

# NATIONAL FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

## MEETING

31<sup>st</sup> October 2006

10:30 hours

### Venue

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service Training Centre,  
Beaverhill Road, Handsworth, Sheffield. S13 9QA

### Present:

Peter Holland (Chair)  
Ronnie King (Vice Chair)  
Les Fielding (Secretary)  
Paul Hardy (Herts. FRS)  
Peter Reading (HMPS)  
Ken Bishop (Tyco)  
Ian Gough (BAFSA)  
Alan Brinson (EFSN)  
Julian Parsons (Wiltshire FRS)  
Duncan Stainthorpe (West Yorks FRS)  
Phillip Hales (Cheshire FRS)  
Steve Bryant (MAWW FRS)  
Mark Bennet (South Wales FRS)  
Steve Mills (WM FRS)  
Ian Lacey (Surrey FRS)  
Cllr Robert Wilkinson (LGA)  
Simon Moore (Surrey FRS)  
Roger Brason (SY FRS)  
Mac Eaton (H & W FRS)  
Adrian Brown (ESFRS)  
Baz Fox (Northants FRS)  
Brian Mellor (Kirklees DC)  
John Moore (Armstrong Priestely)  
Joe Mcafferty (Tyco)  
Bernadette Hartley (EFSN)  
Alan Gibson (D & D FRS)  
John Hoey (SYFRS)  
Alan Bell (NYFRS)  
Peter Cogley (Lancs FRS)  
Andy Cloke (SYFRS)

### Apologies:

**PMH** Michael Clapham MP  
**RK** Rosemarie Everton (UCLAN)  
**LF** Nick Ross  
**PH** Kevin Groom (IoM FRS)  
**PR** Pete Wignall (Notts FRS)  
**KB** Adair Lewis (FPA)  
**IG** Jeremy Williams (Bucks FRS)  
**AB** Sir George Pigot (FSA)  
**JP** Chris Gill (Viking)  
**DS** Simon Barrat (Viking)  
**PHale** Nigel Reynolds (Ox FRS)  
**SB** John O'Leary (Staffs FRS)  
**MB** Norrie Davies (DumGal FRS)  
**SM** Gerry Campbell (DumGal FRS)  
**IL** Gordon Cooke (City University London)  
**RW** Stewart Kidd (BAFSA)  
**SMo** John Wildish (Kent FRS)  
**RB** Peter Armstrong (BAFSA)  
**ME** Dave Beverly (FBU)  
**ABr** Jo Fowler (ESFRS)  
**BF** Paul Johnson (T&W FRS)  
**BM**  
**JM**  
**JMc**  
**BH**  
**AG**  
**JH**  
**ABe**  
**PC**  
**AC**

## 1 Apologies and Introductions.

The chair paid tribute to former South Yorkshire Councillor, Barbara Belcher who sadly died earlier this year; he advised the meeting that Ronnie King had sent a letter of condolence to her family on behalf of the NFSN.

## 2 Minutes of Last Meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

2.1 Accuracy (11.2 (f)) changed post the minutes being issued.

### 3 Matters Arising

- 3.1 (3.2) Blakes Parliamentary year Book will be online within the next 4 weeks link will be put on NFSN Web Site as soon as it is available.
- 3.2 (10.1) Bucks; draft Supplementary Planning document circulated.
- 3.3 (11.6) West Mids.; Community Safety guidance note circulated to FRS members.

### 4 Chair's Address / Report

- 4.1 Letter to times – Following an article in the Times regarding the Joseph Rowntree foundation homes for the elderly, which discussed a list of safety provisions for the elderly that did not include the provision of sprinklers. PMH has responded with the following:

*Regarding the plan to provide appropriate housing to cater for the rising elderly population in society. Whilst I applaud all the 16 requirements specified by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to improve the designs of such housing in the future I was dismayed that no mention had been made of improved fire protection. It is a proven fact that people over 65 are at a much greater risk of dying or being injured by fire than the rest of the population.*

