



Minutes

- Meeting Title:** The Institution of Fire Engineers South Western Branch UK Annual General Meeting
- Date:** Thursday 19 May 2011
- Time:** 1030 hours
- Location:** Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
- Chaired by:** Malcolm Carmichael
- Attendees:** John Woodcock (IFE International President), Des Tidbury (Branch President), Malcolm Carmichael, Peter Robinson, Phil Martin, Justin Sharp, Terry Nottle, Adrian Woolaston, Mike Burroughs, Roy Kane, Gary Jones, Simon Hatch, Dan Stride, Pete Smith, Darren Peters, Alan Gilson, Martin Carnell, Pete Mansi, Gerald Taylor, Chris Holbrook, Mark James, Pete Tobin, Lee Howell, Simon Martyn and Alison Parrott (Minute Taker)
- Apologies:** Glenn Askew, Kath Billing, Jon Castleden, Anthony Bartlett, Neil Gibbins, Charlie Huitson, Malcolm Rawnsley and Steve Widnell

Action

Des Tidbury opened the meeting by welcoming John Woodcock, the IFE International President.

1 Minutes of Previous AGM

Malcolm Carmichael advised that the minutes had been circulated shortly after the last meeting and were agreed as an accurate representation. The Branch Secretary and Treasurer reports were both accepted.

In respect of the election of Branch officers, the Constitution requires Branch representatives to be elected every two years and General Assembly representatives to be elected every three years. Therefore, there will be no formal elections to post this year but 2012 will require a full election of officers.

2 Branch President's Address

Des said that over the last 12 months and since taking over the reins as President from Neil Gibbins, his focus had been the development of a culture of shared learning across the South West peninsula and the Channel Islands.

President: Des Tidbury GIFireE **Secretary:** Malcolm Carmichael CMIFireE

He felt the priorities that the Branch should concentrate on are public safety, firefighter safety and continuing to reduce risk in communities in order to achieve a culture of shared learning across the whole of the Fire industry in the South West.

Des reported that during the past 12 months the Branch had been focussed on providing high quality presentations, with a particular focus on operational incident case studies. Examples being the joint event with CFOA last September on 'Firefighter Safety' and, of course, that afternoon's presentation from Pete Mansi on the Bethnal Green Fire.

The Branch has worked to reinforce wider links with partners, both within and outside the Fire industry with events such as the 'Protecting our Heritage' Seminar at Pendennis Castle, Falmouth which took place a few weeks previously and the sprinkler event at Carlyon Bay scheduled for the following day.

Des and Malcolm Carmichael have been in discussion with Mark James (CFO, Jersey Fire and Rescue Service) in respect of strengthening links with colleagues on the Channel Islands. The aim being to spread the network of learning even further and to reinforce effective lines of communication.

Des advised that, on a personal level, as CFO of Cornwall, he was investigating the benefits of mainstreaming the suite of IFE examinations into the career development process within his own Service.

Des reported that the aspirations that he and the rest of the Committee have cannot be achieved without a great deal of hard work behind the scenes. Des thanked Malcolm Carmichael for all the work he undertakes in his role as Branch Secretary, a post that requires a great deal of time and dedication beyond the day job. Des also expressed thanks to Pete Robinson, who is standing down as Branch Treasurer. Des reported that Pete had been a stalwart of the Committee over many years, with previous roles including Secretary and General Assembly representative.

Des closed his address by reporting how enthused he was to see the number of people attending the meeting.

3 Adoption of Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports 2010/2011

(i) Secretary's Report

Malcolm Carmichael reported on the following:

Action

Membership

Malcolm reported that the membership level is currently at 223, a reduction of 11 from the previous year. This is primarily attributable to the changes in student membership. However, this figure includes seven new members and Malcolm advised that there are a number of potential new members taking examinations who will hopefully take on full membership.

