

Minutes of the 8th Annual General Meeting held in York on the 12th May 2017 at The Principal York Hotel.



Attendees

UK-FA Directors

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

UK-FA Members

Mike Ditanna – Jewel Saffire
Anne Stuart – Jewel Saffire
Richard Whitehouse – UK Firesafe
Andrew Berry – Action Fire Southwest
Ian Parkin - Shires Fire Protection Co.
Tina Parkin - Shires Fire Protection Co.
Carl Thomson – Cross Fire Safety Ltd
Tony Round – Cross Fire Safety Ltd
Steve Brennan – At Hand Fire
Richard Scott – Surefire Protection Ltd Belfast NI
Helen Scott – Surefire Protection Ltd Belfast
Ray Hope – Rayfire Services
Kevin Randall – Orbik Lighting & Fire Detection
Tom Simmonds – Allfire

Keith Ellis – Eurofire & Safety Ltd
Colin Jackson – London Security
Gillian Palmer – F.I.R.E LTD
Peter Edwards – 1st Defense Fire & Rescue
Stephen Robins – CheckFire Ltd

Apologies

Perry Leaver – Wessex Fire & Safety
Tom Daly – Priority Fire & Electrical
Ian Emmons – Firecrest
Steve Best – Newflame Fire Equipment Co. Ltd
Jim Creak - Jalite
Peter Wilkinson – Pyrology
Dave Harvey – Ignite Fire Solutions
Ian McCloskey – Firstcall
Des Myer – Core Fire and Security
Mark Bridgens - Everlux

Here to help

Our Eighth 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 register 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 Secretary introduced the Directors sitting at the head table to the audience and in turn had the Members in the audience introduce themselves to one another. He also thanked Richard and Helen Scott for the 'fall' – the UK-FA embroidered head table cloth that was presented to the Association for our very first AGM in 2010.

The exhibitors and guest speakers; Checkfire Ltd, Allfire, Orbik Lighting & Fire Detection and London Security all UK-FA members were introduced to everyone by the Secretary.



2. Chairman's Address

The Chairman Alan Price gave the following report. This was his last report as Chairman and Alan spoke passionately from the heart about his experiences.

He started by saying that he was not only retiring as UK-FA Chairman but also from the fire industry to move to a new life, living in Spain.

He recalled how 9 years ago he and Alan (Palmer) met at Malmesbury services to discuss the viability of starting another fire trade association – one specialising in looking after the interests of small to medium sized fire business owners. Tom was approached immediately after and readily accepted being involved in forming the embryonic Association.



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Alan went on to say that he had started in the fire industry in the 1970's when good old soda acid extinguishers were still prevalent! He admitted that once he started his own business he fell quickly for being a 'logo catcher' having at one time or another been a member or at least attended meetings of all of the then UK's trade association. He quickly learnt that it's not all about image but he needed substance - up until then he genuinely thought his company was doing a good job until he went to meetings spoke to other people and picked up ideas about best practices which helped improve the service he provided and along the way he happened to make more money!

He said that he sees the UK-FA as being a bit like your mum and dad, people there to pick you up when things sometimes go wrong, brush you off and put you back on your feet. He started simply servicing fire extinguishers and the people he met along the way gave him the confidence to grow into fire alarm servicing, training and ultimately dry riser maintenance.

The industry has provided him a fantastic lifestyle taking him all over the world and providing personal development and improvement.

He thanked Alan, Tom, and Gill for putting on the AGM and went on to say that Tom is much more passionate than he ever could be citing an example of where selflessly he had three years ago given major support to a member in the room, struggling to run their fire extinguisher servicing business and encouraged them to turn their business around to be the success it is today.

Other interesting, anecdotal stories from his time in the fire industry were told and he along the way reminded us of his favourite saying taken from the Two Ronnie's: *"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;

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 Peter has tested the extinguishing agent and yes it does work and work is still in hand.



