



## Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Retired Staff Welfare Network Newsletter  
No 22 December 2021

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to issue No 22 of the Retired Staff Newsletter. With the Covid 19 situation persisting I have yet again had to produce a simple e-version. Therefore, retired members who do not receive emails will again miss out. If you know of any retired staff who do not normally receive the newsletter via e-mail but do have access to internet, please ask them to get in touch with me on: [a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk) or 07866951110

It also gives me pleasure to congratulate Rob Barber on his promotion to Chief Fire Officer.



He has these words to say to the Retired Network

*"I am honoured to be appointed Chief Fire Officer for SFRS as I know what a fantastic service we have and what great people we have that create that fantastic service. I also recognise that our retired members have played a massive part in developing the Service to where it is today, and I will never forget that. Our history is important to me, and I will be happy to engage with you all in whatever way you wish. My vision is to make Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent the safest place to live, work, or visit and in order to do that I need to focus upon our people as they are the ones that deliver the service, I just have the honour of leading it"*

### **From the archive 1**

An interesting incident that featured in a 1976 edition of the Brigade magazine 'Contact'



Wombourne Fire Station was called out to rescue 'a trapped man'. This turned out to be an 80-year-old 'do it yourself' This gentleman weighed 18 stones and was stuck with his leg through some roofing slates.

When a ladder was pitched against the chimney it moved one and a half inches. With such a weight on the old property the services of a helicopter were seriously considered. He was finally brought down a 135-ladder strapped into a Neil Robertson stretcher.





### **Fire Fighters Charity – Living Well Groups**

The previous newsletter included an article on Living Well Groups organised through the Fire Fighters Charity which it was hoped would start in Staffordshire during 2020. Needless to say, this has not happened yet. However, following a recent 'zoom' meeting between a group of retired network volunteers and the FFC it is hoped that face to face Living Well groups will commence in the February 2021 subject of course to any new Covid 19 restrictions.

The groups are open to any retired beneficiary of the FFC

Below is an extract from the FFC website:

*Living Well Groups offer somewhere to socialise and reminisce with fellow retired members of your local fire and rescue service.*

*Staying socially connected is so important, but we know that when you leave your career it can be easy to feel disconnected from the fire service and the friends you left behind. That's why we started our Living Well Groups: to ensure no retired member of the UK fire family feels lonely or like they have nowhere to go.*

*Groups meet regularly, often at community fire locations (although we're having to adapt our Living Well Groups now, due to current lockdown restrictions) and discuss anything of interest to their members. Guest speakers from the Charity and beyond cover all sorts of topics, from health and wellbeing advice, fundraising efforts and sharing stories of ways the Charity has helped people*

Details of venues and times will be circulated nearer to the time. If you would like any more information, please get in touch with me on [a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

### **Merseyside 1 - 3 Staffordshire - Veterans (over 35's) Fire Service English Cup**



On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, Staffordshire travelled away to Merseyside in the Veterans (over 35's) Fire Service English Cup. With a bare 11 players, against a much-fancied Merseyside team, we dug in and put in a real team display to come away with a hard fought, and well deserved 3-1 victory. All 3 goals scored by hat trick hero Chris Deakin.

Staffordshire took an early lead, as a misplaced Merseyside pass in defence found Chris Deakin in space just inside the home box. He calmly slotted home to make it 1-0. Staffordshire had the bulk of the early possession in the first half and some trickery from Chris Deakin down the left wing saw him make a run into the Merseyside box, only to be brought down by a lunging tackle. The referee awarded a penalty, Chris Deakin duly converted the spot kick to make it 2-0.

Momentum then swung the other way and Merseyside had control of the rest of the first half. However, Staffordshire's defence stood firm, and it looked like we would get to the break with a two goal lead. However, minutes before the break, Merseyside had a free kick on the edge of the box, which was expertly converted to make it 2-1 at half time.

The second half started much the same as the first half ended, with Merseyside in the ascendancy. We had to weather the storm at times, but defended fantastically as a whole team, limiting Merseyside's opportunities on goal. When they did get through, they found Goalkeeper Mick Calladine in inspired form, making a string of important saves. The woodwork came to our rescue on occasion also!

