

National Fire Sprinkler Network

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
National Fire Sprinkler Network
held on
29th March 2004
at
Avon Fire Brigade
Severn Fire and Rescue Training Centre**

Present:

Officials:

Peter Holland
Ronnie King
Glyn Evans

Network Chair
Network Vice Chair
Network Secretary

Members

Brian Allan	Arabact/FSA
Peter Armstrong	British Automatic Sprinkler Association
Mark Barry	Zurich Municipal
Neil Baugh	South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Jeanette Baxter	Domestic Sprinkler Co.
Dave Benham	West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service
Graham Blight	Avon Fire Brigade
Bill Boag-Munroe	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
Trevor Brice	Avon Fire Brigade
Steve Bryant	Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Mark Burton	Avon Fire Brigade
Dave Coss	Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service
Glyn Duck	Avon Fire Brigade
Antony Feasey	Firebrake
Les Fielding	Wiltshire Fire Brigade
Jo Fowler	East Sussex Fire Brigade
Alison Gibb	Strathclyde Fire Brigade
Alex Gordon	Strathclyde Fire Brigade
Paul Hardy	Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Bruce Hoad	Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service
David Hollex	Wessex Water - Regional Regulations Officer
Gary Holmes	West Yorkshire Fire Service
Mark Hutton	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
Alan Kurnatowski	Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service
Glyn Jones	Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
Derek Leach	Kent Fire Brigade
Gareth Lloyd	South Wales Fire Service
Alan Longhurst	Mid and West Wales Fire Brigade
Duncan Macowan	Fire Magazine
Mark Maguire	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
Nick Matthews	Somerset Fire & Rescue Service
Steve Mills	West Midlands Fire Service
Mike Painter	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
Sir George Pigot	Fire Sprinkler Association
Cllr. Howard B. Roberts	Avon Fire Brigade
Andy Shaw	Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service

John Sparke
John Streets
Karen Tayler
Peter Wignall.
John Wildish

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
Fire Service College
Armstrong Priestley Ltd
Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
Kent Fire Brigade

41 Network members and 3 Network officials were present.

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

The Network Chair, Peter Holland, introduced himself and opened the Meeting at 12.40 hours. He welcomed all those present and thanked Chief Fire Officer Kevin Pearson and Avon Fire Brigade for their hospitality and for providing the venue for the meeting. The Chair then took apologies for non attendance.

The following apologies were noted:

Keith Addison	Tyne & Wear Fire Service
Hugh Adie	Strathclyde Fire Brigade
Cllr. Barbara Belcher	South Yorkshire Fire Authority
Chris Blake	Hereford & Worcester
Ken Bishop	Wormald
Chris Boulton	Norfolk Fire Service
Alan Brinson	European Fire Sprinkler Network
Sally Burford	Firebrake
Tony Carvell	FBU
Michael Clapham MP	All Party Fire Safety Group
Richard Crook	Wormald
Graham Dodd	Tyne and Wear Fire Service
Prof. A. R. Everton	University of Central Lancashire
Paul Fuller	Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service
Peter Howard	Cheshire Fire Service
John Judd	Greater Manchester County Fire Service
Stewart Kidd	British Automatic Sprinkler Association
Jim Knight MP	All Party Fire Safety Group
Adair Lewis	The Fire Protection Association
Andrew McCracken	Lancashire Building Control
Brian Mellor	Kirklees MBC
Steve Mizon	Royal and Sun Alliance
Jonathan O'Neill	The Fire Protection Association
Julian Parsons	Wiltshire Fire Brigade
Dave Pember-Finn	Hereford & Worcester Fire Brigade
Steve Seaber	Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Ian Targett	Fire Safety Development Group

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting.**

- 2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting of the 6th January 2004 were offered to the Meeting for acceptance. Jo Fowler asked for an amendment to Minute 7.8 which indicated that there had been a Nil Report from East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. Jo said that a report had been submitted to the Network Secretary. It was agreed that this Minute should be changed to reflect that fact. It later transpired that the report from East Sussex had been sent by Email, but had not reached the Network Secretary due to a problem caused by a computer virus affecting the East Sussex computer system.