*The current Building Regulations only require smoke alarms in new houses which is fine providing the person(s) are capable of 1) hearing the alarm and 2) getting out of the house unaided. Clearly the older a person becomes the less likely they are to be able to respond to a smoke alarm quickly enough to save their lives.*

*There is a modern solution in the form of residential fire sprinkler protection which would provide both an alarm and water to extinguish a fire. If designed in from the start there is no reason why they cannot be installed for less than £1000. There are almost as effective as having a firefighter in every room.*

*As our society continues to grow older the least we can do is provide fire safe accommodation*

This raised a number of comments regarding the miss-interpretation of how sprinklers operate in the media i.e. in Casualty and Spooks. PMH felt this is worth writing a strongly worded letter to the Director General of the BBC.

- 4.2 BB 100 – The Chair reported that the delay in the production of BB100 is because the vast majority of consultation responses contained further recommendations for the greater use of sprinkler systems; this is supported by the Schools Minister and being given further consideration.

AB reported that the value of including sprinklers in new schools has now been acknowledged as being in the region of 2.5% of the build costs. There is broad support now politically and in the Fire Community for schools to be provided with sprinkler protection.

- 4.3 Design Guide Update – The Lancashire FRS / NFSN Guide for sprinklers in schools has now been adopted as the CFOA Guidance document. PH is currently reviewing this document for accuracy.

RW reported that the LGA safer communities' board now has focus is on sprinklers in schools and sprinklers in elderly accommodation.

IG reported that BAFSA is getting a lot of enquiries from Higher Education Colleges and Universities for protection of both the educational building and residential student accommodation.

ABr Reported that US Universities now indicate on their web sites if they are sprinkler protected or not.

## **5 Vice Chair/Treasurers Report.**

- 5.1 NFSN Accounts – Balance sheet has now been revised to more accurately reflect the NFSN accounts; e.g. Secretarial, travel & conference, Printing & Stationary and equipment, as requested previously.

This quarter shows expenditure of £4,338.63, with no receipts leaving a balance of £10,328.60

- 5.2 Funding - 13 Fire & Rescue Services who have previously contributed, have not paid which equates to £2,600.00 lost revenue and 20 sprinkler (or associated) companies similarly not paid this year equating to a further £10,000.00 lost revenue.

The Treasurer referred to the previous funding offer from Homesafe in relation to the secretarial costs, that was paid in 2005 and the current position regarding these costs being funded.

To seek further support the Treasurer has been going through the commercial lists and begun to contact companies to follow-up where agreeable, with a reminder invoice and statement. Members present were invited to check with the Treasurer the status of their organisations subscription.

The Executive felt that there would be merit in seeking to attract further membership from other sprinkler manufacturers who had not previously subscribed. To this end the Treasurer and Secretary are preparing a suitable promotional leaflet to send to prospective members who have not previously been members of the network.

The Treasurer then spoke about the BAFSA press release, and the dissolution of the FSA, with a single trade association, representing the industry. BAFSA Have agreed that any surplus from the dissolution of the FSA should be transferred to either the NFSN or EFSN.

- 5.3 The Treasurer informed the meeting that Parliamentary Seminar is being planned for the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 – Provisionally titled; “Automatic Fire Sprinklers Save Lives and Property Don’t They?”, however, this is subject to comment and possible change.

The seminar is in the initial stages of planning and a number of options / invitations had been discussed, with the Schools and Building regulations issues, probably being determined before Feb 2007 the emphasis might well be on residential sprinklers.

Former NFSN Patron, Schools Minister Jim Knight MP has been invited to speak along with Lord Saltaire, Matt Wrack General Sec FBU, and Patrick Cox Senior Fire Tutor FS College who have also agreed to contribute. (See Patrick’s article on Page 10 of the October Issue of the Fire Prevention / Fire Engineers Journal.

LFEPA has been asked to have a major role at the seminar, given the major house building schedule in the Greater London area and a response is awaited.

A number of proposals were made from the meeting which will be considered in the seminar planning.

