

NATIONAL FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
13th December 2005

15:00 hours

Venue

Fire Service College

Present:

Ronnie King (Vice Chair)
Les Fielding (Secretary)
Peter Armstrong (BASA)
Alan Brinson (EFSN)
Adrian Brown (ESFRS)
Lynsey Chatfield (LFCDA)
Chris Gill (Viking)
John Russell (Strathclyde FRS)
John Sparke (Merseyside FRS)
John O'Leary (Staffs. FRS)
John Streets (FSC)
Ken Bishop (Tyco)
Steve Bryant, (MAWW FRS) **SB**
Pete Wignall (Notts. FRS)
Steve Mills (WMFRS)
Andy Cloke (SYFRS)
Martin Eastman (SYFRS)
Bernadette Hartley (EFSN)
Iain Hunter (WFB)
David Pember-Finn (H&W FRS)
Steve Wain (Oxfordshire FRS)
Nigel Reynolds (Oxfordshire FRS)
Duncan Stainthorpe (West Yorks FRS)
Simon Barratt (Viking) **SB**
Tony Lloyd (Homesafe)
William Kinnoull, The Earl of Kinnoull
(Homesafe)
Suzzane Taylor (Homesafe)
Marie Engstrom (Homesafe)
Mark Foster (Homesafe)
Joe M^CCafferty (Tyco) **JM**
Stuart Yates (Homesafe)

Apologies:

RK Peter Holland (Chair)
LF Peter Wise (LFCDA)
PA Dave Beverly (FBU)
AB Norrie Davies (Dumfries and Galloway FRS)
ABrn Matthew Smith (Zurich)
LC Jeremy Williams (Bucks. FRS)
CG John Wildish, Colin Dodds (Kent FRS)
JR Jo Fowler (ESFRS)
JS Brian Mellor (Kirklees DC)
JO'L Paul Hardy (Herts. FRS)
JS Stewart Kidd (BASA)
KB Sire George Pigot (FSA)
Graham Blight (Avon FRS)
PW
SM
AC
ME
BH
IH
DPF
SW
NR
DS
TL
WK
ST
ME
MF
SY

Agenda:

1 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Introductions.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting – 20th September 2005.

3 Matters Arising.

- 3.1 Item 4.2 Parliamentary Seminar – The Chair reported that invitation letters have now gone out giving an outline of the programme explaining how the seminar will cover all aspects of fire safety in order to provide a holistic view point demonstrating the role that fire sprinklers have to play.
- 3.2 Item 6. - Reports from London Fire Brigade and West Mids re: Data base of Fires
- 3.3 Item 7. - Guidance Document and Booklet are available to download from NFSN Web Site
- 3.4 10.11 Overlooked action point needs to be addressed.

4 Vice Chair/Treasurers Report.

- 4.1 NFSN Financial Report – The Chair (Treasurer) explained the NFSN Balance sheet to the meeting.
- 4.2 The Chair informed the meeting that in the New Year we would be invoicing members for subscriptions for 2006.
- 4.3 The Chair thanked all those who contributed to the network both with finances and with practical support. PA questioned the contribution from the sprinkler industry and discussed how companies could be better motivated to contributing to the NFSN.

Action: LF to write to PA to obtain a wider list of companies to get their support, PA is prepared to write a note to attaché to invoices to sprinkler companies.

5 Secretaries Report

Personal Contribution:

As secretary of the National Fire Sprinkler Net work I see my role as a facilitator to enable information ideas and the hard work of our members to be shared for an increased understanding of the benefits of sprinkler protection and to achieve a common approach to promoting the life safety, environmental and economic impact from fire in all types of buildings and structures.

Over the last 6 years I have been passionately contributing to the sprinkler debate in the residential field and in raising the awareness of active fire suppression on tunnels formerly in the public sector Fire Service and currently in the private sector. In that time have seen a gradual shift towards the understanding and acceptance of the life safety benefit of sprinklers.

Meetings:

During the last year the NFSN has held 4 Successful meetings keeping us at the forefront of the sprinkler lobby, through those meetings and with the support of our stakeholders the NFSN has continued to lead in the drive for:

- Sprinkler Protection in Schools.
- Residential Sprinklers
- Sprinkler protection in warehouse premises.

The Network has also been supportive of other networks and associations, i.e. promoting the campaign for sprinklers in Hotels and Fire Suppression in Road Tunnels that is being led by the EFSN.

The Last 12 Months:

BSI FSH 18/2 Committee - Paul Hardy has yet again been an excellent ambassador representing Network on the BSI FSH 18/2 Committee for the last year ensuring we have a voice on the preparation of the water mist standard and ongoing development of domestic sprinkler system design.