3. **Matters Arising.**

- 3.1 The following Matter Arising from Minute 8.2 was dealt with.

Antony Feasey of Firebrake gave an introduction to the work of Firebrake and its constitution.

4. Treasurers Report

- 4.1 The Treasurer produced a spreadsheet of income and expenditure which showed that the Network would have slightly in excess of £2,600 in the bank. It was accepted that a reasonable figure for the Network to hold in reserve to fund its activities would be in the region of £20,000.
- 4.2 Whilst the £2,600 held in the bank currently compared favourably to the financial situation earlier in the year, it was realistically not a great deal of money to do everything that the Network wanted to achieve. Some Network members have agreed that to assist with the Network's funding they may fund or assist with individual Network events.

5. Replacement for Network Secretary.

- 5.1 The Network Chair paid tribute to the work undertaken on behalf of the Network by Glyn Evans, the Network Secretary. He said that Glyn had indicated however that he now wished to retire from his position as Network Secretary. He asked Glyn to address the meeting. Glyn said that to run the Network properly and professionally the Network requires a full time Secretary/Coordinator with proper administrative back up and he could not provide that with all his other existing commitments even if the funding was available. He said that amongst other things all the Network booklets and leaflets needed updating and replacement. Glyn said that he would work with the Network Chair and Executive Council to finalise the Network seminar on the 21st June 2004, but he would then stand down as Network Secretary.
- 5.2 Peter Holland said that it was regrettable that Glyn was leaving, but he did understand Glyn's concerns for the future of the Network. It was for him and the Network Executive Council to find a replacement.

NB. Since the meeting Les Fielding has agreed to take up the position of Network Secretary.

6. Water Policy Group Report.

- 6.1 The Secretary gave a brief report upon the progress of the Water Policy Group. He said that at the Group meeting on the 2nd February 2004 it had been possible to finally agree the Water Policy Document. He paid tribute to the representatives of the Fire Sprinkler Association, the British Automatic Sprinkler Association and Water UK for their contributions to completing the final document.
- 6.2 The Water Protocol document now had to be drawn up a Foreword provided and then passed to the FPA for printing. It was hoped that this could be achieved by the end of May.

NB. As of the 20th May 2004 the document has now been finalised and is to be published by the Fire Protection Association. It will be launched in Portcullis House next to the Palace of Westminster on the afternoon of the 25th May 2004.

7. Fire Damage Report 1 (FDR 1) Review.

- 7.1 The Network Secretary gave an update on this issue. He said that a series of three meetings had taken place so far by the working group which was known as the Data Definition Group. . It was intended that the FDR 1 and other existing report forms would be consolidated into one electronic incident report form which fire and rescue services would submit for every incident that they attended. It was hoped that much more meaningful data would be able to collected.
- 7.2 He was asked if this would include sprinkler data and he said that it was his understanding that this would be the case, as would data regarding the provision and effect of other fire suppression systems.

8. LGA Campaign – Sprinklers In Schools.

- 8.1 Attention was drawn to the LGA campaign on sprinklers in schools. The LGA documents relating to the campaign were provided on their websites. Concern was expressed over the lack of input or information from the sprinkler industry. Prices quoted by the LGA were felt to be tender prices. Concern was also

expressed over prices fluctuations in the sprinkler industry as a result of the dramatic rise in steel and oil prices.

- 8.2 It was also noted that the DfES school exemplar designs had been circulated, but they made no recommendations for sprinklers.

9. News of the World Campaign

- 9.1 Peter Holland gave an update on this matter. He said that the Rosepark Care Home tragedy in Uddingston near Glasgow had kickstarted the campaign. Unfortunately, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service had also suffered a fire in which three children had died. This had resulted in a Lancashire MP, Peter Pike MP, setting down a Parliamentary Question for the Prime Minister to answer. The response from the Prime Minister with regard to domestic and residential sprinklers had been very supportive and encouraging.

