

Minutes of the 11th Annual General Meeting held on the 13th March 2020 at Radisson Blu Hotel in Durham.



Attendees

UK-FA Directors

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

UK-FA Members

Carl Thomson – Cross Fire Safety Ltd
Tony Round – Cross Fire Safety Ltd
Pat Price – Fire Fighter 24/7
Sherrie Wheeler – Fire Fighter 24/7
Fraser Proudfoot Crock Industries Ltd
Ian Parkin – Shires Fire
Alan Liddle – AL Fire Protection
Jan Liddle – AL Fire Protection
Nikki Johnson – Derventio Fire and Security
Steve Brennan – At Hand Fire
Tracey Blandford – F.I.R.E LTD
Mark Bridgens - Everlux
Dan Davis – DRD Fire

Paul Gatens - DetectorTesters
Peter Edwards – 1st Defense Fire & Rescue

Guests

Roger Clarke – UK-FA web designer
Jason Hill – TIO Fire Safety

Apologies

Perry Leaver – Wessex Fire & Safety
Mike Ditanna – Jewel Saffire
Anne Stuart – Jewel Saffire
Ian Emmons – Firecrest
Peter Wilkinson – Pyrology
Phil Wright – Wrightway Safety Ltd
Derek Faye Fire and Safety Testing
Dave Gough – Herts Fire
John Borthwick – Beacon Fire Protection Ltd
Oliver Quarrell – BPS Property Services

Our Eleventh Annual General Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

The Secretary, Alan Palmer welcomed attendees to the meeting and outlined the housekeeping arrangements and the programme for the day. He went on to offer attendees UK-FA pens, mugs and window stickers if they needed them.

Everyone present signed the attendance register and the Secretary confirmed their acceptance for the meeting to be sound recorded to ease the preparation of accurately written minutes.

A group photo to record the event was taken in the hotel auditorium due to inclement weather conditions.

He went on to introduce the Directors sitting at the head table to the audience and in turn had the Members in attendance introduce themselves and the organisation they represent to one another.



Apologies from Members who had previously advised the Secretary they were unable to attend the meeting were presented and are listed above.

The exhibitors and guest speakers were introduced these included representatives from the following organisations: Paul Gatens - DetectorTesters, Sherrie Wheeler - Firefighter 24/7, Jason Hill - TIO Fire & Safety, Mark Bridgens - Everlux, Tracey Blandford - Chatterbox Marketing (the UK-FA Social Media consultancy) and Roger Clarke the UK-FA web designer.

2. Chairman's Address

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and went on to introduce a relatively new fire extinguisher F500 from Argus Fire in Devon that tackles electric vehicle battery fires. Mark Bridgens said that Firemark has also developed a Lithium-Ion extinguisher for commercial aircraft and that he had it on good authority from an HSE source that the only secure way of containing a Lithium-Ion vehicle battery fire is total immersion in water, not an easy task on the side of the road! This began a lively debate that concluded that we should invite a representative from Argus Fire and from Firemark to attend separate future meetings to introduce their specialist fire-fighting agents and any other associated products.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting – Matters Arising

The Secretary ran through the salient of points from the Minutes of the Rotherham meeting held on the 24th of October 2019 and thanked Jewel Fire Group in their absence for hosting the meeting and extinguisher demonstrations. The live fire extinguisher demonstrations went down well, in particular the effectiveness of how Fire Depot's (Sentura) Lithex extinguisher dealt with a Lithium-Ion battery fire.

BS7863:1996 the fire extinguisher colour coding standard has been superseded by a new code BS5306-9:2019 and that this includes now Mauve for Metal Fire Powder extinguishers but is not retrospective, so all existing Blue banded extinguishers and those in stock awaiting to be sold will not be affected.

Alan had optimistically hoped that the membership would achieve 200 again by the end of last year, this has not been the case though the website has introduced 22 new members and this meeting and another 10 up to this meeting.

We are getting quite a few obscure enquiries about all facets of fire protection from building control issues to sprinklers and fire-resistant workwear fabrics, so the new website has increased our reach to consumers. The Secretary also gets regular enquiries from consumers to validate that their supplier is a UK-FA member – usually when the Member has not updated their membership listing, so they do not appear in the Members Directory! Typically there are on average 30-40 firms not having updated their details and are therefore invisible to fellow Members and consumers looking for their services!



Membership auditing, we see this becoming essential as Dame Judith Hackett's report requires the fire protection industry to self-regulate and the drive is towards mandatory third-party accreditation. BAFE registration is a fine thing to aspire too but smaller firms have a job to afford the time and cost involved. The Secretary intends to investigate other alternative intermediate third-party accreditation schemes that can provide reassurance to the consumer and improve the working processes of the service provider. This is not intended to upstage BAFE, more to offer an affordable entry level to third party accreditation than is currently available. This might be simply by taking the first steps and gaining ISO9001 accreditation through a UKAS recognised scheme provider.

