

The Fire Brigades Union



Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions

85th Annual Conference

19th, 20th and 21st May 2010

FBU – Campaigning For You



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions Annual Conference 2010

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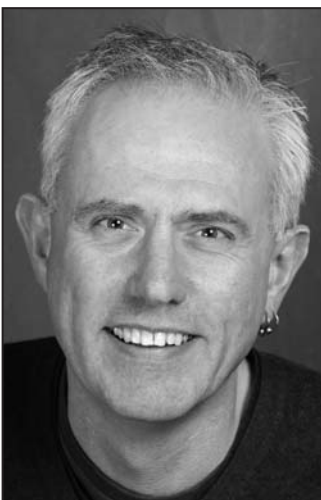
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JIM BARBOUR
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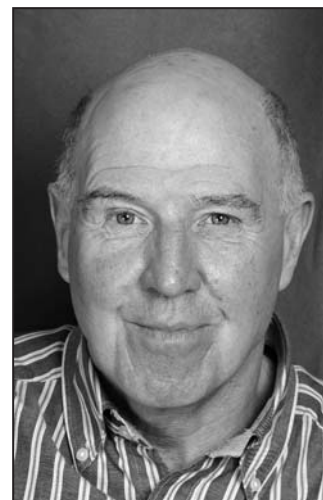
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Contents

Executive Council	iii
Day One	3
Day Two	53
Day Three	101
Record of Decisions	151
Final Appeals Committee	185
Firefighter Representatives	185
Election of Standing Orders Committee	186
Officers of the Fire Brigades Union	187
Annual Conference: List of Delegates	194
Index of Proceedings	199
Index of Speakers	203



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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85th Annual Conference

Southport 2010

19th – 21st May

Day One – 19th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

People can take their seats. We will be starting in two minutes. People will please take their seats, finish their conversations, put their phones on silent or turn them off and we will start the Conference. Good morning everybody. Welcome to sunny Southport, to the 85th Annual Conference of the Fire Brigades Union. I hope you're all well, suitably refreshed and ready for a positive week ahead. My first task this week is my pleasure to invite the Mayor of Southport, Councillor Alf Doran, in his final official engagement in his period of office (tomorrow he is handing over to the new Mayor) and the highlight of his mayoral year, to open our Conference, I am sure. I will hand over to Alf to open the Conference now. *Applause*

THE MAYOR OF SOUTHPORT:

Mr President, delegates, a very warm welcome to Southport and Sefton. First and foremost, Mr President, I'd like to thank you and your members for coming back to Southport, because apparently two years ago we were having a little bit of building work done and it caused one or two problems, particularly with the background noise. I hope that you will agree that the effort that we put into this facility was well worth it. Thank you again for coming back.

I'm very proud to be the Mayor of this Borough. As the President has just said, this is our very last engagement. The next thing we do tomorrow evening is to hand over to the new Mayor. During the last twelve months we've managed to carry out 530 engagements, many of which have been in this room. In fact, the last time I was on this stage was for our charity ball and I was dressed in an ABBA outfit, singing and dancing to raise money for the charity. But I promise you delegates, no singing today! If you heard me sing you'd agree with that one.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to be moving fairly shortly into a sporting event which is taking place in South Africa. Some of you may well be fans of football. Gill and I are rugby fans. But on that commentary that will be made at those football matches, the word "hero" will be used, in my opinion, in the wrong context and far too often for people who kick a leather ball around a piece of grass. To me the people in your Service, who have chosen a profession whereby the normal person would be running away from situations that you voluntarily go to on a daily basis, I think you are the true, genuine heroes within our society, along with many others. For that I wish to offer you my sincere thanks and that of the people of Sefton. Thank you. *Applause*

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure formally to declare your Conference open. I hope you have a great few days while you're here in Sefton, and in particular Southport. I hope you do, as well as the business, get the opportunity to explore our town and our Borough, and I'm certain that you will be made more than welcome wherever you go. Thank you very much, Mr President, and I hope you have a wonderful Conference. Thank you, delegates. *Applause*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, may I just take a moment on behalf of Conference to thank the Mayor for his kind words in opening the Conference. Certainly we've travelled around the country to various venues. Delegates and the Executive Council are always discussing the best venues. I've already got lost in the complex as it's been laid out under the redesign. We will be watching that very closely, and we are pleased with some of the developments we've seen so far. Certainly, the loss of noise from building work is very welcome. Thanks for your opening of the Conference and for attending today. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Next we have the pleasure of inviting Danny McGowan, the Secretary of Sefton Trades Council to give fraternal greetings on behalf of the local Labour Movement. Danny.

BRO DANNY MCGOWAN (Sefton Trades Council):

It's a real pleasure for me and a real honour to welcome you here to Southport on behalf of the Sefton Trades Union Council. Southport is part of the Borough of Sefton; it's also part of Merseyside, and I'm pleased once again to report that we have no BNP councillors on Merseyside. *Applause*. We are fascist-free and we hope to stay that way.

Like yourselves and like most people I know, we still face the prospect of savage cuts that are threatened by the new Government. I know that firefighters know more than most people that cuts cost lives. They wreck communities and they cause all sorts of despair and problems. We think it's a real injustice that the people who made billions in the boom years are literally laughing all the way to the bank while public sector workers and people who rely on their services are waiting anxiously, and some people are having sleepless nights, waiting to see where the axe is going to fall first.

Trades Union Councils – this is an invitation to join a coalition of a different kind. Trades Union Councils are made up of delegates from local union branches. We have fairly small numbers of activists sometimes, but

Day One – 19th May

we are a place where grassroots solidarity exists, where people from firefighters, people from the Royal Mail, people from hospitals, from schools, from print factories, from all sorts of places, can come together and talk about how we can have community trade unionism, how we can have the values of solidarity, the values of looking after each other, of standing beside each other and making the world a better place, even just a slightly better place, how we can achieve those things.

With that thought, all I would like to say is that I hope you have all the best for your Conference, I hope it's a constructive experience for you, and I look forward to welcoming you back to Southport again. *Applause*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Again, on behalf of Conference I'd like to thank Danny for his kind words of welcome. I think the Trades Union Council, the Trades Councils around the UK are in many ways the unsung heroes of the Labour Movement, of local trade union activists who bring together the Movement in Boroughs, Towns and Cities throughout the UK. They play an absolutely essential role, and I'd like to take the opportunity to encourage delegations here, if they haven't already, to consider increased participation in their local Trades Council, an absolutely essential part of the Movement, as I say. I thank Danny for the kind words of welcome and wish him well for the coming year for the work on behalf of Trades Councils. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I'd now like to invite Brother Steve Shelton, the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, to give the initial Standing Orders report. Steve.

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

Thank you. President, Conference, good morning. The Standing Orders Committee seeks your cooperation with regard to your Conference credentials. Would all delegates and officials please make sure they have filled in their details on their credentials so stewards can identify them.

The Standing Orders Committee stress the importance of delegates stating their name and brigade or section when addressing Conference, as this assists the President and the verbatim report. We also ask you to speak clearly into the microphone on the rostrum.

Visitors to Conference are identified by different coloured credentials which must be displayed at all times. Visitors are not allowed on the floor of Conference. Arrangements have been made for tea and

coffee for visitors to be served in the large hall to your right hand side.

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

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

The Standing Orders Committee are pleased to announce that this evening there will be a film and music night starting at 8 pm in the Fox & Goose Pub on Cable Street. The film "Breaking Rocks" is a Jail Guitar Doors documentary directed by FBU member Alan Miles. This will be shown at 8.30-9.45 pm, speakers Matt Wrack and Alan Miles 9.45-10 pm, then music from graduates who appear in the film from 10 pm onwards. On Thursday night in the Fox & Goose Pub on Cable Street there will be International Night, which this year will be in aid of the Haiti Earthquake Fundraiser by Cuba Solidarity Campaign. Tickets are £10 per person, and they are inside all delegates' and officials' packs. All proceeds will go to the Haiti Earthquake Fundraiser.

Following the guest speaker from Cuba Solidarity Campaign – it's the highlight of the week – the Executive Council invite everyone to join them for some musical entertainment provided by Ultimate Madness, plus DJ Alan Paterson. This not-to-be-missed evening with your Executive Council, I trust, will be enjoyed.

May I remind Conference that we are in session from 9.30-5.00 at this moment in time. May I bring to your attention that there will be a lunch provided for all in the large hall to your right hand side today and Thursday. On Friday there will be a packed lunch available in the large hall. If business is to work through lunch on Friday there will be a short tea break to allow the staff a comfort break.

Expense forms are on the tables or in your packs and should be completed correctly and handed to your Regional Treasurers as soon as possible. The delegation fee is £20 per day for the period of Conference including your day of travel.

A list of Scrutineers and Tellers has been circulated, a list of the Final Appeals Committee has been circulated, a list of Firefighter Representatives has been circulated.

Day One – 19th May

These lists will now be placed before Conference for endorsement.

The Standing Orders Committee must be kept informed of any changes to delegations, and we in turn will keep the President's list up to date. I will inform Conference of the changes.

Your list of delegates changes. Hereford & Worcester: delete James Richards; insert Steve Gould. Dorset: delete Diane Critchlow; insert Simon Jones. Derbyshire: delete Marc Redford; insert Helen Tooley. Northamptonshire: delete Gary Mitchell; insert Mick Coles. Region 6: delete Dave Limer; insert Gary Mitchell. CSNC: delete Norman Rees; insert Tim Gerrard. CSNC: delete Simon Jones; insert Paul Price. Lincolnshire: delete Craig Tuck; insert Chris Broom. Devon: delete Nick Coleman; insert Brad Atkinson. London: insert Neil Williams. Strathclyde: delete Sharon Sales-Mossop; insert Amy Farnworth. Strathclyde: delete Alan Kane; insert Paul Wilson. B&EMM: delete Leroy Philpotts; insert Carol Brown. Essex: delete Lindley Chambers; insert Sue McGregor. Isle of Wight: delete Mark Deacon; insert Peter Marhood. West Yorkshire: delete John Durkin; insert John Rankin. G&L: Pat Carberry now attending as a delegate. London: Joe MacVeigh now attending as a delegate. London: Gordon Fielden now attending as a delegate. CSNC: do not delete Jean Westwood. NWC: delete Sarah Gartland.

We rely on the Regional Officials to exercise some influence on the procedure, as I have already laid out, regarding delegate changes.

Facilities. The Standing Orders Committee have agreed stall facilities for the following organisations to Conference: Bookmarks, Cuba Solidarity Campaign, War on Want, Lifelong Learning, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, Unite Against Fascism, Stop the War, Community Heart, UIA Insurance Ltd, Institute of Employment Rights, Morning Star, Fire Brigades Union. The stalls will be situated in the hall on your right hand side.

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

Could I now ask you to turn to your Programme of Business. Page 1. From and including Section K – Financial Accounts, up to and including Executive Council Policy Statement – Finance, will be in Closed Session. Page 2, no change. Page 3: Resolution 3 has been withdrawn, Amendment falls. Page 4: Resolution 16 has been withdrawn to second Resolution 21; Resolution 17 has also been withdrawn to second Resolution 21, Amendment falls; Resolution 48 has been withdrawn to support Resolution 47; Resolution 11

has been withdrawn. Page 5, no change. Page 6: Resolution 18 has been withdrawn. From and including Resolution 19 up to and including, Proposed Alterations To The Rules Of The Union Moved By The Executive Council And Brigade /National Sectional Committees Amendments To Executive Council Alterations, will all be taken in Closed Session. Page 7: Paragraph G12 reads at the end: "AGM report 2009 R", delete "R"; Resolution 68 has been withdrawn, Amendment falls. Page 8: Executive Council Policy Statement – Pension Abatement and Re-employment in the Fire and Rescue Service – the word "Amendment" should read "Amendments". Page 9: Resolution 25 Amendment from Strathclyde has been withdrawn; Resolution 27 has been withdrawn to second Resolution 26, Amendments fall. Page 10: Resolution 23 agreed to Remit with the Right to Speak, Amendment falls. Page 11: Resolution 49 has been withdrawn to second Resolution 47; Resolution 36 agreed to Remit with the Right to Speak. Page 12, no change. Page 13: Paragraph J20, at the end of paragraph J20 it reads: "live 2009 140" delete "140"; after Paragraph J20 insert "Paragraph J21, Confidential Stress Helpline". Page 14: Executive Council Policy Statement – Education, after the word "Education" insert "Review 2009". Page 15: Resolution 62 has been withdrawn to support Executive Council Policy Statement – Education Review 2009.

THE PRESIDENT:

Come to the rostrum, brother. I hope it is a point of order at this stage.

BRO GRAEME McLEOD (Staffordshire):

We withdrew Resolution 62 and we weren't supporting the EC.

THE PRESIDENT:

OK, thanks for that clarification.

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

I can only go on what I was told at Standing Orders last night. If you don't want to support the EC, that's fine by me! Some delegates may have been told that Resolution 62, before it was withdrawn, was going to be moved to page 14. If you have got that in your Programme of Business, can you make sure that you delete it from page 14 as well.

Page 16, no change. That concludes that part of that business.

Could you now turn to your Purple Coloured Book entitled "Proposed Alterations to the Standing Orders

Day One – 19th May

of Conference.” Page 3: Standing Order 8; Grampian, has been withdrawn to second the Executive Council. Page 4: Standing Order 14; Grampian, has been withdrawn. Page 7: Standing Order 22 from Grampian has been withdrawn to second Executive Council.

Would you now turn to your Green Book “Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union.” Page 4: Rule 3; Devon & Somerset, has been withdrawn. Page 17: Rule 26 (1(h); Devon & Somerset, has been withdrawn.

I have to inform delegates that within that book a new page 13 has been circulated and should replace the one in your Green Book, as that has not been printed correctly. Apologies for that.

Could you now turn to your Salmon Coloured Book “Brigade/Sectional Committee Amendments to EC Policy Statement – Pension Abatement”. A new page of amendments has been circulated and should replace the one in your pack as this has not been printed correctly. Apologies for that.

If Wednesday morning’s business finishes before lunchtime, we will move straight to Wednesday afternoon’s business.

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

Speakers’ times. Executive Council Policy Statement “Reorganisation of the Union’s Structures” – General Secretary 25 minutes. Executive Council Policy Statement “It’s About Time” – General Secretary 20 minutes. Executive Council Policy Statements on Finance, Education Review 2009, Pension Abatement and Re-employment in the Fire and Rescue Service, General Secretary 15 minutes on each.

Can I now go on to the voting on a challenge to the Chair of Conference. I draw Conference attention to Standing Order 15. The number of delegates at Conference is 214. Therefore the number of delegates voting to challenge is 143. Please note, the Control Staff National Committee delegates, Black & Ethnic Minority Members National Committee delegates, Gay & Lesbian National Committee delegates, Women’s National Committee delegates, Officers’ National Committee delegates and Retained 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 credential cards and they are NOT permitted to

vote at all. May I remind Conference that all credentials issued are the personal property of the person to whom they are issued and cannot be transferred to other persons without the approval of the Standing Orders Committee. We therefore rely on the integrity of all to comply with this procedure.

Finally, Standing Orders Committee elections.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I point out to Conference that the Standing Orders Committee elections will be taking place this morning, and that in fact Steve Shelton, the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, is up for re-election. Thank you.

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

Thank you, President. The ballot box will be at the rear of the hall.

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

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Come up to the rostrum, Dave. Is there anyone else who is raising any questions or points on the Standing Orders Committee report? No, OK. Just you, Dave. Please confine your comments to why you are challenging their ruling. Thank you.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Morning Conference, welcome to Southport. I hope you have a good Conference, successful and enjoyable. Sorry to have to do this, but Devon & Somerset submitted an Amendment to a proposal, Resolution 61, which has been Ruled Out of Order by Standing Orders on the grounds apparently that it negates the point of the proposal. We don’t think that’s correct. We think our Amendment makes the proposal factually correct when otherwise it’s not. It clarifies the intent of the proposal without which it would be inconsistent. So we would ask Conference to support our challenge and allow that Amendment to be on the order paper. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Steve, can you respond to the delegate’s point, please.

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

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee did Rule Out of Order an Amendment to Resolution 61,

Day One – 19th May

Devon & Somerset Amendment, on the grounds that the Amendment would negate the original intent of the Resolution in that the Resolution itself deals with the global alliance and how it affects trade unions and firefighters in particular. The Resolution is quite restrictive and very specific in its interpretation of the interim constitution. The Amendment, however, introduces the issues of international law and the application and development of international human rights to the Resolution. Unfortunately, this Amendment would widen the intentions and the scope of the Resolution, which is why it negates it. The Amendment, in the opinion of the Standing Orders Committee, would negate the original intent of the Resolution and that was why it was Ruled Out of Order. I urge Conference to uphold that decision and reject the challenge. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. You've heard the challenge, you've heard the explanation. There's no further debate on the issue. I will put the challenge to the vote. Can I see those in favour of that challenge to the Standing Orders Committee report, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That challenge *falls*.

Were there any other questions or points to the Chair of Standing Orders Committee? No. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed*.

Could the tellers and scrutineers please report to Paul Woolstenholmes at the back of the hall. We are now moving on to the Proposed Alterations to Standing Orders. That is the Purple Coloured Booklet. I will ask the General Secretary to move the Executive Council's proposed alterations.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, if I can, President, just seek your indulgence for a brief moment before moving on to the Purple Document just to make a couple of personal comments following my re-election. I would like to just take the opportunity to thank the Fire Brigades Union for re-electing me as General Secretary; it is a huge honour. It is a job I love, it's a Union that I love, and I want to thank those who have supported me for that, and say to those who did not support me, that what I clearly have a task to do is to further build the unity that this Union is going to need in what are going to be extremely difficult circumstances. We've got some difficult issues on the agenda this week around the new Government and the cuts agenda that we face, but also around some internal matters around finance and so on. I think in that process we need unity, but we also need the dialogue and the contribution of people from all views

within this Union, whatever stance they may have taken on particular elections. I seek those views, those alternative strategies, alternative ways forward, and I seek a dialogue on that. So thank you for that and thank you for that opportunity, President.

Can I move on to the Purple Document on Standing Orders. What I propose, to assist Conference hopefully in keeping the debate as straightforward and as brief as possible, is to move the EC proposed changes to Standing Orders in a block. I think some of them are relatively minor; some of them are very important. I can speak to them in a block very quickly, President.

We propose on Page 1 the change to Standing Order 2 which is merely a grammatical and stylistic change. We move that. On Page 2 there is an important discussion around the question of Emergency Resolutions. I think people will recall last year's Conference when there were a considerable number of Emergency Resolutions, and some of the other Conference business was in fact pushed to the end of the week. I know that a number of Brigade and Regional Committees subsequently discussed the issue of Emergency Resolutions and how they had impacted on last year's Conference. One of the concerns that was raised was that Resolutions which had been through Brigade Committees, been through Branches and discussed at Brigade Committees and been through all that formal process within the Standing Orders and Rules of Conference, were submitted in accordance with those procedures and yet were regrettably pushed to the end of the week despite the original timetable, as a result of the large number of Emergency Resolutions which were submitted during the course of Conference and clearly had not been through the same process. I think that there have been discussions on the Standing Orders Committee around that. There have certainly been discussions on the Executive Council about that difficulty. The proposed change to Standing Orders we believe will address some of those concerns. I think the other way in which we address them is through the self-discipline of delegates and through the good offices of the Standing Orders Committee. So that, we believe, is an important change to Standing Order 8.

Standing Order 16, which is on page 5, relates to the timing for Conference. You will note there is a slight increase in the working day. I hope people will be able to cope with that. It makes more clear the timing of the comfort breaks that we have during the Conference.

Standing Order 22, the changes that are proposed again relate to some of the congestion that we had at last year's Conference regarding the amount of business submitted, and in particular Emergency Resolutions. It introduces new proposed speakers' times of 7, 5 and 3 minutes.

Day One – 19th May

The final one, again is an important but relatively hopefully uncontroversial one. It is to change the word “or” to “nor”, what you might call a linguistic correction. I think with those, President, the Executive Council move the proposed alterations to Standing Orders. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I understand Grampian wish to second?

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

Morning, Conference, President. We are very content to withdraw the Resolution on the definition of “emergency”. We’re confident enough that Matt and the EC have captured that. We are hopeful that we’ll have a true definition.

On the proposed alteration for Scrutineers, again we’ve withdrawn that and we’re confident also that our point has been made with Standing Orders Committee and we’ll see a more thorough and fluent voting system in place.

As for the speaker times, we’ve withdrawn that as well as the one on the definition of emergency in support of the EC Statement. Last year we had three Resolutions taken very late on at Conference. We didn’t believe we got a fair crack at moving those Resolutions. This was due mainly to the time constraints. We’ll make the best of the time available, of course, but with existing times allocated, Conference is destined to fail before we even start. Grampian’s proposal just didn’t pick out speakers’ times out of the sky. Instead, we did do some number crunching. We take it the EC have done the same also. Therefore, in the interests of brevity we have withdrawn to support. So let’s suck it and see. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. It’s open for debate. Can I see any of those who wish to come into this debate? I’ve got Les. Was there anybody else? No. Les, Dave, would you two come to the rostrum, please, in that order and then we’ll move to the vote.

BRO LES SKARRATTS (Merseyside):

Thank you, President, Conference. We are opposing the proposed Executive Council alteration to Standing Order 8 only. The attempt of 8 is to reduce speakers’ times in relation to Emergency Resolutions, along with the proposal seeking to increase the level of difficulty, we believe, for delegates to be able to represent members’ wishes through Emergency Resolutions for Conference to debate and decide. I will ask Conference to note that we have just agreed for the General Secretary speakers’ times to range between 25 minutes to 15 minutes –

quite properly, I’d say. But I’d ask delegates to remember that well in considering this particular alteration to Standing Order 8.

We believe the proposed alteration calls for a further level of scrutiny of Emergency Resolutions beyond that which is currently the case. We’re now being asked to agree to us having to persuade Standing Orders that not only is the emergency issue we seek to discuss not a matter more properly for the next meeting for the Executive Council (which may or may not be a full business meeting, it seems, because that’s not clear), even if we get it through that barrier we can only move, second and debate the resolution with decreased speakers’ times for 7, 5 and 3 minutes rather than the current times of 10, 7 and 5. I understand the difficulties and the issues that Grampian and others have, but I believe that this is a very important issue that we shouldn’t change so readily.

But not wishing to be suspicious of the Executive Council’s intent or motive (however, I can assure you I clearly am!) the Emergency Resolutions are more often than not the fundamentally important issues. They are usually issues that affect our members’ terms and conditions of service such as pay and pensions. It also may be the case, comrades, that we’re trying as a Conference to attempt to advance a position through an Emergency Resolution which can only carry on the strength of the debate on the day. Clearly, as Brigade Committees, the very nature of the Emergency Resolution means Brigade Committees won’t have a mandate to position on it. So it is usually the issue that we’re trying to persuade Conference on debate only, and you remove the ability of us to persuade Conference through the debate by decreasing our times and remove the ability to be able to set the agenda at Conference.

Comrades, very rarely you’ll see the Executive Council, the National Officers, the General Secretary be red lighted. If you agree to this proposal you’ll see very many of us get red lighted and curtail our ability to move our particular Emergency Resolutions. We’re not trying to obstruct Conference. I ought to make that clear. It’s always the case that if Steve of Standing Orders comes up and asks us to decrease speakers’ times then we will always consider and usually grant that request. So we don’t see why we should concede such important grounds on Emergency Resolutions so readily to the Executive. It will only suit the Executive’s intent and will always hinder our ability to move our particular agenda forward. So on that particular opposition, comrades, I would ask don’t decrease our ability to represent our members through Emergencies.

In closing I would say this. In the pay dispute 2002/2003 we moved this Union forward on Emergencies. That’s how we took the pay dispute through to what we

Day One – 19th May

believed was a satisfactory settlement, though some people have a point of view on that. It was all through Emergencies. This alteration, if passed, will remove that ability. I would ask delegates to oppose this alteration. Thank you, President.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Conference, again we're only questioning the proposal from the Executive Council Standing Order 8, also for the reasons that Les has outlined there. Certainly we agree with some of the sentiments here. I was one of the ones that complained last year that we did not get through the Conference business as well as we should have done, and it was in no small part to the Conference dragging on. I think that's down to a number of reasons and not just this issue. The way the President Chairs the Conference is important. That's not a criticism necessarily, but it is important to get through the business and not to have multiple speakers on issues when the debate has already been had. Certainly the Emergency Resolutions is an issue. There were 21 last year, and not all of them necessarily were Emergency Resolutions. So we have to be self-disciplined as has already been said. Standing Orders has got to do its job about making sure that the Resolutions that do come in are Emergencies and of an urgent nature, and therefore we should be self disciplined as a group there.

But let's get it clear, what this proposal does is puts this additional obstacle and additional hurdle in there to even get it heard. That is a decision that Standing Orders will have to make, and this is a difficult one for them, as to whether or not that matter would more appropriately be dealt with by the next Executive Council. Surely Standing Orders are able to make a judgement as to whether the matter is urgent and therefore can be heard by Conference. To say: no, you can give it to the Executive Council is actually giving away some of the powers of Conference. This is our Parliament; this is our sovereign body here. If we do not have that ability to put things before Conference then we lose some of our democracy. So this is an important issue for us; it's not just a technicality.

I should say the Executive Council themselves are one of the offenders in this. It's not that the Executive Council never put in Emergency Resolutions that are not really Emergencies. So, again, we have to have the collective self-discipline. Of course, no-one's going to say to the Executive Council that their Emergency Resolution cannot be heard because it would be more appropriately heard at the next Executive Council meeting; that would be a nonsense. So let's have a level playing field here. Let's recognise that there is a duty on all of us to make sure that Conference business is dealt with, but let's not close down our democracy so much that we cannot discuss things which are genuinely of an urgent nature. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. There's no right of reply on an Amendment to Standing Orders. They were moved en bloc, but I will take a vote on each of them separately. The first one is the proposed Amendment to Standing Order 2, moved by the Executive Council. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? That is *carried*.

Next is Standing Order 8, again moved by the Executive Council. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Can I see any abstentions? That is *defeated*. That *falls*.

Next is proposed Amendment to Standing Order 16 moved by the Executive Council. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Any abstentions? That is *carried*.

Next is the proposed Amendment to Standing Order 22 moved by the Executive Council. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Thank you. Any abstentions? That is *carried*.

Finally, proposed Amendment to Standing Order 28 moved by the Executive Council. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Any abstentions? That is *carried*.

In terms of how we're going to deal with the Amended Standing Orders, what I'm asking for is Conference's agreement that we will apply them as from 2 pm this afternoon, from this afternoon's session, and that we will endeavour to have Amended written copies of the Standing Orders available for all delegates. Is that agreed? *Agreed*.

The next item is Section L of the Annual Report contained in the back of your Annual Report. It is the Obituary column for those members of ours who died during the year 2009, including three members who lost their lives whilst on duty. I would ask members to stand, please, for a minute's silence.

*(Conference stood in remembrance
of those who had died)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

Conference, it now falls to me to introduce our President, Mick Shaw, to give what will probably be his last ever Presidential address. Without further ado, our President, Brother Mick Shaw, to give his Presidential address. Thank you.

Day One – 19th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. It's not been an easy year for the Fire Brigades Union or for working people in general, but I guess we didn't expect it to be when we looked forward for it.

On pay, for the first time in living memory, we had to try and negotiate a pay rise during a period when the retail price index measurement of the rate of increase in the rate of inflation had actually moved into negative territory. That's the first time that anyone, certainly in this hall, can remember. We ended up with the lowest pay increase that we've ever had for as long as anyone in this hall can remember. These were indeed unusual times, and at least the small pay increase that we got, with inflation being in negative territory, meant that we actually, at least on paper, had an increase in living standards last year.

We saw continuing pressure on Fire Service budgets, which of course led to continuing pressure on Fire Service jobs, and we saw a reduction in the number of firefighters employed throughout the country. We saw some successful campaigns in some areas where we were able to resist cuts. There were a number of those I haven't got time to go through all of them. One that stands out is Warwickshire where there were some extensive proposals for cuts in firefighter jobs, for the closure of a number of Retained Fire Stations, and our members got involved alongside the local communities in campaigning against those cuts, and those cuts have been withdrawn. *Applause*

However, as is our experience in many Brigades throughout the country, we might get those cuts proposals withdrawn in one year but they have a habit of coming back in subsequent years when they're looking to make cuts in our budgets, and I'm sure our members and officials in Warwickshire are ready and willing, as soon as they may reappear, to get out campaigning again alongside the people of Warwickshire.

As a result of that pressure on jobs and budgets we saw industrial action short of strike action in three Brigades: in Essex, London and Merseyside – lengthy periods of industrial action where our members stuck together, where we produced the correct results in the ballots, where our members took action. At least on one of those Brigades so far a satisfactory negotiated settlement was achieved. Industrial action continues in two more, and I have no doubt that action will continue until we are able to get satisfactory settlements there.

In South Yorkshire, for the first time for three years, we saw our members taking strike action, which isn't something that we should ever be pleased about,

seeing firefighters, seeing emergency fire control room staff having to withdraw their labour with the risks that that entails to the safety of the public, but it has to be our ultimate weapon. When you have chief fire officers and fire authorities who are determined to force through changes to our members' conditions of employment; when you see chief fire officers and fire authorities determined to force through reductions in firefighters' jobs and that they won't listen to reason; and when they're prepared, in order to force that through, to sack our entire membership and only offer them re-engagement on new worse contracts, then I don't think our members had any option other than to take strike action. Our members in South Yorkshire were prepared to do that. They voted very strongly in the ballot to take that action, and they stood, determined, together on their picket lines. I think that we should congratulate them for the stand that they took, not just for themselves but for all of us. *Applause*

I'd also like to congratulate those officials and members from throughout the country who turned up in Barnsley on 28th September last year for the national demonstration that we had in support of our South Yorkshire members, a tremendous turn out. I think it must have made the Fire Authority in South Yorkshire who were meeting on that day realise, if they were in any doubt, that this Union was determined to resist those proposals, we were determined to give the full weight of the National Union to our members in that Brigade, and eventually, after extensive strike action, our members were successful in achieving a satisfactorily negotiated settlement. Again, I pay tribute to them.

There are lessons to be learned, I think, from that industrial action, from that strike action in South Yorkshire, lessons that need to be learned by the entire membership. In previous episodes of strike action what's always happened is that the Armed Forces have come in and provided a degree of alternative fire cover. It's what's happened in the national strikes in 1977 and in 2002 and 2003, and it happened in local periods of strike action in, for instance, Merseyside, Essex, Derbyshire, and was prepared too, to be put into effect in other Brigades that were balloted and getting ready to take strike action. That alternative military cover is no longer available, which forces all the fire authorities in the UK to make alternative provision to provide fire cover in the event that our members withdraw their labour. What we saw in Merseyside in 2006, and what we saw to a similar extent in South Yorkshire in 2009, was chief fire officers taking determined steps to try to provoke a split amongst our membership and to try to persuade a certain number of their employees to provide fire cover in the event that our members went on strike.

I think that we all need to learn the lessons that arise out of those periods of strike action. That means that in

Day One – 19th May

the battles that lie in front of us (and I have no doubt there will be many and considerable battles that do lie in front of us) if we have to consider taking strike action, we have to try to be one step ahead of the other side and think: who are they likely to try to induce to be strike breakers in the event that we have to take strike action, and we have to redouble our efforts to ensure that every section of our membership (whether it be our control room members, whether it be our members working the retained duty system, whether it be our middle manager members) stands together in whatever action we have to take, and that when we take strike action we have united strike action and successful strike action. I'm sure we will take those lessons on board.

We've seen the continuation of the Regional Control Projects. They just seem to go on and on and on, for ever and ever and ever, without ever actually getting a new Regional Control operating. They should have been operating by now. We have some huge buildings in various locations across England – all sitting empty, at great expense to the tax payer, where these Regional Controls should be operating, but of course they are not yet ready to operate. The financial bill for that project continues to spiral out of control. It would be comical if it was not so tragic because, of course, the tragedy is that our members who currently work in the Fire Control in Fire Brigades throughout England still do not know, still are not able to have confidence as to what is going to happen to their jobs in the coming years.

We now have a new Government, formed by at least one Party who made some considerable noises during the last couple of years, saying that they were opposed to the Regional Control Projects, saying that they would not go ahead with it in any place where the Regional Controls haven't yet taken place. Well, there isn't a single Regional Control that is up and running so far, so I think the answer is quite clear, is that is what they are prepared to do. None of them should be proceeded with. The General Secretary has written, on your behalf, to the new Prime Minister making exactly that case. We will wait and see what they do. But I am sure that we will not have too much confidence in them taking the right move on that. We will have to be prepared to do what we have been prepared to do for a number of years now, and that is to say that our members in the Fire Control rooms in England have the full support of the Fire Brigades Union, and we will do whatever is necessary to ensure that not one of our members is made compulsorily redundant, and that not one of our members is forced into a new job on inferior pay and conditions outside of the Grey Book. I'm sure that our control room members have got the full support of our Annual Conference this year again in pledging that support to them. *Applause*

The big event of the last few months, of course, the big event of last month in fact was the General Election.

I suppose the first thing to say about it is that the result wasn't very good but it could have been a lot worse. We could have had a Tory Government with an overall majority being able to get through whatever daft plans they wanted without having to make concessions to anybody else. We could have been seeing inheritance tax for the rich being reduced as we speak. Of course, they weren't able to get a clear majority and they aren't able to go ahead with some of the worst of their proposals. We could have seen our Parliamentary Group wiped out, and that was a very real fear that we did have at one stage, looking at how some of the opinion polls were going, that we could end up without a Parliamentary Group and that almost all of them could have lost their seats. Fortunately, that didn't happen. The majority of our Parliamentary Group did get re-elected. Unfortunately, a couple of significant names weren't re-elected. I would like to pay tribute to the work conducted on behalf of our Parliamentary Group on behalf of our Union by Andrew Dismore MP, who was the Chair of our Parliamentary Group; and by David Drew MP, who did excellent work on behalf of our members in Parliament. Unfortunately, they narrowly lost their seats. I am sure that you would wish to join me in wishing them well and hoping that we see them again in some capacity in the future. *Applause*

Of course, the other thing to take particular pleasure from in the election results is the fact that the British National Party and other fascist groups who were fielding candidates in that election did not get the kind of breakthrough that they wanted. They said that they were going to win seats in Barking and in Stoke on Trent. They didn't win either of them. In fact, they came third in both places. I live in Outer East London where they had some representation in local authorities in that area. In the Borough of Barking & Dagenham, which is next to the Borough in which I live, they went into that election with 12 councillors and said that they were going to take control of Barking & Dagenham Council, and they ended up on the night without a single seat on Barking & Dagenham Council. *Applause*. In the neighbouring Boroughs of Havering and Redbridge where they also had councillors, they ended up on that election night without a single councillor on either of those councils either, and they lost almost every single councillor they had throughout the country. I think that we should be pleased with that. I would like to congratulate those members and officials of ours who got involved in campaigning to ensure that the fascists didn't get any representation, and to congratulate campaigns: Hope not Hate, and Unite against Fascism, who did some tremendous work to ensure that that result was the outcome of the election.

However, what I would say is: do not be complacent. Half a million people in the United Kingdom voted for the fascists. That is an enormous amount of people, and

Day One – 19th May

it is no grounds to be complacent. Fortunately, despite those half a million votes, they didn't win a single seat in any council or in Parliament last week, and I think we can be pleased about that. *Applause*

The new Tory and Liberal Democrat coalition have made their priorities absolutely clear. Their priorities are major cuts in public expenditure, and of course cuts in public expenditure are not some kind of abstract concept; they are cuts in public services and the services that ourselves, our families, our communities rely on, and they are cuts in our Service. They will lead to cuts in our members' jobs, they will lead to pressure on our members' pay and conditions. That is something that is taking place throughout Europe. The reason why the public finances are in that mess, of course, is because of the scale of the bail out of the banks that had to happen in 2008. Those are the same banks that had been lending money to people who couldn't afford to pay their debts back and paying themselves big bonuses on the amount of business that they generated, then demanded that the Government bail them out with our money. As a result of the scale of that bail out, we've now got these huge levels of public debt, and the same banks that have been bailed out are now demanding that those levels of debt be cut while of course they're now starting to return to some degree of profitability and starting to pay themselves out huge bonuses again. It's absolutely scandalous, it's completely obscene, and I think that we should be saying that along with our colleagues in the rest of the Trade Union and Labour Movement, saying that very clearly. We did not cause this crisis. Cutting public expenditure, cutting the jobs of firefighters, teachers, nurses, other public sector workers, isn't going to solve this crisis. We have to resist those cuts wherever they're proposed and we have to try to do what we can to defend public services and point out what was the real cause of the crisis and try to demand some real answers to the crisis that we are in and not the answers demanded by the so-called "markets". I don't know who these "markets" are that apparently we have to obey. Of course, during all those discussions on the coalition, there were various panicky reports in the media that we must get an outcome to these discussions very soon, the markets are demanding it, the markets are unsettled. These markets are in fact the same bankers that created the crisis. *Applause* The people that paid themselves the huge bonuses, the people that we had to bail out, and the people who are demanding that now we get huge cuts in order that they can return to profitability and start paying themselves massive bonuses again. It's completely wrong!

On pay, there is likely to be our first major challenge, resulting from the current circumstances. We haven't yet had a formal response from the employers to our demand for a pay increase. We know what they've

offered, the same group of employers, the local government employees represented by unions such as Unison. They've offered them an increase of precisely zero. They've offered them no pay increase whatsoever, and we're anticipating that it's quite likely that we will get a similar kind of response from those same employers. Yesterday, the latest figures on inflation came out and they showed that the retail price index, the rate of increase is now running at 5.3%. If our members do not get a pay increase this year that will mean that they are suffering a real terms pay cut of 5.3% and that completely unacceptable.

Personally, I wouldn't mind a period of austerity if I felt that that austerity was going to be shared and that people who can afford to shoulder the biggest burden, were going to be those that were going to be demanded of to make the most sacrifices. But, of course, we know that it's not going to work like that. The people at the head of the banks aren't going to be making any sacrifices. They're still going to be paying themselves the huge bonuses. Even when you bring it down to our level of experience in the Fire and Rescue Service, the chief fire officers around the country, all now seem to be on six figure salaries and seem to be paying themselves bonuses as well. The bonus culture has well and truly crept into the Fire and Rescue Service. They are not going to be making any sacrifices. The people who are going to be demanded of to make sacrifices to get us out of this crisis that we're in are people such as our members. I think we have to say no, that that is not acceptable. *Applause*

On Jobs, I don't think that there's any doubt that there's going to be massively increased pressure on Fire Service jobs for a number of years to come yet, and we have to continue our campaigns to defend the Fire Service everywhere it comes under attack, and to defend our members' jobs.

On the issue of pensions, public sector pensions in general but in particular the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the new Firefighters' Pension Scheme, we know that the coalition Government have announced that there's going to be a review of public sector pensions. None of us here obviously have got crystal balls, but I don't think you need a crystal ball, to work out that there's going to be further attacks coming on public sector pensions. We have to do everything that we can, as we did in 2005 and 2006, to defend our members' pension entitlements. We have to say loudly and clearly that a firefighters' job is not like any other job and that we cannot be expected to work to the same kind of ages that other workers are expected to continue to. A firefighter's job is unique and that's why we have unique pension schemes. We have to say that loud and clear, and we have to do what we can to defend them.

Day One – 19th May

This will be, as Alan said, my last address to this Annual Conference in the position of President. I first came to a Fire Brigades Union Conference as an observer in 1979. It was a Recall Conference on the introduction of the 42 hour week which took place in Blackpool. I came to a number of other Conferences in subsequent years, and every year since 1987 without fail I've been at our Annual Conference. I've seen some fine debates during that period. I've seen some fine officials of this Union. I've seen much that has been achieved by this Union on behalf of our members. I'm very proud to have been an official of the Fire Brigades Union. I think you should also be proud as well of the jobs that you do yourselves. You're unpaid; you're often unsung heroes but many of you, almost all of you in fact, put in enormous effort, put in an enormous amount of your time, make enormous sacrifices to be able to work on behalf of our members. I think you should be proud of that and I certainly am proud of the job that all of our officials do.

The Fire Brigades Union continues to be a successful, independent trade union, solely representing workers in the Fire and Rescue Service. We're one of the only unions of our kind of size, of our kind of nature that now exists. There's a handful of very large unions that seem to have swallowed up all the other unions that used to be around when I first got involved in the Trade Union Movement, or even unions that were still around up until just a few years ago, are now part of bigger unions. We remain an independent trade union and I hope that we always will continue in that way. We should be proud of that and we should be determined to retain that status.

Our reputation goes far and wide, by the way, not only within the UK amongst other workers but also amongst people way beyond the shores of the United Kingdom. I sometimes have the opportunity to meet colleagues from other countries within Europe and beyond and I'm often surprised how well informed they are about our proceedings, about our debates, because they regularly look on our website and keep themselves updated about what we're doing and about the campaigns that we're involved in. As I say, we're a Union that's well regarded both within the Movement in this country and far and wide. I hope that we continue to do that.

There is no doubt that we are entering a period that's going to involve some very difficult and some very major challenges. We're going to face some major battles as a Union. I don't think there's any doubt we're going to face huge pressure on jobs which will produce pressure on our membership and which will produce pressure on our finances.

I'd like to congratulate the person who is going to be the President by the time we have our next year's Conference. Alan McLean has already been elected as

the President elect. He was elected unopposed and I think that was a very good decision of the membership that Alan was elected unopposed. *Applause*

Elections are extremely important. They are the lifeblood of our democracy, but what I have always felt very strongly is there is no point in having elections just for the sake of them. Although elections are healthy, they can also be divisive, depending on what people say in their election addresses, depending on what people say when they're campaigning on behalf of different candidates. They can cause division. I think that we are entering a very difficult period, and it's a period in which we are going to need the maximum unity. Looking around on the Conference agenda this week, there doesn't appear to be a lot of major disagreements on the strategy or the tactics that we need to employ as a Union to face those challenges that we face. This is the place where we should be having debates if there are different ideas, if there are different priorities about what we need to be doing. We should have those debates in a comradely fashion and we should arrive at the correct decisions and leave in a sense of unity in order to carry out those decisions.

I think that everyone here understands the enormity of the challenges that we face. I have every confidence that we're going to have a good Conference this week, that we will have a thorough debate on all the issues that face us, that we will arrive at the right decisions, and that we will leave here at the end of this week united, strong and determined to face all those challenges, and to successfully continue to represent our members and our members' interests. I would like to wish you all a very good Conference this week. *Applause*

Thanks, Alan. The next speaker represents a first for the Fire Brigades Union. We actually have a Scottish Fire Minister. We've had Fire Ministers from Westminster before, of course, but never before a Fire Minister from north of the border. Fergus Ewing has that position in the Scottish Government. He is the Minister for Community Safety and that includes the issue of Fire. He is a member of the Scottish Parliament and has been since 1999 representing Inverness, East Nairn and Lochaber. The responsibility for Fire was devolved to the Scottish Government in 1999. One of Fergus's first decisions that he made was not to reduce the number of Emergency Fire Controls in Scotland. I like to think he would persuade the English Ministers to see the value of that decision and persuade them likewise. *Applause*

Our officials in Scotland tell us that he's always had an open door as far as the Fire Brigades Union is concerned and has redressed some of the lack of communication that was previously experienced with previous office holders. It is my pleasure to welcome

Day One – 19th May

Fergus to his first attendance at our Conference of the Fire Brigades Union and to address you. Fergus.

Applause

FERGUS EWING MSP:

Mr President, General Secretary, ladies and gentlemen, good morning. Amongst the messages from the Scottish Government, the first one I should say, following the reference we had from the Mayor of Southport to a particular sporting event that's due to take place quite shortly, namely the Football World Cup, the message from Scotland is: Good luck, England, all the best! I never thought I'd make it through to the end of that sentence!

It is a real pleasure to be here in Southport. It is a real privilege to be asked to address this Conference of this illustrious and successful Union for the first time representing the Scottish Government. I'd like to start off on a serious note by remembering the bravery of James Shears and Alan Bannon who tragically lost their lives in Southampton in April, deaths that so closely followed the loss of Ewan Williamson in Edinburgh last year. We as a society, across these Islands, owe a great debt to firefighters across the land. These deaths reminded us of that debt, and also of the importance of ensuring that we must all work together to reduce the chances of other men and women being injured or losing their lives in this way. *Applause*

Mr President, I wish you well on your leaving office. You seem to be looking quite young for someone that's served for so long. But you did allude to the challenging times ahead. Plainly, we are but one week into a new Conservative/Liberal coalition at Westminster. I get the impression this hasn't been the best week in your lives for many of you. An accelerated reduction in the budget deficit is clearly one of the policies that is being taken forward with an additional £6,000 million of spending cuts to be sought in this financial year alone, with the real risk of more, possibly far more, in the years ahead. These are, as your President has said, most difficult times. But I believe in Scotland that our rescue services are well placed to adapt and find the solutions that protect frontline services whilst living within restricted budgets. The key to this, ladies and gentlemen, is partnership. That is not just a buzz word, but it's an approach which the Scottish Government have taken. When we formed the Government in Scotland in 2007 one of the first things that we did was to sign a deal with local government called a concordat where the principle was: equal responsibility, in partnership, joint and several responsibility for all the decisions that we take, working together, not apart, discussing the issues together, openly, honestly and regularly. That saw, I believe, some significant improvements.

When I assumed responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland some three years ago, like many other politicians (and I'm quite happy to say this) I didn't know much more about the Fire and Rescue Services than any other member of the public. I expect that's probably the same for many people who are appointed as Ministers to this post. Therefore, I took the time to do my best to understand everything about the Fire Service. I started off by visiting all eight Control Rooms. As the President has said, there were eight Controls Rooms three years ago when I took office, and there are eight Control Rooms now. *Applause*

I then undertook a tour of all eight Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland. I sought to speak to firefighters involved in every kind of work, in every city in Scotland, in most rural parts of Scotland, visiting places like North Ronaldsay in Orkney where I saw the work that volunteers do there. I spent time with firefighters, with senior management. In every place I went, I made it my business, my point, my insistence to speak to the local FBU representatives and find out what their views were, what their problems were, and how they saw matters developing. Much has been achieved in Scotland, I believe, over this period. We have been the first to complete the installation of the voice and data capable filing system, we are first to publish a learning and development strategy, additional functions including responding to road traffic collisions, CDRN and Fire Safety have been introduced, £25 million has been invested in capabilities for the consequences of terrorism or extreme weather. The Scottish Government moved, and moved as quickly as we possibly could, to address the anomalies around firefighter ill health retirements, which I personally really found quite odious and unacceptable. And, and this was quite a popular one, I announced in September an additional £6 million of funding to support the backdating of revised pensions.

I want to say a word about IRMP and response times. Scotland also moved from national standards of fire cover to IRMP some five years ago. I believe the approach has proven advantages. But I also recognise concerns that removing national standards of fire cover may have led to an inconsistency in how IRMP is being applied. Whilst I want to see local solutions to local risks, I do not want to see unjustified differences in emergency cover. Therefore it's right that after five years we review the IRMP process. Whilst this review will consider response times, its remit was to review the broad national picture in Scotland, in essence, what has happened to standards of fire cover since IRMP was introduced in Scotland.

Without pre-empting the outcome, I have listened to the strength of arguments from the Union, including the "It's About Time" campaign, and I believe we need

Day One – 19th May

more information. I am therefore announcing this morning that I will be asking the head of our advisory unit to form a working group in Scotland with the Services and the Union to review response standards in Scotland. *Applause*

Little of the substantial progress that I've outlined today could have been possible without the partnership working that I have described. Indeed, there are many other examples of progress, all of which have been achieved without any of the industrial action I've read about south of the border. This could not have been achieved without the positive and professional approach of FBU officials. I congratulate and thank them on the success achieved using that approach. I believe I am the first Scottish Minister to address your Conference and this illustrates to me the importance that the Scottish Government places on hearing the views of those on the front line.

My commitment is to ensure the Union has input on those issues of strategic importance to the Service. Therefore, your FBU colleagues in Scotland sit on the Ministerial Advisory Group, which is our principal forum for strategic matters. This provides them with regular opportunities to contribute to desired outcomes. I can assure you they leave no opportunity unused to take advantage of that. Indeed, only this month the FBU has been offered an additional seat on the Group.

Senior government officials regularly meet with the Union, as do I and our First Minister, Alex Salmond. Indeed, I have personally met Union colleagues on over 20 occasions in the last year alone. Roddy tells me that he sees me more often than some of his family members! So perhaps there is a message there for whoever the new Fire Minister is for the UK from that approach. That message is that this regular engagement is absolutely vital if the progress we make is to be good progress.

There is much still to do in Scotland. Despite the long-term downward trend in fires we still have the unenviable record of more fire related deaths than any other country in the UK per million of population. The latest provisional figures show that in 2008/2009, 49 people died and almost 1200 were injured in accidental dwelling fires in Scotland. These are quite simply too many lives, homes and businesses still being devastated by fire. On my tour of the Services in Scotland, I saw duplication in back room functions such as Human Resources, Training and IT. None of us wants to see scarce resources diverted from the front line, but the question must be asked: if something needs to be done, must it be done eight times in Scotland and often differently, if results can be achieved by working together? I am pleased that three Services in Scotland: Fife, Central, and Tayside are leading the way on shared services. This has been helped by the

equal foresight of the FBU in Scotland who have worked with the three Services to deliver outcomes that are not only right for their members but also for the communities that they serve.

Delegates, the biggest challenge facing us is financial. Scotland's Services cost some £330 million a year, 30% more expensive than the rest of the United Kingdom. Whilst geography in Scotland is a contributing factor, it can't all be explained in this way. We are facing expenditure cuts on a scale not experienced for decades, where Fire and Rescue Services will be competing with areas such as housing, education and health. But I urge those who have to find these efficiencies to do so with care, as I do believe that there is scope for protecting the front line.

As I move towards closing, President, I'm reminded of our discussion over dinner last night (extremely pleasant) when I was asked what I thought the prospects were of the Tory/Liberal coalition Government in the UK continuing, and indeed what advice they might be offered by Lib Dems who were somewhat taken aback by this new arrangement. I thought of the experience of my two year old daughter, Natasha, who is an avid fan of Fireman Sam, and some advice that Fireman Sam has to offer to those who watch the programme. Already, President, there are many Liberals in Scotland who are perplexed and bemused about the new arrangement and therefore may be inclined to give the advice to their party leaders in relation to the new coalition partnership: "Get out, stay out, and dial 999"! *Applause*

I know that I am in the company of many students of politics, familiar with the political history of the UK and therefore will know that the last time that the Liberal Party actually won an election outright was 100 years ago in 1910. What is less well known perhaps is that that was also the year which saw the death of Sir Thomas Crapper, the inventor of the self flushing toilet! I didn't think you knew that. Some might say there's an opportunity there for a new political logo!

But leaving the odd couple, or is it the odd coupling, aside, let me just conclude by emphasising that the partnership approach which we have adopted in Scotland between the Services, the Scottish Government, Local Government and the FBU is now vital if we are to navigate the difficult waters ahead. Underlying that partnership, from my perspective, with the FBU and with the individuals who represent your Union in Scotland is a close, enduring and strong bond of trust in the personal relationships that we have built up over those past three years. Therefore, I congratulate you on the work that you do for your membership, and I look forward to continuing our work together to help achieve our shared goals. Thank you very much indeed on behalf of the Scottish Government. *Applause*

Day One – 19th May

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

On behalf of Conference, I would like to thank Fergus for his attendance and his comments to Conference. Both Fergus and Mick mentioned that it was something of a departure to invite the Scottish Minister. There was certainly some debate. I'm sure there were questions discussed in the delegations around that. It would be naïve to ignore the fact that there are differences in political outlook and tradition and so on between where the Fire Brigades Union has traditionally come from and the Scottish Government. But one thing that I've noticed, and myself and Mick have both attended the Scottish TUC for example in recent years, is it is very clear that in Scotland there is something of a more progressive politics in existence, and that the Scottish Government fits within that more progressive debate. Some of those debates I think we would welcome taking place in England and the rest of the UK. Within that more progressive dialogue that takes place there is therefore more of a space for trade unions to operate. I think that's something that our comrades and officials in Scotland have taken full advantage of.

I think another point which is well taken by this Conference is the question of consistency in terms of Fire Ministers. Fergus outlined the learning curve that he's been on in terms of getting to know and understand the Fire and Rescue Service. I think the difficulty we've had with Fire Ministers from Westminster is that they seem to last about two months and are gone before they've even met anyone. That's been a great disappointment over recent years, and I think has been one of the factors in prevention of developing policy in Fire and Rescue within England.

I'm very pleased, and I'm sure Conference is very pleased, that the Scottish Government has agreed to take on and discuss, and have a dialogue around the professional concerns that firefighters in Scotland have been raising for some time, and we will be discussing later this week, around response standards, response times. We have seen some disgraceful comments from civil servants in England and from politicians and from chief officers, regrettably, in England about that matter. So we very much welcome that.

We have a gift to give to Fergus. We wouldn't want to be accused of taking coals to Newcastle or anything like that. It is whisky, but I'm assured it's Irish Whisky. On behalf of Conference I'd like to thank Fergus for his attendance and I'm sure you will wish him well. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

That now usefully brings us up to a natural break in proceedings. The session after the tea break will be taken in Closed Session, so please can the stewards

ensure that only those eligible to be in that debate are present. 15 minutes. Please be back promptly on your seats. Thank you.

Tea break

(Closed Session)

THE PRESIDENT:

We now reconvene in Open Session. Anybody who is waiting at the doors to come back in can come back in now. We are on Section E of the Annual Report, Accident and Injury Fund. Move on to Section F – Legal. Is there a speaker down there? Come to the rostrum, please.

BRO JOHN RANKIN (West Yorkshire):

Chair, Conference, West Yorkshire would like to place on record their gratitude to Thompsons Solicitors, in particular the Leeds office, for their work not only in representing FBU members in West Yorkshire but also their commitment to assisting officials in recruiting new members by attending branch meetings across the county and trainees induction courses at West Yorkshire Fire Service headquarters. This has been highly effective in ensuring that firefighters are recruited at the earliest opportunity and not lost to other organisations. Thank you Thompsons, once again. We hope Conference supports this. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is that it on the Legal Section? Yes. OK, we move to Resolution 64 to be moved by the Black & Ethnic Minority Members Committee with an Amendment from Cleveland. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. B&EMM to move, please.

Resolution 64 – SUPPORT FOR B&EMM REPRESENTATIVES

This FBU Annual Conference recognises that there has been an increase in the number of B&EMM Representatives who have been targeted for disciplinary action or investigation by management, for carrying out what is their normal trade union duties and activities.

To demonstrate to management that FBU Representatives have the full support of their trade union nationally and from their National Officials – if any B&EMM representative of the FBU is under attack, management must be informed that, we consider this as a direct attack against the union itself and this will be met with the full force and resource of the union.

Day One – 19th May

This demonstration of support should take the form of a National Officer being appointed with the responsibility for organising:

- ***Support for the FBU representative that is going through the discipline procedure in their respective Brigade, including welfare provisions.***
- ***Direct liaisons and guidance to the FBU legal services providers to vigorously defend the FBU Representative against the Brigade discipline process.***
- ***Where appropriate a national statement of support issued condemning these type of tactics from Fire and Rescue Service Managers.***
- ***These actions to be taken as soon as the FBU become aware of a Representative being disciplined.***

B&EMM

Amendment

In title, delete “B&EMM”, insert “FBU”.

In second line, delete “B&EMM”, insert “FBU”.

In second paragraph, third line, delete “B&EMM”.

CLEVELAND

BRO DALTON POWELL (B&EMM):

President, Conference, we are accepting the Amendment. Brothers and sisters, as trade union activists every one of us has a story to tell. The reason we became a representative, the amount of demands we have, the amount of work we undertake, and the difference it has made to our lives, both at work and at home. We have all made a conscious decision that we wanted to make a difference – some by choice, some because no-one bothered to volunteer. This was to challenge the wrongs, to challenge management and to make a difference, all the time looking after those members that needed our help, support, giving advice and guidance when they needed it most, no matter what time the call came.

These very responsibilities that we willingly undertake have a direct or indirect detrimental effect on our employment within the Fire and Rescue Service. In the past, B&EMM representatives have been targeted for disciplinary actions and/or investigated by management for frivolous incidents as a result of carrying out their normal trade union duties and activities.

This issue affects us all, brothers and sisters. But increasing disciplinary action against trade union representatives stops us doing what we do best, diverts our attentions away from our main activities, and can have the effect of putting off new up and coming representatives.

Conference, the Fire Brigades Union needs to provide a support and welfare provision immediately to those members who are victimised by management upon

being accused. We demand that Conference agree to investigate procedures to protect Fire Brigade Union representatives from this continued assault from management. Conference, with the recent change in Government we know all too well we will soon be fighting on all fronts. Management will continue to put pressure on, make our lives more difficult if we do nothing. Our strength is our solidarity. No representative should be alone, fighting management while facing disciplinary action. This is about sending a clear message to management of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Support this motion and together we will send a point that is loud and clear: if you pick on any trade union representative while carrying out their duties, you pick on the entire Union. *Applause*. The Fire Service management must be informed that the Fire Brigades Union will consider this a direct attack against the Union itself, and this will be met with the full force and resource of this Union. Please support this motion. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dalton. Is there a seconder for Resolution 64? *Formally seconded*. Cleveland to move their Amendment.

BRO STEVE WATSON (Cleveland):

Conference, President, I won't labour the point. We've heard from the mover of the Resolution why this Resolution is necessary. We are pleased that B&EMM have accepted Cleveland's Amendment. It's all FBU representatives who could be charged for disciplinary action simply for standing up for our members. When that happens, all of our reps should receive the full support of the Union. Conference, please support the Resolution as Amended. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Cleveland Amendment? *Formally seconded*. Were there any speakers against the Resolution? No. Matt to give the Executive Council's qualification on the support.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. I welcome the fact that B&EMM have accepted the Cleveland Amendment. Two qualifications really. Firstly that it was in terms of the information available to the Executive Council, that the Executive Council were not aware and have not been made aware at this stage of an increase in the number of B&EMM officials, B&EMM representatives being targeted for disciplinary action. What I would say to B&EMM and to any other committee within the Union

Day One – 19th May

we do need to know that information if we are going to challenge it. I would encourage people to ensure that you inform us through the structures.

The second qualification is in relation to the reference to the role of the National Officer. It is, that while broadly we would want to give the support that is outlined in the Resolution, it may not always be appropriate that the National Officer deals with every one of those tasks that is outlined in the Resolution. It may be more appropriate that that is a local official, a sectional official or whatever. Certainly in terms of the role of Head Office, we will give whatever support we can. The National Officers will do that as required. Certainly that is our experience, because we certainly have had a number of cases of FBU officials being targeted for discipline. The Executive Council has discussed and provided support wherever those cases have arisen. I am particularly pleased to see Brother Kevin Hughes in the hall today who has been subject to a disgraceful attack within Merseyside. I am sure Conference would want to welcome Kevin and give him its support too. *Applause*

With those qualifications, President, we're happy to support.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will put the Amendment from Cleveland to the vote first. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried*. Therefore I put Resolution 64 as amended by Cleveland to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

Before we take Resolution 67 the General Secretary is going to make a statement from the rostrum on the issue contained within the Resolution which may assist in proceedings.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Hopefully, seeking to assist. Obviously Fife will get up and move or ask questions as required. The Resolution points to Rule 25(3)(b). The question that has been raised with us is around the interpretation of that Rule as it mentions "family members". As you can see from the Resolution, the call from comrades in Fife is to adjust the Rule and bring an amended Rule (it is suggested it is required) to ensure that the Rule means that the interpretation of "families" includes partners. I do want to report that when the Executive Council has discussed that, the President has made clear in terms of his ruling and his interpretation of the Rules that that is how the Fire Brigades Union would interpret that Rule, that it would apply in respect of partners. The view of the Executive Council (and it is

a matter for Fife in the light of that to consider) believe that the Resolution may be unnecessary. We can also give an assurance that if that clarification is required by means of a Brigade Secretaries circular, for example, then we are more than happy to do that.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Fife to move Resolution 67.

Resolution 67 – ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS

Rule 25(3)(b) states, 'Any member requiring legal assistance in relation to any matter, whether or not arising in the course of his/her Fire Service employment, and any family members of a member may make application to the Executive Council or the National Official or other person nominated to act on behalf of the Executive Council in respect of such applications.'

This Conference calls on the Executive Council to bring forward all the necessary adjustments to rule 25 to include partners. Until such times as the rule can be amended, this Conference calls on the President to give his assurances that the interpretation of this rule includes members' partners.

FIFE

BRO SCOTT McCABE (Fife):

President, Conference, two out of three's not bad. The last thing I think we were looking for, Matt, was maybe next year to bring forward the necessary Rule change for 25. If you give us that commitment we would withdraw the Resolution.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Scott, I think the Executive Council's view is that in terms of the interpretation of the Rule, we don't feel the Rule change is necessary. Our view is that having given that assurance in Conference on the record, and if necessary circulating that by Circular, that the Rule change itself would be unnecessary work to undertake.

THE PRESIDENT:

However, it is a Rule change Conference next year, and it is open to any Brigade within the Union to move such a Rule change if they feel it necessary.

BRO SCOTT McCABE:

Thanks for that. Given what you said, we'll accept points 1 and 2, and what we'll do is we'll bring forward a Rule change next year.

Day One – 19th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I clarify, are you withdrawing Resolution 67?

BRO SCOTT McCABE:

Yes.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. *Applause* That concludes Wednesday morning's business, which is a good way to start. I'm going to take a couple of Paragraphs from Wednesday afternoon's business but I'm not going to move into the pay debate because I think that deserves a proper period of time to have. So we're moving on to Section A of the Annual Report – National Joint Council. Paragraph A1 Introduction, Paragraph A2 Report of the Independent Chair of the National Joint Council Middle Managers' Negotiation Body.

BRO RUSSELL TROTH (ONC):

President, Conference, I represent middle managers locally, regionally and nationally who are Fire Brigades Union members. We've already spoken of the absolute need for unity within this Conference. Let us be clear, chief fire officers, brigade managers and fire authority members determine the change agenda, not middle managers. But often, middle managers are required, as part of their job, to implement change. I know that many Fire Brigades Union middle managers who are not FBU representatives challenge detrimental change within their Brigades, sometimes successfully influencing the change in a more positive manner in line with FBU policy or approach. I urge reps and officials to be mindful of the potential to create division within our Union, and to remember that using the term "management" when referring to principal managers, chief fire officers and fire authority members within their Brigades is misdirected. If you mean those people, use those terms. Don't alienate officer members within the FBU. Please consider terminology used when speaking at Branch meetings, Regional meetings and this Conference. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Russell. General Secretary wants to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I thank Russell for the comments. Certainly the Officers' National Committee have had the same discussion with myself, the AGS and the President. There has been some discussion on the Executive Council about that point. The truth is that when we work within the Fire and Rescue Service as employees we may often have to implement policies with which we personally may

disagree. That often applies to middle managers; it can apply to more junior managers in terms of crew managers and so on, and indeed it can apply to firefighters as well.

The point, I think, is well made by the ONC. We're out to build a united Union that represents all grades within the Fire and Rescue Service. Mick outlined this morning some of the challenges to that in terms of attempts to split and divide our membership along the grounds of RDS versus Wholetime; middle managers versus others. We need to ensure that we are taking account of that every step of the way, because these people have an agenda to create division and to try to create splits in this Union and we have to reject that if we're going to take on the challenges that we face in the coming years. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Brother there.

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

President, I would like to reference back to Paragraph A1. President, Conference, following the General Election result the politics in this country is confused, which may be an understatement. I say confused because there is a disparity in that result which was very apparent in the Scottish vote. Scotland returned Labour with an increased majority in terms of votes cast, albeit the number of seats for all the parties remained the same. For us, there was a clear choice: Tory or Labour. Don't listen to the Labour spin that says the Scottish voters came home to Labour. We didn't. At least I didn't. I just couldn't stomach the Tories.

I was proud of the Scottish people on the morning of 7th May. Only one Tory MP, but one Tory MP too many, I say. That was two fingers to Cameron and what his mob stand for. Personally, I will never vote for the Tories. I will never forget 1989, Thatcher taking nearly half of my weekly pay in poll tax. Her social experiment with the Scottish people is still biting. Good.

So what's my point? Now we seem to have a condemned Government that's resident in Number 10. Scotland will go to the polls again next year for the Scottish Parliamentary elections. This Westminster lot will want to win some favour in Scotland, yes, even the Tories. They will be more keen than most, and they'll start to give powers to the Scottish Parliament, but first they will make it clear that our Parliament already has the ability to use powers it chooses not to. One of them relates to us.

In the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 Part 2 Chapter 7 deals with employment. Here's a quote: Paragraph 45

Day One – 19th May

Statutory Negotiating Arrangements:

“The Scottish Ministers may by order make provision for the establishment of a body of persons (a “statutory negotiation body”), or two or more such bodies, for the purpose of negotiating the conditions of service of employees of relevant authorities.”

As a National Union we need to be ready for this. We need to have a plan of what to do. This paragraph could be enacted today, and where would we be? The Scottish Regional Committee is aware of this paragraph and we do not want to see separate negotiating machinery. But in Scotland there are negotiating forums for Police, Teachers and Nurses. So be under no illusions, the Fire Service could be next. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Andy. General Secretary will respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I thank Andy for raising the issue and bringing it to the attention of Conference. There clearly are pressures and threats to the National Joint Council and to the National UK wide bargaining and they are threats that we need to be very alert to. Some of those do come from the points that Andy has raised in terms of Devolution and separate legislation governing various parts of the UK; some of them are more clearly political. We currently have politicians sitting on the National Joint Council who have made very clear their opposition to the National Joint Council, that they're not convinced that it's of any value at all. I refer to Brian Coleman, who's currently the chair of the employers' side. We do need to be very alert to that.

I think the position of this Union is very clear. We want to maintain UK wide bargaining, and that means maintaining the National Joint Council and the structures that go with it. There are the reserve powers that Andy has mentioned. Those reserve powers also exist in relation to the rest of the UK. I think our message to politicians about the use of those reserve powers is that what we want to see is voluntary agreements on industrial relations. That's how the NJC is currently set up through a voluntary collective agreement between us and our employers. We don't want Government interfering in that. We want to maintain the voluntary arrangement that we have. They should, all of them, make sure that they do not attempt to use those reserve powers. I thank Andy for drawing Conference's attention to the concerns rightly raised within Region 1.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. It was remiss of me this morning when opening Conference not to bring Conference's attention

to the fact that we have, at the back of room, two retired Presidents of the Union, Bill Deal and Ronnie Scott, and also a former Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, Alex Merry. I'm sure you'll all wish to welcome them to Conference. *Applause*

With luck, there will be another retired President up there with them next year! You may have noticed that there's a new National Officer in fact, sitting on the stage here with us. It's his first day in post, although he won the election a couple of weeks ago. I'm sure you would like to welcome Dave Green on his first day as National Officer. *Applause*

During the lunch break there is a fringe meeting that's been organised by Unite Against Fascism at the Royal Clifton Hotel to start at 1.15 pm, and I would encourage people to go along to that meeting and listen to what's being said, and discuss how to get involved in their future activities. We're going to close this morning's session ten minutes early, but as you've agreed a 15 minute extension this afternoon, consider it compensation. Please be in your seats promptly for 2 pm. Thank you very much.

Adjourned for lunch

Day One – 19th May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, if people can now please take their seats, finish their conversations, put their mobile phones on silent, etc, then we will start this afternoon session. Before I introduce the Chair of Standing Orders Committee to give a report I have some bad news to report to delegates. I've been informed from Region 8 that Brother Gwynfor Howells from the Mid and West Wales Brigade died yesterday whilst out running on a local beach with his wife. I'm sure you wish to join with me in sending our condolences to his colleagues and his family.

Next up is Steve Shelton, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee to give a report. Steve.

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

Thank you, President. Some changes to delegates to announce. West Sussex: delete Mick Cambers; insert Bill Woodfine now attending as a delegate. Durham: delete Kevin Shaw; insert Tony Curry. Lincolnshire: delete Chris Broom; insert Craig Tuck.

Could you turn to your Programme of Business, please. On the very front page, times of daily sessions, underneath "Morning" delete "9.30 am to 12.30 pm"; insert "0930 hours to 1245 hours". Under "Afternoon" delete "2 pm to 5 pm"; insert "1400 hours to 1715 hours". Just to the right hand side of the afternoon if you could insert "Comfort breaks: 1100 hours to 1115 hours" and underneath that: "1530 hours to 1545 hours".

Page 3: Resolution 2 has been withdrawn. Page 5: Resolution 14 has been withdrawn, Amendment falls. That concludes the report so far, President. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed*

Thank you. I now have the pleasure of inviting back to our Annual Conference guest speaker from the TUC, Frances O'Grady, the Deputy General Secretary. Frances.

SIS FRANCES O'GRADY (TUC):

Thanks, Mick. Thanks for your hard work as President and also thanks for your work with the Cuba Solidarity

Campaign. Let me also congratulate Matt on his recent re-election as your General Secretary. Thanks to you, delegates, for giving me the opportunity to bring greetings of solidarity on behalf of the whole TUC.

So here we are, a new Government, a new era, new challenges. I think that the first message that we need to send here today is that whatever the colour of the Government in power, whether that's national or local, the trade union movement is here to stay, we aim to grow and we aim to win. As the largest democratic membership organisation in this country we expect nothing more and nothing less than proper consultation, negotiation, recognition and respect.

Of course, we're all still trying to get to grips with the aftermath of that General Election, and I'm still trying to work out whether this coalition is Lib/Con, Con/Lib or, as some call it, Con/Dem. Some call it a new politics, but in many respects this new coalition of MPs looks very old politics to me. We've got more Oxbridge graduates than women, twice as many old Etonians as ethnic minorities, and around a quarter categorised as coming from just one occupational group alone – you've guessed it – bankers! Although, to be fair, lots of them have second jobs too as consultants to hedge funds.

I think that the last time I had a chance to speak to an FBU Conference I said that I didn't care which class people came from, I cared which class they were fighting for and I still hold that view. But of course real politics is not just about individuals or personalities; it's also about the wider forces that hold those individuals to account – some of them, like unions, democratic, and some of them not.

You will have been interested, like me, in the response of the right wing media which, in the lead up to the election and since, has had the expectation and the push that it should be a return to business as usual. I have to say I read with interest the response of the Daily Telegraph columnist to George Osborne's call for bankers to show a modicum of pay restraint. The Daily Telegraph's response was uncompromising: by suggesting bankers' bonuses should be smaller, it said that George Osborne was "behaving like a member of the Socialist Workers' Party". It's not often he gets accused of that!

But who will pay the price of the deficit? Who exactly is expected to tighten their belts and how hard is likely to become the defining issue of this next Parliament. You can bet your life that bankers, debt traders and private equity chiefs will not give ground easily. But one thing is clear to me: we must not allow the jobs, the pensions and the public services of ordinary working people we represent to become the line of least resistance.

Applause

Day One – 19th May

There's never been a more important time for trade unionists to unite, to show discipline, and to campaign to defend working people. That's what I want to focus on today. But I want to start by saying a few words about an issue that's rightly of paramount importance to you, because, Conference, I'm very conscious that we're meeting just six weeks after the tragic events that took place when a serious fire broke out in that block of flats in Southampton, and in the course of fighting that fire two of your brothers, James Shears and Alan Bannon tragically lost their lives. Their deaths followed that of Ewan Williamson, who was killed while fighting a fire in Edinburgh last July. They are a sobering reminder to everybody in the Trade Union Movement and beyond, of the realities that you face, day in day out, saving people and saving lives. Our cause is to ensure that their sacrifices were not in vain, that the Fire Service receives the priority it deserves, and that out of tragedy comes justice.

Colleagues, we have a great saying in this Movement, which is that together we are stronger. Nowhere does that principle matter more or mean more than in your Union. For you, solidarity isn't just a slogan; it's what inspires you in your working lives; it's the foundation of the service that you give to communities and it's what drives the internationalism for which the FBU is renowned, whether it's speaking up for progress in Cuba, or speaking out against injustice in Columbia or Palestine. Your commitment to global solidarity is second to none. When tragedy struck in Haiti earlier in the year, British firefighters were on the scene within 24 hours, saving lives and reuniting families.

If solidarity abroad is part of what makes this Union great, then so too is solidarity at home – not least in the fight against racism and fascism. Whatever the highs and lows of election night, for me personally, no moment could have been sweeter than the look on Nick Griffin's face when the constituency of Barking sent the BNP packing! *Applause*

I want to put on record the TUC stance to all those trade union activists, to Searchlight, the Hope not Hate campaign, and of course to Unite Against Fascism for the part that they played. Through the strength of our values, through sheer hard work, up and down the country, we were able to deny the BNP the power that they crave.

But now, as the dust settles after the General Election, as that leadership campaign in the Labour Party begins, we have to organise ourselves for a new and very different age. The TUC's position is straightforward: we will press the new Government on the bread and butter issues that matter most to working people in Britain: a more balanced economy and growth, decent jobs and skills, pay and pensions, and public services that meet the needs of all.

We've been told quite a few times that we're all in this together. I fear that some of us may be more in it than others. I want to see the evidence that we're all in this together, because let's be clear, Conference, none of this crisis happened by accident. Our public sector deficit wasn't caused by having too many jobs for firefighters, for nurses or teachers; it wasn't caused by providing public sector workers with a modest pension in their old age. No, it was caused by a handful of greedy bankers and speculators who made outrageous fortunes by gambling the livelihoods of working people and landing the taxpayer with nearly a trillion pound bill for the privilege. So today let the message go out loud and clear from this hall that we will defend public services from attack, we will resist savage cuts, and we will protect the jobs, pay and pensions of public services – firefighters and fire control staff – who did nothing to cause this mess. *Applause*

We've got to do more than defend. We've got to show that there is an alternative. We do not have to follow the same path as Greece or Ireland. We have the power to act. Yes, we have to tackle the deficit, but there is a better way. First, fair taxation. The TUC will continue to argue the case for fair taxes, including a clamp down on that £25 billion of tax avoidance, including a Robin Hood tax on financial transactions that would cut down on some of that speculation that caused the mess, and yes, a supertax on the super rich. Secondly, politics is all about priorities. We don't need to waste billions on expensive consultants, on failed IT projects, on arbitrary reforms and restructurings, pointless market testing exercises, and needless privatisations. Nor should we squander billions on the renewal of Trident, a Cold War nuclear deterrent that we can't afford, we don't need, and we don't want. *Applause*

Third, we have to invest for growth. Instead of calls to cut public sector wages and pensions, the business lobby should start worrying about who's going to be able to afford the goods and services that businesses need to sell to survive. Instead of cutting in the short term, which would risk that double dip recession, we should start investing in the long-term. Any half decent business should know that the private sector needs schools and colleges to give the workforce the skills our country needs. It needs a greener, faster transport system to keep people and goods on the move. It needs a new energy system to power a lower carbon economy. And it certainly needs first class emergency services to keep people healthy, cared for and safe.

Delegates, let's be frank about this, the next few years are set to be some of the toughest that we've ever faced, and the situation that we face demands a strong, intelligent, and organised trade union response, and nowhere are the stakes higher than in our Fire and Rescue Service. You're already faced with over £300

Day One – 19th May

million worth of cuts with the prospect of worse to come and the impact already being felt across the country. But again, there is an alternative, there is a solution. A genuine efficiency saving for our Fire Service, a simple message that I hope the new Government takes on board. That is to abandon that reckless Regional Control Plan and abandon it now. *Applause*

That is a project that is now delayed, I understand, until next May at the earliest, already four years late; budgeted to cost £100 million, but for which the true cost is expected to hit £1.4 billion. At last month's Select Committee report, it was made clear that Regional Controls is a waste of time and a waste of money. No financial or operational case, no proper local accountability, and, most damning of all, no real union involvement or voice. Conference, firefighters and fire control staff deserve better. From fighting fires, to coping with floods, to tackling the aftermath of terrorist attacks, it's high time that you got the recognition and the respect and the rewards that you deserve. The values that guide you in your work, that sense of public service, that belief in collectivism and team work, that conviction that we are stronger together, those are the same values that guide all trade unionists.

So, Conference, whether it's in the workplace, or Westminster, or following that scandalous decision on the BA judgment which poses, in my view, a fundamental threat to the right to strike in this country, whether it's in the courts of law, I believe that there's never been more need for solidarity between working people, and no more important time for us to take that message out to the communities that we live and work in.

Let's defend the dedicated professionals who deliver them. And let's keep making the case for our values. Let's keep campaigning, keep fighting, and keep working for real fairness, equality and justice. Thank you. *Applause*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I think the reception that Frances has been given reflects the warmth in which we hold Frances. She is always welcome as a visitor and speaker at our Annual Conference. I think some of the issues she's outlined are clearly going to be key themes of the discussion this week around the aftermath of the General Election, the new Government and the challenge that poses for us within the Fire and Rescue Service, but more widely to working people in general and to the Trade Union Movement as a whole.

Frances has attended our Conference on a number of occasions. People tend to collect gifts. We've got a slight variation this year, because of the confusing state

of things we think she might, like other people, need a drink and we've got a bottle of whisky for her. Thanks very much for coming, Frances. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, we will now move back on to the Annual Report and we're on to Paragraph A3 on Pay. Brother there. Is there anyone else on that Paragraph? No.

BRO DAVE HOWE (Cleveland):

President, Conference, sorry about the voice! Last year Cleveland had Resolution 10 unanimously passed. This Resolution called upon the EC to carry out a study into the effects of overtime on staffing levels and report back to this year's Conference. Could the EC please update Conference on the study.

