



Update from the Chief

Since my last newsletter update, the pace of change has not relented and there have been significant developments at both National and Local level.

At a National level, on the 7th September, the First Minister made the expected announcement that Scotland will be serviced by one Police Force and one Fire & Rescue Service. To achieve one Service by the target date of April 2013, Chief Officers, through CFOA(S), have developed focused work streams to consider how best to integrate and develop a wide spectrum of functions.

Appreciating that all staff should be aware of developments, the Service has made information available on the Intranet. To date, two specific documents have been posted, one dealing with questions appertaining to the workforce and the other a Scottish Government consultation document titled "Reforming Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland". In reply to the consultation, the Highland and Islands Fire Board submitted its response by the 2nd November deadline.

To ensure the interests of Highlands and Islands are best represented as the 'one Service' develops, DACO Billy Wilson has been nominated to represent the Service as a project lead.

At a local level, the Fire Board, at its meeting on 26th August, approved the next phase of development for the Highlands & Islands Fire Cover Model, defining which stations would be designated as Standard and Primary response.

In addition, the Board approved the future work programme for future areas of review that will include: the provision of second appliances at two pump stations, the availability of stations, the possible development of alternative crewing arrangements in areas with recruitment difficulties and the future role of Community Response Units.

These endorsements are of particular significance, as they define the direction of travel for the Service, enabling further work to develop a focused, cost effective delivery model that will enhance firefighter safety.

In my last update, I referred to the new real fire training facility in Sumburgh. I was pleased to be part of the official opening of this facility, together with Stations at both Scalloway and Sandwick in early October. It was a pleasure meeting all Service personnel and guests that attended. Details of the openings are featured on the front page and on page 2.

As this will be the last Newsletter before Christmas, I would like to take this opportunity to wish every one of you and your families, wherever you may be, a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year, and to thank you for the service you have provided for our communities.

Trevor Johnson
Chief Fire Officer

Official Opening

Fire Behaviour Training Facility on Shetland

The official opening of the new training facility at Sumburgh Airport on the Shetland Islands took place on Saturday 1st October.

CFO Trevor Johnson, accompanied by Fire Board Convener Richard Durham officially opened the unit.



This training unit emulates the conditions a Firefighter will face in any room fire, and temperatures within the training units can be in excess of 750°C.

Firefighters from Sumburgh Airport will also be receiving training at the new facilities, and it is hoped that other organisations from across the region, which also use breathing apparatus, will make use of the fire behaviour

units, thus increasing their value to the area. (photo courtesy of Dave Donaldson)

These facilities will provide easier access to fire behaviour training for those firefighters based on the Shetland and Orkney Islands.

Our Firefighters will not only be able to deliver a more effective, higher quality service to the community, but also improve their own safety at incidents. Backdraught and flashover situations have contributed to the rise in Firefighter deaths and injuries across the UK. This facility and those like it will help us address this unwelcome trend.

Staff Communication Survey

The deadline for responding to the Staff Communication Survey was extended to 31st October due to the School holiday period.

By that date 241 members of staff had completed the questionnaire. The responses to the survey are currently being analysed and a summary of the findings will be published on HI-Light in the near future.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Through staff seminars and engagement, I have had the opportunity to listen to the views of a number of staff, all of which I found encouraging, as each recognised the positive manner in which our Service is now developing.

In developing the Service, we must recognise there are a number of things to balance. The easiest solutions usually involve a generous amount of money, a luxury which in the current economic climate is simply not feasible. The challenges presented in delivering emergency response to often small populations, dispersed across a large geographical area, are recognised by us all. The desire of the Fire Board and Service to support our stations is also evident, with our most recent emphasis being on maximising the levels of firefighter safety. All of these must be balanced in a way that makes HIFRS sustainable now and in the future; providing alternative approaches to safe, effective and affordable emergency response.

