

The Fire Brigades Union



Report of Proceedings and Record of Decisions

82nd Annual Conference

9th - 11th May 2007

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 2007

President: **Mick Shaw**
Vice-President: **Alan McLean**
General Secretary: **Matt Wrack**
Assistant General Secretary: **Andy Dark**
Acting National Treasurer: **Mike Smith**

National Officers: **John McGhee**
Dean Mills
Paul Woolstenholmes

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

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

Executive Council



MICK SHAW
President



MATT WRACK
General Secretary



ALAN McLEAN
Vice President



ANDY DARK
Assistant
General Secretary



MIKE SMITH
Acting National Treasurer



JOHN McGHEE
National Officer



DEAN MILLS
National Officer



PAUL WOOLSTENHOLMES
National Officer

Contents

Executive Council	iii
Day One	3
Day Two	57
Day Three	85
Record of Decisions	137
Final Appeals Committee	155
Firefighter Representatives	156
Election of Standing Orders Committee	156
Officers of the Fire Brigades Union	157
Annual Conference: List of Delegates	163
Index of Proceedings	169
Index of Speakers	171



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

82nd Annual Conference

Southport 2007

9th – 11th May

Day One – 9th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, brothers and sisters. We will formally open Conference. We have a formal invitation to the resort of Southport from the Mayor of Southport, Tommy Mann, who is present with the Mayoress, Jean Lilley.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR TOMMY MANN (Mayor of Southport):

Thank you. Mr President, General Secretary, Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, to begin with can I, on behalf of the Mayoress and I, warmly welcome you to the Floral Hall Conference Centre this morning in Southport. We know that you were not here last year. I am sure that you are well aware of the facilities which we offer here in Southport to conference delegates. Clearly the Floral Hall and the Seftons Conference Services do the best they can to facilitate all your requirements while you are here in Southport.

Southport, as you probably are aware, is a changing place. If you have been here in the past you will see that there is an awful lot of construction work going on, not least around this particular building. We are at the present moment building a large hotel, a 133 bedroom hotel along with a convention centre. I think that when you return in 2008 you will see a massive change in this particular area of Southport. There are also four hotels being built in the town, along with leisure facilities, a Splashworld. So we do feel in Southport here we have an awful lot to offer, both to leisure tourism and of course to the conference sector. We know that these changes do take a lot of work to put in, and the investment in Southport is huge. There are millions of pounds. This particular complex next door is costing £40 million, there is £36 million being spent elsewhere in the town. So Southport is really on the up and up. We are looking to the conference trade. The conference trade is very lucrative to our business here in Southport which provides employment for lots of people. Clearly we are very pleased to welcome you all here today. Next year, when you come back in 2008, you will see a vast difference.

2008 also is the year of the Merseyside Capital of Culture, which will also spread into this particular part of Merseyside. We have the Open Golf Championship in 2008. Most of you will be aware that we have the World Firefighter Games here in 2008 in Liverpool. Well done! I hope you're going to be a competitor, are you? I hope so, yes.

I had the privilege of going out to Hong Kong last year to

see the Asians running the World Firefighter Games. It is a fantastic experience, because there are firefighters from all over the world taking part in some fantastic events. I know at the moment that Merseyside Fire Authority are working very hard with other Fire Authorities throughout the country to get teams together to come up here to Merseyside and put on a good show. I am sure that 2008, and your part of it next year, will be a magnificent year to come to Merseyside, and in particular to come back to Southport.

I would like to thank you again, on behalf of the Mayoress and I for allowing us here today to start your Conference. It is now my pleasure to open the 82nd Annual Conference of the Fire Brigades Union. Thank you very much and good luck. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much, Tommy. I think our General Secretary has something to hand over to you.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes. As Tommy said, we've been here a few times now for our Conferences and Recall Conferences. People are getting familiar with the facilities. We look forward to seeing the developments next year. Thank you for your kind words of invitation. We are giving you a little gift to take back to your office. Thanks a lot.

THE PRESIDENT:

I understand we now have the Chair of the Sefton Trades Council, Richie Gregory, who was formerly an official in the print union, the National Graphical Association, and the GPMU who now, I think, have been amalgamated a couple of times since then. Richie has been the Chair of Sefton Trades Council for ten years. He is also the Chair of the South Sefton Unemployed Centre and is giving fraternal greetings on behalf of the local Labour Movement.

BRO RICHIE GREGORY (President, Sefton Trades Council):

Mr President, as President of the Sefton Trades Council it gives me great pleasure to welcome the Fire Brigades Union to Southport. I have been attending my own union's conferences for many years. They have always been held in seaside resorts, allowing us to take advantage of fresh air and fun. But I've seen more hot air than fresh air in my time! But before I talk about hot air, just a little bit about the Trades Council.

I became a member of the Trades Council in 1989. Unfortunately, it was not very well attended, mainly because of the Thatcher Government with their anti-

Day One – 9th May

trade union laws and massive unemployment. This had a domino effect on the Trades Council because of the loss of delegates due to mass unemployment but there were still activists who kept the Trade Council going.

Trades Councils are not just part of the trade unions; they also have a part to play in their local communities. In 1990 the Sefton Trades Council reorganised the South Sefton Unemployed Centre and Community Resource Centre to assist unemployed people in helping them to gain their benefits which they are entitled to. I am glad to say that after nearly 17 years we are still helping the poorest people in this community. Yes, comrades, poverty is still with us, even in the 21st century.

The last couple of months have seen the TC involved in the local elections because the BPF/BNP were contesting a number of seats in Sefton. Through the assistance of UNISON we held a musical gig with a number of local bands in a very friendly pub to get the message over to young people about the evils of the BNP. It was a great success. We are also involved with leafleting in the areas where the BPF were standing.

The air that I mentioned, hot air, my mind goes back to 1980. My union, the NGA, conference in Blackpool. We were addressed by the then TUC General Secretary Len Murray on the subject of Thatcher's anti-union legislation. He promised us under his leadership he would fight to retain the trade union rights. Even if it meant breaking the law, he said. We believed him. But not for long though. The first test came at Warrington with the Eddie Shah dispute. Despite overwhelming rank and file support from the great majority of trade unions, including your Union and Ken Cameron your General Secretary at the time, we were sold out by Murray who came back off holiday to overturn the decision made at the Wembley Conference to support the trade union. We lost the battle. By the way, he later became Lord Murray. Yeah! Pulled the ladder up behind him.

What was to follow was the defeat of the miners, and then again the NGA at Wapping, which was a direct consequence of the craven attitude of the TUC under Lord Murray. Instead, we are still working to overcome that legacy of treachery and weak leadership, but the fight still goes on.

One of our Labour Governments, or should I say New Labour – it seems as though Thatcher had never left because the Fire Brigades Union was in the firing line a couple of years ago with Prescott. Remember John Prescott? Yeah! He was a strong trade unionist apparently, but when he got in a position of high power he pulled the ladder up behind him. He took on your Union again, and again confrontation inevitably raised its head again.

We must fight to defend our trade union principles, whether it be a Tory or Labour Government. We need to fight for a better standard of living and better conditions for all future workers in the trade union movement.

I wish you all the best with your Conference. Remember, Unity is Strength, and Solidarity. Enjoy the fresh air and fun in sunny Southport. This is the posh area of Sefton! Thank you, Mr. President. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Richie. Likewise, Matt has got something to hand over to you, I believe.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Richie, like every other Conference, this one has a tradition of generating hot air! I am sure we look forward to three days of that. I think the Conference is particularly pleased to have greetings from the local trade union movement. People are well familiar with the traditions of the Labour movement on Merseyside. I think your words were particularly welcome. On behalf of Conference I would like to thank you for attending this morning.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can the following Tellers and Scrutineers be agreed, please. The Tellers for this Conference are David Allsey from Greater Manchester, Lyndon Jones from South Wales, Paul Adams from Essex and Tim Davis from London. Can those Tellers be agreed, please? AGREED

The Scrutineers are Mick Henn from the West Midlands, Stuart Wilson from Strathclyde, Joe Heron from Northern Ireland, and Ian Murray from Humberside. Can the Scrutineers be agreed, please? AGREED

OK. Could all the Tellers and Scrutineers please report to Paul Woolstenholmes at the back of the conference hall. Paul, are you back there? He will be meeting you back there in a moment.

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

CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thank you. President, Conference, good morning. The Standing Orders Committee seeks your cooperation with regard to your conference credentials. Will 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

Day One – 9th May

assists the President and the verbatim report writer. 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 entrance hall to your left 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 door on your right, up the staircase and is clearly marked.

Delegates that have business with 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 Floral Hall is a no smoking building 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 International Night from 7.30 pm to 1 am at the Southport Arts Centre situated on Lord Street opposite the Scarisbrick Hotel. Guest speaker from Venezuela and the comedian Steve Gribben. Tickets are available at £10 per person. All proceeds will go to the Zimbabwean Dignity Period Campaign, and Hands Off Venezuela Campaign. Please see your Regional Treasurer if you require any more tickets.

On Thursday night in the Royal Clifton Hotel it is the highlight of the week: the Executive Council invites everyone to join them for some musical entertainment provided by none other than the Counterfeit Clash. This not-to-be-missed evening with your Executive Council Member is from 8.30 pm till 1 am.

May I remind you that Conference is in session from 9.30 to 5 o'clock.

May I bring to your attention that there will be a lunch provided for all in the Royal Clifton Hotel on Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday there will be a packed lunch available in the Floral 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 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.

The list of Scrutineers and Tellers has already been circulated. The list of the Final Appeals Committee has been circulated. The list of Firefighter Representatives has been circulated. These lists are all now placed before Conference for your endorsement.

As at previous Conferences, the President and the Standing Orders Committee have agreed that I will not announce changes to the list of delegates. However, the Standing Orders Committee should continue to be kept informed of any changes and we, in turn, will keep the President's list up to date. We rely on the Regional Officials to exercise some influence on this procedure.

Facilities. The Standing Orders Committee have agreed stall facilities for the following organisations to Conference: Bookmarks, Cuba Solidarity Campaign, War on Want, Working Class Movement Library, Union Learning Fund, Union Learn, Justice for Columbia, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Women's Stand, Venezuela Information Centre, and of course the Fire Brigades Union. The stalls will be situated in the entrance hall on your left hand side.

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

Would you now turn to your Programme of Business page 1. Resolution 27 has been withdrawn. Insert after Resolution 27 Emergency Resolution 3 Iraq – GFIW Support, Greater Manchester. After Emergency Resolution 3 insert Emergency Resolution 4 – Tragic Legacy of Agent Orange, Greater Manchester.

Page 2: no change. Page 3: After Para.A3 Pay Agreement – Implementation insert Emergency Resolution 1 Pay, Executive Council. Resolution 52 has been withdrawn, the amendment falls. Resolution 64 has been withdrawn.

Page 4: After Resolution 59 insert Emergency Resolution 2 – Downgrading, Cornwall. Resolution 48 amendment 2, Gloucestershire, has been withdrawn. Page 5: Resolution 77 has been withdrawn. Page 6: Brigade Committees Proposed Amendments to the Standing Orders of Annual Conference. Could you now please place that after para.G26 Regional Officers and Officials/National/Sectional Committees, Union Officials for 2007. After Section F Legal, insert Executive Council Emergency Statement: Co-Responding. Resolution 63 has been withdrawn. Resolution 65 has been withdrawn. After Resolution 30 insert Resolution 4:

Day One – 9th May

AGM Process from NWC, and insert amendment from Gloucestershire.

From when Conference resumes at 9.30 am up to but not including Ruben Lenarez, UNT Venezuelan NUC speaker, Conference will be in Closed Session. So from the start of business in the morning up to the speaker from Venezuela.

Page 7: no change. Page 8: After Para H10 Union Learning Fund insert Composite A ULF Projects. Resolution 9 was withdrawn to form Composite A; Resolution 11 falls under Standing Order 10; Resolution 18 was withdrawn to form Composite A; Resolution 29 falls under Standing Order 10.

Page 9: Resolution 32 falls under Standing Order 10; Resolution 34 falls under Standing Order 10; Resolution 36 was withdrawn to form Composite A. Unfortunately, the speaker from Zimbabwe will not be attending Conference. Remove that from your Programme of Business, please.

Page 10: Resolution 70 has been withdrawn. After Para G8 Executive Council Meetings 2005/2006 please insert Composite B Annual Conference Cancellation. Resolution 23 was withdrawn to form Composite B, the amendment falls; Resolution 24 was withdrawn to form Composite B, the amendment falls.

Page 11: After Resolution 14 insert Composite C Non Statutory Elections, Postal Ballots. Resolution 10 was withdrawn to form Composite C; Resolution 21 was withdrawn to form Composite C, the amendment falls.

Page 12: Resolution 4 should be deleted as it has been removed to page 6. Resolution 78 has been withdrawn.
Page 13: no change.

The Standing Orders Committee informs Conference that if Wednesday morning's business finishes before lunchtime we will move straight to Friday morning's business.

May I remind Conference, and particularly visitors, that the Stewards will carefully check credentials before the start of any Closed Session, in order to only admit into the hall Delegates, Officials, Members, Solicitors, Tutors and our Visitors. Other visitors and the media will be excluded until after the conclusion of the business that I have detailed.

Can I now go on to voting on a challenge to the Chair of Conference. May I draw your attention to Standing Order 16. The number of Delegates at Conference is 229. Therefore the number of Delegates voting to carry a challenge is 153. Please note that 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, and Fire Service College Representatives have been issued with different credential cards and they are not permitted to vote at all. However, the Fire Service College Representatives may speak in debates affecting the College.

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

Finally, the Standing Orders Committee Elections. May I remind you that these will take place this morning. Stewart Kinnon is up for re-election. There will be an election for the vacant position on the Standing Orders Committee at the same time. This comes from the position held by Tony Nutting who is resigning from the Standing Orders Committee at the end of this Conference.

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

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? There are a couple of hands. Linda first.

SIS LINDA SMITH (London):

We'd like to challenge Standing Orders on putting page 6 into Closed Session. We are not opposed to up to but not including Paragraph G26 being in Closed Session, the debate about Co-responding. We think that's about internal Union strategy and we haven't got a problem with that. We do think, however, that everything after and including Paragraph G26 should be in Open Session. It's an important debate for the delegates here. It's also an important debate for the members of our Union.

I also think it's important that we do have a verbatim record of what's discussed there and then. So I'm asking Conference to support the fact that everything, including Paragraph G26 and after is in Open Session.

THE PRESIDENT:

We will deal with each challenge as it comes up. I ask the General Secretary to respond to that.

Day One – 9th May

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, the Executive Council would ask you to reject the challenge to us on the issue of Closed Session. Linda's right it is an important debate. The whole of that morning's business is of importance. I am pleased that Linda is not challenging on the issue of Co-responding, that is an important debate. We think there are important tactical decisions to be made in relation to Co-responding. We want to have that discussion in an open way but in Closed Session.

In relation to the other debates that will take place that morning you may be aware that there is press interest in that issue. It is an internal matter for this Union, internal matter of structure and organisation. We think that that should be held without the press involvement and without press listening into that discussion. That will allow Delegates to openly express the views of their Delegations. So we would urge Conference to reject the challenge on that point.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Can I see all those Delegates in favour of the challenge from London to the Standing Orders Committee report. Please raise your hands. Can I see those against the challenge, please raise your hands. That challenge falls. Were there other challenges to the Standing Orders Report? The brother there.

BRO IAN YOUNG (Kent):

President, Conference, we are challenging Standing Orders on one of Kent's Resolutions that was Ruled out of Order. I'll read the Resolution:

"Due to the growing important of health & safety within the modern Fire Service we strongly believe that the union should have a national officer with sole responsibility of health & safety. Conference demands that the EC creates a new role for a national officer, or redefines the current national officer's role so allowing one national officer to have sole responsibility for health & safety within the current fire structure."

This Resolution was actually Ruled out of Order because it requires a Rule Change. We don't actually believe it does require a Rule Change for the reasons that we are one National Officer down at the moment. There is pending elections for that National Officer. Also, the remits within the National Officers do change, and have just recently changed, as most people know. So we think that this Resolution can stand and it doesn't require a Rule Change.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Ian. I ask Steve to respond to that challenge.

CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thanks, President. The Resolution was Ruled out of Order. The Standing Orders Committee ruled the Resolution from Kent on Health & Safety out of order on the grounds that to implement this Resolution would require a change to the Rules of the Union. It is not a Rule Change Conference. Rule 14 would need to be changed. Look at Rule 14, have a look at the Resolution that you have already received. The Resolution would require a Rule Change. The Rules of the Union would need to be changed. This is not a Rule Change Conference. I urge you to uphold the decision of the Standing Orders Committee and reject the challenge. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I see all those in favour of the Kent challenge to the Standing Orders Report, please. Please raise your hands. Thank you. Can I see those opposed to that challenge? That challenge falls.

Were there any other challenges to the Standing Orders Report? No. Is the Standing Orders Report agreed?
AGREED

The ballot box for the Standing Orders elections is now available at the rear of the hall. We now move on to Section J, the Obituary. I would ask Conference to stand for a minute's silence, please.

Conference stood in tribute to those who had died

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Delegates. You want to speak on the Obituary? The floor is yours.

A DELEGATE (NIFB):

President, colleagues, I just want to put right an unfortunate omission in the obituaries for Brother Peter Watson who sadly died 10th March 2006. He is from Region 2.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks for that, brother. It is now my opportunity to give my first Presidential address to FBU Annual Conference. Point of information? Come to the rostrum.

BRO WARREN SIMPSON (London):

Conference, President, under Section J Obituaries, we seem to have missed J. Sharland, a London member that died in June 2006. The National Committee and this Conference would appreciate if the details could be amended as soon as possible.

Day One – 9th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Warren. Is there anyone else on Section J? No. Section J agreed. I will now try again to give my first Presidential address, which is both an honour and a pleasure to be able to do that. I would like to pay tribute to the last President of this Union, Ruth Winters, who I am pleased to report is here as a Delegate this week from the Lothian & Borders Brigade. I am sure we welcome Ruth back to this Conference. *(Applause)*

It is, of course, our first Conference that we have had for two years. I hope that we will leave Southport at the end of this week united, with a clear sense of priorities, and a clear sense of purpose. We have got some major debates coming up this week. The most major issue probably is the issue of pay. I've been coming to this Conference now for more than 20 years and there was much of that time when we wouldn't have a debate on pay from one year to the next because at that time we had a pay formula that produced an increase and there wasn't very much to discuss about it. How times change!

I imagine that it is going to be a major debate, not only at this year's Annual Conference, but also probably at a great number of future Conferences. Of course, that debate is going to take place against the backdrop of Gordon Brown's 2% limit on public sector pay, which means that we shouldn't be expecting any generous offers from our employers. However, the existence of a pay formula for the best part of 25 years in the Fire Service did give the Fire Service stability. That's why this Union believes it is the correct way of determining pay rates in the Fire Service. It is why we have sought, for the continuation for this year, the pay formula linking our pay rises to those increases enjoyed by those in the Associate Professional and Technical Group of employees. That's why we submitted that claim and we're awaiting a formal response from the employers.

We only kept that last pay formula for that period of 25 years or so, because at times we were prepared to fight to defend it. It may well be that we're going to have to fight again at some stage to ensure the continuation of a pay formula for the Fire Service.

We have debate on the issue of CPD payments, which is one of the longstanding issues arising from the 2003 Pay Agreement that keeps almost appearing to be resolved, and then another obstacle comes in its way. We've had some clarification from Officials within the Department of Communities and Local Government, and the good news is that the CPD payments can be pensionable apparently. The bad news is the small print. We're not entirely sure what they are proposing for how that pensionability will work. That's something that will be discussed this week. We're urgently seeking

discussions with Officials and Ministers from that department. One of those Ministers is of course along here later this morning and we'll be using the opportunity, while she is here, to be raising those concerns with her.

We have debates on the issue of pensions. Again, I think that's another matter that's going to be a continuing major issue for this Union and for all other trade unions and workers in the public sector.

We have a major debate coming up on our political strategy. We took the decision, as this Union, to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. We do have a motion on the agenda calling for us to reaffiliate, and it is clearly an issue that is something that has to be discussed by this Union and is being discussed all around.

We also have the changed picture in the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where of course in Scotland and Wales there were elections last week and there is a completely new picture in those Devolved Administrations. We, as a Union, have to come to terms with that and be able to best address that changing situation.

Of course, we have discussions on our own internal organisation, on our election process, on our voting procedures, and on our finances.

We've got guest speakers coming to the Conference. Later this morning we have Brendan Barber from the TUC. We also have Angela Smith from the Communities and Local Government Department. I think that is significant. It is the first time that we've had a Government Minister to this Conference for six years. Some of you have welcomed not having to listen to them any more, but I do actually think that it is important for this Union to have a Minister from the Government come along. We might not agree with what they've got to say often, but I think it's important that we hear what they have to say and that they know what we are saying. So I hope that all Delegates will recognise that as a Union we have invited Angela Smith along here later today, and will listen to her in the appropriate manner.

We have International speakers. Unfortunately, our speaker from the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions has not been able to travel here this week. I think with the problems they're experiencing out there at the moment that is probably understandable. Fortunately, we do have a guest speaker from the Venezuelan Trade Union Federation. We also have International guests here from our sister unions in Australia, New Zealand and, at the end of the week, from the Firefighters' Organisation in the USA. There will be a speaker from one of those three sister organisations.

Day One – 9th May

It is entirely right that this Conference, with Representatives from every Brigade in the country, should be concentrating on the priorities that our members have: issues involving the Fire Service, involving their pay, their hours of work, their annual leave, their pensions, and the internal organisation of the Fire Brigades Union. However, looking through the agenda at this year's Conference and comparing it with previous years, it is difficult to discern a sense that we're part of a wider movement. I don't think there's any Resolutions really on International matters or on political matters. I think that is a disappointment.

We may have disaffiliated from the Labour Party (and we will be discussing that later this week, whether we continue with that position), but I hope that decision to disaffiliate from the Labour Party is not being interpreted as a decision to withdraw from political engagement. That would be a major mistake for this Union. We have to engage with politicians. We're part of the wider UK Labour Movement and we align ourselves with trade unions and progressive campaigns throughout the world. The problems that we face in the UK, as significant as they are, are nothing compared to the problems that trade unionists face in countries like Zimbabwe and Columbia. We should be cognisant of that fact and we should be offering our support to our colleagues in those countries. *(Applause)*

However, it isn't all doom and gloom on the International front. It has to be said there are some encouraging signs coming from some parts of the world, particularly in Latin America, and particularly in the country of Venezuela where we're fortunate to have a speaker coming along from that country this week who will be able to inform us of some of the developments out there.

I hope that in the future, maybe when some of the dust has settled from the outcome of the 2002/2003 pay dispute, we will be returning to some of our traditional concerns and we will see an agenda that does properly show that we are part of that International Labour Movement and part of the UK Labour Movement. I think this Union is at its strongest when our Delegates and when our Officials do recognise the common sense of purpose that we have and the common interests we have with those who want to change the world for the better, both in this country and in the rest of the world.

I will close my address by saying that I think it's important to note that despite the wishes of our opponents amongst the employers, amongst other organisations in the Fire Service and in the Government and parts of the media, despite their hopes that we would be defeated as a result of the outcome of the 2002/2003 pay dispute, and we would be demoralised and that we would be marginalised while they got on

with re-moulding the Fire Services against our interests and against our wishes, the fact is that we're still here. Our membership is stable, our finances are returning to good health. We're going to ensure that we have our say on any changes that take place in the Fire Service and we'll try to ensure that the Service is moulded in our interests.

I look forward to us having a good Conference this week and to us leaving here united as a Union and confident to face the challenges that we face. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

We now move to Section I Financial Accounts, Paragraph 1.1. Forward, Paragraph 1.2.

I now introduce the Acting National Treasurer, Mike Smith.

ACTING NATIONAL TREASURER:

Thank you, President. Good morning, Conference. In presenting the accounts for the years 2005 and 2006 I need to bring to your attention one or two points arising out of those accounts.

To help make this a little more user friendly I intend to illustrate those points with a couple of Power Point slides. Let me just make two points on that. First of all, this is not the dawn of a new era for Conference in terms of a Power Point presentation. I also need to emphasise that it is not a precedent for the future. So that whoever follows in this particular position will not feel duty bound to have a Power Point presentation.

I have to say that it's 20 years since I last spoke to Conference, back in 1987. I first came in 1983, and I never thought that the next time I would be speaking would be from this platform with a Power Point presentation, because personally I used to hate the things. But today I need to use it to illustrate one or two important points.

What I intend to do is to formally present the accounts for the years 2005 and 2006, because I have got two years' accounts to present to you today; look back to the year 2002 to show the trends of expenditure over the previous years; and then return to the accounts for the year 2006. You will be relieved to hear that there are not too many slides and they are there to assist you, hopefully.

The Consolidated Income & Expenditure accounts provided for a deficit of just over £2 million in 2005 and a surplus for last year of just over £400,000 at £416,933. The General Fund for 2005 had a deficit of just over £1 million. The Accident & Injury Fund had a deficit of just over £500,000 at £576,000.

Day One – 9th May

The General Fund for 2006 had a surplus of just over £700,000 at £768,000, and the Accident & Injury Fund, with another deficit for the year of nearly £700,000. But for the first time since the financial year 2001 the General Fund expenditure has been less than the income by just over £1 million at £1.87 million. However, the carry forward deficit from the previous year reduced that surplus to just £23,000. That was all, £23,000.

Conference will not need to be reminded that we did not hold Annual Conference last year, which probably saved us approximately £200,000. So whilst the Consolidated Income & Expenditure Account shows a surplus of just over £400,000, that needs to be taken in the context that we did not fund Annual Conference last year. If we had, that surplus figure would probably be half that at £200,000. If you also take into account that we are a National Officer light (there is a vacancy) the full on year costs of that are probably roundabout another £100,000. Then you can see by just those two items alone we would have probably ended up, if we had had those in place, with very little of a surplus at all.

The income in 2006 increased by just over £400,000 over the year 2005, and almost all of that, £363,000, was increases in contributions. What is pleasing to report is that the membership system now is more easily managed, more easily identifiable, and therefore the contributions income is much more easily assessed and able to be quantified.

We have decreased expenditure significantly by just over £1.5 million. Nearly all of that is attributable to the savings in administration of £1.2 million. It is important, Conference, to emphasise (and I cannot over emphasise this too much) that whilst the 2006 Consolidated Accounts show a carry forward surplus for 2006 of just over £2.7 million, the General Fund carried forward a deficit of £1.5 million. That is the real focus of my comments on behalf of the Executive Council.

It is the activity on the General Fund that properly reflects the financial position of our Union, the day to day activities. Conference will be aware that the Executive Council, through the Accident & Injury Fund Subcommittee, has taken steps to address the deficit in the AIF. That will be reported later during Conference.

The cash at bank as at 31st December 2006 showed, on the face of it, a healthier position than previous years at nearly £1.4 million. However, outstanding invoices totalled over £1.6 million. So if we had paid those outstanding invoices we would have had no money in the bank, and been overdrawn by some £250,000.

Conference, President, we have started to turn the corner and halt the upward trend in expenditure, but we need to continue to maintain the downward trend in

some areas of expenditure on the General Fund. We need to continue the savings measures currently being undertaken within the General Fund. This is not a financial statement that says we are broke; nor is it a financial statement that says we can no longer function as a proactive Trade Union. It is, Conference, a financial statement that reflects the campaigning work we have been forced to do to safeguard our members' pay and conditions of service, and that we will continue to do, whatever the constraints. We will continue to manage the Union's finances in a way that provides a sound financial structure for our members and all the regions.

Finally, President, I would like to offer my thanks and that of the Executive Council to the EC Finance Subcommittee for their diligent work over the past two years, to thank the Accounts Department, particularly Nigel the accounts manager, and Stuart for their work, to thank our Auditors, Hard Dowdy (Tim and Nigel are here this morning from the auditors) for their assistance during the past two years. Finally and not least, the Regional Treasurers for their understanding and support in ensuring that wherever possible we have been able to manage the accounts on a prudent and sound financial basis.

On behalf of the Executive Council I move the accounts for 2005 and 2006 and the Financial Statement. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mike. Question from the back.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

Morning, Conference, two questions on the Financial Statement, please. First of all, I note with concern that the amounts paid by the Union for trade union leave – in other words, to pay for our Officials' wages while they do Official Union business – went up from £432,000 in 2004 to nearly £900,000 in 2005, to £1,026,000 in 2006. Obviously, that's of great concern. Historically, we've always attempted to get our Officials paid release from the employers. We are undertaking official work in collective bargaining, industrial relations, which we all know is of benefit to everyone. So I don't know whether the Union/Executive has given any concern or any further consideration to this. I think we should. I certainly don't think that we can afford to go down the road of expecting the Union to pick up all the tabs on the cost of Officials. We could not fund it. In any case, it would undermine the purpose for which we're here. That is the first point.

The second point is – and this is meant with no disrespect whatsoever – on page 180 in the Financial Statement the salaries listed for the National Officials

Day One – 9th May

gives the General Secretary's salary at the end of 2006 as £64,789. My personal view is I don't care what our Officials are paid as long as they're paid an agreed rate, the rate for the job. That is what we would argue in the workplace. Certainly, Matt came to office on the basis that he would take a definition of an average wage across the UK Fire Service. We did have an explanation about that a while back. I'm not precious about this, but I certainly would note that that figure has increased. If we're not going to have that as an issue within the Union, fine. If we are, I just think it needs to be clear. Thanks very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Were there other questions on the Financial Statement? No. Mike, are you going to respond to any of that?

ACTING NATIONAL TREASURER:

I think certainly the latter question is a matter for the General Secretary, and probably the first question as well. I note what Dave is saying in terms of the rising cost to the Union of trade union leave, but that unfortunately is the world that we're living in in terms of the Fire Authorities not releasing our Officials under the previous arrangements that we had for paid leave. I am sure the General Secretary might want to add one or two points to that.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mike. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, Mike. In terms of the second point that Dave raised first in terms of my own position. I think Dave made reference to the fact that there was an explanation provided in E bulletin on that some time ago. I will pledge to Conference to give a repeat account of that, and an explanation of that, into the E bulletin again to explain the answer to Dave's question. The position is that the situation is as it was in relation to 2005 and has continued subsequently.

In relation to trade union leave, I think it is an important point that Dave raises. Clearly what has happened is that employers around the country seem to have got together and attempted to milk the Fire Brigades Union for all it's worth. There have been large numbers of Fire Authorities where we previously had arrangements for people on full time release doing important trade union work, which also benefits the Fire Service as a whole, and suddenly Fire Authority after Fire Authority comes in and hits us with a bill: we want the salary reimbursed; we want national insurance contributions; we want

employers' pension contributions paid by the Fire Brigades Union.

I have to say I think it's an absolutely and utter disgrace from employers when they talk about partnership working and they try to penalise people who are doing a basic job on behalf of Firefighters within their employment and on behalf of the Fire Service as a whole. *(Applause)*

I think there are even cases (and we will explore this issue) where employers, in my view, are in breach of the requirements of the Grey Book about paid time off to attend National Joint Council meetings. We will be taking that up. We will be putting together negotiating positions to take into individual Fire & Rescue Authorities to put a case to our employers that they need to improve time off facilities in terms of the charges that they're placing on the Union.

As a more general point, I think you've probably experienced it in your own individual Fire & Rescue Authorities, we're seeing a more general attack on facilities at the same time. It's an absolute disgrace. They talk about modernisation, they talk about partnership. It's about time they put those words into action. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now call the Executive Council Policy Statement on Finance with amendment from West Midlands, Resolution 26 Motoring Expenses from Shropshire, and Resolution 28 Union Finances, in the same debate. All can carry. The Executive Council are opposing the West Midlands amendment. Can I ask Matt to move the Executive Council Policy Statement on Finance which of course the Executive Council are supporting.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. I never had Mike Smith down as a technological whiz kid, but he showed us a thing or two with his Power Point presentation!

Of course, it is extremely difficult to make the issue of finances in any way interesting or gripping. I don't suppose I'm going to make any difference here. But it is absolutely important; it's central to what we do as a trade union. I think that Mike's contribution was quite measured. There has been a number of difficulties we've experienced in relation to finance, but there have also been a number of steps forward that we have taken. I think in general we can be extremely positive about the direction that we are taking in relation to finances. Our accounts are open. They are published in the Annual Report. Anybody who wants to see our accounts can see them for themselves.

Day One – 9th May

We've faced difficulties on a number of fronts, and we've taken on those challenges and made a number of important decisions. I want to echo something that Mike said at the end of his Power Point presentation there.

That this is a Union which hasn't gone away. I know the employers paid a lot of attention to our accounts over the past couple of years. My message to the employers is: we're building a war chest. If we need to campaign, we'll campaign. The resources will be there to take on campaigns and to defend our members when and where necessary.

I think it was Napoleon who described finance as the sinews of war. If you like, the Fire Brigades Union and our financial strategy is about building up a war chest to defend our members, to defend their pay, and to defend their conditions of service. We've taken that approach to the Union's funds.

It has required some new approaches to the issue of finance. We've introduced a number of new measures. New control measures at Head Office to monitor expenditure very closely. A new system of budgeting so that we can actually start to plan ahead properly for the future, to plan our education, our campaigning and our other activities. We've undertaken a sharp examination of everything that we do. We've looked at whether we can do it better, and we've looked at whether we can do it more cost effectively. A huge amount of work has gone on in relation to finance over the last 18 months or so.

During 2005 we took some important and some very difficult decisions. We cancelled some education events, for example. We significantly tightened up on a whole number of areas of expenditure. That caused difficulties. I know there was concern about the education decision. I know that in Regions the approach we've taken to the Imprest system has caused difficulties for Regions, and in particular for Regional Treasurers. I want again to congratulate the Regional Treasurers because I think they've been outstanding in being able to cope with that new situation, again adopting the same approach that we've used at National level to improve the finances at Regional level.

The truth is that if we don't have the funds there we can't undertake the activities that we need to do. So we've undertaken that thorough review of all areas of our finance and we've made some very significant progress. Some of that was demonstrated in Mike's introduction. Once we turned that corner, once we could see that the deficits were being eliminated, we didn't stop there. We were able to continue, we have continued, through the work of the Finance Subcommittee to look at other areas of work. Trade union leave, as Dave rightly said, is one of those that we are going to continue to look at. That means discussions

with the employers, that means looking at ways of making improvements for the Union as a whole, and particularly in relation to the Union's finances.

In all of this we're guided by the need to ensure that our members get value for money. Our members, let's face it, pay a very high contribution rate as trade union members. They need to know that that money is being carefully managed. Mike mentioned it and I want to echo it. He thanked the Finance Subcommittee for their work. They put in a lot of work, together with people at Head Office, in addressing these issues and in preparing the Document that is in front of you today.

This Document comes out of those discussions. We're asking you to consider just one small area of expenditure at this stage. That's the reimbursement of expenses to Officials. Our approach to this issue has been to plan ahead, to try to simplify things, and to move towards greater equality among Officials.

In terms of planning ahead, we believe that we need to ensure that our expenditure in this area is within the bounds of what we can afford, and the proposals that are in front of you are within the bounds of what we can afford. So what we're proposing in terms of the one of the changes at this time is that there would not be automatic increases in relation to some of those allowances to Officials.

That's a departure from what existed in the 2001 Policy, commonly known as the Red Book. We will aim to increase certain areas of expenditure, but what we're saying to Conference is we need to monitor carefully during the year our finances, our balances, so that if we bring increases forward they will be increases that you know we can afford. That's the approach we've taken in the Document.

We've tried secondly, as I say, to simplify things. We've reviewed a number of rates and we've tried to reduce them, to simplify how Officials can claim reimbursements. If this Document is agreed, we'll also look at trying to simplify the forms that we use in terms of the number of forms and the information required on forms. I know I hate filling in forms, I'm sure lots of you hate filling in forms as well. So we'll try to make it as simple as possible.

Thirdly, as I say, we've moved towards a greater equality in terms of Officials. The approach that we've taken is to say that if we're attending the same meeting we'll get the same rate of reimbursements. That seems a fair way of proceeding to us.

There are obviously some continuing differences within the Document that is in front of you, most notably in relation to car allowances, reflecting different levels of

Day One – 9th May

responsibility. But again, we have started to look at this. The biggest proportional increase in relation to car allowance is to Brigade Officials. We're fully aware of increases in workloads at Brigade level as a result of some of the changes that the President referred to in his opening Statement to Conference. We've tried to acknowledge that and we've tried to take account of that in the proposals that are in front of you in the Finance Document.

Some of you may not think we've gone far enough. We've done it in terms of current affordability. But I will give this pledge to Conference. We will continue to look to see if further increases can be made next year, particularly in relation to Brigade level Officials.

So the approach that we have taken is cautious. We believe that we need to be cautious on this issue. We have been through some major financial turmoil. As Mike has explained, we've probably turned the corner now. The approach we've taken is a step by step approach, and this is not the finished product.

I know that one question that was asked from the Regional Officials' meeting yesterday was about the issue of guidance in relation to London meetings. What that refers to is that because the paper introduces different payments for different categories of meetings, we will need to issue guidance on what category particular National meetings should be dealt with, so that people attending those meetings are clear about what the rate of reimbursement will be. Hopefully that clarifies that question.

In terms of budgeting, we have extended budgeting to a whole number of areas, but it's likely that it will be another couple of years before we've extended that budgeting approach to all aspects of the Union's finances. We ask Conference to bear with us, to allow us that time, to give us that remit to proceed with that work and therefore accept that the Document in front of you is not the finished product.

The other concern that I believe Conference has is in relation to the Executive Council making decisions. Obviously in 2001 we brought a detailed Finance Document in the form of the Red Book to Conference. Some delegates may have concerns that what we're proposing in the Document here is that increases will be agreed by the Executive Council following discussion by the Finance Subcommittee and following recommendations made by myself. Again, I think that is necessary because this is a project that is only partially finished. What I can assure Conference is that the recommendations that we make will be put into the Annual Report. You will therefore be able to scrutinise them both at the time and at Annual Conference and, if necessary, through the normal procedures of

Conference. You will be able, if you so choose, to reject them.

The other reason that we need to do that is that there are a couple of issues that are highlighted in the Document which we're still undertaking work on. We're looking at ways, better ways, to provide mobile phones. The mobile phone has become an essential tool of trade union officials. We're looking at better ways of providing mobile phones. That may mean a National contract; we don't know as yet. We're looking into that.

We're looking at ways of providing better reimbursement in relation to access to the Internet. Again, email is an essential tool these days of trade union officials. We need to be able to proceed with making those changes once we've identified the best and most cost effective way of doing it. So again, that's the approach that we've taken in relation to the Statement that is in front of you. We want to be able to move quickly as appropriate and implement those changes.

Conference, this is a brief Statement. I am extremely pleased with it. I don't think we need to over-complicate the issue of finance. We're going to try to simplify things. This is one of the steps towards doing that. It does, however, reflect a great deal of work and a great deal of progress on the issue of the Union's finances. I'm confident that with your support our financial position can continue to improve and we can continue to build on the foundations that the acting National Treasurer has outlined. I believe that if this approach is supported by Conference, if the Finance Subcommittee continues its work, then we can look forward to a sound future financially for the Fire Brigades Union. I move the Statement.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can we now have GMC to second the Statement, please. Sorry, it's Lancashire. Easy mistake!

BRO MARTIN GALLAGHER (Lancashire):

President, Conference, I'm not sure how to take that! We're quite happy to support the Statement on Finance. We oppose the West Midlands amendment. Clearly, it has all been said. We recognise the hard work that the Finance Subcommittee have undertaken over the last few years following what was obviously a very difficult and expensive pay dispute. We appreciate all the hard work that they have undertaken to make a real improvement in the finances of the Union. We recognise that this is a start. This Policy is a way of continuing that hard work. So please support. Thank you.

Day One – 9th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. I now ask West Midlands, please, to move their amendment to the Policy Statement.

BRO MICK HENN (West Midlands):

President, Conference, the EC Policy Statement is to simplify payments of car allowances. On simplifying them they have increased the allowances for the vast majority of those who have credit cards to pay for petrol. They say in Section 4 that in 2007 they're going to look into the Internet and telephone allowances. But nowhere in that do they say they're going to look into car allowances. I remember back when the then Treasurer Brian Joyce brought the Red Book to us. He said: we need to get this Red Book passed to get the taxman off our back, then we can move forward. We would then be looking into allowances.

West Midlands came back in 2003 and asked where we were with that review into the allowances. We were told this is not the right time. We're coming back now in 2007. Where is this review? We don't know. For me it's very simple. We align it to the NJC rates. Every year it's reviewed, every year it's changed, simple. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. Is there a seconder for the West Midlands amendment? (*Formally seconded*) OK, I'll ask the General Secretary to give the Executive Council opposition to the amendment.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference, the EC would ask Conference to reject the amendment from the West Midlands, or preferably for West Midlands to consider withdrawing it. I've outlined the approach that we've taken. It's a cautious, step by step approach. I think if you look at Mike's Power Point slides you will have seen some of the serious financial problems that we've been through. It's there in Annual Accounts. £1.5 million deficit on the General Fund that we've had to turn round. We don't believe we're in a position to implement the proposals in the West Midlands amendment. I will give a guarantee that we will take up the issue, we'll consider the issue of reimbursement of those rates, but we don't believe we're in a position to do that this Conference.

The simple facts are that the West Midlands proposal would virtually double the costs of reimbursement of car expenses at that rate, and we simply can't afford to do that. So I would strongly urge Conference to reject that, or preferably I would ask West Midlands to withdraw.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Some of you may have wondered who the two gentlemen sitting on the platform behind the Acting National Treasurer during his speech were. They are not in fact his bodyguards; they are Nigel Gooch and Tim Walters who work for our auditors, Hard Dowdy. I would like to welcome them on your behalf to this Conference. (*Applause*)

I will now ask the mover of Resolution 26 to move the Resolution, Shropshire.

Resolution 26 – MOTORING EXPENSES

With the massive increase in petrol prices and insurance premiums; this Conference demands an immediate review by the Executive Council, with a view to increasing the out-of-pocket motoring expenses paid to lay officials and representatives.

SHROPSHIRE

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

President, Conference, I am moving the first Resolution to Conference 2007. The Pay Formula, there's a good idea. Link the level of pay to something that automatically increases every year. You would think as a Union the policies that we wish from our employers we would impose on ourselves. Would it not be easier all round if the prices of our allowances, etc, were linked to the prices that they are comparable to?

I remember in Conference 2002 the debate surrounding the EC Policy Statement The Future Structure and Organisation of the FBU which is the Red Book. That caused quite a stir at the time. I also remember being assured at the time that the anomalies in it would be put right in time. One of these anomalies appears to have been the mileage allowance. In the Document the honoraria and car allowances were linked to other things: qualified pay and the retail price index respectively. That made sense to everybody. It just kept increasing as other things went up. But the same cannot be said for the mileage allowance. It was rated at 25p in 2002 and it's still 25p.

Surely we can put this anomaly right now. Clearly, since 2002 the cost of motoring has risen. According to the AA the price of petrol in 2002 was 71p a litre; it is now 89.5p. That is an increase of 26%. The price of diesel was 75.4p it is now 92.7p and that is a rise of 23%. Over the same period, depreciation of cars has also risen 12.5% and 9.7% for petrol cars and diesel cars respectively. Over the same period the overall running cost of a diesel car has risen by 19%. By that sort of reckoning the mileage allowance rate should have gone up by about 6p.

Day One – 9th May

So the idea of this Resolution is not to try to make being a Representative of this Union a lucrative business. I know that has been an argument in the past. But it is certainly to keep people doing the vocation of this job, and it's about making sure that people are not out of pocket when they do the work for this Trade Union. So I would ask you please to support the Resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Is there a seconder for Resolution 26? *(Formally seconded)* The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I ask the General Secretary to outline the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. The qualification reflects what I've said already. We welcome the Shropshire delegation drawing our attention to the issue. I think that's very welcome. I will give a commitment from the Executive Council that we will take this issue to the Finance Subcommittee. We will look at the issue that is raised: motoring expenses. And we will look to whether and when we can make that increase.

The qualification is the general one I've made: that has to be done within the bounds of affordability. What we don't want to do is agree policies which, at the end of the financial year, dump us back into the red. I am sure Conference will accept that. That is the qualification. With that we support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now ask Berkshire to move Resolution 28 on Union Finances.

Resolution 28 – UNION FINANCES

Annual Conference acknowledges the improvements in the Union's financial position over the last 2 years in placing the Union finances in a stronger position to face the continuous campaigning and work as a trade union in representing our membership in all spheres of the workplace, and political, trade union, socialist and international movement.

Our acknowledgement is not without concerns of the vital elements of budgeting and accountability of our finances to ensure a strong long-term financial basis required to continue as an important and independent organisation within the Fire and Rescue Service and trade union movement.

Following the 2002 'Red Book' of the FBU Financial structure it is 5 years since this was agreed we

therefore instruct the Executive Council to review the Union finances and the current levels of all Union expenditure to report and make recommendations to the 2008 Annual Conference on the Union's current and future financial strategy.

BERKSHIRE

BRO MARK STOLLERY (Berkshire):

President, brothers and sisters, first time speaking. *(Applause)*

Union Finances. Two years ago at our last Conference delegates were warned of the financial plight the Union was facing. National Treasurers over many years have stated at Annual Conferences the Union's financial difficulties. This time the reality came home to roost. The consequence of our financial position was cutbacks and squeezes in all areas of Union expenditure and organisation. This period did hamper our ability to be an effective Trade Union. All Officials continued to do our jobs in representing our members. We continued to defend our pensions, oppose the ludicrous decisions on Regional Controls which still hasn't gone away, and defended our Firefighting and Control members' jobs which remain under threat. We opposed Government, CFO's, Fire Authorities and Regional Management Board decisions which endanger our Service and threaten our members.

Throughout this period of tightening our belts, in West Midlands, Suffolk, Hertfordshire and Merseyside they defended their services and conditions of service. The General Secretary and the National Treasurer have introduced methods to address the Union finances, and their efforts should be applauded.

The question still needs to be asked: why did we get into this situation in the first place? Our Union should never face these types of circumstances again without inbuilt financial safeguards. If we are to remain a strong independent Trade Union we need a strong and sound financial base. It is to represent our members in all spheres of the Trade Union, Socialist and Internationalist Movements, and it is for our long term future. We cannot continue with the previous perceived gung-ho approach: spend, spend, spend and rely on increases in membership, the contributions from them, to bail us out of financial deficits. This Union requires a cautious, sensible and practical financial approach, introducing budgetary elements and a stronger degree of accountability throughout the Union.

The intention of our Resolution is to focus our Union finances in a coherent and accountable manner, and review the decision of the 2002 Conference whereby the Red Book was introduced, and instruct the Executive Council to review the Union finances and the

Day One – 9th May

current levels of all expenditure. We ask that recommendations are made to the 2008 Annual Conference, so this Union has a long term future financial strategy to meet the demands of a strong, independent and professional Trade Union. Thank you. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Mark. Is there a seconder for Resolution 28? No seconder? (*Formally seconded*) OK, the Executive Council are supporting Resolution 28. So the EC Policy Statement, the amendment, Resolutions 26 and 28 are now up for debate. I will now put them to the vote. First, I will put the West Midlands amendment to the Executive Council to the vote. Sorry, I didn't ask the movers of the Resolutions. Right, there is no right of reply needed. I will now put the West Midlands amendment to the EC Statement on Finance to the vote. The Executive Council are opposing. Can I see all those in favour, please, of the West Midlands amendment. Thank you. Can I see those against? That falls.

I now put the Executive Council Policy Statement on Finance to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please. Can I see any against? That is carried.

I put Resolution 26 from Shropshire on Motoring Expenses to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That is carried.

I now put Resolution 28 Union Finances from Berkshire to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That is carried.

I now gives me great pleasure to introduce our Fraternal guest from the Trade Unions Congress, its General Secretary Brendan Barber. For Brendan it's a chance to return to his home town. I am sure he enjoys coming to our Conference as much as we enjoy inviting him here. Brendan Barber. (*Formally seconded*)

BRO BRENDAN BARBER (General Secretary TUC):

Many thanks indeed for those words of welcome. It is a real pleasure for me to bring greetings and solidarity to Conference on behalf of the TUC.

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President, and also by putting on record my thanks to your predecessor, Ruth Winters, for the outstanding service that she gave to this Union. (*Applause*) She was a powerful advocate on behalf of the Union. I pay tribute to all of her contribution.

We also applaud all those Firefighters who've fought so hard in this past year to defend jobs, defend services, and defend communities. No-one more so than in this

part of the country in Merseyside. Despite quite clear intimidation from management, despite a deep rooted culture of bullying, you stood up for what you believed in: fighting against a savage programme of cuts, winning the hearts and minds of local people, and securing important concessions as a result. For that, Merseyside Firefighters should be proud. (*Applause*)

Of course, the past 12 months have also made the headlines for other reasons. This year we remember FBU members Geoff Whicker and Brian Wembridge from East Sussex – committed family men, respected colleagues, dedicated professionals. When the call came that fateful day last December they were among the first on the scene at Marley's Farm, doing their jobs with skill and with courage. When the fireworks exploded they paid the ultimate price.

What happened that afternoon was a stark reminder of the risks that you face day in, day out, protecting property, protecting people, saving lives. The service you provide is difficult, demanding and dangerous. The work you do is uniquely challenging. As we saw in London on 7th July 2005, you are sometimes faced with the most desperate of circumstances. It is absolutely right that you should be fairly rewarded for what you do.

As you know, this is a critical time for your membership. The pay agreement that you reached in the aftermath of your dispute is due to run out in a matter of weeks. With a new settlement due in July the FBU, I think, is right to look for the stability of another long-term deal, right to seek a continuation of the formula, and right to insist that that formula remains open to review.

The \$64,000 question, of course, is what response you will get from the Government. You certainly have a powerful case to make. Time and again Firefighters have been expected to adapt to change, update skills, respond to new challenges. The past few years have arguably seen the biggest upheavals in the history of the Fire Service, an apparently endless cycle of reform, restructuring, reorganisation. It goes without saying, I think, none of us are opposed to change, to genuine modernisation. All of us here today want to see a Fire Service fit for the 21st century. But the FBU has every right to question the implication of the untried, untested, uncostered reforms imposed from above.

Think about IRMP's. Yes, they've been with us for a few years now and the impact is becoming clear. From Suffolk to the West Midlands, from Staffordshire to Cleveland, IRMP's have often been used as justification for damaging cuts, in effect replacing National standards of cover with a post code lottery. Just think, for example, about what's happening in Hertfordshire. Around 40 posts lost, Fire Stations closed in Radlett and Bovingdon, services reduced in Watford, Hemel

Day One – 9th May

Hempstead, St. Alban's and Stevenage – the scene of tragedy just two years ago. This, in the aftermath of Bunsfield, the biggest fire anywhere in Europe since the end of the Second World War. You couldn't make it up!

Little wonder, then, that the Select Committee for the Department of Communities and Local Government was not convinced that IRMP's were suited to responding to a major catastrophic incident. Last July, of course, the same Committee was also highly critical of the Government's other flagship reform: Regional Control Centres, now, three years late, massively over budget. Sadly, they are but the latest in a long line of high profile failures. As the National Audit Office concluded a couple of years ago: major technology projects instigated by the Government have been characterised by overspend, delays, poor performance and abandonment at major cost.

In the past two years alone the IT costs associated with Fire Control have risen by over 50%. Indeed, the report you commissioned from the Institute for Public Finance made it clear that the financial case for Regionalisation is falling apart before our eyes. It said the lack of transparency about the business case "leaves a lot to be desired". It questioned the level of saving the Government plans will actually deliver. It suggested that we revisit whether Regional Controls are the best option. Hardly what you would call a ringing endorsement! In fact, things are so bad that even the Chief Fire Officers' Association is now talking of the "huge challenges" posed by Regionalisation.

So what we need now is a fundamental rethink from the Government. Ministers need to look at the evidence again, to focus on what really works. Sadly, the botched reform of the Fire Service is symptomatic of the Government's wider agenda for our public services. Naturally, we welcome the huge investments Labour has made, but the process of reform has now reached a crunch point. The Government has a fundamental choice to make: either to continue with a discredited, market based programme that commands neither the backing of the workforce nor the support of the public, or to take a step back and to work with Staff, Unions and Service users to create the world class public services that we all want to see. *(Applause)*

I think if Labour is to have a real chance of winning the next election it simply has to take that latter course. Indeed, it's no exaggeration to say that politically we've now reached a defining moment. As last week's elections showed, the Government has been losing support. In the next couple of days the Prime Minister is likely to announce the date of his departure. The challenge facing his successor will be enormous: reconnecting with millions of lost voters, rebuilding trust in the Government, and articulating a positive,

progressive agenda that captures the imagination of ordinary working people. That means developing a new approach to our public services. That means rethinking our foreign policy that has tied this country to the United States so disastrously. *(Applause)* Above all, that means putting the fight against inequality centre stage.

None of us should underestimate Labour's record on the economy, but not everybody has shared in this new prosperity. Despite 50 consecutive quarters of economic growth, despite some redistribution, despite some attempt to dismantle the destructive legacy of Thatcherism, we remain one of the most unequal countries anywhere in the developed world. Today the top 1% of the British population owns 23% of all of the wealth, yet the bottom half owns just 1%. This is a country where FTSE 100 directors award themselves average pay rises of 28% then complain about the minimum wage being inflationary. This is a country where captains of industry enjoy telephone number pensions, then close down decent occupational schemes for the rest of us. This is a country where the partners of private equity firms enjoy riches beyond the dreams of avarice, then leave workers to pick up the pieces of the corporate wreckage they leave behind. All this and more, the inevitable consequence of a Labour market some like to boast is the most flexible in Europe.

So it's clear. We need action to tackle greed at the top, to provide security in the middle, and to eradicate exploitation at the bottom; a bold agenda to improve working life for all, moving from a minimum wage to a living wage, bringing employment rights in our country into line with those elsewhere, and recalibrating an employment relationship that remains fundamentally skewed in favour of the bosses.

This is not just a challenge for the Government. There's a real job of work here for the Trade Union Movement too. If we are to secure a better deal for British workers don't we also need to raise our game? Yes, we stopped the decline of the 80s and 90s, but we've yet to start really growing again. At a time of economic growth and high employment that's simply not good enough. So our task now is to reach out to those missing millions, to reflect the true diversity of the UK workforce, to rebuild trade union organisation where it's needed most.

Nobody pretends it will be easy. Renewal never is. But none of us should lose sight of the potential prize: a brighter future for our Movement, a better future for working people, and justice and dignity for all. Let's get to it. Have a great Conference. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Brendan. I will now ask Matt to speak, who has something for you, I believe.

Day One – 9th May

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Brendan, as Mick said in introducing you, it's always a great pleasure to have you here. I'm sure that the words that you've brought to Conference will echo with the Delegates here about modernisation, about what modernisation has meant to many of our people on the ground, what it has meant for the Fire Service and the service we're able to provide to the public.

I think also Brendan has brought something of that wider perspective that the President referred to, and the need for this Union to engage in that wider discussion about the whole of the Trade Union Movement and the challenges that face us as a whole. So on behalf of Conference, Brendan, I would like to thank you and again give you a gift. I think you've got a collection of these from us now. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Conference. That now gives us an appropriate point to stop for tea and coffee. It's just gone ten past 11, and I would urge you all to be back in your seats prompt for 11.30 please. Thank you.

(Tea break)

THE PRESIDENT:

We will reconvene Conference. I call on Steve Shelton, the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee to give a further Standing Orders report. Steve.

CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee has received and accepted a request to hold a fringe meeting headed "Is Another Columbia Happening?" to be held in the Bold Hotel at 5.30 pm this evening. A flyer will be distributed after this report.

The Standing Orders Committee has received and accepted a request to hold a fringe meeting headed "Britain after Blair".

THE PRESIDENT:

Can delegates please not make so much noise when they are returning to the Conference Hall. It is now 11.35 and we want to reconvene Conference. Thank you.

CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

The Standing Orders Committee has received and accepted a request to hold a fringe meeting headed "Britain after Blair" to be held at the Tea Bar, opposite

the Floral Hall at 6 pm this evening. A flyer will be distributed after this report.

A request was received from the Working Class Movement Library to show to Conference a DVD about the Movement. This will be shown over lunch today in the Conference Hall. Thank you, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is the Standing Orders report agreed? AGREED

We now move on to Section E the Accident & Injury Fund Paragraphs E1 and E2. Paragraphs E1 and E2. No-one on that.

I now call the Executive Council proposed alterations to Rule 30, Resolution 13 Accident & Injury Fund from Northern Ireland which will be taken in the same debate. If the Executive Council Rule Changes carry, then Resolution 13 will fall. I ask the General Secretary to move the Executive Council's proposed alterations to Rule 30.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. If I can just take a moment to apologise for Paul Woolstenholmes, who is the National Officer responsible for the administration of the Accident & Injury Fund. He is also organising Conference and he is busy with Standing Orders business, so I get the joyous task of dealing with another financial issue!

I will be fairly brief, Conference. The 2005 Conference agreed a number of Rule Changes in relations to the Accident & Injury Fund. There was a discussion at Conference, there was debate around the issue and I will remind you that Conference took that decision to make those Rule Changes. Those Rule Changes substantially increased the benefits available under the Accident & Injury Fund.

Subsequently, it emerged through our monitoring of the Union's finances and the monitoring of the Accident & Injury Fund that a number of problems were identified. The increases in the rate of expenditure under the Accident & Injury Fund meant that the Accident & Injury Fund produced a growing deficit. In turn, that began to have an impact on the overall cash flow of the Union. It became clear that measures would have to be taken to address these difficulties, and as a result the Management Committee of the Accident & Injury Fund began to meet to consider what needed to be done. In that discussion the Management Committee consulted with the Finance Department at Head Office, with the National Officer, and with our auditors who provided

Day One – 9th May

separate advice on this issue, Hard Dowdy.

It is as a result of that, that changes were introduced in accordance with the Rule. Changes were introduced by the Management Committee and were endorsed subsequently by the Executive Council. That change was introduced from 24th August 2006. The Rule Changes which are before you today incorporate those changes introduced last August into the Rules of the Fund.

The general approach which has been taken is that there are a number of reductions compared with the 2005 Rule Changes. However, Conference, in general the benefits available under the Accident & Injury Fund in these proposals are higher than those which existed previously. For example, in 2004, prior to the changes, the death of member benefit was 70% of a Qualified Firefighters' salary with 5% per child. The proposals here would be 100% and 20% per child. So although there are changes compared with 2005, nevertheless we believe there are increases in benefits compared with the situation that existed prior to the 2005 changes.

The other issue which has been addressed is in terms of temporary disablement and the effects of the Rule Change in the view of the Management Committee and in the view of the Executive Council is that the financial support would be available when members most need it, ie when they face a reduction in pay.

The Rule Changes are fairly simple and straightforward. We believe that they put the Accident & Injury Fund on a sound financial footing while at the same time providing increased benefit to members compared with what existed prior to 2005. On that basis, President, I move the Rule Changes and urge Conference to support them.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Is the Executive Council Proposed alterations to Rule 30 seconded? (*Formally seconded*)

I now call Resolution 13 Accident & Injury Fund Northern Ireland to the rostrum, please.

Resolution 13 – ACCIDENT & INJURY FUND

Conference instructs the Executive Council, at its first meeting following Conference 2007, to take the necessary actions in order to reinstate Accident and Injury Fund benefits to the levels payable immediately prior to Conference 2004. This change is to be applied retrospectively to all AIF claims submitted since 24th August 2006.

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO PETER CUMMINGS (NIFB):

President, Conference, I am moving Resolution 13 on the Accident & Injury Fund. Comrades, in Conference 2005 a number of amendments to the Accident & Injury Fund Rule 30 were moved by the EC and were warmly received by Conference, although it would only be fair to say that there were a number of eyebrows raised at the size of some of the increases. But there was a general recognition that our members would substantially benefit. It should be remembered that at that time Conference was told that the changes had been costed and that the Fund could sustain the higher financial burden anticipated.

But by August 2006 it was necessary to change the AIF again. No need to list them here, as you will be familiar with them, but the most difficult change, the most unpopular and the most troublesome was the change to temporary disablement. In effect, paying nothing for the first 12 months of an absence due to an on duty injury, as if the FBU was not already in enough turmoil, as if our members – many of them – feeling just a wee bit disillusioned with trade unionism, and our membership needing a bit of confidence to be restored.

The EC eroded a significant benefit. Conference, we are calling on you to simply restore the AIF benefits to what they were prior to the 2005 changes, to the levels that the Union could cope with, to the levels that members realistically and reasonably expected. I think we owe that to our members, particularly those who sustain injury or illness on duty as a result of their work since 24th August 2006. They are the members particularly let down by this volte face.

There is little more to be said. Finances have improved, the wolf has gone from the door. Please support Resolution 13 in the interests of your members. Conference, I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Resolution 13? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council Rule Change and Resolution 13 are now open for debate.

BRO STEVE LOFTHOUSE (West Yorkshire):

We are supporting the EC and opposing Northern Ireland. It's a bit déjà vu, this. I can remember not many Conferences ago we were stood here and we were taking advice again from the EC, asking us to support changes to the Accident & Injury Fund. Once again, they're asking us to support those changes because it is in the interests of our members.

However, I'm not an accountant; I'm a Firefighter, but I

Day One – 9th May

think a couple of Conferences ago I could have given the same advice to get the same result as what we have now. I really do believe that the EC have got to make this work and got to get it right. Our members are getting a little bit tired of believing them. We've got to produce the goods; we've got to make this Fund work, because it's for our members, this. I ask you to support the EC.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anybody else on those two items?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

President, Conference, much as it grieves me to be supporting the EC on this – because I, as a Brigade Official, was deeply concerned about the reduction in payments to our members as a result of the change implemented last year, and about the way that they were implemented, nevertheless we have to face the cold fact which is that we had signed up to stuff that we couldn't deliver on.

If you look at Page 90 in the EC Annual Report you will see that for 2006 the total contributions that came in on the AIF amounted to £1,200,000. But the amount that was paid out was over £2,300,000 – over £1 million deficit in one year – clearly not sustainable. I think when the changes were made back in 2005 not enough thought had been given to some of them. For example, I wasn't even aware that if a member died and they had dependent children then there would be a further payment of 125% of the Firefighters' salary for each dependent child. So it doesn't need you to be a great mathematician to work out how much cost there would be to the Union if a member dies and has two dependent children, for example. You are looking at 375% of a Firefighter's wage for one fatality. Much as that is a tragic incident, it is simply something the Union could not sustain.

What I'd like to see for the future is that we do undertake the review, we definitely do need a review. I think we have to now consolidate the changes that were made in a way that none of us would have wanted to see: to see, frankly, a Statement coming out from the EC automatically and unilaterally imposing changes. That's not the way we should be doing business. It is not the way this Union should function.

We have to now underwrite those changes with the Rule Changes, but let's also look to the future, get back on track to what the AIF should be. It shouldn't be something that is a get rich policy for the members, clearly it's not. But it's got to deliver where it's needed. Support the EC.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Older, wiser and supporting the Executive Council, a good move. Anybody else on those two items of business? I will ask Matt to give the Executive's opposition to Resolution 13.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Just on a couple of those points. The facts are that the Rule Changes in 2005 were published, delegates did have the opportunity to read, discuss and debate those and there was a decision of Conference in the first place.

In terms of the Northern Ireland resolution, the approach that we've taken is that, yes, a problem emerged, those problems were addressed, and as far as those problems were concerned, they were resolved by the measures that the Executive Council took. That may not be ideal, but the Rule is quite clear that the Accident & Injury Fund Management Committee has that power under Rule to make those amendments, because the Management Committee has a responsibility to ensure the viability of the Fund. So everything that happened was within the Rules. It may be somewhat exceptional, but it was conducted and carried out within the Rules of the Union and within the Rules of the Fund.

Yes, I agree Dave, that it is not something that we want to see happening on a regular basis. I think the approach that has been taken is there was considerable work done in relation to the changes that were introduced last August and in terms of the Rule Change we have before us. In terms of that work continuing, I don't think there is any problem with us reviewing that over the course of the next year. Next year is a Rules Change Conference, and there may be improvements which we want to make to the Fund and the operation of the Fund, and we'll take that on board.

In terms of Northern Ireland, I think one unintended consequence of the Northern Ireland Resolution would be to require us to seek possible reimbursement from individuals of overpayments that we would have made, because rates which would have been reduced by returning to the pre-2005 rates would require us, in certain circumstances, to consider seeking from individuals who had benefited from the Fund, possible reimbursement.

In one recent case, for example, there would have been a £16,000 overpayment. I don't want to see us as a Trade Union going to people who we've paid benefits to under the Fund and seeking that money back. I don't think that would be acceptable.

We take on board the concerns that were raised by

Day One – 9th May

Northern Ireland and by other contributors to the debate, but we would urge Conference to reject the Northern Ireland resolution and support the Rule Changes.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Are Northern Ireland seeking the right to reply? No. It would be helpful, Tony, if you'd let us know. Going, going – just in time.

BRO PETER CUMMINGS (NIFB):

President, Conference I would just like to say that we are withdrawing Resolution 13, but we would like to come back next year to review the situation. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, that is helpful. I therefore put the Executive Council proposed Rule Changes to Rule 30 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Thank you. Can I see any against. That is clearly carried.

We now move to Emergency Resolution 3 on the topic of Iraq and the General Federation of Iraqi Workers to be moved by Greater Manchester.

I would like to welcome back to Annual Conference, Val Salmon. *(Applause)*

Emergency Resolution 3 – IRAQ – GFIW SUPPORT

The trade union movement in Iraq is the victim of a continuing campaign of targeting, torture and murder of its officials. As recently as March 2007 the General Secretary of the Mechanic Workers Union was abducted and murdered.

