

# **THE PRESIDENT'S REVIEW**

## **REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MANAGEMENT WORKING PARTY**

### **(1) BACKGROUND**

After the 2015 AGM, The President decided to conduct a survey of the membership to ascertain the health and wellbeing of The Society. The results showed a general high level of satisfaction amongst members, particularly with "Fire Cover", but that there were a few issues that needed attention. One of these was that The Society was drifting too far from its traditional roots as a repository of knowledge of ALL things fire brigade related, and becoming an appliance photographic Society.

This reinforced the opinion, which had been forming within the Committee for some time, that too much management effort was being spent on too few members, at the expense of proper strategic planning for the majority. A further spur to what followed was the realisation of the number of potential officer posts, when set against the background of the total membership and the number of members willing and able to take up the roles, was unsustainable.

In order to examine these issues, the President formed a Management Working Party to conduct a first principles review of The Society organisation and to report back with its results as soon as practicable. On a parallel track, a Financial Review Working Party was formed to look at the operation and reporting of Society finances. Considerable interaction between the two Working Parties was necessary.

Following on from the interim reports previously issued, the Management Working Party is pleased to set out its final proposals in this report together with the basis for these.

### **(2) MANAGEMENT WORKING PARTY MEMBERS**

The members were 0051 Mike Smith, 0088 Howard Davis 0738 Ralph Horton and were led by 0283 Richard Williams. As can be seen from the membership numbers, all are very long serving Society members, and all except Howard Davis have held several senior officer roles in The Society and are long standing Committee members. Howard Davis was asked to join the group, as we wanted an ordinary members input into the deliberations, plus he is a University Professor in organisation and local governance. We held a number of face to face meetings, and exchanged a great number of e-mails whilst completing our brief.

### **(3) HISTORY**

The current organisation of The Society is still largely the one that was set up by Bob Boyd, our second General Secretary, in the early 1970s. This, in turn, was a more formalised version of the method used by our founder, Bob Bonner, when The Society started to grow. In essence, there is a governing Committee formed of elected members and a number of officers whose posts are by appointment. Changes have been made since then, both Constitutional, and by convention, to maintain the democracy of The Society. Major steps to this were introduced in the 2005 Constitution, where it was ensured that the "Ordinary" members of The Committee would always be able to outvote the Executive of appointed and senior officers. Postal voting on major decisions, and limits to what could be proposed from the floor of a General Meeting, were also introduced to ensure that the whole membership was able to have its say, rather than just the ones who were keen enough, and had the funds, to attend the meetings.

#### **(4) DELIBERATION PROCESS**

The working party started by asking whether the current system was still fit for purpose, and if not, could it be improved enough to make it so.

Whilst the current arrangements had stood The Society in good stead in the past, particularly during periods when membership was buoyant, 'cracks' were now starting to show as membership grew older and numbers started to decline. Whether this was attributable to the whole organisation, or was just a sign of the times is a moot point, and one that was outside the purview of this review, but would hopefully be addressed by it.

The next step was to look at other similar organisations to benchmark ourselves against, and see if that threw up any good ideas.

Most were suffering from a similar malaise as the FBS; an aging and generally declining membership frustrated by the majority of young people not appearing to have "hobbies" any more that encompass our interest group.

Amongst the groups looked at quite closely was the VBB – the Dutch version of the FBS. They had recently undergone a review which structured the VBB into functional units and streamlined services to the membership as well as embarking on recruitment initiatives. Other organisations investigated were the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, an organisation extremely similar to the FBS for enthusiasts of railways, as well as constituent organisations in the Fire Heritage Network (UK).

#### **(5) DEMOCRACY**

Democracy, that is involving all the membership in the decision making and reacting to requirements of the majority not the vociferous few was a key consideration in the review of the management of The Society.

The overriding conclusion was that the 'democratic deficit' in the current system is now probably beyond the point of salvage. There has not been a contested election for any national, or Area post, for a number of years, and a number of quite important posts remained unfilled, with no rush of candidates willing to take on the roles. Just as importantly, the "ordinary" members of The Committee cannot really be classed as independent any more. For more than a decade Committee Officers have been re-appointed "on the nod" and all Committee Officers bar one hold other posts within The Society.

The root cause of this situation with Committee, key positions and Area vacancies can only be firmly placed on 'the lack of volunteers' as all vacancies were advertised and the response was extremely poor.

This has led to the impression, in some quarters, that The Committee is unresponsive, and self-perpetuating. This is categorically not the case. It is constrained by The Constitution, finances, and the requirements of the local brigades and other organisations with whom we interact. Any member who has held a senior post in The Society knows how time consuming it can be, and it behoves those that criticise to bear in mind that they are all volunteers, who give their time freely and rarely claim all the expenses to which they are entitled. The opportunities for fresh blood to join have been many; but have been missed every time.

However, it should be noted that the operation of The Committee has cost implications and historical accounts indicated that travel to and from Committee meetings equates to the second highest spend of Society funds after that of the production and distribution costs of Fire Cover.

Notwithstanding democracy, the Working Party concluded that the major emphasis on the management of The Society was to concentrate both the finite physical and financial resources to those services that directly benefit the membership experience.

## **(6) MEMBERS' REQUIREMENTS**

The Working Party went back to basics and looked at what members wanted from The Society and what was needed to produce these outputs. The main tangible benefit that all members get is Fire Cover; a significant minority also enjoy visits to brigades and similar organisations. In addition, there are the less tangible benefits of the social interaction between likeminded individuals, networking, and the sharing and dissemination of information. There are certain actions and processes that need to be completed to allow The Society to fulfil these desires.

