving to slide for much longer. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. Conference, I now call Resolution 10 moved by Lancashire. They've agreed to remit with the right to speak. Lancashire, I invite you to the rostrum.

**Resolution 10 END PAY DISPARITY**

***Conference notes that it is not a surprise to note that in 2019 some of our Members may become pregnant. What Conference will be surprised to note, is that maternity pay across Fire and Rescue Services nationally is a lottery based on the success of local negotiations to enhance the baseline Grey Book maternity pay provision where Members pay drops from the first day of maternity equating to 90% pay for the first 6 weeks, which drops again to 50% pay for a further 12 weeks***

*then drops again to statutory maternity pay for a remaining 8 weeks. Such low income provisions leave many of our Members no choice but to return to work early to avoid financial poverty and in some cases where they may not be physically safe or mentally ready to do so.*

*Imagine that same Member sprains their ankle, whether on or off duty it makes no difference to their pay provision. However the difference between maternity and sprained ankle in this situation is that the Member is provided with the baseline Grey Book sickness pay provision of 6 months full pay which drops to 50% pay for a further 16 weeks. In this situation the Member is afforded a reasonable amount of time to rest and repair then return to duty without the pressure to return back early when unfit or unsafe to do so.*

*Conference calls upon the Executive Council to revisit the Grey Book maternity pay provisions and enhance this to 6 months full pay which drops to 50% pay for a further 16 weeks, then drops again to statutory maternity pay for a remaining 8 weeks. Enhancing the minimum maternity pay will provide FBU Officials a firm starting point to negotiate enhancements from this base line, providing a fairer position to end the disparity between Members pay. We ask that this enhancement commences as soon as practicable and reported upon by Conference 2020 at the latest.*

**LANCASHIRE**

**BRO KEVIN WILKIE** (Lancashire):

President, Conference, can I first congratulate the fire brigades who have set a standard for other brigades to reach. This resolution was to highlight the point that our sisters are unfairly treated when taking maternity leave. This should be a joyful occasion, but yet, in the 21st century, this is still one of the most stressful times. Suffering financial loss for our sisters and their families during maternity leave only contributes to the stress.

Lancashire would like to remit this resolution and work alongside the National Women's Committee and our national officer to bring about a revised minimum standard for maternity provisions and terms and conditions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Tam McFarlane.

**BRO TAM McFARLANE** (National Officer):

Thanks, President. Thank you to Lancashire for the positive discussions we've had over this resolution and for remitting it as well. There are clearly some basic issues regarding it that we have discussed. That's why we have asked them to remit. Of course, we give that commitment to work with Lancashire and the NWC to produce a better policy in regard to this.

I tell you the basic facts behind this. It actually relates to an article that appeared in Firefighter this month which Karen featured. It's the ongoing issue of maternity leave in the UK Fire & Rescue Service really needs to be dealt with. The standards we set have to be set by the Fire Brigades Union. There is only one proper standard that the union should be setting in regard to maternity leave and it's the one that's been developed by the NWC for a number of years. That's what we should be pushing at a local level. It's not aspirational. This standard has been met in several FRS's. Avon, etc, have set it. It's something that should be taken on and pushed as hard as we possibly can.

For my sins I sit on the Inclusive Fire Services Group, an NJC body that's meant to be pushing inclusivity as they call it. I have to sit with principal managers and senior HR directors. They talk a great game but the reality is when they then go back into the brigades in regard to women firefighters, as soon as they get pregnant, they treat them like aliens. The amount of bad experiences that our members are suffering through maternity in the fire service is something that has to be dealt with.

So we are revamping this policy. I'll put my hands up, it's been taking us too long. We will get this revamped policy out. That's the standard we need to set. I would urge conference and every brigade to be pushing the NWC standard for maternity across every FRS in the country. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tam. Conference, I now call Resolution 11 Scotland. They have agreed to withdraw it with the right to speak. Scotland, come to the rostrum.

### **Resolution 11 PAYMENT OF AGREED PAY AWARDS**

***This Conference is appalled that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has refused to backdate agreed pay awards to Members who retired between the implementation of the backdated award and the date upon which the back payment is made. These Members have given their labour over these periods and should be remunerated to the same level as their colleagues have been.***

***Therefore this Conference instructs the employees' side of the NJC to raise this matter with the employers' side at the first possible instance and failing a satisfactory resolution, then begin a campaign of lobbying elected members to resolve this matter.***

**SCOTLAND**

## **SIS SEONA HART** (Scotland):

President, Conference, this is a pertinent issue for members in Scotland, which is why we brought this to conference. We believe that the timescales on pay negotiations are unrealistic to achieve a satisfactory pay award for July. This delay to achieving a pay award timeously has resulted in financial detriment to our members in Scotland who retire between 1st July and the date a pay award has been agreed. For example, the 2017 pay award was agreed in December, and our members who retired at the end of November 2017 missed out not only on a pay award for five months, but also a reduced final salary award on their pensions.

We do not accept the Executive Council's view that drawing attention to this by raising it at the NJC would result in detriment to members already in receipt of this payment as it is both morally and ethically unjust for any fire authority to penalise members who have dedicated a large portion of their lives to supporting their communities.

We are a strong union and our membership is inclusive, not exclusive. When did the minority matter so little that we as a union regard the status quo as a favourable option in case the apple cart is upset for the majority? We are a union that is there for every single member. We are told time and time again that fire authorities are in a race to the bottom. If we ignore these members just because they're in the minority are we now a union on a race to the bottom?

The Executive Council's recommendation is to withdraw this resolution and address this issue in Scotland. We want to assure the Executive Council that we've been trying to resolve this in Scotland and that we don't just bring resolutions to conference hoping that head office can deal with things without trying to seek resolution first. We have raised this with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the matter is currently under active consideration by Thompsons Solicitors, who are investigating any potential case law which could apply.

We will continue working hard in Scotland to try to seek a resolution, but we seek a commitment from the Executive Council to review the timescales for pay negotiations to ensure our members receive the pay awards on their July salaries. We start to lobby our respective governments in early autumn, as budget meetings are taking place in Parliament for the following year. Those draft budgets are announced and then ratified by Parliament in early February, allowing individual fire services to set their budgets for the coming year. By the time the NJC start considering pay awards in June we are already months behind in real terms.

We believe that this conference should be taking this opportunity to reset the clock, as it's unacceptable that our members must wait at times for up to five months to receive a pay award which is hardly worth waiting for. As we currently stand, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service have provided the legal position that states that employers have the choice to backdate pay awards for retired members, so this could happen within any other brigade at any given time. Therefore, we also seek commitment from the Executive Council that we ensure our members are made aware of the possibility of this detriment should there be any delay to the 2019 pay award.

In an act of solidarity we withdraw this resolution. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Seona. General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

We thank Seona and thanks to Scotland for withdrawing the resolution. It is, as Seona set out, an issue that arises only in cases where the pay settlement is delayed, which has happened on a number of occasions over the years, and applies to individual employees who retire between the date on which the pay settlement was due and the date on which the pay settlement is actually implemented and then backdated. The difficulty applies in that the employer in Scotland has taken the decision that people who retire in those circumstances will not receive that increase in pay, as they are no longer employees. That's the difficulty we have: they are no longer employees at that moment.

I think we can give this assurance, if we can find arguments to enable us to take that to the NJC, and it remains an issue in Scotland or anywhere else, then we will do so. Currently, we're not in that position and currently the concern is actually that the threat is not to people who've already received pay increases on retirement but that other employers may adopt the same policy as has already been adopted in Scotland. That's why. Lobbying has gone on and is continuing, but the first step here is clearly to address that in Scotland. We thank the region for withdrawing the resolution.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Conference, tea break. Back at ten to 4. Thank you.

*Break for tea*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Resolution 15 Overtime Working Group moved by Greater Manchester. The EC support.

### **Resolution 15 OVERTIME WORKING GROUP**

***Conference will recall the lengthy debate around overtime at last year's Conference in Brighton with discussion around an overtime ban, Grey Book overtime, flat rate payments and in some circumstances improvements on Grey Book conditions; it was of particular concern that we heard how overtime is being utilised to prop up unpopular and failing shift systems.***

***The Executive Council agreed to form an 'Overtime Working Group' to oversee all aspects of overtime working undertaken by FBU Members'.***

***Greater Manchester Officials have this year negotiated a collective agreement on overtime to cover crewing shortages, whilst the employer undertakes the biggest recruitment drive seen during the last 9 years of austerity. Our Members are now receiving Grey Book rates of pay for all periods of overtime.***

***To provide clarity for our Members and to support all Officials in current and future negotiations Conference instructs the Executive Council to report on the work carried out by the 'Overtime Working Group' to date and in particular to provide clarity on the working of overtime during periods of annual leave, including rota days immediately prior to and following Scale A and Scale B days. This report should be made available no later than 3 months from the closure of Conference.***

**GREATER MANCHESTER**

## **BRO KARL SORFLEET (GMC):**

Conference, an agreement in Manchester to work pre-arranged overtime at Grey Book rates of pay came about in December 2017. The arrangement was agreed between the combined authority and the Fire Brigades Union to maintain ridership levels of five on one-pump stations; five and four on two-pump stations. It came about following a devastating fire in Farmouth in Bolton where four young children lost their lives and Farmouth's second pump on the night was unavailable due to a crewing shortfall. For many years leading up to the agreement the employer had refused to honour Grey Book terms and conditions and offered only flat rate, which is something we couldn't accept and the members in Greater Manchester couldn't accept.

A pre-arranged overtime policy was developed which didn't allow for overtime working over periods of annual leave, including the rota days before and after. It was our view that this best protected our members' welfare. The restriction has been the cause of frustration for some members who believe there should be no restrictions to when overtime can be worked. They believe they should be able to work on their rota days either side of their annual leave.

It's been a challenging time for the Fire Brigades Union in Greater Manchester. The committee sought national guidance on the issue and the EC agreed to defer the question of overtime working during periods of annual leave to the Overtime Working Group.

The resolution asks for the EC to report on the work carried out by this group up to date, and in particular, to provide clarity on the working of overtime during periods of annual leave, including rota days before and after each leave group, following Scale A/Scale B days, and for the report to be made available to officials no later than three months after conference. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder?

**BRO KARL WAGER (Cleveland):**

Conference, President, I am speaking in support of the resolution. Conference, Cleveland believe that it would be very useful to have the report outlined by GMC. However, our members have got a better idea: it's called an overtime ban. See you in 2020! I second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

That's open for debate. AGS.

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Yes, Conference, the Overtime Working Group set up under the auspices of Dave Green has been meeting for some little while now. It probably has one more meeting to take place, and it has been addressing all of the issues around overtime, including specifically the issue of overtime working just before and after annual leave, which was a matter which was brought to the Executive Council I think at the February Executive Council meeting.

They have been working on that. As I say, there is one more meeting to take place. It's also been taken into consideration, and needing to be taken into consideration, the thoughts of this conference in regard to the issue just raised: the overtime ban, which has all been part of the pay debate. When that meeting has taken place there will be a report to brigade secretaries. That will be shortly.

I've no doubt it will be, subject to a report to the Executive Council in June, issued to brigade secretaries as a circular. That work has been ongoing. It needs to be completed. It would need to go to the Executive Council and then it will come to brigade secretaries, i.e. the delegates at this conference in the main, for your consideration.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Andy. I now put Resolution 15 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

We are now on para.A6, para.A7. Yes.

**BRO COLIN BROWN (Scotland):**

President, Conference, I'd just like to make mention of the gratitude that Region 1 has for the AGS's involvement in breaking the deadlock that we had with the employers over the harmonisation and standardisation of our conditions when we merged the eight legacy services into one Scottish service. The employers' side had pretty much walked away from the table, forced us away from the table. With the assistance of the AGS coming up and resolving that, it allowed us to get to the point where we are today. There are still many, many issues, but we do have a pretty standard set of conditions for employees now. So gratitude to you. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Para. A8, para.A9, para.A10, para.A11, para.A12. Yes.

## BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):

President, Conference, I was going to speak this morning about the Frightened Officers Association undermining our terms and conditions or collective bargaining processes. First of all, we would like to thank the General Secretary for lambasting and leading the walk-out in the last MMNB pre-meet against the Frightened Officers Association representatives that were there to undermine what would be the collective structures to go through, the recognised structures to go through, and in South Yorkshire for undermining collective bargaining procedures there.

Matt, what happened there is you turned my old man, normally a gentleman, apoplectic, and I don't think I want to repeat the expletives that he produced five minutes later, but I don't think we'll be going for a drink or getting a Christmas card any time soon!

Just in relation to the MMNB, obviously our lead is the Assistant General Secretary. The request would be, moving forward, that he become fully involved in an advisory capacity in any of the workstream discussions that are ongoing that affect our officer members, given some of the significant issues facing the membership at this present time.

I think we do accept collectively that we could have been more productive in the past, but the past is the past, and I think we look forward to working with the Assistant General Secretary to overcome the challenges our officer members are facing. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now call Emergency Resolution 5 Defending Against Cuts in Greater Manchester, moved by Greater Manchester. The EC support.

### **Emergency Resolution 5 – DEFENDING AGAINST CUTS IN GREATER MANCHESTER**

***The last 10 years have seen Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) decimated as a result of Central Government budget cuts in the guise of austerity.***

***This has resulted in the loss of over 1000 firefighter jobs, many appliances, a local control room and increased attendance times meaning the effectiveness of the service we provide has been greatly reduced whilst the risks to the public and firefighters alike have greatly increased.***

***In 2017 GMFRS became part of Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) under the leadership of the Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham.***

***The Mayor has undertaken a 'Fire Cover Review' to prepare a 'Programme for Change'. An outline business case which details this programme was shared with the Fire Brigades Union on the 7th March, shortly after began a period of formal consultation which is due to conclude at the end of May.***

***The FBU in Greater Manchester had hoped the service's move to the GMCA and the leadership of an elected Labour Mayor would herald a new and helpful governance arrangement for our Fire Service, however it is now clear that it's the same old story of cuts to the Fire Service.***

***'Programme for Change' details the requirement to remove a further £12.8 million from the Fire Service over the next 3 years, strangely however the Mayor did not see fit to increase the Fire Service precept which would have significantly offset some of his budgetary shortfall. Instead it is planned that this £12.8 million will be found through reductions to the Fire Service, both operational and non-operational.***

***These proposed cuts include;***

- ***Loss of 194 firefighters posts***
- ***Removal of 9 fire appliances***

- **Closure of 6 fire stations**
- **Riding 4s**
- **Increased attendance times**
- **Loss of 113 Green Book jobs.**

***The Mayor's outline business case states that feedback from firefighters shaped this 'Programme for Change', but the Union challenges that our Members asked for any of the above mentioned cuts.***

***Whilst we continue to engage in good faith in the current period of consultation we have also begun a campaign, taking our concerns to the public, councillors, MPs and other Trade Union groups. The Greater Manchester FBU online petition in opposition to these cuts has already topped 11,000 signatures. Our campaign will be stronger and our determination greater with the support of Conference and our brothers and sisters across the UK.***

***Therefore Conference agrees;***

- ***That Brigade Committees send messages of support to the Greater Manchester Brigade Committee***
- ***That the issue is raised with the FBU Parliamentary Group***
- ***Our campaign continues to receive national support, including if necessary for industrial action.***

**GREATER MANCHESTER**

## **BRO ROB GRUNDY (GMC):**

Conference, President, we have all witnessed the decimation of our respective brigades under the guise of austerity over the last decade. Greater Manchester has lost many frontline appliances in this time, a thousand firefighter posts, and a move to regionalised control. In 2017 Greater Manchester Fire Service transitioned across to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority led by Mayor Andy Burnham. Since this time Andy Burnham has overseen GMFRS fail to cope adequately with operational demand during the moorland fires of 2018. We have already this year witnessed further moorland fires and we don't believe the service is any better prepared to cope.

The mayor has also led GMFRS at the time of the Jackson Street Fire where four infant casualties lost their lives. On that night the second appliance from the closest station was unavailable due to crewing shortages.

We all saw the horrific events unfold at Grenfell Tower where 71 people tragically lost their lives. At this time there remain 62 high rise properties within Manchester which, due to cladding or other fire safety issues, carry a foreseeable risk.

Conference, with this in mind the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, led by Mayor Andy Burnham, has pressed forward with a programme for change which would pave the way for a further round of savage cuts. These cuts include the removal of 194 firefighter posts, a loss of nine pumps, the closure of six stations, riding fours across the brigade, and an increase in attendance times.

Conference, Greater Manchester FBU officials remain fully engaged in the formal consultation process. However, we have started a local campaign to defend against these cuts. We are meeting with local MP's, councillors and trade union groups, and our online petition has already topped 11,000 signatures. But we ask for your support.

Conference, support Manchester firefighters in their fight. Please send messages of support to the GMC brigade committee. This attack must be raised with the FBU Parliamentary Group at the earliest opportunity. Our campaign continues to receive national support, including if necessary, industrial action. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, I hope that this resolution will pass unanimously. The Greater Manchester brigade committee and the region have our full support in this campaign, and whatever they decide to do to pursue this campaign.

Andy Burnham took over that role just at the point at which GMC members were being threatened with Section 188 notices. Initially, we had some good dialogue with him because we were able, with the support of members in GMC, to put the pressure on to make him realise that that was not a good step and we were able to fight off that threat.

However, we now face the position that's just been set out in front of you. I had the misfortune perhaps to be at the Local Government Association Fire Conference earlier this year, with a number of other officials, where we sat through a presentation by the Deputy of Greater Manchester, about the moorland fires. When he asked for questions myself and Andy were sat next to each other, and we were the only people who put our hands up. What the presentation said was that fires on this scale are probably impossible to deal with, with the resources that fire services have got, and maybe people have just got to get used to the idea that we can't put fires like that out. That was effectively the conclusion that was presented at a conference discussing fire policy run by the Local Government Association! It was pretty staggering. We certainly challenged her over that.

Of course, it raises another issue that's a feature of the so-called modernised Fire & Rescue Service that in Greater Manchester we now have both the chief fire officer and the deputy who do not come from operational backgrounds. I have to say, that brings me to question, when they make their professional judgment to the mayor about the cuts that can be achieved in GMC. I have some scepticism about their capacity to make those recommendations.

I don't care whether it's a Tory authority, a Labour authority, a Tory mayor, a Labour mayor, Andy Burnham or whoever, this union will not stand by and accept cuts. When authorities try to impose such cuts on our service and our members, then we have to fight back. I'm pleased to see the resolution here, I'm pleased to see the start of that campaign in Greater Manchester. You have the full support of head office and the Executive Council, and I'm sure, the whole of conference. Support the Emergency Resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Emergency Resolution 5 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, I now call Emergency Resolution 9 Solidarity with Hereford & Worcester FBU members, moved by Hereford & Worcester. The Executive Council support.

### **Emergency Resolution 9 – SOLIDARITY WITH HEREFORD AND WORCESTER FBU MEMBERS**

***Conference condemns the decision made by Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority on February 11th 2019 to authorise management to use Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act should FBU Members continue to refuse to agree new shift systems which are not only inferior to national agreements but also reduce fire cover and put firefighter safety at risk.***

***Conference also condemns the imposed decision by management to unilaterally remove all wholetime Watch Managers from operational duties, issue open-ended contracts to new firefighters, put new firefighters and recently promoted Crew Managers on non-agreed duty systems, and repeatedly fail to meaningfully engage with the FBU on a variety of matters including the right to raise a grievance.***

***Conference is appalled at the treatment of FBU Members by Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and Conference sends a clear message to the Fire Authority that an attack on one FBU Member is an attack on all.***

***Conference therefore resolves to give FBU Members in Hereford and Worcester it's full support in this dispute and commits to keeping Members informed and if necessary, mobilising Members at every level should the Fire Authority not resolve this dispute in a manner that is acceptable to FBU Members in Hereford and Worcester.***

***Conference also reaffirms its commitment of Conference 2010 in Resolution 20 moved by Humberside that should any section 188 notices be issued, then this will be met with the strongest***

***opposition possible, including an immediate recall of Conference with a view to mounting a national campaign.***

## HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

### **BRO GARETH TAYLOR** (Hereford & Worcester):

Conference, President, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Conference, firstly I would just like to take this opportunity to highlight what may seem somewhat contradicting our earlier resolution regarding CPC. We thank you for your clear message that we can now take back to our members that have raised this. Thank you.

Comrades, I bring this emergency resolution to conference in order to gain your full support and solidarity for the members of Hereford & Worcester who, for the second time in 12 months, find themselves under the hammer of a fire authority who have willingly given permission to senior management hell-bent on driving through unagreed duty systems in place of and inferior to those systems that are nationally agreed. In the absence of such an agreement, they seek to impose them.

Conference, we condemn the actions of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority and the dictatorial managers they empower. Not only does this put firefighter safety at risk, but these unagreed duty systems dramatically reduce fire cover.

Conference, our members face a barrage of attacks week in, week out, chipping away at every angle possible. We have seen a management that have unilaterally removed all wholtime watch commanders from operational duties, issued open-ended contracts to new entrants, put newly promoted crew commanders on non-agreed duty systems, and have repeatedly failed to engage meaningfully with local officials on numerous occasions – even including the right to raise a grievance.

Conference is appalled by this treatment of its members. I ask conference, therefore, resolves to give FBU members in Hereford & Worcester its full support and commits to keeping members fully informed, and if necessary, mobilising members at every level should this dispute go unresolved.

Conference reaffirms its commitment of Conference 2010 Resolution 20 moved by Humberside that should any section 188 notices be issued, then this will be met with the strongest opposition possible, including an immediate recall to conference with a clear view of mounting a national campaign. Conference sends a clear message to the fire authority at Hereford & Worcester that an attack on one member is an attack on all members. In unity, Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

### **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Gareth. Does that have a seconder? A seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. General Secretary.

### **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks, Gareth, and Hereford & Worcester for bringing the issue to conference. I had the pleasure of attending a members' meeting where the state of the brigade and the attacks on our members, the attacks on our officials, the failure to engage with the Fire Brigades Union was set out very clearly and forcefully not just by branch and brigade committee members but by rank and file members of the FBU.

I think this challenge of Section 188, and the threat of dismissal and re-engagement as a way of forcing through contractual change is one that we have never shied away from. We have had now several cases of it and on each occasion the union, the Executive Council, head office, myself have always been very clear that ultimately there's only one reaction that you can make if people are going to threaten to sack the entire workforce and re-engage them on new contracts. That is to take them on and fight them, and that means industrial action, that means strike action.

That's not an easy situation to face. That was the position we faced in South Yorkshire and later in London and on both occasions they did lead to strike action. Again, despite the fact that we fought those attacks off in South Yorkshire and in London, despite the fact that in other cases we managed to get the employer to withdraw those threats before moving to the Section 188 process, we now have another attack. Again, I think the Executive Council

is clear: we will throw our full resources, the full support of head office, of myself, the President and indeed of this conference no doubt, to support Hereford & Worcester members in this campaign to defend decent industrial relations as well as conditions of service, and to defend fire cover in Hereford & Worcester.

Conference, again I'm sure this emergency resolution will be passed unanimously. Please support. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Emergency Resolution 9 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

We now move on to Section D Fire & Rescue Service Policy, para.D1. I now call Resolution 50 National Attendance Times moved by Scotland. The Executive Council give qualified support.

### Resolution 50 NATIONAL ATTENDANCE TIMES

***Conference is deeply concerned that attendance times throughout the UK are getting worse. Fire appliances are taking longer to get to incidents now than a decade ago. The removal of national emergency attendance times has negatively impacted on the time it takes a fire engine to attend an incident.***

***The worsening of attendance times may have contributed to an increase in fire losses and an increase in deaths of both the public and firefighters. This is an enormous concern for members of the public who rightly expect that when they make the call for help, it will come quickly.***

***People want to be sure that when they dial 999 they get fire appliances and firefighters there as quickly as possible, therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to commence a coordinated campaign to lobby all Fire and Rescue Services and all UK governments to;***

- ***recognise the importance of attendance times and the impact on public and firefighter safety***
- ***end the postcode lottery of local standards***
- ***adopt a new national attendance time standard for the Fire and Rescue Service throughout the UK.***

## SCOTLAND

### BRO ANGUS SPROUL (Scotland):

Conference, we're all too aware of the savage cuts faced by our members across the country and while Scotland may not have seen any actual station closures we have seen a huge reduction in frontline firefighter and control posts with the loss of around 1,000 firefighters since 2013. We've seen these jobs go as a result of resource-based crewing and dual crewing of special appliances, merging of control rooms, the creation of new duty system. On any given day in Scotland we can have up to 100 pumps off the run due to wholtime crewing deficiencies, unavailability of RDS. Our service is being propped up by eye-watering levels of overtime.

Against this background, attendance times have risen by 10% since 2016 and show no signs of improving. While we obviously feel that a national attendance time standard is in itself essential, it also holds Fire & Rescue Services responsible for providing the way and speed of response needed to allow us to do our jobs safely and provide the public with the service they expect when they need it, regardless of where they live.

When I joined it was hammered home that in this profession seconds count. Conference, supporting this resolution will help us show chief officers, board members and politicians that that has never changed. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

I'm just sort of – it says qualified support. I think, reconsidering, we are probably just supporting actually, considering

the qualification. The Executive Council is supporting the resolution but would make a number of points on that. If you look at previous Executive Council policy statements, we have set out some initial policies and positions on what a national response standard might look like. Clearly, in terms of the abolition of the old pre-2004 standards, things have moved on. Risks have changed, firefighting techniques have changed and we can't simply reissue a demand for the old ABC risk categories. We need to develop our own preferred model. There are, as I say, some elements of that in previous Executive Council policy statements.

I think secondly we need to be clear that we will challenge Fire & Rescue Services currently, but also that any future standard cannot simply be about the first responding appliance if there's a pre-determined attendance, and we want standards for all of those appliances attending on a PDA to incidents. We are aware that part of the fragmentation (and this has come up in England recently in relation to the inspectorate reports) means that Fire & Rescue Services currently measure response standards in different ways. Some measure from the time of call; some measure from the time of mobilisation. It is absolutely impossible to compare different Fire & Rescue Services when they operate in such a manner. So we need to be clear on that.

We have made submissions recently to a Westminster government consultation in regard to what information should be gathered through the IRS system.

There are two more points. Whereas what we've seen over the past decade and longer is a gradual slow-down of emergency response times, we should be saying that government ministers should be saying: if you're talking about improving public services, we want to see improving emergency response times as part of an improvement system and improvement targets within the Fire & Rescue Service.

In terms of how we might achieve this, I refer conference back to the previous discussion regarding the Labour Party. We are doing a great deal of work in relation to those manifesto commitments we want to demand of a future Labour Government. I think what goes in a manifesto might be one thing, but we need the detailed policy as to what those standards that we would call for in the future might look like. On that basis we're happy to support resolution 50. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 50 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 51 Encroachment of Emergency Service Roles moved by North Yorkshire. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

### **Resolution 51 ENCROACHMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICE ROLES**

***Conference notes with some trepidation the recent encroachment of other emergency services and private industry on traditional Fire and Rescue Service roles, tasks and responsibilities throughout the UK.***

***Although this Conference recognises that these extra skills are often taken on by our emergency service comrades with the best intentions, Conference is also aware that this undermines the core work of UK Fire and Rescue Service's and provides an opportunity for employers to undermine terms and conditions. Conference also notes that this diversification blurs the boundaries between each emergency service's role and can undermine a service's ability to carry out its own traditional role, putting the public and staff at risk by reducing the level of expertise in life threatening situations.***

***Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to seek collaboration with the other unions and federations which represent emergency services, with the aim of stopping the encroachment of roles and responsibilities within Fire and Rescue Service's and across the wider emergency service community. A report on progress should be delivered to Conference 2020.***

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**BRO ED BILLING** (North Yorkshire):

Conference, President, firstly let me congratulate Matt and the EC on the result of the ballot for pay. The membership have resoundingly rejected yet another derisory pay offer and the ludicrous terms attached. The membership also voted to continue the pay strategy, although North Yorkshire's brigade committee and a significant proportion of the national membership disagreed with this strategy in its current form. That said, we respect the result of the referendum – for want of a better phrase!

This resolution is not an attempt to interfere with the direction of travel, but merely a request for the EC to reflect on the strategies we adopt in conjunction with, and in solidarity with, other unions and federations. This resolution is actually borne out of an email sent by the AGS, Andy Dark, to brigade officials regarding the ambulance HART teams and the concerns raised at the countless branch meetings we've attended during the current pay campaign.

The email from Brother Dark was to alert officials to a recent TV programme showing HART teams taking on larger and larger chunks of what is traditionally our role. Although these extra skills are often taken on with the best of intentions, we are aware that this undermines the core work of the UK Fire & Rescue Service and provides an opportunity for employers to undermine our terms and conditions.

In the interests of shared aims and to prevent further undermining of all blue light services' terms and conditions we ask that this union act in solidarity with other unions that represent blue light services and look to work together to prevent this encroachment. This may involve having an introspective look at the policies we adopt and recommend to our members going forward. We have a duty to respect our members' wishes, but also we have a wider responsibility to the trade union movement. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder?

**BRO JON WHARNSBY** (London):

Conference, President, there's a theme running through all the ones we're getting up on! I'm seconding 51 Encroachment of Emergency Service Roles. Conference, we believe that this has become slightly more important after the excellent resolution delivered by Cambridgeshire. As we withdraw from our non-contractual non-agreed work, we're going to have other blue light partners who are being made to justify their existence, taking up some of that work that we're withdrawing from. We'll also have profiteers who are happy to make money off other people's misery stepping into that role. Obviously, we all know the people that, if you give them a pager and give them a T-shirt and tell them they're special, will just do it for nothing.

Employers are pitting us against each other in a race to the bottom. This jack-of-all-trades approach by employers is dangerous and can undermine our bargaining and other unions' bargaining powers. Without a Socialist Labour Government, solidarity – not competition – with our emergency service brothers and sisters is needed to fight austerity and not to help it.

Everyone here can recite the rule book, I'm sure, but for those of you who can't I draw your attention to rule 7 *"Aid and join other trade unions or societies having objects similar to any of this union"*. Our objectives should be public safety and our safety and not undermining or being undermined by other emergency services. This motion, in my opinion, is in the spirit of that rule. Our watchwords should be dialogue, unity and solidarity with our emergency services brothers and sisters. We support. Conference, I urge you to support as well. We second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Jon. That's open for debate. Anybody? General Secretary.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thanks, President. Conference, the Executive Council gives qualified support to the resolution on the basis that clearly it needs to be balanced against other policies. I refer to the moving speech. We have conducted a very thorough consultation with our members on our policy regarding broadening of the role. I slightly take issue with the term "significant minority". Actually, what we've got is an overwhelming majority of our members endorsing the

policy of this conference, including members in North Yorkshire. So we have to respect the views of our members, taken through the recent consultative ballot. We're not in a 52/48 position here, if we're referring to the referendum. We're talking about an overwhelming majority of our members have endorsed the strategy set out by conference.

However, clearly there are issues that we need to be aware of. Some of these do overlap into the discussion around the broadening of the role. For example, the first paragraph usefully mentions elements of the private sector encroaching on areas of traditional Fire & Rescue Service work. We're aware of both private sector organisation, profit-making organisations, and also various voluntary organisations encroaching on work which we think should probably be Fire & Rescue Service work. We are aware, for example, there are various so-called search & rescue teams, there are various flood response teams around the country – work which, in our view, clearly falls within either the traditional remit of the Fire & Rescue Service or work which we think should be part of our discussion with government and employers about broadening of the role.

But there's a very clear reason. This is why, comrades, we need to think deeply about the strategy that we keep discussing and returning to. Part of the thinking was precisely because governments actually would much prefer to have private sector agencies doing some of those areas of work. Governments would much prefer to have volunteers, unpaid volunteers, untrained volunteers, doing certain elements of the work that we are currently discussing. What they don't like the idea of is a well-unionised workforce, a well-organised workforce undertaking those areas of activity.

