



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

Scotland *Newsletter*

THE PROFESSIONAL VOICE OF YOUR FIREFIGHTERS

Spring 2023

Our Brother, Barry Martin sadly lost his life on the 27th of January, following injuries sustained during firefighting operations at the former Jenner's building in Edinburgh, on 23rd of January 2023.

Barry was laid to rest on Friday the 17th of February. Hundreds of members of the public and firefighters from across the UK, lined the Royal Mile, as Barry's friends and colleagues from McDonald Road Fire Station, honoured him by carrying out ceremonial duties, as the funeral cortege travelled from 'Mac Road' to St Giles' Cathedral. The service was a moving celebration and thanksgiving of Barry's life, with dignitaries including First Minister - Nicola Sturgeon and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Robert Aldridge attending.

Since Barry's funeral, Blue Watch colleagues at 'Mac Road', organised a collection on behalf of the Barry Martin Memorial Fund, at the Scotland v Italy match at Murrayfield on 18th March. 67,000 fans watched Brother Graeme Clow present the match ball to the team captains as Barry's photograph was displayed on the big screen. Over £4000 was raised by Barry's Blue Watch colleagues at the event, through cash collections with substantially more contributed through the FBU's DONATETM platform

Those that worked with Barry at McDonald Road and particularly those on Blue Watch, have described Barry as a dedicated professional Firefighter, who was passionate about his job and was a devoted husband to his wife



Shelley and a loving father to his sons, Oliver, and Daniel. Barry's friends and colleagues across the country will miss him dearly and never forget him.

It is fitting that the final poignant and beautiful words, come from Barry's wife Shelley, she knew him best and loved him most. Rest easy brother.

Steve Weir
East Area Secretary

"Firefighter Barry Martin encompassed every vital quality, every passion, and every thread of tenacity, that it takes to succeed. There is something sensational about a human being, who puts others before themselves and does so without question, hesitation, or judgement. My husband was a thrilling example, of what it means, to give our absolute all. And oh, how he gave his absolute all."

Barry's resilience, his determination, his unwavering commitment to his family and career, and his love, lives on through us. Our sons and I are utterly blessed to have experienced such an incredible life with the most exciting and bravest man we have ever known."

I will tell everyone about my remarkable husband."

We say his name with pride and our hearts bursting with adoration, respect, and admiration."

Barry Martin."



Introduction

Since the last FBU Scotland newsletter we sadly lost our friend, colleague and brother, Barry Martin, on 27 January, following the fire at Jenner's in Edinburgh on 23 January. It is impossible to put into words the shock, sadness, and grief that the loss of one of our own causes, across both the UK and global firefighting family. The investigation into the circumstances and cause is ongoing and will run for many months. The FBU and SFRS have committed to a joint investigation and full support for Barry's family, our members, and investigators has been put in place.

Nationally the focus of our union, our employers and Governments across the UK has been on our Fair Pay or Fire Strike campaign (FPFS). This ultimately resulted in a pay settlement over 2 years that will deliver an increase in pay of over 12% (when compounded). Throughout this campaign it has been members that have led, making the key decisions through branch meetings and reporting back through FBU structures and through taking part in legal and consultative ballots.

It was members who mobilised in their hundreds to the Scottish Parliament in October, in their thousands to Westminster in December, and again to lobby the meeting of the National Joint Council in February. Scottish members should be proud of the significant role they played in all these demos and lobbies, it was these actions, coupled with repeatedly smashing the thresholds of the anti-trade union legislation in every ballot, that forced the employers to bring forward a meaningful pay offer that members were willing to accept at ballot.

Nobody is hailing this pay settlement as enough or the conclusion of the campaign, it is just the beginning. 12% puts us where we would have been at the beginning of 2022 had our pay kept pace with inflation, whilst the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast inflation dropping over this year it remains to be seen if the settlement of 5% for 2023/24 is a real terms pay rise.

Elements of the FBU 2022 pay claim covering pay parity for control members, RDS pay terms and conditions, CPD, pay progression and role expansion remain unresolved. As part of the settlement, both sides of the NJC have committed to work jointly to address these elements and the FBU have already set up dedicated working groups for each.