The Working Party's thoughts eventually coalesced around an organisation based on operational units each of which would have responsibility for one or more of the functions needed to fulfil these requirements. (*See The Fire Brigade Society Structural Overview - Appendix A*).

The proposals are to establish the following units with the functions and complement listed.

## **(7) OPERATIONAL SERVICE UNITS**

**(a) Finance** The receipt and disbursement of funds, and maintenance of records thereof. The monitoring of The Society's financial position, and recommendations to keep it on track. The production of regular management reports, and of the annual accounts for members. **Treasurer**. Currently it is not envisaged that an assistant would be required.

**(b) Publications** The editing and production of Society publications principally "Fire Cover", but also embracing any special publications, organising the layout and printing of these publications and of leaflets, publicity material, etc. requested from time to time. **Editorial Team**. Up to four **Editors**, one of whom will act as a managing editor / co-ordinator. It is envisaged that there will be the ability to co-opt further assistance from time to time for specific projects, or when specialist knowledge is required. Any additional expense, must be within the unit's budget. A **Proof Reader** will assist the Editorial Team.

**(c) Membership Services** Registration of new members and the maintenance of membership records. Production and distribution of application forms, annual renewal paperwork and membership cards. Recruitment initiatives for new members. Production of mailing list, and labels for the distribution of "Fire Cover" or any other postings required from time to time. Distribution of "Fire Cover" and Special Publications. Distribution of Society notices, reports etc, either as hard copies or electronically. **Membership Secretary**. Assisted by **Distribution Manager**.

**(d) Events and Administration** This unit will consist of an **Events Manager** for liaising with Regional Administrators to co-ordinate visits and events and to ensure Society guidelines are implemented. Organisation of, with co-operation from local officers and members, Society events such as National visits, International visits and AGM Also part of the unit will be the **Central Administrator** who will liaise and co-ordination with Unit heads, Vehicle Recorder, the Heritage Officer and Supervisory Board and be the 'letterbox' for non-members and outside organisations. (Members will be expected to refer any queries they have to the appropriate operational unit in the first instance). This role will also be responsible for maintenance of any Society records and property records.

It is envisaged that there will be the ability to co-opt further assistance from time to time for specific projects, or when specialist knowledge is required. Any additional expense, must be within the unit's budget.

**(e) Sales Unit** Buy and sell fire related, and other items, at a profit, and as a service to members, and non-members, in order to generate surplus funds for the general use of The Society. To maintain accurate stock and accounting records, and report both to the Finance Unit when requested. To attend major Society events with a range of stock for sale. **Sales Manager.** At this stage, it is envisaged that most sales will be internet or post based, and at Society events. The viability of attending rallies will be questionable. It is not therefore envisaged that an assistant will be required. Assistance for specific projects would be allowed, but must be financially viable and appear in the unit accounts.

**(f) Information Technology Unit** Responsible for the updating and maintenance of The Society website and social media platforms. Provision of e-mail addresses for Society use, and advice and information on IT issues relating to its use by Society Officers. **Web Manager.** It is not currently thought that an assistant would be required. This role will assist the Membership Services Unit in electronic communication with the membership.

## **(8) LOCAL MANAGEMENT**

### **(a) Introduction**

The following covers the arrangements currently in place in The Society to interface locally with the membership together with proposed future arrangements to address the outcome of the Presidents Membership Survey.

### **(b) Current Arrangements**

The Society's local management is divided into Areas which encompass fire and rescue service (FRS) areas and these are managed by Area Secretaries, plus up to a maximum of three Assistant Area Secretaries (current Constitution details). Ireland, including Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are designated Areas and there is also an Overseas Section. These local management units report to the Committee.

### **(c) Geography**

The current 13 areas following cover the following FRSs:

**EASTERN AREA:** Bedfordshire & Luton, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk

**IRISH AREA:** The Republic and Northern Ireland

**METROPOLITAN AREA:** London Fire Brigade

**MIDLANDS AREA:** Hereford & Worcester, Leicestershire, West Midlands, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire.

**NORTH EAST AREA:** Cleveland, Durham & Darlington, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear.

**NORTH WEST & IoM AREA:** Cheshire, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester Merseyside, IoM.

**OVERSEAS AREA:** All areas not covered in England, Scotland Wales and Ireland.

**SCOTTISH AREA:** Scottish.

**SOUTHERN AREA:** Dorset (part of Dorset & Wiltshire FRS), Hampshire, Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex & Isle of Wight.

**SOUTH WEST AREA:** Avon, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire (part of Dorset & Wiltshire FRS), Cornwall, Devon and Isles of Scilly.

**THAMES VALLEY AREA:** Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

**WELSH AREA:** Mid & West Wales, North Wales and South Wales.

**YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE AREA:** Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.

### **(d) Roles**

Following is the current Role Guideline for an Area Secretary. The role of the Assistant Area Secretary is to assist the Area Secretary discharge this role.

**APPOINTMENT:** BY AREA SELECTION / COMMITTEE RATIFICATION

**REPORTS TO:** COMMITTEE

**RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE SOCIETY (INCLUDING SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES)**

Create and maintain close liaison with the Fire Brigades in your area.

Promote the Society and its aims in a professional manner.

Involve Area Membership in the selection and organisation of visits and meetings.

Contact and welcome new members.

Assist other Officers of the Society when requested and in the mutually agreed time scales.

All Society correspondence to be discharged as soon as practical and should be acknowledged within 21 days of receipt.

**REGULAR COMMITMENTS:**

Organise a minimum of two Area meetings each calendar year.