In a rare second half Staffordshire attack, the ball was played through midfield and played into Chris Deakin's feet some 30 yards from goal. He looked up and saw the Merseyside keeper out of position and stroked the ball into the right hand side of the net from distance.

This seemed to dent Merseyside's ambitions, and although they continued to mount attacks, they came up short, and Staffordshire went on to record a memorable 3-1 victory.

Staffordshire now march on to a Quarter Final tie to be played at home against Cleveland.

### **Letter to Retired Members from Alf Wilson**

Alfred Wilson FdM, MIFireE, MinstLM, MRSP, FRSPH  
SESHAA Project Manager/Advisor  
Mobile: 07521093273  
allredwilson@sky.com

Dear Retired Member,

My name is Alfred Wilson. I retired from Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service in 2009.

Following 30 plus years of service I have for the past 26 years also been involved in Voluntary work. This involves international voluntary service that takes me to various countries where we deliver Emergency Vehicles, equipment and training to Fire and other services, Police and Medical services.

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service have always been a great Support in the International projects undertaken by the SESHAA Charity I am involved with.

In my way of giving something back locally and to Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service and also having been approached by the newly appointed CFO/CE Rob Barber to assist with a local project I am looking at the feasibility of refurbishing their Thorneycroft Fire Engine (Thorny) originally based at Rugeley, which has been returned to Staffordshire after being found in a shed in a Welsh Forest following its absence from the service for the past 50 years.

The vehicle needs some work. the wooden (Ash) inner body frame needs renewing. the engine, Rolls Royce B80 (the 8-cylinder wet sump petrol engine) requires a

rebuild. the body needs an overhaul. and the chassis and remainder of the vehicle requires attention. not to mention the pump, see photographs below.

I have the full permission of CFO/CE Rob Barber to pursue any avenues for assistance or support in this project. Due to budget cuts, that are severely restricting all Emergency Services, not only Staffordshire, there is little hope of this vehicle being returned to anywhere near its original condition using existing Fire & Rescue Service budgets.

The Service hoped that the 'THORNY' could be used as a vehicle to Community Safety Education projects, contributing to Community Safety and therefore saving lives.

I am renewing my call to Retired Members who like a challenge!! **and this is a challenge!!** I need someone or some members with Mechanical or Engineering background to undertake an assessment of the present state of the vehicle. I have previously met with Thorneycroft Society Members, who have given me a wealth of information and contacts. The truth is that whilst I am scoping out this project there is a lack of substantive information in relation to the actual state of the vehicle, the photos tell one story and the actual vehicle, to the none trained eye, definitely gives another. The proposed mechanical assessment would greatly assist me scoping the project feasibility. I believe that supporting this project would be a way of saying thank you and giving some support back to this incredible service, helping in the advancement of Fire Safety Education and in doing so promoting the health of our communities, also saving lives.

I would like to say thank you for any voluntary assistance or support on this project. If you require any further information, wish to meet, or visit the vehicle, you can contact me on the email address or mobile number at the head of this letter.

Kind Regards



Alfred (Alf) Wilson



### Does a fire engine always need to be a big 18-ton vehicle?

The truth is no it doesn't," explains Rob Horton, station manager for ERT and responsible for the procurement of appliances and equipment. "You have to be careful how small you go as each time you go smaller you can't put the same things on that appliance. "We still have to carry a lot of equipment, but we have never needed to have an 18 ton to carry the equipment we were carrying. The difference between us and say an 18 ton lorry out there is they are probably only fully loaded a third of the time if not even less. Our trucks are always fully loaded with the water, the equipment and then the personnel coming on and off. Over time that has an effect on the running gear, the breaks and the suspension so that was always a concern."

Rob is reflecting on the Service's procurement of the Rosenbauer appliances back in 2017. A procurement process saw Rosenbauer Volvo selected over the usual supplier Emergency One Scania due to the cost benefits (approximately £20,000 per appliance due to the smaller chassis) and its ability to let the Service do more with less.

