



## Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Retired Staff Welfare Network Newsletter  
No 21 July 2021

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to yet another Covid 19 version of the Retired Staff Newsletter. I had hoped to have been able to produce a 'normal' edition including hard copy for those not on the email list. Perhaps I might manage that for the next one at Christmas. On the subject of Covid, it is great to hear how many retired staff have volunteered to help a variety of organisations in the fight against the virus, carrying out duties from car park marshalling to administering the injections. More recently volunteers have been helping the Fire and Rescue Service at pop up vaccination centres and with surge testing. I am sure this support to the community will continue.

While this format of the newsletter is simple and quite plain, I hope that you still find it interesting. If you have any comments your feedback will be most welcome. If you know of any retired staff who do not normally receive the newsletter via e-mail please ask them to get in touch with me on: [a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:a.buttery@staffordshirefire.gov.uk) or 07866951110

### From the Archive 1

#### Night Club Fire 30 years ago

"The biggest blaze in town for years" was the headline following the fire at the Colosseum night club (formerly known as Top of the World) in Newport Road, Stafford in April 1991. The fire broke out at about 3.30 am on a Sunday morning. Fire crews arrived within minutes from nearby Lammascote Road and began a search of the building wearing Breathing Apparatus but were forced to withdraw due to falling debris. The fire was fought by 90 firefighters using 18 appliances. Work to make the building safe continued for a week after the fire.

The Stafford Newsletter quoted CFO Peter Reid who quipped that "Only one firefighter was slightly injured – an ungrateful parrot bit him" He was Steve Kenny from Cannock Fire Station.



### From the Archive 2

#### Longton Fire Station – The Station of the Stars

The second issue of the Brigade magazine 'Contact' published in Autumn 1974 reported how the old Longton Fire Station had become to be visited by many celebrities who performed at the nearby Jollees night spot.

*"On 14th March 1974, a Volvo car towing a box trailer was driven into the Fire Station yard at Longton by a good—looking chap who asked if it would be alright to park for a couple of hours. On learning that he was to appear at the Jollees nightclub, about twenty yards from the Station, the O.K. was given and Roy Castle proceeded to divest his trailer of every kind of musical instrument known to man and from that moment a change was wrought in the social life of the inmates of Longton Fire Station. Mike Massey, the managing director of Jollees, asked if other artistes who were to appear at the Club might also be*

*allowed to park their cars in the yard, and it was then that Red Watch hit upon the idea of inviting the stars to sign the visitors' book and sign their names on the rec. room wall".*

At the time of writing there were reportedly some forty names scrawled across the walls and these included Ken Dodd (see photo below), Bob Monkhouse, Al Rhead, Vince Kill, Frankie Howard, Bruce Forsythe, Tony Christie, Peters and Lee, Anita Karris, Mike and Bernie Winters, the list goes on.

The station subsequently closed and moved to its current location in Uttoxeter Road (rebuilt in 2015). If anyone knows whether the wall was preserved, please let me know.



### **Restructure to Form Area Commands**

Twenty years ago, the Service underwent a major structural change from a Divisional one of North and South geographic divisions together with a Fire Safety Division to one of nine Area Commands each with its own management structure and administrative support. The geographical boundaries of each area were matched to the local authority areas within Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The intention was to integrate service delivery with local authorities and to encourage and strengthen partnership working with local authorities, police, health, social care and others to improve the

overall safety, in its many forms, of the communities of the county.

This was not the first structural change to the Service since it's formation but was probably the most radical. It would not be the last as there have been other changes since then, driven by, among other things financial constraints.

### **International Road Rescue and Trauma Consultancy IRRTC**

Retired member Neil Pederson has certainly not rested on his laurels since retiring from the Fire and Rescue Service.



Neil is the CEO and co-founder of IRRTC, an international team who specialise in transport related vehicle extrication and trauma care to a worldwide audience. They provide approved rescue and trauma care training for rescue professionals, private companies, and voluntary sector workers nationally and internationally.

They have over 150 years of combined emergency rescue experience in delivering rescue and medical training and specialise in providing emergency responders with the best possible skills and training to learn the latest techniques and procedures to save lives through prehospital care and rescue.

Their UK state of the art training facility is located in Staffordshire at Yarnfield Park near Stone. They can also facilitate training in clients home country if required.

More information on the work of IRRTC can be found on their website [www.irrtcrescue.com](http://www.irrtcrescue.com)



## Prostate Cancer UK Risk Checker Campaign Tool Kit



In March 2021 Prostate Cancer UK launched an awareness campaign called “The Missing Men These are the men who have not been referred/diagnosed in the past 12 months because of Covid. Prostate cancer doesn’t stop for Covid-19. Urgent referrals by GPs dropped by around 52,000 since the pandemic began. As a result, around 8,600 fewer men started treatment for prostate cancer in 2020 than in the previous year.

