

## Women in the Fire Service

### National Executive Committee

13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 held at 1000 via Zoom

**Attending:** Julie King (Chair), Caroline Anderson (Vice Chair), Dany Cotton (Patron), Cheryl Rolph (Company Secretary), Alex Johnson (Liaison and Partnerships), Nicola Lown (Regional Support and International), Sara Slater (Co-opted), Lynsey McVay (Executive), Nicky Thurston (Co-opted), Miriam Heppell (Co-opted), Joanne Henry (RR North East), Jenny Nangle (RR North West), Hannah Lodder (RR Wales), Jo Dawson (LR Nottinghamshire), Nicole Smy (LR Essex), Lisa Howsden (LR Cleveland), Gabi Ahnger (LR Warwickshire), Kasey Grainger (LR Cumbria), Felicity Lynch (LR Cumbria) Kim McNeil (LR Devon & Somerset) Karen Smith, WFS Administrator and Nathalie Holden, WFS Marketing and Communications Officer

1. **Apologies** – Bex Sims, Hannah Singleton, Divine Zake, Louise Brown, Amy Webb, Sue Mallinson, Jan Morris
2. **Notes of last meeting** held on 10 December 2020 were agreed a true record.
3. **Matters arising.**  
WFS shop had gone live and orders received prior to Christmas were delivered.  
**Action for all to continue to promote.**  
Dates for 2021 NEC meetings still be finalised. **Action CR/KS**
4. **WFS Gifts and Hospitality – declarations.**  
None.
5. **Chair’s report.**  
JK wishes everyone a happy new year although the pandemic and lockdown were making it a very challenging start to the new year. However, it was lovely to able to congratulate Lynsey McVay & Nicola Bottomley on their promotions and to Lynsey Seal for the award of QFSM in the Queens New Year’s honours, along with all FRS recipients. I want to reassure the NEC that Hon Officers still continue to meet regularly in order to ensure that the longevity of WFS continues and we are still here in the next 25 years. Our last meeting had been 4 weeks ago so nothing further to report, other than to pass on thanks to Karen & Nathalie for their continued support in challenging times whilst on furlough for 4 days a week.
6. **Treasurer’s report.**  
In the absence of AW, CR confirmed that the bank balances as at 23/12/2020 were £8,854.55 in current account and £72,984.35 in reserve account. SS confirmed the new payroll arrangements worked well for December with some minor issues; but they did not affect pay being made.
7. **Regional reports – see attached from NW and also xls document entitled ‘ideas & initiatives’**
8. **WFS MOU and articles.**

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JK introduced the item & confirmed that the governance arrangements for WFS were very important and hoped that the NEC had chance to read the summary which had been prepared to highlight the changes which were being recommended. JK also advised that if anyone from the NEC was interested, CR was happy to run some short briefing sessions on the constitution/MOU. CR advised that the constitution had been in place for nearly 2 decades and that during the year's changes had been made. Drawing the NEC attention to the summary document CR highlighted that some of the proposed changes were due to legislation changes, the other significant proposals were streamlining the governance arrangements and making Hon Officers, Directors, giving the NEC power to appoint temp members and to change bank as needed. In addition, formalising the arrangement re London being a region in its own right. There were also a number of matters for the NEC to decide upon as the table below:

4	2.1	Increase of subs and introduction of pro rata. NEC agreed to raise individual subs from £10 per annum to £15.00 and introduce a super supporter sub of £25.00. <b>ACTION CR to amend</b>
5	2.4.1	Need to discuss whether there is a process, to best of knowledge the provision has never been used. <b>ACTION MH to draft for CR to include in final version.</b>
6	3.7/3.8/3.9	Questions around the 21 days period. This has not happened never happens so need to reflect practice. NEC agreed to reword to reflect actual practice. <b>ACTION CR to amend.</b>
8	6.1.7	this never happens so agreed to change. <b>ACTION CR to amend.</b>

