

Inaugural Meeting Minutes

9th July 2009, 9.30am – 1pm Woolley Hall, Wakefield

Attendees

Honoured Guest

Fred Temple

Barry Bartholomew – Fire Safety Supplies Ltd
Malcolm Werndly - Fire Safety Supplies Ltd
Phil Wright – Safety Co UK

Guests

Derek Ward – Envirograf
Brian James – Intumescent Systems

UK FA Directors

Alan Price – Chairman
Alan Palmer – Secretary
Tom Law - Treasurer

UK FA Members

Peter Forster – Cherry Parts Ltd
Ian Emmonds – Firecrest UK Ltd
Carl Thompson – Firecrest UK Ltd
Mark Hudson – Saffron Safety
Jim Creak – Jalite Ltd
Pete Edwards – 1st Defense Fire & Rescue Services Ltd
Ian Parkin – Marsden Extinguishers
Trevor Baldry – Firemark Extinguishers
Robin Hollingworth – Premium Fire Protection Ltd
Paul Gardner – Safety Rental Services Ltd
Andy Leather – Fire Risk Pro – Leather Consultancy
Keith Ellis – Eurofire & Safety Ltd
Dave Gough – Herts Fire Protection
Andrew Maben – Firepoint Services Ltd

Apologies

Chris – Prestige Fire Protection Ltd
Richard Scott – Surefire Protection
Richard Gleeson – Phoenix Fire
Girvan Buick – ABC Guardian
Tom – Priority Fire
Perry Leaver – Wessex Fire & Safety
Alan Brinton – Safety 1st Fire
David McKone – Safety 1st Fire
Mr Parkin Snr – Marsden Extinguishers
Adrian Englebright – Fireline
Paul Creasey – Morgan Fire Protection
Gary Austin – South Staffs Fire & Security Ltd

General Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

Everyone present signed the Attendance Book and introduced themselves and the organisation(s) they represent.

2. Chairman's Address

"Thank you for making the effort to attend this, our very first meeting – we do appreciate the commitment in taking time out of your business today and from my experience have found over the years that your commitment to come to meetings will be rewarded through what you learn from today's meeting and networking with like minded people.

It is great to see so many people, some of you I know and others I will try to get to talk to before the end of today.

Unfortunately not everyone can be here today in particular Perry Weaver the original founder of our organisation cannot be with us and without him we would not all be together here today.

The world is experiencing difficult trading times, the fire industry seems to be growing and in most cases to be weathering the storm relatively unscathed.



**The new Fire Trade Association
created to support small and medium
sized professional fire companies.**

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It is good to see that during these difficult times in business that the fire trade is remaining buoyant and that we all seem to be busy – perhaps not in the areas we would want. We need to be flexible and come up with new ideas to say in front. With the help of our members the UK FA will be able to provide support to develop these skills.

In case you are not aware the UK Fire Association was formed by Perry Leaver in 2007 and later Tom Law, Alan Palmer and myself decided to promote this association publicly in January this year.

With many years experiences we all felt the need for another new kind of trade association to support the needs of small professionally run operations. By the nature of our industry it is changing and we felt that other associations were not addressing these issues. It can be pretty lonely - we are a fragmented group of independent businesses that work alone rarely talking to one another!

The concept seems to have struck a chord in the trade with membership growing to nearly 60 fire companies since its inception in January this year.

The UK FA gives members an opportunity to receive regular news that relates to them and to discuss issues with other members without necessarily having to attend meetings.

This, our first meeting will give you the opportunity to see where we are now and to give your ideas on how we take the UK FA forward over the coming months.

The area we are keen to encourage and develop is inter-trading between members we have so many skills to share so please share! This is the quickest, cheapest way to get more work and maybe learn more about your industry too.

Share your problems with others - I will guarantee that someone will be able to help you solve them.

Together we stand as one voice with the UK Fire Association – here is the chance to have your say!

3. Exhibitors Introductions

Exhibitors and their products/services were introduced.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting

Not applicable as this is the first meeting.

5. Treasurers Report

5.1 Membership

Membership stands at 58.

5.2 Accounts

A financial summary as at 9 July was provided as follows:

Current Bank Account balance	£9,654.76
Debtors	£1,125.50

6. Secretaries Report

6.1 Introduction

The Secretary discussed the noticeable recent increase in high profile fires focusing on the South Camberwell Flats fire where several occupants died and the likely ramifications to anyone involved in conducting fire equipment maintenance or who carried out a fire risk assessment in the property. A photo of a members van was shown indicating how the UK FA logo can be used to good effect.

6.2 Membership Communication

The organisation has proven the efficiency of communicating and conveying information to members wherever possible by electronic means. Nearly every membership application has been processed online, allowing the applicant full control during the application process. Members present were asked if they had any objections to electronic communications – none were received. Several reported having had problems during the application process and the Secretary said that these were known about and are being resolved.

6.3 Member Inter-trading

The Secretary reminded members that it was not the direct aim of the UK FA to find them new customers but when an enquiry is received it will be allotted to the closest member able to provide the specific service requested. It is therefore very important to keep the details of the services you provide up to date on the UK FA website as this is how prospective end user customers and also fellow members looking for the services you provide will find you.

The UK FA is actively encouraging members to work together providing one another valuable services to bolster members businesses. Members were strongly advised to agree all aspects of pricing and payment terms from the start, as this is where in the Secretary's experience most trading relationships fall apart.