Unless these ‘missing men’ are found, they risk being diagnosed too late, when their cancer is incurable.

Unlike other cancers, early prostate cancer often has no symptoms, so, the charity is calling for those at highest risk of the disease to speak to their GP about their risk. This includes men over 50, black men, and men with a family history of prostate cancer.

The action they are asking is for men to follow this link for an electronic [30 second Risk Checker](#)

Since the launch over 128,000 men have completed a 30 second questionnaire and have been told their next action (ie speak to your GP or share with a loved one depending on their answers). It’s a simple and easy to use online tool asking four questions to assess risk and make a recommendation to the user based on their responses.

### Who are we trying to reach?

- Men at higher risk of prostate cancer
  - Men over 50
  - Black men over 45
  - Men with a family history of the disease
- Everyone connected to a man at risk. Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK. 1 in 8 men get prostate cancer.

### Angela Culhane, Chief Executive at Prostate Cancer UK said:

“Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK, but until these missing men are found and referrals begin to rise, many more men could be diagnosed when it is too late for them to be cured.

“Detecting cancer earlier helps save lives, but sadly prostate cancer doesn’t have a screening programme, and most men with early prostate cancer don’t have any symptoms. That’s why we want men to be informed about their risk, which is higher if you are over 50, black or if your father or brother had the disease.

“You can find out more by taking our online risk checker or speaking to your GP about your risk.”

Sports broadcaster Tony Jones, 62, is supporting the charity’s call for anyone concerned about prostate cancer:

“I had no discernible symptoms, yet I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in November last

year. So, to learn now that over 8,600 fewer men started treatment for the disease in 2020 compared to 2019 is eye-opening. I am so relieved that I wasn't put off by all the difficulties and concerns around the Covid-19 restrictions and decided to contact my GP surgery about my risk".

Tony, who regularly commentates on football matches in the UK for Sky Sports and who lends his voice to fixtures around the globe for Premier League Productions and UEFA, added:

"I underwent surgery last December, returned to work in the commentary box in the new year after a period of recovery, and thankfully I'm doing well. I couldn't speak more highly of the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and the care I received, but I can also appreciate that in these Covid times I was one of the lucky ones."

There is a history of the disease in my family and understanding more about the risks from the tools available at Prostate Cancer UK has been an important source of information to me. Unlike for some other cancers, sadly there's still no screening procedure for prostate cancer yet, which is even more reason for me to urge anyone who's unsure about the risk of prostate cancer in their family to invest just 30 seconds in the risk checker or contact their GP surgery. And definitely don't wait for symptoms."

Anyone with concerns about prostate cancer may contact Prostate Cancer UK's Specialist Nurses in confidence on 0800 074 8383 or online via the Live Chat instant messaging service: [www.prostatecanceruk.org](http://www.prostatecanceruk.org).

A small team of retired staff are being trained by Prostate Cancer UK to run awareness sessions for both serving and retired staff. Initially this will be carried virtually but it is hoped that face to face meetings will be able to be held before too long. More information regarding this will be forwarded to the network in due course.



**STAFFORDSHIRE**  
UNITED STRONGER IS STRONGER  
**FIRE & RESCUE**

**COMBINED SERVICES**  
Combined Services  
Barbarians  
We Stand Alone Together  
SOLDIER  
**BARBARIANS**

**Sunday 12th September**  
**KO 14:00 hrs**  
**Stafford RUFC ST16 2TT**

**WE ARE BACK! Make This Game your 'Army v Navy' Game! Barbarians v a mixed Fire & Police team. Forward it onto all your contacts. Game is for the FF Charity**

## Fire Behaviour Training Facility Upgrade



Lee Chevin explains what fire behaviour training is and how the Service has invested in new kit to improve this training for years to come.

Fire Behaviour Training (FBT) was introduced into our Service in 1997. Historically the training has been delivered in a format which mirrored

the Devon & Somerset FRS model. In essence, FBT training is conducted in an 'outdoor' classroom facility which is made from shipping containers designed to a bespoke specification. These containers allow our FBT Instructors to deliver 'real fire' training to our operational Firefighters. Such training is significant in reducing the risk to our operational staff. It allows them to experience live fire training scenarios in which they can then apply the necessary firefighting skills and techniques to control compartment fires.