- 9.2 The News of the World are still pursuing their campaign.

10. House of Lords Debate

- 10.1 Following the adverse remarks about sprinklers in schools made by Baroness Andrews in a debate on the 7th January 2004 regarding school fire safety arising from a Starred Question in the House of Lords the Network Chair had entered into correspondence with the Baroness to try to convince her of the effectiveness of fire sprinklers in schools particularly. This had proved a lengthy process as the DfES officials who were drafting replies for the Baroness were clearly hostile to the use of sprinklers in schools. Nevertheless, eventually they had agreed that there was a role for them to play.

- 10.2 There was another debate on the use of sprinklers in schools in the House of Lords on the 25th February 2004 where Lord Rooker for the Government received a very rough ride from Peers present over the statements previously made by Baroness Andrews. Lord Rooker was however far more supportive and extremely positive on the matter of sprinklers in schools. He linked their future application closely to the outcomes of the review of Approved Document (B).

11. Update on Next Seminar/Meeting for the Network

- 11.1 The Network Secretary said that following discussions it had been agreed that the next meeting of the Network would be held on the **21st June 2004** and would consist of a seminar in the Houses of Parliament including a lunch and a drinks reception with MP's on the terrace in the evening.
- 11.2 The seminar would be organised in conjunction with the Federation of British Fire Organisations (FOBFO). To raise funds for the Network there would be a charge for attendance and regrettably due to restrictions on numbers it would be on a first come first served basis.

12. Residential Sprinklers Bill in Scotland.

- 12.1 The Network Secretary reported that he had been part of a four person delegation that had given evidence to the Communities Committee of the Scottish Parliament on the Sprinkler Bill proposed by Michael Matheson MSP. He said that the day previously other Network members, including representatives of the Fire Sprinkler Association had also given evidence to the Committee.
- 12.2 He was pleased to report that as a result of the endeavours of all the participants who had given evidence in support of sprinklers to the Committee they had summoned Michael Matheson to speak to them and it appears that they were proposing to amend the proposed Scottish Building Regulations which are to take effect from the 1st April 2005 to include recommendations for sprinklers in a series of residential buildings.
- 12.3 He said that the fire community should be reasonably satisfied with the outcome of this exercise.

13. Review of Approved Document B.

- 13.1 The Network Secretary said that the review of Approved Document B had now commenced. The ODPM and BRE/FRS were running three open to anyone consultation days in May and June. They had also

opened a consultation website run by BRE/FRS. There was no lack of opportunities for members of the Network to make their views known to the ODPM and BRE/FRS and it was up to them to use those opportunities.

- 13.2 The matter of the BRE/FRS Report into the effectiveness of residential sprinklers was raised. This caused some debate as concerns regarding the calculations used by BRE/FRS in their report were once again raised. Sir George Pigot on behalf of the Fire Sprinkler Association said that they had sent a report on their concerns over the calculations to BRE/FRS and he would send a copy to the Network Secretary.

14. Reports of Progress – Constituent Organisations.

14.1 East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

It should be noted that due to a computer virus the Report from East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service for the 6th January 2004 Meeting of the Network was not received by the Network Secretary. As a result a Nil Report was shown for East Sussex in the Minutes for the Meeting of the 6th January 2004. The error has now been identified so the missing Report is shown below; our apologies go to Jo Fowler and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

Report for 6 January 2004 meeting

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service still continue to run a free half-day seminar on residential sprinklers approximately once a month, attracting a varied audience ranging from Local Authority, architects, developers and private homeowners. It is heartening to see a rise in the number of consultations proposing the inclusion of residential/domestic sprinklers – either by the applicant or the local authority. This is for various reasons, but mainly access problems. However, we still fail to be informed by the local authority if any of these proposals are actually completed.