The FPFS campaign has forced all of us to think about what we want our Fire and Rescue Services to deliver for us, the firefighters and firefighter control staff. It has generated positive media and public focus on the FBU as a union and on FBU members. At every stage FBU membership has increased, new branch reps have come forward and member engagement has increased. We now need to capitalise on this increase in membership and

participation. Despite FBU members forcing the Scottish Government to inject £11 Million into the SFRS budget, the projections of the May 2022 Scottish Government Resource Spending Review remain in place with projected cuts of £43 Million by 2027. Opposing further cuts that will see stations, appliances and jobs cut is going to require an engaged, active, and mobile membership that remain fight and strike ready for the real challenges that lie ahead.

There are also political changes ahead. Scotland has a new First Minister, who may change the SNP's policy direction. The benefits or consequences of this are unknown, it is vital that the voice of firefighters continues to be heard at the heart of Scottish Government. Only the FBU can achieve this, through our own campaign work and our affiliation to the STUC.

Over coming months there are numerous Red Plaque events across Scotland, I'd encourage members to get involved in organising and attending these events, but also to play the Firefighters 100 lottery that funds these important memorials for our fallen comrades, and our vital, ground-breaking research into contaminants and firefighters cancer and disease.

There have been further horrendous stories in national media regarding the conduct and culture within some UK Fire and Rescue Services. The Regional Executive have met with the SFRS Senior Leadership Team to discuss the culture within SFRS and how we ensure SFRS workplaces are safe and supportive for all our members. We cannot pretend that the attitudes and behaviours of a minority of SFRS employees, and by extension FBU members, falls below the rules, policies and founding principles of our union. The FBU rule book and All Different, All Equal policy can be found on the FBU website.

A final reminder, it has been FBU members and FBU officials that have demonstrated that collective bargaining can deliver. Other sectors remain in long running disputes that have seen numerous periods of strike action as sister unions face down employers, pay review bodies, and a government unwilling to engage in meaningful dialogue. Other associations that operate in our sector claim to represent the interests of their members, it is clear from their communications and lack of action over the course of the FBU Fair Pay or Fire Strike campaign that they are unwilling to take on the big challenges, unwilling to take on the fights on behalf of their members, but willing to accept the wins that only the FBU have the strength to deliver.

To FBU members I say solidarity and congratulations on the unity you demonstrated, to non-members I ask what's stopping you joining the FBU, and what will you do with the 12% pay increase FBU members have won for you?

Colin Brown

Executive Council Member for Scotland

FIREFIGHTER BARRY MARTIN MEMORIAL FUND

**To donate £1, text BROBM to 70201 To donate £5, text BROBM to 70970
To donate £3, text BROBM to 70331 To donate £10, text BROBM to 70191**

Supporters can donate online via the FBU Fundraising for firefighters and their families' page here:

<https://www.fbu.org.uk/campaigns/fundraising-firefighters-and-their-families>

Or directly via the fund page here:

https://platform.nationalfundingscheme.org/BROBM?charity=BROBM#.Y_NKVybP1PY



NJC Pay

On 6 March 2023 FBU members voted to accept the third pay offer made by the national employer's side of the NJC, bringing to an end an eight month dispute over our pay settlement for 2022/23.

It seems a long time since the union received the employers initial offer of 2% on 27 June of last year, and the actions of local officials and members over that time has been imperative to improve that offer not once, but twice, and to eventually reach an agreed settlement prior to having to take strike action.

Firstly, it is important to make clear that although a position was finally reached where the Executive Council could recommend that members accept the offer, this does not wash away over a decade of attacks on firefighters pay. From 2010 until 2021 the salary for a competent firefighter fell by over £4000 per annum, a 12% real terms pay cut. That systemic erosion of your pay should be unacceptable to any politician, especially those who made very public shows in front of the cameras in clapping key workers during the height of the Covid pandemic, only to then denounce the same workers for having the temerity to refuse deep real terms pay cuts just a few years later.

