



## **Members Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025 Online only**

Ali Perry – BAFSA , Nick Coleshill – BAFSA, Lee Haggath – Cleveland FRS,  
Toni Maddox – NFSN, Eilish Thornton – County Durham & Darlington FRS  
Dan Willey – Hereford & Worcester FRS, Roger Brason – South Yorkshire FRS  
Ian Cox – NFNS/BSA, Tom Roche – FM, Steve Brailey – Armstrong Priestley  
Sion Slaymaker – Mid & West Wales FRS, Henry Lloyd – Staysafe Fire Sprinklers  
Alan Brinson – EFSN, Ronnie King – NFSN/APPG

Regrets – Terry McDermott, Rob Barber, Ritchie O’Connell, Richard Clarke

### **Welcome and Introduction – AP**

#### **1. Minutes and actions from last members meeting.**

- TM to add links suggested at meeting to NFSN website - completed
- TM to collect suggestions and work with IFSA on website – emailed request but no suggestions received except from RB to add an Ask Joe type section to website (Ask Ronnie?)
- RB/TM – to contact John Blackwood to discuss having meeting in Glasgow, AP to contact Scottish FRS to host meeting.- completed then cancelled
- Following Nick’s Sprinkler Save’s presentation TMC to contact Tom Kitchen from Nottingham FRS to do a presentation – TM gave TMc details to contact TK – TMc to update at next meeting
- Sprinkler Saves – Nick to update TMc to set up meeting with Dave Russell and NC – TMc has been in contact with Dave and to set up a meeting but not date confirmed.
- TR to provide statistics to TMc – completed and added to minutes
- TM to get further information from TK on processes to help other FRSs, Tom has provided the information and it will be added to website.
- TMc to complete and submit grant request by 31 December -grant request submitted and presented at a meeting with IFSA

## 2. Finance update TM

- 4 unpaid invoices for 2025 subscriptions and 2 FRS Hampshire and Leicester that still haven't provided a PO. TM requested help with getting contact information for these two FRS.
- 3 Members lost this year Norfolk, Cornwall and Warwickshire as Members this year. TM requested if anyone knew someone at any of these FRS to encourage them to renew membership.
- Bank balance of £55,862 due to IFSA grants and subscriptions. Invoices from Optimal research have not yet been received so are still earmarked for payment.

## 3. Sprinkler Saves Update

NC

Before NC presentation, IC shared how important Sprinkler Saves reporting is to RK who can advise MP's at APPG meeting. AP emphasised the importance of Sprinkler Saves and NC's work for allowing communication of the importance of sprinklers with real life examples and not dry statistics. AP found these examples useful to communicate with local MP's, Mayor's and FRSs.

### **NC complete report is an addendum to the minutes.**

SS discussed the disappointment that water mist was omitted from 9991 and queried whether they are reviewed in Sprinkler Saves.

NC stated water mist activations primarily occur in prisons and are not promoted due to the sensitive nature of the information.

SS is concerned water mist systems are being increasingly used as compensatory fire protection features, especially in open-plan holiday lets and mentioned how valuable it is to gather real-world data on these systems, similar to the robust data available for sprinkler systems.

It was recommended SS contact Alan Brinson, Ritchie.O'Connell, Alan Crichton to get more information on water mist systems. NC also advised that Stuart Kidd has compiled strong information around water mist systems, especially to address myths and misinformation from certain manufacturers and recommended the BAFSA website for further guidance.

## 4. Parliamentary Business/ All Party Group reports

IC presented RK's report which is attached and then RK joined to answer queries.

Highlights:

- Nottingham School Fire: Ronnie praised the handling of the fire incident and how it helped open dialogue with MPs like Alex Norris and Jim Fitzpatrick.
- Shift of Fire Policy Responsibility: He discussed the puzzling move of fire safety from the Home Office to another department and the importance of making sure schools, hospitals, and prisons aren't left behind in fire safety reforms.
- Consultation on Fire Safety (2021): Ronnie stressed frustration that the results still haven't been published and emphasized the need for political pressure to push this forward.
- Engagement with Angela Rayner: Ronnie is hopeful about securing a meeting with her, helped by connections like Lord Goddard.

- Succession Planning: He talked openly about eventually step down and wanting someone with fire service experience to carry the baton.
- Updates and Communications: He praised NCs work gathering fire/sprinkler incident data, highlighting how crucial it is for convincing MPs and informing parliamentary discussions.
- Evidence to Public Accounts Committee: He pulled together a paper for PAC on Grenfell costs and the need for fire suppression measures like sprinklers, with help from groups like the NFCC and FPA.