We are also proposing to hold a seminar in the summer aimed at educational establishments. The aim is to try and tackle the problem of fires in schools, and raise awareness of the role of sprinklers. Arrangements are to be finalised, but I would appreciate talking to any brigade who has previous experience in running this sort of seminar.

Report for 29 March 2004 meeting

Arrangements for the proposed schools seminar have almost been finalised. However, as the schools building programme for the next 3 years includes very little opportunity for the consideration of sprinklers, the emphasis for the day has changed slightly. The aim is now to make delegates aware of the growing problem of fires in schools (especially deliberate fires), understand the full impact, and give practical guidance on how to address the problem. Although the day will include some input on sprinklers, the emphasis is very much going to be on what they can return to school the next day and do immediately.

It had been planned to include some input from Andrew Muckley on firesetting behaviour. However, due to the recent diagnosis of his illness and his subsequent withdrawal from the circuit, a replacement is now urgently sought. Can anyone suggest a replacement for the irreplaceable?

Contact Jo Fowler on 01323 462404.

14.2 Avon Fire Brigade

Contact has been established with four unitary authorities in the Brigade area to develop the use of sprinklers. Calculations are being made of the costs of fires and consideration to relaxation of protection in HMO's fitted with sprinklers is being given. Thanks were given to Alan Longhurst for his assistance in the design of the proposed sprinkler demonstration unit for the Brigade.

14.3 Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

It was reported that Mersey Side FRS have designed and developed a one room water mist system for emergency use only. It is intended to provide emergency cover for high risk persons living in a one room

situation. It is currently at the Mk 1 development stage and will probably run to a few more stages. The Service will keep around 20 to 30 systems in store for emergency use.

14.4 Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service

Thanks were offered to Wessex Water for their assistance. A sprinkler stop in a high risk building was reported. Some care homes in Wiltshire had reported problems in fitting sprinklers. The Highways Agency has created a Fire Suppression Sub Group and it is likely that two proposed tunnels in Wiltshire will either be sprinklered or fitted with other fire suppression systems. The safety of firefighters is a major factor in this consideration.

14.5 Strathclyde Fire Brigade

Members of Strathclyde Fire Brigade had presented evidence to the Communities Committee of the Scottish Parliament in respect of the draft Residential Sprinklers Bill proposed by Michael Matheson MSP. All new schools and major refurbishments are to be sprinklered. A proposed sprinkler Conference in Glasgow was cancelled as a result of the Rosepark care home tragedy. It was hoped that the Conference could be combined with the autumn meeting of the Network to form a two day event in Strathclyde in September/October. This proposal is being investigated.

14.6 Fire Service College

A new residential block which is to be erected at the College is not to be sprinklered. As a result of the Design and Build contract not including any provision for sprinklers they could not be retro fitted.

14.7 Zurich Municipal

It was reported that Zurich were have remarkable success around the country in getting sprinklers fitted in schools. Major contractors were also starting to fit sprinklers.

14.8 Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service

It was reported that sprinklers had prevented a major fire in a high bay warehouse. Sprinklers were also to be provided in a women's refuge that was opening. The NHBC is specialising in 3 storey town house developments. The Brigade is to write to NHBC regarding the provision of sprinklers in these properties. A debate on this matter then ensued. It was agreed that NHBC at a national level are very supportive of the use of sprinklers, however this message does not seem to have reached down to local levels. It was suggested that the Brigade should contact the NHBC Building Guarantee Division to discuss the situation.

14.9 West Yorkshire Fire Service.

The Brigade has agreed a fire sprinkler protocol with all but one of the West Yorkshire Local Authorities. They are also using enforcement notices under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 to get sprinklers fitted.

14.10 Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service

The Brigade is incorporating the provision of sprinklers into the IRMP process. They will also be giving presentations to all the Fire authority members and also the Local Education Authority members.

