

National Fire Sprinkler Network

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
National Fire Sprinkler Network
held on
24th June 2003
at
Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Training and Development Centre
Longfield – Stevenage.**

Present:

Officials:

Peter Holland
Glyn Evans

Network Chair
Network Secretary

Members.

Keith Addison	Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Brian Allan	Arobact Ltd.
Peter Armstrong	British Automatic Sprinkler Association
Graham Blight	Avon Fire Brigade
Chris Boulton	Norfolk Fire Service
Cllr. Barbara Belcher	South Yorkshire Fire Authority
Alan Brinson	European Fire Sprinkler Network
Richard Crook	Wormalds
Martin Davis	South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Grahame Dodd	Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
David Edwards	Lancaster Building Services
Les Fielding	Wiltshire Fire Brigade
Jo Fowler	East Sussex Fire Brigade
Gary Fredericks	London Fire Brigade
Alan Gibson	Durham and Darlington Fire Brigade
Bruce Hoad	East Sussex Fire Brigade
Peter Howard	Cheshire Fire Service
Glyn Jones	Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
Andrew Kelly	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
Stewart Kidd	British Automatic Sprinkler Association
Derek Leech	Kent Fire Brigade
Adair Lewis	The Fire Protection Association
Gareth Lloyd	South Wales Fire Service
Alan Longhurst	Mid and West Wales Fire Brigade.
Mark Maguire	Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
Nick Matthews	Somerset Fire Brigade
Stephen Merritt	Ultrasafe Fire Solutions
Steve Mills	West Midlands Fire Service
John Streets	West Yorkshire Fire Service
Pete Wignall	Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
John Wildish	Kent Fire Brigade

31 Network members and 2 Network officials were present.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the Meeting promptly at 10.00 hours, he welcomed all those present. He thanked Chief Fire Officer Steve Seaber and Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service for their hospitality and providing the venue for the meeting.

Apologies had been received by the Network Secretary from:

Mark Barry	Zurich Municipal
Peter Tilling	Bournemouth Borough Council
Eric Clark	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Richard Stephenson	Newcastle Metropolitan Borough Council
Bill Goodfellow	Building Control - LB Hammersmith & Fulham
Steve Seaber	Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Bill Boag-Munroe	Merseyside Fire Service
Michael Clapham MP	All Party Fire Safety Group
Tim Gough	R.I.B.A.
Jim Knight MP	All Party Fire Safety Group
John Judd	Greater Manchester County Fire Service
Brian Hibbert	Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service
Hugh Adie	Strathclyde Fire Brigade
Michael Flynn	Aqua Mist
Jonathan O'Neill	Fire Protection Association
Brian Mellor	Kirklees
Tony Carvell	The Fire Brigades Union
Karen Taylor	Armstrong Priestley
Peter Smith	Humberside Fire Brigade
Stewart Brown	Avon Fire Brigade
Alan Holmes	Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Chris Hartrick	Devon Fire & Rescue Service
Ronnie King	Network Vice Chair.

Apologies offered at the Meeting;

Chris Blake	Hereford & Worcestershire Fire Brigade.
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2. Minutes of the Last Meeting.

2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting of the 24th March 2003 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising.

3.1 There were no Matters Arising which were not included within the Meeting agenda.

4. Network Officials Report.

4.1 The Chair proposed that to ensure maximum input into Network Meetings by the Network Members present the Chair and Secretary's Report would in future be combined and wherever possible published prior to a scheduled Meeting so the members would have the opportunity to study it prior to the meeting. The Secretary has produced a Report and this would be discussed now and also circulated after the meeting with the Meeting Minutes so that Network Members who were unable to attend would still have the opportunity to read about the issues that the Network was involved with. This was agreed.

4.2 The Secretary delivered the joint Report from the Chair and Himself. The following matters were discussed;

- (a) It was agreed that the Secretary should place a reminder in the Minutes of the Meeting that the successful sprinkler actuation survey was still running and he still needs to receive details of all successful sprinkler actuations from Network members, and
- (b) Councillor Barbara Belcher said that she felt that it would be useful if Reports of the Network's Meetings could be circulated to the Chair's of Fire Authorities so that they could, in turn raise relevant issues with the other Chairs of Committees within their own authorities, and
- (c) the Secretary pointed out that all the currently available Network leaflets and flyers still showed the contact details for the Network via the Gloucestershire office. After discussion it was agreed that the Secretary should arrange for a supply of sticky labels to be printed with the latest contact details for the Network to be used to overlay the existing contact details on the leaflets, and
- (d) it was suggested that wherever possible relevant Parliamentary Questions and Answers should be placed on the Network Web Site. The Secretary agreed to investigate this recommendation, and
- (e) the Secretary said that it would cut down time significantly in producing both Network Reports and Network Minutes if Members could send their reports to him by Email in Word format. This was agreed.

