



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS  
Minutes of the National Council Meeting held on  
Saturday and Sunday 09-10 May 2009  
**Menzies Strathallan Hotel**  
**Birmingham**

(To be read in conjunction with the various reports already issued)

**Present**

Mr P Robinson QFSM	President
Mr F. Kinghorn	Vice President (Dual position)
Mr J. Littleton	National Secretary
Mr C. Bailey	National Treasurer & Life Vice President
Mrs L. Bairsto	No 1 District
Mr C. Bailey	No 2 District (Deputy)
Mr A. Beecroft	No 3 District (From 1520hrs)
Mr F. Byrne	No 4 District (Deputy) (Dual position)
Mr J.C. Jackson	No 5 District (Beds)
Mr P Robinson QFSM	No 6 District (Dual position)
Mr D. Hayden	No 7 District
Mr C. Richards JP	No 8A District
Mr. G. Jones	No 8B District (Deputy)
Mr F. Kinghorn	No 9 District
Mr G. Bow MBE	Membership Secretary, Fire Fighters Charity and Editorial
Mr R.D. Orringe MBE	General Purposes Committee & Life Vice President
Mr P. Maguire	N.A.R.F. News Editor
Mr J. Goddard	N.A.R.F. Pensions & NPC
Mr F. Byrne	N.A.R.F. Pensions & Editorial
Mr. B. Wakefield	PSPC and Editorial
Mr S. Bairsto	No1 District Vice Chairman (Observer)
Mrs M. Smeed	No 8 District Treasurer (Observer)

**1. The President.**

The President opening the meeting at 14:5hrs asked everyone to stand and remember former friends who were no longer with us at this time.

Following the act of remembrance the President went on to say that it was a great pleasure to open this Council meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

He stated that there was no change to the report that had already been issued.

The only bit that concerned him, was the paragraph towards the end of his report about the voting by members not to get involved with a fighting fund or other solutions to assist certain NARF Members with injury disability pensions who might find themselves having these suddenly discontinued after Review by their Local Authority. This came after the Pensions Committee had already been involved in two cases and The FBU heavily engaged in a similar support exercise for three of their "Out of Trade" Members.

The President went on to say that he was still receiving e-mails and reports from ex fire pensioners, who have found their disability pensions discontinued, sometimes in quite large monthly sums. The last of these, an ex London retiree **and not in NARF** even as a Direct Member! Frankly, despite this chap not being one of ours, I found it galling to have to tell this chap's wife, (who sent in the query about possible help), that even had her husband been a NARF Member, I would have been unable to offer any practical help. I had to tell her, that Council had received little or no support from Branches across the whole country on this (still worrying) issue! Fortunately she had also been in touch with the FBU whom she suggested had been sympathetic to her husband's monetary loss of £400 per month. The FBU have on this chap's behalf, put together a document in which they ask for the decision to be reversed, due to be submitted just before an Appeal is due to be heard. Having been told that contribution may have to be made to the significant costs of Appeal if this is deemed frivolous, and that these could be in the order of £6000, this lady is obviously very concerned especially as success rates in these appeals seem to be only about 30%.

It was exactly that latter fact which prompted Council to seek approval for some sort of fighting fund to assist fire pensioners with appeal costs. I do hope that this one particular case brought to my notice, may even yet prompt a revisit to the matter of a small membership levy, before it is the turn of yet another of our own NARF Members to have to "go it alone"

In finishing the President thanked every one for there hard work through out his time as President.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from:

Mr A. Mulligan	No. 2 District
Mr A Jeffery	No. 8B District
Mr D. Bell	Age Concern
Mr R. Hurst	NARF Deputy Standard Bearer

3. **Minutes of Council Meeting held 15 October 2009 at West Bromwich Community Fire Station**

The Minutes were read for accuracy

**Proposed by** Harry Martin  
**Seconded by** John Jackson

4. **Matters Arising**

4a **Page 3 Pensions Committee Report**

The President asked if any one had seen a copy of the new ill health pension's guidance he noted that Fred Kinghorn had some time back seen a copy. Lynn Bairsto reported that there was a copy on the FBU web site if any one wanted to see it [www.ftm.orq.uk](http://www.ftm.orq.uk). Frank Byrne reported that the appeal by the three London Firefighters had been won on the ill health pensions and they have now been reinstated on full pension.

