

# Volunteer Spotlight

James Lane  
CEng FIFireE



THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS  
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## Tell us about yourself.

My name is James Lane and I am a director with BB7 Fire Engineering. I've been involved in fire strategy work and fire engineering for several years.

## When did you first learn about the IFE?

When I graduated back in 1995, there was a big emphasis on the IFE because my degree was one of the first fire engineering bachelor's degrees that were run in South Bank. So, when we graduated there was a big campaign to say 'you should apply for IFE membership, this is the institution that you should belong to.' There was a particular focus on that because it was an accredited degree so they wanted us to then be looking for chartership after the appropriate amount of time.

## Tell us about your volunteer roles.

My involvement is with IFERG, which is the Institution of Fire Engineers Registrant Group and that involves reviewing engineering registrant applications and also interviewing applicants. Then, more recently, I've been accepted onto the board of trustees as the IFERG representative.

## What is your favourite part of being an IFE volunteer?

It's the chance to contribute to the direction of the industry and to have some influence in where fire safety and fire engineering is going. It's the chance to have a voice and to give something back and help out.

## How did you get involved with IFE volunteering?

It was a conversation that I had with someone who was already a part of IFERG and the conversation was centred around chartered engineers and the need for more of them. I was concerned that because there was an emphasis for more numbers and pressure to get more people through the system, that the standards might drop in the review process. As it happened, I was talking to someone who was on IFERG which I didn't know at the time. I then got a call out of the blue to say 'we think you'd be ideal to be involved' and I thought that's a great opportunity, why not get involved and contribute.

## Would you recommend volunteering with the IFE?

I would, because it is rewarding and I would say we can all sit there and say; 'I'm a member of the IFE' but to really be a member and to really contribute you need to do some volunteering to help run the Institution. Without the volunteers, it all grinds to a halt.

## Has volunteering benefitted your career?

It will have done because there are not enough chartered engineers and I think being part of the volunteering process that generates and creates that level of skill and competence within people raises your profile. Being part of the whole scheme and volunteering at the IFE means that you have a bigger profile within the industry and within the companies that you represent.

## Has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your volunteering?

The COVID-19 protection measures have changed the way we work in all aspects of life. We are now relying far more on technology to stay connected. The IFERG meetings are on WebEx and we had the first Board meeting using Microsoft Teams. While using online communications has worked well so far, nothing can replace face-to-face meetings.

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