6.4 Correspondence

6.4.1 The Secretary gave an update on the misdirection of the web addresses uk-fa.co.uk, .com and .net to the IFEDA web site. The perpetrator has been identified to an address in Buckingham. The Directors are monitoring the situation and will take appropriate action as more information becomes available.

6.4.2 The disagreement with Roland Jones at BSi was discussed. This is about our partially reproducing an email from BSi on our website explaining why the UK FA was not entitled to a 50% discount on the price of Standards - the original correspondence can be found on the UK FA website news page. It was agreed that we should accept the alternative offer from BSi of becoming a distributor to then receive a 30% discount on the purchase of BSi Standards for our members. It is also intended that the Secretary should produce a practical extinguisher service instruction manual based on the requirements of BS5306 part 3:2009 once this document has been published.

6.4.3 Peter Forster from Cherry Parts Ltd had previously sent the UK FA an open letter in response to the allegations made in letters to the fire trade from Mark Radford at Radford Venture Capital Ltd about Cherry Parts Ltd CO2 frost free horns. As Peter was in attendance he was invited to address the meeting to clarify the situation. The original letter from Cherry Parts Ltd can be found on the UK FA website news page.

NOTE - the Secretary will welcome 'right of reply' correspondence from Radford Venture Capital Ltd or any other affected party on the matter that may at the Secretary's discretion be circulated by email to members.

6.4.4 Two members had previously reported problems with CO2 extinguisher dip tubes detaching themselves from the heads. The membership present was asked for their experiences to determine the frequency of occurrences and the problem appears to be negligible.

6.4.5 Many members expressed concern during the meeting about the proposal in BS5306 part 3:2009 for the National Examination Board to be re-examining extinguisher technicians after they take 5 year refreshers. It was resolved that the Secretary should approach BAFE (who are expected to become the 'National Examination Board') with a view to finding a compromise solution where the burden of the additional cost inflicted on the fire trade by this proposal can be eased. Members in particular are concerned that in no other trade does there appear to be a precedence like this where a skilled person having once passed an examination faces having to retake it again (and face failure and possible loss of employment) every five years.

6.4.6 Members were urged to respond before mid-day on the 28 July to the CLG Freedoms and Flexibilities consultative document concerning the proposed changes to how Fire and Rescue Services are allowed to trade. The original documentation can be found on the UK FA website news page.

6.5 Open Debate – What do you want from the UK FA?

Members were given the opportunity to open their minds and put forward ideas about what the UK FA should be providing members. This developed into a lively discussion covering;

- Vehicle stickers – the cost of 250mm x 375mm self-adhesive van logos is to be actioned by the Secretary.
- Government (e.g. BAFE) representation. The Secretary is to investigate cost effective methods to develop our profile with Fire Rescue Services, insurance companies, influencers and specifiers inside and outside of Government.
- A strap line to add to the UK FA logo e.g. and a mission statement along the lines of "*The Independent Experts*" – members are asked to submit their ideas by email.
- Extinguisher technician register – this is to be formalised from the membership application forms and suitably extended – the Secretary was tasked to investigate.
- Technician ID badge for members own technicians - this would need to follow the creation of the technicians register.
- The most important (by a show of hands estimated 90% of those present) was the adoption of a robust and sustainable quality auditing scheme for members not already BAFE or ISO9001 accredited. Members present accepted that this will involve an additional cost to members - the Secretary was tasked with preparing a costed proposal for debate.

6.6 Any Other Business

There being no other business from the floor the General Meeting was concluded at 11.20am for refreshments.

The meeting continued at 11.40am for presentations from the Speakers.

Jim Creak – Jalite Ltd presented “Why BS EN ISO 7010”

Jim gave a lively discussion that opened our minds to the heavy responsibilities of being designated a ‘Responsible Person’. Running through the 4C’s Control, Competence, Co-operation and Communication and taking in the 5P’s Policy, Procedure, Prevention, Practice and Policing the presentation was thought provoking and should not only be given to Fire Service Officers but given to anyone considering taking on this unenviable role.

Derek Ward – Envirograf

Derek’s presentation was fast and furious – he had a lot to talk about in the short time available and all credit to him he finished spot on time! Most of us are involved in ‘active’ fire protection where some form of human intervention is required when a fire occurs. Intumescent products are ‘passive’ working normally by the heat generated in a fire causing the intumescent material to expand and absorb/dissipate the heat - doing its job without any human intervention. Derek’s presentation introduced the wide range of intumescent products available from Envirograf and members spoke afterwards about Derek’s in depth knowledge and passion for his products.

Andy Leather – Fire Risk Pro / Leather Consultancy

Andy gave stimulating live demonstrations in the car park after lunch using the Blazex fire simulator for members to try their hands with. Andy is based in Northampton and provides subcontract fire training and ISO 9001 quality system auditing for other fire companies.

Next Meeting

No meeting dates have been fixed. The UK FA policy is to keep meetings to a minimum, so the next is most likely to be the AGM. Date and venue to be announced.

Acknowledgements

To Fred Temple for making such a great effort to join the meeting and helping make it such a success.

To Woolley Hall staff for hosting the event and providing excellent refreshments and a wide selection of lunch options to suit every taste.

To you if you were able to make it to the pre-meeting dinner and subsequent gathering the evening before the meeting – so much useful information shared amongst so many new friends.

To everyone who attended the meeting, many travelling long distances who I hope felt that the experience was worth the effort. Everyone I spoke with on the day seemed to think so!

Alan Palmer
Secretary