THE PRESIDENT:

I'll ask the General Secretary to respond to that point.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes. I think the Executive Council has started some discussions around the question of overtime. We're not in the position as yet of finalising a survey. There is work also undertaken through the National Joint Council where we've attempted to identify some of those issues. We're still in the process again of analysing some of the findings of that, and that will be reported back through the Executive Council in due course.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We will therefore move on to Resolution 1 from Strathclyde entitled Pay Formula. The Executive Council are giving the Resolution qualified support. Can I have Strathclyde to move, please.

Resolution1 – PAY FORMULA

It is apparent that the pay and conditions of public sector workers shall be attacked following the general election of 2010 regardless of the political party in power. This is as a direct result of the reckless greed of deregulated financial capitalism in pursuing and maximising short term profit, incentivised by unwarranted bonuses that has virtually bankrupted our economy and led to the unprecedented multi billion pound bail out by the Government, funded with public money.

Therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate the introduction of an agreed annual pay formula that shall ensure firefighters pay shall rise in line with percentage increases in the

Day One – 19th May

pay of an appropriate comparator group of skilled workers/professionals. This agreed formula to be provided without detriment to existing conditions of service and not be subject to any public sector pay restraint measures introduced as a result of the financial crisis. Progress on this matter is to be reported to FBU members as soon as is practicably possible.

STRATHCLYDE

BRO PAUL WILSON (Strathclyde):

Good afternoon, Conference. Fortunately, it will be easier for me now that Frances has given her speech to Conference, because she has taken most of what I was going to put to you with regards pay.

Conference, we find ourselves in a time of dire financial fear created by the greed and mismanagement of unscrupulous bankers (I've had to practise saying that a few times!). So I ask you where does this leave us? It leaves us facing some of the most brutal cuts ever faced by many of us here. It leaves us facing a coalition Government hell bent on slashing budgets to recover the funds ploughed into these banks.

Conference we note the recent All Members Circular on Pay for 2010. We applaud this decision, but ask that any pay formula be in line with the pay rises of an appropriate group of skilled workers and professionals without detriment to our current conditions of services. Conference, I move this motion. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 1? *Formally seconded.* It's been formally seconded. Does anybody wish to speak against? I will ask Matt to outline the Executive Council's qualification on the support.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the Executive Council are giving qualified support on a couple of points. The first of those is the issue of timing. The Executive Council and the Pay Group that the Executive Council appointed over the past few years to make recommendations on pay have discussed the issue of a pay formula, how that might be determined, what we might do to try to identify a group of comparators as Paul suggested. The difficulty at the present time is precisely the economic situation which was outlined in moving. We've been through a period of huge economic and financial turmoil. As Mick mentioned this morning, we have been through a period of negative movement in the retail price index – unprecedented in post-war history. In that situation it is extremely difficult to identify a pay formula which will,

for the long term, protect the pay, conditions and standard of living of firefighters. We need to undertake that work and that work will be done.

The second area of qualification is about how we go about achieving the aims of this Resolution. This Union has, for a very long time, had a commitment to having a pay formula as a mechanism to resolving the issue of pay. We believe that it's a nonsense in the Fire and Rescue Service to have to go back, year in and year out, to try and negotiate on the issue of pay. Nobody wants to see industrial action in the Fire and Rescue Service. That is why we want some sort of long term mechanism to provide that stability.

We need to look back at some of the history on the question of pay in the Fire Service. In 1978 we signed an agreement that gave us a long term pay formula. We chose, rightly, to end that formula in 2002 as part of our campaign for improved pay in 2002/2003. In 2003 we signed a very different agreement: a five year pay and conditions agreement. Part of that agreement was that changes to conditions of service were made. One of the themes of debates subsequently to that in this Conference have been concerns about the changes to conditions of service that have been initiated at local level since that time.

We need to be clear on our understanding of what the employers have said on this. What they have said is that they are not minded, in no way convinced of the need for a long term pay formula at this stage. More importantly, that changes or significant improvements in pay, from their point of view, would have to be at the expense for us of further concessions on conditions of service. Conference has been very, very clear over the past couple of years that we are not about trading our conditions of service for small, fractional increases in pay.

I want to be very clear, because we've got some guests in the audience today from the Local Government employers, and we welcome them to hear what the debate at this Conference is around pay and around National Joint Council issues. I want to be very clear that in terms of some of the issues on which we've been sounded out and we've had discussions here at Conference, around some of those conditions of service issues, that as far as we're concerned our middle managers and their conditions of service are not up for grabs from this Union. We will not be conceding or selling out our middle manager members for a small, fractional increase in pay. I hope that message goes back very clearly to the employers from this Conference today. *Applause*

The truth is that pay – and we have told the employers this – is becoming an increasing difficulty in

Day One – 19th May

the Fire and Rescue Service. I think that the employers' stance has been utterly disgraceful. They have used the economic situation to say: thousands of people are losing their jobs; are you really going to be demanding a pay rise? They have used that economic situation to bully and threaten people working in the Fire and Rescue Service, and at the same time they turn round and say: but we do value you as employees. What utter nonsense and what hypocrisy we get from these people! But they are storing up a problem. As Mick said, if their intention is to foist a real wage cut on our members this year as a result of the level of inflation and whatever pay rise (if there is one) that they offer, then we will not be forgetting. I don't know when it will come, but there will be a fight on pay in the Fire and Rescue Service. That may not be this year. I don't know. We hope that the employers engage in those discussions and engage constructively in those discussions. But if it's not this year, then it may be next year, and if it's not next year it will be the year after that.

I attended a conference recently involving Fire Service politicians, chief officers and so on. I think the title was "Managing Expectations in the Economic Crisis". What staggered me is that the consensus all across the room, from all parties, all politicians, all chief fire officers was: well, the cuts are coming; we're just going to have to live with them. The only voice, the only voice that said anything different was ours, the Fire Brigades Union. We said: we work in a public service of which we are immensely proud; you claim to be the leaders of this Service; you claim to be the people who've got the strategic direction; why the hell don't you go to Government and demand the investment that we want in our Service and then we wouldn't be having the cuts, then we wouldn't be having this debate about pay, year in and year out! *Applause*

So we've put the employers on notice. I'm not predicting when that fight is going to come, but they either start listening to what our members are saying, and engaging properly on the question of pay, and try to resolve pay for the long term, or they will, in due course, have a hell of a fight on their hands. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. There's no need for a Right to Reply; there was no opposition. Can I please see those in favour of Resolution 1 from Strathclyde? Thanks. Were there any against? No. That was *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 4 entitled Pay from Northern Ireland. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can we have Northern Ireland to move, please.

Resolution 4 – PAY

Conference notes the decision made by Conference in 2009 in respect of Resolution 5 on Pay (as moved by Shropshire, amended by Strathclyde).

Conference re-affirms its decision that the "A" pay scale should be removed and personnel on the "A" pay scale should be redesignated to the "B" pay scale.

Conference notes the lack of progress on this matter and insists the Executive Council seeks to progress this as a matter of urgency and as a minimum, a report to Annual Conference 2011 is required.

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO DERMOT McPOLAND (NIFB):

President, Conference, in the wake of the pay dispute we entered extensive negotiations at the National Joint Council level. We entered these negotiations with a vision of fair and reasonable pay for all. Pay based on the work actually undertaken by the individual role. This was tied to the concept of job size. Basically, the idea was the more personnel and specialist equipment you managed and the bigger your workload, the more you would receive. The negotiations ended and with the circulation of National Joint Council Circular 905 the implementation phase began.

It should be remembered that these changes occurred during the period of time in which the UK Fire and Rescue Service was undergoing the most drastic modernisation since World War II. Ranks became roles. We flattened our permit, as they say. What we really did was push the work down. When the National Joint Council resolved to reward roles for their increased work, it was based on a review of what work was being undertaken before modernisation. It was not envisaged that the workload at all roles would grow and continue to grow both in competence and, more fundamentally, in administrative shackles; that it would make the pre-modernisation workload appear like a stand down day. Remember those?

My own Service had an extensive review that said that no role, except group commanders, should get the B rate. This was sewed up in hundreds of appeals under the appeal process laid out in NJC 905.

Conference, it is freely acknowledged at all levels, even by our employers, that modernisation has increased the workloads in all roles to an extent that could never have been contemplated pre-modernisation. Whilst there are aspects of such modernisation that have led to an improved service for those we serve (the public, not the employers) there are many aspects that have

Day One – 19th May

detrimentally affected our members' terms and conditions. The most obvious is the pay differential between members in the same role as reflected by the A and B rates.

Conference, there is no objective justification for an A and B rate. A watch manager is a watch manager, doing the same role, doing the same job. The maintenance of false pay differentials is not justified in a modern, professional Fire and Rescue Service. Conference, it is right that all roles deserve fair pay for a fair day's work. It is right that all individuals within a role are doing equal work of equal value. It is right that we move to do away with the unfair and divisive A rates of pay. Conference, let us insist that the Executive Council progress this matter with urgency and determination. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 4?

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, obviously it says in the Resolution that we moved this issue last year. The reason that we moved that last year is it certainly needs to be addressed. Nothing has been done in the last 12 months on this, it appears. The difference between the A and B scale rate of pay, we believe, is inherently flawed. If you look at the NJC circular that has just been outlined to you, 905, job sizing, there's one page on job sizing. The example it gives is that of a watch manager on a one and two pump station. There's no other guidance to determine all the other roles.

If you do look at that example, if you look at the example of the watch managers in the rates of pay, if a watch manager was to move from a one pump station to a two pump station, they would get an increase of pay of £2,134. If you're a watch manager and you're going for promotion through the ADC's (and we all know what they're like with the interviews and everything else), your rate of pay increases by £1400. That's got to be inherently wrong, hasn't it?

If you think, in many Brigades where you do get promoted you often get CPD taken away from you. If you look at the next page in the Annual Report, CPD can vary from £300 to £900. You go through all those hoops to get to a station manager and your rate of increase of pay could potentially be £500. It's ridiculous!

As a Union we've started talking about pay, and we've started talking about the pay for this year. If we're going to be brave about that I think we need to be brave about this. What I think we need to do is table this and get on with it. The qualification to say that we need to have a strategy is a stall that we've already had for 12 months.

I think we need to remove the qualification, support the Resolution and let's get this on the table. Thank you.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Are there any speakers against Resolution 4? I'll ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. I think there's two points. I think the first point in relation to how the rates of pay and the A and B rates are being applied needs to be addressed at local level in any case. So in that we may be dissatisfied, as outlined in the Resolution, with the very principle of A and B scales, at the very least we should be expecting and demanding that our employers at local level do, at the very least, implement the national agreement as it currently exists.

In terms of the Resolution itself, I think the qualification is important, because we do again need to recall how we got to where we are. We got to there after a huge pay campaign, after a series of strikes, and we ended up with an agreement which was collectively agreed by this Conference. The Executive Council's view is that while we do have criticisms of this or that aspect of the current structure in relation to pay, it is not going to be easy to make those changes. In terms of the strategy and tactics that would need to be pursued to achieve the demands of Resolution 4, it may well be that those issues around particular aspects of pay – and in this case the scale A and scale B rates – may need to be part of a wider strategy in relation to pay. That's the concern that the Executive Council have in terms of pursuing this immediately.

We have no indication from the employers that they would be minded effectively to increase the rate for those affected who are currently on scale A rates of pay. That's not acceptable, but the question we have to address is how do we make it acceptable? Our view is that that would need to be part of a far wider campaign on the question of pay, and we will need to assess very carefully about when such a campaign would be launched.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. There should be no Right of Reply; there was no opposition. I will therefore put Resolution 4 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

I will now move on to Resolution 5 entitled Equal Pay Role Reduction moved by the Control Staff National Committee. The Executive Council are supporting. CSNC to move, please.

Day One – 19th May

Resolution 5 – EQUAL PAY – ROLE REDUCTION

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to investigate the imbalance and downgrading of Emergency Fire Control managerial posts resulting from the substantive move from rank to role.

It is apparent that the role given to control managers in these areas do not reflect the correct level of responsibilities and professionalism shown by the realities of the job done.

As Emergency Fire Controls are staffed by a majority of women, we call on the Executive Council to conduct an Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value study, using an appropriate expert and model into the cross roles from different parts of the Fire Service, with a view of putting Emergency Fire Control managers onto higher rates of pay and into the correct roles.

A report of this investigation to be produced as soon as possible or by Annual Conference 2011.

CSNC

SIS SASHA FARLEY (CSNC):

President, Conference, Ranks to Roles was introduced during 2003 following the national dispute, part of the negotiated settlement as a way of modernising the Fire and Rescue Service. This has not exactly gone as well as it could have, with some Brigades making such a mess of it that we find ourselves in a position where our roles have been downgraded from our previous ranks. This has been made easier by the fact that the role maps are simply a cut and paste exercise cobbled together from industrial job roles. For example, an extract from the watch manager's role revolves around "acquiring, storing and issuing resources to provide service delivery" – an awful piece of HR speak which could describe any warehouse and distribution unit manager rather than the work of an emergency service.

How has this happened? Is it the understanding and interpretation of the roles and how to apply them to existing ranks? Or is it the fact that Brigades have managed to move more cynically, seeing an opportunity to use the exercise as a cost cutting one? The allocation of an employee to a specific role should have been carried out by comparing their existing job functions against the following: the most likely role map, for example, leading fire control operator against a crew manager role; the role and function descriptions; the units, elements and knowledge required for the national occupational standards. It should have been fairly straight forward for the most part. However, it would appear that some Brigades saw an opportunity to get

more for less when it came to control room staff. In Lothian & Borders, the GFCO in overall charge of the control room became a station manager – a common story across the country. This is, of course, a role lower than the best fit approach, which was the NJC guidance which should have seen the role as a group manager, the same as comparable ADOs.

In two other Brigades – one a Shire Brigade, the other a small County Brigade – is it right and fair that a station manager B with a budget of £1.5 million and 43 staff is downgraded to receive less pay than a station manager B with a budget of approximately £800,000 and 26 staff? Elsewhere, fire control crew managers were, and still are, expected to take charge of a control room. This responsibility is clearly outside of their role. Leading fire control operators who routinely did this pre-ranks to roles should have, by rights, been upgraded to watch manager. But some Brigades chose not to do this; the cheap option was chosen. We find ourselves in a post code lottery. It is apparent that the role given to control managers in these areas does not reflect the correct level of responsibilities and professionalism shown by the realities of the job done. Control rooms have seen a cutting in staffing levels by stealth, and people have lost their status with the ranks to roles transition.

The really sad story is that a lot of fire control managers have found themselves and the important work that they do misunderstood at best, or ignored at worst. As a consequence, they are under valued, and what is worse, have been under rewarded. As Emergency Fire Controls are staffed by a majority of women, we call on the Executive Council to conduct an equal pay for work of equal value study using an appropriate expert and model into the cross roles from different parts of the Fire Service with a view to putting Emergency Fire Control managers on to higher rates of pay and on to the correct roles. A report of this investigation should be produced as soon as possible, or by Annual Conference 2011.

Will fire authorities find themselves in a similar predicament to that of Birmingham City Council, who only a few weeks ago lost a high profile case over pay equality? Fire control staff deserve and demand equal pay for work of equal value. Support this Resolution. Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 5, please?

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

Conference, everyone in the Union is aware of the huge changes that we're dealing with within the Fire and Rescue Service, one of which was the introduction of rank to role. As we all know, individual Fire and Rescue

Day One – 19th May

Services are taking national agreements and misusing them to suit themselves. Prior to the implementation of an agreement of the rank to role process FBU and employers took part in joint trials in a number of Fire and Rescue Services to assess the system and ensure its credibility and that processes were robust and relevant. Lothian & Borders was one of those Brigades.

The trial, pilot or experiment dealt with all aspects and levels in the Service, including fire control. Initially, the results were encouraging, particularly for our control members. It was clear from the trial that the managerial levels within control were at the right level and an assimilation from rank to role would actually confirm that and should produce a positive outcome for fire control managers. We believe that they should stay at the same equivalent level to firefighting managerial roles. For example, the group fire control officer/ADO would translate over to group managers.

However, the reality soon changed and when the substantive rank to role process took place in the Brigade the group fire control officer in Lothian & Borders control was assimilated to station manager and not to group manager. Other equivalent posts, ADOs were moved to group manager. To put it simply, the only post at that level that was downgraded in Lothian & Borders was that of the group fire control officer. Fire control was treated differently and, in our view, detrimentally.

The main argument from the Fire and Rescue Service was that fire control was like a one pump station. It was not feasible to have a group manager in charge where there was no group. The only similarity between fire control and a one pump station is the size of the workforce and even that is tenuous.

This is a detriment to our members. It is not based on a reasoned argument. It is unfair that the only rank in our Service that was downgraded was that of a group fire control officer to station manager. That post was held by a woman. At the same time, the ADO rank, all men, were upgraded to group manager A. The only station manager post in Lothian & Borders Fire and Rescue Service is in the fire control room.

This downgrading had a knock on effect on other managerial levels within the control room, and the restructure of the whole control room forward. Yes, you've probably guessed it, detrimental changes forward. There was a reduction in watch strength, new control management set up on day duties. Some staff did challenge their change in role and exhausted the grievance process, but their appeals failed. It is clear that this has happened in control rooms throughout the country and it also appears that the worst cases of downgrading posts appear to be happening in fire

control, and the vast majority of staff in fire controls happen to be women.

I have been told that many years ago the FBU employed the services of Sue Hastings to do an equal pay for work of equal value study across the Service, comparing fire controls to firefighters and equivalent managerial levels. The equal pay study was used to secure the increase for control members from 92% to 95% of a firefighters' pay, and other managerial level equivalents. But the FBU has always fought for pay parity across the Service – wholtime, retained and of course control – not 92%, not 95% but 100% pay parity.

We are of the opinion that fire control managers are still being sold short, their role has been undermined and misused in the rank to role process. We urge you to support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I see who wishes to come into this debate, please? Can I just make a point, please, before I call the next speaker, or a couple of points. Firstly, it greatly assists matters and getting through business if the movers and seconders of Resolutions can get somewhere near to the front of the hall so that they are near the rostrum. Secondly, other speakers in debates, please don't come to the rostrum unless and until I call you to come to the rostrum. Where there are debates where there is no real opposition and the Executive Council are supporting, I think there is a limit to how many speakers it is useful to have. There has been a very clearly expressed wish that people want to ensure that the Conference business finishes at a reasonable time and we don't have a huge backlog of business pushed off to the end of Friday afternoon. So with that in mind, I will ask the two speakers there to come up, but please for future debates don't come to the front if you're not a mover or a seconder, unless you're called to come. Next speaker, please.

SIS JAYNE MASON (West Midlands):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 5. The introduction of the agreed role maps laid out straight forward expectations of what uniform personnel were expected to do at work. However, Brigade management have used role maps for their own purposes, cutting costs by using what is in reality demotion, and by pressurising people to do more work and take more responsibility than is actually within their roles to do. We have been complacent and we haven't been vigilant. How many of us actually know our role map?

For too long Brigade managers have traded on, expected and used your goodwill and desire to help our colleagues and our communities. We call upon the EC

Day One – 19th May

to take a firm stand and show strong leadership in this matter by ensuring our membership is no longer bullied, as they have been, to work and act above their agreed role maps. We support the Resolution. *Applause*

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

Mr President, Conference, I will be very brief. The Officers' National Committee support this Resolution. Rank to role has been a shambolic mismatch of lottery results across the length and breadth of this country and this kingdom. Many of our officer members have been also affected by this and are still being affected by the same mismanagement. There has been no strategy, there has been no leadership, and there has been sadly even less common sense applied. We watched HR directors stalking like tigers in the woods, picking off their next prey. It is wrong, it is unjust and it is insincere of our executive officers, managers or whatever it is they decided to call themselves this week to allow their staff to be treated in such a shoddy manner whilst on the other hand accepting and awarding themselves massive performance related bonuses built on the work and performance of our members in all roles. *Applause*

Matt was entirely right in his speech earlier. We're all in this together, except when it affects my massive bonus or my massive pay rise that I want to give myself. They need to get their acts together and ensure fair pay, correct role alignment and real equality for one and all. We support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council welcome the Resolution because I think it does give us the opportunity to address the issues which are currently being addressed through the work that's being done through the Workforce Development Group and indeed through the education programme on the whole question of the correct application of the IPDS process throughout the Service, an aspect of which clearly does need to be developed. That has been outlined clearly by Conference and by the speakers on the question of the misapplication and misuse of the process – a sound process but misapplied, particularly within the control rooms.

We take note of what Marty is saying there about the more general problems that we face across the Service, but specifically I want to refer here to the subject matter within the Resolution and that is within the control rooms.

I have to say, there are two aspects to it, I think. One is what the Resolution is calling for, which is for us to get

expert advice as if appropriate, to work with that internally through the Workforce Development Group and through the local officials. But, as I think was brought out quite strongly, this clearly is a sex discrimination issue. It may well be that we don't wait for a study. It may well be that there are other measures that we might want to address the issue by, perhaps to focus the minds of the employers, either individually or collectively, in the way that they have been mismanaging the allocation of roles within control rooms. Clearly, that is the licence the Executive Council will take, as you would expect. That will be based upon legal advice and the advice of those experts which the Executive Council will be speaking to in accordance with what the Resolution calls for.

So the Executive Council support the Resolution and welcome it coming to Conference. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. There's no need for a reply. I will put Resolution 5 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

I will move on to Paragraph A4 – Continuous Professional Development Payments 2009, then Resolution 6 from Northern Ireland with an amendment from Strathclyde. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I have Northern Ireland to move, please.

Resolution 6 – CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

This Conference demands that the Executive Council commences negotiations with the Employers to ensure that Continual Professional Development (CPD) payments form an integral part of core pay.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Amendment

In line 2, after 'the', insert "National".

STRATHCLYDE

BRO ARCHIE McKAY (NIFB):

President, Conference, Resolution 6 states that this Conference demands that the Executive Council commences negotiations with the Employers to ensure that Continual Professional Development (CPD) payments form an integral part of core pay. I am pleased to note that the EC has given qualified support to the Resolution and that it is already a long term aim. Whilst carrying out background research for this Resolution, the amount of effort which has been made in the past by

Day One – 19th May

our Union negotiators to make CPD payments pensionable was very apparent. This was achieved by the creation of additional pension benefits or APBs and was no small victory.

I now call on the EC to direct negotiation efforts to a start on equality. Let me tell you a fact. There's a difference of £667 between the lowest rate of CPD and the highest rate of CPD. Conference, we have a situation whereby firefighters attending the same types of incidents with similar lengths of service and similar professional development are not receiving the same pay, and this just depends on which Fire and Rescue Service you work for.

As you will recall, CPD is funded from the long service increment pot of money, but in some Fire and Rescue Services, achieving CPD has been very difficult for personnel. Furthermore, Conference, when eligible members don't all achieve CPD the pot of money is not divided up between those that do achieve it. Where does this money go? Fortunately for us in Northern Ireland we have achieved a position where CPD payments are the norm, and we are conscious of the difficulties in other Fire and Rescue Services. Conference, it is time to make CPD fair and equal to all Fire Service personnel. Let's stop this particular pay wedge being driven between us. Conference, support the Resolution, make CPD an integral part of core pay. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 6? Come to the rostrum, please.

SIS MELANIE GIBB (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, in supporting Northern Ireland's Resolution we have to realise that this subject is for National Joint Council negotiations, and our Amendment simply clarifies that. Please support Northern Ireland's Resolution as Amended. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I clarify, were you moving Strathclyde's Amendment there to the Resolution? OK, right. Can I take it that the Resolution itself was formally seconded? Yes. *Formally seconded*. Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded*. Is there anyone who wishes to speak against? I will ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I think the Executive Council fully appreciate the points that were made in moving the

Resolution. We are well aware of the frustration that people have in relation to CPD. Those frustrations relate to the different rates that apply in different Fire and Rescue Services, which is not something we wanted or wanted to accept; it is where we ended up and I can explain that in a moment. The issue correctly raised about pensionability raises difficulties in the long term around pensionable pay in relation to the firefighters' pension scheme in particular.

We do need to refresh our memories about how we got there. We had obviously the agreement to replace long service pay with what was called a payment for continuing professional development. At the end of that we had a very long and very drawn out series of negotiations. I think it took its toll, certainly on the various people on this table who had to go through those negotiations. The employers were insistent on a number of points. The agreement had said that CPD would be funded from the savings made from LSI, and the reason we ended up with different rates is purely down to the fact, as people are aware, that since CPD would be available to RDS members, and rightly so, in individual Fire Services, depending on the balance of the employment between wholetime and RDS employees, the amount of savings and how they were then shared out between wholetime and RDS members ended up with the position where we have different rates in each different Fire and Rescue Service. That is not something that anyone in this Conference would have wanted, not something that those of us involved in the negotiations would have wanted. Yes, I think it is absolutely right that we set as a target the aim of moving towards a single rate of CPD.

The issue was also raised around the fact that because CPD, under the agreement, is potentially removable it raised questions about whether it was fully pensionable. We ended up, as was pointed out by Northern Ireland, with a mechanism by which pensionability could be achieved. But it is not ideal. The additional pension benefits mechanism is not ideal for achieving pensionability. In the longer term certainly we do not want a spread of APBs in relation to the firefighters' pension scheme. We want pay to be core pay, to be non removable and therefore to be fully pensionable as it traditionally has been under the FPS.

So there are a number of challenges. The difficulty that we have is that the employers tell us at national level that they are very pleased with CPD and how it operates, and they are certainly not minded at this stage to engage in discussions about how it can be improved to the benefit of our members. That's not acceptable to us; it's not acceptable to Conference. We will take the issues that have been raised in moving the Resolution to the employers. That is going to be another difficult discussion, but we will take those issues to the employers as soon as we practically can.

Day One – 19th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. No need for a Right to Reply. I will therefore put the Amendment from Strathclyde to the vote first. Can I see all those in favour? Thank you. Can I see any against? No. That is *carried*.

Can I therefore put Resolution 6 from Northern Ireland as Amended by Strathclyde to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see all those against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We now move on to Resolution 7 from Merseyside entitled CPD Payments and the Executive Council are offering qualified support. Merseyside to move, please.

Resolution 7 – CPD PAYMENTS

Conference is appalled by any fire and rescue authority who considers removing CPD payments from FBU members for contemplating or undertaking industrial action and views this as being outwith the national CPD procedures agreed within the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise the matter as one of the utmost importance at the next NJC meeting with a view to reaching agreement within the Council, that the nationally agreed CPD procedures do not provide for the removal of CPD for the contemplation or undertaking of industrial action alone, and such actions by local employers are in breach of the procedures.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO MARK DUNNE (Merseyside):

President, Conference, we've experienced the threat of CPD taken off us on Merseyside on a number of occasions over the last 12 months. We don't believe it's just happening in our Brigade; we believe it's a national issue and we ask for your support and to be aware of what's happened.

The threat of removal of our CPD has happened through intimidation by senior management, through emails to our members, through letters to our home addresses, and through rants by senior management. Why is our fire authority backing our chief fire officer to take our CPD away from us? We believe it's a couple of issues. We believe it's an attack on our beliefs, our collective strength, and our ability to stand up and fight. We also believe they're trying to undermine our legitimate democratic right to partake in any industrial action. That can be from a strike ballot to a work to rule to an overtime ban. It doesn't seem to matter what the issue

is, what matters is that our chief fire officer backed by our fire authority are coming for our CPD.

If you look at what happened with British Airways and their chief executive Willie Walsh, it seems to be a common theme through management that they wish to attack us in many different ways, and our pay is the most direct attack. I'm glad that Conference earlier on recognised Brother Kevin Hughes at the back, and that they showed the support like they have done for the last 18 months. A direct result of what we took to support Kevin in terms of action is where the CPD threats came from. First of all, we decided that Kevin had been badly treated by our management and we decided on a strike ballot and rightly so. Immediately the propaganda started. We are talking within 24 hours. CPD was under threat, it was attacking our right to take strike action, an attack on our right to have a ballot, and saying if you take strike action our fire authority, our chief fire officer, will take our CPD off us. No negotiation, no consultation, no thought, CPD is gone. It became automatically a no strike payment. No industrial action must be taken because as soon as we did in Merseyside you were docked £650 whatever it is on Merseyside. So automatically, other Fire and Rescue authorities are looking at Merseyside, especially South Yorkshire, and saying let's use CPD as a no strike payment.

We don't believe that is what CPD is about. We believe that the EC should bring this to the NJC as a matter of urgency and we do believe that CPD should be treated in its proper form through the correct procedures.

For some reason CPD is desired by our management. After we resolved, through the NJC, our strike ballot in support of Brother Hughes, we moved on five other issues of dispute on Merseyside. So we resolved our strike ballot, we moved on to an overtime ban – an overtime ban that is currently in place and has been in place for six months on Merseyside and is 100% solid by our members, I might add. Applause

But that didn't stop the appalling nonsense coming out of the fire authority and coming out of the chief fire officer and his minions. Yes, we got the emails again to all our work email addresses, yes we got the letters to our home addresses again saying your CPD has gone, how dare you think about taking democratic industrial action, we're after your pay. Yet again, the same as the strike ballot, we had a successful ballot. So we had two successful ballots in the space of six months, yet still our CPD was threatened.

As a result of another successful ballot that we had, with the overtime ban in place (and this will kill you) we then get an email sent out to all employees from our chief fire officer backed by the fire authority saying: yes, you've had two successful ballots; OK, I'm a swell guy,

Day One – 19th May

I won't take your CPD. It wasn't ever about taking our CPD; it was about intimidating our members, it was about bullying our members and making sure that they voted his way in the strike ballot and the overtime ban ballot. That's what we've got to say to you today. Please support us, don't accept the intimidation, don't accept the threats, and don't accept CPD as a no strike or no industrial action payment. Support our Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. Is there a seconder for Resolution 7? Is that formally seconded? *Formally seconded.* Is there anyone who wishes to speak against. The Executive Council are offering qualified support and I ask the General Secretary to outline that.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, I welcome Mark's comments in introducing the Resolution. The qualification is one of tactics because one thing that we are absolutely clear on is that if any employer did attempt to implement the threat that was made in Merseyside, then we would challenge them in any way possible, and that would include potentially taking legal action through whatever means we were advised was the best mechanism. The qualification purely relates to that: that if there is the potential of a legal challenge to any actual cases of CPD being docked (and we need to be clear that at this stage we haven't had any of those cases as a result of industrial action) then we would need to very carefully consider, on the advice of our lawyers, the implications for any legal action of what we had raised at the National Joint Council or with our employers. I will leave it at that. We are very clear that CPD is not designed to be used in this manner. That's very clear from anyone who reads the document. There is huge frustration about CPD itself, but it's very clear if you read the circulars that relate to it, that it is clearly not designed in relation to dealing with industrial action.

We know what was said in those negotiations, the employers know what was said in those negotiations. I think the real point here is actually about the state of industrial relations in various of our Fire Services, including particularly Merseyside. It is a scandal that we have chief fire officers who adopt this line endlessly, they endlessly seek to undermine the rights of our officials to negotiate on behalf of their members, endlessly seek to create splits and division in the workforce, endlessly seek to bully and intimidate people into either leaving the Fire Brigades Union or, as Mark outlined, attempt to influence industrial action ballots or people's consideration on industrial action.

I think Mark at the end summed up the best method of dealing with those people. In spite of that intimidation

(and we've heard it elsewhere, the same hints that they would do this) in each case when we have gone to our members in industrial action ballots over the past year, our members have responded magnificently. Suddenly, isn't it remarkable, those very same bullies and principal managers who want to try to intimidate and bully people into voting no or ignoring our call suddenly have to back track. That's the best message that we send back to those people.

We will take on board the issues that are raised by Merseyside in the Resolution, and the qualification, as I say, is around the issue of legal advice about how any legal challenge to actual docking of CPD payment would be made. That would be considered in relation to discussions with the employers.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. There's no need for a Right to Reply. I put Resolution 7 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously.*

We are now on to Paragraph A5 of the Annual Report, Paragraph A6, Paragraph A7. Now on to Resolution 21 from Humberside entitled Industrial Relations. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Could Humberside move, please, and could London get ready to second.

Resolution 21 – INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Conference condemns the refusal of certain FRSs to abide by the nationally agreed 'Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service'. FBU officials are continually having their requests for external assistance from the NJC Joint Secretaries or other organisations refused by management teams who prefer to impose policies without sufficient consultation or negotiation.

Conference therefore demands that the FBU national negotiators raise this issue at the earliest opportunity at the National Joint Council with a view to amending the 'Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service' to ensure Fire & Rescue Service managers adhere to the amended protocol and cannot refuse a reasonable request for external assistance.

HUMBERSIDE

BRO NEIL TRENCHARD (Humberside):

President, Conference, the refusal by certain Fire and Rescue Services to abide by the nationally agreed Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire &

Day One – 19th May

Rescue Service is totally unacceptable. The agreed Joint Protocol outlines the principle including the joint commitment to continuously improve industrial relations (certainly not done in the majority of Fire and Rescue Services), the joint commitment to ongoing dialogue and exchange of views, including face to face meetings (again, a big problem in a lot of Fire and Rescue Services).

Comrades, the Grey Book promotes joint solution seeking. However, we still have Fire and Rescue Services imposing changes to our members' terms and conditions without sufficient consultation and negotiation, and refusing requests for external assistance from the NJC, Joint Secretaries or ACAS. Conference, we ask that the FBU national negotiators raise this issue at the earliest opportunity at National Joint Council with a view to amending the Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service to ensure our employers adhere to the amended Protocol and cannot refuse a reasonable request for external assistance. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Neil. Joe to second.

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

We have to second this Resolution because industrial relations in London at the minute is pretty much non-existent. It is very likely we're going to be in dispute on a number of issues, industrial relations being one of them but a number of other issues that are coming, shifts etc. I'm going to take this opportunity just to mention a Regional official who was suspended, Paul Henry. He's been treated quite disgracefully by the fire authority over the past six months. I want to take this opportunity to send best wishes from this Conference to him and his family. *Applause*

Thank you for that. As part of the preparation for a dispute we visited Region 9's Committee, we visited Region 11's Committee. So thank you to Nobby Clarke and Danni Armstrong for the invitation. There was Brigade chairs and secretaries from the bordering Brigades around London. We were there to explain why we were going to take action and what the reason was behind it. Part of the brief was to show what the issues on industrial relations were and what the problems were.

If you can bear with us I'll start. I don't know what time I'll finish though. One of the reasons was termination of agreement without consultation, termination of contracts for non operational firefighters, termination or the failure to deliver welfare packs as agreed, failure to agree on middle managers' car users tax liability, child care problems, failure to provide testing procedures for causation of drug and alcohol, failure to abide by

consultation, negotiations on procedure and policies, removal of 16 firefighter posts for alternative crewing, imposition of other work increases, dictating what can be raised at FBU branch meetings, dictating who FBU officials are, refusal to allow FBU branch meetings to take place during working hours, etc.

When we finished giving out that list (it's not exhaustive, by the way, there's a lot more than that) the Brigade chairs and secretaries were all nodding their heads in agreement because what's going on within London seems to be happening right round the country. It would appear that industrial relations is going to be a major factor. The situation is we've just had the recent elections, we had local elections in London. Several of the councils now returned to the Labour Party. We wait to see what the make up of the fire authority is going to be. Matt already mentioned the chair of our fire authority, a gentleman called Brian Coleman. He's quite simply an obstacle to any serious industrial relations within London because he is authoritarian, he's egotistical, he's a lot of things I can't say over a loudspeaker without being sued for slander. Unfortunately, they have to be true for slander and I think they are all true. His attitude is quite appalling. We take the opportunity while we are standing at this microphone to say this to Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London: do us all a big favour by sacking him like the NJC sacked him, get a half decent chair in there and somebody we can work with! *Applause*

Industrial relations is meant to be a two-way street, and having politicians like Mr. Coleman and other politicians like him is getting us nowhere. I think it's quite right that we've got chief fire officers and fire authorities like they've got in Merseyside, and having negotiations is a bit of a hard battle.

I thought I'd try to finish on an upbeat if I can. I spoke to Jim Logan now and I've just spoken to Alan about the Fire Minister. It's one of the best speeches I've ever heard from a politician from this platform. I thought it was a breath of fresh air! He was talking about he was going to speak to local FBU officials for an opinion, he's setting up working parties to specifically include the FBU, taking on board FBU ideas. That is what industrial relations is about. It's about listening to both sides of the argument and putting into practice when we come up with a good idea. That is what good industrial relations should be. I'm retiring in a couple of years and I'm going to move to Dundee. I ask you to support the Resolution. Cheers. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I see those who wish to come into this debate, please? Alan, and I will ask the General Secretary to outline the qualification.

Day One – 19th May

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

Thanks, President. Conference, we are supporting Resolution 21. The crux of the matter for us is that the whole protocol relies on a joint commitment to find a resolution. However, how committed are management when they claim in Grampian, for example, that consultation isn't "an exact science", or that they will participate if and when they view it as an appropriate consultation topic? Semantics also prevent consistent application.

One small example again. The Grey Book capability should be captured under discipline procedures, which was once Grampian members' only way into accessing the appeal process involving board members. However, because the capability word wasn't mentioned, they refused to use it. The route became blocked until we eventually achieved a return to an appeal process following any form of dismissal. Unfortunately, all too late for our good comrade Kevin Ogilvy who was sacked for not fitting the bill only months before.

While Brigade and Regional officials search for methods of pressurising management into abiding by industrial protocols, national negotiators may wish to consider an amended version of the industrial protocol that states that the status quo should prevail until process has been exhausted, because far too often industrial unrest occurs because management impose their particular proposals on our membership while they still claim to abide by the protocol. Support the Resolution, let's keep at them until we begin to experience application of the Protocol. Grampian supports.

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. One error which the AGS reminded me I made earlier in relation to Mr. Coleman. Of course, he is no longer the chair of the employers' side of the National Joint Council. *Applause* It was obviously such an experience it stuck with me!

The qualification in relation to this Resolution is about seeking the evidence to pursue the aims of the Resolution. The mechanism by which we believe we can do that, hopefully, is through the National Joint Council. The National Joint Council has recently sent out a survey on industrial relations. I know many of you already will have completed that. One test of whether people have got the remotest possibility of having good industrial relations is whether our Brigade officials can actually sit down with managers or managers can agree to sit down with our Brigade officials and complete the

survey. In a number of cases that appears to be the case, but there are clearly cases where we can't even complete the survey in that joint manner. So we will review the findings of the survey, and that may provide the evidence for making changes to the Protocol.

I think just one thing that we need to think carefully about, one thing that I would ask is taken back to the employers' side from this Conference is that we want to see good industrial relations in the Fire and Rescue Service. But that does, as has been outlined here, require principal managers, require fire authorities, require chief fire officers to commit to genuine dialogue, genuine consultation, genuine negotiation with our officials. It does not mean giving us two weeks' notice of a change and then implementing that change unilaterally and claiming, because they wrote to the Brigade secretary with two weeks' notice, that he or she has had adequate consultation time. That's not negotiation or consultation; that's not good industrial relations.

We are told by the employers that there is that commitment from their side. I would ask this then: why is it that in the past five years we have had a record number of local disputes in the Fire and Rescue Service? Unprecedented in the history of the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK. That is because of managers at principal level (apologies to the ONC there), chief fire officers and fire authorities embarking on that process of unilaterally imposing change. The simple message from this Conference, the simple message from the Fire Brigades Union is: we're not having it! We're not having you imposing change on us! We will discuss, we will negotiate, we will have a dialogue, but that's got to be on the basis of being treated as equals. We're the people who represent the people on the frontline doing that job. You'd better start listening to us. You'd better start negotiating with us, or that conflict will continue. We will respond, if they fail to comply with good practice in terms of industrial relations, in a very traditional manner, we will ballot our members and we will take industrial action if that's what's required. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. There's no need for a reply. I therefore put Resolution 21 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We're now on to Paragraph A8, Paragraph A9. Come to the rostrum, please brother.

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, we've got a situation in Strathclyde and up and down the country as well. It's the position of former leading firefighters who now

Day One – 19th May

find themselves required to act up to watch manager as and when the watch manager is off. As a consequence of that, they take charge of a multi-pump station, they get a development rate of pay. However, many of them are real unhappy over it. They never sought promotion, they didn't want to build a career, they were happy sitting there as a leading firefighter in charge of a second pump. Now they have to go to multi-pump incidents and take charge. They feel exposed and vulnerable. They've never been part of an assessment of command competence to take charge of an incident and certain of them have been through our ADC. They're really unhappy and they think it's a major anomaly. We really need to have the Workforce Development Group on the role map and national occupational standards to look at this and get it amended to ensure that people in that position don't feel vulnerable and exposed, don't feel that if they make a mistake doing a job at a major pump incident where they don't feel competent to do, that they can then suffer disciplinary action and potentially suffer the consequences of dismissal or whatever and maybe lose their pension. That's the position of many of our members in Strathclyde. I think we have to get that raised nationally and resolved. Thanks, Conference.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

National Officer, Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, John. Looks like we're going to be really busy again this year! This is an example of principal managers not using roles properly. Crew managers first level of supervision, but it's for crews; it's not for watches and there are operational elements within the crew manager role to cover you at operational incidents. But it's about a scale of incident which I understand. It's the administration duties we've got to look at as well, from issuing bars of soap on stations to discipline and poor performance. We've got to look at this in the round. What we've also got to look at is the work of the Workforce Development Group. We're looking at development processes. We've already started to run the challenge on improper use of development which hopefully we'll get something out of. We've got quite a lot of Brigades who were involved in it. The Executive Council are fully supportive of it.

We will be looking at all the roles this year. We'll be looking at giving guidance on the knowledge and understanding contained in the roles and what we actually think the training and the skills should be. I'm quite confident in IPDS, I'm confident in ADCs if they're used properly, but I think that is the crux of it: if they're

used properly. We've got to make sure that the Workforce Development gives guidance to show people that IPDS is a good system but it's got to be used properly. That includes using the role map properly.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. Paragraph A10. OK, now is an appropriate time to break for tea. Back in your seats promptly, please, at 3.45.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

Take your seats, please, finish your conversations. Before I ask Steve to give a further report from the Standing Orders Committee I'm just going to give you some advance notice. You'll be pleased to hear we're making good progress. That means that if we conclude this afternoon's business before 5.15 and there's enough time remaining, we will move on to some of Thursday morning's business starting at Paragraph G1 through to G9 inclusive, and Resolutions 70 and 71 from North Wales. So North Wales in particular, you might want to brush up your speeches! Anyway, Steve, please give a report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thanks very much, President. Can you just turn to your Programme of Business, please, Page 7: Resolution 66 has been withdrawn. Page 16: Resolution 53 has been withdrawn with the right to speak. That concludes that report, President, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? *Agreed*. Thank you. We're now on to Resolution 15 from Suffolk entitled Specialist Skills with an Amendment from Strathclyde. Would the movers and seconders get near to the front, please. The Executive Council are supporting the Amendment and the Resolution. I ask Suffolk to move 15.

Resolution15 – SPECIALIST SKILLS

This Conference instructs the Executive Council, with the FBU Workforce Development Group, to survey every brigade to investigate what specialist skills or roles, as identified by local IRMPs/RRPs, are being carried out and if these roles are agreed locally as being inside or outside of NJC agreed rolemaps and if they attract an Additional Responsibility Allowance.

Day One – 19th May

This information should be circulated to brigade officials in the form of guidance to assist in local consultation and negotiation of specialist skills or roles.

This guidance is to be produced and sent to brigade officials by Conference 2011.

SUFFOLK

Amendment

In line 5, after “allowance” delete full stop, insert “and if so the value of that allowance.”

STRATHCLYDE

BRO STEVE COLLINS (Suffolk):

President, Conference, we are accepting and supporting the Amendment from Strathclyde. Since the introduction of local risk management planning, and possibly even before, Fire and Rescue authorities around the country have been identifying and introducing new and additional specialist skills that our members are either being asked or told to carry out. Some of these skills are introduced just to meet local needs, others are being introduced to meet national or regional resilience needs. With the introduction of these skills, different policies have been introduced around the UK in individual Fire and Rescue authorities, either through agreement with the FBU or imposed by fire authorities. This practice of introducing more and more skills for our members to carry out through local risk management planning continues year on year.

As these are introduced at a local level there is often little or no national guidance or positions on their introduction. This means it's down to local officials to try and navigate and negotiate the introduction of these skills in each Service, often having to search or request information from other officials around the country.

In Suffolk the Fire and Rescue Service identified through an IRMP that they required personnel at certain stations to carry out swift water rescue techniques. This is a completely new role and skill for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. As local officials we started to investigate the national picture of water rescue roles, the understandings that have been found or reached in other Services. We received around 40 responses to our request for information and would like to take the opportunity to thank those officials who responded to us. We also used the Labour Research Department database to look for even more policies. From the responses we received, there were nearly 40 different agreements or understandings on water rescue alone.

That got us to ask the question at Suffolk: if it's like that for just water rescue roles, then what's it like for all the

other different specialist skills we've got around the country? The skills are wide ranging from water rescue, line rescue, NVQ assessors and dog handlers. So this Resolution is calling for a national survey to be completed by Brigade officials along with any agreements or imposed policies that exist in Fire and Rescue Services as to what specialist skills are being carried out around the country. What the survey needs to make clear is whether policies that exist in Fire and Rescue Services were agreed with the FBU or were imposed by the fire authority.

Conference, by supporting this Resolution, having guidance published and sent to Brigade officials, this will assist the local officials when engaging with management and give them a good knowledge base on positions elsewhere in the country. It will also save local officials potentially having to reinvent the wheel every time a new specialist skill is identified by a fire authority through an IRMP. The guidance will also detail the skills that attract additional responsibility allowances in Services, and it should also extend to how these are agreed or negotiated with the FBU. We also support Strathclyde's Amendment which will include the value of these allowances so we can get a comparison around the country as well.

We realise that moving this Resolution will mean slightly more work for Brigade officials, but however, by collecting the information now, good local agreements that do exist on roles and the payment of additional responsibility allowances can be used by officials to negotiate policies where imposed, or renegotiate them if required. The aim of the guidance should be to ensure that best practice is shared throughout the Union. The ultimate aim should be to raise all Services to the best skills levels, protection for our members, and the highest additional responsibility allowances.

Conference, support this Resolution. The FBU can start to ensure this best practice is coordinated, that nationally we can start moving towards shared and unified positions on different skills levels, that our members undertake now or will be asked to undertake in the future. Conference, support it. It will assist local officials, it will identify any conflicting policies, it will start to get a position of unity throughout the Union. The ultimate aim of the guidance should be to bring every Fire and Rescue Service to the highest skills level possible and also the highest additional responsibility allowances, not the lowest. I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Was there a seconder for 15? *Formally seconded.* Can I have Strathclyde to move their Amendment, please?

Day One – 19th May

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

President, conference, this is my last Conference. I'm retiring in 13 days. *Applause*

On a personal note, can I thank you for all coming to my retirement party. I'm genuinely touched that many of you actually made it and travelled the long distance. Can I thank the EC for providing the accommodation and the buffet! *Applause*

Seriously, one of the anomalies from the 2003 pay agreement was the introduction of the ARAs. Perversely, we note that nationally we have different positions where one Brigade accepts that water rescue or line rescue attract an ARA and another does not. Currently, we have the Labour Research Department portal on our website, but we need a more comprehensive and detailed database that has all the different Brigade positions with regard to an ARA and the level of payment it attracts. We need to work together to represent our members' interests collectively. If we cannot achieve this by a national agreement, then we need the information and tools to enable us to locally negotiate or consult on ARAs. It's important that we set the barrier at the highest level of payment achieved and that we do not go below this level. No longer should we hear arguments such as: "we cannot afford it" or "we've always done it before". It's time we set the agenda. No longer should there be a differential of one Brigade receiving £250 whilst another receives £500 and yet another gets nothing for the same ARA. Let us identify a fair payment too for enhanced skills and make it available to all. Support our Amendment. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alex. Is there a seconder for Strathclyde's Amendment? *Formally seconded.* Is there any speakers against? No. The Executive Council are offering support. General Secretary. No, there's no need for Matt to come in on that, there's no need for a Right to Reply. Sorry, my mistake, National Officer, Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks for that. Just a note of caution with this one. It is quite a big body of work and I thank Alex for giving us the extra work about getting a value when he's got 13 days left! Can I just say, when we send out a survey, I'm going to have to speak to local officials and see exactly what they want in the survey and make sure it covers all the aspects. Can I just say that when we do send out a survey, don't just put it to the back of the inbox and say: another one from Starbuck, we'll ignore. Can we get it back as soon as possible and it will allow Workforce Development to get back round the table and work on it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. As I said, there's no need for a reply to the debate from Suffolk. I therefore put the Amendment from Strathclyde to the vote first. Executive Council are supporting. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? No. That is *carried unanimously.*

I therefore put Resolution 15 from Suffolk as Amended by Strathclyde to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously.*

We are now back on the Annual Report Paragraph A11 – NJC Annual Survey, Paragraph A12 – Health Issues. Now on to Resolution 13 in the name of Tyne & Wear entitled Disability Leave. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I have Tyne & Wear to move, please.

Resolution 13 – DISABILITY LEAVE

Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise the issue of 'Disability Leave' at the NJC as a matter for discussion, with the aim of having such leave incorporated into the 'Grey Book'.

The implementation of Disability Leave as defined within the TUC publication, Sickness Absence and Disability Discrimination into the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Sixth Edition 2004 – Revised 2009), would require all UK FRSs to ensure that where an FBU member is registered disabled, that any sickness directly attributable to that disability should be disregarded in the calculation of sickness absence monitoring.

TYNE & WEAR

BRO RUSS KING (Tyne & Wear):

Conference, President, our disabled members up and down the country are facing discrimination and disadvantage when they're getting treated for their disabilities. Quite often during that treatment they've got to go on sick leave; that's the only option for them. This is often leading to disciplinary action taken under the banner of sickness absence management.

The DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) defines disability as this and I've just got to read this, sorry: "Mental or physical impairment which affect the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities." These disabilities includes cancer, HIV, diabetes and mental health problems. Have a look in your Annual Report at the back of the Health & Safety part of it, specifically around the toxins. Have a look at all the toxins that we get exposed to in our day to day working lives. All those toxins can

Day One – 19th May

be attributed to some kind of cancer. Also, you've got the asbestos, mental health problems, you've got stress now (we've got a Resolution on stress coming up), overworked. What the DDA states is that workers are entitled to a reasonable adjustment within their workplace. We in Tyne & Wear believe that disability leave is a reasonable adjustment. That's all I've got to say. Support it! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 13?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Conference, we are in the fortunate position of being able to say that we have negotiated this facility within our Brigade. It's now in our sickness absence management policy that disability leave is not counted towards the sickness monitoring levels which we're all having to experience these days. So that's good for us, but we agree completely with the sentiment. This is something that should be enshrined in the Grey Book. It's a real disgrace, we think, that these days employers are being much more stringent towards our members in relation to sickness absence. You all know about that, the number of times that members are now pressured when they're off sick, the fact that nearly all employers now reduce pay, which they're entitled to do within the Grey Book although they have the discretion not to. So they're being much more punitive in their approach towards sickness. It is one of the few good things that has happened in recent years, that we do have more rights as individuals at work for certain things, and disability is one of them. As Russ as already said, many of our members would qualify under the Disability Discrimination Act. So, frankly, it would be scandalous for any absences that relate to those disabilities to be used as sickness monitoring.

It's a very straightforward proposal. I do urge all of you, if you haven't already raised these issues at local level to do so because you can get them incorporated in agreements with your own Brigades. But it is definitely something that should be enshrined in the Grey Book so please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Pat.

BRO PAT CARBERRY (NG&LC):

Conference, President, a couple of years ago we brought a motion to this Conference quite similar to what we're talking about with this Resolution. It related to a case in Greater Manchester where one of our members was being disciplined under sickness and absence monitoring as a result of an HIV condition

which they had contracted. That member ended up having to go to employment tribunal to try to resolve that issue. I am speaking today in support of this. One of the things that came out of that was that our committee set about developing an HIV policy. In conjunction with the Health & Safety Coordinators Committee we produced that document, which I've got in my hand here. The document is only of use if Brigade secretaries negotiate it into the policies that work within your own Brigades. Obviously, it's out there now.

Earlier this week I had the unfortunate responsibility of dealing with a telephone call from a member who was explaining to me that they'd just been diagnosed with HIV. They wanted to know if they needed to resign, they wanted to know if it could mean that they would be sacked, they wanted to know if they had to tell their employer. All of those questions are contained within this document here. So use it as a tool and support this Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pat. I'll ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Tyne & Wear have clearly identified and brought to Conference an extremely important issue and I welcome the comments that have been made during the course of the debate. The qualification from the Executive Council simply relates to the best way to achieve what is identified within the Resolution. Clearly, the final sentence stating that any sickness directly attributable to the disability should be disregarded in relation to calculation of sickness monitoring, that's clearly the correct position and that is what we would all wish to achieve. The question where we believe we will need some further consideration is what the best way to ensure that is. We welcome Dave's comment that that has been achieved in relation to Devon & Somerset in individual discussions about sickness absence management policies within individual Services. It may be that we need to provide further support and advice to local officials on that. The concern that the Executive Council has is that we do not currently have any reference to sickness and absence management in the Grey Book, and we would have to consider the implications of that in terms of whether we would wish to see such a provision within the Grey Book.

I think the other point we would wish to raise is that it may be that we would seek evidence if we were going to raise it with the employers nationally in individual cases. Also, we would advise, if appropriate, that we may wish to take legal action on individual cases if we felt that legislation had been breached by an employer in

Day One – 19th May

an individual case. So I think there's no disagreement about the aims of the Resolution. We would need some further consideration about the best way to achieve the outcome desired by all of us.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. There's no need for any reply on Resolution 13. I therefore put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Paragraph A13 in the Annual Report. Next is Resolution 9 from Strathclyde entitled Annualised Hours Duty System. The Executive Council are opposing. Can I have Strathclyde to move, please.

Resolution 9 – ANNUALISED HOURS DUTY SYSTEM

Conference instructs the Executive Council to investigate the compatibility of current arrangements for (5 Watch) annualised hours operational duty systems with grey book conditions of service and to raise and secure agreement with our employers on the following matters:

- ***A calculation of the agreed number of hours FBU members are required to work to fulfil their contract under any annualised hours duty system.***
- ***Arrangements for the calculation of (when transposed to hours) and provision for the granting of agreed annual leave entitlement.***
- ***Retaining access to extra Annual Leave and Time in Lieu as provided for in the Grey book.***
- ***The negotiation of an appropriate flexibility allowance as compensation for FBU members providing flexibility under any requirement of an agreed annualised hours duty system for FBU members remaining available to work at short notice.***
- ***A commitment that the introduction of an annualised hours duty system shall not lead to a reduction in uniformed operational posts.***
- ***A commitment to ensuring any annualised hours system is family friendly and does not introduce any obstacles to the recruitment and retention of minority groups.***

Progress on these matters to be reported to Conference 2011.

STRATHCLYDE

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, comrades, we've negotiations over some 20 months on the introduction of a five group system in Strathclyde. That included evaluation of an

initial pilot based on a technical advisory panel ruling. Since then, our members in Strathclyde have voted to accept the phased introduction of a five group duty system. The vote in favour was influenced by the experience of our members during the pilot. Although the vast majority of them continued to prefer whole watch system, the predominant view of our members was that the five group pilot as negotiated by FBU officials was tolerable. Therefore, we couldn't convince them that a campaign of industrial action to resist it was justified. That wasn't just the result of successes that we achieved during negotiation; it was also the genuine desire of our principal managers to constructively look at improvements to the five group that benefited our members. They also agreed to regularly monitor contentious issues during the pilot and to hold problem solving meetings. Of course, they didn't do it purely for magnanimous reasons. The primary motive was to influence the outcome of our members' attitudes to the introduction of a five group system. So their tactics altered the level of acceptance of five group.

We as officials were then required to negotiate its introduction. We believe we did ultimately achieve a relatively palatable annualised hours duty system with many safeguards. For example, it means that FBU members on average work just 12 of the potential rostered as their days assigned to them on what are otherwise rota days. This was a reserve for the uninitiated as for the contracted hours through to the 5 or 6 18 day annual leave periods. They can't do it within their regular duty pattern.

Another thing we did manage to achieve was there will be no reduction in establishment levels, we've got a signed commitment from the Fire Board they will not seek to change the system in future, there will be no potential roster reserve worker in four of the five 18 day annual leave periods, there will be no requirement to work any roster reserve shift at short notice, any requirement to work a roster reserve night shift will be confined to single shifts, simplified local agreement on head for head exchanges, no restriction on number of times that FBU members can apply for a day off (subject of course to the exigencies of the service), an agreed introductory payment. In addition, arrangements for applying for the reallocation of any roster reserve shifts where they conflict with personal commitments, particularly care responsibilities. So locally we did have reasonable success in mitigating the loss effects of a five group annualised hours duty system.

However, there's a number of issues where we were not so successful. The main one was in achieving a permanent flexibility agreement for FBU members. We believe that our members are due this because they have to remain available for work 12 times a year at 48 hours' notice. It does play havoc sometimes with their

Day One – 19th May

personal lives, and it does cause problems with care responsibilities and people having to pay for care that they maybe ultimately don't need. So we believe we're still due a payment for that. We haven't, unfortunately, managed to achieve that at local level.

We also continue to disagree on the actual number of hours that FBU members should be tasked to work under a five group duty system. We insist it's 1800, they say it's 1806. There's no agreed means of calculating the number of hours of annual leave entitlement, although there is broad agreement on how that is transposed into the actual arrangements for the 5/18 day annual leave periods. There's only ad hoc arrangements to repay annual leave lost during sickness. So clearly, our members in Strathclyde are quite frustrated over this.

We also feel that the introduction of a five group long term will mean a detrimental impact on encouraging under represented groups to come into Fire and Rescue Service. These difficulties with care arrangements will, for females, cause them more problems than they would for males. We believe the best means of achieving progress and enshrining the gains that we did manage to make is with a national agreement. That agreement would ultimately apply to other FBU members already working annualised hours duty systems. So that will bring improvements to them also.

Our minds are also concentrated on the potential impact of the much heralded cuts to public sector budgets and the effect that this might have on local agreements. That, we believe, makes it all the more vital we have a national agreement. I'm aware of the argument that a national agreement may herald an attack on members still working a 4 watch system. However, if any agreement we make nationally secures the agreements we are seeking in this Resolution, this will add additional costs and conditions to Fire and Rescue Services considering the introduction of a five group system. So agreement is far more likely to protect a 4 watch system than threaten it. Clearly, if the agreements demanded by the Resolution are not achieved, then our national negotiators should reject them and none of our members should be any worse off.

Our members in Strathclyde expect and are entitled to have these matters raised with our national employers. If they are not, we are effectively accepting the undermining of our conditions of service. Please don't ignore our members' concerns simply because these issues haven't yet impacted upon your Brigades. After all, your Brigade may be targeted next. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Is there a seconder for Resolution 9?
Formally seconded. Is there anyone else who wishes to

speak, either for or against before I ask the Executive Council to outline their opposition?

BRO CHRIS JACKSON (Avon):

President, Conference, our members in Avon do not want anything to do with this five shift system. The Avon management brought it to us over two years ago now. Luckily for us, they didn't really understand it so we managed to fight it off! But they still raise it, but they now call it "demand led crewing". It is still the same thing, but we managed to fight that off. If we agree to pass this Resolution I'm sure they'll come back to us and say: you've now got a national agreement with the FBU on annualised hours duty system, but they'll only use the bits that suit them. With the threats to public services that we've talked about at length today, one of the things I'm sure they're going to miss out of this agreement is the commitment not to reduce uniformed operational posts. Our management give us many commitments on things they were going to do and have failed to deliver and I'm sure they're going to do that in the future. So if we agree to this, they're going to cherry pick the bits out of it that they want, say it's an agreement with the FBU and they're going to bring it in. Conference, please oppose this. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Chris. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. The Executive Council are asking Conference to oppose the Strathclyde Resolution. I think in many respects it reflects the points that Chris has just made from the rostrum there. I think in doing so the Executive Council recognise fully the very difficult position that Brigade officials are in in trying to negotiate around duty systems. We've had a number of changes in duty systems. Let's be blunt, in most cases (and I'll come on to the Strathclyde bullet points in a moment) the agenda from chief fire officers and fire authorities in changing duty systems is one thing and one thing only: cutting costs. They use it to get rid of jobs. That may be by altering the duty system itself and how people are rostered for work, it may be by reducing night time cover, whatever means it is, we end up with a poorer Fire and Rescue Service in general and our members end up working on poorer duty systems. That's why we ended up in a number of conflicts around this. Obviously, most recently in South Yorkshire, a very long and bitter battle that members fought against the imposition of change around duty systems.

We recognise fully the difficult circumstances that people are in. In a number of cases, we have been able

Day One – 19th May

to negotiate changes based on proposals, recommendations from the employer, and we've been able to reach a negotiated settlement on the issue of new duty systems. So there is no criticism whatsoever. I don't think anybody in this Conference is in a position to criticise anybody else in relation to where we might end up at a local level on duty systems. It's simply a very difficult position we face.

However, I think the concern that we have around the Strathclyde Resolution is precisely this. That, in terms of the information the Executive Council have, the majority of our members currently working on a shift fire station remain working on the traditional 4 watch system. There may have been changes to start and finish times; there may have been other changes but the majority remain working on the traditional 4 watch duty system. Our concern about what Strathclyde are proposing is that we put another nail in the coffin of the four watch duty system. On that basis we are asking Conference to oppose.

That doesn't mean that's the end of it. The Executive Council has a responsibility to provide support, assistance and training to officials. We've tried to do that. There has been a number of courses around managing change, dealing with change at work and so on, where the issue of dealing with changes to duty systems has been a central feature of that training that we've introduced at a national level. I know that many officials have taken advantage of that and have used it to good effect in local negotiations and subsequently in local campaigns. But if we raise this, there is no national agreement on a five watch duty system, there is no national agreement on annualised hours. I have to say that if we were to reach such an agreement, in our view, it would simply strengthen the hand of local employers to come and raise their demands for change and say: how can you oppose this; this is now in the Grey Book. We think that would put our Brigade officials who are fighting in very difficult circumstances to protect that traditional duty system into a very difficult position.

In terms of the points that are in the Resolution, I think they are all commendable. Clearly the Strathclyde officials, Strathclyde Brigade Committee have done a very thorough job in trying to get the best deal and getting the best deal that was available in the circumstances. There is no criticism on anybody here. I think that in terms of other officials who are facing similar proposals, then the sorts of issues, the experiences that our officials in Strathclyde have had and how they've made progress on that I think does need to be shared. We can do that through either education, through circulars and through officials discussing with each other. But we do think there is a huge risk to large numbers of our members if we seek

discussions with the employers on trying to get national agreement on a five watch duty system. We would urge Conference to oppose.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Do Strathclyde wish to exercise their Right of Reply?

BRO JOHN McFADDEN:

He's put his finger on it. The introduction of five group annualised hours by and large will be as a result of cost cutting measures. We'll find other Brigades, as a result of the cuts that we face, attempting to introduce these. If they do, if they agree these locally, then what they'll do is they'll go for the cheapest, worst option in all cases. If we don't have a national agreement then they've got a free hand to do that.

I recognise the issues around the 4 watch system and the continuing enjoyment of that by our members, and the dangers of opening this up at this very sensitive time. In the interests of unity I'm going to withdraw, but I'm going to ask the EC to reflect upon what's likely to happen as a result of the public sector cutbacks and proposed changes to duty systems that will ultimately result from that. Thanks. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John, that was helpful. We now move on to Resolution 10 in the name of Cleveland entitled Nationally Agreed Wholetime Shift Duty System. The Executive Council are opposing. Can I have Cleveland to move, please.

Resolution 10 – NATIONALLY AGREED WHOLETIME SHIFT DUTY SYSTEM

This Conference is concerned that Fire Authorities are introducing changes to wholetime shift duty systems on a piecemeal basis. This is leading to the increased fragmentation of the fire and rescue service, with different wholetime shift duty systems in place throughout the country. With this in mind, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to enter into negotiations at the National Joint Council on a single, nationally agreed wholetime shift duty system. This nationally agreed wholetime shift duty system must include a reduction in the number of hours worked with no loss of remuneration, and the payment of a shift allowance in return for working unsociable hours. The Executive Council should seek negotiations with the employers as soon as possible after close of this Conference and provide regular updates on progress to all members.

CLEVELAND

Day One – 19th May

BRO STEVE WATSON (Cleveland):

President, Conference, in the last few years we've seen savage attacks on terms and conditions and shift systems throughout the country. The outcome of the 2003 pay agreement led to a situation where the employers considered it to be open season on FBU members' shifts and the sixth edition of the Grey Book provided major opportunities for the employers to dictate the agenda in terms of changes to shifts. Basically, fire authorities have told us what they want, and Brigade Committees have had to challenge and resist on a Brigade by Brigade basis. Brigade Committees have been attacked and targeted one by one. I wish to commend those Brigade Committees that have faced those attacks and fought off those attacks in some cases. But the Fire and Rescue Service is more fragmented now than it's been for decades.

There are many different wholetime shift duty systems being worked throughout the country with more and more being proposed almost on a daily basis. I've just heard one there, Chris. Thanks for that. What was that: demand led crewing? That's a good one! We've seen the introduction of 12 hour shifts, 11 hour days and 13 hour nights; 10 hour days and 14 hour nights; different variations of self rostering and annualised hours; low level of activity and risk; five watches with an amber watch – the list goes on and on. I haven't even mentioned the mixed bag of shift systems worked by our control room members if the RCC project goes ahead.

This situation has fragmented the Fire and Rescue Service and has chipped away at the foundations of this Union. It could be one of the reasons that our members seem to be disengaging from the democratic processes of our Union. In 2005 we elected our General Secretary with almost 13,000 votes and 21,000 members voted in that election. This year we've elected our General Secretary with 6,000 votes with only 10,000 members voting. Conference, maybe our members are trying to tell us something.

This Resolution is about trying to turn the tide of these attacks. It's about not continually reacting to the agenda of the employers; it's about trying to set the agenda, our agenda. It's about having a coherent national strategy to turn the tide of the attacks that we've seen on individual Brigades. It's about us telling the employers that yes we'll change, we'll modernise, but we want to do it on our terms. It's 2010. There's nothing wrong with demanding a shorter working week. There's nothing wrong with demanding a shift allowance for working unsociable hours. Let's not be embarrassed or uncomfortable or frightened about demanding that. There's nothing wrong with demanding that the deliberate and systematic fragmentation of the Fire Service is reversed.

Conference, we know that the achievement of this Resolution will be extremely difficult, but don't reject it because you think it's unachievable. How do we know what we can achieve until we try? Only reject it if you're absolutely sure that you don't agree with the principles behind it. Only reject it if you think that a nationally agreed shift duty system is a bad idea. Only reject it if you want to see the continued fragmentation of the Fire and Rescue Service and this Union. Only reject it if you want to see more and more Brigade Committees picked off one by one. Only reject it if you want to see more and more disputes in individual Brigades over shift changes and more of our members threatened with dismissal.

Conference, any union is at its best when it fights as one: strong and united. At the minute we seem to be fighting as 57 individual units and that weakens us. We need to turn the tide, we need to start setting the agenda not continually reacting to the employers' agenda, we need a coherent national strategy that ensures that we reverse this tide of attacks as a strong and united national Union not as individual local units fighting their own little battles. We need a coherent national strategy to prevent individual Brigades getting picked off one by one on shift changes. Conference, support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is there a seconder for Resolution 10? *Formally seconded.* Was there anyone wishing to speak either for or against? There is a brother there. Did I see another hand? Brother there. Two speakers, please. One at the back first.

BRO MARK KINSALLA (Essex):

President, Conference, as you're all aware, we're currently involved in a long running bitter dispute in Essex. We have sought a number of assurances from the Service which may constitute a negotiated collective agreement. A small part of that agreement is the inclusion of a guarantee from the Service that there will be a protection of our 2-2-3 shift system and start/finish times. This is a shift system that is precious to every one of our wholetime members, and we believe it is a good, family friendly shift system. This Resolution would jeopardise our position in Essex as we have negotiated a commitment from management to maintain our current shift system. We do have sympathy with all other Brigades that no longer have this same shift system, but feel we will be letting our members down in Essex if we were to support this Resolution. Therefore, we urge Conference to support those Brigades that still have the 2-2-3 shift system in place and oppose this Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

Day One – 19th May

BRO RICHARD JONES (Surrey):

I am speaking in opposition to the Resolution. Short and sweet, a bit similar to what we just heard. I admire what Cleveland are trying to do here. We should be taking the fight to the employers on several things, but this will just put the 2-2-4 in jeopardy. We will be offering it up on a plate for them. You can't reduce the hours on the 2-2-4 and keep it. It will just be giving the employers what they need to bring in a 5 watch, a 6 watch, whatever it takes. It will be the end of the 2-2-4. Oppose. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Richard. I'll ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, I think as the two contributions to the debate have made clear again, it does reflect the concerns around the previous Resolution on duty systems. Our fear is very much that it would put a nail into the coffin of the traditional 4 watch duty system. I repeat, the majority of our members still working shifts, are still working on the 4 watch duty system. In many cases they have either successfully fought off attacks on that duty system, or intend to fight off attacks on that duty system. I think it would be wrong of this Conference to endanger the position of conditions of service of those members who have managed so far to protect that duty system.

I accept fully some of the comments that Steve made regarding the fragmentation of the Fire and Rescue Service. The reference back to the agreement in 2003 clearly linked duty systems to local integration risk management plans and employers have used that provision as a way of forcing through change on a number of occasions. Nevertheless, there are other dangers as well in the Resolution, dangers which I think at some point we may need to grasp and take on board. But if you take the question that we have an existing policy on a shorter working week, the question of how and when we implement is a matter of some considerable concern. Again, a shorter working week could well be used by employers as a final way of killing off the traditional 4 watch duty system. We would have to consider very carefully the reaction of our employers if we were to make such a claim. Traditionally trade unions have argued, for example, for a shorter working week as a way of creating jobs. We know what the agenda of the employers in the Fire and Rescue Service is. We know that one of their agenda items is the reduction of night time cover. We know all the graphs that are produced to say that there are fewer fires at night, therefore you need fewer firefighters at night. It's actually entirely feasible that we could make a claim for a shorter working week, and if we've not thought it out, we actually end up

with fewer jobs at the end of that process because the biggest obstacle to them cutting jobs is the traditional 4 watch duty system. I have to say that I think we need to fully support those members and those Brigades and those Brigade officials who are currently able to maintain those duty systems in place. Conference, we do urge you to oppose the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Do Cleveland wish to exercise Right to Reply? Come to the rostrum, please.

BRO STEVE WATSON:

Conference, we've heard that this Resolution will mean the death of the 2-2-3 shift system. I want to say from the outset now that Cleveland still works the 2-2-3 shift system: 8 hour days, 16 hour nights. We expect that to last for however long we can keep it. We don't see why, with a bit of imagination, we still can't maintain the 2-2-3 shift system as a nationally agreed shift system.

The Resolution merely calls for a nationally negotiated benchmark if you like. If Brigades can negotiate something better, well fine, but it calls for a nationally negotiated shift system. However, having said that, in the interests of unity we're going to withdraw this Resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Again, that was helpful. We will now take Resolution 12 from Staffordshire entitled Maternity Pay Business Case. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I have Staffordshire to move please.

Resolution 12 – MATERNITY PAY BUSINESS CASE

This Conference is appalled that many Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs) are still only paying the minimum amount of money when it comes to maternity pay. We applaud those FRSs who have adopted the FBU's "Best Practice Maternity Document" and have progressed the issue of maternity pay for our women members.

In order to assist Brigade Officials with negotiations on maternity pay, we call upon the Executive Council to develop and produce a standard business case template.

This template is to be completed and sent out to all Brigade Officials and Regional Women Reps within 3 months of Annual Conference 2010.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Day One – 19th May

BRO RICHARD WILLIAMS (Staffordshire):

Mr President, Conference, first time speaker. Applause Staffordshire and other Brigades have adopted the FBU maternity policy. This is one of the best maternity policies in the country. We are disappointed with the EC's qualified support as we expected full support from them. We urge the EC to produce and develop a business case so that all Brigade officials can use this to negotiate best policies within their Brigades. As a Union we should ensure that we have the best tools and are in the right position for our officials to work forward and achieve better maternity policies in the Brigades. It is important to have a better maternity policy so that we could increase retention of our female members in our Service. We have over 2,500 female members and we need to retain these members by getting the best maternity policy we can. We need to build on what benefits we have and not just accept the current ones.

Female members who become pregnant are obviously under stress in work, and obviously problems with money when they go off on maternity leave. If they have this policy in place there is a confidence in their return to work and retention within the Fire Service. Please support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

National Women's Committee to second.

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (NWC):

President, Conference, just like my comrade earlier on, in the NWC we are also disappointed that the EC have only given qualified support to this Resolution. We believe that three months is adequate to achieve such a request considering our members are experiencing many problems now. I would urge the EC to give its commitment that this can be achieved. The longer we leave this the longer our women members suffer.

Women members all over the UK are telling us that they're having to return to work early due to financial pressures. New parents need that first year to bond with a newly placed child or newborn baby, especially if the woman wants to continue breastfeeding. This is not happening as the level of maternity pay is poor. Women members are telling us of the anguish they face when having separation issues from their babies. They are feeling pressurised to return to work because they simply cannot afford to take further time off. Some are suffering from post natal depression and some eventually have no alternative than to leave the Service.

Conference, this is totally unacceptable and we cannot let our women members continue to suffer any longer. Some progress has been made on this, and credit needs

to be acknowledged to those reps and officials in the Isle of Wight, Staffordshire and Avon who have successfully negotiated the FBU's best practice maternity document of 39 weeks full pay, a fantastic result! Further acknowledgement needs to go to the reps and officials in the Brigades who have significantly increased the Grey Book minimum maternity pay. This Resolution hopes to achieve further results by providing a tool to assist Brigade officials in their negotiations. We all know how busy Brigade officials are. The pressures are getting greater and the workload is getting heavier. So let's make life a wee bit easier and get this template developed now.

This may then allow our women members to take that much needed year off so they can properly bond with their children, breastfeed and have enough time to recover mentally and physically without any financial worries. They will then be in a positive frame of mind to return to work knowing that they have had adequate time off with their child or children. Conference, we cannot and we must not let our women members suffer any longer. Once again, I would urge the EC to give this Resolution their full support and get the template completed within three months after Conference. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Denise. Was there anyone wishing to speak against Resolution 12? No. I will ask National Officer John McGhee to outline the Executive Council's qualification to the support.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Sisters, brothers, President, Conference, just before I give the qualification, can I seek a wee bit of licence here. I would like to add my personal congratulations to Matt on his re-election to the position of General Secretary of this Union. I took part in that democratic election process, a process which Mick earlier said is fundamental to all trade unions. Democracy is vital. It's also vital that we respect the decisions taken by our democratic processes. I for one have the greatest respect for the decisions of our members. I look forward to continuing to work in our great democratic Union. *Applause*

Let me turn now to the qualification. I can assure Richard and Denise on behalf of the Executive Council that whilst we are giving qualification, there is absolutely no doubt from this Executive Council that there is full support for the sentiments that have been raised in this motion. We've started the negotiations at the National Joint Council. I say this because this is part of the qualification. We've entered into discussions to try to implement our maternity/paternity and adoption leave

Day One – 19th May

claims that we placed with the employers some time ago. We're hopeful that we will make some progress on that. I have to tell you that it's unlikely that we will obtain 52 weeks paid leave, as we sought within our agreement, but one remains hopeful.

The three months in terms of the timescale, we will do our best and we will do that in conjunction with the National Women's Committee and with Staffordshire, to try to produce the template. But one of the things we do want to be careful about is we want those negotiations at the National Joint Council level to be finished within the three months. We hope that they will also then outline what we would need for any further template. The Executive Council, whilst they give qualification, does not mean that they do not give full support. I ask you to make note of our qualification.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. There's no need for any Right of Reply, in which I will put Resolution 12 from Staffordshire to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are back on the Annual Report Paragraph A14 – Miscellaneous Conditions (retirement). Paragraph A15 – Part Time Workers (Retained Duty System) Settlement – Pay and Conditions. We are on to Resolution 8 from the National Retained Committee and North Wales. I'm taking it that the NRC will move, North Wales will second. It is entitled Less Favourable Treatment. Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I have the NRC to move, please.

Resolution 8 – LESS FAVOURABLE TREATMENT

This Conference demands that the Executive Council enter into talks at the NJC with a view to obtaining agreement for a joint secretaries circular to be released that instructs all Fire & Rescue Services of the requirement to treat RDS firefighters no less favourably than firefighters who work full time duty systems and that this statement highlight that this is a legal requirement following our success at the employment tribunal in the Matthews Case.

**NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE
NORTH WALES**

BRO BOB DEWIS (NRC):

President, Conference, following our historic victory in the Retained Pension Case, this Resolution simply asks for a joint circular to be issued that reminds our employers of their legal obligation to treat our retained

members no less favourably than our full-time colleagues when developing and releasing Brigade policies.

It could be argued that there may be no need for such a circular as the judgment in this case was clear. The National Retained Committee believe, however, that, as past experiences have shown, the requirement to issue a joint circular can be of great benefit. It would serve to reinforce this legal requirement, and importantly would be a helpful point of reference to Brigade negotiators dealing with retained issues. Conference, support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Bob. North Wales to second.

