

Date: August 27th 2009

ALL MEMBERS

CFO Email

Dear Brother/Sister,

Members will recall the recent email from Mr McGuirk which comments at length about the Fire Brigade Unions political ambitions including Merseyside firefighters being used to further those ambitions as a result of some sort of connection regarding the current ballot of MF&RS FBU Members.

Firstly, the FBU is proud to represent emergency fire control members and officers as well as firefighters but it seems a stretch for any person to connect a trade dispute in relation to this matter (the victimisation of an FBU official by unjustified dismissal) and the re-election of the General Secretary. I am sure our members are aware that when any Brigade Committee requests permission of the Executive Council to ballot the membership on any issue the Executive Council considers the issue and either grants or rejects the permission. The decision is taken by vote, the General Secretary does not get a vote on the Executive Council.

We note Mr McGuirk's comments on the merits of action short of strike action which we will pass on to those Brigade Committees undertaking or contemplating such actions. Mr McGuirk helpfully provided us with a link to the electoral commission's website which identifies a political party set up by the Merseyside Brigade Committee in order so candidates may be able to stand against any councillors that support attacks to our jobs and conditions of service and as a consequence oppose the objectives of the FBU. The local officials he refers to are myself, the brigade chair and the membership secretaries past and present, *all four of us*.

He says it is newly formed – **nope**:
It was formed almost 18 months ago.

He says it is presumably supported by subscriptions of Merseyside firefighters – **nope**:
We presume he means Merseyside FBU members, no subscriptions have been used for the purpose of the party, the Public Services Coalition (PSC).

The total sum of money spent on providing leaflets, advertising and literature, including the delivery of such literature, to date (which has to be declared by law) is £0.00p. You can see Mr McGuirk appears to be slightly off the mark on this issue.

He says it feels like a co-ordinated campaign by the Union for possibly our own political agenda, you can see from the above there is no political agenda; it is simply the representation of our members' wishes after considerable consultation, consultation which will continue unabated.

MF&RS literature says that the ballot closes in the Party Conference season and that it is believed that these political events (Labour and Conservative Party Conferences) may affect timing of future action. They probably are unaware that we are not, and haven't been for a number of years, affiliated to any political party so are unfettered by such events. It is interesting to see that they think the Conservative Party Conference would influence this trade union however.

It seems unusual that a senior officer who says Union membership is irrelevant to him has such a deep, deep interest in our workings, elections and current and future possible campaigns. We have checked with the membership secretary who once again confirms however that Mr McGuirk is **not** a member of the FBU.

Yours in unity

L Skarratts
Brigade Secretary