4b **Page 3 Christmas Cards**

John Littleton went on to say that The Christmas Cards had been put on hold due to what had happen early in the year in the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service and that the Headquarters' were moving now that it was now all over he was hoping to get this back on track.

4c , **Page 4 Veterans Badges**

Fred Kinghorn reported that he believe that the BFSA were now not charging postage on the Veterans Badge.

4d **Page 4 Project Fire Guard**

John Littleton reported that Project Fire Guard had now been scrapped due to the cost. The President went on to say that he had received a e-mail from a company that wanted the help of NARF to set up a private Fire Service to cover in the event of any strikes the President turned down this request as it was not in NARF interest to go with this as it would have an effect on membership.

4e **Page 8 Remembrance Service London**

Cohn Bailey reported that this year he had not asked for numbers due to any one who had not applied before will not be able to attend as they are not on the database this was because the numbers had been restricted by the British Legion.

#### **4f Page 8 15b Writing to Chief Fire Officer about NARF**

The President reported that he had written to the 22 Chief Fire Officers that did not have a branch of NARF in their area. So far he has only received 8 replies and they were willing to put NARF paper work in the retirement packs that they send out.

#### **5. Secretary's Report**

John Littleton said that the Secretary's Report was as issued to members and there had been no change. He went on to say that he was concerned by the number of members who are telling other members false figures on items like the Annual Pension Increase etc. He will never give out the figure for the Annual increase until it has been received from the Official Source. Yet again this year Members have circulated figures that have proved incorrect. This must stop, it is not professional and will confuse members and lead to lack of confidence in the information that we circulate. So he asked, before anyone publishes or gives out figures to contact him so that we can make sure that the information provided is correct.

#### **5a Correspondence**

The General Secretary went through the Correspondence he had received since the last meeting in October. There were number pieces of correspondence that he would like to call attention to:

#### **5b Paul Webster**

The secretary read out an e-mail that he had received from Paul Webster resigning as No 4 District Representative.

#### **5c No Mention of Firefighters at NMA Service**

The secretary has sent a letter to NMA with reference that the Fire Service are not mentioned at the Annual Remembrance Service. A reply was received say that this will be sorted out for next year.

#### **5d Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal**

The secretary had received a letter from Ken Hayton OBE who has asked if we would back a campaign for the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for all those who left before the cut off time for this medal even though they had done over the five years. The President called for a vote on this matter, but this item was left for the Secretary to investigate.

## **6. Treasurers Report**

Colin Bailey informed the meeting that his report was as issued.

He went on to say that this year the interest on the accounts will be lower than before due to what was happening to interest rates. He went on to say that the fees for the annual general meeting over the past years had increased due to where the meetings are being held and to Members staying over for an extra night due to travelling. This year's costs seem to be a lot lower as Members do not need to stay the extra night.

His main cause of concern was that 33 Direct Members are still only paying £5.00 instead of £6.00 even though it had been published in the NARF news that Direct Membership is £6.00. He then went on to ask how we wanted to deal with this problem.

Following a discussion it was decided that all those that do not pay the £6.00 their names and address should be sent to the **NARF Office at Birmingham** and Brian Wakefield and the team there will either write or phone them. If they fail to pay the £6.00 by the end of this financial year they will be removed from the database next year. It was also decided that if a District Secretary wanted to know which Direct Members in their area not paying the £6.00 Brian Wakefield would provide the information.

The Treasurer went on to say that he must apologize for missing Wendy Garrett out of his Report in thanking her for all the hard work that she did in the shop and with the Direct Members.

**Proposed:** John Jackson that the Treasurers report is accepted.

**Seconded:** John Littleton.

**Carried Unanimously.**

## **6a Appointment of Auditors**

It is proposed that the Auditors Chipchase Manners & Co, Chartered Accountants be employed again for 2009/10.

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 General Secretary went through the list of Officials asking if each person was willing to stand.

The President said that if everyone agreed with the list, it would be put forward to the AGM as a proposal of the National Council.

The President went on to say that as the present Vice President Fred Kinghorn would take over as President we need to elect a Vice President. There was only one candidate being put forward for Vice President.

**Frank Byrne** was **proposed** by No 4 District and **seconded** by No 1 District for Vice President. There being no other candidate Frank Byrne was elected.

**Proposed by** John Jackson  
**Seconded by** David Hayden  
**Carried unanimously**

#### **8. Membership Secretary**

Graham Bow reported that there was a new membership list that had been issued this morning this showed a slight fall in the membership.