JH highlighted that not all references to HO had been changed to Directors. **ACTION CR to amend.**

The NEC offered lots of suggestions around membership, discounts, moving to direct debits which were agreed to be looked into. **ACTION CR/KS/NH.**

**NB post meeting it was realised that an item had not been clarified for amendment which were subsequently done by email. These being moving all categories into one category for individual membership.**

#### **9. WFS Delegated financial powers.**

In the absence of AW, CR advised NEC that the revisions being suggested were to ensure that WFS business could be effectively carried out. The revisions were agreed. **Action CR to circulate as required.**

#### **10. WFS Expenses policy.**

CR introduced the policy as being new but pretty standard and had been drafted based on current practices. A typo in para 1 was highlighted and the policy was approved. **Action CR to amend and circulate as required. NB post meeting**

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**it was discussed that KS could not undertake booking accommodation for NEC members so this was removed.**

**11. WFS Environmental statement.**

NH introduced the statement which had been drafted as pre cursor to developing a WFS policy. It linked to our work and would hopefully demonstrate our commitment to all partners, young people

**12. WFS 2021 Virtual & other events.**

CA updated the NEC that the first 2 dates for the virtual events had now been agreed and these had been launched – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 with dates for events in April/May/June being sorted. CA also advised that the AGM for 2021 had now been set as 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 and would be a virtual event with a programme for members. The NEC was also informed that an event in 2021 at FSC was highly unlikely due to the pandemic. The NEC then went into breakout rooms to further trial the virtual event.

**13. Any Other Business**

NB asked if the WFS banner which was used on WFS emails could be used by reps. WFS agreed this could be used but suggested reps ask their service for approval before use.

MH reminded WFS of the HeforShe movement and the possibility of WFS signing the agreement. Due to furlough this had been delayed and JK suggested this be tabled at the next NEC.

**Action JK/KS**

**14. Date of next meeting – to be confirmed asap.**

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North West Region NEC Report

Due to the current ongoing pandemic WFS activities have reduced due to difficulties to get everyone together in a learning environment. There are a number of positive actions that have been taken by Services in the North West to offer support to staff across services.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service– Kasey Grainger – Local Rep

One of the big shifts we have made regarding our recruitment process is that we no longer focus solely on physical ability.

1. Our selection tests have been improved and updated. Our first test is the bleep test and they must reach level 8.8 to pass. Anyone who makes it past 6.8 but does not reach 8.8 is invited back to pass a walk test on the treadmill. We removed the ladder lift simulator and replaced it with the 9m ladder, candidates perform 10 reps above their head. Finally, we replaced the portable pump equipment assembly with the hose inflation kit.
2. As part of the selection tests the People Watch Manager/Station Manager speaks to each candidate individually with a short series of questions to assess their communication skills and attitude.
3. For the wholetime interview process we have three different elements a formal interview, a group discussion and a resilience discussion, there are several interviewers involved in this process and they are marked in these three areas.

**Due to these significant changes we have seen a great increase in the number of underrepresented groups being appointed mainly women.**

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service – Sarah Holden – Local Rep

The WFS group at LFRS are continuing to have regular meetings during this pandemic over MS Teams. We have several projects on the go at the moment;

1. **Deliver session to recruits Introductory** sessions about WFS are now given as standard to all WT recruits during their course. We also aim to roll this out to on-call recruit courses
2. **International Women's Day** We are in the process of putting together a publication showcasing some of the Women within LFRS. This will be launched on IWD 2021
3. **Women in the Fire Service development weekend** If this event is postponed, we would like to discuss the option of having virtual workshops. **LFRS Promoting the virtual events held by WFS**
4. **Role Model Story Books** We are in the process of discussing how to deliver female role model books to schools. The intention is to record and deliver virtually.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service – Hannah Remelie – Local Rep - No update given

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service – Paula Lyons – No update given

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service – Jean Jones – Local Rep - No update given

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service – Rebecca Patterson – Local Rep -No update given