



Campaign Update in Devon and Somerset FBU - February 2013

PUBLIC SAY - NO₂ CUTS!



The incredible public support has been repeated across all areas with Firefighters in Torquay, Ilfracombe and Plymouth reporting that they have been “overwhelmed” with support. Wayne Rawling, FBU rep in Plymouth said “speaking to local residents whilst leafletting everyone has fully supported the FBU campaign. No one has supported the cuts”

Kim Telfor, FBU rep at Plymstock added “we have been out to shopping centres, post offices and community centres in our local area and had good support from

FIREFIGHTERS campaigning against frontline cuts in the Service have been receiving incredible levels of public support in all areas. Campaign events are being held across Devon & Somerset with FBU members taking their message of *no frontline cuts* directly onto the streets. The public reaction has been described as “amazing” as local Fire Crews hand out leaflets and ask the public to sign petitions and engage in the consultation currently being held.

The FBU leaflets are appearing everywhere and are being displayed in local shops, clubs and pubs.

In one example, in Taunton, FBU members set up a stall in the town centre and looked on as members of the public formed a queue to sign the petition against cuts!

Taunton FBU rep Wayne Withey said: “We’ve had amazing support from the public and I’d like to think councillors will take notice. It was surprising how few people realised exactly what’s being proposed for Taunton, but when they heard they said they were backing us.”

Taunton members have now set up another major “campaign day” in the town centre scheduled for March 16, when they hope to collect more signatures.

the public”.

In Torquay the campaign is on a roll with FBU rep Dave Crawford saying “with 100% FBU membership Torquay FBU members are receiving great support from local residents, councillors & businesses across Torbay. We have been given time to brief the Mayor & Torquay Councillors in a bid to overturn these dangerous cuts and we will be detailing the real facts and figures to local Councillors at a meeting in the town hall in late March. FBU members will be on the streets of Torquay again on the 2nd March to get more public support”

FBU Regional Official Tam McFarlane said “the FBU is determined to get our message of **no cuts** to as many members of the public as possible. We are asking the public to get involved in the consultation and tell politicians that these cuts are a step too far. From the response so far its clear that people trust their local Firefighters and value the job that they do. We are receiving amazing support for the campaign and we are still not even half way through the consultation. We need every FBU member to keep going, support each other and maximise public support right until the final day of the consultation. Politicians need a clear message - **No to Cuts!**”

Fighting for the Fire & Rescue Service



Protecting Firefighters & Control Staff

FBU SLAMS "GAGGING ORDER"



The FBU has condemned "guidance" imposed by the service which the Union claims not only denies firefighters their right to freedom of speech, but also casts an embarrassing shadow over the service as a whole.

The documents, entitled Media Guidelines and Expectations of Employees During Consultation, says firefighters should not share personal opinions about the proposals as it is not in their remit and could result in disciplinary action.

They are also warned not to make any comment about Fire Authority reports or decisions, changes to service provision or

working practices, funding, the council tax precept or political issues.

The two documents even state the same guidelines apply for personal accounts on social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter. It even goes so far as to state that any publicity material surrounding the proposals must not be displayed at fire stations, in service vehicles or even non-service vehicles which are parked on service land.

FBU chair Bob Walker said the guidelines were ridiculous and embarrassing.

He said: "Some of this really grates. For example, if firefighters want to display a sticker in their own car about the proposals then they are not allowed to park it at the fire station – heaven forbid.

"In the past, for similar campaigns, we have used pictures of firefighters in their uniforms as that is the way people identify us, but we're not even allowed to do that anymore.

"I really didn't want to go public with these documents but quite frankly it's embarrassing, why are they trying to control people?"

"To stop us talking to the public about what's happening to our service is wrong and infringes on our freedom of speech."

The FBU is exploring all options to try and get this "gagging order" removed.

The North Devon Journal, which reported this story, is running a petition to Save Ilfracombe Fire Station. Please sign it at: www.thisisnorthdevon.co.uk.

PLYMOUTH FIREFIGHTERS REFUSE TO TAKE ON RDS DUTIES TO CUT JOBS!

At a recent mass meeting in Plympton, Firefighters from across Plymouth voted unanimously to refuse to take on retained duties in the city which would result in a loss of their own WT posts.

The meeting, which was attended by over 80 FBU members, gave Firefighters from across the city the ability to discuss the campaign in detail and co-ordinate their activity across different Stations.

The cuts, which would devastate Fire Cover in Plymouth, rely on the city's WT Firefighters taking up RDS contracts in order to fill job losses and the CFO has previously said that he



would "be astounded" if enough Firefighters wouldn't do so. This was rejected **unanimously** at the meeting and the Firefighters also pledged to take their campaign of opposition to the public.

FBU Secretary Trevor French, who was at the meeting said "this was a very powerful statement by Plymouth Firefighters who are campaigning vigorously against frontline cuts. Despite the views of senior managers, the FBU members in Plymouth have now made it clear that they have no desire to carry out RDS contracts in the City. Its now time for politicians to understand that their cuts package is falling apart"

TELL YOUR MP: NO CUTS!

The Union has organised a **lobby of Parliament** which will take place at the House of Commons on: **Weds 6th March at 2pm**

It is vital that every Fire Station is represented and that individual Members of Parliament are lobbied against the cuts. Local Officials will be arranging transport to and from Westminster so please make sure that you come!



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