



Women in the Fire Service
National Executive Committee
held on 25 September 2024 via Teams

Present:

Directors: Jules King (Chair), Paula Lyons (Secretary)

Executive Member: Beth Barton (South Wales FRS), Jan Morris (Gloucestershire FRS)

Co-opted Member: Nicky Thurston (Kent FRS)

Regional Reps: Bex Sims (East Midlands), Amy Croxton-Evans (Wales) Sue Mallinson-Smitham (North West), Caz Whiteman (Yorkshire & Humberside), Karla Stevenson (Scotland), Sam O'Brien (West Midlands)

Local Reps: Jo Dawson (Nottinghamshire), Chantelle Bird (Lincolnshire), Paige Williams (Merseyside), Helen Chadwick (Staffordshire), Kerry Murison (NFCC)

WFS: Karen Smith, WFS Administration Manager, Ellie Mason, Marketing & Communications, Kerry Cassidy, Administration Assistant

Apologies: Alex Johnson, Caroline Anderson, Daisy Byron, Dany Cotton, Divine Zake, Ellie Hayes, Hannah Lodder, Hannah Archdeacon, Jo Henry, Karen Pointer, Kathryn Billing, Lynsey McVay, Sara Slater, Georgina Connor		
Welcome:		
JK welcomed to Kerry from NFCC, (Strategy and Policy) representing Jo Hardy and warm welcome to Ellie, WFS new Marketing & Communications Officer.		
Notes from the last meeting:	Agreed as a true record.	
Matters arising:		
Chairs report: 2024 saw 106 Award Nominations		
AOB 9.1 - <i>Working patterns request from Lincolnshire</i> – Bex Sims to ask if this has been resolved. Suggestion that this is asked through the NEC group on WhatsApp.		Action: Lincolnshire
AOB 9.2 <i>Naming of individual network</i> – action to be closed		
AOB 9.4 <i>PPE</i> – Caroline, Beth and Amy – Amy Beams invited to speak at the PPE conference and spoke at the Emergency Services Show. Jan Morris passing over any contacts to Amy. NT – MSA event at the Fire Service College with representation from WFS. There will be a follow up event. JK – this seems to be gathering a bit of momentum, and information needs to be collated together.		
AOB 9.5 <i>Role markings in Wales</i> – JK to ask Amy Croxton-Evans to see if this got any further. Beth Barton, still have role markings on uniform.		
Gifts and Hospitality:	Sue Mallinson receive a T-shirt from Women's Fire Alliance	Action: Office to record
Chairs Report: Jules King		

<p>Since our last meeting we have of course had another hugely successful Training and Development event at the FSC. The feedback has again been amazing and we have held two meetings since June to consider feedback and how we can improve further. As we look to plan for our 2025 event, Karen will provide a further update later on in the meeting. I am delighted to welcome Ellie Mason to the team, who started as the WFS marketing and communications officer on the 3rd September. I am sure you will have already noticed the increase in the communications and social media activity and we will hear a little more from Ellie later on.</p> <p>Work continues in other areas and in May Amy Beam's attended and presented at the PPE conference and recently attended another meeting and spoke in one of the sessions at the Emergency Services show last week. Speaking of the Emergency Services show, my sincere thanks to all who were involved from organising the stand and for attending the event itself. These events are so very positive for WFS to get to meet and engage with new people and companies.</p> <p>As you will know our 2024 awards was a huge success and the 2025 awards will be opening in November so please do look out for those going live and consider nominating someone.</p> <p>Other awards are the Excellence in fire awards, which WFS have sponsored one of the categories again this year. The nominations close on the 30th September and I will send a link via the NEC WhatsApp group and I encourage you all to have a look through the categories and please do nominate, there are so many women out there doing great work on a daily basis and it would be great for them to be recognised.</p> <p>There are more regional events being organised and run up and down the country and actually today there is an event in the East, some of you may have seen some posts from Daisy Byron - I am sure the event will be a huge success and I look forward to hearing about it at the next meeting.</p> <p>On Friday Alex Johnson and I will be travelling to Scotland for their first WFS event, Karla Stevenson has worked hard to pull this event together, the programme looks full and interesting. Then in Mid-October it is the turn of South Wales hosting and all Wales event with many people involved in co-ordinating this event. Dany Cotton and I will be attending that event and will feedback at the next meeting.</p> <p>As ever there is so much great work going on all over the country, please do keep up the good work and make sure you share what you are doing - I am sure Ellie would be very keen to hear from you.</p>		
Treasurer's Report:	Please see Appendix 1	
Regional Reports:		
East Midlands Region - Bex Sims (Derbyshire FRS)		
Our current whole-time course has 16 trainees, 8 of which are women. That makes it 4 courses in a row where the make-up is 50/50 men/women.		

