



Update from the Chief

As I visit personnel across the area I am pleased to hear that the newsletter is well received and that people feel communication channels are improving. The website, wholtime and retained officers' meetings, the service plan and general visits by officers are helping keep everyone informed about developments and news. There will be a further boost later this year with the introduction of an intranet that should give easy access to all Service documents. However, there is always room for improvement and I am sure our new 'Communication Forum', as outlined in this newsletter, will play a vital role in making sure that we improve our information sharing so that everyone feels an integral part of Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service.

In the mean time I would encourage you to help communications across the service by submitting articles to this newsletter!

Enjoy the summer and keep your communities safe.

Best wishes

CFO Brian A Murray

New Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Tony Wood



Tony has been a member of the Fire Service since 1977. He joined Merseyside Fire Brigade as an 18-year-old trainee firefighter subsequently serving at a number of stations in the city of Liverpool, including a period at Toxteth Fire Station, this coincided with the riots in 1981. Promotion through the junior officer ranks followed to rider Station Officer in 1993. A change of role took him into Fire Safety as District Officer and a number of specialist roles within the function.

Tony was promoted to ADO in 1997, to DO and Staff Officer to the CFO in 1998 and to SDO Community and Legislative Fire Safety in 1999 followed by periods as Director of Training and Development and Director of Human Resources with additional responsibility for lead on IRMP.

Tony is married to Sue, they have 3 children Joanne, Natalie and Sophie. They currently live in Liverpool, where they have recently completely renovated their house, ("from the roof down") and intend to relocate as soon as practicable to the Inverness area.

Sailing is a major interest for Tony and he is a qualified Yacht Master. He has sailed in many areas around the coast of Britain, across to Ireland, Scotland and France. He has taken part in several yachting races in his time. Notably the 3 peaks open class yacht race in 1994 where his team came in a credible tenth place whilst raising over £8000 for the Fire Service National Benevolent Fund and a local children's hospice "The Claire House appeal". More recently he skippered a crew which competed in the 2004 National Firefighters sailing challenge.

He considers the future of the Fire and Rescue Service lies at the forefront of community safety, leading the delivery of change with partners in ensuring that all our communities are safer and have the best and most efficient Service provision available.

Operations Support - I.T. Facilities

The Service has entered into a partnership agreement with Fujitsu Services Limited, who will supply and manage an I.T. network for all 95 Retained stations. Staff from the Operations Support department are working closely with Fujitsu to take this project through to completion. The network will link with the existing Headquarters and District Office network. As part of the agreement, an Intranet will also be introduced, which will allow the sharing of documents, search facilities and the electronic submission of forms among other services. Every station will be supplied with at least one terminal, plus a projector and printer.

A 3 month design period commenced on the 1st April. During this time, the infrastructure to support the I.T. project is being designed and put in place. This will be followed immediately by a pilot project, which will involve Fortrose, Kirkwall, Lochcarron and Inverness (Retained) stations. We recognise that training in the use of the system is essential and a training plan has been developed to ensure that everyone can access the facilities that they need. Some initial training has taken place at the pilot stations, and this will be enhanced in the coming months. The pilot period is scheduled to last 3 months, during which time all of the systems, including the training plan, will be tested and evaluated.

On completion and successful evaluation of the pilot project, the rollout to all of the other 91 stations will take place, beginning on 1st October and scheduled to be completed before 31st March 2007. All personnel will have access to e-learning facilities using the internet, plus access to Microsoft Office facilities, such as e-mail. As part of the planned rollout of IPDS in 2007, personnel will also be able to access PDR Pro to keep their personal learning records up to date.

Rank to Role (R2R) Update

I am aware that the Rank to Role process is taking longer to complete than at first anticipated. I am sure that you will appreciate that the staff involved in Rank to Role are also involved in other key initiatives.

All of the role evaluations were completed by the end of May with the sizing of posts being concluded as early as possible in June.

I know that everyone is as keen as I am to complete this as quickly as possible and we will be working very hard in the next few weeks to achieve this.

I will ensure that everyone is kept updated as we progress.

**Divisional Officer Uisdean MacLennan
Chair- Evaluation Panel**