Graham went on to thank all the Secretaries for sending him changes of address. He went on to say that following the last magazine issue of 8500 the returns to the Office at Erdington were down.

#### **9. General Purposes Committee**

Fred Kinghorn reported that the GPC looked at a small flag that could be put on to coffins of NARF members if requested. The feasibility of the Standard Bearer going around the Country to attend funerals is not possible.

The GP Committee were looking at a banner or something like NARPO use for their members but to date they have not come back to me.

Fred Kinghorn said that if District/Branches want to go forward with a coffin drape then there is a place in Fife that can make these.

Alan Beecroft reported that at requests he had attended about 4 funerals in the past.

Fred Kinghorn said that there was a proposal from Saga to advertise Saga Cruises free in the magazine and that they would give us 10% back from every cruise that is sold. He went on to say as he did not want to make any move on it until June as they had to get things into place at their end.

#### **10. Editorial Committee**

Brian Wakefield reported that the returns of the magazines are down but when they check with the Pension Provider, they have the same address. It appears that Members are not in forming their Branches when they change address.

Brian Wakefield thanked the Editorial Committee for all their hard work. 11. NARF Pensions Committee.

Jeff Goddard went on to say that the Authorities were now revisiting the injury pensions again. At the moment there is one Board sitting in London and that Surrey is having to go through that Board. Jeff Goddard went on to say that he believed that this was the start of a National Campaign looking at the thousands on injury awards.

He went on to say that the Authorities were now examining the Police with reference their injury awards.

Colin Bailey asked about the medical panel and who was on it, Jeff Goddard replied that you are appealing against a medical ruling and on the panel there is a Chairman and 2 Assessors, two of the three have Occupational Health qualifications and the third has a qualification pertinent to the injury. He went on to say that the panel were neutral, you then have from the Fire Authority whose case it is , the Brigade Medical Advisor and the Clerk from the Personnel Dept.

Colin Bailey asked who pays for the panel. Jeff replied that it was the Government.

He went on to say that he and Frank Byrne get a lot of enquires about what pension scheme members were on.

Peter Robinson said that he believes that out of 8000 Members we could have 40% of those Members on injury pension and that we should have a "fighting fund" to help our Members. John Littleton believed that if we went down this line we would have a lot of people come out of the wood- work, join NARF get us to take their case nad then once done leave.

The President asked if Council ignore this problem or do we take these cases on. Frank Byrne replied that all cases need to be looked at before we take them on.

Following a discussion the following was put to a vote "that reasonable expensive could be claimed to look at these cases as long as they are current NARF members at this present time".

**Proposed:** Peter Robinson

**Seconded:** Lynne Bairsto

**Carried unanimously**

The President closed the meeting at 1725hrs and informed everyone that we shall start again on Sunday at 0930hrs.

## **Sunday 10 May 2009**

### **Attendance**

**Wendy Garrett Direct Membership Secretary joined the meeting.** All other Council Members present as Saturday 09 May 2009

The President opened the meeting at 0933hrs.

### **12. Public Service Pensions Committee**

Brian Wakefield asked if everyone had g the Reports that he had issued that morning.

Brian went on to say that the first letter was the PSPC response to the Chancellor of the Exchequer with what they would like to see in the April Budget. Brain believed that this letter was quite mild but he thought this was due to a 5% rise in Public Service Pensions this year. The second letter was the 5% increase that we all had in April.

He went on to say that Meetings were being held between the PSPC and the Liberal Democrat and Conservative parties to explain to them that some of the people on public service pension had to pay 11% towards to their pension.

Brian Wakefield went on to say that if there is a minus figure in the RPI in September will we have a reduction? He went on to say that the PSPC have looked into this and they found there is no legal way that this could be done.

### **13. Firefighters Memorial Trust**

Colin Bailey reported the Service in September the format will be the same as in the past but the Church this year will be at the Saint Bartholomew the Great, just off West Smithfield. The reason for this is that a bigger church is needed due to the increase in numbers that are attending each year. The date for this is 1.3 September 2009.

### **Fire Services Monument**

The Service at the Fire Service Monument took place on 26 April this year and as this is to be an Annual Service, it should not clash with the September Service. This Service was well attended by all including dignitaries. The feedback from ail concerned was positive and that this should be an annual event.

Praise should all go to those who look after the Monument in their own time. There will be a Service on Sunday, 09 May 2010.

Colin Bailey asked for everyone to support the Fire Service Memorial Trust on the web site.