That said, I am aware that the extent of our recent successes can sometimes be forgotten due to the pace of development. So as a reminder to us all, I have set out some of the recent achievements below:

- The restructure has reduced the number of senior and middle managers to provide additional staff within districts
- We have funded additional training posts within the training department
- The Service Improvement Team helped many people to understand the importance of their job, what needed to be done, and how best to do it. The SIT also completed many fire safety audits and helped with recruitment for stations
- Building on the work of the SIT, we have supported our Group Managers to develop support programmes, such as the station assessment process, to help staff understand their job and to provide consistency, common approaches and to identify best practice
- Officers have moved from a 5 to a 4 week duty system providing additional support at incidents
- We have built new fire stations at Baltasound, Scalloway, Sandwick, Rousay and Lochboisdale, and we will finish building new fire stations on Fair Isle, Whalsay, St. Margarets Hope, John O' Groats, Bonar Bridge, Uig, Lochaline and Bressay by the end of March 2012
- We have built a state of the art fire training module at Sumburgh, described by people out with HIFRS as probably the best in Scotland
- We will invest £250,000 before March 2012 to upgrade computers on stations. This will support training at stations
- We have provided additional funding for risk-critical Fire Behaviour Training and invested heavily to enhance Breathing Apparatus safety, by moving from a 2 year to a 1 year Refresher Training programme
- We have purchased a replacement high-reach appliance to replace the appliance in Inverness which was almost 20 years old
- We have bought 7 new fire appliances and have orders placed for 9 more.

I believe that you will recognise that these successes are significant achievements which have only been possible due to the professionalism, commitment and dedication of all of our staff.

CFO Trevor Johnson

NEW STATION OPENINGS

Scalloway & Sandwick

On Saturday 1st October, CFO Trevor Johnson visited Shetland with Fire Board Convener, Richard Durham to attend the opening ceremonies of the new Stations at Scalloway and Sandwick.

The visit also included the official opening of the new training facility at Sumburgh airport, which is featured on the front page of the newsletter.



The station at Sandwick is a remodelled and renovated building which was previously a bus garage and is the second development of a new fire station on a brown field site. The first was on Unst in 2010.

It is a departure from the traditional and previous station developments on green field sites and it is proving to be more sustainable and considerably less costly.

This is very significant for the Board and the Service as it allows more stations to be upgraded to the required standard.

The quality in the design and construction of the station is impressive and the Service's building partners are to be commended for their performance. It should also be noted that this is probably the most energy efficient station in the Board's portfolio with very low running costs.

CFO Trevor Johnson, Fire Board Convener Richard Durham are pictured with Watch Manager Stuart Jamieson at the official unveiling of the plaque at Sandwick. *(photo courtesy of Dave Donaldson)*



The station at Scalloway is new, developed using the Service's cost effective design construction specification on a green field site. This quality building uses the latest in "green" technology to provide heat, power and light.

These facilities will now allow the Fire & Rescue Service to provide an appropriate resource to the surrounding communities and improve the facilities and accommodation for the crews.

Pictured above are the crew and guests who attended the official opening. *(photo courtesy of Dave Donaldson)*

INCIDENTS OF NOTE

Road Traffic Collision - A9 Dalwhinnie Junction

Crews from Badenoch & Strathspey successfully extricated 3 casualties from a road traffic collision (RTC) on the A9 at the South Dalwhinnie Junction.

The incident occurred at approx 1130 hours on 11th September with Newtonmore CRU first in attendance backed up by Kingussie and Aviemore Retained Units.

A northbound saloon car, towing a caravan, was in collision with a hatchback travelling south. The saloon car shed its caravan and came to rest at an angle in the roadside culvert, whilst the other vehicle came to rest in the middle of the junction.



Due to the spread of the incident, staff from the Newtonmore Unit initiated sectorisation in accordance with the Incident Command System. This greatly assisted in the command and control of the incident and the safe extrication of the casualties.

Crews worked quickly and professionally and in collaboration with Police, Ambulance and Transerv Staff brought about a safe and satisfactory conclusion to the incident.

Two casualties were transported to Raigmore Hospital by ambulance and 1 was flown by helicopter due to suspected chest and back injuries. All casualties were subsequently released after medical examination.

Agricultural Bailer Fire, Aviemore



On 28th September, crews from Aviemore and Kingussie attended an incident at a farm near Aviemore. Their actions successfully prevented a large quantity of straw being destroyed by quickly extinguishing fires in a bailing machine.

The bailer had encountered mechanical problems which not only ignited the vehicle itself but also spread quickly to the straw in the field.

With the use of hosereel jets, the crews from Aviemore and Kingussie brought the vehicle fire under control.