The Service currently runs with 39 appliances in total, 11 of which are the new Rosenbauers. Before these, new appliances had not been purchased since 2012 and financial challenges in the years following meant the Service was unable to commit further expenditure. This put the Service in a more difficult position in 2017 as they then needed to replace a lot of appliances all at once. "One thing we have learnt from this project is we will never buy 11 again," Rob says. "Even if we bought 11 in one order, we would make sure they are delivered individually over a longer period so we can overcome any initial issues and prevent the same issues for future appliances. The times of austerity forced us into that corner, so the money was not there from 2012 onwards but as the fleet aged, there was a need to replace the old inefficient appliances."

Six of the existing appliances were leased and had to be returned and others were due to be replaced. The Service subsequently engaged with two



suppliers, Emergency One who make the Scania appliance and Rosenbauer.

“One of the things that was scored quite highly within the procurement process was innovation. We wanted to do something different and challenge why a fire engine always has to look the same. Rosenbauer provided plenty of challenge back and subsequently scored really well within the procurement process.”

The advanced technology in the Rosenbauer gives the Service lots of flexibility with how it stows equipment and allowed more water to be carried. The appliance doesn't fit a 135 ladder on, which did raise some concerns, but a decision was taken in 2014 to stop using those ladders moving forward as they are rarely used. A telematics system for the appliances means anyone with access can look where any of the appliances are and if we are investigating a fault get all sorts of information including the road speed, water temperature and which door might have been open. They are also better from a health and safety perspective as they are the only appliances currently on the market that allow you to mount and dismount whilst walking forwards, preventing staff from having to climb in or jump, which is known to cause injuries.

The procurement team were fortunate to have close engagement with Rosenbauer in the early stages and this meant key decisions were taken that made a really positive difference to the final product. Unfortunately, as Rob explains, they still missed some key elements that will not be overlooked next time: “During the procurement of the vehicles air conditioning was never specified. This may seem a small omission, but air conditioning helps make a comfortable working environment within the vehicle, which is important as the crews spend a lot of time within the vehicle, and there is also a safety aspect because in the winter when you are getting back on with wet fire kit with a hot environment inside, the first thing that happens is the windows steam up.”

Looking ahead to the next generation of appliances has already begun, with Rob explaining that they are exploring enhanced rescue pumps, which are quite specialist, and likely to return to an 18 ton chassis. However, for a more general purpose vehicle it is less clear what the future holds. There

are currently only three coach builders in the country to choose from and Staffs will not compromise on the standards set with Rosenbauer. Plus, new research has identified a contaminate issue following a fire that means our BA sets are unlikely to sit within the cab in future, they need to be stored elsewhere.

Rob admits that the likelihood of all 46 fire services having a standardised appliance is unlikely due to “46 different opinions and 46 different ways of doing things”. “We need to look at these sorts of solutions going forward, and I'd hate to see us lose some of the benefits of the Rosenbauer in future procurements. There are huge differences between the Rosenbauer and Scania models but I'm confident we can continue to get the most out of our existing fleet and retain the best capabilities to keep Staffordshire safe.”



### **Memorial garden**

The Memorial Garden has gone from strength to strength in the past year but to ensure that it can continue, users of the garden are encouraged to sign up to support it. Many staff and visitors comment on how peaceful and beautiful the Service's Memorial Garden is. Often a place for lone reflection, relaxation or for gatherings of colleagues, both formal and informal, the garden has become a key feature of HQ and one that many staff have enjoyed over the years. Visitors to the garden can also often enjoy a wide array of wildlife, with regular visits from the local lambs, goats and even peacocks.

The garden has been open since 2002 and is there to provide a space for the remembrance of past employees of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue

Service. Bereaved families and friends are encouraged to visit the garden to allow for thought and reflection at any time. The space is a mixture of plantations, areas to sit with friends, family and colleagues and has a flame sculpture, which the Service commissioned PM Training, a local apprenticeship training provider, to produce.

As a result of Covid the Friends of the Memorial Garden, the charitable trust set up to care for and continue to improve the garden, has seen an understandable decrease in the number of volunteers providing their time. Those volunteers still able to support us have done an incredible job catching up and getting the garden into shape.

A new sign, kindly donated by QPS Print Ltd, has also been installed to brighten it up. Despite these tremendous efforts and kindness from many, we are still keen to improve our resilience and boost volunteer numbers. The volunteers that already come and offer their time are from a range of backgrounds and not all employees of the Service.