The improved offer made on 8 February though is a step in the right direction of reversing the trend of squeezing firefighters pay. Indeed the 7% increase for 22/23 is the joint highest received by firefighters since the millennium, matched only by the 7% award for 03/04, and the 5% increase for this coming year is the second highest in that same time. It is a platform for us all to continue to fight back against the pay erosion imposed on us over the last 13 years under successive Tory governments determined to force down public sector pay. That is the challenge ahead of us all over the years to come.

Indeed, if the last eight months have reminded us all of anything, it is that an organising union such as ours is built upon the strength of its branches. It is our branches who produce the national, regional and area officials of both now, and the future. Our branch reps have been the single most important layer of officials over this time, organising members to attend lobbies of the Scottish Parliament, Westminster Parliament and even the NJC meeting in February to pressure the employers side to make an acceptable offer. They have undertaken strike training to prepare for picketing their workplaces, led the debate in workplaces, organised branch meetings and helped members lobby and engage with politicians and the media. Their efforts, and that of members, saw the FBU return a huge rejection of the 5% offer in the autumn and a overwhelming mandate for strike action in January. Without that unity of response to both of these ballots our national officials bargaining positions would not have been as strong as they were.

The campaign has clearly been invigorating for many of our members and branches, but just as the settlement on pay has to be the first step and not the last in our campaign, so too does the organisation of our branch structures, for there are many fights ahead.

Firstly, we must ensure that the working groups and reviews the national employers have committed to underline the issues still associated with pay in our industry, and actively work to address them.

Additionally in Scotland we have a new First Minister, one who needs to address the significant funding issues within our Service. If the Scottish Government are genuinely invested in developing the role of a firefighter, something they have openly committed to in their own Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland documents, then they need to properly fund our Service and reflect that vision in their own ambition for our industry.

To do that though we need to fight the slow erosion of our own Service. On 1 April it will be ten years since the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was formed, and although there have been positives over that time, there have been many negatives, with those negatives driven by cuts.

Eight Control rooms cut to three, multiple wholtime appliances left uncrewed every day, dwindling numbers of retained firefighters on terms and conditions still to be standardised, fire stations decades past their expected life expectancy, appliances running below the agreed safe crewing model – the list goes on. These are outcomes long in the making, products of decisions of those who have by in large left our Service, and Government, as it has declined.

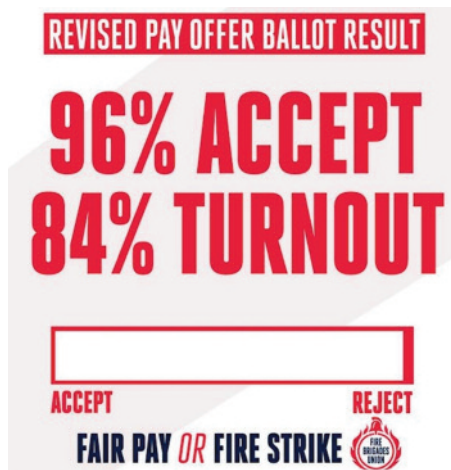
There is potentially worse to come though. The £11 million uplift budgeted to the Service in December and realised in April will not cover the increased costs of that time driven by soaring inflation.

This lack of investment threatens our Service as we know it. Shift systems, appliances, firefighter numbers, crewing models, stations – the cuts made to our comrades south of the border over the last decade should be a warning to our region.

None of this is set in stone though. It is up to us all, as members of a heavily unionised work force, to hold politicians and our senior leaders to account. Our Service needs sustained investment, and if we are organised, unified, hard working and resolute we can ensure that our industry is given the investment it needs to grow, not decline.

Over the course of the next six months members will be asked to fight for our industry. When the time comes make sure you attend your branch and area meetings, turn out to lobby our politicians in our thousands and take on roles within our union to continue the work of those who went before us.