BRO CHRIS BURNS (North Wales):

President, Conference, in addition to the points put forward by the NRC, we also believe that such a joint statement will be helpful to our negotiating position when dealing with management. Such statements have been of valuable assistance to our officials in the past. The recent joint statement on consultation and negotiation springs to mind. Such statements have no cost implications to either us or our employers. As pointed out by the NRC, they can help reinforce the position when dealing with the negotiation of a particular policy or matter. As Brigade secretary, I will be directly involved with our management on revision of many of North Wales' policies which now require simple amendments in light of this great victory by the FBU. I'm quite sure my Brigade will not be the only Brigade that will have to go through this process. Support this Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Chris. Was there anyone wishing to speak against that Resolution? No. I will ask the Assistant General Secretary to outline the Executive Council qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, clearly you will be aware of the details that have recently been reported of the outcome of the discussions following the RDS part time workers' court case and outcome. That has been alluded to by Bob. I will address here and confine my points purely to the narrow point of the Resolution, and that is the question of trying to get the National Joint Council employers side to put out a strong circular and to agree to a strong circular indicating and instructing local employers that they should apply no discrimination to part time workers, our RDS members locally.

Day One – 19th May

What we have addressed is the Grey Book issues. Clearly what is being asked for is that local employers address the local terms and conditions and the local practice. We are fully supportive of what the Resolution is calling for. Indeed, we have had those discussions with the national employers.

The problem we do have, the narrow point, is where it is calling upon the NJC to issue a circular making clear there is an instruction. It is a question of achievability. We do not believe that we could persuade the employers to put out a circular instructing. They are voluntary members, if you like. They sign up voluntarily for the NJC. I think we need to make that clear and be honest with Conference that it is unlikely that we will achieve that. We will achieve a circular, we will make that circular as strong as possible. To be honest with you, local employers need to take heed of that circular. We need our local officials to stress the point that not only do we win on national cases, we will win on local cases as well if they do not heed the advice within that circular. We will make it as strong as possible, but I just want to be honest with Conference: it is very unlikely we will get one which says "instruct". Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. There's no need for any Right of Reply. Therefore I will put Resolution 8 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We have got a half hour to go still and we are racing through now to Thursday morning's timetable, after the Closed Session, obviously. We are starting with Paragraph G1 – Executive Council Meetings 2009, Paragraph G2 – Executive Council Attendance Record 2009, Paragraph G3 – Elections 2009, Paragraph G4 – Industrial Disputes.

BRO ASHLEY OLDFIELD (Humberside):

President, Conference, previously in Humberside we have been lucky enough to have a relatively good industrial relationship with our Brigade management. Unfortunately, we saw two senior managers come to the fore. One of these managers was imported from Merseyside, so there were no surprises when our industrial relations plummeted to an all time low. Coupled with this, new managers coming forward we have just seen. We had a successful campaign run by the FBU locally to oppose the chief fire officer's IRMP proposals to close four fire stations and downgrade three others. The outcome of this campaign was a significant victory for the FBU as we had managed to stop five out of the seven proposed cuts.

With this victory and the new senior managers, all of a sudden the FBU became the unwanted guest at every

meeting. We started to see policies being imposed, our members being asked to carry out work on their rota days and at a lower rate of pay than the nationally agreed rates, plus many more attacks on our conditions of service. Ultimately, we were forced to register a trade dispute as our industrial relations had failed. This culminated in the FBU members having to take industrial action short of strike for three months. This was done in the form of an overtime ban.

Having taken this action, we put enough pressure on our Brigade that our chief fire officer agreed to refer the issues to the National Joint Council Joint Secretaries. This was a position he had consistently refused to do previously. With the assistance of the Joint Secretaries the imposed policies were withdrawn and replaced with fully negotiated and agreed policies.

To finish, since our dispute our industrial relations are now back on track. The FBU in Humberside are now fully involved in the consultation and negotiation process. The two senior managers now treat the FBU and its members with respect. Conference, what this shows is we should not be afraid of taking industrial action. It works and it's worked for us. We in Humberside managed to force our management back to the table and to show respect for the FBU, not dismissing them. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Mark from Merseyside.

BRO MARK DUNNE (Merseyside):

President, Conference, if this is a set off of dodgy photos I'm in trouble! Just to remind you, there is in the industrial disputes paragraph the strike ballot taken by Merseyside but what there isn't, although I did mention it earlier when moving Resolution 7, is the ongoing overtime ban that is in place – a ballot that we had to have and were successful. That's been going on for six months. That's not mentioned in paragraph. Could I ask that is rectified through yourself, Mick, cheers.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. John from South Yorkshire first.

BRO JOHN GILLIVER (South Yorkshire):

Thank you, Chair. Conference, I would like to bring you up to date with South Yorkshire. I'm sure most of you already know that we've now settled. How did this happen? I don't know. It's been quite gruesome all the way through, two years at least. It were a combined effort. Through our own members' resilience and quest for what was right. They were prepared to stand up and

Day One – 19th May

fight. It lay dormant for quite a long while and it took something as serious as this to wake us up I suppose.

Also a combined effort because of the support that you, Conference, all our members around this country, gave us as support through your emails, through your donations to our hardship fund, telephone calls, and also importantly, the demonstration in Barnsley. It not only showed the Fire Brigades Union is still strong but it showed the whole trade union movement what we're prepared to do when our terms and conditions are being attacked by such a fierce form of management.

I would also like to mention Mr Paul Woods. I know most of you probably never heard of him, but he's the chair of the Labour Group in Sheffield. He was instrumental in bringing an early day motion to Parliament through also MP Clive Betts and his influence through the political circles within our Brigade.

What did we achieve? First of all, for those who have been following it, we were supposed to go to ACAS. But this process was continually being frustrated by our management, chucking little bits of this and little bits of that of how they were going to tear us apart really and effectively, and upset that process. This also frustrated the fire authority. That resulted in a meeting being brought together. They also allowed the Fire Brigades Union (which is a first) to present their case, to take us to the National Joint Council, which is the right forum to discuss firefighters' terms and conditions. It shouldn't really be at ACAS but at the National Joint Council. That is where we ultimately wanted to be.

The success of our chief fire officer has always been dependent on the full support of the fire authority and he had always achieved that until now. He's got a split. The fire authority agreed that the matter should be referred to the National Joint Council. The outcome of that was that, yes, we agreed the implementation of 11 hour day shift and a 13 hour nightshift. Also, with no further changes to shifts for five years. Meal breaks and rest periods remain the same, as per Grey Book. There are a few chiefs already, I hear, putting spin on our agreement and saying that this wasn't achieved and that we've had these meal breaks reduced. That is not the case, Conference. We still have the same meal breaks and 12-7 rest period also.

We achieved also pay protection for station officers from 2007 until their retirement date, joint commitment to improved industrial relations. This was a long and bitter dispute. However, management do appear to be listening and working with the FBU and even looking at and engaging a second full time official. Disciplinarys have been dropped and grievances upheld. This has not happened for a long time in South Yorkshire. So Conference, President, Executive Council, as we

seem to put on all our emails: In unity is strength. South Yorkshire has proved, together with your support, we won this battle! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks John. Joe MacVeigh.

BRO JOE MacVEIGH (London):

Well done, John. Well done to South Yorkshire and all the comrades in the dispute last year. Very briefly on G4, I'd just like to thank the members in London for their support of the Fire Brigades Union dispute last year. Well done to the Brigade and Regional Committee on the hard work they did. We thought it was a successful conclusion to our dispute. Well done. Thanks a lot. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Joe. I call the General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Two points really. First of all, on Mark's point about the Annual Report and the point raised in relation to Merseyside, we're more than happy to address that either directly with yourselves or through your EC Member if we can discuss that afterwards.

I think it is worth, following John's comments from South Yorkshire, spending a few moments considering the battle that we had in South Yorkshire. It is the most important battle we've had certainly over the past 12 months and probably for some considerable time. I think we do need to remind ourselves how significant that was, what we were up against, what we were facing, and what the proposals originally were. We had a principal management team, we had a chief fire officer who, over a period of time, had ensured, for example, that the Fire and Rescue authority members disengaged with our officials. There's a lesson there for all of us that we do need that engagement, that dialogue, with Fire and Rescue authority elected members. We may not like their politics in many cases, but they ultimately are our employers and we need to have that dialogue to ensure that the views of firefighters are made clear and are heard.

This team had come in to undermine a longstanding system of good industrial relations in South Yorkshire. It was done for a purpose. It was done to drive through a cuts agenda, to drive through a change agenda. I think what was demonstrated there was a complete and utter contempt towards our members by that principal management team. Clearly, if you listened to what was being said in the fire authority, if you listened to what people were saying privately, they were clearly saying:

Day One – 19th May

don't worry; we'll get this through; the South Yorkshire FBU members won't do anything about it; it's not a major thing; it's easy, and they had such arrogance and such contempt for our members that they felt this was going to be an easy win for them. Well we proved them bloody wrong there in South Yorkshire and our members there deserve the congratulations of every single one of us. *Applause*

They attempted to do it by mass dismissal and re-engagement. They said at the time, and I was in some of those fire authority meetings when they did it, it's merely a technicality, they said; you won't lose your jobs; you'll be re-employed; and by the way, this happens elsewhere. Well I don't bloody care if it happens elsewhere. We're not engaging in a race to the bottom whereby the worst employment practices in private industry or elsewhere in the public sector even are introduced into the Fire and Rescue Service and we'll fight them every single step of the way. *Applause*

Two final points on this. One of the most important outcomes of that dispute is this. We have used it to build a Brigade Committee and strengthen the Brigade Committee, and build a new generation, a new layer of activists. That's what we have to do when we fight. We learn the lessons, we ask our members to learn the lessons. One of the prime lessons that our members learned in South Yorkshire is that you cannot trust those people to deliver you decent conditions of service. The only organisation that can do that is the Fire Brigades Union. That's why they got involved. That's why we've got new layers of branch officials. That's why our education is taking off in Region 4 as a result of that. That's the one major positive outcome of that.

Just a final point, an anecdotal point. There is someone I was speaking to in South Yorkshire in the long run up to that battle. I said privately: what do you think is going on? He said: one concern I've got is what the youngsters are going to do, because we have meetings and they don't say a lot. I have to say, throughout the history of the trade union movement people have always said: the younger generation, they're not as tough as we were. I have to say again, the young members in South Yorkshire proved them absolutely wrong, because they were solid and determined on those picket lines. We have to get out and engage with our young members in every single Fire and Rescue Service throughout the UK. They're the future. They have to be brought into this activity in the Fire Brigades Union. They're the people who will defend this Service for the future for firefighters and for the communities we serve. Well done to South Yorkshire! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I have an announcement to make, which is that at the conclusion of the Standing Orders

Committee election I am pleased to announce that Brother Steve Shelton has been re-elected unopposed. I congratulate Steve, or depending on how you look at it, send commiserations his way. I'm sure we'd like to congratulate him on his re-election. *Applause*

We are now on Paragraph G5 of the Annual Report, Black & Ethnic Minority Members National Committee Report 2009. Paragraph G6- Black & Ethnic Minority Members National Committee Annual General Meeting Report 2009. Paragraph G7 – Control Staff National Committee Report 2009. Paragraph G8 – Control Staff National Committee Annual General Meeting Report 2009. Paragraph G9 – Final Appeals Committee. We are now on to Resolution 70 in the name of North Wales entitled Internal Union Discipline 1. The Executive Council are opposing. Can we have North Wales to move, please.

Resolution 70 – INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE 1

This Conference wishes to place on record its belief that natural justice cannot be served, where in any FBU Internal Union Discipline case, the aggrieved person also acts as the investigator. This Conference instructs the Executive Council to implement such procedures as appropriate to address any such miscarriages in the future, including acknowledgement and implementation of any legal advice sought.

NORTH WALES

BRO CHRIS BURNS (North Wales):

President, Conference, we believe that it is against natural justice for a member to make a complaint against another member and then to investigate their own complaint. If management did this we'd be up in arms. It makes a mockery of the internal discipline procedure. Support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 70? *Formally seconded*. Is there anyone else wishing to speak on the Resolution? I will ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, I think we would like Conference to oppose the Resolution. That is because of the precise way in which the Resolution has been worded. It refers to "the agreed person". The problem we have with that phrase is what it actually means or may mean in different circumstances. It is entirely possible, we believe, for an official to be aggrieved by the actions of an individual

Day One – 19th May

and nevertheless to conduct a fair investigation in accordance with the rules and processes laid out in the Rule Book.

I've had some informal discussions with the officials from North Wales. I believe I understand the intention of the Resolution. We have some sympathy for that. If it was a question of asking the Executive Council to consider the concerns that North Wales have raised, then I think that would create less problem. The difficulty we have is about the precise wording of the Resolution that we have in front of us. On that basis we believe that there is no necessarily insurmountable obstacle to somebody who may be aggrieved by the actions of an individual carrying out an investigation. An example, if I can give an example, we may have members who breach policy, we may have members who steal money off the Union that don't directly impact on the official tasked with carrying out an investigation. That official may nevertheless feel aggrieved about the behaviour of that individual. That is the concern we have with the Resolution. On that basis we would ask Conference to oppose Resolution 70.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Do North Wales wish to exercise their Right of Reply? No. OK. I will therefore put it straight to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please, of Resolution 70? Keep your hands up for a moment, please. Thank you. Can I see those against, please? Thank you. Can I see any abstentions? That is *defeated*.

We are now on to Resolution 71 Internal Union Discipline 2, also in the name of North Wales. I ask North Wales to move, please. The Executive Council again are opposing.

Resolution 71 – INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE 2

This Conference wishes to place on record its belief that natural justice cannot be served where the aggrieved person also acts as the complainant in any FBU Internal Union Discipline case. This Conference instructs the Executive Council to implement such procedures as is necessary, including the acknowledgment and implementation of any legal advice sought, to address any such miscarriages in the future.

NORTH WALES

THE PRESIDENT:

Resolution 71 has been formally moved. Is there a seconder for Resolution 71? *Formally seconded*. Is there anyone who wishes to speak to it? No. I will ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Formally! To be honest, Conference, the arguments are exactly the same as in relation to the previous Resolution. I won't take up any more time. We're asking Conference to oppose the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

I'm assuming you are not wishing to exercise your Right of Reply, North Wales? No. Formally exercise your Right to Reply, OK! I will put that one straight to the vote then. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Thank you. Can I see any abstentions? Thank you. That is *defeated*.

We are now on to Paragraph G10 – Firefighter Magazine and Communications.

BRO ALAN ANDERSON (GMC):

Conference, President, I am retiring in 12 days time!
Applause

President, I was unsure where to bring this subject up as FBU diaries are not mentioned anywhere else and so this Paragraph will have to do. Let me tell you of a situation I found myself in at a meeting of various union members prior to International Workers' Memorial Day. We were discussing how we could get International Workers' Memorial Day more recognised by union members of all unions. I suggested perhaps it was possible to print something in our union diaries as this might help. At this point, to my great surprise and embarrassment, every other representative showed me their diaries with International Workers' Memorial Day clearly mentioned. Please, can we follow that example and do the same. Maybe some other dates could go in it as well: Idaho Day, Mesothelioma Day – all of these just as examples. Thank you.

President, will you indulge me for one minute. You just had a community newsletter. Please read it. They do a great job. There's a stall out there. Go there, find out information. We need your money. Please, please donate. Thanks very much. Cheers. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. I'll ask the General Secretary to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Alan, I don't think there's any problem with us exploring that. What I would suggest is that if there are other dates, rather than us just plucking up a list ourselves, people wish to suggest should go in the Union's diaries

Day One – 19th May

I suggest they are passed to us through Regional secretaries or EC Members and we'll look at amending that for next year's diary.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We move on to Paragraph G11 – National Gay and Lesbian Committee Report 2009. Paragraph G12 – National Gay and Lesbian Committee Annual General Meeting Report 2009. Paragraph G13 – National Retained Committee Report 2009. Paragraph G14 – National Retained Committee Annual General Meeting Report 2009. Paragraph G15 – Officer Members' National Committee Annual General Meeting 2009. Paragraph G16 – Officer Members' Seminar 2009. Paragraph G17 – Organising and Recruitment. Mark.

BRO MARK WILSON (West Yorkshire):

We had this talk about diaries, get your diaries out. Today I'm actually going to give the EC a pat on the back for something that they've done. It's regarding the National Organiser, Daniel Giblin. In West Yorkshire last year management proposed to us that they were going to introduce a co-responding scheme within a cluster of four retained stations. The Brigade Committee decided that we'd take proactive action on this and try to head the proposals off before they actually occurred. What we did was organise a series of branch meetings at these branches in which we called in the National Organiser Daniel, Thompson Solicitors, and the Brigade and Divisional officials for that area.

We deliberately constructed those meetings in such a way that first of all we had Thompson and the officials basically outlining what the benefits of FBU membership were and what they could get from their FBU membership. We then introduced the FBU policy on co-responding to the members at that branch and we openly discussed that issue. To be quite blunt, this is where Daniel really came into his own because he had a wealth, an absolute mine of anecdotal stories of where things had gone horrendously wrong with co-responding firefighters, where schemes had collapsed in other Brigades. It really was enlightening to those members to see the view beyond not only their own fire station doors but beyond their own Brigade boundaries.

What we then took was a third stage of the discussion, we informed them that quite bluntly it would be a voluntary scheme, that they would be paid an ARA if they took it up, but also the flipside of that, they would be in breach of FBU policy and they would be investigated as a result of that. We also advised that it would be better for them to make a collective decision not to co-respond, because obviously if five are out on a fire engine and two are co-responders then they won't

worry about whether they mobilise the other three or not, and when they get to the incident, what do those other three do? We advised them to make a collective decision.

We had some cracking debates. We took one branch who had a paramedic member there. We turned that branch a full 180 in what was an absolutely brilliant debate. I have to say again Daniel played a full part in that.

The ultimate end of it was all four branches fully backed the FBU's co-responding policy. The co-responding policy, because of their responses to management, was stillborn; they never even went there once they realised that the people weren't going to do it. I have to say, we would not necessarily have got that result had we not been able to access Daniel. My plea is that we've just debated the fact that there may well have to be some belt tightening within this Union. I would strongly urge the EC that the National Organiser role is not only maintained but could be expanded. Thank you, Chair.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. I will ask the General Secretary to respond to those points you made.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I welcome Mark's comments about the role of Daniel as our organiser. If you like, just to develop that a little bit further, again we've mentioned South Yorkshire. I'm sure South Yorkshire officials could equally get up and comment on some of the roles that Daniel played in terms of the mapping of the workforce in South Yorkshire, and engagement with RDS members to ensure that that ballot result was solid, and that strike action was solid among RDS members when it took place.

There is other work that's going on elsewhere, where we are dealing with detailed mapping. It does assist us in getting a far more accurate picture of the makeup of the Fire Service, of the profile of our membership, of the actual real density we have amongst RDS employees within the Fire Service. Daniel has played a key role within all of that. It does strike me that there is still a little bit of hesitancy on the part of some officials to utilise him fully and to engage with him. He has now a wealth of experience around all of those issues. I think in my experience, every Brigade Committee which has made use of Daniel's support and services have found it extremely useful. I would echo what Mark said and welcome that and encourage other Brigade Committees, if they haven't done so already, to take up that opportunity.

Day One – 19th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Can I remind delegates that there is a social function this evening in the Fox & Goose Pub in Cable Street, 8.00 for an 8.30 start. At 8.30 to 9.45 there will be a film called Breaking Rocks. It is a documentary about the Jail Guitar Doors initiative, directed by one of our own members, Alan Miles. From 9.45 to 10 there is a question and answer session with speakers including the General Secretary and our very own film director, Alan Miles. Then from 10 till 11 there is music by Johnny Neesom and Leon Walker who are graduates from the Jail Guitar Doors programme. Apparently, it may also include a special celebrity guest from the Region. We don't know who that might be, but we wait with baited breath. That's in the Fox & Goose Pub.

Other than that, I will adjourn Conference and look forward to seeing you in your seats at 9.30 tomorrow morning. Thank you.

Conference adjourned

Day Two – 20th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, everybody take their seats, please, and finish their conversations. We are about to resume this morning session of Conference. Can I remind Conference that we are now back in Open Session. We have concluded the Closed Session business. Before we resume this morning's timetable, the General Secretary has a short announcement to make.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks President. Conference, some of you may have picked this up from the news. I know everybody's got Blackberrys these days and so on and walks round looking at the news on their phones. There has been a Government announcement this morning announcing a series of policy measures and there is a reference to the Fire Service in that which makes reference to the intention to stop the forced Regionalisation of the Fire Service. That's not particularly clear in terms of a Government statement. We are obviously monitoring that and making contact with the Department to see what is actually meant by that phrase. So we will keep Conference informed if further information is forthcoming.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We are now on to Resolution 69 – Membership Secretaries Duties from Humberside. The Executive Council are supporting. Humberside to move, please.

Resolution 69 – MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES DUTIES

This Conference notes with concern the decline in FBU membership and believe that this is mainly due to the reduction in uniformed posts by the majority of UK Fire & Rescue Services.

Conference therefore calls for the Executive Council to carry out a review of the responsibilities and duties carried out by Brigade Membership Secretaries throughout the union.

Following this review, guidance issued to Membership Secretaries, including where necessary the appropriate rule changes brought, to ensure maximising FBU membership within UK Fire & Rescue Services, by promoting the organising and recruitment of FBU members. Should the review identify an increase in workload for the position of Brigade Membership Secretary, then the annual

financial recompense should also be reviewed to more align it with that of the other FBU Brigade Officials.

HUMBERSIDE

BRO ASHLEY OLDFIELD (Humberside):

President, Conference, as a membership secretary myself for the last three years I'm only too aware of the importance of retaining and recruiting members into our Union. We are constantly under attack by our dithering Fire and Rescue Services who are removing uniform positions throughout the country by one means or another, be this by removal of roles such as technical fire safety officers who have been replaced with civilian posts, or reduction in frontline firefighters. This, along with deliberate attempts by both Fire and Rescue Services and our national employers to promote other unions and affiliations within the Fire and Rescue Service has had a severe impact on our membership. With this in mind we need to look very carefully at how we recruit and retain employees into the FBU. In years gone by, it was expected that all new recruits would just join our Union, but unfortunately in today's climate much greater work needs to be done to ensure that we can enrol these new employees.

It has been expected that membership secretaries know and understand the best ways to do this without further training or support. This Resolution is asking for a review of the work carried out by the membership secretaries at present in order to determine where help can be offered by promoting and organising a recruitment campaign. By completing this review throughout the UK I believe it will show the requirement for a national strategy on recruitment and retention within the FBU, as well as the requirement to keep our data up to date. This strategy will need to highlight the differing methods and approaches we can and should be using to enable us to be successful today and into the future when dealing with membership.

The role of a membership secretary within a Brigade when entering into industrial action is of extreme importance. We have seen other unions such as RMT and Unite during their disputes suffer when errors in membership data has led to court action, a position we do not want to find ourselves faced with. That is reason alone to review our own position. I think you should agree.

We may also find that membership secretaries are also an integral part of Brigade negotiating teams and they have had to develop following the large increase in workload for all FBU officials. This is also increasing the burden on these individuals who are no longer just issuing membership cards and ensuring payments are sent, by constantly campaigning in one area or another for the benefit of our members.

Day Two – 20th May

This review will highlight the need to amend a number of our Rules in order to allow membership secretaries to complete their role as best they can, Rules such as Rule 5(1)(c), which highlights the duty of membership secretaries to issue membership cards that are no longer forwarded on to them. Rule 20(3)(d) despatching contributions to Head Office, where now this is done directly by our payroll sections. Rule 21(3)(b) which lays out these duties as their responsibilities as a Brigade official. There are no Rules expressing the need to continually update databases, no Rules about recruitment for either new employees or in areas of low membership uptake, no Rules regarding changes to personal details, variation of nominations or any other individual issues.

We have seen changes to how our membership data is kept, and now have a system run by Head Office staff without any amendments to the role of a membership secretary or the Rule Book. Now we need to address these issues. This review will take all of these issues into account and move us forward to where we should now be. Who knows, we might even be able to start to enrol people online like some of the other unions. Let's take this opportunity to revitalise this role within our Union and give all membership secretaries the tools they require to do the job.

Let me close by making it clear what this Resolution is asking for. We're asking for a full review of the work done by and the responsibilities of all membership secretaries; guidance to be issued to membership secretaries following this review detailing what is expected from them in this role and how they can achieve these objectives; changes to the Rules of our Union in order to allow membership secretaries to complete this most important role. Finally, if following this review it is found that an increase in workload has been identified, this should be acknowledged with an increase in the annual financial recompense in line with other Brigade officials. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 69? *Formally seconded.* Anyone wishes to speak against? The Executive Council are supporting. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, just on behalf of the Executive Council I very much welcome the Humberside Resolution. I think all too often the role of the membership secretary is undervalued. It is absolutely essential to the effective functioning of the Fire Brigades Union. Ashley correctly made reference to some of the court cases against unions in relation to industrial action. We need that accurate information to protect ourselves in those

circumstances. But it's much wider than that. I think this discussion relates very much back to the discussion earlier on on the challenges facing the Union in terms of finance, because there is out there a source of income and that is employees in the Fire and Rescue Service, and it is primarily currently RDS employees who are not currently members of the Fire Brigades Union. Again, membership secretaries can have a key role in the campaign that is necessary to ensure that we build our membership there.

We're happy to undertake the review. I think that will probably fit into the work of the Reorganisation Committee, and the points about the various Rules referring to membership secretaries are noted and hopefully we will be able to report back as quickly as possible, and if possible by next Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. No Right of Reply required. I therefore put Resolution 69 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Were those votes against or were they late going down for in favour at the end there? Are there any votes against? No. Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to the Annual Report Paragraph G18 – Political Fund, Paragraph G19 – RAFT, Paragraph G20 – Regional Offices and Officials.

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

Thanks, President. Page 99 of the Annual Report states that the Brigade chair is vacant. Although some of my friends and colleagues may think I'm a vacant, I'm still here! I was ordered a six month break for health reasons and I'd like to thank the EC Member for that. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Graeme, for bringing that to our attention. I'm sure it will be rectified in time for next year's Annual Report. We are on Paragraph G21 – Retired Officials, Paragraph G22 – Membership Statistics. Gordon.

BRO GORDON McQUADE (Central):

Page 107 – G22, you see headings along the top. It would appear a number of members are under the heading "Levy to Labour". Could we have an explanation of what the Levy to Labour is, please?

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Gordon. There was another question over that side.

Day Two – 20th May

BRO MIKE TREMELLEN (Cornwall):

Thanks, President. Same question. It's just in relation to that. We had some concern from members with regard to our disaffiliation from Labour a number of years ago. There appears to be some confusion as to what that column actually means. If you would explain that, thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Were there any other questions/points on G22? I ask the General Secretary to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks to the comrades for bringing that to our attention. That is an error in the way the table is titled because of the decision to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. That refers to members who have completed the form requiring that none of their political fund should go to affiliation fees to a political party, but since we are not affiliated to a political party under the current policy that doesn't apply to anyone in any case. So it is an error. We can issue a circular to clarify that point.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Paragraph G23 – Union Trustees, Paragraph G24 – Women Members National Committee Report 2009, Paragraph G25 – Women Members National Committee Annual General Meeting Report 2009, Paragraph G26 – Control Regionalisation Advisory Group, Paragraph G27 – Reorganisation Sub-Committee, Paragraph G28 – Integrated Risk Management Programme Planning Board.

We are now therefore on to Section D Pensions and I will bring in National Officer, Sean Starbuck.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, Mick. I will just give an update on where we are with various issues around pensions. First of all, commutation. The issue is now with the Pensions Ombudsman. We're still claiming maladministration against either CLG or the Government Actuaries Department. We put out a circular last week explaining the correspondence so far and a timeline of events.

The Pensions Ombudsman is considering if they've got the jurisdiction to deal with this, because CLG are claiming that they are neither the manager nor the administrator of the scheme. They're manager of the scheme when they want to change it, but they don't want to be the manager of the scheme in this instance.

Our position is still to get an early implementation date. We're not giving any guarantees, but we've got to be

quite clear we haven't closed the door on anybody yet. We've dealt with over 6,000 grievances on this one and we've had a fair bit of success but it's still ongoing.

The next issue is the RDS access to the pension scheme. We've had detailed negotiations with CLG and their legal team. We believe we've negotiated a very good outcome for RDS members into a scheme based on the new firefighters' pension scheme but with the benefits of the old firefighters' pension scheme.

The EC looked at the negotiated position, recommended acceptance to test case members initially, and then to the wider RDS members, put out a circular on 7th May to home addresses explaining the remedy we're recommending. It is quite a detailed position but it does outline all the situation and what we've achieved up to now. The next step is a full consultation with RDS members, very similar to the situation we had when we did the full consultation on the conditions of service issue.

Modified blueprint, which is basically the new modified scheme. They're calling it a modified scheme. It's like a hybrid of the new firefighters' pension scheme with the benefits of the 1992 firefighters' pension scheme. That's going to go through Parliament as soon as they're ready to look at it really. We've got our legal team looking at it, and we're expecting it to be finished by the end of the year, but you never know with this current situation, this political uncertainty as they're calling it.

Pensionable pay. We have got quite a lot of issues around pensionable pay. We're dealing with it in quite a few Brigades. Ivan's quite busy on this one, as you can imagine! We've been raising issues around inconsistencies with pensionable pay for about a year now. They did put out a circular, 11/2009 which they asked for responses on what we deem should be pensionable pay. The FBU responded and when we went to the Firefighters Pension Committee on 15th March CLG came back with a list of what they think should be pensionable. I've got to say, nobody wanted London weighting to be not pensionable, and nobody wanted a change to the way that flexi duty is pensionable, apart from CLG, and they put a position forward that in the future it should be pensionable in an additional pension pot which is similar to the CPD.

We raised this issue and we managed to get it taken off the table. I've got to say, FOA, RFU were both there. Obviously, we made a very strong representation and asked FOA what are you going to do about it if it does get pushed, because we know what we're going to do about it; we're going to defend members' pensions.

We've also got to be aware of the options for the future proposal. I don't want to start any hares running at the moment, but we did get several papers dropped on us

Day Two – 20th May

at the FPC on 15th March. The options they're looking at, they're looking at tiered contributions, fixed commutation rates instead of the sliding scale from 19 down to 16, they're looking at increased contributions and then there was quite a few lengthy paragraphs on the closure of the FPS transferring into the new firefighters' pension scheme. CLG wanted a discussion at that time. They wanted a discussion based on those paragraphs. We made it quite clear that before we enter into any discussions on pensions of that magnitude that we want to see full costings, we want to see a lot more detail than they're providing.

We had a bit of a Mexican stand off when they said: tell us what you can accept; tell us what you can't accept and then we'll provide details. Eventually, we won them round to our way of thinking and we said: we will only consider any change to the FPS if you provide us the costings. We're not saying we're going to agree to them, but we want to see what your proposals are going to save the scheme. They said the scheme has got to be viable for the future.

We were supposed to get these by 13th May. Unfortunately, 13th May Firefighters' Pension Committee was cancelled. It was cancelled via a short note saying because of the political uncertainties we've had to cancel this meeting. We wrote back to them and said: this is not acceptable; we want to see the information you said you'd provide us by 13th May. We haven't got anything yet. We can't make any assumptions on how it's going to change. We don't want to set any hares running. I've had loads of people saying: do you think they're going to change this, do you think they're going to change that? We're not sure. All we're saying is we're not going to make any knee jerk reaction. We're going to look at all the information and we're going to report it to members through the usual channels.

So that's where we are on pensions. We've got to be aware that public sector pensions are under the spotlight and the firefighters' pensions are not going to escape that spotlight. We've got to be ready to react, and the FBU will, I'm sure, always defend members' pensions as we always have done. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. We now move to the Executive Council Policy Statement – Do you want to come up on the Paragraph? Anybody else? There are two speakers over here wish to come up on the Paragraph. OK.

BRO ROGER MOORE (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I just wanted to reaffirm the fact that we know they're coming for our pensions again. I just wanted to draw Conference's attention to a

Resolution put forward by Strathclyde in 2002, Resolution 56: "In light of the ongoing reviews of the firefighters' pension scheme this Conference reaffirms its commitment to vigorously oppose any attempts to make detrimental changes to the scheme or to ring fence new entrants. Positive moves to make any of the above changes shall be resisted by all means necessary including the use of national strike action." Let's not forget that. *Applause*

BRO MIKE TREMELLEN (Cornwall):

President, Conference. Similar again. We had an Emergency Resolution in from Cornwall that was Ruled Out of Order on the basis that it wasn't of an emergency nature. Part of the reason given was that we already have the policy concerning attacks on pensions moved in 2002 by Strathclyde as mentioned previously. Our concern is that because it was passed in 2002 it only makes reference to the FPS whereas ours encompassed the NFPS as well. So can we get confirmation that the existing policy as passed in 2002 would apply in the event of attacks on both the FPS and/or the NFPS? Thanks.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK:

If I can be clear, our current policy and our current understanding – and I'm sure the EC are fully supportive of this – is that we will defend attacks on any firefighters' pension scheme, whether it's the 2006 or the 1992, or the local government pension scheme.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. Now then, we'll turn to the Executive Council Policy Statement entitled Pension Abatement and Re-employment in the Fire and Rescue Service. There is an Amendment from the Black & Ethnic Minority Members. I call upon the General Secretary to move the EC Policy Statement. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. Again, can I take a little bit of licence in the 24 hour news world that we live in. Some slightly better news has just come through. People will be aware of the injunction taken against Unite in the British Airways dispute. We are able to report that apparently Unite have won the appeal on that. *Applause*

That obviously is good news, although I think as Unite have made comment in the press, they should never have been there in the first place because those laws shouldn't be in position.

Comrades, President, Conference, moving the EC Policy Statement on Pension Abatement and Re-employment

Day Two – 20th May

in the Fire and Rescue Service. The background to this is debates at previous Conferences. In 2007 a Kent Resolution was carried calling for a campaign against the rules which allow abatement in the Service. Following that, last year a Northern Ireland Resolution was also carried and that called on us to review the impact of that policy as a result of re-employment practices within the Service and to report back. We were asked to report giving a view on whether pension abatement was potentially detrimental to establishment levels, outside of best practice on recruitment and selection, and potentially undermining our ability to campaign to defend the current retirement ages within our pension schemes. The statement that you have before you highlights the findings of the Executive Council in all of those respects. It lays out the benefits of the existing policy and clearly points out a number of potential problems that arise from it.

There were questions that were asked from last year's Resolution which are clearly answered in the report with an explanation in each case. The Northern Ireland Resolution asked whether abatement on re-employment was potentially detrimental to establishment levels, and the report you have in front of you shows that in our opinion it is. A firefighter re-employed on a similar role, which has now, for example, been deemed to be a non Grey Book job, means that a Grey Book job has been lost and the establishment reduced as a result. This assists employers in the reduction of Grey Book staff, and in our view the increased casualisation of the Fire and Rescue Service workforce by the creation of an increasing number of non Grey Book roles formerly performed by Grey Book employees and FBU members. The FBU consistently campaigns to protect Grey Book jobs. The EC has concluded that this practice is undermining our own position.

The Northern Ireland Resolution secondly asked whether abatement on re-employment is outside of best practice in relation to recruitment and selection of employees for the Fire and Rescue Service. Again, the conclusion of the report is that it is. The only way that re-employment and abatement could be within best practice for recruitment and selection is if the process was out to open competition and the re-employed person was put through the whole process alongside other applicants. Our examination of the facts revealed that in reality that is not generally happening, as many re-employed people only retire for a split second before becoming re-employed. In addition to this, re-employment without open competition, clearly in our view and our conclusion, can have an adverse effect upon equality and diversity within the Fire and Rescue Service.

The third question asked in the Northern Ireland Resolution was whether the current position on abatement after re-employment would undermine the

Union's position to defend current retirement ages within the pension schemes. Once again, the conclusion of the EC Policy Statement is that it has precisely that effect. We're all aware that public sector pensions are under close scrutiny. Sean has just outlined some of the discussions which are already underway, and we can expect those discussions to continue. The FPS is being examined very closely by CLG, as are all public sector schemes. The introduction of the NFPS in 2006 with a retirement age of 60 made very clear what the Government's view on the retirement age of firefighters should be.

We defended the current retirement age within the FPS but re-employment within the Fire and Rescue Service is clearly being used by CLG officials to show that firefighters who retire are perfectly able to continue in their roles, and therefore a way of saving money within the FPS would be to raise the retirement age. We know from statements from this Government, both before and after the election, that public sector pensions are under scrutiny again. We have a huge Achilles heel in that whenever we argue for the current retirement age within the FPS, and when we argued against the increased age for new entrants and members of the FPS, CLG officials responded to us by saying that hundreds of firefighters are taking advantage of re-employment and working well beyond those ages already. Clearly, a major flaw in our argument when dealing with CLG officials and Government.

The current debate about options for the future has included several references to the raising of the retirement age in the FPS and the fact that that large number of firefighters welcome the opportunity to work beyond retirement age is used within those arguments. So we have to be extremely careful. We don't want to provide ammunition to civil servants or to politicians in government that they will use against us on this issue.

In addition to the questions within the Northern Ireland Resolution, we also need to understand that re-employment means that opportunities for new and possibly younger firefighters are lessened, and that the age profile of the Fire Service is gradually raised. The opportunity to create a more diverse workforce is also limited and undermined, in our view, by this practice. So the Executive Council would like to thank Northern Ireland for bringing the Resolution last year. It did initiate an important piece of work and an important process of clarification around a key matter within the Service.

The Statement recognises that some individuals will see and believe that re-employment is beneficial for them, and it would enable them to continue working after they have accrued a maximum pension entitlement. Re-

Day Two – 20th May

employment is clearly discretionary, and abatement currently applies only in the public sector. It is also used, in our view, within the Fire and Rescue Service to reward the favourites. And it is clearly, in our view, open to abuse within the Fire and Rescue Service. I'm sure there are examples from around the Regions of such abuse of this practice.

The Executive Council have concluded therefore that re-employment should not be encouraged and that the policy of the Union should not be to pursue the ending of the current rules on abatement, and in that respect to reverse the decision agreed following the Kent Resolution in 2007.

In conclusion, I think the key point that we make within the Statement is in the last line. Our priority in such debates is to protect the pension rights of the vast majority of members. The Executive Council, on that basis, in terms of protecting the pension rights of existing and future members of the pension schemes within the Fire and Rescue Service conclude that we should not pursue the ending of the abatement rules and that we should not encourage members to seek re-employment within the Fire and Rescue Service beyond retirement. I move the Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Is there a seconder for the Policy Statement? Steve.

BRO STEVE BOYD (NIFB):

Conference, we are seconding the EC Statement on Abatement. Briefly, comrades, Northern Ireland brought Resolution 35 to Annual Conference last year. We asked for this report based on three concerns: the detriment to establishment levels, outwith recruitment practices, and how it undermines our ability to defend the current retirement age. The report shows that there is a problem in all three areas. However, we're well aware of the attack coming our way on public service pensions. We totally believe it would be folly for this Union to open that door. We believe this Statement is the sensible approach which will not undermine our ability to defend our pension scheme. Conference, we urge you to support this Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. There are in fact four Amendments from B&EMM. Can I have B&EMM to move Amendment 1, please. While Colin is coming to the rostrum, just to advise Conference the Executive Council are supporting the first Amendment, opposing the second Amendment, supporting the third Amendment and opposing the fourth.

BRO COLIN JARRETT (B&EMM):

President, Conference, I am moving the Amendments to EC Policy Statement on Pension Abatement and Re-employment, and supporting the Statement with the following.

Amendment 1. The first Amendment strengthens the policy, outlining that the process of pension abatement and re-employment must be subjected to a full equality impact assessment. Many Brigades will try to get away with just an initial EIA which is unacceptable. A full impact assessment must be done in all areas of diversity explored to ensure that if there's a detrimental impact it is not put in place. This would ensure that consultation takes place with representatives from all six equality strands, and all stakeholders which includes FBU. Let's be clear, if the impact assessment identifies that the policy discriminates, it should not be implemented. That's Amendment 1.

Do you want me to continue, President?

THE PRESIDENT:

If you're happy to move all four at the same time, Colin, that would assist progress.

BRO COLIN JARRETT:

OK. Amendment 2. After clarification, we are going to withdraw Amendment 2.

Amendment 3. This just adds "full", again to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Services are clear on what we demand. We demand that a full equality impact assessment is done, not a partial one.

On to Amendment 4. Again, since we've had the clarification (thank you, Matt) we are going to withdraw that one too.

So just to make it clear so that everybody understands where we are and nobody said that fighting against the continued widespread use of pension abatement is going to be easy: it is the right thing to do; it is the right thing for the future of our Fire Service; it's the right position for the Fire Brigades Union to take. Please support B&EMM. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Colin. So for the two Amendments that remain is there a seconder for Amendment 1? *Formally seconded*. And is there a seconder for Amendment 3? *Formally seconded*. Can I have an indication, please of any speakers who wish to speak against the Policy Statement? Can I have an indication of how many wish

Day Two – 20th May

to speak in favour of the Policy Statement. I will take both those speakers and then we'll move to the vote.

BRO LEON MURRAY (Grampian):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support of the EC Policy Statement and the B&EMM Amendments. Conference, last year at Conference Grampian moved a Resolution unsuccessfully on re-employment, not realising that our fears associated with it were already occurring in Grampian. You may have read in the media of our Fire Board's secret decision to offer our chief re-employment in the same role, handing him a £350,000 pension lump sum while still attracting £130,000 salary. This has happened in other services, but it was the way it was done in Grampian that resulted in the media interest.

Late in 2009 our Fire Board endorsed a policy on re-employment within our Service. Little did anyone know that they'd already re-employed the chief at the start of that year, the day after he retired. So why did it take so long for the media to take interest? It was because the deal to offer the chief re-employment was done during a closed session of the Joint Fire Board in which the public and press were excluded, a deal worth hundreds of thousands of pounds made in secret in the absence of a service policy. To me, this stinks, especially if I also add that our Board had also paid him a 10% supplement for two years prior in an effort to offset his pension contributions.

It was a deal that smacks of greed, and it's a deal that is an insult to our members that are waiting in line for promotion. This is the only time abatement and re-employment into the same role has ever been used in Grampian, but I fear it will not be the last. It's a clear example of how abusive practices can occur.

The current FBU policy on abatement needs to be changed. Resolution 83 from Conference 2007 was carried at a time when abatement and re-employment was fairly new to us and we were perhaps naïve as to the impact it could have. But three years on, we can see the problems more clearly. We can see the impact it has on establishment levels, on equality, and the threat it presents to our pension rights. The last paragraph on the EC's Policy Statement outlines the reasons for not pursuing the end of the current rules and I fully understand this, but we as officials can reduce the impact of re-employment within the Fire Service by working to ensure that our members are fully aware of the issue and challenge any negative proposals that are placed before us.

Finally, just to balance what the Chair of Standing Orders said earlier on about the football match, Come on Scotland! I urge you to support the Policy Statement. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO RICHARD JONES (Surrey):

President, Conference, I can't remember the exact year the Kent Resolution went through, but at that time Surrey had an identical one going through. We withdrew to support Kent, basically because theirs was better worded. We believed it was the right thing to do at the time. We were under a lot of pressure from our members who could see this as extra earnings, come back, take their pension, get extra earnings. I'm here to apologise really. I pushed that throughout Surrey on the back of that and brought it to Conference (although we withdrew to Kent). It seemed the right thing to do at the time, but I'm here to say it was the wrong thing to do, and I apologise to Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

OK. There were no speakers against so there's no Right of Reply. I will put Amendment 1 to the vote first. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Thank you. That is *carried*.

I will put Amendment 3 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Thank you. That is *carried*.

I will therefore put the Executive Council Policy Statement as Amended to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Were there any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are making good time. We have concluded Thursday morning's business and we've still 45 minutes to go so I will ask Conference please to turn to Page 9 of the Programme of Business beginning with Paragraph B2- Fire and Rescue Service Policy – Government Responsibility – England, Paragraph B3 Fire and Rescue Service Policy – Government Responsibility – Northern Ireland. I will now take Resolution 30 from Lancashire entitled Fire Service Funding, the Executive Council are supporting. Lancashire to move, please.

Resolution 30 – FIRE SERVICE FUNDING

Since the 'Government Grant Settlement' formula was reviewed in 2004, the accumulative increase to the funding has varied considerably between Fire Authorities.

The lowest accumulative increase has been 12.2% and the highest increase has been 36.5% over the same period.

Conference believes that the different levels of funding has resulted in some Fire Authorities implementing greater operational cuts than others,

Day Two – 20th May

which in turn, has resulted in inconsistencies in the levels of operational capability from one Brigade to another.

Prior to IRMP, all Brigades adhered to the national standards of fire cover which ensured a consistency between Brigades. However, since IRMP, the number of fire appliances mobilised to an incident, the attendance times and the number of firefighters crewing fire appliances, is now a postcode lottery.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to instigate a review of the current funding arrangements, with a view to lobbying the Government for adequate funding to all Fire Authorities throughout the UK, reporting back progress to the 2011 Annual Conference.

LANCASHIRE

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

President, Conference, just let me catch my breath. You know how to catch a man out, don't you! Moving Resolution 30 Fire Service Funding. This Resolution follows on from the FBU document entitled A Fair Deal for the Fire Service that was circulated in 2007 which was in response to the Government's comprehensive spending review. That document highlighted the lack of Fire Service funding at a time when the operational role was increasing year on year. Before the removal of the national standards of fire cover there was a consistency in the emergency cover that the different Fire and Rescue authorities provided as in the old A, B, C and D risks. This is now not the case, and the number of operational firefighter posts that have been lost on the back of the integrated risk management planning process varies dramatically across the country. Although all of us have faced attacks in some form or other, some of the Fire Services have seen the loss of appliances, the downgrading of stations and the reduction of crewing levels, whilst others for now (and I stress "for now") have managed to remain relatively unscathed. I'm talking about job losses here.

I think most of us agree that the IRMP process has been about planning for the operational risks. It simply plans to find the necessary cuts to meet the budget shortfalls, with the budget shortfall being dictated at national level by the government grant settlement as this provides the main proportion of the Fire Service funding that you receive in your authority. Time after time individual Brigades find themselves fighting against cuts that have been forced through by the local authority when the reality is that the true source of the cuts is the below inflation government funding, which, in conjunction with the cap on the council tax, can make it impossible to resolve the dispute. Some government

grant settlements have been as low as half of one percent for the last couple of years, which is obviously below the pay settlement so the figures just don't add up.

For those of you that have tried to understand the formula that is used to determine the annual government grant settlements, you'll be aware how complicated it is and that it considers numerous factors such as the obvious ones like the size and density of the population, the levels of social deprivation within your authority area and other special risks, and it goes through to more obscure factors like the length of the motorway networks, etc. However, looking at the wild and varied results it's been throwing up lately, it's as if they're now considering even more complicated factors such as a county's distance from the moon, or perhaps even the chief fire officer's shoe size! I don't know.

By all accounts, not even the fire authority financial wizards understand why they get what they get in the funding settlements. So what chance do us simple FBU officials have when we're trying to understand it? We understand that this is an extremely complex area, and the intent of this Resolution is simply to get a ball rolling by the FBU to instigate a study of how the Fire Service funding levels are arrived at, and in particular the government grant settlements. This will then ensure that FBU officials are better placed to comment, criticise, and more importantly, influence the funding we all receive. It's not about setting one Brigade against another; it's not about trying to get government grant settlements lowered for certain Brigades; it's just trying to understand why we get such funding and why there is differentials on occasion. Then we can start arguing at source to increase the funding for all. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is there a seconder for Resolution 30?

BRO TIM GERRARD (CSNC):

President, Conference, looking at the issue of Fire Service funding from a control room perspective, it is clear that Fire Services in England had made no plans or allocated funding to upgrade their existing control rooms because of the instigation of the Fire Control Project by the last Government. Fire and Rescue Services were assured that Regional Control Centres would start to go live by 2007 and as a result they did not upgrade their mobilising systems until, in some instances, they were on the verge of collapse. In one or two cases the buildings their control rooms were housed in also needed upgrading or replacing. Instead of heeding the advice given by this Union that this would take years to put in place if it worked at all, many Brigades appeared

Day Two – 20th May

to make no contingency plans whatsoever. When Fire and Rescue Services went cap in hand to the Government for help with funding, the response was patchy to say the least. It appeared to depend on how hard an individual Brigade lobbied as to what sort of financial aid was provided.

In one instance it appears that a Fire and Rescue Service got 75% of the total cost funded by CLG, about £240,000. In other instances, it appears they got little or nothing. It meant in essence that local council tax payers were asked to stump up the money. It was a total lottery.

The recent House of Commons Select Committee report into the Fire Control Project has now stated that the Government must ensure that all Regions involved will have adequate fire and safety measures in place during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. Plans should include provision for the maintenance and, where necessary, upgrading of existing control room technology, and CLG should meet the full cost of that to Fire and Rescue authorities where it has become necessary as a result of delays to the Fire Control Project. Central Government is, in this instance, being asked to provide adequate funding to Fire and Rescue authorities. So ironically, not only are the Government spending £420 million and rising on the Fire Control Project (and think how that money could have been spent to improve the frontline of the Fire Service) but they are also being told they must pay to upgrade the existing control rooms that it was meant to replace! Obviously such funding would only be in place while the Regional Control Centres are on the agenda. I can imagine every chief fire officer dashing off to make a request for such funding before the plug is pulled on the project. I know mine did! He asked for £192,000. The rest of them had better hurry. With a bit of luck, they will have until the end of next week.

However, what the Select Committee did is support the principle of proper adequate funding to fire authorities. Conference, I ask you to support this Resolution.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tim. Were there any speakers against the Resolution? No. I ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's support.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, we support. Just a quick comment on some of the issues that Steve raised. He is right, it is an extremely complex area. We have started some of that work already. I recently had a meeting with a number of academics who specialise in government finance, and particularly local government finance. It's complicated, of

course, additionally by Devolution. We have different practices in the four parts of the United Kingdom. We need that information centrally, but we also need to be able to arm our officials at a local level because it will assist in campaigns against the cuts and so on. So we welcome the Resolution, and as I say, some of that work is already underway.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. There's no Right of Reply. I therefore put Resolution 30 from Lancashire to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We will move on to Resolution 31 from Merseyside entitled Fire and Rescue Authority Budgets, the Executive Council again are supporting. Merseyside to move.

Resolution 31 – FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY BUDGETS

Conference notes with interest a number of national reports and ministers parliamentary answers which records significant savings made by fire and rescue authorities over the last number of years.

Conference further notes that some of the same fire and rescue authorities then seek to make significant staffing cuts due to so called budgetary constraints in those particular authorities.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council compiles a report detailing savings made by individual fire and rescue authorities in the last 5 years, including budget shortfalls declared by the same authorities along with associated staffing and/or service cuts proposed or achieved; such a report to be ready for FBU Annual Conference 2011.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO LES SKARRATTS (Merseyside):

Thank you, President, Conference, this is in a manner of building on Lancashire's Resolution 30. Comrades, I fully understand that our position is to oppose the Audit Commission Report, the National Community Safety Report, Rising to the Challenge, but I would ask that delegates bear with us for a few seconds and we can explain our position.

We understand that the Audit Commission attempts to advance some nonsense and comment upon issues that affect us as operational firefighters, but the report does reveal, we believe, one interesting factor that the Fire and Rescue Services and authorities generally, and Merseyside specifically, have saved considerably more than was required of them in recent years. It is that that we are asking Conference to consider within this Resolution.

Day Two – 20th May

The National report identifies that the Fire Service as a whole has reported £185 million of cumulative annually recurrent and cashable efficiency savings, which we believe now paradoxically gives the chiefs and chairs a bit of an issue because, of course, the agenda that they are trying to set is they are trying to blame Central Government for the reason why they had to downsize and propose job cuts within the Fire Service and within their individual fire authorities. It's the "don't blame me, guv" sort of position.

The problem is now, we believe, that Government only asked for £105 million worth of savings for Fire and Rescue Services but they got £185 million in savings from those chiefs, so they get to please the auditors. So they even went in excess of the Government's wildest dreams. But we believe that the real danger now is that the savings that the chiefs got identified by the Report, they're not ethereal savings; they're real, they're cashable and they're cumulative savings, and they are annually recurring. That, we believe, is important.

Take Merseyside for example, comrades. The savings identified by the Report equate in the last four years to a minimum (a conservative estimate) of £23.125 million. That is the last four years alone. The Merseyside Fire Authority declared a £5 million budget deficit to be met only by job cuts. Again, the blame was put on to Central Government. So the real picture is that they got the savings, they got five times the savings that they had to meet by job cuts. We believe that the national report identified and captured those savings. They can't get off the hook on that one.

So the question must be, surely Conference, are the financial crises genuine, or are they manufactured? We know there's problems out there; we know there's financial pressures, but we also know that some chiefs are using those arguments just to simply set their own agenda. The fire authorities' problem is when they announce the next load of savings that they can only meet at the moment by job cuts, is that in real terms they've already made those savings and that's the important point we tried to put across within this Resolution. Certainly in the Northwest in 2007 and 2008 the Fire and Rescue Service has saved £13.8 million in that one year alone. So they are making massive savings and they've met those challenges.

We have asked the Merseyside Fire Authority to prove us wrong on this particular point, and to prove to us that the £23 million we say the Audit Commission has identified is wrong, and they simply can't do that. The only difference now that exists between us and our position and the Central Government position is that the Government declared – maybe it's not the £23 million which we and the Audit Commission say it is (and we're

sure of our position on that) – that it's only £15 million. Whatever it is, it's a massive saving. Again, they can't get off the hook on that.

But what we're saying, comrades, is we're not suggesting that there's chiefs or chairs taking barrow loads of money and legging it. That's not the point we're saying. But there is an important, principled argument to be had. It was our chief fire officer who said in a letter to us on the point that we make on the £23 million savings over the last four years: "In relation to efficiency savings that have been made, the money has gone to pay the wages of our current employees and the excellent pensions of our retired employees who continue to enjoy a very well deserved public pension in significant numbers."

We believe that is simply wrong in that respect. We think it deserves to be highlighted and used as an argument to advance our position.

We also wrote to the Fire Minister on this point, it was the ex-Fire Minister and ex-Labour MP Sadiq Khan who, in a letter back to us, said: "The Fire and Rescue Service delivered efficiency savings of £197 million between 2004 and 2008 against the national efficiency target of £105 million, with Merseyside Fire and Rescue authority reporting £15 million worth of savings. This was a significant achievement by the Service which helped to provide the resource for the Fire and Rescue Service to maintain the preventing work in its frontline services." So again the preventing rather than reacting sort of argument.

We believe that maintaining the preventing work in the frontline services, what he said, he is opposing Tony McGuirk's position, there is a dichotomy of opinion, there is a split in attempted solidified position on the financial points. We believe that's an important front we could open up now and challenge them on. They tried to stay together on it, we have split them apart on it. They're arguing between themselves now. We believe that with those massive savings identified which are being, as the Minister says, put into preventative services rather than frontline services we can recirculate that money back into frontline services, and we can use that as an argument against them. So when they say they needed to make those savings; it's not our fault, it's Government's fault – as Steve said, Merseyside is on the floor, like a lot of people are, on grant settlements. But we can say to them: you've already made those savings, you can recirculate that money, and we can advance our arguments.

We call for the Executive Council to make that National Report to help Brigade Committees advance that position. So I would ask you to support Resolution 31 and I move. Thanks, President. *Applause*

Day Two – 20th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Les. Was there a seconder for resolution 31? *Formally seconded.* Was anyone wishing to speak against? No. The Executive Council are supporting. I will put it straight to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of Resolution 31 from Merseyside, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are back on the Annual Report Paragraph B4 – Fire and Rescue Service Policy – Government Responsibility – Wales, Paragraph B5 Fire and Rescue Service Policy – Government Responsibility – Scotland.

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

Thank you President, Conference. I would like to refer Conference to page 39 under this Paragraph which makes mention of the Convenors Forum and the dangers from the people who sit on it. In 2007 Audit Scotland reported that “the majority of Fire and Rescue elected members are experienced councillors but serving on a fire authority presents challenges that members’ background as councillors may not automatically equip them for.” In other words, they regularly make comments and decisions without any proper qualifications.

This was proved at a Fire Board meeting held in public in Aberdeen only last month. During the agenda item entitled “Impact on the Recession and Public Sector Funding – Strategic Considerations” the Chair (who, by the way also sits on the NJC) caught everyone by surprise by declaring that he’d proposed at a Scottish Convenors Meeting a merger of fire and ambulance services. In fact, he went on to admit that he’d offered Grampian as a test ground for the initiative. He qualified his proposal by saying: “You can trim the fat off the steak so much but eventually you’ll have to shoot another cow. We’ve got to be radical.”

Unfortunately, our members have become well accustomed to such rhetoric from his previous suggestions for dealing with flooding. Why not fit snorkels to appliances to enable firefighters to drive into deep water! Why not consider the use of dynamite to lower the water levels! Initially, our members were unwilling to stop long enough to take these ideas seriously, until they eventually saw the negative potential of his latest proposal to merge our emergency services.

Our members, once considered jacks of all trades, now fear they may soon become the masters of none. In addition to prevention work, they now try to become proficient in mass decontamination, search & rescue, line rescue, water rescue, road traffic collisions and let’s not forget firefighting. We need another complex responsibility like we need more egotistical politicians.

Comrades, we acted quickly to oppose co-responding. Likewise, we need to use the same arguments to nip this little beauty right in the bud before it gets a chance to grow out of control. Can’t they see from the regionalisation of control rooms in England and Wales, that cuts actually cost more money? If this proposal ever manages to surface nationally, our national negotiators have already a Conference position to fall back on, one that mirrors our position on co-responding, one that recognises the deterioration of standards of both fire and ambulance services, one that says enough is enough. We need a properly funded ambulance service and a properly funded fire service. We remind Conference of our existing FBU policy formed from Resolution 32 in 1998 moved by Greater Manchester. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alan. I now call Resolution 22 from Black & Ethnic Minority Members with an Amendment from Strathclyde. The Executive Council are supporting both the Resolution and the Amendment. Can I have B&EMM to move, please?

Resolution 22 – CHANGE IN LAW FOR FRS EMPLOYEES AND BNP MEMBERSHIP

This FBU Annual Conference acknowledges that it is incompatible for an employee of the Fire and Rescue Service to also be a member of a fascist extremist organisation such as Combat 18 and the British National Party.

It is forbidden by legislation for an employee of the Police Service or Prison Service to be a member of the BNP, and this conference believes it is time for a change in the law to bring the Fire and Rescue Service into line with those services.

The fact that the Fire and Rescue Service is a public institution funded and accountable to the communities that we serve, means that we should now campaign for a change in UK Fire Service laws to reflect that those who are employed by Fire Services cannot also be members of any fascist, racist organisation or group.

This Conference demands that the FBU continue to raise this issue with CLG, and campaigns for legislative change to bring the Fire Service in line with the Police and Prison services.

B&EMM

Amendment

In line 2, delete “the”, insert “any”.

In line 6, delete “the”.

In line 6, delete “Service”, insert “Services”.

Day Two – 20th May

In line 8, delete “the”.

In line 8, delete “Service is a public institution”, insert “Services are public institutions”.

In line 11, after “Fire”, insert “and Rescue”.

In line 13, delete “CLG”, insert “UK and devolved Governments”.

In line 14, delete “Service”, insert “Services”.

In line 14, delete second “the”.

STRATHCLYDE

BRO ANDRE FERNANDEZ (B&EMM):

We are accepting the Amendment from Strathclyde. President, Conference, the BNP suffered their worst defeat at the combined General Election/Council Elections this month. The BNP fuhrer, Nick Griffin, in Barking was spectacularly routed by Margaret Hodge, losing all 12 of their council seats. Their Nazi adjutant, Simon Derby, didn't fare much better in their jewel of the crown area, Stoke on Trent, coming fourth in all wards with 7.7 % of the vote. The BNP took a comprehensive drubbing in every ward, due to the efforts of the anti fascist activists of Unite Against Fascism, Hope not Hate and the Labour Party and an increase in voter turnout.

Applause A coalition of black, white, Asian, young, old, LGBT, trade unionists, and faith groups campaigned for months, exposing the BNP's Nazi traditions, visiting workplaces, distributing leaflets, talking to residents and talking on their doorsteps, on their housing estates. This shows that unity can beat the Nazis.

Despite the BNP's humiliating defeat, we cannot be complacent. The BNP results in other wards should serve as a warning that the politics of intolerance and hate will not simply disappear. The BNP polled 563,743 votes and have made strong gains in Yorkshire, including 7.7% in Rother Valley, 8.6 % in Barnsley East, 8.9% in Barnsley Central, and 10.4% in Rotherham. There is also an increase in Barking's neighbouring ward of Dagenham & Rainham from 4.4% to 11.2%. Nick Griffin has sworn to fight on, and will not fade away into obscurity. We ignore fascist movements at our peril.

The right wing intelligentsia have cultivated the fertile ideological ground for the BNP to thrive, via collaboration, appeasement and capitulation. The unrelenting background noise from the media and politicians who should know better give credence to the bogus debate that scapegoats immigrants as the cause of the so-called cultural crisis and the drain on public resources. Black and Ethnic Minority communities know only too well who the media and politicians are referring to when they talk about immigrants being a burden on the State. The racist red tops and broad sheets have consistently demonised the already beleaguered Muslim community as the enemy within since 9/11. The oppression of women, the oppression and outright gutter press attacks on the LGBT community. Couple

this with the worst economic crisis since the 1929 Wall Street crash, and the perfect storm for a political revival of the fascist BNP, alongside a Tory Government that has no interest in advancing equality in our society, is a very real and ominous threat.

It is now time for all members of the Fire Brigades Union to stand up and be counted and stand shoulder to shoulder with the anti fascist movement against the politics of intolerance and hatred. It is time for the CLG to prove its commitment to eradicating fascism from the Fire and Rescue Service by putting in place the necessary provisions in law to expel and ban from entry any member of the BNP and/or other racially intolerant organisations from the Fire Services. It is time to rid ourselves of the scourge of fascism that seems to destroy working class organisations by infiltrating and festering division within our ranks. We must reject this most backward section of our society from our education services, our health services, social, welfare and civil services, from our offices, from our fire stations, so that we can say with pride, loud and clear “No Nazis Here!”. *Applause*

The fight against fascism cannot be simply reduced to an ideological battle between left wing versus right wing. This is a fight for our very existence. United we stand, divided we will fall and fascism will be our punishment. I ask this Conference to support this motion and play its part in the fight against fascism, and become part of the changes of history, a history where fascism no longer exists. I say no to fascism, I say never, never, never again! Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 22?

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

Conference, President, a change in legislation is essential, but that might take some time. However, we still have our part to play as reps and officials.

Conference, when in equality and diversity meetings, when we are discussing this very issue, management will give you the same old rhetoric: that the BNP are a legitimate political party and as long as MPs don't display racist, sexist, bigoted behaviour at their place of work then there's nothing that can be done.

Conference, there is something that can be done. We can negotiate with Brigade HR practitioners (as they like to call themselves) responsible for equality and diversity and we can get them to agree on a joint statement to declare that it would be incompatible for an employee to be a member or display behaviours of an extremist party and still work within the Fire and Rescue Service.

Day Two – 20th May

Then for that statement to go to the fire boards and the fire authorities for clear and firm commitment. And further, for an agreed joint statement to be included in any Brigade equality policy. So let's roll up our sleeves, let's get the work done. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. Strathclyde to move their Amendment, please.

BRO JIMMY SCOTT (Strathclyde):

Comrades, the BNP talk about races. Let's clarify something right now. Whether you're black, white, brown, green or purple, we're all the one race; we're the human race. Let's not forget that, brothers and sisters. *Applause*

The BNP very ideology is not just hateful and wrong; it's factually wrong as well. We're all out of Africa. Everybody sitting here is out of Africa. We're the same people. The BNP seem to want to hark back to this ideology about 1500 years ago where a white group of people happened to be in the UK. Where did this white group of people suddenly land from? Was a jumbo jet drafting folk in and just landing them here? It's garbage; it's just rubbish.

We've got to personalise their agenda, because we work in fire stations and control rooms. Now and again we hear some vile remarks in the locker rooms and in the canteens. It's got to be tackled there and then. The minute you hear anybody talking about asylum seekers or refugees, we've got to have a critical analysis of actually why asylum seekers or refugees are actually here. If you're going to be genuine about that analysis, stop bombing their countries, stop bombing them. *Applause* Stop sending that vile organisation called the International Monetary Fund to rob them of their natural resources. They're currently camped in Greece at the moment, waiting to privatise Greece. They're a vile organisation! I know we kind of all live in a wee celebrity culture at the moment. You know, we all do different things. I was thinking down there the man that we all know as Prince Philip, maybe we could give him a phone, given that he was an asylum seeker, rescued from Greece. But again, maybe Prince Philip might not want to respond to our text messages or our letters. Do you know something? This is a class issue. This is a class issue.

We're all the same. We're against them. We've got to realise who we are and where we came from. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jim. Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council

are supporting both the Resolution and the Amendment. Can I have an indication of who wishes to come in on this debate, please? I've got Steve, then I'll ask the General Secretary, then we'll move to a vote. Steve.

BRO STEPHEN BOYD (NIFB):

Conference, we are supporting the Resolution as Amended by Strathclyde. However, I'm afraid it does come with a qualification. That qualification concerns the laws of Northern Ireland. In simple terms, due to the political struggle of the last 40 years the law in Northern Ireland simply does not allow us to discriminate against people because of their political opinion. Anyone familiar with Northern Ireland politics will hopefully understand. As much as we abhor the far right politics of the fascist BNP, changing the law in the UK Fire Service still won't be enough to change the law of the land in Northern Ireland. While it will be difficult for us to implement this Resolution, we do support it. We urge Conference to support it, and we urge Conference to support it unanimously. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I think as a number of people mentioned yesterday in a very generally depressing night on election night, one of the few moments of relief was to see the BNP trounced in Barking & Dagenham and elsewhere and then be completely removed from the councils up and down the country. They also had a number of other problems. Apparently it turns out that their website collapsed due to somebody sabotaging it during the election campaign and apparently, their former youth officer, Mark Collett, is being investigated for a threat to kill Nick Griffin!

We have raised this point with Ministers under the previous Government, and our Parliamentary group has also raised this point with Labour Fire Ministers. I regret to have to say that the issue was not taken up by the then Labour Fire Ministers. You will also have followed a debate in teaching where again a review was conducted into a similar concern being raised by teaching unions, and the conclusion was that it would be inappropriate to apply such a ban in relation to teaching. That is regrettable.

Added to that, we now have a new Government. We have already heard Tory politicians in the Fire and Rescue Service say, for example, that there is far too much emphasis on equality and diversity, far too many targets set and so on. So I am fairly pessimistic about the response we will get off whoever – I don't know

Day Two – 20th May

whether we've got the news of who the new Minister is as yet, they don't seem able to make up their minds. Nevertheless, I think the position that we have adopted is entirely correct. The Fire Service is there to serve all of our communities and all of communities fairly and equally. I find it impossible to understand how someone who believes that a significant proportion of our population shouldn't even be here, that they could possibly serve all parts of their community fairly and equally.

I think our campaign against fascism in the Fire Service, wherever it might emerge, is entirely justified and needs to continue. Our wider campaign to support movements and campaigns against fascism can and will continue. I think Jimmy made some very important points about this issue. We face a terrifying, terrible economic crisis that is devastating lives, devastating communities, taking away people's homes, taking away people's jobs. We need to be absolutely clear. That crisis has not been caused by black people, has not been caused by migrant workers; it has been caused by a deregulated banking system; it has been caused by a system, capitalism, which has led us into this crisis in Britain, throughout Europe and across the globe. We need to remember who our enemies really are. We need to say to working people around the mess table and on the streets and in our communities and in our branches in this Union that we need to recognise who our enemies really are. They aren't the migrant workers being paid pittances in our supermarkets or cleaning our hospitals or whatever. They are the people who created this crisis really, the people at the top who are now asking us to pay the price for it. We will need to be united more than ever before if we're going to deal with that economic crisis. There is no place for fascism in that, and there is no place for race or other divisions that seek to set us apart. We need unity. We're committed to that as a trade union. I'm sure you will pass this Resolution unanimously. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

No need for any Right of Reply. I will put the Strathclyde Amendment to the vote first. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

I put Resolution 22 as Amended to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We move to Resolution 33 from Hereford & Worcester, Reaffirmation of Resolution 53 from 1997. The Executive Council are supporting. Hereford & Worcester to move, please.

Resolution 33 – REAFFIRMATION OF RESOLUTION 53 (1997)

Conference reaffirms its policy with regard to Resolution 53 (1997) in that it demands that to assist in the neutrality of United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Services (UKFRS), that Fire Authorities create and maintain an up to date register of all Freemasons and personnel affiliated to other secret organisations employed within all UKFRS, and that such registers be open for scrutiny by members of the public.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

BRO PETE HOPE (Hereford & Worcester):

President, Conference, I ask that you support this Resolution to reaffirm a previous Resolution from 1997. We believe that we should have knowledge, if we require it, as to those persons who hold memberships of these types of secret societies and organisations. Comrades, we feel that it's important that those who are employed in the UK Fire and Rescue Services at whatever level who have membership should be known. Conference, please support this Resolution and reaffirm in order to add the transparency and scrutiny it deserves. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 33? *Formally seconded*. Are there any speakers against? Brother there.

BRO NOEL JORDAN (NIFB):

Conference, President, comrades, we in Region 2 are sorry that we have to oppose this Resolution. Whilst we empathise with this Resolution, its implementation in Northern Ireland is not possible. This is due to our unique position in the UK and in relation to the protection afforded to the people under legislation with regard to their political opinion. Under Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1988 employers must protect the rights of a person of a different political opinion. You will be aware that the membership of many organisations in Northern Ireland would identify themselves as having a particular political opinion. Indeed, if such a register existed which would be publicly accessible, some members of our Service could have their lives placed at severe risk as unfortunately our society still witnesses, on an almost daily basis, violence of a sectarian nature. We are sorry, but for these reasons alone we cannot support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Were there any other speakers on Resolution 33? Executive Council are supporting. Hereford & Worcester wish to exercise their Right to Reply? No. OK. I

Day Two – 20th May

therefore put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of Resolution 33, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Thank you. That is *carried*.

Now back on the Annual Report Paragraph B6 – Arson Control Forum, Paragraph B7 – CLG Project on Fires in Car Parks, Paragraph B8 – British Standards Institute.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, in this section of the Annual Report it mentions some of the subcommittees, the BSI committees, that meet which look at standards. It's a big issue for us. There's no mention of one particular BSI committee which is BSI PH3 covering firefighters' protective clothing. The actual Paragraph says that the FBU continues to be involved with the development of fire related standards. That is simply not the case when it comes to BSI PH3. We've had no direct involvement, as far as I'm aware, for a number of years now.

This year many of you maybe aware, but some of you won't be, there is an intended review of the standards which cover firefighters' PPE, perhaps the most essential piece of equipment that a firefighter can depend on. That review will take place at European level. The standard there is EM469, but at the moment we're having no input whatsoever into that review. I think frankly it's something of concern to all of us, it should be.

So I'd like to ask: what are we doing to engage with the Committee, the BSI PH3 Committee? It's essential that we're involved. I've seen some of the working reports on what is going to be looked at here, and it's actually quite worrying because the Committees are increasingly dominated just by manufacturers. I will read you a quote. This is someone who will be known to the Union, because the Convenor of BSI PH3 is an ex FBU official called Dave Matthews. Some of you will know of Dave, who still continues to Convene that Committee.

He says: "PPE standardisation is a fascinating area to be involved in. Unfortunately, we see fewer and fewer manufacturers, employers and end users involved. If this continues, we could end up with standards being written by only a handful of large manufacturers who can afford to be involved and can drive standards towards their products, which has always been the risk. There is an absolutely essential need for the end users to be involved in developing our standards."

I will give you just one key area where we know there needs to be work done, and there is no intention whatsoever as yet to do it. All of the flame envelopment tests which our PPE is subjected to (and by the way, they're not mandatory under the standards as yet) are on standing mannequins. They're not on crouching

mannequins; they don't include the pressure points that we all know compromise the PPE protection. It's one of the most important areas that we know needs to be looked at. At present, we're not lobbying the way we should be to make sure those tests are developed for that. So the question is: what are we doing to get involved, and if we're not, please can we make sure we do as a matter of urgency. Thanks. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

National Officer John McGhee to respond.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thanks, President. Dave's had a number of conversations with me over this issue. The representation on BSI Committees would take up a considerable amount of time for any officials that we decide to send. There's any number of Committees looking at all different pieces of equipment. We have a group on the Health & Safety Coordinators, a subgroup looking at PPE, and we've already identified that the review of PH3 and the EN standard, that they're going to be looking at that to see how we can contribute and influence the outcome of that.

But let me just say this in terms of the standards. We had a firefighter recently in Bolton injured, very seriously injured, whilst wearing appropriate standard Firefighting gloves. So it doesn't matter the standards they're setting. The important thing for us is that we make sure that the equipment that's given to our members is fit for purpose. Whilst we're setting standards, we have BSI standards on pieces of equipment that fail on a regular basis. If the standards are not high enough, then we need to raise it with our managers and demand that they provide something that's of a higher standard.

So just sitting on those Standard Committees would take up an enormous resource for this Union and actually doesn't always achieve what we want. As the end users, we need to be putting pressure on them to make sure that what they provide us is adequate.

By the way, we've had the same conversation through the Health & Safety specialists in the TUC because like us, most unions don't have the resources to sit on all these Committees. But we are looking at it through the Health & Safety Coordinators, Dave.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. May I remind delegates that there is a Palestine Solidarity Campaign fringe meeting during the lunch break starting at 1.15 pm in the Balmoral Suite of the Royal Clifton Hotel. Apparently, there's also a bit of a football match going on somewhere! Can I remind

Day Two – 20th May

delegates also that there will be a bucket collection at the doors, the exits from the Conference Hall. Don't all get ready to go yet, because someone's got something to raise, I'm afraid. The proceeds from that collection will be going to the Community Heart Campaign, so I would urge delegates to give generously to that. Are you raising a procedural point, Mark? Come to the rostrum.

BRO MARK DUNNE (Merseyside):

Point of information, President. Palestine fringe meeting is now one o'clock at the Clifton. Cheers.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much for that, Mark. I will see you all in your seats promptly please at 2 o'clock. Thank you.

Adjourned for lunch

Day Two – 20th May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, if everybody can take their seats, finish their conversations, turn their telephones off, then we will recommence Conference for this afternoon's session and we will start with a report from the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee. Steve.

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

Thank you, President. Conference, could I please ask you to turn to your Programme of Business Page 11: Resolution 45, Amendment Strathclyde is withdrawn to second Resolution 45.

There is a delegate change: Bedfordshire – delete Jason Hollamby; insert Malcolm Ball.

The Standings Orders Committee is pleased to announce that the bucket collection in aid of Community Heart raised £856.26. *Applause*

Could I just ask Alex Miller to come forward from Strathclyde and collect the trophy on behalf of Scotland in their 2-1 win of today's game. *Applause*. For those of you that don't know, that game took place at lunchtime and it was against the England Z squad. Congratulations. That concludes my report, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Before I ask for any questions, I think you've got a point you want to raise, Alex?

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

Yes, if you don't mind. We'd like to thank you on behalf of Region 1, and as a measure of goodwill we would like to present our comrades with this Frisbee. It's something they could maybe practise for next year on the beach! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alex. Are there any questions or points on the Standing Orders Committee report? Go on, Gordon.

BRO GORDON FIELDEN (London):

Conference, we are challenging Standing Orders. We've had a Resolution on RPE Respirators Ruled Out of Order, saying that it is not of an emergency nature. We do not believe that is the case. What we believe is that

any enhancement to firefighter safety, that would prevent one of our members having a respiratory disease or dying later on in life is an emergency. Therefore, Conference I urge you to support this challenge. *Applause*

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

Conference, the Standing Orders Committee Ruled Out of Order an Emergency Resolution submitted from London entitled Respirators RPE on the grounds that this Resolution is not of an emergency nature in that it states: "Imminent publication of CFRA guidance for RPE has highlighted a gap in firefighter safety." Imminent is the key word here. We can't find any information to support this, nor has it been supplied. We invited London to Standing Orders and we discussed the decision at length, including that this could have been raised prior to the closing date for Resolutions. We also raised the issue with London in respect of previously carried Resolutions at Conference that are existing policy. In 2005 Emergency Resolution 7 Use of Respirators in Urban Search and Rescue moved by Staffordshire, in 1991 Resolution 55 Respirators moved by Strathclyde.

The reason we raised these policies was to further explain why we didn't think their Emergency Resolution was of an emergency nature. Whilst acknowledging the policies were in existence, they then stated that it was because of those policies that they were trying to overturn current FBU policy. So, Conference, with these facts in mind: "imminent publication", intent on overturning 1991 and 2005 carried Resolutions, I would urge Conference to uphold the decision made by the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. I will put the challenge to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That is *carried*.

OK, thanks, Steve. One of the highlights of the election two weeks ago now, amongst the many disappointments, was to see some good friends and allies of this Union get re-elected, one of those of course being John McDonnell MP who was re-elected with an increased vote in Hayes & Harlington. (Applause) In his role as Convenor of our Parliamentary Group John works tirelessly on our behalf and has done for a number of years now. We always know that we can rely on him. He's no stranger to this Conference. It's always one of the highlights of our Conference, John's address to us. It's very topical that he should be addressing us here this afternoon because, of course, there is currently a process to decide upon the

Day Two – 20th May

leadership election for the leadership of the Labour Party and John has announced that he is seeking nomination. I'm sure that you, along with myself, all wish him the very best of luck in that endeavour. John McDonnell MP.
Applause

BRO JOHN McDONNELL MP:

It's nice to be among friends again! Let me just say this. On behalf of all of the Labour MPs that you supported in the General Election campaign, I just want to say a really sincere thanks. Without your support, financial and on the ground, just that basic solidarity, we wouldn't have achieved the result that we achieved. What's interesting about it is that if you look at those candidates that stood, those that you would describe as on the Left, all of them received a higher vote and a bigger swing than all the others across the Parliamentary Labour Party. There's a message in that somewhere, isn't there? There's a message about ensuring that you stay true to your principles, that you work in solidarity with others. And in return for your work you'll get the support and respect of your local communities and others.

