

FIRESA

Fire & Rescue Suppliers Association

www.firesa.org.uk



FIRESA Newsletter August 2010

We've Moved!



We're now in new improved premises in Hampton, Middlesex with excellent meeting and event facilities.

Close to London and with excellent transport links, the rooms are available for hire.

If interested contact the FIA's Michael Gregg on 020 3166 5002 x 208

Please note the new FIRESA contact details:

FIRESA, Tudor House, Kingsway Business Park, Oldfield Road, Hampton, Middlesex TW12 2HD

Tel 020 3166 5002 x 213

Fax 020 8941 0972

No change to e-mail address of dsmith@fia.uk.com

Council Update

The general membership has confirmed its unanimous support for the continuation of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in their current roles through 2010/11, i.e. from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. Congratulations to Dave and Gerry who we are delighted will continue their outstanding work at the helm!

We said goodbye to Glen Bloomfield who retired from Council at the end of March, thanking him for his service over the last few years and looking forward to his further contributions to the Association.

Since then, the general membership endorsed Jon Crossland and James Jones as new Council Members from 1st April. Unfortunately, Jon has increasing overseas commitments with his company and decided in fairness to the Association that he would not take up his position. A new voting/endorsement process is under way for the vacant seat.



James has since taken up his seat and is already making an excellent contribution to Council. Contrary to the impression given in the photo, however, I believe he drives to the Council meetings!

The general membership has endorsed a change to the FİRESA Constitution which would retain the need for one quarter of the Council members to retire but which allows retiring Council members to be eligible for immediate re-election. This retains the important principle of Council refresh while enabling retiring members to be considered for re-election should they wish.

The Annual General Meeting

This year's FİRESA AGM may rightly be seen as our most successful yet and we were especially delighted to make our first visit as an Association to the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh.



Proceedings began with a warm welcome from the CEO of the College, Kim Robinson.

FİRESA Chairman Dave Russell then gave a detailed address which looked at our performance as a representative industry body against our key objectives set a year earlier and in relation to our on-going work on behalf of our members.



He highlighted our membership outreach initiative which continues to facilitate an open, visible and engaged Association through availability of Council papers and the continuation of our popular members-only News Letters.

Members have also had the opportunity to contribute to our several formal government consultation responses and participate in surveys whose subjects have included export activity, apprenticeships and seminar content and format. Membership engagement will remain a primary target as is the promotion of our members to the outside world, with a number of initiatives on-going and publication [now achieved] of a Members' Handbook courtesy of Fire Times.

Export assistance was given considerable emphasis over the last year and is covered later in this News Letter.

Tendering was another special project that was initiated a year ago and since that time, a seminar was held which reviewed EU Procurement Law and the Framework processes and went on to provide invaluable advice on 'How To Write A Winning Tender' which was packed with essential advice from a tenderer's perspective. Our work with Firebuy has yielded clarifications on a number of contract-related issues and receipt of important tendering and related information.

Much of our work, as ever, requires extensive liaison with other stakeholders which includes CLG and its agencies, CFOA and its NPB, the Fire Minister and the All Party Parliamentary Fire and Rescue Group, BIS and UKTI DSO, FOBFO and the fire trade press and exhibition organisers. These will continue in 2010 with additional areas for attention including engagement with the current Firebuy Board, further representation to procurement and technical managers within the FRSs, liaison with the several regional purchasing bodies and greater involvement with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

FIRESA exhibited at Fire and Rescue Expo in May 2009 at which members received a floor space discount and at the Emergency Services Show in November. We have a close working relationship with UBM Live and are delighted to have an extended complimentary pavilion at Fire and Rescue 2010 in Harrogate [again see later].

While issues such as technical standards, European opportunities and the environment are also prevalent, the most notable focus of our work remains the National Procurement Strategy. FIRESA continues to represent the industry in a robust but constructive fashion and has held talks with the Fire Minister, CLG and Firebuy as well as maintaining its seat on CFOA's National Procurement Board. We also responded to the NPS 2008-11 and In Service Management Consultations. We note that the new NPS is more flexible and recognises FIRESA's concerns although serious question marks linger over aspects of the Strategy's delivery and stakeholder commitment.