We call upon conference to condemn the continuing kidnappings, torture and murder of Iraqi Trade Union Officials, and demand that the General Secretary meets with the General Federation of Iraqi Workers so that the Fire Brigades Union may assist morally and materially in the following:

- 1. To make representation to the Iraqi authorities to ensure this recent outrage is fully investigated and that those responsible are detained and brought to justice.***
- 2. That immediate steps are taken to ensure that the deliberate targeting of trade unionists is stopped.***
- 3. To expose the inexplicable hostility from the US and Iraqi military forces towards Iraqi Trade***

Unionists.

- 4. That we join the GFIW in their bid for an apology for these unprovoked attacks, the return of confiscated items and financial compensation for damages caused.***
- 5. That we assist the GFIW in making representation to those responsible for the freezing of all union assets.***
- 6. That the Executive Council through the International Committee initiate a structured strategy to support the Trade Union movement in Iraq in consultation with the GFIW.***

GREATER MANCHESTER

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

I'd just like to thank Standing Orders for putting us on earlier in the day than we expected. Thank you.

Moving Emergency Resolution, Conference, everyone has the right to form and to join a trade union for the protection of their interests. That is Article 23 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a basic human right that is denied Iraqi trade unionists. On 30th March 2007 the body of Najim Abd-Jasem, General Secretary of the Mechanics Workers Union, was found three days after he was abducted by criminal militia – a further victim of a concerted campaign to eliminate the leadership of the newly formed independent and democratic trade union movement by sectarian militia and former Ba-athist security.

Najim Abd-Jasem lived in a very poor and ordinary working class area of Baghdad, possibly with no sanitation, electricity for perhaps two hours a day, running water for the fortunate ones, little or no money, a life with many hardships, perhaps a life we would not envy. Yet he had much to be proud of. He had a wife and four children.

The beliefs and principles that put him at great risk under the dictatorship of Saddam were simply to voice an opinion against Saddam's union which could result in beatings, prison or even death. He worked for the underground movement, fighting against the Ba-athist party for a free and democratic Iraq, for an independent union willing to unite all sectors of Iraqi society under the banner of trade unionism. He wished to see his family live in a decent and prosperous environment without the fears and oppression that he had experienced and fought most of his life against. Najim was one of the leading trade unionists who helped establish what has now become the General Federation of Iraqi Workers, after the fall of Saddam's dictatorship. He was elected as the General Secretary of the Mechanics Workers Union in late 2003.

Day One – 9th May

Trade union officials are being deliberately targeted, kidnapped, tortured and executed due to their trade union activities. Najim is not the first to be murdered. There are many children who no longer have the love of their father to comfort them, and wives who have to provide for those children without the men they married. We remember our friend Hadi Saleem, tortured and murdered in his home. These barbaric murders demonstrate the sectarian militia that formed the Ba-athist secret police, will continue to operate using the weapons of all cowards – those of fear and terror.

Najim was murdered for advancing the cause of social justice, equality and human rights. He wanted a free Iraq with lasting and genuine democracy with an independent trade union at its heart, a trade union that has suffered car bomb attacks, their premises being targeted recently resulting in injuries to many trade unionists. But we should not forget those who are building a better Iraq, there to protect and promote democracy in all its splendour under the flag of freedom.

American forces have now, on several occasions, raided the head office of the GFIW, unprovoked attacks which resulted in the destruction of buildings and contents. The few computers and faxes they possessed through donations were confiscated, officials arrested but released without charges being made against them. Unions are being deliberately kept out of the current central government in Baghdad. After decades of totalitarian government, ministers remain suspicious of independent unions. Saddam's ban on public sector organisation remains in place, including a union for Firefighters. Union assets are frozen due to a decree issued in 2005 which needs to be rescinded. The GFIW have been experiencing severe financial difficulties for several years and have to exist primarily on donations and goodwill.

These actions must be condemned by the Trade Union Movement of this and every country. Death and destruction is common within Iraq every day. We must not allow the world to be desensitised. We must support those who are suffering. We must fight for those who are unable to fight for themselves. We must be the voice of those trade unionists who can no longer speak. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Val. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution 3?

BRO PHIL JORDAN (Gloucestershire):

President, Conference, following on from Val there, this seconding speech is more just being done formally. Val laid out exactly what is happening, and it was quite a moving speech.

Comrades, attacks on the Trade Union Movement, attacks on any Trade Union Movement anywhere in the world are attacks on all of us in this room here today. *(Applause)*

Sadly, comrades, there are attacks going on, on trade unionists around the world. They are being attacked and they are being murdered. Attacked for doing what we take for granted. Freedom to express our views, freedom to represent our members, freedom to associate. Comrades, we should be disgusted and appalled. In fact, no words can truly describe how we should feel when we hear, as the Emergency Resolution has told us, that a General Secretary in Iraq was recently abducted and murdered. We should be horrified. And we should be thankful that our General Secretary is safe and secure to represent us, free from fear for his life.

Others aren't so lucky. Conference, we must condemn the continuing kidnappings, the tortures and the murders of the Iraqi trade union officials. The Emergency Resolution sets out what the FBU should be doing. It's the right thing to do, it's the moral thing to do, and it's the principled thing to do. Conference, I second Emergency Resolution 3 and urge you to support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Phil. The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I ask Matt to give the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks to Val and Phil. Phil in particular, for those comments about safety, I'm not sure how safe I am in the bars of Southport late at night this week, but we'll try!

I welcome the Emergency Resolution from GMC. I think it reflects some of the comments that the President made earlier about the need for this Conference and this Union to engage with wider issues and with International issues. It's been a strong tradition of this Union through many decades. The Annual Conference Final Agenda did not include any International issues, so I'm pleased to see this Emergency Resolution here before us.

I think both the mover and seconder outlined some of the horrors that have descended upon Iraq. I just want to remind Conference of another horror that was inflicted on Iraq. We saw, during the past year, Iraqi Firefighters shot by US troops engaging in response to an emergency call, something which we protested about to the US Embassy following that event.

I think this Resolution is in the best traditions of the

Day One – 9th May

Internationalism of the Fire Brigades Union. The one slight, very small, qualification that the Executive Council has is in relation to Point 6 of the Emergency Resolution. That is about the initiation of a structured strategy to support the Trade Union Movement. Of course, we will do that but that obviously would be part of the wider solidarity movement that we're involved in. The Fire Brigades Union would not engage in that solely in isolation but as part of the wider movement. With that qualification the Executive Council supports.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. It's open for debate. I put Emergency Resolution 3 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Thank you. Can I see any against. Any abstentions? That is *carried unanimously*.

I now ask Greater Manchester to move Emergency Resolution 4 on the topic of the Tragic Legacy of Agent Orange.

Emergency Resolution 4 – THE TRAGIC LEGACY OF AGENT ORANGE

Conference applauds the continuing works of the Medical and Scientific Aid to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia Association.

We also congratulate them on their continuing fight to seek financial support for victims and families still affected by the dispersal of Agent Orange.

In February 2007 MSAVLC requested support from trade unions for a campaign for generous support from governments. Generous financial support of a level that only governments can give. This to aid in adapting housing and provide equipment to enable the moderately disabled as much independence as possible. In turn aid will lighten the crippling financial burden on those families affected.

This Conference demands that the General Secretary and the Executive Council assist MSAVLC, by whatever means possible, to generate the political pressure to ensure the campaign succeeds.

GREATER MANCHESTER

BRO TIM FENSOME (GMC):

President, Conference, during a period of ten years between 1961 and 1971 to destroy forests and deprive Vietnamese resistance fighters of cover, to destroy harvests and to incite the rural population to flee the countryside, the United States Air Force sprayed 72 million litres of herbicide on a total area of 2 million hectares of forests and rice fields. These herbicides included over 41.5 million litres of Agent Orange, which

contained dioxin, a substance one million times more toxic than the most natural poison known at the time. Highly stable, dioxin tends to remain in the environment in soils, in sediments as well as in animal fodder, thus contaminating the food chain.

The Stellman Report estimated the number of potential or silent victims to be 4.8 million, not counting victims poisoned later due to the processes of the food chain. It is reported that the US is planning to cooperate with Vietnam in cleaning up the former US Air Force Base at Danang. This is to be welcomed since it seems to indicate acceptance that Agent Orange has indeed been responsible for the injury of so many Vietnamese men, women and children.

It is not possible to say that any particular case of congenital abnormality can definitely be attributed to Agent Orange alone, but the statistical evidence is overwhelming. A survey some years ago found that a woman in an area sprayed with Agent Orange was 117 times more at risk of having a molar pregnancy than one in an unsprayed area, and many other pathological conditions have a significant increase in incidents associated with Agent Orange.

The other stages of the tragedy, before the connection between spraying and the birth of deformed babies was realised, families hoped that a subsequent pregnancy would give them a healthy child. Consequently, in many families in Vietnam where there is one affected child, there are likely to be several. If one handicapped child in a family in our society is a heavy burden financially, socially and emotionally, then the plight of many poor families in Vietnam can scarcely be imagined!

Conference, the Medical and Scientific Aid to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia Association has, since the 1980s, been doing what it can to alleviate the suffering, but this aid is dwarfed by the size of the tragedy. What is needed is generous financial support that only governments can give, so that housing can be adapted and equipment provided to give the disabled as much independence as possible, and to lighten the burden on their carers.

Conference, we must urge the General Secretary and the EC to assist the MSAVLC by whatever means possible to generate political pressure to ensure the campaign succeeds. Please support this Resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution 4?

Day One – 9th May

BRO JOHN PURSER (North Wales):

Conference, we are seconding Emergency Resolution 4. I am going to be extremely brief. I think you have heard everything you need to be told. Conference, we need to support and give every assistance we can to the victims and the families still affected by the dispersal of Agent Orange. Conference, support Emergency Resolution 4. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. The Executive Council are supporting Emergency Resolution 4. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Again, I will be very brief, Conference. I think the Resolution rightly draws attention to the long term effects of war. Obviously war has an immediate impact in terms of the death and destruction that is unleashed, but this Resolution draws attention to the fact that decades after the conflict in Vietnam, families and individuals are still suffering the consequences of that. I think there's a lesson there for ourselves as a Union, for our society in terms of the wars that are still going on today and are still being unleashed today, lessons that need to be learned. The Executive Council fully supports that Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. That one is now open for debate. OK, I will put that to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of Emergency Resolution 4 please. Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? That therefore is *carried unanimously*.

Conference, it now gives me pleasure to introduce for the first time for six years a Government Minister to the FBU Conference. It used to be an annual event; it did seem to have fallen by the wayside for a few years. Previously, we've had speakers such as the late John Smith and John Prescott. Angela Smith, our speaker today, does fortunately have some considerable experience of the Fire Service, having previously served as a councillor on the Essex Fire Authority. Before becoming a Parliamentarian, Angela worked with the League Against Cruel Sports during which she championed the rights of dumb animals. It is an experience which, from our own experience, we feel may come in handy in dealing with the Local Government Association!

Conference, I introduce Angela Smith whose proper title is the Under Secretary of State, Department of Communities and Local Government, or more easily, the Fire Minister. *(Applause)*

ANGELA SMITH MP:

Thanks very much, Conference. Thank you for that introduction. It's always slightly nerve racking when you are introduced. You're never quite sure what they are going to say, but that wasn't too bad at all. Thank you. Congratulations on your recent election. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Can I first say thanks for inviting me here today. I can honestly say that it's a great honour to be invited. As Mick said, I'm the first Minister to address the Conference for some time, and I think I'm the first female Minister to ever address the Fire Brigades Union Conference. *(Applause)*

I hope I'm not the last on both counts! There's no denying from both our points of view, we've had our differences in the past. I'm sure we'll have differences in the future. But I really do believe we have a great deal of common ground that we can work on together. That's really why I was so keen to accept your invitation to speak to you today.

First of all, I was genuinely really pleased to take on the role as Fire Minister. Over the past year that I have been involved, I've made efforts to get around to as many Fire Services as possible, I've met a number of you already. As Mick said, my interest and links to the Fire Service go back much further than the last year. I was on the Essex County Council and I was on the Fire Committee then.

I decided, in my infinite wisdom (I'm given to bright ideas) that while I was on the Fire Committee I would do some firefighter training to understand what it was all about, to try to get an idea of it. It is perhaps unusual for a politician to find out what it's all about at the sharp end. I fondly imagined that they would let me drive a fire engine. It wasn't quite as it happened. Your colleagues in Essex didn't make it easy for me at all.

My first experience was the BA training. I turned up at Grays for BA training. The tanks, for somebody my size, are fairly large. As I went through I was given the talk beforehand. Some of the Essex people might remember this trainer. He said: Right, you're all geared up, you don't have to worry. If you get nervous, all you do is pull this tab here and the lights will come on, the smoke will go, you can take your mask off, everything's fine. Just do that, pull the tab, you'll be safe, take your mask off and no-one has ever done that to me in 20 years of being an instructor – so I wasn't the first, was I?

It was an interesting experience for me, and it gave me a respect for what Firefighters do and an understanding of what Firefighters do. I understood how tough the job can be, even in controlled situations, let alone in the real

Day One – 9th May

world. I know this morning you were reminded of Firefighters who gave their lives to save others. Michael Miller and Jeff Wornham at Harrow Court, Stevenage in February 2005, and Brian Bembridge and Geoff Whicker at the fireworks depot in East Sussex in December last year.

Thankfully such deaths are rare, but nonetheless they are a terrible loss for families and colleagues and communities. I went to the Fire Station where Geoff and Brian worked from in East Sussex. You really get a sense, talking to their colleagues, that those of us who read about it, feel about it and are upset about it at the time can move on. But there are people who live with that for the rest of their lives as colleagues, as families and as close friends. I pay a very sincere tribute to them and their colleagues.

When Fire Services around the country combined to tackle the biggest fire in peacetime Europe at Bunsfield there was no loss of life. That was a remarkable achievement by Britain's Firefighters. Can I give you an assurance that I'm determined to work for the future of the Fire & Rescue Service to help what I believe is a great public service, to be even greater in the future. I know that's an ambition which we definitely share and have as a common goal.

In Government I think our top priorities are pretty much the same as yours as well. We want to see safer communities everywhere, we want to build up our national resilience in cases of major events – whether manmade or natural – we want to see the safest possible ways of working for Firefighters. That means access to the right training for the job. We want the Service to offer jobs that people enjoy and are proud to do. Further, they should be able to use and develop their talents to the full. We also want a more diverse workforce that represents the community it serves. That's not about being politically correct; it's really about reaching the people who are most vulnerable, the people that need most people, and reflecting the community that we serve.

We also want to see the Service right at the heart of local communities. What you do on Fire Prevention and on Fire Safety, is contributing so much and making a real difference. That is the agenda we need to share, and that is the agenda we want to work with you on.

I think we should start with a few home truths. We all know that employment relations could have been better over the last few years. It's been a bit of rocky road at times. I think we have a joint interest in promoting a period of constructive stability in employment relations. What we need to do in Government is focus on better engagement at every level. I have to be honest with you, I don't think we put enough effort into that in the

past. It needs to improve at Government's National level with the FBU, but it also needs to improve at local level with local management as well.

I think there's a lot more we could do to improve communications, both between you and us, and indeed the Service itself as a whole. There's no doubt that poor communication and poor understanding has led to misunderstandings getting out of hand. At times that's been divisive and at other times a real barrier to making progress. This goes both ways. We want to talk to you early on about issues of concern and interest. So today, I think we can start to make the FRS a model of good employment relations at local level and positive relationships at National level.

I would like to build a degree of trust as well as stability. I'd like to say we should be able to speak plainly to each other and listen carefully, and work in partnership and concentrate on making efforts as individuals as well. I hope you've recognised my determination and that of the Directorate, and Department, to be more open and to engage more with the Union as a whole.

I'm not suggesting that's ever going to resolve all areas of disagreement, but it does provide a framework that we work together. If we look at the challenges ahead, and look at what we have already achieved, I think that's the best way for us to go forward in partnership. Last year we recorded the lowest number of fire deaths since 1959. Fire deaths and injuries in the UK are falling. We need to look at sustaining that. I think one of the problems of success is that further reductions get harder to achieve. If you look at the incidence of deliberately started fires, that's fallen by over a third since 2001.

We all know the blight that is on our communities. The majority of these are started by young people. The Service hasn't just tackled it head on with partners, but has also helped tackle the underlying social problems that lead to that. For example, in Essex we have the Firebreak Scheme where the Service, alongside other agencies such as the Youth Offending Team, is working with young people from sometimes difficult backgrounds to bring down the offending rates and create a sense of worth in those young people themselves. We've seen the youth offending rates plummet and safer communities as a result.

I've seen similar schemes in other parts of the country. It's really clear that preventative work does bring real benefits. Across the country the Service is leading the way in building local partnerships and reaching out to communities to reduce the risks we have in communities. Over 800,000 home fire risk checks have been carried out, over one million new smoke alarms fitted, improving the safety of those most at risk. Within

Day One – 9th May

the Service there has been the development of the IPDS system, the new Leadership Centre at Fire Service College, and proposals for a Centre of Excellence on which we will be consulting soon. The Government support for local government services, including Fire & Rescue Service, has increased by 30% in real terms since 1997. We have a Fire & Rescue Service today with world class professional skills and knowledge that is now supported by world class equipment. We have invested over £200 million in the New Dimension Programme, including the urban search and rescue capability and high volume pumps, and invested in training that goes with that equipment.

New Dimension was borne out of terrorism, but it has resulted in Firefighters being better equipped and better trained to deal with natural as well as manmade disasters. We saw the floods in Boscastle, in Glastonbury, and the scaffolding collapse in Milton Keynes. That just proves how useful and valuable this equipment is. For some years specially trained Firefighters in the UK Search & Rescue teams have provided support for earthquakes around the world. Of course, now we're having earthquakes nearer home. There was one in Folkestone recently. I don't know if anybody else heard the geologist on the radio saying: we should have seen it coming because they strike pretty regularly in geologist's terms, around every 200 years and this one was long overdue.

The serious points to this is, the Service is facing an increasing range of threats and challenges. Look at the very recent incidents. You see the traditional types of fires like Manchester and the Oxford Street incidents, fires at gas cylinders, acetylene and the Deptford fire. Then there is the unexpected, like the Folkestone earthquake. I think we also need to look at the challenge that climate change brings, not just flooding but the increase of heathland fires that we've seen in many parts of the country as well. We have to understand and accept that terrorists will be going on to plot further atrocities in ways that we can only, but have to, imagine. We can only expect the unexpected.

While we see the welcome reduction in fire deaths and injuries, we're seeing an increasing demand in services from the FRS. The scale of that demand is changing and increasing. So equipment needs to work across Brigade boundaries and cooperation is crucial in this. Cooperation has traditionally been a strength of the Service, but boundaries are getting wider still given the nature and scale of the challenges, as we have seen with New Dimension equipment, which is used across Brigade boundaries.

In case anybody misunderstands let me make it categorically clear. We have no plans to force, to lead, to push for the merger of Fire Services. But we do see a

role for Fire Services working more closely together and I am pleased to see across the country that kind of cooperation working.

Obviously, local leaders are the ones best placed to understand the risks and priorities for their own place and their own areas, but I am convinced that much more can be achieved by working together in partnership at whatever level, rather than just working in isolation.

I said something about the areas of agreement. I think also I have to say something about the areas of disagreement. That, of course, has to be on the area of Fire Control. What I tried to do is see Fire Control not in isolation but really as part of the massive investment we're seeing in equipment to provide the very best for the Fire & Rescue Service. I do understand the concerns raised both by the profession and by the public. I think we can take on many of those and address those as we move forward with the project.

But the decision has been made. We need to make it a success for the Service, and we need to minimise the impact on Staff. I hope I'm not blind to the concerns and I hope we can work together with the Staff to minimise that impact and tackle many of the issues of concern.

Altogether there has been a huge investment in public services over the last ten years. The FRS has rightly benefited from that investment. This now is an opportunity to consolidate that investment, build on that investment. That is not sustainable year on year. It is important that we make the best use of the resources that we have. Having made that investment, agreed on strategic direction, the Government is quite rightly not responsible for the day to day running of the Service. Issues of Pay and Co-responding I know are issues of concern. But where we are responsible we are doing our best to make progress. I know the issues of CPD and Pensions is of great concern.

What I can say to you is the principle is that it will be pensionable. There are ongoing discussions about the detail and we will consult with the Firefighters' Pensions Committee before making the changes. The principle is established it will be pensionable and it will be expected for 1st April.

Can I just finish with three key messages. The first one is about how we engage. I think we all need to up our game on how we engage and work together. I hope you will respond positively to that. We're never going to agree with each other 100% of the time. Even my husband doesn't agree with me 100% of the time! But I've referred to the kind of framework that we'd like to work nationally and locally. I really do believe that kind of framework can be effective.

Day One – 9th May

Alongside the traditional challenges, we're facing many new ones. Some of those are more difficult and they need the equipment, the training, and ways of working to meet those challenges. That's a commitment that we provide that equipment and those ways of working and the training.

The third thing I would say is whatever we think, whatever sometimes we feel, I am convinced there is more than unites us than divides us on a whole range of issues, on a whole range of concerns we have. Where we agree is clear cut. Where we don't agree, let's keep talking. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Angela. I now ask Matt to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, Angela, for the comments. I think one thing that we can say about Angela's role as Minister is that there has been an increase in dialogue between us as a Trade Union and her as a Minister, and with the Department. I think that's to be welcomed.

Angela's quite right that there are some very serious areas of disagreement. She's mentioned a couple of them: on the Regionalisation of Controls. We've got very strong criticisms and she's aware of that. We've got concerns about CPD and she's addressed, and she is aware of those. I don't think it's the time to go into a dialogue about those here. We have been able to establish mechanisms by which we can raise those concerns directly with Angela or with Officials from the Department.

I think the one thing I would like to say on behalf of Conference is it is extremely pleasing to us that you're here as the Fire Minister to speak to the Conference. One message I would like you to take back is that if you look around this Conference you will not find anywhere else in the Fire & Rescue Service a more representative body of people that represents the people on the ground doing the job. They're here today in this Hall. That's the message we'd like you to take back and to take on board. We will hopefully see you again if you're still in this position in the future!

We have got a small gift for you. On behalf of Conference, thanks very much for attending and we hope to see you again. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Matt. That now gives us an ideal opportunity to adjourn Conference for the lunch break. Can I ask all Delegates please to be back in their seats for 2 o'clock

promptly, because it's not fair to any Delegates who will be moving business if people are coming walking in at that time. Thank you.

(Lunch break)

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

If Delegates can return to their seats, please, then we will try to get this afternoon started. I will ask Steve Shelton, Chair of Standing Orders Committee to give a report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thank you, President. I hope you have all enjoyed your lunch. Can you now turn to your Programme of Business, please.

Page 3. Resolution 39 has been withdrawn. Amendment falls. Resolution 41 has been withdrawn. Resolution 46 has been withdrawn. Resolution 67 has been withdrawn. Amendment falls.

Page 4. After Resolution 59, insert Emergency Resolution No 7, Secondary Contracts from Hereford & Worcester.

Page 6. After Executive Council Emergency Statement, Co-Responding, insert Emergency Resolution No 5, Co-Responding, Humberside. After Emergency Resolution No 5 insert Emergency Resolution No 6, First Co-Responding, Merseyside. Resolution 12 has been withdrawn.

Page 8. Resolution 86 has been withdrawn. After Resolution 85 insert Emergency Resolution No 9, IQMP Guidance, Northamptonshire.

Page 10. Resolution 1, Amendment 5 has been withdrawn. After Paragraph G7, CSNC Report 2005/2006, insert Emergency Resolution No 8, Regional Control Centres, West Midlands.

Could you now turn to your booklet, Brigade Committee Amendments to EC Policy Statement, Reorganisation Sub-Committee. It is the nice green coloured one. It will have written on the front "Brigade Committee Amendments to Executive Council Policy Statement Reorganisation Sub-Committee. Amendment 1 has been withdrawn. That concludes the report so far, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Report agreed? AGREED

We are now on Section A, National Joint Council. Para A1; Para A2; Para A3. I now call Emergency Resolution No 1, Pay, moved by the Executive Council, to be

seconded by Northern Ireland; Resolution 40, Pay Formula from Avon with an Amendment from Merseyside; and Resolution 61, Pay Formula, Strathclyde, with amendment from Northern Ireland. Only one Resolution can carry. I ask the General Secretary to move Emergency Resolution No 1.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION No 1 – PAY

Conference notes with concern the statement to the House of Commons on 1st March 2007 from the Chancellor regarding public sector pay. The government's intention to restrict public sector pay increases to below 2% for 2007 will increase hardship in our public services.

In relation to the Fire and Rescue Service, this approach follows four years of rapid change. Conference believes the Fire and Rescue Service would benefit from a period of stability and notes that on this basis the Executive Council has lodged our formal claim with the employers that the pay formula agreed under the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement should be applied for 2007.

Should the employers choose to de-stabilise the service by refusing to pay the increase determined by the operation of the formula without detrimental changes to conditions of service, then the Executive Council are instructed to fully consult with members on all options, including strike action.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference. This is, I think, one of the most important discussions we will be having this week. Obviously, pay is central to what we do as a Trade Union. We are dealing with new and different pressures in 2007 to those which were faced for many years with the operation of the Fire Service Pay Formula.

I think all delegates will, by now, be familiar with the Government's policy on public sector pay, outlined at various times by the Chancellor, the likely future Prime Minister, and that policy is based on the idea that in order to squeeze inflation out of the system Gordon Brown has declared that public sector pay needs to be restricted to 2 per cent or less for 2007. This was first declared last year, but has been repeated on numerous occasions including the Statement of Parliament mentioned in the Emergency Resolution. I am sure that Conference will join me in rejecting the approach which blames public sector workers for inflation in the system, or at least which seeks to use public sector workers and the livelihoods of their families as a mechanism for trying to control inflation because when you look at the growth in salaries and earnings in the board rooms of

Day One – 9th May

British companies you realise the unfairness of that approach. Also when you look at the earnings in the senior echelons of the Fire Service you see the unfairness and inequality in that approach. But 2006 National Statistics report that bonuses in the City rose by 16 per cent to £19 billion. Think of the scale of that £19 billion: it dwarfs the whole budget for the UK Fire & Rescue Service. Public sector workers who are putting out fires, who are working in hospitals, who are educating our children, are restricted to 2 per cent because of the dangers of inflation, but high earners in the City can receive bonuses of up to £10 million in a whole range of cases because the argument is used in the City that that level of reimbursement is needed to attract the right calibre of people, and exactly the same argument is used in the Fire Service disgracefully. They bring in consultants and they pay them £10,000 to do a report and, amazingly that report says, "Well, we have concluded that to attract the right sort of people, you have got to give the Chief Officer a 16 per cent pay rise." Absolutely disgraceful.

They argue that it is inflationary for public sector workers to get a pay rise above 2 per cent, but presumably not inflationary for these other people to do the same. The truth is that if you look, for example, at the housing market, these sorts of earnings, this earnings inequality, clearly has an impression, an impact, on housing market inflation and we see our young members squeezed out of the housing market because people in the City of London push up house prices. In London they buy second homes all over the country and people all over the country are priced out of the housing market. That is the result of that growing inequality. It is OK for some. This is an article from *The Guardian* recently. It says that the dining table on board Sunseekers' new 37 metre yacht seats 12 and is made of American black walnut. There is a lot of American black walnut inside a Sunseeker 37. The master state room has a king sized bed, an office area, an entertainment system and an ensuite with spa bath. There are four further guest cabins, saloons and lounges as well as quarters for the six to eight crew members. On the sky deck as well as a bar, dining areas and acres of more lounging space there is a hot tub. The yacht weighs 200 tonnes, will cruise at 25 knots. It is yours for just £8.75 million. The organiser of the exhibition selling these things says "There is certainly a feeling of optimism among exhibitors. The City bonuses will certainly help things along." It is all right if you are in that sort of job, isn't it? It is a different matter if you are in the public sector or you are in the Fire Service.

It seems that there is one rule for them and one rule for us. We start by rejecting that approach. We start by pledging our support to other groups of public sector workers who are already engaged in struggle, and we have seen our colleagues in the Civil Service in PCS

already engaged in a long running fight over pay, over pensions, over job cuts. We will be standing shoulder to shoulder with our colleagues in their fight and, if necessary, seeking their support in any fight that comes in the Fire Service.

We need to look in some detail at where we are on pay because the 2003 Agreement clearly laid out a Pay Formula which would be implemented at Stage IV and Stage V, i.e. for 2005 and 2006. That was implemented. That is the formula that links our pay rise with movements in the average pay for the APT classification of employees. The employers' approach is to see the 2003 agreement as a five-year deal. They say it is a five-stage deal and therefore that is at an end. The simple truth is that a pay formula has operated for most of the past 25 years in the Fire Service. It has served the Service well. It produced stability in the Fire & Rescue Service throughout most of that period, and it is our view, as the Executive Council, that there is nothing to prevent the employers from continuing to address the issue of pay by means of a formula.

The Executive Council's position is that the Fire Service could do with a bit of stability. We have considered the issue of pay for some considerable months now, since the end of last year, and we have begun to engage with the employers on that issue. We have argued why we need stability. I think it is worth taking a moment to look at the issue of stability in the Fire Service: why is that such a powerful argument? Some of the employers say this: some of the employers say that following 2003 we gave you some big rises and as far as we are concerned, we haven't got enough "modernisation" (as they call it) through. I think we need to look a little bit at that claim; look at what has happened in the Fire & Rescue Service in the past few years. I joined the Fire Service in 1983. I am not the oldest one here; I am not the youngest one here. When I joined the Service we learned the structure of the Fire Service. We learned about the 1947 Act. We learned how we had a locally organised Service operating to National Standards. That 1947 Act created a National Joint Council, Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council, a Pension Scheme was established at the same time, essentially the Pension Scheme which remained in place for many years after. The truth is that since 2003/2004 there has been huge change in the Fire & Rescue Service, and it was referred to by Brendan Barber earlier today. We have seen a new Fire & Rescue Service Act replacing that long standing structure that we were all familiar with. We have seen the National Standards of Fire Cover replaced with RINP. We have seen the abolition of the CFBAC. We have seen the abolition of the Appointment and Promotion Regulations. We have seen the abolition of the Discipline Regulations. We have seen huge changes to our Pensions. There has been absolute huge and massive change in the Fire & Rescue Service and the

Day One – 9th May

situation in which all of you are operating, and it is an absolute nonsense for the employers to claim that not enough has changed. The problem is keeping pace with the scale of change that we are actually facing.

I think Brendan Barber was right on another thing. The scale of that change at least matches the scale of change at the end of the Second World War when the 1947 Act eventually emerged from that. I think activists and Officials within the Fire Brigades Union should take a moment to think about that period that we have been through and that we are going through, because that puts enormous pressures on all of you, it puts enormous pressures on your members and, of course, it puts enormous pressures also on the Executive Council and Head Office, and this generation is having to deal with that scale and pace of change. With the scale of changes that we have had, we have got a very clear message for our employers: that you cannot deliver the Fire & Rescue Service; you cannot deliver a modern and efficient Fire & Rescue Service without us, without the people in this room and without the people who you represent; without the work force; without the people who do that job and deliver that service day in and day out, and the Minister mentioned earlier on some of the enormous achievements – and they are achievements we should be proud of: the reduction in fire deaths, we should be proud of. But our members deserve to be paid for those improvements that have been achieved by them on the ground. It is not Chief Officers' alone; it is Firefighters on the ground, in Training Centres, in Control Rooms, at all levels of the Service who have delivered that modernisation, those improvements that the employers and the Minister talked about.

It seems unfortunate that some on the employers' side seem to want endless conflict in the Fire & Rescue Service. Our message has been to them for the past two years: we will do business with you; we will sit down with Ministers and talk business. We will not always agree but we will engage in that dialogue, engage in that discussion, and if possible we will avoid a fight. Nobody wants to see conflict in this Service. Nobody wants to see the number of local disputes that we have seen over the past two years. We will avoid that fight if at all possible. But if you force a fight on us, then we will fight with all our strength as we have proved in those local disputes in Suffolk, in West Midlands, in Hertfordshire and, most significantly perhaps, in Merseyside with that long and bitter dispute. So we say to our employers: deliver the Pay Formula for 2007. Yes, we can then sit down as they have asked. We can sit down and discuss the next few years in terms of pay for the Fire & Rescue Service but we need 2007 sorting out. We need it sorting out very soon. We want the Formula to continue to operate for this year. I will give a notice to Conference. We have done some back-of-an-envelope figures regarding the Formula. It is

not going to produce huge pay rises. There is a bigger argument then for the employers to agree that pay rise because in previous years when we have stood by a Formula, we have stood by that Formula whatever it delivered. We argued for that Formula. We will stick by that Formula whatever that result produces, and that is our message to the employers.

We don't want conflict on pay, but neither are we going to sit back and allow our members and our members' families and their livelihoods because of Government imposed pay cuts. We are in the same position as tens of thousands of other public sector workers. I think there is a lesson here from history because the 1977 strike, the first strike in the history of this Union, was also in the background of pay restraint imposed by a Labour Government. It was one of the opening shots in a battle to what became known as the Winter of Discontent. That, as you know, created huge demoralisation among people who had traditionally voted Labour, and it paved the way for Thatcher's election victory in 1979 and everything that followed from that: all the disastrous consequences for the Labour Movement. We can see reflected in some of the election results last week again turmoil about the policies pursued by a Labour Government. I think the last thing this Government wants to do is to alienate further the very people who put them in power, to repeat the mistakes of the past because, unfortunately, we are almost seeing history repeated in 2007 that we saw 30 years ago.

Our message to the employers is this matter can be resolved. We are interested, keen to pursue those negotiations. We don't want to fight, but if we are forced into a fight then we will take that fight on and we will win it. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can I have Northern Ireland, please, to second Emergency Resolution No 1.

BRO TONY MAGUIRE (NIFB):

For clarification, President, can you remind me: is the Executive Council opposing the Strathclyde Resolution?

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council is opposing Resolution 40 from Avon and Resolution 61 from Strathclyde and only one of the three items in this debate can carry.

BRO TONY MAGUIRE (NIFB):

OK, thanks for that clarity. Conference, we withdrew our Resolution 41 on pay to support the Executive Council

Day One – 9th May

Emergency because we are satisfied that it is a pragmatic and level headed analysis of where we are in relation to pay. That is what is needed right now. We are still coming through the most tumultuous period of change in the history of this job. During our pay strike we asked for fair pay and that is what we must continue to do: to seek fair pay for the Fire Service. Throughout that campaign we maintained that we had continually modernised up to that point. It was nothing compared to the modernisation that the General Secretary has just alluded to. We have undergone in the last few years that unbelievable change and we have well and truly paid for the lengthy APT that is due to come in the end. So it is not unreasonable and it is not unrealistic for this Union to lodge a claim with our employers to the effect that our commitment to the APT continues for the 2007 pay round, and we all, employers and Union members, can continue to benefit from that, from the stability that that would bring. It is a pragmatic position; it is a level headed position and it is a realistic position.

Let me tell you, Conference, our experience of our employers is less than convincing, and if they cannot, or if they will not, meet the pay claim on the APT linkage, then we have got some big decisions to make on pay. Once again, the EC Resolution takes account of that in that the members will be fully consulted. We and our members at all the Branches, be assured, will consider all of those options very carefully. The Chancellor would tell us that it is pay claims from the likes of that, that is feeding inflation. He would do well to go and have a look at the things that the General Secretary said, the pay of company directors, the bonuses paid in the City and the pay of Chief Officers, before he penalises dedicated sector workers again. We and they should not forget that only two years ago the lengthy APT was recognised as the way forward by both our employers and the Government. It made economic sense. It created stability then and it continues to do so.

In 1977/78 the FBU did indeed bring the end to poverty pay in the Fire Service. In 2003/2004 we stood again against poverty pay. We are asking for stability, and if the employers wreck that stability, we just may have to make that stand again, setting all our differences aside, both real and perceived, and go forward as a strong and truly united Fire Brigades Union. There can be no going back to poverty pay. Support the EC Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will now ask Avon, please, to move Resolution 40.

Resolution 40 – PAY FORMULA

Conference demands that the Executive Council are resolute in securing a pay formula linked to Associate Professional and Technical Workers. The

continuation of the pay formula agreed in 2003 will assist in stabilising industrial relations during an important time in the British Fire Service.

AVON

Amendment

Line 1: delete the word 'a' replace with the word 'the'.

Add new final paragraph, 'Failure to secure the continuation of the pay formula will result in a Recall Conference to debate national strike action.'

MERSEYSIDE

BRO CHRIS JACKSON (Avon):

I speak for Resolution 40 but opposing EC's Resolution. Firstly, I would like to state my disappointment at the EC's Emergency Resolution. I thought the combined might of our EC would bring a more meaningful Resolution forward, showing a more resolute stance and a clearer mandate for our members to follow.

Why do we need a National Pay Formula? We already have continuous professional development and additional responsibility allowances at different rates in different Brigades, so we have a local rates of pay to an extent already. Without a National Pay Formula the future is a postcode lottery of pay. This will result in members in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England having different rates of pay depending on a number of circumstances. For example, the political make up of your fire fighting. After recent local elections many of these Tory rank, including my own. Local budgets, attitudes of Chief Fire Officers, and we all remember Mr McGurk's attitude to the FBU. I am sure there are many more circumstances you are all aware of. Our members had to fight long and hard to get a new Pay Formula and at a great cost. So we know this is what our members want and I also believe they will fight long and hard again, but I will withdraw Resolution 40 in support of Resolution 61, Strathclyde.

THE PRESIDENT:

In that case the Amendment from Merseyside automatically falls. I therefore ask Strathclyde to move Resolution 61.

Resolution 61 – PAY FORMULA

Conference instructs the Executive Council to ensure the current pay formula that links annual pay rises in the Fire Service to the average pay rise achieved by the Associate, Professional and Technical group of workers is retained for the long term. Conference also insists that this be agreed without prejudice to any existing pay, conditions or national agreements.

Day One – 9th May

We urge all members to support whatever action is necessary to achieve this, up to and including strike action.

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

Third line – after the word “retained” insert full stop and delete remainder of sentence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO JOHN CAIRNS (Strathclyde):

I move Resolution 61 and accept the Northern Ireland Amendment. Matt has covered the reasons as to why a Pay Formula, brings at least a degree of stability within the UK Fire Service. I was going to speak about the differentials between public sector workers and workers in other sectors like City, business, etc, but I am sure Matt covered it very passionately.

At first glance, the EC Resolution, the Resolution from Avon and the Strathclyde Resolution all look very similar, but on closer inspections there are differences. I would ask you, comrades, to look at the Resolutions very closely. I have already said Matt pointed out the benefits for having a Pay Formula, but if you support the EC Statement, all we are committing ourselves to is achieving a Pay Formula for 2007. What happens after that is anybody's guess. The Strathclyde Resolution is calling for a Pay Formula to be retained not just for 2007 but 2007 and beyond. I am glad Avon has recognised the crucial difference in that, and I am glad they have withdrawn their Resolution in support of Strathclyde's Resolution. Conference, it was said earlier that this is one of the most important decisions we will take this week. Ask yourselves this one question. Do we want stability for the future or do we want stability just up until July this year and then put the boxing gloves back on. I would urge you to reject the EC Resolution and support the Strathclyde Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 61? (*Formally seconded*). I ask Northern Ireland to move the Amendment to 61. (*Formally moved*). Is there a seconder for the Northern Ireland Amendment to 61? (*Formally seconded*). OK. The item is open for debate.

BRO ANDREW IMRIE (West Yorks):

I support the EC. The last three years have been extremely hard for all of us. Conditions have worsened. Let us not be afraid about saying it. Pay has gone backwards without a doubt. We may feel after last strike there is a lot of direction gone, there have been a lot of problems, Branches, Divisions, Brigades. The membership need us more than ever to show clear

leadership in where we are going. Nobody, as far as I am concerned, goes to work for nothing. The only reason we go to work is to pay our bills. The only reason that we stay in this job is because of that security, but we are going backwards. In Brigades we question ourselves about when are we going to get a win. When are we going to be able to go back to Brigades and say “This is what we have done for you.” Let's not kid ourselves: that is what our job is here to do. It is to lead and to protect our members' pay and conditions. That is our role. If we don't want it, we shouldn't be here. The problem we have got is dealing with a Government that is constantly eroding our conditions, making us go backwards with our pay and left us now in a position where we are looking at pitiful percentages and then looking at accepting it and saying ok, we will keep our heads down. The time has finished. It is time to put our heads back up again, and it is time to show the membership that leadership that we gave them four years ago. Our voices should be as loud as ever and quite clear on those Branches, otherwise we are wasting our time here at Conference. Our sole job is to protect our members' pay and conditions. We should have a T-shirt with it on. We should not be ashamed about that is why we are here. I support the EC Resolution and I believe totally that we are capable of doing that. Like Matt says, if they want to fight, we have got to get off our behinds and show them that we are going to take them on again, because it isn't going to go away, and I am sick of hearing the phrase out on the Branches: “Well, when we stop running, they'll stop chasing.” It's a waste of time saying things like that unless we are going to make a stand. I believe more than ever now that after the pensions battle, after the CPD absolute farce that we have just gone through, our members need something to hold on to. We have got to stand up this year, come July, and we've got to turn round and tell them without a shadow of doubt, we ain't going backwards, we ain't going to run any more. We are going to stand there and we want fair pay for the job we are doing. I support the EC.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

I speak in favour of Strathclyde's proposal. I agree with almost everything the last speaker said but don't understand why he is supporting the Executive Council because it is a short-sighted proposal. As has already been pointed out, it is only looking at 2007. It is almost like saying that after we will give up. Just let us off this year and it won't be too much really. My Brigade has already budgeted for 3 per cent in pay for this next year, and I would guess that is well within the APT figures, but that is not really the point, is it?

The last speaker said our sole purpose is to fight for pay and conditions. Of course, it is not. We know that it is not. We are public sector workers. We care about the

Day One – 9th May

industry we are in. We want the job to work. We want to be able to allow our members to be able to do their jobs and we all know that the chaos that we have been through, the anarchy that is out there, the farce and the wastage that is going on is not good for the industry, it is not good for the public, so we have a vested interest in that. Nobody joins the Fire & Rescue Service to make megabucks unless you are aiming to be a Chief Officer or beyond. We know that what the employers have done – and they have been happy to pick this up – is to turn pay into a stick to beat us with. That is what this is all about, and for 25 years the old Pay Formula, although it was not delivering what we wanted, enabled us to take pay out of that industrial relations equation and it is not that way any more.

Our argument to the employers is that it is in their interests as well if they really care about the industry, to get back in there, which is why you have to support Strathclyde in this. This is not a one year issue, is it? Let us be clear. We are prepared to forego the sort of megabucks that people earn in the City. Yes, we don't want that. Who would? Who could live with their consciences. I couldn't, when you know that you have to set a reasonable limit on what you actually ask, and that is not being stupid, I don't think. It is about saying we don't ask for the earth here. What we do expect in return is respect and we do expect the employers to hold up their end of the bargain. It is in their interests to get back in there and agree a Pay Formula which is why, as I say, you have to support Strathclyde in this.

I want a clarification from the EC, if I may as well. Why is the EC saying that you cannot carry both Emergency Resolution 1 and the Strathclyde proposal? To me they are compatible. Strathclyde talks about a long term pay formula. The EC talks about this year only. You can carry both of these so please can I have clarification because otherwise there might need to be a challenge on that.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will give the clarification that Dave has sought. The reason why we are saying that only one of the two items in this debate can carry is so that we don't have two potentially contradictory positions on pay. That is our position.

SIS RUTH WINTERS (Lothian & Borders):

I support Strathclyde's Resolution and oppose the Executive Council Statement. One thing I will say is, the actual reason is, not so much because of the one year approach. I suppose there is a technical argument about that, but the whole point about an Annual Pay Formula is it is only valid for a year. The point is that you actually secure next year's and you are negotiating at the time so I think one of the main things is the word "consider";

the EC is talking about considering. If we are actually going to have this campaign, and it is absolutely correct that we are going to have this campaign and hopefully do something about our pay, then we cannot just be telling the members and the employers that we are considering taking action.

We have to be telling our members, and our members will want to know, what is the leadership. It is not just leadership. I don't just mean for the top table. Over the past five years, we want strong leadership but the members should decide. We want strong members and we have to put forward that campaign to assist the members to have that bite that we need to go and stand up again against our national employers. That is absolutely 100 per cent correct. The employers are playing games. They are playing silly buggers because they could have agreed the Pay Formula. It is within their grasp. The Chancellor and the Government can have their own pay for public sector points of view and strategy, but our national employers could actually have signed off the Pay Agreement for next year, now. They have got their pressures and that is fine, but they could still do it. They should be budgeting for their own Pay Formula now. They should have started that last July when the calculation came out in the last Pay Formula that we had. I do want to really stress this thing. Of course the national employers are going to say it was a five year deal. They have said a lot of crap things to us since the pay deal. They have changed their minds left, right and centre since the pay deal. Why do we expect anything different from them now? The only way they will change their minds is if we stand up and say, we're going to help you change it. That is why we have to back some kind of campaign and, yes, industrial action, strike action.

The one thing I'll say – the criticisms and everything on board is absolutely fine. What we can do now is learn from the last Pay Formula, the last Pay Campaign, and we can all stand up there. I will tell you something: if we're going to get the Pay Formula next year, strike or no strike, you're not going to get it back the year after. The only way to keep our Formula is to put pressure on them. At the moment, they are putting the pressure on us, and until we start reversing that trend, until the members get their confidence, and Officials have the confidence, to be able to stand up to them again, then nothing is going to change.

I have to say, one thing we have to remember, likes or dislikes about that pay deal, we went on 15 day strike to get that Formula. I hope we are not just going to see it go down the river without actually putting up a fight for it. Political reality as well is something we have learnt about. We have learned about this Government, haven't we? We've really learned a harsh lesson the way they've treated us. I have to say on a personal note,

Day One – 9th May

I think Angela Smith got far too warm an applause this morning. I thought that was an absolute disgrace after what her Department are doing to the Fire Service. I know Politicians are detached from the work force, EC Members, Presidents, everybody is detached from the work force, but that is an airy fairy Fire Service she was talking about. I am back at work retraining, and I'll tell you something: it is not a Fire Service I recognise. We are in slight disagreement, Matt, I think this is the place to tell them where we disagree with them, and I think we should have told them where we disagree with them.

I think there's one thing, you know, and Matt actually said this at the Pensions Recall. It was about the pensions, you know, and the fact that members were going to accept the pensions deal. I think the phrase you used, Matt, was there's fights aplenty. Our Brigade certainly think this is the fight we need to stand up for again, and it is not that there are fights aplenty, there are fights now.

Tony, I totally agree with you. Differences real or perceived may be put aside if we have got any chance of attaining and retaining any Pay Formula and having any disputes, we do have to put all that aside, you know, and our Brigade certainly wants to see that happen. It is to start to stop blaming folk and time to start shaming folk, and let's shame the real gits, that's the employers and the Government, and let's get our members the information they need to go and campaign, to go and get a strike ballot if that is what they have to do and, yes, put our head above the parapet. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Before the next delegate gets to the rostrum, it would assist if there is anyone else wanting to come into this debate if they could indicate now so that they could come near the front rather than having the delay of walking to the front. Is there anyone else indicating they want to contribute to this debate? No. OK. We will remove to the right to reply after the next Delegate.

BRO CHRIS DOWNES (West Midlands):

First time speaker. So I thought I would start with a relatively quiet subject, pay. For three years now the problem of negotiating a pay rise hasn't really took my head. In the West Midlands the Officials have enjoyed this time as we have been busy trying to fend off vindictive management attacks on our Conditions of Service. Why do the employers now not want to maintain the current formula? I don't think it would push up a big pay rise. We can't see that at all so what is their agenda? It appears they may be driving us towards a campaign with strings, and that is something we must

never go near again. We must drive our own Pay Campaign definitely without strings. I urge the EC to vigorously defend the agreed Pay Formula for this year and beyond by supporting Resolution 61, Strathclyde.

THE PRESIDENT:

I now call on the General Secretary to give the right of reply for Emergency Resolution No 1.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I will be brief. I think there is no disagreement in the Hall about the importance of this issue. There is no disagreement in this Hall about the need to campaign among our members. There is no disagreement in this Hall about the need, if necessary, to take a Campaign that may lead to industrial action. There is no difference in this Hall on those issues, and I think the message that needs to go back to our employers is that this Conference, this Union, is united around achieving decent pay and that means the Pay Formula that we fought for in 2002 and 2003 and was achieved in the 2003 Agreement. That was the position which the Executive Council had put and have argued for, for some time.

I think we need to be clear about where we are up to with the employers because the fact is the employers have not refused to honour the Pay Formula. The employers are engaged in discussions with us about the Pay Formula. I think we need to allow those discussions, those negotiations, to continue. That is the message that the Executive Council are putting forward in Emergency Resolution 1.

I think it seems the only difference between the two Resolutions, or the core of the difference between the two Resolutions, is this: that in moving Strathclyde, John said that we shouldn't be restricting ourselves to 2007; we need to Campaign and ensure that that is delivered for the long term. Maybe there is no disagreement on that. My question is this: if the employers honour the Pay Formula for 2007 are we still going to go on strike? I think that is a very sharp question that you have to ask because the logic of what John is saying is that if we get the Formula for 2007 but they don't give a commitment for the next 10 years, we go on strike anyway this year. I think that would be a mistake and I don't believe we would win our members to that position, and that is why the Executive Council have thought very carefully about the wording of this Resolution, have thought very carefully about the stakes and situation in relation to the negotiations. Yes, it might not be as hard hitting as some of you think, but that is the logic of where we are. That is the logic of why we are putting that position. I urge Conference to support Emergency Resolution 1. Let us go forward together on

Day One – 9th May

the issue of pay. We are confident we have got the employers into negotiations. We keep up that Campaign and we will see where we go. If it comes to the need for industrial action then, yes, that industrial action will be considered, we will be consulting with people, and that industrial action may be necessary. I think it comes back to that point: if they give agreement for 2007 but not for subsequent years, are we still going to go on strike? If people are saying yes, I hope you have got the mandate of your Branches to do so, to come here and say, "Yes, I am prepared for a long hard fought out fight on the question of 2008 and onwards" because that is really the only difference between us. Support Emergency Resolution 1.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I now call on Strathclyde right of reply.

JOHN CAIRNS (Strathclyde):

Matt, I think the first thing I need to say is it is very difficult to get a mandate on an Emergency Resolution that we only received a couple of hours ago. With the Strathclyde Resolution it is not calling for ten years from now; it has not got any set time on it. What we are looking for is some stability. Matt, you told us about the talks that you have entered into. None of us in this Hall are aware about these talks and how they are progressing. We might not even get a Pay Deal for 2007. All the Strathclyde Resolution is asking for is, continue with a Pay Formula that will serve the members of the Fire Brigades Union well. I ask you to support Resolution 61.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. We will now move to the vote on those two items of business. Dave, you are Challenging the Chair. OK. There has been a Challenge to the Chair. I will allow you to put your Challenge, Dave, and I will remind you of Standing Order 16.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

President, Conference. Sorry to keep coming up, my leg is hurting moving up and down like this. The reason I think we should Challenge is that the Chair's ruling is that only one of these two Resolutions can carry because they are contradictory but in fact they are not. They can both carry. They are compatible. The EC's talks about this year only and Matt's main argument about why you could not pass Strathclyde was if the employers agree to pay the Pay Formula this year, are we really going to get members out on strike, but Strathclyde's does not say get members out on strike this year. It does not say get the Pay Formula for the indefinite future agreed this year. It just says we have to

move to ensure that we get it for the future, so if we get a commitment from the employers for this year as per the EC's Emergency Resolution, then fine. That doesn't mean that we give up on the long term objective, so the two can carry. So the ruling I think is flawed. The Challenge to the Chair is that we should be able to carry both of these Resolutions together.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

OK, I will remind Conference that there has been a Challenge to the Chair once again. Only Delegates can vote. It needs to be a two thirds majority to carry a Challenge to the Chair. I put the Challenge to the vote. All those in favour of the Challenge, please show. Against. The Challenge is carried.

THE PRESIDENT:

Well done, Dave. Don't make a habit of it. OK, so we will move back to where we were which is putting the two items of business to the vote, the Emergency Resolution and Resolution 61. You have now decided they can both carry so you can vote for whichever of them that you wish. Can I see all those in favour, please, of Emergency Resolution No 1. Can I see those against Emergency Resolution No 1. Emergency Resolution No 1 is carried.

I will now put the Northern Ireland Amendment to Resolution 61 to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Can I see those against? That Amendment is carried. I will now put the Amended Resolution 61 to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Thank you. That is carried.

We now move to Resolution 66, entitled Pay, in the name of Lincolnshire. I ask Lincolnshire to move.

Resolution 66 – PAY

Conference demands that the negotiations around the 2007 pay rise attracts only increased payment for existing duties that are set out in the current rolemaps.

Conference demands that any future pay award/formula is not in any way linked with further additional duties the employers may wish members to undertake.

LINCOLNSHIRE

BRO JIM CURRY (Lincs):

Resolution 66 on Pay. Lincolnshire's Resolution on Pay states "Conference demands that the negotiations around the 2007 pay rise attracts only increased payment for existing duties that are set out in the

Day One – 9th May

current rolemaps. Conference demands that any future pay award/formula is not in any way linked with further additional duties the employers may wish members to undertake.” Reasonably clear and simple. Pay is an emotive issue in all spheres of work and Emergency Services are no exception. But contrary to some, or should that be nearly all, the media, certain politicians and employers, have been looking for long terms of stability in terms of the pay for the Fire Service. This was brought about from the 1978 Pay Formula linked to the upper quartile male manual workers which served us well until the late 1990s. In 2002 and 2003 we fought, and for the most part, won a professional wage to reflect the highly-skilled work force and a more appropriate and relevant Fire Service National Pay Formula based on the need that better reflect the changes in the overall terms and conditions in relation to the appropriate comparators.

There are other Resolutions here on the maintenance of the link to Associations Professional and Technical Group of workers average pay rise, one which we would fully support for the current information to maintain a reasonable reward for the work and skills our members achieve. However, a more fundamental issue is that whatever Pay Formula we negotiate it is with our own ends on future or generic changes to the job that we do. Pay should reflect work done, not strings attached probabilities, or should that be impossibilities. Pay is, for one definition, money paid to individuals for the work they produce. Let’s maintain a reasonable professional living wage. Anything extra should be negotiated under CPD or additional responsibility allowance.

You have seen with the backload of contractual duties or not, as the High Court wrote, that the employers will try to abuse the rolemaps and the Grey Book to make us more than agree. Let us ensure that they are not given carte blanche to circumvent paying for the services our members train in, develop for and undertake. They wouldn’t pay the going rate for a two bedroomed house and then expect to add on two more rooms and a double garage for the same price. We cannot allow the principles to be written into our pay agreements. Conference, I urge you to support the Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 66, please? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are supporting. Matt, do you want to give the EC’s support?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

No.

THE PRESIDENT:

It is open for debate. Is there anyone wishing to speak?

No. OK, we will move straight to the vote then. Can I see all those in favour of Resolution 66? Please raise your hands. Any against? Any abstentions? No. That one is carried unanimously.

We now move on to Resolution 55 entitled Unsocial Hours Payment in the name of Nottinghamshire, and I ask Nottinghamshire to move.

Resolution 55 – UNSOCIAL HOUR’S PAYMENT

This Conference recognises that the established duty systems are under attack by Chief Fire Officers and Fire Authorities alike.

Conference therefore demands that should a Fire Authority remove the provision for members to take ‘rest periods’, as defined under Appendix C of the Grey Book (2004) that there should be available an ‘unsocial hour’s payment’.

This payment should be negotiated at NJC level and Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to enter into negotiations at this level as a matter of urgency.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

BRO PHILIP COATES (Notts):

I move Resolution 55. At a time when duty systems and conditions of service are continually under attack by Chief Fire Officers and Local Authorities across the United Kingdom, and when we are struggling to secure a pay agreement, there is a means of making those Chief Fire Officers and Fire Authorities think twice about trying to remove our hard-won conditions of service. Where rest periods come under attack and are removed by Fire Authorities then an unsocial hours payment should be paid in lieu of rest periods. These unsocial hours payments have been paid across the public and private sectors for many years. Firefighters already work more flat hours than the majority of the general public, as well as weekends and night shifts with none of these hours attracting additional pay.

When I was an apprentice back in the seventies, industry achieved a 39-hour week with every hour above that accrued at another time rate. What have we achieved since then? More to the point, have we ever asked for a shift allowance? Now is the time to make these Fire Authorities pay for trying to remove our Conditions of Service. An unsocial hours payment for the removal of rest periods will make them think, as this could open the floodgates for payment on weekends and nightshifts the same as other workers rightfully get paid. I urge all members to support this Resolution. I move.

Day One – 9th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are opposing, and I will ask the General Secretary to outline the opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think on the face of it I can understand and sympathise with Notts for bringing the Resolution to Conference, but the Executive Council see a whole number of pitfalls in relation to this Resolution because it suggests that if the Fire Authority remove the provision to take rest periods as defined in Appendix C of the Grey Book, there should be available an unsocial hours payment. It is the Executive Council's view that we should be fighting to defend the current shift system as outlined in the Grey Book.

The Executive Council has had a number of reports from individual Brigades that shifts have been changed and we are aware of the difficulties that creates for local Officials. We are aware of the pressure that has been put on and the disputes that have taken place in a number of Authorities over that issue of shift systems, but according to the information we have at this level the majority of Brigades represented here today have not experienced changes to the traditional 2-2-4 shift system on Shift Stations, and therefore we believe it is in the interests of the whole of this Union wherever possible to defend that shift system by any means that we can.

The concern with the Resolution is that it almost invites Chief Fire Officers to make changes to shift systems because it says if you do we have got an unsocial hours payment ready in the bag already written into the Grey Book. The Fire Brigades Union has negotiated that. Thereby the Fire Brigades Union by implication suggests it is something we should be engaged in discussions around. That is a matter for you to discuss in relation to your own IRMP's but the feeling I get is that people, wherever possible, want to defend that shift system and therefore we suggest that they should be defending wherever possible the Grey Book provisions outlined in Appendix C. There is nothing to prevent, by the way, where shifts are changed, those negotiations including the issues that Nottinghamshire raised, and I understand that those discussions are already under way in Nottinghamshire. That was a matter for local Brigade Committees to pursue and we would encourage and support wherever possible that happening in the event that shifts have been changed.

Just to finish, President, our recommendation is to oppose. We believe it is an extremely dangerous Resolution to pass and we recommend opposition.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. That is now open for debate. Is there anyone coming in on that. No. Do Nottinghamshire wish to exercise their right to reply? No. OK. We will put Resolution 55 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? OK. Thank you. Can I see all those against? I think you have lost that one, I am afraid.

We are now on Paragraph A4, CPD Negotiations.

BRO ANDY DENNIS (West Midlands):

Just a quick point of clarification, please. In relation to the letter dated 24 April 2007 from T. B. J. Crossley, I will cut straight to the relevant point of it: "The Department's position is consistent with other public sector pension schemes and recognises that a person whose pension contributions reflect their receipt of a particular element of their remuneration as a legitimate expectation, they will ultimately receive a return of contributions relevant to that element." Can I have a clarification if that criterion is going to apply to pension contributions made on NSI payments?

THE PRESIDENT:

The General Secretary was going to introduce that Paragraph, and hopefully in his address he will be covering that point as well.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Minister referred earlier to the issue of CPD and obviously it has been an extremely difficult issue for the Union to deal with, and the negotiations were extremely long and hard and I would certainly like to thank the members of the Executive Council who participated in those negotiations. In relation to the issue as it has arisen recently on pensionability, the fact is that when the draft agreement was reached, the outstanding issue was that of pensionability. Both sides had agreed that the CPD payment should be pensionable but that both sides acknowledged that that issue would have to be referred to Ministerial level once agreement had been reached.

The matter was subsequently raised by the employers' side with the Department of Communities and Local Government, and we were informed that that decision would have to be referred to Ministerial level. You will be aware therefore that within the past two weeks we received a letter from the CLG informing us that agreement had been reached that CPD would be pensionable. The difficulty that then arose was the mechanism by which that pensionability is achieved because it is envisaged, as far as we can see, that it will not be within the normal mechanism by which Final Salary Pension Schemes are covered, particularly in

Day One – 9th May

relation to the two Firefighter Schemes. The Local Government Scheme our Control Members are members of is not affected; it is not an issue for them. The argument which the CLG Officials have put to us is this. That you will be aware that CPD is potentially removable. In theory therefore, somebody could be paying pension contributions for a number of years on to CPD but not during the final three years during which the pension would be calculated, and the CLG Officials have said that is potentially unfair and obviously it would be unfair. They have therefore looked at ways in which pensionability can be achieved and maintained and it appears that they intend to separate the CPD pension element from the rest of the Firefighters Pension Scheme pension from the core pay pension. The difficulty we have had, and we immediately raised concerns with the Department about this, is that it is not clear from what has been presented so far how that would actually work, what would it mean in terms of pounds, shillings and pence to our members, and that is the concern that has been raised. An immediate letter was written to the Head of the Pensions Section within CLG and we have sought urgent discussions.

You may be aware the AGS was absent this morning. The AGS had a lengthy discussion with the Minister on the question of the pensionability of CPD. She has acknowledged that she did not have the technical understanding of the issues that we were raising and that is fair play, but she has agreed that we will engage immediately starting next week in some detailed discussions about what has been proposed. Whether that is simply an oversight by an individual Official, an individual Civil Servant within CLG or whether that is a policy decision, certainly the indication the Minister has given today is that is not the intention of the Minister in signing that agreement. So those discussions need to carry on. There is a meeting scheduled already for next week around the issue of pensionability. We will discover in detail what is being proposed. We will raise any concerns that we have and we will report those back to the Executive Council and of course to yourselves in due course. That is the issue of CPD pensionability.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I think the answer to your question, Andy, is that clarification will be given in those discussions and will be reported back. OK. We are now on Resolution No 44, Competence, in the name of Staffordshire. I ask Staffordshire to move.

Resolution 44 – COMPETENCE

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate a nationally agreed system for carrying out workplace assessment for the purpose of assessing competence.

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO ROBERT MOSS (Staffs):

I move Resolution 44. I am sure many of the Brigades here have had work place assessments thrust upon them and doubtless there are a multitude of different systems in use.

In Staffs we have seen the introduction of a laborious and onerous paper based system that takes longer to record than it does to actually acquire the skills and competence in the first place. I suspect the system we have is in some cases far more complex than in other Brigades and yet not so compared to others. With the introduction of the training and development and competent rates of pay, this is obviously of major importance to our members. The inconsistency of application of systems across Brigades will mean that some members will find it harder to achieve competence in one Brigade compared to another. This cannot be right. Surely, we cannot have a National Pay System and yet all have different methods of assessment. The pay is agreed Nationally. IPDS was supposed to be agreed Nationally. Rank to Role should similarly have been implemented consistently, which it was not. Please, let us sort out this mess and instruct the EC to negotiate a Nationally agreed system of assessing competence. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 44? No. (*Formally seconded*).

BRO STEVE AINLEY (Notts):

I support Resolution 44. We have seen a very piecemeal and somewhat confusing system adopted by a somewhat confused management, and effectively keeping our members on artificially low rates of pay to no-one's benefit but the employer. Whilst the FBU is not seeking to manage for the employer, it often falls to us to have to protect our members against attacks on pay and conditions via the back door. This Resolution, while not being a cure-all for the implementation, it does give rise to a very valuable tool in assisting and preventing the exploitation of the confusion which management create for their own ends. I urge you to support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are giving qualified support to Resolution 44, and I will ask John McGhee to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

We are going to cover a number of these subjects in

Day One – 9th May

this afternoon's session, and the speakers are absolutely right; there is complete and utter confusion out there, and most of it is deliberate by Chief Officers up and down the country whether they are aligned to the Institute of Fire Engineers or whether they are just aligned to their own wee caucuses. There is a clear attempt to try to destroy the work that we have done in terms of IPDS. This is work that has already started and we have been trying to achieve a National system of assessment. It is not going to be easy, but we will keep plugging away. The Minister talked this morning about modernisation, and I think IPDS, if we are not careful, will be one of the first victims of modernisation, yet it was one of the key elements that they wanted. What is happening out there with IPDS is that people are trying to re-invent it. They think it is a training programme, they think it is a recording system, they think it is a way of promoting their friends and the old boys club. We are working hard to try and make sure that up and down the country whether a Firefighter is a Firefighter in a Control Room or a Fire Station, you will be effecting the same method.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. That one is open for debate. Is there anyone wishing to come in? No. No need for a right of reply. In that case I will put Resolution 44 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Thank you. Carried. That now gives an opportune time to break for tea. Before we do, can I ask, please, that all Delegates are back in their seats for 3.30 prompt. Can I also ask that anyone who is late for whatever reason, please return to the Hall quietly because it is not fair to those who are trying to speak or those who are trying to listen. Thank you.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

If people can return to their seats, please, we will reconvene. Thank you. Right. I ask the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, Steve Shelton, to give a further Standing Orders Report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thanks, President. If you just turn to your Programmes of Business, please. Page 6. Resolution 30 has been withdrawn.

Page 10. Resolution 1, Amendment 4 has been withdrawn. Resolution 3, Amendment 2 has been withdrawn.

If you turn to your booklet, Proposed Alterations to Standing Orders of Annual Conference, Standing Order

8 from Gloucestershire has been withdrawn. It is the yellow booklet. The alteration to Standing Order 8 from Gloucestershire has been withdrawn. The Standing Orders Committee have received a request from Strathclyde to hold a bucket collection to support the striking workers of Sunvick. The Sunvick Management treatment of a mainly female workforce is disgraceful and a flyer will be distributed with more information on it after this report. The bucket collection will be held at the end of today's business. Can you please give generously.