In order to tackle the fires, crews utilised beaters and knapsack tanks to extinguish the large number of small fires in the field. This successfully brought the fires under control and prevented the fire spreading to adjoining properties.



ON THE RUN

The column in this edition is slightly different from previous editions of the Newsletter, introducing a small quiz to test your knowledge.

I hope you will have a go at completing the quiz either individually or as a watch/station.

Having observed some of the fire behaviour courses at Invergordon recently, some details of the Delta 500 Attack branch seem to have been forgotten. One of those being that the operating pressure, at the branch, is normally taken to be 7 bars.

But before going into more detail about the branch, it is worth considering some of the basic pressure losses that you, as a pump operator, might encounter.

Firstly, there is the friction loss that occurs inside the delivery hose as the water travels from the pump to the branch. A rule-of-thumb that pump operators should remember is to add:

- 0.2 bar per length of 64 mm hose to the pressure asked for at the branch;
- 1.0 bar per length of 45 mm hose to the pressure asked for at the branch.

For example, if a pressure of 7 bars was requested at the branch on a line consisting of 2 lengths of 45 mm hose, the pump operator must have the low pressure gauge at 7 bars x (2 lengths x 1) = 9 bars.



The picture shows the different widths of delivery hose: from L-R, 64mm, 45mm, 25mm (for evaluation) and 19mm HR tubing. Each has different internal friction loss characteristics.

In the next article, other sources of friction loss will be covered but in the meantime, can you answer the following?

1. **At what pressure does the low contents whistle on the Drager BA set sound at?**
2. **What is the test frequency for the 13.5m extension ladder?**
3. **If you came across an RTC and one of the vehicles involved had a hazard warning panel where the emergency action code was '4X', what does the 4 stand for?**

Answers at the bottom of the last page of the newsletter.

Following on from the On the Run article in the September 2011 issue, staff have questioned the number and disposition of the intrinsically safe radios we have in the Service. For information, there are 6 on the environmental protection/chemical incident pod and one will be issued shortly to each of the two pump rescue ladders at Inverness.

Mike White, Group Manager, Training

PEOPLE

Peter White



The Carrbridge unit recently held a retirement presentation for former Firefighter Peter White to mark his 19 years service to his surrounding community. Unfortunately, Peter was forced to retire in April this year after sustaining an injury outside the Service.

Peter was involved in refurbishing and building a number of "Fire

stations" for the Carrbridge unit over the years. Prior to the provision of the purpose built station in 2006, the unit had occupied various buildings including a shed made by Peter from the recycled doors from Grantown Fire Station.

As former colleagues gathered to wish him well, Peter was presented with an engraved glass tanker by Watch Manager Dougie MacDonald.

Alan Robertson (Albie)



Alan Robertson (Albie) was presented with the 25 year axe when he left the Service a few months ago.

Albie joined the Service in 1983 as a Firefighter and served at Kinlochleven fire station for his entire career and was promoted to Watch Manager.

The axe was presented by Group Manager McElhinney on the training night at Kinlochleven Station on the 26th September in the presence of his wife Janice and other family members.

At the presentation Albie was thanked for almost 30 years of service to the Fire Service and his community.

We hope that you have enjoyed reading the Newsletter.

Would you like your Station to be featured in a future edition of the Newsletter?

Do you have any interesting news articles or events linked to your Station?

If you have any comments, wish any items to be included in the next issue, or would like a copy of the Newsletter in a different format, please contact Denise Sutherland on 01463-227009 or denise.sutherland@hifrs.org

EVENTS

Football

British Cup Winners - 25th Anniversary



The 7th May 2012 will be the 25th anniversary of HIFRS winning the British Cup against Greater Manchester at Roker Park, Sunderland.

To recognise this fantastic achievement a function will be held at the Royal British Legion, Huntly Street, Inverness, on Thursday 10th May 2012.

A group consisting of Donnie Grant, Billy Dingwall, Billy Sanderson, and Alan Edwards have been working on the arrangements, and would like to invite the players and families, retired and serving members along with supporters to the event.

Phil Black's family will be attending and there will be a couple of guest speakers. A buffet will be provided and the cost will be approximately £6.50 per person.

