



Update from the Chief

With 127 active units in the Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service keeping people informed about events throughout the area is not easy, but, it is important and something that I am very keen to do. This newsletter builds on the good work of our normal management channels and the website and I hope you find it useful and interesting. It gives us all the opportunity to share information and I hope that you will contribute to future issues.

The Service is going from strength to strength and the recent upgrade to retained status for 61 units is having a positive effect on recruitment numbers and the service we are able to deliver to the community. The development of the Community Response Units is progressing well and the first of the Road Traffic Collision/Wildfire units will be fully active in the coming weeks. In addition to improvements in our firefighting response there has been a significant increase in our capabilities for dealing with 'new dimensions' type incidents. Mass decontamination equipment is now located in Inverness and improved search and rescue equipment is being distributed throughout the area. Community Fire Safety is being undertaken by all sectors of the Service and we are making a difference to the safety of people in our area.

The future is positive but there are real challenges facing us. We must continue to improve in all areas and we must try and improve the firefighting vehicles and buildings. This will not be easy but we are making progress, for example we will be opening six new fire stations at Dunvegan, Durness, Lochcarron, Lochmaddy, Mid Yell and Shawbost.

Clearly there is a lot happening in Orkney, Shetland, Western Isles and Highland and this newsletter will help keep you up to date. I hope that you will submit material and let others know of the good work that your unit is doing.

As we approach the end of the year I thank everyone in the Service for their hard work. Enjoy Christmas and the New Year and stay safe.

CFO Brian A Murray

Partnership Working

"Alcohol-Fuel for Fire" Campaign, in partnership with Drug & Alcohol Teams, is still ongoing in our area, due to the large number of alcohol related incidents. This has gained momentum and has also been picked up nationally by other Scottish Fire & Rescue Services. Although this year's statistics show a marked decline, we do not wish to become complacent and should endeavour at all opportunities to promote this message during Community Fire Safety visits or talks.

CRM Department works with many partners in the community, one of which is **CRIMESTOPPERS**. As an active partner, HIFRS have been asked to promote this Charity extensively throughout our organisation and to the general public. The **CRIMESTOPPERS** number **0800 555 111** can be used by anyone to report crime anonymously and there is great value in this for preventing and reducing wilful fire raising, reduction of malicious calls, identification of road traffic offences (i.e. drink driving).

Further areas of partnership work include a multi-agency approach to provide a *Home Buyers/Sellers Information Pack* for the Highland Solicitors Property Centre.

The advice that is included within this document encourages buyers and sellers to consider fire safety, security and road safety when in this position. From HIFRS perspective, this will increase the amount of homes in Highlands & Islands covered by Smoke Detection, and may encourage some to provide Residential Sprinklers, which is the ultimate protection for the home.

Working with Young People Fire Cadet Courses

HIFRS have been successful in a bid for £10,000 to the Community Safety Steering Group's Local Action Fund, a fund which offers assistance to young people in the community by providing diversion projects.



Cadet courses at Wick Airport Fire Station



Cadet courses at Wick Fire Station

This money will go towards providing clothing & equipment to further roll out the successful pilot scheme of the Fire Cadet Courses run in Wick Fire Station and other courses currently running within the Service. These courses were run in conjunction with the Education Service, Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and other Emergency Services. They provide a programme for young people who have behavioural issues at school or outwith, are offending or on the verge of offending. The aim is to give life changing opportunities to vulnerable youngsters and to enable them to become more responsible, safer and caring members of their communities.

It is hoped that in the new year the full course can be delivered initially in Caithness, Ross & Cromarty and Lochaber areas.

Operations Support Department

The Operations Support Department has been established to carry on many of the functions of what was the Technical Services Department. The department is led by Divisional Officer John Donaldson.

Much of the department's work in the future will focus on making sure that the Service is well placed to meet the demands on our operational resources.

Mass Decontamination

Much of the work that is being done at the moment focuses on the New Dimensions equipment which was provided by the Scottish Executive. Plans have been put in place to enable five retained stations to assist their wholetime colleagues in providing a mass decontamination capability in the event of a major incident. The stations involved are Invergordon, Grantown, Nairn, Dingwall and Inverness.