But we did lose a couple of good members: Andrew Dismore and David Drew. I just want to say this. Some of you may know them, some of you may not. I just want to pay tribute to them. They were two of the hardest workers of our Group. They worked tremendously hard, and I hope that from this Conference we can send them our vote of thanks for all that they did whilst they were in Parliament working on our behalf. They stayed firm on every issue, and where necessary, joined us in confronting Government policy.
Applause

Let me just say now, Parliament is back, the coalition is in power, and we'll see later on today the detailed agreement between the Conservatives and Lib Dems on the policies that they're wishing to pursue in this coming period, and on Monday, Osborne is going to publish the details of his expenditure plans in advance of a budget some time in June.

It's the lull before the storm at the moment, and we'll wait to see what comes out of that. There may be some policies that we'll support. It looks as though they'll be backing off on the Regionalisation process, on the Fire Control Project and all the rest. We'll see. I think what's a tragedy is that for years we were advising New Labour about the failure of some of these projects and Minister after Minister – and if you remember, I think we went through seven Fire Ministers in the space of 13 years (it might have been meetings with the FBU that finished them off; it certainly finished a number of political careers) – year after year we were trying to get them to review their policies as expenditure on these projects spiralled out of control. We'll see what comes out of that.

But in this coming period, we'll reconstitute the Group, we'll take your advice on how we recruit others to that Group of the new members that have come in, and we'll work on a regular basis with you. You know the style and operation of our work. Your Executive sets our agenda. We then meet on a regular basis and we look issue by issue at how we can influence Government, whoever is there. We build up a lobby of support within Parliament itself, and meet with civil servants and Ministers, and hope to shape policy. That's what we'll do; we'll continue on. But we know how tough it's going to be.

As always, we'll rely upon you and all the FBU members to be feeding information into us, so that we are briefed, and so that we can raise the arguments, and we'll be relying upon you so when the call goes out for the Union for the lobbies, both at the local level and at the national level, we will be relying upon you to build the strength of those lobbies.

You know as well as I do what Osborne has been saying about the future in terms of public expenditure cuts. The tragedy in the last election was that there was a consensus across all the main political parties on one issue. The consensus was this: it was about who was going to pay for this economic crisis. Was it going to be the finance sector, the rapacious speculators who brought the credit crunch about, or was it going to be ordinary working people? I think the reason Labour didn't get re-elected was that they broke that trust with ordinary working people. Just like the Liberals and just like the Tories, they too were calling for savage cuts in public expenditure. Actually, what we should be doing, at this point in time in a recession, is not cutting back on public expenditure but increasing it, investing in public services, and making sure that we increase aggregate demand within the economy. If there is a deficit we know who should pay for it, don't we? The people who created this crisis, the finance sector, the bankers who are still walking off with their bonuses.

So our arguments as a Union in this coming period will be in defence of our Service, and it will be to provide alternatives that the Government and others can consider to avoid public expenditure cuts. The alternatives are clear in terms of tax reform to tackle tax evasion and tax avoidance, which is costing the country anything between £90-100 billion a year. It's all about making sure the tax system is fair, so the corporates start paying their way again. It's also about making sure that, yes, we increase the taxes on wealthiest rather than the poorest as it is at the moment. We'll be arguing those cases.

But I warn you, they will come for us. It's inevitable. They'll come for our Service, they'll come for your wages and they'll come for your pensions. We know

Day Two – 20th May

that. It will be across the piece. It will be across every area of public service. It's interesting. I think what they'll do is the same as the Tories did in the 1980s. The one group that may not be cut, that may not have their pensions or wages cut, will most probably be the Police service, because they'll need it to push others into line. They'll need it to defend themselves against the reaction within our communities. That's what we'll have to do. Just as in the past, we'll have to mobilise to protect our Services, to protect our pay, and to protect our pensions.

But I think one thing that's broken through in the last year, largely as a result of the work undertaken by the FBU, is a sense of solidarity amongst public service unions that's been built up in recent years. Some of you will know the FBU was instrumental in forging the trade union coordinating group, a group of eight trade unions coming together to talk about common policies, lobbying of Parliament together, how we shape the new agenda, but also how we coordinate our work and how we coordinate our response to the cuts when they come, whether it's by the past Government or the current Government.

I think that will be an important body for the future, the trade union coordinating group. As I say, the FBU has taken a leading role in establishing that. I think what we'll need to do is make sure that we work in solidarity, in coordination as best we can to defend one another. It will be going back to some of the first principles of trade unionism which is "an injury to one is an injury to all"; "divided we fall, together we stand" "united in strength". I think that's the future that we have in the coming period. I'm confident that if we work together in that way, if we work in solidarity with others, that we can protect our Services and we can win, and we can protect our members. But it needs us to be honest with people and to be frank about the determination that we have to have in this coming period.

I think also what we need to do is to make sure that we use every possible vehicle we can to express our views. That does mean a frank discussion with the Labour Party now that it is in opposition. Let's get some admission of the errors that they made in Government. Let's try to mobilise them and pull them on to our side, so that we're working with the opposition. I think that there's a large number of new MPs that recognise the failures of the past and will be willing to work with this Union. I think it's critical through the Parliamentary Group that we seek to work with them in solidarity again, to recognise in this period we will need every ally we can possibly gain.

That's a stern message and I apologise for that, but that's the reality of it. All of us now need to go back to our branches to explain to people what the potential is in

this coming period, but to explain to them that we should have the confidence, through working with solidarity, through our Union and the other unions within the public services, that by standing firm we can protect our members.

Let me just go on to the political situation. The Chair has mentioned that there's another Labour leadership election. There's an element of déjà vu here! Some of you will know, a few years ago in 2007 I stood for the Labour leadership and didn't get on the ballot paper. It was a bizarre situation. We had an election with only one name on the ballot paper. It was sort of North Korean style coronation. Earlier this week, there was a dramatic improvement and we reached the situation where at least we had one family on the ballot paper. *Applause*

That's moved on and Ed Balls announced yesterday, and Andy Burnham announced also. So we have got a combination, I described it as the Sons of Blair vs the Sons of Gordon Brown, the next stage on. I hear that Diane Abbott has announced this morning. Let me tell you this, we thought they'd learned their lessons from 2007. We thought this time round there would be an open and democratic debate, then nominations, and then an open and democratic election.

What is it with New Labour and democracy? The bureaucrats have moved in, the hierarchy moved in, and far from having an open and democratic election, what's happened is that they've introduced another system whereby you have to have, I think it's now, 33 Labour MPs to nominate you, constituencies won't be able to nominate direct. Then they've given us a period between Monday and Thursday of next week to submit the nominations. It's at a time when a lot of Labour MPs won't be there anyway. What it does, it completely excludes the opportunity of MPs going back to their constituencies, holding meetings, consultation with members, etc. Does this sound like a stitch up to you? My mum thinks it is!

The funny old thing, last week I got a phone call saying would I support Ed Milliband. It was from an ex Minister who phoned me up. I said: is that Ed Milliband who was the Climate Change Secretary who decided that there should be a third runway at Heathrow in my constituency obliterating the homes of maybe 10,000 of my constituents? Yes. Is that Ed Milliband who wrote the manifesto that said there'd be no airport expansion anywhere in the country, apart from in my constituency, which is the sort of political equivalent of the concrete boot from the Mafia? They said yes. I said: is that Ed Milliband who, in the negotiations with the Liberals to get a Lib/Lab pact, offered to drop the third runway at Heathrow, even though he wouldn't listen to Labour MPs? They said yes. I said: put me down as a doubtful! *Laughter, applause. Unbelievable!*

Day Two – 20th May

It's just extraordinary! What I'm trying to say to them is: look, they've just lost an election. They lost more seats than we've ever done since 1931. We've lost more physical support, lowest percentage of support since the early 1980s. We held on to seats, not because of any commitment to New Labour, we held on to seats because actually at the last election we saw one of the last acts we've ever seen of real class solidarity where people came out, not to vote for New Labour, but to vote to keep the Tories out. People turned out from fear of the Tories, just to keep the Tories out.

I went to the first Parliamentary Labour Party meeting after the election, and it was like a meeting of people that had just come out of a car crash, just wondering how they survived. There was a sort of a false air of euphoria about how they came through the election, almost as though we'd won the thing. Someone had to get up and quote the statistics of just how many seats we'd lost, what our level of votes was. There was a discussion about what were the reasons for the loss of this election. They came out with two things. It was like listening to Sun editorial. One was about immigration, and we'd lost the support of 18% of C2, which I thought was a Citroen car, but never mind! The other was around welfare benefits and how people were angry about teenage girls getting pregnant and getting council houses in advance of everyone else. It was just extraordinary! Absolutely extraordinary!

Let's be clear about it. We didn't lose it for those reasons. I'll come on to them in a minute. We lost it because we broke the trust of working class people with the Party that they founded. People didn't recognise it as the Labour Party any more, they didn't see it as their Party. We were created as a Party to create a society which was more equal, which was just and fair, and yes, which was prosperous. Where people would have a decent home, where they'd live in a decent environment, where they would be paid a decent wage, where they would have secure jobs and trade union rights. Those are the policies that we were founded to implement.

What we saw in the last General Election was the reality that we'd systematically alienated every element of that Labour coalition that always brings us to power. That was the tragedy of it all. That was the tragedy. Knocking on doors, I was getting a great personal response, but it was almost: I'll vote for you despite what Gordon Brown and New Labour in Government was doing. We had to drag those votes out to keep the Tories out. You know why they lost. We discussed this before. Every time we win an election we put together a broad ranging coalition, don't we? People march out for us, who are usually public sector workers, but we've alienated an element of that coalition. We've privatised more jobs than even under the Tories. So I can understand this scepticism.

Trade unions mobilise for us every election as part of the coalition, and yet we failed to restore trade union rights. Only this week, when you see the cabin crew dispute in my constituency we had to get dragged through the High Court yet again, on yet another supposed ballot anomaly. So no wonder we alienated them.

But it is also the pensioners. We've still got two million pensioners living in poverty. The young people, how is it young people survive with tuition fees and the load of debt and all the rest? Then the people who thought we were the Party of peace. It's not just Iraq, it is Afghanistan, and then it's standing aside and ignoring the plight of the Palestinians and what happened in Lebanon as well.

Also, you know, we had people who supported us, can you remember in 1997, because they saw Tories as the Party of sleaze. How could we go to the electorate when Labour MPs were fiddling their expenses as well? *Applause*. So that whole coalition we virtually destroyed in 13 years of Government, completely unnecessarily.

If we're going to get back into power, if Labour is going to get back into power, I'm telling people we need an absolute clean break. That's why I'm saying to people I can't support anyone standing for this leadership election that voted for the war in Iraq, I can't do it. 500,000 Iraqis we think died as a result of that war. If you look at what's happening now in Iraq where trade unions are struggling to maintain some form of basic trade union rights, where they're privatising industries, the oil sector, and workers are being exploited as a result of that. I can't support someone who's voted for the privatisation of our public services. You know, if you want some examples, it's not just what's happening in the Fire Service, but those of you who are Londoners know what's happened with the Tube. Gordon Brown's pet scheme: the PFI, the PPP, we've had two companies collapse and we've had to bail them out! It's cost us £2 billion! That could have been reinvested in the Tube service itself. I can't vote for Ed Balls and others, who manufactured that scheme.

I also can't vote for people who stood aside and allowed the homelessness to double under New Labour. When I was elected in 1997 we had 40,000 families homeless, and it was one of our biggest campaigns against the Tories. Do you know, that went up to 88,000 families homeless. In my constituency surgery every week it is heart rending, the families who come who just want a decent roof over their heads.

So all of those candidates that come forward, I've basically said I can't support you. That's why it was decided that what we should do is run a candidate from the Left. I wasn't particularly keen on it because I want to do my garden at the moment; I haven't cut the lawn

Day Two – 20th May

for six weeks! We had a meeting of the Labour Representation Committee to which the FBU is affiliated, and we decided we'd run a candidate for the Left and they decided I should stand. And you just obey orders in this Movement, don't you?

What we said very clearly is: if we can't support any of these candidates let's set out our policy programme, isn't it? On the key decision: who pays for the crisis we're saying it isn't going to be working class people; it's going to be the rich and it's going to be the rapacious finance sector that caused this crisis. We'll do it through increased taxation, tackling taxation avoidance and evasion, and we'll restore some sense of fairness through tax reforms in this country. It's very simple, if we are a party of public services, we end all privatisation, end it. We stop them actually laundering profits into the private sector as a result of privatisation. *Applause.* The simple fact is if we want our children to thrive and get a decent education, it has to be free education. So we abolish tuition fees and we restore the grants. *Applause*

If we want to tackle the housing crisis, this is not rocket science, isn't it? There's an invention we created about a century ago, it's called council housing. We build council houses again, and we make sure they're at reasonable rents so that people can have a decent roof over their heads and that children aren't living in overcrowded conditions. If we want to abolish poverty, it's simple isn't it? We increase the pension and restore the link with earnings; we lift child benefit to cover the cost of really bringing up a child. All of these things can be done because we live in the fifth richest country in the world.

Let me tackle this issue around immigration. Let me say very clearly to all Labour MPs and others. I welcome people to this country, I welcome them here. *Applause.* I'm the grandson of an Irish migrant. No-one was turning us back at that point in time when they wanted us to build their roads, build their houses and populate their factories. It was as simple as that. But in addition to that, I'm proud of this country's commitment to supporting asylum seekers and refugees, I'm proud of that. I tell you, we have a response to that, because we are, in all the developed world, responsible for some of these issues. You know as well as I do. Why do people come here? They come here because either they're seeking refuge because their lives are at risk, or their safety is at risk, or their human rights are being abused, or they come here because they're living in poverty. The developed world is responsible for part of that poverty. But also, we have a special responsibility as the UK. We're one of the largest arms manufacturers in the world. We sell them the arms that enable them to create wars, and then when people come out of the war zones we condemn them as asylum seekers. We have a special responsibility to provide refuge for people and to support them.

Do you know, within 50 years, just as in Europe, across the world there will be open borders. We should start preparing for that. You cannot build a fortress around either Europe or Britain. We need to explain that to people and get them used to living in a multi-cultural world where people will travel in the same way the Brits have done for centuries. That's the reality. That's the debate that we should be having, and we shouldn't be avoiding, rather than scapegoating individual asylum seekers or others.

I also say to you this. We have to re-establish the Labour Party as the Party of peace. No more military adventures, no more attacks on other States, no more following the US into any imperious war that they call upon us to support. *Applause.* But it's more than that, isn't it? It's actually turning this country into a promoter of peace in the world. I'd like to transform the Ministry of Defence into what we were campaigning for a few years ago, a Ministry for Peace, where we recognise that we can intervene to create peace, to prevent wars. One of the first steps of doing it, which would help us in our financial crisis, would be to scrap Trident. Get rid of the nuclear weapons because they're unusable! *Applause*

Finally, let me just say this to you. I don't know what's going to happen in this leadership election. It's going to be tough. We've got a week in which to secure the required nominations. You can imagine what's happening at the moment in terms of the offers of advancement and all the rest of it to MPs who put their names to certain tickets and all that goes on. We'll seek and we'll do our best, and we'll try to get on that ballot paper. If we get on the ballot paper it will give us the opportunity to put these arguments. I think they'll have a resonance, not just amongst Labour Party members, not just amongst the Labour and Trade Union Movement, but also amongst the wider community as well. You know, that's what they're bloody frightened of! That's what they're absolutely terrified of. Because actually these ideas could catch alight. They could catch afire. They could help us mobilise, mobilise a Movement again which is a social movement, the way the Labour and Trade Union Movement was founded, a Movement that would not only campaign against the coalition of cuts that's coming from the Liberals and the Tories, but a Movement that could also transform the Labour Party again back into a Socialist Party. That's what my ambition is. That's why they'll try to do everything they possibly can to prevent me getting on the ballot paper.

Let me give you this message. I think we can get there with a bit of effort. Any MP that you know, phone them up. Tell them, even if you don't support the policies, at least support the right, the democratic right of Labour Party members being able to debate these issues and vote for candidates who argue for a socialist platform.

Day Two – 20th May

At least do that. I tell you, if I don't get on the ballot paper, we don't walk away; we're not going to hide in corners or anything like that. I'll be doing exactly as we're doing now: touring round the country, putting the arguments, working with you, a non affiliated union, and with affiliated unions to bring them together under the TUCG (Trade Union Coordinating Group) working to promote our ideas, and also to build a coalition that will resist the cuts and the policies that this coalition Government will want to inflict upon us. That means going deep into our communities, mobilising all our communities, mobilising them in defence but then arguing the case for something different, something better.

All the policies I've put forward, the arguments that we've put for a fairer and just and more equal society were summed up in one word when we were founded as a Movement. It's a word not used in New Labour any more. It's called Socialism. So I stand as a socialist candidate. I mobilise this campaign on the principles of socialism. I'm going to rehabilitate the term so that people know what they stand for, what they're campaigning for, so that we can mobilise again, honestly and squarely for socialism in this country, solidarity. *Standing ovation*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Stirring stuff. It was remiss of me, when I introduced John, not to introduce sitting alongside him Simeon Andrews, his Parliamentary Assistant who works very hard on behalf of the Parliamentary Group. I'm sure you'd like to join with me in welcoming Simeon again to our Conference. *Applause*. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Comrades, I think the reaction of Conference to John demonstrates very clearly the warmth and solidarity that we feel towards John and the work he does on behalf of firefighters, on behalf of this Union, and on behalf of the Movement as a whole. John plays a crucial role in our Parliamentary work. That's work about ADC stuff, about standards for firefighters, about stopping the cuts, about challenging Regionalisation of Controls. Our Parliamentary Group has played an outstanding role in all of those areas of work, and John has been absolutely central to that. Also the team around him, Simeon and others as well. We need to acknowledge that.

Just a comment on the leadership question. I was very proud to be able to speak on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union. The Executive Council did support John's previous bid on our behalf to challenge for the Labour leadership. I was proud to speak on platforms supporting John's campaign. I spoke to colleagues in other unions who dismissed John's campaign and said: no, we're going for Gordon, and everything is going to

change, all the Blairites will be gone and we'll be returning to our core values. Of course that was the outcome. What did we get? Absolutely nothing whatsoever, no change whatsoever. Exactly the same policies continued and we've ended up where we are with the election result of two weeks ago.

I think from the response that Conference gave to John you will welcome this (I'm pushing it a bit perhaps here). The Executive Council has agreed in a meeting just before Conference reconvened to support John's campaign for the Labour leadership, and to support colleagues in other unions, the RMT and elsewhere, to give John our backing. I hope that Conference will support us in that as well. *Applause*

John often complains about the number of gifts we give him when he comes up here. So a consumable one this time, a bottle of whisky. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Right. We shall now move on to Emergency Resolution 1 being moved in the name of the Executive Council. It covers many of those issues we have just been hearing about. It is entitled "Defend Community Safety, Public Services and Jobs". I will ask the General Secretary to move.

Emergency Resolution 1 – DEFEND COMMUNITY SAFETY,PUBLIC SERVICES AND JOBS

Conference notes the outcome of the recent General Election and the formation of the Tory/Liberal Democrat coalition Government.

Conference notes with concern that one of the central areas of policy agreement between the Government parties is to rapidly reduce the public sector deficit, primarily through drastic reductions in public expenditure. This will affect working people throughout the UK directly and through the subsequent impact on funding allocations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Such an approach is likely to exacerbate the cuts already faced in the Fire and Rescue Service and other public services. In the Fire and Rescue service this will lead to further reductions in emergency cover, station closures and job losses. In turn these will lead to increased risks to the safety of communities, businesses and firefighters. Such an approach is completely unacceptable to the Fire Brigades Union.

Conference notes that the current economic difficulties facing the UK and other economies arose

Day Two – 20th May

from a crisis sparked by a de-regulated banking system. Public services and those who work within them have played no role in causing current economic difficulties. Conference therefore rejects the argument that public service workers should pay the price for the bail-out of the banks through job losses, pay cuts and attacks on pension rights. Conference rejects the argument that working people in general should pay the price for the crisis and for the bail-out of the banks through poorer services and increased taxation.

Conference pledges to oppose all cuts in the Fire and Rescue Service, to oppose attempts to freeze pay and to oppose further attacks on firefighters' pension rights, if necessary by national strike action. Conference agrees to coordinate our campaigning on these issues with other trade unions as closely as possible including the initiation of coordinated industrial action if appropriate.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I'd like to move Emergency Resolution 1, Defend Community Safety, Public Services and Jobs. I think it's an appropriate time in the aftermath of John's comments and speech to Conference that we discuss these issues.

The Resolution addresses the very difficult situation we find ourselves in after the General Election, as firefighters, as trade unionists, and as working people in general. We need to face the harsh realities. We need to face them squarely, not avoid difficult questions. We need to call things by their right names, and we need to tell the truth to our members, to the Movement and to working people at large, no matter how bitter that truth might be.

But we also need to be optimistic. We need to analyse the situation, develop ideas about how to fight back, and we have to be seen as the people who have the alternative to the cuts agenda, who have a strategy to stop the cuts agenda that we now face under this coalition Government. We need to bring hope and determination, and fighting spirit to our members. That's what this motion is about. It's about how we respond in the face of a Government assault on our Service, on our communities, and on our jobs.

We face a new political situation. The new Government is pretty, bloody clear. They want to unleash on us a new age of austerity. The truth is they are looking forward to and relishing the prospect of cuts. This Government is a cuts coalition, people who want to take a chainsaw to our pay, our conditions and our pensions. The Government isn't denying that it will make savage cuts; it's revelling in the fact.

Next Monday the Government will announce £6 billion worth of immediate cuts for this year. Following that, on 22nd June George Osborne will announce a further £50 billion of spending cuts in his emergency budget. The Institute of Fiscal Studies says that the government departments, including CLG, will face cuts of up to 25%. We need to start thinking about the implications for us, for our jobs and our Service, of cuts on that sort of scale. The coalition Government will attack working class living standards in ways we haven't seen since the early days of Thatcher. They will also, in all likelihood, raise VAT so as to hit the poorest and those least able to pay. We've been warning of this austerity plan for months. We'll soon find out exactly what they have in store for us.

But let's be clear about one thing. They have no mandate for cuts. The Tories got barely a third of the vote and many Liberal Democrat voters voted Liberal Democrat precisely to keep out the Tories, and look what they got in return. Millions voted Labour to keep out the Tories, as John has outlined. We need to cut through the façade and tell the truth to people, that voters do not want their services destroyed. They didn't vote for the new age of austerity.

We have to remember how this crisis started. It started as a crisis of the de-regulated private banking system. That's what sparked the global economic crisis. We need to remember how the Government then used our money, taxpayers' money, to bail out the banks. Now they want our money to pay for that bail out for the crisis that we never started in the first place. I don't know if many of you saw the Sunday Times Rich List last month. I don't suppose there's anybody in this room who's on it! A sickening fact is this: that the richest people in Britain have seen a record boom in their wealth over the past year. So we're discussing how we can possibly defend the Fire Service, others are counting their cash and looking at their bank balances. Their fortunes have soared by 30% over that past year.

It reveals the 1,000 richest people, that's £77 billion increase in their wealth, bringing the total wealth to those tiny handful of people to £335 billion – equal, by the way, to one third of the national debt. The number of billionaires in Britain has risen from 43 to 53 in the last year. The compiler of the list in the Sunday Times said this: "The rich have come through the recession with flying colours. The stock market is up, the hedge funds are coining it in, the rich are doing very nicely. The rest of the country is going to have to face huge public spending cuts, but it has little effect on the rich because they don't consume public services." That's telling us very clearly the reality of life in Britain today, and the disparity between the majority and the tiny, tiny minority who control finance and big business in this society.

Day Two – 20th May

Working people: firefighters, nurses, teachers, street cleaners, council workers, car workers, whatever, our people did not cause this crisis. I think we need to send a message from here, from the Fire Brigades Union and from the trade union movement as a whole to the Prime Minister: "No, Mr Cameron, we will not pay for your crisis!" *Applause*

Another fact that I think reveals what's gone on in Britain as a result of the economic chaos of the past year was a report in March about national income, a slight recovery in national income. It has grown by £27 billion since the middle of last year, perhaps a sign of recovery. Then you analyse where that has gone to. £2 billion of it in increased wages. That's not necessarily to us, or to people at the bottom. Some of that is clearly to those at the very top. But higher profits accounted for £24 billion of that increased national income.

So the crisis is caused by the banks, we then bail out the banks at taxpayers' expense, and as the economy starts to recover, the people who benefit are those at the very top who sparked the whole thing in the first place!

No-one in this room needs to be reminded that firefighters have already taken a battering over the last five years. We're not making any excuses for the cuts that New Labour imposed on us. There hasn't been an era of extravagance the Tories talk about in the Fire and Rescue Service. We've already faced widespread cuts. We've seen over five years something like 3,000 jobs lost in this Service. We've seen fire stations downgraded, appliances off the run, and fewer firefighters going to incidents. We've seen our pay and conditions and pensions attacked. We've seen the result of some of that, as we'll talk about later: firefighters getting to incidents slower, increased risk. We've seen, perhaps linked to that, some of the horrific tragedies that we've had to deal with in our Service.

We can be very proud of our record in resisting that assault on our Service and on our profession. We've defended our jobs in difficult circumstances, we've resisted cuts and we've tried to protect the public as far as we can. We are the only force, the only organisation who stands up consistently to defend the Fire and Rescue Service and the firefighting profession. The truth is that what lies ahead could be even worse, because we expect this Government to attack the Fire and Rescue Service like never before. We have to be prepared for what is ahead.

We have to start by saying that there is an alternative. The truth is there is no need for cuts. There is a huge tax gap. Research by the Tax Justice Network for PCS recently identified that the tax gap, ie unpaid tax in the UK primarily by big business or those at the very

wealthy end, the people I've just spoken about, the tax gap in the United Kingdom is approaching £120 billion a year. That's the uncollected tax in the UK. We know what some of the Tories' friends, Ashcroft, Goldsmith and so on, do with it. They keep their money overseas so as to avoid paying tax in the UK, and then they tell us we have to accept their cuts alongside that.

If those people started to pay their tax, if big business started to pay their tax, there would be no need whatsoever for cuts in the UK public service. There in fact could be the investment that we need in our Fire Services, in our schools and our hospitals, no need for cuts whatsoever. If they started to think about the wars that have been unleashed – £10 billion spent on Afghanistan and Iraq! Isn't it ironic that before the election the Liberal Democrats were being condemned for their stance on Trident, and they pointed out that this is going to cost £15-20 billion (and there's some savings that you could make). So some people may have voted Liberal Democrat thinking that they were going to get the scrapping of Trident. No, what they've got is a Tory/Liberal coalition which will proceed to introduce that horrific, nightmarish waste of money. So there's another saving that could be made.

We need to also start saying: what about taxing more fairly? Not just people who are avoiding current rates of tax. What about actually having a more progressive taxation system in the UK? The resources are there. We need to show that we are ready for a fight. We've shown that over a number of years. We've mentioned South Yorkshire, the magnificent display of solidarity in Barnsley last September. We need to say that that solidarity, that unity has to be built within the Fire Service, within the Fire Brigades Union, but also far beyond it. We need to argue that within the Labour Movement. We need to build a Movement, a unity within our Movement, coordinating that action where necessary, to defend jobs, to defend public services, and to defend our pensions and conditions.

Isn't it interesting that today in Greece the trade unions have organised their fifth General Strike against their austerity measures imposed upon working people in Greece? Next month Spanish trade unions have planned major strikes against the cuts as well. There is a real desire for united action. There is a growing recognition in various public sector unions that we may need to work together and fight together and campaign together if we're going to win together. We need a mass movement to be built to resist this agenda that we face. We also need to reach out to our communities to build alliances against the cuts, to build a demand that we want decent public services and we're not willing to pay the price by having our people thrown on the scrap heap of unemployment and our youngsters' lives devastated by unemployment and poverty. That's the agenda we

Day Two – 20th May

need to set out for the Labour Movement in the face of the challenge of this coalition Government. We need to win the argument.

They will say, and they're saying it, there is no alternative to what we're doing; this is the only option. Remember this, they've said that to our people throughout our history. They've said there's no alternative. If we'd listened in the past, we never would have won the right to vote, we never would have won the right to be in trade unions, we never would have won our National Health Service or education. So we rejected it then and we reject it now. Support the Resolution! *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Secunder for the Emergency Resolution?

BRO NEIL WILLIAMS (London):

Conference, before I address the motion I think it might be worth reminding ourselves about what the scale of this economic crisis really is. \$4 trillion worldwide has been wiped off the output of the world economy. That's enough dollar bills to stretch from the sun to the earth twice over, back to back. It's also enough money to provide basic education, healthcare, sanitation and nutrition to all of the people on the planet who are currently denied it – not for now but for the next 30 years. That's the scale of the amount of money that's been wiped off the planet due to this crisis. And it's still not over. According to Andrew Haldane who is the Bank of England's Director of Financial Stability (what they call an oxymoron if there ever was one!) says that the long term impact of the crisis could cost anything between \$60-200 trillion. That is an enormous sum of money which the ruling class the world over is demanding that we, as working class people, pay for.

Concretely, and in British terms, this amounts to a fundamental attack on our public services, the dismantling of the welfare state, and cuts in wages and pensions the likes of which we've not seen for a generation, as outlined by Matt earlier. We can either go along with this as they've done in Ireland, where the anger from below has not been matched by the trade unions and they've gone along with the cuts, or we can fight, as they are doing in Greece where union leaders have mobilised the anger from below and we've seen general strikes and demonstrations. I don't know if any of you saw that massive banner that Greek workers put on the Acropolis at the top of Athens which demanded that: this is our world, this belongs to us and that European workers should unite to face the crisis. That's where we can take hope from. That's already outlined in Spain and in Greece as well.

What's clear is if we do fight like the Greek and Spanish workers we will have to fight as a class with coordinated and united action across Regions and Brigades and throughout the Trade Union and Labour Movement. It's clear that their side is mobilising against us as a class. The Tories and Liberals have put aside their differences and are united in their assault upon us. £6 million worth of cuts in public spending before the emergency budget, and a further £11 billion worth of cuts at the budget. Beyond that, the Tories have said they want an additional £60 billion worth of cuts in the period of this Government leading up to the next election. That's fewer teachers, fewer nurses, fewer social services, fewer fire stations, less wages, less pensions and more privatisation, as demonstrated this morning with the announcement to privatise the Post.

The CBI and IMF were applauding this assault on us, while the bankers return to paying themselves bonuses and the judges impose injunctions on workers who are trying to fight back. It's not just in BA where they've imposed those injunctions, it's on the railways, it's in the electric companies, it's in the cars, everywhere where workers are attempting to fight back to defend their jobs the judges are coming out with these injunctions against us.

You have to ask yourself the question: how is it legal that they can sack workers, drive down our wages, attack our trade unions and cut our jobs and services, but illegal often for us to fight back? The answer is simple. The laws are written by the ruling class to defend the ruling class. If workers cannot fight because of their laws, it's obviously perfectly justifiable for workers to break the law.

That isn't crazy left wing rhetoric. If you look at the strikes across the construction industry last year, at Lindsey and elsewhere, they did mass pickets, they did illegal wildcat strike action, they did secondary picketing, and they did secondary strike action. Not one official was thrown into jail, and neither the GMB nor Unite have had any of their funds sequestered. More importantly, they won. That shows that the law isn't all-powerful and that we can't not fight because of the law. Every time we challenge it, we have the possibility of winning. As Bob Crowe said: if we hadn't broken the law in the first place, there'd be no such thing as a trade union movement at all.

So, do what we do? If they organise as a class, the Tories and the Liberals, the bankers and the judges, the IMF and the CBI together, then we have to organise as a class too. For us in the Fire Service, and as Conference decided this morning, it means that if any individual Fire Brigade is threatened with the sack for fighting back against the cuts, Conference is recalled with a view to organising national action. Let's make it

Day Two – 20th May

clear, that should be national strike action to defend any firefighters standing up to defend their Service.

Applause

Just as we shouldn't leave any Fire Brigades Union to fight alone, we shouldn't leave any other union or group of workers to fight alone either. If British Airways workers fight, if teachers fight, if postal workers fight, we should be fighting alongside of them, organising collections at every station, sending messages of support and taking delegations of firefighters to the picket lines. If they try to sack any of those workers who are fighting back, just like in Greece and in Spain, then we should be demanding that our union leaders organise national strike action in solidarity with those workers.

Comrades, the money is there to pay for the crisis. Matt outlined some of that a little bit earlier on, and John McDonnell. If we scrap Trident we save £70 billion. If we scrap the wars we save £67 billion. If we close the legal tax loopholes on the rich we could raise up to £120 billion a year. The simple question we face is who is going to pay for this crisis? Is it them, or is it us? If it's not going to be us, we're going to have to fight. That's the key question that faces us as a trade union.

The motion seeks to address that by committing us to developing action alongside other trade unionists throughout the country and the rest of the Labour Movement. That's why it's very important for us to support it. Matt said this morning that we have to be united to fight fascism, not simply inside the FBU but across the whole of the Movement. We have to be equally united across the whole of the Movement to defend our conditions, to defend our services, and to defend our class from their class in this economic crisis. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Neil. Was anyone wishing to speak against the Emergency Resolution? No. Can I see those who wish to speak? Two speakers and then we'll move to the vote.

BRO KEVIN NAPIER (Cambridgeshire):

President, Conference, a Resolution of an Emergency nature, a rallying speech to engage the Conference, but I stand slightly surprised that the EC addressed Conference today seeking a mandate to confront, defend, or even attack the future situation. Whether Con/Lib, Lib/Con, Lab/Lib or even Lab/Con, the writing was on the wall long before a cross went in any electoral box. Excuse my ignorance during a time of FBU reorganising and efficiency recognition, isn't this what we stand elected to do without mandate? Thank you. *Applause*

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

Conference, President, we are supporting Emergency Resolution 1. Just a point to note, they keep banging on about this debt. It's a capitalist debt in a capitalist world. I happen to be a socialist so I'm not in debt at all! They tell you the UK is in debt, Greece is in debt, Ireland's in debt, Portugal's in debt, Europe's in debt, USA's in debt, most of the Third World has always been in debt. So who's not in debt? I've not worked it out yet. I don't think any of us here are in debt. It's a bit of a scam. The farmers are still growing the food, we've all got food to eat. The builders are either building houses or out of work. Nurses are still nurses, teachers are still teachers. It's a scam.

The key to this Resolution is the last line: it's to coordinate. Make sure we coordinate. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Steve. There's no Right of Reply necessary. I will therefore put Emergency Resolution 1 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions. No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to the Annual Report, Section B – Fire and Rescue Service Policy, Paragraph B1. I now call Executive Council Policy Statement – It's About Time with an Amendment from the Control Staff National Committee that the Executive Council are supporting. General Secretary to move.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, firefighters carry out something like 4,000+ rescues at fires every year according to imperfect figures from the Government. Thousands of others are rescued at RTCs, floods and other incidents. Those are people who are alive and safe today who, but for the intervention of firefighters, might well have been dead, or people who might have had more serious injuries but for the rapid response of firefighters. Those are facts of which we can be immensely proud. That's why we are right and justified to be angry and outraged at the increased response times within our Service in recent years. The truth is that response times, attendance times, have worsened significantly over a decade. A CLG report on response times highlighted this in 2009. A couple of facts, examples. In 1996 it took an average 5½ minutes for firefighters to reach a house fire. By 2006 this had gone up to 6½ minutes – an 18% increase in the time taken to attend a house fire. Similar picture for other fires. In 1996 it took under 7 minutes to reach a vehicle fire. By 2006 nearly 8 minutes. In 1996 less than 10 minutes to reach an outdoor fire, by 2006 over 11 minutes. Figures obtained through Parliament on

Day Two – 20th May

22nd March 2010 show that that decline, that slowing of attendance times has continued to worsen during 2007 and 2008 in the areas of the country for which we were able to obtain those figures. Overall, for the last 13 years response times for house fires are 22% slower.

We are alarmed at the arguments that are used to justify and ignore this increase in response times. The CLG report to which I referred looks at the impact of increased response times. It estimates that as a result of that there will have been 13 additional fatalities in dwelling and other building fires each year. Yet nobody expresses at CLG any remorse for those additional 13 deaths a year. Instead, what they say is that other fires are declining in number and therefore fire deaths are declining. Therefore, the phrase they use is that the increase in fire deaths due to slower attendance times has been offset by the decline in fire fatalities as a result of fewer fires. Offset! Fatalities are being offset by this policy.

If you think about it, what they're saying, and Dave our IRMP adviser put this very well, they're saying to a family who might have lost somebody in a fire: well, don't worry about that; one of your family may have died in a fire but don't worry because there's someone down the road who didn't die in a fire because they never had a fire in the first place. That is the logic of CLG's position in relation to attendance standards. It is nasty and cynical and inhuman, and we reject it as professionals working the Fire and Rescue Service.

You've heard this name before, but I'm going to use it again. In 2007 when they were asked about this, CLG officials responding to the Select Committee in the House of Commons, CLG official Chris Wormald replied: "Around 80% of fire deaths have already happened at the point at which the Fire Brigade is called. The actual effect of response times on the death rate is really comparatively small." And an MP, taken aback by this complacency said: "Have we got a worse Service now than we used to have in terms of response?" Wormald's reply again was: "I'm not denying that the number, ie the attendance time has gone up. It clearly has. What I am saying is that this does not equate to a worse Service." This is what people setting policy in the Fire and Rescue Service are claiming on behalf of the previous Government, and I expect we can expect that to carry on.

The real reasons for those slower attendance times is the so-called modernisation agenda which has been welcomed by many fire authorities, fire board chairs, and embraced, regrettably, by so many chief fire officers over the last five years or so. We've seen the removal of national standards of fire cover, and we've seen a shift of emphasis, almost entirely towards preventative activity, community fire safety and so on, at the expense of emergency intervention. We've seen, as a result of that process, the grinding process of cutting firefighter jobs.

The previous national standards of fire cover were a performance measure valued by firefighters and the public that allowed firefighters and the public to make an informed decision about the performance of their Service. Our argument in this Document is that those standards must be the benchmark against which improvements should be made, because the modernisation agenda was supposed to be about improving the Fire and Rescue Service. You will hear endlessly from your chief officers and your politicians about the need to improve the Service. I don't see how a 20% increase in the time it takes us to get to an emergency incident is in any way an improvement, far from it.

We've always supported a genuine risk based approach to fire cover, as long as it was built on genuine methodology. What we saw in our IRMP is, that standards have been set in each individual Fire and Rescue Service, and all too often that IRMP process has been used as a method to bring in and introduce cuts into the Service. The result of all of this is a post code lottery, a post code lottery where people in some parts of the country have to wait – and some of these figures are outlined in the Document that you have in front of you now – an hour for fire engines to turn up to put a fire out. That's not acceptable to firefighters, it's not acceptable, I hope, to the public. The FBU is determined to defend and protect our Service, and the central role of emergency response within that Service.

Attendance times do matter, first and foremost because a rapid response will save lives and reduce injuries to the public and to firefighters. That's what firefighters are taught, at least they were when I went to training school. That's what professionals know, that's what the public understands, and that's actually what the real research shows. That's what the NTECH Reports in 1996 and 1998 showed.

I spoke to the President yesterday about what words I could get away with using in Conference and he reminded me we don't have any bad language in Conference, so I chose my words carefully. Chris Wormald, and the word I chose to use is, is talking complete and utter poppycock. You can put your own word in. I looked up poppycock and it originates in a Dutch word meaning soft dung or diarrhoea. So Chris Wormald is truly talking utter poppycock when he goes to the House of Commons and insults our profession and insults our Service. We will chase him down every step of the way until we get those claims retracted and an apology to the firefighting profession.

It's also an insult to every citizen in the United Kingdom, and we will challenge them. It's also demonstrated in the research that those slower attendance times will actually have increased the cost of fire. They calculate it, £307 million of increased property losses as a result of

Day Two – 20th May

those slower attendance times. That is at a time when the Association of British Insurers are complaining about the growing cost of fire losses. The first half of 2009, £639 million. Increasing in cost of fire losses as a result of larger premises and as a result of the Fire Service getting to those incidents slower and slower over time.

Let's look at the alternative that we are calling for in the Executive Council Policy Statement. Under the old national standards of fire cover, the level of service the public could expect depended, to some extent, on where people lived. There were differences between town and country, but there was also a levelling effect in that towns broadly would have been treated the same, rural areas would have been treated broadly the same. What we have seen under IRMP is a complete fragmentation of standards. When the Government talks about improvement, what we call for in the Document is genuine and progressive improvement to the Service. That's why we produced the Executive Council Policy Statement, that's why we produced the Report that you have in front of you "It's about time".

We need to ensure that the emergency planning process in the Fire and Rescue Service ensures that there are adequate resources, and that means firefighters, firefighter control, appliances and equipment to enable fires and other emergency incidents to be tackled safely, and professionally and effectively. We accept and welcome the Amendment from the CSNC on including planning for emergency call handling in the process of setting national standards.

It's interesting, if you look across the UK at the different approaches taken. In Wales in 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government informed the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services of the adoption of a new attendance time standard, service delivery standard to fires in the home. While the FBU may have this or that criticism of those standards and seek to improve them or defend them, it's significant that in Wales the Welsh Assembly Government can agree in principle a national standard covering all three services in Wales. If that's possible in Wales, why is it not possible in the rest of the United Kingdom as a whole? We heard the welcome comments from the Scottish Fire Minister yesterday. If the Scottish Government can look at the professional concerns raised by firefighters around attendance standards and set up a working group to consider national standards, why cannot the Government that deals with the Fire Service in England do exactly the same thing?

Firefighters will not and do not accept the argument that response times are irrelevant. Built into a firefighter's values is the desire to intervene swiftly, as swiftly as possible, because that intervention is what determines whether someone might live or die, and whether

someone's home is destroyed or not destroyed. To be told that to intervene rapidly to fires and other emergency incidents somehow doesn't matter, or that that is somehow offset by a decline in fires elsewhere simply doesn't wash with us as the professionals who deliver this service on the frontline.

The Executive Council wants the Union to campaign on this issue over coming months. We want you to take the Document back to branches to discuss with members, to discuss with Brigade managements, to discuss with fire authority members, to discuss with MPs. We plan to lobby MPs and councillors to take up the issue. Response time matters because people, their property and their lives matter to us. That's why we're taking up this campaign. We have a Service that we should be proud of. Politicians tell us that every so often. Chief Officers tell us that every so often. Well, the people who really stand up for this Service is this Union, this organisation. It is a Service to be proud of, it is a profession to be proud of. Our Service and our profession are worth defending. I move the Statement.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Seconder for the Policy Statement? Strathclyde.

BRO JOHN CAIRNS (Strathclyde):

Comrade President, Conference, it would probably be correct if the EC were seconding a Statement coming forward from one of the Scottish Brigades because the About Time Campaign started off in Region 1. If the Regional officials were allowed to address Conference, we'd get a more in depth detail as to how they managed to do that, but as yet we cannot do it. It might be a bit disingenuous but we'll probably come back next year asking for the Regional officials to be able to address Conference on Devolved matters.

Conference, we heard yesterday from the Scottish Fire Minister who announced the setting up of a review body to look at response times. The FBU will be fully involved in that process. Since the Minister's speech yesterday, we've had quite a number of delegates approach the Scottish delegates saying that we're lucky and fortunate that we've got a Scottish Fire Minister that's actually looking at response times. Can I just go on to say that luck doesn't really come into it. We've had to work extremely hard to get to the position that we're now in.

About two years ago we started a campaign. This campaign was launched at the Scottish Labour Party Conference. The campaign was called "It's About Time" and called for response times to be reintroduced. We attended the Scottish Parliament, political conferences,

Day Two – 20th May

and we used every avenue open to us to promote our campaign. We within the Scottish Region were extremely proud when our EC Member informed us that the National Union were looking to adopt and expand that campaign.

Conference, Matt's mentioned it, IRMPs have been misused as a tool to make cuts. Now is the time to demand the reinstatement of national response times. Although I'm a delegate from Strathclyde, I know I can talk on behalf of the Scottish Region when I say that the Executive Council are quite correct in using our campaign as the basis for the national policy. The Document states "It's About Time", therefore the quicker we can get this Policy introduced and the principles adopted, the safer it will be for all of us. Support the Policy Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. Was there anyone wishing to speak against the Policy Statement. I'm sorry, there is an Amendment from the Control Staff National Committee. Can I have the CSNC to move their Amendment, please? Next will be a seconder for the CSNC Amendment, so hold fire for a moment, please.

BRO TIM GERRARD (CSNC):

President, Conference, what our Amendment does is to confirm that control room staff are at the centre of our response to emergency incidents. As the second part of our Amendment makes clear, the first intervention in any emergency incident will be the receipt of a call for assistance by fire control. We are the first point of contact for the public and those that require the assistance of the Fire Service. Nobody gets that assistance without the actions undertaken by firefighter control. But it's not just the mobilisation of emergency fire appliances we are talking about. Time and time again the first emergency intervention to a life threatening fire is the fire survival advice offered by firefighter control and which has preserved the life of someone trapped in a burning property. Only last month a firefighter in my own control room here on Merseyside received a commendation for the advice he had given someone trapped in a house fire. There is no better example of the emergency intervention that our Amendment talks about. Such intervention was central to the part of the team campaign.

Unfortunately, chief fire officers are quick to forget such things when it comes to ensuring adequate staffing levels within fire control rooms. They are quick to praise firefighter control in instances like the one I described above, or when dealing with intense periods of high activity such as the floods last year in Cumbria. Yet they are quick to cut when it comes to staffing levels in

control rooms, believing that such cuts will have a minimum effect on the response to emergency incidents. Yet the shocking conclusions contained in the CLG report referenced in this Policy Statement, and the other statistical evidence that is available that show, for example, that over a ten year period attendance times in the Northwest Region alone rose by nearly 30%, must have been influenced by reduced staffing levels in fire controls, staffing levels that will be further reduced by a massive 60% in a Regional Control Centre.

Conference, our Amendment ensures that local fire control rooms (and I stress the word local) are central to Fire and Rescue Services planning properly for early intervention, and that this includes having adequate numbers of firefighters on duty in control rooms. However, alongside adequate staffing, there should also be high performance standards for both the receipt and mobilisation to emergency incidents by control rooms. Currently, Fire and Rescue Services can set their own standards of service. National best value performance indicators did not include fire control rooms. The standards covered by local performance indicators can be lowered as a principal officer sees fit.

One thing that has emerged from the fire control debacle is the setting of national performance standards that the Regional Control Centres would be contracted to achieve. Not that they would have any chance of doing so with the staffing levels that are being proposed for RTC, but that it was to be a national standards.

So the two elements are interwoven. By setting rigorous performance targets, Fire and Rescue Services will need to properly staff their fire control rooms to make sure such targets are met, and in doing so it will add to the faster response times to incidents that is so crucial to the success of our emergency intervention. Conference, I ask you to support our Amendment. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tim. Is there a seconder for the CSNC Amendment? *Formally seconded.* Can I have an indication of those who wish to speak in this debate, please? I'm only going to take two speakers, I'm afraid. I'm going to take these two down this side and then we'll move to the vote.

BRO KEITH FLYNN (Essex):

President, Conference, first of all, I'd like to thank the EC for not actually naming the chief fire officer in the Document. In fact, it was the Essex chief that talked about the defunct measure. What he actually meant was that what you can't do is when the appliance leaves the station, it goes on the roads and it's in the lap of the

Day Two – 20th May

gods, the travel conditions, road conditions, everything like that. Our chief officer said he can't control the weather, he can't control road conditions. So what he proposed to do was just when we get the call, when we mobilise the fire engine, that's it, that's all he ever wanted to record. He never wanted to record when we actually would get to the incident. That is what he means by defunct measure.

After some good work by the Brigade Committee and certainly some of the media coverage we got, we've managed to get him to change his position on that, although we're still locked in the dispute and we haven't actually got an agreement on the dispute yet. But what he has done, he has put that back in the document, he has agreed to record that as a measure and make it publicly available. We're convinced this is just a cheap trick to try to deceive people, to try to cover up cuts in our Brigade. We certainly know it's a trick used by other chief fire officers as well.

Attendance times, certainly in Essex and around the rest of the country, are something we're precious about, something Essex firefighters will fight dearly for. It's firefighter safety; it's public safety. To this end, I've got to apologise for our chief for what he's done, and for some of the standards he's set. Essex certainly support the EC Statement. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Keith. Final speaker, please.

BRO MIKE TREMELLEN (Cornwall):

President, Conference, I am speaking in support. Just a couple of points I wanted to raise on it as well. On the glossy "It's About Time" on page 24 you've got the columns with all the times from mobilisation to attendance. A couple of points there is it's interesting that Cornwall's have actually decreased in the last few years. But that's probably in large part due to the fact that there were proposed downgrades to the last two shift stations in Cornwall. Had they gone ahead those figures would have gone the other way. So I'm pleased to report that due to a large campaign by FBU members (and thanks again to everyone who supported us in that) we've managed to reverse those figures in the right way.

The other point I just wanted to raise was just a point of interest really. The only people that are slower than us as a Brigade are the Isles of Scilly, which is just off our coast. But a point to note there is the fact that generally when they get a fire they have to go down to the garage where they keep all their gear, haul it out of there by hand, commandeer a boat, get all the gear on to the boat and transfer themselves to the nearest island

where the fire is. So I think it's just a point to note, the fact that we're only just above the Isles of Scilly and bless them because they do a wonderful job. Cornwall is fully supportive of the Policy Statement. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I will put the Amendment from the Control Staff National Committee to the vote first. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

Can I see all those in favour of the Executive Council Policy Statement as Amended by the Control Staff National Committee, please raise your hands? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We have now got a tea break. Please be back in your seats promptly in 15 minutes.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, if people can take their seats, please, and finish their conversations we will recommence the afternoon session of Conference.

We are now on to Resolution 25 – Working Time Directive to be moved by the National Retained Committee. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I have the NRC to move, please.

Resolution 25 – WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to oppose any amendments to the Working Time Directive which would threaten the Retained Duty System. This opposition should be in the form of a National Campaign which should include an explanation of the dire consequences for the United Kingdom (UK) Fire Service should detrimental amendments to the Working Time Directive be tabled.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

BRO LEIGH REDMAN (NRC):

President, Conference, this was a major issue which thankfully has been put to the side for the time being. However, it should not be forgotten or put on a shelf in the Union office. It has been acknowledged that the Working Time Directive is not a bad Document; it has the support of the TUC. Again, however, there are a number of serious issues that this Union needs to have addressed in case it raises its head again. We need our Union to be proactive, not reactive.

Day Two – 20th May

Our argument brought to this Conference will, with the best of intentions, defend the rights of firefighters working the retained duty system in the Fire and Rescue Services from those issues contained within the Working Time Directive. If these were to have been implemented without the opt out, it would have had a devastating effect on the retained section of our Union, and would have severely limited these frontline firefighters fulfilling their duties.

Our employers must address these issues. We believe it is the responsibility of this Union to make them aware of the seriousness of these implications and take action. We believe, contrary to what others may say, that if something is not done to protect the current opt out, things could become so serious it could spell the end of firefighters working the retained duty system.

It is also well known that these firefighters may not be the only group of our Union to be affected. Any changes that could be detrimental to part-time workers' rights must be protected. It is the duty and responsibility of this Union to fight and defend those rights. Protect our firefighters' conditions of service. Support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Leigh. Is there a seconder for the Resolution? Northern Ireland.

BRO DAVID NICHOL (NIFB):

Conference, President, prior to the most recent elections to the European Parliament an extensive series of amendments to the Working Time Directive were tabled by a Spanish MEP. Some of these amendments would have been progressive in terms of curtailing long and excessive working hours. However, some amendments, if enacted, could have been extremely detrimental to those firefighters working the retained system, and possibly also officers working the flexible duty system.

We in Northern Ireland believe that this Union needs to be cautious but still vigilant should there be future attempts to amend the Working Time Directive to the detriment of our members and the service they provide. We need careful analysis of any proposed future amendments before rushing to a blanket support position.

However, if, in the final analysis, a campaign is required, then let's do the preparation and make it a winner. I second the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Was there anyone wishing to speak against the Resolution?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, with respect to the National Retained Committee, I am speaking against this proposal. I have to say, the tone of the Resolution I don't like, talking about the dire consequences to the UK Fire and Rescue Service should amendments to the Working Time Directive be implemented. Actually, one of the most shameful episodes over the last year I think I witnessed, and you will have seen it as well, was UK Fire and Rescue Service chief officers going public saying that amendments to the Working Time Directive would devastate the Fire and Rescue Service and in particular the retained.

What a lot of you may not know is that the FBU and the TUC put out a briefing note on that matter. I'd be interested to know how many of you did see it. It made it very clear that amendments to the Working Time Directive could easily be accommodated for retained firefighters. The issue that was being discussed at the European Parliament (and there were a number of them and they were sabotaged, I have to say, with the active connivance of the UK Government) were all about maintaining a long hours culture. We're going to come on in a second to talk about how damaging that is. But I don't think you need me to stand here and tell you that; you all know it, you see it. You can see how it's spreading through the UK Fire and Rescue Service now.

What I do find objectionable is that we should be led up the path of saying that any changes to a system which allows retained firefighters to be on virtually unlimited call is something that we should be opposing. That clearly cannot be in the interests of retained firefighters or the UK Fire and Rescue Service. So this is a major issue for us.

As I said, those amendments that were put in were sabotaged, even though they could easily have been accommodated and retained firefighters could have continued to work it. So this proposal actually goes completely against the spirit of our existing policy, certainly the briefing that we were party to with the TUC on changes to the Working Time Regulations and Directive. I don't think that we should sign what is effectively a carte blanche to say we will oppose changes to working time legislation which increasingly is recognised as being a major issue for us all. Please oppose this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I'll ask Andy to outline the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. The Executive Council do support the Resolution, and we do note that the Resolution is clear

Day Two – 20th May

in that it talks about opposition to detrimental changes. Nonetheless, we do want to make one qualification and it probably is, in the light of that, more of a clarification. That is that we certainly would support any amendments which did strengthen the question of collective agreements and collective opt outs rather than individual opt outs. But we are very clear what the Resolution says: detrimental changes. For that reason we do support the Resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Did the NRC wish to exercise the Right of Reply?

BRO LEIGH REDMAN:

Comrades, I hear what Dave has said. We're looking to be prepared, not to get caught unprepared. There's things to be considered here. Obviously, retained firefighters have their full-time employment. We're looking to be ready to react, to make sure that everything is in place that we can explore the arguments, understand how the full implications will affect all members. Please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Leigh. I therefore put Resolution 25 to the vote with qualified support from the Executive Council. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Thank you. That is *carried*.

We are now on to Resolution 26 in the name of West Yorkshire to be seconded by Devon & Somerset, entitled Working Time Directive. Again, the Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can we have West Yorkshire to move, please.

Resolution 26 – WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

This Conference notes with concern the introduction of flexible working methods such as Central Resource Pools within Brigade's Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs), which have resulted in significant reductions in Brigade establishments. These IRMP changes frequently create increased prospects for employees to work pre arranged overtime shifts or carry out wholetime/retained duties, with the result that many employers regard this as an opportunity to work to encourage members of their workforce to individually resign their rights under the working time directive to derive even more flexibility and savings.

It is clear that as a result of the combination of current, and forecast, poor economic climate and its

associated likelihood of low percentage pay rises, the lack of a nationally accepted standard of fire cover and the current mis-use by some brigades of the IRMP process to implement cuts agendas, that this situation will become increasingly common within the British Fire Service as mounting numbers of the FBU's members will be offered growing incentives to spend increasingly more time at work than ever before.

This Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to immediately and urgently implement the following action:

- ***To redouble its efforts to campaign to highlight the social and health and safety hazards of being at work for long periods of time, as agreed at Conference previously.***
- ***To implement a working group to investigate the extent of, and identify the areas where members are, or are likely in the future to be, exercising their right as individuals to voluntarily withdraw from the Working Time Directive to report back to the Executive Council within 6 months of commencement.***
- ***That the findings of the working group be made available to Brigade Committees as soon as possible after this to assist them in identifying "at risk" groups and focussing their efforts regarding this issue.***
- ***That campaign materials be made expeditiously available to Brigade Committees on the issues surrounding the hazards and impact of individuals voluntarily withdrawing from the Working Time Directive for circulation to these identified groups (this material to include a form which enables the member to give the Employer notice that they intend to re enact their rights under the Working Time Directive).***

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, before I begin, I'd like to congratulate Mick and the two comrades who are retiring in two weeks' time. Just for your own information, I've got 15 years left to do! Thank you very much. *Applause*

The end of our dispute in 2003 brought around some massive changes within the Fire and Rescue Service and for our members, most of them detrimental to the conditions of service. Introductions for the first time of our members being allowed to work pre-arranged overtime, and the move away from national standards of fire cover being two of the worst. The latter in turn brought attacks on our shift system, long day shifts often of 11 hours, more firefighters working

Day Two – 20th May

wholetime/retained duty system, amber watch, working 4 days from 10 am till 10 pm, 5 watch duty system and their grade A's, and, in our view, the worst of them all – close call system. That, for comrades that don't know, is where firefighters are available for an astonishing 96 hours every 8 days.

Because of the attacks on our shift system, it often meant early start times and a day shift with later finish times, which opened the way for flexible fire cover at night and often removal of fire cover at two pump stations. In some cases an attack on reduction in stand down periods, a reduction in establishment, and ultimately a reduction in membership. Strathclyde highlighted yesterday all the inherent problems with the 5 watch system, including the negative effect it has on trying to recruit female firefighters, and firefighters from Black and Asian communities.

Overtime is being abused by firefighting members who sometimes work outside the nationally agreed average of 24 hours per month averaged over a six month period. Wholetime/retained firefighters are a nightmare to police. Firefighters who work both duty systems in my Brigade are supposed to have a break of 8 hours between each duty. However, we strongly suspect by the conduct of non FBU members, that this is not happening. I'm sure it's happening in your Brigades too where they're having less than 8 hours rest periods.

Close call, as I already mentioned, we've just a close call station in our Brigade where firefighters commit themselves to that fire station, albeit in a flat purposely built for their needs while they are there, an additional 100 hours availability for the time and only 30% increase in wages.

We knew that when these sorts of incentives were introduced it would be divisive between members, we knew we would have member vs member in the stampede to earn more money, but at what cost, comrades?

If I may, I'd just like to read a quote from the Scotsman Newspaper, Linda Williamson. When Linda Williamson switched on the news early on 12 July last year her mind was on the family day she had planned with her 3 adult children. Her older daughter, Rachel, was visiting from the United States and she was looking forward to spending the day with her. They would be joined by her second daughter, Rebecca, and son Ewan, a firefighter based a Tollcross. She was getting ready for the day at home in Kinross when she reached for the radio. Moments later her world changed for ever. She recalls:

"At one minute past 8 in the morning I remembered I hadn't put the 8 am news on. I put it on Radio 4 and the newsreader came straight out with it. A firefighter

has been killed in the Balmoral Bar in Edinburgh. I stood and I was horrified. I then said to myself: no, Ewan isn't working today; he's off today; we're all going out. My mind kind of took over and I said; Ewan does sometimes change his shifts. Then I saw a policeman and fire officer get out the car and I knew it was my son. I stood there and obviously they came up the path and rang the bell. I went to the door and three times the fire officer asked me if I was Linda Williamson."

She goes on to say that the following days were a bit of blur, visitors and official arrangements, but one thing Linda remembers quite clearly: you touch the depths of darkness and pain you never thought imaginable. Ewan Williamson paid the ultimate price for working an overtime shift.

Conference, we are realistic. We know we are never going to stop the flood of people who work and work and work, whether through need or greed. But what we must do, what it is our duty to do, is highlight the dangers of working to live rather than live to work. Support motion 26. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Devon & Somerset to second? *Formally seconded*. Executive Council are offering qualified support. Is there anyone wishing to speak against the motion? I will ask Andy to outline the nature of the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

There's two qualifications, Conference. The first is that the Resolution refers to the question of overtime being worked. Clearly, there are limitations, as indeed was mentioned during the moving of the Resolution. There are mechanisms within the Grey Book which can be applied and should be applied to limit the amount of overtime being performed, through record keeping which is required to be undertaken by the employer. That said, we do recognise the difficulties that Brigade Committees have in securing those arrangements with the chiefs around the country.

In addition, the Resolution refers to the question of redoubling our efforts to oppose the working of long hours. One thing we need to be mindful of is the fact that clearly we do campaign within the context of 2-2-3 to maintain a 15 hour nightshift, albeit with a rest break, with a stand down period. But it is a 15 hour shift, and we just need to be mindful that we need to be careful about the way we present those arguments. That said, the EC recognises the call for guidance and assistance, particularly aimed at those who choose, through one means or another, to opt out individually. With those qualifications the EC support. Thank you.

Day Two – 20th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. There is no Right of Reply necessary. I therefore put Resolution 26 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Paragraph B9 of the Annual Report – Fire Safety, Paragraph B10 – Joint CFOA/FBU Warehouse Working Group, Paragraph B11 – National Fire Sprinkler Network, Paragraph B12 – Practitioners' Forum. Anyone else on that Paragraph? No.

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

President, Conference, Comrades, on behalf of Hampshire officials and members can I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their assistance and their support following the tragic fire at Shirley Towers, Southampton which claimed the lives of Alan Bannon and Jim Shears. Without this prompt and informed help from Head Office, Region and many other sources, a traumatic situation would have probably developed into something extremely arduous and far worse. Can I just ask that it is vitally important that this support continues. Having spoken to officials from Lothian & Borders I know how important that support will be to us.

The families of Jim and Alan will bear the loss of their loved ones for the rest of their lives. Therefore, it's extremely important that Hampshire officials and the greater Fire Brigades Union are there to stand at their sides. Jim and Alan have left behind three lovely children who will, in time, come to understand that their fathers' comrades in the Fire Brigades Union did not forget or ever let them down.

On a personal level, Jim and Alan were mates of mine. I worked on the same watch as them. I watched how they grew into competent, confident firefighters. Jim and Alan were lovely fellows. They were two of the very best. The last place in the world I want to be at the moment is standing up here talking to you about this issue. I have been advised that I can't say too much about the incident because of ongoing investigations so I'm going to speak generically when I say that we must redouble our efforts to ensure that this never ever happens again. We must ensure that the politicians, the senior management who make the decisions casually to remove pumps, close fire stations, and slash firefighter posts are made fully aware that we will hold them accountable, that we will come for them should their actions lead to firefighter deaths.

May I thank all those of you who attended the funerals of Jim and Alan. I will apologise that our chief saw fit to discourage Brigades from allowing their firefighters to travel. Our Regional officials worked very hard to make

sure that you were all invited and many of you did turn up. But it was a lot of comfort to the families. I know they appreciated it.

All I can say, comrades, is thank you once again and I hope none of you ever have to stand up here like I am today. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

We now have Northern Ireland who have Remitted Resolution 23 on National Promotion Standards and wish to exercise the Right to Speak.

Resolution 23 – NATIONAL PROMOTION STANDARDS

This Conference demands that the Executive Council begin negotiations with the Employers to agree National Standards for promotion within the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This should include testing of operational competence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO DERMOT ROONEY (NIFB):

Conference, President, our Resolution was asking for a national standard of promotion to include test of operational competence. Since submitting the Resolution we have spoken at length with Sean Starbuck. We now accept that there are national standards in the form of IPDS, albeit that it's not being properly implemented. Employers, including ours only recently, have put in place a system for testing operational competence.

We brought the Resolution because we had concerns about our managers being promoted and how they were being promoted. We felt it was right to raise it at Conference. I want to emphasise that we really want to make sure that the employers all over the UK actually implement IPDS properly and do instil a test of operational competence. We would have accepted Strathclyde's Amendment about incident command. That wasn't an issue though.

We do accept that the EC, via the Workforce Development Group, are effectively working on it. Sean has not only assured us that the issue is being addressed, but that it's a priority and we fully accepted that. In Northern Ireland, we'll do whatever is required to challenge the inappropriate use of development rate of pay, because that's linked to it. There's a serious issue there about not having quality assurance. That's part of the process.

Conference, we obviously Remit Resolution 23 and we'll keep a keen eye on progress. Thank you. *Applause*

Day Two – 20th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dermot. I will ask Sean Starbuck to respond on that.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks, Northern Ireland for Remitting that. We never asked Northern Ireland to Remit it because we didn't agree with it, obviously. It's because we believe that there's a national standard. There is a national standard out there. The problem is, like a lot of things to do with Workforce Development, like we've discussed at Conference, it's how it's applied. That is a major problem here.

I know the next Resolution is about ADCs. It's a similar issue there. The EC made a statement last year that we'd have an upskilling of our officials on workforce development, we'd run a School and that's what we've done. I've got to stress, if you get an opportunity to come to the Workforce Development School, come, because we've put it in easy speak. It is an easy system. The challenges we raise there are challenges which you can go back to your Brigades and raise. Anybody who has been on the School will say that.

Can I just stress the way we are using workforce development to challenge this issue which will cover things which Northern Ireland have raised. We have highlighted that people are using development pay when they haven't got quality assurance. The quality assurance ensures that a Brigade will use workforce development properly, and they will use the IPDS as it should be used. As late as yesterday, Dave Beverley attended a meeting with Edexcel, and Edexcel want to meet us. They want to meet us to discuss the quality assurance because unless they've got quality assurance they can't pay your development pay and promotion, even though we know we are. If I can just leave it at that and just say we are using this as an absolute priority. We've already got a national standard of promotion. When we get it applied, it will cover all the issues that Northern Ireland have raised. Thank you.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. Next up is Resolution 35 entitled, Assessment and Development Centre Process from Nottinghamshire. The Executive Council are opposing. Can we have Nottinghamshire to move, please.

Resolution 35 – ADC PROCESS

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

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

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

BRO IAN YOUNG (Nottinghamshire):

Afternoon, Conference, we are very mindful of what's just been said on behalf of Northern Ireland and I know that Sean has probably got a bit more to say about it in response. We were asked to Remit this but we felt that we would like to carry on because there may be a little bit of a debate to be had.

Conference, this Resolution is borne out of continuing frustration of the members in Nottinghamshire with the current system of promotion of ITOPs and ADCs within the current Fire Service. It seems to frustrate people from within every role and at all levels of experience within the Service. There is in Notts a fundamental belief that the whole ITOP/ADC process is unfair, it's poorly managed, it's poorly applied, and critically, it does not produce the quality of leaders that it's intended that it should. Oddly, and alarmingly perhaps, the process is one area where we find that we have common ground with our management. The frustration for both sides is that neither of us think the system works for anyone.

We understand the history that the ITOP and ADC were introduced as it was recognised by all interested parties that the skills required to manage effectively, such as communication, leadership potential etc, were not adequately addressed under the old system which focused on technical examinations in isolation. Unfortunately, what we did was to throw out the baby with the bath water, and previously held and hard earned qualifications were thrown away, and the ITOPs and the ADCs seemed to focus purely on PQAs with absolutely no regard paid to the technical knowledge and experience of our members.

As a result, we believe we're seeing locally, and probably nationally, a dumbing down of the Service; the competency of our firefighters and our officers is being compromised; and our ability to deal with incidents, look after the safety of our crews and the public is also subsequently compromised. Why? Because in our view we're all more interested in playing buzzword bingo, and reciting from an HR script in the style of some kind of demented Noel Coward where we play act the role in order that we can sort out an imaginary cosmopolitan buffet for an imaginary lunch at an imaginary leisure centre on their imaginary open day. For heaven's sake, let's get a grip! It's time we had a reality check.

Day Two – 20th May

It may be that the system is in fact a good system. Sean will probably argue that in a moment, and that it is simply not being applied properly. It may be that what should happen is that the nationally agreed promotion system should contain the ITOP and the ADC in conjunction with the test of technical ability. The simple fact is that in Notts, and I expect in other Brigades too, that is simply not happening. The result is that our members now completely distrust the process, and decent candidates no longer apply. Those that do apply are frustrated by ever changing goalposts and the raising and the lowering of the imaginary bar. Candidates know the crucial technical skills, their experience, their underpinning knowledge that they've obtained are worthless attributes in this system. Many members, myself included, actually find the whole process humiliating and farcical. We are left disenchanted, which in turn leads to disengagement. Conference, we have a problem. There are, we believe, many problems with this system. We need to address them urgently and we need to do it now. To do so, we ask Conference to back this Resolution for a review. We urge you to accept it in the correct spirit. We accept that the wording in our Resolution is not actually perfect in that the ADC is not designed to address technical ability. Hopefully, you'll understand the spirit of the Resolution.

If your members share our frustration, then support us in seeking a review of the promotion system including ITOPs and ADCs. Finally, please let me be clear: we are not necessarily seeking revolution, not at this point. However, we are seeking a properly balanced process which produces quality, well rounded individuals who have a full and underpinned skills base. Conference, please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ian. Is there a seconder for Resolution 35, please? Come to the rostrum, brother.

BRO CHRIS TAPP (Derbyshire):

I'm speaking to second and in support of Resolution 35. President, Conference, Ian's already given a strong case for why the current promotion process of ADCs is failing the Fire and Rescue Service. I believe it is right to have a process that addresses and tests all the elements required to be promoted in the Fire and Rescue Service.

We've seen vast amounts of people failing the current process for simply not saying the latest buzz words before someone else said it, or not showing enough potential to manage a local airport. We need to test a wide variety of things in a simple process that may include some of the current topics, but will also include what is fundamental to manage in the Fire and Rescue Service and ultimately on the incident ground. That is a national process that is understood by all, applied fairly

across the board, that gives clear standards of what is required to be successful, and includes the real elements of firefighting, would see people promoted that have potential, ability to manage, and the essential firefighting capabilities that are key to being a successful manager in our profession. Conference, I urge you to support the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are opposing Resolution 35. I will ask Sean Starbuck to outline the reasons why. Sean.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

This is a similar situation to Northern Ireland, like I said. Since Ian said I've got to stand up and give an alternative view, I will do as I'm told!

We recognise that there are issues with ITOP and ADCs, but actually what you're saying in your Resolution you're arguing against your own argument because they are not there to give operational competence to a firefighter or anybody promoted; they are there to recognise potential, not to address it, that comes afterwards. You've argued quite well that you should have a situation where people are developed. But that should be part of it.

If you haven't got that as part of your process, that's what we're trying to do, that's what the Workforce Development are trying to do; they're trying to give you a process which is externally quality assured. No wonder your Brigades are saying it's failing. They want it to fail, because it's a lot of work to develop people properly. There's a lot of situations within this system which has been developed for 25 years, since 1986 when we started looking at this. It's linked to the Fire Services Act and other legislation. It's not something that somebody has written on the back of a fag packet. This has been really really thought out. Unfortunately, some Brigades are picking parts of it and that's where it is a problem. Anybody who picks up part of a promotion process, and only uses the first part which the ADCs and the ITOP, it is destined to fail. It's got to be part of a system.

What I'm saying, and I know I'm plugging it again, is we need to come on this Workforce Development Course. We've got John Arnold, an officer's rep from Northumberland who is absolutely superb on this. Not only does he tell you how it works, he also explains how we can challenge it as well. We do need to go away and we need to challenge it when it's not in place. But let's not throw it all away because we don't like how it's working in Brigades.

People will say we shouldn't do the imaginary shelf stacking, but the test of potential is the test of

Day Two – 20th May

communication. You don't need to talk about firefighting to do that. That comes afterwards. The operational competence is part of the development plan. The IPDS Code of Practice which we issued last year is supported by the whole of the EC, and it gives guidance on the IPDS Code of Practice issued by the NJC and the IPDS hub. We are challenging it.

Last year Matt Lamb from Shropshire said we need to raise issues about ADCs in the appropriate bodies. We did. We went away, we met with Skills for Justice and we said we've got problems with ADCs. Actually, what Matt said was: we need more funding. We've now got a national subgroup, the Vocational Standards Group just looking at IPDS and just looking at ADCs. We are addressing it. I've got a lot of confidence in this. I haven't got a lot of confidence in the way it's been implemented. That's why we're challenging it. We need to challenge it, we need to get a quality assured development process, and we need our people to be safe. This is only part of it. But we need this part of it to continue.

I'm asking for this to be Remitted. I don't want to oppose it because we're going to carry on doing the work. We're asking that it's Remitted, please. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. Do Nottinghamshire wish to exercise their Right of Reply? Hang on, first we've got a Point of Order over here. Come to the rostrum, please Martin.

BRO MARTIN POTTINGER (ONC):

Just wondering if you can ask, Chair, if anyone wanted to speak against this motion?

THE PRESIDENT:

I wasn't intending to ask for further speakers because you've had opposition already from the platform, and in the interests of time I thought that was sufficient. That is why I dealt with it like that. Cheers, Martin. Come to the rostrum to give your reply, please.

BRO IAN YOUNG:

Thank you for the Right to Reply. As I said, we were called to Standing Orders and we've been asked to Remit this before we brought it to the floor. We know that Northern Ireland did the same and they've agreed for their own reasons. We didn't Remit it because we think there are a lot of people out there, a lot of Brigades, a lot of members suffering the same frustrations. We think that we needed some kind of answer as to where we are with it and what's happening. I'll thank Sean because he's given us, in Conference, he's given us in private, and he's given

Northern Ireland, and now he's given you an explanation of where he's headed with this piece of work.

I know you're confident in the system, Sean and you've articulated your argument very well. I have to say that I think when we go back to Nottingham and we explain this to our members, they will still say (I will use my words very carefully because I don't want to offend): Ian, that's the biggest load of poppycock we've ever heard! It doesn't matter what Sean says, you can't polish it! *Applause*. But Sean, we'll give you a chance. You can get your duster out. I know that you believe in what you're saying passionately. We do trust you. We have got faith in you to go and do it right. So we will Remit it and we will ask the same question next year. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ian, that's helpful. We're now on to Resolution 28 from North Yorkshire entitled Deliberate Removal of Breathing Apparatus Entry Control Officer from First Line Appliances. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can we have North Yorkshire to move, please.

Resolution 28 – DELIBERATE REMOVAL OF BAECO FROM FIRST LINE APPLIANCES

Conference notes with great concern the continued deliberate removal of the safety critical role of BAECO from first line appliances by some FRSs. This practice appears to be on the increase by FRSs with various reasons being given for doing so, including removing firefighters from fire appliances to ride vans and deliver CFS activities when they are on duty.

FBU members are facing greater risks when dealing with fires and this risk is increased when rapid deployment procedures are routinely used as a means monitoring committed BA teams and is contrary to the guidance given in TB 1/97.

Conference therefore calls upon the FBU to immediately raise this issue at a national level to bring about the necessary guidance being reiterated to FRSs in order for them to cease this dangerous and unnecessary practice.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

BRO SEAN ATKINSON (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we're asking for your support to send a clear message out to all chief fire officers and fire authority members that we will not accept the continuation of this dangerous practice. Everyone here

Day Two – 20th May

today recognises the importance of the BAECO whilst dealing with incidents requiring breathing apparatus, whether that be fires or hazardous materials. Indeed, the Chief Fire and Rescue adviser acknowledges this fact in his circular 18/09 dated 23rd March when he describes the role as “essential to the safe control and support of BA operations”. The skills and knowledge to carry out the BAECO role in terms of maintaining proper records on the entry control board, communicating with BA teams, and the briefing and debriefing of BA teams is an integral part of both BA training and refresher training.

We are now witnessing the deliberate removal of the BAECO from first line day crewed appliances with increasing regularity. Local managers are ordering crew and watch managers to send their BAECO to ride on what can only be described as an ill adapted van with blue lights, but referred to as a community safety vehicle. Senior management believe that the BAECO is better utilised at community events, handing out promotional material and other leaflets rather than monitoring the safety of BA wearers. This is clearly not acceptable to our members.

When asked would the BAECO crew member be removed from front line day crewed appliances to crew the CSV, the management response was: “wherever possible the authority would strive to achieve five on the first appliance and two on the CSV. However, in recognising the limited resources need to be used in the most effective manner, local managers will require a more flexible approach to the distribution of resources. In other words, your BAECO will still attend the incident, just not at the same time as everyone else and not on the same vehicle.

Our members deserve to have a BAECO monitoring their safety from the point of entry, not a rapid deployment board sat in the crew cab waiting for someone to turn up on an ill adapted van some 20 minutes later. Please support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder, please, for Resolution 28? *Formally seconded.* Was there anyone wishing to speak in opposition? The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask National Officer John McGhee to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

There is a couple of things. First off, Conference, the long awaited review of Technical Bulletin 1/97 is taking place currently. We have reached the stage where it is about to go for a full consultation process. I’ve got to tell you that within that there will still be suggestions of rapid deployment procedures. The qualification that we

give on this – and we will certainly look at the best way that we deal with – I think Matt’s outlined on a number of occasions already over yesterday and today that the best way that we defeat these kind of stupid ideas is at local level by informing our members, getting our members active and refusing to carry out dangerous practices. It’s as simple as that. We’ve got to be organised and we’ve got to refuse to do it.

I will give you an example. Our members from GMC produced a joint report with their managers on the incident I talked about earlier in relation to standards where one of our firefighters was seriously burned. Two fire appliances with five crew members turned up at a dwelling house fire. The BA wearers put their tallies into a rapid deployment board and threw them into the back of the truck. There was no BA command and control at all at the incident where our member was seriously injured. There was no reason for it, in my view. There was enough people there. If people had been properly trained they would have carried out the procedures correctly and our member probably wouldn’t have been injured and would still have his fingers on his hands today.

So you’ve got to join with us, and you’ve got to make sure that when they are bringing in batty ideas, that we’re refusing to do them, and we’re fighting against the cuts to make sure that there’s enough of our people on the fire appliances to make sure that we can carry out the procedures properly.

