

## The Institute of Fire Safety Managers

### Minutes of the Council Meeting

**Venue:** Manchester Golf Club, Hopwood Cottage, Rochdale Road, Middleton, Manchester M24 6QP

**Date:** 5 January 2009

**Time:** 1100hrs.

#### **Members Present:-**

J Williamson (JW)	Chairman
Dave Price (DP)	President
Kevin Scarth (KS)	Council Member
R Docherty (RD)	Secretary General and Vice President
Peter Cowland (PC)	Honorary Treasurer
K Day (KD)	Membership Secretary
A Stoker (AS)	Membership Administrator
Stuart Cocking (SC)	Accreditation Secretary
Ray Colyer (RC)	Council Member and Vice President
Neil Cripps (NC)	Council Member
John Cowie (JC)	Council Member

#### **Apologies for absence received from:-**

M Husseyin (MH)

Gary Whitworth (GW) Immediate Past President and Vice President

#### **1. Agenda Item 1. Introduction and Welcome**

Chairman welcomed all to the meeting including new member John Cowie and apologies for absence were accepted (see list above). He also thanked AS for organising the venue and all Council gave a special welcome back to Stuart Cocking.

#### **2. Agenda Item 2. Minutes of Last Council Meeting 7 August 2008**

Chairman asked for matters of fact and matters arising:-

There were no matters of fact or matters arising other than Item 7, KD and AS reported that the membership list was fully up to date and any members that were not up to date with their subscriptions had now been written to finally under Article 25 and removed from the membership list. RD informed Council that Item 13, meeting with Burro Hapold was yet to be arranged but would be definitely in the New Year. RD informed the meeting that a number of issues from the last minutes would be raised in the current meeting. All actions had been completed and signed off other than those carried forward to the current agenda.

#### **3. Agenda Item 3. Correspondence In and Out**

RD reported letters of thanks received from The Scottish Government regarding our comments on draft Building Standards. Letters received from the Institutes accountant with final year end accounts. Letters out were noted to various people and groups regarding fire risk assessors register including a response to the FIA.

#### **4. Agenda Item 4. Reports of Council Officers**

##### **Secretary General**

Nothing to report.

##### **President**

President reported that he had managed to secure a stand at Hazard 09 conference and exhibition 24/25 February 2009 and also one at FIREX in

May at the NEC 12-14 May 2009. President also stated that there may be opportunities at these events to also present papers but that it was important to have sufficient member's packs and information on the stands as well as volunteers to help crew the stands at both events. Chairman stated that he had a banner that had been made for the IFSM but President stated there would be a need to develop corporate signage/banners etc for such events. President also reported on meetings regarding joint cooperation with JOIFF and SIESO regarding organising a plume plotting conference with a venue at the University of Manchester 28/29 April 2009. **(Action for member's packs and information KD and AS, Action for banners, flyers, stand features etc DP and JW). Note actions to be finished in time for the dates of events President to coordinate. Action President information on conferences to RD to email to all members.**

#### **Honorary Treasurer**

PC gave a verbal report regarding monies. This was the first year trading as a limited company and the final accounts prior to this had now been completed to 31 January 2008. The bank balance was showing £8377 and we were about to send out the annual fees letters to members as well as register fees and approved centre and accreditation fees for 2009. Following a discussion on the 'old' account it was proposed by JW, seconded by NC and unanimously agreed that this account should now be closed down and that the membership secretary in conjunction with the treasurer would ensure that all members who had paid annual fees into this account were made aware of the change of account **(Action PC, KD, AS).**

#### **Membership Secretary**

KD reported with AS action had been taken regarding non payment issues. AS and RD reported that following the last Council meeting, they had approached an administrative person who was willing to be contracted to assist with administration. Sharon Lawrence had already been used by RD for the annual risk assessor's registers fees and AS would be using her services to send out the annual membership fees records and to update our membership records accordingly.

#### **Accreditation Secretary**

RD had taken over this function for SC temporarily and reported that the annual renewal fees had been sent out. There are a total of 11 Approved Centres/accredited course providers on the list and their details were on the website. RD reminded Council to promote the accreditation and approval scheme to providers that they know but also encourage people to use the website list to search for course providers if they need a course **(Action all Council).**

### **5. Agenda Item 5. IFSM Risk Assessors Register**

RD reported and updated Council on the register. There are now 31 members on the Register and the annual fees invoices were sent out in November 2008 using our new administrative person. RD also reported on further meetings with RICS, ABBE and Warrington Fire Research which was continuing to be very fruitful. RD to report back after the next meeting at Warrington on 21 August 2008. RD mentioned that where members of the Institute used assessors through their own company or subcontracted work, they should insist that those persons should be on the IFSM register as well as members in appropriate **(Action RD and Council).**

