

NATIONAL FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10th April 2007

10:30 hours

Venue

Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Training Centre,
Hopton Industrial Estate, Devizes. SN10 2EU.

Present:

Peter Holland (Chair)
Ronnie King (Vice Chair)
Les Fielding (Secretary)
Peter Armstrong (BAFSA)
Jon O'Neil (FPA)
Hilary Lee (Armstrong Priestley)
Jim Marsden (GMC FRS)
Dave Baxter GMC FRS)
Steve Mills (WM FRS)
John Streets (WY FRS)
Andy Goves (Wiltshire FRS)
Julian Parsons (Wiltshire FRS)
Graham Blight (Avon FRS)
Martin Glanvill (Avon FRS)
Rich Nichols (Avon FRS)
Jeremy Williams (Bucks FRS)
Chris Hartrick (Devon & Somerset FRS)
Roger Brason (SY FRS)
Pete Wignall (Notts FRS)
Jo Fowler (ESFRS)
Russell Broadbent (H & W FRS)
Baz Fox (Northants FRS)
Tim Gray (Wiltshire FRS)
Vicky Smith (Wiltshire FRS)
Bernadette Hartley (EFSN)
Cllr Robert Wilkinson (LGA)
John Wildish (Kent FRS)
Mark Bennet (South Wales FRS)
Joe Mcafferty (Tyco)
Steve Bryant (MAWW FRS)

Apologies:

PMH Gordon Cooke (City University London)
RK Michael Clapham MP
LF Keith Brooks (Cheshire FRS)
PA Paul Fuller (Beds & Luton FRS)
JO'N Alan Gibson (D & D FRS)
HL Paul Johnston (T & W FRS)
JM Keith Pratley (Welsh Water)
DB Rosemarie Everton (UCLAN)
SM Dave Beverly (FBU)
JS Stewart Kidd (BAFSA)
AG Paul Hardy (Herts. FRS)
JP Ken Bishop (Tyco)
GB Simon Rooks (Tyco)
MG Brian Mellor (Kirklees DC)
RN Alan Brinson (EFSN)
JW Mac Eaton (H & W FRS)
CH Adrian Brown (ESFRS)
RB
PW
JF
RB
BF
TG
VS
BH
RW
JW
MB
JMc
SB

AGM Agenda:

1 Chair's Welcome, Apologies and Introductions.

2 Election of NFSN Officials

2.1 Chair - Peter Holland

2.2 Vice Chair – Ronnie King

2.3 Treasurer – Ronnie King

2.4 Secretary – Les Fielding

2.5 Executive Members:

Peter Armstrong	(BAFSA)
Jon O'Neill	(FPA)
Paul Hardy	(CFOA / Herts.)
Dave Beverly	(FBU)
Chris Hartrick	(Devon & Somerset)

There were no further proposals and the nominees were voted in unanimously.

MEETING
10th April 2007

11:00 hours

Agenda:

1 Minutes of Last Meeting

1.1 (12.8) PH advised the meeting that there had been political intervention following the Kent school fire reported at the last meeting, with Michael Howard MP raising the issue in the Houses of Parliament. This was the same week as the NFSN Parliamentary Seminar and proved very useful in highlighting the issue, a transcript of the debate can be found on the NFSN Web Site www.nfsn.co.uk

2 Chairs Report

2.1 Sprinklers in Schools:

The Chair was very pleased to be able to inform the meeting of the School Ministers announcement at the NFSN Parliamentary Seminar and paid tribute to all the NFSN colleagues and partners involved in the schools campaign. Whilst it has not gone as far as we would have liked it is a significant step forward with all schools having to be risk assessed, he emphasised the Minister's comment, that only very few low risk schools would not be expected to have sprinklers.

The Chair went on to inform the meeting that Edwina Hart (Welsh Assembly Minister), has indicated that if she remains in office following the elections, that £12M funding will be provided

to ensure sprinklers are installed in new schools and refurbished schools for retrofitting sprinklers in high risk schools. Importantly CFO's will determine which schools will be retrofitted not LEAs.

B Wilkinson will be raising the issue of the schools risk assessment at the next LGA Fire Focus meeting.

B Hartley commented that the political culture in Scotland and Wales is more proactive and moving forward, whilst in England, progress is slower. She commented that we will have to keep the pressure on to ensure that the risk analysis is carried out effectively.

The Chair mentioned that the definition of arson in the risk assessment tool does not reflect reality, and Fire & Rescue Services should be mindful of this when contributing to schools risk assessments.

JO'N advised that CFOA have got a crucial role to play in monitoring the application of the risk analysis methodology.

S Mills informed the meeting that West Mids have formed a planning group involving stakeholders to help education authorities make cost effective decisions.

