

1 September 2006

Dear Brother/Sister,

MERSEYSIDE DISPUTE – UPDATE

You will be aware that FBU members embarked on industrial action, in the form of discontinuous strike action, at 10.00am on Thursday 31 August. The first period of strikes is scheduled to finish at 10.00 am on Monday 4 September with a further period of strikes scheduled to begin at 12.00 on Monday 4 September and finishing at 12.00 on Friday 8 September.

This form of action obviously means financial hardship for our members and donations have already been made to the Merseyside Hardship Fund account from branches, brigades and regions around the UK. In addition to this donations and letters of support have been received from other Trades Unions/organisations from around the world. At a Number 5 Region (North-West) committee meeting held today it was agreed that members should be asked for an initial donation of £10 with further weekly contributions of a minimum of £5 per week.

Members may also be aware that the 5 brigades within the North-West have signed up to an agreement covering emergency response arrangements during periods of strike action within one or more of the participating services, each of the Chief Officers in the brigades bordering Merseyside has been contacted by the FBU and they indicated their intention to abide by this arrangement. It has become apparent however that some brigades may be intending to operate outside of this, therefore the following resolution has today been passed unanimously at the Regional Committee;

In the event that FBU members from any brigade are instructed to attend incidents within Merseyside, during periods of strike action, outside of those arrangements contained within the agreement between the 5 North-West brigades covering ‘Emergency response arrangements during periods of strike action’, then an immediate ballot for industrial action will commence within that brigade.

Fire Brigade Union members are once again defending public services in the face of the most vicious and sustained attack from a Chief Officer intent on making his mark on the Fire Service, a Chief Officer who is using untrained and unskilled staff to respond to emergency incidents. Our legal advisors are clear that any crews who may be instructed to work alongside such crews may be compromising their own safety. No employer is entitled to require employees to work in unsafe conditions and staff would be entitled to refuse an instruction to carry out work in circumstances that would be unsafe.

A mass meeting of Merseyside members has been called for Monday 4 September at the CASA, Hope Street, Liverpool at 1pm and any FBU members who are visiting picket lines around that time are more than welcome to attend. Members visiting picket lines are also reminded of the legal restrictions as set out in the Head Office Circular this week - [2006HOC0496MW](#)

Once again we see that when united we are strong and, with your support, we will win this dispute,

Yours fraternally

Kevin Brown
Regional Secretary