Organise a minimum of two Area visits each calendar year

Publish a minimum of one Area News each calendar year and copy to all Area members, the Editor and the General Secretary.

Provide, or arrange to provide the Editor with an Area Report by the copy date determined by the Editor for each edition of 'Fire Cover'.

Provide, or arrange to provide the 'What's On' Co-ordinator details of organised visits by the 1st March each year.

Ensure that no Area Visits/Meetings clash with the Annual Society Visit or the Society AGM

**(e) Current Complement**

The current complement of Area Management (Secretaries and Assistants) is 19, with 5 Secretary posts vacant. If all post were filled in-line with the Constitution the maximum complement would be 13 Area Secretaries and 39 Assistants, a total of 52 Area Officers.

*EASTERN AREA:* Area Secretary (vacant), *Assistants* (2)

*IRISH AREA:* Area Secretary (1)

*METROPOLITAN AREA:* Area Secretary (1)

*MIDLANDS AREA:* Area Secretary (vacant), *Assistants* (2)

*NORTH EAST AREA:* Joint Area Secretaries (2) Assistant (1)

*NORTH WEST AREA & IoM AREA:* Area Secretary (vacant)

*OVERSEAS AREA:* (vacant)

*SCOTTISH AREA:* Area Secretary (1)

SOUTHERN AREA: Area Secretary (1), Assistant (1)

SOUTH WEST AREA: Area Secretary (1), Assistant (1)

THAMES VALLEY AREA: (vacant)

WELSH AREA: Area Secretary (1)

YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE AREA: Area Secretary (1), Assistant (1)

#### (f) Key Membership Survey Factors on Local Management

Five key issues were predominant in the membership survey responses, they being:

*The Society has become a 'photographic society' with the full range of The Society's aims not being addressed.*

*Too much emphasis / effort is afforded to visits at the expense of other facets of services for Area members.*

*More time on visits / events to interact with FRS personnel and other members at the event and more in-depth viewing of key vehicles and equipment, etc.*

*Members require more local activities other than just visit, (newsletters and regular / winter meetings / get-togethers).*

*Members want to be involved in the delivery of local events.*

Following the Membership Survey the Working Party looked at area activities against the key local roles for The Society years 2014-15 and 2015-6, using records held.

AREA	FIRE COVER REPORT (FC204 -211) (MAXIMUM 8)	VISITS <sup>(2)</sup> (MINIMUM 4 IN PERIOD)	AREA MEETING) (MINIMUM 4 IN PERIOD)	AREA NEWSLETTERS (MINIMUM 2 IN PERIOD)
<b>EASTERN</b>	8	1 (National Visit June 2016)	NIL	NIL
<b>IRISH</b>	1	7	2	NIL
<b>METROPOLITAN</b>	8	2 (Three day 2016 AGM)	NIL	6
<b>MIDLANDS</b>	8 <sup>(1)</sup>	6	2	3
<b>NORTH EAST</b>	6	4	A evening meeting takes place every month	NIL
<b>NORTH WEST AREA &amp; IoM</b>	3	6	A evening meeting takes place every month	NIL
<b>SCOTTISH</b>	8	6	2	NIL
<b>SOUTHERN</b>	8	6	NIL	NIL
<b>SOUTH WEST</b>	8	5	4	NIL
<b>THAMES VALLEY</b>	2 <sup>(1)</sup>	2 (Includes 2015 AGM)	NIL	NIL
<b>WELSH</b>	7	3	NIL	NIL
<b>YORKSHIRE &amp; HUMBERSIDE</b>	8	6	1 (One further planned but cancelled due to security and logistics)	NIL
<b>OVERSEAS</b>	6 <sup>(1)</sup>	There was one two-day Overseas Visit in June 2015	Not practical	NIL

Notes: (1) No Secretary in post for period reviewed.

(2) Based on relevant Visit Attendance Registers (FBS005) submitted together with What's On (Version 1).

### **(g) Options**

Although it is key that the 'broad-church' of member's requirements is addressed, actual delivery can be achieved if the following commitments, already in the current Role Guidelines, are complied with; local Meetings, local visits, local Newsletters and local Fire Cover reports.

It became evident that the current local management model is not delivering what the membership desires.

However, members must be prepared to be actively involved in the discharge of local management roles by filling these roles and even more importantly assisting those in post.

### **(h) Geography**

For clarity in our dealings with FRSs, Local Management in England should be aligned with the nine English Regional areas and the FRSs in those regions. Ireland, Scotland and Wales should be the other geographical regions. 'Overseas' be renamed 'International' to reflect the catchment and to cover all the geographical areas not specified. In effect the current 13 areas will reduce to 12.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 (See Fire Cover 216 for an overview) provides for an 'eclectic mix of models' for the management of FRSs. This may in the future provide challenges for The Society when dealing with FRSs.

However, it is strongly believed that The Society aligning with the nine English Regions provides 'two-way' clarity for future communication and interaction with FRSs.

<b>ENGLISH REGION (England)</b>	<b>FIRE &amp; RESCUE SERVICES IN REGION</b>
NORTH EAST	Cleveland, Durham & Darlington, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear
NORTH WEST	Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester Merseyside,( IoM).
YORKSHIRE & HUMBER	North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Humberside
WEST MIDLANDS	Hereford & Worcester, West Midlands, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire.
EAST MIDLANDS	Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire.
EAST OF ENGLAND	Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk
SOUTH WEST	Avon, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset & Wiltshire, Cornwall, Devon, Isles of Scilly, (Channel Islands).
SOUTH EAST	Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Royal Berkshire, Surrey, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire.
LONDON	London Fire Brigade

### **(i) Roles**

For the future success of The Society local members must be involved, and be empowered to assist with arranging and supporting the running of events. We firmly believe that local Officers and members need to embrace this approach.

