



# SHOUT!

The magazine of Hampshire Retained Firefighters Union

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## MORE THAN FOUR

HFRS have commenced the EFC project which is designed to look at using its grey book employees more efficiently. As a public funded organisation we both recognise and support the analysis of optimising the usage of its workforce. In addition we identify that changes can be uncomfortable and unpalatable to individuals. However change can create a better, more efficient and stronger organisation for the future and there are many aspects of the EFC project which bring in beneficial changes.

However one component which we feel is neither beneficial nor safe for the service is the reduction of crewing on pumps to 4 riders. Front line appliances are designed to carry 6 crew and it should be noted that many of the training procedures are designed around this maximum crewing level. However, when we leave training and look at fire stations it is often a case that 6 personnel are not available on a specific watch. For Wholetime stations circumstances such as leave, offsite training and late notification illness creates a situation where less than 6 are available so wholetime pumps usually operate with 5 and sometimes, under exceptional circumstances, 4 available riders.

With regards to Retained stations the situation is a little different. A one pump station for example will employ more than 6 firefighters to allow for dynamically changing availability of crew due to work and home commitments. When the alerters are sounded, firefighters who are in range and available make their way to the station and the pump can respond with the minimum 4 riders (recently increased from 3) but up to the full crew of 6. With the recent rollout of the new RMS system availability is instantly confirmed at the station thus ensuring that the pump doesn't wait for individuals to not attend.

The EFC project has recently been given ownership of a proposal to reduce the number of riders on a Wholetime pump to 4 at all times, this is to allow the additional resources to be used in other areas of the service such as projects and community fire safety initiatives. Recently it was announced that in the foreseeable future the maximum number of riders at RDS stations will be reduced to 4 also, the RFU have responded with a 25 page document. We have sent a copy to every Retained Station, but if you can't wait or get a copy you can download a pdf version from our website home page.

**The RFU are committed to representing your views throughout HFRS - see our back page for just some of the meetings we attend!**

### Invite Us To Your Station

With so much change going on around the service you may be wondering how the Retained Service fits in with the future of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service?

Well why not invite us to your station one evening for a visit and we will be happy to give you a 'warts and all' view.

Consider the new RMS system, Efficient and Flexible Crewing, Transfer Opportunities, New Fitness Requirements, Home Fire Safety Visits - what are the threats and the opportunities!

**Contact us now at [admin@hrfu.org.uk](mailto:admin@hrfu.org.uk) or phone 0798 555 9243 to arrange your visit.**



*The RFU newsletter—designed to educate, inform and entertain.*



## Presentation to SMT

We were recently offered the invitation to 'drop in' to a recent SMT meeting and give some feedback as to what our perception of HFRS is. We thanked SMT for the progress so far and noted that great advancements have been made in working with representative bodies - however it is important to keep up the momentum. This is no time to consider that we have 'got there' more that we are going in the right direction. We offered the following observations:



### HFRS and the RFU

We have worked hard, and hope SMT perceive, that the RFU are seen as a proactive union that embraces change and willing to work with all parties necessary to achieve this. We recognise that not all decisions can go our way but being part of the process gives us an understanding of the mechanisms of change, bringing us in from the cold and allowing us to inform our members why decisions may have been made which they do not necessarily agree with.



### REPRESENTATION

This last twelve months has shown a number of cases where we have represented individuals. We have not always been successful but we would like to recognize the professionalism which the service has shown on cases and how it has handled itself beyond reproach.



### RMS

The RMS is a good example of joined up working where being an intrinsic part of the project allows to aid its promotion, reduce the negative feedback and promote the systems benefits. However the systems implementation has highlighted some failings: Why did the project progress from 'testing Phase' to 'Launch' when there were clearly issues with it?

And we must not forget that it was promoted to help RDS fire fighters balance their home and service life, the way that the service has not taken action with the failings and instead compounded the threat by starting discussion on 4 riders and annualized hours is creating a black morass of ill feeling towards the employers.

### DID WE GET IT RIGHT?

We hope that we have represented you fairly and accurately, remember it is you that we serve. So contact us and let us know how you feel about HFRS and the RDS relationship.

Email: [admin@hrfu.org.uk](mailto:admin@hrfu.org.uk)



### IT/IS

Notwithstanding this the services relationship with IT needs to reflect the migration of responsibility which occurred about 10 years ago in private enterprise. IT is a service industry, it should supply what its customers want and not be the architect of their desires. Let us be clear the service has moved away from its rather strange reliance on Excel spreadsheets. and the days when said spreadsheet not being available for a few hours was just a little inconvenient are well past. The service is now IT reliant and will become more so as it develops There should be NO network downtime and software which could have an effect on people's lives needs to be identified and treated with care. IT needs to be capably resourced to ensure that its basic infrastructure is resilient, robust and future proof, if we are to become more IT reliant the funds and skills should be made available to let this happen.



