

Minutes of the 11th General Meeting and Technical Day held at Jewel Fire Group on the 24th October 2019.



Attendees

UK-FA Directors

Andrew Berry – Chairman
Alan Palmer – Secretary
Tom Law – Treasurer

UK-FA Members

Mike Ditanna – Jewel Fire Group Ltd
Anne Stuart – Jewel Fire Group Ltd
Darren Lucas – CheckFire Ltd
Peter Edwards – 1st Defense Fire & Rescue
Ian Parkin – Shire Fire
John McAleer – Red Point Ltd
Richard Baker – Fire Check UK
Fraser Proudfoot – Crioch Industries Ltd
Steve Brennan – At Hand Fire Protection
Mehran Parry – Sabre Fire & Security Ltd
Nik Johnson – Derventio Fire & Security
Paul Gatens – DetectorTesters
Barry Thompson - Fire & Light
Martin Coates – Fire & Light
Jack Croot - Fire & Light
Stefan Jordan – Global Fire Systems
Keith Ellis - EFS

Guests

Craig Copeland – Dupre (AVD)
Dave Stonier – Dupre (AVD)
Nikki Jackson - Sentura
Robin Smith – Sentura
Gavin Hoult – South York's Fire & Rescue

Apologies

Perry Leaver – Wessex Fire & Safety
Dave Hollingworth – Premium Fire
Adrian Bishop – Guardian Fire Protection
Mike Horrocks – Guardian Fire Protection
Carl Thomson – Cross Fire Safety Ltd
Ian Emmons – Firecrest
Mark Bridgens - Everlux
Phil Wright – Wrightway Safety
Steve Daniels - Hollinsend Fire
Dean Wilson – BW Fire
Nikki Stewart – Firexo
Gareth Baldwin – Firexo
Bobby Bagri – Firexo
Tony Constable – ATC Fire Alarms Ltd

Our Eleventh General Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

The Secretary, Alan Palmer welcomed attendees to the meeting and ran through housekeeping and the agenda for the meeting.

Everyone present signed the attendance register and had the opportunity to introduce themselves and the organisation that they represent.

The Secretary showed an image of a motor mechanic struck in the face after activating an old heavily corroded fire extinguisher, he then went on to show another image of an old BS5423:1987 all cream TG Series 2000 gas cartridge fire extinguisher he had come across in a hotel in Wakefield recently. The point was to show the dangers these old fire extinguishers pose to us in the fire trade but more especially the public at large who can be apathetic to the danger.

Apologies from Members who had previously advised the Secretary they were unable to attend the meeting were presented and are listed above. The Secretary confirmed with everyone present, their acceptance for the meeting to be recorded to ease the preparation of accurately written minutes.

The Secretary then went on to outline the mornings programme of events after the meeting introducing the guest speakers and ending with the technical session featuring Lithium-Ion battery and metal fire extinguishing demonstrations. He sought the permission of extinguisher distributors demonstrating their products to be able to use and circulate the video taken, all agreed.

2. Chairman's Address

Andrew Berry the Chairman said that it was great to see so many new faces attending and that he wanted to keep his address short as there is a lot to get through during the meeting.



3. Minutes of the Last Meeting – Matters Arising

The Secretary went through the minutes from the previous meeting to confirm their accuracy, from these he highlighted the following points;

- Regarding promoting the UK-FA through an exhibition stand at a regional or national fire trade exhibition the Directors had discussed this and felt that the cost versus return was not worth it and that organising stand management would be tricky. If we were to exhibit in the future a sub committee will need to be formed to plan, manage and run the campaign.

- BS7863:1996 the extinguisher colour coding standard is now redundant being replaced with BS5306-10: 2019 adding a new classification, purple for metal fire powder extinguishers. Mike Ditanna from Jewel Fire Group confirmed that though they tried but white was not officially accepted for Water Mist extinguishers.
- Members present agreed that the guest speakers had been well received in particular the social media common voice and image presentation provided by Tracey Blandford who through her consultancy Chatterbox Marketing manages this for the UK Fire Association and is encouraging Collaborative Marketing between the UK-FA and our members.

