

# THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION OFFICERS' NATIONAL COMMITTEE

## NEWSLETTER

October 2007

### **THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION – the largest professional body within the fire and rescue service**

The Fire Brigades Union is the only organisation which seeks to represent all uniformed employees within the service.

We believe that we are all stronger when we work together.

This means that the FBU campaigns on a wide range of issues including those directly and indirectly affecting officer members/middle managers. During 2006 the FBU successfully ran the campaign which convinced the government to make major concessions in relation to their proposed pension arrangements.

### **Protecting pensions**

Most significantly, as a result of this campaign, plans to increase retirement age for existing employees were dropped.

Currently, the FBU is again leading the campaign to defend the ill-health provisions within the Firefighters Pension Scheme. Which other representative body within the service has the resources or the expertise to make sure that the appropriate legal and political challenges are made? Which other representative body has the will to ensure its members, past, present and future obtain the best possible outcome to secure your pension?

The FBU is a trade union, but it is also a professional body which has always played a central role in protecting and developing the professional standards within our service.



**THE OFFICERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
PROVIDING THE PROFESSIONAL FIRE  
OFFICERS VOICE TO THE MMNB**



[www.fbu.org.uk](http://www.fbu.org.uk)

## Responding to IRMPs

For example, the FBU is the only trade union which has responded to consultation on every IRMP since the process was introduced. That's every IRMP that impacts on your working conditions and arrangements. We care about your working conditions and arrangements. We care about what proposals are made within IRMPs that affect you. Why? Because we care about our members and can demonstrate that over a long period of time, unlike another organisation that is currently claiming that they are best placed to represent middle managers.

Where are their responses to the plans that affect you? Where have they been and what have they been doing to protect your working

conditions and arrangements? The answers quite simply are that they have no responses and they have been supporting cuts dressed up as modernisation.

The Fire Brigades Union is about protecting and improving the terms and conditions of our members – and about protecting the UK Fire and Rescue Service. We are extremely proud of that and our officer members continue to make a great contribution to that process.



**MATT WRACK**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**



*An officer member carrying out training for the New Dimension programme.*



# FOA PLEASED WITH BACKDOOR ENTRANCE?



JESS HURD/REPORT DIGITAL

Members will now be aware that following the National Joint Council (NJC) meeting, held on Friday 28 September 2007, a new constitution was agreed for both the NJC and the newly formed Middle Managers Negotiating Body (MMNB).

This was despite a sustained four year attack upon the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) orchestrated by a Government who was prepared to promise anything to anyone who was willing to side with them against the FBU in the 2002-3 pay dispute.

This was a Government driven by the desire to drive a wedge between Officers and other firefighters because they were infuriated by the unity shown as officers took action alongside their colleagues in a claim for a justified increase in pay.

## Smoke screen

They used the smoke screen of improving democracy to allow the Fire Officers Association to achieve national recognition for pay and conditions bargaining through the back door.

This back door was increased in size until it became large enough for those officers, or their representatives who aren't even in the fire service and who worked, apparently tirelessly, throughout the periods you were following a democratically agreed and legally approved strike, to leave. In fact to leave very quickly.

FBU Officer members need to be clear that none of this was about improving democracy but more about undermining it! And the FOA know it!

## **FIRE MINISTER PROMOTES WORKING WITH THE FBU, NOT AGAINST IT**

At the Fire Conference in May the Fire Minister was keen to point out the benefits of working closely with the Fire Brigades Union. The Minister stated “it is important to maintain an excellent emergency response but also to work hard towards prevention and reducing the danger for people most at risk in our society. In both, the key to success is partnership.” This was a clear message from the Minister to fire authorities and chief fire officers of the critical importance of the FBU.

She continued: “Two weeks ago I spoke to the FBU Annual Conference. It was time to reforge the links.

“There is no point denying that employment relations in the Fire and Rescue Service have been a bumpy path over recent years. However, the FBU is a crucial partner...”



ANDREW BARRATT

*Former fire minister Angela E Smith speaking at FBU Annual Conference in May 2007*

## **OFFICER MEMBERS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WORTLEY HALL 20TH NOVEMBER 2007**

**TAKE PART IN THE FBU OFFICERS  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
TAKE PART IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS  
AND MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

**CONTACT YOUR FBU OFFICER REP FOR MORE DETAILS**



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