

Minutes of the 7th Annual General Meeting on the 22nd April 2016 at Oxford Jury's Inn Hotel.



Attendees

UK-FA Directors

Alan Price – Chairman
Alan Palmer – Secretary
Tom Law – Treasurer

UK-FA Members

Michael Ditanna – Jewel Saffire
Anne Stuart – Jewel Saffire
Richard Whitehouse – UK Firesafe
Andrew Berry – Action Fire Southwest
Ian Parkin - Shires Fire Protection Co.
Carl Thomson – Cross Fire Safety Ltd
Oliver Quarrell – Banner Property Services Ltd
Mark Bridgens – Everlux
Trevor Baldry – PJ Fire
Dave Gough – Herts Fire Protection
Mick Franklin – Executive Fire Protection
Naoise Moran – Mist Fire Suppression Ltd
Jim Creak – Jalite plc
Gillian Palmer – F.I.R.E LTD
Dale Jones – Sandham Davies & Jones Ltd
Peter Edwards – 1st Defense Fire

UK-FA Guests

Bruce Robins – CheckFire Ltd
Anthony Robins – CheckFire Ltd
Paul Gatens – DetectorTesters
Chris Richards – IFSM President

Apologies

Perry Leaver – Wessex Fire & Safety
Garrith Glenny – Complete Fire and Safety Solutions
Steve Brennan – At Hand Fire Protection
Tom Daly – Priority Fire & Electrical
Ian Emmons – Firecrest
Chris White – Firebreak
Richard Baker – Firecheck
Tony Constable - ATC Alarms
Peter Wilkinson – Pyrology
Dave Hollingworth – Premium Fire
Lee Pryor – Southern Alarm Systems
Ian McCloskey – Firstcall
Des Myer – Core Fire and Security
Darryl Lythell – Empire Fire

Here to help

Our Seventh Annual General Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

The Secretary, Alan Palmer welcomed attendees to the meeting and advised on the housekeeping rules and the programme for the meeting.

Everyone present signed the Attendance Book and had the opportunity to introduce themselves and the organisation that they represent.

Apologies from Members who had previously advised the Secretary they were unable to attend the meeting were presented and are listed above.

The Secretary confirmed with everyone present their acceptance for the meeting to be recorded to ease the preparation of accurately written minutes.

The exhibitors and guest speakers; CheckFire Ltd, DetectorTesters and the Institute of Fire Safety Managers were introduced to everyone by the Secretary.

Alan then went on to read a moving account from a friend that had posted their experience on social media of being caught up in a fire that had consumed her apartment in Manhattan and showed photographs of recent incidents involving exploding CO₂ fire extinguishers to remind ourselves not to become complacent when working with high pressure vessels.

2. Chairman's Address

The Chairman Alan Price gave the following report.

Dear ladies and gentlemen thank you for attending our 7th AGM and welcome you all to the Jurys Inn Hotel.

I would like to thank Alan Palmer and Andrew Berry for arranging this AGM, I am sure it's going to be as good as the others. After lunch Andrew has arranged a bus tour of the city.

After all this excitement, we have the traditional evening dinner and dance too. Enjoy the day, and for some the weekend.

Our Association is increasing in numbers every year; we believe in supporting everyone no matter the size of their organisation.

Our moto is "here to help" and that's what we do.

We do not put pressure on members to join BAFE or be ISO9001 it's up to the individual to decide, not us. However, we can help members to go down this route if they want to.



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What do you want going forward in your business? What is your passion? Some business owners think they are doing great, turnover increasing year in year out, others reduce overheads to make more profit. Some want to be the next Richard Branson.

I don't know, what you aspire to, but I can tell you we have the tools to help you and advice you the best way forward. The Directors combined business experience is over 80 plus years between us. We know businesses all over the country, big setups to small ones.

It is vitally important to keep up to date with what's going on within our industry and you can use these meeting to meet likeminded people and if you have a new product or services you can introduce it to the trade or set up partnerships.

What better way to do so than at these meeting's, you can network - I have travelled from Wiltshire today and companies have come from all over the country to be here, what an opportunity you have.

- *We are open to ideas, 'here to help' is our approach, we are an association that is not a dictatorship. Our members are our voice so please let us know what you want from us.*
- *The UK-FA is an organisation that has a voice to be heard so please speak and let us know what you want us to put out to the world.*
- *The fire industry is rapidly moving forward and the best way to keep in touch with what is going on is through being in an organisation like ours.*

I would like to remind you of our Aims:

- *To encourage trade between members.*
- *To share information between members.*
- *To represent the Members interests where we can with like-minded and complimentary associations and at government level.*
- *To encourage and help Members develop their expertise and provide high levels of service.*
- *Encourage debate by members so that the association more accurately reflects their views and needs.*

I would like to thank Tom, Alan, Gillian and Andrew, for all their hard work throughout the last year and Richard and Jim for representing us on the BSI Committees.