The minutes were proposed for acceptance by Peter Edwards (1st Defense Fire & Rescue) and were seconded by Steve Brennan (At Hand Fire Protection) as a true and accurate record of the Eleventh Annual General Meeting held at Coldra Court Hotel, Newport South Wales on the 31st May 2019.

4. Treasurers Report (including Membership)

The Treasurer, Tom Law gave the following report;

Membership numbers currently stand at 195 fully paid up members. Whilst this would appear to be down by 10 since last year the actual reduction is being caused by the new invoicing system which we now have as it no longer allows an unpaid invoice to be raised on our accounts.

Our debtor's control stands at £235.96 (someone just bought a British Standard).

The Association is in a strong financial position, our current bank account stands at £92,789.54 and our creditors account is zero, however there will be some costs due from this meeting.

The Treasurer went on to remind Members that the UK-FA still has special rates for HARD COPY British Standards, the UK-FA discount equates to a near 30% discount plus post and packaging. We cannot obtain electronic pdf versions of standards these can only be purchased and downloaded at list price directly from the BSI online shop.



Tom went on to say that he is considering retiring, he's in no rush but he will welcome any nominations from anyone interested in taking on the role which comes with an annual honorarium.

5. Secretary's Report

The Secretary initially explained that the fall back in membership was mainly caused by apathy, many members did not follow the online re-joining instructions even after several reminders. Even after many email prompts many members still had not entered their details to their members web listing then they call wondering why their company doesn't come up in a search on our website! The Secretary has contacted lapsed members to remove UK-FA logo from stationery, website and vehicles, this will be an ongoing campaign.



We have grown by 22 new members and the website makes us less reliant on growth through word of mouth. The target is to achieve 200 by the end of 2019 and hopefully to 210 before the AGM.

5.1 Correspondence

We carried out an audit on a new member in Scotland, they failed on several counts and were advised upon the actions they needed to take to meet membership criteria. We heard no more from them, their membership has lapsed, and they have been accepted for membership by another fire trade association.

5.2 ID Badges

The aim is to provide a self-financing scheme for members, and it is a project that the Secretary said he is wanting to investigate this for his own fire extinguisher technician clients to be able to verify competence on the doorstep to their customers, however it is time consuming and other priorities have got in the way.

The Secretary is still looking at possibly running this using his own administrator and making this service self-financing as it will be time consuming to manage, he said that he needs time to work out the process and do the costings based upon using a product already being used and endorsed by Peter Edwards. Ideally if association goes on to appoint a part time General Manager this is a project that they could run with.

5.3 Social Media

Tracey Blandford is a professional freelance marketer managing our social media presence, the Secretary went through the latest statistics below that continue to show a steady increase in followers in all areas.

Date	Twitter Followers	Twitter Following	Tweets	Twitter Likes	LinkedIn Followers	Facebook Closed Group Members
09/11/2018	309	108	91	64	x	x
24/01/2019	328	109	94	67	3,002	98
22/10/2019	420	124	125	91	3,522	142

Paul Gatens mentioned that the Facebook closed group is open to everyone, the Secretary also said that the website is a gold mine for useful information if you take time dig around it!

The Secretary would still like to see the UK-FA spearheading a campaign through social media to educate consumers of the risks they are taking in buying extinguishers directly and not having them commissioned by a 'Competent Person', people are well aware of the need to use specialists with gas and electrical installation but are willing to risk the safety of their with what is a very highly pressurised piece of equipment!

5.4 Website

The creation of a completely new website is now completed and is operational but as stated earlier it does require members to complete their web membership directory listing if they want their company to show up in the listings!

If you have anything that you feel we can add to or improve the what is a state-of-the-art website, please let the Secretary know.