Further training, in the use of firefighter decontamination structures, will take place at selected stations.

Additionally the wholetime staff at Inverness have been receiving specialist training to allow them to use the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) equipment.

Western Isles Offshore Response Team Exercise in Benbecula Saturday, 26 November 2005

A joint exercise was held in the Western Isles which involved crews from Stornoway and Benbecula. Initially crews and equipment were airlifted from Stornoway and Benbecula airports to a location North of Balivanich. Also involved in the exercise were Stornoway and Benbecula Coastguard personnel, Bristow Helicopters staff and our Control operators who helped co-ordinate the exercise from the Command and Control Centre in Inverness.



Pictured above are crew members embarking the Coastguard helicopter.

NEWS IN BRIEF

"Wear it Pink" Day Breast Cancer Campaign



A few of the staff at Service Headquarters very successfully showed their support for "Wear it Pink" day on Friday, 28th October 2005. As well as getting all dressed up they also managed to raise £50 which will go towards the vital research into Breast Cancer.



Torridon Retained Unit

Firefighters from the recently upgraded retained fire unit of Torridon attended the Shieldaig Fete earlier this year. The main reasons for the unit's attendance was to meet with members of the local community, give advice on community safety and answer questions from the public. Members of the unit also demonstrated the wide range of equipment that they now carry on their new fire appliance.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE...

ADO Ross Notman moved from the Development Department to Skye and Lochalsh District Office on 31 October 2005.

ADO Nick Dunford moved from the Sutherland District Office to Easter Ross & Cromarty District Office on 31 October 2005.

ADO John MacDonald moved from the Skye & Lochalsh District office to Operations Support Department on 17 October 2005.

INCIDENTS OF NOTE

Operational Incident Narrative Old School House, Toab, Tankerness, Orkney 8 November 2005



At 02.12 hours on 8th November 2005, Fire Control received a number of calls reporting a fire at the Old School House, Toab, Tankerness. On arrival the incident commander was confronted with a well developed fire. Following his dynamic risk assessment, the incident commander requested a third appliance.

The fire was fought using defensive fire fighting tactics.

The schoolhouse was all but destroyed by the fire, but crews prevented spread of fire to the adjoining school building.

Throughout the incident crews were hampered by severe gales.

The fire was brought under control by 05.30 hours.

One Vehicle Road Traffic Accident (Loch Ness)



Units from Drumnadrochit, Inverness Retained, and Inverness Wholetime attended this accident. The vehicle came to rest 30 feet down the roadside embankment. This created difficulty in stabilising the vehicle and the casualty extraction. Firefighters worked

with paramedics to release the casualty before leaving the scene in the hands of the police.

Flat Fire Grantown-on-Spey

Four appliances from Grantown, Aviemore, Nairn and the Hydraulic Platform from Inverness attended a fire in one of the 7 flats above a supermarket in Grantown-on-Spey. Due to the size of the premises, the incident was sectorised and crews attacked the fire from 3 sides. There were 22 personnel involved, of which 14 made at least one entry wearing Breathing Apparatus. Due to layout, use and construction of the premises fire fighting was extremely difficult but crews successfully contained the fire to one flat.

TRAINING

Training and Information Days



Training and information days for Wholetime and Retained Officers are held throughout the Service area. The pictures show officers who attended at Service HQ (above) and Shetland District Office, Lerwick (below). These training and information days have been developed to provide effective communications on Service information. The agenda allows for strategic and area issues to be discussed as well as the Service's plans, aims and objectives.



Meetings

Wholetime Officers Meetings - Service HQ
South Mainland - Service HQ
Shetland - Lerwick
Western Isles - Tarbert
North Mainland - Lairg
Orkney - Kirkwall

Dates

13/14/15 September 2005
14/15/16 March 2006
8 October 2005
5 November 2005
3 December 2005
28 January 2006
4 March 2006

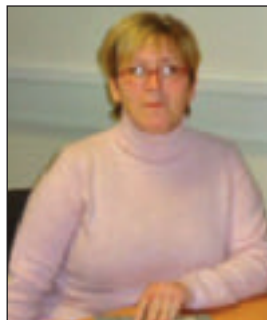
Mich Curtis Learning Development Manager



