

National Fire Sprinkler Network

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
National Fire Sprinkler Network
held on
24th March 2003
at**

Station K - Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade

Present:

Officials:

Peter Holland
Glyn Evans

Network Chair
Co-ordinator/Secretary

Members.

Keith Addison	Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Brian Allen	Residential Sprinkler Association
Peter Armstrong	British Automatic Sprinkler Association
Mark Barry	Zurich Municipal Insurance Company Ltd.
Jeannette Baxter	The Domestic Sprinkler Company
Tom Carroll	Residential Sprinkler Association
Tony Sarvell	The Fire Brigades Union
Martin Davis	South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Grahame Dodd	Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Derek Duggan	UK Firewatch Ltd
Les Fielding	Wiltshire Fire Brigade
Michael Flynn	Aqua Mist Fire Technology Ltd
Jo Fowler	East Sussex Fire Brigade
Alan Gibson	Durham and Darlington Fire Brigade
Alex Gordon	Strathclyde Fire Brigade
Paul Hardy	Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Chris Hartrick	Devon Fire and Rescue Service
Bruce Hoad	East Sussex Fire Brigade
Peter Howard	Cheshire Fire Service
Paul Jenkins	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.
Glyn Jones	Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
Stewart Kidd	British Automatic Sprinkler Association
Gareth Lloyd	South Wales Fire Service
Mark Maguire	Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
A. McCracken	Lancaster Building Control
Brian Mellor	Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
Paul Murley	Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Stephen Pilling	West Yorkshire Fire Service
Steve Seaber	Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Karen Taylor	Armstrong Priestley
Stephen Theaker	Humberside Fire Brigade

Pete Wignall
Wendy Williams

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
West Midlands Fire Service

33 members and 2 officials were present.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the Meeting promptly at 14.30 hours, he welcomed all those present. He also thanked Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade for their hospitality and providing the venue for the meeting at what was such short notice.

He regretted the fact that it had been some time since the last Network meeting in October 2002, but the meeting scheduled for 17 December 2002 had been cancelled due to the industrial dispute that was affecting the UK fire service. He hoped that the dispute would be settled amicably and as soon as possible.

He welcomed Glyn Evans to his first meeting in his new role as Co-ordinator having accepted the post from Bernadette on her resignation. He also paid tribute to Bernadette and the work that she had carried out on behalf of the Network. He wished her every success in her new career.

Apologies were received from:

Derek Leach	Kent Fire Brigade
Steve Mills	West Midlands Fire Service
Chris Blake	Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade
Alan Longhurst	Mid and West Wales Fire Service
Ian Gough	Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
Richard Crook	Tyco International
Leslie Heaviside	Wormalds
Ruth Stoney	USDAW
Rosemarie Everton	University of Central Lancashire
Gordon Cooke	Fire Consultant
Peter Tilling	Bournemouth Borough Council
Alan Brinson	European Fire Sprinkler Network
Eric Clark	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Stewart Brown	Avon Fire Brigade
Les Leckie	Chairman BSI FSH/18 & CEN
Alan Holmes	TC 191
Adair Lewis	Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Jonathan O'Neill	Fire Protection Association Fire Protection Association

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

- 2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting of the 14th October 2002 were accepted as a true record subject to the following amendment.

Kirklees.

It was reported that 9 high rise blocks of flat had been fitted with sprinklers in the basements. In fact sprinklers have been fitted into the basement refuse rooms and refuse chutes of the flats, where they have proved extremely effective.

3. Matters Arising.

- 3.1 Staffordshire Fire Brigade have released a video of a serious school fire.

4. Chairs Report

- 4.1 The Chair said that because of the time of commencement of the Meeting and the comprehensive nature of the Co-ordinator/Secretary's Report he would be brief. He reflected on events since the last meeting of the Network in October 2002. He said that whilst current events in the fire service were tending to overshadow issues in the wider fire related community he believed that the work of the Network must go on and it still remained as pertinent as ever. He said that the involvement of all elements of the fire community were necessary to ensure that the people of the UK enjoyed an environment that was safe from fire.
- 4.2 He said that the Network had been extremely succesful in changing people's opinions on the use of sprinklers and the period of 2003/4 offered some of the most significant opportunites to develop further initiatives on the greater use of fire sprinklers. He referred to two consultation exercise on schools and school buildings being undertaken by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the need for the Network to be contributing to this debate. A Housing Bill was also being drafted and there the Network also needed to be commenting. Finally, he pointed to the proposed review, early in 2004, of Approved Document B - 2000 to the Building Regulations 2000. This would be a significant issue for the Network and one which everyone in the fire community needed to be aware of.
- 4.3 The Chair referred to the recent retirement of Ronnie King as Chief Fire Officer of Mid and West Wales Fire Service. He said that Ronnie had been a been a long term proponent of the greater use of sprinkler systems for life safety and it was a great shame to see his enthusiasm and experience lost. The Chair proposed that he approach Ronnie to see if he would be prepared to accept the post of Vice Chair of the Network.

