



THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY

www.thefirebrigadesociety.co.uk

The organisation for fire and rescue service enthusiasts

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE No 4 – JULY 2023

Dear Member,

Welcome to the second membership update of 2023 incorporating the 2022/ 2023 annual report.

If you are reading this update in hard copy format you will have already received Fire Cover 239 and copies of the following –

- The revised Constitution
- 2022/2023 Annual report
- 2022/2023 Financial Statement
- Voting paper and return envelope

Those members reading this electronically will only receive a voting form and envelope with Fire Cover.

All members, except associate are eligible to vote to approve or reject these documents using the voting form supplied. Voting forms must be returned by the **1 September 2023**. Returned forms will then be opened and counted by two independent persons not associated with the Society and the result will be announced at the AGM.

Under normal circumstances any vote counting would take place on the day of the AGM, however, in the unfortunate event the membership rejects the revised Constitution, the SMT require the period between the closing date for voting and the date of the AGM to discuss and decide upon a course of action to present to the AGM.

If the revised Constitution is approved there will be some vacancies in the Society Management Team. The members of this team that were approved by the membership in December 2022 are all willing to remain in post, the remaining vacancies will be offered to all members after the AGM.

One position that we do need to fill is Treasurer. Richard Thompson resigned from this position at the end of April. Any member that would be willing to take on this important position is asked to contact me at the address at the top of this update. I would like to thank Richard for his work over the past two years, particularly in regards to establishing the Interim Management Team and the Society Management Team.

I am pleased to report that our Vehicle Recorder Simon Rowley has made some progress in obtaining several up-to-date fleet lists from a number of services. These lists are available to members in either excel or PDF format and hard copy. Requests for hard copy lists will incur a cost of £1 per list to cover postage and printing and for will be free of charge to those members who will accept electronic copies. Requests should be sent to either fbsvehiclerecorder@gmail.com or fbsupdates@gmail.com or Simon's postal address can be found in Fire Cover.

We have recently changed our banking arrangements. With our previous bank Barclays, we were incurring costs each year as we were being charged for many transactions. We have now swapped to Lloyds where we incur no costs whatsoever and have the benefit of online banking and the use of the Lloyds app which allows us to pay cheques in as they are received. Our new bank details are –

Bank	LLOYDS
Name	THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY
Account Number	64543468
Sort Code	30-99-50
IBAN	GB64LOYD3099506454
BIC	LOYDGB21287

As advised in the what's on diary, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service have kindly agreed to host the AGM weekend on the 23 and 24 September. A varied and interesting itinerary for the event is currently being planned.

If you require details on the AGM weekend, please register your interest by contacting the Events Manager fbsevents1@gmail.com. If requesting details by post, please include a stamped addressed envelope. The venue and time for the AGM is still to be confirmed and we will be live streaming the meeting for anyone who wishes to join remotely. Further details on this will be circulated to those members who wish to join the meeting via this method.

The provisional agenda for the AGM is detailed below. Members are also reminded that should they wish any matters to be raised at the AGM a motion must be proposed and seconded by an ordinary and/or honorary life member and be received by the Society Secretary by 15 August 2023.

The provisional agenda for the AGM is as follows –

1. Apologies
2. Appointment of Society President
3. Appointment of Chairman
4. Advise of minutes secretary
5. Matters arising from the last AGM held on the 8 February 2020
6. Result of vote – Revised Constitution
7. Result of vote – 2022/2023 Annual Report
8. Result of vote – 2022/2023 Accounts
9. Any other business
10. 2024/2025 AGM Venue

The final agenda for the AGM will be posted on the website.

Please note, now that we do not issue membership cards some of you may not know your membership number, this can be found on the label of the envelope Fire Cover arrived in, please make a note of it as you may require it during the course of the year.

ANNUAL REPORT – 1 APRIL 2022 to 31 MARCH 2023

Society Secretary – Colin Carter

The past 12 months has been a very turbulent time for the Society. At one stage I didn't think we would still be in existence to celebrate our 60th anniversary. Thankfully we are. The fact that we have is due to the hard work and relentless commitment by a very small group of members and I want to thank my fellow Society Management Team members, Marion, Alan, Andy, Gavin and Steve for all they do for the Society, without the collective commitment the Society would not be in the position it is in today.

I would also like to pay tribute to former members of the management team who have stood down in recent months. In March 2022 Simon Adamson and Paul Measday took on the editorship of Fire Cover and transformed it into a first-class publication. With backing from the SMT they introduced full colour and new features that have been very well received by the membership. I'd also like to thank Richard Thompson for all his work looking after our finances. With careful and considered decisions, financially, the Society is in a healthy position and its pleasing to note that Richard, prior to his resignation recommended no increase to membership subscriptions for the 2024/2025 membership year.

