



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS

## No 6 District

### Minutes of the Meeting held at Surrey Fire and Rescue Service HQ Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007

Meeting opened at 10.30 am

#### Members Present:

Peter Robinson (Chair) Pam Bathurst (Secretary - Kent) Mark Bathurst (Treasurer - Kent)  
Trevor Green (East Sussex) Bob Sims (Surrey) Derek Wynn (Hampshire) David Warren and Richard Thorne  
(Oxfordshire)

#### 1. Welcome by Chairman:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Mr Sims for organising the venue. He then asked everyone to stand for a minutes silence in honour of the 4 fire fighters who died in the fire in Warwickshire.

#### 2. Apologies for Absence:

Brian Doick (West Sussex) Dennis Howe (Kent) Jennifer Leyland (Oxford) Frank Knowles  
(Buckinghamshire) Maureen Hooper, Peter Cameron Waller (East Sussex) and Terry Burton (Hampshire)

#### 3. Minutes of meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2007 were read:

Richard Thorne proposed that they were a true and accurate record, Trevor Green seconded and all agreed.

#### 4. Matters Arising:

Mr Sims pointed out a small spelling mistake. The Chairman informed the Committee that Graham Bow was looking great following his op. He is now walking tall and so much better.

Mr Sims then asked the treasurer if he had had a chance to look into the possibilities of investing some of the District monies into somewhere like Scottish Widows where it would earn more interest. Mr Bathurst apologised and said that he hadn't had the opportunity yet, but he would as soon as he could.

Mr Robinson then notified the committee that Jeff Goddard had once again looked into the question of increments in pensions when living in places like South Africa, and had conjectured that it was probably a lost cause.

The Chairman told members about a situation that has cropped up since the Council Meeting. This concerned three London personnel who having previously, been granted invalidity pensions, had in September, had them stopped.

He thought that the local authorities might now be getting wise to just a few personnel on the old Scheme, taking the opportunity, to seek retirement once they had reached 26 and a half years of service. They are now in the London fire authority anyway, insisting that they accept alternative employment within the Fire Service if they are medically able. This action was based upon some guidance sent out in 2004 by the then D.P.M's department It did appear from what little he personally knew of this case, that the London authority may have retrospectively offered these three chaps jobs with the FA but they had declined. The question was asked, whether the pension would still be based on their fire fighting income, or, whether it would be on the new employment and nobody seemed to know, but the matter would be looked into.

#### 5. Report from National Council Meeting:

Mr Robinson said that the majority of his report on the National meeting could be found in the "Firepole" article in the NARF News which is due out over the next week or two, or indeed in the National Minutes. If anyone would like copies of the latter let Pam know and she would email to them.

Bob Sims and Richard Thorne asked for them to be sent. Mrs Bathurst agreed to do that.

Mr Green said that he was having a problem with attachments. Mr Sims suggested sending the items within the email **not** as an attachment.

The Chairman then indicated that there was a firm of solicitors and an insurance company who give exceptionally good rates to NARF members. The solicitors name is Linder Myers Solicitors and the Tel No is 0845 23486723 and the email address is [narf@lindermyers.co.uk](mailto:narf@lindermyers.co.uk)

The name of the Insurance Company is Roland Smith Insurance who regularly advertise in NARF News.

## **6. District Secretaries Report:**

The secretary informed the Committee that not a lot had happened at District level this last 6 months. However she thought that by far the most important thing to mention is that she had, on their behalf, sent a message of condolences to the Chief Officer of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue service re the tragic loss of 4 of his men in the warehouse fire.

She then showed the members a copy of the National Council minutes if anyone would like to have a read.

She said that she would be checking and up dating the District register over the next few weeks, so if anyone had any changes to report (she knew that Jennifer would have) could they please let her have them as soon as possible. John Littleton is looking into stream-lining the National register.

On a brighter note Graham Bow is back in harness as membership secretary, and much better, following his operation.

As the Committee heard in the apologies, our member secretary from Oxfordshire could not be here, she is in the process of moving. She has had one hell of a time through the summer, she was very badly flooded in her beautiful cottage and has had to make the very difficult decision to move to a much smaller property away from the area that was so badly affected by the awful floods. The District Secretary said she was sure they would all join with her in passing on the message to her that she was in our thoughts at this emotional time, and that the move goes well.

She then informed the members that Mark and she attended the Armistice Day parade in Ypres again this year and laid a wreath on their behalf.

That concluded the District Secretaries report.

## **7. District Treasurer's Report:**

The Treasurer informed the Committee that all was running smoothly and there was little to report. He presented the interim accounts to 15<sup>th</sup> November. He mentioned that there were two items of expenditure outstanding.

Mr Bathurst had said (at a previous meeting) that he would look into the possibility of moving the money, in the Deposit Account, to an account which earned a better return. He reported that there was no progress to report at that time. He went on to report that areas had forwarded payments to District in respect of 867 members. This represented an income to District of £433.50p. The remainder had been forwarded to National Level. He further reminded those present, that E & W Sussex always pay at the end of the year, or just after and he expected to receive those payments soon.

