



## THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday

06<sup>th</sup> April 2008

### Quality Hotel, Cardiff

#### Present

Mr P. Robinson QFSM	President
Mr J. Littleton	National Secretary
Mr C.W. Bailey	National Treasurer
Mr A Mulligan	No 2 District & Life Vice President
Mr J. Jackson	No 5 District (Bedfordshire)
Mr F. Knowles	No 6 District
Mr D.G Hayden	No 7 District
Mr C. Richards JP	No 8A District
Mr. A. Jeffery	No 8B District
Mr F. Kinghorn	No 9 District & Vice President
Mr H. Martin	No 11 District & Life Vice President
Mrs W. Garrett	N0 15 District (Direct Membership)
Mr B. Wakefield	PSPC, Editorial
Mr. P. Maguire	NARF News
Mr. F. Byrne	NARF Pensions, Editorial
Mr Graham Bow MBE	Membership Secretary
Mr Roy Orringe MBE	General Purposes Committee & Life Vice President
Mr David T. Bell	Age Concern
Mr Jeff Goddard OBE	NARF Pensions
Mr. A. Beecroft	Standard Bearer (Barnsley)
Mrs M. Smeed	No 8A District
Mr Don Morgan	Gloucestershire Branch
Mr Mick Mace	Cardiff & The Vale
Mr Norman Stevens	Gwent Branch
Mr D. Everest	Chairman Gwent Branch
Mr Colin Haycock	Chairman Cardiff & Vale
Mr Robert Kennelly	South Wales Fire Service
Mr Rob James	Gwent Branch
Mr D. P. Kennedy	Gwent Branch

The President Mr Peter Robinson opened the meeting and asked everyone to be upstanding for the arrival of The NARF Standard

The President asked everyone to remain standing and remember former friends who were no longer with us these included the 4 Warwickshire Fire-fighters and a Fire-fighter from Scotland.

This formality over, The President introduced the Chief Fire Officer of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Brian Fraser QFSM MIFireE. (**Report Attached**)

The President thanked Mr Fraser for attending and opening the AGM and presented him with a NARF Shield. Mr Fraser left the meeting shortly afterwards for a domestic commitment.

## **1. The President**

The President then read out his address:

This year brings pretty much the same theme as my last years report to Council in October because we are still suffering from that lethargy as an organisation, that allows Branches to close down entirely when a Secretary or Chairman retires from office for some reason! This is usually because they have been doing it for years, and feel it is time for someone else to have a go!

The last year 2007, saw the folding of Somerset Branch, District 7, Leicestershire Branch, District 4, the loss of the Hull Branch, District 3 and a further loss in District 3 of Bridlington Branch and all because nobody was prepared to put the effort in to rescue them. I am aware that the two No 3 Branches made the excuse that they weren't being kept informed of what was happening but I would have thought with now four editions of NARF News available to every NARF Member, that excuse holds little credibility. In addition, a telephone call to the District Secretary on local outstanding issues would have resolved the matter I am sure, rather than folding the Branches to make a point!

I am pleased to be able to report that the communication problems locally in No 3 have hopefully now been resolved after the remaining Branches had a meeting to air their grievances. I am now hoping, that the bulk of the chaps who allowed their Branches to close down, will accept the invitation offered to them to join as Direct Members since at least that way, they will still be "in the loop" should they need assistance from Council in the future.

I find it quite surprising that members would allow their only avenue of support to be eroded in this way, just after three London retirees had their disability pensions stopped by their authority and even two NARF Members found their disability

pensions discontinued as result of review by the Pension Authority. Doubtless there will be feedback on the outcome of these cases at NARF AGM, but since the Hull and Bridlington chaps are no longer members at this time, they will not learn of the outcomes since their NARF News will be discontinued immediately since we are now into another year!

I again appeal for Branch Secretaries to think seriously about using the now tried and tested formula of local recruiting to their branches using the County Pension Dept to distribute the flyers. These, need to be enveloped, stamped and only require the local authority admin staff to add the addresses, which doesn't offend Data Protection in any way. For further information on the methodology contact John Littleton, Colin Bailey or even myself since we are all familiar with it and I again stress, that Council will cover the expenses of envelopes, stamps and any token charge which might be made by the local authority for addressing the envelopes.

On a brighter note, we now have a formal arrangement with Linder Myers Solicitors and already I understand that one of our members is in touch with them because of contracting Asbestosis as result of fire fighting some years ago and my understanding is that if his case proves viable it will be on a "no win no fee" basis. For further information see Summer NARF News Issue No 30.

Before I conclude my Report, I feel I must make a plea to all members who haven't paid their subscriptions during 2006 and 2007 but who are still receiving their NARF News editions. This is only because, generally speaking, Branch Secretaries are reluctant to take their friends and sometime colleagues off the Data Base unless they have exhausted every avenue to collect the outstanding amounts. I must stress however, that it is NARF policy to do so!

There was, disappointingly, £14,295 owing for 2006/2007 at the December point of 2007 but it would be fair to say that 688 members have coughed up their dues for 2007 during this year but it still leaves £3, 545 outstanding for 2007 as I write this in February 2008. The outstanding amounts for 2006 will I am afraid mean that anyone who hasn't paid for 2006 and 2007 years will now be systematically removed from our Data Base and their magazine deliveries ceased at the same time. Whilst this will make a significant reduction again in our membership figures, I am afraid this is down to apathy on the part of those members who will not make the effort to send off their very modest subscription cheques to their Branch Sec/Treasurer.