The Standing Orders Committee have received and accepted the distribution of the magazine *Hands Off Venezuela*. The Standing Orders Committee have received and accepted the distribution of the leaflet from the Fire Brigades Union on TUPE. Thank you, President. That concludes this afternoon's report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is that report agreed? Agreed. I now call the Chief Scrutineer.

THE CHIEF SCRUTINEER:

Conference, at the close of Standing Orders nominations, four nominees were proposed: Bro Stewart Kinnon received 39 nominations; Bro Phil Jordan received 37 nominations; Bro Conrad Jordan received 6 nominations; Bro Gordon McQuade received 1 nomination. One nomination was ruled out of order, no nominating Brigade. Bro McQuade has declined his nomination. A ballot paper will be issued to each Brigade during the Thursday morning session. Each Brigade can vote for two nominees. That is the report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Before we return to the rest of this afternoon's business, I would just like to point out to Delegates that we do have a retired General Secretary and a long retired President at the back of the hall, and I would like to welcome them on your behalf: Ken Cameron and Enoch Humphries. (*Applause*)

By the looks of it, they are sitting up there saying "We didn't used to do it like that in our day, did we?" We are now on to Resolution 49 entitled Additional Responsibility Allowance in the name of Shropshire and I will ask Shropshire to move.

Resolution 49 – ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

To allow for a consistent approach in local negotiations by Brigade Officials; this Conference instructs the Executive Council to produce national

Day One – 9th May

guidelines on minimum levels of payments for additional responsibility allowances.

SHROPSHIRE

BRO MATT LAMB (Shropshire):

I move Resolution 49 on Additional Responsibility Allowances. This Resolution from Shropshire has arisen out of a frustration at our management, surprisingly, failing to properly reward A1 Assessors. For a bizarre reason, the Brigade has decided in the introduction of NVQs that Leading Firefighters would carry out the A1 assessment of candidates, and subsequent to this the Role Maps have placed it at Sub-Officer level. Once the NVQ system had started gaining momentum, it was blindingly evident to us that the work carried out by A1 Assessors was that they were overworked and they were receiving no remuneration or recognition for that work. Because of that we asked for an NRNA for the A1 Assessors. But, despite the Brigade getting a massive pat on the back from the Audit Commission for being so efficient, we still have not completed Rank to Role, so they are unable to determine NRNA with us, so we were left going round in circles for some considerable time, so we obviously disputed the matter. We are expecting the Brigade now to come to us with a proposal, but that is more likely to be based on what they can afford to pay rather than any genuine assessment of the value of the work being done. When that comes to us, on what basis can we then accept or reject the proposal and what guidelines to say that that is reasonable?

Of course, in the meantime we have been doing some research on what has been happening in other Brigades and what we have clearly found is that there is no consistency in what IRA's are being paid for and the level of pay that people are getting for it. I am sure you have seen on the email system many requests for information on NRA's. Of course, it is a difficult matter. I understand there is a lot of work to do on that, to assess the value of work outside the Role Maps, but we found that there was a lot of similarities between the Brigades of what was actually attracting an NRA in our Brigade. Line safety rope rescue was a common subject, water safety, instructing fire safety schemes, first aid instruction, are just some of the more notable ones. However, the rate of pay for these extra responsibilities were a complete lottery depending on where you worked and which Brigade you were in. It is quite clear we have National Pay Scales for the work done by Firefighters in their respective Role Maps all the way up to Area Manager. We should at least have National guidelines for the work done outside the Role Map as well, especially in the cases where there are huge similarities in the work that has already been carried out. I would ask you to please support the Resolution and stop this postcode lottery in this extra pay. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Resolution 49? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I will ask the Assistant General Secretary to outline the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council will take on board the points that are being raised by Matt and the other Delegates in the Conference Hall to the problems they are facing on top of all the work load they have got with regard to the negotiations they are facing around the question of additional responsibility allowances. The qualification is a simple one and that is that potentially, with a bit of an exaggeration may be, the list of guidelines we would have to give on the number of issues that Brigades could conjure up – and we have got imaginative Fire & Rescue Authorities out there – could be an endless list on which we would have to give guidance. The qualification is that we would need from yourselves, from each of you in the Conference Hall, from each Brigade, a list, if you like, of the problems where you are facing discussions with management on all the issues where they are seeking to extend, if you like, the work being done by our people outside of the Role Maps. That survey will be initiated if this Resolution is passed by ourselves and we would hope that you would complete that survey to let us know exactly what guidelines you require.

One thing I would also say is that Matt is correct as well when he says the email system is flooded with Brigade Officials correctly and understandably seeking information from each other in terms of what is available, what has been agreed, what is being offered by Brigade managements up and down the country. I would emphasise we do have the Labour Research database or the database set up for us by Labour Research Department which all Brigade Officials and negotiators can access and I would encourage all Officials to enter in the details of local agreements or where you are up to and that would, I think, serve the purpose of informing all Brigade Officials wherever you are, what is happening elsewhere. With that simple qualification, the Executive Council do support this Resolution 49. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. That is open for debate.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancs):

I support Resolution 49. We support the Resolution as it will provide local negotiators with National guidance and any help we can get at local level is obviously an

Day One – 9th May

advantage. We accept the ARA's in our part of the Grey Book as of 2003. However, a word of caution has to be that ARA's have a potential to be divisive amongst our members when we find that we have Operational Firefighters working at neighbouring Stations on different levels of pay. In fact, our Deputy Chief recently indicated to us that he would pay an ARA for a specific skill but we have not accepted yet because, to be honest, we are still looking for the catch. I support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone else on this Resolution? No. There is no need for a right of reply. I therefore put Resolution 49 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

Now we are on Para A5, Revised Allowances Including Car. I now call Resolution 60 entitled Mileage Allowance in the name of Lancashire and ask Lancashire to move.

Resolution 60 – MILEAGE ALLOWANCE

This Conference demands that the Executive Council negotiate a national mileage allowance for members that volunteer to use their own vehicles in circumstances that currently fall outside the existing casual or essential car user rate. This should include a mileage allowance for firefighters that use their own vehicle to undertake detached duties at a station other than their normal place of work.

LANCASHIRE

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancs):

It is like waiting for a bus. Currently the FBU negotiate at National level an essential user car allowance and a casual user rate car allowance as well for members that use their own vehicles for the efficient performance of their duties. This is presently covered in Section 4, Part E, Para 6 of the Grey Book. However, across the country there is not a consistent policy for a car user mileage rate for our members if they incur additional travel expense using their own vehicles when required to work at a Fire Station or another Department other than their normal place of work which is normally referred to as detached duties. Local agreements range from Authorities reimbursing costs at the casual user rate down to some Authorities paying as little as 15p a mile with numerous agreements in between, that consider various factors such as whether you transport your own fire kit, whether it is actually on overtime or within your normal working hours.

In Lancashire the Fire Authority currently argue that a member can be required to work anywhere in the County and the travel to the place of work does not

form part of the efficient performance of their duties. However, they do accept that any incurred expenses are reimbursed using a locally agreed allowance. This is as detailed in Section 4, Part E, Para 1 of the Grey Book.

I am sure Delegates know how difficult it can be to achieve new local agreements in the current climate. It is difficult enough ensuring our employers adhere to existing agreements. Only last year senior management in Lancashire attempted to implement a policy on our members who applied for jobs in the Technical Fire Safety Department, that they would be required to provide their own vehicle for use at work but would only be paid the casual user rate instead of the essential user rate, their argument being that at the interview for the job they would ask the applicant would they be prepared to volunteer to provide their own car and if they declined to volunteer to provide their own car at the casual user rate, they wouldn't get the job. Luckily, on this occasion we did get outside assistance in the form of ACAS. ACAS smelt a rat and the management backed off.

On the issue of the mileage for detached duties it must be assumed that the cost incurred for different members across the country, fuel costs etc, is broadly the same. This Resolution is simply asking that when we can negotiate collectively we should. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is there a seconder for Resolution 60? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are opposing, and I will ask the Assistant General Secretary to outline our opposition.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think Steve has outlined one of the problems that we do have and it is faced by every Brigade and every Official whether still on the floor of Conference or now on this table up here, and that is persuading members not to use their car, and I think that the example given of the interview techniques which were tried, shall we say, in Lancashire, stands testimony to the problem that we do have, which is that our members do use their cars. I imagine many of us will have or still do use our cars for the convenience factor.

The qualification I suppose for this Resolution the Executive Council wants to inform you is simply this. We do have, as you know, two car user schemes within the Grey Book. We see no reason, no benefit, to try and negotiate a third, for two reasons. One is because, if we do negotiate a third your management will still try to avoid making a payment on that scheme if we were to achieve it. Secondly, why don't we just stick with the two that we have got and ensure that our members do actually incur the payments and get the payments under

Day One – 9th May

the car user schemes that we currently have available to us.

If there was a third scheme, if it was worse than the existing two, it has another effect and that is that your employers would ensure that those who currently get the casual or the essential car user scheme would have their payments brought down to that third worse level. It does not benefit the members at all for us to negotiate a third scheme. We have two. Our job is to ensure that our members when doing detached duties attract the payments under one or other of those two schemes.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. Open for debate. Is there anyone wishing to come in on this. Are Lancashire to exercise their right to reply? Steve.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancs):

Thanks for that, Andy. I listened to your response. There is a concern up on the top table that if you do negotiate a third rate for mileage it could worsen some of the existing agreements that we have got in place. I personally have more confidence in Matt and his negotiating skills, but in the interests of caution, I will withdraw.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. We are now on to Para A6, Disputes at the National Joint Council. I now call Resolution 42 entitled Reduction of Pay in the name of Cleveland with Amendments from Gloucestershire and Northern Ireland. Both amendments can carry. I ask Cleveland to move, please.

Resolution 42 – REDUCTION OF PAY

This Conference is concerned by the number of members who are being placed on half pay, and then no pay, during periods of prolonged sick leave.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a national study of the number of members in each Fire and Rescue Authority who are currently on either half pay or no pay, while on sick leave.

Following this national study an assessment should be made of the number of Authorities who are failing to use discretion before reducing the pay of staff.

This issue should then be raised with the Employers at the NJC.

CLEVELAND

Amendment

After the 3rd paragraph, insert new paragraph: "The result of the study should form the basis of a best practice guidance note for Officials to refer to when lodging appeals against any pay reductions for our members. This guidance should be produced within 6 months of Conference ending."

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Amendment

1st paragraph, 2nd line, delete the words "sick leave" and replace with "sickness absence".

2nd paragraph, last line, delete the words "sick leave" and replace with the words "sickness absence".

NORTHERN IRELAND

BRO STEVE WATSON (Cleveland):

I move Resolution 42, Reduction in Pay and accept both the Amendments from Gloucestershire and Northern Ireland.

Put simply, this Resolution asks for a national study to be carried out just to find out how many of our members are suffering a reduction in pay following periods of prolonged sickness absence, and we are grateful to Northern Ireland and Gloucestershire for the amendments which improve the original Resolution.

Brigade Officials have experience on a daily basis with constantly expanding Human Resource Departments who are entirely target driven. They must reduce sickness levels and drive down early retirements to virtually nil. They will take whatever measurements are necessary to get our members back to work and off the sickness absence list. Some of our members have been forced back to work in unsuitable day duty positions, in some cases against the advice of their GP because of the threat of going on to half pay or, in some cases, no pay. Let us carry out a study into the scale of the problem. Let us produce some guidance for Brigade Officials as well and if required let us raise the issue in the NJC. Maybe let us start to name and shame some of these Authorities who are treating our members in such a despicable way. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. Is there a seconder for Resolution 42? (*Formally seconded*). I will ask Gloucestershire to move Amendment 1.

BRO PHIL JORDAN (Glos):

I think you were just about to let us know what the EC's position was. I would be grateful if you could let us know.

Day One – 9th May

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council's position is that we are giving qualified support to the Resolution, qualified support to your Amendment and unqualified support to Northern Ireland's Amendment.

BRO PHIL JORDAN (Glos):

Thanks, President. Conference, we should be concerned about our members being placed on half pay and, worse, no pay. But we need more than a study. We need to do more than just assess the failing Authorities, and we need to do more than just raise the issue at the NJC. Because we need to do more, Conference, you need to support the Gloucestershire Amendment. If you do, Officials will get the guidance they need and members will get the representation that they expect. After Mike Smith's gripping Power Point slide show, it is clear that we must keep the Union finances in check. Phrases like "value" and "cost effective" were used by Matt this morning, and we have no argument with that at all, but there are vital areas of our work that needs to be funded and, yes, they do need to be cost effective and we do need to be accountable to the membership.

So why should we consider another internal study that, frankly, is a good idea but we felt did not quite go far enough. Studies, reports, working groups, all very nice, all with their uses, but Conference we need to see an outcome. The members would expect an outcome.

On the reduction of pay we fully endorse the motives behind the Resolution and we would urge Conference to support it with the Gloucestershire Amendment. We are concerned in Gloucestershire about the loss of pay suffered by our members. The stance of our Brigade is an aggressive one and the threat of reduced pay is forcing our members back to work. This study is vital but the outcomes we seek with our amendment are more so. Conference, support Gloucestershire's Amendment and support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Phil. Is there a seconder for the Gloucestershire amendment?

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

It was really important to come up on this because in your Obituary you have got one of our members listed who died last year tragically, Dennis Elliott. All of our Delegation will know about Dennis but I wanted to share the story about what happened to him because when we are looking at this issue it is not just about pay, although pay is a big issue here, and it is not just about discretion: whether the Authorities do exercise discretion.

Let me tell you what happened to Dennis. In August 2005 Dennis, who was a Station Officer at that time, on one of our Wholetime Stations, was diagnosed with bowel cancer. He was a supremely fit individual and had a really positive attitude. He went through operations, surgery, and had five courses of chemotherapy to deal with his bowel cancer. In early 2006 he was told he was making really good progress, looking to get back to work. Obviously, five courses of chemotherapy take their toll on a person. He was not able to work in any capacity because his immune system was so suppressed, so he was actually expressly told not to undertake any form of modified duty. He also became 55 in May of last year and because he was so positive and committed to the job, he wanted to get back. He wanted to end his career on his terms and not on the terms of his illness. He applied for an extension and that was granted. So he was given an extension until November of last year to get himself back to work. Then, for no apparent reason that we can figure out except that figures had been produced to show there had been a big increase in sickness in our organisation (an 18 per cent increase in one year), the Brigade pressed the panic button, and what did they do? They do what they so often do, a knee jerk reaction. They picked the first person who came up for sickness review and cut his pay. With Dennis that took the wind completely out of his sails. He was completely motivated, this bloke, to get himself fit, but all of a sudden, as he said to me, he realised that they didn't care about him at all, not about him as an individual. Despite all of the apparent concern and support that he had got, which he had received, he realised he didn't matter at all.

The sad fact is that Dennis lost his motivation, he then caught what was a very simple infection but he couldn't shake it because his immune system was so suppressed. He then deteriorated and sadly died on 21 August last year. Obviously, it is a tragedy for the family; it is a tragedy for all of his colleagues as well, and it really did affect our Brigade and our membership badly. We lodged an appeal by the way, against the decision, and after Dennis died – you may find this hard to believe (I still cannot believe it) – the appeal was set to take place three days after his death, and because he had died the Brigade ruled that it did not need to hear the appeal. The Chief made a decision to reinstate his full pay after his death and in so doing he said there was no decision to appeal against. We said it was a disgrace, that we needed to be able to address why the original decision was made to reduce his pay because there was no good reason for it. It was a question where they just wanted to send a message to people in the organisation. They picked, in my view, completely the wrong person to do that. All it had the effect of doing was undermining his ability to get himself well, to get himself back to work. So it was a disgrace and I think,

Day One – 9th May

although that is an extreme example – and I hope it is never repeated elsewhere – it really indicates the sort of mindset of these people. Sometimes it is not just about the money. When we flagged up this issue about sickness absence and how we improved our sickness management methods in the organisation, the attitude of some of our HR people was really beyond what we would think would be human. Their attitude was they are running an organisation and a work place, not a charity. Frankly, I think it stinks and we all know it stinks and I think we have got to start injecting some anger into some of the discussions that we have because as you can see in some of the worst cases, lives really are at stake when people feel that they are treated like shit. So please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dave. Can I ask Northern Ireland to move Amendment 2, please? (*Formally moved*). Is there a seconder for the Northern Ireland Amendment? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council, as I outlined earlier, are giving qualified support to the Resolution, qualified support to Amendment 1 and unqualified support to Amendment 2. Andy, are you going to give the qualification?

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

In terms of Gloucestershire's Amendment, a simple qualification which is that it does depend upon the information we require coming from Officials, Brigade Officials, being sent in to us so that we can ensure that we have got a fully informed assessment upon which then to issue the guidance, and it also covers the issue of workload as well. The Amendment is really about the six months, although we will do everything we can to ensure that information does come out within that six months.

The qualification to the Resolution itself is, as I say, I suppose the question of we need that information from yourself. I will say though that the Resolution seems to confine itself to numbers, but I think the spirit of the Resolution is clear. It is what are the numbers, what is it that Brigade management is doing to ensure that they do consider people's individual circumstances properly, and let us face it, what we have heard today is clearly an indication that they are not, and what arrangements have you got within your Brigade with regards to occupational health service provision. I would take this time also to agree with Dave that perhaps we do need to ensure that we are more hard hitting because certainly the employers are picking on the lame and the sick, and I think it is important that we do give exposure to that and ensure that we seek an early resolution to the problems being faced by our members in terms of loss of pay or indeed no sick pay whatsoever.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. Resolution 42 is now open for debate. Anyone wishing to come in? No. There is no need for a right to reply. I therefore put the Amendment from Gloucestershire first to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? No. Any abstentions? That is carried.

Amendment 2 from Northern Ireland. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried.

We now put Resolution as amended by Gloucestershire and Northern Ireland to the vote. Can I see those in favour please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Resolution 43, Flexible Working, in the name of Fife. I ask Fife to move.

Resolution 43 – FLEXIBLE WORKING

Conference welcomes the introduction of the right to ask for flexible working which aims to help employers and workers agree on work patterns that suit everyone. However since the introduction of this legislation the application of this in the UK Fire and Rescue Service appears to be patchy with brigades applying criteria, considered to be relevant, differently. Others seem to be unaware of the responsibility to deal with such requests timeously and fairly or of their obligation to supply not only a reason for refusal but an explanation of why the request was refused.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a survey of brigades to ascertain the types of flexible working that have been requested and the experiences of members making these requests with a view to preparing a document which can highlight good practice and aid FBU officials in assisting members making such requests.

FIFE

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

I move Resolution No 43 on Flexible Working. Current flexible working law enables parents with a child under six, for a disabled child under 18, to make a request for flexible working. It imposes a duty on employers to consider such a request seriously and only reject it for good business reasons. We can ensure that members and Officials alike are in a stronger position to deal with these requests. Flexible working opportunities, as we all know, can help everyone involved: employees and their families as well as employers. For individuals it can help

Day One – 9th May

balance home and work responsibilities and as someone who has had experience of this, I can tell you that when there is recognition by managers of the responsibility to consider and implement this, it can make a positive difference to being at work and managing home and work responsibilities.

Under the legislation, employees have the legal right to apply to work flexibly and to have their applications considered properly in accordance with a set procedure, and refused only where there is a clear business case for doing so. They are also entitled to have a companion when meeting an employer to discuss their application. Where an application is refused they are entitled to have a written explanation. They can appeal against an employers' decision to refuse an application and to take a complaint to a tribunal in certain circumstances.

However, it is not as simple as it sounds as the onus is on the employee to prepare a carefully thought out application well in advance of when they would like the desired working pattern to take effect. The employer should then follow a set procedure to help ensure a request is considered seriously. Yet, from discussions with other FBU Officials around the country, it is clear that not all requests have been dealt with in the same way, even within Brigades themselves.

Conference, this Resolution is asking for a survey of Brigades to find out what has been happening on requests for flexible working so that we can find out where the good practice is and share it with FBU Officials. This will then provide a basic tool for Officials to use when being faced with members needing support or preparing their applications. A badly worded application can make all of the difference between failure and succeeding. Let us make sure that we have the support available for ourselves as Officials and for FBU members. Support This resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder to Resolution 43?

SIS HELEN HARRISON (NWC):

I second Resolution 43, Flexible Working. I stood here and moved Resolution 25, Flexible Working, in May 2005. That Resolution asked for guidance for Brigade Officials so that they were placed to assist all members making applications for flexible working. The Resolution, importantly, also asked for that information because we knew it would help Officials in the inevitable round of appeals that would follow. The Resolution carried. No offence to Fife or anything, but it is really disappointing for me to be standing here today – groundhog!

Luckily, persistence is a quality that I have in abundance

and my colleagues will confirm it. Flexible working has really pole axed the employers. They do not know what to do. They understand the simple things, job share, one job, this half, that half. They seem to get that mainly but anything else, anything other than simple job share seems to be instantly problematic. Some Authorities will try their best to provide our members with realistic solutions but those Authorities are few and far between. Most Authorities either refuse point blank or cobble together some pathetic unworkable arrangement that suits them rather than the member. The best one I have heard of so far was a woman Firefighter trying to organise hours for her return to work having taken maternity leave. The Station Manager dealing with it offered her the solution that she could get a stand-in and meet her husband in a lay-by, hand over the baby and if she was late she was late. He tried his very best to avoid her getting done under attendance management. Rubbish!

As a Union we really need to have a discussion around this subject area now. We need to pool our ideas and come up with some suitable and workable solutions for our members. The huge consideration for us in this issue is how to fill that gap, the gap left by the flexible working bit. Management have some really strange ideas about this and we need to be ahead of the game. Any solution cannot impact negatively on another FBU member or impact on another FBU policy, that is really important, so as a progressive Union we must state what we want from our employers. Let us take it to them and then maintain the fight to get the best for our members rather than just waiting and seeing what they will give us. Please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Helen. The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 43. It is open for debate. No. I therefore put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of Resolution 43? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We now move to Resolution 51 entitled Equal Opportunities for Training in the name of Hereford & Worcester, and I ask Hereford & Worcester to move.

Resolution 51 – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING

This Annual Conference notes that many members who are primary carers are being restricted from partaking in some Fire and Rescue Services training courses due to management's lack of consideration for childcare. We believe that all our members should be given the same opportunities for training without the individual incurring unnecessary childcare costs.

Day One – 9th May

Conference calls on all Brigade Officials to enter into negotiations with management to ensure that childcare is given serious consideration when planning and offering courses to employees. We further call upon the Executive Council to report this issue back to Annual Conference 2008.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

BRO STEVE LAUGHER (Hereford & Worcester):

I move Resolution 51, Equal Opportunities for Training. Conference, we are constantly told by management that the most valuable asset the Fire & Rescue Service has is its personnel. They will tell us that they believe in training for the future, to help each individual train to their full potential, however, I am sure we can all cite examples from each Fire & Rescue Service where management displays at best a lack of understanding or, at worst, a total disregard for the difficulties faced by their employees who have primary care responsibilities.

An example: training courses cancelled at the last minute leaving our members, their valued asset, financially disadvantaged because, as we all know, child care fees, are paid for at the time of arranging and cannot be reimbursed. Whilst this Resolution focuses on child care, we acknowledge that with an ageing population we also have members who are primary carers for the elderly and those who have responsibility for those who suffer from some form of disablement. We call on all Brigade Officials to enter into negotiations with management to ensure that child care and its cost implications are taken into account when planning, offering courses to employees, and where those courses are cancelled that our members are not financially disadvantaged.

We call upon the Executive Council to report back on this progress of negotiations at Conference 2008. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is there a seconder for Resolution 51?

SIS SAM RYE (NWC):

I support Resolution 51. Those of you who are parents or carers will sympathise, I am sure, with the content of Resolution 51. Have you ever had to turn down an offer of a week long Driving Course because there will not be anyone to look after the children? After all, in today's society the majority of parents both have to work. Juggling life, work and children is hard enough without adding a change in work times for the course. If this seems sad, then what happens when a parent, carer, father, mother, or single parent is offered a Residential

Course. It just would not happen unless you are lucky enough to have a very understanding supportive network of family or friends. Full-time child care would break the bank.

The Grey Book itself acknowledges that family responsibilities often curtail our members' own aspirations, potential, earning capacity and personal development opportunities. In section 2.8 of the Grey Book it highlights those particular difficulties that our women particularly face, and I am sure all of your members do or potentially will experience it at some time in their lives.

To take this point further, I am sure if access to training within the British Fire Service was gender impact assessed, it would be found discriminatory to women. The majority of child carers in society today: women make up 52 per cent of the Trade Union Movement, the majority, yet the TUC even still struggle to provide proper care provision now in 2007. It should not be a fertility lottery to whether a course for ongoing training or promotion is accessible to one of our members. This is no longer an acceptable position to find ourselves in. I urge you to support this Resolution, for Conference, to call upon all Brigade Officials to negotiate with management, sufficient child care to enable our members to attend courses regardless of the home situation and for the EC to report back at this Annual Conference 2008. I support.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are offering qualified support to Resolution 51, and I ask John McGhee to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

The qualification is very simple. If Brigade Officials are entering into negotiations they will have to give the information to us in Head Office in order that we can prepare a report. If we do not get the information from you, it will be a pretty bland report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Resolution 51 is open for debate. Nobody. OK. I therefore put it to the vote. Can I see all those in favour of Resolution 51. Thank you. Are there any against? No. Are there any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

We now move to Resolution 54, Public Holiday Shifts, from Merseyside with an Amendment from South Yorkshire. Can we have Merseyside to move, please.

Day One – 9th May

Resolution 54 – PUBLIC HOLIDAY SHIFTS

Conference deplores the actions of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, and any others, who intentionally remove operational fire cover on public holiday shifts below that which is set within the local IRMP, in order for firefighters to be instructed not to attend for their rostered duty.

Conference condemns this practice as being one that removes fire cover in order to result in a reduction of an overall wage bill for a period that attracts premium rates of pay, a practice that is immoral, unsafe and provides a lesser Fire and Rescue Service for the community at that period.

Conference instructs that Brigade Committees oppose such reduction in fire cover by all means necessary up to and including strike action.

MERSEYSIDE

Amendment

Line 10 after “cover” insert full stop. Delete all after.
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO KEVIN HUGHES (Merseyside):

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service previous IRMP's have led to massive reduction in jobs and front line Firefighters in Merseyside. In fact, in the first two rounds of IRMP's Merseyside job losses accounted for 48 per cent of the National job losses. We are stretched to breaking point on a daily basis and we do not look forward to the day that that straw breaks that particular camel's back (or backside in our case). On Public Holidays or days that are supreme in rate of day, it gets worse. The already dangerous levels of cover are determined by these crazy, ill thought out IRMP's, get worse. Pumps are put off the run and Firefighters are told that they are not needed, all in the name of saving money. We believe this practice of running a skeleton Fire Service in order to save a few quid is immoral. It not only reduces the cover for the public that we serve and our families that reside in those communities, but it is also extremely dangerous. It is a policy that will result in a death or serious injury for one of our members. It is for that reason that we do not accept the Amendment from South Yorkshire. We believe the health and safety of our members is important enough to take action for. Conference, please support the Unamended Resolution and defend our members' safety. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Resolution 54? No seconder? (*Formally seconded*). OK. I will ask South Yorkshire to move their amendment.

BRO ANDY HAYTER (South Yorks):

First time speaker at Conference, moving South Yorkshire's Amendment to Resolution 54. We broadly support the sentiment behind Merseyside's Resolution regarding public holiday shifts. Further to that, we do not propose this Amendment to the Resolution with a suggestion of barring any industrial action, or even strike action, but the decision to take part in any form of local industrial action should be taken at Brigade Committee following consultation with our membership and not at a National level and should not force Brigades into industrial action just because we have voted to do so here at Conference.

Many Brigades would not have the support amongst their membership for strike action over this issue and we would be setting ourselves up to fail in the future over this matter. We should remember that not all of the Brigades in the country could generate enough support for strike action for the pensions' issue, for example, which is a relatively more emotive subject. Conference, please support this Amendment.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. Is there a seconder for the South Yorkshire Amendment? (*Formally seconded*). OK, the Executive Council are giving qualified support to Resolution 54 and opposing the South Yorkshire Amendment and I will ask the Assistant General Secretary to outline why.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The opposition to the South Yorkshire Amendment is quite simply that in order to achieve what the Resolution calls for if negotiations fail, then it is undoubtedly the case that it is going to require industrial action of some form up to and including strike action in order to achieve the end results being sought by Brigade Committees, and for that reason, as I say, we oppose the South Yorkshire Amendment.

Having said that, the qualification that we have got to the Merseyside Resolution itself is quite simply that as always we do qualify our support on Resolutions such as this and that is that we have to be sure that Brigade Committees are able to achieve a successful ballot result, and I do think that covers in some ways some of the concerns that are being raised by South Yorks themselves. This is not to force a ballot on anyone; it is to commit this Union to campaigning properly and effectively within Brigade Committees where employers try to take on our conditions but, more importantly in this case, our fire cover and standard of fire cover that we provide for the public, and that President is the qualification of our position.

Day One – 9th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. Resolution 54 is now open for debate. Is there nobody? Do Merseyside wish to exercise their right to reply?

BRO KEVIN HUGHES:

I just want to draw your attention to the last sentence in the Resolution. What we are saying here is up to and including strike action. For those of you who successfully defend this without strike action, fantastic. We know we are not going to be able to defend it without strike action and that is why we would ask you to support it in its entirety.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will, firstly, put the South Yorkshire Amendment to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Presumably South Yorkshire is in favour. Thank you. Can I see those against? That falls.

I will now put Resolution 54 from Merseyside (unamended) to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Resolutions 58 and 59. I will take them in the same debate. Both Resolutions can carry. Resolution 58 entitled Second Contracts in the name of Cheshire. I will ask Cheshire to move.

Resolution 58 – SECOND CONTRACTS

This Conference condemns Fire Authorities attempting to introduce second contracts for firefighters, to undertake additional duties that fall within their role maps. Whilst performing these duties firefighters should be covered by all Grey Book Conditions of Service, including overtime payments.

Therefore, this Conference demands the FBU ensures that all duties that are undertaken by firefighters and that are within their role maps are covered by the Grey Book.

CHESHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

I move Resolution 58. Cheshire Fire & Rescue believe they can cherry pick elements of the Firefighters' Role Map and allow Firefighters' to work on the second contracts and on lower rates of pay than the payment set out by the NJC. Cheshire Fire & Rescue are attempting to find increasing ways to attack the pay and conditions of Firefighters' by tasking their ever

increasing legal team to find loopholes and differing interpretations of the Grey Book.

Currently, Cheshire Fire & Rescue are offering overtime to Firefighters' on second contracts in order not to attract Grey Book pay. One, staffing the target response vehicles at a flat rate pay despite these hours being in excess of the contracted 42. Two, carrying out community fire safety under the guise of part-time advocates and paying less than Firefighters' flat rate pay, but Scale IV pay for Green Book Staff. The Role Maps were extended to include community fire safety but Cheshire now want to separate elements of this work when they see fit and certainly in the case of RDS Firefighters as they deem this Green Book work. Currently, these contracts have not been signed by Staff or made available whilst their HR and legal teams work up these contracts. Regardless of final legitimate contracts, management are pushing Staff to volunteer for this work at these rates of pay. They are using incentives such as telling RDS Firefighters, by working part-time advocates, they can demonstrate they are fulfilling the Role Map for community safety which will assist, should they wish to migrate to Wholetime. For non-operational managers, should they staff the TRV's they will be able to demonstrate competence in the fire fighting elements whilst greatly improving their promotion prospects. Legally it is difficult on the basis that these conflicts are voluntary and an individual can take the option to work them or not. We believe this is wholly wrong and this work will be undertaken without the usual consultation and negotiation rights afforded to the FBU under the Grey Book. In fact, management don't believe the community safety contracts have got anything to do with us as they deem it Green Book work.

For staffing the TRV's, management have said that the contracts would be firstly voluntary overtime at flat rate, then they were dual contracts and currently they are second contracts undertaking Retained duties. These Retained duties in no way comply with the Retained Duty System within the Grey book. They believe this way they can get away with paying flat rate for overtime. They intend using these additional duties in a flexible way to bring on line the small targeted response vehicles at times they deem fit. They also believe these contracts will cover Firefighters in the event of death and injury under the pension provisions despite them being clearly outside the terms of the Grey Book. Our view is that this work is in the Grey Book and therefore should attract overtime with no need for a second contract. If it is a separate contract, how can management claim that apart from the pay, all of the terms and conditions of service will remain the same. We don't believe management can separate elements of the Role Map and use their own local rates of pay. They will completely undermine the Grey Book whilst at

Day One – 9th May

the same time using this additional work to erode Firefighters' jobs. We now understand what our Chief Officer meant back in 2003 when the overtime ban was lifted, that he for one would not be lining the Firefighters' pockets with overtime. It wasn't that he wished to protect the establishment figures by resisting the use of overtime; he wants overtime and plenty of it but wants it on the cheap. This is from a man that has seen his pay grotesquely escalate in recent years.

We are in dispute over these contracts, or lack of contracts following months of arguing that we could indeed dispute them. Despite finally recognising the dispute and entering into the dispute resolution process, management have blatantly ignored the negotiating procedures and failed to recognise the status quo. We are now at the Joint Secretaries' level attempting to resolve this dispute which has been protracted after management showed contempt for this process and left the talks before they were concluded. So we would now call on the Executive Council to take this issue to the full NJC as Cheshire Fire & Rescue are clearly undermining the Grey Book showing total disregard for the NJC and attempting to introduce local pay rates. Conference, support the Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dave. Is there a seconder for Resolution 58? (*Formally seconded*). OK. Can I have Lancashire, please, to move Resolution 59, Secondary Contracts.

Resolution 59 – SECONDARY CONTRACTS

Conference demands that operational Trainers/Instructors, who have a commitment to train Local Authority firefighters and control staff, are employed under and in accordance with the current NJC 'Scheme of Conditions of Service' (Grey Book). This is unless it is specialist training being given and that the skills are not currently available in-service.

LANCASHIRE

BRO TONY CAVANAGH (Lancs):

I move Resolution 59 – same horse as Cheshire but a different jockey. For those who read the Firefighter magazine, you may have seen the fifth column issue. There was a piece on Lancashire pool trainers; it was in about four or five months ago. At Lancashire Training Centre we had a dedicated work force of trainers with an establishment of 34. Following the review for modernisation, this was reduced by 16 posts. The Centre was still as busy as it ever was but now we had fewer trainers to carry out the work. So some bright spark came up with the idea of getting voluntary Staff in

on separate contracts and call them pool trainers. They brought the pool trainers in on fixed pay equivalent to a Firefighter's daily wage, straight time. The pool originally started with approximately 40 names on it all willing to undermine their colleagues' terms and conditions of employment. Eventually, following discussions with the 40 we reduced the number down to about 10, all good members of the FBU. These 10 left the FBU before they were asked to leave or otherwise. These 10 then carried on eating sausage, chips and beans at the expense of other members of the FBU and trainers.

The thing of it is though that the reduction in numbers actually made the place unworkable so management called us for meetings and we eventually decided on the way forward. We decided and we agreed that Grey Book Staff should get Grey Book pay at Grey Book rates, and the appropriate rate was premium rate. We won this through the majority of the members supporting us. We had the moral high ground. We had the Grey Book. We had all the arguments. What we did not have was a formal policy to fall back on. This gives it to us. Support the Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Tony. Is there a seconder for Resolution 59? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are supporting both Resolutions 58 and 59, and I will call the General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, President. The Executive Council are supporting an important issue which has been highlighted by both these Resolutions, and addressing similar issues and similar concerns of the experience we are having in various Authorities now, of Authorities attempting to introduce secondary contracts and bring people in not on Grey Book terms and conditions. It goes to the heart of what we are trying to achieve as a Trade Union, and there are various ways and both speakers introducing the Resolutions about various mechanisms that we can use. We have the Joint Secretaries route and Dave is absolutely right about the contempt that seemed to come from certain members of the Cheshire management team in terms of people who had travelled to London to engage in a process to try and resolve a disagreement and before that process was concluded, actually walked out without even informing their own Joint Secretary; absolutely bizarre behaviour; absolutely disgraceful behaviour, and we will certainly be raising that formally through the NJC process and will report in due course back to Cheshire members in due time.

I think the reference to what happened in Lancashire actually highlights what is necessary here, because the problem we have ultimately is that we can only

Day One – 9th May

negotiate improvements in terms and conditions. We can only ensure that jobs are placed on Grey Book terms and conditions if our members are prepared to support us. If we have people who are prepared to work at flat rates doing overtime, then that undermines the terms and conditions of you, it undermines the terms and conditions of our members. I think there is a job of work to be done to convince members that they need to ensure that people negotiating on their behalf, people negotiating on behalf of everybody working within the Service, are given that authority, given that negotiating position, by people not undermining their colleagues in the way that was outlined in relation to the Lancashire case, so we fully support the Resolutions and support from Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. 58 and 59 are up for debate. No-one. OK, I will put them to the vote. They can both carry. The Executive Council are supporting both of them. Can I see all those in favour of Resolution 58, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

Resolution 59. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? That also is carried unanimously.

We are now on Emergency Resolution No 7 entitled Secondary Contracts to be moved by Hereford & Worcester.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION No 7 – SECONDARY CONTRACTS

Conference demands that the Executive Council investigate the pension implications for members who were issued a secondary contract after 6th April 2006, and seek advice for Brigade Officials where Fire Authorities propose to issue a single contract containing more than one role map. This information must be obtained as a matter of urgency and reported back to all Officials as soon as possible.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

BRO STEVE LAUGHER (Hereford & Worcester):

I move Emergency Resolution No 7. We have listened and voted on the two previous Resolutions on secondary contracts, but with this Resolution it covers the pension implications on the second contract itself. I raised pension concerns for initially our USAR members some months ago with the National Officer responsible at the time. This first came to light when we were negotiating contracts for Wholetime and on-call USAR members. Pension issues were raised and it was soon

established that there would be problems concerning the on-call element of USAR operatives on a second contract, those who joined after April 2006. As a result of this, senior managers arranged a meeting with Martin Hill from the Pensions Department of CLG and invited Brigade Officials to attend. This took place on 05 April 2007. During this meeting Martin Hill informed us that as the on-call USAR operatives in our Brigade were employed on a second contract after April 2006, therefore this contract is only covered by the new Firefighters' Pension Scheme. He then continued to say that this not only affects on-call USAR operatives but anyone who is employed under a second contract after April 2006. So who could this affect? In our Brigade this affects obviously the on-call USAR, Wholetime Retained, EFAD driving instructors and many more.

You can ask another question: what does this mean? Basically, should an injury result in the loss of employment whilst undertaking any duties under a second contract employed after April 2006, any injury award would be based on the annual salary of the second contract under the new Firefighters' Pension Scheme. There will be no enhancements under the '92 Scheme which could mean a significant reduction in pension. With this information, our Brigade has taken out an indemnity to cover on-call USAR members. They have confirmed that this is legal. All other members carrying out any other duties on a second contract have been informed of the risk. This information obviously we passed onto the National Officer responsible at the time and since then our Brigade managers have formally proposed, as a way forward, that all duties would come under a primary contract to overcome the issues surrounding secondary contracts and pension rights. For me this raised some alarm bells.

What are the implications? This would mean you could finish up with more than one role or different parts of Role Maps under the primary contract: different rate of pay, part-time working rights and a whole host of other issues to take into account. I will just give you one example. Wholetime Crew Manager on my shift currently carries out EFAD driving instruction on his rota days on a secondary contract as a Watch Manager, because that is the rate they pay for EFAD instructors. So lump this together plus many other roles on another rate of pay. As you can see, where does it end? The list is endless and we need some advice and guidance on which way to deal with it. You may ask where do the secondary contracts come from? In our Brigade it resulted from the 2003 Agreement and the lifting of the Wholetime Retained, and now they are being used for a whole host of other duties which our members are more than happy to carry out.

We had a discussion at a Branch meeting recently, and one member quoted to me where can I get a part time

Day One – 9th May

job earning more than £14 an hour for something I like doing, so obviously this is what we are up against as Brigade Officials. What I am asking for from this Resolution, firstly, for an investigation to be carried out into the pension implications for members carrying out duties under a second contract after April 2006 and what are the implications for a single contract containing other duties outside the primary role and obviously advise accordingly. This advice should be reported back to all Officials as a matter of urgency.

So you can see why we put this Resolution forward. It is simple. Our members on secondary contracts are at financial risk should an on-duty injury result in the loss of employment. Our members deserve the answers to these questions so that they can fully understand the implications and risk by carrying out other duties on a secondary contract. Support this Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution No 7? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are supporting.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think, like some of the earlier debates, it highlights a new problem that we are having to grapple with in the Union, because in one sense there is a simple answer to this. If there is not proper pension provision on these contracts, then don't do the bloody contracts; don't engage, don't sign up for them, because that will pretty rapidly force them to resolve the issue. I think, as I mentioned in the earlier discussion, we have got a job of work to convince our members that it is in their interests to allow people to negotiate these issues rather than signing up and rushing in when the Chief Officer offers them a bit of spare cash on their days off.

In terms of the pension details that Steve raised, there are complications. It touches on issues around Wholetime Retained as well, as you rightly say. We have a meeting now set up for tomorrow tea time, and I know that yourselves and a number of other Brigades who are grappling with some of these issues have been invited to that. I wasn't quite sure how you slipped this as an emergency through Standing Orders, but fair play to you, and we support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Emergency Resolution No 7 is up for debate. OK. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Abstentions? That is carried.

We are now on Emergency Resolution No 2 entitled Downgrading to be moved by Cornwall.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION No 2 – DOWNGRADING

Annual Conference condemns the decision of Cornwall County Council of 13 February 2007 to approve a budget that if implemented will see the downgrading of the only two 24 hour crewed fire stations in Cornwall to day crewed.

Annual Conference recognises that this decision is based on finance and not due to any other factor, which is contrary to the concept and guidance of Integrated Risk Management Planning.

Annual Conference recognises the increased risk to firefighters and communities from any downgrading of fire stations and calls upon the Executive Council to raise, as a matter of urgency, this issue with the Minister with responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Annual Conference also congratulates Fire Brigades Union members in Cornwall in their opposition to these dangerous proposals and offers full support to any action they take in defence of these cuts in service.

CORNWALL

BRO MIKE TREMELLEN (Cornwall):

I move Emergency Resolution 2, Downgrading. You may not be aware of the situation in Cornwall. A couple of months ago in the *Firefighter* magazine in the fifth column, anonymous article. The reason why Cornwall Brigade Committee submitted this Emergency Resolution will no doubt be all too familiar to Delegates here. Integrated Risk Management Plans, you know, where analysis of risk is undertaken then resources are matched accordingly. No, not in Cornwall. The Lib Dem County Council preferred to match resources to a reduced budget instead. Risk analysis, no, we'll do that later on or directly. Downgrading the two remaining Shift Stations at Falmouth and Camborne will result in a 15 per cent reduction in the Wholetime establishment. Up to now the membership in Cornwall have mounted a huge campaign of lobbying local and County Councillors, MPs and collecting thousands of signatures in a growing petition against these cuts. The members do not want them, the public do not want them, businesses do not want them. Their difficulty is in persuading a majority Lib Dem County Council who see the Fire Service as an easy way to save some cash.

The political campaign continues and with that the members in Cornwall would like to invite you all to a National rally against these cuts proposals on 31 May in Truro at 10 o'clock, so dust off your surf boards, strap them to the roof of your cars, hitch up your caravan and come on down to the demo on 31st. Please support.

Day One – 9th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I think that is the best invitation we have had all day. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution No 2.

BRO TREVOR FRENCH (Devon):

I second Emergency Resolution 2. Mike has said it all really. What is happening in Cornwall is absolutely disgraceful. They need our support. Please, Conference, cast your mind back to the National Rally in Liverpool last year. What a good day out that was. Mike has given you an open invitation today so please make every effort to get down to the Rally in Truro on 31 May. If you see Mike or Terry at the back of the Hall, they may even throw in a free surf lesson for you so that is why you should go there. Please support. It is important. Get to the Rally on 31 May. Please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. The Executive Council are supporting Emergency Resolution No 2. It is up for debate.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council fully support this Resolution. I am sure it will be passed unanimously. I think what we are seeing here is an example not of any form of risk management at all. What we are seeing here is a form of budget management, a complete disgrace in terms of management in terms of the Fire & Rescue Service. So the Executive Council are pleased to give full support to this. I think we need to link up as we have done in other similar issues, the question of a political campaign, maximising pressure on the Fire & Rescue Authority members and ultimately, as we have done in other local campaigns, we need to discuss with our members the issue of industrial action because, unfortunately, all too often that seems to be the only thing that employers listen to when we are talking about cuts.

I am pleased to see Resolutions like this at Conference. It has always been a role of this Conference to provide support and a boost to members campaigning at local level so I am sure Conference will give that unanimous support, and I echo the sentiments. We had a great day out in Liverpool. Let us make that a great day out on 31 May as well.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Matt. I will put Emergency Resolution No 2 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Para A7 dealing with the National Joint Council Constitution Review.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I just wanted to take a moment of Conference's time to draw attention to that Section of the Annual Report. It is a lengthy Section dealing with the discussions around the review of the NJC Constitution. Of course, this matter goes back some considerable time. It is one of the outstanding issues from the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement that there would be a review of the Constitution. Subsequently a Report was done under the Chair of Rita Donaghy and again that was reported to Annual Conference 2005 and in the Annual Report 2005. Things have dragged on considerably since then and the matter still in a number of respects is unresolved. You will be aware, and the Paragraph in the Report outlines the information which was provided, and through your reports from Executive Council Members, that during discussions on CPD, the employers explicitly made a link between the two issues. That link has caused some considerable confusion in recent weeks because at the end of that process we did end up with a Draft Agreement on a new Constitution. However, that has not been able to be signed off because of the issue which I raised earlier around the pensionability of CPD. So that matter has not been resolved, as I say. There are discussions with the employers about, for example, advertisements for new posts within that new structure of the National Joint Council. There has been no progress on that as a result of the fact that CPD pensionability has not yet been resolved. So it is possible, depending what happens in the discussions we have with CLG, that that matter may be resolved in due course. However, it will not be until the issue of pensionability of CPD is resolved to our satisfaction.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We now move on to Resolution 37 entitled Retention of Women Firefighters, to be moved by the National Women's Committee.

Resolution 37 – RETENTION OF WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS

This Annual Conference notes that some brigades spend a lot of time and thought on encouraging women to become firefighters because of the Government's targets, but very little work is done to ensure that women remain in their chosen profession. Complacency towards breaches of equalities policies is the normal response. Complaints are difficult to make, and when made are often dealt with poorly. Women leave rather than put up with an isolating and unfriendly environment.

Day One – 9th May

Women have been full-time firefighters in the UK for more than 23 years. Many women have joined the Service, but numbers of women are still very low due to the Fire and Rescue Service being unable to retain women. Retention rates are not being made available to the Fire Brigades Union.

We therefore demand that the Executive Council negotiate within the NJC an effective strategy for brigades to create workplaces which women are happy to work and remain in.

NWC

Amendment

Line 13 delete “women” and insert “all employees”
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

SIS JENNY IMPEY (NWC):

I move Resolution 37 on Retention of Women in the Fire Service. The National Women's Committee are appalled and disgusted that the Fire Service has yet to make it into the 21st century. We hear of the Government, Local Authorities and Chief Fire Officers extolling the virtues of women and how they can give so much to the Fire Service. They also seem to spend plenty of their time telling all of us that recruiting women into the Fire Service is a priority. If this is the case then surely retention of women must also go hand in hand with recruiting women into the Fire Service. However, in many Fire Services this is not happening. What is really happening is that women are being victimised and this can take many forms.

On a daily basis we are dealing with women who are frightened of complaining for fear of repercussions from male colleagues. There are many issues. These are a few of them: lack of facilities on Stations, and this ranges from no facilities at all, and women having to put a marker on the door of the Men's to advise them that a woman is using them. If there are women's facilities, men are using them because there are no women on the Station or on duty. Women's facilities are violated because they are in the minority and in London, Devon and many other Brigades women are issued keys to their facilities. Why is this happening? It is to stop men using the facilities to leave private messages which tell women that they are not welcome in the Fire Service.

Other issues are women not being issued with personal protection equipment and uniforms and women's fit. Harassment and bullying are still common place within the Fire Service. It takes place on Stations and at Training Schools, and sometimes to the point of sexual abuse. There are archaic maternity policies and many more issues which I will not go into. Women are an important part of the Fire Service. Retention of women is important.

In 1999 in the days of the Equal Opportunities Task Group, the FBU did calculations. It was the sum to show how long it would take for there to be no women Firefighters in the Fire Service using the rate of loss being experienced just eight years ago. The answer was 22 years. In 22 years there would be no women in the Fire Service. So what did we do? We threw loads of women at the problem without resolving the issues that women suffer from and hope that the Government, the Department for Communities and Local Government, and auditors, give Brigades a great comprehensive performance assessment with quality awards and ticks in all the right boxes before women are forced to leave for the crime of being a woman in a male dominated Service; the crime of being different.

Conference, as a woman Firefighter of 22 years service, retention of me has been tough. On many occasions I was tempted to give up the fight and walk away but a dependent family and 22 years invested into my chosen career which I love and sheer stubbornness would not allow me to quit. There would have been one woman getting her 30 year Firefighter freedom pass last year. Her name is Mary Joy Langdon who is now known as Sister Mary Joy, the once woman Firefighter who turned to the church, and Sister Sue Batten, ex London and now in Avon. Her 25 year badge is now gleaned and a short dash to the finishing line awaits.

I have seen dozens of women leave rather than endure the misery. What a shame to see women with Fire Service longevity being named so few and far between. Sisters and Brothers, support this Resolution and, EC, make our employers collectively sort this out. Retention of and protection of our Staff is a right and not a favour. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Jenny. Is there a seconder for Resolution 37?

SIS DENISE CHRISTIE (Lothian & Borders):

I am seconding Resolution No 37, Retention of Women Firefighters. Conference, as Women's Rep of Lothian & Borders, I have to stress that I am sick to my back teeth of hearing management say how good they are on employing women Firefighters. Granted, we may have one of the highest statistics in the UK but 45 women Firefighters out of over 1,000 employees is not a statistic to be proud of. So why are the numbers so low and why are we not retaining them? I will tell you why? Poor maternity policies; poor facilities; poor PP and uniform. These are just a few issues which have constantly been raised by women members all over the country. Would you be happy to come to work if you had to change and shower in a cupboard with four other people? Would you be happy to come to work looking

Day One – 9th May

messy and uncomfortable because your uniform doesn't fit? Would you be happy if your wife or partner was employed by a company who doesn't care about the maternity rights and will penalise them for being pregnant? To be honest with you, that first part of my speech was quite easy to write. Why? Because I knew some of you would disagree with it.

These are all issues that we blame on management. It is easy to say women Firefighters don't stay in the job because of poor Brigade policies. What isn't easy to say is that women don't stay in the job because of the way they have been treated by their fellow colleagues. Why isn't that easy to say? Because we, the FBU, have failed our colleagues and because we, the FBU, have to be honest with ourselves and negotiate with the NJC to address this. Since becoming a Women's Rep and a member of the National Women's Committee, I have heard numerous horror stories from some of our women members about the way they have been treated in their work places: bullying and harassment is a common complaint from women members. Turning a blind eye is a common complaint from our women members. Feeling isolated is a common complaint from women members.

If you notice, I said I had heard these issues since I had become a Woman's Rep. This has only been within the last year or so but I have been a Firefighter for the last 10 years. So why has it taken me so long to find this out? I will tell you why. It is because women are searching for support, help and guidance and do not feel confident enough to come forward with their views. So what am I asking for here, Conference? I am asking for us, the FBU, the Delegates, the Officials, the Reps, the Members to work with our Brigades and Services, to make the work place for a woman a place where she can go without fear of bullying, fear of harassment, fear of isolation and a place where she feels included and supported. In order for this to happen the EC need to negotiate within the NJC an effective strategy for Brigades to create work places which women are happy to work and remain in. For nine years I didn't think women were being treated like this. Why? Because it wasn't happening to me, and just because it is not happening to you, does it mean it is not happening at all? Please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask South Yorkshire to move their amendment to Resolution 37, please.

BRO VIC GREGORY (South Yorks):

First time speaker. We in South Yorkshire and Region 4 all fully support the National Women's Committee Resolution. In our Amendment we also wanted to

ensure that all employees in the work place had a happy work place and stayed in that work place. However, we are fully aware that the Executive Council and all Officials are constantly trying to create that work place for us to work in and stay in. So after discussions with the National Women's Committee, we are in agreement that there does need to be more done to retain women Firefighters. These token arrangements that Brigades keep putting in for women Firefighters are not acceptable. So as not to dilute their Resolution, we agree to withdraw our Amendment and ask Conference to fully support Resolution 37.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 37. The motion is up for debate.

SIS SALLY HARPER (London):

I support Resolution 37, Retention of Women Firefighters. This Resolution originated from London's Women's Action Committee. In London for many years the number of women Firefighters stayed the same not because we could not recruit women but for every women that joined the Fire Service one left. With all the effort and high priority put on changing the work force, did no-one ask the question why so many women were leaving? I know some of the answers. I asked the questions to our members. I wanted to know why women worked so hard against the odds to do what I think is the best job in the world, only to go to the work place, a work place where I have to have a key round my neck to unlock the women's toilet, where fire gear has to be locked away because it gets tampered with in the gear room. Women leave because of the way they are made to feel in the work place, mainly Fire Stations. Last year I did a survey of how many women Firefighters in London worked at Fire Stations. Around 40 per cent out of 189 worked away from Stations. They worked in Fire Safety Departments, Area Teams and did Project Work. I ask why? I could find only 10 that said they moved work places through their own choice. The majority of them moved because of the way they were made to feel: undervalued, treated as a second class worker, appalling or no women facilities at all; ill fitting PPE, the list goes on. It is not a new list; it has been the same issues for women Firefighters for decades.

You might be bored of hearing it but believe me you are not as bored as we are at trying to resolve these issues. What this Resolution asks for is an effective strategy, actions, to create a work place that women will want to remain in. The focus of this Resolution is to negotiate a strategy that will address the issues women face. Of course, a lot of the issues are issues for all employees. For instance, in London our shift system is under attack. The London Women's Action Committee have been

Day One – 9th May

very active in opposing any changes to our shift system, and I want to make a point. Women don't leave the Fire Service because of our current shift system. Please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Anyone else for this debate? Warren.

BRO WARREN SIMPSON (B&EMM):

I speak in support of Resolution 37. It is very disappointing to see that perhaps a few more men haven't come up here to support women who happen to be our brother's sisters, wives, and have been recognised by the Fire Service as being essential for us to deliver the Service that we want to achieve. All I can say is that we need to support this motion, we need to support our women and we need to bear in mind also that any negative impact that they have in the work place has an impact on our home lives too, so even for purely selfish reasons we need to support our women in the work place.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone else in this debate on Resolution 37? No. OK. I will therefore put Resolution 37 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please. Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? That is therefore carried unanimously.

It has now gone 5 o'clock so I will start to close the meeting but there are a couple of announcements I want to make first. One is that it was announced in the Standing Orders Report that there will be a bucket collection for striking workers, members of the T&G and Amicus so I would urge you all to give generously to that collection, please.

The second announcement is that there is a fringe meeting organised by the Justice for Columbia Campaign starting at 5.30 in the Bold Hotel, and they are urging Delegates to attend.

The last announcement is that tonight is the International Night and I would urge everybody to come along and make sure that Night is a success. It is in the Southport Art Centre which is opposite the Scarisbrick Hotel. I hope you have a good evening and look forward to seeing you back here tomorrow morning at 09.30.

(Adjourned until Thursday morning)

Day Two – 10th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

We will start and I will ask Steve Shelton, the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee to give a further Standing Orders report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thank you, President. Good morning everyone. Could you please turn to your Programme of Business. Page 6. After Resolution 4 insert Emergency Resolution No 8, Regional Control Centres, West Midlands. Page 10. Resolution 1, Amendment 1 from Tyne & Wear has been withdrawn. Emergency Resolution No 8, Regional Control Centres, West Midlands has been moved after Resolution 4, page 6, as previously reported. The Standing Orders Committee are pleased to announce that the bucket collection for the striking workers of Sunvick raised £1,506.31.

The Standing Orders Committee has received and accepted a request from Greater Manchester to show a short DVD on the subject of mesothelioma hoping this will give Conference a better understanding of the subject. The DVD will be shown at tea and coffee breaks throughout the day.

The Standing Orders Committee has received and accepted a request to distribute a newsletter from FBU Learn.

The Standing Orders Committee has received and accepted a request to hold a fringe meeting headed Sephton Holocaust Memorial Project to be held at the Bold Hotel, Lord Street, commencing at 12.30 this lunch time.

The Standing Orders Committee has received and accepted a request to hold a fringe meeting headed Havana Club Rum Reception to be held at the Balmoral Bar, the Royal Clifton Hotel, commencing at 5.15 this evening. The ballot for the positions on the Standing Orders Committee will commence after this report and will close at the end of tea and coffee break this morning. That concludes this report, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is the Standing Orders Report agreed? AGREED. I remind you that Conference is now in Closed Session so if anyone spies any journalists, employers' representatives or anybody, announce it to a Steward and they will be removed.

Right, what I am going to do now is you should have received in your places this morning, a copy of the Emergency Statement by the Executive Council on Co-Responding. It had previously been sent out as an All Members Circular on 25 April but at that time it was not official Annual Conference business because it had not been considered and accepted by the Standing Orders Committee. It was announced yesterday in the initial Standing Orders Report that it had been accepted and was programmed in the time table of business. Nevertheless, it has not actually been circulated as official Conference business until first thing this morning. Just so that we are double sure that everyone has had the chance to re-read it, we are now going to adjourn for 10 minutes in order for delegates to be able to do that, and I would request, please, that you don't leave the Conference centre and the smokers do not creep out for a fag because otherwise we are going to be delayed in resuming. So we are going to break now for 10 minutes and no longer than 10 minutes in order for you to be able to have the last opportunity to re-read the Executive Council Emergency Statement. Is everybody clear on that? We will now adjourn for 10 minutes.

(For Closed Session, please see separate transcript)

THE PRESIDENT:

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce one of our International speakers to this Conference who is coming from a country where I think there are some of the most exciting changes that have been going on anywhere for a generation. The speaker is Ruben Lenarez who is from the Venezuelan equivalent of our TUC. Ruben is the Vice President of the National Transport Workers Federation. He was a founder member of the Venezuelan UNT which is their TUC equivalent and he is currently a leader of the national coordinating committee of the UNT. He has been to the UK before and he has in fact spoken at a meeting of our Executive Council back in December 2005. Ruben has always been passionate about fighting on behalf of the oppressed and in 1967 apparently was making plans to go and join Chez Guevara and fight alongside him in Bolivia but was unable to due to the general repression in Venezuela at that time. It was Chez's loss no doubt at that time, but it is probably our gain because Ruben may well not have been here and able to address us today. I would also like to point out that the Closed Session has now finished and this Session of this morning's Conference is in Open Session. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Ruben Lenarez.

RUBEN LENAREZ:

I would like to thank you all for this opportunity of addressing this Conference. Greetings to everybody and

Day Two – 10th May

especially to Ruth Winters who was the first person that I met from the FBU. When we the Venezuelan people go abroad and we meet with other workers we do so in order to observe and learn, and in that way we can tell you back how this process of revolution is taking place in Venezuela and we are carrying it out.

The destiny of Venezuela and what we are doing in Venezuela is written there in the constitution of Venezuela. We adore this constitution and when it is said that Venezuela is an armed country, we say yes, it is an armed country, it is armed with the constitution. I would like to ask Conference permission to read two articles of the constitution which are about the rights of the people. Article 88 of our constitution says *The state will guarantee the right of men and women to exercise the right to work. The state recognises that house work is an economic activity that produces and for that reason housewives should have the right to social security.* Article 95 says *Female and male workers without any kind of discrimination are entitled to organise in any way that they please without asking permission to anybody in order to defend the working rights as best as they can.* I would like to say that everything that is in the Venezuelan constitution must be accomplished. The President of the Republic must accomplish everything that is said in this constitution that was approved by the Venezuelan people in a referendum.

In Venezuela we have made popular a slogan which says to rule under the wishes of the people. What we are doing at the moment is using the oil as a factor for the integration of all the people in the world as a weapon of solidarity and comradeship. Sometimes US imperialism accuses Venezuela of the fact that they say we give away the oil so we wonder ourselves and we reply to them what happened before 2002 when all the money coming from oil would be accumulated in American banks? Wasn't that a way of giving away money? If we now want to give away this oil but to the poor people to the poor countries so they can live a little bit better haven't we got the right of claiming this social justice which has always been claimed by humanity? Venezuela has always been a country very rich in natural resources. There is gold, iron, aluminium, minerals, oil, gas, water but six or seven years ago 65 per cent of the people in Venezuela did not know any doctor. Two million of Venezuelan older people never learned how to read or write but today we can say that everybody that lives in Venezuela have got the right to public care without the need of paying a cent. This is to accomplish the article of the constitution, clause 85, which says *The finances of a public health system is an obligation and must be provided by the state as well as the right to education.* In 2005 the UN declared Venezuela as a country free of illiteracy and the question is how it is possible that in two years we have managed to solve these two main problems that make our people suffer

so much. The answer is that now the oil is in the hands of the Venezuelan people.

So we had a look around and we thought who is the country in Latin America with the best self system and we find out that Cuba is the country that has got it. So we ask the brothers and sisters from Cuba, do you need petrol and they said yes and we gave them oil and they gave us 18,000 doctors. We also told them as you have done that before, teach all our adult population how to read and write. Also we looked around and we saw that the brothers and sisters from Argentina have problems and they have a crisis of oil so we offered them the oil and after this crisis has happened and gone away then we ask them to pay us back what we have given to them, and we told them now you can pay us back if you can but please do so with cows because you have lots of cows, and we don't have any and if possible we would like these cows to be pregnant so this will help us even more. This is the way in which we have been helping the people in Latin America. We preach it but also we practise what we preach so that people can follow our example. We give cheap prices oil to the countries of Central America. We also were in the very heart of imperialism to the Bronx, to Harlem where the people suffer from extreme cold in the winter so we sell oil at cheaper prices with a 40 per cent of discount to places like Homes for the Elderly and so on and so forth. We as workers are not very diplomatic when we say things. It is the case we are diplomatic and not clear with what we want but we as workers must speak clearly of what our conditions and our demands are.

To finish let me give you two ideas. One of the unions in Venezuela are representing the workers. The reasons are (1) because we want to. We are trade unionists because we want to not because somebody has put a gun on our neck and said you must be a trade unionist, you must represent the workers. We do it because we want to. (2) Because we cannot without the support of the working class as a whole. Under these circumstances we are going forward. Allow me a last idea. A minute ago outside comrades from Palestine gave me this present and told me bring that back to Venezuela – olive oil. They explained to me how the Israeli government had destroyed thousands of olive trees, very old from the times of Christ, hundreds and hundreds of years ago. This is capitalism attacking the people in the name of liberty. I have to say that Blair who is now going with cynicism and lies he practices terrorism. Also Bush he is terrorist number one and he is protecting terrorists from ... It is true that ... blow up our planes so we have three great liars and cynics who put the world in this situation. With that I would like to say goodbye. Everybody should know, even those that have not been born yet, that revolutionary people in the world were born to win and not to be defeated. Homeland, socialism or death.

Day Two – 10th May

I would like to give a present to the President of the Fire Brigades Union. On 11 April 2002 US imperialism realised a coup de'tat against Venezuela and ever since the people of Venezuela went to the streets and said no. This is our constitution, and they defeated the coup because of the President of Venezuela, so every 11th has got its 13th. *(Applause)*

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think the greetings from Conference are a clear reflection of the inspiration that you have given to Conference today. We have been told for 30 years in this country and throughout the west that the only route politically is that of private profit, of privatisation and neo-liberalism, and I think the struggle which Ruben has outlined taking place and unfolding in Venezuela is an inspiration to workers here and indeed workers throughout the developing world and workers through the rich world as well. We greet you on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union. Thanks very much for attending. We do have a gift here for you to take back to your office and to the comrades in Venezuela. Thanks a lot. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference is closed. Back here at 2 o'clock please.

Lunch break

Day Two – 10th May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Right. If all Delegates now return to their seats and end their conversations we will try to get started. Thanks brothers and sisters. I call upon Chair of the Standing Orders Committee, Steve Shelton, to give a further report.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thank you, President. Afternoon everyone. Can you please turn to your Programme of Business. Page 5. Resolution 53 has been withdrawn. Amendment falls. Page 11. Resolution 7, Amendment 1 has been withdrawn. The Standing Orders Committee needs to bring to Conference's attention that business during this morning's Closed Session that was not dealt with, will be dealt with when Conference resumes first thing Friday morning and will still be in Closed Session. The Standing Orders Committee has been asked to let Conference know that the National Gay & Lesbian Committee have a number of badges for sale at £3 each in support of the organisation Jayflag. All profits will be going to support Jayflag. Anyone wishing to purchase a badge please see the NGL Committee. That concludes this report, President. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Standing Orders Committee report agreed? Agreed Thank you. I now call upon the Chief Scrutineer to give a report.

CHIEF SCRUTINEER:

At the close of the ballot for the two Standing Order Committee positions the following votes were returned: Bro Stewart Kinnon, 41,857; Bro Phil Jordan, 40,537; Bro Conrad Jordan, 3,972. Three of the ballot papers were ruled out of order, no Brigade or no signature. I am therefore pleased to announce that Bro Stewart Kinnon and Bro Phil Jordan are elected to the Standing Orders Committee. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much. We are now on the section where we should have fraternal greetings being delivered by the Secretary of our Parliamentary Group, John McDonnell. However, as a result of the news that we heard earlier today, clearly John has got some important discussions and urgent discussions to be engaging in and is unable to join us this afternoon unfortunately, but we do have a very able stand in. So I will hand you over to Dean Mills.

