



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS

MINUTES of the Council Meeting held on Saturday and Sunday

05th & 06th April 2008

Quality Hotel Cardiff

(To be read in conjunction with other reports)

Present

Mr P. Robinson QFSM	President
Mr J. Littleton	National Secretary
Mr C.W. Bailey	National Treasurer
Mrs L Bairsto	No 1 District
Mr A Mulligan	No 2 District & Life Vice President
Mr F Byrne	No 4 District (<i>District Rep substitute</i>)
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	No 15 District (Direct Membership)
Mr B. Wakefield	GPC, PSPC, Editorial
Mr. P. Maguire	NARF News Editor
Mr. F. Byrne	NARF Pensions, Editorial
Mr. G. Bow MBE	Membership Secretary
Mr. J. Goddard OBE	NARF Pensions & NPC
Mr. R.D. Orringe MBE	GPC, PSPC, Editorial & Life Vice President
Mr D.T. Bell	Age Concern (<i>England</i>)
Mr S. Bairsto	Greater Manchester Chairman
Mrs M. Smeed	No 8A District (<i>Observer</i>)

The President opened the meeting at 1402hrs and asked everyone to be upstanding in an act of remembrance for the six fire fighters who have been killed on duty since the last meeting.

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

Mr. H. Whitaker	No 3 District
Mr. P Webster	No 4 District
Mr B Hook MBE	PSPC/Editorial/Pensions/LVP

3. Minutes of Council Meeting held 03rd October 2007 at Bicken Hill Fire Station NEC Birmingham

The minutes were read for accuracy.

Proposed by Alex Jeffery that the minutes are accurate

Seconded by Jeff Goddard

Carried unanimously

4. Matters Arising.

Frank Byrne reported that as from 1st April 2008, Leicestershire had now reformed as a branch with him taking on the Secretaries role. The President said that it was very gratifying to have this news. Frank went on to say that he had spoken to the Direct Members Secretary,

Wendy Garrett and all Leicestershire members that had become direct members will, if willing, transfer back to Leicestershire 1st January 2009

John Littleton reported that following the October meeting he had managed to get a copy of the contract from Community Initiative the company who were supplying the diaries for 2007. The contract was sent to **Linder Myers Solicitors** who informed him that Community Initiative were in breach of the contract, as the contract stated that they would supply free of charge one diary for each member of the Association. Community Initiative were only supplying 2000, and the Council at its October 2007 meeting, voted, that if we could not get one diary for each member of the Association then the order should be cancelled subject to a check on the legal position. John Littleton contacted Community Initiative and cancelled the order for that year. He has not managed to contact them about diaries for 2009.

David T. Bell reported that he had contacted Age Concern about the new bus pass and had received a letter which said that it was up to local authorities when the bus passes start and finish and it is for stopping buses only, plus any local transport in that area.

Proposed by Alex Jeffery that the minutes are a true record
Seconded by Jeff Goddard
Carried unanimously

5. General Secretary Report and Correspondence.

The Secretary said that he would be dealing with Correspondence issues before his report.

Correspondence

The General Secretary reported that a lot of the correspondence that he had received was about Branches not receiving information from their District Secretary, e-mail received from direct members about receiving minutes by e-mail instead of post, e-mail about the current pension rise, e-mails about Barry Hook. There had also been correspondence to and from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, a letter also, from FBU asking us to write to the local government office about the medical's in London Fire Brigade. A letter received from Tom Parry by the President was also read out.

General Secretary Report

The General Secretary read out his report

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 since over the last few months I have had a number of enquiries from branches as to why they are not getting information from their District. Due to this not happening both Hull and Bridlington Branches have 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.

The General Secretary went on to say that he had held the post for 4 years and when he started he was told by the then President, Brian Wakefield, that it would only be a two days a week. He continued, saying that there was one person on the Council that was always there to answer question if the need arose, and he would like with Council's permission to nominate Colin Bailey for a Life Vice Presidency. Lynn Bairsto seconded this. John did nominate one other person for the same award.

Colin Bailey was asked to leave the room while his nomination was

discussed.

The President asked for a vote on Colin Bailey receiving a Life Vice President award.

For: 13

Against: 0

Colin Bailey was invited back and informed that following approval at the AGM he would offered a Life Vice President position.

The second nomination was discussed, and there was a feeling that since the person was no longer a member of Council this might not be acceptable. However, the President asked for a vote on this nominee also receiving a Life Vice Presidency.

For: 6

Against: 8

6 Treasurers Report

Colin Bailey said that all the information regarding the finances was contained in the Report that was issued, and he hoped that everyone could understand it.

He requested all branches to send Subscriptions to District Treasurers as soon as possible, so that they could be sent to him directly.

National subscriptions should not be held locally. He went on to say that there was a difference of 1,397 last year between members on the database, which is now believed to be 95% accurate, and those from whom he had received subscriptions by the 31 December. This resulted in a shortfall of about £6985. His plea this year is two fold: please try to get all members to pay their subscriptions, and to get them to him before the end of the year. For the first time in many years we were in deficit. That is not to say that we are in the red. We have £80,000 of assets, but last year our expenses were more than our income.