5.5 Meetings

The Secretary said that he was pleased with the improved turnouts to our General Meetings brought about by our Technical Days but now that these had run their course for the time being, so we need to look for alternative ideas to draw people along.



The Secretary said that we all need to put more thought into this and come up with proposals for both General Meeting and AGM content and discuss at the AGM.

5.6 Training Courses

The Secretary has always been uncomfortable with the UK-FA advertising training courses in particular his for members but several meetings ago was encouraged by those attending to add a training section to the website whereby ALL accepted training providers can have a link to their own training pages as this is seen as a significant benefit to being a member.

The Secretary said that a training page was being worked upon and should be up and running before the AGM. All relevant training providers are encouraged to contact the Secretary to become accepted and their courses listed.

5.7 Technicians Service Manual update

This free of charge manual available for members to download is now getting out of date when it comes to BS5306-3, 8 and 9. The Secretary who wrote and published it has started to update its contents but is waiting for the release of the revised BS5306-8 to complete what has become a much bigger job than expected!

5.8 UK-FA Members Fire Logbook

The Secretary is part way through creating a template A4 loose leaf document for members to download for free and overlay with their own company details only to learn at the meeting from Paul Gatens that a company called TIO Fire do a cloud based version which means that facility managers based away from premises, maintenance providers, etc. can access and amend records remotely. It also flags up task that have passed due by dates. The Secretary said that BS5306-3:2017 expects the extinguisher technician to obtain read and complete the work carried out in the fire logbook while onsite so this could be a useful to all parties so the Secretary said that he will investigate and report back to members at the next meeting.

5.9 General Manager Position (part time)

The Secretary said the association was growing to a size now where to grow and support members he needs to put in more time. He said that the role currently takes up about 1 day a week on average with Kate his own office administrator acting as the UK Fire Association's unpaid administrator putting in about one hour a day on average on top of his time.

We need to work on more plausible membership benefits and reach out to other affiliated organisations, a phone call to every member once a year to build up a relationship, frequent e-newsletter/website/Twitter/Facebook content, find more training course/CPD providers, etc. This is more than he can achieve with the time he currently puts in.

The Secretary went on to say that third party accreditation to prove competence is fast approaching so we need an affordable, light touch accreditation scheme, this will grow in importance following the Grenfell Tower fire enquiry. Paul Gatens mentioned “matrix of responsibility” evolving where a service manager could be seen to be liable after an incident.

The Secretary proposed that we try to find a member to act as a General Manager to complement his own work and activities working from home 1-2 days a week. It was suggested that this role would suit an experienced, recently retired fire trade professional.

The Secretary said that he will prepare and circulate an outline Job Description to members to see if we can attract someone. If this is unsuccessful the Secretary said that if he wound down some elements of his own work he might be able to give one dedicated day a week to the role but this was not the preferred solution, but would avoid the inefficiencies of lost time in training and initially managing a new General Manager.

6. BSI Representatives Report

Peter Edwards is our BSI representative on the FSH/2 Committee for the design, manufacture and maintenance of fire extinguishers.

Peter Edwards our FSH/2 committee representative said that BS5306-8 is out for editorial checks. The Class A “basic scale of provision” is being investigated where BSI want to maintain this as a minimum of two 13A rated extinguishers he said that most local authorities will accept just the one.

After the British committee members on the European Fire Blankets committee a few years ago it appears that BSI accept they will need to align British with European standards.

An addendum to BS 5306-3 is going through shortly - it’s a clarification thing.

A prominent FSH/2 committee member recently brought up what they felt was the requirement for CE marking on all refurbished CO₂ extinguishers. The DTI and HSE are looking into it and if it did get accepted, thousands of extinguishers would need to be withdrawn. Mike Ditanna asked if those that are refurbishing will be invited to comment, Peter felt that this would be the case. Mike also said that they could expect a robust defence from Jewel Fire Group and several other prominent manufacturers.