Mention was made of HART teams. I think all around the country we've have reports of difficulties we've had in relation to HART teams. In relation to dialogue with other unions, we have, throughout this discussion on the broadening of the role, discussed this with other unions both nationally and locally and on numerous occasions. One of the difficulties in relation to some other areas of public services is that the degree of unionisation and the degree of organisation within those workforces are not to the same level as exists in the Fire & Rescue Service. So you take HART teams and debates that we've had about BA safety system, BA control systems and so on, one of the tensions is whether such mechanisms would be applied by other people using breathing apparatus. Our systems are also under attack. We have clear policies; we will fight to defend those policies which are based on longstanding experience and the protection of our members using breathing apparatus. So we are very clear that actually any collaboration shouldn't be used to undermine the standards that we have won within our sector. Likewise, we should do the same in terms of working with other agencies.

I think the resolution usefully highlights some areas of concern and we ask conference to support it, but I think the qualification is that we need to balance that in consideration of various other policies that the union has in place already. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

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

I now call Resolution 53 Promotion Process moved by the National Women's Committee. The Executive Council support.

### **Resolution 53 PROMOTION PROCESS**

***Since moving away from the national peer assessed promotion process approximately 15 years ago, Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) around the country have started adopting varying assessment criteria from service to service, with the majority using frameworks and processes designed in ways that both reflect and continue to support stereotypes and the status quo. The result is that they disadvantage women, and favour traditional style white male leaders.***

***In some FRSs the process of 'pooling' results is common practice. Without a definitive list of successes, it is difficult to create a transparent system. As a result, this produces a continuous hoop that individuals who want to progress within the service, feel pressured to jump through, continuing until the next promotion takes place.***

*This gives management the ability to manipulate and change results to get the outcome they require, and means the FBU's position can be undermined. It is widely reported that often those carrying out the promotion processes favour those that mirror the traits of the current leadership team, typically white, male and masculine. This effectively maintains the bias against women (and many men with a more balanced style). This process of 'pooling' candidates facilitates this.*

*This Conference calls on the Executive Council to conduct a national survey on current policies and practices FRSs use for promotion, including what happens with the results and with whom the information is kept, and statistics on applications and success rates of women and other under represented groups in promotion processes. The results of this survey are to be reported back through the FBU structures within 12 months of Conference 2019.*

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE**

**SIS CAROLINE STURGESS (NWC):**

President, Conference, with this resolution we, the National Women's Committee, are sharing an honest reflection of the current management structure within the UK Fire & Rescue Service, suggesting that the majority of our leaders are mainly white male.

Women firefighters make up approximately 3.9% nationally, yet it is our belief that despite a slow rise in representation, we are still lagging behind in promotion. We believe the promotion process nationally is fragmented, selective and biased, where there is not one set national standard rather than the many brigade-isms that produce their own standards of practice and apply inconsistency.

It is our belief as a section that these inconsistencies allow the current management structures to hold unconscious bias as they seemingly repeatedly promote in the image of themselves.

As we are in Blackpool I will pay homage to the TV presenter Roy Walker, who only lives down the road from here. You remember him from the 80s and 90s TV Show *Catchphrase*. His favourite line, and the one that made the game show so memorable, was "Say what you see". Conference, we are calling the promotional process as we see it. Roy Walker also said "It's good, but it's not right".

Conference, we have our beliefs, based on the lack of role models in the management structure, and the testimony of many section members who talk of hitting the management wall, feeling repeatedly overlooked despite qualified achievements. With this resolution we ask the Executive Council to conduct a survey to quantify our widely held beliefs so that we can either dispel or evidence our suspicions and work together to act upon them. Please support this resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder?

**SIS MARIA BUCK (LGBT):**

President, Conference, we second and support Resolution 53 Promotion Process. We believe the process of pooling is not a fair way to promote, or in any way transparent. By agreeing to undertake a survey, we will, in our opinion, assist all our members to be able to further their development, and if necessary, hold Fire & Rescue Services to account if they are found to have treated anyone unfairly. We second and support. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

It's open for debate. Yes.

**BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):**

Conference, President, I just wanted to give a little bit of history around this. I welcome this resolution coming. Back in 2017 some of you remember that I attempted to bring a similar resolution but unfortunately it was ruled out of

order at that time. Back in 2018 we moved a step on, and I brought the resolution again with the word amendment and it received qualified support. So we moved it on a bit. The ONC seconded it. He's had a couple of mentions, Simon Amos. He was well-versed in this and they seconded it. I think the qualification came at the time from the national officer. I've checked the record and it stated: "Before we go on to the NJC let's do some work, with help from the ONC, to get a clear picture." So my question is has that work been done?

What was also stated was that we should not go to the NJC and state that we have a process. So yes, go there and say yes we've got a process and it wants enforcing. Have we done that? Have we been to the NJC and told them to enforce the process that we've got?

Comrades, we do have a process but since 2017 I'd argue that we've known that it's not been working. Resolution 52, which has been withdrawn sadly, states the ultimate aim for me: a transparent and consistent process of promotion within the UK Fire & Rescue Service via the NJC. That is what we're all after.

As in Resolution 53, yes, we do need to do the work, we do need to do the survey of the current policy and practice. But I do believe some of this may have started in other arenas such as the NFCC, whether we like that or not. So what I'm saying is let's get amongst it, comrades, and shape the future in the interests of what a number of resolutions over the past few years have set out to achieve, and to also support FBU members in a fair and transparent process that they can have confidence in. I thank the National Women's Committee for bringing the resolution and supporting the previous ones which I put in. Derbyshire will be supporting. Thank you. *(Applause)*

#### **BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):**

President, Conference, this is a piece of work that myself and Simon Amos were carrying out and one we were developing just at the end of Simon's tenure through the Assistant General Secretary. As we stated last year in support of Derbyshire, we have given control of our promotion processes over to HR managers and directors. We don't have a national promotion process since the repeal of the Appointments and Promotion Regs and abolition of the FACB. We think it was better than what we've got now, absolutely. Promotion processes across the UK Fire & Rescue Service have been fragmented and inconsistent.

We would like to work with the women's committee on this piece of work. I think we've got a vested interest in it. I would urge you all to support the resolution. *(Applause)*

#### **BRO SONNY ROBERTS (B&EMM):**

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 53. First time speaker. *(Applause)* The call for a national survey to be conducted to learn and assess current policies and practices for promotion being used up and down the country is encouraged. But we would ask the assessment of B&EMM and LGBT applications to be included in the survey also. While I would not suggest there is a widespread underpinning desire of those making the decisions to overlook our women, LGBT or B&EMM members, our committee would wish to emphasise further and highlight unconscious bias that we all naturally have in some shape or form. But it is something that can affect the progression of those that do not mirror the natural traits of the assessors. Please, Conference, support this resolution. B&EMM committee supports this resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

#### **THE PRESIDENT:**

No more speakers? AGS.

#### **ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Thank you President. There has clearly been a number of resolutions to this conference on the issue of failure to implement IPDS and particularly in relation to promotion. We've got another resolution later on the issue of IPDS as well. It clearly is a source of growing concern. I want to thank the ONC and B&EMM for withdrawing their resolutions to support the NWC's resolution. We felt the NWC resolution is stronger and it's more grittily worded, particularly around the issue of succession planning within Fire & Rescue Services creating replications of what currently exists. I think that is quite useful. The strongest part of the NWC resolution is the question of the survey. This touches on the point that Chris raised. That is that the ONC has been doing an amount of work, both involving myself and arising from the workforce development group. I think you've got a clear commitment from the ONC that they are

very anxious to speed that work up and ensure that it happens. The strength of the NWC resolution is in calling for the survey so that we've got granular detail of what is happening in Fire & Rescue Services, which is important. It is not just in broad terms, but what is happening brigade by brigade. That will be essential to that work. We know the picture out there is one of poor performance by Fire & Rescue Services particularly in terms of fairness. Within the debate I certainly noted the call for inclusion of B&EMM-specific concerns and LGBT-specific concerns. I've got to say, that is going to happen for certain, but for all sections as well. Clearly, the NWC's views and concerns on that, but where it also applies across the board to whether it's wholtime, retained or control as well. Obviously, the ONC are conducting that work and they will make sure their views are input.

I just want to give conference this assurance. We need to do that survey because, although we've got the broad themes and the ONC have worked out the broad themes of what's going on around the country, we do need it FRS by FRS. We really do need to either yourselves or to delegate it to someone who has the information to ensure that, subject to your approval, that you approve and can verify the information is correct, to ensure that information comes in so it can be processed in order to do the work called for by the resolution. I just want to stress the point. We know how important it is to our people, whether they have rank or are aspiring to further rank. We give that commitment and thank the ONC and B&EMM for supporting this resolution which has got real strength for what we want to achieve. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 53 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 54 Fire Survival Guidance Training moved by the Control Staff National Committee. The Executive Council are supporting.

### **Resolution 54 FIRE SURVIVAL GUIDANCE TRAINING**

***Conference notes that whilst operational firefighters receive ongoing training through agreed structured and periodic assessments, after initial training, the same does not apply to Emergency Fire Control Members.***

***Fire Survival Guidance calls, especially in high rise buildings where the 'stay put policy' applies, do not occur very often.***

***It is evident from work carried out by the Fire Brigades Union following Grenfell that training for this type of incident is not the same across UK Fire and Rescue Service Emergency Fire Control rooms.***

***Therefore it is critical that Emergency Fire Control rooms undergo structured training and assessments, beyond their initial training, to ensure they maintain their critical competencies.***

***Conference calls on the Executive Council to address this with the employers as a national approach is required to guarantee consistency.***

**CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

## **SIS SHERRI KITSON (CSNC):**

President, Conference, you might think that this resolution is borne solely out of the tragedy that is Grenfell, but unfortunately it's not. It is intrinsically linked to gaps identified from previous high rise incidents as well. It quickly became clear in Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry that fire survival guidance training is sketchy at best. In control we're expected to be able to handle professionally any 999 call, in many cases without any ongoing call handling training or assessment. Essentially, you could do your initial call handling and fire survival guidance training when you join and then you might not take a fire survival guidance call for two, three, even ten years. It's an inexcusable position to put our control members in.

If I put it like this, we wouldn't expect a firefighter with ten years in the job to go into a burning building in BA if the only time they'd ever worn BA was in their initial training. Perhaps we can't train for every eventuality, but there are

high rise buildings up and down the UK so we're well aware of the risks and we have a history of those incidents. All I'm asking is why don't control receive structured training and periodic assessments to ensure we can handle those calls? Please consider a Coroner's recommendation following the 2010 Shirley Towers incident in Hampshire. The Coroner said: "Call handling is recognised as a key skill for fire control and should be incorporated in regular training and assessment." Are you kidding me? Why the hell am I standing here in 2019 reiterating what has already been spelled out in a Coroner's recommendation?

Why do the Fire & Rescue Services just pay lip service to these recommendations? Why is no-one held accountable for not acting upon these recommendations?

Conference, I put it to you that it's our responsibility as the true professional voice of the fire service to ensure that control staff are fully trained so we can help the communities and support our operational firefighters at high rise incidents. We need to ensure that we never allow our control members to be put into a similar situation again. *(Applause)*

Grenfell has to be the line in the sand. We can't just stand by and allow fundamental gaps in training to just exist without the employers taking any responsibility.

I thank the EC for their support of this resolution but, Conference, we need your support too, all of you. To be fair, after the pay parity debate earlier I am feeling the love! But this is not a local issue for Hampshire; it's not a local issue for London. This is a national issue and it needs a national approach. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Sherri. Secunder, Steve.

## **BRO STEVE WHITE (London):**

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 54. We touched on it in the debate on pay parity, but I think it's fair to say that sometimes firefighters on fire stations do take firefighters in control for granted. It's worth reminding ourselves that on the subject of fire survival guidance calls our comrades in control are getting on with the business of saving lives whilst we're still putting our boots and leggings on. But it's not just us who are guilty of taking them for granted. Our employers are taking them for granted as well. Never mind parity in terms of pay, parity in access to continuation training for risk critical activities is taking them for granted. Never mind taking them for granted by looking at the shamefully low numbers of staff employed in emergency control rooms.

It's not even just them. The national oversight of the fire service – something that we talk about a lot when we talk about Grenfell. The resolution talks about stay put. Where do we go to look for stay put? We go to look at Generic Risk Assessment 3.2, that's where we find stay put in the risk assessment for high rise firefighting. That talks about ongoing training for firefighters that attend high rise fires. In common with a lot of our policies around operations, it's separate from anything to do with control and control aren't mentioned at all, even though those kinds of activities are very much a combined effort between firefighters on the ground and firefighters in control rooms.

Fire Service circular 5404, which is about emergency call management, is completely silent on the issue of continuous training for members in control. You have to go back to the Fire Service Manual for any mention at all of continuous, on-watch training in control.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry shed a spotlight on the extraordinary role that our comrades in control undertook on that night, but also shone a spotlight on their lack of continuous training and therefore, the impact that that had on them: the psychological impact of dealing with multiple FSG calls without the safety net of ongoing, regular, continuous training. Why do we train routinely? We train for our own competence; we train to keep the public safe. Fire survival guidance calls are thankfully still quite a rare thing for us to deal with. So we need to be training regularly so we're on the ball when they happen.

Thirdly, we engage in ongoing training for our own safety. Regular training is part of our safe systems of work. We can't look after other people unless we look after ourselves. London supports this resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate.

## BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY (Hereford & Worcester):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 54. I can tell you now why we don't get on-the-job training. If you cast your minds back a few years ago, we had a little bit of a pay dispute and after that, somebody came up with the great idea that we'd have regional controls. Brilliant idea! Don't know why it never took off really! We were just left, stagnant for years, just sat there. Nobody talked to us, nobody wanted anything to do with us – "you'll be gone soon; you'll go to a regional control; you don't need to learn anything now". Fast forward that to 2010, regional controls went out the window and somebody came up with the bright idea of putting us in to work with the police, which we are now, at Hindlip Park at a place called Southwell House, or as we affectionately know it, HMP Southwell.

The fact of it is as soon as we moved in there, I said to a station commander: we need some training, we need to get more training done because of where we've just moved into. The answer I was given was: don't worry about that at the moment; let's get nice and settled into our new surroundings. So the problem is just absolute apathy and complacency on the part of our management and the people who should know better. It's a point I raise almost every day at work but heyho, you can only do so much. Please support the resolution. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Any more speakers? General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I very much welcome the resolution from the CSNC. It raises some absolutely essential issues, and I think it allows us to broaden those issues out as well. The issue of training immediately raises other questions about standards. We discussed standards earlier and the idea of national standards within emergency response. We need national standards relating to the standard of service that people get when they call in to emergency fire controls to make emergency calls. So it raises those issues. It raises issues about procedures because the fragmentation that we see across the UK Fire & Rescue Service means that procedures differ. It raises the question, as identified in the resolution, about training. That then raises issues around the levels of supervision, around the levels of staffing because must be trained to what? Trained to what procedures? So that we have professionally trained, professionally qualified staff in our emergency fire controls dealing with their job in the best possible way. I think it's a very useful resolution. The Executive Council is happy to support that, happy to do the work set out in the final sentence, jointly with the CSNC and with other relevant officials from around the country. Please support the resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 54 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 55 Firefighter Qualifications moved by Humberside. The Executive Council are seeking Humberside remit.

### **Resolution 55 FIREFIGHTER QUALIFICATIONS**

***Conference asks that FBU Circular 2005HOC0435MF, dated 25 August 2005, is revisited with a view to standardising firefighter competency qualifications. The Circular states, 'Agreement had also previously been reached by the NJC that if Brigades have not received approval from a quality assurance body, then firefighters and firefighters (Control) should move on to the competent pay after 3 years.'***

***This Conference believes that every trainee firefighter and firefighter (control) should receive a qualification from an Ofqual approved awarding body. The qualification must be standardised nationally and quality assured. The circular offers a fall-back position for fire services that have not received approval from an awarding body. This lack of approval results in our newest Members receiving an uncredited qualification, differing levels of competency and an additional year on development firefighter pay.***

***We are the professional voice of firefighters and we believe our voice should represent that of professional firefighters with professional qualifications.***

***Conference asks that the Executive Council enter negotiations with the NJC and secure a position in which all Fire and Rescue Services must ensure that all new firefighters are trained, quality assured and qualified to an accredited Ofqual approved standard.***

**HUMBERSIDE**

**BRO GAVIN MARSHALL** (Humberside):

Conference, Matt has touched on a few of the things that I'm probably going to bring up during this speech. Humberside have been quite lucky recently. We've managed to run three recruitment courses over the last three years. This has given us as officials that opportunity to engage with new employees and also sign up 60 plus new members. However, these recruits, our newest of members, are not receiving any qualifications, nor are they working to any form of quality assurance like the rest of the country or like myself when I entered into the Fire & Rescue Service.

This is driven by the austerity programme; it's played a huge part in it. In actual fact, austerity has driven down the number of firefighters in the UK Fire & Rescue Services and when members retired there was no reason to recruit any new ones. Austerity meant that Humberside went ten years without any recruitment, resulting in a skill deficit in internal verifiers and assessors in the old, like you say, NVQ process that we used to run.

We felt this was quite an easy fix: it just needed a little bit of investment in the workforce. But rather than investing in the workforce, Humberside decided to design an in-house training programme called the TFFP, the trainee firefighter programme. I'm intrigued to wonder what the services up and down this country would probably respond to if one of the firefighters from Humberside were to transfer to one of your brigades. Upon asking: what qualifications do you have; they would say TFFP because I am sure it would be: what the heck is that?

Conference, this resolution asked that FBU circular 2005/HOCO/435 MF is revisited with immediate effect and that the FBU work to a national standardised firefighting qualification. The circular has been used by our service to move away from a national recognised qualification for our newest members for one reason and for one reason only: that's cost-cutting. That is austerity driven. That's where we've come to. The circular states an agreement had also previously been reached by the NJC that if brigades have not received approval from a quality assurance body then firefighters and firefighters control should move on to competent pay after three years.

Previously, firefighters worked towards a nationally recognised qualification. The service was audited to make sure that the same quality of assessments was assured across the service. This process produced qualified professional firefighters after two years. This circular allows services to be rewarded for moving away from a nationally recognised qualification at the cost of our newest members by keeping them on development pay for a further year.

This conference has heard a lot about fragmentation of Fire & Rescue Services in the UK. By addressing this circular we can issue a clear message to all UK Fire & Rescue Services that watering down training to save money is not an option. We pride ourselves on being the professional voice for firefighters and I want for my members to be professionally trained and receive a qualification. The definition of professional is a person qualified in a profession and that's what we'd like to move to today. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. It's open for debate. Anybody? AGS.

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY**

Conference, we are asking for this to be remitted. I will be frank, it's because we don't want to be tied to a position which says that we have to take it to the NJC. The NJC is not a policing body, and it isn't particularly receptive to issues and initiatives that we raise which are progressive. We're not convinced that is the right route to take it to, particularly as we have reached an agreement which they are flouting. So we don't want to go back to the NJC to revisit where we have been and what we have agreed. What we are looking for is the implementation of what we've agreed. The wording of the resolution suggests that there is a problem with what we negotiated all that time back.

The problem is not what was negotiated and what was agreed; the problem, as has been identified, is a lack of investment by Fire & Rescue Services and therefore a consequent lack of implementation of that agreement.

I will say we want it to be remitted. We are not asking for it to be withdrawn because we do want to look at it, we do want to work with this, we do recognise that it's an issue. We're not looking at straightforward opposition. We are asking you to remit it to the Executive Council so that we can address the issues contained within the resolution.

There are some what otherwise might be qualifications to the resolution which feed into that request for it to be remitted. For example, it talks about qualifications. In FRS's where NVQ's are used there is a qualification and that would be appropriate. The question of NVQ's as opposed to a pure IPDS based version where there is no qualification at the end, that was agreed in conference 2007. That was a modification to our position. No problem with that, but in many brigades there is no qualification as such; there is no NVQ, but there is clearly an assessment which proves and passes you as competent and allows you to go on to the competent pay.

A key issue, as identified, is if there is no process why are people on development pay? Clearly, what we still do want is our people to be developed. There was mention made of people being able to become competent in two years. We understand entirely why someone would want the money as early as possible. But let's be frank. We know where IPDS came from. IPDS came from the fact that at incidents our people were killed because they weren't trained to the right standard, and those supervising, commanding, and controlling them weren't trained to the right standard. It brought the HSE in and gave improvement notices, actually to London Fire Brigade, but it was planted across the entire Fire & Rescue Service because London Fire Brigade was working to national processes which were inappropriate and essentially invalid.

So in doing this work, as much as want our people to get the money (that's what we're about), what we're not about is actually them just being given the money without being given the training and proper development. That's a safety issue. Its finding that balance and ensuring that, as the resolution calls for, our people are not mucked around and kept on development pay when they shouldn't be. I do want to emphasise the issue of the need for that development for safety reasons.

So we support the central ambition of the resolution but we do seek licence on how we address it. I will be frank, we think there may be some very quick resolutions, quicker than trying to negotiate with the NJC and that may well be resorting to a legal claim. So we ask you to leave it with us through remittance, but if you won't remit, because of the wording of the resolution and because of the worded requirements, we do need you to oppose it and not to tie us down to what the wording of the resolution specifically says. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Humberside right of reply.

## **BRO GAVIN MARSHALL (Humberside):**

President, Conference, thanks for that, Andy. I appreciate the feedback on that. I think from our point of view the disappointing thing with the circular is the fact that we do have a process in place at this moment in time and what really is the disappointing thing of the circular is that by removing the quality assurance there's no penalty. There's actually a reward to our services to continue to pay our newest members development pay for that additional year. However, I will say that in a couple of resolutions previous to this, you've given some assurances of what that's going to be done toward that and really take it on board. We will remit this and look forward to moving that forward together. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Gav. I'd now like to call Chief Scrutineer, Mark Rowe, to announce the result of the Standing Orders election held today.

## **CHIEF SCRUTINEER:**

President, Conference, I'm pleased to announce the results of the Standing Orders Committee election. There was one vacancy to be filled. There were nominations received for two candidates. One candidate nomination did not

comply with Rule C2(6). That candidate was informed and accepted the reasons I have just reported to conference. The other candidate nominated has accepted the nomination. Therefore, I am pleased to announce that Gareth Beeton from London has been duly elected on to the Standing Orders Committee. Congratulations, Gareth. Thanks, President. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, in closing, today you've unanimously agreed two emergency resolutions and you've pledged support for Greater Manchester and Hereford & Worcester. Let's not walk away from this conference and forget that pledge. If they make the call for support it's up to all of us in this conference hall to make sure that they get it.

I remember back in South Yorkshire when they issued the first Section 188, back in the day, and the support that we got from around the country was a massive boost to South Yorkshire members. So I can assure you they will get it nationally, and what I want from you, if they ask for it, is you'll give it to them locally.

Conference, remember there's a fringe meeting going on straight away, Solidarity with Migrants. I think it's downstairs in the same room. On that note, thank you, Conference, we'll reconvene tomorrow. Conference is adjourned.

*Conference adjourned*



## MORNING SESSION

### THE PRESIDENT:

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

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

Thank you President, Good morning, Conference. Programmes of business, please, page 8: after Resolution 48 insert Emergency Resolution 11 from Derbyshire. Page 10: after para.F15 insert Emergency Resolution 10 Cambridgeshire.

Conference, somebody has reported to the Standing Orders Committee that a Paramal top was found in the reception area, a light blue top Paramal top (never heard of it). It's now in reception so if it's yours, it's in reception.

Conference, the Standing Orders Committee have assessed business remaining which includes two speakers. Therefore the Standing Orders Committee reports to conference the following changes to speakers' times: mover five minutes, seconder three minutes, subsequent speakers two minutes.

Delegation changes: Cambridgeshire: delete Martin Harding; insert James Pearce. West Midlands: delete Aaron Pell; insert Andrew Scattergood. Surrey: delete Graham Whitfield; insert Jamie Devey. London: delete Gareth Beeton; insert Jon Lambe. Lincolnshire: delete Rick Wright; insert Maria Buck. LGBT: delete Maria Buck; insert Karen McDowell. NWC: delete Nicola Hobbs; insert Louise Connell. Greater Manchester: delete Karl Sorfleet; insert Gary Keary. North Wales: delete Ruth Bateman; insert Mike Edwards. Scotland: delete Terry Whyte; insert Alan Still. Many thanks, President.

### THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? *Agreed*

Conference, it now gives me great pleasure to introduce our next guest, Moyra Samuels from Justice for Grenfell, an organisation, as we know, who are campaigning tirelessly for the bereaved families, the survivors and residents of Grenfell Tower disaster. Give a warm welcome to a good friend of the FBU, Moyra Samuels. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

### SIS MOYRA SAMUELS (Justice for Grenfell):

Morning all, and thank you for inviting me for the second year to your conference. I was reflecting that a year ago at your conference it was probably one of the most moving speeches I've given. I think we were all incredibly emotional just reflecting on a year after Grenfell. But here we are, two years on, and where are we? On the night of 14th and the days following the 14th there were four groups that I would argue that were most impacted by that fire. They were those families who lost family members, there were survivors, there was the community, but there were certainly you guys who were greatly impacted. So whenever I think about who has been affected by Grenfell, the firefighters are always there in thinking about the impact of Grenfell.

So two years on and thinking about the community, I will be honest people, we are feeling a little bit battered, we feel a little bit bruised, we feel a little bit war weary. Part of the reason is not because we haven't given it everything we have. We have fought, we have argued, we have scrutinised, and we've done that with lots of support from the country at large. However, there seems to be very little progress, and I'm sure you'll agree as well. There seems to be little progress towards justice. We could say, if we were cynics, we didn't expect that. But I think for the community of North Kensington, for the survivors and bereaved who put their faith in an inquiry, who put their faith in the British justice system, they are deeply disappointed, incredibly frustrated, and actually it is impacting quite enormously on the already poor mental health of our community.

What do we have? We have Phase 2 of the Public Inquiry only going to start in 2020. That's a whole year's gap. To date we still don't have the diverse panel members. We don't know who they are; they haven't been appointed. We

fought so hard for them. The criminal investigation is now being tagged on to the end of the public inquiry. Those findings will only then be passed on to the CPS. That leaves the criminal investigation catapulted into 2021, if not 2022.

We also don't know (and this is one of the key questions we are asking) what's happened to the inquests. The inquests have now been apparently subsumed into the inquiry. So we are completely and utterly dependent on Moore-Bick allegedly to provide us with justice. Clearly, the community are not very happy with this. I'm sure lots of you in the room are not very happy with this. Only yesterday, apparently, it was announced that Moore-Bick is not going to implement as many of the recommendations as have been suggested coming out of the Phase 1 inquiry. He's only going to recommend a few. So for many of us there's a complete disappointment, there's a complete lack of faith that actually we're going to get justice very soon.

I think there are a few reports that have been quite significant. The Equality and Human Rights reports indicated that actually what happened at Grenfell was a breach of a right to life. I think probably we all already agree with that. The inquest report that came out last week, I think, where the bereaved families were asked about the inquiry and how they felt the inquiry went, was a really significant report. It identified that the bereaved felt there was a lack of transparency, that there was a kind of secrecy around this inquiry, that actually they were not put at the heart of this inquiry. The venue itself is unsuitable. But one thing they did with regard to the emergency services (and I think it includes you) is to say that they felt that there was a haphazard nature of the emergency response which increased families' anxiety and trauma. I think that is something that is going to have to be answered.

With the community now we still have an ongoing mental health issue and it's increased. We've had six suicides. Only yesterday on my way back from Newport I was approached by somebody who comes from the Grenfell area, a young man, said that his father had just committed suicide and he was going up to Abergavenny to see the family. The mental health impact is huge on our community. We're talking about the housing issue that continues. Although the stats they give you says that there are only 18 families now who are still in emergency or hotel accommodation, actually in the wider community who have been impacted, there are still hundreds of families in temporary accommodation. Lots of people have not wanted to come back to the Lancaster West estate. So they are still living in temporary accommodation. That's creating enormous insecurity within the community.

On top of that, as if our mental health and our trauma and grief was not enough, Professor Stec then issues a report about a month ago saying that there is an enormous amount of toxins in the soil. As you can imagine, that has created even further anxiety to a vulnerable community. We know that in the days following the fire there was an enormous amount of air pollutants that we breathed in. That was denied. Public Health England said to us: "No, we measured it and it was absolutely fine". In October last year, when the interim report of Professor Stec was leaked, they called a meeting at the Hilton Hotel. Public Health England, NHS, the borough, somebody from the government, and they were completely reassuring 500 people from the community that there was absolutely no problem, there was nothing wrong, we just needed to wash our hands and wash our vegetables.

Now we find out that that's not true, that there are huge contaminants in the soil around Grenfell up to a mile. Not only have we breathed in contaminants and we don't know what the hell the impact is going to be in the years to come (and I'm sure it's impacted on those firefighters who were there on the night as well) but we also have soil that has a range of toxins in it. We don't know what impact it will have on children. Children went to school the day after the fire. Most of the schools were open. It was a very hot summer. We were in the parks, children were in the parks.

The local council has, to some extent, gone back to a kind of business as usual. We're getting a lot of flim flam, we're getting a lot of PR. They just employed a communications person from the Cabinet to work for the council. The trust between the community and the council is at an absolute minus 5. In general, two years on, we feel like we have gained very little and we are going to have to take a deep breath and bed down for a huge fight.

This is where I come to you, sisters and brothers. There is a narrative out there that is going to blame people (possibly you) who were not responsible for that fire. There's a narrative out there that seeks to cover up, that seeks to lie, that seeks to hide the truth of what happened at Grenfell. I don't think I need to repeat to you: we know that before any of you stepped into Grenfell on that fateful night, it was a death trap. That's been so well documented.

We knew. We also know that Arconic, who provided the cladding, Celotex, who put in the insulation, Rydon who did the building, whoever passed the building inspection, they gave that inquiry very little of their time. They felt that they didn't need to explain what their role was. It was you guys who actually spent days and days and days on the stand. However, let me reassure you that the community of Grenfell know who the real culprits are. There is a wanted poster still stuck around in different places in the community and that includes those council members (and we know their names and we know where they live) who made the decisions to approve the cladding on that building. We are very much aware of all the people that I mentioned and their responsibility. We know all the people responsible. I think it's time that I say to you the community of North Kensington are not buying into the narrative that may be out there that it was the firefighters to blame. We don't believe that for one minute. We know that if that inquiry starts to blame individual firefighters who were doing their best, doing their job – yes, we know there was a haphazard nature to the response (I don't think any of us can deny that) – the community will be standing side by side with you to fight against that narrative.

When I say that all the public services have been impacted by Grenfell, and the mental health needs of our community have not been met because of cuts in public services, it means the same as is happening in the fire service. Just as a lay person, in reflecting on the inquiry and how I feel, I may be wrong; there may be more to it, but I would say to you today at your conference that there are a few things I think you need to start fighting for. One is a better communication system. Sorry, the inquiry indicated that your communication system was – everybody in the community keeps going on about why were they using bits of paper? Why weren't they using radios and stuff like that? There may be more sophisticated reasons that as lay people we don't understand.

I also feel that it's really important that as firefighters you are trained in fighting cladding fires, as I think has been argued by the FBU. Again, I may be wrong but from the community's point of view it seems that the firefighters didn't have training in how to manage cladding fires. Thirdly, I think that we are all going to have to talk about stay put because it's the issue that vexes the community most.