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The fire blankets battle between Sentura and Chubb has been settled according to Sentura. Chubb allegedly are advocating removal of all fire blankets in business premises to sell extinguishers instead.

The Secretary has sourced hologram stickers for Membership certificates to improve the professional appearance and prevent fraudulent use. Holograms are now on membership certificates to prevent fraud and improve the professionalism of the Association.

Newsletters last year were few in number as we don't have a newsletter editor and the Secretary does his best to create a news update as time allows. It was also accepted that the existing formatting collapses on certain devices e.g. smartphones and iPad! Alan is using a standard email but will be looking to incorporate this into the web site and social media package proposal.

Automatic renewal and assessment of competency at membership renewal is being delayed until 2018/19 as this is a colossal task to carry out manually and it is envisaged that it will be incorporated into the new website so that the process is automated.

The minutes were proposed for acceptance by Carl Thomson (Cross Fire Safety Ltd) and were seconded by Peter Edwards (1st Defense Fire) as a true and accurate record of the Seventh Annual General Meeting held at Oxford Jury's Inn Hotel on the 22nd April 2016, there not having been a General Meeting held in-between.

4. Treasurers Report (including Membership)

The Treasurer, Tom Law gave the following report;

Finances for Year Ending 28th February 2017;

Membership & Joining fee's: £39,529 (slightly up on the previous year)

Expenditure £22,291 (slightly down on the previous year)

Items of major expenditure included:

Annual General Meeting £7,150.00

Secretaries Honorarium £7,999.00

Treasurers Honorarium £2,666.00



Membership numbers currently stands at 198 members.

Debtor's stands at £12,134.99

Bank account: £89,265.12

The annual membership fee is expected to remain at its current level with no increases for the 8th year running.

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UK-FA Promotion – Service Engineer Overalls with association logo

In an effort to standardise the dress code for service engineers and to promote public awareness of the organisation we will be running a special promotion throughout June. A member email will be sent out providing all members with a telephone number for an overall supplier. Each member company can claim two sets of overalls free of charge, simply state whether you need small, medium, large or extra large. These will be posted out to you and the cost will be covered by the association. Please note that if you require additional text (company name etc.) this service is available however you will need to cover that cost yourselves. This offer is only available to fully paid up members so if you are one of the stragglers that hasn't paid their membership yet I would recommend that you get a move on. These were deftly (and bravely!) modelled by Carl Thomson.



Please note that this promotion is now CLOSED.

The Treasurer also went on to remind Members 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 but these can be purchased and downloaded at list price directly from the BSI online shop.

5. Secretary's Report

The Secretary opened his report by giving some amusing anecdotal stories.

5.1 Correspondence

The Secretary receives a steady flow of email and telephone enquiries each week from Members seeking general advice.

Just before Christmas the Secretary received an anonymous, abusive email directed at him claiming to speak for several Members alleging amongst other things cronyism and self interest through promoting his own extinguisher technicians training courses through the association. These were later substantiated when a Member came forward by email.

Due to the vigour of the allegations which also called for Alan to resign he has decided to stand for re-election so that if the feelings are widespread Members have the chance to elect someone else in his place, though no one has come forward to oppose him.

5.2 Newsletter

The Secretary apologised for not improving the newsletter to avoid formatting problems when opened on different devices especially smartphones. This will be addressed when we proceed with the proposed new website and social media campaigns, details follow.

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5.3 Members Insurance and Competencies Check

The Secretary was 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 is a much more complicated job than first envisaged and it is intended to make this a feature on the new website and we may be able to have this in place now for 2018 renewals.

5.4 ID Badges

Some members looking for ID badges straw poll 7 out of the members in the room budget at £15 per card/person. Tom Simmonds has an online solution where the cost is much less. The Secretary said it was not something he could manage it needs to be a self-run scheme. He would investigate options for the next meeting.

5.5 Terms and Conditions of Service

Template documents are available to Members including Risk Assessment and Method Statements and a set of standard T&C's.