I am looking forward to chatting to you all throughout the weekend.

And finally, may I leave you with my favourite quote from the two Ronnie's who used to say;

"Don't worry about failure, worry about the chances you miss, when you fail to try".

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting – Matters Arising

The Secretary went through the minutes from the previous meeting to confirm their accuracy and went on to identify ongoing issues that follow;

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Peter Edwards confirmed that he has been investigating the new liquid metal fire-fighting agent AVD (Aqueous Vermiculate Dispersion) from Dupr'e Minerals a Staffordshire based company with a particular interest in its use on aircraft fuselage and undercarriage fires owing to the liquid agent being atomised rather like AFFF rather than dropped vertically onto the fire surface as you would with traditional fire-fighting powders. This has all come about because Dupr'e have approached BSI asking them to consider allowing liquids to be included in the British Standard. Results from testing have so far been very positive, Dupr'e already have a range of application systems including a portable extinguisher, backpack, and skid mounted derivatives.

Jim Creak re-iterated the importance of the fire equipment/systems maintenance technician to keep the building records up to date – and that includes the thought process behind any changes made; e.g. relocating or changing the type of fire detector, extinguishing agent, etc. This is a legal requirement prescribed in regulation 38 in the Building Regulations.

Alan asked whether any Members present had approached David Colbran from Fairfield Ltd after David had recently introduced his company Fairfield Ltd who he claims is one of the leading specialist battery suppliers in the UK, no feedback was obtained.

We are still looking for a volunteer to manage the website and co-ordinate its development. Mark Bridgens said that there is a national initiative to get school students involved in business activities that this might be worth considering. The Secretary said he had approached his local secondary school, college and university in the recent past who had shown great enthusiasm initially but all lacked the drive to see things through!

Our BSI representative Peter Edwards informed everyone that the fire blanket issues are still ongoing and that BSI has opted out of adopting the European Standard because they cannot come to an agreement with their continental European colleagues who it is alleged are not all conforming with the prescribed testing procedures in the standard! The BSI Committee representative is still attending the European meetings to maintain contact.

Mark Bridgens added that he feels that the fire blankets standard will in time be withdrawn as they have no place in modern commercial restaurants that now predominantly use anti-foaming oils rather than vegetable oils used in the tests which have different characteristics, also basket fryers tend to now have fixed suppression systems.

He went on to add that tests in an Eastern European country has shown that applying a fire blanket to a person whose clothes are on fire compresses the flame into the flesh making the situation worse for the casualty.

The minutes were proposed for acceptance by Trevor Baldry and the motion was seconded by Ian Parkin as a true and accurate record of the Seventh General Meeting held in Rotherham at the Hellaby Hall Hotel on the 7th October 2015.

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4. Treasurers Report (including Membership)

The Treasurer, Tom Law gave the following report;

This year has seen a steady growth in new applicants and our members list currently stands at 187, that is up from 171 last year.

Accountants figures for year ending 29th February 2016:

Turnover on the year came to: **£38,762.00**
Administrative expenses: **£22,696.00**

Leaving an operating surplus of: **£16,066.00**

Interest receivable: **£ 7.00**

Surplus on ordinary activities: £16,073.00

Corporation tax due on surplus: **£ 3,215.00**

Final surplus for year: £12,858.00

Items of major expenditure since beginning of this financial year include:

Secretaries Honorarium **£ 7,999.00**
Treasurers Honorarium **£ 2,666.34**
Meeting Costs: **£ 4,723.00**

There were also some smaller costs consisting of accountant's fees, postage, insurance, stationery etc.

Current financial position:

Our current bank balance stands at £74,330.96 however we may have some expenses to meet from this event.

Members promotional items:

I also have some association ties available for £9.99 each and service manuals are available at £5.00 to members.

The Treasurer also went on to mention that the UK-FA still has special rates for HARD COPY British Standards, the UK-FA discount equates to a near 30% discount plus post and packaging.

We cannot obtain electronic pdf versions of standards; these can be bought and downloaded at full price directly from the BSI online shop.