### **6. Agenda Item 6 Administrative Assistant**

RD informed Council that (see elsewhere in these minutes as well) Sharon Lawrence from Flying Changes virtual PA had been used to carry out work on the risk assessors register. She had proved a very useful and economical resource and would also be used for annual

membership fees. PC stated that he had been able to liaise with Sharon direct over fees and that she had been most useful so far. RD stated that we should start to plan to use Sharon to deal with a number of administrative functions where officers of Council feel they need some kind of administrative support, normally dealing with membership, registration and accreditation issues where large amounts of administrative details need to be kept and letter/paperwork dealt with. For internal reasons RD suggested and it was agreed that liaison for work placed with Sharon should go through the various officers concerned and cleared with the Treasurer prior to placing work with Sharon. RD also mentioned that if membership and services grow at the same rate as last year then Council may very well have to consider the services of an administrative assistant(S) on a more permanent basis (**Action RD, PC and Council Members**).

#### **7. Agenda Item 7. Membership 2009**

Most of this item was covered under agenda item 4 above but KD updated Council on Membership cards. This had been a long standing issue and a lot of time and effort had been put in to trying to source a decent functional card. Following a discussion, Chairman proposed, seconded by SC and agreed that the issuing of a membership card should not be pursued at the present time as there appeared to be no real benefits from this. AS informed Council that the annual membership fee letters would be going out at the end of February. This would be for the year January to December 2009 but it was thought that delaying the letters until February would stop any confusion with other fees being asked for at the same time by the Institute e.g. assessors register fees (**Action KD, AS and RD**).

#### **8. Agenda Item 8. Changes in Membership Rules Regarding Retired Members**

RD reminded Council that he had circulated a draft change after the decision at the AGM to include the rule for retired member's fee payments. After some discussion on this it was agreed that AS and KD would refine a form of words that came out of the discussion and that they would forward the final wording to RD to amend the Rules and Regulations for Membership and any other documents accordingly. Once done RD would also ensure that the new addition would be placed on the website and all formal documents amended accordingly (**Action AS, KD and RD**).

#### **9. Agenda Item 9. Informing Fire and Rescue Services of the Institute.**

RD informed Council of this item which had been placed on the agenda by GW. Councils overall view was that there was merit in ensuring that Fire and Rescue personnel, especially those in a fire safety management type role were aware of the Institute and the merits and benefits of membership. They should therefore be encouraged to join. RD informed Council that Fire and Rescue Services (Chief Officers) had been written to on a number of occasions with limited response and GW had attended the CFOA conference where it is clear that we are well known and respected in that community but it does appear we are not converting that into members. RD also explained that whenever we have a meeting or conference, local Chiefs are written to and invited. Also, every Fire and Rescue Service, as well as the Fire Service College, receives a number of Daedalus' whenever they are printed. Following on from a lengthy discussion of this topic, it was suggested by AS that a general letter of introduction should be written to Chief Fire Officers but also targeting senior Fire Safety Personnel outlining the role of the Institute, benefits etc. JC further suggested that Chiefs should be asked if we could put it on their intranet and RD asked if JW could use CFOA contacts to use their intranet links to circulate widely and AS to write the letter and circulate draft (**Action AS, JW RD and All Council Members**).

#### **10. Agenda Item 10. Membership Questionnaire**

DP reported on a draft questionnaire to put out to members regarding services, Institute's performance and future development of the Institute. JW circulated a single sheet draft and explained the content. DP had contacted a web based company that would put together a questionnaire to be answered from the website by members with costs. Council agreed the costs involved which were very reasonable and RD stated that we should maximise this opportunity (as the cost is a fixed price) by covering as many areas as we can with relevant questions. JW asked for questions and subject areas to be sent to him and he would circulate the work that had been done so far. JW to compile the questionnaire and circulate final draft to Council for approval before we launch it. DP to liaise with RD regarding the launch so we can inform members of it (**Action JW, DP and RD**)

#### **11. Agenda Item No. 11. Website**

President along with other members of Council had received a number of requests from members about interactive links on the website including checking membership and chat rooms/forums. DP had asked a company to look at the website and they had produced a report that had been circulated. Following a debate on all on this it was agreed that RD would talk to our current webmaster and RD, JW and DP would investigate further including costs (**Action RD, JW and DP**).

#### **12. Agenda Item 12. Formalising Travel Expenses for Council Members and Members on Institute Business**

RD introduced this and stated we needed to formalise travel expenses which had never been done in the past but as a limited company as well as being more active in the fire sector we needed to look to formalise this. A discussion ensued and it was proposed by RD, seconded by PC and agreed that mileage on Institute business should be paid at the rate of 30 pence per mile and overnight accommodation at the normal rate for the area of a premium hotel e.g. premier travel inn with any food pro rata and any other form of transport used at the cheapest available rate (**Action PC and all Council Members**).