These have never been tested in law so the Secretary has commissioned a solicitor to review them and these will be available free of charge to Members upon request to the Secretary.

5.6 Fire Extinguisher Commissioning

The Secretary feels that BAFE and all the fire trade associations are doing the industry a dis-service in not improving end user awareness that like electricity and gas, fire extinguishers are high pressure vessels and must be commissioned by a competent person.

The idea was well received and for being incorporated into a social media campaign. Stephen Robins said that he had access to graphics that we could use and Richard Whitehouse was interested in contributing to the social media campaign.

5.7 Fire Extinguishers in Residential Blocks of Flats

The Secretary is looking for evidence of where a residential flat owner has been injured or killed while tackling a fire in their flat using a common area located fire extinguisher.

He has come across two fires in flats that have been saved using a fire extinguisher and he would like to confirm or dismiss the F&RS approach of removing firefighting equipment from the common areas in blocks of flats where the feeling is that untrained residents will be putting themselves at risk fighting a fire themselves.

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5.8 Website, Social Media and Newsletter

The website needs an update to include many new features and be made more user friendly for Members to access. The original was set up very cheaply in 2010 and has not cost us very little money to run. The Secretary proposed that a budget be provided to upgrade the website, create a social media presence and professional newsletter template. It was agreed that the Secretary will work with Andrew Berry, Tom Simmonds and Stephen Robins to source a website project manager and the website producer along with a part time social media co-ordinator and newsletter template creator. A £10,000 budget was agreed, this being proposed by Richard Whitehouse and seconded by Steve Brennan.

5.9 Meeting Format

A new meeting format is being considered to encourage more Members to attend which would feature other events like technical sessions for informal continual professional development.

Richard Whitehouse supported the idea of technical sessions. Tom Simmonds said that access to meetings was important as travel distances will put some people off. It was suggested to make attendance at AGM's compulsory but this was quickly dropped as we are not a 'compulsory' organisation. Tom Simmonds and Stephen Robins said that they would be happy to coordinate regional technical days.

5.10 Irish Republic

New legislation requires all portable fire extinguishers to have a bursting disc fitted this includes stored pressure field refillables and it is believed that all extinguishers new and existing must comply within a certain time frame possibly as short as 3 years.

Richard Scott said that this does not apply to UK businesses consumers residing in the Irish Republic.

5.11 P50 update

The Secretary has come recently come across these in use in extreme marine conditions but the organisation concerned is conducting maintenance in accordance with BS5306-3.

Anderstore has challenged Britannia's marketing of the P50 with the Advertising Standards Authority and won however details of the case are not being released.

For more information follow this link

http://anderstore.com/library/news/news_article_2017-03-22_the_asa_and_service-free_extinguishers.asp.

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6. Training Officers Report

Andrew Berry our Training Officer Andrew Berry is very keen to promote training through the Association. The Secretary said that he was uncomfortable promoting his own fire extinguisher technician training courses through the UK-FA and especially after the attack he recently underwent about self interest in advertising his training courses in newsletters. The Members were unanimous in supporting Alan and the view was that this is a service that Members need and want and enjoy a discount compared to non-members and that there is no conflict of interest.

Andrew is becoming Chairman so we are looking for a new Training Officer to manage and promote a wide range of training courses to develop competency and widen Members abilities. Andrew has sourced a fire alarms and emergency lighting trainer and we already use Alan Palmer for fire extinguisher maintenance training.



7. BSI Representatives Report

Jim Creak was not available to provide a signage update.

Peter Edwards is our BSI representative on the FSH/2 Committee for the design, manufacture and maintenance of fire extinguishers.

BS5306-3 went out for public comment in May and resulted in over 54 pages of comments so we cannot expect the new code to be released during 2017.



The Secretary said that he had been very disappointed with the draft document which had so many fundamental and grammatical errors that showed it had not been properly proof read before its release.