## I have seen part of the future and its .5m smaller!

Jerry Leonard invited the RFU to see the new Midi pump of West Sussex which will be similar to the 2 being purchased by HFRS next year. One for Emsworth and one for somewhere else - possibly Droxford.

Apart from the size the unit is for all intents and purposes very similar to any other front line vehicle. Importantly it will be seen as a Rescue Pump (the definition used for standard front line vehicles) by Regional Control so will be sent to all incidents requiring such. The midis are not identified as purely RDS units, being smaller they could prove very useful as second pumps in WDS stations being excellent for accessing built up areas as well as smaller rural lanes. Midi pumps are already being used throughout the country and have a proven track record. Although the version we saw was not a Hampshire specified unit the following may prove interesting:



### How are they different?

**Its important to note that the appliance we viewed was an example of concept not the final choice!**

The vehicle has two seats in the front and we are glad to say, 4 in the back! Compared to a standard pump which has a stowage 4.2 meters long, the midis stowage locker is 3.7 metres long. It has smaller wheels and in the example we saw an automatic manual gearbox similar to the HVPs and USAR prime movers. It is limited to 55 mph whilst under standard driving conditions but the restriction is lifted with blue lights to approximately 85mph. The pump is slightly smaller at 2250 lpm. As they are slightly smaller they will obviously fit into stations more easily although heightwise they may be the same. The unit had the new German manufactured 9m ladder with heel bar (note 4 man crew to pitch required) much lighter and broader than the current 9m ladders, a roof ladder and finally a 1800 litre water tank and foam tank.



### How are they similar?

The midis will have all standard equipment consisting of generators, full size combi cutting tools, PPV, LPP's, the new CAF's system (compressed air foam system used to deliver fire retardant foam for extinguishing fire or protect unburned areas from being involved in flame) with lances and branch attachments. As mentioned they are 'equipped' with 6 seats.

### Cost considerations

The midis are more efficient, more environmentally friendly and cheaper to run and obviously cheaper to purchase than the full size versions.

### RFU Comment

Frankly we were amazed by the midi pump as it seems like a Tardis, although smaller it seems more than capable of performing its role. We welcome a more efficient use of HFRS resources which are funded by taxpayers. Are only caveat, and we have been assured this is not the case, is that we would not want to see the service developing into a two tier service with midi equipment offering a reduced service in all RDS areas compared to their wholetime equivalent. We thank Jerry for the opportunity to view the pump.

### More Images?

Visit our website for more images [www.hrfu.org.uk](http://www.hrfu.org.uk) and look under 'News'



## SOCIAL NETWORKING & HFRS? BEWARE!



There is a growing interest in the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. A simple way to keep in touch with your circle of friends and visited by over 17 million people a month.

However there are pitfalls which you need to be aware of as some of our members recently discovered. Few people realise that by posting pictures, opinions and revelations on a website could possibly land them in hot water with their employer, there is always a risk that someone could be 'offended'.

In a fire and rescue service context, any picture which links the user to their employing FRS and if accompanied by other pictures or comments which could be interpreted as sexist, racist, crude or similar can result in a disciplinary investigation and action being taken.

Be aware that someone who knows you, perhaps with an 'axe to grind' or an 'old score to settle' could visit your site, seize the opportunity and report you to the service with potentially serious consequences, especially if you use a service PC to access the site.

## Operational Guidance: Breathing Apparatus Command and Control Procedures - Review and refresh of Technical Bulletin 1/97 RFU National

The project group met in April to begin to narrow the Scope of the Project and determine the composition of both Project Board and Working Group(s). This Project was identified by the Chief Fire & Rescue Advisors (CFRA) unit as one of the eight priority Operational Guidance themes at the Practitioners' Forum in October 08.

The Composition of Project Board: (Main Board) consists of CFRA, APFO, CFOA, RFU, CLG, FBU, FOA, FSC, & NRT. Adam Moore (Notts FRS) is the RFU's representative on the board.

There is also representation from the devolved administrations and a Lead Contact Point for each English FRS Region.

Copies of the minutes and papers are available to RFU members on request and if you have any points to make please contact us on [rfuhq@rfuonline.co.uk](mailto:rfuhq@rfuonline.co.uk)



## What do we do all day?

We recently undertook an exercise to review all the meetings we sit on in HFRS representing the Retained Perspective. It is heartening to see the service making such an effort to invite us and ensure that our views are sought.

Be well assured the service is going to face some major changes over the next few years and the service you know now will be a completely different beast in the years to come. But we will be working hard to ensure that the viewpoint and best interests of the Retained will be heard.

### Just some meetings we sit on:

- Efficient and Flexible Crewing
- Uniform Committee
- Health and Safety
- Workforce Wellbeing Strategy Group
- Thatch Committee
- Retained Strategy Group
- Web Development Group
- RDS Contracts
- Service Delivery Strategy
- Community Resilience Project
- Investors in People
- Establishment Mtg
- Beacon Status