Apparently, the use of “Verified Alternatives” in fire extinguishers has flared up again. Does this comply with the PED considering potential corrosion issues, one AFFF currently cannot fill all extinguishers! Mike Ditanna asked how do you actually police it?!



Mike Ditanna asked about the alleged inditement from the FIA about not using Water Mist extinguishers directly on live electrics, this complaint has been lodged with BSI, but Peter said he had not heard anything about it coming through the FSH/2 committee.

Kevin Gray from Surrey Fire Safety Solutions Ltd is our nominated BSI representative for future BS5839 Committees, but at this stage there is still not a vacancy at BSI to be filled.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The Secretary proposed that the next Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 13th March 2020 in Durham.

The Chairman said that this will be our 11th AGM our first in the new decade, having a live band and casino using ‘UK-FA funny-money’ to play for where the challenge is to once again break the cashier and win a prize!

The Secretary went on to say that the 12th Annual General Meeting (2021) will most likely be held in Scotland to serve our Northern England, Scottish and Irish members.

8. Any Other Business

Mike Ditanna spoke about the failing plastic siphon tube adapters caused by poor quality in some batches of the nylon. Lots of things can affect the integrity and quality of the nylon in particular the influence of PA6 where not all adapters have been 100% pure nylon, the problem is in finding them and sorting this. The Secretary welcomed Jewel Fire Groups openness about the situation which appears to affect 2014 up to June 2015 products. Jewel Fire Group will supply free of charge replacement adapters.

IFEDA is voicing concerns about fire extinguishers being removed from common areas in residential blocks of flats. The Secretary voiced his support as he said that he knew of two fires in flats where the property was saved from serious damage by the use of an extinguisher. Peter Edwards said that in West London there are two authorities with conflicting views on this.

Peter Edwards said that insurers often go with capacity of extinguishers, for instance 9 litre water and not the actual fire rating (13A) maybe this is an education exercise for the new General Manager?

Barry Thompson said that he felt the emergency lighting codes don't work on making lighting at exits and with fire alarms loudest to draw people to safety. The Secretary said that this needs taking up at BSI standards committee level. Interesting but outside our control.

Technical Session

The attendees attended the two live fire sessions one presented by Peter Edwards from 1st Defense Fire & Rescue where they were invited to try different types of extinguishing agents; Water Mist, CO₂, MultiChem Foam on Class B and F fires. He also demonstrated the Lithex and Firexo extinguishers on flammable metal fires. Dupre and Sentura kindly jointly ran the second demonstration using the 9ltr Lithex extinguisher on dramatic Lithium-Ion fires.



Many of us in the fire trade talk about fire extinguishers, but rarely have we used them on real fires! It also gave spectators the opportunity to witness how different extinguishers work on various fire risks including flammable metals.

The fire extinguishers were kindly donated by 1st Defense Fire & Rescue, CheckFire Ltd, Jewel Fire Group and Sentura.

Jewel Fire Group supplied Water Mist fire extinguishers which were used to extinguish a petroleum tray fire and later an attempt was made to fight a deep fat fire which unwittingly has become super-heated and the extinguisher was unable to control. Please note that in our previous technical session held in October 2018 at Dunsfold the Water Mist extinguisher then easily extinguished the same sized test fire.

Firexo withdrew from attending at the last moment but we were still able to trial their fire extinguishing agent donated by one of their agents on a Thermite metal fire upon which it failed.

Presentations were given by the following Speakers

Paul Gatens - No Climb Products Ltd presenting “Raising the Bar”.

Paul said that he decided that this presentation would not be product centric to DetectorTester products. The RRO is 12 years old and there have been 538 prosecutions in different forms so he would look at trends and things going on.