**Action: RK & TR are working to find a replacement for RK**

**5. Research with Optimal economics AP  
AP presented TMc report which is attached.**

SB advised they have approximately 10 schools on their books as life contracts but would find it helpful to know how many schools remain unsprinklered and how many new schools are being built without sprinklers.

AP and TR confirmed that only about 6% of schools currently have sprinklers, based on available data..

TR stated in Wales, sprinkler installation is linked to funding requirements, and in Scotland, it's a regulatory requirement. In England, decisions are typically made locally, not nationally, meaning local councils decide whether new schools get sprinklers.

SB noted that in certain areas like Staffordshire, they are seeing a lot of sprinkler projects — possibly because the local authority has a proactive policy.

IC suggested it would be really valuable to know - Of the new schools being built each year, what percentage have sprinklers to track whether improvements are being made.

**Action - to look at can we identify the current number of new schools being built and what percentage of those are being built with sprinklers.**

**6. NFCC Update  
RC not available to provide an update**

**7. Group Updates**

**BAFSA (AP) -**

- BAFSA has completed a major redesign of its website to make information more accessible, better organized, and fully up to date and launched a new online portal for course bookings and to offer our online training offering, including CPD-accredited courses – information on these course on the BAFSA website. [Training Centre - BAFSA](#)
- FIRAS has closed their third-party certification scheme due to resource challenges. In the UK, three UCAS-accredited third-party certification bodies exist: FIRAS, IFC, and LPCB.

- About 80 members were certified under FIRAS; BAFSA represents over half of them.
- BAFSA has been actively engaging with UCAS, existing TPCs (third-party certifiers), and a new market entrant, Part B, to manage the transition.
- We have temporarily relaxed the certification requirements for affected BAFSA members to allow them time to transfer their certification.
- This situation highlights the vulnerability of the construction and sprinkler industries to the sudden loss of a certification body and underlines the critical importance of third-party certification to ensure quality and maintain trust, particularly when recommending installers to local authorities and housing associations.

## EFSN (AB)

- **Upcoming Conferences - Salzburg in April** – New records seen in attendance and exhibition stands with 430 delegates registered and 62 exhibition stands. The next conferences will be held in **Paris – 2026 and Madrid – 2027**.
- **PFAS in Foam - Regulatory Clarity** – As part of the conference preparation discussions, Alan raised a question regarding PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in foam systems.
- AB highlighted that during conversations with colleagues from Spain, Belgium, and Germany, it became apparent that there is confusion across Europe about the applicable legislation and regulations around PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in foam systems use, particularly regarding responsibility for compliance.
- AB noted that BAFSA has previously addressed the issue **but asked whether, within this forum or elsewhere, more clarity could be provided specifically about the UK's position:** What exactly are the current UK regulations regarding PFAS in foam? Who is responsible for ensuring compliance? What is the law or the regulation regulatory position. But is anyone enforcing it? And whose job is that? Suggesting that it might be a task for BAFSA especially following the PFA presentation at the BAFSA seminar in November.

**AP** acknowledged that there was a need for clarification.

**FSF** -TR had to leave meeting early, AP and IC (**BSA**) delivered his report.

His presentation is attached with highlights below.

- FSF is transitioning to charitable status and are focusing on the Federation's role within the sector, future work plans, and ensuring sustainability.
- **Unsafe Cladding:** Uncertainty remains about who will pay for the removal of unsafe cladding.
- **New Homes Target:** Government's ambition to build 1.5 million new homes is acknowledged as positive but practically challenging given the shortage of skilled builders. There are concerns about how quickly the quality of workmanship can be improved.
- **Grenfell Tower Inquiry – Phase 2:** The issue is not necessarily with existing guidance but with failures in following it, misunderstanding, or willfully ignoring it.