History has shown that it does not necessarily follow that were there is a large complement in local management that the requirements of the Role Guidelines (member's requirements) are delivered.

It is believed that the local management needs simplifying and structuring to deliver the key items, local meeting and visits, local Fire Cover Reports, local Newsletters and local news web posting:

The Working Party thoughts have coalesced on a local management organisation based on two distinct roles as follows:

**(j) Regional / Geographical Administrator** who will report to the Events Manager and Central Administrator in the Events & Administration Unit. The role will be primarily to lead in arranging local visits / events and meetings, but **must** also involve local members in the planning / discharge of events.

**(k) Regional / Geographical Correspondent** who will report to the Events Manager, Administrator and Editorial Unit. The role will be primarily to provide Fire Cover reports (direct to the Editorial Team), local newsletters and local website postings.

Members should be advised to deal direct with relevant business units on items outside local jurisdiction, i.e. membership and distribution matters direct to the Membership Services Unit, publication matters direct to the Publications Unit, etc. This will ensure efficient discharge of members queries, etc. This direct approach requires backing with an 'escalation procedure' to address unresolved issues (See relevant section of this report).

Although **strongly** discouraged, the Regional / *Geographical* Administrator and Regional / *Geographical* Correspondent roles could be discharged by a singleton Officer.

It will be essential that appointees to local management are team players, possess the ability to engage with all the local membership and are committed to the successful delivery of the requirements of the role.

The total complement for this approach would be 24 Officers.

#### **(l) Newsletters**

Area (Local) Newsletters were in the past a key communications avenue to members and it is strongly believed that this service requires reinvigorating.

The pages of Fire Cover are finite and governed by income.

As a yardstick to indicate how Area Reports have grown in size, and in no way singling out the Areas indicated (they all consistently provide reports in Fire Cover), the Editorial Team provided Committee with a comparison of Fire Cover 157 (FC) (the first Fire Cover published by the Editorial Team, 60 pages, plus cover) and FC215 (the last publication, 60 pages, plus cover) highlighting the trend regarding Area News; The Eastern Area Report in FC157 was 4.75 columns, but in FC215 it was 9.5 columns; The Southern Area Report in FC157 was 1.5 columns, but in FC215 it was 6.5 columns; The Metropolitan Area Report in FC157 was 0.5 of a column, but in FC215 it was 2.5 columns.

The Working Party agree with the Editorial Team, that when the inevitable 'allocation of space' to contributors to Fire Cover is implemented, the Area News copy that cannot be accommodated can form the basis of Local Newsletters.

Although it is hoped that the majority of members will co-operate in receiving Society communications electronically, it is recognised that some members will require hardcopy Local Newsletters.

It will be part of the role of the Regional / Geographical Administrator to identify and inform annually the Events Manager of costs involved in providing hardcopy Local Newsletters.



It is the Working Party's belief that cost savings in the Executive Supervisory Board management approach over the current Committee approach will be more than adequate to fund this approach to Local Newsletters.

We would like to praise those in the Metropolitan Area involved in the production of their regular newsletter which we feel is the basis for this approach throughout The Society.

#### **(m) Activities in Regional / Geographical Areas with Vacant Roles**

Recent experience has shown that even in Areas with vacant Secretary posts events can still take place. These events have been achieved by a Committee Officer aided by local members.

Building on this approach the role of the Events Manager will be to facilitate local events and visits where local vacancies exist by seeking assistance from local members and or co-opting assistance.

#### **(n) Overseas (International) Visits**

The same approach is envisaged for the arrangement of Overseas Visits as for activities in Regional / Geographical areas with vacant roles.

#### **(o) Visits**

Providing visits for members is one of the services of The Society, but is not paramount over the other services offered.

Investigation has shown that a disproportionate amount of effort is expended on the organisation of visits considering the number of members that attend. In the Society years 2014-15 and 2015-6 the average number of members attending individual visits, excluding national, overseas and AGM visits, averaged approximately 20 members per visit (4% of the membership), this information being extrapolated from visit registers. Taking into account the demographics of members on the local visits less than 10% of members attend local visit.

National Visits and AGM Visits have historically attracted between 40 - 50 members. Overseas Visits attract on average approximately 20 members.

A disproportionate amount of Committee time has been eroded on issues arising from visits. This time could have been more productively used for the benefit of the membership as a whole.

However the membership survey did reveal that some members were put off attending local visits due to the factors highlighted previously in this report under the heading 'Key Membership Survey Factors on Local Management'.

Discipline on visits was also raised, although a number of responses did highlight recent improvements with discipline as a result of ongoing initiatives to address this.

It was not considered appropriate that costs associated with the arrangement and running of local visits be borne by the vast majority of members that do not attend these visits. In line with the approach for national, overseas and AGM visits, the Management Working Party have strongly recommended to the Financial Working Party any costs incurred with the arrangement and running of local visits be apportioned, and recovered, from those members attending a visit.

Consideration of charging a nominal amount to attend a local visit, as is the practice with some organisations bench marked in this review, was considered. However, it was felt that this was a discussion to be had in the future.

## **(9) SOCIETY OFFICER'S COMPLEMENT**

At the start of its deliberations, the Management Working Party were aware of the President's conclusion that the number of Society Officers compared with the total membership was too high.

The structure proposed for The Society addresses this imbalance.