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5. Secretary's Report

The Secretary opened his report by reciting a serious but amusing incident in his family's own near miss fire incident caused by the sun and a glass orb in the front window of their home.

5.1 Membership Certificates

The Secretary has sourced hologram stickers for Membership certificates to improve the professional appearance and prevent fraudulent use. The samples received are clearly not real holograms and Alan is actively looking for a reasonably priced alternative for 2017/18 certificates.



5.2 Correspondence

The Secretary receives a steady flow of email and telephone enquiries each day from Members seeking advice and the occasional Consumer enquiry, usually to validate a Member's stated abilities. We occasionally get called upon to arbitrate in disputes between the Member and their client, on nearly every occasion we have demonstrated to the customer that they have misunderstood and that the Member has actually been working in the client's best interests. This is another benefit from UK-FA Membership.

The Secretary also has to deal with the occasionally abusive person, typically one or two a year and the introduction of the UK-FA abuse policy now allows Alan a quick opt out from these unpleasant situations.

5.3 Newsletter

Members want to be kept up to date! Our policy is not to simply regurgitate other people's old fire trade news which you can pick up easy enough yourself, but to give Members relevant and quick to read bulletins, however it is very difficult to extract news out of Members to publish!

The newsletter does take significant time to edit and publish and we really do need a volunteer to work with the Secretary as an editor to help compile a smart periodical that is smartphone compatible.

The Secretary is also looking into creating a UK-FA members blog that would fill the gap between email-outs in the short term.

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5.4 Carriage of Waste and Pressurised Equipment

The Secretary was recently pulled over in his van and as being registered as a waste carrier was not prosecuted. We are all waste carriers - we move packaging and old fire equipment around in our vehicles so your business needs to register with the Environment Agency for a Waste Carrier License and at £156 for two years. Members expressed confusion in the system for registering with several having not registered as an upper tier carrier/dealer, broker/dealer (or both) of controlled waste but as a lower tier carrier which is free of charge.

With regards to transporting compressed gas Peter Edwards recommended members use magnetic signs that can be fitted or removed as and when you carry or don't carry pressurised equipment. A new UN directive has changed the style of these signs from green to white background without any written information on them.

5.5 Fire Risk Assessors Register

Members that have been accepted on the scheme are listed in a dedicated side directory in the online Member's directory. The Register does not replace the more detailed schemes available e.g. FRACS from other organisations like the IFSM but simply provides reassurance to Consumers and other Members wishing to use your services that you work in a prescribed manner e.g. to PAS 79, are appropriately experienced and adequately insured for the types of properties in which you specialise.

Application is via the Secretary and the joining and verification process itself is very straightforward.

5.6 Fire Marshal Trainers Register

This free to join scheme for verifies that your training courses include what we feel are critical areas in the syllabus and provides some uniformity in the training provided by Members. This means that if you sub-contract a training course to a listed Member on the scheme you can be re-assured that the syllabus will cover the key topics.

Members that have been accepted on the scheme are listed in a dedicated side directory in the online Member's directory.

Application is via the Secretary and the joining process is very straightforward.

5.7 Links to Other Bodies

Jim Creak again strongly recommended that the UK-FA should be affiliated to the Fire Sector Federation. The Secretary said that we had considered joining but we need a

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representative to volunteer and the Directors felt that membership at this time in our development might be a distraction.

We communicate periodically with Graham Ferris at IFEDA. Several UK-FA Members including the Secretary are also Members of the Institution of Fire Safety Managers with whom we would like to build stronger bonds.

Jim Creak said that the Electrical Contractors Association are forming an apprenticeship scheme that we should consider joining in with.

5.8 P50 update

A lively debate ensued during which it was alleged that Durham Fire and Rescue Service endorse this maintenance free fire extinguisher and also supply them commercially.

Jim Creak feels that the fire trade should to a point embrace the product as it does have virtues in niche markets.

5.9 Members Insurance and Competencies Check

The Secretary is aiming to have the system in place for 2017 membership renewals so that each member's insurance and competencies are updated before their new annual certificate is provided.

This will be dependent upon the website being able to accommodate the additional data-basing required.

This is important as the Secretary can then with confidence recommend a Members services.

6. Training Officers Report

Andrew Berry our Training Officer is wanting to provide a comprehensive training programme for Members. This will be promoted on the UK-FA website and will depend upon the ability of the current website to handle the additional data-basing.

Jim Creak suggested that a 1 hour signs training course could be added to the end of the extinguisher technician's refresher to keep technicians up to date with ongoing changes.



