

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Past Members Association

Chairman's report: Years 2019 and 2020-2021

Our last AGM and Pig racing event was held on 13 April 2019, that seems a long time ago and who would have guessed how things would have changed since then. I will endeavour to give you a brief summary of your association activity and work since then as we have now been in being for nearly 14 years.

The year 2019-2020 was good and our activities included a well-supported AGM at FSHQ with a fish and chip supper with nearly 90 attending, the following year allowed us to enjoy trips to London St Paul's Cathedral, Blenheim Palace, a vintage car rally ending in Brighton, luncheons at Eastleigh catering college, lunch and skittles at Wellow and a great Christmas function at East Horton Golf Club. That was our last year of real fun and freedom.

Now we move on to 2020-2021 year, we actually managed 1 event at the end of February, an Eastleigh catering college luncheon, since then we have endured lockdowns and many restrictions. We have all followed a new fashion of wearing a face mask with steamed up glasses, our hands have been washed and disinfected so many times that we no longer have to buy sandpaper. But the good news is - we are still here and who would have thought we would have produced, tested and now delivered within a year, vaccinations to over 60% of the nation.

When we entered lockdown last March. we obviously had to cancel 2 coach bookings to London and also we had purchased theatre tickets for 2 West End shows. At one time the PMA were out of pocket to the tune of nearly £7,000. We like many other groups had to try and claim reimbursement and recover this from booking agencies, whose staff were also on furlough and some had even closed down and gone into administration. We had an anxious 6 months chasing these agencies and subsequently administrators, even the coach company had changed owners during this period.

However, I am glad to report that we eventually recovered all our payments back, it was a great relief when our Treasurer sent a text to me to say "it was all now back in the PMA's bank account".

How have things affected us, I am pleased to report that we have been able to provide advice and support to many of our members during the past year. The service has been very activeH supporting the NHS and have provided help and ambulance cover where needed either at hospitals or at a vaccination centre such as Basingstoke Fire Station. Some of this help has been provided by recently retired members and volunteers.

I know I can express all of our thanks to the Service for their excellent dedication and work, also to the volunteers during this pandemic.

The PMA recognised the need to help keep all of our members informed, using our website and regular emails plus the magazine when printing allowed, we also re-introduced the old Routine

Notice (pink peril) which has been very well received. I must thank Alan House for this initiative in producing both the excellent magazines and Routine Notice. Remember we also need your contributions if we are to keep this going in the future.

We also communicate regularly with our membership via our Twitter and Facebook accounts and of course our excellent website, my thanks to Kym Carr, Lin Malt and Trudie Smith (for updating the website). We enjoy a regular following from many of our friends and colleagues around the world, using all this media, it has enabled us to assist members when needed and follow events, activities, hobbies and even promote some good news.

We have this year doubled our monthly prize draw which now pays out 2 x £100 prizes to ensure the paid up membership enjoy the chance of a good bonus.

Now some thoughts of our future, we will be proposing to include the Isle of Wight, since amalgamation with HFRS was confirmed in April, to be included within our constitutional changes with a view of offering them the hand of friendship and be part of the PMA - This is to be voted on tonight.

We are also planning future events and activities, but only if and when we consider it safe for us to proceed, as we are very conscious of the health and well-being of our membership.

As a start we have booked a coach to London for Wednesday 7th September for a free day and have left it to the members to book and arrange whatever they choose to do.

We have reserved our usual Christmas function with a booking date at East Horton Golf Club on 16th December a date for the diary.

We are also keeping in touch with Eastleigh Catering College for when the week day luncheons start again, always a popular event which we will certainly pursue at an early opportunity.

We are conscious that a memorial event may be considered appropriate and when things are more certain will be arranged at a suitable venue.

Other opportunities we will consider, continuing the traditional Sunday Skittles with lunch and theatre trips when safe to arrange.

As you are aware the committee have held zoom meetings bi-monthly throughout the year, which has been quite an experience. We have also enjoyed ACO Stew Adamson joining in on occasions, acting as a link to keep us in touch with the happenings and changes within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

I must take this opportunity to thank Treasurer Clive Kemp for his hard work during the year and for his patience when we were chasing refunds. Also for managing independent auditing of the accounts prior to the AGM.

Thanks also must go to Chris Lunn for the unenviable task of liaising and then subsequently

sending out the sad notifications which we all dread.

There are others on the committee who also are quick to assist but I can't name them all.

However, a special mention to Eddie Winter who is always willing to provide support in arranging functions and mail circulation, for which I am very grateful.

Lin Malt for acting as our link with the Fire Fighter Charity and for her committee work.

Malcolm Eastwood for his welfare support work and advice on pensions plus his ability to cheer us all up.

A final mention and my thanks to our secretary Alan House for his extremely hard work on the constitutional changes, membership matters and magazine.

We now go into the next year hopefully in a happier situation than this time last year and will continue to provide support and guidance to members.

One final point - Those of you who receive Hampshire pension payments will be aware that this year was the last year paper records will be sent out, in future you will need to look on line through a web portal and print off your own information. Following our representation it has been agreed, that if you write to the HCC pension department they will continue to send you paper copies of your details including p60 and pension information, payment dates and any changes. I for one have already written and I strongly advise you too.

That concludes my report and I wish you all a safe year ahead.

Andy Anderson
PMA chairman