We were again most fortunate at the AGM to have three outstanding guest speakers.



In addition to Kim Robinson's opening address, we heard from CFO Paul Hayden on environmental matters and their effect on the Fire and Rescue Services

Also, we heard from Crispin Tuckley of CLG who focused on some key procurement-related issues. Presentations are available to members via the web site. The participation of external speakers adds a most welcome additional dimension to our AGMs and we take this opportunity to thank them all for taking the time to address our members and guests.

The traditional Open Forum session at the AGM proved remarkably useful and we took the opportunity to take soundings from the membership on several topics including apprenticeships, member events, membership growth mechanisms and some constitutional issues as well as how we might best act given the current characteristics of the national procurement regime.

Thanks once again to our members that attended and special thanks to our guest speakers and several non-member guests that joined us on the day. Every year throws up new challenges, some that we plan for in developing our influence and activities and others that will surely arise as we make our way through 2010. In whatever we do, we offer our best efforts in representing the fire and rescue supply industry here in the UK and look forward to continue to act on their behalf in what are increasingly difficult times.

New Member

We are delighted to welcome a new member, the National Access and Rescue Centre [NARC] and look forward to their participation in the Association.



NARC supplies the Fire and Rescue Services with dedicated training courses and rescue equipment for working at height.



NARC WTG TRAINING SIMULATOR FULLY OPERATIONAL
Wind Turbine Technician Core Skills Course (5 Day)
Includes accredited WTG climber course • Hub Rescue
• Emergency First Aid (HSE Cert) • Manual Handling • Lifting Hoist Ops
Call 0845 643 2211 now for course dates or visit www.narcwind.com



Member 2010

Export News

Exporting, if executed effectively and with due diligence, can yield sales opportunities of a magnitude that incremental domestic sales growth cannot usually achieve. For this reason, FIRESA is assisting its members in its efforts to sell its renowned and proven quality products and services overseas.

Most of our member companies export, primarily to Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Those that do not currently export would seek to do so in the future while those that do are looking to expand their overseas interests.

FIRESA now works with FIA Export and has forged a direct link with UKTI's Defence and Security Organisation. A number of specific export tenders are made known to members and there are opportunities for our many SMEs to apply for TAPS funding for exhibitions which included Interschutz that took place earlier this year. Participation in trade missions is possible via FIA Export which has organised recent fire-specific missions to Thailand and Vietnam and which has India, Argentina and Brazil coming up in the next six months. These represent cost-effective means of getting the very best out of overseas market visits as working with Embassies' Commercial Officers in the territory results in a programme of seminars, receptions and customer contacts that individual visitors would be hard pressed to achieve on their own.



The Meet The Buyers event at IFSEC 2010

We have access also to inward missions. A well-attended Meet the Buyers event held at IFSEC 2010 was a great success and saw a record-breaking 722 meetings arranged involving 125 overseas buyers and commercial officers from countries as diverse as Bosnia, Iraq and Tanzania. Also, FIRESA is set to participate in an Industry Briefing Course in November which will bring UKTI's Commercial Officers to the Fire Service College from across the world, presenting on their own markets and hearing from us on our product and export capabilities.

There is no doubt that exporting poses significant challenges and in addition to the above, FIRESA has developed its members-only document facility on the web site to enable fledgling exporters to gain access to important advice in this area.

The UKTI Industry Briefing Course is an especially important diary date and this year's event will take place over 8th-12th November. UKTI expects around 20 COs to attend including those from the Czech Republic, Bosnia, India, Brazil, Argentina, USA [New York], Romania and Pakistan. FIRESA members will be informed of the details when they become available but in the meantime, Council is to prepare a short presentation on the Fire and Rescue sector which will be given to the overseas delegates.