Web Site – Thanks to the continued efforts of Ken Bishop and Glenn Bailey the NFSN Web Site has been completely redeveloped, contributions from members have also helped develop the site into a useful source of information on sprinklers, we need to keep the case studies and news items coming in to continue to share our understanding of sprinkler protection with the wider community.

Reports of Constituent Organisations – as in previous years this is the cornerstone of what the NFSN is about, by sharing our; successes, failures, hopes and aspirations it prepares us all for the challenges that we face in educating the building policy decision makers.

The issue of ongoing maintenance of systems has been raised a number of times in the last year, it is clear that this is a key subject that will need the ongoing attention of NFSN members to ensure continued functionality of systems that have been installed, particularly in domestic properties.

Join Initiatives:

The NFSN has played an instrumental role in joint initiatives by the sprinkler industry. This includes the recent consultation response to BB100 and the Approved Document B which resulted in a coordinated response from the industry.

Partnership with the EFSN that has recently boosted the campaign for sprinklers in schools, with our joint encouragement, more and more local education authorities now having a policy to fit sprinklers in new and refurbished schools.

In February this year the issue of National Policy and Guidance was raised at the NFSN Meeting, I am pleased to report that this was taken up by CFOA in the capable hands of John Hoey who has done an excellent job moving this issue forward with the help of NFSN Members.

Early next year the NFSN will join other industry stakeholders to look at the environmental impact of fire to produce a coordinated response to environmental planning proposals, this is something I personally feel very strongly about and see the increased provision of sprinklers having an important role to play in reducing the environmental impact of fire.

The Future:

The NFSN exists because it pulls together of those of us in the fire industry who are enlightened to the human, social, economic and environmental benefits that the provision of active fire fighting systems can give. It exists not for financial gain but to promote the aspirations of its members to make our communities safer from fire. This is a noble aim that we should all be proud of.

We all know, however, that there is still a job for us to do, as not everyone in society have our enlightened view. There have been big steps towards achieving the goals of the NFSN but we should not rest on our laurels.

We look forward to a successful seminar tomorrow and to a high profile Parliamentary Seminar in February.

The Schools campaign in partnership with the EFSN will continue to have a high profile in the coming year.

We also look forward to the publication of the findings of the study on low cost sprinkler systems and to an increased impetus in promoting domestic and residential systems as a direct result of this, working in partnership with CFOA, the EFSN, FSA, BAFSA, FOBFOA, Politician such as Rosie Cooper and others' - Network Patron Nick Ross will front a campaign for sprinkler protection in the home, with the aim of providing sprinkler protection in all new and refurbished dwellings housing the sectors of society most vulnerable from fire.

I thank all members for their contribution and support over the last 12 months and look forward to another successful year hopeful that our contribution the BB100 and the ADB will have proved fruitful in gaining better recognition of the use of fire sprinklers in the revised building regulations guidance.

The Chair asked the meeting to acknowledge the work of the secretary over last twelve months.

6 Election of NFSN Officials

- 6.1 Chair – Peter Holland, Proposed J. Streets, Seconded Steve Bryant – Unanimous
- 6.2 Vice Chair – Ronnie King, Proposed N. Reynolds, Seconded S. Bryant – Unanimous
- 6.3 Secretary – Les Fielding, Proposed S. Mills, Seconded S. Bryant – Unanimous
- 6.4 Treasurer – Ronnie King, Proposed T.Lloyd, Seconded J. M^CCafferty – Unanimous
- 6.5 Executive Members – Jon O'Neil, Peter Armstrong, Dave Beverly, Paul Hardy, Proposed P. Armstrong, Seconded S. Mills – Unanimous

7 Review of Approved Document B Fire Safety

The NFSN consultation was sent in November, any members wishing to see a copy of the consultation submission please contact the secretary.

8 BB100 Fire Safety provisions for schools

The NFSN consultation was sent in October, any members wishing to see a copy of the consultation submission please contact the secretary.

RK discussed the ADB and BB100 consultation meetings that took place and how the consensus had been achieved by those who contributed resulting in a coordinated response from the fire sprinkler industry and lobby.

With regard to the review of building regulations and BB100, BH informed the meeting that one of the first things that was done when the NFSN was established, was to press Government to look into how the economic cost of fire is calculated. The Government did this and produced a report which more than doubled the annual cost of fire from £3.5 billion to over £7 billion by including factors such as the cost to the National Health Service, the cost of each death and the cost in lost jobs. However there is still not enough weighting given to the cost to business and business interruption costs and the costs to the environment. This is pretty obvious after the Hertfordshire oil depot fire of earlier this week in which the consequential cost of environmental damage and costs to business were massive.