DEAN MILLS:

Thanks President and thank you Conference. A statement from John McDonnell MP. "I am sorry I am unable to attend today's session of Conference to address the Annual Report of the FBU Parliamentary Group. The announcement by the Prime Minister today that he is to retire has meant I have had to remain in London. As you know, I put my name forward to stand in the Labour leadership election. To do so I need 44 Labour MPs to nominate me so today I will be meeting various colleagues to secure their nominations. I would like to thank the FBU and the many FBU members who have supported my campaign over the last year. This support has been tremendous. I am so proud to be associated with this Union. I am campaigning for the Labour leadership on a straightforward platform supporting public services and opposing privatisation and promoting trade union rights and opposing attacks on civil liberties. As the recent elections in Scotland, Wales and local councils confirmed, people are demanding a radical break with the policies of New Labour developed and implemented by both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. My campaign will demonstrate not only is there an alternative to this New Labour agenda but also massive support within our movement and our community for change.

"Turning to the Parliamentary Group's Annual Report, you will see that the group has been working hard to promote the Union's policies in Parliament and in representations to Ministers. We have also supported FBU members in disputes whenever they have occurred and used every possible Parliamentary device to highlight the Union's campaign set out in the Report. The group has been central to the campaigns for Trade Union Freedom Bill and public services not private profit anti-privatisation campaign. Rest assured that in the coming year we will continue to do all we can to support this Union and its members. Whether it is Parliament or on the picket line, we will be with you. John McDonnell."

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dean. All right. We are on Section C, Trade Union and Labour Movement. Para C1. I now call the Executive Council's Policy Statement, Political Strategy, with amendments from both Strathclyde and Tayside. (*Intervention from the Floor*) I am sorry, you are absolutely right. My apologies. Go back to Para C1. Para C2. We have someone wishing to speak.

BRO BOB WALKER (Devon):

It is a question really. Under C2 it does not list an affiliation to *Justice for Colombia*.

Day Two – 10th May

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thanks, comrade. We will check. Certainly we are affiliated to *Justice for Colombia*. If there is an error in that Annual Report, obviously we will need to address that, but the affiliation is in place.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. No-one else on C2. I will now to return to where I was trying to get to which is the Executive Council Policy Statement on Political Strategy with amendments from Strathclyde and Tayside. Both of those amendments can carry. Also Resolution 82 on Affiliation and Resolution 81 on Support to Politicians/Organisations with an amendment from Tyne & Wear. They will all be called in the same debate. If the Executive Council Policy Statement carries, then Resolution 82 from South Yorkshire falls. Right. We will start with the Executive Council Policy Statement on Political Strategy to be moved by the General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

During much of this Conference obviously we are discussing important industrial issues and the Fire Brigades Union is clearly an industrial organisation and very good at what we do industrially. But our work does not end there. We are also a political trade union and I hope, and I am sure, that Conference will agree that that needs to continue. We have never limited our activities and energies solely to the battlefields of the work place. We have taken them into the political arena too. There are very sound reasons behind this. There are a number of forces which drive our political involvement and political engagements. We are local authority employees. Our employers are local politicians and our conditions of service are affected by their political decisions. We need to engage with that and it matters what the make up of a Fire & Rescue Authority is.

The wider framework that we operate in, the framework for the Fire & Rescue Service on a national basis is laid out by Government centrally and locally, including now the devolved administrations. The same applies to our conditions of service. The same applies to our pensions. The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004, which governs our working lives, is a piece of legislation drawn up and enacted by politicians. The National Joint Council is comprised of local authority politicians who bring to the table their own political agendas. In other words, our entire service is controlled by politicians making judgments according to their own political agendas and their own political perspectives. We need to be able to influence those politicians and we also need to ensure that we are able to try and engage with more sympathetic and more supportive politicians on Fire & Rescue Authorities. But we are also in a wider context

workers and trade unionists along with other workers and trade unionists. As public sector workers we are affected like hundreds of thousands of others by the political decisions of the Chancellor to attempt to restrict public sector pay rises to less than 2 per cent. As trade unionists, we are affected by the Thatcher Trade Union Laws, or perhaps now the New Labour Trade Union Laws and the refusal of this Government to repeal them. We are affected too by decisions on a wider scale: economic policy, privatisation, tax levels and so on. We engage in this process on a wider political level as well. Indeed, trade unions are political organisations which respond and discuss a whole range of issues as is reflected in our Conference agenda this week.

For the Fire Brigades Union traditionally that has not been all that we have been involved in. The tradition in some countries is different from that in Britain. There are many cases of a tradition of political lobbying, of identifying supportive politicians, but the tradition in the British Labour movement has been slightly different and reflected elsewhere in Europe and Australasia where out of debates within the Trade Union Movement at the beginning of the last century a Party was formed claiming to speak for working people – the Labour Party. That process involved hundreds of thousands of trade unions learning from their lessons of struggle, learning the need to engage on a wider political basis with the politics of the country. So the Labour Party was formed: a Party claiming to speak for working people, and the Fire Brigades Union for many years played a key role in that organisation and was affiliated to the Labour Party.

The pioneers who founded the Labour Party realised it wasn't simply enough to fight the work place battle against injustice. They believed and understood that they needed to get into Parliament, to get into local councils, to get their hands on political influence, because it is one thing to fight within the parameters of the system and it is another thing to try to change that system. If you refer to the Rule Book, the opening section of our Rule Book, it refers to the place of the Fire Brigades Union within the international working class movement, and it refers to our ultimate aim of the bringing about of a socialist system of society. It is something which perhaps we gloss over, we forget, quite often, but that is there built into our Rule Book and I hope it colours all the political debates we will have this afternoon.

Today we move on. We have a debate around trade union rights. This Union has been heavily involved, centrally involved, in the campaign for a Trade Union Freedom Bill. Again, it is political trade unionism that has helped to create that debate. The trade unions involved in supporting that Bill and campaigning for it which would increase the rights of working people at work, are not content simply with fighting the battle on the factory

Day Two – 10th May

floor or in the offices or in the fire stations. They understand, along with us, the need to take that struggle, that campaign, into the wider political arena. We see ourselves as part of that wider international movement, and I think the reaction of Conference to Comrade Ruben this morning reflects the commitment that you have, that the Executive Council have to internationalism. I think our discussion today has to be in that overall context.

One of the key issues that is going to be debated this afternoon is the question of Labour Party affiliation. Conference in 2004 took a decision to disaffiliate from the Labour Party, and I know that on the floor of Conference today, indeed on the Executive Council, there is a range of views. There are strong arguments on both sides and there are certainly strong views held.

One view which I think is largely wrong is this, and it was an argument which some people I think used: disaffiliation will exclude us from the corridors of power. I have to say that if you look back through the history of the movement, if you look to the debates that created the Labour Party, that was not an argument that you really heard at that stage because when the Labour Party was founded, when the pioneers launched that campaign and launched the Labour Party at the turn of the last century, there wasn't a great prospect of getting into the corridors of power. Indeed, the first majority Labour Government was in 1945, 45 years later.

During 18 years of Tory Government we did not say we needed to get into the corridors of power. The fact is, of course, that if politicians are our bosses, if politicians are setting policy, then we do need to engage with them. We do need to do business with them in Government, in fire authorities, in the devolved assemblies and so on. But that is a slightly different issue to the one that we need to discuss in relation to our wider political involvement.

The question, I think, that we need to ask today is where that disaffiliation has left us. Certainly, it has not prevented us from being engaged in that wider political discussion. It has not prevented us from being engaged in that wider political involvement. I think the relationship that we have with John McDonnell operates on a number of levels. John is an outstanding Parliamentarian and does outstanding work on behalf of this Union in Parliament. (*Applause*) I know that the reports from the Parliamentary Group are avidly read by officials in this trade union. It is a way of asking questions in Parliament, of challenging Government in Parliament. It is a way also of finding out information, but it has also got a wider role that Parliamentary Group supports us in our political campaigns around issues like trade union freedom and so on. Our disaffiliation has not prevented us from being involved, for example, in John

McDonnell's campaign for the Labour leadership. I am very pleased that the Executive Council unanimously agreed to support John McDonnell's challenge for the Labour leadership. I think that reflects some of the lessons that everybody has learned on both sides of the debate about affiliation over the past few years: the disillusionment that exists in this Union and in the wider trade union movement with the politics of Blairism, the politics of New Labour. That was reflected in both our decision to disaffiliate and it was reflected more recently in that decision to back John McDonnell in that campaign.

What we are asking Conference to engage in through this Statement today is a structured debate around where we go politically. There are new challenges which we need to engage in, new challenges which we need to face: devolved administrations. There is a specific mention in the Document about devolution and I am aware that there is outstanding work which has been done in Northern Ireland, in Wales and in Scotland in relation to that issue. We are suggesting within the Document that there needs to be further work done around the question of devolution. We are suggesting in the Document that that may mean additional resources being provided from the National Union to the three Regions concerned.

We are also arguing within the Document that we need a structured debate about where our political strategy goes from here. We need to discuss what we do politically and that we will need to debate the issue of the Labour Party. It is the view of the Executive Council that at this stage it would be premature to reaffiliate to the Labour Party and that is why we are arguing for a discussion and debate where all sides of the argument can engage in that discussion, all sides of the argument can put their points of view, and at the end of it, hopefully, we will have a more informed membership, we will have a more engaged membership, who can understand why we make decisions, and at the end of that process we would bring recommendations back to next year's Conference. That is why we believe that the EC's Policy Statement is worthy of support. The work we are doing with the Parliamentary Group, the work in the devolved administrations, the education of our Officials and that properly structured debate around the affiliation question, we think that is a way of developing our strategy, developing political education and ultimately developing a political strategy and way forward for the Union. On that basis, comrades, I move the EC Statement and urge your support for it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Is there a seconder for the Executive Council Policy Statement? (*Formally seconded*). I ask

Day Two – 10th May

Strathclyde, please, to move their Amendment to that Statement.

BRO JIMMY SCOTT (Strathclyde):

Before I start with the Amendment, I thought it was quite interesting one of the things Matt says about bringing about a socialist system of society. This is what this amendment is all about, and I presume Matt will actually be supporting the amendment, so we will wait and see.

Strathclyde would ask you to support the amendment to the EC's Political Strategy, and that is in your orange booklet. Our amendment makes reference to the bringing about of a socialist system of society not just because it says on the first page of your Rule Book, but because of what socialism means and what socialism stands for. I was intensely proud of this Union yesterday when we chose to support a group of 44 workers that have been standing on a picket line for 5 weeks without any, or little, support from the Trades Union Movement. We showed real working class solidarity yesterday, and it means more than £1,500 to these women. As you all know, after standing in picket lines, sometimes you think "Nobody is that bothered, nobody is really caring about me standing in a cold gate" but they know we care about them, and that was good enough for me yesterday.

First, let's look at the EC Statement. It makes the point that we should be part of the wider working class movement internationally as well at home. The question I would like to ask is, are Tony Blair and Gordon Brown part of the wider working class movement? With plans to regionalise controls, remove turn out times, new entrants to receive less of a pension and work longer, PFI to build new fire stations, schools and hospitals, closing down maternity and A&E departments to build private housing, with unqualified support for George W Bush's war for oil, the renewal of private missile systems on the Clyde that are going to cost approximately £100 billion, the demonisation of asylum seekers and refugees in this country is deplorable. The demonisation of asylum seekers and refugees when at the same time we are bombing their countries, and then we are blaming them for coming here.

In 2007 the plight of women in the work place is still, after 30 years, fighting for equal wages, and told when they dare to apply for equal wages, they are told by a lot of New Labour councils, if you get your wage claim we are going to have to cut your services. That is deplorable and that is meant to be a Labour Government.

Support for this amendment sends a clear, unambiguous message to the New Labour Party Minister that was here yesterday, the Fire Brigades Union and the broader Trade Union Movement, we are never going to bring

New Labour back from the brink unless we say we are socialists and we are unashamed socialists, and that is the way society should be run. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Strathclyde amendment. Is there no seconder? (*Formally seconded*). I will now ask Tayside to move their amendment, please.

BRO JOHN DUFFY (Tayside):

I move Amendment 2 to the EC Statement on Political Strategy. The section of this policy that deals with devolution has clearly been written by someone on the outside looking in. That is in no way meant to be a criticism, but the opening statement does not reflect the hard work that has been done on the ground over the last few years. Nor does it reflect what we have actually achieved. The political work that is done within the Regions with Devolved Governments, it is not a bolt on. It is not an extra thing that we just happen to do. It runs instead through everything that we do at Regional level.

In Scotland we are seeing real progress on real issues such as health and safety, new dimensions. We have held the regionalisation of control rooms at the petitions committee stage of Parliament long enough for there to be a change of administration. We have had real influence in both the debate and outcome of the Fire (Scotland) Act. Since that Act became law the SCFBAC has been replaced by three new advisory forums: a ministerial forum chaired by the Fire Minister himself; a strategy forum chaired by COSLA, the local authority body; a service delivery forum chaired by C4; but, crucially, the FBU sits on all three and has real influence on all three. So much so that our suggestion for a fourth forum on equality and diversity has not only been accepted but it is the FBU that chairs that forum, and it is that forum that is currently working on the outcomes of the cultural audit of the Scottish Fire Service.

The Scottish Region has developed political relationships across the country that will help us drive our agenda forward. It will help us progress the issues that most affect our members. We are now in a position to argue for a Scottish National standard for attendance times and weight of response. We have relationships that saw a recent political school be addressed by the man who is likely to become our First Minister. Relationships that can help us stop the drive to downgrade, to cut and to close Fire Stations. These are just some of the achievements that our political strategy has gained for us. All of that is a threat if we are forced to reaffiliate to what is now a minority opposition party.

Regarding the additional resources, we are very well aware that there is a limited pot. We know there are

Day Two – 10th May

restrictions but Scotland has already shown that we can work within a restrictive budget. Over the last couple of years the financial management in Region 1 has been second to none so we are asking you to consider that with our own HMI, our own Health & Safety Executive, our own Audit Commission, our own Parliament, with more members, more Brigades and the largest geographical area, with our Officials meeting both Politicians on an almost daily basis that if we really want a political strategy that works to its maximum, then please support the additional resources and give us the tools that we require to do the job. I move. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for the Tayside amendment?

BRO TONY MAGUIRE (NIFB):

I second the amendment by Tayside. I do not need to repeat everything that John has just gone through there, but what we are seeking to do with the amendment is to firm up the intent of Para 2. As John and Matt have alluded to already, FBU Officials in Regions 1, 2 and 8 are already engaging with the devolved administrations at the highest levels. Only on Tuesday of this week the Northern Ireland Assembly was reconstituted, but even when our Assembly was in abeyance we were working at the highest level with what we called the transitional Assembly; that was the Assembly in waiting. We have had many meetings with our MLAs on issues such as pensions, IRMPs, the cuts being proposed by IRMPs and funding issues.

We welcome the EC Statement, particularly Para 2, and Matt has suggested that we may need more resources. I can assure you we will need those resources, and as John has (more graphically than I can) pointed out, in the interests of clarity and on assurance that those resources will be made available to us and our work won't be hindered, I would ask Conference to support the Tayside amendment.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tony. I now ask South Yorkshire, please, to move Resolution 82.

Resolution 82 – AFFILIATION

This Conference demands that, with immediate effect, the Fire Brigades Union affiliate to the Labour Party.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO TONY DEAKIN (South Yorks):

First time speaker. As this is my first Conference, I

didn't want to get too contentious. Unfortunately, the FBU membership in South Yorkshire had a different view. Fire Brigades Union members have wanted to get rid of Tony Blair since 2003. Apparently news of this resolution has been leaked to Downing Street and this morning Blair has jumped ship.

If anybody else has a wish list they want sorting out for next year, come and see me later and I'll see what I can do. But seriously we in South Yorkshire believe there are many reasons why our Union should return to its rightful position within the Labour Party sharing our views, aspirations and values with our friends, colleagues and opponents within the Labour Movement. Some of these reasons I want to share with you now. Notwithstanding this, I fully understand the recent strength of feeling that led to our disaffiliation and our time out in the cold away from mainstream politics.

Following our dispute in 2003 the Fire Brigades Union voted to sever its links with the Labour Party as voted for at this Conference in 2004. This was obviously set against the backdrop of low morale throughout the Brigades as Government's so-called modernisation agenda took hold of the Fire & Rescue Services of the United Kingdom. Of the three main political parties, the Labour Party is the youngest, formed in 1900 as a Parliamentary pressure group to secure working class representation within Westminster and, importantly – and some would say amusingly – to ensure the introduction of legislation to protect trade unions.

The Labour Party is now a Party of Government, and because of its obligations in governing at a national level, it has meant that the long standing relationship between the Labour Party and trade unions has not translated very well at all to the Government and trade union relationship. This is the critical point of the argument in relation to our resolution to Conference. We have to distinguish between the Labour Party and the Labour Government. The Labour Party still remains a Party that has, to quote the catalyst forum, trade union blood flowing through it even though it does seem to have had a bit of narrowing of the arteries recently – due to a few clots I think.

One of the ways in which we can influence the future direction of any Labour Government is by being part of the Labour Movement, having the debates with in the Party as a full member. We need to be able to influence and persuade members within the Labour Movement. We have to take responsibility for moulding, nurturing and empowering politicians at every level within the Party so as to achieve our ultimate aim which has to be the bringing about of a socialist system of society. We should not forget also that we have many friends in the Labour Party, many of them fighting the same battles and issues as ourselves. There are currently 44 Labour

Day Two – 10th May

MPs who make up the FBU Parliamentary Support Group led by John McDonnell, a friend of the FBU and my choice for leader. But we have little say in this election. No vote. We cannot vote for him. I ask you: is that supporting him?

Affiliated unions include those working in the National Health Service, the teaching profession and the hundreds of thousands of low paid workers employed in other parts of the public sector. They have also taken a battering from this so called Labour Government as part of public sector reforms, but they still see the advantages that come with affiliation.

Comrades, there will be those amongst you who may say “Never reaffiliate”. There are probably some of you who never wanted to be part of the Movement in the first place, just as there will be some who never wanted to leave. I accept you are entitled to your opinions. However, let me ask you this question. Are your members best served on the outside of the Labour Party or may we serve them best from the inside? The basis of our argument is this. More influence can be brought to bear by becoming part of the Labour Party and hopefully the Labour Party will be more likely to recognise the FBU if we reaffiliate. We in South Yorkshire welcome this debate and recommend to Conference affiliation to the Labour Party now. Conference, I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Is there a seconder, please, for Resolution 82?

BRO PETE GALLAGHER (West Midlands):

I second Resolution 82. Local bargaining is a not a new position we find ourselves in but it has become more widespread and we have to be able to utilise and hone skills that we have got to be most effective for our membership.

Having been affected by the policy of disaffiliation, it is good to see that at least one resolution addresses the large gap in the political strategy that we have got; the part that has been sadly missed. Local disputes are now part of our lives. We have not only seen strikes in Shire Brigades but in the Mets as well, and I am sure that many other disputes throughout the country have rambled on without seeing much success. One of the big arguments that took place in our year of discontent with the Labour Party over the 2003 pay dispute was about the political influence we had at local level. During that debate it was clear that very few Brigades had any influence whatsoever within their local authority. We in the West Midlands did have a major political influence and we know that whilst we did have that political influence our conditions were above Grey Book on all

areas. Our influence was then, as far as we were concerned, taken away and by God did that affect us. No influence. So what happened? The Brigade produced an IRMP which removed swathes of fire cover. We tried out best politically but without the influence within the Labour Party we became stakeholders and, of course, our political enemies made the most of our disaffiliation by pressing on with the changes to our conditions and to our shifts.

So who was it that got affected by our disaffiliation at that time? Was it the Labour Party? Do you think Blair and Brown have been affected? No. I assume that they applauded our decision. As we have seen from this, New Labour has moved even further to the right and so they enjoyed the fact that a progressive Left Wing Union has left their affiliation and it could only have brought smiles to their faces. So who else has been affected? Certainly the members have been affected and badly. In the case of the West Midlands our members where we have not had any influence, we have been affected badly. At a recent political seminar in Westminster, a very apt question was asked to Tony Benn and John McDonnell. What effect has our disaffiliation had on the corridors of power? The answer was, of course, what you would expect. Absolutely nothing.

They then went on to describe who had been affected by our disaffiliation of the Labour Party and they clearly spelt out the Labour Movement, the Working Class Movement and the International Movement, and everybody who works in local disputes. We had up until our disaffiliation been leaders on numerous issues and our disaffiliation has been felt badly by the people who really do need us. Let us put it into perspective. The only Party who has any influence in any working class movement is the Labour Party and we are not there. We have endorsed John McDonnell in a leadership challenge from outside the Labour Party. I find that absolutely incredible. Now let us get back where we belong and give a boost to the resurgence of the Left challenge to Brown within the Party. I urge you to support this Resolution and not wait another 12 months to get us back where we have to be. It is our party and we need to be in there. Please support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Peter. Can I have Strathclyde, please, to move Resolution 81.

Resolution 81 – SUPPORT TO POLITICIANS/ORGANISATIONS

This Conference recognises the work that has been and continues to be undertaken by numerous politicians and political organisations in the UK in support of the Fire Brigades Union.

Day Two – 10th May

Conference also recognises the devolved Governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and notes that those respective Regions have been engaging with the politicians within their own political structures. Conference notes that this Union is no longer nationally affiliated to any Political Party.

In light of this, Conference agrees that Brigades and Regions can utilise the Union's Political Fund in order to offer financial support to such politicians/organisations within their respective Brigades/Regions, whom they consider to be supportive of the policies and principles of the Fire Brigades Union.

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

At end of Resolution add new paragraph.

"Details of any such offer of financial support must be circulated to and ratified by the relevant Brigades/Regions membership."

TYNE & WEAR

BRO JOHN McFADDEN (Strathclyde):

As you know, the introduction of IRMP's placed much of the power to determine local fire cover arrangements in the hands of Chief Officers. All of the proposals have to be subject to consultation arrangements with key stakeholders and ultimately IRMP's has to be formally addressed and endorsed by Fire Authorities. Many Brigades have quickly discovered that the outcome of this process leaves the proposals unaltered. This results in a rearguard action from local FBU Officials opposed to the life threatening changes often being proposed. Brigade Officials are then left with no option other than to mount local campaigns and ballot for strike action to sort out cuts to fire cover and pruning establishment levels.

As we have seen around the country, there have been campaigns up to and including strike action mounted by local Officials and members and has led to many of the more contentious elements being withdrawn or amended. These campaigns have also helped develop relationships with community groups and Fire Authority politicians.

This resolution seeks to help Brigade Officials overseen by their Regions establish and secure the support of progressive politicians and Fire Authorities who have assisted FBU officials. We need to support and contribute to their election funds. It would also help the FBU to be able to financially assist local community organisations that have coordinated local campaigns against cuts. Hopefully, this will build a relationship that allows Fire Boards to take full account of their

knowledge and expertise to properly scrutinise IRMPs. We realise this is no panacea to the political realities in many Fire Authorities but can prove helpful and must be supported. This resolution also calls for Conference to take proper account of, and hopefully respond imaginatively to the very real and ongoing process of change in the political structures in these isles.

Scotland has its Parliament, Wales and Northern Ireland have Assemblies and London has its Assembly and elected Mayor. As has been seen in the recent elections for the Scottish Parliament, the political landscape in these parts looks very different and due to the PR voting system it is a lot more diverse. Unlike Westminster the Celtic nations have coalition or consensus Government that is consequently more open to compromise and takes more account of views of opposition parties. This has provided FBU Officials with a better opportunity to influence outcome. The natural progression of this is to establish at Westminster a Firefighter support group and to assist those members who join to be re-elected. Of course, it is vitally important that any politicians the FBU agree to assist are supportive of the policies and principles of this movement, indeed of the wider Trade Union and Labour Movement. Supporting politicians of different parties is not about being unprincipled. It is about establishing progressive coalitions of politicians supportive of works and trade unions from various parties. We have to recognise the former national home of our political support, the Labour Party, has been fundamentally changed by the New Labour project. Although there are still socialists within, it is clear at the moment they are marginalised as New Labour accepts blatant bribes, the prioritised interests of big business and the super rich over those of the working class and trade unionists.

As for the likely next Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, that other architect of New Labour, according to that dangerously radical organisation, the International Monetary Fund, he has officially turned the UK into a tax haven for multinationals and billionaires. They use ever more bizarre and frankly criminal methods to avoid paying tax and swelling profits and incomes costing the UK economy an estimated £80 billion in lost income. That is money that should be spent on fighting poverty pay, providing decent social housing, a living wage and fair pensions and it has instead been used to protect the political interests of the super rich and squandered on rich men's play things. Gordon turned a blind eye to this and lectured workers on the need for pay restraint as inflation and house prices rocket. So this is not the time to consider reaffiliation. It would also wreck the relationship we have built up with other parties in the Scottish Parliament, some now very close to power, and it would wreck our chances of reversing the damage done by the modernisation programme in Scotland. So do not deny this opportunity by reaffiliating to the Party

Day Two – 10th May

that sought to destroy this Union in 2002. Remember that. They tried to destroy us.

We have to organise smarter locally to assist our political friends who are often more supportive of trade union interests than national politicians, and help maximise their influence in Fire Service matters in the interests of our members. This is about trusting local officials involved in decision making at a local level where local officials are best placed to determine how to use that freedom to the best advantage of our members. We do, of course, insist that all financial support must be fully accountable to, and open to scrutiny, by FBU members. Strathclyde believes that the FBU must adapt to a new way of local decision making while remaining insistent and reintroducing agreed national standards to end the lottery of postcode fire cover. Until we secure this we believe Officials locally must be given available resources to do the most effective job. However, in the interests of unity, Strathclyde are withdrawing this resolution to support the EC Strategy Document as amended by Tayside and Strathclyde and opposing Resolution 82.

THE PRESIDENT:

That clearly means that the amendment from Tyne & Wear also falls so we now have the Policy Statement and Resolution 82 in the same debate, and it is now open for discussion. Can I see those who wish to speak, please. Just for clarity, the Executive Council are opposing Resolution 82.

A DELEGATE:

Speaking in opposition to South Yorkshire. Comrades, to reaffiliate to Labour at this time would be a disastrous mistake for the FBU. As has been alluded to, the change in the political direction in Region 1 has resulted in change to Councils, Fire Boards, and it would appear a change in the Government. This change was anticipated by Region 1 Officials and positive contacts were made with politicians from parties then in opposition. The work done by Region 1 Officials along with Region 2 comrades at the seminar in Belfast has afforded the FBU access to the politicians now in positions of power.

My FBU has always been a socialist movement tackling poverty, tackling injustice and fighting for trade union rights. New Labour is not a socialist Party. New Labour policies have caused poverty. New Labour's policies have caused injustice. New Labour have opposed trade union rights. Comrades, New Labour have moved from being a Party of labour representing workers and their families to a Party that represents big business. Gordon Brown, probably our new Prime Minister, unfortunately, applauds the bonuses paid to the top 200 directors but he turns his back on the 150,000 families affected by

the disastrous collapse of Fairpack at Christmas; absolutely shocking. Gordon will not offer help to the families that are hurt by the increase and interest rates today and that has directly been affected by those 200 directors receiving those massive pay packets at Christmas.

Our interest rates went up today and that is what it is as a result of. Not as an increase in the wages of workers but an increase in wages less in need of it. Comrades, New Labour have attacked public services through PFI and privatisation projects. They are currently attacking PCS workers throughout the country. They have attacked teachers' pay and conditions. They have attacked our nursery nurses. They have plundered pensions. To reaffiliate at this time to New Labour would go against everything that the FBU represents. Conference, oppose South Yorkshire's resolution and allow FBU Officials to support individuals to seek office supporting the aims and ideals of the Fire Brigades Union.

BRO MARK DUNNE (Merseyside):

I oppose Resolution No 82. Gordon Brown six months ago went back into the Treasury and said he was going to get rid of 100,000 PCS civil service jobs. We shouldn't be supporting that. More importantly, the Party that he represents and thinks he is taking over has got it wrong on Iraq, got it wrong on Afghanistan, got it wrong on tuition fees, got it wrong on Trident replacement and got it wrong on privatisation, and we shouldn't be supporting that Party.

It would also be remiss of me not to remind you locally why Merseyside aren't ready for reaffiliation. That is because we have a Labour Party running our Fire Authority – and if you read the local news and you see that on camera (I hope you can), they have decided to attack the FBU with public money, council tax payers' money to fund a legal challenge against the FBU by members that we expelled, and rightly expelled, under a co-responding policy that we won this morning.

Merseyside aren't ready to reaffiliate. I think you can all understand why. We have been stabbed in the back nationally and we have been stabbed in the back locally by people who think they are Labour, but they aren't.

SIS LINDA SMITH (London):

I move opposition to Resolution 82 but also opposition to the EC Statement. I want to say that we in London don't disagree with everything that is in the EC Statement and therein really lies the problem because there are too many important issues crammed into that Statement. There is the work of the Parliamentary Group but also the devolved administration in Wales,

Day Two – 10th May

Scotland and Northern Ireland, and I accept the fact that you are moving amendments to it, but we think it is too important to be crammed into that paper.

There is also political training and education and what the paper calls The Labour Party Question. I think it says a lot that the EC have called the crucial political debate around the FBU's political direction The Labour Party Question. Also in that Paragraph the EC say a discussion about the possible reaffiliation is inevitable. What really has changed since we disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 2004? One thing has changed. That is the end of Blair and I wish John McDonnell all the best, and I sincerely hope he gets his 44 nominations, and John McDonnell is a London MP. I think it is likely that he may not and we may end up with Brown as the leader of the Labour Party. As George Galloway so memorably said, they are two cheeks of the same arse, Blair and Brown. Also London does not accept that the EC should take control about the debate of how we politically engage because if I remember rightly the EC were opposed to us disaffiliating from the Labour Party. Nor do we think that the EC should produce discussion materials, and in particular structure the debate they wish to instigate at local schools and local committees. That is for the members and the officials of those local committees to decide how they debate. But we do have a political fund and I am interested that Pete says we should look at what other unions have done, and I know that PCS have just recently voted their members to have a political fund, but they have got no intention of affiliating to the Labour Party. Instead they have run a campaign called "Make your vote count" when they wrote to all candidates in the recent election and said "Where do you stand on the policies of our union?" I think that is the way forward for the Fire Brigades Union. That is how we should operate politically. Mick and Matt yesterday asked us to uphold the tradition of the Fire Brigades Union and to look at politics wider than the FBU, and I certainly support that. Mick says that we should align ourselves with progressive campaigns and join with people who want to change the world for the better. So I ask you frankly Conference, how can we even consider aligning ourselves to a Labour Party that is governed over the now widest gap between the rich and the poor in over 100 years with over 1 million children in this country in severe poverty?

We have talked about the fat cat city bonuses, but they got more in their bonuses than was spent on the nursery education across England, Scotland and Wales last year. Also there has been no repeal of the Tory anti-trade union law. Let's get real. That's the Labour anti-trade union law now. Also the privatisation that we have seen rolling out across the public sector, the NHS, education and our council houses. I think there is one word that is going to be written in particularly large letters on Blair's legacy and that's the word "Iraq", and I

think such a terrible human cost, 1 million dead Iraqi people, 3 million displaced Iraqi people, a complete disaster. I haven't even touched on what the Labour Party have done within the Fire Service. I don't forget the disgusting treatment of our members when we were out on strike. We were criminals, we were fascist bastards and we were the enemy within. Mick, you did say, they did hope to smash our Union and I am sorry, Pete, that is not my Party. So our members in London have not forgotten and they say to me on the branches no, actually, we don't want a single penny of our money going to the Labour Party. So I say oppose Resolution 82 and oppose the EC Statement, and let the political voices that we choose be framed around our Policies, our Rule Book and controlled by our members.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Linda. Before the next delegate starts to speak can I see who else is wishing to come into this debate, please, to get an idea. You can only come into the debate once, I am afraid.

JOHN JENKINS (South Wales):

I oppose Resolution 82. South Wales as a Brigade Committee, after consulting with our members, have voted not to reaffiliate to the Labour Party. It is our belief that the current position is the best for our members as this allows us locally to support people or organisations who support our aims and policies.

In Wales we have continued to have productive relationships with the Labour Party and the Welsh Assembly Government and also in local town halls. This, I believe, reinforces that the 2004 decision to disaffiliate from the Party was the correct one. If we were nationally to reaffiliate to the Labour Party, members in South Wales would lead the FBU in large numbers. This has been relayed to members of our Brigade Committee at almost every branch throughout South Wales. In South Wales we believe it is more important to keep as many members as possible in this Union and rejoin a British Labour Party which has, since 2002, and earlier blatantly tried to tear us to pieces and, by the way, don't think it is going to get any better under Brown. I don't know what the memories of the rest of FBU members are like, but I can assure you that in South Wales FBU members' memories are not that short. Please oppose Resolution 82.

SIS RUTH WINTERS (Lothian & Borders):

President, can you just clarify the statement you made before the last speaker. You said that people can only get in the debate once but there is an EC Statement in front of Conference and there is a Resolution. I think Tayside may have spoken on an amendment to the EC

Day Two – 10th May

Policy and then would also quite like to speak against the second Resolution, so can you clarify that position for me.

THE PRESIDENT:

Can you ask the question about Tayside again, please, Ruth?

SIS RUTH WINTERS:

The question is in any debate where there are two items up for debate, no speaker from a delegation can speak twice on the one issue, but there is a Statement and a Resolution up in this debate. You just said to Conference that Delegates could only speak in the debate once.

THE PRESIDENT:

Yes, because they are both covering the same subject and they are standing in opposition to each other. They cannot both stand. It is on that basis that I am saying that Delegates can only come into the debate once.

SIS RUTH WINTERS:

Well, I will challenge your ruling because the rules say that you can only speak on one of the two Resolutions up in front of you, but Tayside spoke to an Amendment that they made to the EC Statement, quite rightly. Another Delegate from Tayside got up, quite rightly, and spoke in opposition to the second Resolution. Because they are both in the same debate Delegates should not have the right taken away to be able to speak on the two issues.

THE VICE PRESIDENT:

There has been a Challenge to the Chair. It is exactly what the comrade from Lancashire said yesterday, you wait for one bus and then two come along at the same time. There is no seconder required for this so there will be no debate. I remind you that there needs to be a majority of two thirds of Conference. Only Delegates may vote in this. You have heard the challenge. All those in favour of the challenge please show. OK. Thank you. Those against. The challenge is carried.

THE PRESIDENT:

Come back to the rostrum please, thanks.

BRO ANDY NOBLE (Tyne & Wear):

I speak in support of Resolution 82. Basically, all that Tyne & Wear want to do is reaffirm our position that we did not agree with disaffiliation the first time round and

we still do not. That was based on the relationship we have locally with the Fire Authority. Obviously, it is not the same relationship that Mark has with his Fire Authority in Merseyside. It is not fantastic but it is some way better. We thought at the time it would have an effect and make things more difficult for ourselves and, to be honest, that is exactly how it has panned out. Like Matt said, it has not been a complete disaster. We would think we would be able to better represent our members if we reaffiliated. We did not come to Conference with a specific mandate on this. We were left with an open mandate. However, we are always mandated to represent our members to the best of our ability, and I do not think that we would be doing Tyne & Wear members any justice if we did not support this resolution.

BRO MIKE DAVIES (North Wales):

I support the Tayside amendment to the Executive Council Policy Statement. Speaking from a Welsh perspective, I can say that since the Fire Service in Wales has devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government the Welsh Region has achieved considerable success on a number of issues at Assembly level. We have developed a very good and close working relationship with the Minister responsible for Fire Services in Wales. This has resulted in the introduction of a risk reduction plan instead of what we feel is a much inferior integrated risk management plan. We also have an extensive consultation and input on the national framework document. Many of our comments were included in the final version of this document. I would also like to say due to the representation from our EC member, Mike Smith, four Region 8 service standards have been introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government setting, amongst other things, minimum attendance times (remember those!).

We have a seat, including full voting rights, on the Minister's strategic advisory committee and this gives us direct input at Ministerial level. None of this could have been achieved without the control of the Welsh Fire Service being devolved to the Welsh National Assembly. Further information on all this can be found in Section B22 of the Executive Council Annual Report. Conference I say support the Tayside amendment. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Bearing in mind your previous decision in terms of the procedural question – although I would remind you of Standing Order 23 which says that no delegate shall speak more than once on a question – anyone else who wishes to come into the debate to speak on an item other than that on which they have already spoken, Tony, and then we are going to move to the Right to Reply.

Day Two – 10th May

BRO TONY MAGUIRE (NIFB):

I am speaking this time in opposition to Resolution 82. Affiliation is a very vexed question for this Conference. Three years ago we did take the historic step and we did disaffiliate from the Labour Party, and it has been easy to claim that we did that because of the pay dispute, that we simply spit the dummy out and we are having a huff and would soon get over it. Comrades, disaffiliation from the Labour Party was not because of the pay dispute. The pay dispute may have been the catalyst but disaffiliation from the Labour Party was for a host of other reasons, many have already been covered here today. It was wrong in 2004 to claim that and it is wrong now. At that time I moved the resolution on this podium calling for disaffiliation and so people accused me of making a litany of cheap shots. Here's a few more for you.

I do understand the loyalty that people in this Union have for Labour. In reality when we consider that loyalty it is misplaced. At best a lot of it is rooted in sentimentality and even people long for times past when it was different, but at worst that loyalty is based on naïveté. Our relationship with the modern Labour Party has been an abusive relationship. Conference face the reality. We didn't leave the Labour Party; the Labour Party left us.

What would reaffiliation get us? Some of you have seen this leaflet which was distributed yesterday after Conference, and I have to take issue with some of the comments on it. Pete Gallagher referred to a question that was put to some Labour people. I posed an amazingly similar question but I did not ask them what was the effect of disaffiliation in the corridors of power. The question I specifically asked them was had the Fire Brigades Union or the Labour Party been damaged by disaffiliation and both John McDonnell and Tony Benn – I nearly said Tony Blair – said clearly that disaffiliation had not damaged the Fire Brigades Union but it had damaged the left of the Labour Party. I would rephrase that. I would say it has damaged what is left of the left of the Labour Party. However, John McDonnell is a good friend of this Union and a good friend of working class people, but it does not put the remarks that are contained in this leaflet in the proper context. Tony Benn also said on that day that the Labour Party is not a Socialist Party but it is a Party with some Socialists in it. Where do we think that anything is going to change in the political framework in which we live?

Tony Benn also went the lengths at that FBU event to explain the Parliamentary process and how the system of Parliamentary patronage works, and the long and the short of it is those MPs who do not follow the Party whip do not progress in Parliament. It has been like that forever, and also reaffiliating is not going to change that.

Comrades, I put it to you the Labour Party is not capable of reform, it is irredeemable, it is a lost cause. Tony Blair has been a deeply unpopular Prime Minister and we heard Ruben speaking this morning telling us about Blair's complicity in terrorism on people all over the world. Blair has moved on this morning, but look who is most likely – it is a racing cert that Gordon Brown is going to take the reigns of power. Another right winger. The phantom of Whitehall who sabotaged and scuppered a potential resolution to our dispute some years ago. Why do we think we should affiliate to a Party that has been led by the likes of them? Only two or three days ago I read in the paper about Tony Blair sending a message of support to that new right wing, Sarkozy in France. He sent a message of support to a President who said people have a right to strike but people also have a right to work – with a Gallic shrug no doubt. To compound that affront to the European left Tony Blair has put his speech on U-tube. You can go and watch it on the internet. He is having a laugh at people like this.

If this small but proud and principled -

THE PRESIDENT:

Red light, Tony.

BRO TONY MAGUIRE (NIFB):

OK, President, I am coming to the end. The long and the short, comrades, do not support Resolution 82.

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask Matt to reply to the debate on the Executive Council Policy Statement, and if South Yorkshire wish to exercise their right to reply on Resolution I would ask if they could move towards the front so that we are not delayed in hearing that. Just to clarify for delegates, the Executive Council are supporting Amendment 1 to the Policy Statement from Strathclyde, and opposing Amendment 2 from Tayside, and they are opposing Resolution 82 which is in opposition to the EC Policy Statement.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Strathclyde, you talked us round during the debate. We were originally opposing the Amendment and you have convinced us of the arguments.

In terms of the Tayside Amendment, comrades, a couple of points I want to make. Firstly, I think there was a reference to the clear impression that the Document had been written by somebody outside of the process. I accept that. It was obviously written at Head Office and put to the Executive Council but I do

Day Two – 10th May

want to make clear that the Regions involved were consulted about the content of that Document and asked for comments. Kenny is shaking his head but this is absolutely confirmed, I have checked that. Regional Officials and the EC Members in all the three Regions were consulted about the section on devolution within the Policy Statement.

But the main concern that we had with the Amendments is regarding the issue of additional resources. What I would ask to Regions 1, 2 and 8 is this. We have given a commitment that if possible, if affordable, we will allocate additional resources. We think that is as far as we can go because we have discussed finances yesterday and everything that we do will need to be costed and will need to be affordable so we do not want Conference to sign up to something that gives a commitment which we cannot then enforce or bring into operation because of affordability and that is the primary concern we have in relation to the Tayside amendment and we would ask Conference not to support the amendment, although we do take on board many of the points that were raised in the discussion by the movers and supporters.

In relation to the other points, the points that we are arguing and the issues that came up in the discussion, the disagreements between Delegates in relation to the EC Statement and Resolution 82. I think what was reflected in a number of the contributions was the anger that is still in place that was reflected in that 2004 debate. You well remember, and I well remember, and our members on branches well remember the attacks on this organisation, the attacks on our members, by Labour Party politicians. We remember the role of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister in that dispute and the attacks on this organisation. We remember, as Linda reminded us, being called fascists by Labour politicians. We remember being called criminally irresponsible for daring to ask for a pay rise. That anger and that hostility was, I think, extremely widespread and was reflected in that debate. We are fully conscious of that debate that still goes on on branches up and down the country, and that is why the Executive Council are not at this stage arguing for reaffiliation to the Labour Party.

It was mentioned by Pete in seconding that it was incredible that the Fire Brigades Union was supporting John McDonnell despite not being affiliated. Well, I'll tell you one thing. John McDonnell does not find it incredible that this Union is supporting him. John McDonnell is extremely pleased with the support this Union is giving him. Perhaps it is significant that the two unions that have made the most noise about supporting John McDonnell are both disaffiliated unions, ourselves and the RMT sharing a number of policy issues, sharing an approach on a number of issues.

One point that Linda raised I think we have to disagree with. As far as I can see London are opposing both the resolutions and the EC Statement. I have to say that we find it strange that delegates would oppose a structured political debate in the Fire Brigades Union. I can understand there will be concerns about the role of the Executive Council in producing, organising such a debate. Let us face it. That is the role of the Executive Council. The role of the Executive Council is to organise on a national basis on behalf of the decisions that are made at this Conference, so I think it would be bizarre if we abdicated that responsibility and simply left it to local committees. Linda mentioned the PCS, and I think there is a lot to learn from the PCS campaign Make your vote count. Also there are a number of differences in the traditions between the PCS and this Union. The PCS has not traditionally been affiliated to any political organisation.

I think there is a fundamental issue which we have to grapple with regarding this because I think in some of the comments that were made there is a suggestion that all we need to do is ask individual politicians where they stand on things and then advise our members that that may be the best person to vote for. I have to say that is not the view of the Executive Council and I do not think it is the view of the people who founded this Union. I think my view and the view of the Executive Council – I believe probably the view of the majority of you – is that the working class needs its own political voice, it needs a political party and I think the challenge and the debate that has been reflected today is whether that party is going to the Labour Party or something else, and I have to say at this stage there doesn't seem to be much evidence of something else out there.

I think the debate today demonstrates why the EC Statement is correct. We are well aware of the disagreements that were likely to come out in this debate. We are well aware of the disagreements that were reflected here today, and that is why we are arguing for a structured debate. We take those discussions to our members and that should involve a range of views, people who may want to argue for reaffiliation and people who may want to argue against it. We do not see anything to fear in that approach and that is why we would urge people to reject, vote against, Resolution 82 and support the EC Statement as amended by Strathclyde.

THE PRESIDENT:

South Yorkshire, can you come and exercise your right.

BRO TONY DEAKIN (South Yorks):

Can I just say I doubt that I will forget my first Conference. Earlier on one of the speakers said the

Day Two – 10th May

Labour Government tried to destroy us in 2002 and he is absolutely right; the Labour Government did try to destroy us in 2002 but we are not wanting to affiliate to the Labour Government; we want to affiliate to the Labour Party. During our strike in South Yorkshire we had broad support from local Labour Party members all the way through. They disagreed with what their Government were doing. In South Yorkshire we had a working partnership with our Fire Authority. When we disaffiliated this has now deteriorated to the levels of exchanging pleasantries at best.

I appreciate the views of Regions 1, 2 and 8, but where does that leave us in England? I also appreciate and understand people's concerns about the way the Labour Government have and still are behaving, but the Labour Party was formed at the beginning of this last century to represent trade union values within Parliament. We cannot hope that another party will emerge to represent the values of us and people like us. As my colleague said to me this lunchtime, just because your football team has a bad manager, plays bad football and looks like getting relegated, you don't go and support another football team – and I should know, I'm a Sheffield Wednesday fan. God loves a trier!

Conference, the Labour Party has been hijacked by champagne socialists and it is about time that we, and other trade unionists, took the Labour Party back for the working people. I would just like to finish with a quote from one of the greatest socialists of my lifetime, not from my Region but my locality, Tony Benn, who said recently, "The contribution from the FBU and the RMT has been lost and was priceless at influencing issues. What we need is a strong Labour and Trade Union Movement to get what we want but this will not happen if we are divided and disjointed." Please support Resolution 82.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Right. We move to the vote. I will put the Executive Council Policy Statement first. If the Executive Council Policy Statement carries, then Resolution 82 will automatically fall. Sorry. We take the two Amendments to the EC Policy Statement. First, the Amendment from Strathclyde which the Executive Council are supporting. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? That is carried.

Amendment 2 from Tayside which the Executive Council oppose. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? I think we will need a card vote on that one, I am afraid. Can the Tellers and the Scrutineers go to the back of the Hall, please. Are the Tellers in place? If Delegates could remain seated please so that the only people standing are the Tellers are the present time. Can the leaders of the Delegations

with the voting cards, please stand. All those in favour of the Tayside Amendment please stand. Can all Delegates please be patient and remain seated again. Can all those Delegations that are opposing the Tayside Amendment please stand with their voting cards. Thank you.

A CARD VOTE WAS TAKEN

Would the Chief Scrutineer please assist me by giving me a signal when he has completed this vote.

Thanks, Delegates, we will now break for tea. Can I ask you to be back in 15 minutes, please.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

Can people start to return to their seats, please. We will have the result of the card vote on the Tayside amendment. I call upon the Chief Scrutineer to give the outcome of the card vote, please.

CHIEF SCRUTINEER:

Result of the Card Vote Ballot held on EC Policy Statement, Tayside Amendment is: For: 18,162; Against: 26,713. Abstentions, 964.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Mick. That therefore means that the Tayside amendment falls.

I therefore put the Executive Council Policy Statement as amended by Strathclyde to the vote please. To reiterate, if that is passed Resolution 82 from South Yorkshire will automatically fall. Can I see all those in favour of the amended EC Policy Statement. Please raise your hands. Thank you. Can I see those against. That is carried.

We now move on to Para.C3 Institute of Employment Rights. Para C4 International Issues.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

We have been told a number of times at this Conference how important it is for the Union to engage in international issues. It is unfortunate – I won't go into all the reasons why it is the case – that there is no resolution on Palestine here at conference. The first thing to do is to acknowledge the work of the FBU over many years on Palestine. We were backing the issue of justice for the Palestinians long before it was ever an issue on anyone else's agenda. I would like to pay tribute to the work of ex-General Secretary Ken

Day Two – 10th May

Cameron, founding members of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine, and the regular contacts some of us would have had over the years with Yusuf Allen, now sadly departed, who came to this Conference many times to talk on the issue of justice in Palestine. It is a real shame that this issue is not better known about both within the membership of this Union and wider.

At this particular time it is important also to acknowledge the good work of this Union at last year's TUC. Particular thanks to Ruth Winters in pursuing the issue of the composite resolution passed at TUC 2006 which, for the first time really, unequivocally gave support to the notion of there being a requirement for justice for the Palestinians as opposed to the rather more equivocal stuff saying this is an issue about both sides getting together and sorting it out. Let us be clear, the situation in Palestine is a very simple one. There is a colonial project under way in Palestine. Some people think it is about the Israelis trying to protect their security but nothing could be further from the truth. Under the smoke screen of a military occupation which is in its 40th year now the Israelis have moved nearly half a million people illegally in international law into the occupied Palestinian territories. The significance, I think, of what is happening – you can find them everywhere – but they are never really picked up by international leaders and this is a quote from January of this year from one of the UN's own reporters in the area, a man called John Dugar. If you get a chance to read his report, it really is dynamite the things that he is saying about the situation there. He says, "There are other regimes, particularly in the developing world, that suppress human rights but there is no other case of a Western affiliated regime (and that is Israel) that denies self-determination and human rights to a developing people and has done so for so long." This explains why the occupied Palestinian territories has become a test for the West, a test by which its commitment to human rights is to be judged. If the West fails this test it can hardly expect the developing world to address human rights seriously in its own countries, and the West appears to be failing this test. Let us be clear. Everything else that has happened in the Middle East, all the issues around Afghanistan and Iraq are overshadowed by this historic injustice in Palestine which the West is a clear party to.

The situation in Palestine today, as I say, is one where the Palestinians live under, in effect, a system of apartheid and a system of sanctions which are applied against them as the occupied people rather than sanctions against the occupying power. Israel continues to enjoy preferential trading status within the EU. At the same time since January of last year sanctions have been applied by the European Union. No direct date has been given to the Palestinian authority. As a result 160,000 public sector workers have received little or no

wages for over a year. When you take into account their dependants, that is nearly a million people who have received no wages.

Official figures show that 60 per cent of the Palestinian population live on a pound or less a day. A third do not have enough food. It is a terrible situation and a humanitarian crisis which again is borne out in the report I referred to. So really why is this situation allowed to go on. In 2004 the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's building of the apartheid wall was illegal; it should be dismantled and Palestinians compensated for the losses they have suffered. Thousands of homes have been demolished, millions of trees uprooted in order to build this thing. Israel has ignored it. All the countries in Europe and the United States have continued to support Israel throughout this period.

What has also happened recently is on 17 March of this year a unity government was formed in Palestine as some will have seen. There was a descent into factional fighting. It is understandable. There is no structure. There is no hierarchy in the occupied territories. Taking out the payment for all of the workers in the Palestinian Authority meant there is no infrastructure at all so it is not surprising if things descend into some state of anarchy. Against all the odds the Palestinians have brought themselves together and got a unity government formed, but it has not been recognised. Norway is the only country in Europe to have recognised this government and I applaud Norway for doing so.

THE PRESIDENT:

You have got a red light, Dave.

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

Thanks very much. I have well overrun. This is the 40th anniversary year of the occupation. A coalition has been formed this year of over 50 trade unions, charities, and faith groups to call for an end to this terrible occupation. June 09 this year hopes to see the biggest national demonstration in support of justice for Palestine. Please, Conference, ensure as many members and officials can get to that. It is in London. Please come. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Dave. Steve.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancs):

It is only a point of information. In C4 it does make reference to the Lancashire Brigade planning a solidarity trip to Palestine some time this year, 2007. We have been collecting aid for Palestine in the guise of fire kits, etc. The reason we did not go earlier this year is purely

Day Two – 10th May

logistical. We are still dealing with the logistics of it, as to whether to drive kit across, whether it is going to be a waste of money, whether the security issues are going to make it too difficult etc, but we are still hoping to get across at the back end of this year. We will have contact with officials of the trade union movement over in Palestine, particular from NABLIS. They had a delegation over two or three months ago to the Lancashire area and the FBU hosted them for a day. So it is still ongoing and we have contacts with other FBU Officials around the country particularly Dave who has just spoken and John Drake, and Val has been doing some work with us, so it is all ongoing but it is difficult. Thanks.

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

Thank you. I won't take a minute. It is just to mention the trip that went to Iraq in September 2006. There is going to be a full report in Firefighter. Contrary to popular belief that was spread on the website, this wasn't a jolly that everybody went to. I can assure you being held at gun point or being threatened by Ali Babas on the Turkish border is not a jolly. It is just a reiteration that the Fire Brigades Union makes promises and promises are kept because this is what happened. I would just like to thank the following people formally and add it on record: Brian Joyce, an ex Official, ex EC Member who started it and roped me and made my ears bleed for at least three months while we were organising this; Nick whose last time at Conference it is; Norman Brackenbridge, Phil Goldby, ex Officials of the Fire Brigades Union, and Duncan Milligan who came along to do the press coverage but was extremely useful at other things as well.

I cannot underestimate the stir we made going through Europe and a few other places in two fire appliances from Cambridge Fire & Rescue, and for that we have to thank Adrian Clarke who unfortunately couldn't make the trip because of illness. There are a few others but, as I said, there will be a full report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Val. I have been asked by the National Women's Committee delegation to mention that Bro Geoff Ellis, former National Officer, is undertaking a sponsored cycle ride this year from Lands End to John O'Groats, next month in fact, which he is undertaking in support of the Zimbabwe Dignity Period Campaign. We should have had a speaker this week from Zimbabwe. If there are any Regions, Sections, Brigade Committees or individuals who wish to support him financially, all proceeds are going to the AXA Campaign Dignity or physically en route please see the NWC delegation for information and to make pledges. We are now on Para C5, Dean Mills, National Officer.

BRO DEAN MILLS (National Officer):

This is the report of the Parliamentary Group and the work they have done for us in the last couple of years. The number of MPs in the Parliamentary Group has grown to 40 as you see in your Annual Report, and they have met regularly throughout the year, usually every six to eight weeks when Parliament is sitting, but they also give us assistance outside those times.

In May 2006 the responsibility for the Fire Service shifted to the newly formed Department of Communities & Local Government, and Angela Smith replaced Jim Fitzpatrick as the Fire Minister. Clearly, we have differences of opinion but what we do need in the Fire Service is a period of stability and chopping and changing the Fire Minister every five minutes or every flip of a coin is doing us no favours either. In addition to the regular meetings, the Group have organised on our behalf a drop in meeting in June 2006 to help our brothers and sisters with the Hertfordshire dispute and MPs from Hertfordshire and neighbouring constituencies were invited to discuss the proposed cuts and we gave them a full briefing.

The Parliamentary Group also in the past two years have assisted with IRMP disputes. In Cleveland, Hertfordshire, Merseyside and Norfolk have assisted with the Select Committee Report into the Fire Service, have assisted with Firefighters pensions and introduced a Private Members Bill on Emergency Workers. They continue to help us with resisting the regionalisation of controls and also assisting us with questions on CPD and raising issues such as that in house. They have also assisted, of course, our colleagues in Region 2 with the cuts which were facing them and also with Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service with their automatic fire alarm policy. In addition to those, they have assisted at Schools, both the National School and a couple of weeks ago when we did the Political School in Westminster at Portcullis House.

We are going to continue with that part of the training assisted by the Parliamentary Group and the next phase of that will be a School on Local Government which we hope to run at the end of the summer. There are many campaigns which they have assisted us in. The fire control project, for example, they assisted us by tabling EDM29 which had a total of 250 back bench MPs. That represented over half of all the MPs who were eligible to sign it. In 2007 we commissioned a report on public finance which they on our behalf also circulated to all MPs. They assisted with integrated risk management plans and also with the fire safety order. We thank Glyn Evans for help in liaising with us and the RMT.

The Emergency Workers Bill they assisted in. They have helped us with the NJC. Other subjects such as water

Day Two – 10th May

sprinklers in schools and, as Val said, when the visit to Iraq ran into trouble on the Turkish border they assisted in contacting the Ambassador there.

For fire statistics the Group have managed to lay down more than 50 written questions which have been extremely helpful to all members and officials in building up a case of the statistical analysis in all Brigades across the UK on a wide range of issues. They have also been extremely helpful on the Public Services Not Private Profit Campaign.

One of the last things I will touch on because it is something Matt mentioned earlier: the Group are also actively involved with the Trade Union Freedom Bill, and at the end of the 2005/2006 session Early Day Motion 1170, the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom Bill had been signed by 187 MPs. That was two thirds of the back bench Labour MPs. That was scheduled to have its second reading on 02 March but a preceding Bill on agency workers which had been put in meant that that Bill was talked out. However, a new date for a second reading of that Bill has been put in and I would urge all Officials – and we will issue a circular to ensure that support for that Bill when it comes up is given so that we get MPs to sign up for it, and that if another stunt such as putting in a Bill just before that to try and talk it out again, we would hope to avoid. That reading comes up on Friday 19 October so if you can be aware of that.

Just to finish, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Group for their assistance throughout the year on behalf of Conference and the FBU, both to John McDonnell, Mick Clapham and Andrew Dismore, and also Andrew Fisher and Simeon Andrews. On behalf of Conference and all members, thanks for your help so far.

THE PRESIDENT:

Was there anyone else on C5.

BRO TREVOR FRENCH (Devon):

Earlier Matt you just confirmed we were affiliated to *Justice for Colombia*. It is our understanding that all members of the Parliamentary Group have served up to Early Day Motion 727 which is dealing with Columbia, so please Conference when you get home just check to make sure your MP, even if it is part of the Parliamentary Group, has signed up to Early Day Motion 727 please.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you.

BRO STEVE DUNCAN (Herts):

First time speaker. Up until a short time ago I was a

Branch Rep on the fringes and not particularly active. Following our recent dispute in Hertfordshire I found myself in a key role and considerably more active. The problem I had was lack of knowledge on most issues and I needed to address this. One of the learning opportunities I found myself attending was a seminary at Port Cullis House in London. Some of those attending were John McDonnell, Tony Benn and a couple of consultants from the Parliamentary Group. Tony Benn, among other things, was talking about the history of unionism. John McDonnell covered issues around the Labour Party. The two consultants explained the workings of the Parliamentary Group, explained how we can become more effective in the political arena, explaining the process involved in tabling questions and early day motions etc. They also explained how effective they can be on influencing the course of debates being held on the floor. All of this I had been ignorant of up until that point.

I found two points in particular stuck with me on that day. The first was how knowledgeable these two were regarding FBU issues and how competent they were at operating within the political processes. But more importantly with the detrimental effect of the Labour Left created by our continued disaffiliation to the Labour Party makes it even more crucial that this Group is there to provide a voice for us in Parliament and we should support them in every way possible. Thanks for listening.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is that it on C5? Para C6, Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Para C7, Scottish TUC. I now call Resolution 80 entitled Violence at Work in the name of Fife to be moved by Fife.

Resolution 80 – VIOLENCE AT WORK

Conference commends the work of the STUC and the Scottish Executive led by a seconded FBU official on tackling violence at work. This has resulted in an unprecedented response from all sectors involved in serving the public and provided a platform for similar work in other areas of the UK and Europe.

However, Conference notes that Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland, apart from superficial acknowledgements have not participated and prefer to condemn attacks on firefighters rather than enter into proactive attempts to train staff in protection techniques including the psychology of rage and how to manage conflict.

Conference believes that attacks on any FBU member or anyone serving the public are

Day Two – 10th May

unacceptable. However until staff are properly trained and protected these attacks will continue and our members placed in unacceptable danger.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to use the resources provided by the Scottish Executive to:

- ***Provide guidance for FBU members in understanding the psychology of rage and anger and protection techniques which do not involve physical restraint***
- ***Place the success of the STUC/Executive campaign and resources available on the negotiating table with Fire and Rescue Service managements***
- ***Promote the success of the trade union movement in bringing about real change for workers in the workplace.***

FIFE

BRO GRAEME BIRTLEY (Fife):

I am new to this as well. I am moving Resolution No 80 on Violence at Work. Conference, we all now have legislation in place which ensures that everyone knows that attacking Firefighters or other emergency workers is a criminal offence. Those who carry out mindless assaults on these workers will be punished by the courts.

Many talk of the Emergency Workers Act in Scotland and the Emergency Workers (Obstruction) Act in England & Wales as protecting workers like ourselves. Yet the legislation has not stopped these attacks and actually there is nothing to protect staff from assaults at all and only punishes those who get caught. When the Emergency Workers Act was still being consulted on in Scotland, the evidence of the trade unions regarding verbal and physical assaults on all staff serving the public, not just emergency workers, resulted in a campaign being set up in Scotland to assist the level of the problem, identify good practice across different sectors and make recommendations for change. It is still not possible to say what the level of the problem is. However, workers including Fire Service Staff are not reporting attacks as they believe nothing will be done, it is not worth the bother or it is just part of the job. Work has been done successfully in other sectors like the NHS and the rail and bus industries which have not only ensured that a more accurate picture of the situation is reported, but this means training is designed for the purpose so that staff are prepared and know what to do when faced with the hostile crowd or anyone who attempts to attack anybody in the nature of doing their job. It should be emphasised that none of this ever includes restraint or any other measure.

Trade Union officials have also been armed with the resources to make sure employers can no longer ignore the issue. Following further developments in the campaign, DNA spit kits are now being issued to Fire Service personnel in some Brigades and proven to be useful in catching repeat offenders. Yet overall the Fire Service in Scotland has been slow to recognise the value of the resources available. Last year four Brigades in Scotland were selected to send staff on a pilot course when dealing with violence in the work place provided free of charge by the Institute of Conflict Management as part of the campaign. Out of the four Brigades, two Brigades had no one available to send. A chance to trial and develop resources for the protection of our members in those Brigades was lost.

In December the Fire Inspectorate published its report on the Fire Service in Scotland including a short paragraph suggesting that attacks on Firefighters will continue and that not much can be done about them. There is nothing contained in the report about what is being done or should be done to address the issue. In fact, it only contains a short explanation of a research exercise, the findings of which the authors of the report did not agree with and which only reinforced the belief that all such attacks were carried out by schoolchildren. You will recall that the killer of Andrew Morton who was actually firing an airgun at Firefighters at the time was 27 years of age. At this present time FBU Officials in Region 1 have actively pursued a policy of banning all air guns which has received cross party support in Holyrood. The trade union team working with the Scottish Office report that there is reluctance amongst senior Fire Officers to recognise that despite the added dangers of dealing with an Emergency situation, the basic problem has the same causes as those carried out in other sectors of society.

Conference, people who attack Firefighters and other emergency workers do so for a reason. We may not accept those reasons but we think they are valid. Until we understand the reasons behind their motives and the anger and range that can develop from them we can condemn them as much as we like. The trade union team have contacted the Regional Committee and suggested some ways the message can be taken forward. Until steps are being taken to put measures in place to deal with these types of incidents, it is natural to expect an increase in the evidence collated throughout the Scottish campaign and other sectors which indicates that this is a common factor. To date no meaningful analysis has been carried out by any Fire Service to find out how such attacks can be managed. This appears to be simply an exercise in the collection of statistics. Attacks on Fire Service personnel are not restricted to emergency situations and no Fire Service differentiates in the types of incidents being collated.

Day Two – 10th May

Conference, attacks on Firefighters attending incidents are unacceptable. Verbal and physical attacks on FBU members and other workers are equally unacceptable. We know steps can be taken to reduce them. Of course, attackers deserve to be punished but our members also deserve to be protected. As we say back in Fife, "I'm paid to put out fires. I'm not paid to get my head kicked in." Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there a seconder for Resolution 80?

BRO DAVE COLLINGWOOD (Humberside):

I second Resolution 80 from Fife. I will not take up too much of your time. I am sure I know where you all stand on this one. As a Firefighter on a busy Station in a large housing estate in Hull I have had to deal with my fair share of violence and aggression from members of the public on many occasions so this is quite precious to me.

Over my years I have been attacked on numerous occasions with bricks, sticks, fireworks and even on one occasion with a baby's nappy – it was full! On far too many occasions colleagues of mine have been backed into corners and have needed to use force to protect themselves. This will only increase as police attendances to such incidents become nearly non-existent. Perhaps if our members had been given some form of training they may have been able to avoid such situations. But it is not only violence against Firefighters we have to deal with. On many occasions violence between members of the public hamper our operations and put our crews at risk. We have spoken about this subject many a time especially now that new legislation has been put into place. Some Brigades have made token gestures towards some form of training, but as yet nothing suitable has arrived.

Any move by our Union to provide a consistent and useful approach to training our members should be welcomed. Let us give our members the skills they need to deal with such situations. Let us get behind the Resolution and not make it a token gesture. Support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone else wishing to come in on Resolution 80? No. The Executive Council are supporting. General Secretary.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The Executive Council do urge support for this Resolution. It is an important issue. I think it is worth

taking a moment to acknowledge the work of Linda Shanahan who has played a key role in some of the development of some of this work in Scotland in particular and its impact UK wide. I think Conference should acknowledge that role today. (*Applause*)

It is a key issue which the Fire & Rescue Service does need to engage again in a debate. There has been significant research and, as the resolution makes clear, there has been some work done particularly in Scotland. It is also, as I think Dean mentioned, certainly in the reports, something around which the Parliamentary Group has provided assistance in relation to the legislation in England. I think what we need to think about over the coming months is developing an all-round strategy on the issue of violence against Firefighters. That may involve a whole range of issues – training for our members, training for people elsewhere in the Fire & Rescue Service, issues around community engagement. One thing that I think we need to remind ourselves about, long running debates in this Union about the independence of the Fire & Rescue Service, independence from the police and other forces of law enforcement. I just noticed in one of the earlier debates about some of the ideas from GMC about our members being asked to engage in joint activities with the police or with the immigration services. I think we need to be discussing in great detail with Chief Fire Officers the implications of some of the things they are asking our members to do.

We have debated this issue over the past 15 years and I think the key guidance for our Brigade Officials at local level in those discussions has to be that approach: that the Fire & Rescue Service is there to protect life and property and not to act as police officers or immigration officials. We support the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Can I see those in favour of Resolution 80, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on para C8 TUC. I now call Resolution 79 entitled Climate Change and Environment Reps to be moved by Devon.