PH brought a news article from a Bournemouth newspaper, with comments from BH and suggested she make contact with CFO Darren Gunter in Dorset to follow up.

2.2 Economic and Social cost of fire:

The Chair picked up on Alan Brinson's presentation to the NFSN Parliamentary Seminar and advised that there is a need to explore the inclusion of property protection in future amendments to the Building regulations, quoting AB's presentation, when he detailed massive differences in standards across Europe.

BH commented that the Government needs to look at the wider economic costs of fire, than the narrow perspective, with which it is viewed from at the moment.

JO'N commented that he sits on the ADB working group, and made the point that in order to move sprinkler protection forward, the Fire & Rescue Service needs to be more proactive in maintaining statistics of sprinklered fires and that to do this FDRI report forms would need to record better information to ensure the availability of better empirical evidence to support proposals.

JM said there is a need to start to reflect the environmental impact of fire and the carbon footprint of say a major warehouse fire. It was agreed that more research needs to be done in this area. The Chair reported that Ken Knight LFEPA Commissioner has started a study. PH will follow this up with Ken Knight and J M with a view of discussing the engineering principles of this and the possibility of the University of Central Lancs contributing to this work. JM advised that some companies have carbon counters recording the carbon footprint of their activities and suggested that FRS should record the amount of carbon saving where sprinklers have controlled a fire comparing to the carbon footprint caused by fires in un-sprinklered buildings. It was felt that this will also require feedback from the industry to record sprinkler stops where the FRS has not attended.

The Chair asked RB to discuss with J Hoey to see how CFOA could assist in moving these issues forward. BW will also take forward to LGA Fire Forum.

3 Vice Chair/Treasurer's Report:

The balance sheet for the period ending 31 March 2007, shows a balance of £4983-12p,

There are £13,200 outstanding subscriptions for 2006 and £24,600 for 2007. (Total debtors £37,800). But it is only early in the financial year!

Realistically we can expect to receive most of the £24,600, but probably only £3,000 of the £13,200.

Notwithstanding, we are quite solvent, and able to continue to effectively meet most of our objectives.

Reminder Invoices and Statements have gone out for 2006, and New Invoices have also been sent out for 2007.

We are much more focussed now on following up debtors, as we have removed almost all of those who are unlikely to contribute, and it is our intention to continue to secure our financial base, and already several thousand pounds has come in, but not yet gone through the FPA's ledger system.

Additionally we have targeted new members for the Network, especially those whom we feel will wish to contribute to the NFSN.

He advised that the sponsorship for NFSN administration secured for 2005/06 was not forthcoming last year and asked if anyone could identify an alternative sponsorship for this.

The Chair suggested that those not paying this year should receive a prompt from the Secretary that they will not receive any further correspondence from the NFSN due to non-payment of subscriptions and that they should contact the Vice Chair or Secretary if they wish to receive documentation in the future.

The Chair thanked RK for his work as Treasurer and the FPA for their support in managing the NFSN's finance.

4 Secretaries Report:

4.1 The following are the NFSN Service delivery Aims and Objectives for 2006/07

4.1.1 Schools campaign – This was campaign has effectively been won with the Minister's announcement at the NFSN Parliamentary seminar and the introduction of the schools risk assessment tool. Whilst the tools are there, however, it will be important for Fire Authorities to contribute to the risk analysis to ensure that it is being used effectively and to prevent complacency slipping in.

- 4.1.2 Warehouses – the recent revision of ADB failed to recognise the importance of protecting large un-compartmented warehouses and the maximum size allowable without sprinklers is 20,000m².
 - 4.1.3 Single Storey Retail – The maximum size of 2000 m² was under threat during the last ADB review, luckily this has not been changed.
 - 4.1.4 Follow up on Outcome of ADB & BB 100 Consultation – The shortfalls in the recent revision of the ADB and BB 100 will continue to be a focus for the NFSN.
 - 4.1.5 Seminar with Sprinkler industry to promote the NFSN – Unfortunately this did not take place, however, a Development section was introduced to the NFSN Meetings where an hour at each meeting is dedicated to learning of new technologies or hearing of Case Studies from fires where sprinklers have made a difference or where their provision would have significantly reduced the consequences of the fire. Two presentations today are from Avon and Greater Manchester Fire & rescue Services.
 - 4.1.6 FDR1 Feedback BRE Stats re sprinkler stops/actuation – This is ongoing, no progress made on this issue.
 - 4.1.7 Parliamentary Seminar early 2007 – Seminar held on 26th February 2006 was very successful, over 100 delegates attended. Schools Minister announcement re: BB 100 and Risk Assessment tool identifying schools at risk needing sprinklers. Risk assessment tool is on CD and is available for members to take away today, should members not in attendance require a copy please contact the secretary and subject to availability one will be sent by post.
 - 4.1.8 On going input into BS Committees – Exec Member Paul Hardy continues to represent the NFSN on various British Standards Committees.
- 4.2 Focus for 2007 / 08 – Continued work to identify how the benefit of sprinkler protection can be further introduced into UK Building Standards through the ADB and other Guidance, the NFSN will seek every opportunity to influence these standards to provide better life safety, property and environmental protection to reduce:
- The loss of life from fire.
 - The number of injuries from fire.
 - The risk to firefighters attending fires.
 - The economic impact of fire.
 - The environmental impact of fire.