This FBT aspect includes observing the development of fire ('Demonstration' container), creating conditions that are conducive to 'flaming combustion' within the gas layer ('Attack' containers) and generating the 'backdraught' phenomena for demonstration purposes ('Window' container). These facilities are fitted with numerous design features which include hand-controlled vents, bespoke hinged doors, and temperature monitoring systems. These features allow our FBT instructors to constantly evaluate and control the internal conditions. The continued use of all FBT containers is essential in supporting the development of firefighter safety. SFRS maintains this methodology and as a result we have recently invested in two new 40 foot 'Attack' containers. This investment also continues into 2021 with the agreement to provide a new 'Demo' and 'Window' container at the Service Headquarters FBT site.

The acquisition element of 'real fire' training will be carried out within these facilities and will support the overall long term plan of improving the quality and effectiveness of hot training for our operational staff. Without these training facilities, delegates would not be able to gain a full appreciation of the inherent dangers associated with compartment fires within a realistic setting. The procedures and extinguishing techniques required to safely deal with potential flashover and backdraught

conditions, are an essential aspect of dealing with the dynamics of fire phenomena with structural fires.

As the organisation and the sector evolves, and as our transformation work seeks to identify efficient ways of working, it is important that we provide appropriate facilities that ensure we can train to be safe, effective and compliant with national standards.



**The Fire Fighters Charity has holidays available at:**

**Marine Court** - Four fully equipped self-catering apartments, 200 metres from the stunning Sussex coastline and on the doorstep of the South Downs National Park.

**Jubilee House** - Spectacular holidays and short breaks in the foothills of the Lake District.

**Harcombe House** - Cosy bungalows for up to six people in the heart of the Devon countryside. The perfect getaway.



## Booking enquiry

If you would like to make a booking request or enquiry, call 01256 840020 or complete the online form on [www.firefighterscharity.org.uk](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk) The rental phonenumber is open 7 days a week, 9am – 5pm.



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

## Helping Hoodies

Helping Hoodies is a non-for-profit organisation, aiming to support the people who work in the emergency services and their families through regular donations to the Fire Fighters Charity.

Badged products can be purchased by members of the Fire Service community who are serving or who have served.

To enter the online shop visit [www.helpinghoodies.co.uk](http://www.helpinghoodies.co.uk) and enter the password WSFRS2020 where you will be able to purchase hoodies with the Staffs Fire and Rescue Service badge with or without Fire and Rescue printed on the rear in a of a variety of colours. **All profits go to the Fire Fighters Charity.**



## On call (Retained) changes during 2021

Glynn Luznyj, director of response, outlines the new changes to on-call firefighters and how their ongoing development is being prioritised.

As part of the Services 2025 work, exciting new changes to how on-call firefighters work, including the introduction of a new support team and an increase of hours to train, have been introduced from February following a decision at the Service Management Board. This work is all part of a nine-point plan which has a primary aim of increasing the availability of on-call firefighters and appliances throughout the county. This is also being driven by an action plan developed from the HMICFRS inspection where an area for improvement was identified in relation to on-call availability.

The plan has been developed by engaging with the on-call staff and their representative bodies and it will see an investment into the further development of on-call staff by allowing more time to focus on operational training as well as enhancing their knowledge of fire safety and local risk-based preparedness. Other areas within the plan are focused on improving recruitment processes, modular training, rostering arrangements, mobilisation and recording through the Firewatch system.

To help improve on-call availability, the Service will commence a trial of 6x Retained Support Officers for additional support around management, training, recruitment and maintaining skills levels. Maintaining and improving the skills of retained firefighters is also a priority for the Service and so we have agreed from February 2021 to move to three hours per week, per person, for training and competence. The activities that the additional hour can be used for include exercises, operational and theoretical training, fire safety (protection) training, risk visits and PORIS work.

The additional hour is optional and could be used flexibly, for example continuing with the two-hour weekly slot, but then completing a four-hour session one weekend. The hours will reset every three months to avoid any disproportionate build ups, so it will be at the firefighter's discretion to take advantage of this additional time to improve skills.

Station managers will be responsible for establishing recording and monitoring arrangements and we shall be reviewing the success of these changes after six months. We are also working with Keele University to evaluate all aspects of this work and hope the findings will help us to make better use of our retained colleagues moving forward. These investments in our on-call system reflect the increasing complexity and diversity of the firefighter role and I am excited to see the benefits from having higher skill levels across the Service.

### **Strategy and Intelligence**

Ian Read, who is leading the Service's new Strategy and Intelligence Department, gives a breakdown of the new department's responsibilities and the exciting projects they are hoping to deliver.

The Strategy and Intelligence Department (SID) brings together a number of teams that whilst they have differing primary functions, also have some strong interdependencies on each other. The idea is that bringing these teams together under one heading will realise some efficiencies and improved effectiveness by being more joined up.