To help with the organisation of the event, Alan Edwards would be grateful if individuals planning to attend, could let him know as soon as possible, as the numbers attending will determine what area within the Royal British Legion will be required.

Please contact Alan Edwards on 01463 831589 or 07546581174, or by email am.edwards@btinternet.com.

Lands End to John O'Groats Charity Cycle

In the last edition we featured the above charity cycle which took place between 4th - 12th June 2011.

The organisers are now requesting that any remaining sponsor forms are returned with any monies to allow them to award the winner of the "Guess the Final Stage" with the £300 prize.



All monies and forms should be returned before 1st December 2011, when the £300 prize will be awarded.

The money raised, which is already in excess of £10,000 will be distributed to the Firefighters Charity, Crossroads Care, Inverness and Highland Hospice.

From the Archives - 51 Years Ago

The New Inverness Laundry, Telford Street, Inverness 17.3.60

The brigade was called to an outbreak of fire in the above premises in the very early hours of the morning and it was discovered that the main building was well alight. The fire was eventually brought under control by the use of five jets, water being taken from street hydrants and from the canal. An interesting feature of the fire was to be found in the fact that evidence indicated that the fire had been caused by spontaneous combustion taken place in a bundle of laundered linen.

*Extract from Northern Area Fire Brigade Annual Report
16th May 1959 to 15th May 1960*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fleet & Equipment



During October the first 2 of 9 new Standard Appliances arrived at our workshops. These have bodywork and cab conversion, built on a Mercedes 816 Vario chassis upgraded from 7.5 tonnes to 8.2 tonnes Gross Vehicle Weight specifically for Fire Service use.

The design includes:

- Seating for a crew of 5
- 1000ltr integral water tank with an inboard Godiva Prima 2010 main pump with 'traditional' pump gauge panel & controls. All housed in a rear locker
- 1 x high pressure hose reel
- Night Owl remote control directional lighting tower
- All round LED scene lighting
- A 10.5m trussed ladder and a 5.4m short extension roof ladder
- 6 side lockers and shelving to accommodate the Standard equipment list



The vehicles are currently in HQ workshops being 'fitted out' for equipment stowage, and will be ready to hand over to Operations in December.

In mid September the replacement Ariel Ladder Platform (ALP) arrived. The "02" plate Volvo FM12 ALP replaces the current 19 year old Mercedes appliance.

The ALP is equipped with a 'Bronto Skylift F32 HDT' Ladder Platform Boom and turntable. This increases our height reach to 32 metres compared to 28 metres with the old equipment. The controls are fully computerised featuring 'one touch' self levelling jacking and on screen displays for all operations.



HI-FiReS

HI-FiReS is our 10 week youth engagement programme, aimed at young people aged between 12 and 15 years old. This successful initiative is an interactive learning programme based on the Service's activities.

A wide range of topics form the programme, including home fire safety, the use of pumps, hoses and breathing apparatus (BA), ladders, dealing with road traffic collisions (RTC), learning knots and lines, as well as basic first aid.

There are programmes underway in Kirkwall on the Orkney Islands, and Castlebay on the Western Isles and Fort William in the Highland Region.

The programme culminates in a presentation evening where the young people have the opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have learned.



Roseanna Cunningham, Scottish Government's Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs attended a presentation event for HI-FiReS when she paid a visit to Invergordon fire station on 7th July.

The Minister watched the young people as they carried out a range of practical exercises on the drill ground incorporating the skills they had recently acquired. She also took the opportunity to chat with the group about their experiences of HI-FiReS and also spoke to CRM staff and HI-FiReS instructors. (see picture above)

The Minister expressed how impressed she was with both the commitment of the young people and the dedication and hard work of the instructors in making HI-FiReS a success.

Procurement

Since December 2010, we have run procurement exercises resulting in 26 new contracts being put in place, which are saving the Service £217,700 over the next three to five years.

Highlights include the delivery and installation of the Fire Behaviour Units to the new site at Sumburgh in Shetland; upgrading the Ariel Ladder Platform with the acquisition of a newer model from Tayside FRS; and phased replacement of Distress Signal Units with all Stations newly equipped by Christmas.

We have put in place a couple of smaller cleaning contracts and the contract for the cleaning of the Headquarters and District Offices is about to be advertised. A contract for catering at the training facility at Invergordon will be advertised shortly and we hope to have the contract in place before Christmas.