This was agreed.

NB. Ronnie King has now kindly agreed to accept the post of Vice Chair of the National Fire Sprinkler Network.

5. Co-ordinators Report

- 5.1 The Co-ordinator/Secretary's Report is attached to these Minutes.

6. Creation and Appointment of an Executive Committee.

- 6.1 The Chair in opening this Agenda item said that he had always felt uncomfortable with the loose nature of the constitution and running of the Network and he had previously proposed a more formal constitution. Unfortunately, at the time, some member organisations had been unable to come to terms with a more formal membership arrangement as a result the proposal had been left in abeyance. He now felt the time was right to re-address this matter, albeit partially.
- 6.2 The Chair proposed the creation of a four person Executive Committee to be involved in the day to day running of the Network and to oversee and ensure that the agreed objectives and programmes of the Network were being met. He said that the membership of the Network would still remain a loose coalition of interested parties, however it was

entirely necessary that there was an element of control and scrutiny over the day to day affairs of the Network.

- 6.3 The Chair further proposed that the following four persons should form the Executive Committee. They had all been approached informally and had signalled that they would accept nomination.

Jonathan O'Neill	Fire Protection Association
Peter Armstrong	British Automatic Sprinkler Association
Steve Seaber	Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association
Tony Carvell	Fire Brigades Union.

These proposals were agreed by the members of the Network present.

7. Finance Report.

- 7.1 The Chair reported that at noon on the 24th March 2003 the current financial assets held on behalf of the Network amounted to a sum of £9,692 - 56p.
- 7.2 This Report caused a discussion by Members present regarding the funding of the Network, as clearly this sum was insufficient to maintain the programmes and the aspirations of the Network for the next 12 months. The Co-ordinator/Secretary in reply to a question regarding the accumulation of funding said that this was clearly a matter for concern and that a meeting of the newly formed Executive Committee would be constituted very shortly after this meeting to discuss this and other urgent issues relating to the long term future of the Network.
- 7.3 In winding up the debate the Chair said that the funding issue must be addressed and that more stable forms of funding would need to be investigated to ensure a continuous cash flow, however, in the short term, any donations from member organisations would be very welcome.

8. European Report

- 8.1 The Co-ordinator/Secretary reported that a body known as the European Fire Sprinkler Network had been created, apparently with assistance from the International Fire Sprinkler Association. An Executive Director, Alan Brinson, who has a background in the sprinkler industry had been appointed. Alan has worked within Europe for a number of years. He had already been in contact with the Network and the Co-ordinator/Secretary had a very frank and open meeting with him to discuss matters of demarcation.
- 8.2 It was agreed that in future the National Fire Sprinkler Network would concentrate it's efforts on UK matters and any issues which affected Europe would be passed to the European Fire Sprinkler Network for them to process. Similarly, the European Fire Sprinkler Network would concentrate on European issues and pass any issues which solely affected the UK to the National Fire Sprinkler Network. The two bodies would work closely together at all times and share information.
- 8.3 Contact details for Alan Brinson and the European Fire Sprinkler Network are shown in the Co-ordinator/Secretary's Report.

9. Water Policy Working Group Report

- 9.1 The Co-ordinator/Secretary gave the report as he is also Chair of the Working Group. He reported that the Working Group had virtually completed its work on producing a protocol document between the water companies and the sprinkler associations relating to the provision of water supplies for sprinkler installations. The document was now out for a final consultation round and it was hoped that at its next meeting in June the Working Group could begin the preparation for signing off the document and its publication. He also said that he was extremely pleased with the progress and the degree of goodwill displayed by both sides in producing the document.

10. Reports of Progress - Constituent Organisations

10.1 Humberside Fire Brigade.

It was reported that this was the first time that Humberside Fire Brigade had sent a representative to a Network Meeting, he said that he had found the meeting very useful. He also reported that six properties in Hull had been fitted with sprinkler systems.