Resolution 79 – CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT REPS

Conference recognises the urgency of the need to tackle climate change and therefore calls upon the Executive Council to do the following:

1. *To press the Government to give statutory rights to Trade Union Environment Reps to inspect, be consulted and trained similar to rights enjoyed by Trade Union Safety Reps.*

Day Two – 10th May

2. ***To take a lead within the Trade Union movement by becoming environment champions by, for example, performing environmental audits of all FBU offices and practices and by raising awareness within the membership, the wider Trade Union movement and the TUC itself of the challenges and possible solutions to tackle climate change.***
3. ***To press Union learn to provide appropriate training for reps and officers.***
4. ***To participate in Earth Day (April 22) every year and to encourage all TUC affiliated Trade Unions to do the same.***
5. ***To encourage Employers to work in partnership with the FBU and The Carbon Trust with the aim of making every Fire and Rescue workplace carbon neutral within two years.***

DEVON

BRO DAVE CHAPPELL (Devon):

This is a really important issue. You don't need me to tell you that. I was on a Trade Unions & Environment TUC course recently, very good, and one of the things we do is trawl all union policies. It was a bit of a shock to find that the FBU last put some policy through on any environmental issues in 1990/91 so it is overdue for some thought. Obviously, things have changed a lot in that time. I think most people accept that the science around the issue of climate change is now mainstream. There are very few people that oppose the basic concept that human society is now having a palpable and potentially disastrous effect on our planet's climate.

Two quick examples. Look on the back of my shirt – the polar bear. I was in Svarbarg recently. They are extremely concerned, as some of you may have heard, about the plight of the polar bear. There is so much Arctic ice melted now, polar bears have been found drowned because they cannot move between the ice flows. The polar bear may be the first major species that faces extinction as a result of climate change.

In our own case, although Firefighters have had reason to believe we were endangered species in the last few years, the predictions on climate change aren't quite so dramatic, but as you know predictions in the short term for our own country are for hotter and drier summers and wetter winters which, on the summer front sounds not too bad, but we all know that it brings with it a lot more potential for us: issues for us, and especially the dramatic storm events which are likely to be an increasing trend.

If there is anyone who is still sceptical about the scope of this change then I just think you should remember a

good old trade union principle which is a precautionary principle. You hope for the best but you prepare for the worst. The real issue is what is sustainable for the future? The Worldwide Fund for Nature estimates that we are consuming the earth's resources as if we had three planets to live off not one, and of course that figure goes up in the developed industrialised countries and it rises to profligate levels in those societies that waste resources in the worst way. There is an issue of power here, isn't there, and it is not just about the generation of power; it is about social power. On the face of it now many people are signed up to tackling climate change but they are not going to give up the strings of power, and we know the capitalist interests will be quite happy to see the measures imposed to address climate change fall on the world's workers and particularly on the poorest both in the developing and in the developed world, and that is where we come in. It has to be different. That is our challenge: to put the Union Movement at the heart of the battle. Our traditional demands which are for workers' empowerment, for justice and humanity, and that includes the aim of humanising and harmonising work with the environment are exactly the same goals we need to tackle this latest challenge, possibly the greatest challenge.

It is not just about having a vision. There have to be some practical steps taken, and that is what this resolution is about, just addressing in the very short term some of those issues. Central to that is the issue of trade union environment reps. This is something that has already been discussed. The DTI is doing a review this year of workers' rights and facilities so there is an ongoing review which we should feed into. There is an Early Day Motion put forward by our good friend John McDonnell, Early Day Motion 1125 calling for support from the Government for work place environment reps with the same facilities as other trade union reps. Unfortunately, there are only about 50 signatures on that at the moment so, again, please go back and see if you can get your MP to sign up to Early Day Motion 1125.

The TUC is already committed to creating a thousand climate change champions – I hate that word – but if we can get support for raising issues, then pin it on any label as far as I am concerned. The Government has already made a commitment, as has the TUC, to make their organisations carbon neutral. That is going to be a big challenge for us, but there are lots of ways it can be done. There is nothing really that is science which does not already exist to tackle this. The key thing, as I say, is to put the movement at the centre of this great challenge. I think it is essential that we do so please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dave. Is there a seconder for Resolution 79.

Day Two – 10th May

BRO CHRIS JACKSON (Avon):

I second Resolution 79. I think this Resolution has two strands which will benefit this Union. First, environmental issues. We owe it to the future generations to protect this planet. We talked about getting more involved on international issues. Here is your chance. If we do not address global warming very soon we must face the consequences. Two thirds of the world's population live within 80 kilometres of the sea. If the ice caps carry on melting at the rate they are, 80 million people will be subject to flooding on a regular basis very soon, a very big international issue.

Just look on the table in front of you. How much paper could we save and all the benefits that go along with it if we printed on both sides. A small thing and easy to change, but we will make these changes happen. Trade Union Reps.

The second strand that would benefit this Union I believe is as with the ULF, this will get many more of our members active in the Union. It, I believe, will also assist in attracting and retaining members. The more members active in this Union, the stronger it will get. The South West Region TUC are taking environmental issues very seriously and we would like to report to Conference that there is a green camp three days prior to Tolpudde where environmental reps will be trained.

Finally, this Resolution will also help to get employers and the FBU to work in partnership again and rebuild bridges. I urge you all to support this Resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anyone else on 79. No. The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I ask Matt to outline the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I think in general we completely welcome the Resolution. As Dave said, it is some time since Conference discussed environmental issues and it is long overdue and something that I think the Executive Council need to give some serious consideration to. I very much welcome that.

At a recent meeting of the TUC General Council David Milliband spoke on behalf of the Government about climate change and the role of trade unions in relation to that. A number of us raised the concern that is raised in relation to the resolution here in front of you, and that is if the Government wants to engage trade unions in the issue of addressing climate change then they need to be providing facilities and support to environment reps

and so on. We pointed out that the problem for many trade unions – we see some of it in the Fire & Rescue Service – in other industries is actually far worse. We have difficulty in getting employers to engage with trade unions on any issue let alone on the issue of the environment. So we said if the Government wants trade unions to engage on this issue, then it is a two way process and we need some support from them as well.

I think in relation to the Fire & Rescue Service there is a challenge here because in reality the Fire & Rescue Service on a UK wide basis has not properly addressed the issue of climate change and the implications for the service which, of course, then have knock on implications for all of us, for our jobs and conditions. There is already evidence that global warming is leading to more extreme weather events as they are described, fires in open grassland and heathland, extreme cases of flooding, and I think one argument that we need to take into Government and into the Fire & Rescue Service forums where we operate is the need for the Service to start planning around these issues. I think there is a further knock-on effect of that because once we force them to start for global warming and the effects of global warming, then I think that in turn feeds into the debate about the causes of global warming and it is a way that we can play a very positive role into this debate.

The one qualification – it is a very slight qualification – is that the reality as yet is that we do not have environment reps in place. We will need some discussion at the Executive Council about how they could operate, what the role precisely will be, how they will fit into the structures of the Union. But with that one qualification and the other comments I have made, the Executive Council support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. I put Resolution 79 therefore to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Were there any abstentions? That is carried.

We are now on Para C09. TUC Black Workers Conference. Para C10 the TUC Lesbian & Gay Bisexual Transgender Conference. Para C11, Welsh Labour Party Conference. Para C12, Welsh TUC. Para C 13, The Women's TUC. We are now on Section D, Pensions. I call Resolution 83 entitled Pension Abatement to be moved by Kent, please.

Resolution 83 – PENSION ABATEMENT

Conference demands that the Executive Council makes every effort to have any rule within:

Day Two – 10th May

- ***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.

Conference instructs the Executive Council that if this cannot be done by negotiation then legal action should be considered.

KENT

BRO JOHN SAYNOR (Kent):

I move Resolution 83 on Pension Abatement. What does pension abatement mean? In the Firefighters Pension Scheme Rule K4 states that the Fire & Rescue Authority responsible for paying your pension can reduce it or withdraw it altogether during any time that you are employed as a regular Firefighter. This rule applies whether your employment is with the Fire & Rescue Authority from which you retired with the entitlement to the pension or with another Fire & Rescue Authority. Similar rules exist within the new Firefighters Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme

I have served 28 years in the Fire Service. It is my profession, my area of specialisation and despite the ignorant interference of this Government, still a job I love doing. So I ask you: why should I and others like me give up our pension just to have the right to continue in our chosen profession? If I opted out of the Firefighters Pension Scheme – not that we had the opportunity in 1979 – and taken out a private pension, would anybody expect me to leave my job just because my fully paid up pension was now due? Of course not. Would they expect me to give my pension back while I continued to work full time? Of course not. So why is this unjust rule still in our pension schemes and why have the FBU not done anything about it?

Up until 2006 the Inland Revenue made it almost impossible to take a pension and remain employed with the same employer, but that rule went in April 2006. So at the pension seminars called to discuss changes to our schemes we started asking questions about the abatement rules. FBU Officials were unable to clarify what the tax changes meant and how that could affect us. Even Thompsons have given several different opinions on this demonstrating to us how complex this issue really is. So what is it we want to achieve with Resolution 83? We want our National Officials to become active in getting this rule altered or removed. This is a serious issue affecting a lot of our members so

we ask some urgency be injected into resolving this. If this can be done by negotiation, well and good, but if the powers that be want to keep this unfair anachronism, then we should examine any possible use of legal action to get it kicked out. Conference, I urge you to support this Resolution and stop this injustice. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Resolution 83? (*Formally seconded*). Is there anyone wishes to speak on 83? No. The Executive Council are supporting. Dean Mills, National Officer.

BRO DEAN MILLS (National Officer):

Thanks, President. John is quite right. It used to be the case that it was possible to draw a pension and carry on working for the same employer. That restriction as it was, was imposed by the Inland Revenue. Now that has been lifted from April. Whether or not a Firefighter or Control Room member is allowed to work and draw the pension simultaneously is up to the rules of the scheme itself and therefore CLOG. They have said it would abandon prohibition in the case of the LGPS. The reason given was because local authorities were not adopting a common practice. It would be unfair to have a restriction in one city or county where there was no such restriction in another. CLOG has now abandoned its promise to abatement. In the case of Firefighter Schemes CLOG has said it will impose its will and insist on abatement by issuing binding guidance to say that Fire and Rescue Authorities must abate them.

The resolution is calling for us to enter into negotiations and we will do that if those negotiations are meaningful and not just a request to attend the meeting. Then it goes on to say that if those negotiations are not successful we have to explore the legal options to us. We will do that but there are a couple of things which I want to put to you so that we don't up false hopes when we enter into those legal options. Arguments based on age discrimination can be examined and the initial guidance from the DTI on the impact of age discrimination regs had looked hopeful. The guidance has now been withdrawn because the consensus is that it is wrong, and members be allowed to carry on working past their normal retirement age. They must be allowed to carry on building up a pension but it will be a difficult case to make. They must be permitted to draw their pensions at the same time as to continue working for the same employer. As for the arguments based on the Human Rights Act, protecting the right of peaceful enjoyment of property, i.e. the pension that has already been earned as a property, that may also be explored, but again it is going to be difficult so we will enter into the negotiations so long as they are meaningful, and we

Day Two – 10th May

will look at the legal options open to us, although I have to inform Conference that they are limited at this time although we will explore those as those options come open to us.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dean. I therefore put Resolution 83 from Kent to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? That is carried.

Now on to Resolution 84 entitled Ill Health Retirement to be moved by Cleveland, please.

Resolution 84 – ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT

This Conference is concerned that many Fire Authorities are using the Disability Discrimination Act, and the amendments to The Firefighters Pension Scheme implemented in September 2004 to prevent our members retiring on ill health.

Members who have no prospect of returning to operational duty are being forced to either return to work in unsuitable day duty positions, or are being faced with the prospect of resigning from the Service following prolonged periods on half pay, or no pay, with subsequent loss of pension entitlements.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a national study into the scale of this problem and to produce a report within 6 months of the close of this Conference.

CLEVELAND

BRO DAVID HOWE (Cleveland):

I have been instructed by my Delegation not to tell you it is my first time speaking so I haven't done that. I am moving Resolution 84 on Ill Health Retirement. Conference will be aware that changes were made to the Firefighters Pension Scheme in September 2004 which basically removed the requirement to have an operational commitment in order to remain a member of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Basically, at a stroke the Government made it extremely difficult, and some might say almost impossible to retire on ill health. Consequently, the Human Resources Department are now using the tool of redeployment to ensure that they get every last drop and working hour out of our members.

Ill and injured members with sometimes in excess of 28 or 29 years operational service who previously would have been medically discharged on an ill health retirement, have been redeployed into day duty

positions simply to bring down the number of ill health retirements and this is in order to meet Government targets like a lot of other things. These members know that if they do not accept the generous offer of redeployment they may be placed on half pay or no pay depending on how long they have been on a sickness absence. This is not acceptable. They have also been advised by HR Departments that of course you could just retire early knowing full well that the financial implications for the pension would be disastrous. That is not acceptable either.

In three years prior to the changes to the scheme there were 36 ill health retirements in Cleveland. In the two and a half years since the changes there have been four. It is not just a coincidence and I doubt very much whether it is only Cleveland's problem or Cleveland Firefighters' problem. Conference, let us carry out a national study and report back on the scale of this problem. Conference, I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Resolution 84?

BRO DAVE THOMAS (London):

I second Resolution 84. We believe that this is a very important issue and it is going to continue to be a major problem for FBU members also Fire Authorities as well. It is also an extra workload for our Officials because when our members don't get ill health retirement we then have to go through the appeals process. In London we have seen ill health retirements go from about 300 in 1997 to a total of 12 in 2006. The DCLG and the Treasury Solicitors have clearly chosen pension payments as a soft and easy target to save money. Our Fire Authority were recently talking to us and were quite happily boasting that they are going to save a £1 million on ill health retirements last year.

The degree of flexibility that we used to have on ill health retirements has been removed. The introduction of the IQMP which I believe is an oxymoron because it is not independent at all, has closed the door to our members for ill-health retirement. We have also been informed in London by the Fire Authority that in the near future they intend to try and implement Pension Circular 10 of 2006. This allows Fire Authorities to recall personnel who have retired in the past 10 years and are under the age of 60. They will then evaluate again with the IQMP and they will drive them back to work.

The figures in London indicate we have got about seven and a half thousand ex pensioners at the moment, and 1,500 will fall into this category. If they can find 10 per cent they can get back to work. That is 150 of our

Day Two – 10th May

members who are going to be losing their pensions until the age of 60. It is a total disgrace. We welcome Cleveland's resolution and London Region are more than willing to assist the EC to compile and report. Conference, support Resolution 84.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Is there anyone wishing to speak on Resolution 84? Is there anybody else who had their hands up? No. OK.

BRO DAVE ALLSEY (GMC):

I am sort of piggy backing on this about the Disability Discrimination Act and the way that the Fire Authorities and HR Departments are abusing what was put there for the sake of an individual. They seem to think it was put there for them to stop people retiring. In our caring sharing management recently one of our members with 27 years in applied for medical retirement and he was told that the DVA prevented him from retiring. He then, of course, faced discipline and received a written warning for being ill which is a common theme in GMC now. When I argued that if you give them a written warning you are acting unlawfully under the terms of the DVA they said "But he is not disabled". "But you just told me he cannot retire because of the Disability Discrimination Act and he's covered by it." When it suits them they think it is there to suit them.

The real thing I want to talk about is the document that was published or given to every Brigade in April 2005. I am amazed about the number of people who know nothing about it. It was a document produced in conjunction with C4 by the Disability Rights Commission and it was sent to every Brigade by the ODPM. It was entitled *Guidance for the UK Fire & Rescue Service on the Employment and Retention of Disabled Firefighters*. When I actually came across this on the internet quite by accident on the Disability Rights Commission's website we asked where our copy was and nobody knew until they got to the head of the HR Department who kept it locked in his drawer because he didn't like what it said in it. So I would like to piggy back on the back of this resolution that we are fully supportive of and ask the EC if they would try and organise a meeting with the Disability Rights Commission who wrote that document and ask them why virtually no Fire Authority in the country is implementing anything in there. Support the Resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anybody else on 84. No. The Executive Council are supporting. I will ask Dean Mills, National Officer, to come in.

BRO DEAN MILLS (National Officer):

The problem is that the 2004 amendment to the Firefighters Pension Scheme allows Fire & Rescue Authorities to require a Firefighter to carry on working in any type of job within their contract of employment instead of retiring them, and CLOG's view is that all jobs within the rolemap are within every Firefighter's contract.

The upshot of that is that it becomes impossible to get a lower tier ill health pension given the two-tier health pension arrangements. If a Firefighter is fit for some job within the generic rolemap they are not disabled at all according to CLOG's view. If they are not fit for any job within the rolemap how can they be fit for any other regular employment? If they are unfit for one then they are unfit for the other which makes the whole lower tier pension arrangements actually pointless.

There could be legal challenges which we could mount to it but these are not without some substantial pitfalls as well so we should be aware of that. I do give Conference an undertaking, with the help of Joe which would be nice, but more importantly when we do ask for a survey to be carried out, and when we ask for responses back from each Brigade to help us with those surveys, that they are sent to us promptly. We do give an assurance that that survey will be carried out.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dean. I put Resolution 84 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 Resolution 85 entitled Survivors Clause in the name of Norfolk with an amendment from Merseyside. Can I have Norfolk to move, please.

Resolution 85 – SURVIVORS CLAUSE

Conference demands that negotiations are commenced in order to achieve the addition of a 'survivors clause' into the old Firefighters Pension Scheme.

NORFOLK

Amendment

Line 2: delete the word 'old'.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO NEIL DAY (Norfolk):

I will just clarify Resolution 85. It is about the common law partners. We are aware of the benefits used to woo our members into the new scheme but the new

Day Two – 10th May

scheme does not offer the same return as the other scheme. We sometimes hear how our members use the excuse of the pension entitlement as a reason for getting married. Likewise, being unmarried should not be a reason to change the pension scheme. Of course, once you have changed, they won't let you back again.

We are aware that there is obviously an issue about achievability but we must promote the existing scheme. We have got to keep it live. It was only recently we fought hard to hang on to it. We need to continue to campaign to make the necessary changes to keep the scheme modern. We accept and thank them for the Amendment from Merseyside.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Neil. Is there a seconder for Resolution 85? (*Formally seconded*). Can we have Merseyside to move their Amendment, please? (*Formally moved*). Is there a seconder for Merseyside's Amendment? (*Formally seconded*). Is there anyone wishing to come in on Resolution 85. No. The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I will ask Dean to outline the qualification.

BRO DEAN MILLS (National Officer):

Thanks, President. Obviously it is on the basis of achievability. We have tried before with negotiations and Conference will be well aware of the position taken up previously by employers on the position for survivors' clauses. Their argument is no doubt going to be there is now the opportunity under new pension schemes to gain those rights under the new pension scheme. However, we will continue to fight for same sex and common law partners to be included. Something you should be aware of. Where those are, there is a problem in that it should also have a certificate of having gone through a civil ceremony, so there is something else to bear in mind.

The CLG have said that the cost of doing this would be about 0.5 percent of a Firefighter's pay to have common law partners included in the scheme, and we do not think that is too high a price to pay and it will be on that sort of basis that we will continue to fight for the inclusion of that.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dean. Can I see support, please for the Merseyside Amendment? Thank you. Are there any opposed? No. Can I therefore put Resolution 85 as amended by Merseyside to the vote? Can I see those in favour please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Emergency Resolution 9 entitled Independent Qualified Medical Practitioner Guidance to be moved by Northamptonshire.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION 9 IQMP GUIDANCE

Conference notes the recently circulated guidance for Consultation regarding IQMPs.

Conference rejects:-

- (1) Any guidance which could result in member's employment being terminated on the grounds of medical capability.***
- (2) Any move to compulsorily redeploy any member in a job outside their rolemap as an alternative to termination of employment.***

Conference instructs the EC to consult with Brigade Committees before any agreement is reached on the Guidance with a view to opposing industrially if necessary.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

BRO GARY MITCHELL (Northants):

I move Emergency Resolution on IQMP Guidance. In moving this Emergency Resolution, I would like to remind Delegates that changes introduced in April 2006 to The Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the introduction of a new Firefighters' Pension Scheme meant any Firefighter retiring on ill health grounds after that time does so on a two tier ill health pension. If a member retires on this lower tier there is no longer an ill health pension enhancement.

So how was this decision on which tier ill health pension made? Usually by the independent qualified medical practitioner. One year on from these changes we finally have draft guidance from CLG which should be used by IQMPs when assessing ill health retirements.

Conference, for those of you who have not seen this guidance it does not make particularly pleasant reading. The guidance is geared against the member getting ill health medical retirement, but more worrying is what will happen to Firefighters that develop a medical condition which means they are unable to continue Fire Fighting duties but are deemed fit enough to carry out other duties as determined by this guidance? Other duties must be within a members rolemap. If no jobs are available within his or her role, then they should be offered medical retirement from the Service.

Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the view of some of our employers. Not only are some of our employers offering jobs to our members outside their roles, but if the member declines this and there are no

Day Two – 10th May

jobs available then some employers are trying to terminate our members' employment on medical capability.

Conference, surely this cannot be right. I am not sure I understand why the EC are not supporting this stance. I urge you to support this Emergency Resolution. This guidance will affect many of our members at a certain point in their career and I don't want to see our members sacked on medical capability for developing a medical condition. Conference, I urge you to support. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Emergency Resolution No 9?

BRO JOE MACVEIGH (London):

This is basically a sacking charter and it is one of the most disgraceful documents I have ever read. I am quite clear about the IQMP and their independence. The problem we have got in London is that the IQMP office is next door to the doctor who actually decides whether or not somebody is permanently unfit, so really the independence question does not really count because they talk through the office wall, I think. Support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is there anybody else on Emergency Resolution No 9? No. The Executive Council are opposing. I ask the General Secretary to explain why.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Just to be clear, we are asking for Remittance of the Resolution. We understand the concerns of Northamptonshire that are being raised in the Resolution by the mover and by the seconder. However, we do see a number of problems with the Resolution as it is written. First of all, in terms of the actual procedures that we are dealing with and the mechanism by which this guidance is issued, the guidance is issued by CLG. It goes out for consultation and stakeholders, as they like to call them, can respond to that consultation. We will, of course, be responding in detail to that consultation. The fact is that we cannot reach agreement. The Resolution suggests that we should not be reaching agreement in certain circumstances. Technically we cannot reach agreement anyway because there is no requirement for agreement in relation to that issue.

Clearly, what is going on in relation to Fire Service pensions is effectively an abuse of legislation relating to

disability discrimination. In the Firefighters' Scheme we pay very high contribution rates. Those high contribution rates are supposed to fund early retirement, and what we have seen is an abuse of the system by the employers. I think in relation to the final paragraph we would also have difficulty in supporting that aspect because it suggests that we would consider an industrial response to guidance issued by the CLG. I think if it comes down, as Joe says, to a sacking charter, then that is something that we would have to build for locally on individual cases. We don't believe that we are in a position to hypothetically launch an industrial campaign on the question of possible sackings of hypothetical members; it would have to be done at local level on that basis.

However, we do take on board the concerns which Northampton raises and the seconder and we would ask for Remittance and we will therefore explore the issues that are raised within the Resolution and address them in due course.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Do Northamptonshire wish to exercise their right to reply?

BRO GARY MITCHELL (Northants):

Just a couple of things. On the issue of agreement, we know this is guidance and it is for consultation, but surely it is good practice to try to get some sort of agreement. On the issue of industrial response, dispute or whatever, that was only meant for if they try sacking our members on medical capability. That is all we are talking about, but we do agree to Remit it.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much. Emergency Resolution No 9 is therefore Remitted which brings us up to 5 o'clock and almost time to close.

Before we do, if I can remind Delegates that, firstly, there is the joint meeting and reception organised by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the Venezuela Information Centre which is at the Royal Clifton Hotel, and later tonight there is the Executive Council's Social which I know is being eagerly awaited by you all and that is, in fact, in the same venue. I look forward to seeing you at both of them.

Conference adjourned until Friday morning

Day Three – 11th May

MORNING SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Good morning, Conference. Everyone feeling bright eyed and bushy tailed? That is good because we have got a lot of business to get through, and on that point I will introduce Steve Shelton, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee to give the Standing Orders Report. Steve.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thank you, President. Good morning, everyone. I hope you enjoyed your night last night. Is Martin Gallagher still here? Just checking, Martin.

Could you please turn to your Programme of Business. Page 11. Resolution 7 is withdrawn. Amendment falls. The Standing Orders Committee must bring to the attention of Conference that there is still a large amount of business to get through and suggest speakers' times should now be Mover 5 minutes, Seconder 4 minutes and subsequent speakers 3 minutes. Thank you very much. That concludes the report.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is that Standing Orders Committee Report agreed? AGREED

BRO MARK ?

Point of Information, President. Conference, unfortunately an incident took place in Southport last night which involved Sister Vicky Knight, members of our Women's National Committee and also Sister Lisa Smethurst who was there last night. It was an unprovoked attack. A thug, a bully, used physical violence against Vicky and other of our members. Vicky, unfortunately, was rushed to hospital. Ruth was there in attendance to help her. Vicky is at home at the moment. She is pretty beaten up, as are our members from the Committee who were at the incident last night. She is under sedation. Fortunately, the X-rays revealed no breaks but it was a mindless violent attack and our thoughts and wishes are with Les who apologises for not being here today President, and also with the members of our Women's Committee and with Vicky, and we wish her a speedy recovery.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Mark. We have arranged for flowers to be sent to Vicky on behalf of Conference and I am sure you will all join with me in wishing her well. Can I

also announce from the Chair that Stuart Brown, the Gay & Lesbian Representative on the Executive Council has had to leave due to urgent family business.

Right, we are now in Closed Session.

(For Closed Session, please see separate transcript)

THE PRESIDENT:

Conference is no longer in Closed Session. I would ask Delegates, please, to turn to page 10 of their Programme of Business. We are now on Friday morning's business proper. The massed ranks of journalists can be allowed back into the Hall. We are on Section G, Internal Administration. Para G1, Industrial Disputes.

BRO TONY MAGUIRE (NIFB):

Thank you, President. Last time speaking at Conference. On industrial disputes we are, I suppose, on the cusp of a dispute at home over our IRMP cuts and all I am here to do is to say thank you to the Research Department and the Head Office Staff who helped us so brilliantly with campaigning material back in November. Any other time we have been in dispute there is a scramble around and a debate to get leaflets etc, but we had the material to start a campaign that is still ongoing, and we had it in about four days. It was a brilliant piece of work and thank you very much.

BRO MARK DUNNE (Merseyside):

I am speaking on the powers of industrial disputes. I will not go into the detail of Merseyside. I think all of our members up and down and across the UK know why: we have a bullying Chief Fire Officer backed by morally bereft senior management in Merseyside. Many other Brigades have the same but these took it to the next level during this dispute. We were attacked professionally; we were attacked personally; our families were attacked; all our FBU comrades were attacked, yet we won the dispute, and I am here just to say a few thanks.

First of all, I would like to thank our international comrades, especially Derek Best from New Zealand. I don't know if New Zealand are still here today, but thanks for all your support in a letter where the Chief Fire Officer bragged how he was going to break the FBU, fire our members and in the end depose our Officials in Merseyside. He never did that. Thanks to New Zealand for their support in that and thanks, Derek. *(Applause)*

I would also quickly like to thank all the European unions who sent their support into Merseyside and to Harold Schafer from the USA who gives continued support all

Day Three – 11th May

the time. I would also like to thank all you here today, all the members you represent, all the officials, the watch members and all the departments and sections because you were absolutely brilliant, you were fantastic and when we needed you either financially or morally, you were always there for us. Thanks Conference and thanks to every FBU member in the UK. I would also like to thank a few National Officials, in particular Dean, Woolly, the EC, Ruth and Matt who were fantastic. Whenever we needed them they were there for us, and that cannot be stated enough. They were absolutely brilliant. I would like to thank Kevin Brown our Regional Secretary who was always there when we needed him. He became an honorary scouser at times because he spent more time in Merseyside than at home. And also all the families of those people who supported us who had to put up with him being on Merseyside all the time. Our Strike Committee and our Brigade Committee who were absolutely resolute, defended jobs, defended cuts and took on the most ant trade union we believe – although a few of you might want to argue differently – the most anti trade union management in the history of the Fire Service.

Finally, I have two special thanks. First of all, it is to someone who is doing a lot of work round the back of Conference who had a whale of a time during our dispute, and that is Duncan Milligan who was absolutely fantastic and who went through four different press officers. He was chewing them up and spitting them out. Merseyside had to get a retired press officer back in because the three they had Duncan took on and absolutely wiped the floor with them. So, Duncan, thanks very much for that.

A final special thanks goes to a good friend and a good comrade, and that is Bro Andy Dark who lived and breathed the Merseyside dispute, understood what we were about, understood where we were coming from and also understood just how bad and how corrupt our managers were and how determined they were to break the FBU. Comrades, thanks very much. They never did it, did they?

Finally, I would just like to say to our members in Cornwall, thanks for the invite to Truro. We will be working hard to get as many Merseyside members down there as we can in support and thanks very much, Conference, for all your support on Merseyside. You were brilliant. Thanks.

BRO BEN READ (Herts):

We thought it right and proper to take this opportunity, the first National Conference of our Union since our dispute, to update and also to thank our comrades from around the country. The Hertfordshire dispute did not come at a good time, but do disputes ever come at a

good time? It seems not. One thing is certain: it came as a result of a local IRMP's – Integrated Risk Management Plans. No: integrated resource management plans, the modernised agenda, a fancy term for cuts.

As with all disputes, we did not win everything we wanted but nor did the Hertfordshire management. The determination shown by our members with your fantastic support secured our final position and we take this opportunity to thank you not only on behalf of our members but also on behalf of our communities. Those same communities mobilised themselves and stood shoulder to shoulder with us. Their fights, both political and legal, are ongoing which we now support and is testament to the action we took.

Whilst some things have changed, the Hertfordshire are better organised than ever before, fully involved in our Union and all it stands for as a result of this dispute. Again, without your support and solidarity, that would not have been possible. Thank you.

BRO STEVE COLLINS (Suffolk):

I am speaking on the industrial action in Suffolk. In 2005 Suffolk FBU members became the first in the UK to take strike action against cuts introduced by the Fire & Rescue Authority through the IRMP process. Suffolk has sustained years of understaffing across the Brigade and the Fire Authority's IRMP's proposed and sought to cut 12 Firefighter posts from Bury St Edmunds. These posts provided 24/7 crewing of one of the county's two turntable ladders. The proposed alternative crewing would have meant that at best there would have been a delayed response and, at worse, no response at all. Overall, these 12 job cuts would have been a 6.25 per cent cut in the whole time rider work force in Suffolk which would have meant further impact on the shortages already been suffered in Suffolk.

Representations were made by FBU Officials on the cuts and health and safety implications, but still the Fire & Rescue Service did not carry out any risk and task analysis which is required under IRMP or any further risk assessment under the fire cover need provision. Therefore, we registered our trade dispute in June 2005. Following that a ballot vote returned a yes vote of 68.3 per cent. After 22 short discontinuous strikes over an 8 week period a negotiated settlement was reached which focused on 6 key areas to end the trade dispute in October 2005.

The key areas were only a reduction of 3 posts on the Whole Time Establishment, a commitment to achieve and maintain the agreed Whole Time establishment – something we had never had in Suffolk before – and to recruit to the full Retained Establishment on all stations;

Day Three – 11th May

a commitment to provide 5 riders on every front line appliance; the purchase of combined pumping and area appliance for Bury St Edmunds to replace the turntable ladder; the redeployment of 9 Whole Time Establishment posts into community safety roles with a dual commitment to providing emergency response where required, and all 9 posts were on the NJC Conditions of Service. Lastly, a commitment to fully involve the FBU in all future IRMP processes.

Eighteen months after the end of our dispute, we are still working through parts of the negotiated settlement but we have the commitment to achieve all areas within it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the FBU members for the support, both financial and moral, that we received during our dispute, and to conclude the Suffolk dispute served as a reminder that when FBU members stand together it is possible to change things, whereas if we do nothing the cuts will follow.

BRO PETE GALLAGHER (West Midlands):

Last time speaker at Conference, but I won't guarantee it is the last time I get up today.

The West Midlands dispute is still ongoing. We are going through another shift review, and what we have seen is from a 12-13-9. We are now up to 14-10 and guess what is going to come out of the next one? 15-9. What is going to happen? The beds were up there. Now they are down there and that is it after all they went through, after all the things the Brigade had tried to do to us, because the membership in the West Midlands actually stood strong and actually fought off everything that they proposed. By December next year, we will be back to everything that we had and better because we have got better travelling conditions, we have got shift allowances and we have got a staffing arrangement that is actually 120 more people than we had before. What did they do it for? *(Applause)*

All I will say is whenever they come for you, get the people motivated and let's fight it. Thanks to everybody who supported, especially the members.

BRO STEVE WATSON (Cleveland):

I will be very brief. Back in June 2006 we registered a formal trade dispute against IRMP proposals that would have resulted in the loss of some 60 operational posts. We registered a strike ballot, obviously, and we got a fantastic 74 per cent yes vote. Without having to take strike action we managed to negotiate a settlement which achieved major concessions and the removal of some of the proposals completely. I would like just to take the opportunity to thank Alan MacLean, our EC Member, and Pete Wilcox, the Regional Official, who gave us invaluable advice and support, and in particular

John McGhee whose advice was absolutely fantastic. Thanks John. Thanks Conference.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Steve. Was there anybody else on that Paragraph? No. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I think it is an important Paragraph within the Report and it is worth I think making some comment. On behalf of the Executive Council I am sure Conference, we would like to note all the Brigade Committees who are mentioned in the Report who have engaged in some form of industrial action or have balloted during the past two years mentioned in the Report: Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, West Midlands, Suffolk, Somerset, Hertfordshire and, of course, Merseyside, and the two other Brigades who have also balloted, Cleveland and Staffordshire. I think a huge amount of local campaigning, a large number of local disputes – and we know why that is: employers trying to put the boot into our members, into our conditions of service, and I think the people who have stood up today have given an important lesson to us, that if we stick together we can fight back and there is a message back to those employers. You won't beat us, you won't break us; you had better start listening to us.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We are now on Para G2. I now call Resolution 1 entitled Victimisation from the B&EMM Committee with Merseyside and Cleveland Amendments. Only one of those Amendments can carry. Can we have B&EMM to move, please.

Resolution 1 – VICTIMISATION

This Conference condemns recent developments where FBU members have been victimised by the British National Party or other right wing organisations. This Conference demands that the B&EMM National Committee formulate a strategy to give full commitment and support to all B&EMM members who receive such harassment.

B&EMM

Amendment

In line 4 delete the word 'B&EMM' replace with the word 'FBU'.

MERSEYSIDE

Amendment

***Line 3 delete "B&EMM National Committee" and insert "E.C."
Line 4 delete "B&EMM" and insert "FBU".***

CLEVELAND

Day Three – 11th May

BRO DALTON POWELL (B&EMM):

I am moving Motion 1, Victimisation. We accept Cleveland's Amendment and oppose Merseyside's. The reason for our specifying only B&EMM was due to constraint we have when formulating motions as it has to be pertained to be in issue.

Our FBU colleagues, some of whom are here today, B&EMM have otherwise experienced horrific levels of abuse and intimidation because they stood up against fascists in local communities. We ask our members and officials to challenge the far right at every opportunity and rightly so. What we lack is a clear strategy to support individuals and their families once targeted for intimidation by the far right organisations. These include personal phone calls to homes, publication of names and addresses on websites. The far right are also notorious in their approach in instilling fear and intimidation to our members as well as our people, so a carefully thought out strategy needs to be initiated. This must include (1) advice on precautionary measures to be taken prior to embarking on campaigns which may highlight individuals; (2) campaigns within Regions must be Nationally recognised and supported so as not to highlight local individuals; (3) to include within the strategy a designated liaison officer skilled on procedures and methods to alleviate the stress and concern put on individuals who place their heads above the parapet.

Conference 2004 put forward a motion calling on the EC to formulate a policy supporting the efforts of FBU members fighting far right organisations. This included education of members and public alike on far right organisations as well as further highlighting the success UK wide. Little has been done to progress this motion. Far right organisations are stepping up their efforts to spread their able propaganda. Just last Council Election a record number of 700 stood for key positions. All that is required for them to win today is we do absolutely nothing. I urge Conference to support this motion, for the EC to move quickly against the isolation of our members facing harassment. As Phil Jordan (Gloucester) said on Wednesday an attack on one trade unionist is an attack on us all. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dalton. Is there a seconder for Resolution 1?

BRO PAUL TREW (Hants):

First time speaker so bear with me. I second Resolution Number 1. As a young man during the late 70s I, along with thousands of others, marched against the far right, the National Front at the time. We held rallies and we were entertained by groups such as The Clash. For

those who saw the Counterfeit Clash last night, it was almost the same.

The marches almost had a carnival feel and we felt strong together. The National Front were a motley bunch of skinheads, thugs and middle aged misfits. For a few years they held sway, took headlines, usually by beating up some defenceless Asian or Afro-Caribbean member of the community. However, 30 years on things have moved on and have become more serious. The BNP have replaced the National Front as the standard bearers for the far right. They are an altogether more sinister, well-organised and clever organisation. They are trying to infiltrate themselves into all four corners of this country. It is not just the working class areas of Northern town. It is not just the East End of London. They are now targeting leafy suburbs and even small towns in the New Forest.

They crave respectability. They see this as their path to power. Brave FBU Officials have been in the front line when it comes to combating this evil. As such, they have been targeted by the BNP and subjected to vile attacks. These attacks have taken the form, as we have heard, of threats of violence against Officials and their families by all types of methods. The BNP have gone out of their way to pass information on these Officials to other far right groups with the effect that the FBU Officials and their families have had a tirade of abuse via the telephone, email and post. Officials have also had their property vandalised.

We must stand four square behind these brave Officials and show the BNP and their cronies that we will as a Union protect our Officials and their families. Thank you very much. I second this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Can we have Merseyside to move their Amendment, please.

BRO NEIL YOUNG (Merseyside):

Withdraw the Amendment, President, to support Cleveland's.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Neil. Can we have Cleveland to move their Amendment, please? (*Formally moved*) Is there a seconder for the Cleveland Amendment? (*Formally seconded*) Is there anyone who wishes to speak in this debate?

BRO PHIL JORDAN (Glos):

Possibly last time speaker at this Conference. I support

Day Three – 11th May

Resolution 1 and backing a strategy to support the B&EMM comrades and, indeed, all FBU members who are discriminated against, bullied or harassed.

Colleagues, our members continue to be harassed both in their work place and in their lives outside the Fire Service. The mover of the Resolution gave a graphic account of harassment that Black and Ethnic Minority Members are suffering. I say “suffer” because that is what the result of harassment and bullying is. We hear often of victims of harassment and bullying and we usually give a sympathetic “tut”, shake our heads in disbelief, bemoan and criticise the perpetrators, even shed a tear for the victim, but how many of us actually spend time thinking, considering, or contemplating what it is like to be a victim of such despicable behaviour. When you are the victim you suffer. We think of the victim, apologise as we often do, for the behaviour of the aggressor, but how often do we give much thought to the level or amount of or even the depth of suffering that the victim has to deal with or try to deal with. Individuals deal with suffering in many different and varied ways. Too often, all too often, we read about the victim who suffered but couldn’t cope with the suffering and ended up talking of taking their own lives. This is the extreme end of suffering, the ultimate and tragic result that disgusts every one of us in the hall today.

Comrades, we can do more than shed a private tear and we can do more than get angry. We can do more than voice our disgust. We can unite and we can stand in solidarity and fight to support and protect all members of the FBU against harassment and bullying. It is depressing actually to stand here today in 2007 and call for us to unite to defeat harassment. This Union has been at the forefront of dealing with harassment and bullying, and we have taken together bold progressive steps towards fighting harassment. We are one Union and we must act as one Union. We must fight the harassment of our members, build a strategy, endorse it and let us do the right thing for FBU members, move forward and fight this together. If you do not pass this resolution then the future does not bear thinking about. Support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Phil. Was there anyone wanting to get up on this Resolution? No. After Val I will ask Matt to outline the Executive Council’s support.

SIS VAL SALMON (GMC):

I will be very brief. It is just to mention the Employment Tribunal win that Merseyside won and the importance and the impact of that. The fact that we can get people out of this Union and keep them out by the Rule Book means that we do not have to have the BNP

organisation now. The significance of that win needs to be felt across the Trade Union Movement: root them out, get them out and keep them out. Thank you.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Conference, I will try not to come in on Resolutions that we are supporting because of the business we still have to deal with, but this is an important issue and some comments need to be made. I think Val has made reference to the question of Membership, and Conference I am sure will be pleased to note the victory of ASLEF in relation to that issue about the right of trade unions to expel fascists which was won in the European courts recently.

I think one of the positive things that came out of the local elections last week was the failure of the BNP to make the break through that they were aiming for. I am sure that Conference will welcome that. I note the comments that were made about Conference in 2004 and I will give a commitment that we will step up work to develop a strategy around the issues that are raised in the resolution and the wider issues around taking on the far right. In relation to the BNP and the forerunners in the National Front, the fact is that a fascist in a suit is still a fascist. We will step up our campaigning. We need to develop educational material, we need to develop campaigning strategies among our members. The fascists, as have been pointed out, target individuals, target minority groups but we need to remember also the aim of fascism is the destruction of the Trade Union Movement, and the Trade Union Movement therefore needs to be central to this destruction of fascism. Support the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Can I see all those in favour, please, of Amendment 3 from Cleveland. Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is carried.

Can I please see all those in favour of Resolution 1 as amended? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions. No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Resolution 2 on Race Equality Issues from B&EMM with Amendments from Gloucestershire and the West Midlands. Both of those Amendments can carry. Can we have B&EMM to move, please.

Resolution 2 – RACE EQUALITY ISSUES

This Conference calls upon the Fire Brigades Union to report annually and provide a league table of all Fire Brigades within the British Fire Service, in their performance on race equality issues.

Day Three – 11th May

The criteria for such a report to be in agreement with the B&EMM National Committee.

The first report to be produced for Annual Conference 2008.

B&EMM

Amendment

In paragraph 2, delete “in agreement with” and replace with “produced by” Paragraph 2. At the end of the sentence delete the full stop and insert “, in agreement with the Executive Council.”

In the last sentence, after the word “produced” insert “by the Executive Council”

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Amendment

Title: delete RACE.

3rd line delete race.

4th line delete B&EMM, insert relevant.

5th line add ‘s’ to Committee.

WEST MIDLANDS

BRO WARREN SIMPSON (B&EMM):

I move Resolution 2, Race Equality Issues.

As long as the differences and diversities of mankind exist, democracy must allow for compromise, for accommodation and for the recognition of differences. Democracy forever teases us with the contrast between its ideals and its realities, between its heroic possibilities and its sorry achievements. We, as a trade union, must recognise that the world we live in is ever changing, and that we must adapt to as well as influence the changes in our society if we are not only to survive but to be successful as well.

We are never too old or too senior to listen to wisdom. In fact, it was a Firefighter colleague of mine, which I might add had the good sense to remain a career Firefighter, who during the last national dispute bestowed upon me two truisms that I will never forget: that humility is the only true wisdom and that success and survival are not about strength. Ultimately they are about adaptability.

What does that adaptability mean and why is the provision of a league table so vital to us all? The 20th century and, even more so, in the 21st century have been characterised by three developments of great political importance to us. Firstly, the growth of democracy; secondly, the growth of corporate power; thirdly, the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.

If we are to remain effective and continue to build upon

the foundations that have been laid by the blood, sweat and sacrifice of our forebears from every race, gender colour and creed, we must become the change we want to see. We, my brothers and sisters, comrades in arms, must rise to the new challenges and we must meet them head on. We must develop new tools, new strategies to enhance the legacy provided by mechanisms left behind, by our foremothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, and our global neighbours. To be blunt, we must modernise and we must measure. Nothing new there.

However, the proverbial devil is in the proverbial detail: that is to say, the how. How are we to measure success in achieving not just our short term goals, but moreover our aspirations as a trade union firmly rooted in our communities. In order to achieve our goals, we must try to understand what success will look like. Equality can be judged in many ways. For some people it is about a level playing field when applying for a job. For others it is about seeing a more diverse set of people at the top, for example, on the television. I would further put it to you that Government cannot make those judgments, and what is important on behalf of all people. Nor can any single aspect of this Union. What is this all about and where should we be headed? Equality is not about maintaining the inequalities inherent within the status quo but about collectively challenging inequalities for the betterment of us all; a culture of accountability that relates to equality that we all own, and in that vein we welcome the West Midlands and Gloucestershire Amendments to this Resolution.

This Resolution is quite clear about what it calls for. We need to foster a culture of accountability, an accountability that can be measured by more than the consensus of those of us that are engaged as activists, and accountability that will protect and serve all our members across the country and give modern credence to our maxims that any injury to one is an injury to all, and that unity is strength. We also need to be aware that management have a maxim too: if it is not measured it does not get done. We are all aware of the damage that can be caused by the misuse of league tables, by those we charge with pooling together and utilising this information. Such information has been used judgmentally rather than in an enabling manner which is the heart of this resolution. We need to collect information on the range of factors that are associated with inequalities and incorporate them within performance monitoring systems.

Performance analysis should always be based on value added approaches and take account of poor retainment and the various factors associated with those inequalities. Measurement of inequality should start at the earliest date, that is to say, recruitment, and any tackling of inequalities should be focused, there should

Day Three – 11th May

be intervention and there should be targeted support. This is likely to lead to a change of policy and practice at every stage. This is not about naming and shaming; it is about the measurement of detrimental effects on groups some of which we may not even have identified yet. It is about having the skills to analyse, interrogate and indeed challenge any data, and it is about timely, focused and effective intervention throughout all levels of our Fire Service community.

The continued absence of measurement means that we cannot evaluate the impact of policies or indeed any pursuant intervention. The league table is a vital tool when it comes to focusing finite resources and what sometimes seems to be innumerable objectives. If this sounds like gobbledygook or management speak, then the first intervention may necessarily be the hardest. Look at ourselves. But I don't think that is necessary. This is the new language of a modern Union prepared and able to decipher and challenge any acronym, analysis and any abomination that management can muster.

THE PRESIDENT:

You have got the red light, Warren.

BRO WARREN SIMPSON (B&EMM):

To end I shall quote C. S. Lewis, if I may. "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber barons' cruelty may sometimes sleep. His cupidity may at some time be satiated. But those who torment us for our own good, will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience". We are not moral busybodies. Conference support this Motion. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Warren. Is Resolution No 2 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). Can we have Gloucestershire to move Amendment No 1, please. (*Formally moved*). Is Amendment No 1 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) Can we have West Midlands to move Amendment No 2, please (*Formally moved*) Is Amendment No 2 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) Is there anyone wishing to come into this debate? No. The Executive Council are giving qualified support to the Resolution and the Amendments and I ask John to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

It is a very simple qualification. There is clearly going to be some work to be done to work out the criteria we are going to use in this league table. We will do that in conjunction with not just B&EMM but the Regional

Committees as well. Secondly, when we come to draw up this league table we are going to need information back from yourselves and the performance of your own Brigade, and I will give you this challenge. Let us make sure that your Brigade is top of the league and not bottom of the league.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. We will now move to the vote then. I will put Amendment 1 from Gloucestershire to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Are there any against? Thank you. That is carried.

I will now put Amendment 2 from the West Midlands to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Thank you. That is carried.

I now put Resolution No 2 as amended by Amendment 1 and Amendment 2 to the vote. Can I see those in favour please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Thank you. That is carried

Paragraph G3, the B&EMM Committee AGM. I now call Resolution No 3, Race Equality Schemes from B&EMM with Amendment from South Yorkshire. Can we have B&EMM to move, please.

Resolution 3 – RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

This Conference calls on the Fire Brigades Union to produce a race equality scheme.

This race equality scheme to be produced in line with the Race Relations Act (Amended 2000), Specific Duty.

This is to be produced in agreement with the B&EMM National Committee, and produced by Conference 2008.

B&EMM

Amendment

Line 5 delete "in agreement with" and insert "by"
Line 6 delete "produced by" and insert "presented to Annual"

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO BRIAN AMOS (B&EMM):

I move Motion 3, Race Equality Scheme and accept South Yorkshire's Amendment.

Race Equality Schemes similar to general equality duties and disability equality schemes require Fire & Rescue Services to produce an inclusive, progressive document, action plans against set time frames so we know

Day Three – 11th May

exactly where we are. This is not a should or could be; under law it is a must do. Therein lies our role as Union Representatives to ensure compliance: no compromises, no excuses.

We have the expertise to hold the UK Fire & Rescue Service accountable, but reflecting on our own working practices in the same light I doubt very much that we would be viewed as very compliant. You see, race equality schemes in line with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 list three general duties and those are: to positively promote good relations between ethnic groups; to eliminate all forms of discrimination; and to promote equality of opportunity. Further to these are specific duties which impact on day to day activities within all areas of service. These day to day activities need to be equality impact assessed which simply means looking at our practices and assessing whether or not they are fair and equitable to all our members and, if not, we address accordingly.

Can that be said about our policies and procedures? If we are a Union that believes itself to be fully representative, this must be addressed. We are already in the process as FBU Representatives and we have had the opportunity to input in our Fire & Rescue Service schemes across the UK. We are approaching the third Fire & Rescue Service race equality scheme and they still cannot get it right. We can impact on that. We need to lead the way on this. We cannot continue to demand Brigades comply with race equality schemes when we do not. If we had a scheme, our scheme would be the model scheme, a scheme for the Union by the Union. The current disappointment for us is the depth of knowledge amongst our membership, especially in areas lacking B&EMM representation. I know we are all busy but this is a race equality scheme: one race rich in our diverse make up. This impacts on all of us sitting here, so if not us then who, and if not now then when?

Support this Motion with South Yorks' Amendment because together we can utilise the knowledge and expertise from all our Union Sections and together we can produce a document for us by us which will reflect our members wants and needs, and together we will progress some way to ensuring words like "equity, equality" and "fairness for all" are adhered to and bring the fishbowl culture that is the modern day Fire Service up to date. With respect, please support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Brian. Is Resolution No 3 seconded?

BRO PETE GALLAGHER (West Midlands):

Although it is not part of the law that we as a trade union need to produce a race equality scheme, the TUC

recommend strongly that we do so. We under the law demand that Brigades produce a scheme and we should lead the way and produce a scheme which shows Fire & Rescue Services the way. Please don't believe that these schemes are just about race, because from the schemes the benefits are for all through equality impact assessments etc. This law was produced in 2002 and as such we are already a long way behind. We tried to amend this resolution because the law has moved on even further and equality schemes by law are needed on disability and gender already. I would ask that we continue to keep abreast and look at producing equality schemes on all strands. By producing the equality schemes, we are enhancing our service delivery to all members. Conference, please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Pete. Can we have South Yorkshire to move their Amendment, please?

BRO VIC GREGORY (South Yorks):

I move South Yorkshire's Amendment to Resolution 3.

Conference, we at South Yorkshire and the whole of Region 4 fully support the Resolution put forward by our sisters and brothers in B&EMM along with our Amendment. Our members fully believe that the FBU should have its own race relations scheme. It is law in public bodies to have a race relations scheme and although we are not a public body, we are a union and we do stand in judgment against Brigades on their race equality schemes, so surely it has got to be good practice that we have our own. The TUC has actually produced guidance to assist us with this, so we ask that the B&EMM National Committee produce a scheme and present it to Annual Conference 2008. Once again, I urge Conference to support Resolution 3 and our Amendment. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is the South Yorkshire Amendment seconded? (*Formally seconded*) Anyone wishing to come in on that debate. No. The Executive Council are supporting. I put Amendment 1 to the vote. Can I see those in favour? Thank you. Are there any against? No. That is carried.

I put Resolution 3 as Amended by South Yorkshire to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please? Thank you. Are there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously

We are now on to Para G4, the Control Regionalisation Advisory Group. Para G5, the Confidential Helpline. Para G6, the Control Staff National Committee Report

Day Three – 11th May

2005/06. We are now on Resolution 6 entitled Control Staffing from the Control Staff National Committee with an Amendment from Gloucestershire. Can I have the Control Staff National Committee to move please?

Resolution 6 – CONTROL STAFFING

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to investigate the present staffing levels within controls in relation to secondments out of the controls and their replacements. Many controls are now running at less than minimum staffing, and the level of experience is diminishing. This is also placing an onerous burden on staff to work overtime, which is often above the 24 hour a month (averaged over a 6 month period) national agreement. This report to be completed within 6 months.

CSNC

Amendment

***In the first sentence replace “in relation to” with the word “including”
And the end of the Resolution delete the full stop and insert “and should include recommendations on how Officials should deal with its findings.”***

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

SIS JEAN WESTWOOD (CSNC):

I move Resolution No 6 and accept the Amendment. Regionalisation is having the biggest impact on control rooms even before when or if they ever materialise ODPM have seconded a minimum of one operator from most control rooms in England and the staff they want have experience. Control Room Staff say who can blame them and are looking to get out of controls. Secondments are now established in departments such as training and community fire safety. Controls are often running at less than minimum staffing. I worked as one of two on Easter Monday. The other operator was not yet deemed competent. I bet that was a cracking risk assessment.

All around the country, controls cannot maintain their minimum staffing putting extra pressure on the depleted watch. There is an emotional pressure to assist your colleagues by working overtime. Operators are often being rung up two or three times in desperate attempts to get somebody into work. In two months alone one Firefighter Control Operator in my Brigade has worked over 80 hours overtime. Management are making ill-thought out decisions to address this problem. In my Brigade there is a proposal to train up all flexi duty officers to work in control. This was the management's solution when we continuously put in memos devolving our responsibility over efficiency whenever the watch went below minimum staffing. The management's

solution came out a year ago. The flexi duty officers have not yet been consulted, informed or trained.

Another Brigade has proposed its minimum staffing but plug the gap with office staff. Controls need to run efficiently for the benefit of the Staff, Firefighters and the public. They can only run efficiently if they have the correct staffing with the required level of training and experience. Let us find out how controls are staffed, how often they work below minimum and how much more overtime is worked. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution No 6 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) Can we have Gloucestershire to move their Amendment, please. The Executive Council are supporting both the Resolution and the Amendment. (*Formally moved*). Is the Amendment from Gloucestershire seconded? (*Formally seconded*). Anyone wishing to speak? No. As I outlined, the Executive Council are supporting both the Resolution and the Amendment. I put the Amendment to the vote first. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? No. Thank you. That is therefore carried.

I put Resolution 6 as amended by Gloucestershire to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is therefore carried unanimously.

We are now on to Para G7, Control Staff National Committee AGM 2005/2006. We are now on Para G8, Executive Council Meetings 2005/06. I now call Composite B entitled Annual Conference Cancellation, to be moved by West Yorkshire, seconded by North Yorkshire. Can I ask West Yorkshire to move please, and if North Yorkshire are speaking can I ask their Delegate to come up the front so that we don't have to wait for them to get there.

COMPOSITE B [Incorporating Resolutions 23 and 24]

ANNUAL CONFERENCE – CANCELLATION

This Conference condemns the decision taken last year by the Executive Council to cancel Annual Conference 2006. This Conference believes that any decision to cancel Annual Conference should only be taken after consultation with all members by a postal ballot. We therefore demand that the Executive Council bring forward to Annual Conference 2008, the relevant rule changes to ensure this process is incorporated into the Union Rule Book.

MOVED BY WEST YORKSHIRE
SECONDED BY NORTH YORKSHIRE

Day Three – 11th May

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorks):

I move Composite Motion B, Annual Conference Cancellation.

Firstly, I would like Conference to join me in congratulating the Stewards on their recent pay campaign. Although it was not total capitulation by Standing Orders – they are still withholding the biscuits.

Annual Conference 2006 was cancelled by the Executive Council without the members consultation or consent, and I am asking for the support of this Conference so that this ill-conceived idea is never rushed through again. 2006 was a vital year for the FBU nationally. We saw the end of the pay agreement which meant several things. It meant that some Firefighters would be entitled to CPD payments. However, due to stalling tactics and the unwillingness of our employers to sit down and talk to us until much too late, members have lost that money forever. It also mentioned that additional responsibility allowances would be available to our members but due to rank to role in most Brigades not being completed this has not happened. That extra money should be in our members' pockets now. Many Brigades are nowhere near looking at paying the extra allowances despite them agreeing to having them in place by June 2006.

What else happened in 2006? Oh yes, pensions. Do I need to go on? Maybe I should. Ill-health enhancement gone, deferred pension rates until 65, injury compensation scheme and then the fantastic new Firefighters scheme that we have all been given the golden opportunity to join. You know the one: you pay a lot of contributions but you work till you drop.

Seriously though, we have had the ongoing saga of co-responding and I am sure Conference will join me in congratulating the stand taken by Firefighters at Retford and Grantham Fire Stations in upholding a long standing Conference policy and long may it remain. We have also been through two years of the shambles that is called Regional Control Rooms.

All these issues are important as each other and all should have been debated at the supreme government that is Annual Conference, but our members were not given that opportunity because of the Executive Council. So why did the EC oppose motion 24, now Composite B? Is it because Conference dares to condemn them for cancelling it or have they been hiding behind the costing issues? We have seen them do that before. Or is it what I suspect? It is really about the EC maintaining that power over our members where they can without any consultation with the members take away their right to speak?

Surely the EC are accountable and surely they are big enough to admit that maybe they have got it wrong and let our members down. By the EC taking the decision to cancel Conference 2006 and Conference turning its back on our members during 2006 the EC has done such damage to the members' confidence it will take years to repair. They must take responsibility for that and we, comrades, must make sure that it never happens again. Support Composite Resolution B. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

North Yorkshire to second, please.

BRO GRAEME WILLIS (North Yorks):

I second Composite Motion B, Annual Conference Cancellation. First time speaker.

In seconding this Composite Motion, North Yorkshire fully support and endorse the comments made by the previous speaker and would urge Conference to do likewise. In cancelling Conference 2006 the EC have deprived the membership of their democratic rights. Democracy, a core principle of trade unionism has been denied by the minority and for the majority it is a crucial time in our history. From our own perspective in North Yorkshire we constantly denigrate management for their lack of honesty and accountability towards the work force, our members. Imagine our bitter disappointment when this accusation is levelled back at us by our own members because of the actions or inactions of the leadership. Make no mistake, the FBU's reputation has been damaged by this flawed EC decision. The delicate internal financial situation of our Union has been publicly exposed. The issues of Pensions, CPD, Regional Controls etc have not been dealt with appropriately and the Union has been subject to ridicule from various quarters. This situation must never be allowed to happen again. Conference, I therefore urge you to support Composite Resolution B. I second.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are opposing. Is there anyone wishing to come into the debate? I will ask Phil, Neal, and then I will ask Matt to give the Executive Council's opposition.

BRO PHIL JORDAN (Glos):

We would have been supporting Resolutions 23 and 24 with the amendments and I would join the Yorkshire comrades in condemning the Executive Council for cancelling Conference, but I am afraid with the Composite calling for postal ballot of the membership for the cancellation of Conference, we will be opposing the Composite, and I urge you also to oppose Conference.

Day Three – 11th May

BRO NEIL YOUNG (Merseyside):

Briefly, the point has just been covered. Though we do believe that the members should be consulted before we cancel a Conference, we cannot agree with the anti-trade union legislation that introduced postal ballots.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Neil. I will now ask the General Secretary to outline the EC opposition.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Ironically, the EC were going to support Resolution 23 with the Amendment because the EC's view is that there should be consultation on the issue of any proposal to cancel Conference, but in the form that the Composite has been drawn up, we are not able to support that, we are not able to support a condemnation of the Executive Council. There was a debate at the Executive Council as you would expect and that was around the issue of cost, and on the basis of the information available to the Executive Council, the decision was taken to cancel the Annual Conference for that year. The other concern that we have is one that has been mentioned by the two other speakers regarding a postal ballot. Apart from anything else we think that would be a cumbersome and expensive way of consulting members on any issue regarding cancellation of Conference.

Finally, comrades, in relation to some of the issues that were raised in the moving and seconding of pensions, we certainly did have full consultation with members. In fact, we had two Recall Conferences on the issue of pensions so we reject that completely. We take on board some of the concerns that are raised, but we ask you to vote against the Composite.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Are West Yorkshire seeking the right to reply?

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (West Yorks):

President, we don't accept that it is a cost issue. Mike reported on Wednesday that if we had the National Officer in place that we are short of at the moment and we held Conference last year, that this year we would have broken even. So I don't accept that.

Matt's just said that it would be a cumbersome exercise to do a postal ballot. That is right, it would. That is deliberate because members have then got the time to debate it and talk about what it means if we actually cancel Annual Conference and not the EC having the

power just to do it in a closed meeting. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I therefore put Composite B which the Executive Council are opposing to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? Thank you. That falls.

Para G9, Executive Council Attendance Record 2005/2006. Para G10 Elections. Right. We will now break for tea. You have got 15 minutes and can I please ask Delegates to be back promptly. Thank you.

Tea break

THE PRESIDENT:

I will ask Steve Shelton, the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee to give his final report to Conference.

THE CHAIR OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE:

Thank you, President. The Standing Orders Committee have been asked by the Cuba Solidarity Stall to announce the winner of the raffle they have held. The winning ticket was a red ticket numbers 201-205 Dave Limer, Region 6. If you would like to collect from the stall, Dave, you have won a bottle of Havana Club Rum.

The Standing Orders Committee would like to thank the Head Office Staff for their hard work and efforts this week, also Steve Cole and his team and the Floral Hall Staff. *(Applause)*

A special thank you. The Standing Orders Committee would also like to thank the Stewards for their hard work and efforts. *(Applause)* And also for agreeing their new contract with the no-strike clause attached!

President that concludes my final report to Conference 2007. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much, Steve. You have been doing a grand job. I would just like to point out to Conference that we still have a lot of business to get through so I would seek your cooperation in trying to ensure that we finish all of the business because any business that is not completed by 5 o'clock today has to be remitted to the Executive Council, and I am sure that you would all rather ensure that it is actually dealt with properly – not that we wouldn't deal with it properly, of course! So if there are resolutions that are not being opposed, then we possibly don't need to have an endless line of speakers. For instance, I would just urge people to give

Day Three – 11th May

that cooperation to ensure that we get through. We have now got Resolution 14 entitled Elections for Officials to be moved by Hampshire.

Resolution 14 – ELECTIONS FOR OFFICIALS

This Conference demands that elections for officials when due, must run in accordance with the FBU rule book.

HAMPSHIRE

BRO CONRAD JORDAN (Hants):

Speaking for the first time this year! Since the 2003 pay campaign, we have seen a number of elections delayed, and these delays have done nothing to help unite this Union. These delays are divisive and damaging to this Union. These delays build up a distrust in the membership, a membership that is in danger of becoming disillusioned with its Officials because of the constant in-fighting.

As Officials, we should be prepared for the elections for our positions to be run when they are due. This should be seen as a positive thing. If an Official is doing a good job in the position they hold, they should not be afraid of the election. We should also as Officials not be afraid of other Officials challenging for the positions we hold. Challenge is good. It shows a healthy Union: healthy because we have new Officials up and coming willing to take on the responsibility of leading and taking this Union forward. If our elections are run constantly unopposed and delayed we are in danger of becoming stagnant as a Union. Run our elections on time, unite our common causes and let us all move forward together. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Conrad. Is Resolution 14 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) Anyone wishing to come into that debate? No. The Executive Council are supporting but I will ask Matt to come in.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

The EC are supporting, but it is our view that elections are run in accordance with the FBU Rule Book and there is no evidence that any of them have not been.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. OK. I will put Resolution 14 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Composite C entitled Non-Statutory Elections, Postal Ballots, to be moved by London, seconded by Humberside. Can I ask London to move, please, and if Humberside are speaking to their seconding, can the Delegate please get to the front of the Hall.

COMPOSITE C [Incorporating Resolutions 10 and 21]

NON STATUTORY ELECTIONS – POSTAL BALLOTS

Conference notes with concern:

- *The significant workload placed on brigade secretaries in relation to the administration of workplace ballots for elections under FBU rules.*
- *The fact that in recent national elections conducted as workplace ballots significant numbers of members have been disenfranchised as a result of procedural errors by branch officials, such that the number of votes not included in the ballot exceeds the margin of victory of the successful candidate.*

Conference considers that this is unacceptable.

Conference therefore believes that to best ensure proper accordance with the democratic process and to ensure that members with the right to vote receive ballot papers and associated information, elections must be conducted by postal ballots, using the same procedures as are currently used for statutory elections, for all elected positions from Regional/Sectional Officials upwards, where statute does not otherwise provide that a postal ballot is compulsory.

We therefore demand that the Executive Council bring forward, to Annual Conference 2008, the relevant rule changes to ensure this change in voting procedure is incorporated into the Union Rule Book.

**MOVED BY HUMBERSIDE
SECONDED BY LONDON**

BRO PAUL EMBURY (London):

Point of Order. It is actually Humberside to move and London to second, President.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Paul, I have been given some duff information here. Humberside can move please.

Day Three – 11th May

BRO ASHLEY OLDFIELD (Humberside):

I move Composite C, Non-Statutory Elections and Postal Ballots. With regards to the elections of Regional Officials, Sectional Officials and above, it is our belief within Humberside that all members should have the right to express their opinion through the postal ballot system. This allows all members of our Union a right to express their true opinion on these elections ensuring that we have a more democratic process. Also if at the present time in accordance with our Rules a branch fails to complete the relevant paperwork correctly, we can see large groups of our members finding themselves losing their vote through no fault of their own.