All Network Members Please Note Sub Paragraph (a) above.

4.3 The joint Report from the Secretary and Chair are attached to these Minutes.

5. Treasurers Report

- 5.1 After taking all the recent expenses of the Network into account the current assets of the Network held in the bank at the 24 June 2003 amounted to £216 – 50p. This sudden reduction in the cash in hand balance was due to the Network having been sent a cheque in error for over £7,000 by a Network member body. This had been included in the Treasurer's previous Report in good faith, but subsequently the error had been identified and the money had been returned. Since then however, the Chair announced that he had received on behalf of the Network a sponsorship commitment of £10, 000 – 00p.
- 5.2 Nevertheless, it was agreed that the Network needed to increase its current cash in hand situation to deal with day to day expenditure and also a review of its current publicity literature. All members please note.

6. Residential Sprinkler Survey Result.

- 6.1 Paul Hardy of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service presented the Report of the Residential Sprinkler Survey he has conducted. Copies of the report can be obtained from Paul at Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. It is very clear from the Report that sprinkler systems are being increasingly used as compensating features by building control bodies and fire authorities for meeting the recommendations of Approved Document B 2000 - Fire where those recommendations cannot be achieved by other fire safety means.
- 6.2 Paul also said that he had no objection to continuing the survey if it was felt that this would be useful. However, he would need far more input and from a greater number of fire authorities and sprinkler companies than he was currently receiving. The representative for Cheshire Fire Brigade said that he would submit the results of Cheshire's agreements in this issue to Paul.
- 6.3 The Chair said if Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were prepared to continue with this survey it would be extremely helpful to build up a database of sprinkler usage, particularly with the proposed review of Approved Document B commencing in the spring of 2004 where hard factual evidence would be required to support the sprinkler case. Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have been asked to review its current commitments with a view to continuing the data collection process.

7. Water Policy Group.

- 7.1 The Secretary reported that the scheduled meeting of the Water Policy Group on the 19th July 2003, which he was Chair of, had been cancelled following a request from Water UK whilst they held an internal

meeting to discuss elements of the proposed protocol document. He was therefore unable to report on progress.

7.2 He said that he hoped to reconvene the meeting in August or September 2003.

NB. The date for the reconvened meeting has now been set for the **15th September 2003**.

8. Reports of Progress - Constituent Organisations

8.1 South Wales Fire Service.

It was reported that a school fire had occurred in Newport where a fire was started in the school hall stage area which resulted in a teacher in an upper area behind the stage being cut off by the fire from the means of escape in case of fire and having to be rescued by fire service personnel by ladder from a flat roof. The fire was reported as being of doubtful origin.

8.2 Mid and West Wales Fire Service.

It was reported that Powys County Council were reviewing a pilot sprinkler project in a three storey HMO building in Llandrindrod Wells. Concern was also expressed over the role of Approved Inspectors and the fact that the fire authority cannot challenge their decisions. A lengthy discussion then took place on this subject and also on the attitude of some national retailers with regard to the application of the 2,000m² compartmentation requirement insofar as it relates to the increase of retail floor area in existing supermarkets.

The Secretary reported that difficulties with Approved Inspectors by fire authorities had already been raised by the Fire Brigades Union through the auspices of the Fire Safety Advisory Board and they were still awaiting a reply from the governing body for Approved Inspectors to their concerns. He pointed out that this issue and the problem with the retail floor area issue might be best dealt with through the review of Approved Document B 2000 – Fire in 2004.

It was agreed that the Secretary should write to the Building Regulations Division of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) expressing the concerns of the Network regarding Approved Inspectors and the problems with the 2000m² compartmentation recommendation for single storey retail premises.

Action Secretary.

8.3 West Midlands Fire Service.

It was reported that Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council are now considering a policy of fitting sprinklers following reports in the local media.

8.4 East Sussex Fire Brigade.

It was reported that East Sussex Fire Brigade had held a sprinkler demonstration in a derelict house which had been very impressive the media representatives present had also been impressed. It was reported that a deliberate fire had occurred in the George Section of an ASDA store which had been successfully extinguished by three sprinkler heads. ASDA were very pleased and extremely co-operative.

8.5 London Fire Brigade.

It was reported that a two sprinkler seminars had been held, one relating to on schools and one on residential sprinkler systems. It was reported that Croydon Council were offering a grant of up to 70% of the cost of installing a sprinkler system in a house in multiple occupancy. It has also been noted that elected members in London are increasingly asking after receiving reports of fires if sprinklers would have made a difference.

8.6 Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

It was reported that three new schools in Hertfordshire are to be sprinklered.