10.2 The Fire Brigades Union

It was reported that the FBU had been in correspondence with the British Standards Institution over the current work programme of BSI Committee FSH 18/2 to convert BS DD251 to full British Standard status. The FBU were concerned over the recommendation contained in Annex A of DD251 regarding the acceptability of partial sprinkler coverage for loft conversions in dwellings and for the purposes of the Building Regulations 2000. The FBU oppose this derogation as unsafe and recommend that it be removed.

10.3 West Midlands Fire Service.

It was reported that the West Midlands Fire Service would have a fire safety stand at the FIRE EXPO 2003 event at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham between the 19th and 22nd of May 2003. They would also have their domestic sprinkler demonstration unit on site which would give live fire demonstrations.

10.4 East Sussex Fire Brigade.

It was reported that East Sussex Fire Brigade will be holding a series of seminars on home fire safety. It was also reported that there was much press and media interest regarding a recent dwelling fire in which two brothers had tragically lost their lives. One brother, who was an off duty firefighter, had escaped from the blaze and in a selfless act of heroism had then re-entered the premises to rescue his brother. Tragically both men had perished. The father of the brothers was assisting the Brigade with public awareness campaigns and the Brigade were also involved in a joint campaign with the Residential Sprinkler Association arising from the incident.

10.5 London Fire Brigade.

It was reported that a number of sprinkler seminars had been cancelled due to industrial action. It was hoped to re-run them later in the year. It was also reported that sprinklers were being accepted as compensating feature for deficiencies in other fire safety requirements predominantly relating to the application of requirement B5 of the Building Regulations 2000.

10.6 Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

It was reported that the brigade were compiling statistics and creating a data base for succesful sprinkler operations (as are the Network) and also for sprinkler installations. The Hertfordshire representatives reminded the meeting that they still needed this information to be supplied to them.

The installation survey was now available. The Hertfordshire representative also reported that there had been three meetings of BSI Committee FSH 18/2 regarding DD 251 and they had nearly completed their work to change it into a full British Standard. He confirmed that the concerns that the FBU had about part of the content of Annex A have been addressed and it would be removed.

10.7 Residential Sprinkler Association/Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service.

It was reported that a new village is proposed to be built outside Cambridge, negotiations are ongoing with the developers to ensure that it will be fully sprinklered. A new fire station, which is part of a larger apartment complex, is to be built in Cambridgeshire and all parts of the complex, including the fire station, will be sprinklered.

Peterborough Council have adopted a policy whereby all new schools that are to be built in their area are to be fully sprinklered. They are considering a similar policy for the refurbishment of existing schools.

The CFO of Cambridgeshire has sent a letter to the All Party Parliamentary Fire Safety Group requesting a meeting with prison service managers to discuss the provision of sprinklers in prisons and asylum centres. Surrey Fire Brigade have also supported this approach as they have a prison to be built in their area which is not being sprinklered. Surrey FB also have a demonstration prison sprinkler unit.

10.8 Wiltshire Fire Brigade.

It was reported that sprinklers are not to be fitted in the proposed 2.1 kilometre long Stonehenge tunnel, which once built will be the longest road tunnel in the UK. The CFO has responded to the decision by saying he hopes that the decision not too install sprinklers will not be judged as reckless given the empirical evidence of other serious tunnel fires.

It was reported that the European Fire Safety Sub Group of the Fire Safety Advisory Board had created a Working Group to provide input to the Department of Transport on a proposed draft Directive from the European Commission on fire safety in tunnels. The draft Directive is considered to be very prescriptive and the Working Group felt that there should be greater scope for fire safety engineered solutions and the utilisation of fire suppression systems.

It was reported that developers were to fit sprinklers in ten flats and two bungalows to be built in Swindon. Two thirds of Longleat House are now covered by sprinklers. A CentreParc site in Wiltshire was now sprinklered (less the pool and dome areas) and a watermist system had been installed in a hotel. Two historic properties which had been damaged by fire were to be rebuilt and were proposing to fit sprinklers.

Sprinklers were being considered as compensating features in a number of Building Regulations applications where the requirements of B5 could not be met.

A seminar on "Fire Safety in Schools and Colleges" was being held in Swindon on the 8 May 2003.

It was proposed the the September meeting of the Network, which is being held in Wiltshire, might be held in Longleat House.

10.9 Mid and West Wales Fire Service.

The representative from Mid and West Wales Fire Service had sent his apologies and also a brief written report. In the report he states that the Welsh Assembly are becoming increasingly concerned about the costs of water supply costs for sprinkler installations in Wales. They are concerned that this is acting as a strong disincentive to those wishing to fit sprinklers.