Conference, by accepting our Resolution we would be allowing each individual their right to exercise their opinion and giving every member the power to control the result of that vote. Yes, not all of our members will wish to carry out the right but do we really believe that all our members do that now? Of course, we don't. Let us appeal to the whole of our Union and allow them to choose our Officials ensuring the candidate standing is voted for by the whole of the membership and not by the few.

Regarding the issue of cost, yes, postal ballots can be construed as expensive, but would that not be offset by the savings accrued when Officials no longer have to travel to numerous branches for the meetings just on the issue of elections alone? Not only does this offset the cost of postal ballots but releases the burden placed on Officials who within the current climate finds the demands on them are really excessive.

In conclusion, can I summarise our position by reiterating that the introduction of postal ballots for Regional Officials, Sectional Officials and above will strengthen the democratic process within our Union. It will encourage all of our members to take up their vote in a way they feel is right. It will remove the block voting that we have today which allows large numbers of votes to fall in the room. It will allow Officials at Brigade level to free up their time by no longer continually visiting meetings just to process ballots. I move.

BRO PAUL EMBURY (London):

I second the Composite. I think we need to be clear that this Resolution is absolutely not about undermining our work place organisation; it is about recognising the very real difficulties encountered by Brigade Officials in being responsible for the distribution of hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of ballot forms. In London, for example, we have got 6,000 members in around 140 branches. We have to make sure during these elections that ballot forms are packed, collected and then put into the hands of every one of those members and I am sure that comrades in other Brigades have got identical

problems. It is, to be honest, a logistical nightmare and, to be perfectly frank, it is a huge drain on the resources of our Region.

Let us accept the fact that there is a big problem in terms of drains on resources and stuff like that, except the fact that the – I am going to be sick, I am sorry.

THE PRESIDENT:

No, that is not allowed under Standing Orders, Paul.

BRO PAUL EMBURY (London):

I will move it formally. Is that OK? I will second formally. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

There is a lesson about over-indulgence at the EC do! Can I see those who wish to come into this debate, please?

BRO ? (Strathclyde):

We are opposing Composite C. Paul has already covered quite a large area of this! I have to say I feel a bit of a hypocrite standing here as a Scot lecturing people on how to run elections. 142,000 people disenfranchised in Scotland. It is an absolute disgrace. I would also like to say however flawed our election processes are, we certainly won't be taking any lessons from the New Labour administration. May it rest in peace in Scotland.

Whilst understanding the call for postal ballots, the work load has been referred to already and it is true that we are all very busy, but the resolution mentions the work load placed on Brigade Secretaries. It was referred to yesterday that we are a team, and we are a team. We have to support our Brigade Secretaries and get the work done. I understand the specific problems in London, and Strathclyde have similar issues as well.

We are obviously all aware of the problems of work place elections. They are a bit of a logistical nightmare as Paul has referred to. In Strathclyde we have been busy with other matters, and I am sure it is exactly the same in every Brigade in the country. However, the work place ballot in my view should be viewed not as a problem and not as a chore; it is an opportunity to address our members and talk to them at the most basic level. The branches are the Union. When we become detached from the membership we are just some postcode on an envelope and we don't want that to happen. We want to be in the branches talking to the members, the people that matter. It is also the view of Strathclyde, as Matt has referred to already regarding other elections run by the postal method, is it is very expensive and I am happy to say that again, you know, a

Day Three – 11th May

fat Scottish guy standing here telling you to tighten your belts. So if you want to ignore that piece of advice, fair enough. Please reject.

BRO ALAN ANDERSON (GMC):

I am talking against Composite C. Earlier this year I went for the job of Regional Treasurer in Region 5. Unfortunately, I lost by four votes. Was I disappointed? Yes. But I tell you what, I don't think the answer is to do it by post; the answer is to educate our members to take part in votes and do some hard work. I stress it is very important that we get out and talk to the members. Please reject this Composite.

BRO ANDY NOBLE (Tyne & Wear):

I oppose this Composite. In the opinion of some, the fact that we do have to elect the President, the General Secretary, the Assistant General Secretary and all of the top table is bad enough, but to start having to pay to elect other people as well is just taking it a bit too far. Over the last couple of years we have heard on Wednesday morning how we managed to dig ourselves out of a financial hole. I think we would be crazy to start spending money unnecessarily and putting us back in there. We do appreciate that elections are burdensome but I mean I think it is a burden that we are just going to have to bear. At the time of writing this there would have been several elections held just from 02 January this year. It seems crazy to think about what we are trying to build on Wednesday and start spending money willy nilly on elections.

For a number of years we have campaigned against a whole raft of anti-trade union legislation such as the Employers Act and the Trade Union Reform Act, all of which requires us to hold postal ballots. So it would seem strange to me that we continue to protest about these but on the other hand we endorse the principle of postal ballots in the election of our Officials. It seems strange that we dissociate ourselves from the political institutions which either introduced or refused to repeal this legislation, yet we volunteer to undertake one of the very things we dislike about that legislation the most. We have managed without postal ballots for a long time now. Yes, they can be a burden but I think it is a burden that we shall just have to live with for now. Please oppose the Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are opposing. I will ask Matt in a moment to outline the reasons for the opposition. If Humberside are wishing to exercise the right to reply, can I ask that their delegate gets up ready to do so, please. Matt.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Thank you, President. The Executive Council are urging Conference to oppose the Composite on a couple of grounds. One has been mentioned: the question of cost. There clearly are cost implications in terms of postal balloting. I don't want to go on endlessly about cost. It is an important factor. More importantly is the issue of the traditions of the Union. The traditions of the Union are based around involving our members at the work place; about work place democracy. There is evidence across the trade union movement that turn out tends to be higher in work place ballots than in postal ballots, so we would urge Conference to give that some consideration.

There are issues, and I think the mover mentioned some of the ballot returns which have been ruled out because the branch return form is sometimes filled in incorrectly. I think that clearly is an issue that needs to be addressed. It is an issue that we need to address in terms of training for our branch officials for ensuring that the forms are filled in properly because we do not want our members on the branches to be disenfranchised. On those grounds, comrades, we would urge rejection of Composite C.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. Humberside to reply?

BRO ASHLEY OLDFIELD (Humberside):

Conference, we have listened to the arguments, we understand the concerns, but what we have got to remember is what cost is democracy? We have to pay the costs of travelling and subs to the reps. This has got to be paid from somewhere and so would the payment for the postal ballot, so I don't think this should be taken into account. We have also heard arguments over the anti-trade union laws where it requires postal ballots to be taken for the upper echelons of our Union. This postal ballot for us is what was brought on by the Tories over 20 years ago. After 10 years of a Labour Government, we have yet to see any trade union challenge that law and yet we are here today talking against it. If we are that strongly opposed to these laws we should be challenging it against the Government, not against ourselves. With this in mind, I feel we should take that back and support our Resolution. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I will put Composite C to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against? That is defeated.

We are now on Para G11 Final Appeals Committee. Para G12 Fairness at Work.

Day Three – 11th May

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

Firstly, we would like to commend the Fairness at Work Sub-Committee on the revitalised All Different All Equal Policy and booklet. We also feel that the Executive Council should work with the National Fairness at Work Committee in sections to look at issues and anomalies that were raised about All Different All Equal by Regional Secretaries which, unfortunately, could not be addressed due to the remit of the Fairness at Work Sub-Committee and that this be done over the next year. Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there anyone else on Para G12. John.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thank you, President. Delegates will have seen the new All Different All Equal and welcome the words from Alex from Strathclyde. It is interesting when I took the responsibility for this, it felt like I had to wipe the cobwebs of it and start picking up that role. I want to thank a number of people for the assistance they have given us in redesigning and re-writing the Policy Document. I would like to thank the Fairness at Work Committee and the Strategy Group and I would like to thank in particular Kerry Baigent for her work in particular in the last year when we have been putting it together.

I would also thank the Regional Secretaries. We did ask the Regional Secretaries, I think over a year ago, to give us some initial comments on the difficulties they had in the application of the process under the All Different All Equal. There does appear to have been some confusion about what the remit the Fairness at Work Committee were given way back in 2002 or 2003, and that was that we were not re-writing the policy, we were not creating a new policy; we were putting it into a user friendly manner. That is what we had been tasked to do. I apologise to those Regional Secretaries and others that felt there was a remit there for rewriting and coming up with a new policy. We did not have that facility and that remit from Conference.

We will be distributing this Document to all members. We will be getting it sent to their home addresses with the June or July issue of the *Firefighter*, and are looking at the logistics of that. We have tried to design the Document so that it is relevant to all of you, relevant to the Regional Secretaries who can see easily what they have to do, and of course, most importantly, those that feel victim of bullying and harassment and discrimination. We have added a section at the back for people to make notes, because throughout the Document you will notice that we always encourage both Officials and members that are involved to make notes of any situation they find themselves in. We hope that proves helpful.

The comments that have been made by Alex about the policy needing to be developed is something that the Fairness at Work Committee will continue to look at, but I have got to say that can only change if it is a policy decision from Conference and therefore somebody has to come to Conference next year or through the Executive Council and we will take on board those other changes. The Fairness at Work Committee can make recommendations obviously to the Executive Council but we don't have the ability, and quite rightly, to change the Policies of the Union.

If I can just say in terms of fairness at work, moving aside from All Different All Equal, the Equality Sections and the Fairness at Work Committee have been working particularly hard over the last couple of years, and you will have noticed in 2003 there was an isolation of the FBU in terms of Government, in terms of employers and a whole number of issues. Whilst there has been a lot of work here in all other areas and Matt and Andy have been working hard on your behalf to get us back in there and culminating with a visit from the Minister today.

The work of the Equality Sections of what was the ODPM and now CLG proved invaluable as well. The CLG set up an Equality and Diversity project board which the FBU were going to be excluded from. At the first meeting they debated the issue of whether the Fire Brigades Union should be on it, and they clearly said we should not be. A whole number of meetings were taking place that I attended with B&EMM, the Women's Committee and G&L Committee and we continued to put pressure not only on the senior civil servants but the Ministers themselves. Before the minutes of that first meeting had been proved which we had been excluded on, they did a complete U-turn and the FBU now have a dedicated seat on the project board, so things are changing. I will finish because I realise we do not have a lot of time. I will just come back to this policy and pick out just a sentence from Mick's introduction, and he says – and I hope that people will remember this – “It is a positive policy and one of which we should be proud.”

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. We are on Resolution 15 from Tyne & Wear, entitled All Different All Equal. Can we have Tyne & Wear to move, please.

Resolution 15 – ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL

Conference demands that when a member has appealed to the General Secretary against a Regional Committee decision not to grant representation under All Different/All Equal, that member be informed in writing of the result of that appeal within 14 days of the date the appeal was

Day Three – 11th May

received at Head Office. The All Different/All Equal policy to be amended accordingly.

TYNE & WEAR

BRO JOHN RAE (Tyne & Wear):

I move Resolution 15. In the FBU All Different/All Equal policy Appeals Section it states that upon receipt of an appeal against a Regional Committee decision not to grant representation, the General Secretary shall convene an Executive Council Discipline Sub-Committee within 14 days to hear that appeal. It also states that decision of the Sub-Committee shall be final and shall be conveyed to the applicant, the General Secretary and Regional Secretary in writing.

The following sequence of events led to this resolution being proposed. In Tyne & Wear we had a member who, after being suspended under discipline for 9 months, was found guilty at Crown Court in April 2005 and sentenced in May. That member was advised to apply to the Regional Committee for representation under All Different/All Equal policy. That was 19 May 2005. Within 14 days an investigation had taken place and at a properly convened Regional Committee Meeting, May 31, representation was denied. On 03 June 2005 in line with All Different/All Equal policy our member appealed to the General Secretary against the decision of the Regional Committee. 23 September our member was dismissed from the Fire Service. November 17 that year, eight weeks after being sacked, our member was informed that his appeal to the General Secretary had been rejected. Quite unbelievably, that took five months for the reply. It is our opinion that if a member is charged under discipline, no matter what the charge relates to or how serious the matter is, that member is entitled to go through and exhaust the system stated on the FBU procedure on representation. That member is also entitled to a reply to any appeal. A definitive time scale for a reply must apply. We do not know who was to blame for this fiasco, and it is not a finger pointing exercise and we are not particularly bothered, but in any situation of discipline a member is fighting for their job, their future, their reputation and may be trying to keep their family together. Surely we can inform any member whether or not they would be granted representation earlier than five months.

We cannot afford to let any other member go through what this member went through. Fourteen days for the General Secretary to set up a Sub-Committee, hear the appeal, make a decision and inform the applicant is not unreasonable. The Policy must be amended. Please support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is Resolution No 15 seconded? Seconded formally. Is there anyone wishes to speak in this debate.

BRO ALEX MILLER (Strathclyde):

I speak in opposition of Resolution 15. In Region 1 we are currently experience problems in fulfilling time lines under All Different/All Equal as it is. This is due mainly to the size of the Region and the access and availability of Regional Committee members. We feel that prescriptive time lines on appeals and giving the logistics of organising in the Region and meeting of the appeals committee may be difficult to achieve. Do we honestly feel that the Executive Council will not deal with any appeal as quickly as possible? No-one here can foretell the future and there must be some leeway that allows for unforeseen events and complications outwith the General Secretary's control. We oppose.

THE PRESIDENT:

The Executive Council are opposing, and I will ask John to outline the opposition.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

It may seem unreasonable but it would be simply unworkable if we take this Resolution and pass it. The very fact is that when the General Secretary is asked to set up an appeal hearing, he has 14 days in which to arrange that. As you all know, the demands on your own timetable and your own diaries to get the Committee together can often be the 12th, 13th or even 14th day before the appeals can even be heard. If it is heard on 14th day it would not be possible to convey in writing the letter to those members. It is simply not workable.

Again, I appreciate there was no finger pointing and no blaming but there was clearly a mistake made, an administrative error on a one off, because on most occasions if not all other occasions when an appeal hearing is heard the letters go out a day or a couple of days later to inform all those concerned. We take on board that where there have been administrative errors we will do our best to make sure they do not happen again, and those that have an appeal and those involved in the appeal process are informed of the outcome, but please oppose this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Do Tyne & Wear wish to exercise their right to reply?

BRO JOHN RAE (Tyne & Wear):

Thanks for that, John. Obviously you have said there was a mistake made or some delay in that particular case so if what you are saying is if the Appeals Committee can be held and the individual can be informed within a reasonable time, if you can give us

Day Three – 11th May

that guarantee, we will withdraw our Resolution.
Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. We are now on Para G13 E-bulletin. Para G14, FBU website. Para G15, Firefighter Magazine. Para G16 G&L Committee Report 2005/2006. Para G17 G&L Annual General Meeting 2005/2006. Para G18, Information Technology. I now call Resolution 17 entitled Text Messaging to be moved by Cleveland.

Resolution 17 – TEXT MESSAGING

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a feasibility study into the use of mobile phone text messaging, as an additional means of communicating with our members. This study should consider the cost, and all other practical issues regarding the implementation of this communication medium.

A report should be submitted for consideration by the Executive Council no later than 6 months after the close of this Conference. Details of the report, and the Executive Council decision on whether or not to implement this particular measure should be circulated to the members by means of an All Members circular as soon as possible following the Executive Council meeting at which the report is discussed.

CLEVELAND

BRO STEVE WATSON (Cleveland):

I move Resolution 17 on mobile phone text messaging. Apparently, last year 41.8 billion text messages were sent in the United Kingdom. That is an average of 114 million per day. Text messaging is no longer a popular craze but is now an essential communication tool inclusive of all age groups and the use of mobile phones and text messaging is far more widespread than the use of email.

In October 2006 the American Federation of Teachers was the first union in the United States to use text messaging to mobilise its members. They sent a message to members urging them to volunteer and support the pro-union candidates in the forthcoming elections.

We use text messaging now on ad hoc basis at all levels of our Union, but imagine the potential to be able to text thousands of our members. Within minutes it could be possible to text members with the results of a strike ballot or an election result, for example. A message could be sent encouraging members to take part in elections or reminding them to post their ballot papers.

Percentage details of this year's pay rise, if we get one, or something similar like "FBU win High Court action on co-responding" could be sent in a simple text message, and after the co-responding debate yesterday, we might even be able to inform our members in a simple text that we have expelled them – only joking!

This is an effective way to reach large numbers of our members in an instant. All the resolution does is ask the EC to carry out a feasibility study and report that back to the members. If it is not feasible, so be it, but let us just explore the possibilities. Conference, support the Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Steve. Is Resolution 17 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) The Executive Council are supporting and I will hand you over to the Assistant General Secretary.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

Yes, it should be formally, and I realise time is pressing but there is an important point I want to raise with regard to this. The use of the texting system, once we can establish it – and we will take advice from other trade unions both in the UK and indeed abroad as well (because we have had indications from comrades across the Atlantic and also stuck in the Pacific there that they actually use this system), we will take that guidance and advice and use that to implement this policy when and if it is passed, and I imagine it will be.

One key aspect though is that in order for it to work we need the numbers. We have got a system already whereby we take members' email addresses to send them circulars. That list is quite successful. Not as successful as we would want. We do need the information in. Clearly, what we will be doing is lifting the numbers from the membership database and it is like a key message. We need to ensure that the database is up to date, kept up to date, including not just addresses and next of kin, but also mobile phone numbers if this becomes passed. A small point but important if it is to be effective when we implement it. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. I will put Resolution 17 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Thank you. Resolution 17 is carried.

We are on Para G19, National Retained Committee Report 2005/2006. Para 20, National Retained Committed Annual General Meeting 2005/2006. We are on Para G21, notify deaths campaign. Para G22 Officers National Committee Report 2005/2006. Para 23 Officers

Day Three – 11th May

National Committee Annual General Meeting 2005/2006. Para G24 Political Fund. Para G25 Raft. Para G27 Retired Officials. Para G28 Union Trustees. Para G29 National Women's Committee Annual Report 2005/2006. Para G30 Women Members' Annual General Meeting 2005/2006. Para G31 Statistical Statement. I now call Resolution 33 entitled Membership to be moved by Northamptonshire with an Amendment from Merseyside. Can we have Northamptonshire to move, please.

Resolution 33 – MEMBERSHIP

Conference instructs the Executive Council to review membership eligibility and membership fee rates, to ensure recent changes within the British Fire Service are taken into account.

On completion of this review, a paper will be prepared and submitted for Conference 2008.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Amendment

Line 2: delete 'British' replace with 'UK'.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO GARY MITCHELL (Northants):

This Resolution was Remitted yesterday during the Reorganisation debate.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much. Good job someone is awake on those matters. The Amendment obviously automatically falls.

We are now on Section B ODPM now DCLG. Para B1, Introduction. Para B2 Fire Safety Introduction. Para B3 FBU Fire Safety Policy.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I want to take this opportunity, Conference to mark an important event and that is regarding an individual who is here somewhere in the hall, I think at the back, and that is Comrade Glyn Evans. *(Applause)*

Glyn, as you know, is the Fire Safety Adviser for the Union and Glyn stands down from that position in July of this year. It is important therefore that we mark that event. Glyn joined the Fire Service in 1970, went on to the Officers National Committee in 1982, was an EC Member between 1990 and 1994 and then retired in one form but went on to a new life, a new role, advising this Union on fire safety matters. He has proved invaluable, I think, and I think everybody who knows Glyn and his work will acknowledge that. Glyn is an

expert, he is a technical expert on fire safety matters. In fact, he is a technical expert on all Fire Service matters and his knowledge and advice has been essential. I know in terms of the top people here, myself, the AGS and I know John, all rely heavily on Glyn's advice and support. In many ways I think Glyn is completely irreplaceable. I do not think we will be able to find a single person who will be able to provide the breadth of support and advice that Glyn has been able to provide. As well as being a technical expert, Glyn brings to that role a trade union perspective. We can go and find fire safety advisers elsewhere. What we will not have is that grounding in the Fire & Rescue Service, that concern about the safety for Firefighters when they are giving that advice, and Glyn provides that every time he considers an issue.

I think anyone who knows anything about Glyn's work will also know that it is not just within this Union that Glyn is held in such respect. Glyn is known throughout the Fire & Rescue Service, throughout the wider fire community, the people involved in discussing sprinklers and fire safety legislation and so on. Glyn also seems to know everyone in the Fire & Rescue Service, and I have to say sometimes it appears that Glyn appears to know everything about the Fire & Rescue Service. So it will undoubtedly be a huge loss to us when Glyn moves on and probably takes a well earned break from that sort of work later in the year.

On behalf of the Executive Council, on behalf of yourselves as delegates, on behalf of the many members who have benefited from Glyn's advice, although they may not know that Glyn lay behind that, I would like to note that we truly appreciate the work over that many years. *(Sustained Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

We are still on Para B3. It now gives me great pleasure to introduce another of our guest speakers from an International Organisation. There have been a series of meetings over the last year or so between ourselves and sister unions in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, and we have guests from all three of those unions here at our Conference this week. This weekend, in fact, there is a meeting between Senior Officials of our union and those three unions to discuss our continuing work. Speaking on behalf of those three sister unions we have today Peter Marshall from Australia, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce him.

BRO PETER MARSHALL:

First, can I thank the FBU, Members, Delegates and the Executive Council on behalf of all the International Potential Alliance Members for the hospitality. It has

Day Three – 11th May

been overwhelming and certainly it is reassuring when you come to a new country to be amongst your own, even though you are in a particular different place. Can I say Delegates, I got the short straw so I am the one speaking to you out of the three unions but I will do the best I can. I have actually listened to your debate and it is of interest to note that many of the issues that you speak about are very similar to ours at home. If I could give you a bit of a background, in Australia I am the National Secretary of the UFU. We only have a small membership bloc of approximately 14,000 Firefighters. Indeed, New Zealand again is a small union. What we do look for, and in particular, we watch very closely being a small union, is the leadership and the battles and struggles that have been shown around the globe in other Fire Fighting Unions.

In the USA you have got the International Association of Firefighters. Indeed, they have had their battles and struggles. In the UK you have got the FBU and they have had their battles and struggles. Let me tell you the ones you have had over the last decade you should be very proud of yourselves for what you have achieved. There seems to be a common thread that is appearing and the common thread is simply this. Consultant reports. In the USA you have had Tri-Data. In Australia we had KPMG. In New Zealand you had the ESTEL Report. In the UK you had In the Line of Fire and that horrendous disgusting degenerate report called the Bain Report.

It is sad to see that people of the calibre that protect the community are attacked in such a fashion not because they want excessive wages and conditions. It is all about the fact that as Fire Fighting Unions around the globe, we have a very high level of density in membership. More importantly, our unions collectively have principles and if something is wrong we will stand up for them. I actually referred to consultant reports throughout the globe. Each one of those had a threat. In Australia privatisation, contracting out, placing our work in the hands of civilians, not because they can do it better but they wanted to break the union and break its monopoly on labour. In New Zealand they went one further. They actually sacked every Firefighter and wanted to replace them with a new classification. Why? Because they would not trade off their wages and conditions. They went without a pay increase for 10 years. That was an enormous battle and ultimately they won that in the High Court, and if it had not been for the support of our global partners we would have been in a lot of trouble in Australia and in New Zealand.

Over here the Bain Report. That is not about modernisation. You don't have to be a genius to see that that was a response to a justified pay claim. Indeed, some of the threats in that report you could have taken straight out of the Australian Report, the New Zealand

Report and, indeed, the one in the USA. There is a common attack on Firefighters around the globe. As a small union in Australia we look very closely to the leadership and the battles and struggles that our larger sister unions actually fight, because if you lose them they will come at us and if they are successful here we are in real trouble. There has to be a better way for Firefighters. There has to be better respect. There has to be a better and strategic way of addressing what the employers are putting up to us.

Can I say that I have watched very closely the strategies being employed by the larger unions, and we ring up and ask for the information both from the USA and the UK. If it had not been for what you have actually put in place over here we would have been in a lot of trouble.

Firefighters have a special identity and there is a different way, but it can only be done through the leadership of the FBU and the IAFF. Sure the New Zealand and the Australian Union can hold our own, but we really do need the leadership of the larger unions. I can say very clearly on a global level there should be one standard for appliance pumps and the crewing on appliances. There should be one standard for protection for health and safety. There is a forum that we can potentially get in to achieve that. That forum is in part of what they call the UN, and it is the ILO. There is an organisation that is called GUF (Global Union Federation) and there is 11 peak bodies. They represent construction workers, they represent textile workers, they represent teachers and indeed it would be a great day for current and future generation Firefighters under the leadership of the larger unions to look after the Firefighters, to have their own identity in that forum and to have a seat at the table.

On top of the Global Union Federation they have the International Trade Union Confederation. That is a trade union body. It represents 168 million workers. It has a membership of 153 countries. It has 304 national affiliates. We can be part of that under the leadership of the FBU and the IAFF if we join together and are able to reconcile our differences. Can I say very clearly if we are able to do that then we can get into the ILO. It is a tripartite arrangement. There are things that are coming at us that we should not be addressing piecemeal. We should not be addressing global warming on a national basis; it should be on a global basis. We are going to have to deal with nuclear energy; we are going to have to deal with pandemics; we are going to have to deal with all sorts of things. Indeed, as a small union, we are not geared up to meet that challenge without a significant cost. Collectively, we could meet that challenge, and with the collective wisdom of all the larger unions, in particular the FBU and the IAFF, we would be able to meet that challenge easily.

Day Three – 11th May

What I say to you comrades, very clearly, is Firefighters are special people. They tackle adversity every day. You people deserve better respect. My members deserve better respect. Indeed, firefighters around the globe deserve better respect. We want standards. We do not want to have piecemeal standards. We want global standards and you people can make that happen, we seek your support, hopefully under the leadership of the FBU and the IAFF and other trade unions that represent Firefighters, we can have our own identity in the world forum, on the world's globe, and indeed we will never have to have the sort of battles that you are having in the UK, we are having in Australia, New Zealand is having and the US are having on our own. Collectively we can neutralise our respective Governments through the ILO.

Thank you very much for allowing me to talk to you, Conference. I thank you again for the hospitality and thank the Executive Council in particular for allowing me to speak. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much, Peter. I would like to ask Matt to make a presentation.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I am sure the Delegates will be pleased to know that we leave Conference and go straight to a two-day meeting with our colleagues from the three countries mentioned, so no break for us. Hopefully, what Peter has outlined to you is the similarities in the struggles we experience across the globe, that Firefighters are doing the same job across the job, and I think Peter has brought that message to Conference. I think earlier Mark mentioned the support that was given by comrades in New Zealand in relation to the dispute that we had in Merseyside. I think we have already seen some valuable lessons to be learned by the work that we are doing from the three year sister organisations.

I would like to thank Peter on behalf of Conference. We have a small gift for you to take if you can fit it in your luggage. *(Applause)*

BRO PETER MARSHALL:

Thank you again. I am not sharing this; it's mine.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much. We are now on Para B4, Government Departments, Fire Safety Responsibilities. Para B5, Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005. Para B6 Corporate Killing. Para B7 Fire Service College. Para B8 Firefighting at Sea. I now call Resolution 72

entitled Firefighting at Sea to be moved by Lothian & Borders.

Resolution 72 – FIREFIGHTING AT SEA

The 1998 Executive Council Policy Statement (as amended by Lothian & Borders, Cleveland and Strathclyde on Firefighting at Sea, including the use of helicopters) provides Brigade Committees with comprehensive guidance on what the minimum requirements should be achieved for Firefighting at sea.

However, in light of the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Marine Incident Response Group (MIRG) being formed Conference must now recognise that Firefighting at Sea is no longer an issue that Brigade Committees can deal with effectively without assistance from the Executive Council. Therefore, Conference demands that the Executive Council's Sub Committee on Firefighting/Helicopters at Sea is reformed with a view to reviewing FBU policy with consideration of MIRG.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

BRO ANDY FULTON (Lothian & Borders):

I move Resolution 72, Fire fighting at Sea. Firefighting at Sea – I can already see the heads dropping. For those of you who are fortunate enough not to have a Chief Officer committed to supplying a Firefighting at Sea team, I will give you some background.

MIRG: Marine Instant Response Group. This Group was created by the Maritime and Coastguard agencies some years ago. The sole intention was to have Fire and Rescue Services throughout the UK make a commitment to supply a team of Firefighters to tackle incidents at sea. Over that period they have spent a substantial amount of money on training and equipment. However, from the outset the people who have run this MIRG have only been concerned with the project and their own kudos. They have never once concerned themselves about our members. These people have continually shied away from the real issues that our members need to have addressed: insurance; risk assessments; welfare; additional responsibility. Those are just a few.

It has been almost impossible for me, and I am sure other Brigade Secretaries throughout the country, to deal with all these issues. However, it is not for the want of trying. My Chief Officer's mantra on this issue, as well as on other issues, is this is a national project. These issues need to be addressed nationally, and I cannot be seen to be the first – you know how it goes. So where are we? There are currently 13 Fire & Rescue

Day Three – 11th May

Services committed to MIRG. That does not include the Channel Islands. In total there are around 600 Firefighters taking part in the project. The majority of them are our members. Each Fire & Rescue Service will have a different approach to mobilising and looking after their teams. Some will have insurance policies, some will have a welfare package and probably some will have nothing at all. So far in Lothian & Borders we have been successful in achieving most parts of our policy. There is one exception to this and that is insurance.

Our 1998 Policy on Firefighting at Sea has eight recommendations included in it. All personnel will be volunteers; all members will be fully trained with appropriate welfare arrangements; Fire Brigades will only undertake fire fighting and rescue at sea after comprehensive risk assessment; full consideration to inventory and dynamic risk assessment; the necessary PPE will be provided; all volunteers will receive helicopter ditching training; safe operational procedures will be agreed; (and the final one) litigation and insurance. From my understanding of the insurance, our policy is not achievable. We will never be able to meet the requirements of the £1 million no fault cover.

At the moment in Lothian & Borders we are stalling management on various issues. However, that will not last as they are likely to declare availability to MIRG some time later this month and then our members will have to consider what action they will take. I have attempted to discuss these problems with other Brigade Officials with little success. Through my Regional Officials, and in particular John Docherty, I have attempted to have the Health & Safety Sub-Committee discuss Firefighting at Sea without much success. We need to deal with this and deal with it now. The MCA want to further expand the role of MIRG. They want to respond to rescue incidents whilst at sea. They want to respond to chemical incidents whilst at sea, and it is only a matter of time before we want to tackle cargo fires whilst at sea. We need a national response to MIRG. We need national officials to begin discussions with the MCA. We need to inform the MCA of our arguments on insurance issues, the health and safety issues, the welfare issues and additional payments issues. MIRG is not going away. Given the number of members involved, we need to try and protect those members. The first step we must take is to reform the EC Sub Committee on Firefighting and Helicopters at Sea. We need to have a common approach for all Brigades to the unresolved issues in our policy. We need to review, update and improve our policies. We need to build a picture of what is happening nationally and in all the Brigades who are committed to this MIRG team. We need to do this now. Support the Resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. Is Resolution 72 seconded?

BRO TERRY NOTTLE (Cornwall):

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to Lothian & Borders for taking this issue up. Cornwall has been down this road before. We have brought it up at previous Conferences, we have been on to the EC, we have been on to our Regional Officials about it. MIRG is in place. As far as they are concerned, they have a fire fighting response at sea. The marine organisations understand that the UK Fire Service will provide fire fighting and rescue at sea. The only people who don't quite seem to understand is the Executive Council and the Fire Brigades Union. Our members have volunteered. Some of that volunteering was under duress. We had our branch at Falmouth threatened with downgrading over this issue. They stand resolute over this issue and they have not volunteered, but unfortunately, some other members in our Brigade were not quite so strong as Falmouth and they did volunteer under threats of full time job losses, also under promises of nice trips away, nice training courses and overtime. Now they have got the response, they have all been trained up, the overtime has dried up and so have the nice trips away, and our members are being left now unsupported by their Union.

It is not fair on ourselves as Brigade Officials. We are put in a negotiating position where ultimately we can only fail. We need to have a policy that we can actually implement, we can support our members and we can take forward. That is why we say to the Executive Council when they reform the Sub-Committee, when the work is being done, ensure that Brigade Officials in Brigades that undertake marine firefighting are involved. We are the ones who have done a lot of research already, we know the situation, come and speak to us, we can advise you and we can get a policy that is workable and is attainable. Support this Resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Was there anyone else on Resolution 72? No. The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I ask John McGhee to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

First off, I will answer a couple of points raised in that debate. With regards to the MCA, the MCA have been made fully aware of what our concerns are with firefighting at sea, and we have done that on a number of occasions. Regardless of that, we have been completely ignored. Why have we been completely ignored, because it is an issue that has been driven by

Day Three – 11th May

Government. It is not an issue driven by safety. It is purely and simply a Government initiative.

As you know, there were changes to the Fire Services Act 2004 that brought in responsibility for firefighting at sea in a much more defined way. I can say there have been discussions at Health & Safety coordinators committee and they established a group themselves to look at the issue of firefighting at sea. It will be getting raised at the Executive Council and whether the Executive Council choose to re-establish a Fire fighting at Sea Sub-Committee and add on a few helicopters, they might well choose to do that, but it will certainly be raised with them.

I would just ask you to think back to 2002/03 and this is one of the issues that got caught up in the whole negotiation process over pay. This Conference took a decision in 2002 that we would deal with the issue of pay and we would set aside other issues until that was resolved, and that was a priority. That in some way is why we were outside of what was going on inside of firefighting at sea.

One of the other comrades said there that we would need a policy that we can implement and we can uphold. I will tell you what we need. We need a policy that makes our members safe. That is what we need and unless they can guarantee that, then we are not going to get involved in it. So the qualification here is please do not necessarily think there is a predetermined outcome and we will come back with something that is softer than we already have. We will come and we will recommend a policy that will continue to guarantee the safety of our members involved in fire fighting at sea.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. No need for a right to reply. There was no opposition. I will put Resolution 72 to the vote. Can I please see all those in favour? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on Para B9, Health & Safety at Work Committee.

BRO STEVE HUGGINS (East Sussex):

I would like to report two incidents to Conference in what has been a pretty crappy few months in East Sussex. Firstly, on 13 November an East Sussex appliance responded to an automatic fire alarm call. Being 500 metres from the station, the appliance turned right and a Firefighter fell out of the rear of the appliance. He sustained a fractured skull, a bleed on the brain and the injuries were described at the time as life

threatening. During the investigation it has become apparent that this is not an isolated incident. Over the years we have had a number of serious and fatal injuries caused by this scenario. We cannot go on accepting vehicle calls that are not fit for purpose. There seems to be a massive reporting problem on this issue and the HSE claim that they have had no reports of similar incidents in the last 5 years, yet we are aware of dozens of similar occasions across the country when doors have come open. Very few seem to have been reported to the Service, never mind the HSE.

I am aware that previously we have had a Sub-Committee dealing with crew cab safety, and we have asked the Executive Council, through the National Officer responsible for Health & Safety, to reinstate that working group urgently. Fortunately, our member has made a great recovery and is now back on the run but he and I both believe he is very lucky to be alive.

Secondly, the Prime Minister has mentioned it, various people have mentioned it, on Sunday 03 December two Firefighters lost their lives at an explosion at Marley Farm in East Sussex. I called them both Firefighters as the media officer for East Sussex had served for 30 years as an Operational Firefighter before continuing his service in a civilian role. He was an Out of Trade Member.

I cannot go into details of the incident as police and HSE investigations are still ongoing. The FBU were involved in the internal investigation with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service which we hope will lead to a joint recommendation for improvement. We do feel it is appropriate now to identify the practice of storing fireworks in ISO transport containers. If anyone is in doubt of the risk involved with explosives – and fireworks are explosives – look on the internet site which is www.chaf.info and watch the videos of retail and display fireworks being designated in ISO containers. It is scary.

This is research that has been produced by international experts including the HSE lads following a massive factory firework explosions across Europe. Many countries now ban mass storage of fireworks within their borders and if fireworks are needed for displays they only allow them into the country on the day of the display. Our research has shown that this type of incident is not unusual. There have been many major explosions in Holland, America, Germany, Australia, Finland, Spain, Hungary and Denmark with high casualties. Even in the UK we have a large number of smaller incidents involving firework storage but we don't seem to have learned from any of them.

The USA has issued guidance on dealing with firework incidents. They apply an exclusion zone of one mile to all

Day Three – 11th May

categories of fireworks. The rest of the world seems to be following the American guidelines but not us. New regulations were produced on April 2005 and the HSE produced an approved code of conduct to support it. These are the Manufacture and Storage of Explosive Regulations. On p54 of these, guidance is given to the Fire Services which states, "Fire Services may wish to consider in advance what circumstances they would or would not fight a fire. Fire fighting actions should be generally limited to preventing the fire spreading to buildings or areas containing explosives or fire fighting secondary fires after an explosion." Even the ACOP is expecting an explosion. It continues "In general Fire Services should withdraw to a safe distance if the fire should spread to a building known to contain explosive or other similarly hazardous materials. If there is any doubt about the nature or location of the explosives involved, the fire should not be fought and the Fire Service should withdraw to a safe distance." Even their recommendation is 600 metres and in America it is a mile.

Finally, it says "Fires that have spread to buildings or areas holding hazard type 1, 2 or 3 explosives must not be fought." Display grade type fireworks come across are hazard type 3. So we would ask everyone of you to go back to your Brigades, check your policies, check your risk assessments and ensure these points are included in there because they aren't in ours.

We tend to assume this type of critical information is disseminated to Fire Services through the HMI, but it does not seem to have registered in a number of Services, and the generic risk assessment has not been reviewed in light of these regulations. Now the HMI does not exist who is going -

THE PRESIDENT:

Time to wind up, please, Steve.

BRO STEVE HUGGINS (East Sussex):

Who is going to be responsible for passing on this vital advice? I do not think it is going to happen. We would ask the Executive Council to raise the issues at a national level through practitioner forums or whatever route is possible. We believe there might be a need for an independent inquiry into the storage regulations before another explosion threatens the lives of our brothers and sisters. Please be careful out there. They are bombs.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Steve, I will ask John McGhee to respond to those points.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Just before I respond to those points, I would want to pay tribute to the Officials in East Sussex for the work they have done, particularly over the investigation in the Marley Farm incident, and the same goes obviously to the Officials involved in incidents where there were members involved in fatalities. It is always an extremely stressful and difficult situation. I have to say on the evidence I have seen from the way that they have worked down there has been first class and they have really pulled together and supported one another. *(Applause)*

If I can deal with the issue of crew cab safety first, thankfully I can reassure Steve that the Health & Safety Committee have continued to look at the issue of crew cab safety and we are expecting a report from the group who have been looking at crew cab safety by June of this year. Hopefully we will be able to get all of that information out to all of you and start to make inroads in reducing the number of incidents.

I would support what Steve has said. It is absolutely vital and you will become aware far sooner than we do when there is either a near miss when the door of an appliance is opened. We are looking at the whole generic crew cab safety in terms of our manager's vehicles as well. It is up to you to make sure that you get that information reported not only to the Brigade but let us know as well. Hopefully we will be able to help you out with that one, Steve.

With regard to the fireworks, Steve is absolutely right and the storage of fireworks particularly in these ISO containers is just setting large bombs around the country. We have become aware that there is an increasing number of these incidents and again when raised with the Health & Safety Executive, we have found evidence of far more of these incidents than they have on their records. That is something we are seeking to address with the HSE. As you know, the HSE have limited resources, they are under pressure, and we have got to do what we can to put pressure on the Government to fund properly the Health & Safety Executive to make sure they continue in their role helping to protect our members.

We have already raised the issue of the storage of fireworks in ISO containers at the National Health & Safety Group and I will raise that again there and discuss with Matt whether it is something we can raise through the practitioner's forum. We will continue to raise these issues again through the HSE and we will do what we can to support you and push for a public inquiry.

Day Three – 11th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. I will now call Resolution 20 entitled Health & Safety Handbook to be moved by Staffordshire with an Amendment from Cleveland. If Cleveland are going to be speaking to their Amendment, could they make their way to the front please.

Resolution 20 – HEALTH & SAFETY HANDBOOK

This Conference demands that the Executive Council secure production of an up to date FBU Health and Safety handbook containing guidance on current Health and Safety legislation for FBU Health and Safety representatives.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Amendment

At end of Resolution add new sentence.

"This handbook to be produced within 6 months of the close of this Conference."

CLEVELAND

BRO STEVE HILL (Staffs):

I move Resolution 20 and happy to accept Cleveland's Amendment, and also one of the people making the last speech to Conference.

We, as a Union, used to produce a Health & Safety Handbook for our FBU Health & Safety Representatives. Ken Cameron wrote the foreword on behalf of the Executive Council. That just tells you how old the Handbook is. The latest date I can find in my copy is contained within the sentence, "The 1997 Annual Conference Policy Statement and the FBU Health & Safety Strategy March 1995 ...". The amount of legislation and the number of regulations have increased immensely over the last 10 years. We need to equip our Health and Safety Reps with the most up to date information they can have to keep our members safe. It seems that management are paying lip service to health and safety matters as they think they have the upper hand as they are now armed with health and safety managers etc. Over the last few years not many Brigades have managed to fight off IRMP cuts on the grounds of fire cover etc so Regional and Brigade Officials have had to utilise health and safety legislation, and with the help of our Health and Safety reps tried to reduce some of the vicious cuts that management and employers have come up with.

Let us give our health and safety reps the tools they need to carry out their job to the best of their abilities. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 20 seconded? Thank you. Cleveland to move the Amendment.

BRO TELFER WHITFIELD (Cleveland):

Our Amendment is quite simple; it just puts a timescale on it. I ask you to support that. It is important that there is a time scale on it as it gives a commitment to Conference that these things will just not be put on a back burner or on a shelf somewhere for an indefinite period, and it is not unreasonable. It is clear that our members need and would benefit from these publications otherwise they would not come to Conference with a resolution, and I think it is incumbent on the EC to make sure that our officials and our members are as informed as they need to be as soon as they can be.

I would take this opportunity to remind Conference about a similar item carried in Resolution 88 2005 asking for welcome packs for new members in six months. Two years later we are still waiting. Obviously our members want these and in good time. Please support the Amendment.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is the Cleveland Amendment seconded? (*Formally seconded*). OK. The Executive Council are supporting the Resolution and have qualified support for the Amendment. I will ask John to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thanks, President. Telfer, I understand the frustration that Cleveland clearly have and I am sure is shared by Conference, and we set time scales in which we expect them to be met. I would simply say to you that there are workloads and things that come up and it makes it very difficult in order to produce sometimes within that time scale. I will certainly give you a commitment from the Executive Council and from Head Office that we will do our utmost to make sure it is delivered within the six month period.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. I will put the Amendment from Cleveland to the vote first, then. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Thank you. That is carried.

I put Resolution 20 as amended by Cleveland to the vote. Can I see all those in favour please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Any abstentions? That is therefore carried unanimously.

Day Three – 11th May

The Head Office Staff are now leaving to return to London, and I would like to ask Conference to record their appreciation of the job they have been doing here this week. (*Applause*)

The packed lunches have now arrived you will be pleased to hear. What I am proposing is that we have a 30 minute break so I want you back in here in just under 30 minutes by 1 o'clock because we still have 30 Paragraphs and 25 Resolutions to get through, and I am sure you all want to get home at some stage. Thank you.

Lunch break

Day Three – 11th May

AFTERNOON SESSION

THE PRESIDENT:

Could Delegates now return to their seats, please, and finish their conversations, we will try and get on with the business of Conference. There are no more Standing Orders reports. We are now on Resolution 69 entitled Incident Command System to be moved by the Officers' National Committee.

Resolution 69 – INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

This Conference demands that the Executive Council ensures the views of officer members are represented in any review of the incident command system.

To that end this Conference calls on the Executive Council to constitute a working group to consider any proposals to amend the current incident command system.

ONC

BRO DAVID CAIN (ONC):

I move Resolution 69 Incident Command System. Conference, the Officers' National Committee are aware that since the terrorist atrocities of 9/11, the Madrid train bombings and the London bombings in July last year, there is an international move towards an integrated incident command system for emergency responders. It is no surprise therefore that the UK Fire Service Incident Command System is also being reviewed and, in fact, ICS 3 is already being discussed now. Whilst this primarily might be thought to affect our Officer members only, it also impacts on the whole of the FBU membership from Control Staff to Firefighters, and particularly on the incident ground where health and safety are paramount.

We are also aware of an international meeting this year in Orlando USA looking at the common terminology for emergency responders so there is international work going on on this already. The resolution from the ONC demands that the Executive Council ensures that the views of our members are represented in any review of the Incident Command System whether national, European or on a wider international front. We are calling on the EC to set up a working group to include the Officers' National Committee to review any proposals to amend the Incident Command System. We believe this issue cannot be ignored and the matter correctly falls within the health and safety remit of the Fire Brigades Union. Conference, we have all seen the disastrous results

when brigades are left to introduce any safety critical issues without Fire Brigades Union involvement. To sit back and have a revised Incident Command System imposed on our members is not an option. Conference, the Officers' National Committee urge you to support the resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Is Resolution 69 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) OK, the Executive Council are giving qualified support, and I will call on John to outline the qualification.

JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

I will be very brief. The qualification is that we also agree that this should fall inside the remit of health and safety. To that end, the working group will come from the health and safety coordinators and, of course, the ONC have a coordinator on that group and will ensure that they are part of that working group.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. I will put resolution 69 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on Resolution 71 entitled Work Place Related Cancers to be moved by Tyne & Wear, please.

Resolution 71 – WORKPLACE RELATED CANCERS

Conference demands that the Executive Council mounts a national campaign to look into the dangers of workplace related cancers in the UK Fire Service with a view to having them included on the industrial illness list. This campaign should include a survey of all UK Fire Services to establish the possible causes of contracting cancer in the workplace.

TYNE & WEAR

BRO RUSS KING (Tyne & Wear):

Every day Firefighters risk their lives during work related activities. These risks should be by law taken into consideration and appropriate measures made to minimise that risk by our employers, but what is not taken into consideration is an increased risk from cancer due to fire fighting operations.

Throughout a Firefighter's working life they are exposed to toxic particles, gases, fumes, both at incidents and on the Fire Stations. Research in the USA and Canada

Day Three – 11th May

suggests that Operational Firefighters have an increased risk in combating cancers such as non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, prostate, testicular, brain and breast cancer. With modern manufacturing processes the growth in chemical usage in products is growing year upon year and when these chemicals are involved in fire they produce extremely toxic by-products. Conference, some local authorities are now starting to remove the top soil from car fire locations and treating this as toxic waste. When did your Brigade start to wear BA at car fires? I know at Tyne & Wear it was only five or six years ago. When did your Brigade tell your Firefighters to wear BA for turning over duties? The same, four or five years ago. Are your pump operators still being exposed to diesel fumes because of the exhausts being located too low down? Tyne & Wear brought this resolution because a friend of mine and of the rest of the Tyne & Wear delegation, has just been diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He is retired. He has done 30 years in the Fire Brigade. His name is Bill Vinton. One or two of you might know him in here. He was part of an inner city Fire Station where four people on that watch have got cancer. Two have died.

Over the last week we have heard news that Bill is on morphine and he is not going to last the week out. We in Tyne & Wear believe this is a direct link to fire fighting. Please conference, support this resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 71 seconded?

BRO ANDY HAYTER (South Yorks):

I second Tyne & Wear's resolution. I am speaking on this resolution because it is quite personal to me. I have got non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma myself. I have had it for six years. I was diagnosed when I was 31 as an Operational Firefighter and, as you can imagine, I was a bit gob smacked. At that time I was one of seven Firefighters at my station who had contracted cancer within a relatively short period of time. This rose to nine. The station was originally an old building which was replaced with a brand new one, state of the art premises, but the old station did have asbestos within it although I worked there relatively for a short period before we moved to a new station.

My cancer is not deemed relevant to that risk of asbestos, but out of the other guys there were other types of cancers which you could associate with asbestos that were not fully investigated at the time. Sadly, two of those have subsequently died of lung cancer. One is retired ill with throat cancer. He has made a full recovery thankfully. Add to the rest of our little club, a couple of them had bowel cancer and they have

now got colostomies following surgery to remove large parts of their bowels. They are still working operationally. Others have had skin and liver cancer. That is nine of us. I must admit I had not really pursued this very hard at the time. That is probably because when I did ask the question of our occupational health they told me that it was normal for this many employees at one station with 64 staff on should contract cancer. It was within national averages I was told. At that time I was pretty ignorant on the subject and I wasn't active within that time within the FBU; I was too busy concentrating on my hair falling out.

So I didn't chase it up. I don't know why I got cancer. I still don't know. I sometimes think about it. I often think about our brothers Steve and Tony who died who I mentioned earlier. My thoughts go out to his brother in Tyne & Wear. I never get any clear answers about this situation at all. When I get back it has empowered me really to chase it up a little bit harder. Maybe it was the building. Maybe it was a local risk. Probably it was something that I breathed in, I would imagine because I was 31, I was healthy. I am unsure about why I got it.

What I do know is that I would feel a lot better if people who I trust, you, the Union, not our slippery employers, took a proper look at this – not my individual situation but for Firefighters across the UK just in an attempt to find out why this is happening, to go some way to protect members from this nightmare. Conference, please support this resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Was there anyone else on 71?

BRO NICK SUTCLIFFE (West Yorks):

Like Andy, a subject very dear to my heart. June last year I was diagnosed with brain cancer. I had an operation to remove a tumour attached to nearly half of my brain which was a very difficult time for me. Andy has talked about cancers or possible causes of cancers related to Fire Stations and related to the work we do as well. I have no evidence but I am absolutely convinced that my brain cancer was down to the fact that for five and a half years I put a BA set on my back as an instructor and boiled my head doing BA training every day probably twice a day. I am convinced of it. No evidence for that, but we do. There are enough people with cancers in the Fire Service now for us as a Union to start looking at the possible causes. We need to find out about these sorts of things, so I urge you very strongly to support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I will ask John to outline the qualification.

Day Three – 11th May

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thanks, President. It is a subject that is very serious and most of you have seen recent circulars asking for volunteers to take part in a study into toxins in Firefighters. What we see is the start of this process, to actually look and see what is going into our bodies and what is the effect of attending many incidents. Andy said he talked specifically about breathing in, about inhalation of dangerous substances, and we have got to look at that much wider because it is not just about the inhalation, it is about the absorption through your own body, through your skin, of toxins that can lead to cancer and other illnesses as well.

The qualification is twofold really. First off, again, and I have referred back to answers that I have given previously. If we are looking at surveying, we need information from you. You will have to do that work on the ground. More importantly, a campaign or a survey of this nature is a huge piece of work and it is something that we may have to look at and get a bit of outside help to do it, but the toxins survey is the start of the process, it is a subject that we take very seriously, we have had discussions as some of you know. Unfortunately, one of our comrades in Strathclyde died just last week and his funeral will take place on Monday. We are looking already at the investigation into that because the circumstances of his death were not actually in the incident but we have got to look at whether there have been effects of any heat stress and anything else, and we will try to get as many answers from that as possible.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. I put Resolution 71 to the vote. All those in favour please show? Thank you. Were there any opposed? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Resolution 73 entitled Health & Safety Policies to be moved by Greater Manchester.

Resolution 73 – HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Conference instructs the Executive to carry out a full audit of all FBU Health & Safety policies, this to be completed by no later than Annual Conference 2008. On completion these should be promulgated to all Brigades who should then confirm whether they have achieved the various policies.

GREATER MANCHESTER

BRO ALAN ANDERSON (GMC):

I have had the unenviable task of speaking on two other

occasions to Conference. I say “unenviable” because on both occasions it followed the tragic deaths of FBU members. Once was following the death of Bro John Ogden who fell from a moving fire engine whilst proceeding to a fire. On the other occasion it was after the death of Bro Paul Metcalfe who died trying to rescue someone from open water.

Rightly, following these deaths, there were full investigations carried out and here I have to give Conference's gratitude to the work carried out by Brothers Ken Wheeler and Kevin Brown and Sister Val Salmon whose work was invaluable. Following these investigations, the FBU produced policies (1) The Crew Cab Safety Policy, (2) Working In On Or Near Open Water. These policies like many other FBU policies produced contain valuable information and guidance which hopefully will stop other Firefighters becoming tragic statistics.

I was shocked and horrified to hear that we still have Firefighters – and here I have to give condolences to the Sussex people – falling out of what should be safe and secure fire engines. This is the reason for this resolution. I am asking you: let's produce a list of all our health and safety policies, promulgate them to all Fire Brigade Committees and find out where they are being adhered to and why and where they are not. This is not a witch hunt to find out Brigades that have not adhered to those policies. It is an audit that can be worked on. Where Brigade Committees struggle to get management to comply with our health and safety policies, there are other Brigades that have been more successful, shared their tactics and given advice and help. These policies are written so we may carry out our jobs properly and safely. It is our duty to make sure we in all ways possible comply with them. Please pass this resolution. We owe it to our members and we certainly owe it to the spouses of those Firefighters who have tragically lost their partners. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 73 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask John to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

The qualification again is simple. Once again we have got a resolution with a time scale on it. The work load that is involved in this is huge. It is not only our own policies that we have got to be looking at as well, but we will be need to be looking at legislation and get guidance from HSE etc. We will certainly do our best to provide as much information for Officials out there working.

Day Three – 11th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Can I see all those in favour please, of Resolution 73? Thank you. Were there any against? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

I now move to Resolution 74 entitled Aerial Telecommunication Masts to be moved by Merseyside, please.

Resolution 74 – AERIAL TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS

Conference views with concern the ongoing practice of the siting and usage of aerial telecommunication mast installations and associated ancillary equipment on Fire Service premises and workplaces. Conference further recognises the scientific research that indicates that such installations and equipment are potentially unsafe and could cause health problems for members on affected workplaces and accordingly demands that the Executive Council produce a report in time for Conference 2008 which will include findings that take into account the research regarding the relevant health risks members may be exposed to. Such a report to be undertaken with the assistance of Regional Committees.

MERSEYSIDE

BRO NEIL YOUNG (Merseyside):

We have just heard some moving speeches about cancer, work place related cancers. There is another potential work place related cancer with aerial masts. There is increasing evidence to suggest that this is the case. Let us not have our members be the guinea pigs in this experiment. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Neil. Is resolution 74 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask John again to give the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

President, the qualification again is short and simple. There are rafts of research into this area and obviously we will have to sift through that and find what we think is the most relevant and come back to Conference with a report for 2008.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. I put Resolution 74 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Thank you. That is therefore carried.

We are now on to Resolution 75 entitled Targeted Response Vehicles to be moved by Cheshire.

Resolution 75 – TARGETED RESPONSE VEHICLES

This Conference condemns the use by Fire Authorities of Targeted Response Vehicles with 3 riders to deal with small FDR3 and car fires. This practice does not allow safe systems of work and adherence to Technical Bulletin 1/97 and CAST planning scenarios.

This Conference therefore demands that the Fire Brigades Union work with the Health and Safety Executive to ensure that this practice is stopped.

CHESHIRE

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

I move Resolution 75. Cheshire Fire & Rescue have purchased four targeted response vehicles, two that can only be staffed with riders and the latest two that they can vary the staffing levels on. Management claim these vehicles comply with the relevant European standard for fire fighting and rescue service vehicles. However, despite repeated requests they have so far failed to produce the associated documents including certificates and have so far refused to allow Regional Health and Safety Coordinators to inspect the vehicles. The initial intention is to mobilise these vehicles to small fires. Although management have made no secret that in the future they see these vehicles attending car fires, automatic fire alarms and road traffic collisions. Due to the opposition from the Fire Brigades Union on health and safety grounds, they are currently sticking to what they define as small known fires. Obviously, they look to any acceptance from us as the thin end of the wedge to increase the usage, and no doubt allow them to sacrifice conventional appliances as well as nationally accepted crewing levels.

Within IRMP 4 they are proposing to run a pilot at two pump stations in Runcorn and Widnes during the busy evening periods. Instead of riding 5 and 4 at both Stations they will ride 4 on 3 of the water ladders taking one off the run. The other 6 staff when available will crew 2 TRVs but should there be a make up the TRVs will attend in addition to the water ladders to achieve the required attendance of personnel. So that is the next battle and we have started the campaign with the membership and the local community to stop this proposal. Where more is certainly less, less for fire cover in that area, and less for the safety of our Firefighters. As for attending small fires and car fires, we do not believe their risk and task analysis is adequate. This was only produced after months of our demands to see one. The risk and task analysis which is loosely

Day Three – 11th May

based on the FBU's CAST planning scenarios means many of the tasks are delayed because individuals have to double up on tasks that in normal circumstances are carried out simultaneously. The risk assessments are woefully short with no cross references to the Fire Service manuals because these practices in no way conform to the tried and trusted fire fighting procedures that every Firefighter has been trained in and worked, that ensure safe systems of work.

The risk assessments don't include a hazard analysis that identifies any additional hazards that are borne out of the limitations of these vehicles or the number of Firefighters. A dynamic assessment cannot be expected to cover all hazards and when they can be foreseeable. The risk assessments expect too much of Fire Control Staff to accurately assess a fire situation remotely before committing these reduced crews to an incident, too much of crews with the prospect of facing situations they are not capable of dealing with safely and far too much of the crew managers faced with the decisions to back off, allow to burn whilst waiting for the correct resources.

Cheshire Fire & Rescue are insistent that these procedures for breathing apparatus comply with Technical Bulletin 197 as amended and are taking licence to interpret it their own way and whenever it suits to write their own wording. BA should be worn whenever discomfort and possible injury to Firefighters respiratory system can be avoided. Such circumstances may include damping down and turning over after a fire. This has been twisted to a comfort where not taking into account that Firefighters were allowed far too often to enter smoky atmospheres particularly after the fire was seen to be stopped as Andy spoke of earlier. "Very exceptionally there may be operational circumstances where application of full control procedures for BA use would be inappropriate." This has been changed to reduce control procedures or in practical terms no control procedures. The term very exceptionally has been ignored as all of the terms have a precise legal definition.

THE PRESIDENT:

Will you wind up, please, Dave.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

OK, I'll cut it short then.

THE PRESIDENT:

Wind up rather than cut it short, please.

BRO DAVE WILLIAMS (Cheshire):

Locally, we have not had much success with the HSE

and probably won't until a Firefighter is dead so we are calling on the FBU nationally to use whatever avenues are available to ensure that these practices are recognised as being outside TB197 and are stopped before a Firefighter is injured or killed. Conference support the resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dave. Is Resolution 75 seconded?

BRO CONRAD JORDAN (Hants):

I second Resolution 75. In Hampshire they are introducing what they call a first response vehicle and they are only going to crew it with two. They are claiming that Technical Bulletin 197 does not apply to car fires as it is again working in the open. We are challenging this at the moment looking at the risk assessments. Hampshire did a consultation with the public and convinced them that they had not lost a fire engine for this vehicle; it is just a different type of fire engine. They pulled the wool over the eyes of our public down in Hampshire. It needs to be opposed. I ask the Executive Council to do what they can to introduce proper fire engines with proper crews on. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Conrad. The Executive Council are supporting Resolution 75. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Are there any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Resolution 76 entitled Crewing Levels to be moved by Lancashire, please.

Resolution 76 – CREWING LEVELS

Recent IRMP proposals have clearly demonstrated Fire Authorities' willingness to compromise existing safe operating procedures in the pursuance of financial savings. A typical example of this has been proposals to reduce normal crewing levels to four riders.

This Conference reaffirms its commitment that fire appliances responding as the pre-determined initial response to incidents that may require the use of breathing apparatus (BA) teams, must under normal circumstances be crewed with five riders to ensure that adequate BA entry control procedures are implemented.

In addition, and in light of these recent attacks on firefighters safety, this Conference instructs the Executive Council to make representation at national level, to ensure that guidance governing BA

Day Three – 11th May

safe operating procedures, as detailed in Technical Bulletin 1/97, are not compromised and that Fire Authorities IRMP's adhere to national standards.

LANCASHIRE

BRO MARTIN GALLAGHER (Lancs):

I move Resolution 76, Crewing Levels. I am sure we are all aware that FBU standing policy on ridership is to ensure that we have first line appliances, the crew get a minimum of five. Obviously following any IRMP's that the Brigades carry out in that process other alternative crewing arrangements may be proposed even with some appliances riding up to 10. We just do not know what is going to come down the line. However, it is sadly apparent that Fire Authorities across the country have been using or abusing the IRMP process as a means of reducing staffing levels. Many Brigades have seen senior management attempt to justify crewing front line pumps with four riders as standard and as a safe system of work. In our Brigade, Lancs, there was one of those Brigades and proposed as part of their IRMP to drop riding to 4 and 4 on two pump Stations. If, as was intended, this had been rolled out to all 1 pump Stations it would have meant the loss of 120 jobs. But to do this they would have to reinterpret TB197 particularly with reference to rapid deployment. They came up with a stunning plan. The Technical Bulletin states that rapid deployment can only be used in exceptional circumstances. Our Chief informed us and the CFA members that house fires are in themselves exceptional and therefore rapid deployment could be used in all house fires. He went on to explain that when Technical Bulletin refers to a casualty as being known to be close to the point of entry, because the average house is not large, then they will obviously be near to the point of entry even if upstairs and in the back bedroom. Quite bizarre. How about that for a risk assessment.

Also instructions relating to persons reported incidents required the OIC of the first crew in attendance to carry out a dynamic risk assessment and if necessary to order the BA team to wait outside for back up. But everybody here knows what that means. If the OIC makes the wrong call which leads to death or serious injury, the individuals themselves will be subject to discipline in court, not the Chief Officer. However, we did successfully manage to argue against this nonsense and reach an agreement on paper to Staff with 5 wherever possible and therefore save the jobs. So please support this resolution and ensure that national standards regarding Firefighter safety are not compromised when we are using BA. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 76 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are giving qualified

support. I will ask Andy Dark to outline the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

A simple qualification based on the fact that the resolution talks about five under normal circumstances. The policy of the Union is five in all circumstances. All the points were well made by the mover.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. Can I see all those in favour, please, of Resolution 76? Thank you. Was there any opposition? Any abstentions. No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Para B10, Mass Decontamination. Para B11 High Volume Pumps. Steve.

BRO STEVE HARMAN (Lancs):

I just want to speak briefly on Para B11 High Volume Pumps. I would like to congratulate the Appliance Equipment and New Dimensions Sub Group on the work they carried out that resulted in the FBU guidance Policy Document recently circulated. However, the Document contains one section entitled deployment duration. I will quickly read a couple of extracts from it. "It is apparent from the draft policies that some Brigades are expecting HVP crews to provide an initial commitment on deployment of up to 72 hours." There is no grey book duty system which provides for crews to be deployed to other parts of the country for such periods. It goes on to say Brigade Officials need to be mindful of this advice when negotiating Brigade policies including levels of remuneration. I understand that paying allowances would not be within the remit of the Health and Safety Committee and I know National Officials have been extremely busy lately. Can I just ask what consideration has been given at national level to negotiating nationally the pay and allowances for all members that find themselves involved in these protracted incidents, the concern being that leaving it to local negotiations could result in members from different Brigades attending the same incident are taking the same role but on different levels of pay. Also this equally applies to Para B10, Mass Decontamination and B13, Urban Search and Rescue.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Steve. I will ask John McGhee to respond to the question.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Steve, it is an issue that we are aware of and we are trying through the National Health and Safety Group to get some agreed standards in terms of health and safety and welfare for our members who have to be

Day Three – 11th May

sent outside of their own area for longer periods of time. We will be raising that through the employers as well in order to try and make sure that remuneration is on a national level so that our members who are attending an incident are getting the same levels of pay.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. I will now call Resolution 62 entitled Water Rescue to be moved by Strathclyde with an amendment from Gloucestershire. If Gloucestershire could get read to come to the front to move their amendment if they speak on it.

Resolution 62 – WATER RESCUE

Conference demands that the Executive Council secure a national agreement that ensures all Fire Authorities seeking to introduce or already providing a water rescue service adhere to the following principles.

- *A water rescue service is only introduced after full consultation with and the agreement of Fire Brigades Union Officials.*
- *All training courses for boats/personal water craft are to Royal Yachting Association standard.*
- *An agreed standard for a) all communications when working on in or near water and b) for all personal and other protective equipment.*
- *The provision of appropriate and safe access slipways.*
- *An agreed inoculation programme and regular health checks to protect against water borne diseases, for all members working on water.*
- *Nationally agreed procedures for training and attendance in/or around water rescue incidents.*
- *An agreement to pay additional responsibility payments to those personnel who undertake such duties. Failure for such a payment to be made will result in personnel withdrawing from undertaking any water rescue responsibilities.*

STRATHCLYDE

Amendment

Delete the entire first bullet point.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BRO ? (Strathclyde):

We received yesterday a document which is a proposed re-write of Volume 2, Chapter 5 of the Fire Service Manual, safe working on or near water. We feel this changes our position so we will remit this to the Executive Council and we would ask you to take this same document into consideration.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. That is very helpful. Obviously the amendment from Gloucestershire therefore falls.

We are now on to Para B12 Powered Respirator Protective Suits. Para B13 Urban Search and Rescue. I now call Resolution 22 entitled New Equipment/Practices to be moved by North Yorkshire with amendments from Tyne & Wear and Gloucestershire. Only one of those amendments can carry. If Tyne & Wear or Gloucestershire intend to speak to their amendments I would appreciate it if they could come up near the front. Thank you.

Resolution 22 – NEW EQUIPMENT/ PRACTICES

This Conference demands that it becomes national policy that all brigade committees challenge new working practices/equipment before they are introduced into their workplace to ensure that they are within the relevant rolemap. All challenge results should be placed on the LRD website to allow other officials an opportunity to recognise the issues.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

Amendment

In line 2 delete the word 'new' and insert 'any detrimental changes to'.

In line 3 after the word workplace, delete rest of sentence and insert the words "and ensure that any such practices/equipment are used by members within the appropriate role map only."

TYNE & WEAR

Amendment

In the first sentence delete "to ensure that they are within the relevant rolemap"

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BRO IAN WATKINS (North Yorks):

I move Resolution 22 and accepting Tyne & Wear's amendment.