### What does SID encompass?

#### ICT

Firstly, the ICT department provide the hardware and infrastructure that underpins all of our systems across the county. Gone are the days when things stand still for long and ICT is no different, with systems and threats constantly evolving, and keeping up with this is a never-ending process.

Our ICT Team have recently been recognised with a 'High Sheriff' award for the way in which they supported the Service to switch to remote working at the start of lockdown one. Many organisations weren't in such a good position.

#### FIREWATCH/PPHMS

Next, we come to the Firewatch Integration Team and the newly formed Prevent, Protect and Hydrant Management System Project Team (we call it PPHMS for short). Essentially, they are our major software systems that the majority of the workforce do or will interact with.

These systems and their smooth running are heavily dependent on our ICT infrastructure and the

team, particularly in the development stages when intricate file path linkages, VPN tunnels and the like are being implemented and tested. This will be made much more efficient and effective by the formation of SID. Remiss of me to not say but Firewatch and PPHMS are provided to us by the same software supplier, Infographics, but what are they really? At the heart of it they are databases containing a vast amount of the Service's data. That data is only going to grow, which brings me on to the final part of SID - the former BI team.

### Business Intelligence

The former BI team has been in a state of transition for a while now and has been adapted to form a Risk Planning Team and a Performance and Assurance Team. The use of data is key to both of these teams and something we need to embrace further as we progress.

### Risk Planning

The Risk Planning Team will analyse the available data to identify the greatest risks across the county from a firefighter safety, Prevent and Protect point of view. The resultant data relating to those risks will be shared with the Service Delivery Groups for them to align their resources to mitigate these risks. Risk Planning will also provide a wide range of data to support ongoing decision-making for the Service. There will also be a role for this team in ensuring the resource to deliver our response activities are in the right place at the right time, and as such, in due course the Resource Manager will become part of this team.

### Performance and Assurance

The Performance and Assurance Team will provide the reporting function that underpins the new Performance and Assurance Report, with ongoing analysis of Service performance ensuring that implemented strategies are evaluated and having the desired effect. With the increased use of Firewatch and the introduction of PPHMS, the team will also be ensuring that we can utilise this data effectively and shows another linkage between the teams.

### **Fire Standards Board**

In March of this year the Service received notification from the Fire Standards board that four

of the latest standards were being published. The standards cover Emergency Response Driving and Operational Response notably operational preparedness, operational competence and operational learning. The role of the Fire Standards Board is to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional Standards for fire and rescue services in England.

The Board is responsible for approving Standards and the approach to their development. It will set the priorities for Standards development work. It will commission work based on proposals from third parties, monitor progress with ongoing work and approve completed work.

These standards and those that follow will help drive professionalism and service improvement and will be the basis of future inspection judgements used by the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

These initial Fire Standards have an operational response focus, outlining what good practice within frontline teams should look like; utilising the experience and knowledge derived from existing good practice across services. The standards are about identifying what it is to be prepared, how best to respond and then how to learn and embrace new thoughts and technologies to drive a culture of innovation and prevention.

Each standard identifies a desired outcome, what services must have in place to achieve that outcome and the expected benefits of meeting the standard. As is the intention with all Fire Standards, they are principle-based rather than prescriptive, thus allowing services to implement them with a degree of individuality, whilst reassuring the public of commonality and consistency across the fire sector.

Other Fire Standards in the pipeline in the coming months include Code of Ethics, Community Risk Management Planning, Prevention and Fire Protection.

More information on the Fire Standards Board can be found through [www.firestandards.org](http://www.firestandards.org)

### **Reminder issued over BBQ safety following Meir fire**



We know people want to enjoy the hot weather and a lot of residents will be having barbecues but it is important to do so safely says Station Manager, Dan Keeling.

It's after crews from Longton and Hanley were called to reports of a house fire in Meir in the early hours of Monday 14 June.

The fire, which was deemed accidental, started at a barbecue before spreading – causing damage to decking, a double garage and the property itself. Four breathing apparatus and two hose reel jets were used to extinguish the blaze shortly before 5:30am.

Station Manager Dan Keeling said: "Fortunately no one was hurt but the house is severely damaged. This serves as a stark reminder to residents to ensure any coals and barbecues are put out correctly and thoroughly. Immerse coals in cold water and do not leave them unattended until they are completely out.

"We know people want to enjoy the hot weather and a lot of residents will be having barbecues, but it is important to do so safely. Please visit [www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/your-safety/safety-outside/bbq-safety](http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/your-safety/safety-outside/bbq-safety) for more safety advice on barbecues or call our free Community Advice Team on 0800 0241 999."