NFSN F&RS Members wishing to attend the seminar should liaise with CFO’s to be included in the invitations, as there will be a charge that will include the Churchill room, and reception afterwards, with Ministerial Address in the Strangers dining room

## 6 Secretaries Report

- 6.1 Assisted LFEPA re: Temporary Fire Sprinkler Systems – Email circulated a good response Members asked for their views.

IG confirmed that this was based on a self contained water mist system and is in use in Merseyside, West Yorkshire, West Midlands and Hertfordshire. Wiltshire has made decision not to recommend their use due to corporate responsibility issues. SM said that they are being used in the West Midlands as a short term temporary measure where people have been identified as vulnerable from fire, always followed up with a full assessment to identify if there is a need for a full sprinkler system.

IG voiced BAFSA concern on the increased use of temporary systems as these undermine the current basic standards; however, if used in the manner explained by SM it would seem sensible.

PMH reminded the meeting of the video produced following the West Yorkshire trails in 1999 Century of death by fire; KB confirmed that this was still available from Tyco.

BH reminded the meeting of the Strathclyde presentation at the July meeting where CFD modelling has been used to demonstrate that out of 40 fire deaths 37 could have been avoided if sprinklers had been installed.

BM said that the use of water mist has proved successful in West Yorkshire with at least one life having been saved to date.

RW commented that the provision of sprinklers is not just about cost it is about knowledge. Large amounts of money are being spent on protecting vulnerable people in other ways and sprinklers could be afforded if people were better informed.

JP commented that EHOs now assess social housing and give them a health & safety star rating which includes fire safety.

- 6.2 Assisted Surrey re: School re-development, following a £2m fire in 2003 and a further £750k fire which is reason for re-development, however, sprinklers are not being considered in the design even after Surrey FRS recommendations. Ian Lacey has had a positive response from members. **PMH to provide a copy of the draft CFOA guide.**

- 6.3 Meeting Dates and venues 2007

6.3.1 26<sup>th</sup> February - NFSN Parliamentary Seminar, Westminster

6.3.2 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007 – Wiltshire (AGM) (**post meeting note:** Changed from the 3<sup>rd</sup>)

6.3.3 17<sup>th</sup> July 2007 – Tyco Manchester

6.3.4 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007 – Darlington & Durham

## 7 Approved Document 'B' Up-date

IG reported that this is now with ministers expected to be out by end of November to come into effect April 2007

## **8 Low Cost sprinklers**

Tests carried out on 4th July 2006 West Yorkshire. Brian Mellor & Duncan Stainthorp briefed the meeting on the tests. This was reported at the last meeting and a case study produced by DS is now on the NFSN web site. [http://www.nfsn.co.uk/case-studies/nfsn\\_case-studies\\_residential.htm](http://www.nfsn.co.uk/case-studies/nfsn_case-studies_residential.htm)

JH reported that he had received an email from the DLCG regarding progress of the Low Cost Sprinkler initiative. **JH will copy this to PMH.**

## **9 BSI Committee Update – Paul Hardy**

PH could not attend the last meeting due to implementation of RRO in his Authority, however he has received correspondence reporting that work is ongoing on three projects including water mist project. Next meeting is in January 2007.

## **10 CFOA Guide to Automatic Water Suppression Systems – John Hoey**

JH launched the CFOA Guidance document at the meeting. A CFOA Circular will be sent out with PDF and hard copies to all Fire Authorities. The PDF will be posted on the NFSN web site as soon as it is made available.

## **11 Presentations**

### **11.1 Peter Reading - Sprinklers in Prisons & Detention Centres**

PR gave a very interesting up-date on fire safety in Prisons and challenged the sprinkler industry to come up with a design of system that will provide protect offenders in their Cell until sufficient support is available to release them. This is very difficult to achieve for old prisons where it would be difficult to retrofit.

Kevin Groom IoM gave his apologies but asked that it be recorded, that he is currently working on a fire safety scheme for a new prison on the Isle of Man, where sprinklers in cells are an integral part of the overall fire safety scheme.