#### **13. Agenda Item 13. Examination and Education Initiatives**

RD, JC and AS outlined the ABBE initiative and RD had reported elsewhere regarding examination and educational initiatives. All were progressing although RD stated that he was still waiting for consultation reports to come back regarding the Petro-chemical industries syllabuses. JOIFF were very involved with the Institute and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service regarding a fire degree and a verbal report RD had received from JOIFF seemed to indicate that this was going ahead quickly. ABBE were forging ahead with their fire risk assessors qualifications and the Institute as well as individual Council members were involved in that directly. RD had now created a direct link with Leeds Metropolitan University and there were a number of initiatives and options now streaming forward. SC felt that we should continue with our aim of setting up at least one examination in the near future and Council agreed that this would form part of the questionnaire to members to judge the feelings from them on how best we can serve them in the educational field (**Action RD and AS**).

#### **14. Agenda Item 14. Daedalus**

RD reported that there are more than enough articles for the next edition and this will be going to the printers for setting very soon. Target for print would be end of February beginning of March 2009 and there may be enough money and material to run an additional edition this year. The idea was that membership should get more involved in a newsy type of page with information and letters from members. RD would be emailing members for those types of contributions in future. A number of requests had also been

received regarding advertising. Council felt that the Daedalus must always be primarily a newsheet/journal for the membership rather than just a carrier for advertising and it was agreed that limited space would be made available on each edition but that this should not compromise the basis of the newsheet/journal. Council asked that RD should control the number of adverts and size that go in for any edition. RD proposed, seconded by KS and agreed that the costs of advertising should be annual half page fee £500, annual quarter page fee £260 and any one off advert at £50, size to be determined by space available but at least an eighth of a page ( **Action RD and Council**).

#### **15. Agenda Item 15. Activities for 2009**

RD outlined the activities proposed for 2009 consisting of two technical meetings, a conference and an AGM with technical content. President had asked in the past about speakers notes etc, RD explained that speakers presentations were posted on the website if handed over and permission was given, otherwise we did not do speakers notes mainly because of costs, time and lack of volunteers to do these things. JC asked if dates had been set RD explained that these were normally done on an individual event basis but well in advance for diaries. RD asked Council and members about speakers and also venues which were 'central' as these were always hard to find and also that we had to consider costs etc. JW stated that these meetings were always well attended as we always provided quality speakers and topical subjects. JC suggested trying Staffordshire Fire and Rescue HQ as a central venue and RD stated that Nottinghamshire had been an excellent venue and costs were very reasonable. RD would circulate for dates for the first technical meeting of 2009 shortly (**Action RD and Council**).

#### **16. Agenda Item 16. Affiliate Members**

RD reminded Council members of the new grade of Affiliate which dealt with companies and organisations that wished to join and be a part of the Institute. Up to now AS reported that we have three members since we launched a few months ago and RD stated that he had put this item on the agenda just to remind Council members that most of them had companies that should consider this option. GW had indicated by email that his company would sign up for this. KS asked if we could put this in Daedalus and it was suggested that KD and AS would put an update in the next edition (**Action RD, KD, AS and Council**).

#### **17. Agenda Item 17. Special Council Meeting re. Fire Risk Assessors Council Initiative by FIA**

RD and JW reported on this item, the main issue being the proposal for a risk assessor's council by the FIA. RD explained that the Institute had been 'billed' to speak at a meeting arranged by the FIA but had never been asked. It is believed that there was a meeting prior to this and we had not been invited to that. FIA responded that they had forgotten to invite us and apologised and we managed to get a representative there. Council members who could not make that meeting at Warrington Fire Research were briefed by RD and JW but in essence, it was Council's belief that as in the past, we should work towards one national fire risk assessors register that is totally independent from industry, Government or any other organisation that has a vested commercial interest and who is perceived to want to occupy that sector to control the market. RD explained that he had followed the decisions of that meeting by writing to various people in all sectors of the fire world including Government in the hope of having an OPEN debate on the subject with a resolution to the problem of accreditation of fire risk assessors. RD would circulate Council any replies he receives. Following a discussion it was agreed by Council that a further special meeting would be necessary once RD had received replies from the letters but that in the meantime we should continue to liaise and participate in any debates on this subject with all interested parties.

**18. Agenda Item 18. Any Other Business.**

- a) RD read out a request from editors of a book that was being collated and who wished chapters to be written on fire. This was passed to DP to deal with.
- b) RD brought up the subject of the provision of a professional register. This had been debated in the past but Council agreed that this should be placed as a question on the member's questionnaire about provision of services.

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked all for attending the meeting. The meeting ended at 1505hrs.