The maximum Officer complement within the proposed structure would be 40 compared with a maximum of 62 in the current structure. The proposed complement, in reality, is within the 'ball park figure' of the current actual Officer complement.

Again it is emphasised that the membership should be prepared to be actively involved in the discharge of local management roles by filling these roles and even more importantly assisting those in post.

## **(10) APPOINTMENTS**

### **(a) Overview**

Candidates for all posts would be sought by advertising to the membership, and would be expected have the qualities necessary to make a success of the post.

Executive appointments would be made by the Supervisory Board selecting the best candidate.

Geographical and Local Operational Units appointments will by members votes in the relevant geographical or local area.

See following sections details of specifics of each appointment process.

### **(b) General Appointment Conditions**

All Executive appointments will be subject to ratification by a membership vote, the results being announced at the AGM.

All appointment period to be standardised at 4 years, with regular review provisions in this period.

In the event of a post becoming vacant part way through the 4 year term, the initial appointment of the replacement would be for the balance of the 4 year term.

All officers would be eligible for reselection.

Half the initial appointments will be for 2 years to ensure continuity. To ensure continuity of operation, 50% of the posts would become available for reselection every 2 years.

The appointment period to be aligned with Society's financial year and appointments should commence at the beginning of The Society's financial year.

Appointments made before the beginning of The Society's financial year will be regarded as 'designate' and the 'designate period' will not be counted as part of the appointment period.

Members defined as 'designate' may carry out the full range of their assigned role before ratification and the beginning of The Society's financial year.

Appointees can only for fill more than one management role if the secondary role(s) are with their assigned Management Unit. This alleviates 'overload' of Officers, which has the potential for tasks not being discharged and removes the perceived 'conflict of interests' with roles crossing unit boundaries.

The drafted 'Officer's and Volunteer's Handbook' to be rolled out, but amended where the role names require amendment as a result of changes to The Society's structure.

Formalised support and guidance for new appointees, the 'Officer's and Volunteer's Handbook' being pivotal in this process.

Roles may require certain key skills, proof of, and delivery of, these skill to be a condition of appointment.

Appointees to the roles of Treasurer and Sales Unit should before final appointment be subjected to 'criminal record checks' ('Subject Access' - the process by which it can be found out what information is held about a person on the Police National Computer). This 'Subject Access' request will have to be made by the appointee, at The Society's cost, this currently being £10 for each check.

### **(c) Executive Appointments**

This procedure encompasses the appointment of President, Vice President, Officer in the Operational Service Units, the Vehicle Recorder and Heritage Officer.

The current Constitution regarding Executive Appointments, extract following, is in essence suitable, with the appropriate changes in terminology and the added ratification by the membership clause.

#### 18 (2) Executive Appointment (Existing Constitution Clause)

(i) When a vacancy occurs in the roles set out in clause 17(4) above, the General Secretary will invite at the earliest practical time and by the most practical way all Ordinary and Honorary Life Members, subject to clause 17(3), to apply for the vacancy and he will indicate clearly the closing date for applications.

(ii) The Committee, by a majority vote, will appoint the most suitable candidate for the post.

(iii) The Committee may apply criteria that the candidate must be able to satisfy in order to carry out the role.

(iv) Officers of The Society appointed pursuant to clause 18(2) may hold that appointment for such period of time as they are willing to serve and subject to bi-annual review and confirmation of the appointment by the Committee.

It is recommended that the following clause to be incorporated into the Constitution:

#### 18(2) Executive Appointment:

(i) When a vacancy occurs in the roles set out in (clause 17[4]), the Executive Supervisory Board will invite, at the earliest practical time and by the most practical way, Ordinary and Honorary members, subject to (clause 17[3]), to apply for the vacancy and the closing date for applications will be clearly given.

(ii) The Executive Supervisory Board, by a majority vote, will appoint the most suitable candidate designate for the post.

(iii) The Executive Supervisory Board will seek ratification of designate appointments by a vote from the membership, at the same time as the vote for the Annual Operational Plan, and the results announced at the next AGM.

(iv) The Executive Supervisory Board may apply criteria that the candidate must be able to satisfy in order to carry out the role.

(v) An Officer appointed under this clause shall serve for a period of 4 years and will be eligible for re-election.

#### **(d) Appointment Procedures and Criteria for Officers Appointed Locally**

The appointment of the Regional / Geographical Administrator and Regional / Geographical Correspondent will be by nomination from members in the relevant Regional / Geographical area and a vote of members in the relevant Regional / Geographical area with executive ratification.

The current Constitution regarding Local Appointments, extract following, is in essence suitable, with the appropriate changes in terminology.

18(3) Officers appointed by Area Members (i) When a vacancy occurs in the roles set out in clause 17(5) above, the will invite at the earliest practical time and by the most practical way all Ordinary and Honorary Life Members in that Area, subject to clause 17(3), to apply for the vacancy and he will indicate clearly the closing date for applications. (ii) If more than one candidate applies for a vacancy the General Secretary will arrange a vote in that Area and the candidate with the highest number of votes cast will be appointed by the Committee. (iii) An Officer appointed under this clause shall serve for a period of 3 years and will be eligible for re-election.

The recommended amended Constitution clause for Local Appointment follows.

#### **18(3) Appointments by Local Members**

(i) When a vacancy occurs in the roles set out in clause 17(5) above, the Executive Supervisory Board will invite at the earliest practical time and by the most practical way all Ordinary and Honorary Life Members in that locality, subject to clause 17(3), to apply for the post. The closing date for applications will be clearly given.

(ii) If more than one candidate applies for a vacancy the Executive Supervisory Board will arrange a vote in that regional / geographical area and the candidate with the highest number of votes cast and subject to ratification by the Executive Supervisory Board will be appointed.