John McKenzie
Scottish Secretary



FBU Scotland – Holyrood to Westminster

There have been so many demos and protests over the years that it can sometimes seem like there's no point, that nothing makes a difference. The millions who took to the streets in opposition to the Iraq war would maybe the millions that took to the streets in opposition to the Iraq war would argue that case.

But what we have seen over the course of our dispute is the impact that mass mobilisations of workers can have, especially when backed up with direct lobbying of politicians and the mutual support and solidarity from across the trade union movement.

Our campaign really kicked off with our demo at the Scottish Parliament on October 27 last year. This had originally been planned to be in response to the Scottish Government's budget, when they announced it in May, but by the time the autumn came, it was clear that we were headed for industrial action and that inspiring day at Holyrood injected an energy into us as a membership that was carried into the following months of dispute.

Seeing the numbers of Scottish FBU members who had travelled from all over the country to tell the politicians at Holyrood that they weren't willing to stand by and see their jobs undermined and undervalued, gave our General Secretary, Matt Wrack, the message that the vast majority of FBU members were behind the campaign and were ready to fight for fair pay.

And if that meant preparing for strike action, then so be it. The message was heard loud and clear in the Scottish Parliament, but now we needed to take that message to where the real problem with the decades of public sector pay erosion lies.

The date for that demo at Westminster was set for the 6 December, the day after our ballot for industrial action opened and coincidentally, my birthday, and instead of a party, 60 members of the FBU in Scotland made my day by arriving in London mob-handed, including a large contingent from the frozen North.

We met at Parliament Square early doors and started to move into the Methodist Central Hall which within the next hour was packed to the rafters with 'Fair Pay or Fire Strike' t-shirts and hats everywhere, FBU banners



and flags, and the stage set up for the speakers.

Rousing speeches from the Gen Sec, Zarah Sultana, Jeremy Corbyn and our own Kerry McCrone had the crowd suitably whipped up and ready to march over to Parliament to begin meetings with MPs to make the case directly, that if an acceptable offer wasn't made then we were ready to walk out the doors.

(Kerry's heartfelt poem was a real highlight for the assembled masses, and even gave this old man a shout out on his birthday! Cheers sister).

The demo made the TV news, albeit briefly, photos of FBU members and their constituency MPs were all over social media, local news ran interviews with officials and there was plenty of chat with the public, who overwhelmingly supported us. But more importantly than all of that, the day further galvanised the members that were there, and all those that weren't, brought us all tighter together and showed that we were willing and organised and prepared to do what we hadn't done since 2002.

Our ballot ran until 30 January, and the results of that reflected the unity, solidarity and resolve that had been forged over the previous months with 88% voting YES on a 73% turnout (94% in Northern Ireland). What the other 27% were thinking is anyone's guess.

This gave us a clear and undeniable mandate for strike action, but continuing to be reasonable, the employers were offered one last chance to meet and see if an agreement could be reached. The full meeting of the NJC was called for 9 January and once again, FBU

Scotland took to the road (or rail, or airways) and on the morning of that meeting, we were outside the Methodist Central Hall again, making sure that the employers knew that we were serious, that this was the last chance saloon.

The Scots all had to leave in the afternoon, but there were FBU members there well into the evening, and the meeting lasted well into the night.

We were all checking texts and emails on the journey home, but it wasn't until the next morning that we found out that the employers had improved their offer, which was ultimately accepted by a massive 96% of an 84% turnout (again, what were those other 16% doing?).

That offer would not have been tabled had it not been for the strength shown throughout this campaign, the strength shown at Holyrood back in October, at the mass meetings across the country, at the demo at Westminster and then again outside the NJC. That visible presence, that willingness to sacrifice a couple of days, to stand shoulder to shoulder with your sisters and brothers is what pushed them to make an offer they never wanted to.

Everyone who made it to those events to those events, and all those who couldn't but showed their support, can look back proudly over this campaign, knowing that they played their part and that the next time we need to do it, that we make it even bigger, that we put even more FBU members outside the seats of power in Edinburgh or London.

We now know that it works.

