



END THE HYPOCRISY!



Firefighter = Job cut - Pay cut - Pension cut



Empty Regional Control = £16m in charges

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in the South West has slammed the “hypocrisy” of politicians who continue to pour millions of pounds into an empty and unused building whilst cutting vital frontline services.

Speaking on a BBC news channel, FBU rep Tam McFarlane talked of “*the anger that firefighters will feel*” after it was revealed that Government is continuing to pour millions of pounds into the empty and unused ‘Regional Fire Control’ building in Taunton - whilst cutting vital frontline services.

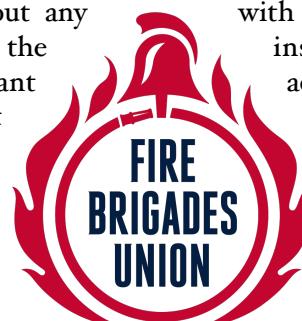
The building was one of nine planned regional centres built under a ‘New Labour’ project, despite warnings from the FBU that it could never work. As the Union predicted, the project fell apart and was cancelled in 2010 by the Tory coalition Govt - but at enormous cost. Without any proper plan of how to reclaim costs or utilise the building, politicians continue to pay exorbitant rents to a private company for a building that lies empty.

"We're having our jobs slashed & our safety compromised by politicians who preach 'efficiency' but are wasting millions on a white elephant"

New figures have revealed that the Government has now paid over £16m in rent, almost double what it actually cost to build the centre. But, because it was built under a ‘private finance initiative’ the money is now going straight into the pockets of the private company that owns the contract.

Calling the situation a ‘scandalous waste of taxpayers money’ Tam McFarlane contrasted the wasted money with massive cuts suffered at the local Fire Station: ‘*just down the road at Taunton Fire Station, dangerous cuts to frontline fire cover have recently taken place. As firefighters, we're having our jobs slashed and our safety compromised by politicians who lecture us about ‘efficiency savings’. Yet these same politicians are pouring millions into what is essentially a white elephant - no wonder firefighters are angry. This political hypocrisy must be ended.*’

The Union is pressing politicians at every level to deal with the situation and has demanded that the money is instead invested into the frontline services that actually need it.



Fighting for the Fire & Rescue Service

Protecting Firefighters & Control Staff

FBU warn Avon report must not be a ‘smokescreen for cuts’

Reacting to the publication of a Government report into Avon Fire Authority, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has raised serious concerns regarding comments on operational response and warned that the report must not be a smokescreen for cuts.

The report, published on 19th July and entitled ‘Statutory Inspection of Avon Fire and Rescue Authority’ comments on a number of areas and makes several recommendations. Amongst other areas, the report raises concerns about historical pay awards given to the Chief Fire Officer and other principal officers in Avon. Concerns about these payments were first raised by the FBU in 2015 who condemned them as ‘hypocrisy’ at a time when firefighters pay was being capped.



Avon FBU rep Gary Spindler

by suggesting that frontline fire stations downgraded within Avon.

Speaking after the report was published, Avon FBU rep Gary Spindler said “this was meant to be a report into the political governance of the fire authority, instead it champions a now discredited package of cuts to frontline cover and the downgrading of life saving fire stations. The report’s author, Dr Craig Baker, is a private consultant who has neither the experience nor the qualifications to comment on the deployment of operational fire cover.

However the FBU says that the report’s author - a private consultant who specialises in “outsourcing and private sector involvement” within the public sector - has overreached himself

cover be cut and fire



The Premier Trade Union for Professional Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff. April 2015

SO MUCH FOR “ALL IN IT TOGETHER!”

FBU slams “hypocrisy” as Chief gets pay rise - and Firefighter jobs are cut!



Firefighter = Real terms pay cut, pension slashed, job losses



Chief Fire Officer - £12,000 pay rise linked to rises for “top” management team

The Fire Brigades Union in Avon has slammed politicians on their fire authority after they agreed to increase the pay of the Chief Fire Officer and the “Service Management Board” by an incredible 10% despite recent austerity cuts which have seen 86 frontline firefighter posts cut in the last few years.

The pay increases, which equates to around £70,000

Speaking after the debate Chris Taylor, secretary of the FBU in Avon, said: “Firefighters in Avon will be furious at this decision. At a time when budgets are being slashed and frontline posts are getting cut, it beggars belief that the authority would take this decision.”