I'm trying to understand, and I hope that you will help me to understand. Remember, our community are lay people; they don't understand how fire safety works; they are not firefighters. I would hope that you can help to educate our community around these issues. Most of all, I think we all need to recognise that Grenfell exposed a neo-liberal system based on profit, based on cost-cutting, and one that doesn't put lives first; it put money first. That's effectively what we all need to stand together and fight because it impacts on all of us.

I believe that as we go forward we need to stand together and think about a legacy of change. We've had lots of discussions about this. What does justice look like? We've lost faith in the judicial system to deliver justice. The only way we think we're going to get justice is to demand change. That change has to come either through Parliament, or it has to come from us standing together and taking to the streets and demanding that change. I hope that when we do that, you will stand side by side with us.

I think that we need to continue to work together, and to make sure that we demand justice. Therefore, on 14th, the second anniversary, there will be some activities going on within the community. I will be passing that information on to people. It's a rather late silent walk, I'm afraid. It's at 7.45. There will be a dinner for the bereaved and survivors before that, and then there will be laying of wreaths and then there will be the silent walk. So people are very welcome to come down on that day. There will also be a church service at 11 o'clock.

What Justice for Grenfell is saying is that we want to remember our dead with dignity and we want to honour them, but we want to fight for the living. Therefore, we are calling a protest in Central London on 15th, like we did last year. I hope that all of you will come and support. We put a call out to the Labour Movement to come and join us. Justice equals change, and justice means that we should no longer have these deaths in vain. Justice for Grenfell. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I think, Moyra, you can see the views of our conference reflected in the response you've just had to your comments to conference today. As I think everyone in the hall knows, we've worked very closely with Moyra and others at Justice for Grenfell since the fire and since campaigning started. We've built a very close working relationship, to work together on common areas of interest. In Justice for Grenfell we have a very powerful ally. They've got their job to do defending that community, but also they have worked very hard to explain to people beyond the lying, reasons behind what happened at Grenfell. That's been a very powerful ally for us in the work that we've been trying to do in terms of occasionally having to answer questions raised about firefighters, people to ask us questions where necessary. That has been absolutely invaluable to the work that we've done. I can assure you, Moyra, we'll do everything we can to ensure a turnout on both the silent walk on the second anniversary and on the protest on 15th. That work, as you know, is already in hand. Thanks very much for coming today. I have a small gift here. We keep exchanging gifts. Neither the Fire Brigades Union nor Justice for Grenfell are going to give up this campaign. We're going to carry on. Hopefully, you are going to stay on and listen to our debate that is going to follow. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, as the Chair of Standing Orders said, we've still got a lot of business to get through today. We'll try to do that as fast as we can, but a lot of that is down to you. So be disciplined. We've got new speakers' times. The VP is ready with his finger on the button. Basically, if somebody has said what you were going to say, don't just get up for the purpose of repeating it.

We are now on to the business of the day, Section E Government Policy and Legislation, para.E10. I now call Executive Council Policy Statement Grenfell Tower – Never Again. General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the Executive Council makes no apology for again bringing a policy statement on the issue of the Grenfell Tower fire to conference. We will never forget the fire on 14th June 2017, and the worst loss of life in a fire in living memory. The 72 people who died, and the hundreds of others, bereaved, survivors and residents, deserve to get justice for what happened to them and to that community, as Moyra has set out. The second anniversary of the fire is only a month away. The Fire Brigades Union needs to be out in force campaigning, lobbying, protesting about that atrocity, as we've described it, and demanding justice. Justice, as Moyra correctly says, must mean change. That's what we're fighting for.

I'm sure the people in this room have followed the inquiry and the press coverage in great detail, including some of the concerns we've got about the questioning and the challenges to some of our members. I just want to assure people that in my assessment (I'm in that community quite a lot) the overwhelming view and the overwhelming mood in that North Kensington community is support for firefighters. I would urge every delegate here and every member of our union to take the time to mark that second anniversary to demonstrate our solidarity and support for that community.

There's another pressing reason why we need to discuss here today the Grenfell Tower fire once again. That's because of the way the inquiry has unfolded over the past year. You remember from last year's debate that Phase 1 had just begun, dealing with the events of the night of the fire. Between May and December of last year the inquiry was held for nearly 100 days. FBU officials and our legal representatives attended every day of those proceedings. Those proceedings heard evidence from 88 firefighters, control staff, fire officers from the London Fire Brigade and from elsewhere, statements from another 262 individual Fire & Rescue personnel were read into the record. The inquiry received in total 668 statements from firefighters. I want to pay tribute to all of our members who contributed to the inquiry in that way. I have to say, I struggle to think of any other trade union which has ever had to deal with that level of inquiry, investigation, interviews and so on. A huge challenge for a trade union. I think we can be very proud of what we did.

I want to put on record the thanks of our union to those members who attended that fire and were deployed into a situation that they were not trained for, Moyra is absolutely correct. The Fire Service had not planned for that incident. One of the key debates is going to be about whether this was a foreseeable incident or not. I think we need

to be clear that in the views of the Fire Brigades Union it was foreseeable. The warning signs were there. If it was foreseeable then the Fire & Rescue Service should have planned, should have prepared. That raises issues about procedures, about training, equipment and about resources. That is one of the fundamental debates that needs to be had about Grenfell Tower.

I want to put on record our thanks to those members of our union who were forced to relive the horror of that night in that inquiry in London, what they did, what they saw, and then to provide the police, the London Fire Brigade and the inquiry with their testimony. We want to praise those who were called to give oral evidence at the inquiry with such dignity, heartbreaking evidence in many cases. To see our members reduced to tears was again very difficult for all of us to deal with.

No-one should forget the early stages of that inquiry, the harsh questioning that some of our members were put under. In many cases, unfair questioning that some of our members were put under. We, as a union, intervened to address the inquiry and its legal team about how questioning was being carried out. Those members of this union had the support of the Fire Brigades Union and will continue to have the support of the Fire Brigades Union throughout this process. Our message to them is the Fire Brigades Union has your back.

I want to pay tribute and thanks to our London officials who've played such a key role in that. I have to say, particularly to Steve White and Gareth Beeton, who've played such a key role in assisting our members throughout this process. Also, to officials from across the country who attended interviews, travelling across the country at the weekend and other times to sit with FBU members while they were interviewed by the police – a remarkable achievement for a trade union, demonstrating the level of support that we will always provide to members of the Fire Brigades Union. I don't think there's another organisation in this country who could have done what we did during that inquiry. We can be incredibly proud of it.

I think conference should also thank various staff, a whole team of staff at head office, who have been working continuously on this issue: researching, reading documents. I will come on to the scale of the documents that needs to be addressed in a moment. It was a huge task. It is momentous, the level of detail that we have to go through in order to identify the questions that need to be asked, the issues that need to be addressed, the issues that need to be challenged or confronted. So a huge issue and we have a fantastic team of staff at head office who have done a huge amount of work on that. On behalf of the Executive Council, therefore I want to thank everyone – lay officials, full-time officials and staff for their role in that very difficult process.

Conference, the union will now begin to invest our efforts in to what we move on to now: Phase 2 of the inquiry. Firstly, we can expect this interim report. As Moyra has said, it's unclear now what recommendations and how many recommendations will emerge from Phase 1 of the inquiry, which are expected soon. We expect there may well be criticisms of the London Fire Brigade. There may be criticisms of individual firefighters and of firefighting operations. We will have to examine closely the interim report, interim recommendations and assess that. If necessary, again, we will robustly defend our members and their role on that night.

We will make it very clear that any failings of the London Fire Brigade are not failings of individual members of the Fire Brigades Union, individual staff or firefighters of the London Fire Brigade. Indeed, we go further and say: actually, this isn't necessarily a London-specific issue. There are buildings with the same cladding all over the country. There are buildings with other forms of flammable cladding all over the country. There are buildings with other failings in fire safety measures all over the country. I attended a meeting in the House of Commons just last week of private leaseholders who have been lumbered with huge costs to correct the fire safety failings within their buildings by the building owners. Only a third of them related to ACM cladding. Another third related to other forms of cladding and another third related to other, major fire safety failings within private buildings all across the country.

The London Fire Brigade needs to be held to account if necessary, but this is a national issue and therefore national government needs to be held to account for failings in the fire safety regime that lies behind what happened at Grenfell.

Conference, we then will move on to what is called Phase 2. The inquiry expects to disclose more than 200,000 documents to core participants by the autumn of this year. Think about the scale of that: 200,000 documents that

we will have to assess, work out which are relevant to firefighters, which are relevant to the Fire Brigades Union. It's unlikely that Phase 2 hearings will start before the end of this year. Again, in terms of the points that Moyra has made, think about the impact of that. We are already approaching the second anniversary and we will not be discussing at the inquiry the underlying causes, we will not start to discuss the underlying causes until the end of this year, as we begin to approach the third anniversary of the fire. Then think about the time it took for Phase 1 and what is likely to take for Phase 2. We will be well past the third anniversary before Phase 2 even starts to come to a conclusion of considering the evidence. Then it needs to consider what its conclusions are, probably as we approach the fourth anniversary of the fire. Think about the impact of that on the bereaved, survivors and on that community, as we approach the fourth and what, a fifth year, as people are told to wait and wait and wait for the outcome of this before they are given justice. I think we need to highlight those issues and challenge them.

We will continue to participate in that inquiry for as long as is necessary, but we need to remind politicians and the public that the people who lived in Grenfell Tower were not responsible for what happened. We need to remind people that the firefighters who attended the fire were not responsible for what happened. We need to call the owners and senior managers of the building to account for their failures. They were the so-called responsible person under the fire safety legislation, responsible for that building. We want to ensure that those construction firms and their owners, and the contractors and others who did the work at Grenfell Tower, those who manufactured, sold and installed the cladding and unsafe fire doors, and the windows, and the rest of the refurbishment, need to face justice for their part in this tragedy.

I regularly attend the silent walk that Moyra has referred to. I know many people in the room have also attended. There was one earlier this year where the Rapper Lowkey spoke. I have to say, I think he caught the mood of people very well because he summed up the frustration that Moyra has referred to, of people saying how long is this going to take? He said: you know what, there's these firms who are still selling this stuff, they're still making huge profits out of selling flammable cladding, they're procrastinating, they're working through that inquiry to make sure they don't get questioned, they're presumably throwing in huge numbers of documents to confuse things. He said: actually, we need to start thinking about taking direct action against those firms. We should be picketing the cladding manufacturers and pointing the finger at the people who are really behind the tragedy that happened at Grenfell.

So we need to think about how we take this forward politically, not simply relying on the inquiry which seems to endlessly and endlessly delay things. We need to hold to account those local councillors who made the political decisions to contract out the building, who ignored the residents when they made warnings, who dismissed them contemptuously, who failed to oversee fire safety in their own housing stock. But above all, Conference, for this union we need to point the finger of blame where it belongs: at the Westminster politicians who have overseen decades of deregulation that created the regime that allowed Grenfell to happen. They are people who should be getting questioned. We're not afraid of firefighters answering questions, but I want to see current government ministers and previous government ministers who signed off bits of legislation relaxing regulations being questioned. Why are they not on the stand at Grenfell being asked why did they take that decision, who gave them the advice, and will they now accept their responsibility for the mess that lay behind the tragedy at Grenfell?

To finish, Conference, I want to highlight our commitment to continuing to campaign. If you read the EC policy statement Grenfell – Never Again, it sets out a number of areas that we think we should campaign around in the coming months. We want to see the removal of all combustible cladding, and a ban on the use of such combustible materials in such circumstances. The question of stay put has been raised. We want to see a national review of the stay put policy. Interestingly, this union has raised that issue in previous fires, fires which resulted in the deaths of firefighters. This union's health and safety report has raised the question of reviewing the stay put policy. I find it staggering that two years down the line, when there is utter confusion among people who live in purpose-built blocks of flats, nobody has stepped in to say: we need to look at this in a serious, constructive way. It's as though nobody really wants to face up to the issue. We now say in our document there needs to be a national government-led review of the stay put policy involving professionals, involving this union, and also involving representatives of tenants' organisations so their voices are heard. We want to see the strengthening of tenants' rights and support for democratic and independent tenants' organisations.

We want to see new accountability structures in the Fire & Rescue Service. We have a completely fragmented Fire & Rescue Service in the UK where everyone does whatever the hell they want. If you have a fire in a tower block in one part of the country, you'll get one response and in another part of the country you'll get a completely different response. It is disgraceful, and it is sickening that it is still in place two years after this fire. We want to see an increase in the number of specialist fire safety officers – again, a key feature of the discussions around the fire safety regime and what lay behind that fire.

Conference, we have to fight to ensure that those who died at Grenfell did not die in vain. We have to ensure that nothing like this can ever be allowed to happen again. To do that we have to fight for our sector, for our service, for our industry. We need to fight alongside the community and with other allies. Conference, support the EC policy statement. Justice for Grenfell. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

London to second.

## **BRO STEVE WHITE (London):**

President, Conference, here we are nearly two years after the fire at Grenfell Tower. The General Secretary is right, we should be justifiably proud of the national response to that enormous amount of statement-taking by the Metropolitan Police – 668 statements delivered to the Public Inquiry, the 88 members that gave oral evidence to the inquiry, and the way that we were able, as a national union, to fall in behind those people so that nobody went into an interview with the police without their FBU rep with them, nobody went to the inquiry without the support of their trade union. There are a lot of people in this room that can take some credit for that.

I've got to say that in the months since Phase 1 of the inquiry finished, that work didn't. We're still supporting members being interviewed a second time by the Metropolitan Police, we're still supporting members who are being asked questions by the inquiry under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules, we're still supporting members who are now going through the process of giving statement to their employer under their employer's serious accident investigation procedures. So all of that work is still going on. Lots and lots of questions being aimed at firefighters. In that two year period we're still seeing no questions being asked of the people who are actually responsible for putting flammable material on the outside of a high rise residential building, nor those people who are responsible for the political climate that allowed that to happen.

Ever fancied being an accident investigator? In that two year period this union is also conducting its own accident investigation into the firefighter safety issues that come out of the fire at Grenfell Tower. I've got to tell you we're looking at 50-odd physical injuries, 30-odd psychological issues, 400 or so near misses. That's not stuff that happened in the past. The mental health impact on our members is something that's just as significant now and continues to be significant as it was then. We're still supporting all those people as well.

But enough about us. What about the community? Moyra talked about soil contamination from the fire, up to a mile away. Professor Stec, who is now working for the inquiry as well as doing stuff for us on fire contamination, has identified the toxicity in flats over 100 metres away. In one case, isocyanates were found inside a flat 160 metres away from Grenfell Tower which could only have come from the fire. Meanwhile, Public Health England are telling the community that it's still all right to eat the rhubarb that they've grown in their gardens!

One in ten people displaced by the fire in Grenfell Tower are still not in permanent housing. One in three people displaced from surrounding flats are still not in permanent housing. Eight out of ten high rise residential buildings clad in flammable cladding have still not had it removed. The estimates are there are 20,000 people in the country living in buildings with unsafe cladding on the outside.

Two years on, Conference, what justice have we actually seen for the 72 victims of the fire at Grenfell Tower? Let's look after each other, let's be unwavering in our support for the community. Justice for Grenfell. I second. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Well done, Steve. That's open for debate. Yes.

## **BRO DEAN POUNDER (B&EMM):**

Morning Committee, Conference, Moyra, I promise not to bring tears this time. I just want to take this opportunity to remind everyone sat here in this room that the fight for justice, the fight for the 72 lives needlessly lost, the fight for the families and the friends who lost loved ones and now pick up the pieces, the fight for the neighbours and the local community is far from over. Phase 1 saw our comrades under immense pressure, reliving the horror of 14th June. That was painful for me, and I'm sure it was painful for the rest of us here in this room. It was an interrogation to find faults, to point the finger. We all applauded our brave brothers and sisters for their incredible bravery that night. I would like us all to once again applaud their bravery, courage and demeanour during that six months of hell! (Applause)

Two years on now, the local residents are living among heightened levels of cancer-causing chemicals: phosphorus flame-retardant toxins to the nervous system are found in soil samples, as Moyra stated, 50 metres from the tower. Other harmful chemicals were found much further away. The primary school that my mother works at, the one that I attended, is only 480 metres from the tower, one of two local schools close to Grenfell.

The report found that if Grenfell had not been re-clad as part of the £10 million refurbishment the fire would have remained contained. I know that; you all know that. However, Stephen Hockman QC, the barrister for Arconic claimed that the cladding had not been responsible for the disaster. After watching the video starring our very own brother, David Badillo, I sent him a text yesterday saying "well done, bro". He asked me to pass on the following to conference – his words:

*"A quick thank you from me for your continued and valued support for the community. Please keep fighting for justice for the bereaved, the survivors and the community around Grenfell and for all those around the country who continue to live in fear knowing that their homes are deathtraps. Those who allowed flammable clad buildings across the country, those who put flammable cladding on buildings to save money knowing the dangers, and those who manufactured and then sold the flammable cladding knowing what and where it was going to be used for must all be brought to justice. Grenfell was by far the worst thing I had ever experienced and witnessed. I can never forget that night. The images are permanently marked in my dreams, my thoughts and my heart. We must make sure that with the passing of time of those in power never forget.*

*With the second anniversary of the fire fast approaching we will remember the 72 angels, the innocent victims of the atrocity of 14th June at Grenfell. They will forever be in our hearts. Brother David Badillo. Justice for Grenfell."*

I support. (Applause)

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Any more speakers? Conference, I now put Executive Council policy statement Grenfell Tower – Never Again to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, can I now ask you to turn to page 6 of your Programme of Business. I now call Resolution 56 moved by Lancashire with an amendment from Merseyside. The Executive Council are opposing.

### **Resolution 56 PROVISION OF AN INDEPENDENT SEAT ON THE FIRE AUTHORITY**

***Conference notes that in 19 out of 29 European countries there is some provision for worker's representation on company boards, and a study based on interviews with worker board representatives in 13 European companies presents a picture of worker representatives making a genuine difference to the way in which decisions are made, with their role contributing to the formation of a more balanced corporate strategy. The TUC has long argued for worker representation on company boards as one element of wider corporate governance reform. Conference asks that all Brigades should request that the FBU be provided representation on the Authority controlling fire governance as an independent (non-elected) member. This position would be in a non-voting capacity. Our appointment would facilitate a voice on the decision-making body by allowing a fresh external perspective, will open debate and will drive scrutiny and***

*promote excellence. The role of a worker representative would be viewed as being responsible for bringing the perspective of a worker to the Authority, rather than for directly representing all Fire and Rescue Service workers.*

*Conference will be aware, the Prime Minister has announced plans to put workers on boards, something already in place in Germany and France, where workplace representatives make up over half of corporate supervisory boards. This proposal has expanded on the Labour Party's 2015 election manifesto which called on employee representation on corporate compensation committees.*

*Workers' interests are affected by the priorities and decisions of organisational boards and it is therefore a matter of justice that they should be represented within those discussions. Workforce relationships are central to organisational success and worker board representation would help the Fire Governance Authority to manage these key stakeholder relationships more effectively.*

*Conference therefore requests that all Brigade Committees request that their respective Fire Governance Body grants (or confers the following rights to the FBU) a seat on the Fire Authority to;*

- be provided with papers for meetings (including those to be considered in private session unless a conflict of interest exists)*
- be briefed appropriately before meetings*
- attend meetings (and remain during items considered in private session)*
- speak at meetings.*

*With Authority's support, the application and acceptance will send a clear message that industrial relations and workers' rights are at the very heart of the Governing Body's strategy and administration.*

**LANCASHIRE**

## **AMENDMENT**

*Paragraph 6 insert final bullet point 'be granted trade union leave (paid) to attend those meetings.'*

**MERSEYSIDE**

## **BRO ANDREW HEWITSON (Lancashire):**

President, Conference, work representation on company boards makes a genuine difference to the way in which decisions are made, presenting balanced views and guiding fully informed decision-making. Conference asks that all brigades should request that an independent seat be provided on all fire governance authorities. For too long the only guiding voice has been that of the employers, with decisions made outwith the interests of the workforce or the public we serve and the FBU have to sit on their hands and watch.

Conference requests all brigade committee request that (1) papers are provided for all meetings; (2) that they be briefed appropriately; (3) that they attend meetings and remain in private sessions; and (4) are allowed to speak at meetings. With the authorities' support this will put industrial relations and workers' rights at the heart of the governing body strategy and administration. Resolution 56, I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder? Chris. One of you. Dave.

## **BRO STEVE HOWLEY (North Yorkshire):**

President, Conference, we are seconding this motion. We've first-hand experience of gaining a seat on the fire authority quite recently, before we then lost that seat when the PCC took over. The impact of us getting that seat initially, you can imagine, they didn't want us in that arena, absolutely not. But then they actually started to see the benefits of having us in that arena. What it did was, instead of councillors not even reading the papers because they knew that there was never going to be any debate because everything went through on the nod, allowed us to

interact within that meeting – something that we’ve never ever been allowed to do before because we had to give speeches two weeks previous and we had to stick to it and we didn’t have a right of reply and all the rest of it. We then got involved, could influence debate, hold them to account in some degrees like we’ve never been able to do before. Yes, we had a non-voting seat, which was great because then you’re not party to it. It never affected the neutrality. I’m a little bit bemused why the EC aren’t supporting this. It is of massive benefit to have a seat on the fire authority. It is something that we should all be going out and doing because it does influence decisions and it does start to improve industrial relations, and you can have a genuine influence.

We were on a Tory fire authority with only two Labour councillors on, and we started to turn the chair of the fire authority. Please support this resolution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Chris, just give us a minute while Moyra departs. Thanks, Moyra. *(Applause)* Chris. Conference, remember the new speaking times.

## BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

Go! President, Conference, I’m speaking on Resolution 56, still deciding. I think this has got legs, Conference, and it does need consideration. I don’t accept the argument that we’ll become complicit somehow in cuts to our services. Comrades, how many meetings do we sit at that decisions are made, discussions are had that we don’t agree with? The minutes, the reports reflect that, and our members are made fully aware of that. It frustrates me immensely, Conference, it absolutely grates when we sit at these meetings, listening to a group of people talk about issues that they barely know anything about, make decisions on it, and the information they have got has come from their managerial buddies. That is actually a thing.

The caveat I would say on this is education. Are we actually ready to do this? Have we got the time and the skill set to actually sit at the table? I’m not sure I’m ready yet, Conference. The financial reports absolutely blow my mind so we’re going to listen to the debate. I thank the comrade for bringing the resolution. Well done to North Yorkshire who said they had a seat and it worked. I think it’s definitely got legs. We’re going to give it careful and considered thought. I would urge conference to do the same. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I’m going to put my hand up. I can’t remember if I’ve moved the amendment. Can you move the amendment? *Formally* Thank you. Is that seconded? *Formally* Thank you. Any more speakers? No? General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the resolution does raise important issues and we certainly should debate them and discuss them. But the Executive Council makes no apology for asking you to oppose the resolution. Conference, the resolution makes reference, in para.4, to the fact that the Prime Minister has announced plans to put workers on boards. That in itself should raise alarm. If it’s an idea that Theresa May thinks is a good idea, then Conference you have to start questioning whether it’s in the interests of working people. I wouldn’t trust the Prime Minister as far as I could throw her.

We need to look at the background to how these discussions and debates began. There are debates in the trade union movement and in the Labour Party about worker representatives on boards. We need to look at the history of that. The idea originated in Europe, indeed in Germany, before the First World War. It was supported by the German Kaiser. It was used as a mechanism to try to cut across the building of independent workers’ organisations, to cut across the building of trade unionism. It’s premised on the idea that we have some common interests with our employers.

The resolution makes reference to the TUC, and yes, the TUC has got policies around that. That doesn’t mean we have to endorse it. The TUC, since the early 1980s, has been arguing for what they call social partnership. What social partnership is is to say to working people that we have common interests with our employers. I have to say, Conference, think carefully about this. We have no common interests with the bosses. They’re the bosses; we’re the

workers. Our job is to represent workers. The fundamental fact is there is a conflict of interest between employers and workers. That's why workers need independent trade unions, because in the private sector bosses' interests is about maximising their profits. The idea that putting workers on boards is going to alter that is fundamentally flawed.

I think in terms of our traditions there are some very serious concerns about the whole debate about worker representation on boards. We recognise that division; it's recognised in the preface to the FBU rule book, some of the fundamental founding principles of this union.

The resolution makes reference to the debates within the Labour Party on this issue. Yes, there is a debate within the Labour Party on this issue and we should participate in that. John McDonnell has raised the idea, for example, of a third of seats going to workers. Let's be clear, that's very different from having a single seat on some form of board. It would still need to be debated, but it's a very different idea from the one that's presented in the resolution here today.

In terms of fire authorities, again, we need to be very careful about what we're asking for. Our argument is for democratically accountable fire authorities. That is our position. In Scotland, for example, we now have a quango effectively: appointees sitting and making decisions on fire policy. Police & Crime Commissioners are setting up scrutiny panels made up of appointees only. Metro mayors could do the same thing.

Our position is for directly elected fire authority members because we want local communities to be able to hold them to account. The resolution doesn't address how such firefighter representatives would be selected. Putting a single representative on a fire authority could mean precisely being drawn into discussions around cuts because being on boards also brings certain obligations to the members of those boards – obligations around confidentiality. A question was asked at the Executive Council when we discussed this: what does a firefighter representative do, for example, if given a confidential paper saying: we now need to discuss redundancies of this level in this fire authority? Is that firefighter representative going to say: yes, I'll comply with the confidentiality agreement that I've just breached because I'm sitting on this board? No, we couldn't possibly comply with any such requirement. We would have an obligation, if it's an FBU rep, to say actually I'm going to go and tell the workforce that redundancies are now being threatened and that person would have broken such confidentiality arrangements.

I think the bullet points miss the point. Of course, we want to end secrecy on fire authorities, of course we want more open government, of course we want to end the practice of having certain papers that our people can't see, of course we want dialogue, of course we want fire authorities where Fire Brigades Union representatives, in their capacity as Fire Brigades Union representatives, can get up and put their case with adequate time, adequate resources, to the fire authority to make the case against cuts. Our officials should be attending and speaking at such meetings and we should be challenging mechanisms which chief fire officers and fire authorities have used to prevent the voice of the workforce being heard. Of course we should do that. That is entirely different, Conference, from sitting on a fire authority board. Conference, we urge you to oppose the resolution. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Lancashire right of reply.

## BRO ANDREW HEWITSON (Lancashire):

President, Conference, whatever the PM says, I'm sure that a seat on any fire authority or fire governance board would be in the interests of the working people. What we're asking for is a seat on a CFA, sorry, the fire authority or the fire governance board. It's not one member of the union going sitting with the chief and everyone; it's an authority usually made up of Conservatives and Labour. On those fire authority meetings our officers go and they sit and they tell lies to these people. These people believe everything that they are told. We sit there and we listen to the lies told by our officers. At the last meeting we had, our departing chief said that there's no females in our service on less money than the equivalent males. That was a lie. I sat and watched and I couldn't say anything. I got told that no people were encouraged to return to work after they retired. I know somebody that has, and I couldn't say anything.

A third of the seats going to workers, I think that's in the future and that's something we aspire to. But I think having one person and one voice on a fire authority, speaking for the workers, would be a start. I think they make decision

at the moment, being told lies by officers and those decisions are made without having somebody to look at, somebody to face and say that they're making that decision on behalf of that person who is going to make their life worse. We're faceless; we have nobody there. We need somebody in that room, talking on behalf of our workers and exposing the lies that our officers tell them. Please support. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. I now put the amendment from Merseyside to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now put Resolution 56 as amended to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 57 National Bonus Survey moved by Buckinghamshire. The Executive Council support.

### **Resolution 57 NATIONAL BONUS SURVEY**

***Conference recognises the worrying use of bonuses within the public sector generally and more closely within our own Fire and Rescue Services.***

***Buckinghamshire has seen in excess of £500,000 in bonuses paid to members of the senior management team, during a period of sustained cuts to frontline services and the largest percentage loss of firefighter numbers nationally.***

***To that end, Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a national survey to map the use and frequency of bonuses within UK Fire and Rescue Services, comparing directly against cuts and job losses during this period of austerity.***

***The findings of this survey will be made available to Regional and Brigade Officials in the form of a report, before Conference 2020, to allow Officials to consider any potential actions.***

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

### **BRO GREG O'NEILL (Buckinghamshire):**

President, Conference, this resolution is asking that a national survey is carried out to see if senior management teams are being given bonuses while job cuts to frontline services are still happening. Conference, this is public money. The highest paid in our services are the ones taking these bonuses while our terms and conditions and pay are being driven down year on year. This has been the case in Buckinghamshire in the last few years to the tune of nearly half a million pounds, which was brought about by a former chief officer and a Tory-led fire authority.

This year I can happily report that the senior management team have refused bonuses, but it is still the fire authority's policy for this to happen. Thankfully, pressure from the brigade committee to the CFO has made the change and the stance has changed on these bonuses and honorariums have come out of appraisals.

Buckinghamshire brigade committee believe that there is no place for bonuses in Fire & Rescue Service. We call on the EC to conduct a survey into the use of bonuses and to report to brigade and regional officials so this can be challenged at brigade level. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. General Secretary. No. I now put Resolution 57 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

We're now on para.D2, para.D3, para.D4, para.D5, para.D6, para.D7.

### **BRO GARY KEARY (GMC):**

President, Conference, MTFA has been the cause of a long-running bitter dispute in GMC. It is close to six years that our dispute was registered. The union and our members refused to accept the brigade's position that MTFA

was contractual. Following the union's decision taken in September 2017 to withdraw from areas of new work, a clear message was given to management that all aspects of MTFA work should cease. For a 12 month period after this there were no MTFA exercises or training conducted. Late last year the service made a push to reintroduce MTFA training, initially arranging familiarisation with HART teams and police tactical aid armed units. However, the union and our members stood strong and refused to engage in this training. There followed a period of renewed pressure from the service, through which time offers of payment were made to firefighters and officer members alike to provide an MTFA capability. These offers, ranging from £1500 upwards, were rejected outright by the union and our members. However, as I'm sure you would expect, there were difficult conversations had with some members. It was necessary to have these discussions and explain that the right thing to do was reject this offer and stand together in support of the union's position and our collective drive to attain a much-needed pay increase for all firefighters.

GMFRS have now written to all those firefighters who had previously provided MTFA cover, thanking them for their commitment over previous years. They have also written to the Home Office and Greater Manchester police informing them that GMFRS is no longer able to provide an MTFA capability.

In the last month the service has notified local officials of a national push to introduce MTA into brigades, informing them that the FBU has been consulted on this work at a national level. We are again resisting this latest push by the employer, but it would be very helpful if, at the earliest opportunity, we could get a national directive on MTA to assist our resistance. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

AGS. Thanks, Gary.

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, I think we congratulated GMC earlier in the conference on a different session. Clearly they have really been putting the work into the issue in GMC. The question of MTA has now arisen. Certainly we've made it known to the employers, we've made it known at the Home Office (only to the Home Office) that any movement that we were thinking about in terms of MTFA isn't necessarily reflected in that we will have the same kind of views with regard to MTA – not least the fact that MTA is not generally a mass casualty event and secondly, it is a lot more up close and personal. The hot zone is the area of deployment that we imagine they're planning for and certainly what the JOPS imply. So we will put some guidance out on that, as Gary has requested. It's an issue that we are going to have to consider in light of the broadening the role because, as you know, there are distinct and specific differences between MTFA and MTA, in particular the risks to our members at such incidents. Thank you.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Now para.D8, para.D9. Yes. This is D8, yes?

**BRO GARY KEARY (GMC):**

President, Conference, speaking on para.D8 Kerslake Report. The 22nd May 2017 saw the heinous terrorist attack on Greater Manchester Arena, an attack that cost 22 innocent people their lives. In the wake of this attack the Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, saw fit to commission a review into the events on that night, the Kerslake Report. This review was conducted and concluded prior to the forthcoming Coroner's inquest. The Kerslake Report was extremely critical of the Fire Service and its response to the Arena attack. This criticism only served to further frustrate and anger Greater Manchester firefighters who in reality had done nothing wrong, and certainly had nothing to apologise for.

