

**Women in the Fire Service
National Executive Committee
held on Thursday 29 February via Teams**

Attending:	<p>Jules King (JK), Chair/Director Caroline Anderson (CA), Vice Chair/Director Alex Johnson (AJ), Patron/Director Divine Zake (DZ), Executive Member Lynsey McVay (LMc), Executive Member Nicky Thurston (NT), Co-opted Member Jenny Nangle (JN), North East, Regional Rep Clare Amor (CAm), Wales joint Regional Rep Bex Sims (BS), East Midlands Regional Rep Daisy Byron (DB), East, Regional Rep Jan Morris (JM), Shropshire, Local Rep Georgina Conner (GC), States of Jersey, Local Rep Lisa Howsden (LH), Cleveland, Local Rep Karen Smith (KS), WFS Administration Manager</p>
1. Apologies received from:	<p>Amy Beams, Emma Smith, Hannah Remelie Jo Dawson, Zoe Crossan, Kasey Grainger, Karla Stevenson, Kerry Cassidy, Miriam Heppell, Nicola Lown, Jo Hardy.</p>
2. Notes of last meeting held on 5 December 2023	<p>These were presented and agreed as a true record.</p>
3. Matters arising	<p>Marketing and Communications – Event and Awards Sponsorship package to be sent out – KS to check if this was circulated</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION POINT: KS</p>
4. WFS Gifts and Hospitality	<p>JK would be attending the Greater Manchester FRS event in April and accommodation to be provided.</p>
5. Chair’s Report	<p>It is that time of year as we approach international women’s day that we celebrate on the 8th March, however the events that have been organised up and down the country have already started, my first event to celebrate IWD is tomorrow as i meet senior and influential leaders from across the unlicensed sector in East Sussex tomorrow.</p> <p>I know many service have put much effort to organise events and my thanks to you all for sharing on social media and opening up the events to others, please do make sure we share through our various communication methods to maximise the reach.</p> <p>This year’s theme is ‘inspire inclusion’ - when we inspire others to understand and value women’s inclusion, we forge a better world. And when women themselves are inspired to be included, there is a sense of belonging relevance and empowerment.</p> <p>We continue to plan for the rapidly approaching training and development event at the Fire Service College, having received a positive response from Fire and Rescue Services.</p>
Chair’s Report cont’d	

	<p>Regional reps recent event - so inspiring to hear all that is being done in services - regional events being planned. Need to be really good at promoting ourselves, events going on and sharing all the effort and work being achieved.</p> <p>Awards closing date tomorrow, with 83 nominations to date.</p> <p>Events during 2024 include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East event in September • Greater Manchester in April • Wales event in October • Scotland in September <p>All this data should be gathered showing how women are being supported with number of people attending. Events</p> <p>Different thinks we are engaged with, Directors doing a list Plan on a page say, we've seen these people, attended these events, supported these number of people. All done under the name of WFS. AJ spoke to 6/7 people already this year. Every contact counts which should be celebrated and recorded. Questions on what WFS can offer services</p> <p>GC -Events notice board on the website. Jules and Caroline's list – circulate to those who attended today.</p> <p>Considering making some changes to the way the AGM and appointment of officers is undertaken. We want to have more transparency and give opportunities for others. As well as committee members saying they would like to re-stand, they give reason why they want to carry on and what it means to be part of WFS.</p>
<p>6. Treasurer's report</p>	<p>On behalf of the WFS Treasurer, Sara Slate, JK presented the financial statement as at January 2024, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing cash book: £10,821.00 • Closing reserves balance: £96,902.00 <p>Looking to see how WFS can make the reserves work with regards to interest as not complete with Barclays.</p> <p>Outstanding invoices are being chased relating to the previous year 2022/2023. Report back to Directors in March.</p> <p>HMRC – SS applied for the Employment Allowance that is applicable for small businesses to reclaim PAYE (tax and NI). PAYE bill of £3,080 has been credited.</p> <p>VAT review – meeting taken place with the VAT specialist who we have procured services from. It appears that we are justified in not being registered as our work constitutes vocational courses. However, our constitution needs to be clearer to back this up. We are awaiting a written not from the</p>

