

# Cheshire FBU News

*Conference Special 2010..... Conference Special 2010..... Conference Special 2010*

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## **1. Political Speeches.**

The main political speakers were the Scottish Fire Minister Fergus Ewing and John McDonnell MP for Hayes and Harlington in London and conveyor of the FBU group of Labour MPs in parliament.

Fergus Ewing's address was welcomed by delegates and he painted a picture of cooperation and genuine acceptance that the voice of staff in the fire service is through the FBU.

Our colleges in Scotland enjoy a relationship with this Minister that the English Fire Minister would do well to follow. In Scotland the FBU is involved with discussions on most if not all important policy decisions regarding the Fire Service and has its views listened too and acted on. Scotland has already scrapped the expensive regional control project with all eight-control rooms staying as they are. The ill health pension changes brought about by a massive campaign of members was accepted first in Scotland.

John McDonnell gave an inspiring and uplifting speech to conference which ended in a long standing ovation from delegates. He thanked the Union and its members who helped him during the election campaign. He will be continuing to support and raise our issues in the houses of parliament with the other Labour MPs who form the FBU Labour Group in Parliament. He thought Labour lost the election because Labour deserted its core supporters, for instance; "trade unions mobilised for the party in 1997 and then they don't as a Government they fail to repeal anti-trade union laws". He went on to say he thought Labour supporters had lost trust in the party the unions had formed.

He warned conference that this CON-Dem Government will come for public service workers pensions and jobs. Only the police will be spared, as they will be needed to bring everyone else into line. He therefore called for maximum unity across the entire TU movement, saying he would support coordinated action under the banner of the TUC.

He stated that he was promoting an alternative to cuts by for example-scrapping trident, plugging the tax gap by ensuring the rich and big business paid all their taxes which, by some accounts are in excess of £120 billion . He wants Labour to campaign for and start to build council houses. It is good to see some Labour politicians have not forgotten where they have come from and who they should be representing- us the working class.

## 2. Key Resolutions

Two important resolutions were passed at Conference on the reorganisation of the FBU and its finances where conference gave its approval for the Executive council to carry out a full review of the Union's organisation and finances.

The most important motions that got total unity were the ones which called for coordinated action in the face of the onslaught against the public sector. Matt Wrack the general secretary moved the resolution saying we should not shy away from the truth about the coming assault on jobs. He called for the union to have optimism and a strategy to stop the cuts agenda. He called the government the "cuts coalition which wants to take a chainsaw to our jobs and services and unleash a new age of austerity on the working class." He pointed out there is another solution to cutting jobs and services. He pointed out when you see that the combined wealth of the 100 richest Britons amounts to a third of Britain's overall debt and therefore called for the tax gap to be narrowed to pay for the debt crisis. The Gen Sec said that to date the employers had not responded to our pay claim and told the employers that if they did not engage over pay they were in for a fight and further stated the union was not going to allow middle managers to be sacrificed by the employer to deliver small increases in pay for fire-fighters. The message from conference is that we are stronger when we stick together: managers; whole time; retained; control and all other FBU members whatever the shift pattern.

## 3. Rallying Call.

Annual Conference ended with Brigade delegates going back to their Brigades to act on the attached 'Emergency Resolution 1'. The Brigade committee received a conference report from the Cheshire delegates and agreed that the way forward is to resist the cuts agenda when it is proposed in Cheshire by all means possible. To this end a campaign committee is being set up to start planning the fight back.

## 4. Brigade Committee Update

The Brigade Committee met on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June to receive feedback from Officials on Conference and also to be updated on the latest goings on in Cheshire with regards to Cheshire's plans following the publication of the IRMP7.

### Day Staffing Pensions:

It was reported that Thompsons (FBU legal representatives) are issuing proceedings using a retired member to challenge the Service's decision to go back on the agreement reached over the day staffing duty system.

It is about time something was done to bring this dispute to a head. The day staffing members need a medal for the patience they have shown.

## 4. Brigade Committee Update Continued.....

### Shift changes:

Brigade officials have had nothing in writing as a firm proposal yet but outlined to the Brigade Committee what they thought, from dialogue so far the Service wanted.

- Keeping the 223 system
- Making Macclesfield a stand alone station similar to the Lancashire LLAR system
- Changing the start finish times to 1600-0700hours
- Two pumps taken off the run at 2200-0700hours
- Some Staff to be sent home from 1100-0700hours—8hours
- Different stations on different nights will lose one of these pumps
- Staff sent home may have to come in on another day to make up the 8 hours, it may be that they will not have to make all the hours back up—this is meant to be some sort of gain for staff?
- These outline proposals are intended to create savings of over £300,000 a year and result in further job loses.

After a long discussion the Brigade Committee decided that in line with Emergency Resolution 1 from Annual Conference policy we should campaign to stop any more cuts in front line jobs and Service. That campaign should start now and members should start to get involved to protect your job and Service.

## 5. Stop Message.....

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June saw Members of the Fire Authority debate many issues including the problem of what increase to make to their own allowances. This year Members were faced with four possible options including an increase of 4.8%. After some debate they decided to wait and see what pay award Firefighters receive they will then make their decision but of course back date it! Some of you may recall the removal of the third pump at Ellesmere Port and the Fire Authority meeting when the axe fell on that resource; more time was spent discussing increasing the FA mileage allowance at that meeting than on the reduction of fire cover by removing a fire appliance so you see these are important matters!

**To contribute to further issues of Cheshire FBU News contact your  
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