The FBU in Greater Manchester do not accept or recognise the outcome of this meaningless review, and instead will await the Coroner's inquest through which we are confident that the truth about the events of that night will be realised and the blame laid at the right door. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Para.D9, para.D10. I now move on to Section G Education, para.G1, para.G2. I now call Resolution 67 Young and Newer Members – Education moved by Cleveland. The Executive Council support.

## **Resolution 67 YOUNG AND NEWER MEMBERS EDUCATION**

***This Conference recognises the importance of a vibrant, inclusive and fully involved membership and in particular the role younger and newer Members (for example, Members under 30 years of age or 10 years or less as a Member) can contribute to our Union moving forward.***

***This Conference must also recognise the lack of tailored education for young and newer Members.***

***This Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to organise and run a pilot, national 'Young and Newer Members' education course before Conference 2020 and to report back to Conference 2020 on the merits and successes, or otherwise, of that pilot course.***

**CLEVELAND**

### **BRO DARREN FAWCETT (Cleveland):**

President, Conference, in order to survive our union must look to the future and plan accordingly. The FBU has a proud history of inclusion, but we in Cleveland believe that for many reasons, be they educational, societal or practical, younger and newer members are not receiving sufficient support, education and inclusion to thrive as comrades and to become the reps of the future.

It's great to see some young and new faces in the hall, but there should be more young reps. Young reps will bring new ideas and a fresh attitude to many parts of our great union. Two years ago Cleveland brought a resolution to conference asking for a framework to involve, recruit and inform young and new members. We believe that a national young and new member's course will better address these issues. Move our union forward and start educating the reps of the future. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

### **THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder?

### **SIS LEONI MUNSLOW (London):**

Conference, hands up any delegates here today that are under 30 years old! Two, Conference, two delegates. You see, it's not just at conference that young members are under-represented. At all levels of our union from branch meetings up, experience breeds confidence and our senior members dominate the discourse. It's absolutely crucial to recognise the successes achieved by our ROOT members and our older members in service now. They successfully fought and won hard battles that got us here today.

I stood strong on the picket line with my brothers and sisters in 2013, but when most of you were striking in 2002 I was still at school. *(Laughter)*

I had no idea what a union was or why, as an adult, I should even be part of one. I'm lucky, comrades. I got quite heavily involved in my students' union and I came to conference as an NUS delegate here in Blackpool in 2006 and 2007. But most of our new members join the fire service with no real knowledge of how to get involved and how to drive our movement forwards.

Conference, we join with excitement and enthusiasm; we're so proud to be part of the fire service and one of the oldest and strongest unions in the country. Let's engage that passion before we get burnt out and battle weary. Every army needs reinforcements.

Why can't we have a course designed for young and new members where no-one gets to swing the lamp about how long they've been in? *(Laughter)*

Empower us to speak amongst our peers, this huge number of under 30s who make up our recruits because we'll be the ones still here at conference in 2030.

Technology and the use of digital media has changed the way young people have participated in activism globally, so why aren't we capturing those young activists and educating them to secure our own future? If we can combine

the knowledge and experience from our senior officials with the enthusiasm of our new recruits, then this is the union with the future that I'm excited to be part of. Please support this resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks for making us all feel better, Leoni! *(Laughter)* General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

During the war.... *(Laughter)* Firstly, I thank Cleveland for bringing back the issue of younger members. It is important that the union should think about how we engage with newer and younger members. If we're frank, one of the difficulties we've got is we haven't got enough younger members. When we have had, as we have, a virtual decade of job freeze we have got an ageing workforce in most Fire & Rescue Services. The number of people under 30 in the Fire & Rescue Service is extremely limited, as a result of the job cuts that we've seen across the service. So how we react to that and how we build issues like organising and education has obviously to take account of those challenges that we face. But I do appreciate Cleveland correctly raising these issues regularly here at conference.

The Executive Council is happy to support the resolution. I will just take the opportunity to point to the work that our head of education, Lindsey McDowell, has undertaken over the past year. I know many people in the room will have been on courses. There is a significant amount of work being undertaken to review the courses that we have in place, to revise them, to update them, and hopefully to improve them. We appreciate all the feedback that you and your reps give at the end of such courses which allows that to take place. There's no qualification; we're quite happy to support the resolution. Thanks, President. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 67 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 68 FBU Education moved by South Yorkshire. The Executive Council are supporting.

### **Resolution 68 FBU EDUCATION**

***Conference recognises the value of non-Grey Book membership. Our national education programme, plays a vital role in educating (politically and otherwise) Members, Officials and future Officials. The Fire Brigades Union could benefit from greater participation of non-Grey Book Members.***

***Conference therefore asks that a review of non-Grey Book Members' educational access is undertaken with a view of enhancing the resources available to all Members.***

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

## **BRO MATT NICHOLLS** (South Yorkshire):

President, Conference, I'll keep it short we believe that the Green Book members are currently under-using the education programme. We find ourselves in a shrinking workforce and therefore membership is shrinking too. We need to take every opportunity to train as many members as we can to help fight the fights moving forward. This resolution only asks that a review of the Green Book staff taking up courses takes place and we work towards trying to encourage a better Green Book participation and enhance the resources for all. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Does that have a seconder? Have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

Just one quick point. I suppose it's just to make the point firstly that the number of non-Grey Book members is extremely limited in the union. Secondly, that in terms of our education (and I know South Yorkshire understand this) it is aimed primarily at officials, people who either are officials or are becoming officials of the union rather than trying to educate (in an ideal world) 33,000 members. So it's the reference to non-Grey Book members. Clearly, we are talking about people who are becoming activists/becoming officials. Again, we are happy to support the resolution.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, I now put Resolution 68 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show.  
*That CARRIES*

We are now on para.G3, para.G4, para.G5, para.G6, para.G7, para.G8, para.G9, para.G10. Blooming heck! I've got a queue.

## **BRO GARY KEARY (GMC):**

President, Conference, ULF offer the use of a dyslexia diagnostic tool called QuickScan. This has been utilised in GMFRS on many occasions for the benefit of our members. More information is available on the ULF website, or take the opportunity to talk to one of the ULF team on the stall. Dyslexia is protected under the Equality Act 201 and the employer cannot discriminate against them, but only if they are made aware of the condition. I urge you all to make yourselves aware of this excellent facility. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **SIS CAROLINE STURGESS (NWC):**

President, Conference, the National Women's Committee have agreed to withdraw Resolution 36 Women and Firefighting. This is due to the fantastic news received a few days ago that money has been secured through the Union Learning Fund to assist with research into the effects of hot environments on women firefighters. The evidence gathered will help to produce heat illness prevention and awareness training specifically aimed at women firefighters. I urge you to visit the Union Learning Fund stand for more information. *(Applause)*

## **BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):**

Conference, President, the level 3 Apprenticeship in Personal Trainer has previously been run in 25 different Fire & Rescue Services across the country. The ULF in Essex are close to reaching an agreement on introducing this initiative and it is expected that we will be rolling out a programme over a period of time offering this opportunity for many of our members to gain a qualification. The initial tranche is going to be 24 FBU members who will be getting this excellent qualification.

Although this has gone on in the past, what is unique is this time will be the first time that the initiative has been run utilising the fire service apprenticeship levy funding. This means that we're giving extended opportunities to our members to get a fantastic qualification which they can use informally (as it's outside the role map) to assist our members in trying to reach their agreed fitness standards.

I'm aware that this is a sought after qualification for our members and therefore I urge you to talk to the ULF team when you return to your brigades to see if you can get more information regarding this levy. Thank you very much.  
*(Applause)*

## **BRO IAN McGREGOR (Scotland):**

President, Conference, I just wanted to add a few sentences to para.G10 Union Learning Fund. After an absence of eight years Region 1 Scotland has secured funding for our union learning project with a full-time project organiser seconded from the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. I'd just like to add a wee bit of gratitude to that. I'd like to thank my regional officials for their help and support throughout the process that we undertook, and I'd also like to add a special thank you to Mark Dunn, the Union Learning Fund manager for his knowledge and guidance and always being on the end of a phone when we needed him. I don't think I would be here giving you this update without his help. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Conference. I know, as somebody who chairs the National Steering Group, they do a fantastic job up there in the learning centre and help giving our members education opportunities. A big well done to all of them.

Conference, we are going to break for tea break now. We've got to be really disciplined. I need you back in here at quarter past. Thank you.

*Break for tea*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Take your seats. Conference, it's a great pleasure to introduce a leading member of the Shadow Cabinet and a great friend of the FBU, Labour MP Angela Rayner. Angela was elected as MP for Ashton-under-Lyne at the 2015 General Election. Angela has served in the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Secretary of State for Education since 2016. Before she was an MP she worked for Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council as a care worker and was a senior elected Unison rep. Angela is a member of the FBU Westminster Parliamentary Group and regularly speaks up for firefighters. Conference, a big warm welcome, please, for Angela Rayner. *(Applause)*

## SIS ANGELA RAYNER MP:

Comrades, Conference, brothers and sisters, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. A sarcastic thanks because I've got you to thank also for being in the position that I am. One of the reasons I got involved in Parliament was kind of by accident, as a union official in Stockport Unison and then a convener in the Northwest. One of the things that the trade unions collectively were kind of sick of at the time was plastic politicians that looked and sounded the same, that were not from a traditional working class background, that didn't know what the roots of our Labour Movement was (which was around trade unionism), and we decided to try to do something about it. I went on the training course with fellow comrades from all different unions, just to see what it was like to try to get through what was, at the time, considered the right wing progress stitch-up that happened in a lot of safe Labour seats. I got through that process and I was trying to prove that people like me can't get elected to run for Parliament and I got elected! Then not only did people like me, Rebecca Long-Bailey and others get elected into Parliament, but we blew the roof off, didn't we? In 2015 the Front Bench ended up on the Back Bench, and the Back Bench ended up on the Front Bench. Then David Cameron ruined the country and then it all went to hell in a handcart. *(Laughter)*

I remember at the time taking on more front bench jobs than I've got socks in my underwear drawer. My staff at the time were just like "can you stop saying yes, just don't answer your phone." I've had a political career in the first 18 months of my time in Parliament that most Parliamentarians are lucky to get in two decades. So it has been quite a whirlwind.

I took on shadow pensions and one of the first campaigns that I did as a trade unionist was standing shoulder to shoulder with you when we were being told that we can't have defined benefit pensions any more, that we had to give away our pension benefits and rights. I don't believe we should have to do that. I was Shadow Pensions Minister and I was working on some of the issues around the way they churn up our pension pots. It meant that a lot of money that actually could go to the employers and to employees as part of that pension scheme, was being taken by those that churn up at the top within these pension funds. It was all very secretive, what was happening on the markets. I still believe that we can have defined benefit schemes, and we can defend your pensions.

Then, of course, we have pay. One of the proudest moments I had in the trade union movement was fighting for equal pay when I was a manual worker as a home carer. I know that that fight is still on. My husband is a branch secretary in Stockport Local Government branch. I know you've been fighting on pay. Let me promise you that you'll always have a sister and a comrade in Parliament. I haven't changed who I am, and I will continue to support you because I believe the job that you do is so crucial to our society and to support our communities. We should be valuing that in terms of how we pay our public sector workers. The Labour Party has moved heavily, but as Matt has said many times throughout your conference, you have to be a critical friend and you have to keep pushing us. I'm really proud that in 2015 when I went into Parliament one of the first things that happened was your union re-affiliated, came home, back into the Labour Party. I was really proud of that, and I hope that we as front benchers and others in the Labour Party earn your respect.

I know that takes a lot to do. We lost some of that in the union movement; we lost our way a little bit. I'll say that that's happening in the GM on the fire authority and you have a friend in me there. I do not accept that we're going to cut back on fire engines and support that we have across GM. We need more. Actually, what happened with the Arena attack shows that we need to make sure that we support our emergency services and give you everything that you need to do your job. Many servicemen and women have lost their lives in the fire service in Greater Manchester doing the job. We will never forget that. But every day you're out doing your work you put yourselves in harm's way and you put your lives on the line for us. That's invaluable. You'll always have my support there, across GM and nationally through the Parliamentary Group.

Coming back to Parliament, it has been kind of crazy. I rocked up there and it was a big strange. It's a bit like Hogwarts. I didn't go to private school or anything. I left school at 16, pregnant, with no qualifications, so I was kind of a bit of an oddity – certainly amongst the Tories but even more so in Parliament. I don't think there's many that have got my background, even within our own benches. So it was a bit scary. You do have to fake it till you make it.

I remember one particular time people were resigning left, right and centre, and I had this piece of legislation going through. We went into what's called Report Stage. I didn't even know what that meant. I'm stood at the Despatch Box because basically Jeremy had nobody. Literally, everyone was just trying to keep the show on the road at the time. One of the senior whips came up to me and he said "Are you prepared" and I said "I've got nothing". He said: "You've got nothing, you've got no speech? nothing". I said: "No, I've got nothing I didn't even know I was going on to this report stage." He said: "Aren't you shitting it?" I said: "Crumbs!" *(Laughter)*

His wisdom was: "You're well hard!" and walked off! *(Laughter)* So it was a bit of a baptism of fire. I went on the Armed Forces Parliamentary Group. We went on this away trip and I was on with a couple of Tories because they do it cross-party. One of the Tories was having a chat, and I was talking about the problems we have on our estate. I was saying about how the horses were churning up the grass on the estate and it was causing havoc, everyone was complaining about it. This Conservative member says: "Oh, Angela, we don't have horses on our estate any more, we have llamas!" He meant his country estate and I'm like "No, I mean a council estate, mate, with travellers!" *(Laughter) (Applause)*

So it is a crazy place. Especially when I'm there everyone wants me to say "party" and it will always be "party" because I'm from Manchester and it ain't gonna change. But it has been an absolute honour to represent our great movement, the Trade Union Movement. Coming from Manchester, the home of the TUC, what I think is the best city (and I know not everyone is going to agree with that) – we've got football on Saturday as well. I think it's the best city in the world, not just in the UK. We've got a solid history of our working class roots. I'm really proud to be part of that process that has brought new people into the party.

I am still scared when I get up and I stand at the Despatch Box. I still get nervous. People say to me: "But you look really, really confident; you're leaning over the Despatch Box; you're really giving it to the Tories" and I'm kind of like leaning on the Despatch Box because my legs are going like this. But, do you know, there's nothing that makes me more energetic than when I'm giving it to the Tories on behalf of our working class members, our roots and our public services that deserve it. When I'm stood there, I'm not stood there as Angie Rayner; I'm stood there because you put me there to do a job. I don't ever want to let you down. I don't want ever for you to stand there and think she's changed, or she didn't say what we wanted her to say, she didn't make the point.

I will always, always stand up, no matter how frightening it is. I'll stand up in that room and I'll say what needs to be said. For far too long we've pussyfooted around and not said what needed to be said. We saw the results of that with Grenfell when you've seen how deregulation and competition and privatisation comes before support and safety. I've got to say, Matt Wrack is a phenomenal General Secretary. I've shared many a platform with Matt over the last couple of years – at the Miners' Gala and others. He's brought me to tears a couple of times, and not just because I've paid the bar bill! *(Laughter)* But he's a great General Secretary and he's done you proud, I think. He's done a really good job in some very, very difficult circumstances. *(Applause)*

Before I give the floor back to you. Conference, you were 100 last year weren't you? Not you personally. A few of you maybe! *(Laughter)* Congratulations. I know you'll be around for another hundred years. But I've got an ask of you as well. Not just to keep our feet to the flame and keep pushing us, and making sure we're as radical as we need to be. Not only do I want you to do that for us, and it's important that you do that and you keep your demands and your asks high, but now you're affiliated back I really want you on those benches, in our councils, on those authorities and really pushing your agenda forward. Like recruits like. One of the best things that happened after the 2015 – we had the assassination of Jo, we had all the other stuff that went on – the best thing that happened on that bench was the 2017 result of the General Election that nobody thought we were going to have. Everyone thought we were all going to be knackered – including us, by the way, until Theresa May said her flagship programme was to take people's houses from them, but don't mind, we'll wait till you're dead. I was waiting for the punchline, me. I was like "yes!"

But if you saw that radical programme that we had and our manifesto, and the people that came in, the new Members of Parliament that we never expected to gain, everyone had written us off, they were like fresh blood to us, they rejuvenated the Parliamentary Party. We've got a long way to go. You can see that from Change UK and others that have just disappeared and decided that it's too hard for them now because they're not in the leadership position. It's too hard. When has it ever been too hard for us as comrades? We know when the going gets tough we get in there and get stuck in and support.

I need your help. I need you to get involved in the Labour Party, keep getting involved, whether it's at a local level, regional level or a national level. I promise you, any single one of you that needs my support in doing that, then please speak to me. Especially women, because I'm a bit of a feminist with a capital F. Anyone that needs my support in getting involved and getting through the selection process, etc, then please give me a shout. But I hope to see some of you in this room involved in the local party, or involved in things going on into the future.

I just want to reiterate a massive, heartfelt thank you, comrades, for everything that you do to keep us safe, to keep our country great, and to keep our union and our Labour Movement in safe hands. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

Angela, I think you can see the warmth of the reception you've had reflecting quite a changed, noticeably changed, relationship that we've got with the Labour Party. Just a few points on some of the things Angela said. You spoke about your background. I think this union is very clear: we need more ordinary people in Parliament; we need more rank and file trade unionists getting elected into Parliament. That needs to be part of the process that we've seen started in 2015. That's certainly part of the discussions we have.

You mentioned, and we've discussed it already in conference this week, the time when a large number of Labour MPs decided that Jeremy Corbyn shouldn't be the Labour leader any more. It was a very weird period in Parliament. I think I've said to conference before, I remember attending that and there was a very weird and nasty atmosphere. I think people who stood firm through that period won't be forgotten certainly by this union and shouldn't be forgotten by the Trade Union and Labour Movement as well.

We've had a long period where, to be honest, Labour front benchers wouldn't have wanted to come to this conference because either they were, I have to say on occasion, putting the boot into us, or they would be getting stick off the floor of conference. Again, that reflects some of the big changes that we've seen in the Labour Party. We are certainly committed to playing our role in completing the processes that are needed to build a Labour Movement and a Labour Party that can really bring the changes that we need.

We have got you a gift there. For those who remember, I think probably one of Angela's biggest challenges (for those who remember him) is that one of her constituents is Bob Pounder, former GMC brigade secretary. So good luck with that one, Angela. *(Laughter)* There you go. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, we're now on Section C Operations Health & Safety. Para.C1. I now call Resolution 37 Women Specific Illnesses moved by the National Women's Committee. The Executive Council are supporting.

### **Resolution 37 WOMEN SPECIFIC ILLNESSES**

***Uterine fibroids are non-cancerous tumours or growths that grow in or on the wall of the uterus or womb. Endometriosis is a condition where the tissue that lines the womb is found outside the womb, such as in the ovaries and fallopian tubes. 1 in 10 women suffer with this illness. The number of women firefighters reporting women specific illnesses such as these has increased in recent times.***

***These are two examples of women specific illnesses which can cause debilitating pain, abnormal bleeding, fatigue and depression, among other side effects. These side effects can make it difficult for women firefighters to work on the incident ground or in the control room and may mean that women need to book sick from work as a result. Depending on the severity, this could obviously***

***have a knock on effect on their sickness records and result in disciplinary action, especially if the woman feels unable to disclose details of her illness to her manager.***

***These illnesses need to be acknowledged in our work place to ensure that our women Members are not left feeling undervalued, misunderstood, rejected, inadequate or fighting with their mental health.***

***Conference calls upon the Executive Council to work with the National Women's Committee to produce a best practice guidance document to enable FBU Officials to be able to approach their Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that discrimination doesn't take place. The best practice guidance will ensure such illnesses are fully considered in policies, reasonable adjustments are considered and sickness policies recognise these gender specific illnesses.***

***This work is to be completed within 12 months of Conference 2019.***

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE**

## **SIS LOUISE FLETCHER (NWC):**

Conference, menstruation is a natural process that does not present difficulties to the majority of women. However, heavy periods and painful and debilitating conditions such as endometriosis can and do have detrimental effects on women's daily activities and their working career. Symptoms can be so severe that attendance at work can be affected, often resulting in a punitive response rather than understanding and a supportive one.

If these women-specific issues are not taken seriously by employers, absence by employees may result in not just distressing physical issues but mental and psychological issues. It's vital that the service recognises women-specific issues as a genuine health issue and educates managers so they are aware how symptoms can affect women at work and what adjustments are necessary to support women.

As reps we need the tools to be able to support and represent women who may feel uncomfortable and unable to approach their line managers, especially in a male-dominated environment. Having this best practice document will ensure negotiating guidance is consistent throughout the UK. We, Conference, call for the EC to work with the National Women's Committee to create a best practice document to support female members. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder? Have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. That's open for debate. No? I now put Resolution 37 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, it was my intention to take Resolution 38 from Scotland and Resolution 42 from Cumbria in the same debate. However, as was reported by the Chair of Standing Orders in his report, Resolution 42 from Cumbria has been withdrawn with the right to speak. I will ask Cumbria to speak during the debate. Conference, I now call Resolution 38 Minimum Crewing Levels moved by Scotland. The Executive Council are supporting.

## **Resolution 38 MINIMUM CREWING LEVELS**

***This Conference applauds the dedication and commitment of our Retained Members and the service they offer our communities.***

***They are professional firefighters and under no circumstances should their health and safety be seen as less of a priority than that of their wholetime colleagues.***

***Therefore, this Conference is appalled that Fire and Rescue Services throughout the UK believe it to be acceptable that;***

- ***Retained OICs are expected to drive appliances en route to operational incidents and then immediately take up the role of OIC upon arrival***
- ***'in development' firefighters can form a breathing apparatus team of two.***

***Conference therefore instructs all Brigade and Regional Officials to oppose such practices in the strongest possible terms and for the Executive Council to develop clear guidance for Officials detailing the minimum acceptable crewing requirements for all appliances.***

**SCOTLAND**

**BRO COLIN BROWN** (Scotland):

President, Conference, this Conference applauds the dedication and commitment of our Retained Members and the service they offer our communities. However, there can be no doubt now that the health & safety of RDS members is routinely gambled by fire services in order to push through cuts. The strong, local community ties that bring members of the public into the retained service are subsequently hung over them by unscrupulous fire services like the Sword of Damocles. The moral pressure that any response is better than no response is weaponised against them to push members into the acceptance of unsafe practices. We have seen this with reduced crewing numbers on rescue pumps from five to four and the sustained attempts to reduce this further foisted on RDS crews in the first instance, then used to justify reduced crewing across the service.

Reps fighting these cuts have been cornered by the argument that if it's acceptable for the RDS why should wholetime be different? And, would you rather see pumps go off the run? This race to the bottom has already been referenced by the President and other speakers.

Reduction in crew sizes is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to unsafe practices being initially snuck into the retained service then subsequently used to justify implementation across the whole service. Against conference policy we now routinely see RDS OICs driving to incidents and expected to take charge on arrival. In Scotland we have increasingly become aware of occasions where two trainee firefighters riding as part of a crew of four are subsequently expected to perform as a breathing apparatus team at incidents in clear contravention of the guidance in TB197 and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service's own policy document Breathing Apparatus – Procedure and Operational Guidance.

We have Year One trainees being pressurised on to the LGV and emergency response driver pathway. All of this is now commonplace for RDS members, the service's desperate attempt to keep pumps on the run in the face of the negligence in recruitment, forward planning and training. This unwitting acceptance of compromised safety standards by many of our comrades in the retained service increasingly affects the wholetime. The exponential increase in the use of dual contract employees, now used to working with this lax approach in the RDS service, bring the same approach to the wholetime service. The turn a blind eye approach adopted by the fire services has morphed into open encouragement for OICs to drive, for trainees to drive, for safe crew composition to be roundly ignored to the extent that increasing numbers of members believe all of this is now rolemap or contractual.

They are either oblivious to the union policies and guidance or wilfully ignore guidance given by reps as they want to keep their driving tickets or think that to object or refuse would cast them in a negative light to management and hamper their opportunities. It is of paramount importance that in order to allow officials to defend the hard won health, safety protections, defend jobs and protect members' role maps, pay and conditions, that the EC reaffirm and communicate in clear, unambiguous terms the conference positions, and develop clear guidance and resources for officials to use when detailing the position to members and challenging fire services on minimum safe crewing levels. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder?

**BRO ED BURROWS** (Cumbria):

President, Conference, due to the continued austerity and the ongoing cuts that are attacking our response to incidents, we are facing a greater risk as senior managers cut crewing. Cumbria is one of the poorest fire services in the country with a budget of £16.5 million and no reserves. We have faced a reduction in staff of 33% since 2010, crews of mostly four and all stations made one pump stations. We fight and fight against these cuts.

Cumbria is now facing three person crewing being brought in on RRVs, which are rapid response vehicles, for our retained, but responding not just to small fires but now to all incident types. We are also facing retained stations allowed to respond with three on the full sized fire appliances.

We are all aware of the increased risks this will bring to our firefighters and the general public, with the added realisation that Cumbrian appliances are spaced at great distances apart with 20 minutes being an average travel time for the second pump. We are fobbed off with the use of operational discretion and dynamic risk assessments that the OIC can decide not to commit if it's too dangerous. No firefighter would stand by and wait. They will take action. The service is forcing a response under the moral pressure to act.

The risk assessments are just fanciful. We have national operational guidance so why do we not have national standards for crewing? This is not about accepting fewer than five on an appliance. We will continue to fight against these vehicles. We would like the General Secretary's assurance that three person crewing will be fought at national level to stop this dangerous crewing standard. Please support Resolution 38 from Scotland. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Anybody? Ed, just to confirm, you seconded that one, didn't you? Thank you.

## BRO DEREK MacLEOD (Hertfordshire):

Conference, I'm speaking at my last conference. We are happy to support Resolution 38 stipulating minimum crewing levels, especially when I see the bullet point stipulating safe crewing levels and the competency of that crewing level. I was minded to come up here and just relate something that was said a couple of weeks ago. A good watch manager, a friend and colleague of mine, was telling me at the Stevenage fire station comments that our new chief fire officer made on the mess deck at Stevenage within sight of Harrow Court, when he was talking about how we routinely now ride developing firefighters as a breathing apparatus team. It's become increasingly so as crewing levels have fallen. My friend said it was a Harrow Court recommendation – which it was – that we should avoid this practice. The chief's reply was (mindful of what was said yesterday about how long it takes to learn the lessons in other tragic incidents) that it wasn't a Coroner who denotes the safe competency levels on a fire engine; that it was his job to stipulate what's a safe BA team and a Coroner just makes a recommendation. The chief fire officer actually sorts out what that safe level is.

It is astonishing in the shadow of Harrow Court that he would say that at Stevenage to the duty watch. That's why we fail to learn these lessons, because the people that really should be doing their job are failing in their job. Also, I should applaud him because one of the other recommendations in 2019 was that we actually have a high rise pack available to operational crews in Hertfordshire. But I want to finish on a positive for Hertfordshire that 14 years later we just received our high rise packs. It should have been a recommendation that was a quick win at Harrow Court. Again, that's astonishing but it's happening.

So thanks for bringing this resolution. Hertfordshire are happy to support and encourage conference to do so. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Derek. Happy retirement. Lucky, lucky man. Next one.

## BRO PAUL FARMAN (NRC):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 38 Minimum Crewing Levels. Conference, the NRC have consistently voiced concerns regarding the dangerous practice of deploying fire appliances to incidents with insufficient resources. Pumps sent out with three riders and the dual rolling of the driver/OICs have become increasingly commonplace as our employers continue to neglect the recruitment and retention required to maintain retained stations.

This practice puts our members' lives at risk and the lives of the public we serve. We've listened to arguments that allowing these practices to take place helps keep pumps on the run and provides vital cover. Conference, do not believe this; it is merely a management ploy to further the neglect of their responsibilities for the management and maintenance of vital retained resources in their Fire & Rescue Services.

We are all aware of the critical shortages in retained cover across the UK Fire & Rescue Service. The solution to this will not be achieved by the removal of safety critical crewing levels that can place firefighters in dangerous situations when attending property fires, for example. The only solution to the shortage of available crews on retained stations and appliances is for our employers to recognise that investment is requirement. This is one of the reasons that the NRC brought our resolution on the retaining fee to the floor this year, and for which we thank you for your comprehensive support.

In closing I would ask you all to support this resolution. The alternatives are pretty bleak if we don't. What happens when crews of three can't be achieved? How many roles combined are too many? The Fire Brigades Union has been at the forefront of the health & safety agenda and has been the only union to campaign successfully for our retained members. Riding three and driver/OICs are an ill-fitting sticking plaster for the wounds caused by the many years of under-investment in the retained duty system of the UK Fire & Rescue Service. I urge you to support the resolution. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

AGS.

## **ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, the Executive Council has no qualification to its support for this resolution but felt it was important to speak to it. It is clearly a critical issue which is becoming more and more widespread. The issue of three riders itself is bad enough, but we do know of chief officers who have made it absolutely clear in written documentation provided to their fire authorities that they are exploring the issue of two riders – and not on small vehicles but on pumps for first PDA initial attendance. So it is going to develop just as the NRC pointed out to us there. When I say develop I mean develop in the wrong direction.

The very question of the control measure being that there should be a delayed intervention, just as Cumbria said, is not anything which any fire authority has sought or achieved with public support. That is something that we need to make part of our campaign nationally. We've got a press office, we've got a communications department which stands ready and willing to step up that work in exposing essentially what is the most unprofessional practice that you can imagine, particularly as it is unlikely to happen on the ground. Fact is fact. The operational imperative for our people is to get in, and it's no solution at all that they're offering.

The resolution calls for clear guidance from the Executive Council, we give a clear commitment that we will do that. We have given some assistance on that to some of the brigade committees which have asked for it. The campaign that has been mounted in North Yorkshire, more recently in Suffolk and in Derbyshire and Oxfordshire – and I've got to say I think Oxfordshire have been perhaps the most successful – for however long we don't know, through their political campaigning and through the arguments that they put, or to supplement the arguments they put, have been successful in getting it taken off the table.

The most worrying development is that chief officers haven't got the bottle to bring in three riders in some of these brigades. They're actually saying: only apply to retained fire appliances, or fire appliances crewed by retained crews. That's got to tell us something. They are not at all confident that they can get our wholetime members to mobilise in this way. The wholetime members, all wholetime staff, are in the FBU. They rely upon the fact that there are other organisations, and indeed non-union membership, in too large a number within the retained that creates that kind of division.

So it's something that we do have to step up. I just want to say this. As was said, we do need to have national standards on the question of minimum crewing levels. We have been successful in Oxfordshire, and hopefully will be elsewhere, in using the existing national operational guidance, the requirement – not through an approved code of practice but a requirement of national operational guidance – to show that they cannot implement, either en route to the incident or on arrival at the incident, the national operational guidance. I think that's what we need to deliver to you in a very cogent, coordinated, consolidated document so that you can put those points into your safety critical notices and into your documentation that you'll be providing to councillors to show that they have been warned. If an accident occurs, if an incident occurs, to our members or to the public where there is a delay, they have a liability

because they were told by the professional body in the fire service, the Fire Brigades Union that they could not implement and cannot implement national operational guidance with three riders.

Perhaps we're spending too long on this, but it is a key issue. It's recognised by conference as a key issue. I just want to give you the assurance that you'll get the guidance because it is recognised by this Executive Council to be so important to us and to the public as well. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

I now put Resolution 38 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, it was remiss of me at the start of this session, we usually have a report from the Chair of Standing Orders. We agreed to do that after Angela had left the stage and I forgot. So, Chair of Standing Orders, Steve Shelton.