New Fire Minister



Bob Neill was born in 1952 and studied Law at the London School of Economics which led to a successful career as a barrister specialising in criminal law.

He was elected as MP for Bromley and Chislehurst in June 2006. After only a year in Parliament, Bob was appointed Shadow London Minister and in 2008 was made Shadow Local Government Minister and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party. In January 2009, Bob also took over the shadow planning brief.

FIRESA is meeting shortly with senior advisers at CLG as a precursor to seeking a meeting with the new Minister; highlights of the Minister's speech at Fire and Rescue in Harrogate include:

'We must be utterly rigorous in prioritising resources to support frontline services, whilst cutting waste through greater transparency, improving efficiency through more joint working and energetically delivering value for money in procurement'.

'It has never been more important that we are open to new ideas, to new ways of working and delivery, and to greater flexibility in providing services'.

'The devolution of the power to individuals, to communities will make a real difference to the way local services are delivered, to the way communities hold service providers accountable'.

'Localism is the principle, the philosophy that defines everything we do'.

'I am proposing my department to seek out your best ideas, your new thinking and your experience to join me in a strategic review of the sector, government's role in it and the future of the service'.

'The big question you will need to address is how you will deal with the changing environment. I believe there is significant scope to find efficiencies in the way you deliver services... to deliver on savings will mean doing more for less, or in some cases stopping activity which no longer needs to be done'.

'The basic concept of FiReControl is sound...[but] the project must be delivered to time. The project must be delivered to cost'.



Since the Minister's speech, the Prime Minister has commented at a PM Direct event at the Institution of Engineering and Technology in Birmingham.

He noted that cuts imposed on the Fire and Rescue Services should be 'sustainable'. Cameron was told from the floor that 'since 2003, we've seen a dramatic increase in deaths of fire fighters in fires and an increase in property damage', and was asked 'when these austere times are over, will you look at anything that is cut during this period and go back and get in those fire engines back in the places they are needed to support the public?'. His reply was 'I think we should be trying to avoid that approach. Let's try and make cuts in a way that's sustainable and let's try and make sure the fire service we have is capable of doing the very important work we want it to, but we've all got to open our minds and think how we can work in a different way'.

The fire and rescue market is clearly entering a new phase of austerity with the Operational Efficiency Programme and Comprehensive Spending Reviews setting ever more stringent financial restraints across government which is bound to affect our Fire and Rescue Services. CFOs are braced to cope with real and significant grant cuts in coming years with the Services under pressure to deliver the same for less and with fleet and equipment among the procurement items likely to be affected. This, coupled with the changing demands of the FRSs as they deal with issues such as climate change and terrorism, make it all the more vital that industry is properly represented as we proceed through this decade.

The Members' Handbook

We take this opportunity to offer our heartiest thanks to Colin Robinson of FIRESA member Fire Times who has produced the FIRESA Members Handbook. This is of significant value to the Association and its members; copies are available by application to the Secretariat.

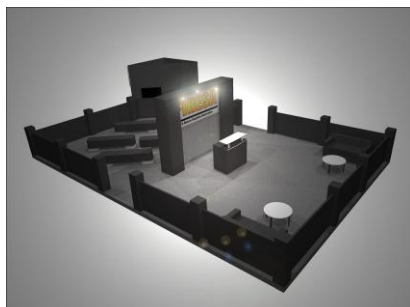
Out And About

The Chairman attended a seminar of the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety Group on 7th June at which there was discussion of fire-related issues to be addressed by the new coalition government. He made a formal presentation on behalf of FIRESA which was very well-received and which resulted in warmest congratulations from FOBFO Secretary Ronnie King. The mood of the session was generally sombre given the expected cuts to FRA funding and there emerged the idea that FRSs would need to examine on a fundamental level how the service is delivered nationally.

This is just one of the many liaisons that we have undertaken over recent months. Members have been informed through the Council Minutes and Digests of our other primary activities and these have included work with CFOA, the APPFS, Firebuy and the Fire Service College on delivering a joint seminar event on the future of the Fire and Rescue Services. We're looking to get a working party together on this and will keep members informed of progress.