With that, we will certainly look at the best way of making sure that there’s always BA command and control. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. There’s no need for a Right of Reply. I will put Resolution 28 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 34, also from North Yorkshire, entitled Recording of Training. The Executive Council are supporting. North Yorkshire to move, please.

Resolution 34 – RECORDING OF TRAINING

This Conference acknowledges that training and the recording of training activities must be rigorously controlled and that all training undertaken must be recorded accurately and audited centrally.

Conference notes with concern that some FRSS allow entirely inadequate ad hoc local arrangements for the delivery and recording of training undertaken by their staff.

Day Two – 20th May

We therefore call upon the Executive Council, aided by local officials, to carry out a review of the training delivery standards in each FRS to identify these standards and produce a report with their findings back to Annual Conference 2011.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

BRO EDMUND BILLING (North Yorkshire):

President, Conference, Conference acknowledges that training and the recording of training activities must be rigorously controlled and that all training undertaken must be recorded accurately and audited centrally. This is especially important with the backdrop of increased firefighter fatalities and the desire of senior brigade management to force all responsibility and liability on to the lowest possible level of management.

Conference notes with concern that some FRSs allow entirely inadequate ad hoc local arrangements for the delivery and recording of training undertaken by their staff. My Brigade, North Yorkshire, is as guilty as any other in this respect. An example would be swift water training. We have several dedicated swift water rescue units across the county with no joint approach to training on this safety-critical and potentially dangerous equipment. Each station that has the units seem to have their own way of training with no overall system in place to check that this training and recording is appropriate or adequate.

This led to a situation at one of the stations where no-one had realised that all the instructors' qualifications were out of date, meaning that there was no-one qualified to train the crews. Obviously, North Yorkshire FBU, headed up by our Health and Safety guru Alistair Biggs, requested that the swift water units be taken off the run until the trainers could be reassessed. However, our senior management decided, in their wisdom, to ignore our request and keep their fingers crossed that there wouldn't be an incident before the instructors were retrained.

Had our Brigade had detailed, centrally controlled systems in place, this situation would have been avoided. There are many other examples, such as the high volume pumps, the line rescue and the salvage unit. The training tends to be left to watch based staff that are keen to progress in the Fire Service. They are given the task of constructing training packages or training as instructors by station or group managers that are keen to give them develop opportunities regardless of whether the task is in their role map. Since the managers that give them these tasks are also the managers that will interview them for any potential promotion, the people selected to carry out the training or produce the training packages are reluctant to turn such an opportunity down. The watch managers at our dedicated training centres

have little or no input into the content, and also no real knowledge of the equipment or practices.

It's important to say, though, that this issue is not confined only to the special units, with some very worrying training and training recording systems being developed locally for all aspects of our work. Once again, North Yorkshire is at the forefront for poor practice with systems such as the cascade training. What happens with this is you'll have one member of the watch, it can be any rank, it can be a probationer if they decided to, is sent to training school, gets a day's training on a piece of equipment or any aspect, then comes back to the station and then delivers the training to the rest of the watches.

There's no quality control and no appropriate way of assessing that all staff are getting the training or that it's recorded. Also, in our Brigade we use the PDR Pro system of recording which was hailed as a recording saviour by senior management when brought into the Brigade. It's been such a success that they are now looking at bringing in another system to replace the failsafe PDR Pro. The new system will no doubt be computer based once again, and our principal officers will refuse to research the levels of IT literacy in North Yorkshire and provide suitable training for those members of staff that are not IT competent. Each Fire Service must take ownership of and take extremely seriously all aspects of training and training recording. With this in mind we call upon the Executive Council, aided by local officials, to carry out a review of the training delivery standards in each Fire and Rescue Service to identify these standards and produce a report with their findings back to Annual Conference 2011. Please support this Resolution. Conference, I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 34?

BRO JOHN DENVIR (ONC):

President, Conference, the Officers National Committee support the Resolution and believe that we as a Union should strive for a minimum national level of standardised quality training across the UK. North Yorkshire have highlighted issues in areas of specialist training, but we believe, as they do, that across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland we should be looking at a minimum standard of core skill training and an adequate recording mechanism.

We also believe that as a Conference we have an opportunity to send a message to our members to complete training records and to highlight that by completing these records, our members are giving themselves protection.

Day Two – 20th May

When an issue arises from an incident or accident and an investigation is carried out, either internally or externally by the Health and Safety Executive, those who are investigating are like meerkats, pricking up their ears, demanding to see an individual's training record whether relevant or not. We believe that Conference should use this Resolution to remind and encourage our members that the need to complete training is vitally important. From a health and safety policy point of view, we need to go back to the meerkats, it's simples.com. If you do the training, record it, and according to law, if you don't record you didn't do it. We second the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Was there anyone wishing to speak against Resolution 34? No. The Executive Council are supporting. I will therefore put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 37 from Dorset entitled Transferability. The Executive Council are supporting. Dorset to move.

Resolution 37 – TRANSFERABILITY

This Annual Conference fully supports the victory of the FBU in obtaining part time worker rights for all Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighters.

One of the significant advantages of these rights is that it gives RDS firefighters the right to apply for wholetime posts without being treated less favourably than their wholetime counterparts.

However, this Conference condemns any Fire Authority who misuses this legislation by ring fencing wholetime posts exclusively for RDS transferees and in doing so reinforcing inequality between duty systems. This practice further undermines the equality agenda which was set in order to ensure that applicants into the Fire and Rescue Service were taken from the widest possible pool of people.

Therefore, we call upon the Executive Council to immediately carry out a review of Fire and Rescue Services regarding this issue with a view to developing clear policy and guidelines for brigade officials to follow.

DORSET

SIS KAREN ADAMS (Dorset):

President, Conference, firstly, we'd like to applaud and fully support the victory by the FBU in obtaining part

time workers' rights for all our retained duty staff. As this Resolution states, one of the most significant advantages of these rights is that it gives retained duty system firefighters the right to apply for wholetime posts without being treated less favourably. So why the need for the Resolution? Certainly within the Southwest, and particularly in Dorset, we have unscrupulous chief fire officers freezing recruitment for the next two years and ring fencing wholetime posts exclusively for RDS transferees.

These chief fire officers, who I'm sure are connected with CFOA (who, as we are aware, put money into the case to fight against the RDS firefighters gaining part time workers' rights) now seem to think that it's all right to misuse legislation and totally undermine the equality agenda, which was put in place to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service have applicants from the broadest spectrum possible.

This Resolution calls upon the Executive Council to carry out an immediate review of the Fire and Rescue Services regarding the unscrupulous action with a view to developing a clear policy and guidelines for all Brigade officials. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Karen. NWC to second.

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (NWC):

President, Conference, the National Women's Committee has similar concerns about the way in which some Fire and Rescue Services are stifling diversity and recruitment by ring fencing wholetime posts for existing retained firefighters. Sam Samuels reminded us last year, in a similar debate, that out of 14,266 retained duty staff, only 103 were black or ethnic minority, and only 536 were women. I doubt if these figures have changed very much.

We urgently need a comprehensive review to establish how many Brigades are carrying out equality impact assessments prior to transferring, and how this impacts on the diversity agenda. We have a responsibility to ensure that applicants for firefighters posts have the same opportunities whether they live in close proximity to a fire station or not. This evaluation process needs to apply not only to like for like transfers, but also promotions. Appropriate role specific assessments and interviews need to be carried out to ensure that the most suitable candidate is appointed in all cases.

It is already difficult enough for women and other under represented groups to forge a meaningful career in the Fire Service without any further reinforcement of the already heavily glazed glass ceiling. I therefore reiterate

Day Two – 20th May

Dorset's request to the Executive Council to produce a best practice to assist not only Brigade officials to carry out their role but also ordinary members to understand the implications of the transferability scheme. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Denise. Was there anyone wishing to speak against Resolution 37? The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I ask Sean to outline the nature of the qualification.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

The Workforce Development Group have been looking at transferability, getting a best practice guidance document for quite a while. I've got to be honest, it hasn't been easy. We've put out quite a lot of requests for information; we need some information back from Brigades. A circular was sent out last week. A big part of it is how retained firefighters are actually recruited. We need to know. If people haven't responded, I would request that they do. We need to know if they use the national firefighter selection test to get in. That's one part of it.

In addition, I've got to touch on something else, even though I can't go into it in too much detail. Northern Ireland have recently fought an employment tribunal about transferability from retained to wholetime. The result was in last week and we've had a real brief look at it. The ET ruled against us. They ruled that the FBU were right that there was discrimination if a retained firefighter couldn't transfer directly, but it was justified under different equality legislation. The EC are going to get a full report to the next business meeting in June and we'll get a full legal briefing. We need to see if we're going to appeal this decision.

We've got to be really careful. If we're going to put guidance out on this, we've got to make sure that any guidance we put out does not conflict between part time workers' legislation and different equality legislation. So we've got to get it right. The only problem I've got is the "immediate" part. I don't know what the Executive Council are going to do about an appeal, and I don't know where that's going to take us. Apart from that, there's no problem, there will be a review, it will cover the areas you're asking for, but it's the "immediate" part because of this Northern Ireland situation we've got to look at.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. There's no need of any Right to Reply. I'll therefore put 37 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now back on the Annual Report Paragraph B13 – Fire and Rescue Service Statistics User Group, Paragraph B14 – Resilience Sounding Board, Resolution 24 from Cleveland entitled Publicity Campaign. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Cleveland to move, please.

Resolution 24 – PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

This Conference agrees that there appears to be little understanding by the public, or recognition by our employers, of the additional responsibilities undertaken by Fire and Rescue Services in recent years. With that in mind this Conference instructs the Executive Council to mount a publicity campaign to highlight the additional responsibilities taken on by Fire and Rescue Services in recent years. This campaign should utilise national and local media and commence as soon as possible after the close of this Conference.

CLEVELAND

BRO DAVE HOWE (Cleveland):

President, Conference, the thinking behind this Resolution is to better inform the general public of all the extra responsibilities of the modern firefighter through a high profile campaign and a well organised publicity campaign by the Union. However, bearing in mind what we all heard earlier in Matt's address today regarding the state of the Union's finances, Cleveland would not now wish to incur the Union any extra cost at this time and therefore we withdraw. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, that's helpful. Back on the Annual Report, Paragraph B15 – Regional Control Centres, Paragraph B16 – Scottish Fire Controls. Then we will take Resolution 32 from Nottinghamshire entitled Government Regional Control Centres Project. The Executive Council are supporting. Nottinghamshire to move, please.

Resolution 32 – GOVERNMENT REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRES PROJECT

Conference recognises the continued failure of the Government to deliver the FiReControl project.

Conference demands that if, for any reason, the Government withdraw from the national implementation of the FireControl Project in England, the FBU will continue to oppose any attempt by FRAs, LACCs or Government to adopt Regional Control Centres in any other guise or within individual Regions.

Day Two – 20th May

The FBU will continue to mount a vigorous campaign against any form of regionalisation of Fire Control Centres.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

BRO IAN YOUNG (Nottinghamshire):

Hello again, Conference, we sincerely hope that all Brigades and delegates will be able to support Nottinghamshire with this Resolution. The Resolution we feel is clear. I don't expect it will take too much of an explanation. The Resolution came about following information gained that the fire authority in Notts and within the East Midlands Region were considering their options should the national regional fire control fail to be delivered as planned. Yes, it's only taken six or seven years to get them to that point.

For the information of every fire authority in England, the national fire control project as originally planned (loose use of the word planned there) is basically as dead as the proverbial dodo. For us in Notts, we took to understand that at its inception a national project meant that it would include the whole of the British Isles. Clearly, as we now know and as things have progressed, that is not the case, as Ireland, Wales and Scotland have already dumped the project. We heartily applaud the respective Devolved Governments within those countries.

So now it appears that the nation concerned is only England, and that at long last our fire authorities are considering their possible exit strategies. In Region 6 that exit strategy appears as if it may be that the Region will go it alone and we will have our own Regional Control Room without the need to include anybody else. In Notts we intend to re-insert to the CFA and the chief officer that this scheme was launched as a British national scheme. We will reaffirm that the watered down English national scheme is unacceptable and that once again we will reaffirm that the local, regional, national scheme that they propose is unacceptable too and it will be opposed with the full vigour of all of our members.

We'd like very much to ensure that all exit routes are closed off and that the political bunglers who have gambled with our control members' jobs and with our health and safety and the safety of the public are brought to book publicly for the disgraceful way that they have meddled with our Service for their own benefit. To conclude, read the Resolution. It simply states that if, and hopefully when, the project collapses we ensure that we do not let the politicians off the hook by allowing them to claim some kind of spoof regional, national control centre. Conference, what is there to consider? Support our control members, support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 32?

SIS SASHA FARLEY (CSNC):

President, Conference, as we have heard from various members and officials, we're in unknown territory with the new Government. This territory is not unknown to emergency fire control staff. We have been in unknown territory since the release of the Bain Report in 2003. That hasn't changed with today's announcement. So what is going to happen? Who knows! Who cares! We the FBU care. We care what happens to our members, we care what happens to our terms and conditions, and we care what happens to our members' jobs. With the uncertainty surrounding the Fire Control Project, we need to know that all our members will be protected. We are already hearing from different Regions some of the Plan Bs that are being bandied about. One Region, if rumour is to be believed, is proposing to still move emergency fire control staff into the Regional Control Centre, still drop the staffing levels within that control, put a new mobilising system in place, and close all the current control rooms with the ensuing loss of jobs for our members. This would be a stand alone Regional Control, not linked nationally, no resilience, not part of the Fire Service, and very easy pickings for private enterprise.

So, Conference, support the Resolution, support your emergency fire control staff, support the communities we serve and support your own safety at incidents.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sasha. Was there anyone who wished to speak against Resolution 32? OK. The Assistant General Secretary will outline the Executive Council's position.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council support the Resolution without qualification. Clearly, particularly in view of the time, I could leave it at that, but I do think it is important, to an extent for Conference to hear but certainly for members (particularly control room members) to read through the Report of Proceedings, a firm commitment from the Executive Council. I will certainly give that. That is that if, with Fire Control, the new Government fails to deliver what the two parties forming that coalition promised in the run up to the election, the Executive Council give a firm commitment they will not stand by and watch Fire Control 1 be replaced by some kind of Fire Control 2. The Executive Council do support. Thank you. *Applause*

Day Two – 20th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. No need for any Right of Reply. I will put Resolution 32 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Section J of the Annual Report – Health & Safety, Paragraph J1 – Introduction.

BRO BILLY DELVE (West Yorkshire):

Conference, President, last year I brought a Resolution asking for a study into the extent, causes and effects of drug/alcohol and substance misuse. Conference asked that this study should incorporate existing drug/alcohol and substance misuse policies within the British Fire and Rescue Service so that we have best practice. Can the General Secretary give this Conference an update of this study.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Billy. The General Secretary is not in a position to, but I'll ask the National Officer for Health & Safety, John McGhee.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Following Conference we wrote to the other Brigade secretaries asking what policies were in place so that we could compile them and actually carry out the survey. I've got to say – and we will be coming to talk about stress amongst our officials – the response to that just wasn't sufficient for us to carry out that work that you've asked us to do. Unless we can get the information from the Brigade secretaries we're unable to carry out the kind of surveys that you're asking us to do.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Paragraph J2 – Regional Health and Safety Coordinators. Lee and then the brother from Lancashire.

BRO LEE MOON (Bedfordshire):

President, Conference, Beds officials and members would like to thank our Regional Health and Safety coordinator, Steve Kerridge, for his assistance in dealing with the serious RTA involving a pump in Luton which has resulted in one of our members facing criminal prosecution which carries a mandatory 3-10 year custodial sentence if found guilty, along with financial and social ruin. It's hard to believe that Standing Orders do not feel that a member facing a custodial sentence is not sufficiently serious and urgent enough to make it to the floor for debate, especially as this can happen at any

time to any member in the UK for doing no more than fulfilling their employers' expectations.

Our Emergency Resolution read: "On 15 March 2010 a Bedfordshire FBU member was charged by the Crown Prosecution Service with causing death by dangerous driving following an accident whilst driving a rescue pump under blue light conditions and exercising exemptions from the Road Traffic Act by proceeding through a red traffic light on the way to a persons reported house fire. Consequently, Bedfordshire & Luton Fire and Rescue Service have withdrawn their provision of legal support for our member, citing the local authority's Indemnities for Members and Officers Order 2004, despite the fact that the Service train and allow employees to use the exemptions of the Road Traffic Act. For the avoidance of doubt, we seek no changes whatsoever to the FBU driving through red lights policy. Conference demands that the EC raise the issue at the next available opportunity with the employers' side of the NJC, and seek agreement to ensure that where fire authorities train and permit employees to drive to emergency incidents using the exemptions under the Road Traffic Act, and are subsequently involved in an accident, that the fire authority must provide the finances for continued legal support of their employee through any and all legal proceedings."

Bedfordshire will now raise this issue through our EC Member to negotiate a national policy at the next EC meeting in two weeks' time. That will ensure none of our members will be left to stand alone and have to pay their own legal costs when involved in an accident which occurred whilst using the exemptions the employers encourage and train us to do. We also urge that other Brigades and officials take this issue back to Brigade and Regional Committees and mandate your EC Members accordingly at that meeting. Thank you.
Applause

BRO KEVIN DEACON (Lancashire):

Conference, President, last year Conference accepted that the FBU policy relating to emergency fire appliance driving consisted of numerous previous Conference Resolutions and unanimously carried Resolution 73. This called for a review of the driving policy as the existing policy is now unclear, and report back to Conference 2010. Is there an update on the progress of the review of the current policy?

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Kev. I'll ask the National Officer responsible to respond to both of those questions, although I don't quite see the connection with Regional Health and Safety coordinators, but it's a question and it's an appropriate part of the agenda certainly. John.

Day Two – 20th May

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

President, I know as a delegate I took a liberty several times from the floor of Conference, but never moved a Resolution under a Paragraph! Good try, Lee! *Applause*

The driving policy and Resolution 73, I'll try to answer both of these points in one. A group of the Health and Safety coordinators were asked, following last year's Conference, to go to look at the emergency fire appliance driving policies that are across the whole of the Union and not just simply what our policy is on red lights. They came back earlier this year with a very short report. There is clearly much more work to be done about that because it had concentrated quite simply on the red light policy. We've asked that group of coordinators to go back and do further work to look at the training that's available and what's actually going on out there. We will report back later on this year from that group.

In terms of the red light policy, it's a serious situation for any of our members. We understand the difficulties that our members find themselves in when they have these accidents or incidents, whatever you want to call it. But, you know, currently we give advice to our members not to go through red lights, to stop at them. We understand the concessions that are made under the Road Traffic Regulation, but quite simply the safest thing for our members to do is to stop at red traffic lights. Unless somebody comes to a Conference to change that policy, that should be the guidance we continue to give our members.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Are you on the same Paragraph, Andy?

BRO ANDY?:

President, Conference, I'd just like to comment on some of the things I've been hearing under this Paragraph. We need to tell our members that they don't have exemptions under the Road Traffic Act; they have relaxations. If they cause an accident when they pass through a red light they will be prosecuted because they've gone against the Road Traffic Regulations. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Andy. I'm going to take Resolution 39 now from the National Women's Committee entitled Menopause, the Executive Council are giving qualified support. NWC to move.

Resolution 39 – MENOPAUSE

This Conference is concerned that there is no real evidence based information on how the menopause

can affect women when carrying out their duties in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

We therefore call upon the Executive Council to set up a Sub Committee of the National Health and Safety Committee, to include a member of the NWC, to investigate further and produce a report on the effects that the menopause may have on women working in the FRS.

The findings of this report are to be included in an information leaflet on the menopause which is to be distributed to all Brigade Officials and Women Reps before Annual Conference 2011.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS SAM RYE (NWC):

President, Conference, just as death comes to us all, so for women there will be a time that our periods will finally, and possibly thankfully, come to an end. For a small percentage of us it will occur with little or no symptoms apart from the obvious, but for nearly 8 out of 10 women there will be symptoms to deal with. While some of the symptoms will be mild, say a hot flush, for some women they will suffer from a more serious range of conditions like heart palpitations, heavy sweating, skin complaints, urinary tract infections and disturbed sleep patterns. All these in themselves are not life threatening but having to deal with some or all of the symptoms associated with the menopause can have a major impact on a woman's life.

We are all probably guilty of not really understanding the effects that the menopause has on our women members, but neither do our employers who have a responsibility to those members. A better understanding would ensure that when a request is made to, say, have a fan for a member experiencing hot flushes the answer is not no, but yes, because it would be seen as a reasonable request. By the way, that was an actual request which was denied purely because the fan wasn't in keeping with the corporate image of the office!

I appreciate that that is a ridiculous situation, but as part of the National Women's Committee we are all too aware of women FBU members suffering in silence from associated conditions of the menopause. Is it really too much to request a change in a member's work routine to compensate for disturbed sleep patterns? Would it be asking the world if uniform could be adjusted so that a woman feels cooler? This Resolution is purely about gaining evidence based information on the effects of the menopause and our women members at work to help with compiling a best practice guidance note to be distributed to all reps. This guidance will help negotiations with our employers to ensure that our

Day Two – 20th May

women members are supported through the change, that reasonable requests are not thrown out, and that our health and safety is taken seriously.

Please support this Resolution and be assured that there is evidence out there that is not limited and can only help enhance a best practice guidance note on the menopause. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sam. Is there a seconder to 39? Who is seconding Resolution 39? Thank you.

SIS JENNY IMPEY (Kent):

Sorry about that slight confusion. President, Conference, whilst I'm keeping my fingers crossed that I've got a few years left before this subject really affects me, some of our women members are going through it now. Fire and Rescue Services are not even aware of the effects that it can have on our ability to carry on doing our jobs. Our job as a Union is to protect the interests of our members which includes their health and well being. So we need to be well equipped and knowledgeable when our Brigades scratch their heads when asked what they are doing to ensure our members' health and safety needs are addressed. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Jenny. Is there anyone who wishes to speak against Resolution 39? Can I see those who wish to speak in favour? Two speakers. Three speakers is too many at this stage in the afternoon. We've heard from you a couple of times this week, Alan. Katy we haven't, nor Andy. So Katy, then Andy, then John to give the qualification. *Applause*

SIS KATY LANE (London):

Thanks, Mick. President, Conference, I joined the London Fire Brigade in 1987 at the grand old age of 27, bright eyed and bushy tailed, full of life and youth. It is well documented what it was like, and still is to some extent, for operational women in the Fire Service then. But despite all the victories and disappointments of the last 23 years, I now face some of the hardest years of my career. Apologies for this being purely from a firefighter perspective. Because I joined the Fire Service so late, I am tied to this job in order to get my full pension (whatever's left of it) for another seven years. If I haven't been put away for murdering my 11 year old crew manager who amuses himself by asking if I'd like some help to get on to the machine every time we get a shout, I'll be 57. I'm not sure if that will be unprecedented for an operational woman firefighter, but quite possibly it will be. I'm proud of that. But much as I

might like to pretend that the menopause won't hit me in that time, statistics tell me it will, and there is no amount of lifestyle adjustment that will stop it.

So this is where it gets serious. I, and other women who are now actually contracted to work as firefighters until they are 60, need to know if the menopause will affect us detrimentally while serving operationally. It's not good enough for our employers to cross their fingers (a typical employer approach to health and safety) and hope that women will just leave before they are 50, or be bullied out, or be disillusioned out, or be injured out, or be sidelined into non operational positions rather than deal with the problems on stations that present themselves. Nor is it good enough for them to hope that all women firefighters will be in managerial roles before they hit 50 either.

The physical, emotional and psychological effects of perimenopausal symptoms and continuing menopausal consequences for firefighters and all women in the Fire Service must be investigated and the results documented and published for all to see, to protect members like me from being sacked, injured or killed just because I'm female. That may sound over dramatic, but who knows?

So, please, as a matter of urgency, discover whether our employers are going to put us at risk if we suffer from severe rises in body temperature known as hot flushes while we are in a fire situation, whether the possibility of osteoporosis will force us into non operational jobs that will pay less in our last years of service, or whether any repeated sickness absences because of menopausal issues will get us sacked. Our employers sure as hell don't look as though they're trying to resolve these questions. If the answers are no, then all well and good, I'll just be left with the ageism.

I'll never forget or forgive what nearly happened last year, so for those of you here who obviously don't like me, forget it's me that's asking. Do it for those new bright eyed and bushy tailed young women who are now joining, full of life and youth, unable to imagine being 40, let alone 50. Do it for them so that in another 23 years they are now hopefully standing where I am now as loyal FBU members they can't look back at this report and see that we asked for help as women from our colleagues and that our fears were once again relegated to the "to do" file because a few men (not all) can't see how women's issues could possibly be that important. They say unity is strength. I and others need this strength right now. Don't just put up your hands. Please support this Resolution fully and act on it. Don't make us ask again! Support the Resolution. *Applause*

BRO ANDY IMRIE (West Yorkshire):

President, Conference, we are supporting Resolution 39. I'd like to say to start with I think we've had our eye off

Day Two – 20th May

the ball, because this has been something that's been coming from day one. I'm quite astonished really that it's taken until 2010 to get this kind of Resolution to Conference. I congratulate the Women's Section on all the support that they're going to need to bring this to a good Resolution for us all.

It's more complex than what we think. I think it's been played down a little bit. When you start to do the research and look into it, 34 different symptoms is what the female firefighters are facing when they're approaching the menopause, 34. Some of those are absolutely crucial to the role of the firefighter – one of them being the hot flushes, as has been said. The research into the body core temperatures now has shown quite clearly that going through that vital stage raises the body temperature by 1½ degrees. That's before they go into a hot compartment fire. So where's the potential for safety? We're actually allowing members to be put in a dangerous situation. We already know that some people may already be going through that change. So we know that there's a dangerous situation out there.

It's nothing new that once again our employers might look at this as a way to look at female capability in the job and all that that entails. That's where we're going to have to be extremely careful. We're going to be positive about it. They have got the responsibility to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace for people that have illness or are going through problems. That's what we need to be demanding.

We do need the information and the research. We do need to nail it down so that we're going in fully loaded. I would ask everybody at Conference here now to really take a step back and think how serious this is. We should be supporting our female members and getting round them.

One of the things that I am mindful of, looking at a situation like this, is that it can be touched on lightly, so I would implore Brigade secretaries and Brigade Committees to take it with the seriousness that it needs. Go back to your Brigades, go back to management, prior to this (because there will be females out there that may be going through it) and start to positively react out there in Brigades. Thanks very much, chair. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Andy. It is now 5.15. Can we agree an extension of Standing Orders until we've concluded this Resolution, please? *Agreed.*

I will ask John to outline the nature of the Executive Council's qualification on Resolution 39.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, President. Can I just say that when we held our first Health and Safety School for Brigade Health and Safety reps over a year and a half ago now I've got to say that this was an issue that was raised. I think it was Katy mentioned there that we've got to push just a few men to take some action. I have to say I was delighted at that School. I was disappointed first off that there were no women at that School, but I was delighted at the fact that the number of gender health and safety issues that were raised by the men who are out there at the moment acting as Brigade Health and Safety reps. The menopause was one of the issues that they raised, and we had a discussion at that School.

It is an issue that has been highlighted already in a number of senior committees in the Fire and Rescue Service as a potential danger. We know since the Building Design Adviser Group work that the rise in core body temperature while firefighting increases the risk of everybody. Of course, that's one of the risks for women going through the menopause. So we're happy to do this.

One of the things we did want to say, though, research like this can be quite detailed and serious and the limited skills and ability that we would have on that committee may restrict, if you like. We will look to push our employers to make a contribution in terms of trying to encourage other people to do some serious research as well as our own. It certainly sounds as if we may have to co-opt some of the speakers that have come up here today on to that subcommittee because some of the research has already been done. We give the commitment we'll get this serious issue looked at.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. There's no need for any Right of Reply. I therefore put Resolution 39 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

Can I inform delegates that at the close of this afternoon's session there is a fringe meeting in the Royal Clifton Hotel in the Osborne 1 room, organised jointly by the Cuba Solidarity and the Venezuela Solidarity Campaigns. You will be pleased to hear that there are free rum cocktails being served! Get along there and enjoy those.

Tonight, we have the combined International Night and Executive Council function in the Fox & Goose Pub. The International Night, part of the evening there will be a film just arrived here from Cuba about Cuban medical teams working in Haiti with the victims of the Haitian earthquake. That is what all the funds raised from

Day Two – 20th May

tonight are going to. Then at the Executive Council function we have the tribute band Ultimate Madness, plus music from DJ Alan "Wheels of Steel" Paterson. So Alan will get an audience after all this afternoon. I look forward to seeing you all there.

The brother there has a Point of Order that he wishes to raise.

BRO BRYAN BANKS (Lothian & Borders):

Sorry, President, it's a Point of Information. Conference, I need to make a comment on what was said from this platform today with regard to the Dalry Road fire. It's not appropriate for me to go into the detail about our investigation, but now I feel I must. Ewan Williamson was covering a shift for someone; it wasn't overtime. However, there is no question that he was unfit for duty on that night, Conference.

Conference, I'd like to urge caution to all delegates when commenting on ongoing investigations. Bear that in mind, please. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I think that's a point well made, brother. With that, I'll adjourn Conference to tomorrow morning at 9.30.

Conference adjourned

Day Three – 21st May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, if everybody could take their seats, please, turn their telephones off, finish their conversations, we will get started on the final morning of Conference. I hope that you're all feeling well. You don't all look it! We will start with a report from Steve Shelton, the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

(Bro Steve Shelton):

Thank you, President. Good morning, Conference. Can I just announce a couple of delegate changes.
Merseyside: delete Mark Dunne; insert Gary Bennett.
Lincolnshire: delete Craig Tuck; insert Chris Broom.

Can you now turn to your Programme of Business please, Page 12, Resolution 29 has been withdrawn, Amendment falls. After Paragraph J11 insert Emergency Resolution 4 Respirators RPE, London. Page 16 after Paragraph C12 insert Colombian guest, Jorge Gamboa, CUT Executive Trade Union Federation. After Paragraph C13, sorry, I think I've already given you that information: Emergency Resolution 3 Haiti, B&EMM. Thank you. Emergency Resolution 2 has been withdrawn to second Resolution 56.

May I remind Conference we still have quite a bit of business to get through and we may have to look at speakers' times at tea and coffee break. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Are there any questions or points on the Standings Orders Committee report? No. Is that report agreed? *Agreed.*

We are now therefore on to Section I of the Annual Report Paragraph I1 – Introduction, Paragraph I2 – All Different All Equal Representation. Steve.

BRO STEPHEN BOYD (NIFB):

Conference, just a wee typo with regard to the table at the top of Page 132. Our request for representation 3 granted 3, not granted 3. With the President's permission could Conference score out "not granted 3" and replaced that with a zero.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Was there anyone else on that Paragraph? No. OK, we'll ensure that the correct information is

included, Steve. At this stage I call Resolution 65 from Fife entitled All Different All Equal. The Executive Council are opposing. Can I have Fife to move, please.

Resolution 65 – ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL

This Conference acknowledges the difficulties and the complex nature of the All Different All Equal policy. The Fire Brigades Union has over the years taken steps to reinforce the policy to ensure that all members will be treated fairly and without bias. It is our belief that the timescales set out in All Different All Equal are now incompatible with the Grey Book, discipline arrangements. As such this is leading to difficulties in carrying out FBU investigations within a suitable time. Whilst maintaining the core principles of the policy we call for a wide ranging review of all aspects of the All Different All Equal policy and that the review should involve representatives from the equality sections and regional secretaries who are asked to manage the policy.

FIFE

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

President, Conference, with regard to the current policy I'd like to make it clear that we in Fife fully acknowledge and support these principles. However, there are some concerns we have in the practical application of the process in relation to timescales when this policy is used by us in conjunction with existing discipline and fairness at work arrangements, as outlined in the Grey Book. We do not know the answer to this problem. Conference may well ask then why has this Resolution been put forward in the first place? Also, because of local collective agreements there may be slight variations in discipline and fairness at work policies throughout the Fire Service that reflect local needs which may even complicate the matter further.

Picture this. A member is accused of bullying and harassment, management invoke the discipline process and carry out an investigation and within 7-21 days a hearing is called. At the same time, the member writes to the Regional sec and the All Different All Equal process is started to determine whether the criteria for an arguable defence is met. Management then proceed with the discipline case and a sanction is imposed. The All Different All Equal investigation concludes that the member does not have an arguable defence.

What has actually happened in this case is that we've given support to a member at a discipline hearing throughout who does not actually qualify for this. All investigations under All Different All Equal are carried

Day Three – 21st May

out at Regional level, as we know. In Region 1 we have meetings roughly every 12 weeks. This could result in up to a three month delay in investigators reporting back to the next Regional Committee. Again, any discipline or fairness at work process within the Brigade will most certainly have concluded. We could call a special meeting, but we could find this extremely difficult getting eight Brigades and Sections to the meeting at short notice. Cost is another issue. At Conference this year we were asked to consider a Report on the Structure of the Union. This Report talked about finance, and yet we're prepared to waste money on an All Different All Equal investigation, knowing full well that in most cases and in most Brigades the discipline or fairness at work process is concluded. Conference, please support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Graeme. NWC to second, please.

SIS JO BYRNE (NWC):

President, Conference, we seem to have a debate on this subject every year, with some members agreeing with the principles of the All Different All Equal policy and others vehemently opposed to it. Whatever your feelings are about it, it is a Policy of this Union and we have to make sure that we adhere to it. It's no secret that the National Women's Committee is fully supportive of the principles of the policy. However, there's an old adage along the lines of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". It appears that this is broke and it does need fixing. We need to fix it together so that it best fits both the needs of our members and the ability of our officials to carry out investigations in a timely and comprehensive manner. It is totally unacceptable for an arguable defence investigation to take months and months, and which is sometimes conducted by Union officials who have had little or no formal training in carrying out these investigations. We may be reluctant to admit it, but it is clear that the set timescales within the policy are not working. This can lead to a loss of credibility with our members, who are either suffering at the hands of bullies, or members who have requested representation.

If this motion carries and a committee is established to review the mechanics of the policy, then we absolutely need to ensure that the officials with the most expertise are involved, and we welcome that the Resolution includes the equality sections who deal with bullying and harassment issues, and represent members on a daily basis. It is also imperative that a relevant education programme is implemented to ensure that all officials who manage and support the policy have the necessary training to carry out their role. Please support this Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jo. Can I have an indication of any speakers who wish to speak against the Resolution, please? The General Secretary will be speaking on behalf of the Executive. One speaker there, come to the front, please. Can I have an indication of those who wish to speak in favour of the Resolution? B&EMM. One speaker against, the speaker coming to the rostrum now, Dalton from B&EMM to speak in favour, then the General Secretary, then Right of Reply then the vote. I don't intend calling any more, I'm sorry.

BRO DALTON POWELL (B&EMM):

President, Conference, I'm speaking in support of motion 65. The All Different All Equal debate has been on Conference agenda ever since it has been introduced to the Fire Brigades Union structure. Why is this? With so many factors involved in making this policy fair for all, there will always be winners and losers. That is why it is of vital importance that the Fire Brigades Union evaluate this policy. The Fire Service disciplinary regulations have been changed, thus making the timescale very difficult for us as a Union to react swiftly and efficiently.

Some Brigades understand that we need time to put our procedures in place, so consideration is given. Some Brigades will try to push their cases forward as soon as possible, knowing full well that our All Different All Equal policy is a lengthy process, so we might not be able to meet the deadline.

We need to be ready for every eventuality. That is why it is important for us to take a look at the All Different All Equal policy in detail so that we can ensure that we can get it to work quicker and fairer for all. Let us not forget, that is why this rule was established. If we want this policy to work and work well it has to evolve and keep evolving so it is not out of date. Support this motion. *Applause*

BRO IAN YOUNG (Nottinghamshire):

Morning Conference, I am speaking to oppose the motion. Basically it's on the basis – as we all know; it's been debated time and time again – that the system we had previously was not fair. I don't intend running that argument again. You either agree with it or you don't agree with it. We think that it was fundamentally unfair and in our experience it didn't work. It does concern me that Regions are having difficulty implementing it, and if there are training issues around it and the need for assistance then I understand that completely. I don't agree that it's fair to say that it's broke. That concerns me. It's not a broken system. In Region 6 it works very well. All our officials are properly trained, and where we've needed to implement it, we've implemented it in the correct manner. We don't believe it's broken, we don't

Day Three – 21st May

believe that it needs fixing. We do believe that the fundamental principles of equality for all and representation for all are addressed by the existing policy. On that basis, I ask you to oppose it. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the Executive Council are asking Conference to oppose the Resolution. We don't think the policy is broke and needs fixing. I think the truth is that All Different All Equal has been subject to discussion and debate, as has been mentioned, since its existence. We welcome both the mover's and seconder's comments about supporting the principles of the policy. However, we would have some concerns, if we're supporting the principles, why we would agree a Resolution that therefore calls for a wide ranging review of all aspects of the All Different All Equal policy. We don't think such a wide ranging review of all aspects of All Different All Equal is necessary in the slightest. All Different All Equal has been subject to amendment at this Conference within the past few years: in 2006 and was reissued in 2007. So this is a debate that has gone on, and has been subject to amendment and change.

On the question of training, first of all training on investigation under All Different All Equal is available and has been developed as part of the national training and education package. I know that Regions have taken up that opportunity to provide training. If that hasn't been done, then Regions clearly do have an obligation to provide training for officials who they are going to ask to undertake investigations.

In terms of review, we are not convinced of the need for a review. I remind Conference of the discussion we had yesterday on the reorganisation of the Union. We've just agreed to undertake a major, very significant, review of the organisation and structure of this Union. That's a huge amount of work that will involve this Executive Council, will involve officials on the floor and back in Brigades, Regions and Sections. We therefore don't see it is necessary to undertake another review of another area of the Union's activities. It is our view that if specific problems had been identified, then the more appropriate way to have brought those (whether that is around timescales or whatever) would have been to have brought proposals specifically on those areas of the policy. Conference, we urge you to oppose the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Are Fife seeking to reply? Come to the rostrum please.

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY:

President, Conference, as I've already said in my speech we fully support the ethos behind this policy. We don't want it changed; we just want it improved to reflect the concerns we've got with the timescales. This used to work, but the problem is they changed that, and that no longer works with it.

Back to the point with regard to training. In Region 1 we don't have an issue with training; we're all trained to deal with All Different All Equal investigations. On the other point as well for us in Region 1, there's an issue of travel distances. So if I was summoned to go to a member, say, up in Orkney with regard to an All Different All Equal investigation, it could take me two days to get there for a start. Two days to get there, two days to get back, a day for the investigation. If you put that against the fact that a stage 1 discipline hearing can be carried out in a week, how is that going to work? What we're actually looking for is for the EC to engage with the Regional secretaries to see if there's any way that we can improve the issue of timescales, that's all. We're not asking for it to get ripped up, just see how we can address the issue of timescales. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Graeme. I will put Resolution 65 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That *falls*.

We are now on to Paragraph I3 – Equality and Diversity Delivery Partnership, Paragraph I4 – Equality and Diversity Stakeholder Group, Paragraph I5 – Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, Paragraph I6 – CLG Equality and Diversity Awards. That brings us on to Section H of the Annual Report, Education. Paragraph H1 – Introduction. I now bring the Executive Council Policy Statement Education Review 2009, the General Secretary to move. Could the seconder make himself available towards the front of the room, please and that will save some time.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, moving the EC Policy Statement: Education Review 2009. In 2008 Conference agreed the Policy Statement: Education – Responding to Modernisation, and that outlined the challenges facing the Union as a result of the so-called modernisation agenda unleashed after 2003. This agenda includes far more industrial matters being addressed upon local bargaining: shifts, second contracts, ARAs and so forth; as well as major changes nationally which have emerged over the same time: changes on pensions, on IRMP, the impact of Devolution and other changes in

Day Three – 21st May

legislation covering the Fire and Rescue Service. Conference agreed to review education in the light of these developments, and the Policy Review that you have in front of you is the result of that.

The Review included a training needs analysis questionnaire for education officers and officials. This is based on what officials have reported as their experiences and priorities in relation to training and education within the FBU. So this is very much a demand led education package, not demand led rostering but demand led education. It caters for all officials, mainly at Brigade and Regional level. It is assumed that the Regions have established an education programme and in general our view, and the feedback that we have reported in the Policy Statement, is that education is in a very healthy state. The table on page 9 highlights some areas of that. This table reports the take up of TUC education in the FBU compared with the Union's size and proportionate size within the TUC. For a Union that represents a very small percentage of TUC affiliates as a whole, we punch well above our weight in terms of taking up of TUC courses, especially the short courses where we take up almost four times our share of courses compared with other TUC affiliates. That is particularly when you note that many other affiliates have a one to one ratio in that respect.

Thanks need to go to the Regions who continue to support the education programme. The Document includes a comprehensive list of courses and the outcomes available. For example, the new courses on understanding equality impact assessments, have proved to be extremely useful and popular with officials, the courses on workforce development issues again have proved to be invaluable to officials and were reported and discussed in some of the debates yesterday.

The courses we run are all under constant review and are developed as necessary. They are all accredited, assessed and evaluated by both students and tutors. In addition to this, the FBU has a professional and diverse team of tutors who have all played their part in delivering the courses under the direction of Trevor Cave. It is important that the Statement from the EC recognises the role of National School, which throughout living memory has been the key flagship event of the Union's education programme. Its importance is again recognised and acknowledged within the Education Review Policy Document.

Courses are constantly being identified and developed, trialled and introduced to react to the changing needs of officials who are dealing with issues such as shift changes, role map issues, new safety and equality legislation. The FBU is constantly striving to improve the education process. This year we also have launched a

new folder which most officials will have seen, the education folder outlining the courses available at a National and Regional level.

The Statement you have in front of you is designed to allow education to be responsive to demand, to be fully inclusive and flexible, but it also needs to be managed within a budget. The National Officer, Sean, with the remit for education is responsible for managing that. He needs to ensure that we also have the correct governance in relation to education. The Statement proposes a single committee to replace the current structure. This new committee is big, but ensures, in the view of the Executive Council, inclusiveness for all Regions and Sections.

The Statement fulfils the requirements of previous Conference decisions. In fact, it goes further by ensuring that we have a clear plan for ensuring that FBU education is affordable, it's realistic and is manageable, and continues to assist officials as they develop in their ever changing roles within the Fire and Rescue Service. It is important that officials have a say and a dialogue in how education is developed and also have access to that education when it is available. In our view, the Statement addresses the concerns highlighted in 2008 and offers a very clear, practical way forward for education for the future. I move the Statement. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Suffolk to second, please.

BRO STEVE COLLINS (Suffolk):

President, Conference, we welcome the Review which outlines how the education programme will assist officials in dealing with the new demands on their role. The education detailed in the Review, at both National and Regional level, will continue to ensure our officials and activists throughout the Union are educated in the wide range of issues we know deal with, both within the workplace and within the wider trade union movement. Conference, the FBU should be proud of the education programme.

We believe the range of topics outlined in the Statement and the proposed governance arrangements are designed to be inclusive and to simplify the current arrangements. We believe that this Statement does offer a plan for realistic, manageable and appropriate ways for dealing with the Government's modernising agenda, and will ensure our officials are ready for the challenges as they surface. We need to continue the education programme already running and build on it for the future for officials at all levels of the Union. Conference, support the Education review. I second. *Applause*

Day Three – 21st May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Was there anyone wishing to speak against the Policy Statement? Was there anyone wishing to speak in favour? No. OK, we've had it moved and seconded. There was no opposition so no Right of Reply. I will put the Policy Statement to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We now move on to Paragraph H2 of the Annual Report – National School 2009, then on to Resolution 63 from Suffolk with an Amendment from Dumfries & Galloway entitled The People's Charter. The Executive Council are supporting. Can we have Suffolk to move, please.

Resolution 63 – THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

This Conference endorses the previous position that the FBU has taken nationally regarding The People's Charter.

With this in mind we feel that encouraging officials and members to sign the Charter is a start but not enough. We demand that the Executive Council establish a training package to deliver to members/officials at local, regional and national level, this could be delivered through the national education programme and cascaded down through the regional education programmes utilising brigade and branch officials. We believe this will not only promote The People's Charter but also assist in giving members and officials the necessary skills to forward the FBU's political agenda.

Many of us know there is a lack of real political choice on offer but by using The People's Charter we may have a vehicle to start the drive for change this will not only help the FBU and its members but will also help to improve the overall work and life chances for working people throughout the country.
SUFFOLK

Amendment

In line 7, delete "and cascaded down through the regional education programmes utilising brigade and branch officials".

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

BRO ANDY VINGOE (Suffolk):

President, Conference, we are opposing the Amendment from Dumfries & Galloway. The People's Charter is not a new ideal in the social history of our country; it has been around since the mid 19th century. It brought about one of the first examples of People Power having a direct effect on the governing body of

the era. The principle behind the Charter was then, as it is today, to get as many people as possible to sign and support it. As Conference already knows, the FBU along with other trade unions and other trade unionists, including the TUC, has started the ball rolling. But, Conference, this is not enough. We need to mobilise every trade unionist we can. We need to mobilise the FBU – and that's you and your members. That's why this Resolution calls upon the Executive Council to make sure that the People's Charter is made an integral part of our Union's education process, both at national level and grassroots level (which is why we oppose the Amendment to our Resolution).

If all of our officials from watch, station and sectional reps up to the Executive Council can have training and education on the history, principle and the six aims then this can only bring about a greater understanding of what the Charter is about and what we want it to achieve.

Conference, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the six modest demands. They are: a fairer economy for a fairer Britain, more and better jobs, decent homes for all, save and improve our services, not cut them; fairness and justice; and to build a secure and sustainable future for all. Conference, as you have heard, these demands are not unachievable; they are a common sense approach to building a better future for everyone. We all know what Con-Dem Government will bring, but with the People's Charter we may well have a vehicle to bring about a movement of change that will not only forward our Union's political beliefs, but will also forward the lot of all working people. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 63, please? *Formally seconded*. Can I please have Dumfries & Galloway to move the Amendment?

BRO GERRY McLEOD (Dumfries & Galloway):

President, Conference, good morning. I have to say, Dumfries & Galloway is the only place in Scotland that has a Tory MP!

In the mid 19th century two guys, Fred and Karl, compiled a pamphlet called "The Communist Manifesto". It wasn't meant to be hard and fast, but a simple guidance note that could be adopted and adjusted by workers of the world to suit the cultural differences in their areas. Resolution 63, although a great piece of work by Suffolk, does not allow any flexibility in how it can be adopted by individual Brigades. For example, Dumfries & Galloway is not the same as London – they have one or two stations more than us!

Day Three – 21st May

In its present form maybe 25% of Brigades could utilise it efficiently, whereas with the Amendment in place 75% to 100% of Brigades could adopt this Resolution and filter it down using their own systems of communication. Comrades, this is a great piece of work by Suffolk, but if you support the Amendment it could be brilliant! *Applause*. I'm sure you will agree, if Fred and Karl were here today, they would support the Amendment too. Cheers!

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Gerry. Is there a seconder for the Amendment? *Formally seconded*. Is there anyone who wishes to speak against Resolution 63? Is there anyone who wishes to speak in favour of the Resolution? The Executive Council are giving support to both the Resolution and the Amendment. The General Secretary sees no need to add our support to it. We are supporting both the Resolution and the Amendment. I will put the Amendment to the vote first. Amendment from Dumfries & Galloway. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That is *carried*. I therefore put Resolution 63 as Amended by Dumfries & Galloway to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We now move on to Paragraph H3 of the Annual Report – National Education Grants, Paragraph H4 – TUC Day Release and Extended Courses, Paragraph H5 – Tutors 2009, Paragraph H6 – Union Learning Fund, Paragraph H7 – Black & Ethnic Minority Members' School 2009, Paragraph H8 – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans School 2009, Paragraph H9 – Women Members' School 2009, Paragraph H10 – Union Modernisation Fund.

We are now on to Section C of the Annual Report, Trade Union, Labour Movement and International Issues. Paragraph C1 – Introduction, Paragraph C2 – TUC 2009. Karen.

SIS KAREN ADAMS (Dorset):

President, Conference, I am pleased to be able to inform Conference that Brother John Drake, Regional Secretary of Region 13, has been elected as the Chair of the Southwest TUC. Comrades, as you know, the post of the Chair is the highest office available to lay officials within the Regional TUC and is elected by all affiliated unions. John secured the support of an overwhelming number of unions to be elected. For this in Dorset and the Southwest, we wish to send congratulations. I am sure the whole of Conference will agree. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Congratulations, John. We are now on to Resolution 51 in the name of the National Women's Committee

entitled Domestic Violence. The Executive Council are supporting. Can we have the NWC to move, please.

Resolution 51 – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

This Annual Conference views with profound concern the continuing high incidence of domestic violence, which accounts for one fifth of all violent crime reported in the UK and that domestic violence has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other type of crime.

It is a gross failing in a modern society which blights the lives of tens of thousands of women and their children and tears apart both families and social fabric.

This Conference recognises that Trade Unions have a role to play in combating this violence, of which women are overwhelmingly the victims. Through information and awareness campaigns, practical support and provisions under rule for victims and perpetrators and support in the workplace such as; adjusting hours of work, ensuring that counselling is available and where necessary, signposting members to help agencies, to name but a few.

It calls upon the Executive Council to:

- ***Urge the UK Governments to work with the TUC and affiliates to ensure awareness, reduction and ultimately elimination of domestic violence.***
- ***Campaign for employers to provide the necessary support to employees suffering from domestic violence.***
- ***Urge employers to provide comprehensive domestic violence policies and guidelines within their respective FRS***

Finally, this Annual Conference implores the Executive Council to consult with the TUC General Council regarding ways in which the Domestic Violence Bill might be made more effective in practice by:

- ***Demanding that local authorities develop long-term and stable funding streams for local provision of domestic violence services for women.***
- ***Developing a challenging attitude campaign across the UK in order to reduce the level of tolerance of violence against women.***

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS JO BYRNE (NWC):

President, Conference, it is vital that we, as active trade unionists, continue to highlight the devastating effects

Day Three – 21st May

that violence against women has on families throughout the UK. The disturbing statistics are that domestic violence accounts for one fifth of all violent crime reported in the UK, and that it has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other type of crime. Whilst we acknowledge that men can also be subjected to this type of abuse, women overwhelmingly account for the vast majority of victims, not only of domestic abuse but also trafficking and sexual exploitation, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriages and honour killings. One woman every three days dies at the hands of a current or former partner. As a mother of three girls, that statistic terrifies me.

This is the umpteenth time I've spoken on violence against women at different Conferences. Whilst I may be committed to doing everything in my power to ensure that my daughters know that it is not OK to be controlled by a partner, society, and particularly the men in society, we have a role to play too. I'm sure I'm not the only one who can remember that drink/driving was OK prior to the late 1970s/early 1980s Government campaigns. But since those campaigns, peer group pressure has really forced perpetrators to think about the consequences of their actions and has drastically reduced the incidence of alcohol related road deaths. We need to raise awareness amongst our own colleagues to make them realise that domestic violence is an absolute blight on society and can only be stopped if sexist attitudes are challenged and challenged by peers.

From a Fire and Rescue Service perspective, there is a growing trend in the use of arson as a weapon against women and their children in acts of revenge, and a heightened risk of accidental dwelling fires for these families who often have chaotic lifestyles. In addition to this, Fire and Rescue Services need to look at domestic violence from an organisational point of view, where thousands of working hours are lost due to the physical and psychological effects on women suffering from abuse.

The National Women's Committee is in the final stages of producing a national best practice policy on domestic violence which we hope will be used not only by local and Regional women's reps but also Brigade officials to make senior managers and HR departments realise how vital it is to produce a robust and meaningful policy to provide the necessary support to employees suffering from domestic violence.

Finally, Conference, I urge the Executive Council to keep up the pressure on the TUC General Council regarding ways in which the Domestic Violence Bill may be made more effective in practice by demanding that local authorities develop long-term and stable funding streams for local provision of domestic abuse services

for women, and that means women's hostels and refuges and not unisex facilities, and developing challenging attitude campaigns across the UK in order to reduce the level of tolerance of violence against women. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jo. Is there a seconder to Resolution 51?

SIS ALI BURROWS (LGBT):

Conference, President, most lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships are based on love and respect, but some are built on abuse and control. Abuse and control in a relationship is domestic violence. The recent statistic that one in three lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people experience domestic abuse in their relationships is a sobering one, I'm sure you'll agree. There are many similarities in both same sex and heterosexual domestic violence, but there are a number of aspects that are unique to same sex relationships and their families. These can include the threat of being outed if the abused partner isn't out to their family, friends or workmates. There is also a general lack of information and understanding within the LGBT communities and this lack of understanding and education leads to some people believing that the abuse doesn't happen in same sex relationships, or they do now know how to respond if they witness violence in friends or family members' relationships.

LGBT people as a minority group can feel isolated in their lives, particularly in smaller cities or rural areas, and do not know where or how to seek help. If they do find a source of support, LGBT people risk not being taken seriously due to the little recognition within domestic violence mainstream organisations of same sex abuse. Gay, bisexual and transgender men who attempting to escape domestic abuse have no specialist refuge, and nowhere to go, whilst lesbian, bisexual and transgender women do have forms of refuge, but again face re-victimisation due to homophobia or transphobia, purely because LGBT specialists in this field are scarce.

We must take action and push to move services forward. Victims and survivors of domestic abuse need us to raise awareness and push employers in Fire and Rescue Services to clearly understand and support their workforce within their own policies and procedures. Please support this Resolution. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ali. Can I have an indication of who else wishes to speak in this debate, please? We have one speaker there and then we will move to the vote.

Day Three – 21st May

BRO ARCHIE McKAY (NIFB):

President, Conference, I'm supporting this Resolution. Firstly, domestic violence is a crime. It is committed by despicable bullies who seek control over their partners, bullies who have the unnerving audacity to somehow make the victim feel that they are to blame, that they are responsible. This is a trade union issue. After all, these victims or survivors work alongside us all day and daily, and often the bullies do too.

Can I tell you some facts from Northern Ireland? Five people are killed each year as a result of domestic violence. Over 700 families have to be rehoused every year. On average, 400 domestic incidents are attended every week by the police. The police deal with over 100 assaults on men and women annually. Every day, 12 women and 4 men report an assault by a partner to the police, and the police respond to a domestic incident every 23 minutes. At least 11,000 children are living with domestic violence on a daily basis, and these children remain the silent victims.

What do we need to do to support the Executive Council and the TUC? We need to join the campaign for better services for victims of domestic violence, we need to work with campaign groups including Women's Aid, who have worked tirelessly for over 30 years to raise public awareness, and we need to work with our Fire and Rescue Services to develop relevant workplace policies to help those suffering domestic violence. None of us have any problem in supporting this Resolution, but we must all play our part in making the demands contained within the Resolution happen. Support the Resolution and act. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, there was no opposition, therefore there is no Right to Reply. I will therefore put Resolution 51 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 55 from Tyne & Wear entitled Paramedic Staffing Deficiencies. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Tyne & Wear to move, please.

Resolution 55 – PARAMEDIC STAFFING DEFICIENCIES

This Conference views with great concern the number of incidents attended by both our members and members of the ambulance service, where the ambulance crew consists of various staffing combinations which do not include fully trained paramedics. Conference believes this places both

firefighters and non paramedic qualified ambulance personnel as well as members of the public, in an unacceptable position.

With this in mind Conference agrees to seek the assistance of other trade unions and organisations in order to campaign for the compulsory inclusion of at least one fully trained paramedic per ambulance vehicle crew.

TYNE & WEAR

BRO ANDY NOBLE (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, in the run up to the General Election I lost count of the amount of times I heard the phrase "protecting frontline public services" used. Of all of the politicians that used that phrase, none of them actually called for any improvement to frontline services which, regardless of the state of the economy, is a bit of a sad indictment on the politicians. As John McDonnell said yesterday, we're the fifth largest economy in the world; we shouldn't just be looking to stand still in terms of public services.

As far as Tyne & Wear are concerned, it's about time that politicians got real and prioritised some of the finance set aside by the previous Government and likely to be set aside by this Government for projects such as Trident, its future replacement, and other projects which seem to have been allocated seemingly bottomless pits of money. These should be put aside and the money set aside for those services that the general public benefit from on a daily basis. To continue to fund projects which in reality nobody in their right minds would hope need never be employed, and ultimately from which society never benefits, at the expense of those projects in services from which we all benefit is the economics of the madhouse.

It would have been a fair assumption to have expected that there would have been one or two Resolutions that called for greater spending in our own industry, and you wouldn't get any arguments from anybody in Tyne & Wear on that. But I think it's important as a Union that we're not always preoccupied with our own problems, and that we don't just have an opinion on other services, but we're prepared to offer our support, particularly to those services with whom we work closely.

The reason behind this Resolution stems from events that took place at an actual incident. It happened in Gateshead. Having done the research, I'm more than confident that it could happen pretty much anywhere. The concern is, if it hasn't happened in your Brigade area yet, then give it time and it will. A relatively unremarkable road traffic collision involving three vehicles, four casualties (one of whom was unfortunately declared dead at the scene, leaving three casualties, two of

Day Three – 21st May

whom were in a serious condition). However, of the four ambulance service staff who attended the incident, only one was a fully trained paramedic. Two of those casualties required treatment or procedures which under existing protocols could only be carried out by a fully trained paramedic. I've been told by members who attended the incident that the only paramedic who attended the scene was absolutely fantastic, nobody could have done any more than what she did! But inevitably, because of the circumstances, it meant that the simultaneous treatment of both casualties couldn't be provided and they both required urgent attention.

You might think that this is a problem that only affects members of the ambulance service. I suppose to a large degree you might be right. But that shouldn't mean that we're not entitled to an opinion when our members who attend such incidents are made to feel helpless as a consequence of being unable to assist casualties because of the inevitable, unavoidable delays in treatment. I would argue that it directly impacts on our own members, particularly their mental well being.

One of the more worrying aspects of this topic is the move currently being made in some areas, not only to staff ambulances with no paramedic qualified personnel, but to introduce an even lower level of qualification than ambulance technician. The Fire Service is fortunate in as much as we only staff emergency vehicles with qualified, competent or developmental staff. If that were to change and we were to introduce this staffing model, which included another role that was unable to perform all of the functions that were required of a competent firefighter, I'm sure we'd have something to say on the matter, and I've got a pretty good idea what that might be! Or at least, I'd like to think so.

I think it's only fair that we have something similar to say on this issue. It's not a criticism of ambulance staff who aren't paramedics; it's a criticism of managers within that service who seek to employ staffing models purely to reduce costs at the expense of service provision. It's a criticism of politicians who refuse to fund essential frontline public services in the way that people in the UK deserve. The decision to act within procedures or not act at all is a dilemma that we've all heard in relation to the Fire Service. It's no consolation to hear that it's happening in the ambulance service as well. Please support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Was there a seconder for 55?

BRO MICK BELL (West Midlands):

President, Conference, I will be as brief as possible. Basically, I'd just like to wholeheartedly endorse the

comments made by the comrade from Tyne & Wear. This is an issue that in the West Midlands, having spoken with colleagues in the ambulance service there, we would appear to be in the enviable position where about 62% of West Midlands operational staff are paramedics. This would appear to compare very favourably with the national average of about 30%. When I heard those figures I found that quite shocking anyway.

Given our supposedly enviable position in the West Midlands, even accounting for this, let's make no bones about it, because of the target driven culture that we and the ambulance service operate in, a lot of their paramedic staff are acting as responders in cars, which inevitably means there's fewer paramedic staff on ambulances. The public certainly don't distinguish between ambulance service staff. They don't distinguish whether someone's a paramedic, a technician, or an ECA. If I'm honest, this is something that, to a large extent, our members don't either. Again, let's make no bones about it, there is a difference; that's why they've got different names. This is something that in the West Midlands is increasingly impacting on our members. I know it is. It's something that has impacted on me personally. If, in the West Midlands, it's impacting on us with our supposedly enviable figures, then I guarantee it's something that will be happening within your Brigades.

All I will say basically, is don't put your heads in the sand on this. This is an issue that needs looking at. Please support the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone who wished to speak against Resolution 55? OK. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask the General Secretary to outline the nature of that qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, Mick. Yes, the qualification refers to the phrase in the second paragraph for the compulsory inclusion of at least one fully trained paramedic. I think all the points are well made in the debate. It clearly can have a direct impact on our members at emergency incidents. But also, as Andy outlined, we should have an interest in the defence not just of our own public service but of other public services as well.

Our qualification is that we would seek to discuss that with the unions representing ambulance service staff. There are a number of unions who fall into that category. Just as we would expect other unions to seek our views on staffing levels and minimum staffing levels, we should do the same in respect of the Resolution in front of you. That's the qualification. With that, we support.

Day Three – 21st May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Matt. There was no opposition, therefore no Right of Reply. I will put Resolution 55 to the vote. Was that a Point of Order? I wasn't intending to take any further speakers in support, brother. We do need to make some progress, I'm afraid. Can I see all those in favour, please of Resolution 55? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now back on to the Annual Report Paragraph C3 – Irish Congress of Trade Union Conference 2009, Paragraph C4 – Scottish TUC 2009, Paragraph C5 – Scottish Trade Union Congress Black Workers' Conference 2009, Paragraph C6 – Scottish TUC Women's Conference 2009, Paragraph C7 – Wales TUC 2009, Paragraph C8 – Wales TUC Women's Conference 2009, Paragraph C9 – TUC Women's Conference 2009. I am now going to take Resolution 60 from Staffordshire entitled Because I Am A Girl. The Executive Council are supporting. Staffordshire to move, please.

Resolution 60 – BECAUSE I AM A GIRL

This conference supports Plan's "Because I am a Girl" campaign, believing that the appalling discrimination faced by many girls must be urgently addressed.

Plan, a child centred community development organisation working across Africa, Asia and Latin America, has launched a campaign to ensure the rights of girls are realised and respected.

This Conference is concerned that in 2009, girls are still less likely to go to school than boys and two thirds of the children of primary school age out of school are girls. Girls are more likely to be subjected to violence, have less access to health care and less basic nutrition than their brothers.

This Conference therefore resolves to support Plan's campaign by calling on the Executive Council to:

- 1. Lobby the UK government to support all initiatives that improve the rights and opportunities of girls; in particular by supporting programmes that enable girls to access education;***
- 2. Promote the "Because I am a Girl" campaign;***
- 3. Raise awareness of the double discrimination faced by girls because of their age and because of their gender.***

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO ROBERT MOSS (Staffordshire):

President, Conference, this Resolution's intent is to support Plan's "Because I am a Girl" campaign. Plan is a

child centred, community development organisation working across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Plan's "Because I am a Girl" campaign seeks to ensure the rights of girls are realised and respected in the aforementioned geographical areas.

This Resolution notes with great concern that during 2009 girls were still less likely to go to school than boys. Two thirds of the children of primary school age out of school are girls. Girls are more likely to be subjected to violence, have less access to healthcare and less basic nutrition than their brothers.

This Resolution asks Conference to support Plan's campaign by calling on the Executive Council to: Lobby the UK Government to support all initiatives that improve the rights and opportunities of girls; in particular by supporting programmes that enable girls to access education; to Promote the "Because I am a Girl" campaign; and raise awareness of the double discrimination faced by girls because of their age and because of their gender.

Conference, support this Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Rob. Was there a seconder? Please come to the rostrum.

SIS SARAH GARTLAND (NWC):

Conference, President, there are often comments made by our members about why we as a Union support issues abroad or globally. I'm sure we all explain to those members why we campaign for those internationally related issues. This Resolution is an international issue, but it's so different in many ways as this is about young girls who have no voice, and in many respects, no place in their societies. We can talk about inequalities, but for most girls, being born in the developing world is an achievement in itself. Over 100 million girls are missing in the developing world before or shortly after birth. Pregnancy related illnesses are the leading cause of death for young women aged 15-19. 90% of child domestic workers aged 12-17 are sexually and economically exploited, often suffering from violence and abuse. This can't be right, fair or just.

We must all be mindful of cultural differences and not be seen to be criticising people's religions or beliefs, but to deny access to education because of gender, to subject girls to violence, abuse and rape, is not something that we can sit back and take no action on.

Children and young people so very often do not have a voice or are simply ignored. In developing countries this is most often the case. This Resolution speaks of what

Day Three – 21st May

we as a Union can do, but I would ask you to support the Resolution and try to do more. The campaigning group Plan have a website where you can sponsor a child, donate money and sign petitions to put pressure on our Government to encourage the better treatment of girls in societies. In so many respects, we are so lucky. For us who have daughters, nieces, goddaughters, we know that our loved ones will have equal access to education in their early years, not face abuse and violence on a daily basis. So please leave this Conference today and make a difference. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are supporting. Was there anyone who wished to speak against Resolution 60? No. I will put Resolution 60 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are back on the Annual Report Paragraph C10 – TUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans Conference 2009, Resolution 53 in the name of the National Lesbian & Gay Committee has been withdrawn but they wish to exercise the Right to Speak on the item. Pat.

Resolution 53 – CENSUS – EXCLUSION OF THE QUESTION OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION 2011

Gay and Lesbian members of the FBU note with concern the Office of National Statistics entrenched stance of refusing to include any question compulsory or non-compulsory relating to sexual orientation in the 2011 Census.

Gay and Lesbian members believe the Census should include the question relating to sexual orientation giving members of our community the opportunity to be counted. Our members also acknowledge that the requirements from the Census to answer this question must be on a voluntary basis with the option not to state.

Traditionally, sexual orientation has been seen as a private matter, but without clearer evidence on where lesbian, gay and bisexual people live, where they work, what their experiences and needs of public services are, we are missing a vital piece of the jigsaw. Evidence is the key to making services reflect everyone's experiences and meet their needs. However, if sexual orientation remains a private issue the needs of LGB people will remain marginalised and ignored.

Conference calls for the Executive Council and General Secretary to immediately commence a

campaign to encourage all officials and members to write to the Government Equality Minister and to the Office of National Statistics to demand that the 2011 Census includes the question of sexual orientation affording LGB people the right to be recognised.

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

Thank you, President. Conference, I thought I'd just take a moment to speak to you as to the reasons why we withdrew this Resolution. It certainly wasn't to do with any kind of requirement from Standing Orders that they wanted us to drop it; it was down to that age old problem of when you write a Resolution by the time it gets to Conference circumstances quite often change.

What happened with this Resolution was that in order for what the Resolutions calls for, a campaign against the exclusion of the question on sexuality in the census, the census has to go before both Houses of Parliament in a draft form before it can be approved. That draft census order for 2009 has now proceeded through Parliament and has now become an Act of Parliament, so it's law. Therefore, there's no way that we can get any other questions into the census.

But I think it is worth Conference noting the very fact that they decided to exclude the question. Our community wanted the question asked. The Equality & Human Rights Commission said it should have been asked, but the Office of National Statistics decided not to. They said that the reason behind that was because the heads of households would be the people filling in the forms, and they may not provide accurate information about all the people who live within that property. If that was the case, then why did they ask the question about religion? If the head of the household may have certain religious views, they may not be the same as everyone else within that property, yet they can give information which may be misleading. The same goes for disability

So the reasons just don't add up. All we want at the end of the day is the right to be counted. Obviously, on this occasion we won't be. Conference, please note that we strive for inclusion, but this is not inclusion; it's isolation. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pat. Before we get on with the rest of the business I have been asked to inform delegates that the official FBU shop is now open at the back of the door, which is at the rear of where the observers are sitting. So during the tea break (not whilst Conference is in session) delegates can get to the back and stock up with souvenirs.

Day Three – 21st May

Right, we're back on the Annual Report. We are on to Paragraph C11 – TUC Black Workers' Conference 2009, Paragraph C12 – Institute of Employment Rights. Brother there. Did you wish to speak to the Institute of Employment Rights?

Before we get to C13, I have the pleasure of introducing a guest speaker who we have the honour of having here this week from Colombia, Señor Jorge Gamboa. Jorge Gamboa is a member of the National Executive of the Centrale Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia, which is the largest trade union confederation in Colombia. Prior to being elected to the Executive of the CUT, Jorge led the Colombian Oil Workers' Union. During 2007-2008 he led a national campaign which included large scale strike action against the proposed privatisation of the Colombian State Oil Company. Towards the end of that campaign, in April 2008, Jorge was speaking at an event for union members in the Region of Santander when a group of police officers attempted to assassinate him. He has since been forced to travel with bodyguards, and he is still one of the most threatened and high profile trade union leaders in Colombia. He is visiting the United Kingdom this month and next as a guest of Justice for Colombia and is visiting a number of trade union conferences and workplaces. We have the pleasure of having him here today. Bienvenido, Jorge. *Applause*

BRO JORGE GAMBOA (CUT):

Gracias. (*through interpreter*) Thank you very much for the invitation, and I bring greetings from the CUT, the Colombian version of the TUC. I wish you have a very successful Conference.

Colombia, as many of you will know, is a country in Latin America. It's a beautiful country, it's a country with a lot of natural resources, a lot of natural beauty. But it's also a country with a government that kills trade unionists and other campaigners for human rights.

Since 1986, when the CUT was set up, 2,700 Colombian trade unionists have been killed. We need international solidarity for Colombian trade unions to carry on doing their work, their struggle against neo-Liberalism which is our common enemy. I'd like to thank you for your ongoing support for Justice for Colombia which has been campaigning to put an end to the death threats, the attempts made on the lives of trade unionists, and has also campaigned to get trade unionists out of jail. Neo-liberalism is our common enemy. In Colombia it generates unemployment, hunger and misery. We have a tyrannical government led by President Uribe, which has made Colombia an outpost of American Imperialism where recently we're having to deal with these seven new military bases that the Americans are going to have use of in Colombia, and from which we fear they will launch attacks on

progressive governments in Latin America, in countries like Venezuela, Ecuador, Cuba and Bolivia.

We need your solidarity so that you put pressure on the British Government so that the British Government doesn't support the Colombian Army and the human rights abuses that they're committing. *Applause*

We ask that you oppose the free trade agreement between the European Union and Colombia. We ask that you denounce the crimes committed against Colombian trade unionists, and we ask that you support the campaign to get Colombian trade unionists out of jail. We ask that the rights of trade unions be respected in Colombia, and that the agreements made between employers and the trade unions be respected too. We ask too, may the struggle continue. Together we will win. Let the struggle go on. Muchas gracias. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

It's not the first time that we've had a speaker from Colombian trade unions address the Conference. It's always an inspiring opportunity to listen to their struggle that they face there. Believe me, when we think we have things difficult in this country from time to time, the challenges that we face are absolutely nothing compared to the challenges that trade unionists, socialists and even just campaigners for decent human rights face in Colombia. People like Jorge and his comrades continue in their fight for workers' rights in that country, and hopefully we will continue to give them whatever support we can in the future. I introduce the General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, Jorge, on behalf of Conference I would like to thank you for your attendance here today. Hopefully the warmth of the reception makes clear the solidarity between the Fire Brigades Union and our brothers and sisters fighting for justice, trade union rights and freedom in Colombia. Our international guests are always particularly welcome at the Fire Brigades Union Conference. I think we're particularly pleased and proud of the work that we've undertaken over many years with Justice for Colombia. I think the point is well made that when members occasionally ask why we're involved in international affairs, we can point to campaigns like Justice for Colombia that very practically have achieved results of getting trade unionists out of prison who shouldn't be in prison.

We are very proud of that work, and we pledge from the Conference here today to continue that. We wish you well in the work for the rest of your visit in the United Kingdom and once you return to Colombia. Thanks very much for attending. We have a small presentation. *Applause*

Day Three – 21st May

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, we are back on to the Annual Report Paragraph C13 – International. I therefore now call Emergency Resolution 3 entitled Haiti being moved by the Black & Ethnic Minority Members Committee. B&EMM to move, please.

Emergency Resolution 3 – HAITI

Conference welcomes the TUC Black Workers Conference decision in April 2010 to send the FBU motion entitled “Haiti” to Congress 2010. The motion calls for the TUC and its affiliates to take action in response to the devastating earthquake which struck the Haitian capital Port Au Prince on the 12th January 2010.

The FBU have already supported the humanitarian, political and financial responses. Many of our members have been involved personally through their life saving Fire & Rescue Service roles, but much more needs to be done in order to reconstruct and develop Haitian society, infrastructure and economy.

Conference therefore requests:

- *Local, regional and national support for the TUC Congress Motion – “Haiti”.*
- *The FBU support and develop links with our sister trade unions in Haiti.*
- *We seek ongoing dialogue between Haitian trade Unions and the FBU International Committee.*
- *Brigade Committees establish relationships with their Fire and Rescue Services in order to provide training, equipment and financial aid for Haiti.*
- *Full FBU support for the B&EMM National Committee to co-ordinate ongoing trade union initiatives with our Haitian comrades as agreed by the Executive Council.*

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

BRO ANDRE FERNANDEZ (B&EMM):

President, Conference, on 12th January a 7.3 magnitude earthquake destroyed the capital city of Port au Prince and the surrounding areas. The quake lasted for 17 seconds, causing the deaths of nearly 200,000 people, and creating 1.3 million homeless. On 22nd January the US got approval from the UN to take over all sea and airports in Haiti which, having not one signatory from Haiti, has no basis in law. The arrival of 13,000 Marines, Special Forces, spooks and mercenaries, none of whom have any humanitarian training or experience came with the US blockade that saw aircraft carrying vital humanitarian aid redirected to the Dominican Republic. All flights were stopped for three hours for the arrival of Hillary Clinton, whilst the Haitian people suffered.

After six days, the US Air Force managed to get bottled water to the dehydrated people of Haiti, whilst 800 US residents in Haiti were fed, watered and airlifted out. The world's media ranted about the widespread criminal looting and mayhem, hyperventilating about the need for more security amongst the rubble. The people of Haiti alone, and with dignity, formed civilian groups to help those still trapped under tonnes of debris, distributing what little water and food that they had amongst themselves.

The report in the Morning Star this week told of women being regularly raped in the refugee camps. When these rapes were reported the police routinely turned away the victims, did not take the women seriously, or told them to notify the police if they see the rapists again.

During this crisis, the Fire Brigades Union and the British Fire and Rescue Service has made a significant contribution in alleviating the mass human misery. Now it's time for the trade union movement to play a bigger role in Haiti. At the TUC Black Workers' Conference, the FBU moved an emergency motion on Haiti. This motion subsequently was chosen as the TUC Black Workers' Conference motion to Congress. We have asked the TUC to take action, and we need to take action ourselves, which is the purpose of this Resolution.

Conference therefore requests that this Union:

- Gives local, regional and national support for the TUC Congress Motion entitled “Haiti”.
- That the FBU support and develop links with our sister trade union in Haiti.
- Seeks ongoing dialogue between Haitian trade Union movement and the Fire Brigades Union International Committee.
- That Brigade Committees establish relationships with their Fire and Rescue Services in order to secure training, equipment and financial aid for Haiti.
- Full FBU support for the B&EMM National Committee to co-ordinate ongoing trade union initiatives with our Haitian comrades as agreed by the Executive Committee.

The powers that be have no interest in seeing Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere, become a strong nation, standing on its own two feet. We should show the world what the trade union movement is capable of when it organises and moves. Please support this Emergency Motion. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Was there a seconder, please, for Emergency Resolution 3? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting. Was there anyone wishing to speak against the Emergency Resolution?

Day Three – 21st May

I will put it therefore to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 57 in the name of the National Gay & Lesbian Committee entitled International LGBT Campaigning. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I have the Gay & Lesbian Committee to move, please.

Resolution 57 – INTERNATIONAL LGBT CAMPAIGNING

The Fire Brigades Union has a proud tradition of campaigning on international issues, the LGBT Section have emulated this by regularly taking international issues to the TUC LGBT Conference, whilst campaigning and raising awareness of such issues with sectional members.

We recognise there remains over 70 countries with legislation in place that criminalises homosexuality and a small percentage having the death penalty, we also acknowledge that many countries have made positive steps forward with regards issues covering homosexuality and LGBT people, this is welcomed.

Whilst there is so much positivity in the area of sexual orientation it is disappointing that in 2009 we did witness a small number of countries introducing or strengthening anti-LGBT legislation.

Of particular note is Uganda, with the introduction of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill going through their political system, such legislation will be in violation of human rights and would detrimentally affect and put in place major barriers of the effective work of HIV/Aids prevention efforts.

As a member of the Commonwealth, we call on the Executive Council to work with the TUC and affiliates to register our disappointment in the strongest possible terms and launch a campaign that includes gaining support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to apply whatever political pressure possible to ensure that Uganda complies with its international human rights obligations.

This to be done within 6 months of Conference, with a report on progress to be provided to Conference 2011.
NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

BRO PAT CARBERRY (LGBT):

Conference, President, here in the UK we enjoy many equal rights. Our relationships have now been recognised under civil partnership, we receive protection

against discrimination both in the workplace and wider society, but we're quite lucky. Not everyone enjoys the rights and freedoms that sometimes we take for granted. In over 70 countries legislation criminalises homosexuality. In Africa, to be gay is illegal in 37 of those countries. Here at Conference in the past we've moved Resolutions on LGBT oppression in Zimbabwe. I'm sad to report not a lot has changed for the people in that country under Robert Mugabe. Recently, he was quoted as saying, on the issue of sexual orientation and equal rights: "This issue is not debatable. It is not up for discussion. Those who engage in homosexual behaviour are just crazy. It's just madness, insanity."

That didn't come as much of a surprise from Mugabe. However, under the power share agreement with the opposition that government also brought on board, (kind of a coalition agreement) their PM actually agreed with the President. Morgan Tsvangirai said: "Women make up 52% of the population. There are more women than men so why should men be proposing to men?"