## **THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):**

Thank you, President. Obviously you were overwhelmed with Angela! It's just some delegate changes because obviously there's people sat out here now and so they don't get questioned while they are there. Durham: delete Holly Ferguson; insert David Welsh. Tyne & Wear: delete Russell King; insert Chris Moore. Devon & Somerset: delete James Leslie; insert Dave Roberts. Northumberland: delete Ash Fox; insert Caroline Saunders. CSNC: delete Caroline Sanderson; insert Sandra Brown. Bedfordshire: delete John Blackmore; insert Mark Lee. Thank you.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Is that report agreed? Denise, come forward.

## **SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Scotland):**

President, Conference, we are challenging Standing Orders. We put in an Emergency Resolution, that we believed to be in line with Standing Orders. If you have a look at Standing Order 12 it talks about "Any Emergency Resolution proposal forms that are received at head office after 5 pm on Friday 10th May 2019 will only be accepted if of an exceptional nature".

Comrades, the resolution that was ruled out of order in front of you is of an exceptional nature. We are due to have pay negotiations in Scotland on Monday, and this resolution will have an impact potentially on that. We need that debated today on conference floor. *(Applause)*

## **THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS (Bro Steve Shelton):**

Conference, the Standing Orders Committee has ruled out of order an emergency resolution submitted by Scotland, as the delegate has just announced, and the paperwork is in front of you. The Standing Orders Committee do not accept this as business of an emergency resolution of an exceptional nature as it believes the business referred to has been moved, seconded, debated and carried within this conference session and should not be returned to. Thank you, President.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Come forward, Denise.

## **SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Scotland):**

We are challenging Standing Orders. We don't believe that their interpretation of this not being of an emergency nature and an exceptional nature. We are challenging Standing Orders.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Right, Conference, there's been a challenge on that. So you are now voting whether the emergency resolution is now going to be put back to the conference floor. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *The challenge CARRIES*

Thanks, Steve.

## **THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS** (Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee will ensure that the emergency resolution that has just been won to go back on the floor will be out back on the floor shortly and I will give a report when that business is going to be taken. Thank you.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. Obviously, it will be out there soon. We've still got quite a bit of business to do. If you agree to suspend your Standing Orders, we will knock lunch down to 30 minutes, the packed lunches will be ready and you can then read the emergency resolution during the lunchbreak and then we will reconvene. The idea is to get through the business as quickly as we can, but it is all important business. I don't want to be speaking to a half empty hall. We will do that with your indulgence. So is it agreed to suspend your Standing Orders for lunch? *AGREED*. Thank you.

Conference, we now move on to Resolution 40 Critical Attendance Standards (Cast) Scenarios moved by Tyne & Wear. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

### **Resolution 40 CRITICAL ATTENDANCE STANDARD (CAST) SCENARIOS**

***Conference is aware of the considerable amount of work Brigade Committees and in particular Brigade Officials undertake while responding to and campaigning against detrimental changes to their services' Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP).***

***Conference also recognises that for Brigade Committees to effectively respond to an IRMP with evidenced arguments they must be provided with all available resources to do so.***

***In order to aid Officials, Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a full review of the FBU's CAST scenarios and intervention window methodologies, amend and update where required, and make available to all Brigade Committees by republishing and promoting.***

***An update on the progress of this work to be given to Conference 2020.***

## **TYNE AND WEAR**

## **BRO BRIAN HARRIS** (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, in November last year Tyne & Wear fire authority agreed to put a range of devastating cuts to public consultation. This was on top of previous cuts from 2013 to 2017 such as pumps removed, crew sizes reduced from five to four, and staffing models changed.

Fortunately, we have managed to persuade the fire authority to delay the bulk of these cuts until next year. This was achieved by strong political lobbying of MPs which secured a debate in Westminster Hall, and also by raising concerns with fire authority members in our collective IRMP response.

Like many in conference today, writing a formal response to an IRMP which we believe is now just a cost-cutting tool, is not an easy task. While trying to find evidence for arguments to IRMP proposals we tried to find the FBU Cast scenarios – a suite of 35 task analysis scenarios detailing what crews did and when at various incidents, and giving a total of firefighters required. These were not easy to find and not in an electronic format. Also, we questioned whether they were current, bearing in mind they were published in 2004.

We have a national operational guidance programme standardising procedures because supposedly a fire is a fire and has the same risks and hazards no matter where it is in the UK. But a dwelling fire or a high rise fire, or many other incidents, are dealt with all differently across the UK. For example, why do some FRS's send 12 firefighters to a house fire on a PDA and some only send eight? Why do some have six pumps in a high rise PDA and some only have four, and often with no consideration of the crew sizes?

Conference, this resolution is asking for the CAST scenarios and intervention window methodologies to be reviewed, republished, taking into account the current health & safety legislation, new technologies, incident learning such as Grenfell, procedures, equipment, etc. Conference, we understand this is not an easy task for the EC and I've

asked for a report on progress at conference 2020, but this work is vital for brigade officials so we would hope it is completed as a matter of urgency. Conference, please support the resolution. I move.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. AGS.

## ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, our qualified support and the qualification to the resolution is based on a practicality, if I can put it that way. We have to bear in mind the way that the original CAST scenarios were created by the Fire Brigades Union, which was a process whereby we lent extremely heavily on work that had been done by the heavily funded Pathfinder project, which was a government-funded project to look at fire service resourcing and fire standards during the period 2001-2003. As I say, that was extremely well-funded. That it is a resource issue is what our real qualification is. You have to bear in mind that those CAST scenarios were based upon work which was undertaken by others – basically the service. It wasn't done on a table top basis; it was done on drill grounds, it was done in Moreton-In-Marsh using timed runs, timed sessions in order to create what we adopted as the CAST scenarios.

So we don't have those resources, we don't have fire appliances, we don't have teams of crews, we don't have that equipment. This is not a long lead up to the qualification means that we're not going to do anything. What it really means is that we may need to tweak what we call our CAST scenarios because of the methodology that we're going to have to use, which will be different from the way the current CAST scenarios, the 2004 CAST scenarios were created. They will still be of huge value because, as with the CAST scenarios, it comes down to us producing our professional standard, effectively, and it's for the firm to challenge them. They won't be able to challenge them because they will be (a horrible pun) CAST iron.

So the qualification is practicality, but we recognise the need for this. They are important. The work we are doing is different. They do need to be updated for that new work. It's a clear commitment to do it, but with that qualification. Thank you, President.

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now put Resolution 40 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 45 Response Times moved by Warwickshire. The Executive Council give qualified support.

### Resolution 45 RESPONSE TIMES

***Conference notes and applauds Officials of the FBU for their just endeavours to defend UK Fire and Rescue Services (UKFRSs). Tory Austerity has severely cut UKFRSs and therefore impacted on response times. This means that the opportunity to save life is reduced and the potential to put our Members at risk is increased.***

***Conference notes the Executive Council Policy Statement to Conference 2018 'Stop the Rot', which included a 5 minute attendance time for all incidents. Conference believes this to be a commendable position, but feels that its nonachievability in rural areas undermines this as a policy position.***

***Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to revisit the National IRMP Document with a view to updating the entire document with an evidence based approach to all attendance times using the CAST methodology. This new document will be submitted to Conference 2020 for approval as the FBU Policy on all attendance times.***

**WARWICKSHIRE**

## BRO NEIL STUART (Warwickshire):

President, Conference, "Conference notes the Executive Council Policy Statement to Conference 2018 'Stop the Rot', which included a 5 minute attendance time for all incidents. Conference believes this to be a commendable position, but feels that its nonachievability in rural areas undermines this as a policy position."

When the turnout time for RDS is five minutes an attendance time for five minutes is clearly impossible. Updating the national IRMP document using CAST methodology would provide brigade officials with evidence based arguments when responding to detrimental changes to their services' IRMPs. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Neil. Does that have a seconder? Yes.

**BRO PAUL FARMAN (NRC):**

President, Conference, we are seconding Resolution 45 Response Times. Conference, the NRC would like to thank Warwickshire for bringing this resolution here today. Over 60% of frontline fire appliances are on retained stations. Many of our members and prospective retained members work at stations that are located in remote rural areas. Often these are spread so far apart that even if they were crewed 24/7 they would be unable to meet a five minute response standard. Our members there know that the FBU developed policies designed to safeguard conditions and jobs as well as help protect the public we serve.

However, there are elements of this policy statement, as highlighted by Warwickshire, that do not fit with the logistics of cover as provided in remote rural areas. We know it, our members know it, and more importantly, so do those that campaign to undermine us. Prior to the abolition of national attendance standards retained firefighters were required to respond from home or work and attend their stations within five minutes. Campaigning for a national five minute response time to calls from one pump retained stations that could be situated 20 minutes or more apart, and in some cases very much more than that, unintentionally creates a credibility issue for us, and as such, we need to address this so our efforts can be focused on the intent of the policy statement. Support the resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

That's open for debate.

**BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):**

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of Resolution 45 Response Times from Warwickshire. Conference, I'm sure you will agree that the response times shouldn't be solely related to the time that an appliance takes from the point of mobilisation to attendance. Chief fire officers are always quick to point out about performance standards and how quick they can get an appliance from Point A to Point B, but in reality they don't have any figures to benchmark these against with the abolition of national standards. From around the UK Fire & Rescue Service the ONC regularly receive reports from officer membership and from firefighters, particularly those who work within the remote rural locations, about the time it takes to get a supervisory officer to an incident to provide that appropriate critical incident command support.

ONC have serious concerns that in some cases, depending on where the incident is, it can take in excess of two hours' travel to an incident. It is simply unacceptable. It is simply wrong that our members experience a postcode lottery of attendance times when it comes to receiving that additional incident command support from flexi officers. It's also unacceptable that in some cases our members are having to travel excessive distances and having to remain on duty for between eight and ten hours, only to have to travel back, still on duty, to camp out strategic mobilised locations of a home. ONC will now work with the AGS and General Secretary, brigade secretaries and health & safety officials to address this. Conference, please support. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Any more speakers? AGS.

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, we're giving the resolution qualified support because it talks, as does Resolution 40, around the issue of creating CAST scenarios with a slight variation. That variation is that it's saying there should be CAST scenarios based around response times and attendance times. In other words, to take account of, let's call it, the rural remote issue. We're quite happy to do that if we're going to do CAST scenario work, which we've given a clear commitment we will do. There is no reason why we wouldn't do that as well, to challenge, test and improve our case, I suppose.

I've got to say, to bring a resolution to this year's conference when only 11 months ago we agreed – I would guess unanimously – to support the Stop the Rot EC statement with all its content, does give us a problem. Nothing to prevent it; that's the democracy of the conference process, but I think within the debate someone spoke about credibility. I think that's something we do need to have an eye on.

Let's be clear that non-achievability, essentially if we were to say that we do not believe, or we hold a position that we don't believe there should be a uniform standard, then contrary to what we've been arguing certainly for the last 15 years that the GS and I have been up here (and I think beyond that time) we would be saying that we believe there is no alternative to a postcode lottery for the people of this country. A fire in a two up two down is the same whether it's in the centre of the city or it's out in a rural area; whether it is a warehouse in the middle of London such as Neasden a few days ago, or whether it's a warehouse in Warwickshire. The importance is it's about attending the fire, responding, and making sure that we do get there with the usual issues, the correct weight of attack and with the right, quick response time.

If the employers, if the NFCC, if governments want to say we need to have different arrangements and we will put in other control measures that they can identify, which is perhaps more expensive than providing fire cove, for those per household, that they can introduce and that they can fund, we will look at that. But until that happens this union's position remains that there is a five minute response time in order to save the lives of the people in the property, whether they are in the city or whether they are in the rural areas or remote rural.

So it is a qualification. We will do the work but the real qualification is that we have set our standard, we have set the standard we think should be applied but we will test that, we will challenge that through the process. But we do maintain the 2018 position Stop the Rot. Thank you, Conference.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Conference, I now put Resolution 45 to the vote All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, I now call Resolution 41 A Positive Health & Safety Culture Regarding Working Time and Rest Periods moved by North Yorkshire. Executive Council give qualified support.

### **Resolution 41 A POSITIVE HEALTH AND SAFETY CULTURE REGARDING WORKING TIME AND REST PERIODS**

***Conference applauds the commitment of Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighters to their local communities. Some firefighters even choose to take secondary contracts as RDS firefighters in addition to their primary Fire and Rescue Service employment. These staff provide retained cover during periods not covered by their primary contract.***

***For the avoidance of doubt this is not referring to collective agreements to the national duty system 'Day-crewing duty system' contained within Scheme of Conditions of Service Sixth Edition 2004 (updated 2009). Unfortunately, some firefighters choose to provide Retained cover during rest periods and on rota days immediately pre and post their primary employment shifts. This does not allow staff to have enough rest to ensure their wellbeing and safety, neither does it comply with the Working Time Regulations 1998.***

***Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services reported its findings from Fire and Rescue Services inspected as part of tranche one. The inspectorate raised concerns with some Fire and Rescue Services ability to monitor overtime, secondary employment and compliance with the Working Time Regulations.***

***Conference calls on the Executive Council to raise this issue with the employers' side of the NJC with a view to issuing a circular regarding safe and legal rest periods between primary and secondary employments, particularly in cases where the Fire and Rescue Service is both the primary and secondary employer.***

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**BRO STEVE HOWLEY** (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we've heard over the last couple of days at conference, the issues around RDS recruitment and retention, and the impact that has on availability of appliances and crew numbers. In North Yorkshire we're no different from anywhere else. We see on average between 18 and 26 appliances off the run every single day out of the 46 we should have available. However, North Yorkshire's solution to this is to recruit wholetime staff to work on RDS stations within the areas where they live.

They're encouraged to provide as much availability as possible. We are now seeing wholetime firefighters finishing a night shift at 0800 and going immediately on call with the retained and then coming back on to do a night shift the following night and vice versa.

When we've raised this with management on countless occasions, all we get is "we have a policy for this; we'll look into it". We have had wholetime firefighters out at incidents all night with the RDS and coming on duty the following day and either being re-sent out to that barn fire or simply slipping in and out of consciousness throughout the day on station, only waking up in some instances to take charge of a pump.

Again, when we've raised this with management they simply say "we have a policy and we're looking into it". Their excuses are it's only a problem if they're out on a night, so therefore what we could do is we could knock them off the run during the day, etc, etc.

This should be simple, Conference. It's not legal and it's not safe, either under the Working Time regs or associated health & safety legislation. The HSE are the enforcing body for the regs. But, as your comrades in South Yorkshire are aware, they're a pointless entity and a toothless tiger.

Conference, to be clear, this resolution isn't about staff working second jobs. It's not about penalising our dedicated RDS staff, or even those who have two jobs within the fire service. It's about forcing Fire & Rescue Services to take their responsibilities as a primary and secondary employer. It's about stopping Fire & Rescue Services abusing the good nature of our members who do both wholetime and RDS contracts. Most of all, it's to stop our members putting all of our members at risk by turning a blind eye to these illegal practices which they have a duty to monitor.

Therefore, Conference, I call on the Executive Council to raise this issue with the employers with a view to issuing a circular regarding safe and legal rest periods between primary and secondary employment where the Fire & Rescue Service is both the primary and secondary employer. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. Does that have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Kate.

**SIS KATE SCOTT** (Dorset & Wiltshire):

Conference, President, sorry I can't remember your name, but you've just said it's not about second jobs. It is. There's no-one forcing the hand of someone who wants to become retained. There's plenty of people who choose to be retained rather than, say, doing a fiddle job like a gardener or a plumber.

I take some issue with the wording of the third paragraph where it says: "Unfortunately some firefighters choose to provide retained cover during rest periods." Do you know what? I bet there's a helluva lot of people in this room who choose to work as sparkies or plumbers on their rest periods as well. To be honest, that is a darn sight harder than if you choose for your secondary employment to be retained.

There are plenty of wholetime retained, and they're good, solid FBU members who mostly didn't become retained until those of us in this room said that they could. So let's stop this them and us culture. The days of one man one job are well and truly gone!

In terms of this resolution, you could have a hard night at work, retained or wholetime. What is the point of only resting after your wholetime shifts? If you give your middle days in your rota, it totally ruins your four days off. If you give a few hours around your wholetime shifts, like, guess what, it already happens on day crewing stations! You

have the freedom and control of your other days. So I'm not speaking really in support or against. By all means send your circular, but consider that the best way to rest is when you want to rest, not when someone else is telling you to. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Anybody else? AGS.

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, the Executive Council support entirely the sentiment and central ambition of the resolution's motivation which is obviously contained within the first paragraphs, which is to get the employer to wake up to its responsibility to count the hours and to take necessary steps to ensure that there isn't long periods of continuous duty and our people do get their rest. We support that ambition.

The qualification is quite a simple one. It is that the employers' side on the NJC may not (and I would guess not) want to write a circular with the wording that we would want. Certainly, if we do put a circular out, if it isn't going to be sufficient – I will be frank, if it isn't as honest enough as it should be – certainly what we would want to do and would do is put our own information out as an independent trade union, to assist you in that work.

I've got to say, also the resolution talks about essentially where the same Fire & Rescue Service holds both contracts with that particular employee, our member. The obligation on the employer is to do it with all employment, and we would say clearly that must be for all work which is of a safety critical nature, which means that's where the contract, wholetime or retained, might be held by two separate Fire & Rescue Services with that same employee, our member. So that's the second qualification.

One thing I do think we do need to be clear on, though, is that this is something which is being done by our members. Our members are doing this. It's a discussion we do need to have with our members because at the end of the day we've got to take them with us. Until we get the support of our members, those individuals that are doing it, we should hold our position. But it is a discussion that needs to take place with them.

Anyway, with those two qualifications, the central one the question of reliance upon the employers' side of the NJC to produce an acceptable joint NJC circular, that's the qualification to our wholehearted support for the ambition of the resolution, which is to start getting the hours counted. Thank you.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Right of reply, North Yorkshire.

**BRO STEVE HOWLEY** (North Yorkshire):

Conference, President, thanks for your qualifying support, Andy. We're happy to accept that qualification. I'd just like to respond to Kate's comments. The sentiment of this resolution isn't about penalising our members who wish to undertake RDS duties. It's not meant to attack RDS firefighters for the fantastic commitment they give. It's simply about protecting all our members against themselves for giving this goodwill and making it clear that they need to take adequate rest periods before the start and finish of shifts. If we don't do this, it's like going back to the Victorian days where we're suddenly saying that it's all right to work 24 hours a day seven days a week. It's not about that, it's not about stopping people doing RDS; it's about having adequate rest periods between those shifts. That's what it is. I'd just like to clear that point. It's not about attacking retained. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Steve. I now put Resolution 41 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Composite A Fireground Welfare Facilities moved by Greater Manchester, seconded by Shropshire. The Executive Council give qualified support.

## **Composite A – FIREGROUND WELFARE FACILITIES**

*During protracted incidents, fireground facilities can be very limited. This was highlighted at the moorland fires in Greater Manchester in 2018, with Members facing unacceptable conditions including being on the fireground for many hours without toilet and wash facilities.*

*At many incidents firefighters are reliant upon the charitable nature of neighbouring home and business owners providing access to toilet and wash facilities resulting in firefighters walking contaminants through these areas.*

*This issue is not exclusive to large incidents, those requiring one pump reliefs often have no facilities despite firefighters being required to be in attendance for many hours.*

*This is an issue which affects all firefighters, however, women are especially affected due to menstrual cycles and other practical issues.*

*Conference, calls on the Executive Council to immediately carry out a survey of all Fire and Rescue Services to establish what, if any, fireground welfare facilities they provide, the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) for such facilities and to identify any best practice.*

*Conference, therefore, calls upon the Executive Council to campaign for and negotiate a national minimum standard for welfare facilities on all appropriate PDAs so that the necessary facilities are provided to protect the health, well-being and dignity of all firefighters and also protect the public from the spread of contaminants.*

**MOVED BY GREATER MANCHESTER  
SECONDED BY SHROPSHIRE**

### **SIS ROSA CROWLEY-BENNETT (GMC):**

Conference, President, last summer saw fires of an unprecedented scale tear across the moorland surrounding Manchester. Members from Greater Manchester and other brigades travelled long distances and worked long shifts in hot conditions to fight these fires, yet many, especially in the first days and weeks of these fires, were not afforded the basic necessity of toilet or welfare facilities, despite being on the moors for whole shifts at a time.

I am certain that there are countless other stories like this from being in attendance at one pump reliefs through the night to large protracted incidents. Temporary places of work such as incident grounds must still comply with the workplace health, safety and welfare regulations where possible. It is unacceptable to rely on the public or businesses to provide facilities which will undoubtedly become contaminated when being used by firefighters at incidents. When there are no facilities provided by the public, the options are even worse. In the age of technology and smartphones, with seemingly everything being recorded by passers-by, members are being put at risk if they are forced to relieve themselves behind bushes, for example.

Comrades, please support us in fighting for these basic standards of welfare and dignity to be met consistently across our Fire & Rescue Services. Support this resolution to survey services and to campaign for a national minimum standard for welfare facilities to be included on PDAs. I move. *(Applause)*

### **THE PRESIDENT:**

Shropshire.

### **BRO KEN HALLIHAN (Shropshire):**

President, Conference, we are seconding Composite A Fireground Welfare Facilities. First time speaker at conference. *(Applause)*

Thank you, Greater Manchester, for agreeing and moving the composite. In recognition of the time constraints of the day and in the belief or hope that this is not contentious I shall be brief. That said, Conference, I want to emphasise that we feel this is important. Highlighting the section that this falls under in the programme, health & safety, a cornerstone of everything union this is and does. Conference, please support this. It is 2019, not 1919. We second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. Anybody? I've just been informed the EC have dropped the qualification so they are now supporting. Therefore, I will put Composite A to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 46 Period Dignity moved by West Midlands. Executive Council are supporting.

### **Resolution 46 PERIOD DIGNITY**

***Conference notes that for too long, women and men have shied away from talking about periods. Conference believes that, by changing perceptions, we can tackle some of the wider issues around periods. This Conference believes that access to sanitary products in the workplace and schools should be as normal as having access to things such as toilet roll.***

***Conference agrees that women should be entitled to have period dignity. By making changes in our workplaces, our places of education, and in society, women will be able to have a positive period knowing that they are able to access sanitary products. Having a period is natural and should not be a source of awkwardness for anyone.***

***Conference notes the 'Period Dignity' campaign by Unite the Union and agrees that the FBU should be aiming for similar within the Fire Service. Conference supports the aims of the 'Period Dignity' campaign, which are to;***

- ***change attitudes towards periods – periods should not be embarrassing for anyone***
- ***employers to provide sanitary products in the workplace – this to be the norm for every workplace***
- ***places of education to provide sanitary products for students and employees – this to be the norm so that young women's education does not suffer***
- ***ensure VAT is removed from all sanitary products***
- ***support Period Poverty campaign groups. Women and young girls should have access to these vital products. Nobody should face period poverty.***

***Conference therefore agrees that the relevant Brigade Official will raise this campaign with their Fire Service employers, with a position that the second bullet point is enacted within their fire service. Conference also agrees to support period poverty groups wherever possible. This will be done by Conference 2020.***

**WEST MIDLANDS**

## **BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD (West Midlands):**

President, Conference, just for the record I would just like to state that Steve Price-Hunt sends his apologies. He has had to leave conference due to caring issues and it is for that reason and that reason alone.

President, Conference, the FBU has a proud history of commencing and supporting campaigns, not just in the workplace but also out in wider society. This resolution seeks to support those who find themselves in the horrendous situation that exists in the world today: period poverty. A recent survey identified 27% of children and women have missed days at school or work respectively due to period poverty. This clearly is not acceptable.

But women are forced to make these decisions, often having to balance the need to put food on the table for their hungry families rather than purchasing the "luxury" taxed items that will afford them period dignity

Globally, millions of women have no access to any form of sanitary products and either go without or in some cases utilise rags or whatever they can find. This is not dignified and requires change.

The second bullet point, when this resolution is moved, will see brigade officials ensuring adequate provisions of sanitary products is provided in every Fire & Rescue workplace. For years the West Midlands has ensured welfare packs are available on all frontline appliances for the use of employees or the public when attending incidents. This

is clearly an example of good practice which doesn't happen very often in the West Midlands, and should happen across all of the UK Fire & Rescue Services.

Conference, let's assist in the fight to end period poverty. I urge you to support this. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder?

**SIS LOUISE FLETCHER (NWC):**

President, Conference, we are seconding the resolution. I'm absolutely delighted to be able to stand up and second this resolution brought by the West Midlands. The National Women's Committee has strong ties with Period Power which is a similar campaign, and we have also welcomed the organiser of that said campaign to speak at our recent school at Wortley.

Awful reports demonstrating the need to support this campaign. Period Power report an increase in blood on chairs in schools, more and more children missing the vital education that is thus putting us again, as women, below what could be afforded to others in our society, reiterating the awful decisions of parents, mothers, having to balance the need to put food on the table. But we just also need to remember the homeless in our society as well. They don't have access to workplaces but they also struggle with these issues. I second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Louise. That's open for debate. No? I now put Resolution 46 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 47 Standard of Facilities moved by Dorset & Wiltshire. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

**Resolution 47 STANDARD OF FACILITIES**

***Conference calls upon the Executive Council to ensure that services are maintaining the standard of facilities on fire stations that are set out in the FBU minimum facilities' document. Conference also asks the Executive Council to make sure services are not using the current review of the Gender Recognition Act to revert to unisex facilities that are not suitable and fail to protect women's safe spaces.***

**DORSET AND WILTSHIRE**

**SIS KATE SCOTT (Dorset & Wiltshire):**

Following the review of the Gender Recognition Act we as a region are concerned that services are reverting or changing to unisex facilities. Health, safety and welfare regulations 1992 state that employers need to provide separate rooms containing toilets for men and women. While on the surface of it, unisex facilities might seem like a sensible solution to achieving this, they aren't. Unisex facilities do not adequately take into account people's different needs and how these can be met. Treating everyone the same is not a solution. Why not have unisex toilets or pods that all can use?

I shall say why. Sharing a toilet with a man is generally not fun. It's quite unpleasant and it can actually be pretty degrading. I did think, before I came up here, maybe I'm wrong; maybe I better go and have a look. So I called into a station where I know they've got unisex facilities. It was pretty unpleasant. Toilet seat up, marks in the pan, urine on the floor. I think if we're all honest we all know that a unisex toilet on a fire station becomes a male toilet that women can sometimes use.

The Gender Recognition Act rightly highlights areas for consideration by brigades, but let's not have a by-product of accommodating the rights of others eroding the rights of women. The least we can do is keep the facilities we've been fighting for the last 25 years. How disrespectful will it be to our pioneering sisters that we are now having to justify having female facilities?

The needs of women need to be heard and they need us in this room to speak for them. We ask in this resolution for the EC to instruct brigade and regional officials to set up meetings with the Fire & Rescue Services to raise this before renovation plans are decided on or implemented. The meetings, if at all possible, should also involve members of NWC, and at these meetings ask your Fire & Rescue Services do you actually value your female firefighters, or are you just paying lip service? I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Kate. A bit too much detail, but thank you! Can I have a seconder? A seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate.

**BRO KARL WAGER** (Cleveland):

Conference, President, although I do support what Kate said I do just quickly want to add something to the debate. I think if we are on fire stations now where we've got shared facilities (which, at my fire station, there is) anybody on my fire station who walked into a toilet and there was stains on the pan, urine on the floor, the first thing that we do is walk out and say "who's just used that toilet? Get in and clean it up." I think it's important to realise that we should have respect for everybody, not just ourselves. If there are people out there pissing on floors and not cleaning up I think they need to have a word with themselves, I really do. So although I do support it, I think that needs to be considered as well. If you see it, challenge it and make sure it doesn't happen. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO DAVE HART** (Scotland):

President, Conference, I'm talking in support of Kate's resolution. In Scotland in remote rural areas we have fire stations that haven't even got running water! They are housed in asbestos farm sheds. There's one particular one in Shetland that the back third of the fire station has got farm animals in it. There's no toilet facilities, there's no welfare facilities. It's something we bring up with the Fire & Rescue all the time and it just gets batted down the road. So we would support this resolution. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Tam McFarlane.

**BRO TAM McFARLANE** (National Officer):

It is just to give the qualification. Thanks to Dorset & Wiltshire for bringing this resolution. I think I would maybe say to Dave clearly it's totally unacceptable for any workplace not to have toilets and proper facilities on it. Maybe if we moved to a Scottish headquarters up there, we'd soon see a rapid change. It seems it's good for one and not good for the other, isn't it?

In regard to the qualification, the resolution actually calls on the Executive Council to do this. Clearly the Executive Council can't do this. This is a job for regional and brigade officials. But it's clearly a job of some urgency. Once again, you've got the tools. This is the document that's been referred to. It came out in November 2008 and it's absolutely clear what the union's policy is in regard to this. In regard to permanent workplaces all toilets must be situated within designated separate rooms for men and women. All shower/washing facilities must be situated within designated separate rooms for men and women. That has been the union's policy for ten years now and it's something we need to work very hard to achieve.

It's absolutely right, we've all experienced it, in a workplace that is dominated by men unisex facilities become men's facilities and our women members are isolated. So please, take this issue very seriously. Toilet humour to one side, take this issue very, very seriously. It is a matter of dignity for our members. You've got the tools. Get into the workplaces and get the situation resolved, please. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Tam. I now put Resolution 47 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

We are now on to para.C2, para.C3, para.C4. Yes.

**BRO DAVE HART** (Scotland):

Conference, President, para.C4 Research into Contaminants. We all know that we came out with the guidance on contaminants, the ten steps on contaminants. Consider that a best practice document. It's very important that you go back to your brigade committees, set up contaminants groups, force the issues that we are highlighting, and make sure that you adhere to it when you are doing negotiations.

What I'm up here for basically is to say that anyone who wants to publish anything on behalf of the FBU must make sure that it adheres to our policies. I'm just going to highlight one thing: the lottery paper that's on your desks. If you've still got it in front of you, it's a picture of a kit room. It's got one dirty tunic, two clean tunics, it's got three pairs of boots – one with a pair of dirty gloves in it with a smoke hood next to it. Everything we're against. So we're just asking maybe have a little bit of an audit of our social media, of our media, videos, photos, and think before we publish. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Dave, I think we take that point on board.

**BRO STEVE WHITE** (London):

President, Conference, yes, we did put in that picture with the dirty gloves, but we do note with thanks the amount of work that's going into contamination at fires and firefighting and cancer. We know that when we go to fires we're exposed to chemicals that are known to cause cancer, that probably cause cancer, that possibly cause cancer. But we also know that there's a world of difference between knowing we're exposed to all these contaminants and being able to prove that your cancer was caused by your firefighting activities and not. We are perhaps a decade or so away from being able to prove that and make that link. However, hopefully the three year field trial will get us somewhere in the right direction. We know we can't currently make that proof. We can't currently meet the thresholds of industrial injuries. But we do know that when we go to fires we are being exposed to all of these toxins. We can't wait to prove the link, we can't wait for occupational cancer for firefighters to kick in with the legislation.

But there are things that we can do now. Review our social media, obviously. We can lobby our employers to be clearer in their policies about hygienic practice when it comes to managing ourselves after incidents. We can lobby our employers around clean cab policies and how our PPE and our equipment is looked after. But also we can have a word with ourselves frankly. I know it's going on ahead, but at C9 the Firefighter Cancer Support Network has also produced a handy list of things that we can do right now in order to reduce our exposure to carcinogens when we are at work.

We do need to break the culture that dirty firefighters are effective firefighters. Dirty firefighters are firefighters that aren't thinking about their future long-term health, or the future long-term health of their comrades on the fire appliance. We need that culture where we're saying to people: this is a clean cab; get your PPE off and in a plastic bag before you get into the fire appliance before we start travelling back to the station.