	<p>specialist on action to be taken.</p> <p>ACTION POINT: KS to circulate copy of financial report</p>
7. Regional reports	
<p>East Midlands Nottinghamshire – Bex Sims on behalf of Jo Dawson</p>	<p>Our Women’s Network focus has mainly been to organise some events to celebrate International Women’s Day, but in a less formal way. This afternoon we are hosting a virtual human library event, where four women have agreed to be ‘books’ – telling their story and taking appropriate questions. Topics include neurodiversity, menopause, domestic abuse and rediscovering yourself. It’s a bit of a trial but hopefully will encourage people to understand other people’s background and learn from lived experiences. The second event is an in person coffee and cake morning (who doesn’t love cake), in the hope of socialising and having conversations in real life. There is also the opportunity to look at the uniform we have been trialling (more about that in a bit). We have collaborated on another event with Broxtowe Women’s Project, taking part in a history of fashion – we have two mannequins, one dressed in modern day firekit and one dressed in fire kit from the 90’s when we had our first female firefighter in NFRS. The hope is to raise the awareness that females can be firefighters too (and have been for over 30 years...) As mentioned we are continuing with our clothing review and have been trialling two sets of duty rig. Breaking news: both sets of trousers are actually comfy! I will update on what we actually choose at the next meeting.</p>
<p>Derbyshire – Bex Sims</p>	<p>Focus on IWD events - will be sharing blogs/vlogs throughout the month from females and allies in service. We have 2 virtual Women 2 Work sessions planned in and a female only awareness session for whole time recruitment ran by all female instructors. The Gender network continues to keep busy - current work streams are Fight for 52 campaign to increase our full pay for maternity leave to 1 year, looking into having sanitary items provision on fire trucks as well as currently in stations and buildings, SLT support for gender neutral terminology across the service and working with HR to create a standardised medical and information sharing before attending to increase awareness if patient is expected to remove clothing for examination. Sanitary supplies for trucks, good on services but not on trucks. Terminology, male gender terminology needs to be addressed. Looking at standards for medicals, is there a national standard. GC shared that change often comes better if challenged by a man. This is not acceptable but maybe the best strategy to get the terminology changed.</p>
<p>East Region Bedfordshire – Daisy Byron</p>	<p>BFRS ACFO fully on board for the event on 25 September in Kempston and fully financed. Free event hoping to have 120 delegates for East region delegates, if all spaces not filled may move onto to neighbouring regions. BFRS have 12 whole time new recruits, 3 are women. No women went for the on-call. Intend to fill the 3 places allocated to BFRS for the Training and Development Event. Mam Tor walk in April has</p>

	<p>approximately 170 people attending WFS, Police and a lot more men. Still some spaces available.</p>
<p>North West Lancashire – Jenny Nangle</p>	<p>IWD Lancashire will be doing the same as last year with an open day for women. Listen to employee voice group, maternity, flexible working and roles. Observation RTC, Fitness. Eleven women/10 men on the new recruits' course. First time had more women than men on a course.</p> <p>Greater Manchester FRS will be holding a regional event on 11 April, 100 places with 8 workshop morning and afternoon. Now on Eventbrite, really good workshops to choose from, 8 in the morning and 8 in the afternoon.</p> <p>Next regional meeting will be held on 21 March and looking at either Merseyside or Cheshire to host in October. Really please events taken off as a region and have a very strong group to support.</p> <p>Looking at holding another Incident Command Group, planning to line up with the next promotion board.</p> <p>Walk and Talk will take place on 17 April for the North West region, mid-week possibly more family friendly. If they go well will look at further dates. Also discussing holding a coffee and chat session. Don't have enough advocates to help support and help organise. Need to be visible in remote stations.</p>
<p>Cleveland – Lisa Howsden</p>	<p>Women's network meetings, talking about menopause policy. Women PPE Kit/not able to get tunics/taking 6 months to be delivered into Stores. A lot of talk about. Female/male fit fire kit – need assurance from suppliers that fit is correct/same level of protection. Breast/hip area if fits correctly should get the same level of protection. AJ suggested writing to suppliers asking for guidance on correct fit. ACTION POINT: AJ</p> <p>JM – shared that it is all about the fit to achieve the best protection. Needs to be someone fitting who knows and understand what the fit needs to be.</p> <p>LM – if man's fit better and more comfortable then women choose that kit.</p> <p>CA – in DSFRS handful of people trained by Bristol on how to fit correct kit</p> <p>Seven from Cleveland will be attending the Mam Tor walk. Trying to organise meetings for the women's network but having difficulty getting planned in and people attending.</p> <p>IWD - had lots of photos done with men and women.</p> <p>TDE – 2 people attending</p>
<p>Lynsey McVay – Tyne and Wear FRS</p>	<p>Apologies from Jo Henry as no regional report. Update on Tyne & Wear specific. Recently had a recruits course with 50% diversity, 5 women, course of 25</p> <p>Disappointingly we have lost Sarah Natrass who has moved from the region to Greater Manchester as ACFO.</p> <p>IWD – organised a 2-hour session online with senior leaders from ambulance, police and fire.</p>