It is their generosity that keeps the garden going but as we resume a normal way of life and the garden starts to receive more visitors, the trustees are calling for more people to volunteer their time or sign up to give a small financial contribution each month to help fund the garden's ongoing maintenance.

As a volunteer you can contribute as much or as little time you can offer. But even an hour maybe once a fortnight or month can make a huge difference to your wellbeing and in keeping back the weeds, planting new plants, or helping to develop new areas of the garden.

We have recently added a superb garden summerhouse that is equipped with benches and a dining table which is a lovely place to relax.



Jimmy Lea, the owner of Creative Wooden Structures, based in Leekbrook, offered to remove and replace the existing structure in the memorial garden after it fell into a state of disrepair.

As part of Creative Structures' offer, the company said it would donate a new purpose built, fully furnished, round building as well as dismantle the old structure, all at the firm's own expense.

The company said it would also provide three benches for the inside the summer house, along with a table and weather blinds for the winter months.

Jimmy, a former Royal Engineer, has family connections to the fire service with both his uncle and brother-in-law, now retired, having been fire fighters.

It would be great to resume the retired members working parties whether to help with the garden or just to simply come and enjoy it and meet with friends. If any of you would like to get involved, please let me know

[a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)



### **SFRS continues to support Prostate Cancer UK**

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service started its partnership with Prostate Cancer UK in March to help raise awareness internally to all our staff as well as externally to our community. There is a barrier for some men who fit in the risk profile to

reach out to their GP and ask for a screening. This barrier has cost some their lives due to the diagnosis being late. Normalising conversations towards Prostate Cancer will save lives. It might be your brother, dad, uncle, grandfather, friend, colleague, or a complete stranger who you have a conversation with that could make a difference.

We have been speaking with Prostate Cancer UK with how we can be most effective in carrying forward these messages. One of the methods we are exploring is with the Retired Network where some will become volunteers for Prostate Cancer UK and help raise awareness to other members of the Retired Network, but also deliver workshops across the Fire Service for Staff.

In addition, it would enable the group to target members of the Retired Network who by very nature of the age profile of retired staff would predominantly be regarded as high risk. A similar programme utilising retired staff has been launched successfully across the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

It is hoped that, in conjunction with Firefighters Charity, the face to face 'Living Well' groups referred to earlier, will commence in the New Year. The Prostate Cancer message will be included in the initial Living Well meetings.

Another positive way to help raise awareness and further communication is through staff fundraising for Prostate Cancer or to do a 50/50 approach with the Firefighters Charity. Burton Red Watch have been doing just that and started a fitness challenge for themselves as well as fundraising for Prostate Cancer.

Firefighter Leisa Morgan shared their idea: "We saw the article in the Inews reference it being Prostate cancer month, so as a watch that has had a few personal links with cancer we thought it would be a good idea to come up with something we could do as a watch. We wanted something that all of us could participate in as we have different age/ physical ability and time. So, we came up with the walk/ride/row from John o' Groats to Lands' End and back to Burton Fire Station"

### **The 3 main risk groups are...**

#### **Being over 50, family history of Prostate Cancer or you are black**

Most men with early prostate cancer don't have any signs or symptoms.

**Symptoms:** One reason for this is the way the cancer grows. You'll usually only get early symptoms if the cancer grows near the tube you urinate through (the urethra) and presses against it, changing the way you urinate (wee). But because prostate cancer usually starts to grow in a different part (usually the outer part) of the prostate, early prostate cancer doesn't often press on the urethra and cause symptoms. If you do notice changes in the way you urinate, this is more likely to be a sign of a very common non-cancerous problem called an enlarged prostate, or another health problem. But it's still a good idea to get it checked out. Possible changes include:

- Difficulty starting to urinate or emptying your bladder
- A weak flow when you urinate
- A feeling that your bladder hasn't emptied properly
- Dribbling urine after you finish urinating
- Needing to urinate more often than usual, especially at night
- A sudden need to urinate – you may sometimes leak urine before you get to the toilet.

If prostate cancer breaks out of the prostate (locally advanced prostate cancer) or spreads to other parts of the body (advanced prostate cancer), it can cause other symptoms, including:

- Back pain, hip pain or pelvis pain
- Problems getting or keeping an erection
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Unexplained weight loss.