ID badges, Peter Edwards had brought a sample along and the typical cost all in was under £10 each. Some scepticism was shown from the floor as the self-grown badge would be weak in that it cannot cover all of requirements like a Level 3 CSCS type card with DBS, qualifications or that of the Gas Safe system. The Secretary said that he will hold off and

Mark Bridgens suggested it would be worth us talking to Tom Brooks at Linden Fire as he is at the vanguard and sits on several committees. He may be prepared to come and talk to us at a future meeting about options for taking the ID card forward.

The website training page only features extinguisher technician courses run by the Secretary's own company, as an Association we are keen to also promote other training providers relevant courses, e.g. fire alarms, emergency lighting, dry risers, etc. but not manage their bookings, all enquiries would go straight to the provider to organise. Andrew has investigated and found a couple of providers but trainers need to be Level 3 qualified and it was mentioned that IFEDA are said to be gaining Level 3 accredited trainers for courses so it was agreed that we would hold off and refer Members to them for training in the short term.

The Secretary wrote the now outdated Extinguisher Servicing Procedures Manual that is downloadable from the UK-FA website and was supplied free in hard copy to all new Members. It is a colossal task to rewrite this and with the advent of BS5306-8 being updated Alan is doing the groundwork in preparing the manual for completion once the new standard is released in hopefully, the near future.

The creation of a Members hard copy fire logbook has been cancelled with the advent of apps such as TIO that we are following with interest.

The General Managers post has been advertised internally amongst Members but to date no one has shown any interest. At the Directors next Executive meeting we will review the situation and how we take things forward.

The minutes were proposed for acceptance by Steve Brennan (At Hand Fire Protection) and were seconded by Ian Parkin (Shires Fire) as a true and accurate record of the Eleventh General Meeting held at Jewel Fire Group in Rotherham on the 24th of October 2019.

4. Treasurers Report (including Membership)

The Treasurer, Tom Law gave the following report;

Finances for Year Ending 29th February 2020;

Turnover on the year came to:	£36,105
Administrative expenses and promotions:	£34,085
Leaving an operating surplus of:	£2,021
Corporation tax due on surplus:	£384

Our current bank account balance stands at £82,354.79 however we will have some expenses to meet from this event along with website, office and ongoing marketing costs.



The Associations finances are extremely sound and membership stands at 200.

The Treasurer is standing down and the Secretary gave a resume about how Tom came to be involved with the UK Fire Association from its inception 11 years ago and went on to thank him for the work he has done over the years to ensure the Association has robust accounts and the reserves to develop membership benefits through valued services.

5. Secretary's Report

Membership is currently 200, we lost a few with the introduction of the new website re-application process that caught a few people out, but we are slowly regaining original and also new members all by word of mouth.

The Directors intend to have a review upon how to draw in more people to attend meetings this could be to look at new locations and the meeting content to increase participation in what are excellent opportunities to share best practices, network and make new friends. We do understand that many people are not comfortable coming to a meeting on their own for the first time or worry they will end up getting allocated a job! Perhaps the way forward is to move away from physical meetings altogether?

Technical days give members the opportunity to see and apply new and existing fire fighting agents and assess their effectiveness. We in particular are taking a keen interest in Lithium-Ion battery fires which is a massive hazard that the motor industry in particular seems to be sleepwalking into.

A Members annual phone call would be a nice gesture to build a more personal relationship and gain feedback, Alan said that he would see this as a role for the Secretary to conduct once his workload has been shared to free up his time.

6. Social Media Report

Tracey Blandford is the UK-FA social media consultant.

The closed Facebook group is active and growing steadily.

When we post items Tracey said that she sees a massive spike in responses. What she needs is more content to put out there to keep the momentum going.

The Treasurer said we need Members to contribute items and it was Paul Gatens suggested that an informal sub-group be formed from people who can keep creating and feeding content, Dan said he would take the lead on this.

Tracey presented the latest social media statistics shown below;

Date	Twitter Followers	Twitter Following	Tweets	Twitter Likes	LinkedIn Followers	Facebook Closed Group Members
20/09/2018	283	107	85	59	2,905	67
09/10/2018	291	109	86		2,926	78
20/10/2018	295	108	87	65	2,937	81
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
10/03/2020	461	124	138	93	4,051	158

Twitter Followers up 133 in 12 months
LinkedIn Followers up 1,049 in 12 months
Growth of FaceBook Group - 60 in 12 months.