Fire and Rescue Expo 2010

Fire and Rescue Expo in Harrogate over 29th and 30th June was a very special event for the Association.



While FIRESA's presence at major exhibitions is not new, we are indebted to UBM Live for providing us with an extended stand in Hall C which acted as a focal point within the exhibition generally and which included a presentation area that allowed our members to inform delegates of their latest product offerings.

Over the two days, we offered a programme that encompassed a wide range of product types including vehicles, battery-powered hydraulics, IR cameras, area lighting, water mist, CAFS deployment and powder-based Class A foams.

Gerry Dunphy at UBL Live was instrumental in organising our presence at the show and we thank him enormously and wish him a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

The Emergency Services Show 2010

We look forward very much to another successful ES Show which takes place this year over 24th-25th November again at Stoneleigh Park.

We will be there and hope to see you all on the FIRESA stand.

Fire Industry Charity Ball

FIRESA is delighted to act as a co-sponsor of the Worshipful Company of Firefighters' Charity Ball that takes place at the Portman Hotel in London on 25th September.

It's a truly sparkling occasion and a great chance to spend an evening of entertainment with friends and colleagues as well as providing an opportunity to treat your own staff and customers to a fantastic night out.

Those wishing to attend should go to www.firefighterscompany.org/ball

National Audit Office Report on Firebuy

The Report by the NAO specifically on the national procurement activities headed by Firebuy has been published.

FIRESA contributed to the review collectively and through a number of its individual members.

Its findings are quite devastating in respect of its view of Firebuy's successes and what it sees as a number of operational deficiencies.

Here are some of the comments from the NAO:

Firebuy, a specialist body established by the Department for Communities and Local Government to support procurement of kit by Fire and Rescue Services, has cost nearly twice as much to set up and run as the total savings it claims to have delivered. In a report to Parliament today, the National Audit Office recommends that the Department quickly assess whether to continue with a nationally directed central procurement body and, if so, to change the way Firebuy operates, or to transfer its operations to another professional buying body or a Fire and Rescue Service.

Without the power to make local Fire and Rescue Services use its national procurement contracts, Firebuy has had to rely on persuasion. Progress has therefore been slow with only five out of the 14 framework contracts it has set up being used by more than half Fire and Rescue Services to purchase equipment. Most of the contracts allow suppliers to offer many variations of the same types of equipment, allowing Fire and Rescue Services to procure expensive bespoke equipment, and preventing suppliers offering lower prices through high volume orders. For example, the Firebuy contract for fire engines allows for 54 possible combinations of supplier, chassis, water pump and body type and a possible one million different specifications.

The approach to measuring savings achieved by Firebuy is inadequate and the information that the estimated savings are based on is mostly unreliable.

The Department expected Firebuy to be self-financing by its third year of operation (2008-09) but it is still heavily reliant on grants from the Department. Firebuy is expensive to run, with overheads between five per cent and 10 per cent higher than the industry norm. The Department has not shown enough leadership, direction or oversight of Firebuy to ensure it achieved its original objectives, most of which were not monitored (only 29 of 66 targets were monitored) and many were not met.

FIRESA is seeking the views of its members on what they believe to be the best way forward given the likelihood that Firebuy will cease to exist or if it does, be very different in form in the future.

Council Meetings in 2010

15th September, Bedfordshire and Luton FRS HQ [note change from Hampton]

29th November, UBM Live, London

As ever, we welcome member guests who should contact the Secretariat should they wish to come along to either the September or November sessions. We are delighted to welcome Joy Flanagan of CFOA to the final meeting of 2010 where she will present on the newly configured CFOA web site.

Disclaimer

While every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of reported facts, the views and opinions expressed in the News Letter are not necessarily those of either the FIRESA Council or the Newsletter's Editor and reflect the diversity of interests and experience within the FIRESA Membership.