These symptoms can all be caused by other health problems. But it's still a good idea to tell your GP about any symptoms so they can find out what's causing them and make sure you get the right treatment, if you need it.

## **New Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime.**

May 2021 saw the election of Ben Adams as the new Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime, and his Deputy, Helen Fisher. The Service media team caught up with them to ask a few questions



### **Ben, tell us about life before the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office – what's your background?**

I chased a dream as a professional golfer doing all sorts of jobs before establishing an Apple Computer dealership. I have written an accounting software product and helped companies to manage change. I have been a district and county councillor and twice ran for parliament in Stoke.

### **What drew you to the role as Commissioner?**

The opportunity to improve two vital Staffordshire services that have a direct impact on how safe people feel.

### **What's top of your wish list to achieve in Staffordshire over the next three years?**

For people to feel they are well protected and safe.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

Walking, driving, golf, reading, Aston Villa and movies.

### **What's the best piece of advice you've received?**

Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.



### **Now it's over to you, Helen – what were you doing before the Commissioner's Office?**

I started working life as a musician, built and ran a car repairs business in Cannock until three years ago and was a member of Lichfield District Council and Burntwood Town Council for 12 years, and Staffordshire County Council for four years.

### **What drew you to the Deputy Commissioner role?**

The Commissioner kindly asked me to take on the role. It is my opportunity to get involved in a lot of different subjects, work with some fantastic organisations and to hopefully make a difference to the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

### **What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge?**

Probably finances – as we come out of Covid, public finances will be stretched and I'm sure that will impact on the things we do.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time?**

I enjoy baking, travelling, and listening to music.

### **What's the best piece of advice you've received?**

Be yourself!

Thank you, Ben and Helen. We look forward to seeing more of you both over the coming months!



## Ceremonial Squad



The ceremonial squad with the support of the Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber is seeking to expand its membership in order to be able to support more events. If anyone is interested in joining the squad, they will be given a warm welcome and will experience a great sense of camaraderie. Please get let me know if you are interested.

Talking of the ceremonial squad, below is a photograph of Paul Longmore, a member of the squad, representing the SFRS Retired Network at a recent Remembrance Day parade.



## From the archive 2

An interesting item courtesy of Staffordshire Past Track.

Can anybody identify what this item is? Answer can be found on the last page.



## Join 'My Fire Fighters Charity' APP

The new online community and wellbeing hub for the fire services community. Meet others, access support and live well.



Working in much the same way as Facebook Groups, MyFFC offers you the chance to join any of 20+ groups, covering a vast range of topic areas. Once joined, you can meet others who share your interests, kick off conversations, share ideas, post content, and have fun.

There is a broad selection of groups to choose from, all designed to bring people together from across the UK. The first step is to register for MyFFC and then you can explore all of them and join in the discussion.

Below is a brief overview of just a few of the groups on offer to all who register:

### **Getting started**

As its name suggests, this is a great group to join when you first register for MyFFC. We'll share tips and advice to get you up and running on the site and be on hand to answer any questions you might have.

### **News and updates**

A must for all members, here is where we'll post all our latest news and updates, including what's happening across the Charity, what's new on MyFFC, what's coming soon and the events and activities you won't want to miss.

### **Runners, riders, walkers and more**

Attention fundraisers, this one's for you. If you're planning, taking part in or have completed a fundraising challenge, here's the place to talk about it, get fundraising tips and support others.

### **Living Well Groups**

Complementing our incredible online and face-to-face Living Well Groups, this group is for anyone who has ever attended or those who'd like to find out more about what they're all about.

### **Monthly Giving**

Thank you for regularly donating to us, if you'd like to find out how you can meet others who regularly give through their payroll or by Direct Debit, dive into this group. We'll share the stories of those who donate and also tell you about the difference your donations are making.

### **Retired from the fire service**

Whether you retired 30 years ago, or yesterday, this group is for everyone who has completed their time in the service but is still keen to be a part of the fire services community. Meet others, make friends, be a part of a UK-wide Watch of retired FRS personnel.

### **Spouses, partners, and dependents**

If you're other half is a member of fire and rescue service personnel, or if you're a dependent, here's where you can meet others like you, share your experiences and support each other.