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7. BSI Representatives Report

Peter Edwards is our BSI representative on the FSH/2 Committee for the design, manufacture and maintenance of fire extinguishers. We have vacancies for people to represent the UK-FA on other fire related BSI committees, if you are interested please contact the secretary.

There has been an imbalance on the FS/H2 Committee with the FIA having an unfair level of representation and that we currently have just one vote where Peter is working to have this increased to two owing to the number of members we have.

Jim Creak sits on several BSI signs committees though not as a designated UK-FA representative however we still benefit greatly from the delegate reports that he provides. Jim said that he is also a representative on the Emergency Lighting for Fire Safety Management committee and has been co-opted onto the International Standards 16069 committee Health and Safety Management committee due to his interest in fire safety management in particular the training, instruction and management aspects.



The revised BS5266 which has recently been out for public comment specifically cites BS5499 for the associated signage.

Both Jim and Mark Bridgens from Everlux exhorted the quality of BS5499-4:2013 and how it clarifies in particular the application of way finding signage with working diagrams to simplify their application. Jim said that fire protection firms will find that both BS5499-4 and BS5499-10:2014 are powerful tools when it comes to demonstrating to customers by a 'third party accredited' party why specific signage is required.

Peter Edwards that the MCA (Marine & Coastguard Agency) need to harmonise portable fire extinguisher maintenance to BS5306-3 and encourage them to sit on the BSI committee.

The CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) also has discrepancies with the provision of extinguishers on aircraft and Peter has volunteered on behalf of BSI to invite them to come and sit on the BSI Committee.

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8. Election of Directors

The Secretary fell due for re-election, as there were no alternative nominations, Alan Palmer was nominated for re-election by Jim Creak and seconded by Andrew Berry where upon the vote he was unanimously re-elected.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The UK-FA policy is to move the meeting venues around the Country to allow all Members reasonable access to a meeting at least once in every two years. The Secretary proposed that the next General Meeting will be held in October at the Coventry Transport Museum, the actual date to be advised.

10. Any Other Business

Jim Creak felt that the UK-FA should consider creating an approved apprenticeship scheme for technicians.

Richard Whitehouse would like the UK-FA to provide a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check service 2-3 members felt that this would be a valuable service to Members. The Secretary said that he knew a firm that might be able to run this service for the Association and that he would investigate further.

Richard went on to request that the UK-FA provide Members with membership ID cards. The Secretary said that he had considered providing these in the past, but that the scale of managing such a scheme would almost be a full time job, overwhelming the Secretary. Several members suggested that we were wealthy enough to sub this out to a specialist provider. The Secretary said that he will investigate further.

The Chairman commented that the dry riser testing code of practice BS9999 does not mention anything about the static head pressure at the top of the system while wet testing so any leak will not be identified and this could result in major flooding from an unidentified leak. This is something that he includes this in the dry riser training that Alan Price provides. A lively debate ensued between Alan and Peter Edwards about the correct process for pressure testing a dry riser.

Alan went on to discuss the fireball grenade style fire extinguisher and Mark Bridgens said that these have been approved for use in Portugal and are flying off the shelves over there. Peter Edwards said that a loophole based around 'PAS' in BSI had initially allowed these through the BSI net however this has now been closed.

The Annual General Meeting was formally closed at 11.55am.

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The meeting continued with presentations from our speakers.

Alan Palmer: The benefits from FSB Membership

Alan gave examples in how membership of the Federation of Small Business had helped him from the very useful and free legal helpline where he had used their services to draft employment contracts and use their low cost auto enrolment pension scheme provider.

BAFE have been running full page advertisements in the FSB newsletter promoting the perceived security in using one of their scheme members. Alan went on to suggest that the trade associations representing fire extinguisher servicing companies (including the UK-FA) were missing a trick in not publicising the fact that you must be competent to service portable fire extinguishers, something that in the gas and electrical industry had been promoted extensively.



Anthony and Bruce Robbins: CheckFire introducing the new MultiChem extinguisher.

The father and son duo introduced CheckFire and emphasised their core values have not changed since the firm was established in 1975 in their own home and is now based in a 30,000ft² warehouse. The company's kitemarked and MED approved Commander Edge range is well established being available in red or in the polished stainless steel form. The extensive range includes water additives, enviro-foams and the new 6ltr MultiChem extinguisher that has exceptionally high fire ratings including Class F, this will be available in time in 2 and 3ltr sizes with anticipated fire ratings of ??F/8A and 25F/13A respectively.