(iii) An Officer appointed under this clause shall serve for a period of 4 years and will be eligible for re-election.

#### **(11) OPERATION and SUPERVISION**

Each Operational Service Unit will be responsible for its own operations. It will set and manage its own budget, after discussion within the Executive Supervisory Board. The Operational Plans of all the Operational Service Units for the following year will be put to the membership as a formal vote. The result will be announced at the AGM.

The Editorial Team (ET) has since its start submitted annual Operational Plans to the Committee to discharge the requirements of the Constitution. In recent times the Distribution Managers annual Operational Plan has been associated with the ET Operational Plan. This approach has resulted in the successful production of our publications and has received praise from our President. The Working Party firmly believe this approach to forward planning and budgeting is an essential.

Each Operational Service Unit will provide quarterly progress report against the Operational Plan for the membership.

To enable efficient discharge of duties, the presentation of reports for members and the preparation for AGMs it is essential that certain actions are time-scaled throughout each financial

year. The Fire Brigade Society Year and Activity Planner (Appendix B) details the time-line for The Society's financial year and the key activities.

There will be no directly elected Committee. Instead, an Executive Supervisory Board, under the Chairmanship of the President, and consisting of one member, usually the principal officer, of each unit. Officers, other than the principal may participate as well, or instead if expedient.

Whilst it is envisaged that the annual budget meeting will be at a central location, it is hoped that, as Units will be self-managing, the vast majority of other communications and any subsequent decisions, will be by e-mail or possibly conference or video calls in future. There will always be the possibility of actual meetings, but it is hoped to avoid these as much as possible to minimise operating costs.

As an additional level of oversight, at least for the first 2 years of the revised arrangements, there will be 2 lay members on the Executive Supervisory Board. They must be full members of The Society and hold no other posts within it. They will be elected by the membership for a period of one year, and will be eligible for re-election. They will be expected to participate fully in the management process, and as such will be supplied with all messages and documents as appropriate. At the end of the 2-year period, a proposal to continue, replace, or end the lay member system will be put to the membership. The Executive Supervisory Board will have to power to include other members, and non-members for specific projects, or where specialized knowledge would be helpful.

The Executive Supervisory Board will ensure the timely production, publication and distribution of any advertising or materials relating to the recruitment for vacant posts, or posts under 4 yearly / regular review. They are responsible for the selection of the most suitable candidate, after interviews if necessary. They will be responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the units, and for resolving any cross-unit issues in an amicable manner. They will work together on The Society's overall budget, and trim or expand their own unit budgets and operating plans as necessary.

## **(12) RECRUITMENT / MEMBERSHIP**

The Membership Unit will lead recruitment and budget for campaigns and items associated with recruitment.

The following amendments to the membership are recommended.

**(a) Junior:** To include one nominated Associate Membership in the same household. (this would offset 'Child Protection' checking and provides for a 'responsible adult' to accompany the Junior).

**(b) Trial Membership:** For a one off payment, prospective member (16+) may attend two FBS events in a single Society year. Conditions: This to be a once only offer per person. Events are not to include AGM Visit, National or Overseas Visits. One off payment will be refunded against joining as a full member in that Society year.

**(c) Corporate Membership for FRSs / Institutions:** Consideration is recommended to reintroduce, with a charge, Corporate Membership for groups / Institutions. This would be for Fire Cover (FC) only, with a range offered of two FCs, three FCs, etc.,.

Notwithstanding this report, a number of recruitment initiatives are underway targeting 'retired fire fighters' and cadet / young fire fighters.

### **(13) DATA PROTECTION**

Changes are necessary to The Society's current Data Protection Statement to reinforce Data Protection.

Only Society Officers with a strong legitimate need for membership list / details should be provided with them. Local Administration Officer of a geographical area should only be provided with membership list / details for that geographical area and no other.

The current statement reads:

*The Membership Secretary produces annually in August / September a membership list which is only supplied to officers to enable them to carry out their role. The information contained in this booklet is the same as the information held electronically and indicated in Section 2 above, less payment details. Members have the opportunity of opting to not have their address entered in this listing by completing the appropriate section on the membership application / renewal or in writing at any other time to the Membership Secretary.*

It is strongly recommended that The Society's Data Protection Statement be amended to read:

*The Membership Secretary holds and maintains the Membership List. The full Membership List will only be provide to Society Officers with a strong legitimate need. Annually, in September, a Membership List of the members in a geographical area will be supplied to the local Administration Officer of that geographical area to enable them to carry out their role. Local Administration Officer will be supplied with details of changes to their geographical Membership List. The information contained in the geographical listing is the same as the information held electronically and indicated in Section 2 above, less payment details. Members have the opportunity of opting to not have their address entered in this listing by completing the appropriate section on the membership application / renewal or in writing at any other time to the Membership Secretary.*

### **(14) MEMBERSHIP RULES**

No changes are proposed to the Membership Rules other than where the role names require amendment as a result of changes to The Society's structure.

### **(15) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM)**

It is recommended that AGMs be a stand-alone event in February / March each year. It is envisaged that the meeting will return to its original format as a business meeting, a networking and social opportunity, and chance for the members to question officers and put forward ideas for the future. Although we will endeavour to increase the attractiveness of the AGM by choice of different venues, guest speakers, etc., it will not be a visit weekend, where the original reason for the event gets shunted to ever more inconvenient times so that just one more identical battenburg Scania can be seen.

It is further recommended that AGMs are sequenced in various geographical regions, north, middle and south and that these locations be near main transport links (motorways / train services / bus services).