Meetings

Three Committee meetings were held during the year. Dates for forthcoming meetings will be set at the July Committee meeting. All members are welcomed to attend and the dates will be circulated for information. Key topics considered at recent Committee meetings include:

- Support to Channel Islands IFE members.
- Linking IFE qualifications with development programmes for staff in local authority fire services.
- Study courses for Level 3 Diploma and Level 3 Certificate examinations.
- Access to study material for candidates entering IFE examinations.
- Planning for Branch events.

Events

The joint event with CFOA South West was well attended with representatives from across the South West Region. The recent Heritage Seminar and the forthcoming Sprinkler Seminar attracted some high quality speakers.

IFE AGM, General Assembly and UK Working Group

The South West Branch is one of the most active in the UK and is represented at every national event by a Council, Committee or General Assembly representative. Malcolm recommended attendance at the IFE Conference and advised that the Branch has set aside £1,000 from funds to assist members to attend this year's Conference which will be held in Cardiff on 6th and 7th July.

Study Courses

The South West Branch has been committed, over many years, to encourage and assist people preparing for exams, particularly the science paper. Bill Cox, a former International President of the IFE, has been enlisted to run courses each year and future courses are scheduled for November 2011 and January 2012. In addition,

Malcolm
Carmichael

Action

study courses have also been run by Neil Gibbins and Ashley Raddon to assist students in the preparation for the Fire Safety papers.

The IFE is looking to develop more on-line study materials in future and work in this respect is currently on-going.

Pete Robinson and Mike Burroughs have both attended the IFE marking week at the Fire Service College which is supported by branches around the UK.

Engineering Council

Ashley Raddon continues to represent the South West on the Council.

Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service is aiming to get every person working as a specialist Fire Safety Inspecting Officer registered with the Engineering Council.

Branch Extension

Malcolm reported that he was delighted that Mark James, CFO of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service, was present at the meeting to discuss how the South West and Channel Islands can develop collaborative arrangements.

In summary, Malcolm reported that the Committee had worked hard during the past 12 months to put on events which are of real relevance to members in respect of firefighter safety and fire engineering. Malcolm stated that if members let the Committee know the type of event they want to see the Committee will do its very best to meet those needs.

All

Malcolm thanked Pete Robinson for the enormous amount of time he has committed to the IFE, in particular the South West Branch, in recent years. Malcolm reported that he would be standing down from the role of Secretary at the next AGM and stated that if anyone was interested in taking on this role he would be happy to work with them to explain what is involved.

Malcolm finished his address by reminding those present that the South West Branch has its own page on the IFE Website www.ife.org.uk

(ii) **Treasurer's Report**

Pete Robinson reported a balance of £4612.52. Although this balance is healthy Pete said that this was a legacy from a conference which was held some 4-5 years previously which netted

approximately £9,000 income. Pete said he would like to see another big conference being held in the next few years to boost this figure.

Pete closed his address by reporting that he had been overwhelmed by the appreciation shown for his work. He reported that the role is demanding but extremely rewarding.

4 Election of Branch Council Officer

Malcolm reported that as the Committee posts were for a two year period, there would be no elections this year other than for the vacant post of Branch Treasurer following Pete Robinson's resignation.

Justin Sharp was duly elected as Branch Treasurer and Malcolm thanked Justin for putting himself forward for the role.

5 IFE International President's Address

John Woodcock said that he was delighted to have been invited to attend the meeting as he has strong connections with the West Country. He then went on to report the following:

Membership

The reduction in the number of Branch members is reflected nationally. This is largely due to the changes to the student membership rules which was agreed by the General Assembly two years ago. This has caused more problems overseas than in the UK. Having said that, there has been a large increase in the level of other grades of membership, particularly in respect of Affiliate membership, which has seen a 21% increase since 2009 and 84% since 2006. There has also been an increase in the grade of Technician. The Engineering Council has been delighted to see an increase in the number of engineering technicians, which is showing the largest increase in any grade. The Engineering Council is automatically recognised internationally so registration is a very big plus.