8.7 European Fire Sprinkler Network.

It was reported that warehouses in France and Spain are to be fitted with sprinklers (it should be noted that this is dependent on floor area and the defined hazard of the building contents). Finland is subsidising the fitting of sprinkler systems in residential care homes. CNPP is to set up a Working Group to draft a care homes guidance document. The European Commission (EC) has commissioned Professor Don Christian to redraft the existing European Union hotels fire safety guidance. The draft EC Tunnel Safety Directive is still undergoing a review of the consultation round responses by the EC. The Dutch have published a guide on residential apartment buildings which is pro sprinkler in philosophy.

8.8 Wiltshire Fire Brigade.

Confirmation has been received from Swindon Borough Council that sprinklers will be considered in the design stage for all future new schools built in that authority's area. There are likely to be up to 8 new schools built over the next 10 years with 4 of them being built in the next 4 years.

Stonehenge Tunnel – The draft orders for the tunnel have now been published. The design and proposed operational considerations do not include the provision of fire suppression. The next stage will be to raise a formal objection to the draft orders with regard to the recommendation to install fire suppression, in the hope that this will then be heard at a Public Enquiry.

In the mean time the Design Team for Stonehenge tunnel have been tasked in getting preliminary design and cost estimates of fire suppression systems that could be considered at a later stage. Tyco/Wormald have been consulted and have provided suggested designs of system with approximate costing. The most appropriate system taking into account water supplies, drainage and effectiveness is likely to be a high-pressure water mist (fogtech) system with the ability to induce Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF).

8.9. Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

It was reported that concerns had been expressed over the fire safety of a large council house property (two houses converted into one) where there was a history of fire raising. A risk assessment had been carried out and pressure was mounting on the local council housing department to install sprinklers. A new hotel is to be sprinklered.

8.10 Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service

A new complex is to be sprinklered.

8.11 Devon Fire & Rescue Service

A new two storey office block has been built at Devon Fire & Rescue Service HQ and it has been fitted with a sprinkler system. A Multi Agency Seminar is being planned for Building Control/ Planning/Local Authorities to unveil the updated policy on HMO's this will include a sprinkler input. There are five proposals for sprinkler installations across the county involving new build properties and HMO's.

8.12 South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

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

8.13 Essex Fire and Rescue Service.

One PFI school project is to be sprinklered.

8.14 Somerset.

All new schools in Somerset are to be sprinklered. Taunton District Council has had two HMO's sprinklered and 20 houses on a housing estate in Taunton are proposed to be sprinklered. Sprinklers are to be retro fitted to a supermarket that was damaged by fire.

8.15 West Yorkshire Fire Service.

It was reported that in Leeds;

- 8 new PFI schools are to be sprinklered,
- 2 refurbished schools to be sprinklered,
- 13 other schools in Leeds to be sprinklered in 2004,
- all new schools to be sprinklered,
- Environmental Health Department setting up an Advisory Panel too offer advice to landlords on the fitting of sprinklers,
- One HMO using extended cover sprinkler heads,
- All Leeds Council residential care homes to be retro fitted with sprinklers when refurbished,
- All West Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority premises to be sprinklered.

8.16 South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

There is now a sprinkler strategy in place in South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. A sprinkler demonstration unit is being fitted out. The strategy will focus on schools. There is to be a substantial redevelopment in Sheffield and it is hoped that sprinklers may be introduced into that programme. New fire stations will be sprinklered.

8.17 Armstrong Priestley

20 enquiries have been received for fitting sprinkler systems in schools.

8.18 British Automatic Sprinkler Association.

The following items are issues that BASA is currently involved with;

- BASA have published the latest two titles in their series of Information sheets - BIF4 Sprinklers in Warehouses and BIF5 Sprinkler in Retail Premises.
- BASA have published, jointly with Zurich and Royal & Sun Alliance, the Joint Code of Practice for the Installation of Sprinklers in Schools. Copies are available at £5 including postage.
- Building Regulations determined. The Manchester Building Act decision to require sprinklers has been upheld by ODPM. Full text on BASA web site.
- The letter to the National Fire Sprinkler Network from HM Customs and Excise regarding VAT and Sprinklers: the full text is available on the BASA web site
- BASA Conference 19 November: Marriott Worsley Park. BASA Dinner same day. BASA AGM 20 November same location

Third Party Certification (See Any Other Business – Item 11.3 below).

All BASA installer members are third party certificated by LPCB/BRE Certification under LPS1048. This scheme was set up in 1990 and provides an independent assurance of quality and compliance for specifiers, end users and authorities having jurisdiction.

The scheme requires:

1. The companies be ISO 9000/1 certificated, and

2. Each company is subject to a certification and audit regime in which the LPCB conducts regular checks of designs and installations.