We will do this by continuing to campaign for sprinkler protection in the following areas:

4.2.1 Residential:

- Continue to campaign for the provision of sprinklers in all new and refurbished Care homes. RK asked JO'N why this had been dropped from the ADB Revision when they had been minded to make this provision. JO'N responded that this had been for 3 reasons (i) Cost, (ii) Achievability & (iii) Lack of empirical evidence to suggest that sprinklers would be beneficial.

- Domestic – seek further development of low cost sprinkler technology and community safety initiative to ensure public understanding of the benefit of sprinkler protection in private homes, in particularly for those venerable from fire, i.e. HMO's, Social Housing, Student Accommodation, refuges and hotels.
- Hotels – It makes for good commercial and public safety sense to protect hotel stock from the effect of fire and the NFSN will support

4.2.2 Commercial:

- Formulate a strategy and seek ways of influencing legislators to make provision for sprinkler protection in all single storey warehouses over 2000m² in the next review of ADB. JM suggested that the 7,000m³ should be aimed for which is the average size required by Local Acts.
- Use empirical data to demonstrate the need for sprinkler protection in all Underground and semi-enclosed car parks.

4.2.3 Events 2007 / 08

- 4 NFSN Meetings
 - April
 - July
 - October – This will be a high profile meeting attended by MEP's Stephen Hughes and Fiona Hall.
 - Early 2008 to be arranged.
- NFSN Parliamentary Seminar planned to be held 4th Feb. 2008. It was suggested that a potential theme could be the environmental impact of fire.

PA asked if any specific campaigns would be pursued that would raise the profile of the Network, LF Responded that a NFSN Executive meeting would be held to develop a strategy for future objectives and that this would be communicated to the next meeting in July. LF to arrange Executive meeting to take PA's comments forward.

5 Low Cost Sprinkler report Published:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1509323>

JO'N advised that the Design Guide is due to be completed by 21st April and that the main possibilities are for its use in social housing where modern building methods have been adopted. He went on to say that the development group are looking for sensible targeted pilot projects that will provide effective feedback to a working group. Still issues with water authorities, good partnership developed with Northumbria Water to champion this and take forward.

Discussion re: water companies took place LF advised of Keith Pratley's (Welsh Water) interest in attending future NFSN Meetings. SM Raised the lack of knowledge regarding the Guidance Document on Water Supplies to Domestic and Residential Sprinkler Systems LF to re circulate guidance document with minutes.

6 Presentation: Sprinkler Controlled Care Home Fire in Bristol – Graham Blight:

GB gave an excellent presentation on the Serious Fire in Monica Wills House on the 20th December 2006. He informed the meeting that in spite of a very serious uncontrolled semi enclosed car park fire that destroyed 24 vehicles underneath a Five Storey warden controlled

apartment block for the over 50's, that sprinklers installed in the newly opened centre controlled fire spread, even though UPVC windows failed very early in the fire. A copy of Graham's presentation is circulated with the minutes and will be available on the NFSN web site.

7 Presentation: Sprinkler Controlled Fire, Manchester Airport - Jim Marsden & Dave Baxter:

JM & DB gave another excellent presentation on the sprinkler controlled fire that occurred in Terminal 1 at Manchester Airport on the 11th January 2007. They reported that terminal 1 is a fully fire engineered solution that relies heavily on sprinkler protection and in spite of changes to the airport where the sprinklers were enclosed within a false ceiling the fire was successfully controlled by 2 sprinkler heads limiting fire damage to 10m² and smoke damage to 50m². The fire highlighted other learning points that will require reassessment of the fire engineering principles adopted there due to changes in security measures adopted post 9/11. A copy of the presentation will be circulated with the minutes and be available on the NFSN web site.

8 Sprinkler Stop at Marks & Spencer's in Leeds – John Streets

JS showed a short video of CCTV footage captured when a fire occurred in Marks & Spencer's on the 16th March 2007 that was effectively extinguished by a single sprinkler head.