All our groups are supported by a member of the MyFFC team. Your Group's Owner will be listed under the 'Group Details' – so drop them a message directly if you have any questions or further thoughts.

To find more information and to register for MyFFC go to [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk)



**Fire Fighters Charity helpline No:  
0800 389 88210**

### **Two men commended for exceptional bravery**



Two men have been awarded the Chief Fire Officer's Commendation Award for their exceptional bravery at an incident in July 2019.

Akam Ali, a member of the public, and Simon Motzkeit, an off-duty firefighter for West Midlands Fire Service, were present when a road traffic collision occurred on Saturday 27 July 2019.

Whilst leaving the A38 northbound, Lichfield, a camper van had collided with a streetlight and overturned. The vehicle contained gas cylinders which are believed to have ignited, whereby the driver, his wife and two friends were trapped inside a burning vehicle.

Akam witnessed the collision whilst at a petrol station on the opposite carriageway. Without hesitation, he navigated the road on foot, sprinting across two 70mph carriageways in-order to reach the vehicle.

Simon was travelling northbound with his children when he witnessed the motorhome lose control. He immediately parked his vehicle and made across the carriageway, meeting Akam at the scene.

Despite the extreme temperatures and lack of equipment at their disposal, both men managed to remove all four occupants of the burning vehicle. The driver of the motorhome later told how the actions of these two men have saved the lives of everyone involved. He described the strength required to lift him from a burning vehicle as “unbelievable”, and has credited the bravery and valour of these members of the public in acting so rapidly.

Crew Manager Bryan Brindley, said: “From my observation of the fire and the positioning of the vehicle following the collision, I believe both men demonstrated a great level of bravery and put themselves in a position of risk in order to save the lives of those involved. I also believe that if not for their actions, the four occupants may not have been able to escape by themselves and may have lost their lives in such a tragic way.”

Chief Fire Officer Rob Barber presented Simon with his award on Tuesday 9 November 2021 at Lichfield Community Fire Station (pictured above). Akam was unable to attend.

## Safety Plan 2020 – 2024



As required by the Government’s Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, every fire and rescue service must produce a high-level Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which explains how they use their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area.

Listening to feedback from our people and our communities, we now call the IRMP for Staffordshire our Safety Plan. We identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks across Staffordshire and use this information to plan how to control these risks, respond to emergencies and deliver our fire prevention and protection activities in the most efficient and effective way. This means we can make sure we have the right people and resources in the right places at the right time to protect our communities, our buildings, our people and the environment.

Our resources are placed so that we are able to respond to incidents as quickly and as safely as possible. As part of our planning process, we monitor and review the risks within Staffordshire to ensure we remain flexible in our approach and are best placed to suggest improvements where they will benefit the safety of our firefighters and our communities.

### **This helps us to:**

- Improve our knowledge of vulnerability and identify those most at risk
- Better understand the needs of our diverse communities
- Prepare for the challenges ahead.

We continue to use and develop a range of data-driven tools, techniques and modelling programmes to help us monitor, assess and anticipate the impact of future changes in risk and levels of demand.

These are key to supporting our risk planning processes. They involve the use of both social and demographic data, consideration of local strategic infrastructure plans, industrial strategies and, information and learning from previous emergency incidents.

The next four years are likely to be the most challenging and uncertain we have known. When planning how we combine our prevention, protection, and response activities in the most effective and efficient way possible, we will need to take into account a range of issues, including:

- The changing face of Staffordshire in terms of the risks faced by our communities and our firefighters
- The impact of increased demand upon our services coupled with reduced public sector funding
- The sustainability of our buildings and other assets
- The benefits of new and emerging technologies and tactics.

We will continue to invest in the level of operational training for our staff to ensure that it is effective and meets the foreseeable risks that our firefighters are likely to face in the future.

In planning our response to risk, we work closely with partners including Staffordshire Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service and the Environment Agency. We contribute towards the risk assessment process in the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum, which produces a community risk register drawing upon local and regional risks set against a national risk framework. Through the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, we are part of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum and regularly take part in joint exercises and training, testing our Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles to ensure we are adequately prepared when crisis hits. We work with other fire and rescue services and partner organisations to identify new and

emerging risks, such as naturally occurring hazards (extreme weather), pandemic illnesses and malicious threats (including terrorism) and use this intelligence to prepare our firefighters for the types of emergencies they may face.