	<p>Active Bystander training planned to be delivered to senior Managers/middle managers, driven by gender network in TWFRS.</p> <p>TWFRS will be filling places at the TDE, accepted 3 places but would like more. KS advised that only off-site places or Saturday only.</p> <p>Cultural champions – a couple on every station where staff can go with informal grievances and for follow up. Safecall in place, informal grievances to monitoring of any themes. In the process of reviewing uniform.</p>
<p>South West Jersey – Georgina Connor</p>	<p>Menopause policy final out for sign off, and working on Maternity policy.</p> <p>Uniform – given male uniform and this has been raised.</p> <p>IWD – GC invited to attend a young boys school, in ordinary clothes for them to guess which job they do to break down barriers.</p>
<p>Wales South Wales – Clare Amor</p>	<p>Organising event for October. Aiming for as many women instructors but opening event up to men and women. Cam returned to work at the beginning of December and have had promotion.</p> <p>Fire fit test, non ops worry about the fitness opportunity to see if they can achieve the fitness.</p>
<p>West Midlands Shropshire FRS – Jan Morris</p>	<p>Joint IWD with South Mercia Police – Jan’s a guest speaker. SFRS now recruiting for whole time.</p>
<p>London - Divine Zake</p>	<p>IWD – holding an event. Also worth mentioning LFB held an International Men’s Day in November which was successful.</p>
<p>8. Marketing and Communications – update provided by KS</p>	<p>Marketing and Communications Officer, Emma Smith has moved on to another organisation, however will continue with WFS on Wednesday until the vacancy has been filled.</p> <p>The 2024 Awards nominations close tomorrow 1 March, total number of award nominations are 83</p> <p>Advocate of Excellence – 6 / Bright Light – 14 / Exceptional Allies – 8 / Dany Cotton Inspiring Leader – 15 / Digital Trail blazer – 6 / Firefighter Rising Star – 8 / Fund Raising Heroes – 7 Outstanding Team – 12 / Youth Inspiration – 7</p> <p>International Women’s Day – ES wanted to thank everyone who has sent in photos towards a presentation for WFS.</p> <p>Newsletter - ES currently working on articles for the Newsletter, no date yet to be published</p>
<p>9. WFS Event updates</p>	
<p>9.1 Women’s Development Programme</p>	<p>The 8th WDP started on the 8th February 2024 with 17 attendees. Women to Work have agreed to facilitate 4 more programmes running later this year going into 2025.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme 9 – October 2024 • Programme 10 – February 2025 • Programme 11 – May 2025 • Programme 12 – Sept/Oct 2025 <p>The intention is to discuss and put out to tender again in 2025, if WFS feel the programme is still relevant.</p>
<p>9.2 Training and Development Event – 7th-9th June 2024 – update provided by KS</p>	<p>Number of Services attending totals 52. Potential number of delegates to date: 234 (maximum 250) and this includes 35 delegates off-site and 18 Saturday only delegates. FSC are looking to improve on bed spaces and hoping to purchase more beds to increase the number of twin rooms. Unsure if this will be in time for the event.</p> <p>Delegate bookings: The Registration booking form and event information is now going out to booking coordinators, to date we have 11 completed.</p> <p>Workshop allocation: have gone down a different route, with delegates being asked to select 3 workshops from Saturday morning/Saturday afternoon/Sunday morning. No option to select workshops in order of choice, ie 1st/2nd/3rd.</p> <p>Keynote Speakers: Antarctic Fire Angels confirmed. Several members asked if this could be recorded. JK asked KS to ask AFA if this would be acceptable to them.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION POINT: KS</p> <p>Awards Ceremony: to be held on Saturday to give recipients more of a special evening.</p> <p>Programme: Friday Opening from 12.00 – registration, 3 x 45 icebreakers/kit fitting/BA set familiarisation. Friday evening includes Keynote Speakers and regional meetings. Saturday, a full day of workshops – 25 workshop choices Saturday evening includes Awards (of which there are 9) at 7.00 pm, Event Photo, Silent Disco. Sunday will begin with the AGM, one workshop and close at 1.00 pm.</p> <p>AGM: We are looking to improve the system of elections to the NEC committee and looking towards the future for succession planning. This will include posting on the website all vacancies for the NEC, job role and nomination forms. Those on the NEC if wishing to re-stand will be asked to give a brief pitch for roles, on contribution/what they can do/and ideas for future projects. Also at voting online to enable all members to have an opportunity to vote. Full programme and workshop outlines are on our website.</p> <p>WFS Volunteers/roles Number of volunteers have had to be reduced, roles will be allocated beforehand and volunteers advised.</p>

<p>10. Any Other Business</p>	<p>Teams: WFS asked if Teams could be used to share documents. ACTION POINT: KS</p> <p>Facebook group - DZ discussed how important it is that people requesting to join the group to answer questions provided, to help admin approve request.</p> <p>Policies - all due for updates and will be prepared for review for the next meeting. KS to send out. ACTION POINT: KS</p> <p>Administrative side of WFS to be reviewed as governance needs to be tightened up. ACTION POINT: JK/KS</p> <p>Menopause toolkit coming out in a few weeks.</p> <p>Event information: Important for WFS to capture information on organising events, feedback and learning points and be able to share to everyone. Directors already providing information. All asked to notify WFS office of anything that would contribute towards a full picture of how WFS supports in whatever capacity. ACTION POINT: ALL</p> <p>Draeger Event: have asked about the possibility of another joint event in the South and a host service is required. There are many regional events going on and it would be ideal for the future to have events in all regions. ACTION POINT: KS/Directors</p>
<p>11. Dates of next meetings:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 April 2024 (10.00-13.00) • 25 September 2024 (10.00-13.00) • 27 November 2024 (10.00-13.00) <p>Additional dates for diaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and Development – 7-9 June 2024 • Emergency Services Show – 18/19 September 2024