### **(16) VOTING**

When the current Constitution was drafted provision for members to vote on key Society matters was included. It was this provision that enabled a recent members vote on membership rates and the President's Vote in 2016.

Within the proposals in this report a membership vote would be conducted annually, before the AGM, seeking approval of the Operational Service Units Operational Plans and Executive Appointments / Reviews. This would serve in allowing all 'stakeholders', the members, to register

their opinions rather than a Committee decided opinion. This provides for a 'full democratic' approach to the running of The Society.

It was considered making 'voting' it a condition of membership. However, it is believed that the policing of such a policy would be an added burden and not in line with the ethos covering voting we are accustomed to.

#### **(a) Voting Costs**

The cost of recent votes has established that adopting this approach for seeking approval of the Operational Service Units Operational Plans and Executive Appointments / Reviews would not be a drain on financial resources.

It is the Working Party's belief that cost savings in the Executive Supervisory Board management approach over the current Committee approach will be more than adequate to fund voting.

#### **(b) Voting Procedure**

The President's Vote in 2016 ran extremely smoothly and it is strongly suggested that the procedure used should be adopted for future votes.

The voting procedure used in 2016 was published on the FBS Web Site (See Fire Cover 213, page 3) and is Appendix C to this report.

Paramount in the voting procedure is that to comply with current legislation to reduce this risk of fraudulent voting, all votes must be able to be tracked.

### **(17) COMMUNICATION**

Communicating with members has been via the Information section in each Fire Cover or by inserts distributed with Fire Cover.

Both these methods have potential drawbacks; the prolific use of the Information section in Fire Cover erodes valuable space for other copy; inserts have cost implications not only to produce, but can inflate the distribution cost of Fire Cover.

The recent initiative to encourage members to receive Society news and information by electing to access the FBS website and download such information, or have it sent to an email address, has shown encouraging take-up.

Obviously provision should always be made for those who are not electronic to receive Society news and information.

It is recommended that members are encouraged at the time of membership renewal (and initial application) to elect to receive Society news and information electronically by either of the methods currently offered.

### **(18) FIRE COVER**

Fire Cover is not part of this formal review. However, key points raised in the Membership Survey have been evaluated by the Editorial Team and reported in Fire Cover. The Editorial Team will make the necessary adjustments in Fire Cover subsequent to the outcome of this report's recommendations.

### **(19) WEB SITE:**

The web site requires updating to meet the current popular platforms and will need changes to layout to reflect any changes to The Society's structure.

As these changes have cost implications it is recommended that these be the subject of a fully-budgeted Operational Plan.

The increased use of the web site for membership communication is strongly encouraged.

However, caution needs to be exercised with regards to the web site content such that it does not become a substitute for becoming a member and reducing income to The Society.

## **(20) DISPUTE PROCEDURE**

As previously stated, members will be expected to deal direct with the relevant Operational Service Units on queries, etc., which should facilitate efficient resolution of such matters.

However, if a matter is not resolved satisfactorily by direct correspondence with the relevant Operational Service Unit, a member may request that the matter be adjudicated. This process will be formally managed by The Society's President.

This procedure will bring dealing with such matters in The Society in-line with the complaints procedure introduced and operated by the Editorial Team, an initiative which follows Press Complaints criteria.

## **(21) APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW.

**Appendix B:** THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY YEAR AND ACTIVITY PLANNER.

**Appendix C:** THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY VOTING PROCEDURE.

## **(22) ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Management Working Party thanks all those who have assisted in providing information and assistance in the preparation of this report. We especially thank those outside organisations who freely gave their time and information in the benchmarking exercise.

## **(23) CONCLUSION**

The working party firmly believe that the adoption of the proposals within this report will streamline the workings of The Society and deliver the membership's requirements within the finite budget and resources available.

We commend to the President and membership acceptance of these proposals.

***Richard Williams (Lead), Mike Smith, Howard Davis, Ralph Horton.***

***The Management Working Party.***

***June 2017.***



# THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW (APPENDIX A)

## PRESIDENT

*The Society figurehead and Chair of Executive Supervisory Board (with as required a vice President, namely incoming / outgoing President, for continuity)*

## OPERATIONAL SERVICE UNITS

PUBLICATIONS UNIT	FINANCE UNIT	MEMBERSHIP SERVICES UNIT	EVENTS & ADMINISTRATION UNIT	SALES UNIT	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UNIT	NON EXECUTIVE APPOINTEES (without portfolio)
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## COMPLEMENT OF OPERATIONAL SERVICE UNITS (Maximum) and NON EXECUTIVE APPOINTEES

EDITORS (Up to four with one Managing)  &  PROOF READER (Total of five Officers)	TREASURER    (One Officer)	MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY  and  DISTRIBUTION MANAGER (Total two Officers)	EVENTS MANAGER  and  CENTRAL ADMINISTRATOR (Total two Officers)	SALES MANAGER    (One Officer)	WEB MANAGER    (One Officer)	NON EXECUTIVE APPOINTEES  <i>Two members with no other roles in The Society appointed by annual membership vote (Two members)</i>
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### NOTES:

The grey shaded area will form the Executive Supervisory Board, consisting of the President, plus seven Officers (maximum), the Publications Unit and the Membership Services Unit being represented by one Officer each, but with both officers from Events & Administration Unit.

The two Non - Executive Appointees (without portfolio) will be part of the Executive Supervisory Board for the first two years of the new structure whilst it 'beds in', at which time a review will take place.

Appointees can only fill more than one management role if the secondary role(s) are with their assigned Operational Unit.