This week in Malawi two men were convicted of committing unnatural acts an indecency. I say two men, one of which identifies as being trans. Yesterday, each was sentenced. Each of them received 14 years' hard labour, which is the maximum sentence that can be applied. This is for committing a crime where there is no victim.

Currently in Uganda a hideous piece of legislation is progressing through its Parliament under the title of the "Anti Homosexuality Bill 2009". If passed, it will be a life sentence if you're found to be gay, the death penalty if you have sex and you're found to have HIV, or a serial offender, or a person of authority, or if the person you're engaging in activity with happens to be under 18. If you fail to report homosexual behaviour, that also carries a three year prison sentence. So you can see how that's commencing a witch hunt culture.

These proposals are not a rollover from a past Victorian draconian era; they're something that is happening now; they're new. This is not progress. As we've seen with this week in Malawi where such laws exist, they will be enacted.

We're in a difficult situation as to what we do about it. I certainly know that for countries like Sweden they have said about cutting funding and aid and I don't think this is the way to resolve such things. That aid makes a difference to the lives of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people, and it is life and death. So cutting aid is not actually the way to do it. But there are things we can do to apply pressure.

Conference, I urge you to please support this motion.
Applause

Day Three – 21st May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pat. Was there a seconder for 57?

BRO DALTON POWELL (B&EMM):

Conference, the recent strengthening of the anti LGBT legislation in a number of countries around the world has given the LGBT community and welfare groups causes for concern. This has been even more so in Uganda. With the recent introduction of the Anti Homosexuality Bill at present going through the political arena, it has been hard pressed home by its architect, David Bahati. This bill will provide fuel to marginalise the LGBT community and violate their human rights, throwing Uganda back to the oppressive regime days of Idi Amin in 1972 when thousands upon thousands of people were removed from the country for the colour of their skin.

Conference, I cannot even begin to comprehend the horror that this may unleash – indiscriminatory beatings, killing, police brutality, guilt by association with a mass exodus of people fleeing persecution. I ask Conference to work with the TUC and its associates in gaining support from the Government in order to apply international pressure and condemnation on the Ugandan government. Support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dalton. The Executive Council are supporting. Was there anyone who wished to speak against the Resolution? OK. I will put that to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of 57, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

I now bring Resolution 58 from Lancashire entitled Support for Palestine. The Executive Council are supporting. Lancashire to move, please.

Resolution 58 – SUPPORT FOR PALESTINE

Conference notes the FBU's recent involvement in supporting the Palestinian people. In particular, Conference applauds the initiative that enabled eight Nablus firefighters to visit Scotland and North West England to undertake Fire Service based training, and the TUC resolution that led to the boycott of Israeli goods produced in the occupied territories.

Following several visits to the West Bank by FBU members over recent years, it is recognised that we now have good contacts with the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and firefighters from the Nablus Fire Department, and it is important that these links are maintained.

To this end, the Executive Council should continue to promote through the International Committee:

- ***Solidarity visits to the region by members with a view to encouraging new active supporters to the Palestinian cause.***
- ***Collaboration with other organisations such as the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and the International Solidarity Movement (ISM).***
- ***Initiatives that aim to provide PPE and firefighting equipment to the West Bank and Gaza.***
- ***Training initiatives for Palestinian firefighters.***

LANCASHIRE

Amendment

In line 4, delete "TUC resolution that led to", insert "motions at both the STUC and TUC Congress in 2009 calling for".

In line 5, delete "produced in the occupied territories".

STRATHCLYDE

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancashire):

Conference, President, I'm not sure of the status of the Amendment? I heard it was going to be withdrawn, but I'll have to wait and see.

THE PRESIDENT:

I can clarify, Steve, it hasn't been withdrawn yet; it's still on the order paper.

BRO STEVE HARMAN:

OK. We have a problem with the Amendment because we feel it makes our Resolution incorrect, but leave that aside for now. I'll be quite brief on this because I know there's a couple more speakers.

We've had numerous Resolutions to this Conference, and you'll be well aware that the FBU is at the forefront of the campaign to support the Palestinians against the oppression from the Israelis. I just want to remind you how important it is that we continue to keep the momentum up on this campaign. They're still building in East Jerusalem the settlements, they're still going up. The blockade on Gaza is as intense as ever. Although firefighters in Nablus particularly where we know of are sharing fire kit, we've sent fire kit out, and it's still held on the borders because of the blockades. We sent a fire engine out. We believe that didn't get through. Words are all well and good, but we need to get more members involved in this campaign. The best way to do that, to get them involved, is by getting them to support the initiatives like the recent training initiative that the Scottish Region undertook. It was a fantastic success. They spent a bit of time in the Northwest as well.

Day Three – 21st May

Another fantastic way of getting members involved, officials, anybody we can, is to try to encourage them to get out to the Region.

When the Nablus firefighters visited the Northwest we did get them around quite a few stations, and they met with our members on the stations. There was no firefighter I met that wasn't extremely touched by the situation when they talked to the eight Nablus firefighters that came across.

I've said it before at Conference, I have been over to the West Bank myself, and it was probably about four years ago now, but I would urge any members that can, to support any initiatives that arise to get over there. And I would urge the FBU to support initiatives to get over there. But just as a very minimum, just for now can we all make sure we support the boycott of settlement goods. That's really important, that. The other one is: just make sure that all of us in this room, all the delegates, observers, sign up and join the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign. It's a couple of quid a month, but it shows our support. Support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is there a seconder for 58, please?
Formally seconded. Can I have Strathclyde to move their Amendment, please.

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

Conference, President, it was during an STUC fact finding visit to Palestine in 2008 that FBU officials who were there took the trouble to go to Nablus fire station. They quickly realised that what Nablus firefighters needed was practical help to assist them with specialist skills. So on their return, when the STUC as a result of that fact finding visit decided to support the boycott, disinvestments and sanctions campaign against the state of Israel, and that was quickly followed by the TUC, our FBU officials decided that they would put together a training programme to offer to the Nablus firefighters in the hope that they could visit the UK. It took quite a time before they actually got that permission from the Israeli authorities to visit Scotland, but last October eventually they did. I think we've really got to salute the FBU Regional officials who organised that visit, acted as hosts and tour guides throughout their time there. That was former Regional secretary Kenny Ross and current Regional organiser Jim Malone.
Applause

Included in their visit was a visit to the Scottish Parliament where they met with MSPs from the Friends of Palestine Support Group. They also had the pleasure of having an official reception from Dundee City Council. Dundee City Council, of course, was the first city in the

world to twin with a Palestinian town when they twinned with Nablus, over 30 years ago now. That was historic and led to many others adopting other Palestinian towns for twinning arrangements. That was under the leadership of George Galloway, of course, back in the late 70s.

I can't stress too much just how overwhelmed our Palestinian comrades were with the reception they got in Scotland. It convinced them their struggle is not forgotten, and there are many groups working to end their occupation. So initiatives like this are absolutely vital.

On the training front, week 1 consisted of specialist BA training and week 2 RTC training. That was provided by the Scottish Fire Training College at Gullane. Of course, it was FBU members who trained them. They were delighted to train them. They couldn't believe the enthusiasm and dedication that they put into their courses. If you actually visit the FBU Scotland website there's a photo gallery there that just shows you how well they work together, and some wonderful photographs from that visit.

On the return to Nablus they will now be using those skills. They will now be acting as instructors to their comrades at Nablus fire station and other fire stations on the West Bank to upgrade their skills. So it was a really vital and wonderful opportunity that we had, and they took full advantage of it. I had the pleasure of the company of them on a visit to Glasgow City Centre. They were delighted to discover a Palestinian Solidarity Campaign stall in Buchanan Street which is there every Saturday. They quickly opened up when the comrades there started telling them about how they'd been attacked by the Israeli occupation forces when they visited the West Bank and took part in demonstrations against the wall. Our firefighter colleagues from Nablus told us about the sorts of harassment they suffer on a daily basis from the Israeli occupation forces, how they're kept at security barriers while settlers torch Palestinian olive groves in front of them, how the Israeli forces stop them from attending house fires where settlers are burning out Palestinians so they can grab their land.

It brought home to me just how vital the PCS campaign is. If Palestinians are ever to succeed in ending the occupation, particularly now when the apartheid state of Israel is growing ever bolder and building new settlements in occupied lands, launching further attacks on Gaza and strengthening the blockade, we have to redouble our efforts to support our comrades there.

Of course, Israel is pursuing a normalisation strategy to try to convince the outside world that it is a normal state that don't victimise and discriminate against the minority Palestinian population and those people in the Occupied Territories. They've just been accepted disgracefully as a

Day Three – 21st May

full member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in Europe. Israel used this as an endorsement of their brutal tactics that they continue to use in Palestine. So only by continuing to build on the solidarity of exchange visits and the sort of practical help that firefighters can offer as well as supporting and broadening the PSC campaign can we offer the war weary, brutalised people of Palestine hope. Hope that one day they can be free of their oppressors and they can have their own State of Palestine. I urge you all to support the Resolution and to join the PCS. But in the interests of unity I will withdraw the Amendment. Thank you, Conference. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. It is now official tea break. Can I have Conference agreement to conclude this Resolution before we break for tea? *Agreed*

Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? Sorry, I was more worried about the tea break; I didn't pay attention! OK, the Executive Council are supporting. Was there any one who wished to speak against Resolution 58? No. No-one else wishing to come into the debate? General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council are very pleased to support Resolution 58. I think particularly to remind Conference of the impact of the direct solidarity work that has been initiated around Palestinian firefighters. As I mentioned earlier in relation to Colombia, people do often ask why we are involved in such issues. I think the practical solidarity that has been organised with Palestinian firefighters is a very powerful way of engaging with our members directly in relation to an issue that they can understand about work within the Fire and Rescue Service, about why we should be supporting firefighters elsewhere to improve their training, resources and so on, but it also gives us the opportunity to raise those wider political issues. It fits into a long tradition in the Fire Brigades Union. Some of those initiatives have been reported here this morning. I remind Conference also of one of those early visits to Palestinian firefighters, and a very moving speech given some years ago by Linda Smith who made an early visit to Palestinian firefighters on behalf of the Union.

So the Executive Council are very pleased to support the Resolution. I'm sure it will be passed unanimously. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I therefore put Resolution 58 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you.

Were there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

We now break for tea. Back in your seats 15 minutes prompt, please.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

If delegates could take their seats, please, finish their conversations, turn their phones back off we will resume this morning's business. We're now on to Resolution 59 from Devon & Somerset. Very sorry, I have the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee here to give the final Standing Orders Committee report. Steve.

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

Thank you, President. Delegate changes: Northern Ireland: delete Dermot Rooney; insert Lynda Rowan-O'Neill. Northern Ireland: delete Rod O'Hare; insert Sean Millen. Northamptonshire: delete Steve Mason; insert Dave Schofield. NWC: delete Sam Rye; insert Sarah Gartland.

The Standing Orders Committee do not wish to cut speakers' times at the moment, but are keeping a careful eye on the progress of Conference business and will keep Conference informed if necessary. The Standing Orders Committee would like to thank all Head Office Staff, and our Conference Stewards for their hard work and efforts this week. *Applause*. A special mention for Steve Cole and the Mascol team for their hard work and efforts in setting up our Conference. Thank you. *Applause*. I would also like to thank the Conference Centre Staff and Management team for their assistance. I wish you all a safe journey home once Conference is over. President, that concludes my final report to Conference 2010. Conference, President, thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Are there any questions or points to the Chair of the Standings Orders Committee? No. Thank you. On your behalf I'm sure you would like me to thank Steve and the Standing Orders Committee for the excellent job they've done this week helping Conference run smoothly, and hopefully they'll do the same in future years as well. Thanks very much. *Applause*

We now move on to Resolution 59 in the name of Devon & Somerset. There are Amendments from Strathclyde and Devon & Somerset. Both Amendments can carry. The Executive Council are opposing the Resolution and both Amendments. Can I have Devon & Somerset to move, please?

Day Three – 21st May

Resolution 59 – ACTION FOR PALESTINE

This Conference condemns the injustices and suffering caused by Israel's actions in Palestine. Israel's occupation, annexation, colonisation and repression of Palestinian land and lives are designed to make it practically impossible for Palestinians to build a functional, integrated and stable society, and this also includes the work of the fire and rescue (civil defence) services.

Furthermore, Conference recognises that this issue is a crucial one for the whole world, not only in terms of recognising and addressing injustices that have continued over many decades, but as a vital test for the international community that it can and will act against imperialist or colonialist interests.

This Conference acknowledges the work of the FBU, in particular the Scottish region, in facilitating the training in the UK of eight Palestinian firefighters from the West Bank town of Nablus in 2009, and nationally in securing landmark support for Palestine at the 2009 TUC Congress. Conference pledges the ongoing support of the FBU towards helping Palestinians build their society free from Israeli oppression and occupation.

To this end, Conference resolves to:

- 1. Establish and maintain an FBU Palestine Action Committee, comprised of co-opted FBU members and officials from around the country, under the control of the Executive Council and reporting to the FBU's International Committee and the Executive Council, to coordinate the FBU's actions in support of Palestine;*
- 2. Organise and fund one or more delegations per year of FBU activists and officials to the Palestinian territories, to help promote and extend awareness within the FBU about what Palestinian life is like under Israeli rule;*
- 3. Actively promote dialogue with, and the provision of training and equipment for, Palestinian fire and rescue services where possible in East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank, and to lobby for political and financial assistance from national and international institutions to support the development, integration and coordination of these services;*
- 4. Campaign for national and international action by Governments and civil organisations, including targeted boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel, until it ceases its occupation of the areas internationally recognised as Palestine (pre-1967 Green line), abides by international law, and makes amends*

for its acts of repression, ethnic cleansing and theft of Palestine land, property and lives.

DEVON & SOMERSET

Amendment

In line 12, delete "nationally".

In line 13, delete "2009 TUC Congress", insert "STUC and TUC Congresses in 2009".

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

Reword point 1 as follows:

"Coordinate the FBU's actions in support of Palestine by establishing and maintaining an 'FBU Palestine Action Committee (hereafter referred to as 'PAC')' as a sub-committee of the FBU's International Committee. The PAC to be comprised of voluntarily co-opted FBU members and officials from around the country, under the appointment and direction of the Executive Council, and reporting to the FBU's International Committee and Executive Council;"

DEVON & SOMERSET

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, apologies to you for bringing two proposals to the Conference on Palestine. We were going to composite but couldn't be sure that we'd get Executive Council support for that. In this case, as you've heard, the EC are opposing this proposal and that's why it's important that we have a chance to discuss this. I'm moving the proposal and the Amendment, and welcoming Strathclyde's Amendment. I don't understand why the EC are opposed to that.

The key thing about this, Conference, without going over all the issues about Palestine that you've already heard about, is we in the FBU are in a special position on this, and like all special positions it has a responsibility that goes with it. We've led landmark decisions on the issue of Palestine in the trade union movement when many other people didn't want to touch it because of the vested interests that do not want people to talk about this. We've had the courage to do that. But it's all things, you do not stand still, you have to keep the momentum going, otherwise they just stagnant, they die.

So please bear that in mind. We cannot just pass a Resolution on this and do nothing. That's the purpose of our proposal. It commits us to some specific things which we know the Executive Council are opposed to. That's what I want to ask you to consider. So please do that.

There are two issues within our proposal which are not contained in the Lancashire proposal. It asks for the setting up of a Palestine Action Committee, which is a sub-committee of the International Committee and

Day Three – 21st May

reporting to them, appointed by the Executive Council, so with the full control of the Executive Council and the International Committee. The purpose of that is to enable activists and officials who want to take part in this to be given an official framework to do so. As I keep saying, this is an issue which the Union has historically led on. Don't underestimate the importance of that; we're at the forefront of this. I pay tribute to the people in the past, particularly Ken Cameron, and most recently Kenny Ross in Scotland and the Scottish Region, for enabling us to do ground breaking work here. But let's move that on.

The simple fact is – and some of you will know this – even though we commit to international issues, the International Committee cannot function as effectively as we would like because the Executive Council members have all got many other things to do. The purpose of a union is to develop solidarity, to enable people to take part. You need to do that in a formal way. You need to have permission to do that, you need to have a structure to do that. That's what this is calling for. There is nothing that is contradictory, and there is nothing that's against our principles on that.

Just yesterday we voted on a Resolution, which I fully supported, to set up a sub committee of the National Health & Safety at Work Committee to look at issues around menopause. I fully support that. There is nothing to say we cannot have a sub committee of an existing committee of the Union. So bureaucratically there is no problem whatsoever. It's something we should embrace as a Union, we want people to be involved and spread the level of involvement through the Union.

The other objection you'll hear is about cost, because the Resolution commits us to fund and organise at least one delegation per year. It's essential to the Union that we do that. But we can find a way, with the financial problems that exist, to make sure that that is not excessive. That should not be a fundamental objection. So the key thing about this, as I said, is there's a principle at stake here to keep that momentum going. Whether we like it or not, and I hope that we do like it and appreciate it, we're at the forefront of the debate in the British Trade Union and Labour Movement on this, and that has a massive impact internationally, but it's one that we have to keep the momentum going on. Please don't lose heart, please don't become faint hearted, and please don't give into the excuses that you're going to hear now to say why we shouldn't do this. Thanks. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Is there a seconder for Resolution 59, please? *Formally seconded*. Can I have Strathclyde to move their Amendment? *Formally moved*. Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment, please? *Formally seconded*. Can I have Devon & Somerset to

move their Amendment, please? Sorry, Dave, I really do need to wake up a bit this morning. OK, is there a seconder for Amendment 2 from Devon & Somerset? *Formally seconded*. Is there anyone who wishes to speak against the motion? Is there anyone who wishes to speak in favour of the motion? The Executive Council are opposing. I will ask the General Secretary to outline that opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, I think Dave has highlighted the areas where the Executive Council are opposed and they're fairly clear. We did ask Devon & Somerset to Remit the Resolution because I'm sure nobody in Conference would want to be voting against a Resolution that is in general something that we would broadly support and want to make progress on. But there are the points 1 and 2 where the Executive Council have particular concerns.

I have to say to Dave they're not excuses, and I take exception to the suggestion that the Executive Council are making excuses. The Executive Council has thought very carefully about the Resolution and have concerns about points 1 and 2. Point 1 is that we should establish an FBU Palestine Action Committee. The Executive Council are not convinced that that is necessary. There are already structures whereby solidarity work in relation to Palestine can be developed through our Brigade, Regional, Sectional Committees and through the Executive Council. The fact that we have facilitated lay officials from various levels of the Union to participate in delegations and solidarity work I think demonstrates very clearly that those structures are adequate. We don't believe there is a need to create a new committee. We're not convinced that that would add in any way to improving and taking forward our solidarity work.

The second area of concern is regarding point 2, which would require us to organise and fund one or more delegations per year of FBU activists and officials to the Palestinian territories. Just in terms of one of the considerations that the Executive Council had in relation to that point, it relates to another area of solidarity work that we've also supported over many years and that's in relation to Cuba. You will recall that the year before last we organised a wider delegation to Cuba, and the International Committee and the Executive Council were keen that delegations should not involve necessarily the same old faces: the President, the General Secretary and so on. We did want particularly to try to encourage newer and possibly younger officials to get involved in some of that solidarity work. We organised a very successful delegation to Cuba. The International Committee considered a proposal to suggest that again for next year.

Day Three – 21st May

It was at exactly the same time that the EC was considering some of the reports that I gave in relation to finance. As a result of that, and the point was made, we are going to be going to our structures and saying that we need to make very significant cuts. At that time it was felt that it would simply be inappropriate to propose that second delegation to Cuba. So that was a very difficult decision to make, and not something that we would want to do, but it was done out of necessity. Yet this Resolution would require us, regardless of costs, to establish one or more delegation per year of FBU activists and officials to the Palestinian Territories.

We don't believe we can make that commitment. That does not mean that delegations won't be organised. Delegations have been organised. I think you've heard in the previous debate some of the outstanding successes we have made in relation to solidarity work in relation to Palestine. We did ask Devon & Somerset to Remit and if they are willing to do that, then that would be a more helpful way of dealing with this. Otherwise, Conference, we do urge you to oppose and I hope that Conference will.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Devon & Somerset wish to reply?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL:

Thanks, Matt. To be brief, don't get misled by this. We're not asking for the Executive Council to fund the delegations. If you read the proposal correctly it says "Conference resolves to". We're well aware that Regions that assist in this will count within that framework. So it's not an issue of the Union as a whole and therefore nationally having to actually fund what will be quite potentially expensive arrangements.

I still come back to the essential part of this proposal which is about enabling the Union to have a structure within which this can take place. That's why we're not prepared to Remit on this. It's an important principle for the Union. We are either a Union that endeavours to do things as opposed to sit down and talk about them, or we're not. As I say, with due respect to the International Committee, it's not about trying to be offensive. I think you'll find people on the International Committee will themselves say they are not able to do the work that they would like to do for a number of reasons. So let's broaden that, let's share the load on that. That's the key point about this. Don't get drawn into the issue around funding. We can easily resolve that. One delegation per year could be one person per year and that has already taken place within my own Region this year. So funding is not the issue. The only issue is whether or not you think it's acceptable to have a sub committee of the International Committee to do this which involves more local people and activists. So that's the key issue for Conference.

Sorry to test your patience, but that's the key issue that we'd like you to be voting on. Please support this proposal as amended. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. I will put the Strathclyde Amendment to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That *falls*. I will put the Devon & Somerset Amendment to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That *falls*. I will put the Resolution 59 from Devon & Somerset to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That *falls*.

We are now on to Resolution 61 entitled Global Alliance from Suffolk. The Executive Council are supporting. Can we have Suffolk to move, please.

Resolution 61 – GLOBAL ALLIANCE

This Conference welcomes the news that the FBU has joined with Unions representing firefighters in 12 countries to form the International Firefighters Unions Alliance (IFUA).

Conference further welcomes that our General Secretary has been elected onto the steering committee which will oversee the development of the Alliance.

Conference agrees with the following interim constitution:

- ***Independent trade unionism and full trade union rights for the firefighting profession;***
- ***The best levels of remuneration, working conditions and retirement pension provision;***
- ***The highest standards of firefighting professionalism in order to achieve the highest level of community safety;***
- ***The highest standards of safety for firefighters;***
- ***Would seek to ensure that the firefighting profession and consequently firefighter unions is representative of the communities that they serve, vigorously opposing discrimination on grounds of religion, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, age or trade union activity.***

Having the ability to learn from each other's experiences and particularly from each other's successes is of great importance, as is an international trade union voice for the firefighting profession. The alliance should also be in a position to promote and help develop independent trade unionism for firefighters in those countries where there are significant barriers to its development, particularly in the developing world.

Day Three – 21st May

This Conference therefore supports the view that the aims and ethos of the Global Alliance must be included in all FBU political courses, both nationally and locally.

SUFFOLK

BRO ANDY VINGOE (Suffolk):

President, Conference, we would have supported the Devon & Somerset Amendment if it had been allowed by Standing Orders. The FBU is an International Union that has been proven over many years through support for campaigns in Cuba, Colombia, Palestine and other countries. The main point of this Resolution is to learn from other union successes, and to support our comrades in countries where there are significant barriers to union development.

We believe that to have a session at any future political course and National School would be extremely beneficial to the students and will enable them to understand the benefits of being a member of an International Trade Union, and be able to pass the information back on to branches. We would also like to see the International Sub Committee communicating international issues more with our members as this will further the aims of our Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 61? *Formally seconded.* Is there anyone who wishes to speak against? Were you speaking against, Dave? I wasn't intending to take any speakers for. I was only asking for speakers against. We are at quite an advanced stage of this morning's business. I'm not intending to call you, Dave; I'm calling the General Secretary. You're speaking against? OK.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

I wasn't going to speak against, because I fully support the principles of the Global Alliance. I'd rather speak to the proposal. But there are some major issues with this proposal which you've not been made aware of and which you should be aware of. There's actually a Section in the Executive Council's Annual Report at page 55 on the establishment of the IFFUA. The problem is that the bullet points in here which call upon Conference to agree with the following interim constitution are not correct. At least 3 bullet points are not included. What is said in the Annual Report on page 55 is that the officials of the Union that attended the inaugural conference of the IFFUA back in April last year have already agreed that. So there's not a role for Conference actually to agree or not agree with the aims and constitution of the IFFUA. It's already done. It's a done deal.

But there are some major issues for us within that. Let's just be clear what they are. One of the unions that attended the inaugural conference of the IFFUA was a union from Israel called UCAPS, which is a member of the Israeli Trade Union Federation called the Histadrut. Any of you who remember the attacks on Gaza last year will also know that the trade union federation of Israel, the Histadrut, put out a statement which could have been written by the Israeli defence or foreign ministers in the way that it fully upheld and approved what was being done to the people in Gaza, which was an absolute outrage. It outraged the International Trade Union Movement. So it is something of a surprise to find that we're attending an inaugural conference at which we've got representatives of that union.

As a result of the work done within the FBU, as you know, we put landmark proposals to the TUC and also the STUC last year, one of which was calling on the Trade Union Movement to review its relationship with the Israeli trade union Histadrut. As a result of that, we understand that our General Secretary was asked to write to the UCAPS union and ask for some sort of clarification on their position. I don't believe that correspondence has ever been published. Certainly, I don't know whether we've ever even received a reply from that union.

Let me get back to the point. We're not actually against, but we have to be against to get this matter brought to Conference attention and it will be. The actual proposal does not cover the issues which are already agreed in the constitution. Funnily enough, one of the bullet points not contained in the proposal is exactly on the issue that we were trying to flag up with our Amendment that was Ruled Out of Order by Standing Orders. It is about this alliance should be promoting international law and international human rights. If we're going to be part of an alliance where we say it's not that important, then what are we doing in it? Actually, the bigger point is if we're going to be part of this alliance, which I support and I know our delegation supports, then let's make sure it does what it's supposed to do and not turn a blind eye in the interests of some sort of spurious solidarity to issues which are uncomfortable but nevertheless have to be addressed.

So my advice is: vote for the proposal, but let's ask for some replies from our General Secretary and from the Executive Council on very serious issues that the alliance will have to deal with. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dave. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks. Dave raised some important points in relation to the International Alliance. I think it is important to say

Day Three – 21st May

that the alliance is clearly at a very early stage, and there are people who come from very different political traditions, to be blunt, within that alliance. The Executive Council has taken the view that participation in the Global Alliance is beneficial to members of the Fire Brigades Union and gives us the opportunity to raise the concerns that we have in a forum where we would not otherwise have been able to make such progress.

In relation to the points made about the Israeli union that attended, Dave is correct, an Israeli union was present at the founding conference. Certainly in terms of the report that was given to us by the officials of that union, they represent Israeli/Arab firefighters within Israel. In terms of the concerns raised about Histadrut, I think from the Resolution last year, letters have been sent to Histadrut. I'm not aware of any formal proposal in terms of a letter regarding the Israeli union which attended the founding conference but I will research that and liaise with Dave through his EC Member. But that problem exists on a much wider scale than the firefighters' unions international alliance. Exactly the same issue arises in relation to other affiliations which we've had for a very long time. We're affiliated to EPSU, the European Federation of Public Sector Unions, which has Histadrut as an affiliate, the European TUC, the Public Services International – all of these organisations have Histadrut affiliated to them. So exactly the same point applies, and the same concerns, regarding Histadrut's role and particularly the stance it took over the question of the invasion of Gaza, to each of those areas of concern. That's why we wrote on behalf of the Union to Histadrut expressing our concern, as I believe was raised in last year's Conference decision.

Yes, there are clearly differences, not just on international political issues such as Palestine. There are some organisations within the Global Alliance who have no tradition of discussing political issues outside of their own industry, very different from the tradition that we have in the Fire Brigades Union. What that discussion did give us the opportunity to do, and we think it is therefore extremely useful, is precisely to start to raise that the Fire Brigades Union has views on various issues. I think the most obvious one in terms of that discussion was the ability to do a presentation on equality and diversity, which I think opened a lot of people's eyes at that conference. The discussions on equality and diversity in some of those other organisations are probably 20 or 30 years behind where they are in the Fire Brigades Union. So from that perspective alone we think we made some useful contributions.

So the Executive Council's view is that yes, the point about the bullet points may well be well made, but we believe the international alliance is potentially an important area of work. There are other areas of work

regarding firefighter standards and conditions of service and legislation that we're involved in, for example, through EPSU's firefighter network. In relation to some of the points made earlier regarding the International Committee, one of the difficulties we've had at Head Office for some considerable time is we have, of course, been short staffed. As reported, we now have a full complement of National Officers. That will allow us to review all the remits that are allocated within Head Office. I can assure you that part of that will be improving our coordination of our international solidarity work.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Do Suffolk wish to exercise the Right to Reply? Yes? No, OK. Therefore I will put Resolution 61 to the vote. The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

I now move on to the Annual Report Paragraph C14 – Parliamentary Group. I will now take Resolution 54 from Hampshire entitled Political Fund Awareness. The Executive Council are supporting.

Resolution 54 – POLITICAL FUND AWARENESS

In order to encourage an increase in the membership of the Political Fund this Conference instructs the Executive Council to provide members with a greater awareness of the benefits and uses of this fund.

HAMPSHIRE

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

President, Conference, I'm not going to labour this one. It's an old chestnut. I get regular comments from Hampshire officials complaining there's a common perception amongst many of our members that all or some of the money from the political fund is donated directly to the Labour Party. Despite officials' best endeavours to convince them otherwise, this perception holds true. Because of the disgraceful treatment of Fire Brigades Union members and the Fire Brigades Union itself during the strike there's a deep suspicion and reluctance amongst our members to contribute to anything which may benefit the Labour Party, whether it's a misconception or whatever.

I know that we may not change the title of the fund, but there must be something that we can do to overcome these deeply entrenched beliefs. I'm not sure if this is just a Hampshire problem. I can't believe that. What we've got to do is we've got to extol the benefits of this

Day Three – 21st May

Fund to our members. It's a very valid Fund. All I'm going to do is to ask the EC to consider some solution to this. I move. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Paul. Is there a seconder for Resolution 54? *Formally seconded.* Does anyone wish to speak against? The Executive Council are supporting.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think we can give Paul that assurance that we will do that. I think the most obvious case that we can use is precisely the work of the FBU's Parliamentary Group. That's not the only area of use for the Political Fund but it's a key one. I'm sure that our members will be pleased to know that there are MPs who have consistently exposed, for example, the Fire Control Project. It's the FBU Parliamentary Group who have led the way in Parliament in challenging Government on their facts, using Parliamentary questions to elicit information and detail including financial detail on the costs of the Fire Control Project. So I think there are arguments that we can use, and we'll take on board the concerns that are raised by Hampshire and hopefully that will assist those Labour MPs who have consistently, on that point and on other points relating to Fire and Rescue Service, had to challenge the policies of the previous Government for 13 years that it was in power. Yes, we will take on board the Hampshire concerns and, through Firefighter and other means, seek to ensure that members are fully aware of the uses of the Political Fund.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Can I therefore see all those in favour of Resolution 54, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

I am now going to move on to Resolution 56 from Merseyside entitled Anti Trade Union Legislation. West Yorkshire will be seconding. The Executive Council are supporting. Merseyside to move, please.

Resolution 56 – ANTI TRADE UNION LEGISLATION

Conference is deeply concerned at recent legal cases brought against trade unions who were pursuing, or contemplating pursuing, industrial action, in particular the growing trend of employers using the unfairly stringent anti trade union legislation in relation to the trade unions obligations regarding membership details and the effect that even minor discrepancies have on the legality on the successful outcome of industrial ballots.

Conference opposes such practices in the strongest terms possible and as such calls on the Executive Council to lobby the TUC, the FBU Parliamentary Group and all other relevant bodies with a view to redressing this notoriously unfair practice by any and all means possible.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO MARK ROWE (Merseyside):

President, Conference, Thatcher's anti trade union laws that were not repealed by the Labour Party whilst it was in power (incidentally, a Labour Party which in fact joined with the Conservatives and employers' organisations in opposing its reform) have always been used as a weapon to frighten workers and their unions. They are and were cynically designed to stop unions taking action to protect jobs, to protect decent wages, to protect pensions, to protect sick pay and to protect all conditions of service.

Trade union activity in the UK has become in many cases a criminal offence. Workers are denied the right to effectively organise to defend themselves or other workers without facing prosecution. Trade unions which seek to defend jobs, services or industries face massive penalties including the freezing of union funds or even receivership. These are all tactics designed to stop unions from functioning on behalf of their members, or in support of members of other trade unions.

Recently, there has been an increase in the use of these laws to stop unions from taking legitimate action to defend union members' conditions of service. Examples in the last 12 months include Network Rail being granted an injunction against the RMT resulting in one of the worst examples of a concerted campaign of media distortion and bias against a trade union ever seen with the BBC's John Humphrys' interview with Bob Crowe making continued references to ballot rigging. Ballot rigging! Come on! There's simply no question of a union ballot rigging or interfering in the balloting process because it is undertaken by an independent scrutineer, usually Electoral Reform Services; ballot papers sent out by post to the homes of members being balloted and returned to the Electoral Reform Services for counting. The union at no time handles the ballot papers. So how could the RMT rig a ballot? These are disgraceful sound bites designed to deride unions generally and give the impression of union corruption to the general public.

British Airways also sought and received a high profile injunction against Unite, stopping the proposed strike by cabin crew. As recently as Monday, they obtained yet another High Court injunction. This time the decision was based on a technicality on whether Unite followed the rules in contacting its members with strike result details, although that has now been won on appeal.

Day Three – 21st May

These are obviously not isolated cases. It is a clear, calculated and coordinated approach being taken by employers and the Government to stop the elementary human right of workers to organise effective action against employers who seek to remove jobs and attack our conditions of service. The particular piece of anti trade union legislation used by Network Rail against the RMT, and twice now used by British Airways against Unite, relates to the trade union obligations regarding membership details and the effect that even minor discrepancies have on the legality of the successful outcome of industrial ballots. Specifically, the union, to hold a ballot, must construct a matrix of information setting out which members it will be balloting, their job titles, grades, departments and work locations. The employer is under no obligation to cooperate with the union to ensure these details are accurate. In fact, employers frequently do everything possible to disrupt the process.

Merseyside Fire Authority, prior to a ballot in November 2009, in an attempt to disrupt a legal ballot when we were notified of the ballot, immediately removed the check off facility for FBU members. As we know, the check off facility is where you have your subs taken at source. So now, if you wish to become or indeed remain a Fire Brigades Union member on Merseyside, the only way you can pay your subscriptions is through setting up a direct debit mandate with your bank or building society.

This meant that the membership secretary had to identify every single FBU member in Merseyside, and exactly which station, location or department they worked. Get it wrong by just one member, or if there is the slightest inaccuracy, even when it does not affect the result of the ballot, and it means that the ballot is open to being challenged by the employer and quashed by the courts.

We believe the use of this particular piece of anti trade union legislation will be used extensively as a first strike method of dispute resolution in the Fire Service. I say “dispute resolution” with all the sarcasm I can muster, because essentially, why would the employer wish to spend time resolving a dispute when they simply seek an injunction instead? A legal route of attack first approach to resolving disputes. After all, in the case of the Fire Service it would cost them nothing personally as it's public money they would be using to fund these lengthy and costly legal challenges, using our taxes to stop us protecting our jobs.

The Fire Service employers will be buoyed by the result of British Airways' and Network Rail's appeals for injunctions and will be queueing up to have a go at it themselves. We believe the employers' time would be better spent around the negotiating table.

The High Court appears to be leaning towards the employers in making their decisions. With the media organised hysteria surrounding the Courts about to hit the public sector, it would appear the situation is only going to get worse with trade unions who attempt to defend the members' conditions against a sweeping cuts agenda. The Establishment is prepared to deny trade union members a voice, and also deny even the most basic of trade union principles: the right to withdraw your labour. We should all have a very strong viewpoint on this because if some puppet of the government sitting in a court room makes a decision to ignore the wishes of thousands of union members just because one member one inadvertently added to or left out of a ballot, even if the result was 95% in favour of action and the omission or addition makes no difference to the result whatsoever, then frankly we should be telling them where they can stick their injunction!

Nationally, in all trade unions the result of this is not a fear of strike ballots but deterioration in industrial relations, as union members become increasingly angry that their democratic wishes are frustrated by blatant, one sided anti trade union laws. If we cannot get the anti trade union laws repealed as a whole, then we need to address key parts of it. We are seeking to have the employer bias removed. So we call on the Executive Council to lobby the TUC, the FBU Parliamentary Group and all relevant bodies with a view to redressing this notoriously unfair practice by any and all means possible. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. West Yorkshire to second.

BRO MARK WILSON (West Yorkshire):

Having withdrawn Emergency Resolution 2, we are now seconding Resolution 56 from Merseyside. Comrades, I quite enjoyed our little night of madness last night because it took me back to another time – 1980, the year I left school. From that day until 1997 I never did a day's work under a Labour Government. Some of the more cynical of you will say that I still haven't, but that's an issue for opinion!

In that time I've seen a lot of things. We've seen the requirement introduced for secret ballots, the outlawing of secondary picketing, the threat to unions of sequestration of their funds, the introduction of check off, the need for a political fund ballot – all these things, deliberate tricks by the bosses to try to hamstring the efforts of trade unions to effectively and legitimately represent their members. I think it's a symptom of employment law. It's ironic that to dismiss someone under the ACAS Code of Practice and deprive that

Day Three – 21st May

individual of their livelihood, the threshold of proof that's required is basically what is reasonable to believe from the facts that are presented at that time. Yet, increasingly (and we've seen this with the British Airways dispute and the Network Rail dispute) they have shown that a trade union running a ballot to defend its members' conditions in the eyes of the law now is becoming increasingly demanded to show, when asked, that they can prove beyond all reasonable doubt that they have complied with the law. That's the sort of level of proof that years ago would have condemned somebody to the gallows.

But one thing is for certain, if it's maintained, this draconian application of the law, what it is doing is seeking to condemn trade unions to be simply the role of impotent spectators or a subservient staff association which only gets consulted when management know that the answer that they're going to get back is the one that they want to hear.

Let's bear in mind the pure logistics of the British Airways case. The membership were in different locations, not across town, not across the county, not across the country but across the globe. It must have been an absolutely Herculean task for Unite to even attempt to comply with the legal requirements. What happened? Unite were faced with the prospect of the ballot being ruled unlawful because of 11 spoiled ballot papers.

Historically, comrades, trade unions have always fought for fairness and consistency. To be quite honest, it was clear with the court ruling at that time that the punishment did not fit the crime. To be quite honest, comrades, that ruling in favour of BA was nothing short of criminal in itself. If that decision hadn't been overturned, it would have robbed trade union members of their basic human right to withdraw their labour. OK, yesterday that decision was overturned and we've won this particular battle. But we all know about the changing political climate that's coming and we're under no illusions. There are going to be a lot more fights like this. Comrades, I urge you, support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 56. Is there anyone who wishes to speak against the Resolution? No, I'm not intending to take any more speakers in this debate. I will therefore put Resolution 56 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on Paragraph C15 of the Annual Report – Affiliations.

BRO BRAD ATKINSON (Devon & Somerset):

President, Conference, we've noticed in the affiliations list that there's an omission of Palestine Solidarity Campaign. It should be on that list.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask the General Secretary to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Brad, you are correct; it is an omission. Apologies for that.

THE PRESIDENT:

No-one can get everything right. We will now take Resolution 52 from Northumberland entitled Labour Party Re-affiliation. The Executive Council are opposing. Northumberland to move, please.

Resolution 52 – LABOUR PARTY RE-AFFILIATION

Conference recognises that after three successive terms of Labour Government, the disappointment of FBU members and those in the wider trade union and Labour Party movement, in the Labour Government itself.

Consequently, Conference has to acknowledge that being disaffiliated from the Labour Party has in some instances affected the ability of the FBU to engage with Labour politicians on a local and national level and therefore calls on this union to re-affiliate to the Labour Party with immediate effect.

NORTHUMBERLAND

BRO COLIN JAMES (Northumberland):

President, Conference, it's only two weeks ago since the General Election, less since the resignation of Gordon Brown, and less again since the formation of the Con-Dem coalition. While some may be surprised at the Lib Dems allegiance to the Conservatives, ask why should we be at all? The Liberals have their historic roots firmly embedded in the capitalist class system, and just like the Tories, they represent a class that is a far distance from that of the working masses of this country. That class division is still there today for all of us to see.

With the Labour Government gone we have an opportunity. We heard from John McDonnell yesterday and what he had to say about that. We have an opportunity to seize the chance to effect change from within the Party itself, to reshape, rebuild and

Day Three – 21st May

reinvigorate the Labour Party, and build for the eventual return to Government. But we must begin now, not next year or the year after; the fight back has to start now. The whole trade union movement, not just the FBU, have been given this opportunity. Let's not waste it. Labour MPs themselves are telling us we need to reaffiliate. After the election loss, thousands of members are now rejoining the Labour Party, thousands of new members on a daily basis.

Conference, let's not sit back and wait for somebody else to make a start and do the work. The change we want to see can only come from working within the Labour Party, not sitting on our backsides doing nothing, not endlessly whingeing on websites, not just pointing the finger at others, moaning on and on while doing nothing about it ourselves. The change has got to come from being in the Party itself.

Conference, we have a situation politically that the public didn't want, and the country now faces uncertainty as it will be ruled through a period of behind the scenes murky back room deals by the Lib Dem Cons. Even though the election has not produced the result the capitalists wanted, their programme of cuts will go ahead. Yet again it's the working class people that will be forced to pay the price and make the biggest sacrifices for capitalist greed and failure. The only way out for the working class is the political solution. That's the very reason the trade unions founded the Labour Party over a century ago.

But in the Blair years we allowed career minded politicians who are nothing more than impostors in the Labour Party to take over the Party itself. But I need to tell you this. It's not Blair's Party or Brown's Party, it's certainly not Mandelson's Party; it's not even going to be the Milibands' Party. It's our Party and we must reclaim it. The opportunity of a lifetime is there right now for the FBU and the whole trade union movement and the working class of this country to begin the process of changing the Labour Party and achieve our ultimate aim of bringing about a socialist system of society. That's what it says in our Rule Book, and that's why we can't miss out on this opportunity.

We have to get real, and we have to start the process now. We have to get real because of the fight for our pensions. We have to get real because of the fight for our jobs and get real because of the fight for the safety of our firefighters' lives. Together with our brothers and sisters across the whole trade union movement that fight back has to start right now. No more moaning, just action, because without having our own Party, our ability to continue in the future to be an effective Union will be compromised if we cannot be effective politically. That was recognised 100 years ago and that principle hasn't changed since.

Conference, I urge you, don't waste another year to have the same debate again. Start the process, the fight back, and the reclaiming of our Party, our Party. Start that now. Reaffiliate. I urge you to support. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for 52?

SIS MANDY BUCHANAN (Tyne & Wear):

I have 18½ years left to do! Comrades, President, this latest General Election proved the people don't understand our political system. In conversations on my branch it was obvious that members thought they were electing a Prime Minister and they didn't want to vote for Gordon Brown. It fortunately didn't take much explanation for them to realise that only the people in Fife and Kirkcaldy were actually voting for Gordon Brown. I reminded them that it was Labour Party members, trade unions and Members of Parliament that selected the leader of the Labour Party. Comrades, that's where you come in.

John McDonnell is the sort of MP that deserves the support of the trades unions, and especially from this one. Matt told him yesterday that he would have our full support and gladly. Only, he isn't going to get out full support, because we aren't affiliated, and you don't get to play a full part. If John manages to get on to the ballot paper – and, comrades, I hope you're all going home to get a hold of your MPs this weekend and encourage that to happen – that's where we as trades union members miss out. I get a vote and I'll use it wisely. I've built up contacts with other socialists over many years I've been in the Labour Party. I will encourage them to do the same thing. They will hopefully lobby their union leaders to do the same. I won't bother lobbying my Union leaders because they haven't got a vote!

When this Conference took the decision to disaffiliate we didn't just leave Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and John Prescott. When the FBU disaffiliated they disaffiliated from me and all of the other comrades and socialists, those people who've supported us during disputes in Merseyside, Essex, Derbyshire, South Yorkshire and the rest including the national strike. I lost my seat on the local CLP and therefore I lost my only real chance of forcing my MP to listen and support our various concerns.

So, comrades, why should we change that decision now? Because, as the previous speaker said, we've got a real chance to change things within our only realistic and credible Party, to bring it back to where it should be, to start to have an influence over who should be selected to stand as councillors and MPs, to have our own candidates with a realistic chance of them getting

Day Three – 21st May

elected. Staying outside and throwing bricks was never the best option. Let's get back in there and have a say, a proper say, and put the anger about the Parliamentary Labour Party to one side and reaffiliate and make the Labour Party ours again. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mandy. Can I have an indication of those who wish to speak against this Resolution, please? Hang on, hang on, I'm just asking for indication. Can I have an indication, please, of those who wish to speak in favour of the Resolution? OK. I'm going to take – put your hands down please – two speakers against the Resolution. I will then ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's opposition. I didn't see, were there further hands wishing to speak in favour? Right. I'm going to take two speakers against, then ask the General Secretary to outline the Executive Council's position, and then we'll move to the vote. I'm going to give priority, by the way, to those who haven't spent a lot of time at the rostrum, bear that in mind. Put your hands up, please, those who wish to speak against? Steve and Chris in that order, please. I'll take Steve.

BRO STEPHEN BOYD (NIFB):

Conference, we are opposing Resolution 52. This Resolution states: "in some instances affected the ability of the FBU to engage with Labour politicians on a local and national level". Well, shame on them, comrades! Shame on any Labour politician who refused to engage with the Fire Brigades Union! *Applause*. The only reason to affiliate to the Labour Party is to get them into Government and keep them in Government. That's what they use the money for: to get into power. Well, we helped them get into power in 1997, we helped them again, and then look what they did to us! Comrades, have we witnessed, following their electoral defeat, the real evidence of them re-connecting with their working class roots? I think John McDonnell answered that yesterday with an emphatic no.

Disaffiliation has not damaged the Fire Brigades Union. You just have to look what this Union achieved in Westminster in 2008 and 2009. Comrades, we may never have any real influence over a UK Government, but we can and have had tremendous influence over those who make decisions locally. It's only logical that we continue to do that.

As has been said many times: let Regional Committees decide how to direct our support. For crying out loud, comrades, the Tories and the Lib Dems support against Regionalised Controls and now we want to reaffiliate to the very Party which tried to introduce it, the Party which, for six years, have refused to listen to the experts, refused to listen to the Fire Brigades Union.

Comrades, it's been said before, the Party we were talking about reaffiliating to dodged the opportunity to repeal Thatcher's laws, the laws that this week had Unite cabin crews over a barrel for failing to inform members about 11 spoilt ballot papers! It is sad, but the Labour Party in its current form is not fit for our purpose. Until it is, we must not reaffiliate. Oppose the Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

BRO CHRIS JACKSON (Avon):

Conference, President, I come up with a very heavy heart for two reasons. One: this is the second time I've actually supported the EC! The most important, I'm actually a Labour councillor in Bristol. *Applause*. So I would like us to reaffiliate to the Labour Party so we've a chance to change the path of the Labour Party from within. But I'm asking you to vote against this Resolution at the moment, because it does state "with immediate effect". We need to go back to our members and explain the benefits of being inside the Labour Party and how we can change things. But if we did this now, without the mandate from our members (I know in Avon I have not got that mandate to rejoin) I think they'd leave in droves if we went against their wishes.

So I think for now I would ask you to oppose this motion, but I hope it gets brought back here next year and we can actually affiliate. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I think it was my mistake and I may have been a bit harsh, I don't think Gordon has been to the rostrum this week actually. I don't want to deny him his chance to get to the rostrum this week. Take Gordon, then the General Secretary, then Right of Reply. I've seen so much of him I thought he'd been at the rostrum as well, but maybe I was wrong!

BRO GORDON McQUADE (Central):

I have been up once! Conference, President, I'll be brief. Every year this Resolution comes up, every year it's heavily defeated. Can I ask Conference not to take a massive backwards. Do not reaffiliate nationally to the Labour Party. Just try and picture it, as the comrade said. On Monday you go into your branches and try to explain what we've done this week: that we've reaffiliated to Labour. Just watch the graph next year Matt puts up on membership losses. I believe too they would leave in their droves. Please oppose this once again. Thanks. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

General Secretary.

Day Three – 21st May

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council are urging opposition to the Resolution. I think I would take issue with some of the suggestions in the Resolution. What wasn't particularly outlined was the instances whereby the disaffiliation has affected the ability of the FBU to engage with politicians, whether Labour or otherwise, because I don't accept that. If people think that the reason the South Yorkshire Labour controlled authority tried to sack our members was because we disaffiliated, you're living in Cloud Cuckoo Land; they did it because they unfortunately for a long time have taken the advice of the Chief Fire Officer on industrial relations matters, and that includes completely bypassing and ignoring the Fire Brigades Union in that disgraceful attack.

I would refer Conference back to the Resolution we've just unanimously agreed from Hampshire, because you need to think carefully about what Paul said in moving that. Nobody got up to challenge him or disagree with him. He said that one of the concerns about the Political Fund was that people believed it is being used to pay affiliation fees to the Labour Party, and we needed to explain that it wasn't.

That, to me, suggests that the points that Chris has made were perhaps the most important. It is the question of what would be the reaction of our members. Where I think the Executive Council would perhaps disagree with some of the comments made, we think there is a need for an ongoing dialogue about our political engagement and that would include the question of whether or not we should reaffiliate to the Labour Party. But the point is at this present time I think our membership are absolutely clear, and I think that's been reflected in the reaction of Conference today. There is still huge anger out there among our members about their treatment by Labour politicians. Yes, we may say, and I know some people will say, there is a difference between Labour councils and the Labour Party; there is a difference between the Labour Government and the Labour Party; and within this Conference we may acknowledge and accept that difference. That may not, however, be how our members see it. Our members see Labour politicians calling them fascists for daring to put in for a pay claim; our members see Labour councillors threatening to sack them; and our members see Labour fire authorities up and down the country making huge cuts, and have seen Labour Ministers come here and repeat a mantra without any dialogue or engagement with this Union and the voice of the professionals who we represent.

I think if you look at the recent election, what clearly happened was a broad move by working class people to hold their noses and vote for the Labour Party to keep out the Tories if at all possible. That's clearly evidenced by what happened. John acknowledged it yesterday and I just

want to take up that point, there is no problem with this Union in terms of its engagement with Labour MPs whatsoever. There is a whole host of Labour MPs who do not necessarily want to have dialogue with us over political matters. To be honest, they would have exactly the same approach if we were affiliated, and the affiliation in that respect makes no difference whatsoever. But we do have very strong links, alliances and working relationships with those on the Left of the Labour Party in Parliament. You can see that from John's work with us, and our political work with him consistently over the past few years.

But we do need to remind ourselves why there is that hostility among our members and among working people in general. It is sickening that we now have Tory Ministers saying in relation to the recent injunctions and so on using the trade union laws that Labour were in power for 13 years and did nothing about it; why would you possibly expect us to do anything about it? We saw the gap between the rich and the poor grow under a New Labour Government. Those are the things that have caused anger among working people.

Conference, I'm sure that this Resolution will be defeated. I don't agree with the point that it should not come back. I welcome the debate. I think we need to continue having that debate, but Conference, we urge you to oppose the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Northumberland wish to reply?

BRO COLIN JAMES:

President, Conference, I think it's important that we don't need to confuse the issue between the difference between the Labour Government and the Labour Party. Quite rightly so, Matt identified that. We can understand some of the anger out there amongst our membership. But if we want change in a future Labour Government, and if we want strong links with all Labour MPs, we've got to do that work and we've got to be in the Labour Party, to be affiliated to them.

We had a local dispute about five years ago. It was just after the time when we had disaffiliated from the Labour Party nationally. During that dispute we took our case to our local Labour Party who were ruling the County Council at the time. We took our case to them, and from some of those Labour councillors, they were of the opinion why should we even be in the room, talking to them? Exactly, shame on them! We lost that dispute, we lost 30 jobs. But in a couple of years' time the election process came round again and those Labour councillors were deselected by the local Labour Party. The reason they were deselected is because of the way they had treated the FBU.

Day Three – 21st May

So when you're saying about Labour sacking firefighters, it was the FBU that got those longstanding Labour councillors the sack! *Applause*. We thanked the local Labour Party for what they had done, they hadn't forgotten us. But they turned round and said that it was thanks to what the FBU had done locally, because that reinvigorated the whole local Labour Party Movement in our County. That's what we need to do, that's what we need to do with our MPs. If they're not working for Real Labour we'll do the same for them and they'll get deselected. That's why you have the influence, to have your Party and your MPs working for you. I urge you to support the Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Right, I will put Resolution 52 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That is *defeated*.

We are now going back to Page 11 of your Programme of Business, outstanding business from Thursday afternoon. First up is Resolution 41 from Tyne & Wear with an Amendment from Strathclyde entitled Stress Survey – FBU Officials. The Executive Council are opposing both the Resolution and the Amendment. Can I have Tyne & Wear to move, please?

Resolution 41 – STRESS SURVEY – FBU OFFICIALS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to instigate a full and thorough survey of all officials within the FBU regarding stress.

This survey should be used to highlight those areas where officials perceive themselves to be subject to additional stress associated solely with their trade union activities. The purpose of the survey being that if common areas of concern are identified by officials, then arrangements, policies or procedures can be adopted to minimise or remove the problems identified.

TYNE & WEAR

Amendment

In line 2, delete "within", after "officials", insert "and those that have recently retired from".

STRATHCLYDE

BRO DAVE TURNER (Tyne & Wear):

President, Conference, we are accepting Strathclyde's Amendment. Comrades, when the Resolution was drafted I'm quite sure we didn't anticipate it as being a contentious issue. It certainly came as a surprise when the EC chose to oppose it. The reason given by the EC for the opposition is that the work has already been

done. This was certainly a surprise to myself and the other Tyne & Wear delegates. Neither myself nor anybody else from Tyne & Wear was aware of any recent work that had been done on the subject of stress. No one in Tyne & Wear was aware of any outcome of the study, or any guidance or recommendations that resulted from the study.

The study was apparently carried out 7 or 8 years ago. If a week is a long time in politics, then 7 to 8 years in the FBU is a lifetime. While we totally accept that the work may have been done, we are concerned as to the relevance of an 8 year old survey.

I've only been a Brigade official for 3 years, but in that short time I've seen the work expected of officials increase dramatically. The changes since the national pay campaign have been huge. It doesn't look like it's going to get any easier. On a personal note, I attended a joint School with Region 5 at Blackpool in January. It's fair to say at the time I was having a certain amount of domestic difficulties about the time I give to the FBU. But I was in good company because half the group, when we had a discussion, were either about to get divorced, divorced, or thinking about getting a divorce. Now, I'm not blaming the FBU for the failure rate of marriage of officials, however, we can't hide from the fact that we are asking fewer people to do more work. If employers were doing this, as a Union we would not accept it. We may be wrong. FBU officials, past and present, may not be suffering from stress, but the only way to find out is to ask the question now, not 8 years ago, now.

In Tyne & Wear we have a formal arrangement with the management where a Brigade official accompanies the welfare officer to visit watches to give stress awareness sessions. These aren't voluntary; they form an integral part of the Brigade's quarterly training programme. These sessions are invaluable as they have helped many people identify the fact that they are suffering from stress. People are often unaware of the signs, symptoms and effects of stress. All we are asking for is that a survey is carried out with the aim of identifying any common areas of concern, and if there are, then policies, procedures and workloads can be looked at in an attempt to mitigate the problem. We may find some of the answers we get are uncomfortable, but that is not a reason to not ask the question. Support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 41, please?

BRO JOHN MAGGS (Avon):

We understand a survey on FBU officials was carried out several years ago. However, since then the workload of officials has changed and increased

Day Three – 21st May

dramatically, along with new technology, with mobile phone use, and with ever increasing emails. Further, many of the officials surveyed before have now been replaced with new blood. Although it can be argued that our role is voluntary and we can give up the work whenever we want, we will all be aware of the moral obligation that we have to carry out the duties on behalf of our members to the best of our abilities and still feel we are not achieving the results our members expect and deserve. This alone can cause stress, but add to that the long hours, often away from home, and away from our families, and often in our own time, our work/life balance can be severely distorted, adding to the other stressors.

Our employers may give us various excuses for not carrying out a stress survey when the real reason is more likely to be that they're frightened of the results they may be confronted with. So I say to the EC: please don't fall into the trap; we are better than that.

It is important that a new, updated survey is carried out to establish if the increased work is causing real or perceived stress to officials at all levels. Just as importantly, this survey must be adequately analysed, published and acted upon. Therefore we urge Conference to pass this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Strathclyde to move the Amendment, please.

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, frankly, I'm disappointed that the EC would seek to oppose this. We, as officials, deal with members who suffer stress, either through domestic or work related matters all the time. Why, then, would we think that we as officials, we would be exempt from stress? The EC will tell you that a survey was done some years ago, but what mechanisms were put in place and what has happened in those years? Let's identify and remove, or at least reduce, stressors; let's support us as officials; and let's utilise all available sources of information, including retired officials, to assist us. There's a wealth of experience out there, let's use it.

With that in mind, support our Amendment and utilise the experiences of recently retired officials and let's properly research and fight stress in a coordinated manner, and assist each other in the carrying out of our duties. Remember, an injury to one is an injury to all. Support our Amendment and Resolution 41. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment?
Formally seconded. Can I have an indication, please,

is there anyone who wishes to speak against Resolution 41? Is there anyone wishing to speak in favour of Resolution 41? I will take one speaker and then ask John McGhee to outline the Executive Council's opposition.

A DELEGATE:

President, Conference, this won't take long because they nicked my speech! In the EC's Policy Statement on the reorganisation of the union structures and the workload structures they acknowledge that the workload and pressures on officials has increased. So we'd just like to add our support for a new survey. We call for it to be done in the very near future, and for the results to be published and to be acted on this time. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

John McGhee.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Suffering from no stress! Comrades, we are opposing this. Let me give you the assurance that the Executive Council takes this situation very, very seriously. We understand the stress that officials are placed under by the work that they undertake on behalf of our members. That goes from branch officials all the way up to our General Secretary and our President, right throughout our organisation people are taking on workloads that often can lead to stress. I don't meant to be flippant, but here we are, we look at some of the symptoms of stress – lack of sleep and increased use of alcohol! Have a look around the room today, we can see for ourselves quite easily. All of the speakers that have come to the rostrum have demonstrated quite clearly that this is an issue and a problem for us.

But what have we been doing since the survey was conducted? It was a very detailed survey carried out by Nottingham Trent University, looking at stress in employees of the Fire and Rescue Service, but also we added in a part of that survey to look at the stress of officials. It was done in roundabout 2000/2001. In some ways I wish this was in Closed Session, but here goes, I'll take the chance. It identified that we had officials who should probably be in hospital. That was the level of stress that some of our people were exhibiting with the questionnaires they filled in. So we know the level of stress that people were under 7 years ago. What have we done to try to resolve that? We have adopted policies and we have adapted policies, and we have tried to introduce measures that would alleviate some of that stress by building other committees and building support networks for you.

Day Three – 21st May

Look at the education programme that's been reinvigorated over the last couple of years. In fact, next week we've got one of the Education Schools on time management. That's specifically to deal with the issues that our members are under. An awful lot of the stress that's caused out there is because people just don't have enough time to do anything – they don't have enough time for their families, their partners, or just their hobbies to get a wee bit of a break, and it's just constant. We've tried to introduce IT equipment that would assist you in your jobs – the use of mobile phones, the use of Blackberrys. Sometimes those things can add to the stress as well, and that's about the time management. You've got to learn to switch these off. I've noticed this week at breakfast time people have got their mobile phones sat on the table whilst they're having their breakfast. There are small things like that that we can do to adapt: put them away; you're entitled to sit down and have your meal, have a break and manage your time a bit better.

So there have been lots and lots of things that the National Executive of the Union is doing to try to alleviate the stress. The need for another survey is not there. We understand and we know the stress that's been caused, and we're doing our best to try to alleviate it. Reorganisation of the Union is going to be looked at. Please be assured that when the reorganisation of the Union is being looked at, that the workload of all of our officials, right from the branch officials all the way up to the General Secretary and President, has got to be looked at so that people are not being made ill by being active in this Union. The last thing that we want as a National Executive is to make anybody ill and lose officials of this Union; we want to increase the activity and increase the involvement, but there's not a need for another survey. So please, don't put that demand on us because that just increases the stress level for some people that are going to have to do it. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks John. Do Tyne & Wear wish to exercise their Right of Reply? No. OK, I will therefore put the Strathclyde Amendment to the vote first. Can I see those in favour of the Strathclyde Amendment, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? I will take that again. We don't particularly want a card vote at this stage on a Friday. Can I see those in favour of the Strathclyde Amendment? Thank you. Can I see those against? That was *carried*.

Can I see those in favour of Resolution 41 as Amended by Strathclyde, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? You don't make these things easy, do you? I'm going to have to call a Card Vote. We've not had one.

(A card vote was taken)

THE PRESIDENT:

We will declare that vote when it is available. We will now move on to Resolution 45 from Lothian & Borders to be seconded by Strathclyde entitled Fire Ground Facilities. There is an Amendment from Grampian. The Executive Council are giving qualified support to the Resolution and are supporting the Amendment. Can I have Lothian & Borders to move, please?

Resolution 45 – FIRE GROUND FACILITIES

This Annual Conference notes with concern that there are still no appropriate facilities on the fire ground for firefighters in Lothian & Borders even though the Fire Brigades Union developed and circulated a best practice document on minimum workplace facilities some time ago for information and negotiation at local level.

This policy outlines the standards we must seek to achieve for all members and in particular provide minimum welfare facilities for personnel, including dignified toilet, washing and sanitary provision and disposal facilities at operational incidents and training events.

As a consequence of these issues not being addressed, this Annual Conference calls upon the Executive Council to immediately initiate discussions at National Joint Council level in order to achieve national implementation of requirements as laid out in the FBU policy within the earliest possible timeframe and give a report back to Annual Conference 2011.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Amendment

In title, delete "FIRE GROUND", INSERT "INCIDENT GROUND".

In line 2, delete "fire ground", insert "incident ground".
GRAMPIAN

BRO BRYAN BANKS (Lothian & Borders):

Conference, we are accepting the Amendment highlighted by both Grampian and Strathclyde. Therefore, Resolution 45 will be Incident Ground Facilities. I'm hoping that it's not a card vote at the end of this!

Conference, some years ago I attended this Conference and listened to a speaker talking about a situation where a female firefighter had to ask male colleagues to guard an appliance door while she climbed into the crew cab to try and address problems that she was having with the onset of her period. This was a very brave speech and it highlighted a disgraceful situation that we've got.

Day Three – 21st May

So what great strides have been made up to now? In Lothian & Borders on our appliances we now have welfare packs. It's an advancement on nothing but it has to be said it's an advancement. It still means that you might have to have your crew cab security, or go and search for a tree, a bush, a wall or something to hide behind.

Conference, this is a dignity issue and it's for all firefighters. Protracted incidents are on the increase. We've got mass decontamination, flooding incidents, urban search & rescue, the list goes on. We have also got a slight addition in Lothian & Borders where we've got the use of CCTV at incidents, so we may have to be careful when you have to go for a pee behind a wall or a bush and you don't get caught because you may be facing discipline or legal charges and it could be potentially serious.

In Scotland we thought we're really moving forward. There were rumours that we were going to get four welfare vehicles. That vaporised and I think we only ended up with one, so L&B were no further forward apart from our wee welfare packs on the appliances. So the FBU best practice document on the minimum workplace facilities has been highlighted to our management and it's got us very little. This policy outlines the standards that we must seek to achieve for all members – that's dignified toilet, washing and sanitary provision plus disposal facilities at operational incidents and training events.

We strongly feel that the welfare vehicles should be viewed as essential, not as a luxury provision if there's finance available. There are serious health & safety considerations at stake, as well as basic dignity issues for all firefighters.

So to the final paragraph of this Resolution: this Annual Conference calls upon the Executive Council to immediately initiate discussions at National Joint Council level in order to achieve national implementation of requirements as laid out in the FBU policy within the earliest possible timeframe and give a report back to Annual Conference 2011. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Before I ask Strathclyde to second can I point out that it is now 12.45 which in the Standing Orders says we break for lunch. What I am proposing is that we take a short break at about one o'clock. There will be packed lunches available outside. I have seen a few people sneaking in with some brown paper bags. Could I urge delegates to please show some discipline and wait until we break for lunch, so that everybody gets the chance to go out there and get them together and no one has snaffled all the best sandwiches before the delegates get there! Is Conference happy to agree to that? *Agreed*

OK, can I have Strathclyde to second, please?

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, in Strathclyde we are fortunate: we have a welfare unit that offers separate dignified toilet and washing facilities for both sexes, a rest room with central heating, air conditioning, satellite television and basic canteen provision. Avon has a similar provision, yet today we are debating why this is not available in L&B. The question rightly put by the Resolution is why these facilities are not available nationally.

I have read thematic reviews from 1999, 2000, 2002, Audit Commission reports, etc, on diversity and equality, yet contained within them are little or no references to dignified facilities on the station, never mind on the incident ground. These facilities should be available for all. As an over 50s male can I state here and now my toilet breaks, like my nasal hair, have massively increased with age! *Applause*. There aren't many bushes left in Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow! The FBU were rightly praised in the thematic review of 1999 for our progressive stance on equality and diversity issues. We as a Union from all aspects of officialdom, engaged proactively on equality and diversity and the dignity of our members. We raised the bar high and it's time to raise it again, with a national plan of action to demand the provision of dignified facilities on the incident ground for the welfare of our members. Support this Resolution and let's move the Fire and Rescue Service forward to a more fitting role for 2010. It is no longer acceptable to have a post code lottery for the right to spend a penny with dignity at an incident. Support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Alex. Grampian to move the Amendment, please. *Formally moved*. Is there a seconder for the Grampian Amendment? *Formally seconded*. Is there anyone who wishes to speak against Resolution 45? The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask John McGhee to outline the nature of that.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thanks President. I will be very brief, because I know you want your sandwiches. The qualification is quite simple. We have already started discussions at the National Joint Council because we were trying to introduce it in the review of Section 5, the Health & Safety Section of the Grey Book. But I have to tell you, the likelihood of any substantial inclusion in the Grey Book is very slim. The aim of the employers is to have as little as possible in that Grey Book, as you know, and to put most things down to local negotiation. So the qualification is that whilst we will continue to push for a national standard of facilities that at a local level you must keep up the pressure. Hopefully, with the

Day Three – 21st May

production of the best practice document it will assist and we will continue to review that document in the future as well. Keep up the local pressure and we'll do what we can at NJC level.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. I will therefore put the Amendment from Grampian to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. That is *carried*.

Can I please see all those in favour of Resolution 45 as amended by Grampian? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Resolution 50 from Northumberland entitled Incident Response Units. The Executive Council are supporting. Northumberland to move.

Resolution 50 – INCIDENT RESPONSE UNITS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a survey of the training that has been provided in each Fire & Rescue Authority for mass decontamination at CBRN incidents. A report should be produced, highlighting any best practices and also any areas of serious concern over training and procedures. This report to be circulated to Brigade Officials within six months after the close of Conference 2010.

NORTHUMBERLAND

BRO COLIN JAMES (Northumberland):

President, Conference, I think I might have a better chance with this one! Conference, it's about six years or so since we were given RRUs as part of our new role to deal with CBRN incidents, and the responsibility, along with other agencies, for mass decontamination of the public and ourselves as well. Such is the potential scale of these incidents that we will be working with neighbouring Brigades and that means training together as well in multi-agency exercise for as near realistic training as we can. This all costs money and the allocation of resources in order to train and maintain competence through the IPDS system.

Conference, we have had major problems in Northumberland with training, or the lack of it. We've highlighted this through Health & Safety Committee meetings, directly to the chief fire officer, to the chair of the fire authority and eventually to the Health & Safety Executive, but there's been very little action. All the recommendation back from the HSE was that a large scale exercise should be held, even if it was just to

boost our morale! Like doing drills is good for morale! That will never catch on, will it?

That was two years ago, and we still cannot manage sending more than a single pump at a time to multi-agency exercises. I recently finally attended one of those multi-agency exercises, and the brief at the start from the officer in charge was: that we're going to make a lot of mistakes. He was right: we did. Six years on, is that the farthest we've come? I suspect a number of Brigades are in the same or similar position and we need to know. If training and maintaining of competence isn't being achieved, it needs to be sorted out. We need the resources to protect the public and ourselves if such an incident ever occurs. It was moved yesterday by Lancashire, and it's all about funding issues in Brigades and that applies here.

Conference, we need the information from each Brigade to put our case forward. Support the Resolution. I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Colin. Is there a seconder for Resolution 50? *Formally seconded*. Was there anyone who wished to speak against? The Executive Council are supporting. I will put Resolution 50 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on Paragraph J3 of the Annual Report – TUC Union Health and Safety Group, Paragraph J4 – Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Group. Hereford & Worcester Remitted Resolution 36 entitled Recruit Training but wish to exercise the Right to Speak.

Resolution 36 – RECRUIT TRAINING

Conference condemns the current trend in some Fire Authorities toward initial training courses and believes this has a detrimental effect on the Health and Safety of our members.

Conference demands that recruit courses should be for a minimum of 3 months for all firefighters, and should cover all aspects of firefighting and Health and Safety.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

BRO PETE HOPE (Hereford & Worcester):

Conference, President, we are happy to Remit on this. However, we would call on Sean to address Conference on the position currently on the work to date, the possible timescales that he envisages to complete the work. Could I ask also that Sean refers in his reply to the length of the training course?

Day Three – 21st May

THE PRESIDENT:

Sean.

BRO SEAN STARBUCK (National Officer):

Thanks for Remitting this. We didn't want to vote against this really because we support the ethos of it, but we didn't want to be tied to the three months. I'm doing some work currently with Jim Malone and the Scottish Fire Service College. They're looking at a foundation course which they are using for their wholetime firefighters. They are currently looking at a foundation course which equates to about 16-17 weeks. So basically we didn't want to be tied to the three months, because actually what we're looking at might be more than three months. Timescales, we'll just have to prioritise it and get back to it as soon as we can really.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Sean. I now call Resolution 38 from the National Women's Committee entitled Fire and Rescue Service Apparel. The Executive Council are opposing. NWC to move, please.

Resolution 38 – FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE APPAREL

This Conference remains committed to ensuring that Women's Health, Safety and Welfare is never compromised at work, particularly in relation to work-wear and specifically PPE.

One of the ongoing concerns the NWC have however, is that women wearing men's kit at work are exposed to a higher level of risk than those with properly fitting, gender specific personal protective equipment. This safety issue aside, the additional discomfort and restriction that ill fitting kit brings to any employee can be debilitating and is itself unacceptable.

Although individually tailored kit would be the ultimate precaution and comfort, the Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) has researched, advised and provided a method for Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure that many concerns are addressed in relation to PPE. Yet we are fully aware that take-up of the project has been piecemeal to date.

In order to properly map the gap in good, gender specific provision of kit and properly address the deficiencies, this Conference demands that the Executive Council:

- ***Carry out a national audit to establish a picture of where Women's Health, Safety and Welfare is still being compromised.***

- ***Raise these concerns as a matter of urgency at all relevant national forums, to achieve take-up of the ICP nationally as a minimum provision.***
- ***Provide information and support to all officials to ensure that this issue becomes a local priority Health and Safety agenda item.***

We call upon the Executive Council to report back progress to the NWC within 12 months of this Conference.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

President, Conference, the issue of women being exposed to unacceptable risk and being excluded from normal work activity due to ill fitting PPE and work wear has been raised numerous times. When I was researching this speech it goes as far back as 2004 at the National Women's Committee AGM, various Conferences; it's been raised by me; it's been raised by Women's Committee sisters; it's been raised by women in your Fire Services; by you as Brigade officials; by Health & Safety officials; by the FBU nationally, particularly by Vicky and John.

When the integrated clothing project appeared on the horizon, it actually looked like it would be a really good solution for women because it said it would provide the widest range, all sizes, be accessible, and include our much sought after maternity wear. This Resolution was put forward at a time when the ICP looked a bit dodgy because the Fire Service were backing away from it. As more people backed away, I suppose our chances of improved clothing solutions felt like they were fast disappearing. So the Resolution was intended to highlight the impact on women and so that you lot could go back and ask the questions about the ICP in your Services, and look at the alternatives that you were going to have.

My own Service has rolled out the brushed titanium (it's not grey) work wear, and the corporate clothing from the ICP in April. But it hasn't all gone swimmingly. We raised quality issues, availability issues, and sizing issues. There are a number (we think about 5% of the operational workforce) who are still wearing the old uniform which is blue and white, so they do stick out somewhat. They're mostly women, and just a few tall men.

The maternity wear, not available at the sizing events in Staffordshire or in Hereford & Worcester. I know that Staffordshire women who are pregnant currently are wearing their own clothes. So it's not there. Apparently, I was told, they're looking for a minimum order of 200 sets. That was always going to be a goer!

Staffordshire's chief has expressed his concerns in the strongest terms to Firebuy, so I was told: let's hope and

Day Three – 21st May

keep our fingers crossed for a reasonable result. But honestly though, are you happy that the health, safety and welfare of FBU members at work is reliant on people hoping and crossing their fingers? I'm not happy. In Region 7 we have a saying, or I have a saying: "It's better when Helen is happy".

So I suggest that a national audit is a first and an essential step towards resolving this frankly ridiculous and potentially dangerous situation for our members. The issue needs raising now as a priority on the FBU agenda. I urge you to support the Resolution, firstly by voting for it, and then please, let's take the appropriate action to back up our words today. The Resolution asks for a report back in 12 months, and I think that a series of staged reports would be best, perhaps every three months, over that 12 month period. Regular updates would continue to keep the issue high on the agenda and it would show the FBU members it affects, the progress that we were making as we made it.

So, Conference, let's continue to demonstrate the commitment, the total commitment, to firefighter health, safety and welfare that we are known for, and let's make Helen happy. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

I'll try to make you a bit happier, Helen, by apologising to Conference. The Executive Council are not opposing Resolution 38. That was due to an error in some paperwork up here. We are in fact supporting it. Is there a seconder? Katy.

SIS KATY LANE (London):

Conference, I'm tired of coming here now and having to stand for a minute's silence to pay my respects to another colleague, or two or three, who have died at work – not because I find it a chore, but because it is 2010, the 21st Century, and the world is so full of the most extraordinary technology that none of us should be dying of work. Just because the queues to join this profession are long does not mean that employers can treat firefighters as expendable collateral whose deaths can be offset by savings to the public when one less full pension gets claimed. With that in mind, I would like our EC to get our employers to concentrate on this with some urgency. Our fire gear is our first and last hope of surviving that most indiscriminate of killers: fire. Where it fits and where it doesn't can mean the difference between permanent disfigurement, disability or death.

Women firefighters are not an add-on to the Fire Service, an exercise in political correctness, employed solely to fulfil targets, quotas or collect brownie points for fat cat chief officers in their quest for post-retirement consultancy jobs. We are professional life savers, as

dedicated, courageous and selfless as our male colleagues, and we deserve proper PPE and proper work wear, equal to our male counterparts but not the same!

There is a female form mannequin. It is there for a reason. When a Brigade's bureaucrats in their safe, air conditioned office suites discuss their PFI contracts for fire gear, they need to insist that anyone who wants to win that contract provides properly fitting fire gear for men and women, or no cigar. The technology may be rocket science but the decision is not. As for work wear, dear God, how many companies provide uniforms for women, pregnant or not? For Brigades not to provide it is, quite frankly, pathetic.

Work wear is important, but if I ever, ever have to come here and stand for a minute's silence because one of our sisters has been killed because her male fitting fire gear allowed it happen, I won't see us as hanging our heads in respect, but in shame. This final message is for employers and chief officers, but may apply to a few in here. Some firefighters are women. Get over it, get on with it, stop the platitudes and get clothes and PPE to fit us all. Support the motion. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Katy. Was there anyone who wished to speak against Resolution 38? No. In that case I will put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously*.

I do have the opportunity to report the outcome of the Card Vote that was just taken. I call upon the Chief Scrutineer to deliver the result.

BRO TONY CAVANAGH (Chief Scrutineer):

President, Conference, 13 days to go! It's been a pleasure! I announce to Conference the result of the Card Vote taken on Resolution 41 Stress Survey – FBU Officials. For: 27,198; Against: 16,490. Therefore, the result is the Resolution is carried. I thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tony. We will now break for lunch. Back in your seats at twenty past, please.

(Adjourned for lunch)

Day Three – 21st May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

If delegates can please return to their seats, finish their conversations, put their phones back on to off. We are now on to Resolution 40 from the Control Staff National Committee with an Amendment from Strathclyde. The Executive Council are supporting both. Can I have the CSNC to move Resolution 40, please. Tim, are you moving it for the CSNC?

Resolution 40 – CCTV

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to raise the issue with Fire & Rescue Service Employers the use of CCTV monitors in Emergency Fire Control Rooms. Such Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) monitors have already been installed into Lothian and Borders Fire Control.

The monitors have been installed under the guise of providing firefighter safety in terms of violence against crews. They have been opposed locally, however the CSNC believe there are national implications.

These proposals are outside of the national role maps, do not assist in firefighter safety and are a dangerous move towards changing the function and role of Emergency Fire Controls to include surveillance.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to oppose the implementation and use of this type of equipment and do all in their power to prevent its introduction and remove it where it has been installed.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Amendment

In line 11, after "Council", insert ", Brigade and local officials".

STRATHCLYDE

BRO TIM GERRARD (CSNC):

President, Conference, Lothian & Borders fire control have two 42 inch screens mounted either side of the mobilising board. The mobilising officer in charge of control is supposed to carry out all of the normal functions and monitor the screens when the crews turn out, looking to risk assess the incident as they are proceeding to it. I should mention that these screens are connected to Closed Circuit Televisions monitoring the City of Edinburgh area.

