

# Cheshire FBU News

*April 2009*

## In this Issue

<b>1</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>IRMP 6</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Wilmslow Cuts</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Attendance Reward</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Fire Stats</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Thought of the week</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Pay</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Stop Message</b>

## 1. Control

The FBU at Regional level has been invited to talks with the members from the RCC board, this at the moment is not the start of formal consultation, but certain issues about jobs and conditions were raised. The FBU made it clear that they are unconditionally opposed to the RCC project and will be resisting it all the way. The detail of this meeting is being sent out to all control members in the region to keep you up to speed with developments.

This issue was discussed at the last regional meeting of the Union and the upshot was a resolution passed by Region calling for control to be prepared for industrial action if redundancies or changes of conditions of service are part of any proposal. The mood at region was one of defiance and enthusiasm to campaign for action to resist RC by all means.

Control members should contact their brigade official for more information and to arrange a branch meeting to discuss the way forward.

## 2. Wilmslow Cuts.

A brilliant turnout by members on the day of action saw 1000,s of leaflets delivered and the petition against the fire cuts started. The campaign gathers pace with more residents emailing their protests to elected CFA members. If we could reach the whole community I don't think there would be many voting for the cuts. The officials report that Manchester Airport Firefighters and GMC members who live in Wilmslow who could apply to be WTR have said that they will not apply out of solidarity with Cheshire FBU. The Editorial team on behalf of Wilmslow and Cheshire FBU members salute their stance and thank them for there support. Although the CFA have now voted for this increase in attendance times the campaign goes must go on for the benefit of the Community of Wilmslow and the Firefighters who work there.

### 3. Fire Stats

The latest stats on fire deaths in households from the government have just come out and it is showing a 10% fall in house fire but an 8% increase in deaths in the home. So there are less house fires but more people dying in them, For a local perspective; for the following years (figures come from a parliamentary question by Mr Dismore to the Fire Minister about number of rescues from dwelling fires in the following years) 2005- 63 rescues, 2006 - 70 rescues and 2008- 40 rescues. These rescues were of uninjured people and so the figures will be higher if injured people are included. Other statistics show that between 1997 and 2006 fire crews rescued well over 2,000 people in Cheshire. 300 of those were from fires and over 1,800 were from vehicles. There are no figures for the numbers we rescued or assisted from e.g. flooding in 2007 or 2008 or other extreme weather events (snow).

These figures underscore the importance of the frontline rescue capability in saving lives and underline the fact that everyone in a fire isn't dead before we're called.

Other interesting stats have come from the insurance companies which have posted 17% increase in household fire losses couple this with the appalling increase in firefighter deaths. It makes you wonder whether attendance times and the reduction in front line jobs has any effect on these figures? No, they cannot because as we all know national and local fire service spin says less is more, less is safer, slower is more efficient. The service would never cut jobs attendance times if it were to compromise safety.

Check out these stats

#### **ABI - Record fire damage costs of £3.4 million a day spark fears in surge in large-scale fires**

##### **Summary**

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) announced the publication of figures which show that the cost of fire damage in 2008 rose by 16 per cent on 2007 to a record £1.3 billion, £3.4 million every day.

Nick Starling, the ABI's Director of General Insurance and Health, stated: 'We know that arson tends to increase during an economic downturn. Insurers are reporting a rise in large-scale fires that are increasingly putting lives at risk. We believe that arson and fraud are contributing factors. We are investigating this worrying trend, and will be publishing our recommendations for tackling the problem later this year.'

##### **Contents**

#### **RECORD FIRE DAMAGE COSTS OF £3.4 MILLION A DAY SPARK FEARS OF SURGE IN LARGE-SCALE FIRES**

Businesses and homeowners battling through the recession are being hit by an increasing fire threat according to figures released today by the ABI (Association of British Insurers). The cost of fire damage in 2008 rose by 16% on 2007 to a record £1.3 billion – £3.4 million every day. The figures show that in 2008:

- Commercial fire damage cost £865 million, up 15% on the previous year. School fires alone cost £33 million, with a serious school fire occurring every month on average.
- Fire damage to homes cost £408 million, up 17% on the previous year.

Nick Starling, the ABI's Director of General Insurance and Health, said:

“These are alarming figures. They highlight both the importance of fire insurance, and reducing and managing the fire risk.

“We know that arson tends to increase during an economic downturn. Insurers are reporting a rise in large-scale fires that are increasingly putting lives at risk. We believe that arson and fraud are contributing factors. We are investigating this worrying trend, and will be publishing our recommendations for tackling the problem later this year.”

#### 4. Pay

Discussion surrounding this year's pay award are all quiet at the moment but undoubtedly the economic gloom will be used as a lever to try and keep any rise down to an insignificant level. Many people seem to have an opinion about Firefighters pay but it is interesting to note that the settlement offered to Brigade Managers' amounts to only 1%. Of course 1 % of £100K+ is very nice but the same cannot be said for 1% added to a Firefighters wage. The increased output from frontline staff should now be reflected in better wages, after all only by people having more spending power will the economy begin to strengthen.

#### 5. IRMP 6

The policy committee voted through the IRMP6 on the 11<sup>th</sup> March, members must remember that all IRMP are aspirational and not set in stone and so the campaign against the increase in attendance time at Wilmslow goes on and the fight against 12 hour shifts now begins. The union will start to put together a strategy to oppose 12 hour shifts and all members who are opposed to this shift pattern have to get involved. Remember you are only contracted to work 42 hours and so any overtime is voluntary.

#### 6. Attendance Reward

Optimum crewing staff have again achieved retention of the AR day which was linked to sickness. The figures for gaining this day have been available since November 08 but it has taken badgering by the officials to get Senior Managers to produce the figures at a March 2009 JCP and agree that yet again short term sickness has come down for the third year running. Something you would expect Managers to be shouting from the top of HQ and sending congratulations emails and blogging about high fives, surely an AR day group is just waiting to be formed on Fakebook!. What have you heard from your Manager? The impression this silence and reluctance gives is that Senior Managers are disappointed we collectively have brought short term sickness down to below 3 shifts per member.

## 7. Thought of the week!

A man in a hot air balloon realised he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago but I don't know where I am." The woman below replied, "You're in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You're between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

"You must be in Information Technology," said the balloonist.

"I am," replied the woman, "how did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is probably technically correct, but I've no idea what to make of your information and the fact is, I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help at all. If anything, you've delayed my trip."

The woman below responded, "You must be in Management."

"I am," replied the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well," said the woman, "you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are, due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise, which you've no idea how to keep, and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault."

## 8. Stop Message.

The stop message this month is in remembrance of Firefighter Tony Kane from Northwich who sadly lost his long battle with illness and passed away on Good Friday. Tony was an active member of the FBU and served as Branch Rep at Northwich and also as rep to the Brigade Committee. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

A special mention also for Tony's colleagues at Northwich who have done so much over recent months to support Tony and his family.

**To contribute to further issues of Cheshire FBU News contact your Branch rep or email: [cheshirefbunews@googlemail.com](mailto:cheshirefbunews@googlemail.com)**

**Check out the website:<http://www.cheshire.fbu.org.uk>**