Yet again, it is indicative that the use by Branch Treasurers, of the again tried and tested Standing Order Forms with their Branch Bank, would probably eliminate this particular problem entirely! I am sure; it is only forgetfulness, and not always antipathy toward the Association, which is causing these subscription omissions by some members every year.

In conclusion, I hope that this reminder will prompt some of those backsliders, to send off their outstanding dues to ensure that they will continue to receive their

NARF News copies. This action will also retain them, the reassuring knowledge that they still have the weight of the PSPC, NPC and NARF behind them if some unanticipated problem should threaten their financial security as has happened already with some retirees during 2007 and mentioned earlier.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Mrs L Bairsto	No 1 District
Mr H Whitaker	No 3 District
Mr P Webster	No 4 District
Mr B Hook MBE	PSPC/Editorial/Pensions/LVP
Mr S Bairsto	Chairman Greater Manchester

## **3. Minutes of AGM held 19<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at The Quality Hotel Newcastle on Tyne**

The minutes were read for accuracy.

Colin Bailey gave a presentation on the National Memorial at Alrewas and what was going to happen on the 20 May 2008 when the Memorial will be dedicated by the Princes Royal who is Patron of The Fire Service Memorial Trust.

Proposed that the minutes were correct

**Proposed:** Alex Jeffery

**Seconded:** Andy Mulligan

*Carried Unanimously*

## **4. Matters Arising.**

There was one matter arising.

In Item 6 Treasurers Report in line four it should be Surplus not **Income**

## **5. General Secretary Report and Correspondence.**

May I begin, by wishing you and yours a happy and successful 2008? I trust that you enjoyed a good festive season and that you are now rested and ready for the fray.

Yet another year has gone by and I look back over the highlights and low points in the NARF year.

The loss of two branches Leicestershire, and Aberdeen highlights the problems that branches have in getting members to take up the post of officials.

I must ask all District Secretary's to make sure that the Branches in their District are informed as to what is happening for over the last few months I have had a number of enquires from branches as to why they are not getting information from their District. Due to this not happening Hull and Bridlington Branch have both resigned from the Association. Branches are the life blood of the Association and we must make sure that the information is getting to them.

The highlight of the year is our Membership Secretary Graham Bow returning to full health and his award of the MBE.

On behalf of the President, Treasurer and myself I thank you all for your hard work and support throughout the year, lets make 2008 even more successful.

### **6 Treasurers Report**

Colin Bailey said that all the information regarding the finances was contained in the report that all delegates should have picked up from the table before the meeting. The Treasurer went on to ask all branches to get Subscriptions to District Treasurer so that it could be sent to him instead of being in local hands. He went on to say, that there was a short fall last year on the members on the database which is now believed to be 95% accurate. He explained that this was based upon the figures for those from whom he had received subscriptions by the 31 December. His Report is shows a short fall of about £6985 this seems to happen every year because some is paid in late in the New Year. My plea this year is two fold: Please try to get all members to pay their subscriptions and to get them to me before the end of the year. As you can see, for the first time in many years we were in deficit. That is not to say that we are in the red, as we have £80000 in reserve but last year our expenses were more than our income. There is no doubt that the £5000 we donated to The Firefighters Memorial Charity Trust contributed to that deficit but it was a one off contribution. The prime cause of this deficit, was the non- payment of subscriptions. If they had been received we would have been in surplus. **My main plea is make sure your subscriptions are paid and bring it to the notice of your members whenever you can, and make sure that they pay and forward them on to me.!**

Colin then asked for any questions.

The President thanked Colin for all his hard work as Treasurer

**Proposed:** Fred Kinghorn that the Treasurers report be accepted as a true record

**Seconded:** David Hayden

***Carried Unanimously***

## **6a Fix Subscriptions for 2008/2009**

Proposed that National Subscriptions be fixed for 2008 at the present rates

**Proposed:** Brian Wakefield

**Seconded:** Graham Bow

*Carried Unanimously*

## **6b Appointment of Auditors for 2008**

Present Auditors are:

Chipchase Manners & Co

Chartered Accountants

The decision was to stay with current auditors.

**Proposed:** Fred Kinghorn

**Seconded:** Frank Byrne

*Carried Unanimously*

## **7. Appointment of Officials**

The President hoped that every one had the current list of Appointments for 2008/2009 which was attached to the AGM papers.

Confirmation of Appointments and Officials' for 2008/2009 (As circulated at the Meeting)

**Proposed:** Alex Jeffery

**Seconded:** John Jackson

*Carried Unanimously*

## **8. Life Vice President**

The President reported that Colin Bailey had been put forward for a Life Vice President at the National Council meeting on the Saturday. This had been deliberated upon by the Council and had been approved but it now needed approval at the AGM. The President asked for any objections. As none were forthcoming the President presented Colin with his medal.

The President thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked everyone to stand to allow the Standard to be marched out.

The President wished everyone a safe journey home

**The AGM closed at 1545hrs**