9 Reports of Progress - Constituent Organisations.

9.1 Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service - Steve Bryant

9.1.1 Mid and West Wales FRS recently attended two incidents in the space of a week where sprinkler systems extinguished and suppressed fires in industrial and retail property respectively. Both businesses suffered minimal property damage and disruption to their operations, and where operating normally shortly afterwards.

9.1.2 Unfortunately, we have also had two school fires within the last 24 hours, one school suffered substantial damage, with the other not being as badly damaged. Obviously we will now emphasise (again) the benefits of sprinklers to the appropriate authorities.

9.2 Avon Fire & Rescue Service - Graham Blight

9.2.1 GB reported that a fire in Sainsbury's in Bath was contained by 2 sprinkler heads extinguished by FRS on their arrival

9.2.2 GB reported that St Monica's are building another new building near to the fire damaged building which is not being protected by sprinklers.

9.3 Kent FRS (John Wildish)

Kent, as part of their campaign to increase awareness on the benefits of sprinklers are looking at providing community safety awards for innovative approaches to fire safety for example where sprinklers are provided either as standard in a development or as part of a design freedom package. John asked if any Fire Authorities represented at the meeting had considered similar schemes or were aware of other Fire Authorities who had implemented them.

9.4 BAFSA Report - Peter Armstrong (for information, not discussed)

9.4.1 New Council

At the first Council meeting of the year new Council members DIS Sprinklers, Viking, Reliable and Tyco Building Products took their seats for the first time. An invitation was extended to ITT Lowara to join Council as a co-opted member representing the Associate grades. There remains one vacancy for an Associate member and it is hoped that one of BAFSA's many Fire and Rescue Service members will put themselves forward.

9.4.2 Wise Up to Fire Campaign

BAFSA will continue to campaign under the WuF banner during 2007. BAFSA will maintain some activity in respect of sprinklers in schools but will also focus on issues affecting fires in care homes, sheltered housing and HMOs

9.4.3 Events

BAFSA supported a one day seminar for Hereford and Worcester F&RS at the end of March.

BAFSA supported a one day seminar for the Association of University Fire Officers at the University of Essex on 5 April. It is believed that this is the first sprinkler seminar to focus on fire risks in university buildings.

9.4.4 Training

An agreement has been reached whereby courses for residential and domestic installers will be run under the BAFSA banner by Bodycote Warrington.

A one day sprinkler seminar for facilities managers is being run by BAFSA for the British Institute of Facilities Management on 19 April. This event will be repeated in October.

9.4.5 Other Events

BAFSA will be exhibiting at a major conference to discuss the future of education in England and Wales in May 2007 at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre in London. BAFSA's stand will be located alongside Zurich Municipal who will be delivering a workshop on school arson.

The Fire Service National Benevolent Fund will be launching a campaign to lobby for sprinklers in all new dwellings at the House of Commons in June, BAFSA is sponsoring the event.

9.4.6 Publications

During 2007 three new BAFSA Information Files will be published:

- Components of Sprinkler Systems Parts 1 and
- Sprinklers and the Fire and Rescue Services

The very popular 'Sprinklers for Safety' which is called up in the new Approved Document B is now available for free download on the BAFSA web site.

An update to the Members' Listings in the Blue Book (BAFSA Sprinkler Yearbook) will be published in October 2007.

9.5 EFSN Report - Bernadette Hartley (provided post meeting for information)

- 9.5.1 Both Alan and Bernadette are pleased that the Minister's announcement will ensure that most new schools and major refurbishments will be sprinklered.
- 9.5.2 Alan has been doing work on the CEN committee system in Europe to ensure that sprinklers are seen as part of fire engineering solutions in building codes across the EU. One of the ways forward on hotels could be directing the work to a CEN committee which Alan would be on. The Commission seems happy with this. This would impact on UK hotels (and across the other 26 countries in the EU). As a minimum we think that new hotels should be sprinklered and that existing hotels should have escape routes retro-fitted with sprinklers.
- 9.5.3 Another approach we are looking at which would affect the UK is having an input into the new EU Health and Safety Strategy. Protecting the workforce from fire in hotels, care homes and warehouses is a strategy well worth following up. We are also lobbying MEPs after the Latvian care home fire in which 26 people died. We are pushing the Culture Committee on fires in heritage buildings, too.
- 9.5.4 We have also run events in France, the Scottish Parliament and European Parliament in Brussels in which Scottish and Swedish supporters spread the message about sprinklers to politicians and fire service people.
- 9.5.5 The next big event will be in June in Glasgow where there will be a day devoted to a big campaign to get domestic sprinklers fitted into regeneration projects and the Commonwealth Games Village (should the city win their bid).

10 Any Other Business No other business the meeting was closed at 13:15

11 Date of Next Meeting – 17th July 2007 – Tyco, Manchester