- In recent years, the number of waste fires and wildfires has increased with several large waste fires at illicit sites and fires involving fly-tipped materials. Extreme weather conditions have already seen hundreds of hours spent tackling wildfires in the Moorlands, which destroyed hundreds of acres of countryside and threatened homes. We have specially-trained waste and wildfire tactical advisors
- Climate change causing wide-scale flooding across Staffordshire and further afield. We have high-volume fire engines and enhanced logistical support vehicles (used during the Cumbria and Thames Valley floods and more recently at the collapse of Whaley Bridge dam)
- As well as aiming to cause physical harm, terrorist attacks now seek to disrupt services by preventing access to buildings or damaging computer systems. We have measures in place involving physical and cyber security, but we must continue to be vigilant and develop our buildings, systems, and staff knowledge to keep pace with the threat.

This Safety Plan sets out the priorities, which support our vision of making Staffordshire ‘the safest place to be’ and are driven by our assessment of the risks across the county. Ensuring that our communities are protected by a first-class fire and rescue service is at the heart of everything that we do. We recognise that delivering these priorities will depend on collaboration, co-operation and effective communication.

To see the Safety Plan in its entirety, go to the Service website. [www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

### **World Amateur Cycling Championship medal for Fire staff member**



A member of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service staff has won a bronze medal representing Team GB in the UCI World Amateur Cycling Championships in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Fiona Prew, who is the Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Specialist at the fire service, has only been cycling since 2013, when a series of injuries forced her to hang up her running shoes.

Undergoing a total of three knee operations and sustaining a significant calf tear led to one of Fiona's colleagues suggesting she buy a bike. "I always say, I didn't choose cycling, it chose me," Fiona said.

The bike she purchased, a second-hand road bike which cost her £500 was meant to help her maintain her fitness whilst taking a year off running.

But Fiona soon found herself racing accidentally after joining Stone Wheelers cycling club. A short time later, after reading an advert in a cycling magazine, Fiona entered the inaugural UK Qualifier for the UCI Amateur World Championships which were held in Denmark in 2015, where she came sixth in the time trial and eighth in the road race.

"Seeing the depth of talent and World champions crowned there really stuck with me," Fiona said, and by 2016 she had qualified again, this time the Championships were in Australia, where she came an agonising fourth place.

2017 was Fiona's break-through season, where she was TLI Cycling National ITT Champion and won a silver medal at the UCI World Amateur Championships in France.

However, Fiona suffered a devastating blow to her confidence in April 2018 when she was hit by a car while out cycling. The crash dislocated and smashed her left shoulder and elbow, broke several ribs, tore ligaments in her knee as well as her abdominal muscles.

"I felt like I shouldn't complain because so many fire fighters and others I work with have sustained a lot worse than that in the line of duty," Fiona said. "It took me till September 2018 to be surgically healed and 18 months of intensive physio but a lot longer to overcome the psychological impact of the crash."

Fiona spent 2020 trying to regain not only her health and fitness, but to enjoy cycling again. "There was a silver lining to the covid-19 lockdown for me, because the roads were so quiet, I was able to get back on the bike without being so frightened of being hit by a car again," she said.

By summer 2021, Fiona had gained enough confidence to race again, but hadn't replaced her bike after the crash due to supply chain delays. She competed in number of races on her old bike, succeeding in gaining a place in the top ten in her first, and making the podium of three out of five others.

When officials announced that the World Championships for 2021 would be moved to October and take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fiona decided to test her mettle and plucked up the courage to compete in the qualifier in August. Fiona said: "It was the worst road surface imaginable; craters everywhere, big climbs, fast descents and a 600m tunnel, I felt like all my demons were coming back to haunt me."

Fiona also suffered the loss of a friend in the month before the qualifier, with the competition itself due to be held on the day of his funeral. "His family told me to go for it, and though it was a tough decision, I felt like I had an extra purpose to ride and that helped me dig-deep on race day," Fiona said. "Thanks to his memory, I had the ride of my life to win the qualifier – it was such an emotional day."

