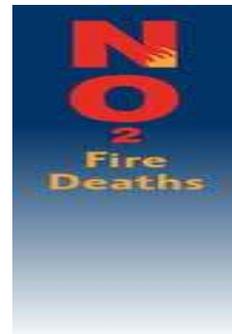




Summer 2010

FBU's



Councillor Terry Walker talks to reps at Brigade Committee Meeting

The Chair of Avon Fire Authority, Councillor Terry Walker, was invited to speak to the Brigade Committee on 21st July.

Councillor Walker stated that he feels we are in a "dire position", this was in relation to Pay, Pensions, budget cuts, tax increases...the list went on! He stated that there will be a government strategic review of the Fire and Rescue Service - the outcome of which are obviously unknown, but the drive is for us to do more for less!

This year he said there will be a cut of approximately £1Million from our budget, with much more to come. We are likely to start seeing the effects after the Autumn, although how exactly is still not clear. He stated that whilst he is Chair to the Authority there will be no drive for cuts to frontline services, a position which he is very proud to stand and fight for. His position is clear in that we are primarily here to serve and protect the public and we cannot achieve that effectively with less resources. Terrorism he reminded us has not

gone away, and is just one reason for maintaining our levels of service as you never know when we will be needed!

Terry confirmed that the promise of redeployment still applies to our Control Staff, and again it is something that he will stand by should the need arise. Regional control may still go ahead despite the promises of the Tory government (At time of writing the government have just confirmed that the project indeed will still go ahead - this is not quite as clear cut as it sounds and there is still much confusion over the whole project) The previous software firm has left the building, Ericsson say they can't make the technology work. EADS have picked up the bits and replaced them with 'Intergraph', they now have to prove they can fulfill the needs on time, on budget, and be quality!

With regards to the recent Helicopter story, Councillor Walker stated that the need for one has been put forward to the Fire Authority before and rejected, as yet he has not seen the business plan and was clear in that unless it improved the service we can provide in real terms effectively, it will not happen.

On the pensions front there was more doom and gloom. It was stated that the cost to support our scheme was £293Million, and although the government found Billions to bail out the bankers, we are not worthy of protection. From the governments point of view he said the

current situation is unsustainable and their will need to be change. Some of the options open to them include raising our contribution payments from 11% to 15%, moving us all to the New Pension Scheme, calculating our pension over a longer period of work...the possibilities are many . One thing he was sure of is that we will have to fight for everything! The fight he said will not and should not be a lone one, we need and must engage with other unions in order to fight back effectively and with unity as this is where our strength lies - UNITY!

Councillor Walker was warmly thanked by everyone for giving his time to talk to us. We should be under no illusion of the amount of work Terry puts in to maintain standards within Avon, something we should all strive to match in order to fight against cuts not only to our service, but to all public sector services. In order for him to continue his excellent work on our behalf he needs to maintain his position primarily as a Councillor - something which we can assist him with by simply delivering leaflets within his Kingswood ward.



IF YOU CAN GIVE AN HOUR OF YOUR TIME PLEASE CONTACT CHRIS TAYLOR... MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!!!



Tam MacFarlane — Re-Elected as EC Member

We would like to congratulate Tam after being re-elected as our regional EC Member. As Well as Terry Walker, we were also lucky to have Tam as a guest at the last Brigade Committee meeting. He gave us the position as far as he was aware on several matters including Pensions.

On pay we know that a 5.1% claim was tabled and rejected, and instead of any rise, we were given a Pay Freeze ~ for TWO years!

He stated that as our requested pay rise was in line with the Retail Price index, we have in effect obviously been given a 5.1% pay cut!

Tam went on to explain how he sees the current **CON-DEM** alliance government. Unions, he said, have been fighting for changes towards a fairer progressive tax system, the re-energising of efforts towards nationalising industry, and indeed even promoting cuts...but cuts in what we believe are in unnecessary and over the top spending areas, on projects such as Trident.

Tam explained that the **CON-DEM** alliance have in fact taken matters in completely the opposite direction, for example the blanket increase in tax through the rise in VAT to 20% - something which will undoubtedly hit the poor much more than the rich. Also taking yet



more of the taxpayers money to invest in Health, solely with a view to make it more appealing before privatising it. Cameron says we are all in this together, its clear that he and the Tory's are exempt.

We must fight for:-

- NO CUTS
- NO CLOSURES
- NO SAFETY ISSUES
- NO CHANGES TO PENSIONS

Pensions possibilities are many, however one of the most obvious is that we have our contributions

increased from 11% to 15% - cheers another pay cut, or another option maybe that we

all get to work longer and moved to the NFPS.

The Chief Fire Officers Association are colluding on the cuts agenda with the government as for every cut we believe many CFO's get a bonus! *Principle* by Role position CFO's maybe — but some are far from 'principled' people!

Tam was clear in that we must defend all our frontline Public Services with appropriate collective action. Tam stated that we must see no job cuts, no station closures, No Safety issue arise from cuts and obviously No detrimental pension changes. We have fought and won in Cornwall and raised fire cover, we are engaged in Devon and Somerset over short term contracts and Dorset and Gloucester over imposed changes to work routines and shift patterns. The FBU are also preparing a legal challenge over the removal of facilities time from FBU officials, this is the time that we spend working for you!

NATIONAL RALLY

The list of matters we as Firefighters should be raising with this government are rising almost daily. However, as it stands we have some seriously worrying ones to be getting on with.

Pensions are probably under the greatest threat ever, and we MUST stand and fight for what we see as a fair solution to a situation far from our own making!

Cuts are rampant across the country, and every cut puts your colleagues and their communities at increased risk - our job is to reduce risk and save life so lets stand up and protect everyone from mad cuts for cash!



**NATIONAL RALLY
&
LOBBY
CENTRAL HALL
WESTMINSTER
WEDNESDAY
17TH
NOVEMBER 2010**

