**Happy New Year !**

For the last time this year, I will open up with the words “Happy New Year”. I trust everyone had a good break and we are all settled back into the routine, refreshed and ready to go.

In terms of news, one of the biggest issues for the network to consider is the publication of the New Measures to Improve Building Safety Standards. (See link 1 below). The Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick announced the publication in a debate in the House on 20th January with the promise that the Government intends to go further and faster to improve building safety. I am sure you will be delighted to note that there is mention of sprinklers in the document and that during the debate in the House, it was recorded that the Housing Secretary is minded to recommend that the height threshold for sprinklers is reduced to 11m in new buildings, subject to receiving more evidence and on the matter.

To this end a call for evidence with a very short timescale concluding on 17th February 2020. (see link 3 below).

Also and in the same week the Governement released its response to the findings of Phase One of the Grenfell Inquiry (see link 2 below). Once again the Government made clear their commitment to address building height in regard to sprinkers.

All things considered, the imperative to push hard on sprinklers in buildings above 11m is a key priority for the Network.

For consistency with the NFCC, the rationale for 11m metres is concerned with the height at which normal fire and rescue operations can be effected using standard ladders. The highest standard fire service ladder carried on pumping appliances is 13.5m long, providing a working height of 11m when pitched. The NFCC have amended their sprinkler position statement which originally suggested 18m as the threshold for sprinklers in new build high rise residential properties. The postion statement explains the reason for moving to 11m, detailing the gap in other protection measures, between 11m and 18m, such as dry rising mains. Those of you tasked with providing a consultation response are asked to align behind the 11m threshold which will provide consistency with Scotland and Wales.

In other news, the HMICFRS released their annual report on the UKFRS entitled “The State of Fire”. Network members are encouraged to read the report, in particular the sections discussing fire protection. The emphasis of the report being to re-introduce more rigour around inspection and enforcement. Good news.

It would seem that 2020 will be a landmark year for all things fire protection related.

It is also appropriate to thank the Network for the work we have all been involved in over the last few years, lobbying, eduating and supporting the promotion of sprinklers. The evidence we produced has been key to getting Government’s ear and approvals. There is still more to do, but we should be pleased with the progress we have made.

At the last meeting we suggested that a letter should be sebt to Sir Martin Moore Bick to introduce the Network and offer support interms of providing evicence

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-improve-building-safety-standards>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grenfell-tower-inquiry-phase-1-report-government-response>
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/fire-safety-risk-prioritisation-in-existing-buildings-a-call-for-evidence?utm_source=01ffc92e-0e2a-4c17-8a7c-8c41327591a4&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily>

**Sprinkler Stops**

**Importance of sprinklers highlighted after fire at Bolingbroke Heights, Flint**

A fire at a high-rise block of flats in North Wales has been successfully extinguished thanks to an effective sprinkler system.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service crews were called to a report of a fire at Bolingbroke Heights, Flint yesterday evening (Friday 24 January) at 17.49hrs – and appliances from Flint, Deeside and Holywell were mobilised to the incident.

Firefighters rescued a man in his 70s from a heavily smoke logged flat within the building. He received a precautionary check for smoke inhalation at the scene.

The fire was extinguished quickly by the sprinkler system and was confined to a cooker within the flat.

In 2016 and working closely with North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Flintshire County Council retro-fitted a sprinkler system throughout the whole of the three blocks at Bolingbroke Heights, Richard Heights and Castle Heights in Flint.

Paul Scott, Senior Fire Safety Manager at North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, said: “This incident clearly highlights the importance of sprinklers in helping to avoid the spread of fire.

“The fast activation of the sprinkler system helped to protect the occupier of the flat from serious harm, as well as avoiding damage to his flat and major disruption to the remainder of the building and its occupants which may have been caused had the fire spread.

“In Wales we have led the way in the promotion of fire safety and the protection of our residents and businesses - commercial and domestic sprinkler systems deliver benefits that are far greater than the cost of their installation and maintenance.

“Sprinkers are an extremely effective safeguard against fire, protecting people, firefighters, jobs, homes, businesses, the economy and the environment.”

**Paul Scott**

Uwch Reolwr Diogelwch Tân/Senior Fire Safety Manager

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru / North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

**Vacancies**

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Terry McDermott recently retired as Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service. Terry was also the National Fire Chiefs Council Lead on sprinklers. At the recent Autumn meeting Terry announced his intention to stand down as Chairman at the next AGM (19th March 2020).

In addition Julian Parsons has also announced his decion to step down as the Secretary. As an interim solution Terry staying on and providing the role of Secretary up to the AGM, at which point he will apply for the position along with any other interested candidates.

Interested candidates for the positions of Chair and Secretary, should email their expression of interest to Terry at nfsnsecretary@gmail.com.

The post of Secretary is awarded a monthly retainer of £750. Reasonable expenses are covered (travelling, subsistence, accommodation,etc).

The post is responsible for maintaining the general communications of the NFSN, the website, organising meetings and managing the financial matters of the network in partnership with the support received from the FPA.

If anyone would like to discuss this post further they can contact Julian either through email or on 07964415055.

**Membership News**

To be announced at the AGM

**Sprinkler Stops**

If any of you are aware of a sprinkler stop or other sprinkler event of interest then please let us know on nfsnsecretary@gmail.com . There is a proforma on our website which will help you provide the essential information we need.