We probably do need to use some shock tactics to shock ourselves and shock our members into behaving hygienically around fires and fire contamination. In London we have two reps, Barry Jackson and Robbie Irvine, guided by Sean Starbuck who have produced a really hard-hitting presentation that they're starting to roll out around our branches now. It's been really effective in getting members to change their minds. I'm sure they would be happy to share that with you if you got in touch with them.

We look forward to a future where occupational cancer in firefighting is recognised, but we can start making ourselves safer now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Anybody else? General Secretary.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

I just wanted to take the opportunity to remind conference of the major work that the union is undertaking now on contaminants that has been referred to. We take the points in terms of the messaging and so on on board completely and we will have a think about that.

The issue of contaminants is going to come up in the debate today in relation to Grenfell but it's a major issue facing our service, our profession, our industry. The truth is this: actually, this is a matter that should be researched and addressed centrally by employers and by government. One of the issues that we face in the fire service in the UK today is we've got, as we keep saying, a completely fragmented Fire & Rescue Service so there is no body that is able or resourced to undertake that sort of work. So the Fire Brigades Union has had to step in and undertake research which, in a better world, would be undertaken by employers on a national basis.

So we've launched the research project. It is a major piece of research and will last three years. It's a very costly piece of research. I think it's something we can be very proud that we're undertaking. I think it will put fire service employers to shame in reality.

Dave mentioned the leaflets about the lottery, but actually on a positive note, that major piece of research would not be possible without the Firefighters 100 Lottery, which is the main source of funding for that major piece of research. I will just give another plug to delegates. If you and your committees see the importance of that bit of work, the only way we're able to fund it is by the lottery. So we need to build support for the lottery as well. Thanks very much.  
(Applause)

**THE PRESIDENT:**

I've got para.C5. Yes.

**BRO JIM BITTLESTONE (Durham):**

President, Conference, we welcome the FBU Contaminants Project, the size of it and the aims. We do have concerns about momentum being slowed. Brigades have been asked to show an interest in that. I know there's a lot of brigades out there but we do need to follow those up with at least initial meetings so we get a general direction of where the FBU want to take this.

We've already started in our brigade and other brigades have looked at quick wins. On Monday I'm heading to Holland with our training department and our assets department to look at a BA cleaning machine. It's going to be the first one in the country if we get it. It's a big modular, massive thing that we're very much looking forward to having. We hope we can get it.

We have concerns about the money and time being spent possibly in the wrong direction, where that money might be spent differently if we don't have the right direction of travel and the areas that you want to concentrate on. We might be drifting. So just a little bit more direction on that, please. (Applause)

**THE PRESIDENT:**

General Secretary.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Just to give conference the assurance, the project is underway. In fact, just this week officials have had a meeting with Professor Anna Stec here in Blackpool to discuss the progress on that. I believe there's a meeting due in fact in Durham & Darlington very shortly. So the work is underway and you will receive reports of progress through your Executive Council members over coming months.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Para.C6. Conference, at this point we are going to break for lunch. With your indulgence we're going to reconvene at 25 past. So you haven't got long. I'm going to have a word with Standing Orders. Whoever has still got resolutions on the order paper be prepared that speaking times might be cut down again. We've got to get through this business. Thank you very much.

*Break for lunch*

## 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. Conference, could you please turn to your Programmes of Business page 9 after para.F1 insert Emergency Resolution 12 to be moved by Scotland.

Conference, the Standing Orders Committee has further assessed business remaining with the following changes to speakers' times: mover 3 minutes; seconder 2 minutes; subsequent speakers one minute.

The Standing Orders Committee has agreed to a bucket collection in support of Sea Watch Brother Brendan Woodhouse, a Sea Watch volunteer who attended last night's fringe meeting. Please give generously. The bucket will be at the back of the hall. Thank you very much for that.

On behalf of the Standing Orders Committee I would firstly like to thank all of our head office staff for their efforts this week. Thanks to our conference stewards for their hard work and support this week. As always, another great job. Thank you very much. Thanks to Steve Cole and the Mascol team for their hard work and efforts in setting up our conference, thank you very much. Thank you from the Standing Orders Committee to Alison, Vivienne and Jill and all the staff at the Imperial Hotel, Blackpool for their help and assistance this week. Also, Luke and all the staff at Grand Hotel, Blackpool.

Personally, Conference, I would like to thank all members of the Standing Orders Committee for their hard work and efforts, not only at this conference but at every conference I've had the pleasure and honour to organise. Members of the Standing Orders Committee past and present put huge amounts of hours and effort into arrangements and business to make conference happen – a lot of pressure, a lot of late nights. So well done, and many, many thanks from me.

Conference, may I wish you all a safe journey home once conference is over. President, that concludes my very, very, very last report to conference. Conference, I wish you all the very best for the future. Thank you and thank you President. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Conference. Is that report agreed? *AGREED* I might have a few little words to say about him later on anyway.

I now call Resolution 35 moved by B&EMM National Committee with amendment from Merseyside.

### **Resolution 35 FIREFIGHTER PROSTATE CANCER A 2017**

***Government published survey documented 30% of deaths in males in 2015 were caused by cancer, with prostate cancer being within the top ten causes of all deaths in males within the same period.***

***In 2016 Cancer Research statistics recorded 11,631 deaths from prostate cancer and 47,151 new cases recorded.***

***1 in 6 males will be diagnosed with prostate cancer within their lifetime. The likelihood of contracting prostate cancer if you are a black male increases to 1 in 4.***

***In March 2018 the Home Office produced statistics recorded 40,500 full time equivalent Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) personnel in England, of which 32,340 were firefighters, 84.1% of the total workforce being male and 94.3% of the total number of firefighters being male.***

***Conference recognises that with the overwhelming majority of the FRS workforce in England, currently male and statistics showing that approximately 5,676 FRS personnel will contract***

*prostate cancer within their lifetime, this is a foreseeable significant risk for a large proportion of our membership.*

*Therefore we call upon the Executive Council to conduct research and produce a best practice guidance document regarding prostate cancer, reducing the risks and personal checks.*

*Following this then consider opening negotiations at the NJC with a view to making prostate cancer testing part of the FRS periodical medical. In doing so, early detection will allow early treatment, thus reducing the mortality rate.*

**B&EMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

## **AMENDMENT**

*Final paragraph line 1 delete 'Following this then' insert 'Conference also instructs the Executive Council to'*

*Final paragraph line 2 after 'making' insert 'voluntary'*

**MERSEYSIDE**

## **BRO DEAN POUNDER (B&EMM):**

Firstly, I would like to open by applauding the work being undertaken with regards to firefighter cancers by the National Health & Safety Committee. It is a broad and complex issue that needs a robust approach to ensure that we work to secure the very best guidance, policy and legislation. In particular, we applaud the work done surrounding the contaminants prevention poster which many brigades have adopted to reduce the risk in the workplace.

We acknowledge that there are many types of cancer that can affect firefighters and the general public, but what is perhaps little-known is the increased risk faced by black men, and in turn therefore, an increased risk to our B&EMM firefighters of prostate cancer. All males have a one in six chance of being diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetimes.

However, studies show that when this is separated out according to race, one in four black males are at risk whereas for non-black males it is one in eight. This is a clear difference and one that presents a particular increased risk for our black firefighters. When this is viewed through the lens of the research conducted in other countries, what has been shown is that prostate cancer is also an increased risk for firefighters as an occupation, although by what factor is currently being analysed and debated.

Therefore, for a black male who is also a firefighter the risk factors of contracting prostate cancer is a significant one. It's something that we need to be cognisant of, and where possible, take proactive prevention action to mitigate.

Therefore, National B&EMM committee, as outlined in this resolution, calls on the EC to conduct research and produce a best practice information to help prevent or reduce the risk presented to all our firefighters, to complement the work being undertaken on prevention of other cancers as well. There are some positive prevention recommendations, guidance, made by prostate cancer charities which would be of value to flag up to our firefighters given the heightened risk. If we could take proactive steps to reduce our risk of cancers, possibly non-invasive testing to improve early detection, we could hopefully save firefighter lives from this horrific disease. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Dean. Can I have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. Merseyside to move the amendment. *Formally* Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. I now put the amendment to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

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

We are now on para.C7, C.8, C.9, C10. I now call Resolution 48 Personal Protective Equipment moved by Dorset & Wiltshire. The Executive Council are supporting.

## **Resolution 48 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

***Conference calls upon the Executive Council to put more pressure on services to resolve the issue of correctly fitting PPE as a matter of priority. Much research has been done into the burn patterns created by incorrect fitting PPE and yet services are still failing to provide individual measuring and female-fit. We need to increase the pressure to ensure the Health and Safety of our Members.***

**DORSET AND WILTSHIRE**

**SIS KATE SCOTT** (Dorset & Wiltshire):

First off, apologies, I cut down my speech on the unisex facilities and didn't mean to imply all men are dirty!

We are concerned that in 2019 there are still services that are failing to provide correct guidance regarding the fitting of PPE. We are aware of at least one PPE supplier who is providing inconsistent advice regarding fit and burn patterns. The National Health & Safety Committee, in conjunction with the NWC is attempting to obtain concise, robust information from all PPE suppliers regarding the necessity of wearing gender-specific PPE. This information is vital so we can produce clear and consistent advice regarding the correct fitting of PPE.

We demand that the EC promote our firm position that Fire & Rescue Services must provide correctly fitted PPE which offers our firefighters the best protection possible whether male, female, tall, small, broad or slim. I move.  
(Applause)

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Do we have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. Anybody? No? I now put Resolution 48 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Emergency Resolution 11 Body-worn Cameras moved by Derbyshire. The Executive Council support.

## **Emergency Resolution 11 – BODY-WORN CAMERAS**

***Following attacks in recent weeks on firefighters in Derbyshire the issue of body-worn cameras was being considered by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service managers, however since Conference business opened on May 15th 2019 Officials have been contacted by a senior officer of Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and the issue could now progress with pace locally with potential national consequences. Conference needs to react in the interests of all FBU Members and establish a position.***

***Conference knows that firefighters face unprecedented levels of risk and the most diverse types of work than ever before in our history. The use of body-worn cameras is common practice in some other services. They can aid with evidence collection, training and learning and also act as a deterrent to attacks on individuals.***

***However Conference is also guarded against their potential misuse that could have a negative impact on our Members' neutrality within their communities and their use in ways that we could not support i.e: Discipline. To add to the complication GDPR also needs to be considered and FBU Members need to be aware of how such devices should be used.***

***Conference therefore asks the Executive Council to look at the use of body-worn cameras and consider whether or not they should be used in the Fire and Rescue Service and in what circumstances. From this a best practice document, guidelines, FBU position or policy should be established. This will aid Officials to understand this issue and deal with it appropriately as and if it arises within their respective Brigades.***

**DERBYSHIRE**

**BRO CHRIS TAPP** (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, let me just be clear from the outset, Conference, Derbyshire is not asking for or automatically supporting the use of body-worn cameras. We realise that this is a live and growing issue across the UK and that's been evident from the number of different brigades and regions that have come to speak with me already this morning. So we are asking the Executive Council simply to look at this issue.

It's been triggered by two attacks in Derbyshire on the same night – one appliance lured down a dead end and then the appliance was stoned (stones and bricks were thrown at them). The second was a watch manager and a firefighter going to look for fire outside. They were then surrounded and attacked. I believe one was bottled but he did have his helmet on luckily, and quite rightly so. The other one was punched in the face and ended up in hospital with an eye injury.

So Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service are looking at these to improve firefighter safety, which is fair enough in these areas, and also around fire investigation. Whilst the intent is good, we don't have any policies or procedures in place. As a union we've not really got a clear position or guidance as it stands.

This also goes into the thin blue line, comrades. Is it another step in degrading our neutrality, as the General Secretary has already spoken about? Our service is keen on collaboration across the various blue light services and it is growing. Derbyshire knows that body-worn cameras with many different pros and cons go with them.

We also know that in different areas of the UK there will be bespoke issues around the country. I've spoken to a couple of comrades about that already. All this does need some consideration at national level.

Conference, we're not committing yourselves or the Executive Council to anything other than doing some research, gathering some information, establishing a policy, a position and/or, if required, guidance and best practice. Please support the resolution, comrades. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Chris. Do we have a seconder? Yes.

**BRO LEE HUNTER** (Merseyside):

President, Conference, we are seconding Emergency Resolution 11. Conference, we all know that on the majority of occasions Fire & Rescue Services' default position when resolving issues that have arisen on the fireground is discipline. Make no mistake about it, information gathered from body-worn cameras will be collated with the potential to be reviewed, to examine whether fireground policies and procedures have been adhered to. We must protect our neutrality. Not only our neutrality but, as always, firefighter safety must be paramount.

We have all seen, through fly-on-the-wall type TV documentaries how already stressed and agitated people react to body-worn cameras. It is a fact, people become more confrontational and aggressive at a time when we would be trying not only to calm them but extract life saving information from them. Body-worn cameras will put firefighters in danger that is entirely preventable. Conference, I support the resolution. I second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

It's open for debate.

**A DELEGATE:**

Conference, President, I will be as quick as I can. We entered into a trial into body-worn cameras last year. I know that we've got a position that Dave Green wrote, I believe, which I used in my response to the brigade. Just on that, we've got six principles in there and the six principles were only wear when FBU rep was present, not to be used to monitor conduct, not to be used to monitor performance, no voice or sound recording, only to be used to prosecute those who wish to do us harm. The wearing of these cameras is completely voluntary. If anybody would like that information please do feel free to get in touch and I'll pass it on. Cheers, thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO PHIL McDONALD (ONC):**

I'm speaking in support of Emergency Resolution 11. Just in respect of GDPR, our officer members are now routinely being subject to the fitting of cameras, tracking equipment in their provided cars. Some of those provided cars can be used for both business and private. To be clear, whilst we probably cannot challenge the installation of this equipment, provided we have agreement on the purpose of its use, it must be for business purposes only. Any use of this equipment for tracking private use of the vehicle is a clear breach of GDPR and it must be challenged and reversed. It is only for operational use. Therefore, the ONC will now work with the AGS, the GS and affected brigade secretaries to ensure that the rights of all our members under GDPR are respected. Conference, please support. *(Applause)*

**BRO DAVE GILLIAN (West Yorkshire):**

President, Conference, we're completely opposed to body-worn cameras in West Yorkshire. We've fought off their use so far. We don't believe they provide a deterrent. We already use silent witness cameras on fire appliances which has led to zero prosecutions. As a victim of attacks on firefighters on a number of occasions, it's always been someone in the distance, perhaps with a hood on in the dark and I don't believe cameras will help with that. What we have found is a member sacked in West Yorkshire using evidence from a silent witness camera. I think that's the biggest danger.

In terms of the motion, all I'd say is be careful asking the question because you might not get the answer you want. Thank you, comrades. *(Applause)*

**BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW (Essex):**

President, Conference, I am speaking against the resolution. Comrades, we've experienced first-hand body-worn cameras in Essex being worn by senior officers on our picket lines. We've got CCTV on our appliances. We've had firefighters attacked and that information has not been used for any prosecutions; it has not helped. However, it has been used against the policy (because they're not supposed to use it for discipline) to discipline our members. Conference, our senior managers can't be trusted with CCTV and they can't be trusted with body-worn cameras.

Most of our managers who are FBU members, I wouldn't have an issue with it; they would be trusted; they are our comrades. Unfortunately, it's not just our comrades who will be having this piece of equipment. I oppose. *(Applause)*

**BRO JAKE DRINKWATER (NIFB):**

President, Conference, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Whilst we recognise that some members may believe that body-worn cameras may help with evidence of attacks on firefighters, attacks on appliances, etc, we in Northern Ireland would urge extreme caution in making a policy based on this premise. Recently in Northern Ireland a fellow trade unionist and journalist Lyra McKee was murdered. It is not uncommon for firefighters to be attending incidents where attacks like this do occur. In fact, on the night, firefighters had just been withdrawn from the exact area where Lyra was murdered. These same firefighters work regularly in that area, and indeed many of them live in that area.

We believe that in circumstances such as this, if firefighters were seen to be wearing body-worn cameras it could be counter productive in trying to protect firefighters from attacks. If it was known that we, as a service, had evidence of events that could implicate others in serious crimes, then we ourselves would become targets of those wishing to retrieve and destroy such evidence. We ask you to bear that in mind if this emergency resolution is passed, and make sure that our neutrality is protected. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Derbyshire right of reply.

**BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):**

President, Conference, just to clear up a couple of things. I absolutely take on board the comments that have been made by comrades from Essex and elsewhere. We're not asking to make a policy on anything in terms of saying yes, let's wear them or whatever. What we're saying is let's look at it and then decipher what the position or policy is going to be. If it is such that they are not going to give us any advantage in any way, shape or form, then so be it. We are not asking for it to be used in the wrong ways. We absolutely understand that and we need those safeguards in place. But the fact of the matter is its happening. So what are we going to do? Are we going to just sit

back and say we'll oppose? That's it. We've got to do something; we've got to have a position. So we're not asking too much. Let's just have a look, with caution I accept, but let's have a look. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Chris. I now put Emergency Resolution 11 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

We are now on para.C11, para.C12, para.C13. I now call Resolution 33 Mental Health Charter moved by Hereford & Worcester. They've withdrawn with the right to speak.

### **Resolution 33 MENTAL HEALTH CHARTER**

***Conference 2018 saw a record number of resolutions based around mental health and recognises that at least 1 in 4 of us in our profession are predicted to suffer from a mental illness at some point in our lives. Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to examine the range of Mental Health Charters and to communicate with Brigade Officials the most suitable charter to sign up to as soon as is reasonably possible, prior to Conference 2020.***

**HEREFORD AND WORCESTER**

### **BRO TREVOR CONNOLLY (Hereford & Worcester):**

President, Conference, I'm speaking on Resolution 33 Mental Health Charter. Conference, you will have seen that the agenda this year is again heavily weighted towards issues concerning mental health and stress. This is a problem on the rise and continued attacks on funding, increased workload resulting from the reduction of numbers in personnel and the uncertainty of our job security and we're on a downward spiral. It is recognised that one in four of us will suffer from a mental illness at some point in our lives. All of us here today are here to protect the rights of our members and achieve the best outcome for them. Of course, we do our best, and do all this whilst working a full-time job and facing unprecedented job cuts, losses and station closures. I'm sure many of us have felt the stresses of working in roles of the FBU reps and officials possibly more than one in four.

As we've mentioned in this resolution, Hereford & Worcester members are continually being threatened in the workplace by their employers and have no trust in senior management. During a recent debrief following a consultation process which looked at determining the service's core values it was reported that a feeling of fear (I will repeat that, just to let it sink in) it was reported that a feeling of fear was mentioned on more than one occasion in fire control. Basically, the management didn't take much notice of that. I mentioned to a senior officer about our health and safety and his attitude was: what, you might get a paper cut! I will leave that one there.

It is therefore highly unlikely that our members would turn to the employer for help with regard to their mental health. In order to improve this bleak situation our members feel they would benefit from a benchmark and clear direction for the service to proceed. A solution to this would be to sign up to a mental health charter but with so many options we are looking to the Executive Council to look at these and issue advice to all brigades for the most suitable charter to sign up to. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Trevor. I now call Resolution 34 Mental Health in the Fire & Rescue Service moved by the B&EMM National Committee. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

### **Resolution 34 MENTAL HEALTH IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

***Recent research by Mind Blue Light programme shows poor mental health is now prevalent in high-risk jobs, such as the Fire and Rescue Service.***

***With resources being squeezed by austerity exposing Members to unacceptable conditions and increased workloads due to less staff, issues are compounded.***

***Therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to open negotiations for an employer funded contractual mental health and wellbeing provision for Grey Book employees via the NJC.***

***A provision that is both proactive and responsive as well as comprehensive and consistent across the UK.***

***Conference believes our employers have a duty of care to arrange such a provision and this will better safeguard firefighters wellbeing.***

**B&EMM NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

**BRO DEAN POUNDER (B&EMM):**

Recent research by the Mind Blue Light programme shows that poor mental health is now prevalent in high risk jobs such as the Fire & Rescue Service. Up to 90% of people within the Fire & Rescue Service have, at some point, experienced stress or poor mental health. With resources being squeezed by austerity, exposing our comrades to unacceptable conditions and increased workloads due to fewer staff, these issues are compounded.

They are something that no human being should ever have to witness, hear or experience. However, firefighters and control staff are the ones who head into danger or reassure others in the face of adversity. They are routinely and repeatedly working in traumatic situations and although highly trained, the toll on their mental health can be significant, as it is unpredictable.

Your mental well-being can be affected by repeated exposure to traumatic events, the impact of physical injuries, workload pressures. It can also be affected by other factors in life such as suffering some sort of loss, loneliness, relationship problems or money problems.

Let us not forget about the other stresses caused at work caused by bullying, discrimination, racism, sexism to name but a few. Unfortunately and regrettably, this is at the hands of our very own trusted comrades. The aggression is often experienced among the black and ethnic minority community, without exclusivity, of course. All this has a profound effect on our personal lives. We take this home to our families, we then spread this toxicity, thus creating a poison household.

*“Therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to open negotiations for an employer funded contractual mental health and wellbeing provision for Grey Book employees via the NJC. A provision that is both proactive and responsive as well as comprehensive and consistent across the UK.*

*“Conference believes our employers have a duty of care to arrange such a provision and this will better safeguard firefighters wellbeing.”*

It's Mental Health Week. It's OK not to be OK. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Does that have a seconder?

**SIS CAROLINE STURGESS (NWC):**

We are seconding Resolution 34 Mental Health in the Fire & Rescue Service. As a committee we host an annual school where we hold a range of workshops to support our members. One such workshop has stuck with me and in 2017 I assisted to run a workshop “Find your Voice”. This workshop is intended to allow our members a safe platform to share experiences and explore ways to deal with issues and, where needed, a mechanism to refer for further support or representation when needed.

This workshop was by far the most attended that year with over 40 delegates attending. I was heartbroken, to say the least, to listen to the appalling accounts of the way in which some had been treated, how they felt at the time, following, and what little or fragmented support they had been offered.

Every member in that room had experienced degree of harassment and/or victimisation, from a one-off comment to multiple occurrences – verbal and non-verbal aggressions, and for some, physical aggression. These accounts, some historical, brushed over as banter or others recent where our members had brushed this time off in favour of

keeping their heads down and getting on with the job. We welcome the good work that B&EMM have put into this and forwarding this resolution. Conference, we support and we second. Please support. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. General Secretary.

## GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the qualification is around the need for evidence before we engage in negotiations with employers. There's a great deal of work being undertaken through our health & safety structures, and that includes research around mental health in the Fire & Rescue Service. So there are some concerns, for example, with the Mind Blue Light survey, which was effectively a self-selecting survey. We are undertaking work to identify what evidence we need to build. So the qualification is that that work needs to be done prior to drawing together policies which we can then take to the employers at a national level. Thank you.

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. I now put Resolution 34 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call para.C14, C15. We are on to Section H Equality and Fairness at Work para.H1, para.H2, para.H3, para.H4.

## SIS LINDSEY BLAKE (LGBT):

Conference, President, today May 17 is IDAHO day, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Whilst we may celebrate all we have achieved in promoting LGBT equality there still remain challenges. In recent weeks in Brunei they have introduced an affirmation that the death penalty shall be applied to men who have engaged in gay sex. The United States have imposed a ban on trans people serving in the Armed Forces, and the Cuban government, only last week, cancelled their country's national pride event and arrested a number of LGBT activists. This is a huge setback worldwide. Even here in the UK, same sex marriage is still not recognised in Northern Ireland. On the streets of Birmingham anti-LGBT protests are taking place in response to education programmes in schools, including LGBT diversity.

Whilst we celebrate what we have achieved, we remain vigilant. There remains much to be done and plenty who would take away our hard fought for rights at the first opportunity. Conference, we shall celebrate IDAHO day today and hope that you do also. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## BRO MARK McCARTAN (NIFB):

Conference, I will be quick. Date for your diaries: 3 August Pride in Belfast, FBU fire engines are coming over. So if you're going to be over in Belfast make it 3 August. We will be able to get together. There will be no fights or emergency resolutions running. Just enjoy yourselves. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. Para.H5, para.H6, para.H7. I now call Resolution 69 All Different All Equal moved by West Midlands. The Executive Council oppose.

### **Resolution 69 ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL (ADAE)**

***Conference supports the need for the FBU to carry out ADAE investigations when Members are accused of actions that contravene our own standards.***

***However, Conference notes that the time taken for ADAE investigations, from the request being lodged with the Regional Secretary, to an appeal being heard at the Representation Appeals Committee, can mean that individuals that are evidently undeserving of FBU representation receive the full backing of the FBU. This has the potential to cause great distress to FBU Officials and Members.***

***Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to alter the FBU ADAE Policy and make any necessary Rule changes, so that the decision of the Regional Committee is enforced until the final decision of the Representation Appeals Committee.***

**WEST MIDLANDS**

**BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD** (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I'm not going to get into too much detail on this. I think the resolution is pretty self-explanatory. We just believe that an introduction of what we could essentially call a safety measure. When we're talking very rare and isolated cases in this instance, that the regional committee, when deciding representation is to be withdrawn, the decision of that elected committee stands and representation is temporarily suspended subject to the outcome of an appeals committee.

Conference, most of us sit on our regional committees. We know that when these come and we make the tough decision to withdraw representation, how rare that is. In some cases it is very, very, very clear what that member has done. What this has done, on the rare occasions, has meant that the officials representing that member at the time when representation has been withdrawn have been placed in an impossible situation between representing a member and members who elected them into their positions, asking them why are you representing that member when you clearly know what they have done?

So we're not trying to undermine the ADAE policy, what we are asking for is that representation is withdrawn when the regional committee make the decision. Let's face it, if we don't support this resolution what we're saying is the regional committee is going to get this wrong. Let's have faith in our regional committees that when we make these decisions (and I know we all consider them thoroughly) we get them right.

Conference, as I say, it's quite self-explanatory. I urge you to support this resolution. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open to debate. Anybody? Tam.

**BRO TAM McFARLANE** (National Officer):

Thank you, Conference. We are asking conference to oppose this resolution. I have to say that the redrafting of what is a fundamental policy to the union and the process within it has been pretty much never-ending. I am the person that was tasked to bring together all the previous changes made for a re-draft, and as we started to do that, we then had to pause that again because there were two policies that would have again altered it in totally different directions at conference, one of which was withdrawn and one of which is still in place.

It's the view of the Executive Council that we do need to reach a consensus on this policy. We believe that this is it. We don't accept that if we don't oppose this it would mean that the regional committee is wrong. It's inherent in any process that has serious consequences for everyone involved to have a proper appeals process. We believe that the proposed change would mean that representation is withdrawn despite an appeal being lodged and before an appeal is heard.

I will say this just about timescales. I hope there will be some peace of mind here. The current process in regard to going to the appeals representation committee is that it's heard within ten days of receipt. That does then offer a quick and hopefully definitive position. So we do urge conference to oppose this resolution.

Just to clarify, the All Different All Equal, this document here, is more than just a process. It's a statement of intent from us to our members. In the Foreword the General Secretary says "Fairness at Work must be a practice not a policy". So there's more to the equality policy of the Fire Brigades Union than just this process. But we do need to get the process right within it. We believe that a consensus has been reached on this. We are urging conference to oppose this resolution.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, I now put Resolution 69 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

I now move on to Section F Trade Union and Labour Movement para.F1. I now call Emergency Resolution 12 Adult Social Care moved by Scotland, seconded by Northern Ireland.

## **Emergency Resolution 12 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

***On Wednesday 15th May 2019 at the Fire Brigades Union Conference, Emergency Resolution “Health and Care Work”, was moved and carried at this Conference. As national pay negotiations continue, this resolution will have a catastrophic effect upon the pay talks in Scotland that are scheduled to take place on Monday 20th May 2019.***

***The resolution stated that “Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to not include adult social care such as slips, trips, falls and patient transport within any future negotiations on the broadening of the role of a firefighter.”***

***Conference notes that to exclude “adult social care” in its entirety from any future negotiations has the unintended effect of removing a large quantity of potential work in the broadening of the role of a firefighter that may be acceptable to our members.***

***Conference agrees that inappropriate work for the role of a firefighter, such as assisting faster discharge from hospital, as expressed within the resolution, should never be included in the role maps and Conference recognises the issues faced by Members in the West Midlands.***

***Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to continue the pay strategy with the inclusion of adult social care, however any broadening of the role of a firefighter must be relevant and reasonable.***

**SCOTLAND**

## **SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Scotland):**

President, Conference, comrades, Standing Orders has the ability to allow for emergency resolutions in exceptional circumstances to be debated on the conference floor. I just want to put on record Scotland genuinely appreciates the decision of this conference to make sure that that important debate happens today.

Comrades, as reported at conference this week, pay negotiations are due to commence on Monday between the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the FBU. I stood up here on Wednesday in that pay debate and reiterated the point that our members in Scotland, their patience is wearing thin and running out fast regarding the slow pace of these pay negotiations. Members in Scotland have worked tirelessly for the national pay strategy over the last two years. Firefighters from all over Scotland descended on the Scottish Parliament in December 2017 to lobby the Scottish government over pay, to make sure that firefighters had a better pay rise.

The impact of that lobby was £15.5 million extra in our budget. Comrades, that money has now been squandered on overtime and other projects instead of lining the pockets of our members. We continue to keep up the political campaign. In 2019 we secured an extra £5 million in our budget to support the pay negotiations. That's an extra £20.5 million that could have been used to support pay for members in Scotland. Our members' patience is seriously running out fast.

So we need to get to these negotiations on Monday with a conference policy that truly reflects the outcome of the pay ballot. This emergency resolution supports that, supports the vast majority of our members, of your members. I would urge you to keep that in mind when you're voting.

We genuinely appreciate the situation that our members and our comrades in West Midlands have. This resolution agrees that inappropriate work such as assisting faster discharge from hospital should never be included in any firefighter rolemap. Our members in Scotland do not want that either.

These negotiations on Monday don't just impact on Scotland. If we are successful, then we need to use that for any potential future leverage for pay negotiations throughout the UK affecting your members in your regions.

Comrades, I sincerely urge you to vote to support this emergency resolution. We do not want the last two years of hard work to have been done for nothing. Support the ballot, support the Scottish comrades, support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

**BRO ROD O'HARE** (NIFB):

President, Conference, we are seconding emergency resolution 12 from Scotland. First of all, can I say in Northern Ireland we absolutely agree that it was the correct decision made by Standing Orders this morning. However, given the gravity of the situation and the possible implications it has moving forward, I accept that conference had to bring this back to the floor.

Let me be clear before we start that we appreciate the sentiment of Emergency Resolution 7 by West Midlands. We understand the intent of the resolution. However, this has raised a particular obstacle for our brothers and sisters in Scotland. We believe that conference owes it to our colleagues in Scotland to pass this. It should be noted that our comrades in Scotland, up to this point, have been able to enter into positive discussions with their government within the parameters of the NJC in a manner supportive of national collective bargaining.

To allow this to progress I would ask that our brothers and sisters are afforded the support of conference to proceed with this, starting on Monday. Comrades, please bear in mind, as Denise has already said, that a positive outcome in Scotland could have positive results for all of our services moving forward regarding remuneration.

In the spirit of solidarity I ask that conference supports Emergency Resolution 12 in order that Scotland may go into this high stakes poker game not only with our full support but with a full deck of cards. I second. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

That's open for debate. Yes.

**BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD** (West Midlands):

President, Conference, we appreciate Scotland's attempt here to provide clarity on this issue. We will always have solidarity with Scotland and their struggles up there. But we are very disappointed that falls response is not included. There seems to be confusion around this. So let's define it as this: the physical intervention by our members with members of the public in the event of a non-injury fall. Let's be honest here, that is not appropriate work of a firefighter.