## **8. Area Reports:**

### **Buckinghamshire:**

Bucks had its AGM at Aylesbury Fire HQ in March and it was a well attended meeting culminating in a pleasant buffet laid on at nominal cost by the Station Cook.

The second Meeting was in October and was a Luncheon event at Buckingham Hotel, Buckingham. It was only attended by 39 persons but amongst these was the Bucks current CFO and his wife as our guests and the Branch Chairman (the ex CFO of Bucks) and his lady. It was a pleasant affair and much enjoyed by all. At this meeting the new Secretary for Bucks Branch, John Coombs was introduced to members although it was only the wives and partners who didn't already know him since he is a regular attendee at Bucks NARF meetings

### **East Sussex:**

Mr Green informed the Committee that they now have 130 members, and that they had an AGM in April and all had gone well.

### **Hampshire:**

Mr Wynn informed the Committee that he didn't have a lot to add this meeting. He said that he had attended 6 funerals of NARF members. He then indicated that the Hants AGM was going to be the following Saturday

and that he would be pushing hard to gain new members and that he was going to take up the offer of National footing the bill of postage for prospective new members.

### **Kent:**

Mrs Bathurst gave the following report from Kent: In Kent I have had quite a lot of success, ref our membership. We had 3 or 4 members who had not sent in their subs earlier in the year, for various reasons. Instead of just letting their membership lapse (as it does after a certain amount of time) Mark and I took a day out and went for a drive. We visited the last addresses of those 4 members that we had not heard from. 2 had moved, but we managed to gain addresses and telephone numbers from the new occupants of those houses, but the other 2 were reminded (by seeing us) that they must pay their subs to remain members, and they did. Previously we had just assumed that they no longer wished to be members.

On the same subject, back in July, Mark and I attended the County show in Maidstone along with a stand that I had set up (with the Chief Fire Officers permission I hastily add) Over the 2 day period that we attended, we had 5 people show interest and 3 signed up as members. We will be doing it again next year. These are some of the things that we put up on the display. She then showed the Committee the items that had been on the display.

Our relationship with both the Kent Retirement Association and the Benevolent Fund seems to go from strength to strength.

At the end of October we took one of our members to visit an old colleague of his on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Despite the difficulty of him being deaf and only partially sighted, the two of them seemed very pleased to be in each others company and reminisced about the other members of their watch. It was a lovely sight to behold.

As I said in the District report we also went back to Ypres on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November In Kent we asked our members if they would like our area to make a donation to the families fund of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. The answer was a unanimous yes, so we are making a small donation along with a few private ones. This concluded the Kent Area report.

### **Oxford:**

The representatives from Oxford reported that they had an AGM in June and that they now have 30 members. The accounts are in good order with £750 in the account. They (like Kent) had sent a donation to the Warwickshire Families fund. Enquiries were being made to the Chief Fire Officer ref recruitment into NARF of the services retiring personnel.

Mr Thorne then again asked why the cold calls from FSNBF had not yet stopped. The Chairman said that a senior member of the Fund had reassured the General Secretary that this would be discontinued and thought that this had been taken on board. Recent contact by himself with another senior member of FSNBF seemed to indicate that it was still going ahead but with the dialogue having been prepared in advance and from which callers were told not to deviate. We might have to live with this!

Oxfordshire had also had a Bar BQ and a Quiz night and both had been very successful.

The 2 members then told everyone that Ms Leyland was recovering from her operation when the floods hit, and she had really suffered quite badly from these, which was why she had made the difficult decision to move away from her lovely cottage.

### **Surrey:**

Mr Simms reported that Surrey has 275 members at present. They had an AGM in April, and another one is due next April. Despite the large amount of members, they were finding it very difficult to get Officers to do the work. There was now a very strong possibility of the Surrey Branch folding. It was felt very strongly that this would be **very** sad. Mr Sims then said that it was tragic that we had lost the diaries this year, they were of excellent quality and the members really liked them.

### **8.7 West Sussex:**

The representative from West Sussex had sent his apologies, he was unable to attend today.

### **9. Election of Officers:-**

Mr Wynn proposed and Mr Warren seconded the motion that if all Officers were prepared to stand again that they should all be nominated en bloc. The officials all agreed that they were happy to stand again, and the motion was carried unanimously.

### **10. Any Other Business:**

The Secretary asked if all reports given at the meeting should be in writing, and a copy given to her at the end of the meeting which would alleviate the necessity for her to write the extensive notes that she has to at the moment.

The secretary was then asked if she could write a little note to Ms Leyland informing her that she was in **all** our thoughts and prayers for a speedy **full** recovery and that her move goes well. Mr Thorne and Mr Warren were then given the collection that had been made for her and they were asked to get her some flowers or chocolates or whatever she would like.

The Treasurer expressed his thanks to his wife, the secretary, for all the help and support she has given him and all the hard work she continues to do for NARF. He then showed his concern that the National Secretary had been changing the members numbers on the National Data – Base from the numbers used by the local areas. The Chairman said that he would take this matter up with John Littleton and Graham Bow to get the anomaly corrected.

**Next Meeting:**

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held sometime in May, venue and time to be decided nearer the time, but it was felt it would take place at the Wray Park Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.53pm