



***eFBU Matters—Informing Berkshire Members***

**Pensions Meeting**

Last week FBU members attended a hastily arranged pensions update at Station 1 with FBU National Officer Sean Starbuck. The meeting was extremely well received and after Sean had given an update on the current state of affairs he went on to answer as many questions as time permitted. Members who attended saw the complexities of the situation the union has been placed in by the Government attack on pensions to pay off the deficit. The FBU is putting together a FAQ sheet that will appear on the national website.



**IMPORTANT PENSION UPDATE**



Please view the [national website](#) to see the latest on pensions. The Executive Council has issued a statement after considering the Government's proposals on the FPS and the NFPS. The proposals include a retirement age of 60 and massively increased contributions with a reduced returns. The Government has ignored significant evidence against the raised retirement age and potential opt outs from members could threaten the future of scheme.

**Fire Authority  
Budget  
Setting Meeting**

The meeting of the Fire Authority to set the budget has been delayed until the 15th February due to delayed announcement of the grant settlement by CLG.

**FBU Member in Redundancy Threat**

RBFRS has notified your brigade reps that a member of the Grey Book staff is at risk of redundancy. It's inappropriate to say more at the present time due to the sensitive and personal nature of the matter. However, we shall keep you updated when we can. In the meantime, we are calling on the Fire Authority to make good on its promise to avoid compulsory redundancies wherever possible. The FBU is confident that this can be achieved in this particular instance.

**London Fringe Allowance**

At its budget setting meeting in February 2011 Fire Authority members voted to stop the payment of the London Fringe Allowance. The FBU and the brigade entered into negotiations on the matter and were unable to agree. As a result both parties attended a meeting on the 16th December 2011 with the National Joint Secretaries and the FBU and RBFA agreed the following concerning the phased removal of the London Fringe Allowance:

- Year 1— 2012—2 x current rate (1 x current annual rate to be payable as a lump sum)
- Year 2— 2013— 1 x current rate
- Year 3— 2014—half of current rate
- Year 4— 2015—half of current rate (final payment)

Both parties agreed to commence negotiations in January 2013 on the introduction of a Berkshire Allowance payable to all Grey Book staff. Factors to be considered as part of the discussions include the financial position of the Authority and recruitment and retention implications. If agreement is reached that such an allowance would be appropriate, the figure per individual would be not less than £250 per annum (FTE).



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**Mind What You Write**

A few eFBU matters back, we informed you that the brigade was revising its IT Policy. Unfortunately, RBFRS only has to consult on this subject and doesn't need to mutually agree it with the union. That is, our concerns don't have to be taken on board. Sadly this seems to be the case. The updated policy will mean that anything you write on your home computer - on Facebook, Twitter or email etc - could leave you open to a discipline investigation if it adversely affects the RBFRS brand. We've argued that this invades personal privacy but the brigade thinks it is necessary. It assures us that staff will be advised when the policy goes live.

**You Have Been Warned!**



Would you like to receive eFBU Matters and local FBU updates straight to your home email? If so, please contact [berkshirefbu@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:berkshirefbu@yahoo.co.uk) and we'll put you on our mailing list. We're also keen to hear your views on how to improve the newsletter."

**VERY IMPORTANT**

Have you updated the FBU about your change of address or next of kin? It's vital that we have your correct details so if in doubt [CLICK HERE](#) for the forms you need.

Please print off, complete and return to Paul Watts  
FBU Membership Secretary @BHQ.

**Control Staff  
Deserve  
Recognition**



You may be aware that the Government intends to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee with a medal, and we understand that this will be awarded to all emergency service staff who have completed five years loyal service. Sadly, however, it seems that our Control members won't be honoured. They were likewise neglected when the Golden Jubilee Medal was issued in 2002. We believe that staff working in Emergency Fire Control should be treated equally with other uniformed employees because, as we have said in other regards, we are all 'Part of the Team'. It is unfair that members who contribute so much to the smooth running of the fire service should be ignored in this way. We are pleased to report that the national employers agree with us and will support a joint statement on the subject. Locally, FBU officials have argued strongly for Control staff recognition. We contacted FBU head office and asked the Executive Council to push for a merit award for members who don't receive the Jubilee Medal. Our Control members are important - without them, fire-fighting and rescues simply won't happen. Please show your support for Control when you meet with managers and Fire Authority members. Thanks.

**Your Berkshire FBU Officials are:**

**Mark Stollery— Brigade Secretary— 07917 065868**

**Maurice Whyte—Brigade Chair—07917 065867**

**Paul Watts—Brigade Organiser—07917 065869**

**Please do not hesitate to contact them if you  
need FBU assistance.**