“In Avon we have lost 86 frontline firefighter posts

FBU slam ‘hypocrisy’ of CFO pay - we raise warnings in 2015. But was anyone listening?

Firefighters in Avon will be appalled that after recent serious incidents like the Grenfell fire, the Government has published a report which talks about saving money by cutting firefighters.”

FBU rep for the South West region, Tam McFarlane added “the author of this report has overreached himself. He should have stuck to political matters and left operational matters to the professionals. In addition, we need clarity about the potential cost of this report and its recommendations. Who is going to pay for the two reviews, a ‘de-layering exercise’ and the introduction of a programme board etc. which the report demands? At a time when all fire services have seen massive budget cuts we need guarantees that additional resources will be made available to match any recommendations. No matter what, we want everyone to be clear, we will not allow this report to be a smokescreen for further cuts to life saving fire cover.”

Plymouth firefighter Mark Hunt heads up TUC campaign to ‘Scrap the Cap’

Plymouth Firefighter and FBU rep Mark Hunt has been the ‘firefighter face’ of a national campaign to end the public sector pay cap.

The campaign, being run by the TUC, has been a high profile and nationwide attempt to end the public sector pay squeeze, which has forced real term pay cuts on workers since 2010. Mark has appeared in a series of videos outside Parliament and has highlighted the devastating impact the cap has had on firefighter pay.

Mark challenged Chancellor Phillip Hammond directly, saying “We’re about 10% behind on



Plymouth firefighter Mark Hunt heads up TUC campaign

our income because of the cap. We have so many public sector workers all working hard, giving their best and you tell us that we’re not worth a pay rise? Sit back look at the great service that we give and start protecting that service, not cutting it” - Well said Mark!

TUC research shows that if the cap continues until 2020, then compared to 2016 social care workers would be worse off by £3,533; midwives by £3,288; Teachers £3,064; Firefighters £2,766; Nurses £2,656 - **It is time all public servants had their first proper pay rise in 7 years.**

South West firefighters support brave Grenfell colleagues



FBU rep Tam McFarlane with TUC colleagues Nigel Costley & Joanne Kay present cheque to Battersea firefighters who attended Grenfell

Firefighters in the South West, along with the TUC, raised more than £1,000 at the three day Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival for the Grenfell Firefighters' Support Fund. The Festival is organised by the TUC and the FBU has a stand which raises awareness of the issues facing firefighters and gets support for our campaigning work.

This year, FBU reps gave festival goers the opportunity to contribute to the Grenfell fund, set up by the FBU to support the firefighters who attended this major fire. The response was incredible and £1,000 was raised.

A cheque was then presented by Fire Brigades Union official Tam McFarlane to firefighters from Battersea fire station who responded to the Grenfell fire. Tam was joined by Nigel Costley, South West TUC regional secretary, and Joanne Kaye, South West TUC vice-chair.

Tam McFarlane said: "The support and solidarity shown by everyone at the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival towards our colleagues who responded to Grenfell was very heart-warming. People were queuing up at the FBU stall to donate to the fund. All of the firefighters present were very moved by this show of appreciation. The men and women who attended Grenfell did an incredible job in the most challenging circumstances imaginable, and the horrors they experienced will stay with them for the rest of their lives. The presentation of this cheque shows that they not only have the respect and appreciation of everyone in the fire services across the UK, but of trade unionists and members of the public nationwide."

Nigel Costley said: "Tolpuddle celebrates the solidarity of farm workers when they formed an early union and of workers across the country who won their freedom. The solidarity being shown here today is to the firefighters who fought this unprecedented blaze at Grenfell that took so many lives".

Union raises serious concerns over 'misuse' of forced entry protocol

The FBU has written to all Chief Fire Officers in the region raising 'serious concerns' over a forced entry protocol which the Union says may be being 'misused'.

The protocol, which covers all South West FRS's, was put in place with the aim of assisting the ambulance service to gain entry to a property where they have concern for the welfare of the occupant and the ambulance crews cannot gain access themselves.

However FBU members from across the region have been raising their concerns that on several occasions fire crews have been mobilised to incidents when ambulance crews aren't even in attendance. In addition, crews have also been left in situ for unacceptable periods of time due to Ambulance crews being redirected to other calls by their control.

