

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN  
CYMRU**



**MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**COFNODION Y PWYLLGOR DATBLYGU POBL A'R  
GYFUNDREFN**

**MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**DYDD LLUN, 14 MEDI 2009**

**MONDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2009**

***PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN,  
HEOL LLWYN PISGWYDD, CAERFYRDDIN***

***FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,  
LIME GROVE AVENUE, CARMARTHEN***

**11.00 – 12.20**

**PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	M Williams
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	R Llewellyn
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Holmes, P James
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	E Kirchner, P Llewellyn, C Philpott
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	R Smith, E Aitken, A Howells, K Jones, Jane Rose, B Bassett, Archdeacon Randolph Thomas, The

## 1. PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair, on behalf of all Members, extended his congratulations to Councillor C Philpott on the birth of her grandson.

A warm welcome was extended to Jane Rose, the Service's recently appointed Equality & Diversity Officer, who was in attendance as an observer.

Councillor P James raised concerns over the number of changes recently made to the Fire Authority Membership and emphasised the importance of continuity within the Fire Authority's structure.

## 2. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared.

## 3. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009

The minutes of the People and Organisational Development Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009 were received and approved as a true record subject to the following amendment:

Item 11, resolution 2 referring to the review of early retirement / termination of employment policies and flexible retirement provisions for support staff to be amended to reflect that 'Committee approve devolving the application of such discretion to Director level (***after consultation with the Director of Resources***), together with a business case cost recovery period of no more than 4 years'.

### Matters Arising from the Minutes of the POD Meeting Held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Reference was made to item 4, resolution 2 relating to the Corporate Risk Department Report – Health & Safety Management Performance, whereby Members had requested further details of the injury involving 'vehicles in motion'. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the information had been promulgated to committee and informed Members that the incident related to a retained firefighter who was responding to an alert from their place of work to the Station in their own private motor vehicle. The road conditions at the time were poor due to snow. Whilst pulling over to allow a lorry to pass, the car slid in deep snow and came to rest against the hedgerow resulting in a neck & shoulder injury. 12.5 days absence was incurred.

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on item 14, relating to the Senior Management Structure of the Service. It was reported that the appointment of two Assistant Chief Fire Officers had also resulted in two Area Manager vacancies being filled. The successful candidates, Mr Jim Cameron from Shropshire Fire Service and Mr Derek Masson from East Sussex Fire Service were due to commence in Mid October and early November respectively.

The Director of Resources provided an update on item 9 relating to the Employers Circular on fire pay for 2009. Members were informed that negotiations had now been resolved as follows:

Operational Staff – increase of 1.25%

Support Staff – increase of 1%

Principal Officers – increase of 1%

#### **4 TO COMMISSION THE NEW BRIGADE CHAPLAIN, THE REVERND MARK BEATON**

Members were reminded that the Supervisory Chaplain, The Very Reverend Geraint Hughes, had recently retired following almost 13 years as Chaplain for the Fire and Rescue Service and that Archdeacon Randolph Thomas (currently the Powys representative) had been appointed as Supervisory Chaplain.

Members noted that a formal presentation to the Very Reverend Geraint Hughes to mark his retirement would be made at the Annual Medal Presentation on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

The Chair, on behalf of all Members, extended his thanks to Archdeacon Randolph Thomas for the contribution made as Powys Chaplain and wished him well in his new position as Supervisory Chaplain.

Members Officially endorsed the appointment of The Reverend Mark Beaton, Vicar of New Radnor, as the new Powys Chaplain and Archdeacon Randolph Thomas offered a prayer of dedication to mark the appointment.

The Chief Fire Officer formally presented The Reverend Mark Beaton with the Service Badge and congratulated him on his new role within the Service.

#### **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

- 1. Archdeacon Randolph Thomas be appointed Supervisory Chaplain*
- 2. The Reverend Mark Beaton, Vicar of New Radnor be appointed as new Powys Chaplain.*

#### **5 TO RECEIVE THE CORPORATE RISK DEPARTMENT REPORT – HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE**

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with a periodic overview of Health and Safety management performance within the Service. Attention was drawn to the number of On Duty Injuries whereby a total of 28 injuries had been reported compared with 36 within the same reporting period for the previous

year. Members were very pleased to note the 25% reduction in total injuries to date and emphasised that although the figures were promising the Service should not be complacent.