Until recently in North Yorkshire, consultation over the introduction of new working practices, new initiatives,

Day Three – 11th May

new pieces of equipment and general consultation with the FBU was quite frankly a joke. The joke was on us. In management's eyes consultation simply meant that anything could and would be introduced with scant discussion with the local FBU. This was developing into a serious situation where new equipment, new working practices, were being introduced at an alarming rate to meet management's growing appetite for meeting Government targets and getting those illusive but crucial ticks in boxes. Something had to be done. Our members were seeking and demanding guidance from the local FBU. After much consideration and thought, the idea of a check sheet was developed by our Brigade Committee. This consultation check sheet would empower and guide our members to ask certain questions of local management when new equipment and new working practices were introduced into the work place. Our members could ask uniform questions of their line managers knowing that they had a contractual and legal right to ask these questions. Management also had a contractual and legal obligation to answer these questions.

With the introduction of new equipment, for example, an FBU member on a Fire Station would follow this simple procedure using the consultation check sheet issued and fully supported and endorsed by the Brigade Committee in January of this year. We have had the consultation check sheet scrutinised by Thompsons solicitors to ensure that it is legally correct and within the law, and our members are using this check sheet in conjunction with their rolemaps as a way of stopping the stupid ideas club. Unfortunately, North Yorkshire is a market leader in this club. So how does it work? Simply ask your line manager the following questions when you are introduced to a new working practice or a new piece of equipment: Has the Brigade fulfilled its contractual obligations as laid out in the Grey Book Section 6, Part C regarding consultation? Has this process been fully carried out as per the ACAS Codes of Practice regarding consultation? Has the Brigade fulfilled its legal obligations under the SRC Regulations, Reg 4A regarding consultation? Has full and meaningful and appropriate consultation taken place with the Fire Brigades Union?

Once these questions have been asked the individual can also request to have sight of the following documentation. This will identify that consultation has actually taken place. They can ask for risk assessments, SOPs, SEOPS, minutes of meetings between management and the FBU that will accompany normal consultation, proof of a signed agreement between management and the FBU appertaining to these new work routines or equipment, and also detailed instructions on the use of this equipment in carrying out the new procedures. If the above criteria have not been met and you are instructed by your line manager to continue, then you follow this simple process on the

consultation check sheet. Remain calm and conduct yourself in a dignified manner. Remember that you have employment rights that are enshrined in your contract of employment. Remember that the Brigade as your employer has a duty of care to ensure your health and safety within the work place. Remember that the Brigade is your employer and has certain legal and contractual obligations that it must fulfil. Also remember that if you carry out instructions unchallenged it could be considered as custom and practice and we will have difficulty challenging this at a later date. Ask for these instructions or orders in writing. Once you have your instructions in writing, carry out the instructions to the best of your ability, but most importantly inform your local official and then you can be advised to submit a grievance, the FBU can take it up for that person and we can take further legal advice.

Once someone knows and understands their legal and contractual rights, they become stronger. Simultaneous at this point, reckless and bullying management becomes weak or ineffectual. One thing we have learned in North Yorkshire over the last couple of years is that knowledge is power.

THE PRESIDENT:

Wind up please, brother.

BRO IAN WATKINS (North Yorks):

Our members are starting to understand their legal and contractual rights and are using them to challenge management until they consult with us properly. This is not a quick fix but it does show our members that they can ask questions without fear of reprisal.

THE PRESIDENT:

Finish now please, brother.

BRO IAN WATKINS (North Yorks):

Please support this resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks. Is Resolution 72 seconded? (*Formally seconded*) Tyne & Wear to move their amendment please? (*Formally moved*). Is Amendment No 1 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). Gloucestershire to move their amendment, please. (*Formally moved*). Is the Gloucestershire amendment seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are offering qualified support to the resolution, support for the Tyne & Wear amendment and are opposing the Gloucestershire amendment and I will ask John to explain.

Day Three – 11th May

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

The qualification is simply that you have to be in there at a very early stage. Management have a duty to consult with you on any new working practices. The time to challenge is at the initial consultation process and you will have much more effective results. If not, then of course we challenge in any other form that we find useful.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. I am now going to put Amendment 1 from Tyne & Wear to the vote. If Amendment 1 carries, Amendment 2 falls. Can I see all those in favour, please, of Amendment 1? Thank you. Is there any opposition? OK. That is carried. So therefore Amendment 2 from Gloucestershire automatically falls.

I therefore put Resolution 22 as Amended by Tyne & Wear to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see any against? Any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

Could I ask delegates now please to turn to Page 4 of their Programme of Business and transport themselves back to Wednesday afternoon. I now call Resolution 38 entitled Flexible Duty System to be moved by the Officers' National Committee. There is an amendment from South Yorkshire and if South Yorkshire intend to speak to that amendment could I ask them please to come to the front.

Resolution 38 – FLEXIBLE DUTY SYSTEM

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council and Brigade Officials to resist any attempts by the national and/or local employers from implementing any proposals to alter the flexible duty system supplement as currently contained within the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Sixth Edition).

ONC

Amendment

Line 3 after "proposals to" insert "detrimentally"
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

BRO PAN POULLAIS (ONC):

I move Resolution 38 and accept the South Yorkshire amendment.

For many years the Officer members of our Union throughout all the Regions who are conditioned to the flexi-duty system have benefited from a 20 per cent flexi duty payment. It is an additional allowance. This allowance stems back when in 1985 a new flexible duty

system was agreed. The 20 per cent allowance was agreed because it replaced at that time prior to 1985 the residential duty allowance where our Officers who were conditioned to some peculiar hours received the allowances to cover heating and lighting, telephone and food bills. The FBU Officers Committee at the time worked hard to secure and safeguard those allowances in any new proposed schemes, in addition it also safeguarded residential requirements and the length of duty periods. This resulted in that agreement and that agreement is in line with the current Grey Book conditions.

Those agreed provisions were that the flexi duty system should equate to no more than 66 hours per week comprising 42 hours of positive hours and 24 standby call out hours. With this, the agreement was that the Officers conditioned to that new duty system will get the 20 per cent enhancement on their wages. The allowance is also pensionable and this is also contained within the Grey Book as a protective measure. In other words, those Officers cannot be, unless they volunteer to come off that system, because of the implications to do with the pension.

Even the long service increment attracted the 20 per cent flexi payment and the CPP unfortunately does not, so therefore those Officers have actually lost part of that allowance now by converting to the CPD as and when we get it.

Straightaway our Officers are looking at that financial loss. I am not talking about just those Officers currently in the system. I am talking about all the new Officers that would be up and coming and some of those are you, you sitting out there. Trust me. I know. Twenty per cent compensates for the long hours and the working conditions for all those Officers.

As you know, since the Pay Agreement of 2003, the Fire Authorities have tried to erode those conditions of service by what they refer to as the modernisation agenda. We know that means cuts. We know that means changes to conditions of service and cuts to resources. It has already been recommended and approved by some Fire Authorities to review the flexible duty system. That review will be detrimental. I know that some Brigades have work systems like South Yorkshire, which is why I have accepted their amendment, but any review to the flexi duty system will pave the way for a two tier entry system where they will get people in from outside industry to come in at manager level without that enhancement of pay. That is going to happen because they will be able to get someone to do the job for less money, and it would be a huge saving.

Let us face it. The main incentive for promotion to a

Day Three – 11th May

senior role is, lo and behold, the 20 per cent flexi duty allowance. That is the only incentive, certainly in my eyes. The Fire Authorities are aware of this. So therefore it paves the way for that two-tier system. Comrades, I urge you to vote in favour of this resolution and its amendment to secure the future for our Officers up and coming, because at the end of the day, no matter what has been said before, there is still a big chunk of FBU Officer members. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Pan. Is there a seconder to Resolution 38? (*Formally seconded*). South Yorkshire to move their amendment. (*Formally moved*). Is there a seconder for the amendment? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are supporting. I therefore put the South Yorkshire amendment to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Are there any against? Any abstentions. No. That is carried.

I now therefore put Resolution 38 as amended by South Yorkshire to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Any opposition? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously

Now we will announce that Resolution 47 from West Yorkshire has been withdrawn.

We will move on to Resolution 48 entitled National Joint Council from Dorset to be seconded by Gloucestershire with an amendment from Tyne & Wear. Dorset to move, please.

Resolution 48 – NJC

Conference deplores the apparent lack of commitment from Fire and Rescue Employers both nationally and locally to the principle role and effective functioning of the NJC, as evidenced by the disgraceful actions of Merseyside Employers resisting the involvement of NJC Joint Secretaries, and their reluctance to convene regular NJC meetings.

Conference demands the Employers give a firm commitment to the primacy of the NJC and to ensuring its constitutional aims, structures, resourcing and the role of the NJC Joint Secretaries are fully supported.

DORSET

Amendment

In 2nd paragraph after the word demands, insert "that the Executive Council seek from" delete the word 'give'. In next line delete the word 'ensuring' and insert "ensure that"

TYNE & WEAR

SIS KAREN ADAMS (Dorset):

I move Resolution 48 on the NJC and accept the Tyne & Wear amendment. We are all here representing the FBU from our respective Brigades. We all have issues and challenges back in those Brigades that are not necessarily unique but certainly are of local importance to our members and to the local communities. We do not just make up on the spur of the moment our positions on the various matters or, even worse, what processes to use to try and achieve our aims. There lies the road to anarchy. Maybe this is desirable to some in the room, but it is unacceptable to the members of Dorset. We want and need a structured approach to industrial relations. This structured approach, that is both necessary and important, is achieved by the two sides at a national level agreeing upon the correct procedures time frames and levels of ensuring that the FBU and the employers can implement at a local level.

If you look at the preface to the Grey Book in Para 3 it states "The NJC's overall aim is to support and encourage the delivery of high quality services by a competent, well developed, motivated and diverse work force with security of employment. The following principles are fundamental to achieve this aim which is stable industrial relations achieved by consultation and negotiation between Fire & Rescue Authorities as employers and recognised trade unions."

Comrades, I am not going to describe the actions of Merseyside employers. That would be disrespectful to the delegation and members of Merseyside. However, we applaud all our brothers and sisters from Merseyside for their strong resolve. Looking around the Regions and what is going on around the country now, then it would be fair to say that industrial relations are less than stable. Why is that? Is that because the FBU is reluctant to adhere to the Grey Book? Is that because the FBU is fearful of the consequences of adhering to Grey Book procedures? Is it because the FBU has no conviction in their argument or policy? The answer is no, no, no. It is because the employers' side of the NJC have no intention of accepting the primacy of the NJC because the employers' side have their own agenda of fragmentation and FBU bashing, because the employers' side do not want an NJC. They would much rather have local employers negotiating at a local level everything that is included in the Grey Book.

On 23 November 2006 a meeting to discuss contingency planning was held. No prizes for guessing what contingencies they were planning for. When I tell you who attended, the LGA, CFOA, the scab RFU, and the scab FOA, Tony McGurk and other friends of the FBU. These were all organisations and individuals who were planning for contingencies when we went on strike. It is as plain and simple as that. They didn't look

Day Three – 11th May

at the reasons why we would go on strike or how that could be avoided by serious constructive negotiation and the processes that would ensure good employment relations, but what to do in the run up to and during any strike actions by the FBU. Are those the actions of employers committed to stable industrial relations achieved by consultation and negotiation between Fire & Rescue Authorities as employers and recognised trade unions.

Comrades, all this resolution asks for is a commitment by the employers' side of the NJC to commit to the principles agreed less than three years ago. It said that words are cheap. I and the members in Dorset are sick and tired of hearing that the employers are committed to the primacy of the NJC and subsequently seeing them do the opposite. We want and demand that the employers side of the NJC commit in word and deed to the principles contained within the nationally agreed Grey Book. Support Resolution 48.

THE PRESIDENT:

Gloucestershire to second. (*Formally seconded*). OK. Tyne & Wear to move their amendment. (*Formally moved*). Is there a seconder for the Tyne & Wear amendment? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are offering qualified support. I will ask the Assistant General Secretary to outline the qualification.

THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY:

The qualification is on two points in the main. The first is that in the first paragraph it talks about a reluctance of the employers to convene regular meetings of the NJC. We have got to say that our current experience is that the employers' side has not been reluctant to convene those meetings although the picture was looking very much different at the time of writing by the Dorset Brigade Committee. That is a qualification to that part.

In general the qualification we have got both for the Tyne & Wear amendment and the second paragraph of Dorset's resolution was well put by Karen. We can seek those words and we can get those assurances. What we cannot guarantee as an Executive Council is that we will get them to do it both in word and deed. That is something that we will have to force them to do. I think it is important to make that clear. It is not in our gift to force them otherwise than by industrial means if they carry on in the way they have sometimes in the past.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Andy. I put amendment from Tyne & Wear to the vote then. All those in favour please show. Was there any opposition? That is therefore carried.

I put Resolution 48 as amended by Tyne & Wear to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Is there any opposition? Any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

We are now on Resolution 50 entitled Maternity Uniform to be moved by Hereford & Worcester.

Resolution 50 – MATERNITY UNIFORM

This Annual Conference notes the progress made by some Fire & Rescue Services in updating their maternity policies using the FBU Model Maternity policy as guidance, but is concerned that the issue of maternity uniform is still a big problem for our women members whilst pregnant.

Conference believes that if the Fire & Rescue Service is serious about wanting to retain and recruit more women, then it needs to seriously look at the provisions of such uniform and ensure that where good policies are written that they are implemented correctly.

Conference calls on all Brigade Officials to revisit the Brigade's Maternity policy with their management and when doing so to emphasise the importance of correct fitting maternity wear for our women members to be available through all stages of pregnancy. We further call upon the Executive Council to report progress of this issue back to Annual Conference 2008.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

SIS TAMSIN SARKOVIK (Hereford & Worcester):

I am moving Resolution 50 Maternity Uniform.

I would like to start with a quote from the National Women's Committee Maternity Policy. "Those who are pregnant should expect to be treated in a way which is sensitive to their circumstances and not in any way singled out for inferior treatment or regard."

Whilst some Brigades and Services have improved their policies in recent years, too many still have very poor, non-existent or long standing draft policies. I am sure we all know horror stories from our colleagues across the country. I have brought this resolution through my Brigade Committee as a direct result of one of our members. A Fire Safety Officer who was expected to meet the public on a regular basis and forced to represent her Service. In order to do this she needed to look smart and official. So she was given a bright red oversized man's shirt. This was part of the uniform trial. Not only was it not adequate for her needs, particularly during the later stages of her pregnancy but she also said that she felt hideous and uncomfortable in the clothing. This was deemed to be a solution by a Fire Service whose Chief Officer is the head of the

Day Three – 11th May

integrated clothing project. She told the Chief that this was not acceptable. The solution made the Firefighter feel like she was being a nuisance to her employees, embarrassed around her colleagues and stripped of her professionalism in front of the public. It has also led several other women members of this Fire Service to believe that it is norm to be treated with disregard when you are pregnant.

If Fire Services across the country are serious about their commitment to recruiting and retaining women, they need to produce sound maternity policies with clothing being given particular attention. This resolution does not ask for much just to provide our pregnant members with a uniform that is fit for purpose and enables them to maintain their professionalism and identity, the same as all of you.

I urge you, Conference, to support the resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 50 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are offering qualified support and I will ask John McGhee to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thanks. The qualification is as I have answered previously. We need you to give us the information on what is going on in the Brigades. I will very quickly take the opportunity to say on the issue of maternity clothing, I want to thank Sally Harper who has represented the Union on the integrated clothing project making sure that issues relating to Firefighters of both sexes have been raised properly and adequately and pretty loudly on occasions as well. Her voice has been well heard and I am sure many of the issues that you have raised have been voiced at that integrated clothing project.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Can I therefore see all those in favour of Resolution 50, please. Was there any opposition? Any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Resolution 57 entitled Negotiating Bodies to be moved by Gloucestershire.

Resolution 57 – NEGOTIATING BODIES

Conference acknowledges that in 1999 and 2002 the decision was taken for Brigade Officials not to sit on Committees with FOA and the RFU respectively.

Conference acknowledges the difficulties that this caused Brigade Officials given that National Officials

did sit on Committees with these organisations.

Conference demands that the Executive Council negotiates with the national employers a revision to the constitution of the NJC that will result in the setting up of negotiating bodies for:

- ***Full and part time employees***
- ***Employees working the Retained Duty System***
- ***Officers (for Station Managers and above)***

Membership to the negotiating bodies for each group will be open to trade unions and staff groups who can show they have at least 30% national membership of the appropriate group of staff for each of the negotiating bodies.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BRO MIKE TULLY (Glos):

Just to inform you we are withdrawing Resolution 57. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. We are now on to Para A8, Technical Advisory Panel. Para A9, the Resolution Advisory Panel.

BRO BOB WALKER (Devon):

Almost for the last time. In future it will be Somerset because there will only be one delegation next time. Just to point out a couple of things about the RAP that we attended in London. The first point is that the recommendations were not accepted by either side and obviously we did not reach agreement. The second point is there was nothing entertaining about going there even though you might see Robbie Williams was present. In fact it should have been Robbie Woods.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks very much. Para A10 Rank to Role. Steve.

BRO STEVE WATSON (Cleveland):

I am just seeking some clarification if I could, President. Para A10 refers to Rank to Role and Pay Protection Arrangements. I am seeking clarification specifically on the Pay Protection Arrangements regarding the ex Station Officers which are due for review this year. There is a lot of uncertainty in Cleveland around this issue. It is causing concern to our members with obvious financial implications depending on what the outcome of the review is. Could somebody give us some progress, please, on where we are on that issue.

Day Three – 11th May

THE PRESIDENT:

OK, Steve. I will ask Matt to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Steve, it is an important point. The matter has been raised with the Joint Secretaries of the NJC. There is a jointly agreed survey which Fire & Rescue Authorities are currently supposed to be responding to, so that might be something that you want to chase up locally. We obviously need to ensure that that is completed accurately. Part of the discussions will be around a picture of how many protected Station Officers there are currently in the Service and what is the scale of the issue we have got to deal with. So the matter is in hand.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Matt. We are now on to Resolution 45 entitled Rank to Role Strategy Group to be moved by Humberside.

Resolution 45 – RANK TO ROLE STRATEGY GROUP

Brigades and Regions around the country are at different stages of the rank to role process and the in depth understanding of this topic by local officials will have a great bearing upon the future of all FBU members both financially and otherwise.

Due to this important subject having contractual implications on FBU members, Conference demands that the Executive Council immediately form a Strategy Group to advise, assist and provide education for Officials involved in the local Consultation/Negotiation of the Rank to Role process.

HUMBERSIDE

BRO PETE SMITH (Humberside):

First time speaker. I move Resolution 45 Rank to Role Strategy Group. Conference, Brigades up and down the country are at different stages of the rank to role process. This has created massive differentials in Brigades and Regions nationwide. FBU Official's interpretations of this process vary within their respective Brigades as standards and guidelines are currently non-existent. This obviously makes it extremely difficult for Officials to negotiate because at the moment they have no set rules or boundaries to guide them. The knock on effect sees some of our members lose out financially creating divisions within our work force. Humberside have been negotiating on this issue for months but have still not secured a definitive position.

We feel that the majority of Brigades in the UK are in a similar position to ourselves, a position that is frustrating to both our Officials and our members. We find that some Brigades have finished their rank to role negotiations yet others have not even begun.

There is also the problem with appeals. These vary within our Brigades as yet again there were no set standards or guidelines. Job sizing is all over the place. Members and Officials are confused with regards to A & B gradings. Members not awarded high gradings whilst performing similar or identical roles to those who have been awarded a higher grade are left feeling undervalued and out of pocket. These problems were also highlighted between the duty systems with little consistency between Wholetime and Retained gradings.

Lack of consistency is also evident between Brigades with Watch Managers in one Brigade carrying out the same job as Watch Managers in a different Brigade but receiving different rates of pay. A very bitter pill to swallow is the pension implications as if we have not had enough attacks on our pensions of late, as well as the question of pensionability of CPD, the differentials in pay between A and B grades will have further detrimental effects on our members' pay. We need national stability on this important subject and due to the contractual implications on FBU members Conference demands that the EC immediately form a Strategy Group to advise, assist and provide education for all of our Officials in order that we may have some national consistency in local negotiations of the rank to role process. Please support this resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 45 seconded?

BRO ANDY HAYTER (South Yorks):

I second Resolution 45. South Yorkshire is currently subject to a formal dispute over the rank to role process. Our management are insisting on a promotion process to move from an A post to a B post even though they accept this is a job sizing issue. They still insist on an application form and an interview and refer to this as an appointment process. We will not accept this position and we have made Andy Dark and John McGhee aware, via our EC Member, and we are pressing management to agree to the Joint Secretaries assistance to help resolve this dispute.

Conference, we need the Strategy Group to standardise where possible the rank to role process and assist all Officials currently negotiating this issue to ensure that all our members are treated equally and fairly throughout the UK. Thank you.

Day Three – 11th May

SIS RUTH WINTERS (Lothian & Borders):

I support Resolution 45. There are two or three things in this issue I wanted to say in support. One of them is I think everybody across the country has seen the variables in terms of how managers or Fire Authorities are comparing or misusing the actual guidance of rank to role, and one of the things I would like to ask, whoever is responding for the EC, is have we actually looked into the fact that since we have won the case of the co-respondent, and the point that we won on was the fact that it was a contractual issue and the fact that there would be a contract within the preface of the Grey Book. The Grey Book supersedes the written contract as long as the written contract has the part in it that says you are employed under the conditions of the Grey Book. The nationally agreed rank to role procedures are also inside the Grey Book. Could we look at that in a legal case. Obviously, what is happening, apart from the disparities, is the fact that our own Brigades – and we are also going to take this up – is our Chief Fire Officer is using it as levels of promotion. A is one rank, one managerial level. B is a promotion. That is bad enough as it is, but now we have got CPD and you have your money taken off you once you get promotion, again I would ask the EC to look at the legalities in terms of the detrimental effects in any Brigades that are misusing rank to role in that shape or form.

Thirdly, in terms of our Fire Control Staff, again I would ask that the Executive Council consult with our solicitors because we think there is a possibility on an equal pay for work equal value claim that certainly needs to be looked at before we do anything about it. My Control Room has been totally downgraded in terms of rank to role for the senior manager roles that they had before. The only manager of an equal level previously under the old rank system to have been downgraded just happens to be the only female woman rank in the Lothian & Borders Fire Brigade and that is the Officer in Charge of the Fire Control Rooms. I would ask the EC to consult with our solicitors on all three points and support this motion so we can look at the legalities of the contractual issues. I support.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks Ruth. The Executive Council's position is qualified support. I will ask John McGhee to respond to those questions and outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

The Executive Council have had a discussion already about the idea of a strategy group and this is in essence a qualification to this resolution. I have been asked to come to the June Executive with suggestions on how

we deal with issues which encompass rank to role, IPDS, dare I say, SVSG. I remember Davy Patton and Dave Matthews before him using all these abbreviations and it drives me mad. There are a whole number of issues that are out there, national occupational standards are set by a body that is outside of the National Joint Council. We sit on that body. Those standards then form the rolemaps. The rolemaps were agreed in 2003. Some of those standards have already changed but we are still working to the old standards. It may be advantageous for our members to be working to the new standards. We need to look at that and look at a way of making those changes as things go on.

The Group we will be setting up will look at more than just the rank to role. Let me just say one thing on this A to B. I don't think it is going to be too difficult inside of the National Joint Secretary and the Joint Secretaries to resolve that because it is absolutely clear that the role is one role. The A to B is a job size and the qualifications and the competence you need for a Watch Manager A and Watch Manager B are identical. There is no difference. You cannot look at a separate rolemap and say this is someone that falls into an A or a B. So that is an issue I am sure we will be able to resolve through the National Joint Council.

On the basis of this Strategy Group, we will be setting up a Group through the Executive Council and whether we call it a Strategy Group or not is another matter. Picking up one point in terms of training, as far back as 2005 we recognised that there was going to be a need to train our Officials and we organised a whole series of seminars to give as much information as we could to those Officials who were going to be involved in the negotiations and the change over from rank to role. I am glad to see that Humberside did send Officials to that. It may well be that the Officials now within those Brigades have changed, and if we have to revisit that then I am sure through the education programme we can try and assist and give further help to any new Officials that are out there.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Can I therefore see all those in favour, please, of Resolution 45? Thank you. Is there any opposition? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Para A11, Bounty Scheme. Now into Section B, ODPM, now DCLG and now just CLG. Para B14, IPDS. Para B15 Firefighter Selection Physical Tests. Now on to Resolution 19 entitled Regional Management Boards to be moved by Staffordshire, please.

Day Three – 11th May

Resolution 19 – REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS

This Conference recognises the increased influence Regional Management Boards are having on members conditions of service and working practices.

With this in mind Conference accepts the need for FBU Regional Officials to engage and where necessary negotiate with the Regional Management Boards on all issues affecting FBU members.

STAFFORDSHIRE

BRO BRIAN MOSS (Staffs):

There is no hidden agenda with this resolution. It is clear in its intent and I am not going to stand here teaching you to suck eggs or tell you something that you don't already know. That said, it is a quick opportunity to remind you of the increasing influence that the regional management board are having on members conditions of service and working practices. We are already seeing the non-uniformed support staff and heads of HR coming together under the umbrella of regional management boards implementing a common approach and changes to our conditions of service. We see the influence that staff from one Brigade are having on determining the conditions of another Brigade. Let us face it. It is a tactic that we have employed successfully over the years. We have shared our knowledge and we have tried to improve on conditions that members and comrades have secured in other Brigades. Be clear. It is obvious that the regional management board agenda is not about improving and maintaining our conditions of service. They are out to take away as much as they can.

The RMB's will share the knowledge and actively seek to drive down our conditions of service to the lowest common position across the Region. We must face up to that fact and we must meet the challenge head on. It is abundantly clear the influence the RMB's and the independent companies that are being set up will have on the Control Staff members conditions of service. If we do not start to engage now it is going to be to the detriment of those members.

Conference, we must be ready to engage with the regional management boards. We need to stop the further erosion of members' conditions. We do not have any option. It is not something that we want to do, but I am afraid it is something that we cannot avoid. We must do it to protect members.

In closing, I understand that there is going to be opposition to this resolution and I would question why it is seen as acceptable to have discussions with the devolved administrations yet we cannot have

discussions with the regional management boards on the very issues that they are directly influencing. Surely, it has also got to be recognised that this resolution, what it seeks, is consistent with the twin track strategy that has been adopted for the Regional Control campaign. How else are we going to protect members' jobs and conditions if we do not directly deal with the people who are influencing these issues. Conference, I urge you, don't bury your heads in the sand. Recognise the need and support the resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 19 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are opposing and I ask Matt to outline why.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

President, Conference. I understand some of the concerns that Brian has raised in moving, but the opposition is based on the final sentence because we acknowledge the importance of regional management boards. We know we need to monitor and engage, and Regions are already doing that. They are making an assessment within their own Region of how far that process needs to take place. However, what the resolution actually asks us to do is to allow Regional Officials to engage and where necessary negotiate with regional management boards. We don't negotiate with regional management boards; we negotiate with our employers and regional management boards are not our employers. I am sure there are regional management boards who would want to start raising all issues affecting Fire Brigades Union members. I tell you one issue we don't want to be discussing with regional management boards, and that is the issue of pay. We have a national negotiation on pay. There is a resolution later which talks about regional pay. I think the danger in the resolution is, that is precisely the sort of pressure that we will be opening up this Union to by supporting the resolution. We take on board the concerns that are raised, but I think there are problems with the wording of the resolution, and on that basis, Conference, we strongly urge you to oppose the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Are Staffordshire seeking the right to reply? OK. I therefore put Resolution 19 to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Can I see those against. Thank you. That falls.

I now call Resolution 35 entitled FBU Strategy to be moved by Wiltshire with an amendment from Gloucestershire. If Gloucestershire intend to speak to their amendment can I ask them to come to the front, please, and I ask Wiltshire to move.

Day Three – 11th May

Resolution 35 – FBU STRATEGY

Conference instructs the Executive Council to bring to Annual Conference 2008 a detailed, long term strategy for dealing with the Fire Service management's approach to consultation, negotiation and the modernising agenda. There is a need for a detailed debate and clear strategy on how the FBU is to tackle national and local employers in seeking to achieve the objects of the Union (Rule 3 of our Rule Book) in order to best represent the interests of FBU members and the public, both of whom are under attack by today's modern management.

The long term strategy brought to Conference 2008 will be debated in closed session.

WILTSHIRE

Amendment

At the end of the Resolution insert a new paragraph "The Executive should produce a detailed guidance document for all Officials within 6 months of Conference 2008 outlining what the strategy is and how all the recommendations should be implemented."

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BRO PAUL LAWLER (Wilts):

I move Resolution 35 as amended by Gloucestershire. I stand before you today asking you all to support this resolution. Comrades, I believe that supporting this resolution will have a positive impact on all our Officials in the FBU and therefore will benefit our members, and also the public. What we need is a clear and detailed strategy regarding negotiations and consultation. At this moment in time some of our Officials are negotiated with. Other Officials are consulted and some Officials are completely ignored. It is time that we unite and organise ourselves to bring a consistent and uniform approach to negotiation and consultation. When the management do ignore us or want to bring in unwanted, unreasonable and unworkable practices and policies, we need a clear strategy on what our next move will be.

I am a new Brigade Official facing difficult and testing times as we all are. Therefore the guidance, help and support that a clear strategy will bring, will assist me and all other Brigade Officials while tackling these absolute clowns.

One issue is timescales but we need to act now. It is time to stop these despicable cuts in both the Fire Service and our conditions and also the attacks on our Officials and members. I strongly believe that this resolution should be supported by Conference.

Let me be quite clear comrades. They have had had strategy to divide and conquer us since 2003. Now is the time to organise, unite and fight to regain the ground lost to these absolute muppets. We need a clear strategy to protect our Officials, our members and also our Fire Service. Be sure, comrades, this is our Fire Service, not theirs. We will not let these bureaucrats and jokers steal it from us and wreck all the hard work that our Officials past and present have achieved over the years. Please support this resolution because I strongly believe failure to do so will result in the position of these corrupt daylight robbers growing stronger and stronger while our Union, of which I am a proud member, will become weaker, and our ability to protect the Fire Service we are all proud of will diminish.

With the help of this strategy we will continue to take on the management and beat them and also take on this scab work force and beat them too. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is there a seconder for Resolution 35? (*Formally seconded*). Can I have Gloucestershire to move their amendment, please? (*Formally moved*). Is that seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are offering qualified support to both the resolution and the amendment. I will ask Matt to outline the qualification.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

A qualification on each of the main resolution and the amendment, President. It is an important issue. The mover was quite right. There has been a drive towards local bargaining from these "muppets" as he described them, and perhaps the anti-muppet strategy will be very welcome at next year's Conference.

I think the one qualification in terms of the main resolution is the final sentence about closed session. The Executive Council are not convinced that we would need to hold that discussion in closed session. We would need to see at the time what the outcome was, what was the type of document that we produced. It may well be something we would want to launch publicly.

The second qualification, the one we have made a number of times in terms of the amendment, is about the timescales. We will obviously work to achieve that but ask you to bear in mind the points we have made earlier in relation to workloads.

THE PRESIDENT:

I therefore put the Gloucestershire amendment to Resolution 35 to the vote. Can I see those in favour,

Day Three – 11th May

please? Thank you. Can I see any against. That is carried.

I therefore put Resolution 35, as amended by Gloucestershire, to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Any against? Thank you. That is carried.

I now move to Resolution 56, the Initial Test of Potential and the ADC by Derbyshire. Can we have Derbyshire to move, please.

Resolution 56 – ITOP/ADC

This Conference acknowledges the changes in the promotion procedure, with the abolition of the examination system and practical assessment to the introduction of the ITOP and ADC system. However, Conference believes that these systems are fundamentally flawed with no consistency of application or practical assessment of potential and are surrounded in secrecy. All this has a potentially detrimental effect on the health and safety of our members.

This Conference demands that the Executive Council set up a Working Group to look at the new systems of advancement throughout the country and report back to Conference 2008 with recommendations to take forward to our employers.

DERBYSHIRE

BRO ROB FURNACE (Derbyshire):

I move Resolution 56. The White Paper our Fire & Rescue Services recognised was that the Fire & Rescue Services needed to improve its human resources systems. In particular, there was a need to update practices in relation to recruitment and staff progression. With the introduction of the Fire & Rescue Services Act on 01 October 2004, the appointments and promotion regs were repealed. In light of this and the introduction of the integrated personnel development system or, to us, IPDS, the Fire Services Examination Board ceased following the final exams in early 2006. The 2006/08 framework states "Fire & Rescue Authorities should use the new national processes to assess people's potential for new operational and control roles in the Service."

Brothers and Sisters welcome to the wonderful world of IPDS featuring ITOC and ADC. To ensure this was no overnight fad we were assured of extensive trials, pilot studies involving test groups from diverse backgrounds etc over a 10 year period, before it was adopted by Fire & Rescue Service in 2003. In the rush to meet the modernisation frenzy, the old system was discarded too quickly before the new one could be given a chance.

With some foresight the two systems should have run in tandem until the teething problems were addressed. We have now come to realise that this has all the vital

ingredients of turning into another half baked sensation with little relevance to the Fire & Rescue Service. The process at best is cumbersome, heavily reliant on jargon. For example, I give you BARS, Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scales. I wonder who thought up this little gem? Perhaps they should be behind some at her Majesty's pleasure.

Will an applicant's score be transferred to any Fire & Rescue Service? Yes and no. That depends on your Fire Authority as it is not mandatory. The ADC exercises: you are the manager of an airport or a leisure centre. Here is a list of tasks to undertake. This could be a little controversial I know, but how about you are the manager of a Fire Station, here is a list of tasks to undertake. There are general concerns of a bias towards non-uniformed personnel. I have highlighted only a few concerns but there are many unanswered questions, and I believe the setting up of a working party is paramount to encourage more candidates to participate in a friendlier system. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 56 seconded?

BRO MARK DUNNE (Merseyside):

I second the resolution. It will come as no surprise to you once again that the incorruptible system of IPDS has been corrupted in Merseyside by Tony McGurk and his sycophantic underlings again. We have no FBU members above Watch Manager B in Merseyside because of the pressure put on them. We have questions asked on promotion interviews about FBU membership and if you answer the wrong way you are not getting promoted. Since the end of the 2006 dispute, surprise surprise, many scabs have been promoted beyond their competency and experienced and knowledgeable FBU membership in Merseyside have been simply overlooked because they took strike action. Lo and behold, the greatest disgrace of all, the greatest Chief Fire Officer in living memory, Tony McGurk has this week given a Fire Authority Liberal Democrat Councillor a senior managerial position in Merseyside Fire Service. Absolute disgrace. Support the resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Mark. The Executive Council are giving qualified support. I will ask John McGhee to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

Thanks, President. Again, the qualification is the same about setting up a Group looking at all of these issues, and it will fall inside that same Group. We will certainly

Day Three – 11th May

do it. Mark, to be perfectly honest, I do not think what system we set up, McGurk will corrupt it. That is because he is McGurk. It is a half-baked sensation, I think, was how you described it. We are aware that IPDS is causing massive problems out there, but please do not lose sight that we do not want to go back to the old examination system, because the examination system that we had before has led to people like McGurk being in charge of the British Fire Service.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, John. I therefore put Resolution 56 to the vote. Can we see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Is there any opposition? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Resolution 68, Training Induction, to be moved by the Control Staff National Committee.

Resolution 68 – TRAINING INDUCTION

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise with the relevant committees a realistic minimum training induction programme for all Firefighter/Control staff. The minimum 3 weeks that some brigades currently undertake is totally unrealistic due to increasing workloads and complexity of Firefighter/Control duties.

CSNC

SIS SHARON PEVERETT (CSNC):

Some Brigades still give only minimum training of three weeks to their Control Staff after which trainees go on to a Watch for continuation training. This has been tried for several years. However, with the growing numbers of experienced operators being seconded to projects or leaving the job, it is falling to less experienced operators to assist new recruits for this training. Therefore, it is imperative that thorough induction training is given to ease the pressure on the Firefighters in Control Watches to maintain safe staffing levels and safeguard the health and safety of the fire crews.

Firefighters Control are increasingly put under pressure to meet response times for mobilising and using their judgment to assess what type of response is required. They can also be called upon to give fire survival advice to callers. Three weeks is not sufficient training for new recruits to cover all this and we instruct the EC to raise with the relevant committees a realistic minimum training induction programme. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 68 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are supporting. Can I

see all those in favour please? Thank you. Is there any opposition? Any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

Para B16 Practitioners Forum. Now on to Resolution 5 Private Finance Initiative to be moved by the National Women's Committee.

Resolution 5 – PFI

This Annual Conference has seen first hand problems surrounding facilities for women at many new build PFI Fire & Rescue Service workplaces.

Examples of these problems include:

- ***Unisex facilities – affording little privacy***
- ***No floor to ceiling partitions on toilets and showers***
- ***Joint locker rooms***
- ***Lack of sanitary machines and sanitary disposal vestibules.***

This Annual Conference believes that the finances required to provide adequate facilities for women at these workplaces are being sacrificed in order to maximise profit for the private companies who have gained the PFI contract.

This Annual Conference believes that the above circumstances add further authority to the FBU policy of opposing PFI buildings within the UK Fire & Rescue Service and demands that the Executive Council produce an up to date record of all PFI buildings within the Service which lists the facilities provided for women at each.

This record to be produced by the 2007 Women's AGM.

NWC

SIS SAM RYE (NWC):

I move Resolution 5, PFI, Private Finance Initiative or Fire Stations on the cheap, not only cheap but not in the best interests of our members. We as a Union opposed PFI but unfortunately it is a reality. They are coming thick and fast and with little or no consultation. The result is a gleaming Station with inadequate facilities for our members. Is it fair that some of our members will be left feeling isolated and intimidated because of a total lack of private facilities? Our Brigades are supposedly championing the equality of gender, but all they care about is a flagship Station which gives a fabulous glossy image to the public but is inadequate inside and

Day Three – 11th May

compromises privacy and dignity. Privacy, a basic human right which should be afforded to everyone.

Is it really acceptable to have unisex locker rooms, to have mixed showers which have gaps at the tops and bottoms of the side panels and joint toilets with no sanitary provision? With unisex facilities you risk overlooking individual needs, individual privacies. The cost is nominal to have individual facilities, but it is cheaper to provide for the masses. This sums up PFI. How many PFI Stations are out there now? We as a Union need to address this issue, we need to take back ownership of our Stations and consult our members about what they want from their Stations. We need to up the fight against PFI Stations and carry out what our Union Conference has opposed for years. Conference, this report will help us in that fight. I urge you to support the resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Sam. Is Resolution 5 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are offering qualified support and I will ask John to outline the qualification.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

President, again the qualification is that we are going to need the information to come from Brigade Officials to let us know exactly what are the lack of facilities out there. I understand the specific area of PFI that the National Women's Committee is concerned about, but let us give you this commitment: we will survey all the work places and not just those that are built with PFI. Our facilities should be for all our members and dignity should be available in every single work place in the country.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. I put Resolution 5 therefore to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Is there any opposition? Any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

Now on to Resolution No 8 entitled National HR Strategy Document to be moved by the Officers' National Committee with an amendment from Gloucestershire. If Gloucestershire intend to speak to their amendment, can I ask them to come to the front, please. ONC to move.

Resolution 8 – NATIONAL HR STRATEGY DOCUMENT

This Conference notes with concern the National HR Strategy Document developed by CFOA. CFOA claims that this strategy document has been

developed through the collaborative work of HR Practitioners and supported by external stakeholders. It is notable that the objectives of this document are at odds with a range of FBU policies.

Amongst the issues of concern raised by the document are multi-level entry, a role for the private sector in provision and delivery of service and means of attracting leaders from other sectors. Such issues have significant implications for officer/middle management members.

CFOA recommends this document to key National stakeholders and intends that it will be the subject of regular reports to the Practitioners Forum.

This Conference demands that the Executive Council develops a strategy with ONC Representatives, aimed at challenging the objectives of this document that do not comply with FBU policies and ensuring that FBU policies are not swept aside whilst CFOA's recommendations are foisted on and adopted by various FRS's.

ONC

Amendment

At the end of the Resolution insert a new paragraph. "The FBU strategy should be the subject of regular reports to the Practitioners Forum."

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BRO KIERAN BARR (ONC):

I move Resolution No 8, National HR Strategy Document. We understand that Gloucestershire are withdrawing their amendment and we thank them for that.

Conference, what is the British Fire Service coming to? Decisions once made by Chief Officers and Principal Officers in consultation and agreement with the Fire Brigades Union and all matters relating to the uniformed personnel in the Fire Service will in future be taken by suits with no experience or understanding of the Fire Service. The Chief Fire Officer's Association through the collaborative work of the HR Practitioners Forum, and supported by external stakeholders developed this Human Resources Strategy. I think it should be known as the human remains strategy for the Fire & Rescue Service. The commitment towards our members in recognising the collective contribution we all make in moving forward and positioning our Fire & Rescue Service at the forefront of the public service delivery is being ignored. Why? Have we been part of their consultation process? No.

We know that for the past 20 years the Fire Service has been at the forefront of the public services, building a

Day Three – 11th May

safer society, reducing death and injury, damage to property and damage to the environment from fire and other emergencies. The Fire Service has been outperforming all other public services and the service we deliver to our communities, and the Local Government audit has confirmed this. We now have puppet Chief Fire Officers who are having their strings pulled by so called Chief Executives, the ever increasing civilians dressed up in Fire Service Uniform, living out some kind of fantasy as Firefighters, and may I say with the full support of the Blairite Government. They decide and often without consulting the FBU, they drive through change in the Fire & Rescue Service to the detriment of the safety of the communities we serve and also the uniformed personnel on which it keeps insisting is its biggest asset.

This document is at odds with the wide range of FBU policies. Amongst the issues of concern raised by the document are multi-level entry; a role for the private sector in the provision and delivery; and the means of attracting leaders from other sectors. These are only some of the issues that have a significant implication for our Officer members and, indeed, all our FBU members. Comrades, the Chief Fire Officer's Association Strategy Group even wanted to decide our pay and we thought New Labour and the NJC were bad. For example, in my own Fire Service we have the head of the Human Resource Department who is in charge of the Fire Service Training Centre with the Area Manager of the Training Centre reporting to them. Two long serving civilians and a finance department, senior finance officers have been replaced by so called talented quality people. They run the Fire Service by implementing budgetary restraints. We can see only too clearly the destruction of the other public services that these so called talented quality people work in: the NHS, education, police, ambulance service, the list goes on.

The ONC representatives are asking this Conference to instruct the Executive Council along with the Officers National Committee to develop a strategy aimed at challenging the objectives of this document that contradicts FBU policies, a strategy that ensures that the FBU policies are not swept aside whilst the Chief Fire Officer's Association recommendations are fastened on and adopted by various Fire & Rescue Services. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 8 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). Can Gloucestershire confirm that they have withdrawn their amendment? Withdrawn. Thank you very much. The Executive Council are supporting. Matt?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

I do wish to just make a comment on the resolution. We

are supporting it but in relation to the issues raised in there about the Practitioners' Forum, they did attempt to consult with us on that HR Document. The problem we have with that is that it is none of their business what our pay and conditions are. These are matters for the NJC and not for CFA so we did not respond to that. We have also raised very firmly with the Practitioners' Forum, that it is not the business of the Practitioners' Forum, the pay and conditions properly covered by the National Joint Council. So that is the approach we have taken so far to that document. Work has already been undertaken in relation to analysing that document and a Brigade Secretaries' circular was sent out with a document which went into some of the political background to the thinking on the CFA document. I think the next step is what is outlined in the resolution developing a counter strategy and that work will carry on from here.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Matt. Can I therefore see all those in favour of Resolution 8, please? Thank you. Is there any opposition? Any abstentions? That is carried unanimously.

We are now on to Para B17, Attacks on Fire Crews. Para B18, Integrated Risk Management Planning.

BRO COLIN JAMES (Northumberland):

We have an IRMP strategy and we have done since 2003, yet we are still seeing changes implemented throughout the UK that we don't necessarily agree with but will just have to put up with. However, what we shouldn't have to put up with are the unnecessary deaths and injuries to our members due to Fire & Rescue Services' failure to comply with health and safety legislation, and we have heard some of those examples earlier by other speakers. IRMP's can be simply defined as one big risk assessment for each Brigade. The Brigade identifies the risks, decides what preventative measures to put in place, and also what control measures can then be applied to minimise those risks. That format helps decide what resources are needed (in theory) and importantly what training is then required. Conference, it is quite evident that throughout the UK Fire Service suitable and sufficient training is not always being delivered to our members to help them safely tackle the risks they face whether that be new dimensions, water rescue or even BA training, those risks having previously been identified in their own Brigades IRMPs.

With that in mind we must review our own IRMP strategy if Brigades are to continue to ignore health and safety legislation. We must ensure that such serious breaches of health and safety legislation is brought to

Day Three – 11th May

the attention of the Health & Safety Executive at the earliest opportunity if management are to continue to pay little attention to our concerns highlighted during any consultation process.

We need to look at how our own Health and Safety Reps can bring these breaches of legislation to the attention of the Health & Safety Executive before any further harm is done to our members rather than waiting until having improvement notices served on the Brigade always after the event.

To be effective in doing that we need to incorporate into our own IRMP strategy a process to help protect FBU members and have our own Health and Safety Reps fully trained. We talked earlier about having an up to date Health and Safety Handbook. That would help. That would highlight their concerns of management's failures to deliver suitable and sufficient training, ultimately directed to the HSE. Having withdrawn our own resolution on IRMP's we will instead pursue this issue through Health and Safety Coordinators to the National Health and Safety committee. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT:

OK. I will ask John to respond to some of those points.

BRO JOHN MCGHEE (National Officer):

The Integrated Risk Management Plan in our strategy is constantly under review and we are constantly trying to provide information and assistance to Brigade Officials to help challenge any new ideas that Brigades are coming up with. Only just recently we held a seminar on the Bunsfield Report into coma sites, and we are trying to feed that information into our next round of challenges to Integrated Risk Management Plans. We are constantly looking at that. We are also establishing a fairly decent dialogue with the HSE at National level and we are trying to give guidance to the Health and Safety Coordinators to do the same thing at Regional level, although the resources in HSE are very stretched. We have had a commitment recently from the HSE responsible for the Fire & Rescue Service to say that although there has been no inspection in the Fire & Rescue Service for a number of years, he does not expect that to remain the case for an awful lot longer and we will continue to pursue and put pressure on them in order that they do carry out inspections of the Fire & Rescue Service before there are any further fatalities or injuries to our members.

We are aware that the training has been eroded in the Fire & Rescue Service. We have managed now to convince the Health & Safety Executive that that is a real issue and it is something that they are now beginning to look at. I have said it on many platforms and particularly I would like to get the opportunity to say

it to CFOA. Fire Safety is killing our members and we are going to put a stop to that: not Fire Safety but we are going to put a stop to them killing our members.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, John. Para B19 Building Disaster Assessment Group. Para B20 Fire & Rescue Statistics User Group. Para B21 National Framework. Para B22 Welsh Assembly Government Service Standards and Risk Reduction Planning. Para B23 Select Committee. The good news is we are making progress. Will delegates turn to Page 8 of their Programme of Business. We are now into Thursday. We are on Section H, Education. Para H1 Introduction. Para H2 Black & Ethnic Minority Members School Report 2006. Para H3 Gay & Lesbian Annual School 2006. Para H4 Integrated Risk Management Planning Training Seminars. Para H5 National Education Grants. Para H6 National School.

I now call Resolution 16 entitled Education from Tyne & Wear with an amendment from Tayside, Resolution 25 entitled Education from Dorset with an amendment from Tayside, and Resolution 31 also entitled Education from Derbyshire in the same debate. Resolutions 25 and 31 stand in opposition to each other. Consequently only one of them can pass. Can I ask please Tyne & Wear to move Resolution 16.

Resolution 16 – EDUCATION

Conference demands that in line with future education programmes that schools/seminars are introduced for Brigade Officials, Divisional Officials and Brigade Membership Secretaries to deal with all aspects of membership issues.

TYNE & WEAR

Amendment

Remove from "schools/seminars..." to "... to deal", replace with "training be provided to officials at all levels to assist them in dealing ..."

TAYSIDE

BRO ANDY NOBLE (Tyne & Wear):

I move Resolution 16 and accept the Tayside amendment. Obviously at the minute our education programme is biased towards the political and the campaigning work that we do and we think that is only right. We are not asking for any kind of change in that. What we are asking for, however, is that some time is set aside for handling issues such as training in regard to Membership Secretaries. If Conference does accept the amendment from Tayside, obviously that would facilitate people being able to access this kind of training as well. Please support the resolution.

Day Three – 11th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. Is Resolution 16 seconded? (*Formally seconded*). Tayside to move their amendment, please. (*Formally moved*). Is the Tayside amendment seconded? (*Formally seconded*). The Executive Council are giving qualified support and I will ask Dean Mills to outline the qualification.

BRO DEAN MILLS (National Officer):

Thanks, President. The forecast for the future education programmes is not possible; it is speculative, but I do give the undertaking that where possible that training will be provided.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Dean. I therefore put the Tayside amendment to Resolution 16 to the vote. Can I see those in favour, please? Thank you. Were there any against? No. That is carried.

I put Resolution 16 as amended by Tayside to the vote. Can I see all those in favour, please? Thank you. Any against? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

I now move on to Resolution 25 in the name of Dorset. Dorset to move, please.

Resolution 25 – EDUCATION

Conference believes that the current FBU education programme is not effective and is not meeting the needs of our officials. We therefore instruct the Executive Council to carry out an immediate review of the education programme, to include the areas of:

- ***Access***
- ***Accreditation***
- ***Suitability***
- ***Recording***

Following this review, we instruct the Executive Council to bring to Annual Conference 2008, a revised Executive Council Policy Statement on education, which better meets the requirements for officials than is currently the case.

DORSET

Amendment

Remove sentence 1.

Amend sentence 2 to read:

Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out immediately a complete review of the education programme.

TAYSIDE

SIS KAREN ADAMS (Dorset):

I move Resolution 25 on Education. This resolution is borne out of frustration because we believe that the current education programme of the Union is ineffective and does not meet the needs of our Officials. As a Brigade Secretary I am faced on an almost daily basis with a constant and ever increasing work load borne out of management attacks on our conditions of service and working practices. They are forever trying to use changes in the law as well as changes to the Grey Book as justification to drive forward their agenda which is always about worsening our working conditions.

This agenda is, of course, nothing new and it is something that we as Union Officials are well used to. What is different however is the context that it is happening within. The fact is that the Fire & Rescue Service of today is a totally different Service than it was two years' ago. We have seen changes at every level and with every aspect of our work and nothing appears to be exempt. We have also seen management using changes to Grey Books to discipline our members at every opportunity using changes to the dispute procedures to alter the way we negotiate, and now with potential changes to the constitution of the NJC we will be seeing changes to our negotiating body themselves. Given this background, it was our expectation that the Union would be pro-active in delivering effective, sustained and substantial education to Officials which meets the requirements of our agenda in this ever changing situation. Unfortunately, we do not believe this to be the case.

I fully understand the difficult financial situation faced by the Union and the need to deal with it effectively, but I have to say that the cancelling of the education programme in order to balance the books was a false economy that has, in my view, been a disaster. The bottom line is that we as Officials need to have the skills necessary to do our job effectively, and we look to the Union Nationally to give us the education that we require. We don't feel that this has happened and this is why this resolution has been tabled. Having said this, I note the position of the EC and I accept the reality is, that the current education policy has never been given a chance to be implemented effectively. It is the case that our resolution would require a revised education policy to be developed when actually the current one may be effective if it was only given the chance to be implemented properly. Given this, I withdraw this resolution on that basis but I would say to the EC no more cancelling education. It is a false economy that does not serve this Union, its Officials or its members. We need the education policy to be implemented fully and as a matter of urgency. If this is not done, then we will be back at next year's Conference demanding change.

Day Three – 11th May

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Karen. That means the Tayside amendment automatically falls. Can I ask Derbyshire, please to move Resolution 31.

Resolution 31 – EDUCATION

Conference acknowledges the good work undertaken by the National Education Committee and recognises that the education of our members is crucial in giving them the skills and confidence to be effective Union Officials.

However, Conference has real concerns that there is no coherent education strategy that links together training in regions and nationally or any audit trail to evaluate training in place.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council develop a national strategy that links in with the regions to enable the Union to embark on a comprehensive training policy and with sufficient budget to achieve results. This strategy to be developed and in place by Conference 2008.

DERBYSHIRE

BRO PHIL POOLE (Derbyshire):

I move Resolution 31 on Education. There is a significant amount of education being undertaken for Regional FBU members. This education is an essential investment for the future of the Trade Union to help Officials successfully to protect the conditions and rights of our members. Much of the education is sought locally through various local TUC tutors. Despite the excellent work of the National Education Committee there is a degree of duplication which in a similar way has been carried out in Regions. Our resolution makes it clear that it is now time for a National strategy. Once this is developed it can capture the good practice in Regions and can be shared Nationally for the benefit of all Officials. Education needs to be seen as an investment in the future so please support this resolution. I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Is Resolution 31 seconded? Formally seconded. OK, the Executive Council position is to offer qualified support to Resolution 16 and to the amendment and to oppose Resolution 31, and I shall ask Dean Mills to explain.

BRO DEAN MILLS (National Officer):

Resolution 31. The EC are opposed. The resolution talks about there being no coherent strategy and I think as Karen outlined earlier when they were going to move

their resolution, which they have withdrawn, there is a coherent strategy. We just have not had time for it to be properly implemented due to the dispute and the subsequent fall out from that. We do take on board the point that is mentioned in the resolution that the training which we provide needs to be linked up across the Union in all Regions and Sections, but we do have a National strategy as I said, and part of it we have recently seen. I accept there has been an overlapping time between the submission of the resolution and the education programme kicking off again, but we have recently seen a Political School carried out. That is going to roll out again Nationally. We have seen four TUPE Seminars, three Pension Seminars, National School for 2008 is planned 28 October to 02 November. 2009 and 2010 National Schools and each of the Sectional Schools have already been planned in and booked. So we do have that strategy in place. It is ongoing but it does need time. I do give you a guarantee though. Oppose the resolution as it is worded at the moment and you can come back next year if we do fail to deliver on that education strategy.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dean. Do Derbyshire wish to exercise their right of reply?

BRO PHIL POOLE (Derbyshire):

Following the information from Dean, we would like to withdraw this resolution.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. I have just been handed some information about Bro Paul Embury from London who had the unfortunate experience on the rostrum this morning, and despite my mischievous suggestion that it may have been due to over indulgence at the EC do, I understand he has continued to be ill and he has now been taken to hospital. I am sure Conference will join with me in wishing Paul a speedy recovery and all best wishes. *(Applause)*

We are now on Para H7, National School Dates. Para H8 TUC Day Release and Extended course. Para H9 Tutors. Para H10 Union Learning Funds.

BRO KEV GRIFFITHS (South Wales):

Conference will be aware that Wales has been the only Region of the Fire Brigades Union that has not had a successful bid for a Union Learning Project. This has meant that members in Wales have been denied access to valuable learning opportunities the projects have delivered to members in all the other Regions of this Union. However, it is important that we

Day Three – 11th May

acknowledge the support, the information, the advice and the guidance which has been provided to both members and Officials, and for that we would like to express our sincere thanks to the National Union Learning Fund Project Manager, to the Regional Coordinators and to the Staff of the FBU Learning Centres. We will always be grateful for that support and encouragement and I am delighted to be able to inform Conference that the Union's bid to the Welsh Union Learning Fund has been successful and a Regional Coordinator appointed. We are now able to conduct a project in Wales for the period of 2007-2009 and fully embed life long learning in the Region.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you. I will now call Composite Resolution No A, Union Learning Fund Projects to be moved by London, seconded by Fife and I will remind everyone that the Executive Council are supporting.

COMPOSITE A [Incorporating Resolutions 9, 18, and 36]

ULF PROJECTS

This Conference reaffirms support for and acknowledges the work of the FBU Learning Fund Projects in providing learning opportunities for hundreds of our members. This is another positive benefit of FBU membership and places the FBU at the forefront of lifelong learning within the UK Fire and Rescue Services.

Conference recognises that the current funding is due to finish in April 2008 with no guarantee of further funding being made available post 2008.

Conference believes that in order to sustain the spirit of Annual Conference 2004 Resolution 65 and to mirror the recent moves within the TUC Union Learn, we need to act quickly to ensure the sustainability of the Lifelong Learning agenda beyond April 2008.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to set up a working group utilising Education Sub-Committee members, ULF Project Committee members and Regional Education Officers to look at how lifelong learning is mainstreamed into the FBU at all levels.

To this end Conference instructs the Executive Council to form a working group from members of the Executive Council Education Sub-Committee, FBU ULF Project Committee and Regional Education Officers to produce a report for no later than 1st October 2007 for the Executive Council. This report

should include proposed recommendations on how lifelong learning is embedded.

Moved by LONDON

Seconded by FIFE

Supported by LEICESTERSHIRE

BRO TIM DAVIES (London):

I move Composite Resolution on the Union Learning Fund that embraces the Scottish, Northern Ireland and Welsh Union Learning Funds.

Firstly, I must profess an interest and a great belief in life long learning. I am a Firefighter in London and currently seconded to the FBU ULF Project as the London Regional Coordinator. My role is to assist setting up sustainable networks of trained Union Learning Reps around my Region in accordance with the FBU Rule Book and helping and advising the London Regional Committee with a learning agenda. Similar to other Regional Coordinators, I am also developing life long learning by working with other TUC affiliated and recognised trade unions and learning providers. All of this is necessary so that life long learning can become integral and an important facet of the FBU and the UK Fire & Rescue Service now and well into the future.

The principles of the FBU and the TUC learning agenda are lucid and transparent: to encourage, support and deliver equality of opportunities in learning and development for workers that enable them to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families. No great shakes, just sound social principles that are included within our own Rule Book. So far the ULF projects Nationally have been very successful even though some Regions have embraced it faster than others.

Thousands of our members and other Fire & Rescue Service staff have benefited from the direct assistance given by project workers and ULRs. Bill Rammell, the Labour Government's Minister for Life Long Learning and Alan Johnson, Minister for Education, have both described the Union Learning Fund as one of the unsung successes of this Government. This composite resolution brings together the concerns our members have around the UK about the future of Union Learning and also about the future shape it may take. A consideration any working group will want to explore are the possibilities to embed a mainstream life long learning into future FBU education policies and strategies. Indeed, 2006 saw the launch of Union Learn, the learning arm of the TUC, an arm that embraces life long learning and TU education under the same umbrella, an arm that supports TU officials and members in learning needs around skills for life as it does in health and safety or equality. In fact, an arm that is mainstream in learning and development to ensure

Day Three – 11th May

that officials and members can develop and represent their unions to the best of their ability.

The concept of a Union Learning Fund is not a new one. Indeed, it was almost 10 years ago in 1998 when the ULF in England was launched by the Labour Government. Since then Scotland, Northern Ireland and just recently as we have been told, Wales, have also benefited from funding and the FBU has taken advantage of this and runs projects in all of these countries on behalf of and for our members.

In 2004 this Conference passed Resolution 65 from Fife recognising the beneficial contribution of the Life Long Learning agenda and called for the embedding of the ULR's into our Rule Book which subsequently occurred one year later. Resolution 65 also talked about expanding the role of our Regional and Brigade Education Officers to include Life Long Learning. In 2006 we successfully achieved further funding from the ULF in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and they held their first ever ULR Seminar and it was attended by 60 Officials. It was a Seminar that was addressed by the Fire Minister, who we met earlier this week, the Chief Executive of the Fire Service College and CFAR showing the maturity that the FBU's learning agenda is having in the UK Fire & Rescue Service.

Incidentally, next month we hold the second National Seminar hosted by the Fire Service College and we are expecting even more to attend. Last year we also set up the 2008 Strategy Group drawn from members of the National ULF Group and chaired by an EC member to look at ways that Life Long Learning can be continued post March 2008.

So as you can see Conference, the concerns of our members reflected in this composite are not new concerns but concerns based on the wishes to see Life Long Learning continue to bring them benefits in the future even though Government funding in its existing form may cease. I hope the events just described to you show that efforts have been made already to look at ways we can integrate and embed Life Long Learning into our Union. It is now time to take that step, to organise this with all those concerned throughout the existing structures we have. The working group the composite instructs the EC to set up allows all Officials currently engaged in learning and education to sit down and look seriously at the issues. We understand that this Conference and the EC will want to see accountability and also exercise democratic control of the working group, and we accept that the report of that group should be presented to the EC when it is completed.

THE PRESIDENT:

Will you please wind up, Tim.

BRO TIM DAVIES (London):

We would stress however that the funding could cease at the end of March and Conference 2008 is in May so we expect the EC to determine how to play this factor out.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, Tim.

BRO TIM DAVIES (London):

One more.

THE PRESIDENT:

One sentence.

BRO TIM DAVIES (London):

In the words of Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." I move.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Tim. Can I ask Fife to second, please? (*Formally seconded*). Dean Mills, National Officer.

BRO DEAN MILLS (National Officer):

Thanks. I will keep it short. We will get Tim on a speech synopsis course. The Composite Resolution is needed and hopefully it will be overwhelmingly endorsed if not unanimously. I thank the ULF team, Trevor and Adrian and all the rest for all the work they have done. Every one of you in this room has been and constantly gets asked what are the Union doing for us. The ULF is not just a case of what we are going to do; it is what they already have done. I won't go through all the figures but I will just give you a few. We have got 320 Reps already trained and in place, and 20 of those are going to undertake a bespoke course, an online course that has been set up for us. We have already delivered in excess of 6,000 courses to over 4,000 members and Officials: ICT courses, we have over 2,000 Officials and members that have undertaken those; the European Computer Driving Licence, we have had over 300 already gone through or who are currently undergoing the courses. There are 400 on the ITQ course and shorter courses on subjects such as digital photography. 700 have attended skills for life both for literacy and numeracy, and this is not just about getting members into jobs. It is about keeping them in jobs where failings have been identified and where management would otherwise have got rid of them. The language courses we have done include Spanish, French, Polish, Sign Language, Portuguese, Urdu and Bengali, and they are ongoing. Drug

Day Three – 11th May

awareness courses which are already in place, and over a 1,000 members put through the Union Learning direct course with 900 members in further and higher education. There are lots more figures on what we have already achieved, but I am conscious of time. We will do all we can to look at maintaining the funding we have had and we have taken on board the comments that have been made to us during the course of this week by various people involved in the funding who have come down to see Conference and the Stand we have had outside. Support the composite resolution overwhelmingly and let us continue to provide this service to all our members.

THE PRESIDENT:

Thanks, Dean. Can I see all those in favour of Composite A, please? Thank you. Is there any opposition? Any abstentions? No. That is carried unanimously.

Now we are on Para H11, Women's National Schools. Para H12 Workers Educational Association International Labour Organisation Study Days.

I have been asked by the National Women's Committee to announce that they have so far collected almost £2,500 for the Dignity Period Campaign and that they will be ensuring that Geoff Ellis does in fact carry out his bike ride from Lands End to John O'Groats.

There are a number of Officials who are present in the Conference Hall today who will not be returning next year because they will have retired and I would like to announce a number of those. There is Keith Walters from Tyne & Wear who has already announced to us he has made his final speech; Tony Maguire from Northern Ireland; Tennyson Turney who is the Chair of Region 9; Richard Nightingale the Chair of Cambridgeshire; Pete Gallagher from the West Midlands; Norrie Henderson from Warwickshire; Tony Pearson who in fact retired last week and is in the observers' gallery; Ray Price, Retained Rep from Region 7; also Mick Henn, Steve Hill and Steve Laughher from Region 7, and Ian Johnson from the Greater Manchester Officers' Section. Also a member of the Executive Council, John McDonald from Region 1, who unfortunately has had to go home earlier today due to family reasons. John is retiring after this Conference and John has been a fixture at this Annual Conference for many years now. He joined the Strathclyde Brigade in 1975 where he immediately got involved in the FBU and played a leading role in the Strathclyde Strike Committee in 1977. John has always been a true socialist, always prepared to stick up for the oppressed and to support other workers. He has always engaged in the fight against fascism including being involved with the anti-Nazi league in Glasgow and he has 100 per cent commitment to the Union and all of its

struggles and John will be retiring shortly after Conference.

Right. I would like to move on Conference's behalf a vote of thanks firstly to the Head Office Staff, nearly all of whom have actually returned to London, the Standing Orders Committee who have done an excellent job in trying to ensure that Conference has run smoothly, the Stewards, and they said if I didn't announce that, they'd be out, the Conference Centre Staff, and I have also been asked by the Standing Orders Committee to request all Regional Treasurers to ensure that they return their voting cards from their Brigade Delegations to the Standing Orders Committee.

Other than those that I have mentioned who are going to be retiring and won't be returning, I look forward to seeing you all here next year and please have a safe journey home.

Before Delegates leave it has been brought to my attention that I did miss out one thing which one delegate was helpfully trying to wave to me. The Annual Report. We have been through it Paragraph by Paragraph but we do actually finally need to have Conference's endorsement of it. Can I see the endorsement of Conference of the Annual Report. AGREED

Thank you and goodbye.

Conference Closed



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Record of 2007 Annual Conference Decisions

Southport

Record of Decisions

Motions Carried ...

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE FINANCE

Conference will be aware that during 2005 and 2006 the Executive Council took a number of emergency measures in relation to financial arrangements. These were a result of a serious financial situation facing the Union at the time. Since the introduction of these measures the financial situation facing the Union has improved. Head Office has been introducing a system of budgeting which has allowed close scrutiny of finances by the General Secretary, Treasurer and the Finance Sub-Committee of the Executive Council.

It is recommended that the system of reimbursement of Officials is simplified and equalised as far as possible.