The £5,000 we donated to The Firefighters Memorial Charity Trust contributed to that deficit, but that was a one off contribution. The prime cause was the non- payment of subscriptions. If they had been received we would have been in surplus. **His main plea is to bring it**

to the notice of all members that subscriptions should be duly paid and forwarded on to him as soon as possible.

Lynn Bairsto **proposed** that all members that have not paid their subscriptions should after 6 months be removed from the database. This is what they do in Greater Manchester.

Seconded: Wendy Garrett

Brian Wakefield that this would cause a lot off unnecessary work for the Membership Secretary and be difficult to do.

Following a discussion the President went on to say that all those members who have not paid their subscriptions for 2006/2007 will be moved from the database. The President continued by stating that he would find a way to get this information into the next NARF News.

The President thanked Colin for all his hard work as Treasurer.

Proposed: John Jackson that the Treasurers report be accepted as a true record

Seconded: Alex Jeffery

Carried Unanimously

6a Appointment of Auditors

It is proposed that the Auditors Chipchase Manners & Co, Chartered Accountants be employed again for 2008/9.

The Treasurer said that he was happy with the auditors and it was agreed that at the AGM, the Meeting would be told that the Council were happy with the present Auditors.

Proposed by John Littleton

Seconded by John Jackson

Carried unanimously

7. Election of Officials'

The President went through the list of Officials on the sheet that had been issued by The General Secretary before the meeting.

The President said that if everyone was happy with the list, it would

be put forward to the AGM as a proposal of the National Council.

Proposed by John Littleton

Seconded by John Jackson

Carried unanimously

8. Membership Secretary

Graham Bow the membership secretary reported that the membership numbers on the 31st March 2008 that he had distributed before the meeting, showed there are 7777 total on the database down 200 members since 31 December 2007. Some branches are reporting that some members are not receiving the NARF news. Synergies are looking into this.

Brian Wakefield said that 4 years ago it was decided that we were committed to get the difference between the paid up members and the database down to 10%. To date, only 7 Districts out of 11 Districts are down to 10% accuracy.

9 General Purposes Committee

Fred Kinghorn stated that the General Purposes Committee report was as issued in writing. He stated that one of the things that the GP Committee has to be careful with is that they are not seen to be making rules, but to present findings.

Fred Kinghorn reported that the “Ad in the Hole” initiative was dead as far as the Committee were concerned and we should not follow this through as he could not see any great advantage to us.

Colin Bailey stated that if articles are sent to him for the NARF web site he will put them on. Since the October meeting, he had received only a few articles to put on. He went on to say that the web site is only as good as the information received. **He appealed for some appropriate information to put onto it.**

10. Editorial Committee

Peter Maguire said that there would only be three issues of the

magazine this year due to his illness but the next issue will have 20 pages to make up for this.

Emergency Motion

John Littleton reported that morning that he had been given an emergency motion as per section 3.8.1 of Standing Orders to put before Council tomorrow and before we finished this evening he needed a vote to see if this motion should go forward:

The Motion was from No 1 District as follows:

Due to the dramatic and unprecedented rises in fuel cost over the last few months and with the expectation of worse to come. I propose that the current expenses for travel by car is immediately increased to .39p per mile.

Proposer: Andy Mulligan District 2

Seconded: Lynn Bairsto District 1

A debate took place on this motion to determine if it would go to the full meeting Sunday. It was eventually put to the vote with following results:

For: 5

Against: 8

The President closed the Saturday Session of the meeting at 1700hrs and reminded members to gather at 0915hrs on Sunday 06 April 2008 for photograph before the meeting.

Sunday 06 April 2008

The President wished everyone a good morning and hoped that everyone had a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast.

2b. Apologies for Absence

Lynn Bairsto

Stan Bairsto

Both had left early morning to go home due to Lynn Bairsto having been taken ill during the night.

11. Pensions Committee Report.

Jeff Goddard apologised for the delay in producing his pension report but he was waiting for the details of the appeal for the Surrey Pension Appellant. He reported that they had attended the tribunal on the 10th March 2008 and they had 15 working days to inform us of the outcome. Jeff Goddard continued by saying that he had looked into why they are re -doing the medical assessments and he had found out, that any brigade that retires more that the average number on ill health grounds, have been told to review all cases by the Government Department that have now taken over the administration of the Pension scheme.

There is however a need for some help to our membership in the form of explaining to them what payments are theirs by right, and those, which are part of an injury compensation scheme and subject to review. These are vulnerable former members of brigades and on the grounds that there is no other organisation for them to seek help from, they will turn to NARF!

Options

- A. Do not get involved.
- B. Restructure membership subscriptions to provide a £20000 per annum fighting fund to finance officials expenses in representing members at tribunals.
- C. Seek payment up front from the affected member of a sum adequate to cover anticipated expenses.”

Colin Bailey said that if we did decide to get involved the increase cost to members would be around £3.00p per member. Colin went on to say that option **C would** be the better for NARF and we could give the advice for free but make it known to the member that if he lost he would have to pay expenses and not NARF.