We are also the lead Service in the User Intelligence Group for the replacement of the Framework agreement for all Scottish Fire & Rescue Services hydraulic rescue equipment and ancillary equipment. We are active participants in the Scottish Fire Rescue Services Centre of Expertise, and look forward to future joint procurement activity on fleet, PPE and uniforms, specialist and generic fire fighting equipment.

In the last year, we have also run training sessions on specification writing, evaluation criteria, contract award process overview, as well as sessions providing a general procurement overview. Further courses will be run in the New Year covering various procurement topics and contract management. Information about the courses as well as useful procurement documents can be found on Hi-Light.

COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT

New Partnership Agreement

The Service is a partner in the Inverness Community Safety Partnership (ICSP) which includes members from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The main aim of the partnership, which was officially launched in July, is to coordinate community safety work being undertaken in the Inverness area with a view to making Inverness a safer place to live, work and visit. The partnership will share information and target resources to try to ensure this objective is met.

The member partners have recently been working to improve communication and management within houses of multiple occupation (HMO).

Future plans include an open discussion with members of the Inverness community designed to highlight issues which affect their quality of life and so inform the future priorities of the partnership.

Driving Ambition

Driving Ambition courses were delivered in Tain, Golspie, Wick, Thurso, Lochaber and Kingussie during August and September to 379 S6 pupils.



This multi-agency initiative is designed to engage with potential young drivers, increasing their knowledge and understanding of issues relating to road safety and vehicle ownership.

HIFRS input specifically focuses on the importance of driver safety, what to do at the scene of an accident and the role of the Fire & Rescue Service at a road traffic collision.

Operation Youth Advantage

HIFRS recently attended Operation Youth Advantage for the first time, at the course held in October at Cameron Barracks, Inverness. Operation Youth Advantage is a 5 day residential initiative jointly run by the Army, Northern Constabulary and Grampian Police designed to divert young people who are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.

Staff from the Service gave input on fire safety and the effects of anti-social practices. Initial feedback has been extremely positive with young people engaging well, asking questions and remarking on the positive messages they had received from the session.

On the Run : Answers to Quiz

1. At 55 bars +/- 5 bars, or to put it another way, between 60 bars and 50 bars.
2. On acceptance at the station, quarterly, annually (by workshops) and after operational use. These tests must be recorded on the record sheet.
3. The number 4 means a dry agent, for example sand or fuller's earth. Make sure that the sand is dry and not moist, as any moisture can initiate a chemical reaction.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Morag Bannigan

We are pleased to announce not just a first for Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service, but a first for all Fire & Rescue Services in Scotland.



Morag Bannigan, Admin Team Leader is the first support member of staff (civilian) in Scotland to successfully complete the Supervisory Management Programme on the Block Delivery method, resulting in a HNC in Watch Management.

This course is run by the Scottish Fire & Rescue Services College and is delivered in Gullane. The HNC has been

placed on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework at Level 7 (equivalent of an Advanced higher). The course includes 4 challenging modules which cover leadership and motivation, managerial effectiveness, resource management and employment interviewing.

Completion of this course provides students with some advanced standing towards the Diploma in Public Service Leadership.

Emergency Services Charity Football Match 2011



A football match between the Police and Fire Service in aid of Crossroads Lewis was held in Stornoway on 17th September.

This was the fourth annual match between the two sides who use the fixture for fundraising efforts. The first two games were won by the Fire Service with the Police winning last year. This year's closely fought and very competitive game was also won by the Police. The trophy was presented to the winning team by Councillor Charlie Nicholson, a Member of the Highland and Islands Fire Board.

24 Hour Spin Cycle

Our personnel from Grantown Fire Station took part in a 24 Hour Spin Cycle in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support.



The Grantown crew helped raise £2000 for MacMillan Cancer Support in memory of Rhona Milne a local campaigner for good causes, who tragically died after a short illness.

Firefighter Keith Dickinson organised the event with a Spinning bike being ridden from 1000 hours on Saturday 17th September until 1000hours on Sunday 18th at the Craig Maclean Sports Centre, Grantown.

At one point in the evening all 15 bikes were occupied by Grantown Fire Station personnel.