Since joining the Service in August as the IPDS Manager Mich Curtis has been busy familiarising herself with the progress achieved so far, planning the future development of IPDS and working with Margaret Fisk (HR Department) to design an appraisal process that can be used throughout the Service. Although there seems to have been a few teething problems with the FF

development programme in relation to the type of evidence that could be used and the method of capturing evidence these have now been addressed and knowledge of the process is starting to increase. Sub Officer Ricky Dibble has just started working for the IPDS project on a part-time basis to assist Mich with Inverness station. By working with the four watches Ricky will help both the trainees and assessors to correctly capture evidence that can be used as part of the trainees portfolios, when working towards Operation in the Community level 3 and assisting in the use of the PDR pro system.

Integrated Risk Management Planning



Cathie Way joined the Service in July 2005, having previously worked in The Highland Council Road Safety and Community Safety Units.

Cathie has been working on the development of the Integrated Risk Management Annual Action Plan for 2006/2007. In doing this, she has been gathering information on progress made so far, and identifying

areas of priority in driving down risk in our local communities.

Having now produced the draft Annual Action Plan, the IRMP Team are consulting with key stakeholders throughout the Service area.

Presentations have been made recently to: IRMP Working Group; The Highland and Islands Fire Board and Wholtime crews in Inverness. All other staff members should receive copies of the draft Annual Action Plan in the near future. Plans are in place to further consult with Community Safety Partner organisations in each of our constituent authorities.

All staff are encouraged to participate in this important consultation process. Consultation ends on 28 January 2006. The draft Plan and consultation questionnaire can be accessed through the Service website. Paper copies can be obtained by contacting the **IRMP Team on 01463 227170**.

Long Service & Good Conduct Medal



T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer MacLennan is seen presenting Firefighter Alan Duff from the Tain Unit with his Long Service & Good Conduct Medal. Alan joined the Service in 1984.

Gaelic Language Plan

HIFRS has produced a Gaelic Language Plan which is one of the first to be completed by the Fire Service in Scotland.

The plan sets out the objectives of the Service in delivering a set of actions which will help to promote the Gaelic language throughout the Highlands & Islands and beyond. The language plan is currently being distributed and will also be available on our website www.hifrs.org.



SERVICES - The FSNBF provides a range of services that enhance quality of life for serving and retired Fire & Rescue Service employees and their families. Yes, that includes you, if you are employed in any Department of the Service, including Civilian and Support staff.

The charity provides a number of invaluable services to its beneficiaries, including;- Recuperative facilities, Rehabilitation and Therapy, Financial support for those in need. These services provide all Fire & Rescue Service personnel and their dependants with the support they need when they need it most, enabling them to get the most out of life. Recent research has shown that the somewhat archaic grant giving service was in need of review, to which a pilot "beneficiary support policy" was conceived. This will hopefully go a long way towards helping beneficiaries more quickly and enriching many of the current support services offered by the charity.

FUNDRAISING - Providing these services to our beneficiaries costs over £7 million per year. Like many charities, we rely almost entirely on donations to fund our work, and therefore a lot of hard work by Fire & Rescue personnel everywhere. There are many new revenue streams to help provide a steady flow of income including;- Ben Fund Lottery, Gift Aid, Affinity deals, Treks, Fundraising activities. The "Ben Fund Lottery" has also undergone a

review and now offers more prizes, including;- 1st prize-up to £25,000, 2nd prize-£2,000, 3rd prize-£1,000, 10 x £100 prizes, 10 x £50 prizes. Join now to avoid disappointment!

SUPPORT & ASSISTANCE If you feel you need assistance, know of anyone else who needs help, have a fundraising idea or wish to know more about the charity, please contact **Graham Clark or Mark Loynd on 01463 227000**.



Another successful "Car Wash" happened on 10th September, with many stations throughout the Service taking part. With money still coming in, it looks as if for the second year running the Highlands & Islands will be at the top of the fundraising list, Well done to one and all.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading the Newsletter but if you have any comments or wish any items to be included in the March issue please contact T/ADO Derek Wilkie on telephone number 01463-227006 or derek.wilkie@hifrs.org