Andy Mulligan said that if we started to fund appeals then the flood gates would open and our reserves would soon go and this was the job of a union and not NARF and it would be interesting to see what NARPO are doing and could the General Secretary write

to find out.

The President went on to say that we should go back to the membership of NARF in order to bring back to the October meeting their answer to the difficult problem of what if anything; they want us to do on their behalf. If that is fight these cases, then the subscriptions would have to go up about £3.00p to cover the costs

Jeff Goddard hoped that this had answered the question that had been put forward by No1 District.

12. **PSPC Report**

Brian Wakefield stated that his report was as issued and that the next meeting of the PSPC would be in May.

The PSPC have been in touch to ask certain aspects about the Firefighters Pension scheme and he had sent a response to them. What they are trying to do, is dispute some of the suggestions from Mr Alexandra the Liberal Democrat who is going over all the place saying that the local authority pensions should be stopped and the money used to improve state retirement pensions.

Brian Wakefield went on to say that the PSPC are doing a good job protecting our interests!

13. **Firefighters Memorial Charitable Trust**

Colin Bailey requested that anyone who wanted to take part in the:

Service of Remembrance September, or:

Remembrance Sunday Parade November.

Should get their names to him by the 07th July 2008

The Garden of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Colin Bailey gave a slide presentation on the National Memorial at Alrewas and told us, what was going to happen on the Tuesday 20 May 2008 when the Memorial will be dedicated by the Princess Royal who is Patron of The Fire Service Memorial Trust at 1400hrs.

14. National Pensioners Convention Report

Jeff Goddard reported that the next meeting of the National Pensioners Convention would be 8th MAY 2008.

Jeff Goddard said that he has been to 6 meetings and he thought that it was a waste of money as they will not take on the Government or support pensioners. Jeff went on to say that there was only one person who had “a fight in his belly” and that was the General Secretary. Jeff stated, that he was disappointed that the voice for pensioners was not doing anything and was just a “talking shop”

The President asked in view of this assessment whether it was worth continuing our membership of the NPC?

Andy Mulligan expressed a strongly opposing view as our previous NPC Representative. Andy advised the President that it would be himself attending the three-day 16th National Pensioner’s Parliament on 3rd to 5th June 2008.

Roy Orringe reported that the Welsh Assembly and income from raffles funded NPC Wales.

After some consideration of the merits and demerits, it was decided that we should look at it again in a year’s time.

15. Age Concern

England

David T. Bell said that his report was as issued, he said that at the present time, Age Concern was considering whether to join up with Help the Aged! This has been thought about over the last few years and Gordon Richard the Director General says, if it happens it will give more weight to their negotiations with the Government.

Scotland

Fred Kinghorn said his written report was as issued. Fred said that in Scotland there seems to be a problem with dental care for the elderly

in care homes. He also reported that there was a problem with obesity in the Elderly

Harry Martin reported that there seemed also, to be a big problem with abuse of the Elderly in homes in Northern Ireland.

Roy Orringe reported that in Wales the policy is to close care homes and to do care at the person's home instead

Wales

Roy Orringe reported that his role was actually with the National Partnership Forum in Wales. There were a number of things that they were concerned with. One is care in the home that we have just touched upon, and "the order of the day" is to get them out of hospital as soon as possible and back home.

16. Motions

16A. Emergency Motion

As per section 3.8.1 of Standing Orders this motion should go forward:

Due to the dramatic and unprecedented rises in fuel cost over the last few months and with the expectation of worse to come. I propose that the current expense for travel by car be immediately increased to .39p per mile.

Proposer: Andy Mulligan District 2

Seconded: Lynn Bairsto District 1

As this motion was dealt with yesterday there was no need for this to be discussed since it had not been supported.

17. Any Other Business

17A Wendy Garrett

The President for information of members stated that Wendy Garrett had had a hoax bomb put through her letterbox which the Police had taken very seriously. It appeared this worrying action is increasing in various areas. Wendy Garrett explained what had happened.

“Lucky this was a joke bomb.”

17B Christmas Cards

John Littleton stated that over the last couple of years he has received Christmas Cards from other Fire Service organisations. He believed that the current NARF Christmas card now needs to be joined by another, specifically designed for official purposes. It seemed that both the last and current Presidents also received formal cards from other fire related organisations.

Since this wasn't a matter of urgency for the current year, it was decided that this should be brought back to the October Meeting when the Secretary has looked at costing.

17C Fire Service Charity (FSNBF)

Andy Mulligan asked a question about the letter the President had sent to the Fire Service Charity (FSNBF). The President replied by saying that the letter had been sent after consulting several other members of the Council and was a seriously considered communication. The President went on to say the Chris Burgess should have been coming to the AGM in the afternoon to talk about the radical changes to the Charity but had telephoned to say that due to the weather conditions he would not be coming after all. He was conscious that there were some strong feelings in some areas about the changes being made but it was no part of NARF strategy to be challenging the decisions taken by another and totally independent Management Board.

The President closed the meeting at 1155hrs.