This resolution does point to inappropriate work. We haven't had a debate on this yet as conference. We need to start moving towards the debate of what is inappropriate and appropriate work for firefighters. *(Applause)*

Conference, we did agree about falls response, pretty much defined as I've just said, when we moved and subsequently carried Emergency Resolution 7. It defined that as inappropriate, so before you vote you should be demanding of the EC that they define what inappropriate work is. If they do not agree that falls response is inappropriate then I urge you to oppose this resolution. Conference, thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT** (Cheshire):

Thank you, President. Conference, we do have sympathy with Scotland. However, we are clear that to carry this resolution and consequently supersede Emergency Resolution 7 – which carried following a full debate and a vote – would be to seek to subvert both the principles of sovereignty and democracy of this conference. On that specific point alone we cannot support. We oppose. *(Applause)*

**BRO CHRIS TAPP** (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I'm speaking in support of Emergency Resolution 12 Adult Social Care. Comrades, Derbyshire seconded the Executive Council's resolution on pay and the future of the Fire & Rescue Service. I genuinely welcome this debate that's come to the floor. It's the right thing to do; it's a really important issue; we need to do it.

West Midlands, it hurts me to say what I've got to say and I sympathise with you. I know Derbyshire's members don't want to do what these people have had to do. As you know, Derbyshire concluded with the original

emergency resolution that we couldn't support it based on the restrictions to our negotiators. So we have to stay with what we've done.

Conference, the final decision will always be ours. I said it yesterday: it will be made by us, in a ballot by people on fire stations. This isn't the last bite of the cherry. I said that yesterday and I'm saying it again now. We still feel we need to allow the negotiators to conclude their work and give them the best hand we can in the negotiations. Allow them to come back for a final decision and then we'll deal with the fall-out after that.

Executive Council, Matt, Andy, National Officials, President, you must give the West Midlands what they need, you must give them what they need to allow this to carry on. In genuine honesty, and with all those assurances for our comrades in the West Midlands, Derbyshire will support. *(Applause)*

**BRO SPENCER GRAY** (South Wales):

I'm speaking in support of the Emergency Resolution 12. President, Conference, we in South Wales believe that the negotiations in Scotland will pave the way for an advance in future negotiations nationally across the UK. I refer to para.3 that to exclude adult social care will tie our hands in future negotiations with our employers. Brothers and sisters, please reconsider. We support Scotland in Emergency Resolution 12. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**BRO ALAN CHINN-SHAW** (Essex):

President, Conference, we are opposing Emergency Resolution 12. Firstly, I'd like to congratulate Scotland for the fantastic political campaigning that they've done to lobby for an increase in budget. Unfortunately, the members in Essex do not want anything to do with any adult social care. It's not the role of a firefighter.

Essex have got a problem with the strategy, as most brigades will recognise. We don't agree with the expanding of the role, especially into the workstreams that we're looking at. We're 100% behind West Midlands, we voted for that resolution, it was carried. The democracy of this union should have maintained that decision; it shouldn't be overturned apart from at another conference. Again, massive respect for the work that was done in Scotland. Unfortunately, we urge you to oppose the resolution. *(Applause)*

**BRO JASON HUNTER** (London):

Conference, President, we would like to survey our members in London on the workstreams. The survey is written and ready to go. We await the EC's permission.

What we have learned from our region in the traditional way of reporting back through branches and committees is that London members do not want to take on work in the arena of adult social care. Negotiating the five workstreams together is the current strategy agreed by 86% of this membership. However, conference this week overwhelmingly made a decision to start shaping that non-exhaustive list. West Midlands' resolution called for the removal of adult social care and for the London membership this was the first step in the right direction for a very long time. The removal of MTFA and EMR have also been discussed at conference. We decided this was not the right direction to take. Should this be reviewed or any other decision this week?

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Start finishing up, Jason.

**BRO JASON HUNTER** (London):

Conference, are we in danger of finding ourselves in a constitutional crisis and potentially setting a precedent for future conference decisions? I will just leave you with this. We must allow for the workstreams to be shaped. At any fruit and veg stall in a London market you will hear the cry "Five for a pound", and it is the customer that gets value for money.

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Jason, that's your time.

**BRO JASON HUNTER** (London):

I'll just finish with one last thing, President, with the greatest of respect –

**THE PRESIDENT:**

No, that's your time. *(Applause)* Any other speakers? General Secretary.

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, a bit unusual circumstances, but here we go. I will answer something from Jason on the idea of a separate survey in London. We're a national union and the national union has balloted our members on the strategy of this union and that is the outcome of that ballot and that needs to be respected by every single delegation here and every single region and every single brigade committee. There cannot be separate surveys of members following conference decisions and decisions of our members.

Just to be clear on terminology, in terms of the talks in Scotland, they are NJC talks facilitated by the NJC with NJC joint secretaries with Scottish officials and Scottish employers also present. I think that's an important clarification.

Denise made an important point about the £15 million. The point about this resolution and the delicate stage that we're at is that we have never yet had those discussions with the Fire & Rescue Service, knowing what the Scottish government has said behind the scenes to the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. How the hell can we go into those discussions with red lines being drawn up on the hoof at conference? We don't know what the position of the other side is as yet.

Of course, Conference, I've been into the West Midlands more than once to hear the concerns of the West Midlands. Of course the concerns of this conference will be taken into those discussions. I say to the West Midlands, you know very well that in your own recent dispute the AGS played a key role in assisting the outcome of that in terms of attention to detail and ensuring that we got adequate responses. Exactly the same approach will be taken into these discussions.

I think we have to ask that the resolution is taken without the clarification that's been asked by the West Midlands.

Conference, I think it's time for a reality check. In brigades that are represented here there is already huge amounts of work that come under the remits that are being discussed here. We haven't been able to stop it. Indeed, there are other trials that relate to the term falls that took place in fire services in the UK during the NJC trials. Some of that work, I believe, is still carrying on without the concerns that have been expressed by members in the West Midlands. So what is the difference between those? There clearly must be some different approach between fire services elsewhere and what the management did in the West Midlands. We need to try to get to the bottom of that. That's the hugely important issue to address as well.

Conference, we do urge support for the resolution but without the clarification sought by the West Midlands.  
*(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Point of order.

**BRO JON WHARNSBY** (London):

President, Conference, just a point of order there. Matt, I do apologise but when our EC member reported to the EC that we were going to do a survey it was reported back that national were going to do their own survey and we would confuse London members by running our own survey. We understand we're a national union and we do want a national voice to be heard. Just the point of order there is we wanted to do a survey. A ballot, one question, is not a survey; it's a referendum. A yes/no or a yes/yes does not get the detail we need from our members about what they want to do and what they are willing to negotiate. That is what we should be doing

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Jon, that isn't exactly a point of order. *(Applause)*

Denise, right of reply.

**SIS DENISE CHRISTIE** (Scotland):

Thanks, President. I'll keep this very brief, Conference. If we go back up the road tonight in Scotland and this resolution does not pass, trust me, we will have members at our door potentially looking to get out of the NJC. That's how serious it is in Scotland just now. They've been lobbying hard for two years. We've had money in the Scottish budget for two years that's been wasted away. Our members are now seeing the potential in negotiations on Monday could be scuppered because this resolution does not pass. So I would urge you again to please support your Scottish comrades. Thanks. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, I now put Emergency Resolution 12 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, I now call Resolution 62 Free Our Unions – Repeal the anti-union laws moved by Suffolk. Essex are seconding.

**Resolution 62 FREE OUR UNIONS – REPEAL THE ANTI-UNION LAWS**

***This Conference notes that the anti-trade union laws – not just the 2016 Trade Union Act, but multiple laws going back to 1980 – continually undermine workers' ability to organise and campaign. They mean our movement is fighting the challenges of low pay, insecurity and erosion of hard-won terms and conditions with our hands tied behind our backs.***

***This Conference also notes that in 2015, 2017 and 2018, Labour Party Conference voted for clear policy to repeal all the anti-union laws and replace them with strong legal rights for workers and unions, including strong rights to strike and picket. However, this has not yet fed through into the party's public campaigning. Conference welcomes the Free our Unions campaign and associated statement for Labour to implement this policy that has been launched by a range of trade union branches and organisations, coordinated by The Clarion magazine. It is absolutely crucial for our movement to ensure the next Labour Government acts quickly and decisively on this and that the trade union movement hold them to account on this.***

***Therefore Conference demands that the Executive Council support this campaign and;***

- ***sign the Clarion free our unions statement for labour movement organisations and stay in touch with the other signatories to coordinate***
- ***circulate the statement to Members and an explanation of why it is so important***
- ***encourage and assist Branches and Committees to invite a speaker from the campaign to Branch and Committee meetings***
- ***buy copies of the pamphlet published by The Clarion about the campaign to distribute to Members***
- ***encourage Officials to circulate the statement as widely as possible to other nearby union branches and trades councils (and, as appropriate, Labour Parties) asking for support***
- ***coordinate photos supporting repeal of the anti-union laws and the right to strike at upcoming meetings***
- ***write to Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell on this issue.***

**SUFFOLK**

**BRO KEVIN DRIVER** (Suffolk):

President, Conference, first time speaking. *(Applause)* I don't quite know how I'm going to follow that, but we'll give it a go.

The Free our Trade Unions campaign started by Lambeth Unison and the Clarion is an important movement, not just for the FBU but for the trade union membership nationally. The campaign urges the repeal not only of the 2016 Trade Union Act, but multiple laws dating back to the 1980s. As I'm certain conference is aware, these anti-trade union laws are designed to hinder us, the workers, in our ability to organise and take action against our employers. They have assisted in corroding trade unions' wider culture of self-activity, militancy and solidarity. A high profile

national example of this, as referred to by the General Secretary on Wednesday, was a ballot by PCS – a ballot which saw 50,000 workers vote yes to taking strike action for fair pay, and only 8,000 voting against. Yet, as it didn't hit the new thresholds set out in the 2016 anti-trade union act the huge majority was denied the right to strike. Perversely, if 12,000 had voted no, the strike could have gone ahead.

However, it's not just the big headline disputes that we see affected by these restrictive laws but also numerous smaller disputes. Every day in our profession we see chiefs and fire authorities emboldened by a direction of anti-worker Tory government delivering crippling cuts to our service, imposing unworkable shift conditions on firefighters and control staff, reducing crew sizes to unsafe levels, ordering us to work on our days off without proper remuneration. Every day our resistance as workers and our ability just to say no to unfair and unsafe demands are being shackled by some of the worst anti-trade union laws in the Western world.

The Free our Trade Unions campaign also calls for replacing these stifling laws with strong legal workers' rights, enabling us to organise, strike, picket and take solidarity action. This will enable us to stand united as one in solidarity with NHS workers, to stand united as one in solidarity with local government workers, to stand united as one in solidarity with our brothers and sisters from other trade union. Isn't that, in essence, the strength in unity of trade unions? In order for unions to fulfil the purpose of maintaining and improving conditions of service, workers' rights, the high standards of health & safety for our members, unions have to have the legal freedom to operate, the legal freedom to organise, the legal freedom to oppose. That means we must demand that these anti-trade union laws are repealed. I call on conference to support this resolution. Conference, please support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I've got Essex and Staffordshire down at seconders, so whoever is first. You've got it, Riccardo, go.

## BRO RICCARDO LA TORRE (Essex):

President, Conference, comrades, I haven't got to tell you about the devastation our profession has faced over the past few years. So as firefighters we understand all too well the shackles that these anti-union laws are placing on us. The Fire Brigades Union is the only organisation defending jobs and fighting cuts. These laws are designed to stop us from doing just that. Brother Driver from Suffolk covered the internal industrial issues that these laws present to us really well so I won't repeat them. But, Conference, these laws attack our class and our families much wider than the workplace. We must demand the right to take effective action over wider social and political issues.

We've heard at length in this conference about the injustices that are still plaguing the Grenfell community almost two years on. Yes, we write letters, yes, we lobby, yes, we march and rightly so. So we should. But can you imagine if we were able to fight properly for that community? If we were able to remove our labour for any worker or any community, regardless of where they are or who they're employed by. We hear horror stories of towers still wrapped in death-trap cladding, but they're deemed a few centimetres too short to get the funding to remove it. Imagine the pressure put on decision-makers if every person who lives in each tower organised, removed their labour from whoever it is they work for. How quickly would we then see that cladding come down?

Conference, these laws in their current state are a foot on the throat of our class and we have to act. I'm sure you support the sentiment of the resolution, but please note what it calls for. This can't be a campaign built on sand. It has to have the members with it. So please get the pamphlet into branch meetings, arm the members with the arguments. This is about applying pressure. The Labour Party is meant to be the voice of our movement and our class in the Parliamentary arena but they have lost that voice on this issue. Angela Rayner spoke of the front bench now which used to be the back bench. But they're not making the noises loud enough on the front bench. Luckily, Matt has quite a loud voice on this, but even the General Secretaries in our movement aren't making enough noise on this issue. We have to apply the pressure. We have to get the Labour Party and trade union leaders unapologetically calling for the repeal of these laws. Not just the Trade Union Act 2016 either, because it was crap in 2015. All of them back to the 80s, Thatcher's laws. Conference, I second. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

That's open for debate. No? I now put Resolution 62 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I'm now on to para.F2, para.F3, para.F4, para.F5, para.F6, F7, F8, F9, F11, F12. I now call Resolution 64 Democratic Republic of Congo moved by Merseyside. The Executive Council support.

## **Resolution 64 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

***Conference is appalled that millions of Congolese have lost their lives in a conflict that the United Nations describes as the deadliest in the world since World War Two and which has also been described as a silent holocaust with an estimated six million deaths. United States allies, Rwanda and Uganda, invaded in 1996 the Congo (then Zaire) and again in 1998, which triggered the enormous loss of lives, systemic sexual violence and rape, and widespread looting of Congo's spectacular natural wealth.***

***Congo is extremely rich in gold, diamonds, copper, cobalt, tin, uranium, coltan and many other precious minerals. Congo has 64% of the earth's coltan, a precious mineral that is needed for our modern electronics such as iphones, ipads, computers and laptops. In 1946 the 'Strategic Minerals Stockpiling Act' was passed to obtain and stockpile cobalt, with the largest reserves of cobalt on the planet Congo was targeted. Cobalt was described within the act as a strategic and critical mineral essential for the United States aerospace, military and defence industries.***

***The United States and the UK provide financial and military aid to countries such as Rwanda and Uganda, these neighbouring countries plunder Congo's natural resources as the death toll rises. In four studies the United Nations implicated multi-national companies in sourcing coltan from Congo stating that these companies serve as the 'engine of the conflict'. A further United Nations (leaked) report in 2010 stated that crimes of genocide may have been committed by Rwandan troops. The ongoing conflict, instability, weak institutions, dependency and impoverishment in the Congo are a product of a 125 year tragic experience of enslavement, forced labour, colonial rule, assassinations, dictatorship, wars, external intervention and corrupt rule. There is very little media coverage about what is actually happening in the Congo, when there is coverage it is very often about rebel groups committing mass atrocities. What these reports do not cover are the funding, training and the arming of these rebel groups by foreign governments.***

***Conference instructs the Executive Council to produce a report recommending actions to be taken by Brigade Committees to raise awareness of the current position within the DRC and also within the report recommend affiliation to an agreed DRC support group.***

**MERSEYSIDE**

## **BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):**

Conference, Congo is arguably the richest country on the planet in terms of natural resources. It's the storehouse of strategic and precious minerals that are vital to the functioning of modern society and modern high tech weapons. I think there lies the problem that Congo has. Due to the strategic location of Congo in the heart of Africa the lust for her wealth by powerful nations has meant repeated interventions over the last 125 years. Congo is literally and figuratively the heart of Africa and the fulcrum on which the African continent swings.

Congo has the agricultural potential to feed the entire world beyond 2050. Let that sink in for a minute. The world population post-2050 is expected to be 9 billion. Congo also has the hydroelectric capacity to provide electricity to the entire African continent, with some left over to export to southern Europe and the Middle East. Congo is a part of the second largest rainforest in the world and is vital to the fight against climate change and global warming. The situation in Congo, in the Democratic Republic, has become much worse and is a major moral and humanitarian crisis, comparable to the wars in Syria and Yemen which receive far more coverage.

Armed groups are now raping and pillaging in the country yet again, taking out the natural resources: diamonds, oil and cobalt. A lot of geopolitical commentators presently believe the situation in the DRC is stably bad, but in fact it's become much, much worse. The big wars of the Congo that were all on the top of the agenda 15 years ago are back and worsening. Due to the disruption of planting and harvesting caused by the conflict there's now two million children at risk of starvation. The United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic – it's largest and most expensive peace keeping effort – has been shut down.

This is a silent genocide. Many nations deliberately suppress the information because they're complicit in the rape of the natural resources. Conference, I'll close in saying this. This is how Congo Justice close all their correspondence. Break the silence, stop the pillaging, promote justice, defend women and children, protect the environment, support the people. I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Can I have a seconder? Can I have a seconder? *Formally* That's open for debate. I now put Resolution 64 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

Conference, I've been informed that the delegation from Warwickshire had to leave so therefore there is no-one to move Resolution 65 so that falls. I now call Emergency Resolution 3 moved by the B&EMM National Committee. The Executive Council support.

### **Emergency Resolution 3 – NEW ZEALAND TERRORIST ATTACK**

***We are horrified by the mass murder of 51 people in Christchurch, New Zealand on the 15th March 2019. Many other men, women and children were also seriously injured in this horrendous attack. Conference stands in solidarity with the Muslim community and sends our deepest condolences to all those whose lives have been devastated.***

***We unreservedly condemn this despicable act of far-right terrorism.***

***The Fire Brigades Union opposes racism, bigotry and xenophobia in all its forms. We make no apology in our condemnation of all who engage in overt racism, fascism, dog-whistle politics and the peddlers of right wing ideology that seeks to fan the flames of hate and division in our society.***

***These toxic behaviours are often used to radicalise individuals into extremist views, which evidentially has serious consequences for our minority members and communities.***

***In the light of the horrific attack in New Zealand, Conference remains resolved in calling upon all FBU Members to tackle hate, wherever it raises its ugly head.***

***Conference therefore demands;***

- ***The FBU re-affirms our commitment to robustly tackle the promulgation of far-right ideology, racism or bigotry wherever it should arise***
- ***The Executive Council sends a message of solidarity to the appropriate organisation in New Zealand***
- ***As role models, all Officials commit to lead by example in championing our equality principles in all we do, by opposing racism and bigotry in all its forms as an example to the Members we represent.***

**B&EMM**

## **BRO SONNY ROBERTS (B&EMM):**

President, Conference, moving Emergency Resolution 3 New Zealand Terrorist Attack. As a union I know we stand united in our feelings of disgust, despair, and heartbreak as we learn the horrifying action of the evil, with the mass murder of 51 innocents in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March, and more recently the 258 people killed across Sri Lanka last month. Along with this, other men, women and children were also seriously injured in these horrendous attacks.

I'm sure conference stands in solidarity with the Muslim and Christian communities affected by these crimes of humanity as we send our deepest condolences to all those lives that have been left in devastation, our fellow human beings.

The Fire Brigades Union opposes racism, bigotry and xenophobia in all its forms. We make no apology for our condemnation of all who engage in racism, fascism, dog whistle politics and the pedlars of the right wing ideology

that seeks to fan the flames of hate and division in our society. These toxic, poisonous behaviours and attitudes are often used to radicalise individuals into having, sharing and breeding these extremist views which have serious consequences on our minority members and the communities in which we serve.

In light of these horrific attacks in both New Zealand and Sri Lanka I ask conference to remain resolved in calling upon all FBU members to tackle hate wherever it raises its ugly head. Conference, therefore we request the FBU reaffirms its commitment to tackling robustly the promotion of far right ideology, racism or bigotry wherever it should arise. Let's not kid ourselves. It's here and in today's climate, not just around the world but in the UK. It's on our streets. Sad to say, it's also in some of our fire stations.

We ask that the Executive Council sends a message of solidarity to the appropriate organisations, both in New Zealand and Sri Lanka. We ask that as role models all officials commit to lead by example in championing our equality principles in all we do by opposing racism and bigotry in all its forms as an example to all our members.

I ask for the support, please, to move Emergency Resolution 3. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. I now put Emergency Resolution 3 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Emergency Resolution 4 Venezuela moved by Merseyside. The Executive Council support.

### **Emergency Resolution 4 – VENEZUELA SOLIDARITY**

***Conference notes current FBU affiliation to the International Campaigns 'Hands Off Venezuela' and 'Venezuela Solidarity Campaign'.***

***Conference further notes the coup attempt of 30th April 2019 that added to the problems already faced by an economy struggling with low global oil prices and the announcement of US sanctions.***

***Conference recognises that international solidarity matters and therefore undertakes to;***

- ***Send a message of solidarity and support to the people of Venezuela via our affiliations***
- ***Encourage FBU Branches to affiliate to the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign***
- ***Invite Venezuela Solidarity Campaign speakers to Regional Committee meetings.***

***Conference also calls on the British Government to promote dialogue to foster a peaceful solution to the Venezuelan crisis.***

**MERSEYSIDE**

## **BRO MARK ROWE** (Merseyside):

President, Conference, its times like these, when the Venezuelan and the Bolivian Revolution is fighting for survival against the might of the US empire that international solidarity matters most. Trump's statement at the United Nations Security Council last September set out what is at stake here. He said this: "All nations of the world should resist socialism and the misery that it brings to everyone. In that spirit we ask the nations gathered here to join us in calling for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela. Today we are announcing additional sanctions against this repressive regime."

Conference, that's a clear and unambiguous statement of intent for regime change which has been a long-term policy aim of successive US administrations, including the attempted overthrow of Hugo Chávez back in 2002. The Venezuelan Government's policy of using the country's resources for the benefit of the majority of its people is, of course, problematic for other nations that covet global oil production and consequently the agents of corporations, the press, and the media. Gains over the last 17 years include record investment in public services creating a free education system and implementing a free national health service, 20 million people have benefited from various anti-poverty missions which have reduced extreme poverty from 20% to 4.8%. Since 2010 the construction of 102 million homes has enabled the provision of social and low cost housing for Venezuela's poorest citizens.

We've got to also have a look at Venezuela's commitment to trade union rights. We just heard Riccardo talking about how repressive the anti-trade union laws are in this country. So let's have a little comparison between ours and Venezuela's. The Venezuelan trade unions have recognised by the government the right to form unions, trade union freedom, the right to strike and to take secondary and solidarity action. They have had recognised the right to collective bargaining and an obligation on employers to negotiate with trade unions. It ended outsourcing and the use of agency labour to undermine terms and conditions, implemented the right to social security including pensions for all workers. Conference, I had a huge list. It goes on and on. The light's flashing at me.

What we need to do, Conference, is send a very clear message of solidarity to Venezuela when they're under attack by US imperialism. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. Does that have a seconder? *Formally* Thank you. It's open to debate. No? I now put Emergency Resolution 4 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

We now move on to para.F13, F14, F15. Yes, come on. You've done a lot of running.

## BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):

I know, sorry. Conference, they've all come at once, obviously. Thanks, President, Conference, we've had a difficult week so sometimes we need to take a little step back and recognise the fantastic work that this union actually does. Other people recognise the fantastic work that we do. We've been a long-time supporter of the Shrewsbury 24 campaign which essentially saw building workers imprisoned in 1973/1974 for picketing. Some of them spent many years in prison. One actually died as a consequence of the chemical cosh that he was subjected to whilst in prison. Conference, there's some really great news in relation to the campaign. On Tuesday 30 April 2019, halfway through the judicial review hearing, in the Birmingham Administrative Court the Criminal Cases Review Commission conceded the case. It agreed to reconsider the referral of the convictions of the pickets to the Court of Appeal. The CCR has taken over five years to make that decision and all the evidence that the campaign has submitted since 2012 was put to them. It has steadfastly refused to make the referral despite the strength of fresh evidence.

The legal team, halfway through, two hours into the case, took the unusual step of conceding, and it was agreed to withdraw its earlier decisions. That's absolutely fantastic news. That demonstrates the pressure that's brought to bear by trade union solidarity. Eileen Turnbull, the secretary and researcher of the Shrewsbury 24 campaign, has asked me to read out (and it is very brief, President) a statement to conference on behalf of all the pickets who are still alive. A lot of them are very elderly now, as you can imagine. It says this:

*"Dear Conference, On behalf of the Shrewsbury 24 campaign and the pickets we would like to thank Matt Wrack and all FBU members and conference for the support they have given us for the past ten years. We have had many setbacks in our attempt to achieve justice for the pickets but the FBU have stuck with us. We always knew that no matter what hurdles we faced Matt Wrack and the FBU members would be always there with us. You have encouraged and assisted us at every step of the way. Without this we would not be in the position we are today. We will never forget it. Thank you all so very, very much. In solidarity Eileen."*

Conference, give yourselves a round of applause. Your solidarity in this instance has been absolutely brilliant. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

I now call Emergency Resolution 10 Climate Emergency – for a Socialist Green New Deal moved by Cambridgeshire.

**Emergency Resolution 10 – CLIMATE EMERGENCY – FOR A SOCIALIST GREEN NEW DEAL**  
***Conference notes and congratulates the climate change protests that took place on the 12th and 13th May 2019 across Britain & internationally. Thousands of families marched through cities to demand urgent action on climate change and dramatic cuts in carbon emissions.***

***The Mothers Rise Up protest was led by eleven 11-year-olds to represent the 11 years we have to act on climate change, as set out by leading climate scientists in a recent UN report.***

***These protests have clearly highlighted the urgency of the situation and the need for action. Conference also notes the youth climate strikers, and welcome their commitment to working with trade unions on this matter. We should develop links and discussion with them, nationally and locally, actively looking for opportunities to coordinate our campaigning, demonstrations and action.***

***The labour movement needs to campaign on this matter in workplaces, industries and in Government both in the UK and internationally.***

***Conference believes that a Socialist Green New Deal is required to shift power from capital into the hands of workers and communities to address this matter, and should include;***

- ***A target of net-zero UK carbon emissions by 2030***
- ***Creating millions of public, well-paid, unionised green jobs***
- ***Public ownership of energy including expropriating the big six energy companies, creating an integrated, democratic system. Large-scale investment in renewables, rapidly phasing out fossil fuels***
- ***Public ownership of transport – majorly expanded, integrated, free or cheaper***
- ***A public program manufacturing, installing and training in renewable technologies and eliminating waste. Mass insulation and building and retrofitting zero carbon council housing and public buildings***
- ***A workers-led 'just transition' from high emission jobs to alternatives, with public investment guaranteeing communities and living standards***
- ***Democratic public ownership of banking and finance, providing resources and economic leverage***
- ***Pausing and moratorium on airport expansion, consulting transport sector workers about alternatives***
- ***Repealing all anti-union laws, so workers can freely take industrial action over wider social and political issues, from fire safety to climate change.***

***Therefore Conference calls on the Executive Council to lobby the Labour Party to adopt this program.***

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**BRO JAMES PEARCE** (Cambridgeshire):

Conference, President, it is said by many that when it comes to climate change our generation is unique. It's unique in the fact that we are the first generation to truly understand the damage we are doing to our planet and the last who can stop it.

Conference, we in this room and the members we represent are directly at threat by way of our profession and our class. Capitalism is driving us into the abyss. A system that favours profit and excess more than the welfare of people has led us into this crisis. Climate change is a social, economic and political issue for all workers and our communities, yet it is an industrial issue for the Fire & Rescue Service impacting jobs, hours, welfare and pay.

Conference, we congratulate our members on their response to the climate events such as wildfires, floods and storms, events which are becoming more common with climate change while our budgets are continuing to be slashed. We must support this resolution and call for a genuine socialist green new deal to shift power from capital into the hands of workers and communities. We believe that the demands set out in our resolution are vital to achieving this. I was inspired, as I'm sure many of you were, by the talk by Patrick who represents the Youth Climate Strikers, at the fringe meeting the other night. If they can organise themselves and stand up to this sort of stuff, then we need to do the same. Conference, please support this resolution before it's too late. I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Does that have a seconder? Back again?

## BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):

Conference, I can't say no if someone asks me to second. I am seconding Emergency Resolution 10. Conference, war, famine, pestilence and death, the Biblical four horsemen of the global apocalypse. Inaction, apathy, ambivalence and delay, the real four horsemen of the global apocalypse responsible for this climate crisis. They're the ones that will ruin economies, create starvation and kill many thousands. We need action right now, as the comrade has just said. We all need to wake up as well, and wake other people with us. We're sleepwalking towards catastrophe, hypnotised by the flashy shiny trinkets and trappings that we've all been brainwashed into believing we need to be happy. 500 people hoard over half of the world's wealth, 500 people are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths caused by global warming. Who knows how many future deaths?

A socialist green deal will hold to account those who put the accumulation of obscene wealth before global need. Get your members involved, educate them as the comrade said, before it becomes simply too late. I second.  
(Applause)

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. That's open for debate. Yes.

## BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD (West Midlands):

President, Conference, a really quick point on this. We really welcome this resolution coming to conference. It's finally time that the trade union movement started talking about this. I believe we're in a unique position as the FBU. We will be one of the lone voices in the trade union movement calling for action on climate change. I think as a union we're proud of what we do and how we take campaigns forward. We lead the way, as a small union. We could be one of the leading trade unions in this country. I'm calling for that. We need to stand in solidarity with the young generation who are doing it there. They're doing it on their own at the minute. As a union we need to stand shoulder to shoulder with those people and be at the forefront of this. Conference, please support. (Applause)

## THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? No. I now put Emergency Resolution 10 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 66 Truth about Zane (TAZ) – Failed Inquest

### **Resolution 66 TRUTH ABOUT ZANE (TAZ) – FAILED INQUEST**

***Conference is appalled at the handling of the inquest into the death of Zane Gbangbola, a 7 year old boy who tragically lost his life on 8th February 2014 during the severe flooding on the River Thames in Surrey.***

***Zane's home had become infused with the deadly nerve gas Hydrogen Cyanide. This is believed to have been released from an unregulated landfill site that lay adjacent to Zane's home. The nerve gas was detected, and independently verified by Hazmat teams within Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.***

***The Coroner's verdict judged Zane's death to be from Carbon Monoxide poisoning, but large amounts of evidence would suggest otherwise, and strong concerns point to how this inquest was investigated and handled. Zane's parents Nicole and Kye set up the TAZ campaign, calling for an Independent Panel Inquiry into the death of their 7 year-old son Zane during the flooding and to protect the public.***

***South East Region are in full support of this campaign, with Surrey FBU now part of the TAZ Campaign Committee, along with members of the Trades Union Congress and other relevant Organisations.***

**Conference calls for the Executive Council to support and raise awareness on the TAZ campaign by;**

- **directing each Brigade Committee to inform all Members and urge them to sign up to the TAZ petition – [www.truthaboutzane.com](http://www.truthaboutzane.com)**
- **periodically publishing updates and promoting the TAZ campaign on the FBU website, and each of its social media platforms**
- **the General Secretary writing to Zane's parents Nicole and Kye, pledging the support of the Fire Brigades Union in pursuit of achieving an Independent Panel Inquiry into their son's death.**

**SURREY**

**BRO LEE BELSTEN** (Surrey):

President, Conference, back in 2004 during dramatic flooding of the River Thames a young family, Kye and Nicole Gbangbola (who I've become very close to) had their world turned upside down by suffering a tragedy that no parent should ever experience: the death of their beloved son, Zane. Zane was a beautiful and popular 7 year old boy who loved helping people, getting involved in the charity work with his mummy and daddy. He was truly an inspirational young boy who touched many hearts and was cherished by everyone he met.