Gus Sproul
Scottish Chair

Red Plaque Events

The FBU Red Plaque events continue to grow across Scotland, as the first Red Plaque of 2023 was unveiled, in Motherwell in January, and a further two scheduled to be unveiled in April in Dundee.

On the 11th of January 2023, on the 60th anniversary, a joint Red Plaque event took place at Motherwell Fire Station to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of Stanley McIntosh (48) and Joseph Calderwood (58) who were tragically killed, in the line of duty, at a fire at Colville's Steelworks in 1963.

Every Red Plaque event has proven to be unique and special in its own way and the event at Motherwell was no exception, with this being the first unveiling to involve a class of schoolchildren from Knowetop primary school, participating with their teacher, in the ceremony itself, with their families in attendance. The children had been working on 'Forged by Fire' on the weeks leading up to the unveiling, a project which is a unique collaboration between historians at the university of Birmingham and Leeds Beckett University supported, on this occasion, by SFRS staff and FBU Officials.

Professor Shane Ewen, from Leeds Beckett University, who led the project described it as "exploring the lesser-known history of how burns injuries and fatalities have shaped individual and collective identities in modern Britain across the 19th and 20th centuries." The children completed a series of activities geared around the importance of remembering our fallen heroes, historic and contemporary fire investigation, re-enacting the Fatal Accident Inquiry, and writing their own dedications to the two firefighters, which they read individually during the ceremony. There was an overwhelming feeling of community involvement with the Red Plaque event, and we are currently looking at the opportunity to replicate this at future Red Plaque unveilings across Scotland, involving not only schools but also local community groups to ensure the importance of the Red Plaques is remembered by future generations.

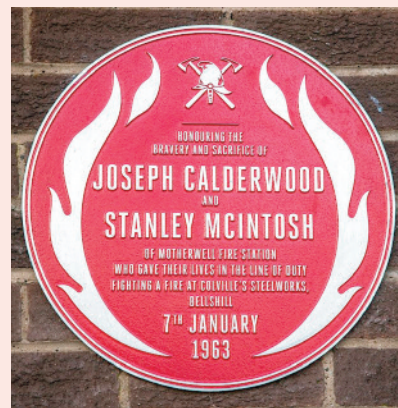
Our next Red Plaque unveiling will take place at Blackness Road Fire Station on the 13th of April 2023 at 1pm, where we will be unveiling two red plaques to remember fallen firefighters, John Jamieson Buist, killed in the line of duty at the Jute Warehouse fire on the 13th of April 1962 and William Carnegie who was tragically killed at a building fire that same year on the 14th of June. We would welcome FBU members, friends, and family along to the ceremony at 1pm, where we will have speakers including FBU National Officer, Tam McFarlane, EC Member for Scotland, Colin Brown, SFRS Area Commander Jason Sharp and the Lord Provost.

Finally, it's crucial we all support and continually promote the Firefighters 100 Lottery, both within and beyond our membership, to maintain funding, to continue laying Red Plaques, to ensure our fallen comrades are never forgotten and also to ensure funding for our DECON campaign

**Sign up online now from only
£4.34 per month.**

www.fbu.org.uk/blog/introducing-firefighters-100-lottery

Seona Hart,
Scottish Treasurer



Temporary National RDS Organiser

I am delighted to have been successful in my application for the role of RDS Organiser for FBU National. A post which was mandated by conference in 2022 to increase membership within the RDS across the whole of the UK. As the Region with the largest volume of RDS firefighters the post has been seconded to Scotland for an initial 6-month period. RDS members are crucial to our union particularly in Scotland where they make up such a large proportion of our firefighter numbers. I aim to increase RDS membership and engagement so that this section has the strong collective voice it deserves within workplaces, through their membership of the only union willing to fight for their pay, terms, and conditions.

I will be there to help build RDS union structures which is so important in opening up lines of communication. The employers have now committed to forming a working group to look at RDS pay, following the FBU's pay campaign, and in order for RDS firefighters to be involved in these talks, and have their voices heard, they need to be members of the FBU.

