

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS



ESTABLISHED 1968
GOLDEN JUBILEE
YEAR
2018

MEMBER OF PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONERS COUNCIL
AGE CONCERN FORUM
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF AGEING
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www.narfire.org.uk

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Chair's Comments

Welcome to the latest newsletter.

Now things are back to normality we have been able to hold face to face NARF meetings at local, regional & national levels which makes things so much easier.

I have attended meetings at all these levels and numerous funerals where I parade the NARF WM Colours, usually along side Ian Forrester & Barry Higgins, who act as sentinels.

My thanks go out again to the Committees of Birmingham, Coventry & Solihull, Dudley & Sandwell and Wolverhampton & Walsall boroughs. As the years roll on the ages of the committee members increases and some new blood is required so if anyone feels like contributing some help let us know. Birmingham Borough in particular is in need of some new committee members. For details of what it entails please contact the NARF Office on a Wednesday between 1100 – 1500 hrs.

Thanks also go to Alison Newis for taking over the National role of Individual Membership Secretary. Alison was a member of Corporate Relations at HQ in West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service until recently.

It is again time for our Prize Draw which helps raise money for ex members widows Christmas gift so please take part if you can. Details are over the page.

Please remember to notify the NARF Office at Erdington for any changes of address. The e-mail is retired.firefighters@wmfs.net

Special Event

On Sunday 14th May 2023 A Church Service took place at Holy Trinity Church, Wolverhampton. The service was arranged by West Midlands Branch Chair Mr. John Littleton and Reverend Richard Merrick.

The service was held to commemorate all those NARF members who died during the Pandemic, to bless the new Wolverhampton & Walsall Sub Branch colours and to celebrate Saint Florian's Day as no service was held at the National Memorial Arboretum this year.

The Aldridge Fire Cadets acted as sentinels and those attending included City Of Wolverhampton Mayor, Councillor Samuels, local MP Jane Stevensons & Area Commander Martin Ward White from the West Midlands Fire Service.

About 80 people attended and a buffet took place after the event.

Congratulations.

Acting Chief Fire Officer Wayne Brown has been appointed Chief Fire Officer following a rigorous Interview process. Wayne joined the WMFS from London Fire Brigade in 2019

Simon Barry has been appointed Deputy Chief Fire Officer looking after Community Risk Reduction and Richard Stanton ACO with a Director for People reference.

Karen Gowreesunker has been appointed ACO with a reference for Enabling Services. Karen joined the WMFS in 2005 as a Service Support Officer and has worked her way up.

Group Commander Kris Darnley was one of 19 Fire Service Personnel in a civilian services attachment alongside 200 Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard & Merchant Navy personnel who paraded in Whitehall & then lined the processional route to & from Westminster Abbey for the Coronation of King Charles 3rd.

Twenty new recruits passed out from the latest course.

Pensions.

Following the difficulties still being experienced by some members the WMFS Pension Scheme Manager (Catherine Miks – Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee of councillor's) asked Ms Louise Wagstaff to complete an investigation into what has been happening. That report has now been completed and the initial report shared with the Scheme Manager. The report will be formally shared with the Pension Board & full Fire Authority ahead of their next meeting in June.

The most recent error, not included in the above report, (April's pension) has been notified to the Pensions Regulator, as well as the Scheme Manager and has been discussed at great length by the Pension Board. A formal report has been submitted to the Scheme Manager from the Pension Board to discuss at their next meeting.

Employee representatives on the local Pensions Board can be e-mailed on :-

Employee.pension.rep@gmail.com

The Oracle Fusion computer system which can show P60's & wages slips has now completed it's trials and after a few setbacks appears to be working OK. (Our own John Littleton, WM Branch Chair was one of the trialists). It now falls on the Fire Authority to decide whether to implement the system or not.

New Fire Dog.