At the time in Surrey when the banks of the River Thames burst, it caused in some areas catastrophic damage to many families and their homes. The Gbangbola's home was one of these. They had the use of electric pumps to pump out the flood water, but they also hired a small petrol pump in case the electric pumps failed. They did not use this petrol pump; they did not need to. But unbeknown to Kye and Nicole, adjacent to their property was an historic unregulated landfill site. Through the flood water landfill gases migrated into their property. During the early hours, as they slept, both Kye and Zane suffered cardiac arrest. Kye, the father, partially recovered but is now paralysed from the waist down and is completely wheelchair bound. Zane didn't. Paramedics were unable to resuscitate him and he was pronounced dead not long afterwards.

The immediate aftermath of this tragic situation was that the property was cordoned off, Surrey Fire's Hazmat team swept the property three times and detected high levels of hydrogen cyanide, not carbon monoxide. The residents of the area were evacuated, Army gold command was put in place, Porton Down officials were in attendance, an emergency Cobra meeting was held, and there was even an unscheduled appearance from the Prime Minister.

At the subsequent inquest it was deemed that Zane had died from carbon monoxide poisoning. Hydrogen cyanide evidence was not investigated. The Coroner even refused Article 2 European Convention of Human Rights which protects the right to life. A jury was refused. Much of the evidence available was not disclosed. Witnesses and their testimonies were ignored. The Coroner was the judge and the jury.

No carbon monoxide was found in the home and no source of carbon monoxide, as stated by the fire service's Hazmat teams. Legal aid for representation was denied three times, but all five public authorities, including the Coroner, had the best QC's representations, funded for years by the State. Kye and Nicole were defenceless and had to beg and crowd fund to pay for their representation right up to the last day. All these instances point to a cover up.

The injustice that Zane and his family have suffered is truly shocking. There's not a day that goes by where Kye and Nicole don't campaign to reveal the truth regarding their son's death. When doing so, the pain and heartache they often endure is indescribable.

Basically, Conference, the resolution calls for national support. We support it in our region and in our brigade. I'm asking for brigade committees to inform and update their members on the Truth About Zane campaign, to sign the petition, to periodically publicise the campaign and any updates through the numerous media and social media platforms, and finally for the General Secretary to pledge officially the support of the Fire Brigades Union in writing, seeking the pursuit of an Independent Panel Inquiry for their beautiful little boy, Zane. Conference, please support. I move. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Lee. Does that have a seconder? Seconder? *Formally* That's open to debate.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Just very quickly. I'm sure conference will give Surrey the assurances that you seek and assuming you pass it, we will implement the resolution in full.

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

I now put Resolution 66 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

We're now moving on to Section E Government Policy and Legislation para.E1. I now call Resolution 58 Governance of Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service moved by Greater Manchester. The Executive Council support.

**Resolution 58 GOVERNANCE OF GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (GMFRS) Conference, May 2017 saw the dissolution of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority (GMFRA) and the legal responsibility for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) taken by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).**

*This change came about as a result of the Greater Manchester devolution programme and the subsequent election of Andy Burnham as Greater Manchester Mayor.*

*This shift in governance and the necessary statute required the TUPE transfer of all GMFRA employees into the GMCA. As a result of our Union's efforts, there has been no change to any Grey Book employees' terms and conditions through this transfer and we remain fully aligned to the NJC.*

*The concern of the FBU in Greater Manchester relates to the governance of our service since this transfer. On the abolition of the Fire Authority, the new statute gave the Mayor the ability to establish a fire committee made up of cross-party councillors. We understand that this committee was formed and convened on a small number of occasions before a decision was taken to disband it, presumably by the Mayor's Office.*

*Some 18 months after our take-over by the GMCA there is no evidence of a democratic, accountable committee through whom the governance of GMFRS can be observed, advised or challenged by the FBU.*

*Additionally, we believe that the Mayor has devolved his responsibility for the running of GMFRS to the Deputy Mayor and PCC Bev Hughes, again we do not believe there is any facility for devolving this responsibility available within the statute laid down.*

*Clearly, our concerns around the democracy and accountability within the governance of GMFRS are matters that the FBU must press. It is fundamental to the future of our service in Greater Manchester that any decisions taken which impact on our Members and shape the future of our service are scrutinised, transparent and open to challenge.*

*Conference demands that work commences immediately to challenge through any necessary channels this perceived breakdown of democracy in the governance of GMFRS, with an aim to re-establish the fire committee and to ensure that no such undemocratic practices are permitted within any other Brigades where devolution has been adopted.*

**GREATER MANCHESTER**

## **BRO ROB GRUNDY (GMC):**

Conference, President, prior to May 2017 Greater Manchester Fire Service was governed by an elected fire authority. This authority was comprised of cross-party councillors from across Greater Manchester. This democratically elected authority met regularly which allowed the FBU to observe proceedings and engage with and lobby its members. Since the transition to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, statute gave the elected

Mayor, Andy Burnham, the ability to establish a fire committee to be made up of cross-party councillors. The Mayor did initially establish a committee and the FBU understands that it did convene on a small number of occasions. However, a decision was then taken, presumably by the Mayor, to disband the fire committee.

The FBU has major concerns around the responsibility that the Mayor has devolved to his deputy and Greater Manchester PCC, Bev Hughes. We do not believe statute currently exists to allow for this devolvement of responsibility.

Conference, our concerns lie with democracy, transparency and accountability of the current GMC governance structures. It is imperative that the management of our service is open to scrutiny and challenge.

Conference demands that work commences immediately to challenge through any necessary channels this perceived breakdown of democracy in the governance of GMFRS, with an aim to re-establish the fire committee and to ensure that no such undemocratic practices are permitted within any other Brigades where devolution has been adopted. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have a seconder? Yes.

## BRO ANDREW SCATTERGOOD (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I just want to second this resolution because we are also under threat of a metro mayor taking us over. We are working very hard to try to stop that from happening and hopefully we'll be successful. The point I want to make comes back to part of the debate we had about demands for the Labour government. We don't have a policy on this. We have a policy on the PCC; we don't have a policy on this. There is very little difference, other than the blurring of the line between police and fire in the anti-democratic nature of what these metro mayors are trying to do. It is purely a power grab and as a union we should be opposing this.

We hope the Executive Council will do further work into this. If not, I've got a feeling a resolution is coming next year. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Anybody else? Yes.

## SIS SHERRI KITSON (CSNC):

President, Conference, just really quickly to add to that. Due to the combined authority in Greater Manchester the board of directors in the Northwest Fire Control does not have any representation from Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service on it at the minute either. I just wanted to add that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Anybody else? No. I now put Resolution 58 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 59 Fracking moved by Shropshire. The Executive Council support.

## Resolution 59 FRACKING

***Conference notes the reports of an increase in earthquake activity in Lancashire since Cuadrilla was granted a licence to frack for gas. Conference is also concerned that the granting of those licences, by central Government, appears to have overturned local democracy.***

***Following the UN's IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report last October, Conference believes that climate change and its effects on our lives, and those of future generations, is now of the highest importance. As such, Conference believes that FBU Policy should be to support renewable energy sources in preference to burning more carbon fuels.***

***Therefore, Conference instructs the FBU to oppose fracking in the UK and instructs the Executive Council to support campaigns against fracking.***

## SHROPSHIRE

**BRO KEN HALLIHAN** (Shropshire):

President, Conference, in 2016, taking advantage of planning rules put in place by the coalition government to favour fracking Sajid Javid, then Communities Secretary, duly overturned Lancashire Council's decision not to allow Cuadrilla to continue fracking operations. This ruling, following overwhelming opposition by residents, clearly undermining local democracy came just days after the Paris Climate Agreement, which requires countries including the UK effectively to phase out fossil fuels entirely over the coming years.

Despite America's commitment to this agreement, and Barack Obama referring to it as a turning point in the effort to avoid dangerous global warming, the Trump administration has already begun the process of withdrawing from it, clearly indicating where the neo-Liberal business interests stand on climate issues.

Since the Tory party rid themselves of the inconvenient coalition with the Liberal Democrats in 2015 the UK funding for green energy has teetered and plunged into freefall, dropping by 56% in 2017, the biggest fall of any country globally. Whilst the immediate local environmental impact of fracking can be debated, we feel that the catastrophic effect of global warming and the developed countries' responsibility to act is difficult to argue against with any degree of credibility.

The IPCC has emphasised the vital importance of limiting further warming, and the need for deep and rapid emission reductions in order to do so. The Committee on Climate Change published a report only this month recommending a net zero carbon emissions time of 2050 in the UK, stating the targets are achievable and should be put into law as soon as possible. Recent weeks have seen hundreds of people arrested in the UK for taking part in protests organised by Extinction Rebellion, a group also demanding that the UK set legally binding targets to reduce carbon emissions to net zero much sooner.

In the face of this evidence we believe it should be FBU policy to support clean, renewable energy sources in preference to burning more carbon fuels. Also that the FBU should support democratic opposition to fracking in the UK. I know that many of you have spoken to Miranda and Nick from Frack Free Lancashire. I would urge you all to have a look at the [frackfreeunited.co.uk](http://frackfreeunited.co.uk) website. Please support the resolution. I move. *(Applause)*

### THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have seconder? Yes, Kev.

**BRO KEVIN WILKIE** (Lancashire):

President, Conference, we are seconding Shropshire's resolution 59 Fracking. I find it ironic that we're here in Blackpool, Lancashire, a stone's throw away from Preston New Road, a Cuadrilla fracking site that has caused a 1.5 magnitude earthquake on 11 December 2018. Blackpool has also been hit by five other earthquakes in the October in just three days due to fracking, just one mile east of here, Blackpool.

I could go on with stats and figures on why fracking for shale gas should be banned. Obviously, the comrade from Shropshire has just alluded to it. Going back to the county councillors in Lancashire, they were also personally threatened with lawsuits and everything else that went with it. The Labour councillors at the time stood up to be counted and voted against fracking.

The environment is not just for today but for future generations. Lancashire now seconds Shropshire's resolution. *(Applause)*

### THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Kev. Anybody else? No. I now put Resolution 59 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That CARRIES*

I now call Resolution 60 Precept Flexibility moved by Buckinghamshire. The Executive Council give qualified support.

## **Resolution 60 PRECEPT FLEXIBILITY**

***Conference notes the financial constraints placed upon England's Fire and Rescue Authorities after austerity measures were introduced in 2010 by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition and since by the Conservative Government. This has led to vast reductions in central Government grants to Fire and Rescue Authorities, whose ability to raise funds locally has been worsened further by the restrictions placed on council tax precepts.***

***A lack of funding has directly affected firefighter numbers with in excess of 10,000 posts cut in England since 2010.***

***Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to lobby the Westminster Government, utilising the FBU Parliamentary Group, to scrap the cap on council tax precepts, allowing Fire Authorities flexibility to adjust according to need.***

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

## **BRO CHRIS WYCHERLEY (Buckinghamshire):**

President, Conference, comrades, we are no strangers to turbulence in Bucks. We have endured years of relentless attacks during these years of Tory austerity. We have suffered one of the greatest percentage losses of firefighter numbers in that time and over 10,000 nationally. This resolution is clear in its intention to scrap the cap on council tax precepts to grow our services and increase firefighter numbers. Public sector cuts have always been ideologically driven, not about finances, yet that's the long-established line of managers and government. This will not address the needs of all. We should remain vigilant in our endeavours for fully funded Fire & Rescue Services. We will continue to support and fight for that.

However, what this gives many of us is options. We call on the EC to lobby the Westminster government using FBU Parliamentary Group to scrap the cap. Conference, I move. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Thanks, Chris. Does that have a seconder? A seconder? *Formally* It's open for debate. Are you seconding, John? No?

## **A DELEGATE**

President, Conference, obviously we are unsympathetic to cuts in the fire services, that goes without saying. I don't believe we should be using a regressive form of taxation or lobbying for a use of regressive taxation to make up for the deficit in government funding. I believe that this would put the FBU Parliamentary Group in a difficult position and it would give a Tory government further excuse to cut Central Government funding. On that basis we're opposed. *(Applause)*

## **BRO ANDREW FOX-HEWITT (Cheshire):**

A similar theme to the comrade there. We absolutely understand the concerns. I would suggest that it's remitted. We already pay our taxes and our services should be fully funded. By removing the cap, all it will do is allow desperate governance models to pass those taxes on to hard-working people, people that are already being forced into poverty. While we need to raise funding, that should be done centrally and not off the back of residents and communities that are already paying for those services. So we do need to be very, very guarded about removing that cap and allowing that mechanism and apparatus to come into force. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, I'm glad Dave and Andy got up to make those points because they are similar to the points we want to make in relation to our qualification. We did have some discussion at the Executive Council about this. I think the key point is that it is central government funding cuts that have led to the crisis in the Fire & Rescue Service.

We need to be clear about that. Therefore, what is happening, and the dangers we've just been alerted to is that central government funding is cut and actually effectively the burden is passed on to local communities to fill the gap through increases in their council tax. Correctly, the point has been made that council tax is not a progressive tax; it's a regressive tax.

However, the Executive Council believes that the precept cap is also undemocratic because it is central government dictating to local government what it can and can't do. On the point of democracy, we support local democracy so we support the right of councils to determine their own council tax precepts. But I think the point we are making in our qualification is that should not and cannot be interpreted by FBU members and officials as a support for the raising of council tax in all circumstances as a solution to the funding crisis that we're facing in our Fire & Rescue Service.

So we did have similar concerns to those that have just been expressed. We think that qualification hopefully addresses the points. On that basis we can ask conference to give qualified support to the resolution. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

Buckinghamshire right of reply? *(Waived)* No. I now put Resolution 60 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against please show. *That FALLS*

Conference, we now move on to para.E2, para.E3, para.E4, para.E5, para.E6, para.E7, para.E8, para.E9, para.E11. Yes.

## **BRO RICH WILLIAMS (Staffordshire):**

President, Conference, thank you. Sorry about this. I just wanted to get on record the fact that obviously there are a few brigades around the country suffering under the fact that now we're under the governance of Police and Crime Commissioners. I know there are commitments from a Labour government that they would try to reverse that. The issues we face currently in Staffs around Police & Crime Commissioner are just on the governance currently, but actually through the back door he's going for a single employer, he's taking fire staff across under police employ. Basically, the land grab is to sell the police buildings and to move all his police officers into fire buildings. That's what he's trying to achieve in Staffordshire. Just be mindful of that, if it's coming anywhere near you, that actually they're not just after governance; they're after taking the fire service and destroying it bit by bit, especially the PCC we've got.

I am seeking support from the EC and Dave has already offered support for stuff that we're doing locally. Please stop this from happening in your brigades as best you can. Thank you. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

General Secretary.

## **GENERAL SECRETARY:**

Conference, very quickly, I'm very glad that Rich raised that point. Dave has been leading on our campaign against PCC takeovers. We've got a clear policy to oppose PCC takeovers. I would urge conference and all officials who face that threat to make sure that we implement the conference policy as determined here. That means we campaign against PCC takeovers. They make all sorts of promises and they make promises to our officials and they make promises to our members, and the reality is as has just been set out. That's why we've got the policy and that's why every official in this union should be implementing that policy when faced with that threat. *(Applause)*

## **THE PRESIDENT:**

I now move on to para.E12.

## **BRO DAVID GILLIAN (West Yorkshire):**

President Conference, West Yorkshire brought an emergency motion to conference which was ruled out of order. Standing Orders instructed us to speak to the issue under E12. Our rule book commits us to bringing about a socialist system of society and I'm sure we all agree there are few things more contrary to socialism than the privilege of unaccountable peers claiming huge expenses whilst undemocratically influencing our laws.

Two things have happened in recent weeks. Firstly the great-grandson of notable fascist Oswald Mosley was elected, in the loosest sense of the word, to the House of Lords for life on a mandate of just 18 votes. In addition, a Bill was brought to the House of Lords in March intending to remove this undemocratic method of election that elected the fourth Baron of Ravensdale. This was blocked by filibustering.

Working with groups such as Politics for the Many and with the influence of our Parliamentary support group and the seat on the Labour NEC, we can seek to ensure success of the scrap and replace campaign, a campaign for the abolition of the House of Lords to be replaced by a fully democratic and accountable revising chamber. Thank you, Conference. *(Applause)*

## THE PRESIDENT:

Para. E14, para.E15, para.E16. Conference, that concludes all of the business. Do I get endorsement for the Executive Council report? *AGREED* Thank you.

Conference, it now gives me pleasure to thank quite a few people. First of all, the staff here at the Imperial Hotel who've done us a fantastic job again. The food and everything is fantastic. Mascols, as usual a top job. Thanks to our head office staff and our stewards who've done a great job all week for us. A big thank you to the Standing Orders Committee and of course all of you on the conference floor. So a round of applause for everybody involved in that. *(Applause)*

Conference, you've taken some important decisions this week, none more so than giving your negotiators their directions going forward. But with that, there's a duty on all of us to do our part back in the brigades. There's a job to be done. We need to get our members prepared and ready for the next stages of what we believe is a campaign as laid out in the Emergency Resolutions, and that includes preparing them for a ballot.

So, Conference, there's a whole lot of work to do. I'm sure you lot will deliver, as you always do.

At the beginning of conference we held a minute's silence for our fallen brothers and sisters. We were notified of the sad death of another sister of the FBU, Nuala Cameron, the wife of our former General Secretary, the late Ken Cameron. She was a friend, sister and comrade of the FBU. Nuala worked for the FBU and was always active, even after retirement, supporting our campaigns. Nuala was a comrade to all of us. I saw her only a couple of weeks ago at the STUC. We are all shocked to hear of her untimely passing. We send our deepest condolences and solidarity to Nuala's family at this sad time.

Conference, every year we pay tribute and thanks to our retiring officials. I get a list off our EC members and these are the ones I've got: Rob Sherwood from Kent, Mick Cambers from West Sussex, Andrew Hewitson from Lancs, Alex Muir, Scotland who has done 40 years (well done on that one; don't forget your badge), Derek MacLeod from Herts, Russ King from Tyne & Wear, and of course Steve Shelton from Greater Manchester.

If there's anybody I've missed off that list, I apologise. As you know, we thank all of them for all of the hard graft that they've done over the years on behalf of our members. As we all know, sometimes it can be a thankless task but we all do it because we believe in it and we want to make a difference.

So thanks to all of those who are retiring. Enjoy your retirement. *(Applause)*

Conference obviously that concludes the list of the officials who are retiring, but I just mentioned the last one, Steve Shelton. Steve, would you like to come up to the rostrum, please. Yes, in fact it's a Presidential order: come to the front. As I mentioned, he is one of those who has played a pivotal role in our union and our conference. He's been a regional official for 30 years and for the last 22 years he's been the chair of our FBU Standing Orders Committee. As most of us know here, Steve is well-renowned for his happy go lucky attitude to life, he's always cheerful, always smiling, always pleased to see delegations when they come to visit Standing Orders. He loves nothing more than a challenge to his committee reports at conference, loves nothing more than imparting his superior conference knowledge to unsuspecting delegates. As we all know, he never takes it personally.

In fact, when I first met Steve I honestly thought he had Tourette's syndrome which, as we know, is involuntary movements or vocalisations caused by triggers called ticks. The reason I thought Steve suffered from that syndrome was because if anyone mentioned chief fire officers, Manchester United, Liverpool FC and even the Executive Council he had an immediate, uncontrolled reaction – a burst of expletives and profanities would come flying out of his mouth, no matter where he was or whatever company he was in. He didn't even realise it was happening. We just never even knew what he was ranting about. We just knew it was a whole load of loud effing and jeffing pouring out of a mouth in that Manchester accent.

If you can try to visualise a ranting Noel Gallagher, sucking a lemon who has just caught his brother Liam in bed with his missus, you'll know what I mean!

As some know, Steve is a Manchester City fan and obviously after last week he's even happier than he would normally be. In fact he's that happy and giddy his Tourette's appears to have been cured – well, until Manchester United or Liverpool win something again.

Seriously, Conference, the Standing Orders Committee is your committee that you elect to ensure the smooth running of our conference and importantly, ensure conference business is carried out in accordance with the laid down rules. That is something I think delegations sometimes forget. They are not there to rule out your resolutions; they are there to ensure the resolutions you submit are in accordance with the rules that you set out here at conference. I've heard it said they've been too finicky, they've been too strict applying the rules, etc. I have to say, Conference, it would be absolute chaos if we had no rules or we just ignored the ones that we do have.

Conference, you elect members of the Standing Orders Committee to police and implement them on your behalf. So maybe some should remember that in future. I have to say, Standing Orders Committee chaired by Steve do a fantastic job. Unless you've been sat up here on this top table you just don't realise how much hard work goes on behind the scenes at conference. It doesn't just go on while we're at conference. Probably in a couple of weeks' time the details and all the preparations will start for next year's conference.

They are first up in the morning, usually having a meeting to discuss emergency resolutions, probably before some of you even got in, I think maybe, looking at the state of some of you this morning. They are usually the last ones to finish at night, closing down the computers. Now I've explained how hard he has worked (or maybe he has conned us over the years) I'm sure you'll join me in wishing Steve a long happy and most importantly healthy retirement. After 30 years in the fire service and, as he keeps reminding us, "I'm still on the trucks" and after 22 years of babysitting hundreds of FBU officials he's earned his retirement.

Steve, we've got a small gift for you. Well done. Please pass on our thanks to Kath and the family for lending you to us for all these years. Steve, thank you very much. (*Applause*)

## **THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS** (Bro Steve Shelton):

Conference, I'm not going to keep you long because we did the Ted Rogers 3-2-1 before and cut everybody down. I wasn't expecting this. I was a bit shocked when I got called to the front. I'm lost for words. I just want to say thank you very much. I'll still be in touch with the Standing Orders Committee but there's one person that I really want to thank. Before I get too emotional I'm just going to say his name. I've worked with him for a long, long time on Standing Orders. He was an Executive Council member, then he became a national officer. I still kept in touch with him and we still have banter about all sorts – some of it I can't tell you about. He then came back to Standing Orders as the secretary to Standing Orders. He's been a great mate of mine, great comrade. I'll miss him loads. He never gets thanks, like me stood up here and you lot thanking me. Nobody really understands the work that goes on in Standing Orders and how much work Dave Green does behind the scenes, together with all the other responsibilities he's got. We've worked pretty well together, I think. I really would like you to appreciate the work that he does and give him the round of applause just as much as you have given me because it won't be long now that he will be on his way into a better climate, if you know what I mean.

I wish him all the very best, I wish you all the very best. I can't thank you enough for the gift. Just make sure you win this pay dispute, make sure you sort the pensions out. Look after yourselves. We know who the enemy is. The

enemy isn't in this room; it's out there. Protect yourselves, look after yourselves. Have safe journeys home. Maybe we'll see each other again. Love you lots. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE PRESIDENT:**

Conference, last bit now. Can you all make sure you return your voting cards to Standing Orders at the back of the room? Don't worry, you don't have to go trundling in and trying to get through security on the door and everything. Other than that, all I can do is wish you a safe journey home. Thank you very much for your participation and enthusiasm this week. Safe journey. Conference is closed. Thank you.

*Conference adjourned*



Established 1 October 1918

**OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE  
FIRE BRIGADES UNION  
ALONG WITH  
LIST OF DELEGATES**

MAY 2019



# OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

**PRESIDENT** – Ian Murray

**VICE-PRESIDENT** – Andy Noble

**NATIONAL TREASURER** – Jim Quinn

**GENERAL SECRETARY** – Matt Wrack

**ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY** – Andy Dark

**NATIONAL OFFICER** – Dave Green

**NATIONAL OFFICER** – Sean Starbuck

**TEMPORARY NATIONAL OFFICER** – Tam McFarlane

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| REGION 1  | Chris McGlone |
| REGION 2  | Jim Quinn     |
| REGION 3  | Andy Noble    |
| REGION 4  | Pete Smith    |
| REGION 5  | Les Skarratts |
| REGION 6  | Ben Selby     |
| REGION 7  | Matt Lamb     |
| REGION 8  | Grant Mayos   |
| REGION 9  | Brian Hooper  |
| REGION 10 | Paul Embery   |
| REGION 11 | Richard Jones |
| REGION 12 | Tam McFarlane |

## REGIONAL SECRETARIES

|           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| REGION 1  | Denise Christie     |
| REGION 2  | Phil Millar         |
| REGION 3  | Tony Curry          |
| REGION 4  | David Williams      |
| REGION 5  | Mark Rowe           |
| REGION 6  | Adam Taylor         |
| REGION 7  | Andrew Scattergood  |
| REGION 8  | Cerith Griffiths    |
| REGION 9  | Riccardo La Torre   |
| REGION 10 | Dave Shek           |
| REGION 11 | Joe Weir            |
| REGION 12 | Trevor French       |
| B&EMM     | Joseph Mendy        |
| CSNC      | Lynda Rowan-O'Neill |
| LGBT      | Pat Carberry        |
| ONC       | Phil McDonald       |
| NRC       | Peter Preston       |
| NWC       | Nicola Hobbs        |

## REGIONAL CHAIRS

|           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| REGION 1  | Brian Cameron    |
| REGION 2  | Dermot Rooney    |
| REGION 3  | Russ King        |
| REGION 4  | Nail Carbutt     |
| REGION 5  | Gary Keary       |
| REGION 6  | Marc Redford     |
| REGION 7  | Richard Williams |
| REGION 8  | Alex Psaila      |
| REGION 9  | Cameron Matthews |
| REGION 10 | Gareth Beeton    |
| REGION 11 | Mark Simmons     |
| REGION 12 | Guy Herrington   |
| B&EMM     | Cameron Matthews |
| CSNC      | Sandra Brown     |
| LGBT      | Yannick Dubois   |
| ONC       | Mark Ames        |
| NRC       | Paul Revill      |
| NWC       | Louise Connell   |

## REGIONAL TREASURERS

|           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| REGION 1  | Seona Hart        |
| REGION 2  | David Nichol      |
| REGION 3  | Dave Howe         |
| REGION 4  | Gavin Marshall    |
| REGION 5  | Andrew Fox-Hewitt |
| REGION 6  | Clare Hudson      |
| REGION 7  | Sasha Hitchins    |
| REGION 8  | Arwel Roberts     |
| REGION 9  | Mav Langdon       |
| REGION 10 | Jason Hunter      |
| REGION 11 | Andy Petch        |
| REGION 12 | Val Hampshire     |

# LIST OF DELEGATES

|          |                        |                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| REGION 1 | <b>Scotland</b>        | Colin Brown<br>Jamie McCallum<br>David Hart<br>Seona Hart<br>Ian McGregor<br>Alan Still<br>Angus Sproul<br>Terry Whyte<br>Simon Leroux |
| REGION 2 | <b>NIFB</b>            | Jake Drinkwater<br>Mark McCartan<br>Barry Mitchell<br>Rod O'Hare                                                                       |
| REGION 3 | <b>Cleveland</b>       | Darren Fawcett<br>Karl Wager                                                                                                           |
|          | <b>Durham</b>          | Jim Bittlestone<br>Holly Ferguson                                                                                                      |
|          | <b>Northumberland</b>  | Guy Tiffin<br>Ash Fox                                                                                                                  |
|          | <b>Tyne &amp; Wear</b> | Brian Harris<br>Russ King                                                                                                              |
| REGION 4 | <b>Humberside</b>      | Adam Hayton<br>Gavin Marshall                                                                                                          |
|          | <b>North Yorkshire</b> | Edmund Billing<br>Stephen Howley                                                                                                       |
|          | <b>South Yorkshire</b> | Matt Nicholls<br>Stuart Smith                                                                                                          |
|          | <b>West Yorkshire</b>  | Martyn Bairstow<br>Kieran Armstrong                                                                                                    |
| REGION 5 | <b>Merseyside</b>      | Tommy Hughes<br>Lee Hunter                                                                                                             |
|          | <b>Cumbria</b>         | Edward Burrows<br>Shane Parkinson                                                                                                      |
|          | <b>GMC (3)</b>         | Paul Davies<br>Rob Grundy<br>Karl Sorfleet                                                                                             |
|          | <b>Lancashire</b>      | Andrew Hewitson<br>Kevin Wilkie                                                                                                        |
|          | <b>Cheshire</b>        | Andrew Fox-Hewitt<br>John West                                                                                                         |

# LIST OF DELEGATES

## REGION 6

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Derbyshire</b>       | Anthony Dempsey |
| <b>Leicestershire</b>   | Chris Tapp      |
| <b>Lincolnshire</b>     | Graham Vaux     |
| <b>Northamptonshire</b> | Mark Drinkwater |
| <b>Nottinghamshire</b>  | Simon Thomas    |
|                         | Richard Wright  |
|                         | Nick Ferrison   |
|                         | Mark Jones      |
|                         | Nick Hardy      |
|                         | Dean Gillen     |

## REGION 7

|                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Hereford &amp; Worcester</b> | Trevor Connolly   |
| <b>Staffordshire</b>            | Gareth Taylor     |
| <b>Shropshire</b>               | Michael Mosley    |
| <b>Warwickshire</b>             | Mark Tattum       |
| <b>West Midlands</b>            | Ken Hallihan      |
|                                 | Simon Morris      |
|                                 | Steve Rule        |
|                                 | Neil Stuart       |
|                                 | Billy Holland     |
|                                 | Steven Price-Hunt |
|                                 | Alex Wilson       |

## REGION 8

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Mid &amp; West Wales</b> | Deiniol Lloyd       |
| <b>North Wales</b>          | Simon Jones         |
| <b>South Wales</b>          | Blythe Roberts      |
|                             | Duncan Stewart-Ball |
|                             | Mike Alexander      |
|                             | Spencer Gray        |
|                             | Steve Saunders      |

## REGION 9

|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Bedfordshire</b>   | Mark Lee         |
| <b>Cambridgeshire</b> | Mark Woodworth   |
| <b>Essex</b>          | Martin Harding   |
| <b>Hertfordshire</b>  | George White     |
| <b>Norfolk</b>        | Alan Chinn-Shaw  |
| <b>Suffolk</b>        | Martyn Wager     |
|                       | Daren Scotchford |
|                       | Derek MacLeod    |
|                       | Alan Jaye        |
|                       | Benjamin Jones   |
|                       | Kevin Driver     |
|                       | Phil Johnston    |

# LIST OF DELEGATES

## REGION 10

### London

Gareth Cook  
Nathan Cane  
Jason Hunter  
Jon Lambe  
Daniel Lawrie  
Leoni Munslow  
Jon Wharnsby  
Steve White  
Dave Young

## REGION 11

### Berkshire

James Hunt  
Martyn Hyndman

### Buckinghamshire

Greg O'Neill  
Chris Wycherley

### East Sussex

Simon Herbert  
Mark Brown

### Hampshire

Mark Chapman  
Gary Jackson

### Isle of Wight

Spence Cave  
Dave Hunt

### Kent

Tom Richardson  
Rob Sherwood

### Oxfordshire

Michael Brooker  
Josie Fullerton

### Surrey

Lee Belsten  
Jamie Lee Devey

### West Sussex

Mick Cambers  
Anthony Walker

## REGION 12

### Avon

Steve McGreavy  
Gary Spindler

### Cornwall

Jon Castledon  
Josh Jones

### Dorset & Wiltshire

Karen Adams  
Kate Scott

### Devon & Somerset

James Leslie  
Scott Young

### Gloucestershire

Rosie Tully

# LIST OF DELEGATES

**B&EMM**

**B&EMM**

Dean Pounder  
Derek Sonny Roberts

**CSNC**

**CSNC**

Sherri Kitson  
Caroline Saunderson

**LGBT**

**LGBT**

Maria Buck  
Karen McDowell

**NRC**

**NRC**

Paul Farman  
Phil Williams

**NWC**

**NWC**

Kathryn Duncan  
Louise Fletcher

**ONC**

**ONC**

Rossel Byrne  
Len Cleary





Established 1 October 1918

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