Members will be requested to deal direct with the appropriate Management Units on relevant matters.

Each Operational Service Unit will produce a formal structured and financially supported Annual Operational Plan (maximum two sides of A4) which will be collectively presented as the Executive Supervisory Board Report to members, in advance of each AGM, for agreement by formal vote, bring full democracy to the membership.

The Geographical and Local Operational Units' Operational Plans will be collated by the Events Manager and in essence be the current 'What's On'.

If the Annual Operational Plan fails to gain agreement from the membership, the previous Annual Operational Plan will continue to operate until another Annual Operational Plan is formally agreed by a membership vote.

Quarterly progress reports from each Operational Service Unit will be collated and made available to the membership.

Formal records of any Executive Supervisory Board meetings will be made available to the membership.

## GEOGRAPHICAL and LOCAL OPERATIONAL UNITS STRUCTURAL OVERVIEW

The Geographical Regions, Local Units and Other Roles will report to the relevant roles in the Events & Administration and Publications Units for their respective duties.

**ENGLAND:** Nine geographical Units each with a Local Administrator and a Local Correspondent

**SCOTLAND / WALES / IRELAND:** Three geographical regions each with a Local Administrator and a Local Correspondent

**INTERNATIONAL:** Direct responsibility of the Events Officer with a local co-opted assistance as required for Correspondent's Role and visits planning / arrangement.

**OTHER ROLES:** Combine LAVR and NLAVR to form VEHICLE RECORDER role. The VEHICLE RECORDER and HERITAGE OFFICER will report to the relevant roles in the Events, Administration, and Publications Units for their respective role duties.

**FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY YEAR & ACTIVITY PLANNER (APPENDIX B)**

ACTION / DATE	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<b>FIRE COVER PUBLICATION</b> <i>(INSERTS or SPECIAL CONTENTS LISTED)</i>		AGM MINUTES MEMBERSHIP CARDS			ADVERTISE VACANCIES			ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS. OPERATIONAL PLANS & APPOINTMENT VOTING FORMS			RENEWAL DOCUMENTS DIRECT DEBIT & STANDING ORDER MEMBERSHIP CARDS	
<b>SIGNIFICANT EVENTS</b>						<b>EXECUTIVE SUPERVISORY BOARD MEETING</b> <i>(To agree next years' Operational Plans)</i> <i>(Review Appointments and Reappointments)</i>			CLOSING DATE FOR VOTING	COUNT VOTES	AGM	
<b>ACCOUNTS</b>	FINAL ACCOUNTS REPORT	FINAL ACCOUNTS AUDITED	QUARTERLY REPORT			QUARTERLY REPORT			QUARTERLY REPORT			QUARTERLY REPORT
<b>OPERATIONAL SERVICE UNITS</b>			QUARTERLY REPORT	PLANNING AND FORMATION OF OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR FOLLOWING FINANCIAL YEAR		QUARTERLY REPORT			QUARTERLY REPORT			QUARTERLY REPORT

# **THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY VOTING PROCEDURE (APPENDIX C)**

## **PREPARATION**

A statement, explaining the reasons for the vote, along with any supporting documents, e.g. candidates' manifestos, reports etc. and a distinctively coloured voting paper, should be prepared for each member of The Society with voting rights. The voting paper should clearly give the closing date for receipt of replies, together with the return address.

In order to comply with current best practice, the ballot papers will require a name, signature, and membership number for validation if needed.

The voting documents should go out to members, by the most practical method available, to arrive no less than 21 days, and no more than 30 days before the closing date for replies.

Errors and Omissions Excepted.

## **RECEPTION OF VOTES**

On arrival at the response address, the envelopes should be date stamped, and numbered consecutively. The numbers received each day should be recorded, and the unopened envelopes placed in a sealed box until the count. During the reception period, any items opened as not addressed per instructions, but found to contain a voting slip, should be resealed without further examination, and an appropriate note made on the envelope. The acceptance of these votes at the count will be at the discretion of the presiding officer (The President, or his appointed representative).

## **COUNT**

The count should take place no later than 14 days after the closing date of the vote, at a convenient location as determined by the presiding officer. The time, date, and location of the count will be notified to the proposers of all motions put to the vote, and all candidates participating in the election. Any proposer, or candidate, or their nominated representative, (must be a full Society member) may be present for the count. No expenses will be payable for this. Any other member, at his own expense, and within the space constraints of the location, may also attend as an observer.

The sealed box should be opened in the presence of the presiding officer, and the counters. The counters, 2 or 3 in number, should be Society members, living local to the count location, who have had no direct involvement in the preparation of, or personal interest, in the outcome of the ballot. Additional assistance in opening envelopes may be rendered if needed, providing the contents are not extracted or examined by the assistants.

The votes will be counted, with a random portion being checked against membership records for validation. The validity of any improperly completed ballot paper, together with any received incorrectly addressed, will be determined on the day by the presiding officer, after consultation with the counters. At no time before, during, or after the count, should the votes be examined by anyone other than the counters, the presiding officer, or candidates.

Any proposer, or candidate who is dissatisfied with the count may request a recount at the time. A further count will take place to verify or overturn the initial result.

The result will be announced by the presiding officer, who will make arrangements to inform the interested parties not attending, of the outcome. As soon as is practical, the results will appear on the Society website, and be circulated to the members in an appropriate manner.

## **ARCHIVING**

After the count, the voting slips and receipt records will be placed in sealed packages, signed by the counters and the presiding officer, and retained unopened for 2 years. They will then be destroyed without further examination. The envelopes will be destroyed as soon as practicable.