Anthony demonstrated the logic of having a multi-purpose foam extinguisher in the run off areas around a kitchen, whereby if the foam extinguisher is inadvertently used on a deep fat fryer fire this extinguisher will not exacerbate the situation, it is not designed to replace the kitchen Wet Chemical extinguisher. Risk assessment is often impossible in multi-hazard HMO residential units and Bruce feels that this extinguisher offers a better, safer solution than a fire blanket and/or dry powder.

Mark Bridgens stated that Everlux have recently created an ID sign for this extinguisher and he clarified with Bruce that it is known as a "multi-class foam".

A lively debate ensued led by Peter Edwards who is using the MultiChem extinguisher for catering event hire.

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Paul Gatens – DetectorTesters, an update on how their products are evolving.

The companies Solo brand is well known worldwide and the company has rebranded as DetectorTesters a British based ISO9001 company located in Hertfordshire that has been awarded the Queens Awards on two occasions. They manufacture detector testing problems from hand held aerosols for smoke sensors and there is the possibility of product misuse where the device can be damaged. The Solo A3 aerosol test gas is based on F Gases which the firm has been told it must discontinue from January 2018 where flammable Solo A5 aerosol gas replacement.

The Testifire range is an all in one test tool combines heat (up to 100 degrees C), smoke and CO does not rely on aerosols instead using capsules and it control the stimulus so preventing over use and can be incorporated into the companies range of high access tools (up to 9 metres).

The Scorpion range has been developed for hard to reach locations, lift shafts, voids, secure areas, etc. where these fixed testers are hard wired in place. This can be used effectively with Aspirating systems, the traditional way has been by hot wire or smoke generation which are not popular techniques and aerosols are not recommended by many of the manufacturers.

The battery sticks for the Solo and Testifire range is being increased from 2.2Ah to 3Ah which should provide power for a full day's work with one battery.

Training was mentioned during the AGM, BS5839-1:2013 states that to be competent the technician needs to have "*relevant, current training*", so manufacturers training is vital in continual professional development to keep technicians up to date. Health and Safety training is the most popular course DetectorTesters provides where 9-metre-high access poles wrongly used can cause injuries to the technician or people nearby. Some companies are doing their own risk assessments and in-house reducing the reach down from 9 meters to sometimes only 6 metres.

We are delighted that DetectorTesters will shortly become UK-FA members.



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Chris Richards – The Institute of Fire Safety Managers

The Secretary said that he is a member and asked how many UK-FA members in the room were also IFSM members and two other people responded.

Chris is a retained fire fighter formerly full time and is the current President (since 2014) representing a professional body of around 800 principled, like minded individuals, mainly consisting of fire risk assessors. Members are recognised for their experience, less than on qualifications and welcomes, students, serving fire officers, fire trade personnel, etc. The IFSM no longer accredit and approve fire risk assessors they refer members to FRACS and other recognised schemes when after successful registration the member can be listed in the IFSM's own risk assessors register.



The debate has been had in house as to whether to remain in the Fire Sector Federation and the decision was made to remain as it is important to represent their members at high levels in the industry. CPD and networking is actively encouraged and provided through frequent seminars. Individuals can have their own fire warden training courses IFSM approved and even become an approved training centre.



Fire industry technical information is circulated to its members and the content from seminars is made available online. The IFSM have received an invitation to sit on the BAFE Council but they have taken their time and not accepted, but probably will do in due course.

Their virtual office is hosted and the Secretary General is based out of the FPA offices at Moreton-in-Marsh where the IFSM hosts joint seminars.

Regarding the UK-FA, Chris feels that the IFSM should be talking with us and he is going to take this back to Council for discussion, he does not see us being in competition and personally welcomes dialogue with all fire trade organisations.

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The Meeting closed for lunch at 1pm after which an intrepid party of attendees and their partners braved the inclement weather to 'enjoy' the bus trip around historic Oxford.



The AGM Dinner and Dance featured a live band that entertained everyone through into the small hours of Saturday morning.





Congratulations to Jill Edwards at winning the casino by acquiring the most winnings (of funny money).



Acknowledgements and thanks

To the team at the Jurys Inn Oxford Hotel for hosting the meeting and AGM dinner helping to make this such a wonderful weekend.

To Andrew Berry and his wife Angie for organising the; hotel, dinner, band, casino and bus trip.

To you if you were able to attend the meeting (especially if you travelled a long distance to be there) to be with us contributing your views and ideas at the meeting and networking at break times to make this as usual such a friendly and constructive environment.

Alan Palmer



Secretary
For and on behalf of the UK Fire Association