The LPCB states that all companies so listed in the 'Red Book' are capable of designing, installing and maintaining sprinklers systems to the following standards:

The LPC Rules for Automatic Sprinkler Systems incorporating BS 5306 Part 2 1990. Other internationally recognised standards (eg NFPA, FM) Domestic and Residential systems to DD251 (2000) or TB14 (2000:1)

Companies classed as 'Certificated' may issue LPCB Certificates of Conformity which certify that a sprinkler system is designed and installed according to the appropriate standards and in which only approved and listed components have been used.

Registered companies can design and install certain types of Sprinklers, but cannot issue Certificates of Conformity themselves - this is done by the LPCB or a supervising company.

All LPCB listed companies offer an independent guarantee of quality and reliability .

8.19 Cheshire.

It was reported that the brigade are working closely with their local authorities on a greater use of sprinklers. Warrington Metropolitan Borough Council has asked a housing association to include a sum of money for new houses to be built by them for rent to be sprinklered. The Chief Fire Officer is to address a Regional Conference of the Royal Institute of British Architects (R.I.B.A.) on the subject of fire sprinklers.

8.20 Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service.

It was reported that an application to install a residential sprinkler system in a 4 storey shop in Lancaster (retail areas on ground and first floors) which had serious means of escape in case of fire problems has been received. The scheme has been rejected with the recommendation made to install a system to BS 5306.

In the North West there has been a recent directive from the OPDM Planning Division. The following restrictions will apply until 2006. There will be no new housing built on Greenfield sites. Building on brown field sites will only be permitted if regeneration need can be identified. The aim of which is to move populations back into areas with a high number of unoccupied/derelict housing stocks.

Areas highlighted for this approach include East Lancashire, (Burnley, Nelson, etc), Greater Manchester (Oldham, Rochdale, etc) and parts of Liverpool. Student accommodation is exempt. Lancashire Fire &.Rescue Service have a meeting in July 2003 with English Partnership (North), who specialise in urban regeneration and ensure close compliance to the recent planning directive.

Lancashire Fire &.Rescue Service are still getting inquiries for relaxations in Building Regulations and the provision of a national database of installed systems would be of great benefit. However the recent planning decision will probably stop one of the sprinklered schemes from going ahead in Lancaster.

8.21 Avon.

In Bath problems have been experienced over the fitting of sprinklers in heritage buildings.

8.22 Wormalds.

It was reported that increases in cost of school insurance due to a hardening of attitude in the insurance industry to the school fire losses has served to increase the use of sprinklers in schools. It is not clear if PFI contractors also fully understand the ongoing implications of the contracts that they are entering into in providing school premises for a given period of time when measured against the statistical probability of fires in school buildings.

8.23 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

It was reported that one 3 storey HMO is to be sprinklered. A large electrical retailer's warehouse is to be sprinklered. Nottingham City Council are reviewing greater flexibility in building design and use by the use of sprinklers. Sprinklers are also under consideration in a large school refurbishment.

8.24 Kent Fire Brigade.

It was reported that there is a joint partnership with the local authority to fit sprinklers. A proposed seminar on sprinklers for building design and enforcement professionals including building control officers and architects, etc., to be held in July is already over subscribed. There was also a request for a national best practice document offering guidance on the acceptable use of sprinklers as compensating features for the proper discharge of the requirements of the Building Regulations.

It was suggested that this was an issue that should be referred to the Fire Safety Advisory Board.

Action – Chair to write to Chair of the Fire Safety Advisory Board raising issue.

8.25 The Fire Protection Association.

The FPA are looking forward to the publication of the new CEN Sprinkler standards. It was pointed out that there were still difficulties with sprinkler myths being promulgated and believed. This was demonstrated at a recent meeting of the institute of Facilities Managers.

8.26 Norfolk.

It was reported that the brigade was in discussions with a housing association regarding targeting the fitting of sprinklers at individuals who are at risk.

9 Any Other Business.

9.1 Stewart Kidd reported that the Manor Art Gallery in Scotland was to be the subject of a major refurbishment during which process sprinklers will be fitted.

9.2 The Secretary reported that due to the Network Email address receiving a large amount of unwanted advertising material (SPAM) some of which was most unpleasant, he had amended the Emailing instructions on his computer so that it would not automatically send receipts to persons requesting them. He asked Members not to request receipts unless there really was a need for them.

9.3 Concerns were expressed regarding the capabilities of some installers to carry out the necessary calculations for the sprinkler systems that they were proposing to fit. Stewart Kidd and Richard Crook both drew attention to the issue of Certificates of Conformity as matters of surety for enforcers with regard to the appropriateness of installed systems. These are described under the BASA Heading in these Minutes.

9.4 There being no other business the Chair brought the meeting to a close. He did again make a plea to the members of the Network to submit their reports to the Secretary in a Word document format via Email and prior to Network meetings, as it made the preparation of the Minutes that much quicker and accurate.

All members please note.

10. Date of Next Meeting.

The date of the next meeting is;

[30th September 2003 in Wiltshire](#)

at

Longleat House.

THE END