<p>We held a women's incident command awareness day last week which had 15 delegates - 10 x DFRS, 2 x Leic, 3 x Notts. Caz was our key note speaker, we had an XVR demonstration, discussion about what it means to be an IC, Q&A with current female ICs and a next steps session to think about what to do next, what support/courses are available etc.</p> <p>Nicky Thurston asked if the information on the I/C if Bex could share this information.</p> <p>Our gender network is remaining open to all, not women specific. Therefore, we will be supporting International Men's Day this year by approaching allies within the service to have a blog on our social media pages one a week for a month after the day itself. Our gender network raised concerns earlier this year regarding medicals and removing clothing - this has been escalated and our previous medical supplier's contract has not been renewed. We have a temporary solution whilst the service decides what our medicals need to look like in the future.</p>	<p>Action: Bex Sims</p>
Jo Dawson (Nottinghamshire FRS)	
<p>Holding menopause coffee mornings. 'This is me', standing agenda item now and used at the AFSA conference. 5-minute talk Facility improvement and wear we can get changed, pods 1 male/1 woman/1 gender neutral. Sanitary bins in all toilets even in men's toilet now. Notice more women walking around service and come to women's network meetings. Whole-time 4 out of 18 were women. Flexitime being looked into. Fitted for new uniform which is really comfortable.</p>	
Kerry Murison: NFCC	
<p>Following success of workshop day and sharing working across the work place. After Sheffield event, set up the WFS NFCC Forum, place where people can come to discuss issues for women in the fire service. Kicking off in 18 October, talking about menopause with lots of interest, open to everyone. Bi monthly meetings, talking open conversation amongst NFCC staff. Challenge and support panel with end of term report and will share. What it means to be a woman leader in the fire service. Keep connected with WFS and welcome to attend. Mark Hardingham, tasked colleagues to produce a thought piece around culture, home affair select committee. Exploring historical culture of FRS and trying to come up with a tool kit in helping Chiefs to hear, may come and test thinking with WFS.</p>	
Scotland: Karla Stevenson	
<p>Looking forward to first Scottish event at the weekend.</p> <p>Women's issues – Karla now part of these meetings.</p> <p>Now have free Sanitary products in all buildings. Menopause workshops coming up for managers next month.</p> <p>18% improve pass rate for women.</p> <p>Women can now request fridges for breast milk</p> <p>Special wealth meetings now happening to support staff.</p>	
Greater Manchester - Sue Mallinson-Smitham	
<p>SM has a new job role in GMFRS for 1-year secondment as Women's support – a fire sector first and hopefully others will follow suit. Possibly something for the future in FRS.</p>	

