



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



**Seasons Greetings**



Berkshire Brigade Committee wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The previous twelve months have been tough for our members with a disproportionate rate of change locally and an ongoing pay freeze and rising living costs nationally. More than ever there is a need for unity and unified action. However, now is the time to forget about work and celebrate the festive season with your friends and family. See in the new year fully refreshed and then consider what you can do for your brothers and sisters—because you are the Union. Best wishes. Enjoy the season appropriately!

**NCFE Level 2 Award and Certificate  
in Equality and Diversity**

A free online Equality and Diversity course is available to you as an FBU member. The course is designed to give you an understanding of issues around stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.

Interested?

Then contact Regional Education and Learning Organiser rep:-  
kieron.hall@fbu.org.uk

For further details on the course and others available [click here](#)



**RSOs are Go!**



We are happy to report that the long-running negotiations around the RSO shift pattern are nearly complete. The FBU was concerned about the level of flexibility that individuals had been asked to provide, especially when this was contrasted to the allowance payment that the brigade was offering in recompense.

At it's November meeting, the Brigade Committee agreed to accept the alternative option of a fixed shift pattern instead, and this has been communicated to RBFRS. It is hoped that the RSO concept can now proceed once minor details around the shift and leave have been settled.



**Resilience Agreement Contracts**



The Brigade Committee resolved to thank and congratulate all the FBU members who saw through and have rejected the Brigade's resilience agreement offer. For those that chose to take the money and undermine the union's efforts to fight for just pay and pensions the committee resolved to ask them to consider their membership of the FBU as their actions are clearly against the interests of the union under rule 26.

Follow 'FBUberkshire' on



[www.fbuberksire.co.uk](http://www.fbuberksire.co.uk)

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 help.



## **IRMP Consultation**



### **Windsor— ‘Little Fire Van’ - Update**

The project for the "local fire engine" at Windsor - a Mercedes Sprinter van - has commenced. The group has already looked at the strategic and operational risk assessments and the FBU is asking for all documentation to be made available to it. The union is opposed to the concept of Maidenhead's L4P attending primary fires with a crew of only 3 riders and has made this position clear at its meetings with the fire authority and management. The FBU has been unable to locate any other brigade that uses such a controversial combination of small vehicle and reduced crew primary fires and takes such a reckless approach to public and firefighter safety. It is asking the Fire Authority to drop the proposal and already there seems to be movement on the type of appliance to be used in Windsor.

### **IRMP thinking reaches new heights!**

Surprisingly, RBFRS has decided to move forward with its discussion on the aerial ladder platforms. This project was due to start in April 2012 and will look into the viability of these appliances but it will now go ahead five months early. The FBU hopes that the sudden rush has nothing to do with freeing up a crew to ride Windsor's "local fire engine"! It did not seem right to us that the ALP project could begin prior to the completion of the IRMP public consultation phase in January. The FBU successfully argued that the project should only commence once that process has finished. Preferably it should start according to the timeline indicated in the Action Plan. We are more than happy to arrange someone to represent the FBU on this basis. However, we would not commit reps prematurely to the project.



## **Functional Hearing Tests**



The FBU were recently invited to a demonstration of new software to test functional hearing. This replicates a mixture of pumping and fireground sounds with the candidate having to comprehend words spoken amongst the background noise. The rep who attended found this challenging but reported that the



software might have a role to play within the suite of other tests.

However, it is not certain if the software will be purchased. We'll keep you updated as soon as we hear anything!

## **IRMP - Have Your Say**

The IRMP consultation phase is due to end in early January and the FBU is encouraging members to respond to the Action Plan. If you agree with what the Fire Authority means to do for the forthcoming year or feel that such things as the "local fire engine" are a bad idea, then this is the opportunity to have your say. Please do not let your chance to influence the decision-making process go unused.