Key Facts: When we post we gain followers, likes and shares.
As an organisation we need to keep the focus on content and a resource available to create and deliver

7. BSI Representatives Report

Peter Edwards is our BSI representative on the FSH/2 fire extinguishers Committee has been Richard Cotes appears to be the most likely person to take on the Chairmanship of this committee.

The revised BS5306-8 is currently out for consultation and delays have occurred due to disagreement over composite bodied extinguishers which seems to have now been resolved so could be released as early as March. A lively short debate ensued!



The next BSI meeting scheduled for next week is unlikely to go ahead due to Covid-19 so this will create further delays in release of the updated standard.

The DTi with the HSE are looking into the processes involved in the remanufacturing of CO₂ extinguishers after one UK extinguisher manufacturer has raised concerns. So far there is no rush to stop the practice as there have not been any incidents and there are millions in use. The Secretary said that he had spoken to the two largest remanufacturers just before Christmas and they were both very upbeat and had no concerns about the practice of refurbishment being stopped.

Mark Bridgens from Everlux sits on the BSI signs committee and said that BS5499-4 Code of Practice for escape route signing could be up for review as it up to 5 years life cycle review. Mark feels it is full of gobbeldy-gook, for instance half a lux of light requirement on the surface of a sign is too complicated for most technicians to perceive, so he is pushing with John Creak for a review of the standard but only if there is a chance of making it less full of technical speak.

ISO7010 fire blanket sign changed to look less like a pair of curtains being pulled conversations at ISO level to remove the fireman's helmet for call point signs as it implies its for fire and rescue services, watch this space.

8. Directors Elections

The three Directors were all due for 3-yearly re-election. Tom Law stood stand down as Treasurer and Dan Davis volunteered to take over the role, there had been no other nominations received for any of the directorships.

Andrew Berry the Chairman was nominated for re-election by proposer Peter Edwards and seconded by Steve Brennan, Andrew was voted in by unanimous show of hands.

Dan Davis was nominated for Treasurer by proposer Phil Wright and seconded by Nikki Johnson, Dan was voted in by a unanimous show of hands.

Alan Palmer the Secretary was nominated for re-election by proposer Dan Davis and seconded by Steve Brennan, Alan was voted in by unanimous show of hands.

9. Any Other Business

Ian Parkin thanked Tom for the personal support he had received which turned his business around when he was at a low point.

Paul Gatens said there is research going on with aged optical smoke detectors to define an early day's replacement period could be included in BS5839 parts 1 and 6 going perhaps with a sensitivity test as in America and Canada to offset the occurrence of false alarms,

which has already been accepted in Germany Spain and Italy. This is currently still out for discussion with the aim of reducing false alarms.

The Secretary said that Tom is an avid wine maker, so he presented him on behalf of the Member with a crystal red wine decanter and accessories was along with and lifelong honorary membership along with our best wishes for his well-earned retirement.

The Secretary went on to outline the evening function format and programme.



10. Date of Next Meeting

The Secretary proposed that the next General Meeting will be held in Nottingham at Global Fire and Security facilities on Friday 16th October 2020.

The Annual General Meeting was formally closed at 10.59am.

The meeting continued with presentations from our speakers.

All the presentations were forwarded to Members electronically after the meeting.

Jason Hill: TIO Fire Safety – A new interactive digital logbook.

Paul Gatens: DetectorTesters – Aerosol Canisters 25 years on.



Sherrie Wheeler: Fire Fighter 24/7 – Introduction to Residential and Domestic Sprinklers.



Mark Bridgens: Everlux - BS 8629:2019 Code of practice for the design, installation, commissioning and maintenance of evacuation alert systems for use by fire and rescue services in buildings containing flats.



Roger Clarke – The UK-FA subcontract website designer and manager providing ideas into “Firing up your website”.



The meeting closed for lunch at 1pm after which a party of attendees were escorted and guided around Durham City Centre and Cathedral by our local hosts Jan and Alan Liddle.



The AGM Dinner and Dance featured a casino and live band that entertained everyone through into the small hours of Saturday morning.





Acknowledgements and thanks

To all our speakers and the team at Radisson Blu Hotel for hosting the meeting and AGM dinner, making this another smoothly run and memorable event.

To Andrew Berry for organising the hotel, dinner and casino with Tom Law sourcing a fantastic band called "Switch".

To Alan and Jan Liddle for leading the afternoon walking tour of lovely Durham.

To you if you could attend the meeting, everyone contributing views and ideas then networking at break times to make this such a warm and friendly gathering.

Alan Palmer



Secretary
For and on behalf of the UK Fire Association