1. Car Allowances

The following car allowances are paid currently:

	Executive Council Members	Regional Officials	Brigades Secretaries and Chairs
Car Allowance	£4,779	£3,186	£903
Car Maintenance Allowance	£1,200	£1,200	—
	£5,979	£4,386	£903

It is proposed that the allowances are simplified and increased as follows:

	Executive Council Members	Regional Officials	Brigades Secretaries and Chairs
Proposed	£6,000	£4,500	£1,100

It is proposed that the above rates be reviewed annually by the Finance Sub-Committee following recommendation by the General Secretary in consultation with the National Treasurer. Any recommended amendment to be approved by the Executive Council.

2. Honoraria

The following honoraria are paid currently:

	Brigade Membership Secretary	President
Honoraria	£360.32	£1,440

Linked to qualified Firefighter rate of pay.

It is proposed that these are increased to the following rates:

	Brigade Membership Secretary	President
Proposed	£500	£1,500

It is proposed that the above rates be reviewed annually by the Finance Sub Committee following recommendation by the General Secretary in consultation with the National Treasurer. Any recommended amendment to be approved by the Executive Council.

3. Subsistence

It is proposed to simplify and equalise the subsistence rates as follows:

1 Within Region

	2-5 hours	5-9 hours	9+ hours
Day rate/Overnight with meal provided	£6.00	£12.00	£15.00
Overnight – no union meal	£25.00		

2 Outside Region

All Officials	£25.00
---------------	--------

3 Conferences, Schools and seminars

All attendees	£20.00
---------------	--------

4 FBU National meetings in London*

All officials	£30.00
---------------	--------

* this is to be subject to further guidance

It is proposed that the above rates be reviewed annually by the Finance Sub-Committee following recommendation by the General Secretary in consultation with the National Treasurer. Any recommended amendment to be approved by the Executive Council.

4. Telephones, Mobile phones and internet/e-mail connection

There are currently a range of measures in place within Regions in relation to telephones, mobile phones and internet/e-mail connection. The Finance Sub-Committee will consider each of these issues during 2007 and will make recommendations to the Executive Council to ensure that Officials are provided with adequate means to function efficiently and professionally.

Record of Decisions

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE RE-ORGANISATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Annual Conference 2005 endorsed a Statement from the Executive Council ("Executive Council Statement to Conference – Re-organisation Sub-Committee"). The Re-organisation Sub-Committee as agreed by the Executive Council consisted of the President, Acting Vice-President, the General Secretary and the following Executive Council members: John McDonald, Dave Green, Jim Barbour, Mike Smith, Jack Ford and Vicky Knight.

The Sub-Committee met on several occasions during 2005 and 2006. Small Working Groups of two members were also created to examine each of the individual issues identified within the Conference Statement. In addition a discussion was held with Professor Mike Terry of Warwick University who has assisted other Unions in the area of re-organisation. On behalf of the Union the Sub-Committee would like to thank Professor Terry for his assistance in this matter.

All Committees of the Union (Brigade, Regional and Sectional) were invited to make submissions to the Sub-Committee for consideration. The Sub-Committee wishes to thank those Committees which provided submissions.

In relation to the issues identified in the 2005 Conference paper, the Working Groups of the Sub-Committee considered each issue in detail.

1. Implications of move from Rank to Role 'Non-uniformed' membership of the FBU

There are a number of significant issues which as yet are not fully developed which will have an impact on our future and "who" we actually represent in the Fire & Rescue Service. These include but are not limited to:

- The development of a separate NJC negotiating body for Middle Managers (MMNB)
- The shift from Rank to Role
- The definition of "Fire and Rescue staff"
- Uniform and "non-uniforming" of posts.

Who we represent in the future is becoming increasingly a focus of our attention.

We have successfully maintained the position of Watch Managers within the NJC Negotiating Body and outside the compass of the MMNB. The Executive Council and the Officers National Committee will need to monitor carefully the development of the MMNB in relation to the wider NJC.

It is apparent that in some quarters widening the definition of "Fire and Rescue staff" to include the non-uniform administrative staff and the removal of the

distinction of "uniform" and "non-uniform" may create a number of potential dangers which will now need to be considered in detail.

2. Future structure of the Union to meet ever changing aspirations of members

Decision making process within the Union

Recent years have brought considerable change to the Service in which the FBU seeks to represent its members and there are many important factors to consider in the continuing development of the Fire Brigades Union.

Considerable lessons have been learnt from the Pay dispute (see materials produced by the EC following the Pay Dispute "lessons learnt" and "moving forward together" workshops) and with further work the Union could perhaps be better structured to reflect these.

Any consideration in relation to the issue of "Union – Future Structure/s" must necessarily involve wide-ranging discussion on topics including:

- Definition of "Membership"
- Impact of Rank to Role
- Impact of IPDS
- Impact of devolution, in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- New Grey Book, terms and conditions
- Key areas such as: Equality and Diversity; Health and Safety; and Discipline and Grievance
- Role of Head Office
- Role of Regional, Brigade and Sectional Committees and Annual Conference
- Legislative Change
- Finance.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Options need to be identified and explored in relation to all of the above prior to the development of recommendations and a full and interactive consultation process with the broad membership. Final decisions must be Conference based.

3. Future development of Sectional representation

We recognised the invaluable resources and specialist knowledge contained within each specific trade and equality section within the Union including the need for further work in this area to develop this within the organisation.

This is clearly a high profile and significant area of Union activity and indeed, its consideration is intrinsic to any discussion in respect of Union structure.

A number of areas will require detailed exploration, in consultation with the membership, including:

- The role of "Sections" within the current/future overall FBU structure

Record of Decisions

- Development, education and training needs
- Definition of Membership – important if we are to consider potential recruitment and representation of members outwith the current Grey Book
- Democracy and accountability issues.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

by FBU members. This is a complex issue which needs further attention within the Sub-Committee and elsewhere in the Union.

4. To fully incorporate work already complete on 'Stress of Officials'

The past twelve months have seen several meetings take place in order to progress this area of work. Exploratory work was undertaken by Nottingham Trent University and Park Lane College, Leeds. After receiving detailed proposals from both institutions it was decided to move the work forward by utilising Park Lane College. Several meetings have been held with Trevor Cave, TUC tutor at the college and several options are being considered.

Advice that is coming from the college revolves around dealing with the issues of "time management" and "work prioritisation", rather than dealing with the issue of stress as a single issue. To this end a pilot course is being devised that will enable Officials to address work and time pressures. It is envisaged that further meetings planned over the year will enable firmer proposals to be formulated.

5. Necessary and/or desired Rule changes

At this stage there are no recommended Rule changes arising from the work of the Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee considered the individual issues identified above within the context of the overall issue of the possible re-organisation of the structure of the Union. This would obviously be a major project and would impact on the other current work of the Union at all levels. In discussing this issue the Sub-Committee gave consideration to the feedback received at the Executive Council, at other Committees of the Union and to the number of submissions received. In the light of this, the Sub-Committee has concluded that there is not a consensus or desire at this stage for a wholesale re-organisation or re-structuring of the Union. This does not mean of course that the issue should not be re-considered in the future. Any organisation needs to occasionally review the effectiveness of its structures.

The Executive Council recommends to Conference that the work of the Sub-Committee should continue and should at this stage focus on the following areas:

1. Head Office – especially around issues relating to the support and training of Head Office officials
2. Stress of Officials – ensuring that previous work already carried out on this issue is progressed
3. Membership of the FBU. The Executive Council is aware of moves to introduce non-uniformed employees in areas of work traditionally carried out

Record of Decisions

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT TO CONFERENCE POLITICAL STRATEGY

In 2004 the Fire Brigades Union Annual Conference voted to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. This was a hotly debated issue and the outcome undoubtedly reflected the anger of FBU members at the Union's treatment during the 2002/3 Pay campaign.

The decision to disaffiliate did not; of course mean the end of the union's Political involvement. As our Rule Book makes clear, the Fire Brigades Union is part of the Working – class movement and linking itself with the international trade union movement, has as its ultimate aim the bringing about of the socialist system of society and has seen the need to play a part in broader politics at local, national and international level. This has been the case since 2004 and will continue to be so.

1. Parliamentary Work

The Union's Parliamentary Group has been firmly established over the past three years and currently has 44 members. All the members of this group are Labour Party MPs. The Parliamentary Group has proved invaluable in a number of areas of work including;

- Campaigning against the Regionalisation of Emergency Fire Controls
- Supporting members involved in local disputes
- Challenging departmental policy where appropriate
- Obtaining information and statistics which are difficult to obtain through other means.

The Group has also assisted in a number of wider campaigns such as that around the Trade Union Freedom Bill.

It is essential that this work continues and is developed. It is recommended that during 2007 further work is done to ensure that membership of the Group grows and that links are developed and improved between members of the Group and local Brigade and Regional Committees. This will assist the Union in local campaigning around issues such as IRMP cuts, Health and Safety etc.

2. The Devolved Administrations

In the devolved administrations (Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland) the responsibility for Fire Policy has been removed from the Westminster Government. The three Regions affected have already developed strategies to engage with local politicians and this has met with this has met with success. During 2007 this work will be further developed by the Officials within the respective regions. Consideration will need to be given to whether Assembly/Parliamentary Groups could be developed along similar lines to the Group at Westminster. Dealing with devolved powers is a relatively new challenge for the Union and may mean that additional resources will

need to be directed to the three Regions affected.

3. Political Education and Training

As Public Sector workers the pay and conditions of FBU members are determined by political decisions, albeit decisions taken within the constraints determined by the wider social and economic situation. It is essential therefore that FBU Officials at all levels have a sound grasp of the political process. This should include Fire and Rescue Service funding, decision making, the establishment of central policy, lobbying etc.

This has always formed a part of the Union's Education and Training programme. This needs to be developed to take account of such changes as devolution, the shift to the DCLG in England, new targets set for the Service etc. Training and Education will be developed to take account of these issues and will make use of the assistance which can be provided by the Parliamentary Group and other supportive politicians.

4. The Labour Party question

The decision to disaffiliate has not ended debate around this issue. Concern has been expressed that disaffiliation has closed a number of doors to the Fire Brigades Union. There can be no denying that there are differences in operating as a non-affiliate to the situation prior to 2004. However, the situation we have faced has not been as cataclysmic as some predicted.

Nevertheless, it is right that the Union should continue to debate its political direction and this will inevitably include the issue of possible re-affiliation to the Labour Party. In order that this debate is conducted in a systematic and constructive manner the Executive Council will, during 2007, arrange a structured debate involving discussion at local and national schools, debates at local Committees and the production of discussion material through the pages of Firefighter and elsewhere.

5. Key Targets for 2007/8

- To build membership of the FBU Parliamentary Group
- To examine the possibility of similar groups in the devolved administrations
- To discuss at Executive Council level and with Regions 1, 2 and 8 the issue of devolution and the requirements and challenges for the Union around this issue
- To provide Education and Training in relation to the political process, lobbying etc.
- To organise a structured debate on the Union's political direction.

Record of Decisions

INTERNAL

Resolution 1 – VICTIMISATION

This Conference condemns recent developments where FBU members have been victimised by the British National Party or other right wing organisations. This Conference demands that the E.C formulate a strategy to give full commitment and support to all FBU members who receive such harassment.

B&EMM
AS AMENDED BY CLEVELAND

Resolution 2 – EQUALITY ISSUES

This Conference calls upon the Fire Brigades Union to report annually and provide a league table of all Fire Brigades within the British Fire Service, in their performance on equality issues.

The criteria for such a report to be produced by the relevant National Committees, in agreement with the Executive Council.

The first report to be produced by the Executive Council for Annual Conference 2008.

B&EMM
AS AMENDED BY GLOUCESTERSHIRE & WEST MIDLANDS

Resolution 3 – RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

This Conference calls on the Fire Brigades Union to produce a race equality scheme.

This race equality scheme to be produced in line with the Race Relations Act (Amended 2000), Specific Duty.

This is to be produced by the B&EMM National Committee, and presented to Annual Conference 2008.

B&EMM
AS AMENDED BY SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Resolution 4 – AGM PROCESS

This Annual Conference recognises that the NWC has the responsibility within the FBU of dealing with issues that 'primarily concern women'. Women recognise that the issue contained within this Resolution may affect the other sections but it is being persistently raised by women through their structures at brigade, regional and national level.

This Annual Conference acknowledges that changes were made at Annual Conference 2002 which enabled the National Women's Committee to submit 3 Resolutions to Annual Conference, however, currently the National Women's Committee cannot amend their

own Conference Resolutions, cannot amend any other Conference Resolutions or policy statements, cannot submit Emergency Resolutions, cannot submit rule changes or proposed amendments to Annual Conference Standing Orders.

This Annual Conference calls upon the Executive Council to formulate the relevant changes to the processes required to address this issue and for this to be reported back to the Women's AGM 2007 and will include the required rule changes which shall be submitted by the Executive Council to Annual Conference 2008.

NWC
AS AMENDED BY GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Resolution 5 – PFI

This Annual Conference has seen first hand problems surrounding facilities for women at many new build PFI Fire & Rescue Service workplaces.

Examples of these problems include:

- Unisex facilities – affording little privacy
- No floor to ceiling partitions on toilets and showers
- Joint locker rooms
- Lack of sanitary machines and sanitary disposal vestibules

This Annual Conference believes that the finances required to provide adequate facilities for women at these workplaces are being sacrificed in order to maximise profit for the private companies who have gained the PFI contract.

This Annual Conference believes that the above circumstances add further authority to the FBU policy of opposing PFI buildings within the UK Fire & Rescue Service and demands that the Executive Council produce an up to date record of all PFI buildings within the Service which lists the facilities provided for women at each.

This record to be produced by the 2007 Women's AGM.
NWC

Resolution 6 – CONTROL STAFFING

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to investigate the present staffing levels within controls including secondments out of the controls and their replacements. Many controls are now running at less than minimum staffing, and the level of experience is diminishing. This is also placing an onerous burden on staff to work overtime, which is often above the 24 hour a month (averaged over a 6 month period) national agreement. This report to be completed within 6 months and should include recommendations on how Officials should deal with its findings.

CSNC
AS AMENDED BY GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Record of Decisions

Resolution 8 – NATIONAL HR STRATEGY DOCUMENT

This Conference notes with concern the National HR Strategy Document developed by CFOA. CFOA claims that this strategy document has been developed through the collaborative work of HR Practitioners and supported by external stakeholders. It is notable that the objectives of this document are at odds with a range of FBU policies.

Amongst the issues of concern raised by the document are multi-level entry, a role for the private sector in provision and delivery of service and means of attracting leaders from other sectors. Such issues have significant implications for officer/middle management members.

CFOA recommends this document to key National stakeholders and intends that it will be the subject of regular reports to the Practitioners Forum.

This Conference demands that the Executive Council develops a strategy with ONC Representatives, aimed at challenging the objectives of this document that do not comply with FBU policies and ensuring that FBU policies are not swept aside whilst CFOA's recommendations are foisted on and adopted by various FRS's.

ONC

Resolution 14 – ELECTIONS FOR OFFICIALS

This Conference demands that elections for officials when due, must run in accordance with the FBU rule book.

HAMPSHIRE

Resolution 16 – EDUCATION

Conference demands that in line with future education programmes that training be provided to officials at all levels to assist them in dealing with all aspects of membership issues.

**TYNE & WEAR
AS AMENDED BY TAYSIDE**

Resolution 17 – TEXT MESSAGING

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council to carry out a feasibility study into the use of mobile phone text messaging, as an additional means of communicating with our members. This study should consider the cost, and all other practical issues regarding the implementation of this communication medium.

A report should be submitted for consideration by the Executive Council no later than 6 months after the close

of this Conference. Details of the report, and the Executive Council decision on whether or not to implement this particular measure should be circulated to the members by means of an All Members circular as soon as possible following the Executive Council meeting at which the report is discussed.

CLEVELAND

Resolution 20 – HEALTH & SAFETY HANDBOOK

This Conference demands that the Executive Council secure production of an up to date FBU Health and Safety handbook containing guidance on current Health and Safety legislation for FBU Health and Safety representatives. This handbook to be produced within 6 months of the close of this Conference.

**STAFFORDSHIRE
AS AMENDED BY CLEVELAND**

Resolution 22 – NEW EQUIPMENT/PRACTICES

This Conference demands that it becomes national policy that all brigade committees challenge any detrimental changes to working practices/equipment before they are introduced into their workplace and ensure that any such practices/equipment are used by members within the appropriate role map only.

**NORTH YORKSHIRE
AS AMENDED BY TYNE & WEAR**

Resolution 26 – MOTORING EXPENSES

With the massive increase in petrol prices and insurance premiums; this Conference demands an immediate review by the Executive Council, with a view to increasing the out-of-pocket motoring expenses paid to lay officials and representatives.

SHROPSHIRE

Resolution 28 – UNION FINANCES

Annual Conference acknowledges the improvements in the Union's financial position over the last 2 years in placing the Union finances in a stronger position to face the continuous campaigning and work as a trade union in representing our membership in all spheres of the workplace, and political, trade union, socialist and international movement.

Our acknowledgement is not without concerns of the vital elements of budgeting and accountability of our finances to ensure a strong long-term financial basis required to continue as an important and independent organisation within the Fire and Rescue Service and trade union movement.

Record of Decisions

Following the 2002 'Red Book' of the FBU Financial structure it is 5 years since this was agreed we therefore instruct the Executive Council to review the Union finances and the current levels of all Union expenditure to report and make recommendations to the 2008 Annual Conference on the Union's current and future financial strategy.

BERKSHIRE

Resolution 31 – EDUCATION

Conference acknowledges the good work undertaken by the National Education Committee and recognises that the education of our members is crucial in giving them the skills and confidence to be effective Union Officials.

However, Conference has real concerns that there is no coherent education strategy that links together training in regions and nationally or any audit trail to evaluate training in place.

Conference therefore demands that the Executive Council develop a national strategy that links in with the regions to enable the Union to embark on a comprehensive training policy and with sufficient budget to achieve results. This strategy to be developed and in place by Conference 2008.

DERBYSHIRE

Resolution 35 – FBU STRATEGY

Conference instructs the Executive Council to bring to Annual Conference 2008 a detailed, long term strategy for dealing with the Fire Service management's approach to consultation, negotiation and the modernising agenda.

There is a need for a detailed debate and clear strategy on how the FBU is to tackle national and local employers in seeking to achieve the objects of the Union (Rule 3 of our Rule Book) in order to best represent the interests of FBU members and the public, both of whom are under attack by today's modern management.

The long term strategy brought to Conference 2008 will be debated in closed session.

The Executive should produce a detailed guidance document for all Officials within 6 months of Conference 2008 outlining what the strategy is and how all the recommendations should be implemented.

WILTSHIRE

AS AMENDED BY GLOUCESTERSHIRE

COMPOSITE A [Incorporating Resolutions 9, 18, and 36] ULF PROJECTS

This Conference reaffirms support for and acknowledges the work of the FBU Learning Fund Projects in providing learning opportunities for hundreds of our members. This is another positive benefit of FBU membership and places the FBU at the forefront of lifelong learning within the UK Fire and Rescue Services. Conference recognises that the current funding is due to finish in April 2008 with no guarantee of further funding being made available post 2008.

Conference believes that in order to sustain the spirit of Annual Conference 2004 Resolution 65 and to mirror the recent moves within the TUC Union Learn, we need to act quickly to ensure the sustainability of the Lifelong Learning agenda beyond April 2008.

Conference therefore instructs the Executive Council to set up a working group utilising Education Sub-Committee members, ULF Project Committee members and Regional Education Officers to look at how lifelong learning is mainstreamed into the FBU at all levels.

To this end Conference instructs the Executive Council to form a working group from members of the Executive Council Education Sub-Committee, FBU ULF Project Committee and Regional Education Officers to produce a report for no later than 1st October 2007 for the Executive Council. This report should include proposed recommendations on how lifelong learning is embedded.

**MOVED BY LONDON
SECONDED BY FIFE**

Record of Decisions

NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL

Resolution 37 – RETENTION OF WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS

This Annual Conference notes that some brigades spend a lot of time and thought on encouraging women to become firefighters because of the Government's targets, but very little work is done to ensure that women remain in their chosen profession. Complacency towards breaches of equalities policies is the normal response. Complaints are difficult to make, and when made are often dealt with poorly. Women leave rather than put up with an isolating and unfriendly environment.

Women have been full-time firefighters in the UK for more than 23 years. Many women have joined the Service, but numbers of women are still very low due to the Fire and Rescue Service being unable to retain women. Retention rates are not being made available to the Fire Brigades Union.

We therefore demand that the Executive Council negotiate within the NJC an effective strategy for brigades to create workplaces which women are happy to work and remain in.

NWC

Resolution 38 – FLEXIBLE DUTY SYSTEM

This Conference calls upon the Executive Council and Brigade Officials to resist any attempts by the national and/or local employers from implementing any proposals to detrimentally alter the flexible duty system supplement as currently contained within the Scheme of Conditions of Service (Sixth Edition).

ONC

AS AMENDED BY SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Resolution 42 – REDUCTION OF PAY

This Conference is concerned by the number of members who are being placed on half pay, and then no pay, during periods of prolonged sickness absence.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a national study of the number of members in each Fire and Rescue Authority who are currently on either half pay or no pay, while on sickness absence.

Following this national study an assessment should be made of the number of Authorities who are failing to use discretion before reducing the pay of staff.

The result of the study should form the basis of a best

practice guidance note for Officials to refer to when lodging appeals against any pay reductions for our members. This guidance should be produced within 6 months of Conference ending.

This issue should then be raised with the Employers at the NJC.

CLEVELAND

AS AMENDED BY GLOUCESTERSHIRE & NORTHERN IRELAND

Resolution 43 – FLEXIBLE WORKING

Conference welcomes the introduction of the right to ask for flexible working which aims to help employers and workers agree on work patterns that suit everyone. However since the introduction of this legislation the application of this in the UK Fire and Rescue Service appears to be patchy with brigades applying criteria, considered to be relevant, differently. Others seem to be unaware of the responsibility to deal with such requests timeously and fairly or of their obligation to supply not only a reason for refusal but an explanation of why the request was refused.

Therefore, Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a survey of brigades to ascertain the types of flexible working that have been requested and the experiences of members making these requests with a view to preparing a document which can highlight good practice and aid FBU officials in assisting members making such requests.

FIFE

Resolution 44 – COMPETENCE

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to negotiate a nationally agreed system for carrying out workplace assessment for the purpose of assessing competence.

STAFFORDSHIRE

Resolution 45 – RANK TO ROLE STRATEGY GROUP

Brigades and Regions around the country are at different stages of the rank to role process and the in depth understanding of this topic by local officials will have a great bearing upon the future of all FBU members both financially and otherwise.

Due to this important subject having contractual implications on FBU members, Conference demands that the Executive Council immediately form a Strategy Group to advise, assist and provide education for Officials involved in the local Consultation/Negotiation of the Rank to Role process.

HUMBERSIDE

Record of Decisions

Resolution 48 – NJC

Conference deplores the apparent lack of commitment from Fire and Rescue Employers both nationally and locally to the principle role and effective functioning of the NJC, as evidenced by the disgraceful actions of Merseyside Employers resisting the involvement of NJC Joint Secretaries, and their reluctance to convene regular NJC meetings.

Conference demands that the Executive Council seek from the Employers a firm commitment to the primacy of the NJC and to ensure that its constitutional aims, structures, resourcing and the role of the NJC Joint Secretaries are fully supported.

**DORSET
AS AMENDED BY TYNE & WEAR**

Resolution 49 – ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

To allow for a consistent approach in local negotiations by Brigade Officials; this Conference instructs the Executive Council to produce national guidelines on minimum levels of payments for additional responsibility allowances.

SHROPSHIRE

Resolution 50 – MATERNITY UNIFORM

This Annual Conference notes the progress made by some Fire & Rescue Services in updating their maternity policies using the FBU Model Maternity policy as guidance, but is concerned that the issue of maternity uniform is still a big problem for our women members whilst pregnant.

Conference believes that if the Fire & Rescue Service is serious about wanting to retain and recruit more women, then it needs to seriously look at the provisions of such uniform and ensure that where good policies are written that they are implemented correctly.

Conference calls on all Brigade Officials to revisit the Brigade's Maternity policy with their management and when doing so to emphasise the importance of correct fitting maternity wear for our women members to be available through all stages of pregnancy. We further call upon the Executive Council to report progress of this issue back to Annual Conference 2008.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Resolution 51 – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING

This Annual Conference notes that many members who are primary carers are being restricted from partaking in some Fire and Rescue Services training courses due to management's lack of consideration for childcare. We believe that all our members should be given the same opportunities for training without the individual incurring unnecessary childcare costs.

Conference calls on all Brigade Officials to enter into negotiations with management to ensure that childcare is given serious consideration when planning and offering courses to employees. We further call upon the Executive Council to report this issue back to Annual Conference 2008.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Resolution 54 – PUBLIC HOLIDAY SHIFTS

Conference deplores the actions of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, and any others, who intentionally remove operational fire cover on public holiday shifts below that which is set within the local IRMP, in order for firefighters to be instructed not to attend for their rostered duty.

Conference condemns this practice as being one that removes fire cover in order to result in a reduction of an overall wage bill for a period that attracts premium rates of pay, a practice that is immoral, unsafe and provides a lesser Fire and Rescue Service for the community at that period.

Conference instructs that Brigade Committees oppose such reduction in fire cover by all means necessary up to and including strike action.

MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 56 – ITOP/ADC

This Conference acknowledges the changes in the promotion procedure, with the abolition of the examination system and practical assessment to the introduction of the ITOP and ADC system. However, Conference believes that these systems are fundamentally flawed with no consistency of application or practical assessment of potential and are surrounded in secrecy. All this has a potentially detrimental effect on the health and safety of our members.

This Conference demands that the Executive Council set up a Working Group to look at the new systems of advancement throughout the country and report back to Conference 2008 with recommendations to take forward to our employers.

DERBYSHIRE

Record of Decisions

Resolution 58 – SECOND CONTRACTS

This Conference condemns Fire Authorities attempting to introduce second contracts for firefighters, to undertake additional duties that fall within their role maps. Whilst performing these duties firefighters should be covered by all Grey Book Conditions of Service, including overtime payments.

Therefore, this Conference demands the FBU ensures that all duties that are undertaken by firefighters and that are within their role maps are covered by the Grey Book.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 59 – SECONDARY CONTRACTS

Conference demands that operational Trainers/Instructors, who have a commitment to train Local Authority firefighters and control staff, are employed under and in accordance with the current NJC 'Scheme of Conditions of Service' (Grey Book). This is unless it is specialist training being given and that the skills are not currently available in-service.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 61 – PAY FORMULA

Conference instructs the Executive Council to ensure the current pay formula that links annual pay rises in the Fire Service to the average pay rise achieved by the Associate, Professional and Technical group of workers is retained. Conference also insists that this be agreed without prejudice to any existing pay, conditions or national agreements.

We urge all members to support whatever action is necessary to achieve this, up to and including strike action.

**STRATHCLYDE
AS AMENDED BY NORTHERN IRELAND**

Resolution 66 – PAY

Conference demands that the negotiations around the 2007 pay rise attracts only increased payment for existing duties that are set out in the current rolemaps. Conference demands that any future pay award/formula is not in any way linked with further additional duties the employers may wish members to undertake.

LINCOLNSHIRE

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Resolution 68 – TRAINING INDUCTION

This Conference instructs the Executive Council to raise with the relevant committees a realistic minimum training induction programme for all Firefighter/Control staff. The minimum 3 weeks that some brigades currently undertake is totally unrealistic due to increasing workloads and complexity of Firefighter/Control duties.

CSNC

Resolution 69 – INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

This Conference demands that the Executive Council ensures the views of officer members are represented in any review of the incident command system.

To that end this Conference calls on the Executive Council to constitute a working group to consider any proposals to amend the current incident command system.

ONC

Resolution 71 – WORKPLACE RELATED CANCERS

Conference demands that the Executive Council mounts a national campaign to look into the dangers of workplace related cancers in the UK Fire Service with a view to having them included on the industrial illness list. This campaign should include a survey of all UK Fire Services to establish the possible causes of contracting cancer in the workplace.

TYNE & WEAR

Resolution 72 – FIREFIGHTING AT SEA

The 1998 Executive Council Policy Statement (as amended by Lothian & Borders, Cleveland and Strathclyde on Firefighting at Sea, including the use of helicopters) provides Brigade Committees with comprehensive guidance on what the minimum requirements should be achieved for Firefighting at sea.

However, in light of the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Marine Incident Response Group (MIRG) being formed Conference must now recognise that Firefighting at Sea is no longer an issue that Brigade Committees can deal with effectively without assistance from the Executive Council.

Therefore, Conference demands that the Executive Council's Sub Committee on Firefighting/Helicopters at Sea is reformed with a view to reviewing FBU policy with consideration of MIRG.

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

Record of Decisions

Resolution 73 – HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Conference instructs the Executive to carry out a full audit of all FBU Health & Safety policies, this to be completed by no later than Annual Conference 2008. On completion these should be promulgated to all Brigades who should then confirm whether they have achieved the various policies.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Resolution 74 – AERIAL TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS

Conference views with concern the ongoing practice of the siting and usage of aerial telecommunication mast installations and associated ancillary equipment on Fire Service premises and workplaces. Conference further recognises the scientific research that indicates that such installations and equipment are potentially unsafe and could cause health problems for members on affected workplaces and accordingly demands that the Executive Council produce a report in time for Conference 2008 which will include findings that take into account the research regarding the relevant health risks members may be exposed to. Such a report to be undertaken with the assistance of Regional Committees.

MERSEYSIDE

Resolution 75 – TARGETED RESPONSE VEHICLES

This Conference condemns the use by Fire Authorities of Targeted Response Vehicles with 3 riders to deal with small FDR3 and car fires. This practice does not allow safe systems of work and adherence to Technical Bulletin 1/97 and CAST planning scenarios.

This Conference therefore demands that the Fire Brigades Union work with the Health and Safety Executive to ensure that this practice is stopped.

CHESHIRE

Resolution 76 – CREWING LEVELS

Recent IRMP proposals have clearly demonstrated Fire Authorities' willingness to compromise existing safe operating procedures in the pursuance of financial savings. A typical example of this has been proposals to reduce normal crewing levels to four riders.

This Conference reaffirms its commitment that fire appliances responding as the pre-determined initial response to incidents that may require the use of breathing apparatus (BA) teams, must under normal circumstances be crewed with five riders to ensure that adequate BA entry control procedures are implemented. In addition, and in light of these recent attacks on firefighters safety, this Conference instructs the

Executive Council to make representation at national level, to ensure that guidance governing BA safe operating procedures, as detailed in Technical Bulletin 1/97, are not compromised and that Fire Authorities IRMP's adhere to national standards.

LANCASHIRE

Resolution 77 – IRMP'S

Conference instructs the Executive Council to explore the possibilities of the FBU's Health and Safety Committee working closely with the Health and Safety Executive with reference to IRMP's throughout the UK Fire and Rescue Service. The Executive Council to produce a report on this matter by the end of December 2007.

NORTHUMBERLAND

Record of Decisions

TRADE UNION AND LABOUR MOVEMENT

Resolution 79 – CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT REPS

Conference recognises the urgency of the need to tackle climate change and therefore calls upon the Executive Council to do the following:

1. To press the Government to give statutory rights to Trade Union Environment Reps to inspect, be consulted and trained similar to rights enjoyed by Trade Union Safety Reps.
2. To take a lead within the Trade Union movement by becoming environment champions by, for example, performing environmental audits of all FBU offices and practices and by raising awareness within the membership, the wider Trade Union movement and the TUC itself of the challenges and possible solutions to tackle climate change.
3. To press Unionlearn to provide appropriate training for reps and officers.
4. To participate in Earth Day (April 22) every year and to encourage all TUC affiliated Trade Unions to do the same.
5. To encourage Employers to work in partnership with the FBU and The Carbon Trust with the aim of making every Fire and Rescue workplace carbon neutral within two years.

DEVON

- Provide guidance for FBU members in understanding the psychology of rage and anger and protection techniques which do not involve physical restraint.
- Place the success of the STUC/Executive campaign and resources available on the negotiating table with Fire and Rescue Service managements.
- Promote the success of the trade union movement in bringing about real change for workers in the workplace.

FIFE

Resolution 80 – VIOLENCE AT WORK

Conference commends the work of the STUC and the Scottish Executive led by a seconded FBU official on tackling violence at work. This has resulted in an unprecedented response from all sectors involved in serving the public and provided a platform for similar work in other areas of the UK and Europe.

However, Conference notes that Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland, apart from superficial acknowledgements have not participated and prefer to condemn attacks on firefighters rather than enter into proactive attempts to train staff in protection techniques including the psychology of rage and how to manage conflict.

Conference believes that attacks on any FBU member or anyone serving the public are unacceptable. However until staff are properly trained and protected these attacks will continue and our members placed in unacceptable danger.

Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council to use the resources provided by the Scottish Executive to:

Record of Decisions

PENSIONS

Resolution 83 – PENSION ABATEMENT

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.

Conference instructs the Executive Council that if this cannot be done by negotiation then legal action should be considered.

KENT

Resolution 84 – ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENT

This Conference is concerned that many Fire Authorities are using the Disability Discrimination Act, and the amendments to The Firefighters Pension Scheme implemented in September 2004 to prevent our members retiring on ill health.

Members who have no prospect of returning to operational duty are being forced to either return to work in unsuitable day duty positions, or are being faced with the prospect of resigning from the Service following prolonged periods on half pay, or no pay, with subsequent loss of pension entitlements.

Conference instructs the Executive Council to carry out a national study into the scale of this problem and to produce a report within 6 months of the close of this Conference.

CLEVELAND

Resolution 85 – SURVIVORS CLAUSE

Conference demands that negotiations are commenced in order to achieve the addition of a 'survivors clause' into the Firefighters Pension Scheme.

NORFOLK

AS AMENDED BY MERSEYSIDE

Emergency Resolutions Carried ...

Emergency Resolution No. 1 PAY

Conference notes with concern the statement to the House of Commons on 1st March 2007 from the Chancellor regarding public sector pay. The government's intention to restrict public sector pay increases to below 2% for 2007 will increase hardship in our public services.

In relation to the Fire and Rescue Service, this approach follows four years of rapid change. Conference believes the Fire and Rescue Service would benefit from a period of stability and notes that on this basis the Executive Council has lodged our formal claim with the employers that the pay formula agreed under the 2003 Pay and Conditions Agreement should be applied for 2007.

Should the employers choose to de-stabilise the service by refusing to pay the increase determined by the operation of the formula without detrimental changes to conditions of service, then the Executive Council are instructed to fully consult with members on all options, including strike action.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Emergency Resolution No. 2 DOWNGRADING

Annual Conference condemns the decision of Cornwall County Council of 13 February 2007 to approve a budget that if implemented will see the downgrading of the only two 24 hour crewed fire stations in Cornwall to day crewed.

Annual Conference recognises that this decision is based on finance and not due to any other factor, which is contrary to the concept and guidance of Integrated Risk Management Planning.

Annual Conference recognises the increased risk to firefighters and communities from any downgrading of fire stations and calls upon the Executive Council to raise, as a matter of urgency, this issue with the Minister with responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Annual Conference also congratulates Fire Brigades Union members in Cornwall in their opposition to these dangerous proposals and offers full support to any action they take in defence of these cuts in service.

Moved by CORNWALL

Record of Decisions

Emergency Resolution No. 3 IRAQ – GFIW SUPPORT

The trade union movement in Iraq is the victim of a continuing campaign of targeting, torture and murder of its officials. As recently as March 2007 the General Secretary of the Mechanic Workers Union was abducted and murdered.

We call upon conference to condemn the continuing kidnappings, torture and murder of Iraqi Trade Union Officials, and demand that the General Secretary meets with the General Federation of Iraqi Workers so that the Fire Brigades Union may assist morally and materially in the following:

1. To make representation to the Iraqi authorities to ensure this recent outrage is fully investigated and that those responsible are detained and brought to justice.
2. That immediate steps are taken to ensure that the deliberate targeting of trade unionists is stopped.
3. To expose the inexplicable hostility from the US and Iraqi military forces towards Iraqi Trade Unionists.
4. That we join the GFIW in their bid for an apology for these unprovoked attacks, the return of confiscated items and financial compensation for damages caused.
5. That we assist the GFIW in making representation to those responsible for the freezing of all union assets.
6. That the Executive Council through the International Committee initiate a structured strategy to support the Trade Union movement in Iraq in consultation with the GFIW.

Moved by GREATER MANCHESTER

Emergency Resolution No. 4 THE TRAGIC LEGACY OF AGENT ORANGE

Conference applauds the continuing works of the Medical and Scientific Aid to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia Association.

We also congratulate them on their continuing fight to seek financial support for victims and families still affected by the dispersal of Agent Orange.

In February 2007 MSAVLC requested support from trade unions for a campaign for generous support from governments. Generous financial support of a level that only governments can give. This to aid in adapting housing and provide equipment to enable the moderately disabled as much independence as possible. In turn aid will lighten the crippling financial burden on those families affected.

This Conference demands that the General Secretary and the Executive Council assist MSAVLC, by whatever means possible, to generate the political pressure to ensure the campaign succeeds.

Moved by GREATER MANCHESTER

Emergency Resolution No. 6 FIRST/CO-RESPONDING

Conference welcomes the decision of the Liverpool Employment Tribunal of the 1st May 2007, regarding actions taken against the FBU by former members who were subject to internal union discipline for continuing to co-respond in breach of FBU policy. Conference also welcomes the Court of Appeal decision of the 28th February 2007 regarding the contractual position with regard to co-responding.

Conference again re-affirms Conference policy on first/co-responding as agreed by Conference in 2001, 2004 and 2005.

Moved by MERSEYSIDE

Emergency Resolution No. 7 SECONDARY CONTRACTS

Conference demands that the Executive Council investigate the pension implications for members who were issued a secondary contract after 6th April 2006, and seek advice for Brigade Officials where Fire Authorities propose to issue a single contract containing more than one role map. This information must be obtained as a matter of urgency and reported back to all Officials as soon as possible.

Moved by HEREFORD & WORCESTER

Record of Decisions

Motions Remitted to the Executive Council ...

duties. Failure for such a payment to be made will result in personnel withdrawing from undertaking any water rescue responsibilities.

STRATHCLYDE

Emergency Resolution 9 IQMP GUIDANCE

Conference notes the recently circulated guidance for Consultation regarding IQMPs.

Conference rejects:-

- (1) Any guidance which could result in member's employment being terminated on the grounds of medical capability.
- (2) Any move to compulsorily redeploy any member in a job outside their rolemap as an alternative to termination of employment.

Conference instructs the EC to consult with Brigade Committees before any agreement is reached on the Guidance with a view to opposing industrially if necessary.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Resolution 33 – MEMBERSHIP

Conference instructs the Executive Council to review membership eligibility and membership fee rates, to ensure recent changes within the British Fire Service are taken into account.

On completion of this review a paper will be prepared and submitted for Conference 2008.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Resolution 62 – WATER RESCUE

Conference demands that the Executive Council secure a national agreement that ensures all Fire Authorities seeking to introduce or already providing a water rescue service adhere to the following principles.

- A water rescue service is only introduced after full consultation with and the agreement of Fire Brigades Union Officials.
- All training courses for boats/personal water craft are to Royal Yachting Association standard.
- An agreed standard for a) all communications when working on in or near water and b) for all personal and other protective equipment.
- The provision of appropriate and safe access slipways.
- An agreed inoculation programme and regular health checks to protect against water borne diseases, for all members working on water.
- Nationally agreed procedures for training and attendance in/or around water rescue incidents.
- An agreement to pay additional responsibility payments to those personnel who undertake such

Record of Decisions

Motions Defeated ...

Resolution 19 – REGIONAL
MANAGEMENT BOARDS

STAFFORDSHIRE

Resolution 55 – UNSOCIAL HOUR'S
PAYMENT

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Resolution 82 – AFFILIATION

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Composite Resolution B
[Incorporating Resolutions 23 & 24]
– ANNUAL CONFERENCE CANCELLING

WEST YORKSHIRE

Composite Resolution C
[Incorporating Resolutions 10 & 21]
– NON STATUTORY ELECTIONS
– POSTAL BALLOT

HUMBERSIDE

Executive Council Proposed Alterations to the Rules of the Union

RULE 30 (3) (b)

Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund

CARRIED

RULE 30 (4) (a)

Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund

CARRIED

RULE 30 (4) (b)

Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund

CARRIED

RULE 30 (5) (a)

Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund

CARRIED

RULE 30 (5) (c)

Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund

CARRIED

RULE 30 (5) (d)

Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund

CARRIED

RULE 30 (5) (e)

Accident Injury and Death Benefit Fund

CARRIED

Record of Decisions

Brigade Committees Proposed Amendments to Standing Orders of Annual Conference

Standing Order 4 Gloucestershire

CARRIED

Standing Order 4

The Standing Orders Committee shall issue to the Secretary of each Brigade/National Sectional Committee and delegates a Final Agenda containing all motions and amendments, together with amendments to rules, accepted for inclusion by the Standing Orders Committee in accordance with Standing Order No. 5. These documents, together with delegates' names shall be issued not less than 14 days before Conference is due to commence. Any resolution which has been rejected by the Standing Orders Committee shall be circulated to each Brigade and National Sectional delegation, prior to Conference, with the Standing Orders Committee's reason for rejection.

Standing Order 15 Gloucestershire

CARRIED

Standing Order 15

The method of voting at each Conference shall be voice or show of hands, at the discretion of the President. Where, however, a division is challenged by delegates to Conference, voting shall be by card. Before Conference commences the leader of each Brigade Committee delegation shall be supplied with a list showing the voting figures to be used for Trade votes, Political Fund votes and for Accident and Injury Fund votes. Such figures shall record a vote equal to the membership figure of each Brigade as shown on FBU Membership records at 31st December each year. The leader of each Brigade Committee delegation shall be supplied with a voting card, indicating the name of the Brigade which shall be recorded by tellers. When a card vote is to be taken a warning device will be operated and sufficient time will be allowed for delegates to return to the Conference hall. The voting figures will be recorded and tallied by computer. The President will receive a record of the total of the votes in favour, votes against and votes not cast.

Final Appeals Committee

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	Gavin Barrie
Region 2	Jimmy Quinn
Region 3	Steve Hedley
Region 4	Paul Matthewman
Region 5	Neil Thompson
Region 6	Dave Limer
Region 7	Chris Wood
Region 8	Chris Howells
Region 9	Tennyson Turney
Region 10	Joe MacVeigh
Region 11	Mark Simmons
Region 12	Danny Whitelock
Region 13	Phil Jordan
CSNC	Sue Offland
ONC	Allan Guest
NWC	Kerry Baigent
B&EMM	Samantha Samuels
G&L	
NRC	Harry Cotter

Record of Decisions

Firefighter Representatives

REGION/SECTION	NAME
Region 1	Ken Ross
Region 2	Tony Maguire
Region 3	Dave Turner
Region 4	Sean Cahill
Region 5	Steve Harman
Region 6	Dave Limer
Region 7	Chris Wood
Region 8	Roger Perry
Region 9	Kevin Napier
Region 10	Paul Embery
Region 11	Danni Jones
Region 12	Eduardo Cardoso
Region 13	Val Hampshire
CSNC	Sharon Peverett
ONC	John Allen
NWC	Samantha Rye
B&EMM	Leroy Phillpotts
G&L	
NRC	Harry Cotter

Election of Standing Orders Committee

Re-Elected

Brother Stewart Kinnon (Strathclyde) for 4 Annual Conferences

Elected

Brother Phil Jordan (Gloucestershire) for 1 Annual Conference



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 2007

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

REGION 1

Mr R Robertson
4th Floor
52 St Enoch Square
Glasgow G1 4AA

REGION 2

Mr J E Barbour
3 Windermere Park
Belfast
Northern Ireland BT8 6QZ

REGION 3

Mr R A McLean
12 Whytrigg Close
Seaton Delaval
Whitley Bay
Tyne & Wear NE25 0TG

REGION 4

Mr S Starbuck
58 Cheriton Avenue
Adwick-Le-Street
Doncaster
South Yorkshire DN6 7BT

REGION 5

Mr W A Gee
288 Stockport Road
Cheadle Heath
Stockport SK3 0PY

REGION 6

Mr D A Green
21 Tennyson Avenue
Gedling
Nottingham NG4 3HJ

REGION 7

Mr D Whatton
19 Micklehome Drive
Alrewas
Burton-on-Trent
Staffs DE13 7AT

REGION 8

Mr M R Smith
4 Ffordd Yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
Bridgend CF35 5LJ

REGION 9

Mr K Handscomb
28 Atlantic Square
Station Road
Witham
Essex CM8 2TL

REGION 10

Mr I Leahair (Acting)
6 Canon Avenue
Chadwell Heath
Romford
Essex RM6 5RR

REGION 11

Mr E Thornton
23 Northlands Avenue
Orpington
Kent BR6 9LX

REGION 12

Mr P Miller
C/o FBU Region 12 Regional Office
Fire Station
St Mary Street
High Wycombe
Bucks HP11 2HE

REGION 13

Mr T McFarlane
19 Trescothick Drive
Oldland Common
Bristol BS30 9TB

CSNC

Ms S Eames
18 Blackberry Close
Waterlooville
Hants PO8 0PU

ONC

Mr J C Ford
74 Woodford Road
Bramhall
Stockport
Cheshire SK7 1PB

WOMENS COMMITTEE

Ms V A Knight
12 Harbord Road
Liverpool L22 8QG

B&EMM

Mr M Nicholas
William Rust House
52 Beachy Road
London E3 2NS

GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

Mr S Brown
C/o UCATT
Abbeyville Road
Clapham
London SW4 9RL

RETAINED

Mr T Mitchell
49 Kirkton Street
Carlisle
Lanarkshire ML8 4AD

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL SECRETARIES

REGION 1

Mr K Ross
48 Landemer Drive
Rutherglen
Glasgow G73 2TB

REGION 2

Mr A Maguire
14 Bachelors Walk
Lisburn
Co Antrim BT28 1XJ

REGION 3

Mr S A Gregg
118 Guildford Road
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS6 0SW

REGION 4

Mr S Cahill
9 Marsh Street
Rothwell
Leeds LS26 0AG

REGION 5

Mr K P Brown
34 Doctor Fold Lane
Birch
Heywood
Lancs OL10 2QE

REGION 6

Mr D J Limer
4 Grandfield Avenue
Radcliffe On Trent
Nottingham NG12 1AL

REGION 7

Mr T L Nutting
58 Dorchester Way
Clifford Park
Coventry CV2 2JA

REGION 8

Mr G Mayos
4 Gwalia Road
Tywyn
Gwynedd LL36 9DH

REGION 9

Mr G Noakes
21 McDivitt Walk
Eastwood
Leigh on Sea
Essex SS9 5UD

REGION 10

Mr J MacVeigh
John Horner Mews
Off Frome Street
London N1 8PB

REGION 11

Mr J Parrott
117 Hythe Road
Brighton BN1 6JR

REGION 12

Mr K Horan
62 Bourton Road
Buckinghamshire MK18 1BE

REGION 13

Mr J Drake
158 Muller Road
Horfield
Bristol BS7 9RE

CSNC

Ms S J Offland
10 Carnoustie Close
Wirral
Merseyside CH46 6JH

ONC

Mr D Beverley
Twin Waters
Tan Lane
Little Clacton
Essex CO16 9PT

WOMENS COMMITTEE

Ms K Baigent
19 Trescothick Drive
Oldland Common
Bristol BS30 9TB

B&EMM

Mr C St Paul
112 Misbourne Road
Uxbridge
Middlesex UB10 0HP

GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

Mr P Carberry
44 George Street
Leighton Buzzard
Bedfordshire LU7 3JX

RETAINED COMMITTEE

Mr P Preston
20 Victoria Road
Old Colwyn
Colwyn Bay
Clwyd LL29 9SN

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL CHAIRS

REGION 1

Mr J Duffy
Dumbledykes
Eassie
Forfar DD8 1SR

REGION 2

Mr J Quinn
71 Dalebrook Park
Finaghy
Belfast BT11 9EW

REGION 3

Mr A J Blacklee
10A Harper Terrace
Middleton-St-George
Nr. Darlington
Co. Durham DL2 1JR

REGION 4

Mr I Murray
13 Munroe Close
Hull HU8 0AX

REGION 5

Mr N Thompson
The Lighthouse
Lower Mersey Street
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire CH65 2AL

REGION 6

Mr T D Murray
60 Ethel Street
Northampton NN1 5ES

REGION 7

Mr A N Larose
80 High Street
Newchapel
Stoke on Trent ST7 4PT

REGION 8

Mr R Perry
7 Llannon Road
Upper Tumble
Llanelli
Dyfed SA14 6BW

REGION 9

Mr T Turney
37 Lowick Gardens
Westwood
Peterborough PE3 7HD

REGION 10

Mr G Fielden
27 Normanhurst Road
Borough Green
Kent TN15 8HU

REGION 11

Mr D Jones
14 Pembroke Court
Pembroke Avenue
Hove
East Sussex BN3 4AB

REGION 12

Mr D Whitelock
1 Neal Close
Gerrards Close
Bucks. SL9 7AW

REGION 13

Mr P A Jordan
38 Goddard Way
Tuffley
Gloucester GL4 0YA

CSNC

Mr J Whittaker
69 Wansbeck Gardens
Hartlepool
Cleveland TS26 9JH

ONC

Mr A P Guest
11 St Saviours Hill
Polruan
Fowey
Cornwall PL23 1PR

WOMENS COMMITTEE

Ms D Feltham
8 Rokescroft
Basildon
Essex SS13 3EA

B&EMM

Ms S Samuels
12 Waterhead Close
Wolverhampton WV10 8NX

GAY & LESBIAN COMMITTEE

Ms Y Dubois
Flat 3
4 Preston Park Avenue
Brighton
East Sussex BN1 6HJ

RETAINED COMMITTEE

Mr D H Cotter
37 Waveney Avenue
Ballymena
Co. Antrim BT43 5AZ

Officers of the Fire Brigades Union

REGIONAL TREASURERS

REGION 1

Mr G K Barrie
30 Warrington Drive
Edinburgh
Scotland EH3 5LY

REGION 2

Mr S Boyd
60 Derrymore Meadows
Bessbrook
Newry
Co. Armagh BT35 7GA

REGION 3

Mr S E Hedley
8 Ambergate Close
Newbiggin Hall
Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 4AG

REGION 4

Mr J Pagan
29 Skye Croft
Royston
Nr Barnsley
South Yorkshire S71 4EL

REGION 5

Mr S Shelton
26 Arbury Avenue
Stockport
Cheshire SK3 0QA

REGION 6

Mr P Wilkins
The Old Post Office
176 Main Street
Stanton Under Bardon
Markfield
Leicestershire LE67 9TP

REGION 7

Mr C Wood
60 Lotus Avenue
Knypersley
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire ST8 6PS

REGION 8

Mr S M Jenkins
Millwood
Millbank Lane
Johnstown
Carmarthen SA31 3HW

REGION 9

Mr J Brown
28 Marlborough Road
Southend on Sea
Essex SS1 2UA

REGION 10

Ms L Smith
Flat 4 Ashby Mews
Prague Place
Brixton
London SW2 5EP

REGION 11

Mr S Beckwith
35 Regency Court
Sittingbourne
Kent ME10 1BZ

REGION 12

Mr D Dymond
151 Wykeham Road
Reading
Berkshire RG6 1PW

REGION 13

Ms V Hampshire
40 Jasmine Way
Trowbridge
Wiltshire BA14 7SW

ACTING NATIONAL TREASURER

Mr M R Smith
4 Ffordd Yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
Bridgend CF35 5LJ

List of Delegates

NATIONAL BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY MEMBERS COMMITTEE

	B Amos
	G Brooks
	L Philpotts
	W Simpson
Secretary	C St Paul
Chair	S Samuels

NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN MEMBERS COMMITTEE

	T Coe
	P Griffith
	K Gutherson
Secretary	P Carberry
Chair	Y Dubois
Regional Official	P Gallagher

NATIONAL RETAINED COMMITTEE

	R Arrand
	B Dewis
	J Haizelden
	M Jones
Secretary	P Preston
Chair	D H Cotter

NATIONAL WOMENS COMMITTEE

	E Carr
	H Harrison
	S Rye
	J Winrow-Jones
Secretary	K Baigent
Chair	D Feltham

REGION 01

Central	G McQuade A Paterson
Dumfries & Galloway	W Brown C Irving
Fife	G Birtley S McCabe
Grampian	L Murray A Paterson
Highland & Islands	E MacGregor F Parr W Sanderson
Lothian & Borders	B Banks D Christie A Fulton R Winters
Strathclyde	J Cairns B Coats G Hannah A Kane M McCulloch J McFadden A Miller J Scot P Wilson S Wilson
Tayside	J Malone R Norrie
Secretary	K Ross
Chair	J Duffy
Regional Officials	G Barrie J Docherty R Robertson

REGION 02

Northern Ireland	K Barr P Cummings J Heron D McPoland L Rowan O'Neill
Secretary	A Maguire
Chair	J Quinn
Regional Officials	S Boyd F Rooney

List of Delegates

REGION 03

Cleveland	D Howe S Watson T Whitfield
Durham	R Morton K Shaw
Northumberland	C James G Wilson
Tyne & Wear	R King A Noble J Rae K Walters
Secretary	S A Gregg
Chair	A J Blacklee
Regional Officials	S Hedley P Wilcox

REGION 04

Humberside	D Collingwood A Oldfield P Smith
North Yorkshire	I Watkins G Willis
South Yorkshire	A Deakin V Gregory A Hayter G Wilkinson
West Yorkshire	J Durkin A Imrie S Lofthouse N Sutcliffe D Williams M Wilson
Secretary	S Cahill
Chair	I Murray
Regional Officials	P Matthewman J Pagan

REGION 05

Cheshire	J Darling A Price D Williams
Cumbria	D Greenway M Hind
Greater Manchester	D Allsey A Anderson T Fensome I Johnson J Roberts D Rogerson V Salmon
Lancashire	T Cavanagh K Deacon M Gallagher S Harman I McGill
Merseyside	M Dunne K Gore K Hughes L Skarratts N Young
Secretary	K P Brown
Chair	N Thompson
Regional Official	S Shelton

REGION 06

Derbyshire	M Ferron R Furnace P Poole
Leicestershire	R Palmer P Tyrrell G Vaux
Lincolnshire	J Curry C Tuck
Northamptonshire	S Mason G Mitchell
Nottinghamshire	S Ainley A Cairney P Coates
Secretary	D J Limer
Chair	T D Murray
Regional Officials	T Neal P Wilkins

List of Delegates

REGION 07

Hereford & Worcester	C Horsburgh S Laughher
Staffordshire	S Hill B Moss R Moss
Shropshire	A Brown M Lamb
Warwickshire	T Conn N Henderson
West Midlands	A Dennis C Downes M Fellows P Gallagher M Henn R Jones D Starnes
Secretary	T L Nutting
Chair	A N Larose
Regional Officials	P Goulden C Wood

REGION 08

Mid & West Wales	R Curran C Howells S Philips R Sheehan
North Wales	C Burns M Davies J Purser
South Wales	P Davies S Fleming C Griffiths M Holly J Jenkins L Jones
Secretary	G Mayos
Chair	R Perry
Regional Official	S Jenkins

REGION 09

Bedfordshire	J Clarke J Hollamby
Cambridgeshire	K Napier R Nightingale
Essex	P Adams D Barnard B Hooper S Kerridge M Rogers
Hertfordshire	S Duncan B Read A Smith
Norfolk	N Day P Greeves
Suffolk	S Collins A Vingoe
Secretary	G Noakes
Chair	T Turney
Regional Officials	J Brown A Clarke

REGION 10

London	S Chapman J Day M Denney G Edwards P Embery S Harper K Lane R Lockwood E Lynch D Thomas Y Timms
Secretary	J MacVeigh
Chair	G Fielden
Regional Officials	I Leahair L Smith

REGION 11

Kent	T Green J Ripley H Sawyer J Saynor I Young
Surrey	N Burchell D Jones

List of Delegates

	J Tigwell
East Sussex	M Dale S Huggins
West Sussex	F Bishop M Cambers
Secretary	J Parrott
Chair	D Jones
Regional Officials	S Beckwith M Simmons

REGION 12

Berkshire	E Cardoso M Stollery
Buckinghamshire	R Matthews G Richardson
Hampshire	C Jordan L Ramsey P Trew
Isle of Wight	M Deacon P Fletcher
Oxfordshire	A Middleton A Sillman
Secretary	K Horan
Chair	D Whitelock
Regional Officials	J Barton D Dymond

REGION 13

Avon	C Jackson A Sedgemore C Taylor
Cornwall	T Nottle M Tremellen
Devon	D Chappell T French B Walker
Dorset	K Adams C Stanley
Gloucestershire	P Jordan M Tully
Somerset	L Redman A Woollaston
Wiltshire	P Lawler J Tray
Secretary	J Drake
Chair	P A Jordan
Regional Officials	V Hampshire K Herniman

CONTROL STAFF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

	K Smith P Watts J Westwood
Secretary	S J Offland
Chair	J Whitaker

OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

	K Barr D Cain P Poullais
Secretary	D Beverley
Chair	A P Guest



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

FOUNDED 1918

Affiliated to the Trades Union Congress
and Trades Councils

Index

Index

INDEX OF PROCEEDINGS

(R) = Resolution
(CR) = Composite Resolution
(ER) = Emergency Resolution

A

Addresses	
Barber, B. (General Secretary TUC)	16
Gregory, R. (Sutton Trades Council)	3
Lenarez, R. (Venezuela National Transport Workers Federation)	57
Mann, T. (Mayor of Southport)	3
Marshall, P. (International Guest Australia)	102
Shaw, M. (President)	8
Smith, A. M.P. (Under Secretary of State)	24
Accident & Injury Fund (R)	19
Additional Responsibility Allowances (R)	39
Aerial Telecommunication Masts (R)	113
Affiliation (R)	64
All Different All Equal (R)	99
Annual Conference Cancellation (C R)	93
Appointment of Tellers and Scrutineers	4
Appreciations	
Andrews, A.	75
Clapham, M.	75
Cole, S.	95
Dismore, A.	75
Evans, G.	102
Fisher, A.	75
Floral Hall Staff	95, 135
Gallagher, P.	135
Head Office Staff	95, 109, 135
Henderson, N.	135
Henn, M.	135
Hill, S.	135
Johnson, I.	135
Laugher, S.	135
Maguire, T.	135
McDonald, J.	135
McDonnell, J.	75
Nightingale, R.	135
Pearson, T.	135
Price, R.	135
Standing Orders Committee	135
Stewards	95, 135
Turney, T.	135
Walters, K.	135

B

Bucket Collection	55, 57
-------------------	--------

C

Chief Scrutineer	39, 60, 72
Climate Change and Environment Reps (R)	77

Competence (R)	38
Control Staffing (R)	93
Crewing Levels (R)	114

D

Downgrading (ER)	51
------------------	----

E

Early Day Motion 727	75
Education (R)	130
Education (R)	131
Education (R)	132
Elections for Officials (R)	96
Equal Opportunities for Training (R)	45

F

Fairness at Work	99
F.B.U. Strategy (R)	125
Firefighting at Sea (R)	104
Flexible Duty System (R)	118
Flexible Working (R)	4

H

Health & Safety at Work Committee	106, 107
Health & Safety Handbook (R)	108
Health & Safety Policies (R)	112
High Volume Pumps	115

I

Ill Health Retirement (R)	81
Industrial Disputes	85, 86, 87
Integrated Risk Management Planning	129
International Issues	72, 73, 74
Incident Command System (R)	110
Iraq-GFIW Support (ER)	21
ITOP/ADC (R)	126
IQMP Guidance (ER)	83

M

Maternity Uniform (R)	120
Membership (R)	102
Mileage Allowance (R)	40
Motoring Expenses (R)	14

N

National H.R. Strategy Document (R)	128
N.J.C Constitution Review	52
Negotiating Bodies (R)	121
New Equipment/Practices (R)	116
N.J.C. (R)	119
Non Statutory Elections – Postal Ballots (CR)	96

P

Parliamentary Group Report	74
----------------------------	----

Index

Pay (ER)	28
Pay Formula (R)	31
Pay Formula (R)	31
Pay (R)	35
Pension Abatement (R)	79
PFI (R)	127
Policy Statement on Finance	11
Political Strategy Policy Statement	61
Public Holiday Shift (R)	47

R

Race Equality Issues (R)	89
Race Equality Scheme (R)	91
Rank to Role	121
Rank to Role Strategy Group (R)	122
Resolution Advisory Panel	121
Reduction of Pay (R)	42
Regional Management Boards (R)	124
Retention of Women Firefighters (R)	52
Rule 30 Alteration	18

S

Second Contracts (R)	48
Secondary Contracts (R)	49
Secondary Contracts (ER)	50
Standing Order Committee Election	39, 60
Support to Politicians/Organisations (R)	65
Survivors Clause (R)	82

T

Targeted Response Vehicles (R)	113
Text Messaging (R)	101
The Tragic Legacy of Agent Orange (ER)	23
Training Induction (R)	127

U

Union Learning Funds	132
ULF Projects (CR)	133
Union Finances (R)	15
Unsocial Hour's Payment (R)	36

V

Victimisation (R)	87
Violence at Work (R)	75

W

Water Rescue (R)	116
Woolstenholmes, P.	4, 18
Workplace Related Cancers (R)	110

Z

Zimbabwe Dignity Period Campaign	74, 135
----------------------------------	---------

Index

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

A

Adams, K. Sis.	119, 131
Ainley, S.	38
Allsey, D.	82
Amos, B.	91
Anderson, A.	98, 112

B

Barber, B. (General Secretary TUC)	16
Barr, K.	128
Birtley, G.	44, 76

C

Cain, D.	110
Cairns, J.	32, 35
Cavanagh, T.	49
Christie, D. Sis.	53
Chappell, D.	10, 20, 32, 35, 43, 72, 73, 78
Coates, P.	36
Collins, S.	86
Collingwood, D.	77
Cummings, P.	19, 21
Curry, J.	35

D

Dark, A. (Assistant General Secretary)	40, 41, 44, 47, 101, 115, 120
Day, N.	82
Davies, M.	69
Davies, T.	133, 134
Deakin, T.	64, 71
Dennis, A.	37
Downes, C.	34
Duffy, J.	63
Duncan, S.	75
Dunne, M.	67, 85, 126

E

Embury, P.	96, 97
------------	--------

F

Fensome, T.	23
French, T.	52, 75
Fulton, A.	104
Furnace, R.	126

G

Gallagher, M.	13, 115
Gallagher, P.	65, 87, 92
Gregory, R. (Sutton Trades Council)	3
Gregory, V.	54, 92
Griffiths, K.	132

H

Harman, S.	40, 41, 42, 73, 115
Harper, S. Sis.	54
Harrison, H. Sis.	45
Hayter, A.	47, 111, 122
Henn, M.	14, 39, 60, 72
Hill, S.	108
Howe, D.	81
Huggins, S.	106, 107
Hughes, K.	47, 48

I

Imrie, A.	32
Impey, J. Sis.	53

J

Jackson, C.	31, 79
James, C.	129
Jenkins, J.	68
Jordan, C.	96, 114
Jordan, P.	22, 42, 43, 88, 94

K

King, R.	110
----------	-----

L

Lamb, M.	14, 40
Laugher, S.	46, 50
Lawler, P.	125
Lenarez, R. (Vice President of the National Transport Workers Union)	57
Lofthouse, S.	19

M

Macveigh, J.	84
Mann, T. (Mayor of Southport)	3
McFadden, J.	66
McLean, A. (Vice President)	35, 69
Maguire, T.	30, 64, 70, 85
Marshall, P. (Australia)	102, 104
McGhee, J. (National Officer)	38, 46, 91, 99, 100, 105, 107, 108, 110, 112, 113, 115, 118, 121, 123, 126, 128, 130
Miller, A.	99, 100
Mills, D. (National Officer)	60, 74, 80, 82, 83, 131, 132, 134
Mitchell, G.	83, 84, 102
Moss, R.	38, 124

N

Noble, A.	69, 98, 130
Nottle, T.	105

Index

O

Oldfield, A. 97, 98

P

Peeverette, S. Sis. 127
 Poole, P. 132
 Poullais, P. 118
 Powell, D. 88
 Purser, J. 24

R

Rae, J. 100
 Read, B. 86
 Rye, S. Sis. 46, 127

S

Sarkoviak, T. Sis. 120
 Salmon, V. Sis. 21, 74, 89
 Smith, M. (Acting National Treasurer) 9, 11
 Saynor, J. 80
 Scott, J. 63
 Shaw, M. (President) 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,
 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27,
 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42,
 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57,
 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73,
 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89,
 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104,
 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116,
 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127
 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135
 Shelton, S. (Chair of Standing Orders) 4, 7, 18, 28, 39,
 57, 60, 85, 95
 Simpson, W. 7, 55, 90, 91
 Smith, A. M.P. (Under Secretary of State) 24
 Smith, L. Sis. 6, 67
 Smith, P. 122
 Stollery, M. 15
 Sutcliffe, N. 111

T

Thomas, D. 81
 Tremellen, M. 51
 Trew, P. 88
 Tully, M. 121

W

Walker, B. 60, 121
 Watkins, I. 116, 117
 Watson, S. 42, 87, 101, 121
 Westwood, J. Sis. 93
 Whitfield, T. 108
 Williams, D. 48, 94, 95, 113, 114
 Willis, G. 94

Winters, R. Sis. 33, 68, 69, 123
 Wrack, M. (General Secretary) 3, 4, 7, 11, 14, 15, 18,
 20, 22, 24, 27, 28, 34, 36, 37, 49, 51, 52, 59, 61, 70,
 77, 79, 84, 87, 89, 95, 96, 98, 102, 104, 122, 124,
 125, 129

Y

Young, I. 7
 Young, N. 88, 95, 113