10.10 South Wales Fire Service.

It was reported that the Welsh Assembly has provided funding for a five storey secondary school in Swansea to be retro-fitted with sprinklers. The school was indentified by risk analysis.

10.11 Zurich.

It was reported that in the North Tyne area four schools to be built under PFI contracts are to be sprinklered. West Yorkshire Fire Service was reported as co-operating closely with Zurich. Concern was expressed over the classification of schools as low risk premises in Approved Document B - 2000. It was also felt that Ministers and civil servants at the Department for Education and Skills seemed to be generally unaware of the level of threat that fire posed to school buildings.

It was also pointed out that Zurich would not accept any sprinkler, or fire suppression system, installations that did not conform to a recognised British Standard.

10.12. Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

It was reported that the next batch of schools to be built would be considered for the fitting of sprinklers.

10.13 Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service

Nothing to report.

10.14 Devon Fire & Rescue Service

It was reported that Devon F & R S are working up a series of sprinkler seminars with their local building control officers. In Ottery St. Mary an old Victorian hospital has been converted into apartments and sprinklers have been fitted. The system was subjected to a full NFPA test and the sprinklers extinguished the fire in two minutes.

10.15 South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

It was reported that a strategy document on sprinklers was being prepared.

10.16 West Yorkshire Fire Service.

It was reported that there are now fourteen fully sprinklered schools in the West Yorkshire area. West Yorkshire Fire Service believes that a multi agency approach linked to a strong line on enforcement and established work programmes with the LEA's is the way forward for improving the level of sprinkler provision in schools.

10.17 Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing.

It was reported that one sheltered housing complex is to be sprinklered.

10.18 Strathclyde Fire Brigade.

It was reported that in Strathclyde FB area they had dealt with an individual who had a known history of fire raising. As a result of a recommendation from Strathclyde FB sprinklers were fitted in this persons home. A fire was started which the sprinklers dealt with. The person was rehoused and again sprinklers were fitted and again a fire was started, which the sprinklers also dealt with.

10.19 Armstrong Priestley

Mr Peter Armstrong is having sprinklers fitted in his house. It was reported that Armstrong Priestley have fitted sprinklers in a fire station in Leeds and also into students accommodation in Leeds.

10.20 UK Firewatch Ltd.

No report, however the representative said that he had found the meeting very useful and he hoped to attend any future meetings that were held in the North of England.

10.21 British Automatic Sprinkler Association.

It was reported that a draft Code of Practice on sprinklers in schools was being developed by BASA. It was hoped that once it was completed it might become an FPA Technical Bulletin. There is to be a meeting of the Working Group in Birmingham at the offices of Zurich Municipal on the 17th April 2003, hopefully to finalise the document. Concerns were expressed that DD251 might not offer appropriate or sufficient guidance to deal with refuse chutes and refuse rooms.

It was reported that a Trust had been set up to promote fire safety in listed buildings. Historic Scotland had commissioned Stewart Kidd to write a book on fire safety matters.

10.22 Cheshire.

It was reported that draft guidelines for three storey premises were being drawn up in conjunction with the District Surveyors Association.

10.23 Building Control - Lancaster.

It was reported that sprinklers were being used as compensating fire safety feature for a number of premises where certain fire safety requirements of the Building Regulations 2000 could not be met. They were;

a single staircase six storey block of flats, and
a three storey police station conversion to residential accomodation, and
a four storey barn conversion.

10.24 Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service.

It was reported that two new fire stations to be built in Lancashire are to be sprinklered. However, the developers for a design and build school project had refused to fit sprinklers into the schools.

Lancashire F & R S are now inserting a standard recommendation regarding sprinkler provision into all planning applications. They have also entered into an agreement with the police over the secured by design scheme to include sprinklers.

10.25 The Domestic Sprinkler Company.

It was reported that there were concerns over the lack of recognition of the ability of sprinklers to reduce the toxicity levels of fire effluents. The matter had now been referred to Professor David Purser of the Building Research Establishment.

11 Any Other Business

- 11.1 There being no other business the Chair brought the meeting to a close. He did however make a final plea to the members of the Network to ask if they would submit their reports to the Co-ordinator/Secretary in a document format via Email and prior to Network meetings, as it made the preparation of the Minutes that much easier.

All members please note.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is

24th June 2003 in Hertfordshire

Venue to be advised.

THE END

11. Any Other Business

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting