The Fire Trade Association here to support small and medium sized professional fire companies.

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Minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting held on the 28th March 2025 at the Edinburgh Holiday Inn Hotel.

Attendees

UK-FA Directors
Andrew Berry – Chairman
Alan Palmer – Secretary
Dan Davis – Treasurer

UK-FA Members
Dale Jones – Sandham Davis & Jones
Sherrie Wheeler – Firefighter 24/7
Ross Kyne – Forth Fire Protection
Laura Kyne – Forth Fire Protection
Peter Edwards – 1st Defense Fire & Rescue
Niki Johnson – Derventio Fire and Security
Mark Bridgens – Everlux
Tom Law – Tom & Sue Law Ltd
Scott Harris – Harris Fire & Electrical
Mike Ditanna – Jewel Fire Group
Eric Ralphson – Jewel Fire Group
Anne Stuart – Jewel Fire Group
Fraser Proudfoot – CI Fireguard
Chris Watson – Maple Carpentry
Kevin Buchanon – Fesscom Fire Protection
Clark Currie – Fesscom Fire Protection
Danny Hope – Camberley Fire & Security
Carl Thompson – Cross Fire Safety
Liam Reed – Trent Safety Services
Janet Liddle – AL Fire Protection
Alan Liddle – AL Fire Protection
Jeff Harvey – Fire Risk Reports
Shawn Butler – Fireguard One Ltd
Daniel Bent – Canary Fire Stopping
Rob McCoppin – Canary Fire Stopping
B Wylie – Safety Chair
Andrew Logan – Kelly Fire
Brian Boyd – 1st Choice Fire
Kieran Boyd – 1st Choice Fire
Bob Anderson – Anderson Fire
Scott Anderson – Anderson Fire

Non-Member Guests
Gavin Skelly – Fire Aware
Lisa Skelly – Fire Aware
Wojciech Mrozik – Newcastle University
Freddie Brooker – Evac-Chair
Peter Cadman – Evac-Chair

Apologies
Steve Best – Newflame Fire Equipment Ltd
*Pat Price – Firefighter 24/7
Steve Brennan – At Hand Fire Protection
Phil Wright – Wrightway Safety
Jez Lambley – 1st Defense Fire
John Borthwick – Beacon Fire Protection
Dave Hollingworth – Premium Fire Protection
Seamus Higgins – Vraxis Safety Solutions
John McEwan – Highland Fire
Alex McIntosh – Eclipse Fire Protection
Craig Mundie – Speyside Fire Solutions Ltd
Duncan McLeod – Safety Welding & Lifting Intl
Steven Spark – Spark Electrical Services
John Noble – Safe & Sound Fire

= Scottish Members

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Our Sixteenth Annual General Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

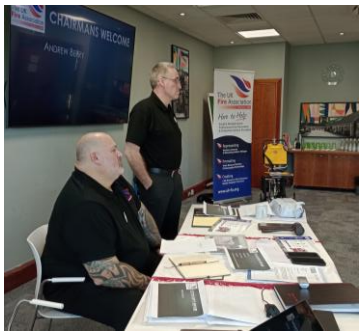
The Secretary, Alan Palmer warmly welcomed attendees to the meeting and continued to outline the housekeeping arrangements and the programme for the AGM. He then went on to offer attendees UK-FA pens, refillable water bottles, jotter pads, window and vehicle stickers.

Everyone present signed the attendance register and the Secretary confirmed their acceptance for the meeting to be sound recorded only to ease the preparation of accurately written Minutes and not to be circulated any further than the Directors.

Alan introduced the Directors sitting at the head table and Claire O'Hare our Office Manager to the audience and in turn had the members and guests 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 exhibitor Evac-Chair and our other guest speakers listed at the end of these Minutes were briefly introduced.



2. Chairmans Welcome

The Chairman, Andrew Berry thanked everyone for travelling in many cases long distances. He went on to say that the Directors and key UK-FA representatives have been issued with black UK-FA polo shirts for these meetings and when representing the association e.g. at BSI, FSF meetings, etc. The idea is to make our meetings more welcoming by encouraging smart, casual attire (not T shirts and jeans though!), with formal suits reserved for the evening dinner and dance.

Andrew reminded everyone that the revised BS5839-1 is due for release it seems before June 2025. **POSTSCRIPT** – it was actually published in May.

British Standards ordered by members through the Treasurer (treasurer@uk-fa.org) are subject to an approximate 30% discount from RRP. Mark Bridgens suggested that we might want to prepare a synopsis of the many changes and this may be something we could introduce at the October Technical Meeting. **POSTSCRIPT** – Nick Johnson one of our Technical Officers ran a presentation of the changes at the October Technical Meeting held in Wales.

3. Treasurers Report

The Treasurer, Dan Davis's report started by stating that membership had remained steady at 241, a little disappointing at only just one up from this time last year. The Directors have several ideas for growing the membership steadily in an organic way over the coming year.

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Finances for the year ending 28th February 2025 were as follows;

Turnover for the year came to £50,381. The Association holds significant bank reserves for any unforeseen emergencies totalling £83,625. Of this, the current account stands at £28,625 with an additional sum in reserve of £55,000 invested in a high interest account which matures annually in October and returned £2,865 in interest. The Corporation Tax bill came to £557.

Our nominated charity for 2024-25 was the Prostate Cancer UK charity in tribute to Tom Law where we have pledged to this worthwhile cause our usual minimum contribution of £10 per member of our 2024-25 membership subscriptions as of the 28th of February 2025. On top of this, additional donations raised mainly from last years AGM to the total to £5,000. Looking ahead into 2025-26 Dan said that it was our policy to wherever possible support a fire related charity and he had tried to make contact with the Firefighting Foundation who fit smoke alarms in needy peoples homes and provide defibrillators, however after several attempts to date at reaching out to them he has had no response so without an alternative the Directors have decided to support the Prostate Cancer Charity for a second year.

Our greatest charity fundraising event the popular golf day had to be cancelled due to a waterlogged course and was for several reasons regrettably not resurrected. Dan said that he will investigate the possibility of running another in 2025 possibly abroad in Spain or Portugal.

Alan made the observation that Dan has been Treasurer now for 5 years, which was followed by a round of applause. Dan made the point that and demonstrated from his own perspective how the association really does encourage cross working for different skillsets between members.

4. Minutes of the previous AGM – Matters Arising

The Minutes of the AGM held in Cambridge on the 12th of April 2024 had been circulated to Members several weeks before this AGM and the Secretary went through the key points asked if there were any questions arising as he went through them.

Alan announced at the last AGM that he and Tracey were getting married and we are both very grateful for the John Lewis gift vouchers that several members had contributed towards and presented to us at the Cambridge AGM. These have subsequently been used to buy a rug for the lounge.

Alan asked Mike Ditanna from Jewel Fire Group for an update on refurbished CO_2 extinguisher kitemarking. He said that PJ Fire have achieved a BSI 8882 not a kitemark but an endorsement for the process in refurbishment. Mike said that Jewel Fire Group was taking a long-term view with some uncertainty with the future use of CO_2 in fire fighting due to environmental concerns and the payback time for investment in a CO_2 salvage unit being 3-4 years being uneconomic.

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Mike went on to say that Jewel Fire Group do pay good prices especially for large quantities of used CO_2 extinguishers that they refurbish.

Alan explained that information on handling and disposing of AFFF etc. is such an important subject that we feel the knowledge should be made available to all stakeholders whether a UK-FA member or not and this is why anyone can keep up to date with the situation by reading the News Section on our websites homepage which the Secretary strives to keep updated.

Members do from time to time receive phishing emails, Alan said categorically, that we do not sell on our membership directory to anyone, we can't stop people from trawling through our directory. All genuine emails come out to members usually in the form of a Technical or Information bulletin. If you have not ticked the box in your online members section giving us permission to contact you, then you will not receive correspondence from us as all communication are in in electronic form.

Alan rounded up the general points and then the Minutes were proposed for acceptance by Dan Davis and were seconded by Mark Bridgens as a true and accurate record of the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting held in Cambridge on the 12th of April 2024.

5. Secretary's Report

The UK-FA are members of the Fire Sector Federation which has representation from all levels in the fire industry with outcomes that influence Parliamentary decisions. Nick Johnson has recently kindly volunteered to take on the mantel from John McAleer for representing our interests at this national forum.

Firexo was discussed after Alan had notified members that the business had gone into administration. This news was widely doing the rounds in many quarters and prompted a rapid response from Jack Breith at Firexo who explained to Alan that a dormant company that they had registered was terminated for administration reasons which caused the confusion, the business he confirmed was still active. The UK-FA provided an immediate redaction of the email sent to Members and provided an apology to Firexo. Alan said that in his opinion as the Firexo extinguishers appear to be manufactured at least the 3, 6 and 9ltr sizes to BS EN3:1996 he could see no reason why they cannot be serviced to BS5306-3, however it was alleged from the floor that a BAFE spokesperson has stated that they do not recognise them.

Alan went on to explain the problems associated with traditional AFFF, water-with-additive and wet chemical extinguishing agents started over 80 years ago and the fire industry is not the only generator of PFAS – otherwise known as forever chemicals. This is a massive problem, these chemicals exist in water proofing in outdoor clothing, Teflon and fire-retardant materials used in bed mattresses, furniture, carpets and other soft furnishings.

In the short term the Environment Agency has released RPS132 which is a list of requirements for storing and disposing of foams that the fire trade needs to follow. A withdrawal date of September 2025 is given which bizarrely does not actually mean that the RPS has been terminated, it can still be used to prosecute transgressors against.

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DEFRA and HSE plan to hold a 6-month consultation on restricting firefighting foams ending in February 2026. The Proposed Transition Periods (Phased Approach) is 5 years for portable extinguishers, marine, aviation, and defence applications and 10 years in high-risk industrial sites: offshore installations, and naval/civil ships. Following conclusion of the consultation, the HSE will finalise recommendations with a formal decision expected in 2027. The EU is looking to formalise their legal regulations before the end of 2025.

At the 2024 AGM a request had been made to expand the work categories in the members website area to include things like passive fire protection. Alan wanted to remind everyone that this was duly expanded but he said it only works efficiently when members actually log-in to their profile and accurately select the type of work they do and also importantly the areas, county wise in which they are prepared to work. The members area is easily accessed and if you have lost in your log-in details and/or password Claire can re-issue these to you if you contact her Monday-Thursday at admin@uk-fa.org.

6. BSI & FSF Representatives Report

Peter Edwards and Mike Ditanna are our two BSI representatives on the FSH/2 Fire Extinguishers Committee where two meetings July and February have taken place and a new chairman Mark Bristow has recently taken over. Peter said that the aims of the committee are to oversee public safety, employee safety and that of the extinguisher operator, ensuring confidence in standards, a commitment to the environment and that extinguishers actually work! There has been discussion about the composition of the group and the lack of end user participation, so it has been agreed to invite end user groups e.g. national care providers, the MCA, CBI, Association of British Insurers, etc. to have representation, many have already refused to get involved.

New standard for li-ion is being looked at by the FSH2/20 sub-committee which is fairly dormant while they await what the proposed European EN3-11 standard recommends which with be based upon the Dutch the “Kiwa” test who many in the UK fire industry do not feel is fit for purpose.

BFC asked that BSI test all liquids that go into firefighting foams, but this has been kicked back as being the responsibility of the firefighting equipment manufactures themselves, not BSI.
Fire blankets and mobile trolley unit standards are next up for review.

There is a new European standard, DIN 91489 covering electric vehicle fire blankets which is free to download.
The updated draft of BS EN 3-7: Portable fire extinguishers – Part 7: Characteristics, performance requirements and test methods is currently open for comments until 6th June. This standard outlines the key characteristics, performance criteria, and test methods for portable fire extinguishers.

All organisations on BSI committees are entitled to two representatives, currently we just have Peter who has received approval from the Directors and the BSI committee chairman to appoint Mike Ditanna as our second representative specialising in water mist technology.

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Mark Bridgens is a representative for Everlux on the BSI signs committee said that not much was occurring at the moment, BS5499-4 that covers escape route signage is coming up for review this year.

Fire Safety (England) Regulations has been effectively implemented since 5th May in Northern Ireland through their Technical Booklet E that is the equivalent to the Building Regulations Appoved Document B in England and Wales, which will have a big effect on building signage, sprinklers, etc.