An Eleven month old Cocker Spaniel has become the West Midlands Fire Service new fire Dog. 'Giddy' completed her training with his handler Alex Daw from the Fire, Research & Investigation Team in Nottingham. Training was based on the positive reinforcement method (play with a ball on a positive hit.) Station Commander Matt Ling said 'Giddy' is already showing her value as a member of the team'. Giddy has been fitted out with Scanine safety kit including boots.

HMICFRS Report.

A report from His Majesty's Inspector Of Fire & Rescue Services is said to be a difficult read as it says there is bullying, harassment, discrimination, misogyny, racism & homophobia in all British Fire Services. Wayne Brown, new CFO, says It is totally unacceptable for any of those things in any Fire Service, and that the WMFS has put in place procedures and practices to reduce and eradicate them.

Aston Museum

The museum in the 'old' part of Aston Fire Station is coming along. There was a 'big' day recently when, with the help of HQ Staff and porter driver two manual fire engines, three trailer pumps and a hose cart, were transported over from the railway arches at the rear of HQ to their purpose built garage at Aston. (The arches are on the route of HS2 and needed vacating) The Shand Mason Steamer had been moved from its store at Sutton Fire Station some time ago.

The dreaded Risk Assessments and Staff training now needs to be carried out.

Meetings Left This Year

Birmingham Borough. AGM To Be Confirmed. Committee Mtg Office Erdington Fire Stn 9/8 & 8/11.
Dave Brookes Sec 07973 779594

Coventry & Solihull. Committee Mtgs 3/8 & 2/11 Binley Fire Stn. 1100 hrs.
Alan Cramp Sec 07584 025235

Dudley & Sandwell. Committee Mtg 3/10 Haden Cross. Steve Grey Sec 07878 584238

Wolverhampton & Walsall. Committee Mtgs 2/8 & 25/10 Fallings Park 1930
Christmas Dinner 24/11/23 The Pavilion Wolverhampton (Details Later).

Brigade Carol Service

The Brigade carol service will again be at St Martins in the Bull Ring, Birmingham on 10/12/23 at 1630 hrs. This date is yet to be confirmed.

NARF Shop

Following a revamp, the NARF shop is now open again. Allan Middleton has now taken over as shop manager after Peter Buckland stepped down after many years work. Allan worked for Avon Fire & Rescue for 30 years. Since retiring he has been a Lecturer in Public Services at City of Bristol College Now retired altogether, he volunteers at the helicopter museum in Weston Super Mare along with spending time at his allotment, his boat and his MGB Roadster.

Prize Draw 2022.

A big thank you to all those who took part in last year's draw helping us to show the widows of ex members that we haven't forgotten about them.

Prize Draw 2023

Prize Draw 2023.

It's time again for this year's Prize Draw. As you know monies raised from this draw goes towards a Christmas gift for the widows of ex NARF members. These gifts are always appreciated but there is no obligation to buy the draw tickets. Please find enclosed two books of tickets.

The draw will take place on 16th August 2023 at the NARF Office at Erdington Fire Station at 1200 hrs.

1st Prize £500 2nd Prize £200 3rd Prize £100 4th Prize £50 10 Prizes of £25

We hope you take part but there is absolutely no obligation to take part or take the two books.

Tickets are £1 each (1 book £5, 2 Books £10.) Single tickets allowed
No need to return unwanted tickets.

Please make cheques out to 'WMFS Pensioners Association'

Put your name, address & phone number on the ticket stub (the small part) & return them to us in the envelope provided, remembering to put a stamp on it. Keep the main part of the ticket (large part) for your records.

If you wish to pay directly into our account, please do so but let us know, using your name as the reference. Our A/C is Lloyds 34058668 Sort Code 77-85-14

Further tickets are available from Ian Forrester 0121 451 2086 or
valandian@hotmail.co.uk

Winners will be contacted and listed on the West Midlands NARF website on
wmnarf.net

This newsletter has been compiled by Ian Forrester Birmingham Borough