14.11 Fire Sprinkler Association

It was reported that representatives of the FSA had given a demonstration of sprinklers to members of the Communities Committee of the Scottish Parliament prior to the taking of evidence by them on the Residential Sprinklers Bill. They have also employed a full time National Officer, Tony Marlow, and will be opening offices shortly.

14.12 Fire Magazine

It was reported that Fire magazine is anxious to contribute to the sprinkler cause and any help that they could give would be offered.

14.13 Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue Service

It was reported that due to potential costs it had been decided that the brigade would not proceed with an enforcement action against a major retailer for failing to fit sprinklers in a store. The determinations of some Approved Inspectors regarding the fitting of sprinklers in retail premises still pose a problem. The Brigade is to make a donation of £500 – 00p to the work of the Network. The Network Chair thanked the Brigade for that donation. He also thanked Alan Longhurst the M&WWFRS representative who is retiring from the service for his contribution to the work of the Network and his dedication to raising the profile of sprinklers. We all wish Alan well in his retirement.

14.14 Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

It was reported that a Housing Association was planning to building 2,500 new homes in Somerset and the Brigade were providing a seminar for the developers to promote the use of sprinklers in the development. This will have a knock on effect as their partners have proposed schemes in areas of Devon and Cornwall. Funding of £50,000 has been secured by Taunton Deane District Council and the Brigade from the Private Sector Renewal Funding Bid to towards providing sprinklers in high risk HMO's. It is hoped to secure more funding once the project is up and running. All new domestic properties for the disabled to be built in the Taunton Deane area are to being fitted with sprinklers.

14.15 Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service

Blackpool Local Education Authority has signed a sprinkler protocol to fit sprinklers in all new schools and council offices. The Brigade also inspects all Local Authority Planning Lists and send out standard letters regarding sprinklers to developers and architects.

14.16 Firebrake

It was reported that Firebrake are responsible for organising Walesfire 2004 (27th to the 28th May 2004 in Tenby) in partnership with the Welsh fire and rescue services. In autumn 2004 Firebrake plans to organise two Community Fire Safety seminars, one in South Wales and one in North Wales.

14.17 South Yorkshire Fire Service

The Brigade are planning to hold two half day seminars on sprinklers; one aimed at sprinklers in schools and one aimed at sprinklers in housing.

14.18 West Midlands Fire Service

It was reported that sprinklers had saved a factory premises from a major fire. The brigade was holding a discussion with Wimpey's the builder regarding the fitting of sprinklers in new dwellings. 35 homes in a development in Tipton are to be sprinklered and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council is considering fitting sprinklers in 150 new houses.

14.19 Wessex Water

The meeting was advised that there is a Regulations Advisory Service website and that sprinkler installers should notify the water authority for the area when proposing to fit sprinklers in a premise.

14.20 Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council

Although Brian Mellor sent his apologies for this meeting he did include a brief report that his authority is fitting a sprinkler system in a sheltered housing premises at present.

15 Any Other Business.

- 15.1 The Secretary reported that the Network Email address was continuing to receive large amounts of unwanted advertising material (SPAM) some of which was most unpleasant and reminded members of the need not too request receipts for their messages unless they really needed them.
- 15.2 The matter of Legionella bacteria affecting sprinkler systems was raised. The Secretary said that he had investigated this issue thoroughly and there was a LPC document available on this subject which he felt came as close as any research document might in suggesting that the risk of someone contracting Legionnaires disease from contaminated water from a fire sprinkler system was negligible. He said that he had also examined a website specifically for the disease which recorded all known outbreaks of the disease in a five year period and not one was attributable to a fire sprinkler system.
- 15.3 It was reported that Avon Fire Brigade are proposing to hold a major fire safety seminar on the **14th September 2004.**

16. Date of Next Meeting.

- 16.1 The date of the next meeting which will be a joint seminar with the Federation of British Fire Organisations is;

[21st June 2004 in London](#)

[at the Houses of Parliament.](#)

[Details to be circulated separately.](#)

THE END