I am informed the screens are constantly monitoring different areas, so it's like watching a TV screen where someone else has the remote control. Most of the time the closed circuit televisions are monitoring cash point screens across the city, or known crime spots. The Fire and Rescue Service believe that this is neither suitable, beneficial nor appropriate, and possibly an infringement on human rights. What have they achieved so far? Nothing. However, there is a potential for control staff to witness traumatic scenes of no relevance to their jobs. There is also potential for control staff to witness injuries to firefighters, or incidents that could involve fatalities.

Fire control staff should not be carrying out a monitoring surveillance job. The coalition Government has stated that it will regulate closed circuit television, stop the Big Brother syndrome for the general public. Conference, I ask you to support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tim. Is there a seconder for Resolution 40, please?

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, I would like to start by thanking CSNC for bringing this Resolution forward and giving us the opportunity to second it. We have a CCTV system installed in our control room and this happened through a community partnership initiative, and our control members are not happy.

This system has been touted as an improvement to the safety of firefighters, but it's not. This scheme is a divisive weapon which pitches fire control operators against firefighters. It is an attack on the members' conditions. It is not part of a fire control operator's job to monitor CCTV images. Fire control rooms are not a surveillance environment. Fire control operators are not trained or paid to monitor incidents for command purposes, but that's what will end up happening with this. Please support. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Strathclyde to move their Amendment, please? *Formally moved.* Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded.* OK, the Executive Council are supporting. Was there anyone who wished to speak against Resolution 40? I will put it to the vote therefore. Can I put the Amendment to the vote first. Those in favour please show. Thank you. Were there any against? That is CARRIED. Resolution 40 as amended by Strathclyde, I put it to the vote. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is *carried unanimously.*

Day Three – 21st May

We are now on to Resolution 47 from Strathclyde to be seconded by Hampshire, supported by Leicestershire, entitled Health and Fitness Assessments. There is an Amendment from West Yorkshire. The Executive Council are supporting both. Strathclyde to move, please.

Resolution 47 – HEALTH AND FITNESS ASSESSMENTS

Conference demands that the Executive Council enter into negotiations with our national employers to ensure all health and fitness standards that all uniformed employees with an operational commitment are required to attain are appropriate and measured consistently to ensure:

- ***Fitness standards demanded of operational firefighters are appropriate and realistic and all Fire Service personnel with an operational commitment are required to achieve them;***
- ***Standards are appropriately graded to acknowledge the differing physiology of males and females;***
- ***Standards are appropriately graded to take account of the natural decline in aerobic capacity as a result of ageing;***
- ***A moratorium of a minimum period of 12 months from introduction of fitness testing to being required to achieve the agreed desired standard;***
- ***An agreement to provide one hour each working day as part of the work routine devoted to physical fitness training for wholtime personnel with an operational commitment on any duty system worked and appropriate arrangements for personnel working in the RDS;***
- ***An agreement to provide and maintain appropriate fitness equipment at Fire Service work places with appropriate access arrangements for RDS personnel;***
- ***Any agreed interim fitness standard that a failure to achieve would necessitate removal from operational duty is appropriate and realistic and takes account of age and sex differences;***
- ***Outcomes are as reliable and as accurate as possible and that aerobic testing using gas analysis is provided. This to ensure the reliability and accuracy of aerobic capacity tests that may indicate a failure to achieve the desired interim or desired final standard.***

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

Insert new final bullet point:

“An agreed range of appropriate methods of

creating the necessary physical exertion for fitness testing and measuring to be carried out be incorporated in the policy.”

WEST YORKSHIRE

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

President, Conference, we are supporting the Amendment from West Yorkshire. Comrades, early in 2008 in Strathclyde we got issued with draft proposals to introduce fitness testing for all firefighters with an operational commitment. The chosen means of doing this was the Chester Step Test. Many of you will be familiar with it. It had been developed for the Fire Fit Group by Professor Kevin Sykes.

When I studied fitness standards in other Fire and Rescue Services with the aid of some of my colleagues and comrades in this hall, it quickly became apparent that this steering group was set up by CFOA and it was set up to impose their views on firefighter fitness standards right through the Service nationally. It also became clear that many Fire and Rescue Services had introduced this standard or were planning to introduce it.

Their chosen measure of fitness is aerobic capacity. In essence, it's how efficiently your body uses oxygen during exercise. It's commonly known as the O2 max to professionals. The higher your O2 max goes the fitter the individual is deemed to be. However, unless the test is conducted using state of the art gas analysis equipment the outcomes are highly questionable. Without this equipment it's widely acknowledged that the CST has got an inaccuracy rate of 15% in measuring the outcomes for two-thirds of the population. Therefore it's essential that this equipment is provided whenever these measurements have been applied to FBU members as part of any formal fitness test.

We do have this equipment in Strathclyde. In addition, we just don't have the Chester Step Test, we have a treadmill walking test that has been provided. That's important as well, because walking is a far more natural function and many people's athletic performance will be far better with the walking test than it will be with the unnatural Chester Step Test.

We've also had an interim standard introduced with Strathclyde. They've taken a sensitive approach to this. They don't want vast reams of firefighters off the run because they can't achieve the standard the Fire Fit Group is looking for. So they've introduced this interim standard. Where people don't achieve the interim standard using the Step Test, they do get an opportunity to do the walk test, and many more of them pass that than do the initial step test. So that is really important that that also is provided.

Day Three – 21st May

It is also important that our members are provided with proper support if they do fail, and that on station equipment is provided in terms of aerobic exercise equipment: cycle machines, and treadmills and so on, if they want to introduce these standards.

The other problem we've got with this approach is that of course these standards don't take any account of the natural decline in fitness as a result of aging. It doesn't take account of the different physiology of women firefighters. It's not realistic. So what we've got to do is we've got to provide our own research. It's not good enough just taking this off the table from the Fire Fit Group and accepting it, because if we do, then what we're going to find is that many in the female population just will not consider a career in the Fire and Rescue Service because they will not be able to achieve the fitness standards.

The Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research say that women at their peak, when they're 19 years of age if they have got excellent fitness, are expected to achieve the O2 max of between 39 and 41.9. The Fire Fit standard that they're trying to impose nationally is 42. So if women who are deemed to have excellent fitness cannot achieve this standard at any point in their lives, then it's clearly discriminatory. It also takes no account of the research that indicates that women use oxygen in a different and more effective way during exercise. So any straight comparison with men's performance is misleading and invalid. So we do need to urgently dispute this national standard and get an agreed and realistic standard in its place.

One means of challenging the standard locally is by the question of equality impact assessments. We have done this in Strathclyde. For two years we've asked for it. It was eventually supplied. It was incomplete and totally inadequate, so they're away to revise it and trying to introduce a revised version which, in their view, will indicate that it's not discriminatory. We'll continue to challenge them on that.

Of course, the O2 Max measures only one aspect of health and fitness which is aerobic capacity. It takes no account of other aspects: flexibility, strength, muscular endurance and cognitive abilities, and it's not task relevant. So the Chester Step Test only provides a guide to aerobic fitness; it doesn't indicate fitness for role. So we've got to challenge where they are misapplying it and using it to indicate that.

Of course, the elephant in the room for FBU members is the potential to dismiss on capability grounds. A national agreement on realistic fitness standards would minimise this. However, it is accepted that some people, no matter how hard they train, will reach a ceiling and that ceiling might not be what's been desired

by these fitness standards. That will be down to genetic factors. So any national agreement must ensure that the O2 Max is not the sole arbiter of fitness for operational duties and that redeployment is always an option for those deemed unable to attain the desired standards.

Comrades, the local implementation of the Firefighters Steering Group would cause great concern to our members in Strathclyde and elsewhere. That's why we need a proper realistic national agreement on this. All those protections will help to allay those concerns. We've got to grasp the nettle now. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Hampshire to second.

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

President, Conference, we withdrew our own Resolution 49 to support this. We want to ensure that our retained members get paid time off to reach these fitness levels. Our management have taken a fairly firm line on this. They are taking anyone who does not come up to the new standards imposed by Hampshire off the run, withdrawing them from operational duties. As you know, for our retained members, that's essentially saying you're not doing very much.

Hampshire's standards take no account of age. Like I say, the bar has been raised, so what we are seeing is that quite a few people are being taken off the run. It has a double whammy because it also then puts stress on to our retained comrades because you're usually removing experienced older members who have the ability to guide their younger crew members through difficult fires, etc.

I'm not going to bleat on for too long about this. I would just say that given the fact that many of our retained stations tend to be quite small, nothing more than garages in many cases, several of them have very little in the way of equipment to train on, and so consequently we're also not providing that equipment for those stations. Again, support this, please, and I'll go now. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Leicestershire were supporting. Were they intending to speak?

SIS HELEN TOOLEY (Derbyshire):

President, Conference, I recently wrote an article on Fire Fit for Siren. The proposals by Fire Fit to bring in a national fitness standard of 42 VO2 max threatens to entrench discrimination for not only female firefighters

Day Three – 21st May

but also our older male colleagues. A fitness testing process where women are more likely to fail will impact psychologically on our female firefighters, making us feel inferior if we fail, and giving others an excuse to say women cannot do the role of a firefighter.

It is important to stress that we do not want easier standards for our women. We fully support fitness testing for role. However, this testing should be fair and equal for all and relate to the tasks a firefighter may carry out, regardless of age or gender. The proposed tests are based on inadequate and flawed research, considering only one aspect of a firefighter's role. There's no mention of strength or the changing role or expectations on a firefighter. These tests could well lead to Fire Services getting rid of valuable and highly experienced team members. Implementing this one size fits all approach to fitness testing could make many Fire Services vulnerable to claims of sex and age discrimination. Fire Services could also be missing out on good quality female recruits at a time when they are aiming to recruit and retain more women.

An employment tribunal in Northern Ireland ruled that a fitness test for the RUC PS&I resulted in a smaller proportion of women passing than men and was therefore unlawful direct sex discrimination. The indirect discrimination legislation requires Fire Services to balance the extent of any disparate impact against the need for a fitness test. This does not mean a lower pass mark for women, but a pass mark which is fair and measures the fitness actually needed to do the job. At the moment, any Fire Service using Fire Fit recommendations would find the large disparate impact difficult to justify and would be vulnerable to discrimination claims. Please support this Resolution. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

West Yorkshire to move their Amendment? *Formally moved.* Is there a seconder for the West Yorkshire Amendment? *Formally seconded.* The Executive Council are supporting both. I will therefore put them to the vote. Can I see those in favour of the West Yorkshire Amendment, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried.* I now put Resolution 47 as Amended by West Yorkshire to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. That is *carried unanimously.*

We are now on to Paragraph J5 of the Annual Report, Health & Safety Executive Proactive Inspections.

BRO MICK COAKLEY (ONC):

President, Conference, I am serving on the Health & Safety Committee. These inspections by the HSE have breathed new life into health and safety. I think it's up to

this Union to ride that tide with a renewed enthusiasm for health and safety. With that, I'd like to compliment the Health & Safety Committee that persuaded the HSE to look at three areas and insisting on competence of our members and better training, maintenance particularly of officer training, without a reduction in pay (I would suggest), and to ensure that employees given the responsibility to gather information are sufficiently trained.

It's no surprise that these issues have resulted in firefighter injuries and firefighter deaths in the past. Our Union has got to help prevent that. What we should do now is urge the HSE to deliver their final report to each Fire and Rescue Service and make sure that it is adopted in full. If not, assist the HSE to issue Improvement Notices to Fire and Rescue Services. We should also consider a memorandum of understanding with our partner agencies like the HSE, and maybe we may attract some favour from CFA, but that's a maybe. This memorandum of understanding would help, in my opinion, to gather information for serious accident investigations as carried out by our investigating officers up and down the country. It would give them more power to get that information.

Make no mistake, the battleground of these Con-Dem cuts will be health and safety. South Yorkshire recently have been told they've got to reduce their budget by £9 million. That's some 15% of their budget. That 15% is going to be coming from reduced training, reduced equipment. So let's enter into that battle with our weapons, armed with HS265, Safety Reps and Safety Committee's Regulations, let's reduce the expectations of chief fire officers, let's highlight the incompetencies of FOA, and let's keep our members safe at work. Thank you very much. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

John McGhee.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, President. Mick, just in terms of getting any kind of protocol, I just draw attention of Conference to the recent Document published by the Health & Safety Executive called Striking the Balance between Operational and Health & Safety Duties in the Fire and Rescue Service. It goes some way to creating a bit of a protocol how things will work in the Fire and Rescue Service.

I just want to pick up on a comment that Mick made in regard to this riding the tide of the proactive inspections of the Health & Safety Executive. I've watched at times a wave that goes up the River Avon where people go and surf it every now and again. As it gets towards the end it just starts to flatten out and people just fall off their surfboards. Believe me, this tide isn't going to last

Day Three – 21st May

very long. We've managed to get them to do eight inspections in the last year. The pressure that the Health & Safety Executive are under is as much as any other public service. They're not going to be around proactively inspecting the Fire and Rescue Service for very much longer. They will take their eye off us. Our comrades in UCATT, for example, are already putting the Health & Safety Executive under pressure and saying: hang on, when we look at the accident and death statistics in the Fire and Rescue Service and compare them with the construction industry, far more of our members are being killed and we want you to come and look, and we want a striking the balance document in terms of the construction industry.

So we have been circulating all of the reports into these inspections of eight Brigades, and I just got the final one this week. I will get that circulated next week when we get back to the Office. Every one of your Brigades, every one of you should be raising these eight reports with the recommendations with your own Brigades and asking and making sure that they can comply with the recommendations made in each of the reports that have been issued. As I say, the tide's already turning and it will be pretty far out before we know it.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Now on to Paragraph J6 – Brigade Health & Safety Representatives Training Course. I now call Resolution 44 from Dorset with an Amendment from Strathclyde entitled Health and Safety. The Executive Council are supporting. Dorset to move, please.

Resolution 44 – HEALTH AND SAFETY

Following the rise in firefighter deaths and the "Safer Firefighters" campaign, Conference demands that the Executive Council carries out the following actions:

Ensure that there is a FBU Health and Safety Representative in every branch;

Train its FBU Health and Safety reps to at least TUC Health and Safety Stage 2 level;

Actively promote the role of Health and Safety representatives within the workplace;

Ensure that all representatives have access to resources to enable them to carry out their functions effectively;

Negotiate to ensure that representatives have adequate time off work for training, meetings and to carry out effective investigations, following accidents or near misses;

Publish a Health and Safety "Firefighter magazine" supplement, highlighting fire service successes, campaign areas, accident reviews and dispelling Health and Safety myths.

DORSET

Amendment

In line 2, after "Council," insert "with the assistance of local officials".

In line 2, delete "carries", insert "carry".

STRATHCLYDE

BRO SIMON JONES (Dorset):

President, Conference, we are accepting Strathclyde's Amendment. Following the rise in firefighter deaths and the "Safer Firefighters" campaign, Conference demands that the Executive Council with the assistance of local officials carry out the following actions: Ensure that there is a FBU Health and Safety Representative in every branch; Train its FBU Health and Safety reps to at least TUC Health and Safety Stage 2 level; This in no way means that we accept that Health & Safety reps cannot or should not attend other training courses. Actively promote the role of Health and Safety representatives within the workplace; Ensure that all representatives have access to resources to enable them to carry out their functions effectively; Negotiate to ensure that representatives have adequate time off work for training, meetings and to carry out effective investigations, following accidents or near misses; Publish a Health and Safety "Firefighter magazine" supplement, highlighting fire service successes, campaign areas, accident reviews and dispelling Health and Safety myths.

The Health & Safety Welfare Act remains a powerful piece of legislation to protect our members whilst they're at work. With proper use by skilled FBU reps, it can be an important tool to be used in improving the working environment, and combating negative changes. We must recognise that firefighters have a fundamental right to return home after work, fatigued but in the same condition that they started and free from injury. The legislation that is now under the Health & Safety banner has become increasingly complex as it seeks to protect workers from different areas of harm and needs reps that can understand this legislation and use it for the benefit of our members. Too often we hear that health & safety is a threat to people's jobs and is designed to make them more costly and harder to do. We need reps that can look at some of the myths and have the understanding to educate our members and their managers.

This Resolution draws together much that is existing FBU policy and creates a best practice statement which clearly outlines the target of the FBU and the way of getting there. I'll explain the reasons for each of these six action

Day Three – 21st May

points. (1) This is in line with the rules of the FBU and is the foundation for all the other actions. Health & Safety reps should be the catalyst for change and represent our members locally. (2) TUC Health & Safety Stage 2 provides the correct level for the reps to operate at branch level. They would be skilled in organising and representing their members, understanding the legal framework in which they work, and how they fit into the union structure. (3) Active promotion by the FBU goes into all areas from supporting the reps at branch level to training our Brigade and Regional reps and support for our National Officer. This will reduce the workload for our reps, nearly all of whom are volunteers, and ensure that their work is valued. Supporting our reps is vital so that they have office space, access to IT and telephone. They need to have up to date reference material that can be held on each branch or hosted centrally on the website. The recent branch reps pack is a very good start in this respect.

Health & Safety reps often face difficulty getting time off. Brigade level negotiations need to ensure that reps have good facilities agreements based on SRSCU Regulations. The use of Firefighter and Health & Safety supplement would raise the profile of health and safety amongst every member and make sure that common myths are busted, and that members are adequately protected at work.

We want to do all that we can to make our workplace in the Fire Service as safe as possible for our members. I believe that this Resolution contains all the key actions to make this happen. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 44?

BRO GARY BENNETT (Merseyside):

Conference, as Brigade Health & Safety coordinator I'm often the first port of call for members' problems, management initiatives, Brigade Committee discussions, workplace inspections, investigations and plans. My role is vast, demanding, complex and, unfortunately, historically renowned for being more stiff than sexy! We have discussed at length this week that we need to maximise our involvement with members, reps and officials. We need every post filled. We need the profile of health & safety and welfare to be raised, developed and further enshrined in statute.

We the Fire Brigades Union must assist this by promoting health and safety and welfare reps in the workplace. Those reps don't work in isolation; we can't, none of us. For example, in Merseyside, my joint working with the National Women's Committee has effectively ensured access to bespoke fire kit for all firefighters, safely and effectively tested, well fitting and

fit for purpose. It has also ensured, for example, that we provide maternity work wear, and where it does not specifically suit, provide comfort and safety, or be suitable during a certain trimester, an alternative of a £200 payment to spend for yourself is available. So joint working and well informed reps does work.

To support and assist those reps we need to ensure that they have time off, resources, support and training. In addition, this Resolution calls for publicity for health & safety, and welfare, Firefighter magazine supplement displaying our successes, raising our profile and to dispel the health and safety myths. Not just on Workers' Memorial Day on 28th April, but year round, celebrating our fights and successes, not just remembering firefighter deaths. Conference, support the Resolution, promote health, promote safety and promote welfare. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Gary. Strathclyde to move their Amendment. *Formally moved.* Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded.* Is there anybody who wishes to speak against Resolution 44? You want to speak against, Mark? Come to the rostrum.

BRO MARK WILSON (West Yorkshire):

Whilst we fully support the sentiments behind this Resolution I think we ought to offer a note of alarm and concern. Certainly regarding the first two bullet points of what this Resolution asks for is, first of all, that there are FBU Health & Safety Representatives in every branch, and then that they be trained to at least Stage 2 level. Looking at that, what I would have to say is first of all, on my Brigade Committee I've got people (because of turnover of members) who aren't even on level 1 yet. The other side of it is we had a long debate about cash. I'm afraid it does come down to it. Are we going to put in every branch, a branch rep required to attend two courses, extended courses at that, to get to that Stage 2 level, bearing in mind what the turnover of branch officials is like? I think there's a third element that's just occurred to me. We have sad situations where people on branches have done the courses and then start following their own agenda. The more people who've got access to this sort of knowledge and this sort of power, if you like, the harder it is to keep control of that. I would really urge caution, chair. I really think we should oppose this Resolution. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. My apologies to Conference. The Executive Council are actually giving qualified support. I'll ask John to give that qualification. Are you raising a Point of Order, Dave?

Day Three – 21st May

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon & Somerset):

Sorry, Conference, a Point of Order on what Mark's just said and with respect. The actual cost of the TUC education is not met by the Union, so there should be a cost neutral element in that to the Union itself. Certainly in my Brigade when reps go on courses they get their subsistence and their travelling paid for by the Brigade, which is what it should be because it is a recognised function. So please don't think that we can't afford to send our reps on courses. There should be no problem for us there.

THE PRESIDENT:

That was not a Point of Order, Dave. It was a Point of Information that may have informed delegates in their consideration. John, can you give us the qualification, please.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Yes, I can. Simon pretty much gave the qualification himself because the Resolution is asking for the Executive Council to ensure that there's a branch safety rep in every branch, and really the Executive Council cannot do that on its own; it needs the assistance of yourselves within the Brigades.

I would just add a couple of qualifications on there, because I don't want employers who may read our verbatim report to think that Stage 2 is the ceiling that we expect our safety reps to be trained to. You're entitled to training and there's no limit to that training. It's reasonable training that you should be allowed. We certainly don't want to set the bar at Stage 2.

I would ask, Mark, that you just reconsider your position because I think you can quite easily support this Resolution. We understand the difficulties of people getting trained and getting time off and that's something that we clearly all want to try to address. The Resolution is trying to set out a way that we can assist that process, rather than trying to hinder it. I think also it's important for me to say here that the commitment that the Executive Council have shown in the last few years to health & safety, I think it would be difficult for any of us to criticise that. They have made the resources available. The health & safety packs that we've issued to branch safety reps – we've now issued somewhere in the region of about 1700 of those to branch safety reps. That's getting pretty much near to all of our workplaces having one of those packs, at least we hope, with a safety representative.

As I say, that qualification is that there's no limit to the amount of training. And, by the way, there's no limit to the number of safety reps you can have in any one

workplace. We don't just want one safety rep in some of our branches; we want as many as we possibly can. If that's one per watch then that's fine. If it's two per watch, we will get them trained and working on behalf of the Union to make sure our members' safety is improved.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Do Dorset wish to exercise Right of Reply? No, OK. I therefore put the Amendment first to the vote from Strathclyde. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Those against? Thank you. That is *carried*. I put Resolution 44 as amended by Strathclyde to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Those against? Thank you. That is *carried*.

Now on to Paragraph J7 of the Annual Report – Toxins Study. I will take Resolution 43 from Nottinghamshire entitled Toxin Levels in Firefighters. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Nottinghamshire to move, please.

Resolution 43 – TOXIN LEVELS IN FIREFIGHTERS

Conference applauds the work already carried out in relation to toxin levels found in firefighters.

Research data and statistics show that firefighters have a higher than industry average for certain diseases and cancers. Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to build on the work already carried out, to further investigate ways to include toxin testing as part of a firefighters' medical examination and ways of reducing toxin levels.

A full report with recommendations will be presented to the 2011 Annual Conference.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

BRO BOB MOULD (Nottinghamshire):

President, Conference, as firefighters we're constantly being exposed to the products of combustion which contain benzene, asbestos, cyanide and formaldehyde, to name but a few. It must be almost impossible not to get contaminated by these lethal toxins either by inhalation or absorption through the skin. It's not just BA wearers that are at risk, but also those of us that are working outside a building, because a lot of these toxins are invisible and odourless. Simple tasks such as damping down have been shown to carry a high risk of exposure.

There is also a lot of compelling evidence out there that we are more susceptible than the general public to testicular cancer, multiple myeloma, non Hodgkin's lymphoma and prostate cancer. The FBU has already

Day Three – 21st May

carried out some commendable work in relation to toxin levels found in firefighters, and this appears to confirm some of our long held suspicions. But there is still a lot of work to be done. We must be ready and willing to assist with any new research that can positively impact on firefighter safety and well being.

I am sure that many of us here have seen one of our members come down with a life threatening illness that's made us wonder if the job in some way contributed toward it. It is time to put an end to this speculation and replace it with ammunition that will enable us to take on the Brigade HR and occupational health departments who refuse to acknowledge that these illnesses may be job related. We owe it to our members not only to offer guidance on how they can minimise their exposure to these toxins, but also how they can reduce toxin levels in their bodies if they suspect that their levels may be high. We strongly believe that the best way of achieving this will be to include toxin testing as part of a firefighter medical. This will then determine if that individual needs to go on a detoxing regime, or if they are within the accepted levels. This would also have the effect of recognition of the problem within those Brigades that have, up to now, pleaded ignorance while some of our members have had to endure slow deaths.

Comrades, please support. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder please for Resolution 43?

BRO JOHN MAGGS (Avon):

Avon FBU has studied the research that has been carried out on this subject by universities in the USA and Canada where the dangers of toxic smoke, drive through the burning synthetic materials found in every dwelling, workplace, car and rubbish bin, causing severe health problems to firefighters has been acknowledged. It has been demonstrated beyond doubt that chemicals inhaled into the lungs or absorbed through the skin are causing cancer, lung diseases and even death. These reports have made fire chiefs in the States sit up and take notice with improvements to procedures, PPE and BA sets, being made. The recent tragic deaths of our comrades on the fire ground have quite rightly made the headlines. But are these the only firefighters that have died in the line of duty? I'm sure we have all heard of colleagues who have been struck by acute chronic illnesses, either while serving or recently retired, some of whom have sadly passed away. How many of these colleagues are victims of our work environment?

Avon FBU would like to share research with Nottinghamshire to help bolster the report for next

year's Conference and we will be speaking to them. It is vital that this is addressed. Firefighters must be regularly monitored for toxic poisoning, and proper scientific research into working practices and PPE for firefighters in the UK must be carried out. Conference, I second.

Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone who wishes to speak against Resolution 43? The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask John McGhee to outline the nature of that qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, President. The Executive Council qualification is on two grounds. Both speakers there have referred to the data that is available. The data, unfortunately, is from the States and from Canada. We really need to be pushing, and we have been pushing, to try to get a study done in this country so that we have data of UK firefighters.

The last bit of the qualification is if we're pushing for this testing, which can actually be quite invasive for individuals, we believe it would need to be on a voluntary basis and that we shouldn't be pushing for compulsory testing if our members don't want to have that testing carried out.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks John. I will put 43 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We move on to Resolution 46 from Cleveland entitled Paid Time Off for Health Screening. The Executive Council are supporting. Cleveland to move, please.

Resolution 46 – PAID TIME OFF FOR HEALTH SCREENING

Conference acknowledges the continued endeavours of the Fire Brigades Union to strive for improvements in both physical and mental health and well being within the Fire and Rescue Services.

With the above in mind, Conference calls upon the Executive Council to enter into negotiations at the National Joint Council with a view to agreeing improvements to the Occupational Health arrangements currently contained within the Grey Book.

These improvements should include the provision of paid time off for employees to attend screening

Day Three – 21st May

or counselling appointments to ensure that employees who are diagnosed with any illness or medical condition are fully supported during their treatment.

CLEVELAND

BRO BRIAN GIBSON (Cleveland):

President, comrades, recent events, the recession, and various surveys and studies into the Fire and Rescue Service have highlighted two very worrying trends, both of them you will not be surprised to hear: that the role of the Fire Service employee in the modern day is more dangerous and more stressful than ever before. Of course, our employers have a duty of care towards employees regarding occupational health provision, and currently Section 5 Part B of the Grey Book states that employees can get reasonable paid time off for cancer screening appointments only. But what about screening for other conditions – asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and of course the amount of toxins our firefighters are exposed to at incidents? What about screening for mental health and well being? Occupational health services are in place throughout the United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Service and there may be some very good schemes out there, but not all Brigades provide mental health and well being support, including essential services such as counselling.

How confidential is that service and support when it is provided? Conference, all we are saying is the EC should enter into negotiations with the national employers, let's get some improvements to our current occupational health provision. After all, isn't that what our members truly deserve? Conference, I move.
Applause

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Brian. Is there a seconder for Resolution 46? B&EMM.

BRO COLIN JARRETT (B&EMM):

The need for a position on paid time off for health screening is an absolute necessity for our B&EMM members. They have a particular need for initial and follow up medical screening due to the high incidence and the known fact that B&EMM members are more susceptible to diseases such as sickle cell, Thalassaemia, and a high incidence of mental health issues. They carry with them a battery of tests, appointments, follow up appointments, procedures. To identify these problems at an early stage, these are all required; they are not by choice. The fact is that B&EMM female members are more likely to fill the numbers for Lupus, again requiring batteries of tests. So with all this, I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Colin. Does anyone wish to speak against Resolution 46? The Executive Council are supporting. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

On to Paragraph J8 of the Annual Report – Serious Accident Investigations.

BRO PAUL TREW (Hampshire):

Conference, tragically, we're still seeing incidents across the Service that require serious accident investigations. It's noticeable that each investigation has been different, and an agreed protocol and process would greatly assist local officials. The working group has drawn on their experiences from previous investigations and have a number of recommendations to make. Will the General Secretary give an assurance that the recommendations of the working group will be brought to the Executive Council as a matter of urgency?

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask the National Officer, John McGhee to respond to that.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Yes, Paul, I can give you that assurance. The working group have been looking at the serious accident investigation manual that we've been developing. As you say, tragically we've just gathered far too much experience on this. On each occasion it's given us learning opportunities. It's caused amendments. We've had change by that experience. There is an Executive Council meeting the second week in June, 8th, 9th and 10th June, and it will be going to the Executive Council then for a decision, and hopefully be published straight after.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. On to Paragraph J9 – Generic Risk Assessment, Paragraph J10 – CFRA Dynamic Management of Risk at Operational Incidents – Dynamic Risk Assessment. On to Resolution 42 from Lancashire with Amendments from Grampian and Strathclyde. Both Amendments can carry. The Executive Council are supporting the Amendments and giving qualified support to the Resolution. Lancashire to move, please.

Resolution 42 – WATER INCIDENTS

Conference notes the increasing number of waterside incidents that FBU members are attending. These incidents include; responding to

Day Three – 21st May

incidents at lakes, reservoirs, canals, harbours, estuaries, rivers and flood water.

Conference is concerned at the inconsistencies in safe operating procedures, equipment and training between different Brigades.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to instigate a review of current Brigade capabilities in relation to responding to waterside incidents. This is with a view to producing guidance containing a national standard that will assist FBU Officials.

LANCASHIRE

Amendment

In line 5, delete “Brigades”, insert “Fire and Rescue Authorities”.

In line 7, delete “Brigade”, insert “Fire and Rescue Authorities”.

GRAMPIAN

Amendment

In line 3, before “lakes, insert “lochs,”.

In line 5 delete “Brigade”, insert “Fire and Rescue Authorities”.

In line 7 delete “brigades”, insert “Fire and Rescue Authorities”.

STRATHCLYDE

BRO KEVIN DEACON (Lancashire):

President, Conference, we are accepting the Amendments from Grampian and Strathclyde. Conference, the number of water incidents attended by FBU members has been steadily increasing for many years with the majority of Fire and Rescue Services being heavily involved and playing a major role in these incidents. These incidents have involved rescues at major floodings, rivers, canals, coastal waters, lakes, reservoirs, and yes, occasionally even lochs! Whilst all these waters differ, they all provide inherent dangers to our members. Whilst welcoming the review by the National Guidance Project – Flooding and Water Safety Group, Conference is concerned at the inconsistencies regarding the safe operating procedures, equipment and training between different services.

These inconsistencies include issues such as the minimum number of personnel required for a water team, the minimum number of personnel that make up a boat crew, whether a boat has an engine or not, PPE, and the skills required for all crews including boat operators attending water incidents.

Conference, all FBU members attending water incidents within the United Kingdom should be trained to a national standard. It is not acceptable that water technicians’ and boat operators’ skills vary from Service to Service. Water

is and always has been an alien, hostile and hazardous environment to our members and it is our duty to protect their safety. We need a review of all the current Fire and Rescue Service water incident capabilities with a view to producing guidance that will assist Brigade officials in securing safer working environments, better equipment, and consistency in skills and training. Conference, support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Kev. Was there a seconder for Resolution 42? *Formally seconded.* Grampian to move their Amendment.

BRO ALAN PATERSON (Grampian):

President, Conference, as a result of the Additional Functions Order in Scotland, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service moved to train all its firefighters to effect water rescue from the dry bank. Only five firefighters in Grampian at any one time based in Elgin would venture into water fully trained and fully equipped due to the Brigade’s risk based analysis that said the area flooded to any great extent only once every five years.

Brigade officials warned that even with such statistics, such resources were insufficient due to the moral dilemma faced by the majority on scene. The Brigade’s standard operational system was set to fail long before the initial call.

Sure enough, examples of severe flooding eventually spread throughout the Region, which of course saw all firefighters up to their necks in water in fire gear, giving it their best shot, which fell well short of safe systems of work. True to form, corporate management acted quickly by blaming the incident commanders for straying from Service procedures. From there, rather than roll the training out to more wholtime firefighters, they’ve turned to the usual methods of propping up the service: recall to duty, overtime payments, and an expectation that our RDS comrades could turn their hands to swift water rescue in addition to their core training and preventative work.

While we await further examples of health & safety breaches, Brigade officials continue to utilise any method available to apply the necessary pressure to our corporate managers. Carrying this Amendment to the Resolution would hopefully deliver the necessary guidance that will show our members that the current practices largely fall well short of the standards that could have prevented the tragic loss of Brother Paul Metcalf. Please support the Amendment. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Grampian Amendment?

Day Three – 21st May

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, we obviously echo all of that. Just one further thing I'd like to bring to your attention. Attendance at water incidents is a non statutory duty. Driving boats, as far as I'm aware, isn't in the role maps anywhere, so I think we ought to be looking at some sort of pay for this activity as well. Support the Amendments to the Resolution. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Strathclyde to move their Amendment. *Formally move.* Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde Amendment? *Formally seconded.* Is there anyone who would like to speak against Resolution 42? I'll ask John to outline the Executive Council's qualification.

BRO JOHN McGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, President. You will be aware already, or you should be, that the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisers Unit for England has already started a project to produce guidance for working in and near water. The Union Regional Health & Safety coordinators and myself are involved in that project which will produce the guidance which will set the standard across the UK.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Both Amendments can carry, by the way. I will put Amendment 1 to the vote from Grampian. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Any against? That is *carried*. Amendment 2 from Strathclyde. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Any against? That is *carried*. I put Resolution 42 as amended. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried unanimously*.

We are now on to Paragraph J11 – Operational Guidance Project – Review of Technical Bulletin 1/1997 – BA Command and Control Procedures. Then we're on to Emergency Resolution 4 – Respirators RPE, London to move, please. The Executive Council are giving qualified support.

Emergency Resolution 4 – RESPIRATORS RPE

Imminent publication of CFRA guidance for RPE, has highlighted a gap in firefighter safety. Conferences believes that the current policy held with regards to RPE has saved many lives of our members over the years.

However with further advances in technology, this brigade believes that the use of respirators, in certain circumstances and not in an oxygen deficient

atmosphere where active monitoring is in use, will enhance fire-fighter safety. Therefore conference instructs the executive Council to develop best practice for the controlled use of RPE respirators into an FBU policy.

LONDON

BRO GORDON FIELDEN (London):

First of all, President, can I just confirm if we are in a position, once we have received the qualification, if we do not accept that qualification what the procedure is, please?

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council's support is as outlined by whoever speaks on its behalf, Gordon.

BRO GORDON FIELDEN:

But you didn't answer the question. If we wanted to reject the qualification?

THE PRESIDENT:

I suggest you wait and hear what the qualification is first, and then make any comment you may feel is necessary afterwards.

BRO GORDON FIELDEN:

Will that mean that there is a Right of Reply then?

THE PRESIDENT:

There is a Right of Reply if there is any opposition. There is no Right of Reply if the only speakers have been in support. So if you could move it, please, Gordon, you'll then hear whatever the position of the Executive Council or other delegates is, and I suggest you take it from there.

BRO GORDON FIELDEN:

President, Conference, since the introduction of breathing apparatus in the Fire Service, continuing improvements have been made year on year. This has undoubtedly saved many premature deaths of our members. The further advancements in technology have extended the duration and better quality equipment in RPE. Of course, now we have the introduction of telemetry. During this same period PPE has also been improved and developed.

We are now in a position where some 50 years have passed since the introduction RPE into our Service, but we still find ourselves in certain situations using paper

Day Three – 21st May

dust masks which, after tests, have proven to be ineffective in ensuring our members' respiratory safety. Conference, just take a minute to look at the Document that was produced yesterday at conference: It's About Time. Turn to page 15, if you want an example you'll see it there. Then further, turn a further page and you'll see another set of firefighters fighting fires with paper dust masks.

We have all been in this position in the past where we have been in environments where we have not used breathing apparatus such as road traffic collisions where glass management is required, clearing away after fires, revisits to incidents, and of course fire investigation. But there are still hazards to our members. These are not seen but still carried in those are airborne particulates that cause our members harm, not just short term with chest infections and toxin ingestion, but long-term exposure that may well lead to respiratory diseases and possible cancers, and reducing the lifespans of our members.

Conference, this is something we could do something about, eliminating these exposures and risks in the future. Conference, before you express concern that this will be an alternative to breathing apparatus, I repeat, it will not. I repeat that again: it will not be an alternative to breathing apparatus. If they were to use respirators in an oxygen deficient atmosphere or a fire situation they would not be fit for purpose.

The Resolution's intention is to ensure that in any GSOP (Generic Standard Operating Procedure) – a new buzz word that's likely to come – or Brigade Standard Operating Procedure, this is made clear and defined, and for a specific use in line with other policies we have developed and amended, for instance, PRPS and other new dimension areas. We will also need to ensure that there is a full control procedure, controlled air monitoring at all times while this is being used, and clear and strict guidelines when and where it should take place. We can only ensure that this happens if we engage in the process. We are all too aware that Brigades up and down the country have already introduced respirators over and above that which has been agreed at Conference in the past.

Conference, we changed our policies with regard to USARB personnel and respirators for the same reason I have outlined, making sure that our members have the best protection when carrying out their roles at incidents. Therefore, we must not close our eyes to change, but only accept change that we believe enhances the safety of our members. We are the lead professional organisation in the Fire Service, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Conference, this is a chance to plug a gap in our members' safety at incidents. Please let us not be in a position that in the

future one of our members dies of exposure because of airborne particulates. I urge you to support the Resolution. I move. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Gordon. Come to the rostrum, Dave.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorkshire):

Thanks, chair. It says in the Resolution that imminent publication of CFRA guidance for RPE has highlighted a gap. If this publication hasn't been published yet, how can it highlight a gap?

THE PRESIDENT:

Sounds like a rhetorical question to me, Dave. The Standing Orders Committee Chair did yesterday give you a number of reasons why they had Ruled Out of Order the Emergency Resolution, the wording that you highlighted there being one of them. Conference, in its infinite wisdom, decided to overturn the Standing Orders Committee, so that's what you've got in front of you. Is there a seconder, please, for Emergency Resolution 4? Hereford & Worcester.

BRO STEVE GOULD (Hereford & Worcester):

President, Conference, we are seconding the Emergency Resolution from London. The use of respirators will provide protection and give control measures whilst working in an atmosphere where we're exposed to dangerous particulates. This is a positive step forward from the use of dust masks which allow little or no protection to firefighters, and with no way of monitoring their use. This will allow for a safer system of work when working in contaminated atmospheres which do not require breathing apparatus. The use of respirators will come under full entry control procedures as does BA. To reiterate what was said by London: respirators will not be used as an alternative to breathing apparatus. I second. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I see who wishes to speak against Emergency Resolution 4, please. OK, I will ask the National Officer, John McGhee to outline the nature of the Executive Council's qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, President, for this task. It is an interesting picture, isn't it? Not only is he not wearing a dust mask, a respirator or breathing apparatus but he's not wearing a helmet either! We're not suggesting flat caps for them, are we?

Day Three – 21st May

Let me just give the qualification here. The qualification is that in 1991 a much younger delegate from Strathclyde brought a Resolution from the Brigade calling for a ban on the use of respirators and the use of dust masks as well, because they don't make it safer. At that time, that was the argument: that they didn't make it safer for our people, and the gold standard was to use compressed air breathing apparatus. That was a Conference policy decision.

Then we came back to make a change to Conference policy decision in order to progress some work on USARB. Then we came back and amended Conference policy again to use the respiratory protective suits and masks for decontamination.

So the qualification is very simple. We will go away and we will create the best practice. Until we've got that best practice document, we won't be using respirators or dust masks. We will carry on with our policy of advising our members to use breathing apparatus where there's a risk to their respiratory systems. We will come back next year with that best practice document as a guidance, so that you, Conference, can decide if that's the policy you want to replace with the one you had from 1991. That's the qualification: we will go and we will work on this best practice, and we'll come back and you will make the decision, as you have on many of the other Resolutions passed here this week. You've asked us to come back with reports. We will do that so that you, Conference, can make that decision. That's the qualification.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. There was no opposition, therefore no Right of Reply. Are you raising a Point of Order, Gordon? Can you come to the rostrum, please, to give your Point of Order.

BRO GORDON FIELDEN:

President, given the qualification that the National Officer has given for this Resolution, it's unacceptable to us in London on the basis that it says it will bring it back to Conference. If there's a best practice document that's agreed and goes before the Executive Council that enhances our members' safety, then we should do that immediately, not wait for a year.

THE PRESIDENT:

That was not a Point of Order; that was a point of view. I will ask John to respond to that point of view before we move to the vote.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE:

I'll give a counter point of view, shall I? There's any number of the Resolutions you have passed this week

that has asked to come back here so that you can then get that report and we take action. That's what you've asked us to do so that you can then make a decision on the reports that we come back with, so you can say whether it's adequate or inadequate. That's just exactly the same as we're asking here.

Gordon needn't be worried here. We understand. I'm certainly not an expert in respirators and what's out there in the industry. I don't think there's probably anybody in this room who is an expert. So what we want to do is to go away and look at that, and see how it fits in the hierarchy of protection for our members, when it would be used, and when it wouldn't be used, and come back here and make that recommendation so that you can decide if that advice that we are going to give is the advice that you want to take back to your branches and your members to improve their safety.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. There is no Right of Reply as there was no opposition. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. Can I see all those in favour, please, of Emergency Resolution 4? Thank you. Were there any against? That is *carried*.

Right, we are now on Paragraph J12 – Operational Guidance Projects – Review of Operational Guidance for Railways, Tunnels and Underground Incidents. Were you wishing to speak on that Paragraph? Paragraph J13 Dalry Road, Andy.

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, on the morning of 12th July members in Lothian & Borders woke up to the terrible news about Dalry. That morning none of our officials knew what was in front of us. The help and support of local and national officials was invaluable. I must take this opportunity to give some of them thanks today. Roddie Robertson and John McGhee, (and I know he's at the back somewhere) John Docherty (now retired), your advice and assistance was and continues to be priceless and gives us direction; all of the Scottish officials, and all of the officials throughout the country who offered and gave us support, which also continues; officials from other investigations – Jim Parrott, Pete Goulden and Matt Dale, and many others; Thompsons solicitors and in particular, Sid Smith in the Edinburgh office – as always, their advice and assistance was first class; Brian and Denise, who both knew Ewan and were determined to be part of the investigation, your contribution has been invaluable, especially everything that you've done for our members; Davy, thankfully you were off duty that fateful night, but I'll not say here why.

I can't stand here without mentioning Ewan's family. They have been fantastic throughout. Their loss has

Day Three – 21st May

been devastating to them, but they are dealing with it with true dignity.

The Balmoral Bar on Dalry Road in Edinburgh is a fairly small bar, and like many other bars in the City, it is on the ground floor of a tenement block. On 12th July at 00.38 hours three pumps and a turntable ladder were mobilised to that fire. It was a fire in the basement. It all sounds fairly routine, but yet tragically Ewan Williamson lost his life.

Our investigation continues. When we started, it was a very daunting prospect, but we're making progress, albeit slow. Despite no formal agreement on a joint investigation with Lothian & Borders Fire and Rescue Service, we have conducted around 50 joint interviews with them. We have established excellent links with the police and the Health & Safety Executive, and we have a mountain of information which grows by the day. Somehow, with the support of those already mentioned, we will formulate a report, but it will take some time.

As the first of three serious accident investigations on the podium today, I'd like to offer some advice and assistance to Hampshire. We've spoken already, but I would like to do it formally here. Pick up the phone at any time – and I mean at any time; if you've not already done it, get all your Brigade officials nominated as safety reps; most importantly take some time off. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Paragraph J14 Warwickshire – Atherstone on Stour.

BRO MARCUS GILES (Warwickshire):

President, Conference, it's now two and a half years on from this tragic incident in Warwickshire, and the criminal element is still ongoing. Therefore, until any decisions have been made regarding prosecutions the passage of information controlled by the police will be difficult, as will the introduction of any control measures locally, regionally and nationally.

However, the FBU investigation team in Warwickshire are processing the information that we currently have and are in the initial stages of producing a draft report. Finally, I'd like to place on record my thanks for the assistance and the continued support of John McGhee, Pete Goulden, Steve Law and all the officials within Region 7. Thank you. *Applause*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Paragraph J15 – Marlie Farm – East Sussex, Paragraph J16 – Combined Aerial Rescue Platform Best Practice Document. Andy.

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

President, Conference, these appliances are quite frankly a joke. We have two in Lothian & Borders. The first was delivered nearly three years ago and it has been on the run for approximately three weeks. There have been many problems: sheered bolts on the sub frames, jack and legs contacting the ground when driving, overweight by only about 500 kg, pump failing to deliver water, to name but a few. By far the biggest problem we faced has been the rear wheels lifting off the ground when cornering. This happened when the appliance was mobilised to a fire call. Clear daylight was seen between the offside rear wheels and the tarmac. Our management's response was quite frightening. They refused to take it off the run. Why? Seemingly, there's a well known characteristic of large goods vehicle that the rear wheels are designed to lift! Can you believe it? We certainly can't!

Eventually, our members refused to drive it, the manufacturers investigated, and would you believe it, there was a problem. The appliance is currently at Milton Keynes and is now awaiting further testing which we have been invited to attend. What the outcome will be is anyone's guess, but I would put my money on it, in three months' time it will be back answering fire calls.

Our local paper ran a good story on it and its headline: "Flaming Useless".

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Andy. Paragraph J17 – HIV/AIDS Best Practice Document, Paragraph J18 – Branch Health and Safety Representatives – Body Mapping, Paragraph J19 – Health and Safety Strategy for Firefighters in the European Mediterranean Area – Workshop, Paragraph J20 – The Second Congress of Atemschitzunfaelle – Live 2009. *Applause*. Paragraph J21 – Confidential Stress Helpline.

Apparently, I've been informed this is going to be the last Annual Conference at which a number of delegates and officials who are currently here will be present. I have a list of a number of people who will not be returning with us. Jerry Pagan, Executive Council member for Region 4; Alex Miller, Strathclyde; Fraser Parr, Highland & Islands; John Docherty Region 1 who has already retired but doesn't appear in the Annual Report (that is an omission); Tony Cavanagh, Lancashire; Alan Anderson, GMC; Mark Denney and Danny West, London; Alan Sillman, Oxfordshire; Steve Hedley, Region 3; Mark Fellows, West Midlands. I apologise if there's anyone else I've missed out, but I'm sure that we all wish to join together in wishing them the very best for their retirements. *Applause*

I will now put the Annual Report to Conference for endorsement. Is that agreed? *Agreed*

Day Three – 21st May

I would now like to move a vote of thanks to a number of people without whom we would not have been able to have got through this week as relatively easily as we have done: the Head Office Staff who have been here, the majority of whom have already left for London; the Standing Orders Committee, particularly Stewart Kinnon who has ensured that the Vice President and myself have been kept informed of what should be happening and kept us briefed; the Stewards of Conference; the Vice President I'd like to thank for assisting me here, and he'll have the pleasure of sitting in this big chair himself next year; and finally I'd like to thank yourselves, all our Delegates and Observers who've helped this week be as smooth running and as comradely and fraternal as I think it has. Thank you very much for that. With that, I will formally adjourn Conference. Thank you very much. *Applause*

Conference closed



Record of 2010 Annual Conference Decisions

Southport

Record of Decisions

Motions Carried ...

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE AS AMENDED BY CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE IT'S ABOUT TIME

The Executive Council notes with great concern the fact that emergency response times in the Fire and Rescue Service have increased over more than a decade.

The Executive Council notes that such slower responses to fires will have increased the damage caused by fire and are likely to have led to avoidable deaths and injuries among the public. Slower response times will also have been a factor in increasing the risks faced by fire crews attending emergency incidents.

The Executive Council is alarmed at the complacency demonstrated at this trend by some policy makers and others. We believe that, unless challenged, this complacency will seriously damage the reputation of our profession and our Service.

Central Government Complacency

Government commissioned research in 1997, and in 2002 confirmed what is already common knowledge among fire service professionals and what is self evident to the public: *that slower response times for the fire and rescue service would increase the number of deaths and increase fire damage.*

Yet in 2007 without providing any evidence a senior civil servant claimed to MP's in Westminster that slower response times for the Fire and Rescue Service did not equate to a poorer service to communities. This claim, which has never been refuted or even clarified by Government, is an insult to Firefighters and to any member of the public who has ever been through the tragedy of experiencing a fire. It is part of a cynical agenda which seeks to denigrate and undermine our profession so as to support further cuts to our Service.

During the past two years similar comments have been made by politicians within local Fire and Rescue Services and even by Chief Fire Officers. Response times have recently been described by one Chief Fire officer as a 'defunct measure'. The apparent spread of this view follows from misguided and dangerous attempts to undermine and weaken the importance of emergency intervention within our Service.

The Communities and Local Government (CLG) report *Review of Fire and Rescue Service response times, Fire Research Series 1/2009* confirms that response times have slowed. The report concluded that this is likely to have resulted in 13 additional deaths in dwelling fires

and other buildings in 2006, possibly 65 additional deaths in road traffic collisions and an £85m increase in other buildings fire damage that would not have occurred if the 1999 attendance time had been maintained. This latest research wholly supports the FBU's view that response times remain a vital aspect of the effective and efficient functioning of our service.

Emergency response remains a vital and central function of the Fire and Rescue Service and an essential feature of the Firefighting profession. There has been a concerted effort by government departments and CFA to prioritise preventative activities **at the expense** of emergency intervention. Unless challenged, this view will seriously damage the Firefighting profession, will further undermine investment in our Service and will over time weaken the confidence and trust which the public place in Firefighters.

In contrast to this approach, the Executive Council supports the building of a genuinely integrated service achieved through proper fire protection standards, improved prevention and awareness activity **and** improved emergency response.

Policy in Devolved Administrations

The Executive Council welcomes the fact that a more enlightened debate on Fire Policy has been possible in the devolved administrations of the UK and in particular in Wales and Scotland. However, despite service standards being set by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Executive Council notes with concern that a similar trend (towards slower responses) exists within Welsh FRS's. In Wales, the proportion of dwelling fires attended within 10 minutes has fallen from 91.6% in 2000 to 88.2% in 2007. We note that in Scotland, progress towards national response standards remains slow.

It's About Time

The Executive Council notes the campaign launched by the FBU in Scotland around the theme **It's About Time** and congratulates the Scottish region of the FBU for this initiative aimed at achieving a Scottish response standard. The Executive Council agrees to make the need for rapid and adequate emergency intervention (speed and weight of attack) a central theme of campaigning across the UK.

This will include building the case for sufficient investment to allow local Fire and Rescue Services to plan properly for emergency intervention. This must include ensuring adequate resources (Firefighters, Firefighters' (Control), appliances and equipment) to enable fires and other emergency incidents to be tackled safely and professionally. The first intervention in any emergency incident will be the receipt of a call for assistance by Fire Control. We must ensure adequate

Record of Decisions

Firefighter (Control) numbers on duty to answer such emergency calls. There should also be continued assessment against rigorous performance standards for receipt and mobilisation of calls by Control.

This campaign will build on work already undertaken around the central importance of emergency intervention (for example, our work around IRMP, Operational Guidance and Firefighter safety).

The Executive Council reiterates its support for a fully integrated and modern fire and rescue service incorporating prevention, protection and intervention. Speed and weight of emergency response must be a central component of a genuine risk based approach to improving safety for our communities and for firefighters.

The Executive Council will develop and campaign for the introduction of national standards of emergency response. We support such an approach in all parts of the UK and will pursue this aim through all the appropriate government bodies.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE EDUCATION REVIEW 2009 A REVIEW OF CURRENT TRADE UNION EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE WITHIN THE UNION

1. Introduction

The 2008 Annual Conference adopted the Executive Council Statement: "Education – Responding to Modernisation". This recognised that the union is now working in "the biggest period of change in the Fire service since the years immediately following the Second World War" and went on to highlight the fact that "the 'modernisation' agenda has affected all aspects of the work of the Fire Brigades Union resulting in various strands of work and discussion as the Union develops strategies for the way forward."

The report went on to focus on the new challenges facing local Officials, challenges very different from those being faced a decade earlier. New issues confronting Officials, along with changes and developments affecting the structures in which they operate that were noted in 2008 included for example: Negotiations on Shift and Duty Systems; Second Contracts; New Pensions arrangements; Grey Book procedures, including the Protocol on Industrial Relations; New Equality legislation.

Issues and arrangements such as those mentioned above have informed the development of the National Education programme since then and this is detailed later in this report.

The 2008 Executive Council Statement identified that the development of a programme of education and training which matches fully the needs of the Union would be a major task and went on to suggest that some of the issues which may need to be addressed include:

- Full details of the current position within each Region;
- Demands for training and development from Sectional Officials;
- Training Needs Analysis;
- Development of a series of new seminars/training events dealing with specific aspects of union activity;
- Ensuring an integrated approach across Regions/Sections and the national programme;
- Preparing the FBU for various possibilities in relation to the external regime for trade union education.

During 2009 Head Office conducted a Training Needs Analysis to help inform this review. All FBU Officials were invited to complete a questionnaire and in addition all Regions were invited to complete an additional questionnaire. 126 Regional, Brigade and Branch Officials participated in the survey and all Regions have now provided the information requested on their Education programmes covering the recent past, the present and future plans.

A particular point of interest from the survey of Officials is that a majority of Officials at both Regional and Brigade level hold more than one position in the Union, and some of those Officials have numerous positions within the structures outlined in the Rule Book. This is often the case at Branch level as well.

Most education and training provided at the moment within the Union is supported by Trade Union Education Tutors trained and approved by the TUC Education Service and working through TUC approved TUC Education providers. Courses accessed by FBU Officials in this way are accredited within the TUC Education Service/National Open College Network (NOCN) framework and are nationally recognised, being part of the new qualification system for England and Wales, the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF).

Trade Union Education and training has a range of objectives including:

- Helping Union Representatives improve their performance both in their workplace and in the Union;

Record of Decisions

- Achieving a greater understanding of trade union policies and priorities;
- Gaining an understanding of the wider political context within which they work;
- Encouraging and developing future activists and Officials;
- Developing their study skills and personal confidence whilst participating in educational activities;
- Recognition of learning achievements through accreditation.

2. Trade Union Officials – Scope of Roles and Functions

During 2009 the TUC published a major research paper “Training Needs for Union Professionals”^{*} that identified both the variety of job titles and roles that Officials have within the trade union movement and also listed the main functions of Trade Union Officials today. These Officials may be directly employed by trade unions, either appointed or elected, or be operating as lay elected Officials, sometimes referred to as trade union voluntary officers. An understanding of those roles and functions can help inform the design of relevant trade union courses and programmes. This section summarises key points from that TUC research.

Union Professionals

Union professionals have a variety of job titles/roles including:

- National Officer
- Regional Officer
- Full Time Officer (FTO)
- Regional Organiser
- Union Staff
- Union Education Officer
- Union Project Worker
- Case Worker

*** Source: “Training Needs for Union Professionals” Doug Gowan, Open Learning Partnership, for Unionlearn with TUC Education 2007.**

Union professionals describe their main functions as:

- Directly helping activists and branches to organise
- Providing back-up, advice and support on organising
- Casework and representing members to management
- Providing information and advice to members
- Providing direct support, e.g. training in organising, bargaining, workplace learning or casework
- National, regional or local bargaining

- Managing regional/national staff and/or resources
- Liaising with lawyers on legal cases
- Representing members at tribunals
- Organising union promotions, campaigns and/or events
- Representing the union

The same review of union professionals’ training, undertaken by the Open Learning Partnership, included the following observations:

- The trend noted previously towards an increasingly diverse professional union workforce appears to be continuing;
- While the problem of an aging trade union workforce is real, it is counterbalanced by an influx of younger project workers and organisers, many of them women;
- Organising work has strengthened in its priority in union work;
- In spite of the dominance of the organising model, pressure for support for individual members through casework continues to grow apace;
- External factors including litigation culture, legal changes, and rapid communications available from workplaces are in part behind this trend.

Union Representatives

Most Union Representatives, like most FBU Officials are not paid by the union. A majority hold paid employment at their workplace and perform the representative duties additionally in a voluntary capacity.

Some representatives undertake more than one representative role. The time spent in their union role varies considerably between representatives, depending upon the size and type of the union, employer, the facilities provided and the number of roles performed.

*Union representatives spend on average 6.2 hours a week on union work.**

Representatives include the following categories:

- Workplace Representatives (“Shop Steward”)
- Union Learning Representatives
- Safety Representatives
- Equality Representatives
- Environmental Representatives

*** Source: “Workplace representatives: a review of their facilities and facility time” TUC response to the DTI consultation document, March 2007.**

Record of Decisions

Some unions advised that their representatives are not divided into different categories but undertake a range of representatives' tasks as members' needs dictate.

Branch Officials/Workplace Representatives

FBU Branch Officials or Workplace Representatives carry out some, or all, of the following duties:

Recruiting and Organising Members:

- Building workplace organisation
- Recruiting new members
- Encouraging existing members to become more involved in the union
- Keeping members informed of what is going on in the Union and in their Workplace.

Representing Members:

- Investigating member's problems
- Discussing solutions with management
- Representing members regarding grievances, disciplinaries and other issues
- Attending meetings with management and reporting back to members
- Bargaining regarding wages and conditions

Communication:

- Taking union policies forward
- Communicating with members regarding policies
- Providing information, for example, using union leaflets and newsletters
- Ensuring the flow of information between the union and its members

Representing the union to a range of public and private bodies, including:

- Trades Councils
- Sector Skills Councils/Standards Setting Bodies
- Public Bodies
- Schools/Educational organisations
- Local Councils/Fire Authorities etc.
- Employers

Union Learning Representatives

Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) are responsible for the promotion and representation of the collective and individual learning needs in their workplace. This may include activities such as negotiating with an employer for learning facilities or supporting someone learning a new skill.

The key role of Union Learning Representatives is to raise demand for learning, especially among workers with low skills levels and Skills for Life needs – those who need help the most

and who employers and training providers find it hard to reach.

The Employment Act 2002 gives statutory recognition to Union Learning Representatives and rights to time off. Under this law Union Learning Representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off for:

- Analysing their members' learning or training needs
- Providing their members with information and advice about learning or training matters
- Arranging learning or training for their members
- Promoting the value of learning or training to their members
- Consulting the employer about carrying out these activities
- Preparing for carrying out any of the above activities
- Undergoing training relevant to their functions as learning representatives

Safety Representatives

Safety Representatives focus specifically on workplace health and safety issues. They usually cover a defined area or group of workers in the workplace where they themselves work.

The issues they deal with can be very wide ranging, from the general workplace environment (uncomfortable working temperatures, lack of breaks) to more specific health and safety hazards (such as manual handling, stress and RSI).

Safety Representatives have specific rights enshrined in law (The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, made under section 2(4) of the Health and safety at Work etc Act 1974), which enable them to:

- Represent employees in discussions with the employer on health, safety or welfare and in discussions with HSE or other enforcing authorities
- Investigate hazards and dangerous occurrences
- Investigate complaints
- Carry out inspections of the workplace and inspect relevant documents
- Attend safety committees
- Be paid for time spent on carrying out their functions
- Receive paid time off for union approved safety training.

Employers are required to consult safety representatives, especially about:

- The introduction of any new measures at a workplace that may substantially affect health and safety;

Record of Decisions

- *Arrangements for appointing competent persons to assist the company with Health and safety and implementing procedures for serious and imminent risk;*
- *Any health and safety information required to be provided to employees;*
- *The planning and organisation of health and safety training for the workforce, such as induction training; and*
- *Health and safety implication of the introduction of new technology*

Equality Representatives

Equality Representatives work to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination in the workplace, relating to the following areas:

- *Women's Programmes*
- *Tackling Racism & Discrimination*
- *Equal Opportunities*
- *Lesbian & Gay Issues*
- *Disability*
- *Equal Pay*
- *Countering the Far Right*

The role of the equality representative is still evolving but duties include:

- *Identifying equality issues*
- *Raising awareness of the equality agenda among members and the union*
- *Where appropriate, encouraging employers to include equality and diversity as part of their collective bargaining agenda*
- *Supporting and advising other representatives and members with the aim that every worker receives fair treatment, irrespective of gender, race, disability,*
- *Gender reassignment, religion, age or sexuality*
- *Monitoring policies and procedures in the workplace and the impact they have on different groups.*

Drivers of Demand for Union Representatives and Professionals Education/Training

The main drivers of demand for Union Representatives and Professionals Education/Training reported by Unions are reflected in the data that emerges from the Union's recent TNA of Officials. These include the replacement of retiring Officials, the size of Union membership; Employers' needs and requests/Agreements; Workplace Changes; Union initiatives and Government and legal requirements/initiatives.

3. FBU Officials & Trade Union Education – Review

As detailed earlier during 2009 a Training Needs Analysis was conducted by Head Office and all

FBU Officials were invited to complete a survey questionnaire that aimed to identify current and recent utilisation of both TUC and the Union's education programmes along with their future priorities for learning as FBU Officials. In addition all Regions were invited to submit a detailed report on recent, current and future education plans. 126 Regional, Brigade, Sectional and other Officials participated in the survey and education /training priorities identified by them were as follows:

Courses in Order of Priority

Equality Impact Assessments	36.4%	1
Employment Law Update	32.6%	2
Handling Internal Investigations ADAE	30.2%	3
Handling Discipline & Grievance	29.5%	4
Collective Bargaining/ Negotiating Skills	27.9%	5
Time Management	24.8%	6
Using the Media	24.0%	7
Negotiation & Consultation Procedures	22.5%	8 =
Health & Safety Update	22.5%	8 =
Pensions & Medical Appeals Update	21.7%	10
Equality & Fairness Update	20.9%	11 =
Fairness at Work Introductory	20.9%	11 =
Handling Change – Shifts etc	20.2%	13 =
Tackling Bullying & Harassment	20.2%	13 =
Conference Skills/Public Speaking	17.1%	15 =
Accidents Injuries & Claims	17.1%	15 =
Qualifications & Workforce Development	14.7%	17
Handling Members Problems	14.0%	18
Engaging with Politics	13.2%	19 =
Discussion Leaders & Education Methods	13.2%	19 =
National School Year 2	11.6%	21
National School Year 1	10.9%	22
Promoting Union Learning Regions	10.1%	23
Health & Safety Introductory	8.5%	24
Branch Officials Introductory	7.0%	25

In addition the survey showed that Regions try to encourage and support both new and more experienced Officials accessing the TUC Education programme – in England, Scotland and Wales and the ICTU Education programme – in Northern Ireland, wherever possible. These courses are usually accessed on a day-release basis requiring support from the Union and facilities for time-off to attend.

There have been some attempts to address the problems of accessing day-release courses from

Record of Decisions

more remote areas working with TUC Centres that offer forms of distance learning. There have been successes with some of this work, in Scotland for instance, especially when a blended approach can be introduced, but there are also issues especially related to tutor capacity and support and problems for some learners associated with working in isolation etc. We should continue to utilise these methods when appropriate and with caution, working closely with both providers and the TUC Education Service.

However it would appear that currently we are more much successful in assisting our Health & Safety Reps to access the TUC programme than with getting our Branch and new Brigade Officials onto the TUC Union Representatives programme. Regions should review arrangements to help new Officials access the TUC Reps programme as a priority as part of our strategy to improve our ability to deal with industrial relations issues at local level.

More experienced Officials do successfully complete the TUC Diploma courses, especially Employment Law and Occupational Safety & Health. With regard to ULR training there has been mixed success getting Reps onto the ULR Introductory course, again depending upon geography and to address the deficit we have arranged both distance and blended learning opportunities to help with this.

However Officials have differing priorities for courses depending on local factors and also the availability of courses geographically. The capacity of TUC Education Centres is varied and tends to be more limited and restricted in the more rural parts of the regions. This lack of provision in some areas puts more pressure on the Union's regions to provide their own courses, although it is still possible for these to be supported by TUC tutors from elsewhere.

TUC courses supported by Regions include:

- **Union Representatives Stage 1 (10/12 days)**
- **Stepping Up – Union Representatives Stage 2 (10/12 days)**
- **Diploma in Employment Law (One year 30-36 days)**
- **Health & Safety Representatives Stage 1 (10/12 days)**
- **Next Steps for Safety Representatives Stage 2 (10/12 days)**
- **Diploma in Occupational Safety & Health (One year 30-36 days)**
- **Union Learning Representatives (5 days)**
- **Equality Representatives (3 days)**

- **Disability Champions at Work (5 days)**
- **TUC Activists' Academy (5 days)**

It is essential that Regions continue to utilise the TUC Education programme wherever and whenever this is feasible as it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the Union to replicate either the core TUC 10/12 day courses or the advanced Diploma courses that take a year to complete.

The following table shows the Union's recent performance in accessing the TUC programme and demonstrates how successful Regions have been in getting their Officials onto TUC courses. Most public sector unions would have a percentage take-up directly reflecting their % of TUC membership whereas the FBU is almost double on the 10/12 day programme and much more effective than most in utilising the TUC short course programme. Most of the courses being accessed will include courses organised with the assistance of the TUC with either national or regional courses.

FBU Percentage Take-up of Places on TUC 10/12 day and short courses

	FBU – % of total TUC member- ship	FBU – % take-up of TUC course places – 10/12 day courses	FBU – % take-up of TUC course places – short courses
2008	0.69	1.25	2.80
2007	0.71	1.45	3.00

Source: TUC Education Annual Reports – 2009, 2008

4. National Education Programme

4.1 Developing the National Programme

As stated in the introduction, Annual Conference 2008 agreed an interim education policy statement that included recognition that the Union nationally should prioritise organising a range of courses to assist Brigade and Regional Officials within their increasing workload especially taking up issues with employers/management. Subsequent EC discussion agreed that the Union should appoint a Director of Education to assist the National Officer with responsibility for education in developing a suitable programme. The programme has been well supported with Officials from all regions participating and in the main giving positive feedback. The following sections detail work to date with these priorities and also include those courses already regarded as part of the national programme including schools and seminars organised by Sections.

Record of Decisions

At one time it was felt that the Union should concentrate solely on developing a national programme of Political Education and encouraging Officials to access the TUC programme for their Industrial Relations/Trade Union Education needs. Unfortunately it is not possible for that to happen. Although the TUC offers a suitable programme of short courses within this category they rarely succeed in recruiting except where these are organised on a single union basis.

The FBU's national programme would be a good example of this in practice. Therefore if the Union wishes to continue to address the education/training needs of its officials it has to develop effective working relationships with the TUC Education Service for both its national and regional programmes. Courses should have access to up to date classroom/learning facilities including access to ICT, interactive boards, multimedia etc. It is good practice in trade union education to encourage participants to undertake an element of pre-course work and this approach has now been introduced for national courses.

All education and training provided nationally within the Union is supported by Trade Union Education Tutors trained and approved by the TUC Education Service and working through TUC approved TUC Education providers. Head Office is continuing to evolve an effective working relationship with the TUC Education Service, develop a diverse team of tutors who are able to make a positive contribution to the national programme. The team should aim to include a balance of tutors across all the equality strands with the skills, knowledge and experience to work with all the union's Equality Sections.

All courses organised within the national programme are monitored and reviewed by Head Office, the Director of Education and the National Education Committee on an on-going basis. As part of this process participants are invited to complete a standard FBU Evaluation and monitoring form during the closing session of each course. Completed forms are then processed by Head Office and a summary of learners' comments prepared. Any immediate action points requiring immediate attention are dealt with by the Director of Education, Head Office, and/or TUC course tutors as appropriate.

With regard to participation in the national or regional programmes there needs to be a process in place to prevent individuals attending courses, schools or seminars on an annual or repetitive basis if they do not contribute further to the wider scope of the FBU. This process to be agreed by the Executive Council.

There is a need to develop a database that records each individual member's education activity within the national and regional programmes. It would be helpful if this can be linked to current Union membership records and administrative systems. Once this is in place it will be possible to obtain a more accurate picture of activity, progression and success with an integrated programme and, for example, this information could be used to more effectively allocate places on future courses.

In addition the Director of Education has now formalised a process for inviting course tutors to write up their course assessments to help enhance the evaluation process and provide a more "rounded" picture. Copies of each course summary evaluation are provided for information and comment to the National Education Committee and the Executive Council.

National courses accessed by FBU Officials in this way are accredited within the TUC Education Service/National Open College Framework and are nationally recognised, being part of the new qualification system for England and Wales, the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF).

The National Programme for the following year is now placed before the National Education Committee and meeting of Regional Education Officers before being considered by the Executive Council. Regions should therefore take the details of that into account when organising and integrating their programmes with that of the national Union.

Details of the Union's National Education Programme for 2008 and 2009 can be found in Appendix A of this paper.

Details of the Union's draft programme for 2010 can be found in Appendix B of this paper.

4.2 The National School

In recent years the National School has been very successful. It has been possible to re-introduce both a first year and second year school with differentiated learning taking place whilst sharing sessions with keynote speakers etc. There was some thought that demand for the School was declining but this has not been borne out by recent experience, the National School last year was fully subscribed with over 20 participants on Year 2 and around 36, in two groups on Year 1 and this year had similar numbers and was over subscribed.

FBU Officials and active members apply for the National School through their Regions. Those

Record of Decisions

applying for the second year should have already completed the first year programme. Those applying for the first year should be signposted to the School only once they have some experience of participating in the Union's education programme within their regions. This practice should continue and regions, when planning their education programmes should consider introductory courses that give potential participants at the School an introduction not only to the work of Branch and Brigade Officials but also to Political Education and Equality and Diversity. This point is developed further in the Regional Education section.

In the survey of Officials there was a request from some for the Union to consider a third year school. Unfortunately, whilst this may be a positive aspiration for the future, given the current pressures on the education programme from elsewhere it should not be a priority at this time.

The National School is designed by Head Office, including the Director of Education in cooperation with the team of FBU TUC tutors from the TUC Education Service to help FBU Officials discuss a range of contemporary and relevant issues. The National Education Committee is also consulted during the planning process.

Topics include the development of trade union strategies to deal with modernisation of the Fire Service and the relevance of both public and private sector trade unionism today. The course therefore provides opportunities for participants to update their knowledge, and develop their skills and confidence to engage in debates covering current Fire Service employment issues; current issues at the National Joint Council and matters with a wider social and political relevance especially in support of fairness and equality in the workplace and community. In short the School looks at contemporary industrial relations questions but is also a political school examining and discussing the societal context within which we work and live.

The School aims to help participants to:

- Understand the importance of trade union activities at both local, national and international levels and the ways in which these can interlink
- Discuss key current issues for the FBU within the UK Fire Service, of concern to the National Joint Council and to identify priorities for the union and its members
- Consider wider issues of concern to trade unionists including an opportunity to up date on fairness, equality and employment law

- Consider how the union might develop strategies for building an effective organisation at all levels in order to protect the interests of the membership
- Think about the relevance of political ideas in pursuit of trade union objectives such as fair and equal treatment
- Discuss how to tackle racism and challenge far right ideas in the workplace
- Understand the broader trade union and labour movement, both national and international, and factors affecting its development both now and in the past

4.3 Programme & Course Development

For the 2008 and 2009 programmes new materials were written, piloted and/or revised for the following courses and delivered with the assistance of TUC approved tutors and accredited within the TUC Education Service/National Open College framework:

- **"Handling Change & Restructuring"**
- **"Handling Change – Shifts etc"**
- **"Qualifications & Workforce Development – A Trade Union Approach"**
- **"Understanding Equality Impact Assessments"**
- **"Handling Internal Investigations (ADAE)"**
- **"Promoting Union Learning"**
- **"Health & Safety Update"**
- **"Pensions Update & Handling Medical Appeals"**
- **"Organising & Planning Trade Union Education"**
- **"Union Learning in the UKFRS"**
- **"Using National & Local Negotiation & Consultation Procedures"**

For the 2010 programme and beyond new materials that may need to be written could include, for example:

- **"Bargaining Skills for Brigade Officials"**
- **"Understanding FRS Financial Information"**
- **"Engaging with Fire Authorities and Fire Boards"**

5. Regional Education

5.1 Introduction

The Union has a history of its Regions planning a range of education courses to promote union policy and support local Officials, especially at Branch and Brigade level. Currently the Union's Regional Education Programmes are organised by Regional Education Officers.

The Conference decision to embed union learning within the Union's general programme of work included a proposal to combine the work of the

Record of Decisions

Regional Education Officer with that of the Union Learning Co-ordinator into a new position – the Regional Education and Learning Organiser (RELO). Therefore from April 2010 the Official responsible for education will be the Regional Education & Learning Organiser.

In a number of regions this role is undertaken by one of the current Regional Officials but in some instances the role has been taken up by other Officials. The Regional Education Officers are invited to attend meetings by Head Office twice yearly to report on their programmes and discuss development issues. Head Office, through both the National Officer with responsibility for education along with the Director of Education, when requested, assists Regional Education Officers with a range of issues including:

- Assistance with programme planning
- Development and standardisation of course materials
- Support from TUC Education Centres and TUC approved tutors

5.2 Accessing the TUC Education Programme

Current policy with regard to training and education for new officials such as Branch Officials, Health & safety Reps and ULRs is to encourage and assist them to access the programme of TUC courses available within their regions and this should continue. All these courses are supported by nationally recognised accreditation within the TUC/NOCN framework.

Signposting Officials to appropriate courses within the TUC programme should remain a priority for Regions and Brigades. In some parts of the country it can be difficult to access the TUC programme due to lack of providers geographically, or limited capacity as a consequence of low trade union take-up. Where difficulties are experienced accessing courses due to lack of provision this should be raised with the TUC Education Service.

The TUC Programme of courses includes the following:

- **Union Representatives Stage 1 (10/12 days)**
- **Stepping Up – Union Representatives Stage 2 (10/12 days)**
- **Health & Safety Representatives Stage 1 (10/12 days)**
- **Next Steps for Safety Representatives Stage 2 (10/12 days)**
- **Diploma in Employment Law (One year 30-36 days)**
- **Diploma in Occupational Safety & Health (One year 30-36 days)**

- **Union Learning Representatives (5 days)**
- **Union Learning Representatives follow on units (3 days)**
- **Equality Representatives (3 days)**
- **Disability Champions at Work (5 days)**
- **Introduction to Pensions (2 days)**
- **Pensions Champions (3 days)**
- **TUC Activists' Academy (5 days)**
- **Introduction to COSHH (3 days)**
- **Risk Assessment (3 days)**
- **Employment Law Update**

In addition regions are recommended to provide FBU specific introductory training for Branch Officials and Health & Safety Reps within their programme, wherever possible supported by TUC approved tutors and accredited within the TUC/NOCN framework.

5.3 Regional Questionnaire – Training Needs Analysis

During 2009 Regions were invited to complete a questionnaire designed to obtain an up to date picture of what's happening with education in the regions. Most regions completed and returned the questionnaire, provided detailed information to Head Office separately or reported to the National Education Committee and key points within this section are informed by those returns.

Most Regions have appointed Regional Education Officers and some are now reporting that they have followed the 2009 Conference decision by appointing a Regional Education & Learning Organiser instead. It is clear that for many Regions there is a preference for one of the elected Regional Officials to take on the Education role. Head Office recently provided training for Officials involved with organising and planning regional education programmes and this was successful.

It is of great benefit to the Union to have Regional education plans, with procedures for monitoring and review, for at least a year in length. Some Regions now report a preference for a two or three year planning cycle. There is some merit in this as it may not be necessary to run the same courses in each year but more preferable to build in progression, for example offering an introduction to Engaging with Politics in year 1 of a cycle and then offering a follow-on course during the next year etc.

5.4 Regional Education Programme – Recent Experience

Most Regions offered a Regional Education Programme during 2008 and 2009 and although a small number of regions reported a lapse in this

Record of Decisions

activity the same regions had recently elected new Regional Education Officers and were positive about efforts to rebuild their programmes. It is encouraging to note that those regions with successful programmes, supported by tried and tested course materials and resources, have, with Head Office support, provided advice and guidance to assist with this.

The Officials targeted for participation in regional programmes are in the main, as would be expected, Branch Officials and Brigade Officials. With a view to developing the next generation of Officials some Regions offer courses aimed at both new Officials and also Branch Activists. Some regions have also reported on specific initiatives to ensure inclusion of Reps from all the Sections, and this should be encouraged.

A clear lesson for the future is that where Regions plan their education to fit in with the annual union diary (both Regional and National) then they are more likely to have a thriving programme; at least on an annual basis or over a longer cycle – some up to three years.

With regard to participation in regional programmes there needs to be a process in place to prevent individuals attending courses, schools or seminars on an annual or repetitive basis if they do not contribute further to the wider scope of the FBU.