## **12 Reports of Progress - Constituent Organisations.**

### **12.1 Steve Mills – West Midlands**

#### **a) Sprinkler stop at the ICC in Birmingham**

SM showed a short video of the fire which involved stage curtains that were successfully extinguished by the sprinkler system.

At just after 17:00 on Monday 25th September 2006 a fire occurred in Hall No 1 at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

At the time the Hall was being set up for an exhibition and conference and was not occupied. The fire was caused by heat from a fixed overhead lighting unit that ignited a backdrop curtain which had been resting in close proximity to the unit.

Approximately 200 people were safely evacuated from an adjacent hall as a precautionary measure.

The fire, which but for the action of the sprinkler system may have had more serious consequences, was extinguished by six sprinkler heads within the hall prior to the arrival of the West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service.

- b) The number of referrals for domestic / residential sprinkler installation as part of the DCLG HFSC initiative continues to grow. To date West Mids. With the following referrals:
  - a. Referrals resulting in systems being fitted; 9
  - b. Referrals where systems are waiting to be fitted; 12
  - c. Referrals where systems were not fitted; 40
  - d. Referrals where sprinklers are still under consideration; 21
  - e. Portable unit deployments; 7

- c) A very productive meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> October at the request of Birmingham City Council. Representatives of Council design and planning departments, Schools safety officials, Zurich Municipal Insurance and WMFS got together to discuss ways they could all work together at the design stage of new schools to maximise the positive effects that sprinklers can bring. Future meetings to discuss detailed plans and proposals are planned for the near future.

It was established at the meeting that BCCC now have 2 schools protected by sprinklers with more proposed in the next 2 years.

Coventry now has 5 sprinkler protected schools.

- 12.2 BAFSA Announcement re: Dissolution of the FSA – Ian Gough informed the meeting of the Position of BAFSA. See BAFSA Press Release in appendix 1 to the minutes  
PMH recorded the sadness at the dissolution of the FSA.

- 12.3 Kirklees District Council – Brian Mellor - Residential sprinklers completed to date:
  - a) Roundway Sheltered Housing premises Honley Huddersfield - Standard DD251.
  - b) Lynroyd Sheltered Housing Linthwaite Huddersfield -Standard BS 9251
  - c) Brooklands Sheltered Housing Bradley Huddersfield -Standard BS9251
  - d) Wessen Court Marsden Huddersfield – Standard BS 9251
  - e) Walker Street Thornhill Dewsbury – Standard BS9251
  - f) Wellington Court Batley Standard BS9251
  - g) Sprinkler head activated by Wall paper stripper during maintenance process.

- 12.4 Cheshire FRS – Philip Hales

Recent school fire in Macclesfield, substantial damage we are using to promote sprinklers in schools, we have written to all MPs Members and LEAs sent them a CD and information on school fires

The Chair of the CFA had taken a motion to the County Council; they are going to raise sprinklers at their meeting to review their policy on sprinklers in schools.

Yesterday the Head of CFP did a radio interview on local radio promoting sprinklers, they had picked up from the above motion.

We have established a sprinkler group who meet regularly to advice on sprinkler matters, covering domestic and non-domestic premises, they are setting up a sprinkler conference in February 2007, for those who we are trying to convert, and we will be looking for speakers at that conference.

Halton BC housing has just installed a mist system in a home where the tenant is at risk.

Making good progress with Styal prison and the work Peter Reading is doing in promoting sprinklers in cells.

#### 12.5 Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service – Baz Fox – (NFRS) Initiative to promote Residential sprinklers within HMO's.

The Fire Protection Department has been working in partnership with Northampton Borough Councils Environmental Health Officers (EHO's) on HMO's for the last 14 months.

This has led to the sharing of databases, joint inspections, and an up skilling of knowledge for all personnel, and agreed common standards of passive and active fire precautions.

The Head of Fire Protection is a member of the county wide Housing forum so all Boroughs and Districts are aware of the benefits of sprinklers and the available funding for the scheme.

The Head of Fire Protection is actively championing the installation of residential sprinkler systems in HMO's.