Issues have arisen over the application of the European Fire Blankets testing where instead of a steel table being used a wooden one with an aluminium foil covering have been used instead amongst other variations.

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.

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8. Election of Directors

Alan Price stood down as Chairman and Andrew Berry stood as his nominated replacement being proposed by Alan Palmer and seconded by Peter Edwards where upon a vote of hands he was unanimously elected.

Although only re-elected last year to serve for 3 years the Secretary felt that due to the allegations made against him of cronyism and self-interest from providing training through the Association, he should stand again for election to gain a vote of confidence. Alan Palmer was nominated for re-election by Peter Edwards and seconded by Anne Stuart where upon a vote of hands he was unanimously re-elected.

Tom Law fell due for re-election and being willing to stay in post was proposed by Richard Scott and seconded by Steve Brennan where upon a vote of hands he was unanimously re-elected.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Secretary proposed that the next General Meeting will be held in 19th October at the Coventry Transport Museum.

10. Any Other Business

Steve Brennan suggested that we advertise the next AGM to Members as early as we can.

Stephen Robins said that this had been his first meeting and he had really enjoyed the experience and gained benefits from attending. These views were supported by Tom Simmonds, Ray Hope and Colin Jackson all also being first time attendees.

The Annual General Meeting was formally closed at 11.45am.

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The meeting continued with presentations from our speakers.

Stephen Robins: Checkfire - Products update.

The 6ltr Multichem fire extinguisher introduced at the last meeting has been added to with a 2ltr and 3ltr size and is finding use in HMO's and small catering vehicles.



The Contempo product range extends the range of polished chrome/aluminium extinguishers to now include antique copper and polished gold.

A new stand is also going to be released soon.

The question was asked about the environmental credibility of Eco foam which as it still contains fluorine's at less than 0.01% cannot be deemed to be 100% environmentally friendly.



Kevin Randall – Orbik Lighting and Fire Detection – BS5266-1:2016 Emergency Lighting.

Kevin introduced the recently introduced BS5266-1:2016 and how this must be read in conjunction with Building Regulations and that installers and maintainers need to be trained to be competent.

Members were taken aback by the significant changes and the implications for installers and maintainers.

Kevin's MS PowerPoint presentation is available upon request from the Secretary.



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Colin Jackson – London Security Plc – What to consider when selling your business.



Colin is the acquisitions manager for London Security Plc and was asked to give Members advice on preparing an exit strategy for when it comes time to dispose or retire from their business.



Integrated Fire and Security Solutions

A lively debate was encouraged where several Members who had sold their businesses shared their experiences both good and bad.



Colin's MS PowerPoint presentation is available upon request from the Secretary.



Tom Simmonds – Allfire – Fire Risk Assessors App

Tom introduced the Android or Mac App that allows fire risk assessors to focus on what they are best at - which is not usually at writing up the reports!

The App is tailored with your own comments and libraries, it frees up time and speeds up preparation of reports to PAS 79 standard. It typically takes half an hour longer while at site and it will accept voice input and to record and store video and photographic evidence. UK-FA Members can enjoy a substantial discount and several are exploring adopting the App, including the Secretary himself! The cost is normally £95 + VAT per month with a £250 + VAT set up fee however the cost to UK-FA Members is £75 + VAT with no set up fee.



For more information contact Tom at tom.simmonds@allfireuk.com.



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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 York.



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







Congratulations go to Jill Edwards for once again winning the casino by acquiring the most winnings (of funny money) and securing a bottle of Champagne.

Acknowledgements and thanks

To the team at the Principal York Hotel for hosting the meeting and AGM dinner, making this such a smoothly run and memorable weekend.

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

To you if you could attend the meeting, especially to Richard and Helen Scott who travelled from Belfast to be with us, everyone contributing views and ideas at the meeting then networking at break times to make this such a warm and friendly gathering.

Alan Palmer

Secretary

For and on behalf of the UK Fire Association