FBU Regional Secretary Trevor French has now written directly to Chief Fire Officers raising concerns and demanding action. Trevor



said "this protocol was meant to ensure that when our colleagues in the ambulance service needed our help, they got it. However, its becoming clear that it is being misused and firefighters are being left in an impossible situation.

We have numerous examples of fire crews being left for hours at incidents when an Ambulance isn't even in attendance. How can an Ambulance crew make a risk assessment that they cannot gain access without even being there? This is not only putting our members in a very difficult situation, it is also compromising patient care as Ambulances are being redirected due to our attendance. We are not paramedics and it was never the intention that we could be used to prevent people getting the professional care that they need. We are demanding answers and are determined to get them.'

If you or your colleagues have had similar experiences please pass them on via your local FBU Officials.

Working hard for members



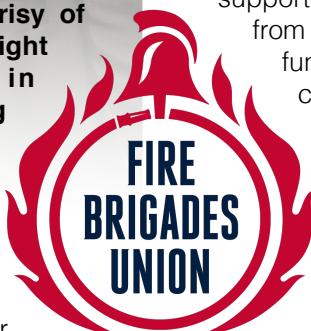
It's been an incredibly busy summer for the FBU & I want to start this bulletin by thanking your local Officials for all the hard work & commitment they've put in making sure your voice is heard over this period.

From dealing with unprecedented political upheaval and turmoil in Avon, exposing the hypocrisy of waste in the failed regional control, right through to representing members in grievances and fighting for proper crewing levels and safe working practices in our workplaces, FBU reps across the Region have been working hard on your behalf.

A special mention must go to FBU reps in Cornwall who have succeeded in persuading the Service to increase the payment for 'Continual Professional Development' (CPD) from the current £294 up to the recommended NJC minimum of £500.

Although details around criteria etc still need to be sorted out, there has now been agreement that the £500 payment will be made and will be backdated to 1st April 2017. Many of us will think this has been a long time coming, but it is a credit to the reps and the industrial relations in Cornwall that has seen these negotiations succeed to the benefit of all the eligible firefighters in the Service.

This now leaves Gloucestershire as the sole Fire & Rescue Service in the Region still paying CPD at a rate well below the NJC recommended minimum, despite the FBU raising the issue with Service managers.



The refusal of Gloucestershire to pay CPD at the recommended rate is disappointing to say the least. It was way back in 2006 when the NJC encouraged FRS's to bring the value of CPD up to 'a minimum level of £500" and yet here we are, 11 years later, and the firefighters in that Service are still waiting.

I would encourage the management & politicians in Gloucestershire FRS to think again on this issue. Raising CPD to the recommended minimum level is a local decision and, against a background of disgraceful national pay freezes & pay caps, it is a way that FRS's can show their staff that they properly value them.

Unfortunately, the summer also brought great sadness with the loss of our Brother Mark Hattersley who died on Saturday 12th August. Mark was a highly regarded Firefighter in Avon Fire & Rescue Service and served on Blue watch, at Bedminster Fire Station. He leaves behind a wife, Rachael, and two young children. As a Firefighter and Union member, he was our brother and everyone in the FBU sends Mark's family, friends and colleagues our full solidarity and support at this very sad time.

Local Avon reps have been liaising with Mark's family, friends & the Service to make sure they have the full support of the Union, including the AIF fund. I know from previous experience how important the AIF fund can be for families at a time of tragedy, it can help to alleviate financial concerns at a time when the focus of family members is on coping with bereavement.

The fund operates in exactly the same way as every other strand of the FBU, it is based on the premise of all being in it together. The monthly payments of Union members, used to support our colleagues and their families in need, is a fundamental act of solidarity where we all chip in once a month in order to help each other out.

Exactly the same principle applies in our normal Union membership. We all pay our dues once a month and use the money to fight for our profession and support each other. Whether its building the legal case for the Grenfell inquiry or providing the accredited training our reps need to help you on a daily basis - being in the FBU is all about supporting each other.

In these difficult times, we can be assured that ours is a Union we can be proud of. Lets keep it strong by **getting involved, supporting each other and staying united.**

Tam McFarlane

FIREFIGHTERS 100 LOTTERY

SUPPORT INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE THE LESSONS LEARNT FROM FIREFIGHTER DEATHS AND INJURIES

ONLY
£1
PER
WEEK

FIREFIGHTERS 100
LOTTERY

SUPPORT THE FAMILIES OF FIREFIGHTERS KILLED OR INJURED IN THE LINE OF DUTY