It has been pleasing to see visits taking place again this year. My thanks to Alan Broughton for all his hard work managing this huge undertaking. Reports I have received from members indicate everyone is enjoying the visits and are pleased to see them being organised and managed in a sensible way. Thanks, must also go to those members who have assisted in arranging and hosting visits this year.

Included with this documentation is a copy of the revised Constitution. I urge members to vote in favour of its adoption as I believe it gives the Society and those running it a firm footing to enable the Society to progress and prosper in the years ahead.

The Society will however only continue to thrive and operate if members offer their services and they put themselves forward to take on vacant positions. Thankfully, the current members of the SMT have all agreed to stay in post, however they cannot run the Society alone and should not be expected to do so. Changes within the proposed Constitution have reduced the number of officers and positions to an absolute minimum so from a membership of 350 we are only looking for 10 members to form the SMT.

You will note the agenda for the AGM includes an item Appointment of Society President. I am delighted to announce that Robert Bonner, son of our founder Bob Bonner has kindly agreed to become our next President. For those of you who don't know Robert he was for many years a member of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and is now the Curator of Fireground the museum based at the former Rochdale Fire Station in Manchester. Robert is also Secretary of Fire Heritage Network UK.

The Society has come along way in its 60 years and has seen and recorded changes and developments in the fire and rescue world. For this to work continue it needs members to contribute and get involved and help move The Society forward.

Membership Secretary – Marion Carter

Membership numbers for the year 2022/2023 totalled 382, comprising of 350 full members, 13 Honorary Life members and 19 associate members. Although this number was slightly down on 2021/2022 it is pleasing to record that several former members have re-joined during the period under review.

During the 2022/2023 period we reviewed subscription payment options and due to the costs incurred to The Society using some of these we decided to limit options to bank transfer, cheque, postal order or cash. The majority of members now use bank transfer which significantly reduces the workload for me and I thank members for doing so.

I'd also like to thank the majority of our membership for paying their subscriptions early, this helped the SMT significantly with their financial planning for the year ahead.

Lead Editor – Simon Adamson

I was appointed lead editor commencing with issue 236. It was apparent that the society finances would only allow the production of three issues in 2022-23 and a satisfactory price was agreed with the printers for each issue to have 48 pages with covers, all to be in colour where original illustrations allowed. The opportunity was taken to reduce the amount of text and increase the number of illustrations, and to achieve a good balance of old and new and of UK and foreign content.

I would suggest that Fire Cover now compares favourably with the best of US and European fire magazines. But there is a need for more members to contribute pictures and articles.

I would like to pay tribute to my fellow editors, proof readers and the printers. My particular thanks go to Paul Measday who established a very good working relationship with the printers.

Having produced three editions of Fire Cover, I felt it was time to hand over to a new team and I would urge all members to give them full support.

Events Manager – Alan Broughton

During the period under review, visits were arranged to Hertfordshire, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Scotland. These visits were arranged and hosted by the SMT and the Scottish Area Secretary. I was appointed Events Manager towards the end of the membership year and since then have been very busy in arranging visits for the 2023/2024 membership year.

At the time of writing, June 1st, the society has already undertaken successful visits to Avon, Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire, Surrey and Edinburgh. Plans are in place to visit West and East Sussex, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Cleveland, Aberdeen, Glasgow and a two-day visit to South Wales & Mid and West Wales with the year culminating in the AGM in September at the museum in Rochdale.

The only disappointment I have encountered is the poor response from Lincolnshire from my request to visit the county which is totally the opposite to the already named fire and rescue services where the cooperation could only be described as excellent.

I am very grateful to all my fellow members who have organised some of the visits and leaving me to do the easy bit in communicating the information to those attending.

Discussions and plans are already happening in relation to visits for 2024. Visits to Isle of Man, Northern and Southern Ireland as well as Essex, Kent and Suffolk are all possibilities.

If any member would like to ask the FBS to arrange a visit to a particular FRS, contact me fbsevents1@gmail.com with their request.

Webmaster – Steve Udall

It has been a great pleasure to be part of the new FBS Management Team over the last 12 months. My main role has been maintaining and updating the website (www.thefirebrigadesociety.co.uk), but also creating our very own Facebook Page (assisted by Andy Daley) www.facebook.com/TheFireBrigadeSociety.

I have also assisted with three editions of Fire Cover with proof reading and Cartography. The website has some new Galleries coming online, and ways of presenting more content to members only is being looked at.

With a hard-working Management Team continuing to produce quality publications, and visits now resumed I think we can enjoy our 60th Anniversary Year and look forward to the future."

Distribution Manager – Gavin Stewart

Due to the Royal Mail price rises the cost of postage for distributing Fire Cover has increased by 23% over the last 2 years. To give members an insight it will now cost the Society in the region of £2700 to distribute 3 editions of Fire Cover to every member in this membership year.