Examinations

Examinations have been a huge success and John Woodcock reported that he had been privileged to attend the Marker's dinner and to see the enthusiasm and commitment from all the volunteers. Two years ago there were 1900 exams a year but that figure has now risen to 5200 exams a year. Ofqual awarding body status has been awarded at Level 4. This increase in take up of exams means that the IFE is no longer as dependent on funding from membership as now 20% of revenue is from exams, providing a greater diversity of revenue.

The Irish Branch has set up, in conjunction with the Dublin Institute of Technology, a four year under graduate degree course in fire engineering. This will run for the first time in September of this year. The course has a multi-level entry and can be exited each year with a range of qualifications being possible.

Sustainability

John Woodcock reported that sustainability had been the theme for his year as President. He stated that the Building Research Establishment at Watford showcases some fascinating concept buildings which incorporate the latest thinking for sustainability but these buildings are potential death traps as they don't meet any building standards. In the future there could be a huge challenge for fire services attending fires in such premises as fire growth will be much higher than in the past. The challenge will be to link fire safety and sustainability which is still in disconnect mode in the UK and there is still a lot of work to be done in getting all the relevant parties together on this subject.

Fire Risk Assessors

There has been a lot of success with the development of an Auditors' Register and the promotion of the concept of registered risk auditors in the UK. The IFE is heavily involved in the work to develop a single national competence standard for fire risk assessors. Feedback indicates that those services which have adopted the Register are happy with it.

Awards

David Rasbash left monies in his will to the IFE. It has been thought fitting to use this money to recognise individuals who have obtained significant achievement in the world of fire engineering each year.

Fire Futures Review

The Review has been valuable as it has enabled the IFE to look at the way the Fire sector operates. John Woodcock reported that he was pleased to see fire partnership groups have been set up between individuals from the Insurance Industry, CFOA and the IFE.

Louise Craig, IFE Chief Executive Officer, has pushed the IFE's involvement in the Fire Futures Review and, as a result, the IFE has a strong position in terms of research information management, workforce development and the development of standards. A strong Technical Strategy and Advisory Group (TSAG) has been established and special interest sub groups are

being developed such as the Heritage Group. The use of Skype allows these special interest groups to get together and network easily.

Conferences and Events

The IFE, in conjunction with CFOA and the FPA, runs a company called Fire Conferences and Exhibitions Ltd. Due to financial restraints, it will be necessary to rethink the way future events are run.

Charitable Education Fund

This Fund has taken over from the concept of travelling schools and some excellent work has taken place with the Ghanaian Fire Service in respect of the delivery of tuition and study materials. In addition, a fleet of vehicles has been delivered to Albania and Kosovo.

Website

It is recognised that the Website is not very user friendly and will therefore be undergoing a review. Three tenders have been submitted to redesign the site and to make it more user friendly and to create online forums and an ability to interact.

6 Any Other Business

(i) Collaborative Arrangements between SW Branch and Channel Islands Group

Mark James advised that Jersey and Guernsey Fire and Rescue Services had both adopted the IFE exams as a progression test. IFE membership in the Channel Islands is therefore likely to expand and it is hoped that the Channel Islands can link up with the SW Branch at grass roots level.

Des suggested that the way forward would be to set up a Sub Group under the SW Branch. Malcolm advised that he would need to refer this suggestion to IFE Headquarters for approval but he did not anticipate that there would be any issues as the constitution allows for flexibility.

Malcolm asked Mark what he was hoping to get out of the collaboration. Mark replied that he was looking to develop opportunities for learning and networking and would also look to run an event each year. He is currently working with Leeds University in respect of fire growth development and there may be an opportunity for members of the SW Branch to visit Jersey to look at this work. Mark also suggested linking into Branch meetings via Skype if possible.

(ii) Annual Conference and AGM

Malcolm asked if anyone is interested in taking advantage of the funding made available by the Branch to attend the AGM in Cardiff on 6/7 July that they contact him by mid June.

Action

All

(iii) Future Events

Malcolm asked those present to let the Committee know what events they would like to be held in the next 12 months.

All

John Woodcock advised that a database of speakers and subjects is held on the IFE Website.

G:\BHQ\CFO\POGoffice\meetings\IFE\AGM1952011