To kick-start the initiative the Fire Prevention Department are providing funds to part fund sprinkler installations within HMO's.

Final figures haven't been agreed but it is hoped that the Fire Service will be able to provide something in the region of £20k-£30k.

For each premises considered for the scheme it could mean funding up to 50% of the total installation cost.

The remaining funding will be provided by the private landlord and or the local Authority.

A women's refuge in Daventry is the first premises in the county to confirm they wish to go ahead with the scheme and an initial meeting is planned with them on 07/11/06.

The scheme will have conditions attached, one of which will be that the premises must stay in use as an HMO for at least 10 years. (This is the same as the Suffolk agreement.)

NFRS will provide an update to the NFSN at future meetings.

#### 12.6 South York's FRS – Roger Brason

Update on the Rotherham Sprinkler trial, Rotherham council past a motion to agree a trial project of fitting domestic sprinkler systems to their Sheltered residential housing as part of their refurbishment scheme.

Six of their plumbing and ventilation staff completed the Domestic Sprinkler Installation course, to allow their staff to install systems during the refurbishment programme. Design will be done by a registered Sprinkler system Designer already used several times by South Yorks. Fire Rescue. Supervision provided by ourselves and a recognised 3rd party Certified body (Firas). Should the scheme be successful it would then be included in the refurbishment model for future housing.

See Yorkshire Post Article:

<http://www.yorkshiretoday.co.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?SectionID=1084&ArticleID=1839646>

#### 12.7 EFSN – Alan Brinson

Alan Brinson said that in The Netherlands the publication of an independent report into the fatal fire at the detention centre at Amsterdam airport, which killed 11 people in October 2005, had led to the resignation of two cabinet ministers and the local mayor. Their successors are organising a review of all prisons and detention centres in The Netherlands. At the same time a review of the fire safety building code for prisons is being carried out. At this stage it is not certain what role sprinklers will play but in a preliminary report into the fatal fire it was stated that they were an obvious measure to fit in such a facility.

Germany is due to publish its new high-rise model building code before the 2007 summer holidays. At this stage it looks as though it will require sprinklers in new commercial buildings higher than 22m and in new apartment buildings higher than 30m.

Bernadette Hartley organised a reception in the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 24th October. The event was hosted by Scottish MEPs and the speakers were Jeff Ord, HM Chief Inspector of Fire Services for Scotland, and Frank MacAveety MSP. 16 MEPs came to the event. This was the second reception about sprinklers in the European Parliament. Fire and sprinklers are beginning to get attention in the European Parliament and we hope to increase this profile in 2007.

At a recent meeting with the senior schools architect at the DfES he accepted that the preliminary results from the study that he commissioned the BRE to run show that the typical cost to fit sprinklers in a school is 2.5% of the total cost of construction, not 7% as stated in the draft of BB100. The next meeting will be on 17 November and by then we should have information from the FPA on examples of construction savings that can be made when sprinklers are fitted. This will give a fuller picture and enable the senior schools architect to advise the minister of the costs of the various options. One of the options to be prepared for the minister is a requirement to fit sprinklers in all new and refurbished schools.

#### 12.8 Kent FRS – John Wildish gave his apologies and provided the following report for the minutes from Kent

Firstly some good news, there are currently 8 schools in the county which are being designed and built with sprinklers.

Secondly the bad news, a fire occurred in a relatively new school, less than 5 years old. The fire is believed to have started in a light fitting and rapidly spread involving the whole building which was a total loss.

Two hundred and thirty children and their teachers were evacuated from a primary school when fire broke out.

Crews from Kent Fire and Rescue Service were called to the school, in Octavian Drive, just before 0945.

70 Fire-fighters tackled the blaze at Lympne Church of England School, near Hythe, in Kent.

Following the fire, a number of high level meetings were held at director level between KFRS, the local education authority and Kent County Council. We have again strongly emphasised the need for sprinklers. There are a number of new schools planned to be built over the next 10 years, hopefully this incident will act as a timely reminder to ensure these new / refurbished schools are fitted with sprinklers.

