



THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY

www.thefirebrigadesociety.co.uk

The organisation for fire and rescue service enthusiasts

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE No 2 – DECEMBER 2022

Issued by the Society Management Team (SMT)

Dear Members,

Membership update number 1 circulated in May 2022 outlined where the Society was financially and updated you on the temporary positions that had been put in place to ensure the Society continued to operate to give you, the members, the best membership experience possible. A lot has been achieved since then so we are taking this opportunity to bring you up to speed on developments and to maintain our approach of being open and honest with you.

We recently asked you to vote on several proposed changes. All voting envelopes were opened by two independent people not associated with the Society at 12.00hrs on Thursday 1 December 2022 at the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Leigh Road, Eastleigh, SO50 9SJ. A total of 163 voting forms were received by the closing date. No forms were null and void. 16 voting forms were received after the closing date and were counted and were not included in the results below.

	For	Against	Abstained
Accept the minutes of the last AGM held on the 6 February 2020	160	0	3
Accept the accounts for the year 2021 / 2022	161	0	2
Ratification of the Interim Management Team	161	2	0
Dissolve the current Constitution for a period of 12 months	151	10	2
Addition to the membership fee for members requesting hard copy communication	146	15	2

The SMT are grateful for your support, just over 45% of the membership voted and by approving these proposals will allow us to move the Society forward over the next 12 months.

Membership of the Society continues to increase with several former members re-joining as well as attracting some new members. The current membership stands at 376, comprising of 345 full members, 13 honorary life members and 18 associate members.

The Society now has a dedicated Facebook page, search The Fire Brigade Society.

We are pleased to announce that we now have an Events Manager, Alan Broughton has kindly offered to take on this role and members of the SMT are working with Alan to plan a comprehensive diary of visits for 2023. The diary will be circulated with the next edition of Fire Cover.

We are determined to deliver three editions of Fire Cover each membership year, but this will be very much dependant on the subjects I am about to share with you being addressed.

Unfortunately, two of our editorial team have indicated that they will not be able to carry on editing Fire Cover after the publication of Fire Cover 238. The workload associated with the production of such a first-class magazine is sizeable and sadly Simon Adamson and Paul Measday have indicated that their other commitments will not allow them to carry on. I'm sure everyone will join me in thanking them for their efforts and commitment and wish them well for the future.

We therefore have vacancies for a Lead Editor and editor as part of the editorial team. Simon and Paul have both agreed to assist their successors with the production of Fire Cover 239 due for publication in June/July 2023.

If any of you are interested in either position, or indeed you would like to offer assistance with the production of Fire Cover please get in contact with me as soon as possible. We have no limit on the size of the editorial team, the more members it has the better and it is vital these positions are filled if members are to continue receiving Fire Cover

The response to previous requests for articles and photos for Fire Cover appears to have been ignored or forgotten. There is a very small number of members submitting material, to those who have, we thank you, to those who haven't and could please do so now, we are at a critical position, if suitable material is not submitted, we run the risk of not being able to produce Fire Cover.

Each and every one of us is aware of the almost daily rise in the cost of living and the Society is not exempt from these increases. Our printers have already advised us that we will see an increase of 5% on the cost of producing Fire Cover as from April 2023. In addition to this, there is an anticipated, but yet unknown, postage increase due in April. The SMT and in particular our Treasurer are planning for this but at the same time are trying our best not to increase subscription rates as we do not feel this is the right course of action in the current climate.

As mentioned previously, our current membership stands at 376, if everyone renews their membership in April 2023, we can afford to produce three editions of Fire Cover (subject to a new editorial team being established and suitable material being submitted). A drop in membership numbers by 50 members will see us having to delve into our financial reserves which are not huge and could be sustained for 12 months. If 100 members did not renew, we would have no option but to reduce the number of Fire Covers produced to two per membership year. More than 150 members not renewing would result in one Fire Cover per membership year.

To assist with our planning the SMT are asking if you have already decided **NOT** to renew your membership for whatever reason next year that you let me know by any means be that email, phone call, letter or even a text message by the 7 January 2023. This will allow us to plan the 2023/2024 membership year and confirm our plans in time for the distribution of the next Fire Cover.

We need to reduce costs associated with running the Society to the absolute minimum so that all available funds can be used for Fire Cover production and distribution. You will recall the financial reserves the Society accumulated over many years were virtually wiped out by previous managements. This year we have managed to increase our reserves due to the careful management of our finances, changing the way we operate and some significant donations from members, for which we are very grateful.

As part of our commitment to reduce costs we asked members whose preference it was to receive communication in hard copy format to reconsider receiving electronic (email) communication. Disappointingly only two members opted to change. Of those members still requiring hard copy correspondence, nearly 50% of them have included an email address on their renewal form.

The financial situation is such that every penny counts. We will therefore only be sending this and any further correspondence to members in hard copy format that have not included an email address on their renewal form. We apologise that this is going against the wishes of some members, however we hope you will all understand it is vital we make savings in an effort to keep the Society operating.

The cost of producing and distributing this update has been financed by a donation from an SMT member.

The previous management of the Society canvassed members for their views on Fire Cover becoming an electronic publication. The response to this was that members prefer and wanted a hard copy magazine. A question I pose to you all is this –

If the Society is no longer financially viable in its current format, would you still be a member if it became an online Society, still maintaining visits but with an online version of Fire Cover with a substantially reduced membership fee?

We value your thoughts on this idea.

So, to conclude, what do we need from you –

- Articles and photographs for Fire Cover
- Volunteers to join the editorial team
- Notification if you are **not** going to renew your membership
- Your view on moving to an electronic publication if membership numbers reduce as outlined above

Can I reiterate, we do not want to increase membership subscription rates, but this may be inevitable if the Society as you know it is to continue operating.

2023 marks the 60th anniversary of the Society, it would be very sad if we do not make that milestone..

On behalf of the SMT I would like to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas, thank you for your support and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Kind regards

Colin Carter
Society Secretary