7.1 Marketing and Communications update:		
<p>EM – has been in post since the beginning of September. Overwhelmed by information shared at the meeting today and wants to continue to share positivity and awareness.</p> <p>Activity has been very quiet on social media since June, however now active again on all platforms and has created new templates and putting together a strategy. To help everyone understand the platforms used, Ellie detailed the following:</p> <p>LinkedIn - primarily used business to business, collaboration, awards. TDE, WDP so other businesses can see what we are doing</p> <p>Facebook - community public and private. Area of community, less visual but links. Facebook group (private group) and Facebook page (public)</p> <p>Instagram - more about visual and empowerment. Spotlights on members, directors etc with more inspirational content. Health tips on fitness</p> <p>X – no activity for quite a while on X, but will relaunch just to share information and speak direct to services.</p> <p>Emergency Services Show: WFS attended with a stand and had a steady stream of visitors. We had a positive few days and an opportunity to meet potential sponsors. Plans now for a Newsletter to go out in the next couple of months and preparing for the Awards to open in November.</p> <p>JK talked about liaising with Ellie to recognising key events and have a calendar to prepare/schedule posts for social media. If other members have suggestions, please let EM know</p>	<p>Action: EM/JK</p> <p>Action all</p>	
8.WFS Events Update		
Women's Development Programme		
<p>KS provided an update on the WDP with the 9th Programme 9 commencing on 16 October with all 30 places filled. Further programmes will follow on -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme 10 – February/March/April 2025 – 6 bookings to date • Programme 11 – May/June/July 2025 • Programme 12 – October start <p>JK and KS to organise a meeting with Women to Work for discussion on where to go after 2025.</p> <p>Bex Sims - Derbyshire FRS interested in holding a similar version for men and have asked Women to Work if this might be possible. Discussed more about ally ship which could be explored further.</p> <p>Nicky Thurston, lots of really good information available and happy to share with Bex.</p>	<p>Action: JK/KS</p> <p>Action: BS</p>	
Training and Development Event – Karen Smith		
<p>Dates 20-22 June 2025 - Planning has commenced and waiting for the Fire Service College to confirm the number of bed spaces available and fees. Once confirmed letters will be prepared and sent to all Corporate Members offering places to begin co-ordinating bookings.</p> <p>Suggestions are welcome for: Strap line/Keynotes speaker/Workshops – a workshop 'Expressions of Interest form is available' now on the website</p>	<p>Action: all</p>	

9. Any Other Business:	
9.1 Regional events – KS reminded the committee there is a form available to be completed with details of any regional events. This will enable the office to keep track of events and offer resources, including roller banners/flags/leaflets	Action: all
9.2 Policies – Paula Lyons has co-ordinated the review of all the WFS policies, most to bring them up to date.	
9.3 NT asked if there would be any coordination towards the worker protection action coming into effect from October. The key focus is sexual harassment. JK suggested NT should put a message out on NEC group asking where services are with this and how WFS could respond.	Action: NT
New station in Matlock with seven pods and ideally each should have sanitary bins in each, however this increases the cost hugely. General discussion on this to ensure pods are gender neutral, bins need to be in each or alternative to make a couple 'women only'.	
10. Date of next meeting: 25 November 2024	

Appendix 1

Financial Summary and Outlook

Financial Year Ending 30 April 2024

Financial Year is 30th April each year with financial year 2023/24 ending 30 April 2024. Work is still being done to finalise all documents for the Accountant – Nick Westbury, whose appointment was approved at the Training and Development Event in June 2024. Draft accounts will be presented to the Directors in due course for review.

Financial Year Ending 30 April 2025 (Current Year)

The draft financial position as at 12 September 2024 is shown below. Further work is being carried out to summarise the position of both the Women's Development Programme and the Training and Development Event 2024.

Opening Bank Balance		6,348
Income		180,450
Merchandise	1,708	
Events	90,055	
Corp. Membership	6,750	
Ind. Membership	2,134	
Sponsorship	750	
Raffle	1,718	
Refunds	1,606	
HMRC	30	
Training and Development	200	
Transfer from Reserves	75,500	
Expenditure		180,163
Employee Costs	15,997	
Premises Costs	2,600	
Transport Costs	765	
Supplies & Services	9,942	
Establishment Costs	2,055	
Trading Costs	93,805	
Transfer to Reserves	55,000	
Closing Cash Book Bank Balance		6,635

The reserves are shown as below, note interest is yet to be added:

Opening Reserves Balance		110,902
Transfer Out		75,500
Interest		
Transfer In		55,000
Closing Cash Book Reserves Balance		90,402

As of 12 September 2023 the amount of money owed to WFS from events is £26,045 and Membership is £2,445.

Sara Slater
WFS Treasurer