Paul went on to emphasise the growing importance of the premise’s manager and the Responsible Person, with the “matrix of responsibility” expanding, that includes the service technician and who knows if soon a fire protection company director gets prosecuted? We can’t just write in the fire logbook that you don’t have the right equipment or walk away not informing the Responsible Person of faults or issues that we have identified. Fines can be up to £5,000 and prison sentences up to 20 months are being given. Premises managers tend to be employees, who when prosecuted and fined have lost their homes to cover costs as Legal Aid is not applicable. Fire protection companies may need to consider taking out indemnity insurance to protect staff from implied responsibility. You need to question and ask yourself if you are testing your own competency - before someone else does and it all kicks off! A technician working for one of the large fire protection companies recently was heavily grilled after a fatality caused by a significant fire in a premise that they covered, it was not a pleasant experience and luckily for him everything he was responsible for was in order.

It is important that we can demonstrate relevant personal ongoing continual professional development, fire risk assessors were expected to do 30 hours CPD now it is 50 hours but there is currently no requirement for fire alarm engineers! We need to know when to replace detectors, subject to each manufacturer and tell the client, it’s their choice to decline the advice but they need that information to make an informed decision. Keep an eye out for new products for instance moving from paper logbooks to electronic, new types of multi-sensory detectors, etc. We have to educate the Responsible person even though they don’t want to listen, this is a challenge and there are no known training courses for Responsible Person’s.

Do fire risk assessors know how to maintain a fire alarm system or fire extinguishers? It is surprisingly common that many do not! Scorpion allow you access hard to access detectors always recommend even though they may not accept. Don’t let technician develop dodgy practices, leaning over a balcony with a 6-metre test pole for instance! Scorpion avoids the risk at height to technicians. Not having high temperature detector testers so writing in the logbook they do not have the right equipment is not acceptable! The technician needs to correctly use equipment, the use of aerosol canisters is not outlawed but there are a lot of H&S and environmental concerns about using them.

Dame Hackett has said don’t wait for regulation, raise the bar now, make those changes take action now. The fire and rescue service are being tasked to do more investigations and make more prosecutions. The RRO is up for review and the conclusions of first The Grenfell Tower

Office Tel: 01932 252306
Email: secretary@uk-fa.org
www.uk-fa.org Twitter: [@uk_fa.org](https://twitter.com/uk_fa.org)

Unit 19, Enterprise House, 44-46 Terrace Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 2SD.

Fire enquiry are due out at the end of the month, a number of organisations talking this up the results usually lapse but hopefully this time actions will be taken. Third party accreditation is likely to become compulsory and competency levels need to increase and be defined and measured in a skill matrix.

The fire safety logbook systems need to be fit for purpose, maintained correctly and available to protect the Responsible Person and the Competent Person. Now that there is a cloud-based product like TIO Fire from DetectorTesters sister company, helping to educate the property manager and they are looking to include CPD training modules that the Responsible Person is encouraged to go through. TIO Fire has a £25 per annum registration fee, with ability for intelligence built in provides transparency so client can see what's been done may mean the difference to a servicing company preventing the race to bottom on price!



Dame Hackett mentions competency 152 times “proven demonstrated ability” most in our industry are only “capable” they can’t prove their competency. The FPA and FIA are raising the standards of their courses. It is one thing to read the British Standard but quite another on how you apply it!

Stefan Jordan – Global Fire & Security presenting Ansul System Servicing

Stefan said that Global Fire & Security had joined UK-FA three months ago after the Secretary had approached him to provide Ansul cooker suppression system maintenance for members after Telegan resigned their membership after being taken over by Churches. The company is celebrating its 20-year anniversary in 2020, it started with servicing fire extinguishers, then grew into fire alarms and CCTV, its sister company covers passive fire protection. They are the leading Ansul distributor in Europe with their 10,000th installation just been completed. They cover hospitals, restaurants, theme parks, prisons, football stadiums, hotels, schools, etc. and it is all driven by insurance companies who often provide a financial bursary. It is looking like insurers will make the systems compulsory within 12 months.