Studies in other countries which more comprehensively examine the consequential cost of fire, e.g. in Denmark and Canada are coming up with figures of around 1% of GDP. This is an enormous sum and we should be sending this message out to all our contacts.

9 Reports of Progress - Constituent Organisations.

- 9.1 Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, Jeremy Williams - Local Authority Development Frameworks – See Paper [Appendix A](#)

Jeremy's paper was read by those attending the meeting and discussed at length, LF summarised how NFSN members could take the points raised in the paper forward:

1. Through the CFOA AWSS (Active Water Suppression Systems) Working Group
2. Pushing for clearer central guidance through the ODMP following the launch of low-cost sprinklers systems for residential property in 2006

- 9.2 Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing – Brian Mellor reports on the retrofitting of sprinklers in sheltered premises in the Marsden and Huddersfield areas.

He pleased to report steady progress with Retro fitting sprinklers in our sheltered premises. Kirklees tenants have been surprised on how neat the sprinkler heads are and how the pipe work has been hidden, without spoiling their decorations.

Down the common corridors new suspended ceiling have been fitted to allow all services to be hidden. In certain cases due to restricted height the sprinkler heads are below the surface and chrome guards have been fitted. Using side wall sprinklers and carefully directing pipe work into flats via storage areas also helped at ground floor levels. On the first floor the sprinkler heads were able to be hidden completely due to space above the ceiling levels.

It is pleasing to know that we can satisfy our tenants with their decoration and home comforts, and put in place to an existing building the ultimate in fire safety - a residential sprinkler system to BS 9251.

With the majority of sprinkler installations the main shut off valve is usually near the front main entrance accessible to emergency services and signed accordingly with notices.

The weekly testing of the system require an overflow pipe and Brian has found careful attention is required to discharge water to a safe area to prevent freezing and icing up in an area where elderly persons enter the premises.

At present Kirklees are completing a sprinkler installation in Marsden, Huddersfield. Brian reports that he heard the contractor talking about a meter for the water supply to the sprinklers. He informed him the Water Board could not charge for water to extinguish fires, but on saying this I thought he had better check further. Brian contacted Yorkshire Water and requested advice and was told that direct mains fed water supply to sprinklers would not be charged, however if it was tank fed there would be a charge. This may be of interest to members to check their own area.

- 9.3 East Sussex Fire Rescue Service - Adrian Brown - Adrian raised the issue of web information on sprinklers. His question is how many Fire & Rescue Service Web sites have information on sprinklers? If you search under sprinklers on a FRS web site how many hits do you receive? The ODPM web site only returns 20 many FRS web sites will return none. Is this something that should be addressed and what if any are the opinions of this meeting.

- Link on FRS web sites to NFSN site **Action:** LF to ask Peter ask if he can write to all CFO's to ask if a link could be put a link on their respective websites.

- 9.4 MAWW Steve Bryant reported success in with schools with an increasing no of schools now being protected in MAWW
- 9.5 Avon – Post meeting apologies and contribution from Graham Blight please see [Appendix B](#)

10 Any Other Business

- 10.1 SW how can pressure be put on ODPM for developers to comply with BRegs with regard to provision of sprinklers in retail premises over 2,000 m2

JS responded that this is ultimately this is the responsibility of the Building Control officer and as long as the functional requirements have been met sprinklers may not always be required. Stating that this is an area that is still developing with no clear guidance for the ODPM to say that an alternative means of compliance is right or wrong.

Action: SW will draft a paper for the NFSN and this will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

- 10.2 BH commented that no other country in Europe is contributing to the sprinkler debate in the way that the NFSN are and congratulated all those who contribute.
- 10.3 PA reported that BASA is now BAFSA (British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association) JS informed the meeting that BAFSA had produced an information sheet dispelling the myths of sprinklers, **Action:** LF to obtain and put on the web site.

- 11 Date of Next Meeting – LF to communicate 2006 meeting dates with minutes March meeting will be in Leeds at Armstrong Priestley date in March to be arranged.**

An Opportunity to Promote Fire Sprinklers

Having been tasked on behalf of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service to consider the local impacts of regional and local housing strategies. It has become apparent that the implications range nationally to the Fire Sprinkler industry as a whole.

This paper represents the opinion of BFRS and our strategy in relation to the matter, a view that we would encourage to be considered by all in the NFSN.

Consultation has recently been conducted by regional assemblies, on district and sub-district housing allocations.

Having now decided upon these figures, local authorities are now considering spatial options; where to put new developments in a combination of brown and green field sites, by council led consultations.