Then, in September, Fiona won the Emergency Services Individual Time Trial Championships on behalf of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service – the first time the service has ever won the title. Not only did she win, but she broke the course record in the 12TT on the Saturday and followed this up with a win less than 24 hours later on Sunday.

Just 10 days later she flew back to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and despite the stormy weather forecast, completed the challenging course in 32:13.

"I thought I had come in fifth, I knew the Swedish rider had overtaken me for gold and then her teammate for silver and was convinced I wasn't going to make the podium – my heart sank," Fiona said.

But after an anxious wait – the head of the jury at the championships said nonchalantly: ‘Yep, that’s a bronze medal – by one minute and seven seconds’.

“I was in shock, an element of relief but definite shock,” Fiona said.

“My lifetime ambition is to be world champion and win the coveted rainbow stripes, so my head is already in ‘operation go faster’ mode ready for next year!” Fiona added.

So how does she manage her full-time role with the fire service and her cycling career?

“It’s like having two full-time jobs at times,” Fiona said. “I’m generally up at 4.30am, on the bike for 5am, sometimes I use training as an active commute – a four-hour (95 kilometre) round trip, but this is balanced with structured training.

“Then I’ll do a long ride with the club at the weekend – with a stop for coffee and cake of course!” Cake is also a big part of Fiona’s life as she is known by her colleagues for always bringing in sweet treats, albeit with a healthy twist. She is a reluctant gardener, though that can often prove to be more of a challenge than being on her bike.

“I would say to anyone who is interested in cycling to just give it a go – it’s so inclusive and enjoyable and you’ll never know where your bike can take you until you try!”

### **Joint Emergency Service Christmas Carol Service**

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police invite you and your family to join them for a Christmas Carol Service at Lichfield Cathedral. Sadly, last year’s event was not possible due to Covid restrictions, but this year we are hopeful we can all come together and celebrate Christmas with song and prayers in a beautiful location.

The service, which will take place on Sunday 12 December, will include carols and reading from both fire and police colleagues. It will begin at 5:30pm, with all guests to be seated by 5:15pm. The service will last until approximately 6:45pm.

To book a free ticket for the event, please complete this [short form](#).

**NB:** Please note all attendees are asked by the cathedral to wear face masks throughout the service.

Toilets are not available in the cathedral itself but are available across the road from the cathedral in the Old Stables.

Please be aware that there is no parking at the cathedral itself, but there are plenty of public car parks near the cathedral, more information can be found here:

[www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/Residents/Transport-and-streets/Car-parking/Lichfield-city-car-park-map.aspx](http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/Residents/Transport-and-streets/Car-parking/Lichfield-city-car-park-map.aspx).

**Blue Light Together:** Your new hub for mental health information and support (for serving and retired emergency service workers)



Working or volunteering in the fire service has always been a challenging job – but this year it’s been even harder. Exposure to greater levels of trauma, working longer shifts, and feeling pressure to stay strong for the people around you have made life tougher.

But it’s important to protect your mental health and wellbeing. That’s why, Mind, The Royal Foundation, The Ambulance Staff Charity, The Fire Fighters Charity, and Police Care UK have launched Blue Light Together – a brand new website designed to support emergency responders.

Blue Light Together is for you, your colleagues, and your friends and family. It’s full of specialised information and resources, as well as stories and tips from your fellow emergency responders. It’s also completely independent of SFRS, so anything you look at or access from the site is completely private.

If you're feeling the pressure, visit [Blue Light Together](#) for tailored, expert, independent information, and support.

**Answer to: From the Archive 2**

The unusual looking piece of equipment is a Gratkin Incendiary Bomb Shield designed to be used by Auxiliary Fire Service firefighters during incendiary bomb attacks in the Second World War. This example came from Cheslyn Hay.

This shield was made from a rectangular curved galvanised metal sheet, by E. Griffiths Ltd., Birmingham. A small rectangular peep hole can be seen at the top with a wire mesh covering.

Length of shield: 735mm.

Width of shield: 438mm.

I don't know if it was ever used in anger or how effective it may have been!

**Finally, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your families and friends the best wishes for Christmas and New Year**