I am looking forward to being able to have the capacity to visit our existing members across Scotland and those who will join us in our fight and campaigns to further support, strengthen and ensure all voices are heard in the union. Please feel free to contact me with any RDS membership queries or to join the FBU and make your voice count.

**You can contact me by email
kerry.mccrone@fbu.org.uk or by phone on
07966 723025.**



FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

THE GOOD CAUSES

The Firefighters 100 Lottery Fund shall be administered appropriately by the Fire Brigades Union for the future benefit of all firefighters and their bereaved families in accordance with the following good cause criteria:

1. Family support and welfare: to provide longer-term support to the families of firefighters killed or seriously injured in the line of duty, including financial support such as individual bursaries to help towards the costs of further education, or grants towards the provision of specialist medical equipment, or support for inquests or similar processes.
2. Memorials and remembrance: to support, establish and maintain memorials and/or memorial events in remembrance of firefighters killed in the line of duty.
3. Protect, prevent and promote: to promote the lessons learnt from the deaths and serious injuries of firefighters so as to better protect firefighters, the communities they serve and prevent deaths and injuries in the future.
4. Research: to support research into the physical and mental health and wellbeing of firefighters; the "all hazards" nature of the modern fire and rescue service role; and the prevention, protection and intervention work firefighters undertake to save lives in our communities.
5. Humanitarian assistance: to support humanitarian initiatives and appeals, including internationally, which are aimed at assisting those affected by fire or disaster and where there is a particular need for the support of skilled fire and rescue service intervention.

<https://www.firefighters100lottery.co.uk/support/firefighters/buytickets>

FBU Legal Protection for you and your families

There are times, especially in our profession, when firefighters and their families, need the best possible support and advice from specialists in the legal profession.

Legal protection is a vital benefit of FBU membership and, as a union, we make sure we engage the best possible solicitors. The normal, commercial, legal world is dominated by 'no win no fee' firms with bad reputations for service and even worse reputations for delivering. FBU members using our legal service keep 100% of their compensation, whatever the injury and however complex the claim. By comparison, claims companies and high street law firms can take up to 25% of your damages.

The interests of Fire Brigades Union members and their families are protected by a set of specialist solicitors who know our industry inside out and have a unique relationship and commitment to our members.

Thompsons Solicitors are the UK's only law firm uniquely dedicated to trade unions, and they have built a reputation for supporting and winning cases for firefighters which is second to none.

The FBU have worked with Thompsons for many decades, and over this time they have built up a specialist knowledge of our industry – even sending lawyers to participate in hot fire training so that they understand the unique demands of our profession.

This commitment means that firefighters can trust Thompsons to deliver on your behalf. As an FBU member you will benefit from a comprehensive package of legal services which include cover for:

- **Personal Injury at or away from work, on holiday or on the road**
- **Serious injury, including brain and spinal cord injuries.**
- **Industrial disease or illness**
- **Special terms for clinical negligence**
- **Employment law**
- **Criminal injury claims**
- **Free wills service, which allows you to generate a will online**
- **Special terms for Lasting Powers of Attorney, re-mortgaging and conveyancing and even Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) Claims**

Applications for any legal assistance relating to your employment must be submitted in the first instance to the Regional Secretary

John.McKenzie@fbu.org.uk

Access to the application form and further information can be found at:
<https://www.fbu.org.uk/forms/application-legal-assistance-fbu-members>

**Because FBU members give 100%
We make sure you always get 100%**

25 Year Membership Presentations



Graeme Miller from Red Watch Ayr receiving 25 year recognition from Branch Sec Kerry McCrone

Direct Debit

The Fire Brigades Union paid out nearly £150,000 nationally on administration fees to Fire and Rescue Services to process FBU Contributions on behalf of members! Switch your membership to Direct Debit now to avoid these unnecessary costs

www.fbu.org.uk/form/direct-debit-form



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FBU Scotland at Scottish Greens Conference highlighting the impact of climate change on our profession and raising awareness of the DECON campaign and increased risks from contaminants



FBU Scotland with support from Maggie Chapman MSP take the DECON campaign to Scottish Parliament chamber for debate

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