- **Key solutions discussed:**
  - Stronger enforcement and/or incentives.
  - Accountability, licensing, registration, third-party certification.
  - More "professional curiosity" — particularly in construction, meaning individuals should not accept compliance claims at face value (e.g., simply relying on CE marks without further verification).
- **Review of Approved Document B (ADB):** - Reinforces the concern that rules are only effective if properly followed and ties into the broader theme of improving compliance and enforcement.
- **Government Structures and Oversight:** - Discussion on the transfer of responsibilities from MHCLG to the Home Office, Fire and Rescue Services remain a smaller part of government operations compared to policing. Raised concerns about frequent restructuring with changes in government; a plea to allow time for new structures to settle and be effective.
- **Cameron House Consultation (Scotland):** - 2017 fire resulting in two fatalities led to a Fatal Accident Inquiry and a working group report recommending sprinklers, particularly in traditional buildings converted into hotels. A **cost-benefit analysis** that accompanied the consultation did **not** fully support sprinklers for larger hotels (those requiring BS 12845 systems), mainly due to:
  - Underestimated repair/damage costs for historic buildings.
  - Overestimated water supply costs for sprinkler systems.
  - Overstated maintenance costs.

Political will seems to exist to push for sprinklers despite the CBA findings. Further work is underway to provide corrected cost data to influence the final decision, including engagement with MSP Jackie Baillie, who supports the families affected by the fire.

- **Fire suppression systems** in timber-framed and modular construction buildings continue to be a topic of interest.
- **Schools:** Awaiting further government direction regarding sprinkler installations.
- **Competence and Certification:**
  - High priority under the Building Safety Regulator's agenda.
  - Discussion about the new **mandatory third-party certification** for fire risk assessors — still some uncertainty over which types of buildings this will cover (all buildings vs. only high-risk buildings).

## 8. Members updates

**County Durham & Darlington FRS (ET)** – no update

**Cleveland FRS (LH)** – High Rise Sprinkler Save believed that Joe Flounders reported on website - **NC to follow up.**

**Staysafe Fire Sprinklers (HL)** –

- Building Control officers have pulled back from making clear decisions, leading to uncertainty and architects are struggling to keep up with constantly changing regulations but can't rely on Building Control for guidance anymore.

There is a shortage of competent fire engineers and inexperienced workers on-site, language barriers, and lack of supervision are leading to serious mistakes, especially in fire protection areas, there is a worry about health and safety standards falling. Senior building control officers have either **retired** early or failed assessments and the remaining ones are **Grade 1** (meaning they should be under supervision) but are often unsupervised.

- The Approved Documents (like Approved Document B) are often ignored or circumvented via creative fire engineering solutions. Fire strategies often depart from basic, established fire safety measures (like protected staircases and sprinklers), creating potential future problems. Accountability is low — strategies mainly seem to be about covering backs rather than ensuring real safety.
- HL discussed video made in collaboration with London Fire Brigade, which effectively demonstrates the importance of sprinklers. It includes two heads in one container and none in another, showing the timing and rapid progression of a fire without sprinklers, compared to how quickly it can be extinguished with them.

[Sprinklers - Automatic Fire Suppression Systems \(AFSS\) | London Fire Brigade](#)

**South Yorkshire FRS (RB)** –SYFRS has just completed a match fund sprinkler installation of 50 bed care home in Sheffield.

AP to contact RB for further information.

#### **Mid & West Wales FRS (SS)**

- MSSFRS will continue to advise NC of sprinkler saves – have reported 4 in the last 18 months/2 years – 1 domestic, 2 schools, 1 care home cupboard. MWW acquired sprinkler demonstration trailer to show the effectiveness of sprinkler which has proven popular with the public on open days. They have an open day schedule that has proven popular with public engagement.

This led to discussion on the increased interest in the UK and Europe of mobile demonstration units. AP brought up the possibility of a partnership with IFSA to fund a new unit in the UK. RB advised SYFRS had one that became uneconomical to repair but advised that Derbyshire FRS has the facility to do side by side comparisons. AB mentioned the challenge he had come across in Benelux such as the size of the unit and licensing regulations around this issue. If the trailer weighs more than 750 kilos or is above a certain length, you need a heavy goods vehicle licence to move it. RB highlighted need to safely contain and dispose of water used in display. EFSN is currently gathering information around the issues.

#### 9. Future events

Action :TMC to organise next meeting

SS has offered MWWales FRS for next meeting to make it easier for RK to attend

SB has also offered Armstrong Priestley as a location for a future meeting.

#### 10. AOB

IC explained the importance of having all the FRS in the network and questioned how we can get lapsed members back – for two reasons (1) Providing NC a bigger pool to obtain saves (2) NFSN is more powerful if it can cite ourselves as a representative of ALL the FRSs. NC provided a contact at Hampshire.

Action: IC to reach out to Cornwall FRS

TM working on data based: Requested assistance from members to provide contact details to add.

11. AP encouraged everyone to report sprinkler saves, thanked everyone and ended meeting at 11.23