Ansul is manufactured in US with 18 distributors in UK, Global have been the top one for the last 10 years, most of the competition are quite niche and small. Ansul systems are installed in all commercial kitchens, Global have over 220 staff of which about 120 are installation or maintenance engineers. It is typically a two days job after site survey to install and commission what is a mechanical system operated by a 360-degree fusible link activated in about 40 seconds or by manual pull causing a lot of mess with 24 hours clean up. There is a fire reported every day and it works successfully every time!

Opening a new office shortly in Nottingham to amalgamate all three of the company divisions. Stefan offered us the use of their facilities to showcase their facilities and systems.

The company is now becoming a distributor for FirePro an aerosol extinguishing agent ideal for protecting battery rooms.



Global are offering members the ability to provide their clients with third party Ansul installation and maintenance. Introductory fee is made to members and the Secretary asked Stefan to put together a guidance document and members were reassured by Stefan that their other business interests will be protected when using Global Fire & Security as a partner.

Robin Smith – Sentura Group presenting Lithex Extinguishing Agent

Robin introduced himself as the Technical manager for Sentura Group and that he was going to introduce Lithex the Lithium-Ion and metal fire extinguisher. Lithium-Ion batteries are by and large well-made, but numbers are increasing and therefore the risks from fire by thermal runaway caused overheating or over-charging. The anode and cathode overheat or short circuit the protective layer between the cells breaks down, causing an uncontrolled exponential fire.



AVD stands for Aqueous Vermiculite Dispersion, vermiculite naturally occurring mined and chemically exfoliated then mixed with water and is best used as a mist. It is inert, non-toxic and environmentally friendly. It works by creating a non-flammable barrier between the cells with a film over the surface of non-flammable oxygen barrier, the process has a cooling affect, encapsulating the cell preventing the fire propagating.

No industry recognised class covering Lithium-Ion batteries, a lot of classes involved in a Lithium-Ion battery fire. Class A battery materials, in plastics and coatings, leading to Class B when plastics melt and run, gases are given off creating a Class C risk and an element Class D and of course electrical!

Office Tel: 01932 252306
Email: secretary@uk-fa.org
www.uk-fa.org Twitter: @uk_fa.org

Unit 19, Enterprise House, 44-46 Terrace Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 2SD.

Class D L2 metal fire powders are not suitable on Lithium-Ion battery fires as these and pure Lithium are very different fires, Lithex however will work on both.

Sentura have five 5 products in the range;

9ltr 13A rated 1,000 Watt/hours

6ltr 13A rated

2ltr 5A rated

1ltr 3A rated 120 Watt/hours

500ml 30 Watt/hours ideal for personal protection of small devices; laptop mobile phones etc.

The Watt/hours are only for guidance as Lithium-Ion fires are difficult to test as they are very unpredictable.

Typical trade prices are £18.50 for the 500ml sized extinguisher to around £240 for the 9ltr extinguisher. Refill packs are available.

Robin went on to introduce their new yellow extinguisher pull safe safety pins, preview before their formal release next month from FireChief. Users often struggle to pull the pin when squeezing the levers together, but the pull safe pin overcomes this problem. There are two different lengths of pin to suit CO₂ and other extinguishers. Robin said that the trade needs to see it as an upsell like standard CO₂ horns being converted to frost free horns. They come in a bag of 20 costing £1.50 per pin. There was concern from members that these could be in conflict regarding the use manufacturers original components and "Verified Alternatives".

Robin introduced the new range of FireChief HFC-236FA EN3 clean agent gas portable fire extinguishers ranging in size from 2kg up to 9kg which they see as an alternative to the cold from CO₂ damaging sensitive electronic components.

The Secretary thanked Jewel Fire Group for hosting the event and to our guest speaker along with everyone who was able to attend today.

Alan Palmer



Secretary
For and on behalf of the UK Fire Association