Upon scrutiny, the most reported cause of On Duty injury during the reporting period was handling, lifting and carrying, closely followed by hit by moving, flying object and then slips, trips and falls. Members were provided with a brief synopsis of how the data would be used to raise awareness of these events in an effort to reduce their occurrence.

Reference was made to Health & Safety Audits and Inspections and the Chief Fire Officer highlighted that an external audit in the security of premises had been undertaken to ensure that the Service's processes are robust.

Members were informed that during October 2009 the Service would be subject to the Operational Assessment process, which was an external audit to ensure that all Fire Services in Wales provided an assurance of service delivery. H&S Management would be reviewed in the audit as a Key Line of Enquiry.

Members were pleased to note that this year's CFOA H&S Seminar would be hosted by the CFOA Wales H&S group on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October in Cardiff. The Welsh Assembly Minister, Dr Brian Gibbons, would be in attendance to provide the opening address to delegates and CFO Richard Smith would be providing a key note speech on the day. Members noted that Councillor Roy Llewellyn was also due to attend the event in his capacity as the Authority's H&S Champion, alongside the Service's H&S Director, ACFO Paul Bates.

Members sought clarification on the definition of "Exposure to Noise". The Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service had a duty to ensure that workers' hearing was protected from excessive noise at their place of work. The Service would continue to undertake regular assessments to keep the threshold for employees subjected to noise for a substantial length of time to a minimum.

Following a query from Councillor P James the Chief Fire Officer clarified that the term "Responding to Alarmer" referred to Retained Duty System Personnel or Day Crewed Personnel who were on call and travelling to the Station in response to a fire call.

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development concluded that the Service would continue to encourage a culture whereby employees report H&S issues in order that remedial actions are carried out immediately where necessary.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***Members acknowledge the progress being made to continuously improve the management of health, safety and welfare within the Service.***

## **6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELL BEING**

Members gave consideration to the Health and Well Being report whereby sickness absence rates for the period April-July 2009 equated to 1.66 shifts lost. Based on current trends the projected end of year figure was 4.97 shifts lost, which was within the Service's target of 5.8. Members were pleased to note that this placed the Service within the upper quartile of best performing Fire Services.

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development informed Members of an approach adopted by the Service whereby Members of staff who could not undertake full operational duties were placed on restricted duties. This enabled individuals to re-engage with the workplace early and remain involved in providing community safety advice by undertaking Home Fire Safety Checks, fitting smoke alarms etc.

Members noted the organisation's commitment to Health & Wellbeing through the support of nutritional campaigns such as National Sandwich Week and promoting local produce during British Food Week.

Committee was pleased to note that the figures for ill-health retirements remained comparatively low with none being recorded for Control Room and Support employees for the current year.

A discussion ensued on the absence sickness figures for Control Room staff. Members were informed that the changes made to the staffing structure within the control room had resulted in many improvements such as reduced sickness levels and an ability to accommodate increased maternity leave. The Chief Fire Officer reported that the staffing structure within the control room had been recognised as best practice and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service were due to visit the Service's Control Room with a view to implementing a similar structure.

Following discussions, Committee concluded that the independent review of the Control Room presented to Members in 2008 was satisfactory and that all Members endorsed the report.

Members commended the proactive approach taken by the Service and the efforts made to keep sickness absence levels as low as possible.

### **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The report be received and noted.***

**7 TO CONSIDER A REPORT ON THE WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT 2009**

Members were informed that the major recruitment campaign undertaken during the tail end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 had resulted in 12 recruits being employed in July this year. It was noted, however, that one recruit had withdrawn from the course within the first two weeks and was immediately replaced, and another had withdrawn towards the end of the 16 week course and therefore could not be replaced.

The graduation ceremony for the 11 recruits who had completed the initial course would be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Members noted that the new recruits would then commence Phase 2 of their Development Programme which would take approximately 2 years to complete.

Committee also noted that a second intake of recruits would be commencing employment with the Service on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and this course would again consist of 12 individuals who will then take up places at fire stations in March 2010.

Following a query from Councillor J Holmes, the Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an update with regard to the procurement of new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for operational staff. A sizing exercise would be undertaken across the Service prior to the kit being introduced in early 2010 at a cost of £420 per set.

**RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received for information. Members also noted the success of joint working with neighbouring Fire Services in Wales which has resulted in significant cost reductions.*