#### 14. National Pensioners Convention

Jeff Goddard reported that they meet about every 6 weeks, and that it is like attending a union meeting with mixed unions. Proposals are mainly geared towards the State pensioner, not necessarily a pensioner that we represent. They fight on every front instead of concentrating on something they might win.

There a series of Sub Committees that are looking at a number of projects and that at present their seems to be a lacking leadership.

Jeff Goddard went on to say that it is expensive for NARF as we do not get a lot out of it but he believed that we needed to stay in, but this was his personal opinion.

Roy Orringe reported that NPC Wales was a strong organization even though they had union members.

#### 15. Age Concern

##### *England*

David. T. Bell was not available but had sent a written report which was read out. In his report he mention that from April and following the merger between Age Concern and Help the Aged will now be called "**Age UK**"

Lynn Bairsto asked why the publications had stopped since David Bell was not at the meeting and this question will be asked at the October meeting.

##### *Wales*

Roy Orringe said that they are still receiving publications from various organizations.

##### *Scotland*

Fred Kinghorn reported that since the merger of Help the Aged and Age Concern they do not have to pay fees any more. Fred Kinghorn went on to say that the amount of information that he received through the letter box caused his house to shake.

## 15. Motions

### Motion No 1

#### **From No 4 District**

I have been directed by No.4 District Committee to formally request that the National Council discuss and consider the current voting procedures as laid down in the National Constitution, paragraph 5.3.10.

*No 4 District consider that the present allocation of votes to Districts when voting on National Council matters does not truly and democratically reflect the number of members represented by individual Council Members.*

Following discussion it was decided that the following will be altered in to the National Constitution:

**District Representatives with a registered membership that have paid subscriptions by the 31 of December each year shall have the following votes: less than 600, shall have one vote: 600 -1199 shall have two votes: 1200 and over shall have three votes: 1800 and over shall have 4 votes: 2400 and over shall have 5 votes, 3000 and over shall have 6 votes. If the votes are equal, The Chairman of that Meeting shall have a second casting vote.**

**Proposed by:** Colin Bailey

**Seconded by:** John Littleton

**Carried unanimously**

### Motion No 2

No.4 District wishes that the following 'motion' be discussed and voted on at the Spring 2009 Annual General Meeting of the Association.

#### Background

This motion is submitted because of the current situation where Districts are not made aware of the President's intentions as to whether or not he is prepared to submit himself for re-election at the end of his first, three year term in office. The first that National Council members are made aware of the need to elect a new Vice President (the incumbent VP automatically becomes President if the current President does not seek reelection) is either at the Spring Council Meeting or, more usually, when they receive the Agenda and 'meeting papers', a few weeks prior to the Council Meeting. In either case, not in time for Council Members to discuss the subject with their District Committee or their Branches.

This matter has not just arisen this year, it has been going on for some time and it is time that it was addressed. If this is passed by Council it will allow all Districts adequate time to consider their nomination for a new VP, should the President indicate that he is not to seek re-election. No.4 District submit the following amendment to **Paragraph 5.3.1 of the National Constitution.**

***“ \_\_\_\_\_ offer themselves for re-election in future years. The President should give an indication, to the National Council, at the Autumn Council Meeting, when they have completed two and a half years in office, as to whether or not they intend to seek re-election at the following years Annual General Meeting.”***

**Proposed by:** No 4 District Frank Byrne

**Seconded:** No 5 (Bedford) District John Jackson

**For:** 12

**Against:** 7

**Carried**

## **15 Any Other Business**

### **15.1 Harry Martin**

Harry Martin brought up the case where non official medals are being presented to Fire Service Members and he would like the Council to write to the Branch in Northern Ireland to stop this.

John Littleton told the Council that these medals were coming from the BFSA which individuals can buy themselves, he went on to say that slips were being put into the boxes with Veterans Badges. These medals are not medals but mementoes issued to works Fire Brigades for Service.

### **15.2 Colin Bailey**

Cohn Bailey brought up about a magazine called the NHS Retirement Fellowship. It a sort of club to which you can subscribe and where various benefits and discounts are available. He went on to say that there is a site called **[www.club-together.org](http://www.club-together.org)**.

### **15.3 Lynne Bairsto**

Lynne Bairsto reported that 30 applications forms have been received from the old Lancashire Branch and they have joined Blackpool, Southport or Greater Manchester Branch until they can start another Branch.

The President said that this was good news. The President closed the meeting at 1115hrs.