This list summarises the range of courses offered by Regions over the past two or three years, in most cases regions would not expect to offer more than three or four courses in year:

- **Introductory Branch Officials**
- **Handling Members' Problems**
- **Union Benefits & Services**
- **Handling Discipline & Grievance/Handling Casework**
- **National & Local Negotiation & Consultation Procedures**
- **Handling Change at Work – Shifts etc.**
- **Introductory Health & Safety Reps**
- **Employment Law Update**
- **Health & Safety Update**
- **Handling Internal (ADAE) Investigations**
- **Dealing with Accidents, Injuries & Claims**
- **Engaging with Politics & Campaigning – Introduction**
- **Conference Skills/Public Speaking**
- **Discussion Leaders & Education Methods**
- **Promoting Union Learning**
- **Pensions Briefing – Update**
- **Time Management**
- **Handling Medical Appeals**
- **Developing Representative's Skills**

Regions were asked what their top three priorities for regional courses during 2009. The major responses included the following:

- **Introductory Branch Officials**
- **Handling Members' Problems**
- **Handling Discipline & Grievance**
- **Introductory Fairness at Work**
- **Understanding Equality Impact Assessments**
- **Handling Internal (ADAE) Investigations**
- **Dealing with Accidents, Injuries & Claims**
- **Engaging with Politics & Campaigning – Introduction**
- **Countering the Far Right**
- **Time Management**
- **Conference Skills/Public Speaking**
- **Using the Media**
- **Handling Medical Appeals**

The above list is therefore a useful starting point when planning future programmes and Regional Committees are encouraged to consider this. All the above courses can be supported by written learning materials and resources available from Head Office or the TUC Education Service Centres. Regions should aim to offer a balanced programme that introduces new Officials, reps and activists to pathways of FBU and TUC education and also offers further opportunities for development accessing courses such as Engaging with Politics; Handling Discipline & Grievance etc.

Head Office will provide appropriate assistance and support for regional courses and programmes should include a contribution from the General Secretary, President or substitute to be arranged by the Head Office National Officer with the Education remit.

Recent reports of Regional education activity and discussion at the National Education Committee have highlighted that there is a deficit in respect of access to the following courses within Regions:

- **Introductory Fairness at Work**
- **Tackling Bullying & Harassment**

The National programme will therefore address the need for Introductory Fairness at Work training in 2010 but Regions should consider programming these courses into their future plans as soon as possible.

Preferred modes of delivery for regional courses were:

- Block release Residential
- Block release Non-residential

Record of Decisions

Education and Training facilities used when running courses included:

- TUC Education Centers'
- Hotel & Conference Centers'
- Regional Offices
- Fire Service/Local Authority

6. Sectional Education

Each of the Equality Sections has in recent years arranged an annual School with approval and support from Head Office. These are described respectively as:

- **The B&EMM School**
- **The LGBT School**
- **The Women's School**

In addition the ONC have an annual seminar that is tutor led with TUC Education input and the CSNC has had courses tailored to meet specific needs in recent times – for example updates on Employment Law; Handling Change at Work etc. Most of these events, except the Women's School have been held during the fourth quarter of the year and close to the National School. This may discourage or disadvantage people from attending that event, especially during times of restricted trade union leave. It would therefore be useful if the Sectional Schools could be timetabled during the first quarter of the year, in consultation with Head Office when planning the national programme from 2011 at the earliest. The B&EMM School is traditionally held in October, the month that Black History is celebrated. Any change to this longstanding arrangement should be subject to full consultation with the B&EMM National Committee.

It is important that all the principles associated with good trade union education practice mentioned earlier in this report are utilised to the benefit of Sectional students in attendance at these Schools to ensure that they have access to effective trade union education development opportunities. Sections have a good deal of experience of working with both Head Office and TUC Education tutors on the development of programmes for their Schools. A common factor associated with the success of these events is the involvement of TUC tutors and the Director of Education at the earliest stage of the planning process and ensuring that Schools have a good balance of tutor led activity and guest speakers. Arrangements for all Schools should ensure that members attending feel that they are in a safe and comfortable environment.

FBU education at the sectional schools should be pertinent to the constituent members and also include education on current FBU campaigns and

issues. Head Office will provide appropriate assistance and support with resources for Section Schools and programmes should include a contribution from the General Secretary, President or substitute to be arranged by the Head Office National Officer with the Education remit.

All Schools and seminars should have a direction, be accredited, have clear aims and be designed to produce and develop Officials for the union.

Recent experience has shown that on occasion not all Sections have always been successful in encouraging participants in their Sectional education to progress to other educational opportunities available within the wider Union. Where trade union education is a key theme within Sectional education events then signposting participants to the Union's mainstream education courses, either nationally or regionally, should be easier to facilitate.

As has been said with regard to participation in the national or regional programmes there needs to be a process in place to prevent individuals attending courses, schools or seminars on an annual or repetitive basis if they do not contribute further to the wider scope of the FBU. Other Union education opportunities should be accessed via the Regional or National programmes as appropriate.

All invitations to guests should be facilitated through Head Office via the National Officer with the remit for Education to ensure that all protocols are adhered to.

7. Education Governance

Responsibility for the governance of FBU education rests with the Executive Council.

The Executive Council is currently assisted by two bodies:

- A National Education Committee which acts as an advisory group to the Executive Council – this Committee determines the direction of education programmes; planning events etc and then presents these proposals for the consideration of the Executive Council.
- A meeting of Regional Education Officers which consist of a twice yearly meeting of all the Regional and Sectional Education Officers where regional education requirements and proposals are discussed.

It is proposed to simplify the governance of Education by having a single "National Education Committee" which will replace the current two bodies above and bring the organisation of

Record of Decisions

Education Governance in line with other FBU committees and structures.

The constitution of the proposed new National Education Committee shall be made up of the following:

- Vice president (Chair)
- General Secretary
- National Officer (Secretary)
- Director of Education
- 3 members of the Executive Council
- The Regional Education & Learning Organiser from each Region and the Official with the remit for Education from the CSNC, NWC, ONC, B&EMM, NRC and G&L committees
- Union Learning Fund Project Manager

In the absence of the Vice President the role of the chair will be taken by one of the 3 Executive Council members.

The National Officer, Director of Education and the Union Learning Fund project manager will attend in an advisory capacity.

The National Education Committee will meet twice yearly to maintain the link between the national education programme and the regional/sectional education programmes. It is an opportunity to discuss and plan the current courses that are available and to allow the introduction of new ideas following their piloting on the national education programme. These meetings should also be used for Regional Education & Learning Organisers to discuss what education they will be delivering in their respective regions and to discuss with Head Office what support will be required. Regional Education & Learning Organisers will be able to discuss what 'off the shelf' courses they intend to utilise and where, if anywhere, they feel regional amendments may be required. An example of this may be where an 'off the shelf' course is constructed to be delivered over three days but a Region may wish to concentrate the theme into a single day event to ease time off requirements and the necessity of limiting residential expense. Head Office will hold a library of available courses accessible through the Director of Education for use in Regions.

Business of the National Education Committee

To enable the efficient working of the committee it will receive written reports from all Regions and Sections. Head Office and the Director of Education will also provide written reports to the National Education Committee. Reports shall be provided to Head Office for circulation no later than 14 days before the meeting.

The National Education Committee will receive all evaluation reports from education events and propose future education programmes for the consideration of the Executive Council.

8. Summary

Education Review 2009

A review of current trade union education policy and practice within the Union

This review has focused on the requirements of the 2008 Executive Council Statement to annual Conference and has recognised and responded to the current challenges facing local Officials of the Union.

The review offers manageable, realistic and appropriate ways that the education programme can assist with local, regional and national requirements intended to develop and encourage new and existing officials.

The review is designed to reflect the recognition that all sections of the union should have an opportunity to contribute to the direction that FBU education is taking and this is reflected in the inclusiveness of the proposed new National Education Committee.

In conclusion the 2009 review provides an opportunity for the Union's education programme to further develop officials, ensuring that they have access to accredited, consistent, educational opportunities with involvement in the on going evaluation of the programmes being delivered.

Conference endorses the findings and recommendations of this review.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE FINANCE

Annual Conference 2002 established standardised national rates for various allowances and expenses within the Fire Brigades Union (the Red Book). In 2007, Annual Conference further amended various aspects of financial reimbursement for officials.

During 2009 and 2010 the Union has reviewed all of these payments in consultation with our advisors and following various discussions with HM Revenue and Customs. These discussions have addressed the issue of the taxation of various payment made to officials for activity on behalf of the FBU. Subsistence payments have been covered by a Dispensation agreement with HMRC which requires renewal each year. The tax liability on other payments has previously been met by means of a

Record of Decisions

PAYE Settlement Agreement (PSA). However, there will be no PSA for 2009/2010 onwards. This has required the Union to take a number of steps to address the issue of the taxation of allowances and other payments.

In doing so, the Executive Council has attempted to ensure that reimbursement of officials reflects the costs born by officials as a result of activity. Addressing these matters has resulted in additional expenditure for the Union and this will be monitored carefully.

The allowances rates agreed in 2007 were as follows:

Car allowance

Executive Council Members	Regional Officials	Brigade Secretaries and Chairs
£6,000	£4,500	£1,100

Honoraria

Brigade Membership Secretaries	President
£500	£1,500

These payments will in future be subject to full taxation and National Insurance contributions as appropriate. It is therefore proposed that payments be increased as outlined below.

Officials Allowance

This allowance shall be paid to officials of the Fire Brigades union to cover the costs related to activity as an official of the union. These include the costs of purchasing, maintaining and running a vehicle; the costs of maintaining office facilities at home; the costs of providing other equipment or resources not provided by the Union.

	Executive Council Members	Regional Officials	Brigade Sec's & Chairs
Gross	£7,784	£5,625	£1,375
Net	£6,000	£4,500	£1,100
	Brigades Mem'ship Sec's	President	Vice President
Gross	£625	£9,784	£8,784
Net	£500	£7,380	£6,690
	National Treasurer		
Gross	£8,784		
Net	£6,690		

N.B. The existing policy of providing a car to the President shall cease on the introduction of this policy.

These rates are recommended to take account of the changed situation in relation to taxation. They include **no increase** in the **net** amount for EC members, regional, sectional or brigade officials. The arrangements for the President will change with the introduction of an officials' allowance to **replace** the honoraria and provision of a car. The new allowances are increased for the Vice President and National Treasurer. This is recommended so as to take account of the national responsibilities involved in these two roles.

Subject to administrative issues being addressed, these allowances may be paid in monthly or quarterly installments from 2011. This shall be determined by the Executive Council.

Taxation and tax relief

It is the view of the Executive Council that much of these payments should not be subject to taxation since they reflect activity necessarily undertaken on behalf of the Union. However, HMRC require any claims for tax relief on such expenditure to be made by individuals and there will no longer be any PSA between HMRC and the Union.

The Union will therefore provide assistance and training so as to assist officials in making a claim for a reduction of tax in relation to these payments. Once the Executive Council has been able to assess the impact of such tax relief on officials, the above allowances may be reduced to take account of the reduced taxation on individual officials.

Subsistence

Subsistence payments made by the Union have previously been covered by a Dispensation agreement from HMRC. This agreement is subject to periodic review.

It is not proposed to amend subsistence payments at present but this may be necessary subsequently.

Guidance on allowances, expenses and taxation matters will be issued by the Executive Council after further professional advice has been sought.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE AS AMENDED BY BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS PENSION ABATEMENT AND RE-EMPLOYMENT IN THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Introduction

Pension abatement is the term used for the practice of reducing the pension of someone who (i) has retired with an immediate entitlement to a pension and (ii) is then re-employed. At the point of retirement, their commutation lump sum is paid. When they are

Record of Decisions

re-employed they receive the usual income for the job that they are doing, but their pension is reduced or stopped.

When they retire a second time the pension is brought back into payment. If they have been a member of a pension scheme during the period of their re-employment their second pension comes into payment as well.

In the Fire and Rescue Service, abatement is usually applied where a Firefighter retires with a pension under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS). They receive their commutation lump sum and then after a short period they are re-engaged and admitted to membership of the New Firefighters Pension Scheme (NFPS); they cannot rejoin the FPS because their pension has at least nominally come into payment and they have received their lump sum. They then retire again at a later age and their FPS pension comes back into payment. Their NFPS pension is also paid, and so is their NFPS lump sum.

This arrangement is usually applied where the Firefighter is entitled to retire at the age of 50 because they have built up 25 years' service in the FPS. It could equally apply if a member retires between the ages of 50 and 55.

It can also apply in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). For some LGPS members the retirement age is 60, for others it is now 65. The rules permit members to retire and return with an abated pension in the same way described above. In the LGPS there are arrangements for flexible early retirement whereby an employee retires in part, meaning that they draw part of their pension and move to part-time work. Re-employment with abatement is less common.

Points to note

- Abatement is discretionary: Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) are legally permitted to allow Firefighters and other employees to return to work and receive their full pension as well as their salary. CLG is not able to make them do so but strongly advises Authorities to do so.
- In the FPS, abatement only applies if the Firefighter concerned is re-employed as a regular Firefighter. In the NFPS it applies if he or she returns as an FRA employee (Grey or Green Book). In the LGPS it applies if the employee returns on Green Book terms. Communities and Local Government (CLG) wants to change this so that it applies in all cases if the employee returns as an FRA employee. The Treasury want to take it still wider so that it applies if he or she returns to any public sector employment.
- On re-employment, a Firefighter can only be admitted to the NFPS if they are employed in a

role that involves or might involve active Firefighting. If a returning Firefighter is re-employed in a role that cannot involve firefighting (such as community fire safety or driver training) then he or she should be admitted to the LGPS and not the NFPS

- Currently abatement applies until the person concerned retires again. Under the CLG proposal it will only apply until he or she reaches age 55 (FPS) or 60 (NFPS).
- Until 6 April 2010 there is no minimum period of "waiting time" between finishing the first employment and starting the second. According to CLG, after 6 April 2010 there will be a minimum period of one month. That is a dubious interpretation of the tax law provisions but it is the employer's risk and CLG has told them not to run it.
- When the employee concerned returns to work, it is as a new recruit. Some FRAs require them to go through competitive application and induction processes. In practice however, re-employment with abatement is usually used as a method of keeping favoured staff on and no medicals etc are required.

Legal issues

In 2007 the FBU investigated whether the abatement of pensions for returning Firefighters is unlawful age discrimination: any other applicant competing for the same post would not lose part or all of another source of income as a condition of being accepted. The answer we received is that the practice might be discriminatory but it was not discriminatory on the grounds of age: it discriminated against Firefighter pensioners, not all pensioners.

Conversely, re-employing retired Firefighters might discriminate against other applicants for the same job on the grounds of age. Like any other post in the Fire and Rescue Service, if there is a vacancy to be filled it should be filled by open competition. FRAs that have a policy of filling posts by open competition and allowing retired Firefighters to apply run no risk but FRAs that re-employ Firefighters as "new" recruits might be breaching their own equality standards and the law.

Policy

Resolution 83 (Kent) was carried at the 2007 Conference is current FBU policy:

Conference demands that the Executive Council makes every effort to have any rule within:

- ***The Firefighters Pension Scheme***
- ***The New Firefighters Pension Scheme***
- ***The Local Government Pension Scheme***

Which allows abatement of our members pension payments, removed or amended to stop this practice.

Record of Decisions

Conference instructs the Executive Council that if this cannot be done by negotiation then legal action should be considered.

FBU representatives have raised the whole issue of abatement repeatedly with the CLG at every opportunity in line with this policy and as mentioned above have sought the advice of Thompsons and a QC as to the lawfulness of abatement. CLG and the Treasury, however, have indicated that they intend to apply the principle of abatement still more widely.

Resolution 35 (Northern Ireland) was carried at the 2009 Conference:

Conference notes with concern the increasing trend whereby members are availing of 'Pension Abatement'. It is clear that this practice:

- ***Is detrimental to establishment levels***
- ***Is outwith best practice with regard to recruitment and selection procedures.***
- ***Will undermine our ability to defend current retirement ages as outlined in the pension schemes applicable to Fire Service personnel.***

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to initiate a report to evaluate the continued merits of current policy, in the form of Resolution 83 from Annual Conference 2007.

This report, including recommendations, to be made to Conference 2010.

Arguments in favour of current policy

- If a Firefighter who is a member of the FPS wants to carry on at work after they have accrued a full 40/60ths pension, they will carry on paying 11% of pensionable pay for little purpose. They will be covered for ill-health benefits and they will maintain a salary link to their final pensionable pay but they will not build up any more pension. The only way they can do so is to retire and join the NFPS.
- If they apply for re-employment in a vacant post the practice of abatement means that the FRA will get the post filled on the cheap if they re-employ a Firefighter with abatement. If they appointed another candidate they would have to pay the full rate for the job and also the Firefighter's pension. If the Firefighter applicant is appointed the FRA has to pay the salary but does not pay the pension. The Firefighter feels cheated out of his or her pension.
- Abatement applies only in the public sector. In the private sector it would be against tax law if a pension is reduced or stopped because the pensioner is re-employed. This disparity of treatment is unfair.
- Abatement gives preferential treatment for returning Firefighters: it is cheaper to employ them than an external candidate. As a result

re-employment with an abated pension is a useful means of enabling a Firefighter to gradually reduce their work as they approach retirement. Some FRAs allow returning Firefighters to job-share meaning that the Firefighter can move from full-time to part-time work as they approach retirement.

Arguments against current policy

- When the NFPS was created, it was against the background of pressure from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Treasury to increase the normal retirement age for all Firefighters. The normal retirement age for the FPS should be raised to 60. The practice of an increasing number of Fire and Rescue Authorities of re-employing Firefighters after retirement age can only strengthen the hand of those who wish to make further attacks on the retirement rights of FPS members.
- Some FRAs allow returning Firefighters to return to non-operational duties on Green Book terms. This practice means that uniformed Grey Book posts are being lost. In the current economic and political climate when our jobs and Service are under attack all across the UK this can only serve to undermine the Union's campaigns in defence of current establishment levels.
- By definition, a returning Firefighter or Control Room employee is beyond retirement age. That means that vacancies are filled by older employees at the expense of potential younger recruits. The establishment as a whole gets older. The opportunities for young people to find a career in the Fire and Rescue Service are undermined by the practice of re-employment.
- This process of re-employment has rarely been subjected to a full Equality Impact Assessment, and could therefore be a policy which has an adverse impact on the under represented groups in the Fire and Rescue Service which would be a further barrier in employing a more diverse workforce.
- Returning Firefighters are sometimes assigned to non-operational duties. That means that non-operational roles that could otherwise be filled by injured Firefighters are less likely to be available.
- The spread of the practice of re-employment assists the agenda of creating a smaller and more 'flexible' and increasingly casualised workforce.
- Some of the issues above could be dealt with more sensibly by facing them head-on. Members could pay reduced contributions after they have accrued maximum pension. Flexible retirement options should be permitted in the FPS and NFPS as they already are in the LGPS, so members can move to part-time work and draw part of their pension.

Record of Decisions

Conclusion

The current policy has a potentially detrimental impact on establishment levels.

On examination it has been demonstrated that in many instances it is contrary to best practice with regard to recruitment and selection procedures.

There is a concern that government will use this to attack the current ability of some FPS members to be able to retire with an unreduced pension from the age of 55 years.

In addition there are dangers that some opportunities to redeploy injured Firefighters will be lost.

The Executive Council concludes that the spread of the practice of re-employment is contrary to the long-term interests of the Fire and Rescue Service and increases the threat to the pension rights of the majority of FBU members. Therefore, where possible, FBU officials should oppose such policies. The Executive Council does not encourage members to seek re-employment within the service after retirement.

The Executive Council re-affirms its decision that any re-employment constitutes a break in FBU membership and that therefore any official who retires from the service shall have terminated their term of office as an official even if they are subsequently re-employed within the fire and rescue service.

Officials of the Union should ensure that proposals to utilise re-employment within FRSs are scrutinised in regard to the impact on Grey Book jobs and the potential undermining of fair and non-discriminatory recruitment practice. This should include the demand that all such proposals are subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment.

The Executive Council recognises that the abatement of public sector pensions is a matter determined by Central Government (with some discretion on the part of employers) and that such pressures are likely to increase as public sector pensions come under greater scrutiny and attack. Therefore the FBU will not pursue the ending of current rules on abatement. Our priority in such debates will be to protect the pension rights of the vast majority of our members.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE AS AMENDED BY BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

REORGANISATION OF THE UNION'S STRUCTURES

Over the past six years the central debate within the Fire and Rescue Service and the FBU has been about 'modernisation' and its impact on our Service. The experience of Firefighters has been that the real agenda has been one of cuts, job losses and fragmentation.

Key challenges which have emerged over this period include:

- An attack on the number of wholetime uniformed Firefighter jobs;
- A trend towards removing uniformed posts in order to replace them with non-uniformed posts;
- Increased pressure on officials at many levels but especially on brigade level officials due to the increase in local bargaining arising from the 2003 settlement.

Each of these challenges, in turn create further test for the Union in terms of the demands for education, resources, finances, research, publications and other communications. The Union needs to ensure that the structures of our organisation are adequate to provide sufficient support to officials and service to members.

The Union's Re-organisation Committee has continued to review these areas since 2005 and has initiated a number of policies and Rule Changes as part of this process. In December 2009, the Executive Council instructed the Committee to re-examine all areas of organisation in the light of changed circumstances.

This review will assess all current structures against the following criteria:

- Improving our service to members
- Improving support to officials
- Ensuring cost effectiveness

Areas to be reviewed include:

- Branch level structures
- Brigade level structures
- Regional Structures
- Sectional structures
- Head Office and central functions
- Executive Council and Committee structure
- Annual Conference

Although a thorough review of all these areas will be necessary and should not be pre-judged there are clearly issues which will need to be addressed as a part of this discussion.

- **Branch level structures:** The workplace branch is a key aspect of the organisation of the Fire Brigades Union. The review should examine the function of the Branch under current management regimes and the support and training which Branch Officials need.
- **Brigade level structures:** The increase in local bargaining since 2003 has significantly changed the role of Brigade Officials. At the same time we have experienced a huge expansion of Human Resources departments within Fire and Rescue Services. We have much anecdotal evidence that the pressures created by this regime have

Record of Decisions

increased workload in relation to bargaining, discipline and various other demands created by management. The review will need to consider whether Brigade Committees need additional support. It will also need to consider whether different types of Brigade need differing levels of support/resources.

- **Regional Structures:** The last review of organisation concluded that all Regions should be treated in the same manner and that structures should be the same in all Regions. Since then we have experienced much change within the Fire and Rescue Service as well as other political change such as devolution. Three FBU Regions now deal with devolved administrations in terms of Fire and Rescue policy. Two Regions are single Brigade Regions, a number of Regions are very considerable in terms of geography. The review will need to consider whether 'one-size-fits-all' remains valid. The review will need to consider issues such as the support provided centrally to regions and the number and role of officials.
- **Sectional structures:** All of our Sections have been through various phases of development and it is appropriate to include the participation of all the relevant Sections and look again to examine whether they provide the best mechanism to support members and to develop advice and policy for the Union as a whole. The review will need to consider issues such as the support provided centrally to Sections and the number and role of officials.
- **Head Office and central functions:** The demands on the Union centrally have significantly changed in recent years as a result of significant changes within our Service. This has produced, for example, an increased demand for specialist FBU-based training and education. The scale of change at a national level and the absence of central policy structures within the Service have increased the need for FBU research documents on a range of issues. The huge changes in communications have significantly increased the speed with which members can be kept informed of developments but have also significantly increased demands on staff resources and time. Likewise, the demands placed on Head Office by an expanded IT role will need to be considered and addressed.
- **Executive Council and Committee structure:** the review will consider whether the current structure of the Executive Council provides the best representation for members. It will also consider whether the current system of EC Sub-Committees and other National Committees provide the best mechanisms for addressing issues facing the Union. This will include consideration of the size, frequency and duration of meetings and the possible use of alternatives such as video conferencing.

- **Annual Conference:** The Union's Conference is the most important event in the Fire Service year. It is where delegates set the agenda for the coming year and where the Executive Council and National Officials are held to account. It is important that this key role be reviewed to ensure that it remains effective. For example, in recent years, there have been numerous occasions where delegates have been absent or have had to leave Conference as a result of reduced trade union leave. The TUC has recently consulted on alternating between a full Congress and a smaller London-based Congress. Many other Unions have moved to Conferences every two years. The review of Conference should consider:
 - Frequency
 - Delegation size
 - Organisational matters such as the number of resolutions.

Every area of the Union's activity and structure will need to be reviewed as part of this process. It is likely that challenging and testing questions will emerge from this. But the Union has evolved over the past 90 years to take account of changing circumstances and that needs to continue to address the changes of the 21st Century.

Conference agrees that a full report on all these matters will be produced for Annual Conference 2011.

Record of Decisions

NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Resolution 1 – PAY FORMULA

It is apparent that the pay and conditions of public sector workers shall be attacked following the general election of 2010 regardless of the political party in power. This is as a direct result of the reckless greed of deregulated financial capitalism in pursuing and maximising short term profit, incentivised by unwarranted bonuses that has virtually bankrupted our economy and led to the unprecedented multi billion pound bail out by the Government, funded with public money.

Therefore Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate the introduction of an agreed annual pay formula that shall ensure firefighters pay shall rise in line with percentage increases in the pay of an appropriate comparator group of skilled workers/professionals. This agreed formula to be provided without detriment to existing conditions of service and not be subject to any public sector pay restraint measures introduced as a result of the financial crisis. Progress on this matter is to be reported to FBU members as soon as is practicably possible.

STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 4 – PAY

Conference notes the decision made by Conference in 2009 in respect of Resolution 5 on Pay (as moved by Shropshire, amended by Strathclyde).

Conference re-affirms its decision that the "A" pay scale should be removed and personnel on the "A" pay scale should be redesignated to the "B" pay scale.

Conference notes the lack of progress on this matter and insists the Executive Council seeks to progress this as a matter of urgency and as a minimum, a report to Annual Conference 2011 is required.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolution 5 – EQUAL PAY – ROLE REDUCTION

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to investigate the imbalance and downgrading of Emergency Fire Control managerial posts resulting from the substantive move from rank to role.

It is apparent that the role given to control managers in these areas do not reflect the correct level of responsibilities and professionalism shown by the realities of the job done.

As Emergency Fire Controls are staffed by a majority of women, we call on the Executive Council to conduct an Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value study, using an appropriate expert and model into the cross roles from different parts of the Fire Service, with a view of putting Emergency Fire Control managers onto higher rates of pay and into the correct roles.

A report of this investigation to be produced as soon as possible or by Annual Conference 2011.

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Resolution 6 – CONTINUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

This Conference demands that the Executive Council commences negotiations with the National Employers to ensure that Continual Professional Development (CPD) payments form an integral part of core pay.

**NORTHERN IRELAND
AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE**

Resolution 7 – CPD PAYMENTS

Conference is appalled by any fire and rescue authority who considers removing CPD payments from FBU members for contemplating or undertaking industrial action and views this as being outwith the national CPD procedures agreed within the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise the matter as one of the utmost importance at the next NJC meeting with a view to reaching agreement within the Council, that the nationally agreed CPD procedures do not provide for the removal of CPD for the contemplation or undertaking of industrial action alone, and such actions by local employers are in breach of the procedures.

MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 8 – LESS FAVOURABLE TREATMENT

This Conference demands that the Executive Council enter into talks at the NJC with a view to obtaining agreement for a joint secretaries circular to be released that instructs all Fire & Rescue Services of the requirement to treat RDS firefighters no less favourably than firefighters who work full time duty systems and that this statement highlight that this is a legal requirement following our success at the employment tribunal in the Matthews Case.

**NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE
NORTH WALES**

Record of Decisions

Resolution 12 – MATERNITY PAY BUSINESS CASE

This Conference is appalled that many Fire & Rescue Services (FRSs) are still only paying the minimum amount of money when it comes to maternity pay. We applaud those FRSs who have adopted the FBU's "Best Practice Maternity Document" and have progressed the issue of maternity pay for our women members. In order to assist Brigade Officials with negotiations on maternity pay, we call upon the Executive Council to develop and produce a standard business case template.

This template is to be completed and sent out to all Brigade Officials and Regional Women Reps within 3 months of Annual Conference 2010.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Resolution 13 – DISABILITY LEAVE

Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise the issue of 'Disability Leave' at the NJC as a matter for discussion, with the aim of having such leave incorporated into the 'Grey Book'.

The implementation of Disability Leave as defined within the TUC publication, Sickness Absence and Disability Discrimination into the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Sixth Edition 2004 – Revised 2009), would require all UK FRSs to ensure that where an FBU member is registered disabled, that any sickness directly attributable to that disability should be disregarded in the calculation of sickness absence monitoring.

TYNE & WEAR

Resolution 15 – SPECIALIST SKILLS

This Conference instructs the Executive Council, with the FBU Workforce Development Group, to survey every brigade to investigate what specialist skills or roles, as identified by local IRMPs/RRPs, are being carried out and if these roles are agreed locally as being inside or outside of NJC agreed rolemaps and if they attract an Additional Responsibility Allowance and if so the value of that allowance.

This information should be circulated to brigade officials in the form of guidance to assist in local consultation and negotiation of specialist skills or roles.

This guidance is to be produced and sent to brigade officials by Conference 2011.

SUFFOLK

AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE

Resolution 20 – DISMISSAL AND RE-ENGAGEMENT

This Conference condemns the use of the dismissal and re-engagement process in FRSs in the UK in order to implement contractual change on FBU members.

Conference demands that this issue is raised at the National Joint Council, with a view to seeking a national agreement that no UK FRS will implement a dismissal and re-engagement process in order to implement contractual change.

Should there be no agreement reached at the National Joint Council, then any future dismissal and re-engagement procedures implemented by any UK FRS to make contractual changes to any FBU member, is met with the strongest opposition possible, including an immediate recall of conference with a view to mounting a national campaign.

HUMBERSIDE

AS AMENDED BY HUMBERSIDE

Resolution 21 – INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Conference condemns the refusal of certain FRSs to abide by the nationally agreed 'Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service'. FBU officials are continually having their requests for external assistance from the NJC Joint Secretaries or other organisations refused by management teams who prefer to impose policies without sufficient consultation or negotiation.

Conference therefore demands that the FBU national negotiators raise this issue at the earliest opportunity at the National Joint Council with a view to amending the 'Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire & Rescue Service' to ensure Fire & Rescue Service managers adhere to the amended protocol and cannot refuse a reasonable request for external assistance.

HUMBERSIDE

Record of Decisions

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE POLICY

Resolution 22 – CHANGE IN LAW FOR FRS EMPLOYEES AND BNP MEMBERSHIP

This FBU Annual Conference acknowledges that it is incompatible for an employee of any Fire and Rescue Service to also be a member of a fascist extremist organisation such as Combat 18 and the British National Party.

It is forbidden by legislation for an employee of the Police Service or Prison Service to be a member of the BNP, and this conference believes it is time for a change in the law to bring Fire and Rescue Services into line with those services.

The fact that Fire and Rescue Services are public institutions funded and accountable to the communities that we serve, means that we should now campaign for a change in UK Fire Service laws to reflect that those who are employed by Fire and Rescue Services cannot also be members of any fascist, racist organisation or group.

This Conference demands that the FBU continue to raise this issue with UK and devolved Governments, and campaigns for legislative change to bring the Fire Services in line with Police and Prison services.

**BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS
AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE**

Resolution 25 – WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to oppose any amendments to the Working Time Directive which would threaten the Retained Duty System. This opposition should be in the form of a National Campaign which should include an explanation of the dire consequences for the United Kingdom (UK) Fire Service should detrimental amendments to the Working Time Directive be tabled.

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

Resolution 26 – WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

This Conference notes with concern the introduction of flexible working methods such as Central Resource Pools within Brigade's Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs), which have resulted in significant reductions in Brigade establishments. These IRMP changes frequently create increased prospects for employees to work pre arranged overtime shifts or carry

out wholetime/retained duties, with the result that many employers regard this as an opportunity to work to encourage members of their workforce to individually resign their rights under the working time directive to derive even more flexibility and savings.

It is clear that as a result of the combination of current, and forecast, poor economic climate and its associated likelihood of low percentage pay rises, the lack of a nationally accepted standard of fire cover and the current mis-use by some brigades of the IRMP process to implement cuts agendas, that this situation will become increasingly common within the British Fire Service as mounting numbers of the FBU's members will be offered growing incentives to spend increasingly more time at work than ever before.

This Conference therefore calls upon the Executive Council to immediately and urgently implement the following action:

- To redouble its efforts to campaign to highlight the social and health and safety hazards of being at work for long periods of time, as agreed at Conference previously.
- To implement a working group to investigate the extent of, and identify the areas where members are, or are likely in the future to be, exercising their right as individuals to voluntarily withdraw from the Working Time Directive to report back to the Executive Council within 6 months of commencement.
- That the findings of the working group be made available to Brigade Committees as soon as possible after this to assist them in identifying "at risk" groups and focussing their efforts regarding this issue.
- That campaign materials be made expeditiously available to Brigade Committees on the issues surrounding the hazards and impact of individuals voluntarily withdrawing from the Working Time Directive for circulation to these identified groups (this material to include a form which enables the member to give the Employer notice that they intend to re enact their rights under the Working Time Directive).

WEST YORKSHIRE

Resolution 28 – DELIBERATE REMOVAL OF BAECO FROM FIRST LINE APPLIANCES

Conference notes with great concern the continued deliberate removal of the safety critical role of BAECO from first line appliances by some FRSs. This practice appears to be on the increase by FRSs with various reasons being given for doing so, including removing firefighters from fire appliances to ride vans and deliver CFS activities when they are on duty.

Record of Decisions

FBU members are facing greater risks when dealing with fires and this risk is increased when rapid deployment procedures are routinely used as a means monitoring committed BA teams and is contrary to the guidance given in TB 1/97.

Conference therefore calls upon the FBU to immediately raise this issue at a national level to bring about the necessary guidance being reiterated to FRSs in order for them to cease this dangerous and unnecessary practice.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Resolution 30 – FIRE SERVICE FUNDING

Since the 'Government Grant Settlement' formula was reviewed in 2004, the accumulative increase to the funding has varied considerably between Fire Authorities.

The lowest accumulative increase has been 12.2% and the highest increase has been 36.5% over the same period.

Conference believes that the different levels of funding has resulted in some Fire Authorities implementing greater operational cuts than others, which in turn, has resulted in inconsistencies in the levels of operational capability from one Brigade to another.

Prior to IRMP, all Brigades adhered to the national standards of fire cover which ensured a consistency between Brigades. However, since IRMP, the number of fire appliances mobilised to an incident, the attendance times and the number of firefighters crewing fire appliances, is now a postcode lottery.

Conference calls on the Executive Council to instigate a review of the current funding arrangements, with a view to lobbying the Government for adequate funding to all Fire Authorities throughout the UK, reporting back progress to the 2011 Annual Conference.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 31 – FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY BUDGETS

Conference notes with interest a number of national reports and ministers parliamentary answers which records significant savings made by fire and rescue authorities over the last number of years. Conference further notes that some of the same fire and rescue authorities then seek to make significant staffing cuts due to so called budgetary constraints in those particular authorities.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council compiles a report detailing savings made by individual fire and rescue authorities in the last 5 years,

including budget shortfalls declared by the same authorities along with associated staffing and/or service cuts proposed or achieved; such a report to be ready for FBU Annual Conference 2011.

MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 32 – GOVERNMENT REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRES PROJECT

Conference recognises the continued failure of the Government to deliver the FiReControl project.

Conference demands that if, for any reason, the Government withdraw from the national implementation of the FiReControl project in England, the FBU will continue to oppose any attempt by FRAs, LACCs or Government to adopt Regional Control Centres in any other guise or within individual Regions.

The FBU will continue to mount a vigorous campaign against any form of regionalisation of Fire Control Centres.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Resolution 33 – REAFFIRMATION OF RESOLUTION 53 (1997)

Conference reaffirms its policy with regard to Resolution 53 (1997) in that it demands that to assist in the neutrality of United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Services (UKFRSs), that Fire Authorities create and maintain an up to date register of all Freemasons and personnel affiliated to other secret organisations employed within all UKFRS, and that such registers be open for scrutiny by members of the public.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Resolution 34 – RECORDING OF TRAINING

This Conference acknowledges that training and the recording of training activities must be rigorously controlled and that all training undertaken must be recorded accurately and audited centrally.

Conference notes with concern that some FRSs allow entirely inadequate ad hoc local arrangements for the delivery and recording of training undertaken by their staff.

We therefore call upon the Executive Council, aided by local officials, to carry out a review of the training delivery standards in each FRS to identify these standards and produce a report with their findings back to Annual Conference 2011.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Record of Decisions

Resolution 37 – TRANSFERABILITY

This Annual Conference fully supports the victory of the FBU in obtaining part time worker rights for all Retained Duty System (RDS) firefighters.

One of the significant advantages of these rights is that it gives RDS firefighters the right to apply for wholetime posts without being treated less favourably than their wholetime counterparts.

However, this Conference condemns any Fire Authority who misuses this legislation by ring fencing wholetime posts exclusively for RDS transferees and in doing so reinforcing inequality between duty systems. This practice further undermines the equality agenda which was set in order to ensure that applicants into the Fire and Rescue Service were taken from the widest possible pool of people.

Therefore, we call upon the Executive Council to immediately carry out a review of Fire and Rescue Services regarding this issue with a view to developing clear policy and guidelines for brigade officials to follow.

DORSET

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

Resolution 38 – FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE APPAREL

This Conference remains committed to ensuring that Women's Health, Safety and Welfare is never compromised at work, particularly in relation to work-wear and specifically PPE.

One of the ongoing concerns the NWC have however, is that women wearing men's kit at work are exposed to a higher level of risk than those with properly fitting, gender specific personal protective equipment. This safety issue aside, the additional discomfort and restriction that ill fitting kit brings to any employee can be debilitating and is itself unacceptable.

Although individually tailored kit would be the ultimate precaution and comfort, the Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) has researched, advised and provided a method for Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure that many concerns are addressed in relation to PPE. Yet we are fully aware that take-up of the project has been piecemeal to date.

In order to properly map the gap in good, gender specific provision of kit and properly address the deficiencies, this Conference demands that the Executive Council:

- Carry out a national audit to establish a picture of where Women's Health, Safety and Welfare is still being compromised.
- Raise these concerns as a matter of urgency at all relevant national forums, to achieve take-up of the ICP nationally as a minimum provision.
- Provide information and support to all officials to ensure that this issue becomes a local priority Health and Safety agenda item.

We call upon the Executive Council to report back progress to the NWC within 12 months of this Conference.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Resolution 39 – MENOPAUSE

This Conference is concerned that there is no real evidence based information on how the menopause can affect women when carrying out their duties in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).

We therefore call upon the Executive Council to set up a Sub Committee of the National Health and Safety Committee, to include a member of the NWC, to investigate further and produce a report on the effects that the menopause may have on women working in the FRS.

Record of Decisions

The findings of this report are to be included in an information leaflet on the menopause which is to be distributed to all Brigade Officials and Women Reps before Annual Conference 2011.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Resolution 40 – CCTV

Conference calls upon the Executive Council to raise the issue with Fire & Rescue Service Employers the use of CCTV monitors in Emergency Fire Control Rooms. Such Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) monitors have already been installed into Lothian and Borders Fire Control. The monitors have been installed under the guise of providing firefighter safety in terms of violence against crews. They have been opposed locally, however the CSNC believe there are national implications.

These proposals are outside of the national rolemaps, do not assist in firefighter safety and are a dangerous move towards changing the function and role of Emergency Fire Controls to include surveillance.

Conference calls upon the Executive Council, Brigade and local officials to oppose the implementation and use of this type of equipment and do all in their power to prevent its introduction and remove it where it has been installed.

**CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE
AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE**

Resolution 41 – STRESS SURVEY – FBU OFFICIALS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to instigate a full and thorough survey of all officials and those that have recently retired from the FBU regarding stress. This survey should be used to highlight those areas where officials perceive themselves to be subject to additional stress associated solely with their trade union activities. The purpose of the survey being that if common areas of concern are identified by officials, then arrangements, policies or procedures can be adopted to minimise or remove the problems identified.

**TYNE & WEAR
AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE**

Resolution 42 – WATER INCIDENTS

Conference notes the increasing number of waterside incidents that FBU members are attending. These incidents include; responding to incidents at lochs, lakes, reservoirs, canals, harbours, estuaries, rivers and flood water.

Conference is concerned at the inconsistencies in safe operating procedures, equipment and training between different Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to instigate a review of current Fire and Rescue Authorities capabilities in relation to responding to waterside incidents. This is with a view to producing guidance containing a national standard that will assist FBU Officials.

**LANCASHIRE
AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE**

Resolution 43 – TOXIN LEVELS IN FIREFIGHTERS

Conference applauds the work already carried out in relation to toxin levels found in firefighters.

Research data and statistics show that firefighters have a higher than industry average for certain diseases and cancers. Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to build on the work already carried out, to further investigate ways to include toxin testing as part of a firefighters' medical examination and ways of reducing toxin levels.

A full report with recommendations will be presented to the 2011 Annual Conference.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Resolution 44 – HEALTH AND SAFETY

Following the rise in firefighter deaths and the "Safer Firefighters" campaign, Conference demands that the Executive Council with the assistance of local officials carry out the following actions:

Ensure that there is a FBU Health and Safety Representative in every branch;

Train its FBU Health and Safety reps to at least TUC Health and Safety Stage 2 level;

Actively promote the role of Health and Safety representatives within the workplace;

Ensure that all representatives have access to resources to enable them to carry out their functions effectively;

Negotiate to ensure that representatives have adequate time off work for training, meetings and to carry out effective investigations, following accidents or near misses;

Publish a Health and Safety "Firefighter magazine" supplement, highlighting fire service successes, campaign areas, accident reviews and dispelling Health and Safety myths.

**DORSET
AS AMENDED BY STRATHCLYDE**

Record of Decisions

Resolution 45 – INCIDENT GROUND FACILITIES

This Annual Conference notes with concern that there are still no appropriate facilities on the incident ground for firefighters in Lothian & Borders even though the Fire Brigades Union developed and circulated a best practice document on minimum workplace facilities some time ago for information and negotiation at local level.

This policy outlines the standards we must seek to achieve for all members and in particular provide minimum welfare facilities for personnel, including dignified toilet, washing and sanitary provision and disposal facilities at operational incidents and training events.

As a consequence of these issues not being addressed, this Annual Conference calls upon the Executive Council to immediately initiate discussions at National Joint Council level in order to achieve national implementation of requirements as laid out in the FBU policy within the earliest possible timeframe and give a report back to Annual Conference 2011.

**LOTHIAN & BORDERS
AS AMENDED BY GRAMPIAN**

Resolution 46 – PAID TIME OFF FOR HEALTH SCREENING

Conference acknowledges the continued endeavours of the Fire Brigades Union to strive for improvements in both physical and mental health and well being within the Fire and Rescue Services.

With the above in mind, Conference calls upon the Executive Council to enter into negotiations at the National Joint Council with a view to agreeing improvements to the Occupational Health arrangements currently contained within the Grey Book.

These improvements should include the provision of paid time off for employees to attend screening or counselling appointments to ensure that employees who are diagnosed with any illness or medical condition are fully supported during their treatment.

CLEVELAND

Resolution 47 – HEALTH AND FITNESS ASSESSMENTS

Conference demands that the Executive Council enter into negotiations with our national employers to ensure all health and fitness standards that all uniformed employees with an operational commitment are required to attain are appropriate and measured consistently to ensure:

- Fitness standards demanded of operational firefighters are appropriate and realistic and all Fire Service personnel with an operational commitment are required to achieve them;
- Standards are appropriately graded to acknowledge the differing physiology of males and females;
- Standards are appropriately graded to take account of the natural decline in aerobic capacity as a result of ageing;
- A moratorium of a minimum period of 12 months from introduction of fitness testing to being required to achieve the agreed desired standard;
- An agreement to provide one hour each working day as part of the work routine devoted to physical fitness training for wholtime personnel with an operational commitment on any duty system worked and appropriate arrangements for personnel working in the RDS;
- An agreement to provide and maintain appropriate fitness equipment at Fire Service work places with appropriate access arrangements for RDS personnel;
- Any agreed interim fitness standard that a failure to achieve would necessitate removal from operational duty is appropriate and realistic and takes account of age and sex differences;
- Outcomes are as reliable and as accurate as possible and that aerobic testing using gas analysis is provided. This to ensure the reliability and accuracy of aerobic capacity tests that may indicate a failure to achieve the desired interim or desired final standard;
- An agreed range of appropriate methods of creating the necessary physical exertion for fitness testing and measuring to be carried out be incorporated in the policy.

**STRATHCLYDE
AS AMENDED BY WEST YORKSHIRE**

Resolution 50 – INCIDENT RESPONSE UNITS

Conference instructs the Executive Council to conduct a survey of the training that has been provided in each Fire & Rescue Authority for mass decontamination at CBRN incidents. A report should be produced, highlighting any best practices and also any areas of serious concern over training and procedures. This report to be circulated to Brigade Officials within six months after the close of Conference 2010.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Record of Decisions

TRADE UNION, LABOUR MOVEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Resolution 51 – DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

This Annual Conference views with profound concern the continuing high incidence of domestic violence, which accounts for one fifth of all violent crime reported in the UK and that domestic violence has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other type of crime.

It is a gross failing in a modern society which blights the lives of tens of thousands of women and their children and tears apart both families and social fabric.

This Conference recognises that Trade Unions have a role to play in combating this violence, of which women are overwhelmingly the victims. Through information and awareness campaigns, practical support and provisions under rule for victims and perpetrators and support in the workplace such as; adjusting hours of work, ensuring that counselling is available and where necessary, signposting members to help agencies, to name but a few.

It calls upon the Executive Council to:

- Urge the UK Governments to work with the TUC and affiliates to ensure awareness, reduction and ultimately elimination of domestic violence.
- Campaign for employers to provide the necessary support to employees suffering from domestic violence.
- Urge employers to provide comprehensive domestic violence policies and guidelines within their respective FRS.

Finally, this Annual Conference implores the Executive Council to consult with the TUC General Council regarding ways in which the Domestic Violence Bill might be made more effective in practice by:

- Demanding that local authorities develop long-term and stable funding streams for local provision of domestic violence services for women.
- Developing a challenging attitude campaign across the UK in order to reduce the level of tolerance of violence against women.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Resolution 54 – POLITICAL FUND AWARENESS

In order to encourage an increase in the membership of the Political Fund this Conference instructs the Executive Council to provide members with a greater awareness of the benefits and uses of this fund.

HAMPSHIRE

Resolution 55 – PARAMEDIC STAFFING DEFICIENCIES

This Conference views with great concern the number of incidents attended by both our members and members of the ambulance service, where the ambulance crew consists of various staffing combinations which do not include fully trained paramedics. Conference believes this places both firefighters and non paramedic qualified ambulance personnel as well as members of the public, in an unacceptable position.

With this in mind Conference agrees to seek the assistance of other trade unions and organisations in order to campaign for the compulsory inclusion of at least one fully trained paramedic per ambulance vehicle crew.

TYNE & WEAR

Resolution 56 – ANTI TRADE UNION LEGISLATION

Conference is deeply concerned at recent legal cases brought against trade unions who were pursuing, or contemplating pursuing, industrial action, in particular the growing trend of employers using the unfairly stringent anti trade union legislation in relation to the trade unions obligations regarding membership details and the effect that even minor discrepancies have on the legality on the successful outcome of industrial ballots.

Conference opposes such practices in the strongest terms possible and as such calls on the Executive Council to lobby the TUC, the FBU Parliamentary Group and all other relevant bodies with a view to redressing this notoriously unfair practice by any and all means possible.

MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 57 – INTERNATIONAL LGBT CAMPAIGNING

The Fire Brigades Union has a proud tradition of campaigning on international issues, the LGBT Section have emulated this by regularly taking international issues to the TUC LGBT Conference, whilst campaigning and raising awareness of such issues with sectional members.

We recognise there remains over 70 countries with legislation in place that criminalises homosexuality and a small percentage having the death penalty, we also acknowledge that many countries have made positive steps forward with regards issues covering homosexuality and LGBT people, this is welcomed.

Record of Decisions

Whilst there is so much positivity in the area of sexual orientation it is disappointing that in 2009 we did witness a small number of countries introducing or strengthening anti-LGBT legislation.

Of particular note is Uganda, with the introduction of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill going through their political system, such legislation will be in violation of human rights and would detrimentally affect and put in place major barriers of the effective work of HIV/Aids prevention efforts.

As a member of the Commonwealth, we call on the Executive Council to work with the TUC and affiliates to register our disappointment in the strongest possible terms and launch a campaign that includes gaining support of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to apply whatever political pressure possible to ensure that Uganda complies with its international human rights obligations.

This to be done within 6 months of Conference, with a report on progress to be provided to Conference 2011.

LESBIAN, GAY, BI-SEXUAL AND TRANS MEMBERS

Resolution 58 – SUPPORT FOR PALESTINE

Conference notes the FBU's recent involvement in supporting the Palestinian people. In particular, Conference applauds the initiative that enabled eight Nablus firefighters to visit Scotland and North West England to undertake Fire Service based training, and the TUC resolution that led to the boycott of Israeli goods produced in the occupied territories.

Following several visits to the West Bank by FBU members over recent years, it is recognised that we now have good contacts with the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and firefighters from the Nablus Fire Department, and it is important that these links are maintained.

To this end, the Executive Council should continue to promote through the International Committee:

- Solidarity visits to the region by members with a view to encouraging new active supporters to the Palestinian cause.
- Collaboration with other organisations such as the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and the International Solidarity Movement (ISM).
- Initiatives that aim to provide PPE and firefighting equipment to the West Bank and Gaza.
- Training initiatives for Palestinian firefighters.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 60 – BECAUSE I AM A GIRL

This Conference supports Plan's "Because I am a Girl" campaign, believing that the appalling discrimination faced by many girls must be urgently addressed.

Plan, a child centered community development organisation working across Africa, Asia and Latin America, has launched a campaign to ensure the rights of girls are realised and respected.

This Conference is concerned that in 2009, girls are still less likely to go to school than boys and two thirds of the children of primary school age out of school are girls. Girls are more likely to be subjected to violence, have less access to health care and less basic nutrition than their brothers.

This Conference therefore resolves to support Plan's campaign by calling on the Executive Council to:

1. Lobby the UK government to support all initiatives that improve the rights and opportunities of girls; in particular by supporting programmes that enable girls to access education;
2. Promote the "Because I am a Girl" campaign;
3. Raise awareness of the double discrimination faced by girls because of their age and because of their gender.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Resolution 61 – GLOBAL ALLIANCE

This Conference welcomes the news that the FBU has joined with Unions representing firefighters in 12 countries to form the International Firefighters Unions Alliance (IFUA).

Conference further welcomes that our General Secretary has been elected onto the steering committee which will oversee the development of the Alliance.

Conference agrees with the following interim constitution:

- Independent trade unionism and full trade union rights for the firefighting profession;
- The best levels of remuneration, working conditions and retirement pension provision;
- The highest standards of firefighting professionalism in order to achieve the highest level of community safety;
- The highest standards of safety for firefighters;
- Would seek to ensure that the firefighting profession and consequently firefighter unions is representative of the communities that they serve, vigorously opposing discrimination on grounds of religion, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, age or trade union activity.

Record of Decisions

Having the ability to learn from each other's experiences and particularly from each other's successes is of great importance, as is an international trade union voice for the firefighting profession. The alliance should also be in a position to promote and help develop independent trade unionism for firefighters in those countries where there are significant barriers to its development, particularly in the developing world.

This Conference therefore supports the view that the aims and ethos of the Global Alliance must be included in all FBU political courses, both nationally and locally.

SUFFOLK

EDUCATION

Resolution 63 – THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER

This Conference endorses the previous position that the FBU has taken nationally regarding The People's Charter. With this in mind we feel that encouraging officials and members to sign the Charter is a start but not enough. We demand that the Executive Council establish a training package to deliver to members/officials at local, regional and national level, this could be delivered through the national education programme. We believe this will not only promote The People's Charter but also assist in giving members and officials the necessary skills to forward the FBU's political agenda.

Many of us know there is a lack of real political choice on offer but by using The People's Charter we may have a vehicle to start the drive for change this will not only help the FBU and its members but will also help to improve the overall work and life chances for working people throughout the country.

SUFFOLK

AS AMENDED BY DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

Record of Decisions

LEGAL

Resolution 64 – SUPPORT FOR FBU REPRESENTATIVES

This FBU Annual Conference recognises that there has been an increase in the number of FBU Representatives who have been targeted for disciplinary action or investigation by management, for carrying out what is their normal trade union duties and activities.

To demonstrate to management that FBU Representatives have the full support of their trade union nationally and from their National Officials – if any representative of the FBU is under attack, management must be informed that, we consider this as a direct attack against the union itself and this will be met with the full force and resource of the union.

This demonstration of support should take the form of a National Officer being appointed with the responsibility for organising:

- Support for the FBU representative that is going through the discipline procedure in their respective Brigade, including welfare provisions.
- Direct liaisons and guidance to the FBU legal services providers to vigorously defend the FBU Representative against the Brigade discipline process.
- Where appropriate a national statement of support issued condemning these type of tactics from Fire and Rescue Service Managers.

These actions to be taken as soon as the FBU become aware of a Representative being disciplined.

**BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS
AS AMENDED BY CLEVELAND**

INTERNAL

Resolution 69 – MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES DUTIES

This Conference notes with concern the decline in FBU membership and believe that this is mainly due to the reduction in uniformed posts by the majority of UK Fire & Rescue Services.

Conference therefore calls for the Executive Council to carry out a review of the responsibilities and duties carried out by Brigade Membership Secretaries throughout the union.

Following this review, guidance issued to Membership Secretaries, including where necessary the appropriate rule changes brought, to ensure maximising FBU membership within UK Fire & Rescue Services, by promoting the organising and recruitment of FBU members. Should the review identify an increase in workload for the position of Brigade Membership Secretary, then the annual financial recompense should also be reviewed to more align it with that of the other FBU Brigade Officials.

HUMBERSIDE

Record of Decisions

Emergency Resolutions Carried ...

Emergency Resolution No. 1 DEFEND COMMUNITY SAFETY, PUBLIC SERVICES AND JOBS

Conference notes the outcome of the recent General Election and the formation of the Tory/Liberal Democrat coalition Government.

Conference notes with concern that one of the central areas of policy agreement between the Government parties is to rapidly reduce the public sector deficit, primarily through drastic reductions in public expenditure. This will affect working people throughout the UK directly and through the subsequent impact on funding allocations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Such an approach is likely to exacerbate the cuts already faced in the Fire and Rescue Service and other public services. In the Fire and Rescue Service this will lead to further reductions in emergency cover, station closures and job losses. In turn these will lead to increased risks to the safety of communities, businesses and firefighters. Such an approach is completely unacceptable to the Fire Brigades Union.

Conference notes that the current economic difficulties facing the UK and other economies arose from a crisis sparked by a de-regulated banking system. Public services and those who work within them have played no role in causing current economic difficulties. Conference therefore rejects the argument that public service workers should pay the price for the bail-out of the banks through job losses, pay cuts and attacks on pension rights. Conference rejects the argument that working people in general should pay the price for the crisis and for the bail-out of the banks through poorer services and increased taxation.

Conference pledges to oppose all cuts in the Fire and Rescue Service, to oppose attempts to freeze pay and to oppose further attacks on firefighters' pension rights, if necessary by national strike action. Conference agrees to coordinate our campaigning on these issues with other trade unions as closely as possible including the initiation of coordinated industrial action if appropriate. Conference notes that these attacks will affect millions of working people in the UK and pledges to support campaigns through the TUC, STUC, Wales TUC, ICTU and the Trade Union Coordinating Group to oppose the cuts agenda and to support all those campaigning to defend jobs and public services. To be successful, such a campaign will need to unite trade unionists, local communities and progressive political forces to present

an alternative agenda which puts people before the needs of profit.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Emergency Resolution No. 3 HAITI

Conference welcomes the TUC Black Workers Conference decision in April 2010 to send the FBU motion entitled "Haiti" to Congress 2010. The motion calls for the TUC and its affiliates to take action in response to the devastating earthquake which struck the Haitian capital Port Au Prince on the 12th January 2010.

The FBU have already supported the humanitarian, political and financial responses. Many of our members have been involved personally through their life saving Fire & Rescue Service roles, but much more needs to be done in order to reconstruct and develop Haitian society, infrastructure and economy.

Conference therefore requests:

- Local, regional and national support for the TUC Congress Motion – "Haiti".
- The FBU support and develop links with our sister trade unions in Haiti.
- We seek ongoing dialogue between Haitian Trade Unions and the FBU International Committee.
- Brigade Committees establish relationships with their Fire and Rescue Services in order to provide training, equipment and financial aid for Haiti.
- Full FBU support for the B&EMM National Committee to co-ordinate ongoing trade union initiatives with our Haitian comrades as agreed by the Executive Council.

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS

Emergency Resolution No. 4 RESPIRATORS RPE

Imminent publication of CFRA guidance for RPE, has highlighted a gap in firefighter safety. Conferences believes that the current policy held with regards to RPE has saved many lives of our members over the years. However with further advances in technology, this brigade believes that the use of respirators, in certain circumstances and not in an oxygen deficient atmosphere where active monitoring is in use, will enhance fire-fighter safety. Therefore conference instructs the executive Council to develop best practice for the controlled use of RPE respirators into an FBU policy.

LONDON

Record of Decisions

Motions Remitted to the Executive Council ...

Resolution 23 – NATIONAL PROMOTION STANDARDS

This Conference demands that the Executive Council begin negotiations with the Employers to agree National Standards for promotion within the UK Fire and Rescue Service. This should include testing of operational competence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolution 35 – ADC PROCESS

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

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

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Resolution 36 – RECRUIT TRAINING

Conference condemns the current trend in some Fire Authorities toward initial training courses and believes this has a detrimental effect on the Health and Safety of our members.

Conference demands that recruit courses should be for a minimum of 3 months for all firefighters, and should cover all aspects of firefighting and Health and Safety.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Motions Defeated ...

Resolution 52 – LABOUR PARTY
RE-AFFILIATION

NORTHUMBERLAND

Resolution 59 – ACTION FOR PALESTINE

DEVON & SOMERSET

Resolution 65 – ALL DIFFERENT ALL
EQUAL

FIFE

Resolution 70 – INTERNAL UNION
DISCIPLINE 1

NORTH WALES

Resolution 71 – INTERNAL UNION
DISCIPLINE 2

NORTH WALES

Record of Decisions

Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union moved by the Executive Council

RULE 21(2)(d)
BRIGADE COMMITTEES

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 26A(2)(e)
MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE

CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 3
OBJECTS OF THE UNION

CARRIED

RULE 20(3)(g)
REGIONAL COMMITTEES

CARRIED

RULE 20(3)(g)(3)
REGIONAL COMMITTEES

CARRIED

RULE 22(iii)
NATIONAL SECTIONAL COMMITTEES

CARRIED

RULE 26(1)(h)
INTERNAL UNION DISCIPLINE

CARRIED

RULE 27
FINANCE

CARRIED

RULE 30
ACCIDENT INJURY AND DEATH BENEFIT FUND

CARRIED

RULE 6(3)(iii)
CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION
CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 8(1)
CONSTITUTION AND POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 19(3)(g)
NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS
CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

RULE 20(2)(b)
REGIONAL COMMITTEES
CARRIED AS A CONSEQUENTIAL

Record of Decisions

Proposed Alterations to the Standing Orders of Conference

Standing Order 2

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CARRIED

Standing Order 2

The Standing Orders Committee as established under Rule 7 will issue a preliminary notice to all Branches at least 20 weeks before the Conference is due to be held; such preliminary notice to inform Branches of closing date for the receipts of resolutions, amendments, amendments to rules and delegates' names.

Standing Order 8

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

LOST

Standing Order 16

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CARRIED

Standing Order 16

On the day (or days) on which Annual Conference is held, delegates shall assemble at 09.30hrs prompt, adjourn at 12.45hrs, re-assemble at 14.00hrs and adjourn at 17.15hrs. Comfort breaks will be 11.00hrs to 11.15hrs and 15.30hrs to 15.45hrs.

Standing Order 22

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CARRIED

Standing Order 22

The mover of the resolution shall be allowed seven minutes, the seconder five minutes and any or each subsequent speaker, three minutes. The mover of an amendment shall be allowed five minutes and the seconder three minutes. No person shall speak more than once on a question, except the mover of the original resolution, who alone shall have the right to reply. Should the proposed mover of a composite resolution through no fault of his/her own, be absent from the Conference hall when he/she is called, any other delegate representing a Brigade/National Sectional Committee involved in the composite shall be allowed to move the resolution.

Standing Order 28

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CARRIED

Standing Order 28

In the case of Special Conferences, the above Orders shall be adhered to as closely as possible. The Standing Orders Committee shall be in session from the outset of any Special Conference in order to allow resolutions to be submitted from Brigade/National Sectional Committees. Neither the Executive Council by decision nor the President by his/her ruling shall have the power to deviate from this Standing Order at any Special Conference.

Record of Decisions

Final Appeals Committee

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	Gavin Barrie
Region 2	Brian Stanfield
Region 3	Pete Wilcox
Region 4	Graham Wilkinson
Region 5	Neil Thompson
Region 6	Tom Murray
Region 7	Brian Moss
Region 8	Chris Howells
Region 9	Brian Hooper
Region 10	Joe MacVeigh
Region 11	Mark Simmons
Region 12	Allison Burrows
Region 13	Phil Jordan
NWC	Kerry Baigent
NG&L	Pat Carberry
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	
ONC	Pete Moss
CSNC	Sue Offland

Firefighter Representatives

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	John Duffy
Region 2	Dermot Rooney
Region 3	Paul Reames
Region 4	Ian Watkins
Region 5	Steve Harman
Region 6	Dave Limer
Region 7	Pete Goulden
Region 8	Chris Burns
Region 9	Kevin Napier
Region 10	Paul Embery
Region 11	Danielle Armstrong
Region 12	Allison Burrows
Region 13	Val Hampshire
NWC	Sam Rye
NG&L	Pat Carberry
NRC	Harry Cotter
B&EMM	
ONC	Dave Beverley
CSNC	Sharon Thorndyke

Record of Decisions

Election of Standing Orders Committee

Re-Elected

Brother Steve Shelton (Greater Manchester) for
4 Annual Conferences.



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union and List of Delegates

May 2010

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

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Grampian	Leon Murray Alan Paterson
Highland & Islands	Marty Cooper D Mackay Fraser Parr
Lothian/Borders	Bryan Banks David Bennett Andy Fulton Bob Thomson
Strathclyde	John Cairns Paul Donnelly Melanie Gibb Alan Kane Andrew MacLeod John McFadden Alex Miller Sharon Sales Mossop James Scott
Tayside	Ronnie Costello Mike Gaffney Terry Whyte
Regional Secretary	John Duffy (Acting)
Regional Chair	Gavin Barrie (Acting)
Regional Treasurer	Gavin Barrie
Regional Official	Jim Malone

REGION 2

Northern Ireland	Noel Jordan Archie McKay Dermot McPoland David Nichol Rod O'Hare Lynda Rowan O'Neill
Regional Secretary	James Quinn
Regional Chair	Brian Stanfield
Regional Treasurer (and Delegate)	Stephen Boyd
Regional Official	Dermot Rooney

REGION 3

Cleveland	Brian Gibson Dave Howe Steve Watson
Durham	Richard Moreton Kevin Shaw
Northumberland	Kieran Brennan Colin James
Tyne & Wear	Amanda Buchanan Russell King Andy Noble Dave Turner
Regional Secretary	Peter Wilcox
Regional Chair	Steve Watson
Regional Treasurer	Stephen Hedley
Regional Official	Vacant

REGION 4

Humberside	Ashley Oldfield Neil Trenchard Richard Walker
North Yorkshire	Sean Atkinson Edmund Billing
South Yorkshire	Nigel Bailey John Gilliver Richard Mallinder Mark Wild
West Yorkshire	David Benson William Delve John Durkin Andrew Imrie David Williams Mark Wilson
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Regional Chair	Ian Watkins
Regional Treasurer	Pete Smith
Regional Official	Graham Wilkinson

List of Delegates

REGION 5

Cheshire	Lee McGarity Andrew Price Dave Williams
Cumbria	Dean Greenway Mally Hind
Greater Manchester	Alan Anderson Paul Fogerty David German Gary Keary John Roberts Peter Taylor Simon Yaffa
Lancashire	Tony Cavanagh Kevin Deacon Steve Harman Ian McGill Chris Molloy
Merseyside	Mark Dunne Mark Rowe Les Skarratts
Regional Secretary	Kevin Brown
Regional Chair	Neil Thompson
Regional Treasurer (Chair of SOC)	Steve Shelton
Regional Official	Steve Harman

REGION 6

Derbyshire	John Cooke Marc Redford Christopher Tapp
Leicestershire	Carl Doughton Roger Hawes Neil Mayne
Lincolnshire	Chris Hides Craig Tuck
Northamptonshire	Steve Mason Gary Mitchell
Nottinghamshire	Philip Coates Robert Mould Ian Young
Regional Secretary	Gary Mitchell (Acting)
Regional Chair	Tom Murray
Regional Treasurer	Pete Wilkins
Regional Official	Tom Neal

REGION 7

Hereford & Worcester	Peter Hope James Richards
Staffordshire	Graeme McLeod Robert Moss Richard Williams
Shropshire	Matthew Lamb Stephen Morris
Warwickshire	Marcus Giles Steve Roberts
West Midlands	Michael Bell Mark Fellows Jayne Mason Michael McKay Roger Moore Emmett Robertson
Regional Secretary	Chris Downes
Regional Chair	Brian Moss
Regional Treasurer	Vacant
Regional Official	Pete Goulden

REGION 8

Mid & West Wales	Roger Curran Lawrence Larmond Gareth Lewis Gordon Walker
North Wales	Christopher Burns Michael Davies Tania Morris
South Wales	Simon Fleming Cerith Griffiths Mark Holley Lyndon Jones Mark Watt
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Regional Chair	Vacant
Regional Official	Chris Howells

List of Delegates

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Cambridgeshire	Phil McQuillen Kevin Napier
Essex	Lindley Chambers Kieron Davies Keith Flynn Mark Kinsalla Mick Rogers
Hertfordshire	Steve Duncan Tony Smith
Norfolk	Peter Greeves Jamie Wyatt
Suffolk	Steve Collins Andy Vingoe
Regional Secretary	Adrian Clarke
Regional Chair	Brian Hooper
Regional Treasurer	Del Godfrey-Shaw
Regional Official	Neil Day

REGION 10

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Regional Secretary (and Delegate)	Joe McVeigh
Regional Chair (and Delegate)	Gordon Fielden
Regional Treasurer (and Delegate)	Laurie Brightman

REGION 11

Kent	Stuart Becks Sharon Downie Jenny Impey Robert Sherwood Ian Young
Surrey	Paul Greenwood Richard Jones Andrew Treasure
East Sussex	Matthew Dale Steve Huggins
West Sussex	Francis Bishop Mick Cambers
Regional Secretary	Dani Armstrong
Regional Chair	Mark Simmons
Regional Treasurer	Bill Woodfine
Regional Official	James Tigwell

REGION 12

Berkshire	Mark Stollery Maurice Whyte
Buckinghamshire	Matt Bliss James Wolfenden
Hampshire	Tony Brown Nigel McCullen Paul Trew
Isle of Wight	Mark Deacon Matt Sainsbury
Oxfordshire	Steve Allen Alan Sillman
Regional Secretary	Ricky Matthews
Regional Chair	Vacant
Regional Treasurer	Dave Dymond
Regional Official	Ali Burrows

List of Delegates

REGION 13

Avon	Chris Jackson John Maggs Chris Taylor
Cornwall	D Keen Mike Tremellan
Devon & Somerset	David Chappell Nick Coleman Trevor French Robert Walker
Dorset	Karen Adams Diane Critchlow
Gloucestershire	Michael Tully Scott Turner
Wiltshire	Tony Littler Joe Tray
Regional Secretary	John Drake
Regional Chair (member of SOC)	Phil Jordan
Regional Treasurer	Val Hampshire
Regional Official	Kevin Herniman

B&EMM

	Andre Fernandez Colin Jarrett David Pazir Dalton Powell
National Secretary	Samantha Samuels
National Chair	Vacant

CSNC

	Sasha Farley Simon Jones Norman Rees
National Secretary	Sue Offland
National Chair	Kath Smith

LGBTC

	Alison Burrows Kevin Gutherson
National Secretary	Pat Carberry
National Chair	Yannick Dubois

NRC

	Bob Dewis Leigh Redman Paul Revill
National Secretary	Pete Preston
National Chair	Harry Cotter

NWC

	Jo Byrne Denise Christie Helen Harrison Sam Rye
National Secretary	Kerry Baigent
National Chair	Dona Feltham

ONC

	Mick Coakley John Denvir Martin Pottinger Russell Troth
National Secretary	Dave Beverley
National Chair	Peter Moss



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Index

Index

INDEX OF PROCEEDINGS

(R)	= Resolution
(ER)	= Emergency Resolution
(CS)	= Closed Session
(ECPS)	= Executive Council Policy Statement

A

Accident and Injury Fund (Section E)	16
Action for Palestine (R59)	118
ADC Process (Res 35)	87
Addresses:-	
Doran. A. (Mayor of Southport)	3
Ewing. F. (Member of Scottish Parliament)	14
Gamboa. J (International Guest – C.U.T.)	112
McDonnell. J. (Member of Parliament Hayes & Harlington)	70
McGowan. D (Secretary Sefton Trades Council)	3
O'Grady. F. (Deputy General Secretary Trades Union Congress)	21
Shaw. M (President)	10
All Different All Equal (R65)	101
Annualised Hours Duty System (R9)	39
Anti Trade Union Legislation (R56)	123
Appointment of Scrutineers and Tellers	4
Appreciations:-	
Anderson. A (GMC)	149
Cavanach. T (Lancashire)	149
Conference Centre Staff	117
Denney. M (London)	149
Docherty. J (Region 1)	149
Fellows. M (West Midlands)	149
Headley. S (Region 3)	149
Head Office Staff	117, 150
Kinnon. S	150
McLean. A	150
Miller. A (Strathclyde)	149
Pagan. J (E.C. Member Region 4)	149
Parr. F (Highland and Islands)	149
Sillman. A (Oxfordshire)	149
Standing Orders Committee	150
Steve Cole and Mascol Team	117
Stewards	117, 150
West. D (London)	149
Assistance to Members (Res 67)	18

B

Because I Am A Girl (R60)	110
Bucket Collection	69

C

Card Vote	131, 135
CCTV (R40)	136
Census – Exclusion of the Question of Sexual Orientation 2011 (R53)	111

Change in the Law for FRS Employees and BNP Membership (R22)	63
Continual Professional Development (CPD) (R6)	29
CPD Payments (R7)	31

D

Defend Community Safety, Public Services and Jobs (ER1)	74
Deliberate Removal of BAECO from First Line Appliances (R28)	89
Disability Leave (R13)	37
Dismissal and Re-Engagement (R20) – (CS)	
Domestic Violence (R51)	106

E

Education (Section H)	103
Education Review 2009 (ECPS)	103
Endorsement of Executive Council's Annual Report	149
Equal Pay – Role Reduction (R5)	27

F

Fairness At Work (Section I)	101
Finance (ECPS) – (CS)	
Financial Accounts (Section K) – (CS)	
Fire and Rescue Authority Budgets (R31)	61
Fire and Rescue Service Apparel (R38)	134
Fire and Rescue Service Policy (Section B)	78
Fireground Facilities (R45)	131
Fire Service Funding (R30)	59

G

Global Alliance (R61)	120
Government Regional Control Centres Project (R32)	93

H

Haiti (ER3)	113
Health and Fitness Assessments (R47)	137
Health & Safety (Section J)	95
Health and Safety (R44)	140

I

Incident Response Units (R50)	133
Industrial Relations (R21)	32
Internal Administration (Section G) (CS)	
Internal Union Discipline 1 (R70)	48
Internal Union Discipline 2 (R71)	49
International LGBT Campaigning (R57)	114
It's About Time (ECPS)	78

Index

L		T	
Labour Party Re-Affiliation (R52)	125	The People's Charter (R63)	105
Legal (Section F)	16	Toxin Levels in Firefighters (R43)	142
Less Favourable Treatment (R8)	45	Trade Union, Labour Movement and International Issues (Section C)	106
		Transferability (R37)	92
M		V	
Maternity Pay Business Case (R12)	43	Vote of Thanks	117, 150
Membership Secretaries Duties (R69)	53		
Menopause (R39)	96		
N		W	
Nationally Agreed Wholetime Shift Duty System (R10)	41	Water Incidents (R42)	144
National Joint Council (Section A)	19	Working Time Directive (R25)	82
National Promotion Standards (R23)	86	Working Time Directive (R26)	84
O			
Obituary (Section L)	9		
P			
Paid Time Off for Health Screening (R46)	143		
Paramedic Staffing (R55)	108		
Pay (R4)	25		
Pay Formula (R1)	23		
Pension Abatement and Re-Employment in the Fire and Rescue Service (ECPS)	56		
Pensions (Section D)	55		
Political Fund Awareness (R54)	122		
Presidential Address	10		
Publicity Campaign (R24)	93		
R			
Reaffirmation of Resolution 53 (1997) (R33)	66		
Recording of Training (R34)	90		
Recruit Training (R36)	133		
Re-Organisation of the Unions Structures (ECPS) (CS)			
Respirators RPE (ER4)	146		
Rules of the Union – Proposed Alterations (CS)			
S			
Specialist Skills (R15)	35		
Standing Orders of Conference – Proposed Alterations	7		
Standing Orders Committee Election	6, 48		
Standing Orders Committee Report	4, 5, 6, 21, 35, 69, 101, 117		
Stress Survey – FBU Officials (R41)	129		
Support for B&EMM Representatives (R64)	16		
Support for Palestine (R58)	115		

Index

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

A

Adams. K (Sis)	92, 106
Anderson. A	49
Atkinson. B	125
Atkinson. S	89

B

Banks. B	99, 131
Bell. M	109
Bennett. G	141
Billing. E	91
Birtley. G	54, 101, 103
Boyd. S	58, 65, 101, 127
Bryne. J (Sis)	102, 106
Buchanan. M (Sis)	126
Burns. C	45, 48
Burrows. A (Sis)	107

C

Cairns. J	80
Carberry. P	38, 111, 114
Cavanagh. T (Chief Scrutineer)	135
Chappell. D	6, 9, 38, 67, 83, 118, 120, 121, 142
Christie. D (Sis)	44, 92
Coakley. M	139
Collins. S	36, 104

D

Dark. A (Assistant General Secretary)	29, 45, 83, 85, 94
Deacon. K	95, 145
Delve. B	95
Denvir. J	91
Dewis. B	45
Doran. A (Mayor of Southport)	3
Dunne. M	31, 46, 68

E

Ewing. F (Member of Scottish Parliament)	14
--	----

F

Farley. S (Sis)	27, 94
Fernandez. A	64, 113
Fielden. G	69, 146, 148
Flynn. K	81
Fulton. A	19, 27, 136, 148, 149

G

Gamboa. J (International Guest – C.U.T.)	112
Gartland. S (Sis)	110
Gerrard. T	60, 81, 136
Gibb. M (Sis)	30
Gibson. B	64, 144
Giles. M	149
Gilliver. J	46
Gould. S	147

H

Harman. S	60, 78, 115
Harrison. H (Sis)	134
Hope. P	66, 133
Howe. D	23, 93

I

Impey. J (Sis)	97
Imrie. A	97

J

Jackson. C	40, 127
James. C	125, 128, 133
Jarrett. C	58, 144
Jones. R	43, 59
Jones. S	140
Jordan. N	66

K

King. R	37
Kinsalla. M	42

L

Lamb. M	26, 146
Lane. K (Sis)	97, 135

M

MacVeigh. J	33, 47
Maggs. J	129, 143
Mason. J (Sis)	28
McCabe. S	18, 19
McDonnell. J (Member of Parliament)	70
McFadden. J	34, 39, 41, 116, 137
McGhee. J (National Officer)	44, 67, 90, 95, 96, 98, 130, 132, 139, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 148
McGowan. D (Sefton Trades Council)	3
McKay. A	29, 108
McLean. A (Vice President)	9
McLeod. G	5, 105
McPoland. D	25
McQuade. G	54, 127

Index

Miller. A 37, 69, 130, 132
 Moon. L 95
 Moore. R 56
 Moss. R 110
 Mould. B 142
 Murray. L 59

N

Napier. K 78
 Nichol. D 83
 Noble. A 108

O

O'Grady. F (Sis) (Deputy General Secretary
 Trades Union Congress) 21
 Oldfield. A 46, 53

P

Paterson. A 8, 34, 63, 145
 Pottinger. M 29, 89
 Powell. D 17, 102, 115

R

Rankin. J 16
 Redman. L 82, 84
 Rooney. D 86
 Rowe. M 123
 Rye. S (Sis) 96

S

Scott. J 65
 Shaw. M (President) 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17,
 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31,
 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45,
 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61,
 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 74, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83,
 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97,
 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108,
 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120,
 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130,
 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141,
 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149
 Shelton. S (Chair of Standing Orders) 4, 5, 6, 21, 35,
 69, 101, 117
 Skarratts. L 8, 61
 Starbuck. S (National Officer) 35, 37, 55, 56, 87, 88,
 93, 134

T

Tapp. C 88
 Tooley. H (Sis) 138
 Tremellen. M 55, 56, 82
 Trenchard. N 32
 Trew. P 86, 122, 138, 144
 Troth. R 19
 Turner. D 129

V

Vingoe. A 105, 121

W

Watson. S 17, 42, 43
 Williams. D 84, 147
 Williams. N 77
 Williams. R 44
 Wilson. M 50, 124, 141
 Wilson. P 24
 Woolstenholmes. P (National Officer) 7
 Wrack. M (General Secretary) 3, 4, 7, 16, 17, 18,
 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 30, 32, 34, 38, 40, 43, 47, 48, 49,
 50, 53, 54, 55, 56, 61, 65, 74, 75, 78, 103, 109, 112,
 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 128

Y

Young. I 87, 89, 94, 102