### 13 Any Other Business

- 13.1 PMH asked sprinkler providers why fire service connections are not provided on sprinkler systems. IG this is a topic that is increasingly being asked and will be discussed more in the future.

### 14 Date of Next Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007 – AGM Wiltshire (TBC) (Post meeting note: Changed from the 3<sup>rd</sup> April)



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SPRINKLER INDUSTRY UNITY**

#### **Introduction**

The UK fire sprinkler industry currently finds itself with the unique opportunity to unify itself within a single trade association. This has long been an expressed desire by many - both inside and outside the industry.

Both the UK's sprinkler trade associations – the British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA) and the Fire Sprinkler Association (FSA) – have for some time been in discussions aimed at bringing some degree of unity to the sprinkler industry. That aim may have moved a step closer to being achieved with the news that the FSA is in the process of being dissolved and that BAFSA has agreed to welcome any former FSA members.

BAFSA has agreed to offer membership to any former FSA members who agree to join. It will provide membership on a similar basis and at similar rates to the FSA's membership. Stewart Kidd, BAFSA's secretary general, said: 'We are sorry to hear that the FSA is closing down. To ensure everyone's best interests are served, BAFSA's Council has decided to offer membership to all existing FSA members. We hope they will come on board by our annual general meeting (AGM) in late-November 2006.'

The FSA has asked its members to pay a levy of £100 towards the costs of dissolving the Association. This is a requirement mandated under the FSA's Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is a standard legal requirement for companies limited by guarantee and is designed to protect members by limiting their liability to £100 only.

The same Articles also require any surplus funds after dissolution to be transferred to some other organisation having the same objectives. BAFSA has declined to accept any such transfer and has suggested that any surplus be offered to the National Fire Sprinkler Association or the European Fire Sprinkler Network.

#### **Expanded Council**

BAFSA has agreed to provide enhanced representation for new members on its council by:

- amending its constitution to allow up to three sprinkler head manufacturers to be elected,
- by inviting the FSA's present chairman to join the Council as a representative of the fire and rescue services in the Associate –Organisation category,
- by accepting one of the FSA installer members as a representative of the Associate – Installer category of membership.

BAFSA has also pointed out that it will hold elections for its 2007 Council at its AGM on 23 November 2006 and that all those who are BAFSA members in good standing on 10 November may offer themselves as candidates for election to the Council.

BAFSA will invite Roy Young, the FSA technical adviser, and Ian Grist of DIS Sprinklers to join its technical committee, as well as offering places on its marketing committee to any new members. In addition, BAFSA will set up a residential and domestic committee under the chairmanship of an appropriate installer.

**BAFSA will also maintain and augment the FSA's existing telephone 'Support Hotline' for advice for domestic and residential installers. Existing FSA publications will be reviewed by BAFSA's enlarged technical committee and, if approved, will be integrated into the well-received BAFSA Information File (BIF) format. The FSA's training courses will continue to be offered by BAFSA's training partner, the Association of Building Engineers.**

## **Membership matters**

All FSA members will be accepted into BAFSA at the appropriate grade and will not be required to pay any additional subscription in 2006. From 1 January 2007, FSA members will pay the same subscription as they did in 2006, unless the BAFSA subscription for that grade is lower, in which case they will pay the lower amount

All FSA members who apply to join BAFSA by 10 November will be entitled to attend and vote at BAFSA's AGM on 23 November. These members will receive a complimentary welcome package which will include free copies of all BAFSA publications, including the Members' CD-Rom. In addition, all FSA members will be invited to attend BAFSA's conference on 23 November at no cost (other than a nominal charge to cover refreshments and lunch).

BAFSA Council recognises that these abrupt changes in the industry will involve some degree of disruption and confusion and are firmly committed to making the transition as easy as possible. Any FSA member who wants to talk about the process of joining BAFSA should contact Mr Kidd either by email or phone. □

*For further information, please contact Stewart Kidd at BAFSA on e-mail: [info@basa.org.uk](mailto:info@basa.org.uk); tel: +44 (0)1353 659187*

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