

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS – THURSDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2021

ANNUAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS CEREMONY

In late September, at the Marriott Hotel in Huntingdon, around 100 guests celebrated the achievements of staff from across different areas of the organisation, highlighting outstanding accomplishments during the coronavirus pandemic and the commitment, dedication and professionalism of staff regularly going above and beyond to provide the best possible service to the people of Cambridgeshire.

Although I was only able to join the celebrations virtually, I would like to thank Councillor Jamil for attending in person on behalf of myself and the Authority and the senior management team for hosting such a successful event.

It is very important to the Authority and myself that we are able to recognise the achievements of our staff from across all the different areas of the Service. The passion, enthusiasm and professionalism shown by the winners, as well as the years of commitment shown by those receiving long service awards, is really inspiring. It shows me how devoted our staff and their families who support them are to providing a great public service.

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF COMBINED FIRE CONTROL

Members may be aware that last month the Service marked the tenth anniversary since the country's first combined fire control launched; our very own combined fire control!

On 25 October 2011, the 999 call functions for Cambridgeshire and Suffolk fire and rescue services joined together to form the first collaboration of its kind, taking calls for both counties. Since coming together, call handlers have taken more than 177,000 emergency calls and sent around 178,000 fire engines to incidents.

Both Chief Fire Officers (Chris Strickland and Dan Fearn) have been very public about how incredibly proud they are of the 40 call handlers that work within the Huntingdon based facility recognising the calm, professional and often life-saving advice they give to the residents of both counties in their time of need whilst mobilising the appropriate assets to deal with the emergency. I would like to add, on behalf of the Authority, my own appreciation of the work done and continuing to be done 24/7 by the watches.

The project has clearly demonstrated what can be achieved in terms of collaboration and efficiency. By joining forces, this collaboration alone has saved each fire service over £4m over the last decade and the innovative approach has led the way for other services around the country to merge their own control functions.

FIREBREAK - UPDATE

I am delighted to report that after 20 months, September saw the return of FireBreak.

For those not familiar with the term, FireBreak is a funded one week course for 12 individuals that can be tailored to support the needs of those attending. It is an intensive intervention based on four principles; resilience, healthy relationships, efficacy and aspirations. It provides a positive alternative learning setting for young people and is carried out within the structured and disciplined environment of the

Service on an operational fire station, combining classroom based learning with practical activity. It offers a unique opportunity for participants to engage with operational firefighters who, as positive role models, are given additional training to become FireBreak instructors. The course culminates at the end of the week with a pass out parade where participants demonstrate their practical achievements and are awarded their certification in front of invited guests and dignitaries*.

At present the Service is running one course every three weeks to catch up following its absence whilst it wasn't safe to continue during the pandemic last year. The latest pass out parade was held on 22 October at March Fire Station and Officers attending reported how it never fails to impress them what young adults can achieve given the right environment and support.

I am really proud that CFRS can provide this scheme and would urge all Members to become familiar with it and support it wherever possible.

** FireBreak costs approximately £4500 per course and includes food (breakfast and lunch), specialist instruction, a year's support afterwards encouraging community engagement and two AQA awards in First Aid: Basic Life Support and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Firefighting Skills and Active Citizenship. This is normally self-funded through schools or grant funding that can be available through other partners.*

Another initiative that has returned recently is

BIKER DOWN

Again, after almost two years, the Service has been able to restart its 'Biker Down' road safety information sessions. These expertly delivered sessions provide motorcyclists with essential information for what to do if they come across an accident involving another rider, including 'First Person on Scene' first aid training and general road craft. Again, I am proud that the Service can offer this potentially life-saving advice to the communities of Cambridgeshire.

Finally, I would like to briefly mention

ST JOHN'S PARK, HUNTINGDON

Early last month, the ground was broken on the multi-million pound project to build a modern, purpose-built training centre and new community fire station at St John's Park, north of Huntingdon by the Chief Fire Officer, myself and key colleagues involved with the project from the Service and contractors Artisan.

Members will know that we have been seeking to improve our operational training for many years and it's fantastic to see work begin on this development. The facility will offer effective, reliable and realistic training for all operational staff, as well as giving much needed capacity to enable the Service to train more firefighters more often than the current site allows.

We will have an opportunity to discuss the project in more detail at agenda item 12.