Various supporting documents will be put out for public comment including developers' contributions and standards drawing together partnerships of local authorities and organisations.

For an example of scale the housing strategy and timeframe for Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale anticipates an average housing build rate of 4040 dwellings per year between 2006 and 2026.

Nationally there is a commitment to increase the rate of house building from 150,000 per year today to 200,000 over the next decade.

This scale of development nationally and locally will represent a significant opportunity for fire sprinklers to be promoted alongside other considerations to balance the future of fire safety provisions (prevention, protection and response).

- Stakeholders including fire services and private business should consider contacting local councils to identify how they can be involved in the development proposals and planning consultations
- Consultation regards developers contributions at local level, should be considered as a means of Fire Services obtaining funding for sprinkler systems in order that these may be provided to 'vulnerable' premises
- Consultation on developers standards should be pushed to include sprinkler systems in new developments, particularly those expected to house vulnerable groups, schools etc
- FRS may wish to consider trade-offs in relation to their IRMP, when sprinkler provision covers developments; reducing overall infrastructure costs due potentially reduced fire cover requirements and resulting in potentially reduced developers contribution
- Consultation on sustainability should consider sprinkler provision, as a method of increasing property life, reducing environmental impacts (CO emissions etc), protecting communities and facilities

- Consultation offers an opportunity to raise awareness and push forward the expectations of councils beyond building regulation standards

It is therefore put to the NFSN that stakeholders in the fire sprinkler debate should engage with local planning authorities, to establish how local plans will be affected and how they can influence the debate in order not to miss this 'golden opportunity'.

I will be most interested to hear any views that you may be able to offer regards this matter to progress our local case, and will be most obliged to assist in any way that I can should you require further details.

Jeremy Williams

Planning Coordinator – Community Safety

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Email: jwilliams@bucksfire.gov.uk



Press Release

Friday 9 December
09.00hrs

Fire service announces result of “Aardman” fire investigation as news breaks that sprinklers will be fitted in four new Bristol schools

Avon Fire & Rescue Service has welcomed news that sprinklers will be fitted in four schools in Bristol when they are rebuilt in a multi-million pound programme. The news comes on the same day AF&RS is able to reveal the cause of the Silverthorne Lane fire, which happened in October.

Bristol City Council's cabinet last night (Thursday 8 December) approved a proposal within the "Building Schools for the Future" programme to fit integral sprinkler systems in each of the four new built city schools - Brislington Enterprise College, Hartcliffe Engineering Community College, Speedwell Technology College and Whitefield Fishponds Community School.

AF&RS has been campaigning for the schools to be fitted with sprinklers, especially in the light of recent devastating fires such as the "Aardman" fire in Silverthorne Lane, where the property was not fitted with sprinklers.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Bill Feeley said: "AF&RS commends this excellent decision to safeguard the future of these schools. The fact that Bristol City Council has made this decision is great news and will protect the pupils and the school property for years to come.

"We are delighted to be able to work with the council, Fire Authority and the public on this. This is an informed, forward-thinking decision. Following the Aardman fire, it can be seen that by making this investment, the council will never have to face that type of situation or scale of loss and utter devastation."

Bristol City Council executive member for children's services, Cllr Jos Clark, said: "The safety and welfare of schoolchildren in Bristol is our top priority and sprinkler systems have been judged to be appropriate here. We are delighted to have approved the use of sprinklers for these rebuilt schools."

The result of the fire investigation into the cause of the Silverthorne Lane fire is due to be announced at the joint press conference this afternoon with ACFO Bill Feeley and Cllr Jos Clark.

Note to editors

A press conference is due to be held at Temple Fire Station, Temple Back, Bristol, at 2.30pm on Friday 9 December. ACFO Feeley and Cllr Clark will be available for interview about the sprinklers. AF&RS sprinkler demonstration unit will also be available to highlight the effectiveness of installing a sprinkler system. An announcement about the cause of the Silverthorne Lane fire will follow.

In line with Government guidelines, a thorough risk assessment is carried out at each school to establish the most effective form of fire protection in each case. When sprinklers are not used there are many safety measures in place including alarms, early warning sensors linked to the fire brigade, fire doors and exits and smoke and temperature detectors to ensure the safety of children in schools.

If you have any queries please call the press office on 0117 926 2061 Ext 216 or 07977 467634.

Wenna Coombs
Press and Communication Officer
Avon Fire & Rescue Service

Headquarters
Temple Back
Bristol
BS1 6EU

Tel: 0117 9262061 ext 217
Duty mobile: 07977 467634
email: wenna.coombs@avonfire.gov.uk
Fax: 0117 9250980