On the Everlux front Mark said that they are now in a position to conduct signs site surveys on behalf of members. Alan said that there has been and continues to be a constant trickle of changes in signage, and he strongly recommended that fire risk assessors and signage providers keep themselves up to date. Alan said that he thought his signs knowledge was quite comprehensive until he attended with other UK-FA members the Everlux technical training sessions in November 2023 where he learned how things had moved on rapidly from his previous training 10 years earlier!

John McAleer had until recently been our representative at the Fire Sector Federation was unable to attend the last few FSF meetings and had nothing to report back on. Nick Johnson is our newly appointed representative and is waiting to attend his first meeting so also had nothing to report.

7. Directors Elections

The posts of Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary all fall due for 3-yearly election together next in 2026.

8. Any Other Business

Tom Law said that his System8 management software is available free of charge “as his gift” to UK-FA members, the access codes for maintaining the software can be downloaded from the Members area accessed from the UK-FA website homepage.

9. Date of Next Meetings

The Secretary said that they are looking at holding the 2026 AGM possibly at Bournemouth or somewhere along the English south coast. **POSTSCRIPT** – a date could not be confirmed at the meeting but subsequently the Directors proposed **Friday the 17th of April 2026** to be held in Cheltenham which was felt to be a more accessible location. The Chairman agreed to investigate potential venues and make the initial arrangements.

The Secretary said that Checkfire Ltd has offered to provide a technical day to UK-FA at their Pontypridd facilities. It was agreed that Alan should liaise with Checkfire to find a convenient date in October to hold a General Meeting combined with this technical day.

The Annual General Meeting was formally closed at 10.55am.

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At the conclusion of the meeting, and after a refreshments break presentations were provided by our speakers;

Wojciech Mrozik of Newcastle University gave us an update on the university's research into lithium-ion battery fires conducted since UK-FA involvement in 2022.

Mike Ditanna of Jewel Fire Group as a leading supplier of new extinguishers and refurbished CO_2's Mike gave an update with an emphasis on Water Mist extinguishers.

Gavin Skelly of Fire Aware introduced The Fire Aware Organisation and talked about being a member. The Fire Aware Organisation reconnects all those businesses who design develop construct and manage buildings with their moral priority for people's safety. It aims to influence all members of the supply chain to commit to a set of moral obligations which will dictate the way their business acts in relation to its delivery of fire safety. Fire Aware looks to change the procurement process to ensure all members of the chain use their moral standards as a condition of contract or order. Implementing this up and down the supply chain produces a network of morally in tune companies with the same moral position and the visible intent to keep people safer.

Peter Cadman of Evac+Chair explained that they are the market leaders in evacuation chairs and introduced a rewarding, and simple referral scheme for UK-FA members to benefit from.

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Chris Watson from Maple Carpentry was interviewed by the Treasurer Dan Davis in a “fireside” Q&A session encouraging audience participation discussing the common mistakes made on fire door inspections.

The speakers presentations where available were circulated to members shortly after the AGM.

The AGM Dinner and Dance ran into the small hours of Saturday morning.

The UK Fire Association Ltd is Limited by Guarantee and trades as ‘UKFA’ and ‘UK-FA’.
The directors are Mr A Berry - Chairman, Mr D Davis - Treasurer and Mr A Palmer - Secretary.
Company number: 6799862 registered at the address shown at the top of the page.

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During dinner the Directors were delighted to present Peter Edwards with a plaque acknowledging him as the recipient of the 2025 UK Fire Association Life Fellow Award for the work and support he has put into the Association since his company 1st Defense Fire joined in 2009 as one of our very first Members!

On Saturday many members who stayed for the weekend visited the Falkirk Wheel, saw the Kelpies, then enjoyed Edinburgh after taking a city centre open bus tour.

Acknowledgements and thanks

To all our speakers and the superb team at the Hotel for hosting the meeting and AGM dinner, to help make this such a smoothly run and very memorable event.

To you if you were able to attend the function, contributing your views, ideas, and opinions then networking at break times to make this another very warm and friendly gathering.

Alan Palmer - Secretary
For and on behalf of the UK Fire Association

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