Added to this is the cost of the C4 envelopes you receive your Fire Cover in plus the cost of the labels and printing ink. I search for the best prices every time Fire Cover is due.

We have negotiated a price cap of 5% for the year with our printers MP, last year their prices increased by 10%.

As can be seen we have seen a considerable increase in the cost of printing and distributing Fire Cover in the last 2 years but we have managed to absorb the increases without increasing membership subscriptions for the second year by careful management.

We have managed to reduce the time it takes to get ready to send Fire Cover out through close liaison with the Membership and Society Secretaries who print the address labels and any inserts before sending them to me where I can add them to the envelopes ready for the magazines to arrive.

Depending on what time Fire Cover is delivered to me from MP Printers I have all the magazines at my local Post Office either that day or first thing the next morning to ensure members receive it without delay.

Treasurer – Richard Thompson

2022-23 has been an exceptional year for the Society's finances. We have ended the year with a substantial surplus of over £5,000 and a health bank balance. This money will be ploughed back into membership services in 2023-24 and beyond as we are a not-for-profit organisation.

The large surplus is mainly due to four components. Firstly, we have seen a number of very generous donations to the Society. It is clear that the Society means a lot to people and while we keep their names private, they have been personally thanked for their contributions. Secondly, all of the sales unit stock has been sold bringing in over £1,000 of income before expenses. Thirdly, this is the first year with the revised membership rates. These were chosen so that we cover the basic expenses of running the society and put us on a more solid footing. Finally, moving to three Fire Covers per year have also helped cut costs.

The 2022-23 year has also seen some increased one-off costs. Due to the changes in personnel running the society, van hire was necessary to move assets and extra printing and postage was needed to keep the membership updated on what was happening.

Moving forward into 2023-24 we are all aware of the rate of inflation on day-to-day goods. We already know there will be increased costs in printing Fire Cover and postage rates. It is reasonable to expect all other aspects of expenditure to increase. The current assessment suggests that subscription rates do not have to increase immediately to balance this but this will be kept under regular review.

This will be my last annual report as society treasurer. I am standing down as of 30 April 2023. This is due to the number of hours I have available to commit to the society not being quite enough to fulfil the full role of treasurer. I'm leaving the society with a healthy financial position which is a solid foundation stone to grow from as we start our 60th anniversary year.

THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY

Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 March 2023

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

Income (£)		
Item	2022-23	2021-22
Membership Subscriptions	12,762	11,586
Other Donations	2,967	112
Sales	1,075	192
Donations In With Subscriptions	595	211
Unclaimed Officers' Expenses	145	236
Binder Sales (Net)	0	251
Total Income	17,545	12,588

Expenditure (£)		
Item	2022-23	2021-22
Fire Cover Printing	7,290	9,786
Fire Cover Distribution	2,725	2,269
Printing - General	688	112
Other Expenses	316	0
Website	230	499
Postage	211	158
Unclaimed Officers' Expenses	145	236
Mileage Claims	129	0
Bank Charges	129	129
Stationery	107	0
Insurance	101	99
Van Hire	76	0
Printing - Membership Cards	70	73
Total Expenditure	12,218	13,361

Net Income/Expenditure (£)	2022-23	2021-22
Total	5,327 Surplus	773 Loss

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

Assets (£)		
Item	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Cash in Bank Accounts	15,696	11,126
Library	1,677	1,677
Sales Unit Stock	0	1,000
Pre-payments Made	0	70
Total Assets	17,373	13,872

Liabilities (£)		
Item	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Subscriptions Paid in Advance	7,698	8,125
Donations relating to Next Year	332	309
Total Liabilities	8,030	8,434

Net Assets/Liabilities (£)	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Total	9,343 Assets	5,439 Assets

Notes to the Accounts

The value of the Membership Subscriptions shown relate to the society year to which they relate, irrespective of when they were actually paid.

The totals may not match the sum of the items as every entry has been shown to the nearest whole pound

Unclaimed Officers' Expenses are a matching income and expenditure, as though they had been claimed and then paid over as a donation

Other Donations are higher in 2022-23 because of a number of very generous donations received from individuals.

The sales unit stock has now all been sold. Therefore, the asset value is shown as £0 and the gross income generated is shown in the income section.

The 2022-23 years saw increased costs of additional printing - to keep the membership informed of what was happening to the society - and van hire to move assets to new custodians.

The website costs for 2021-22 included a £202 accrual for expected costs that had not yet been claimed. The website costs for both years turned out to be lower than expected, with £432 being spent in 2022-23 before the £202 credit was applied.

Independent Auditor's Statement

I have independently reviewed the above Financial Statements of the Fire Brigade Society and supporting documents. I believe that they are a true and fair reflection of the society's accounts and are free from material misstatement.

Name: Victoria Parapen CGMA

Signature: [electronically signed]

Date: 31 May 2023

Colin Carter
Society Secretary