

Constitution





The Association

Structure

The British Fire Consortium herein after called the *Consortium* is governed by its full members and is managed by an elected council in accordance with the duties, powers and rules detailed herein.

Legal Entity

The Consortium is a group of members, formed into a private *Consortium*.

Aims

The prime aims for the *Consortium* are to:

- Maintain the high quality and technical standards of our members and our associated industries.
- Actively encourage all members to obtain third party accreditation to ISO 9001 or its equivalent, certified by an approval body recognised by the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA)
- Actively promote best practice within the fire industry through liaison and representation with official UK and European bodies, together with other relevant agencies, institutions and associations
- Give impartial advice, with members being ethical in their business dealings and maintaining high standards of commercial conduct at all times.
- Provide technical advice and training for members
- Hold regular meeting, creating an environment to enable members to exchange information, ideas and to be kept informed of current trends and issues
- Provide marketing and advertising, promoting the *Consortium* at all levels

Membership

Membership is open to all companies, partnerships and sole traders active within the UK.

The *Consortium* can refuse membership without reason or further communication. There is no right of appeal if membership is refused.

Full membership – this may be granted to a company that has been trading for a minimum of twelve months and has full voting rights. Each full member is allowed one vote only. Where a member has multiple trading names, only one member of that group has voting rights. Council will arrange an audit of each applicant, prior to granting full membership. Members and members with multiple trading names may only use the *Consortium* logo after successfully passing the audit and have been advised of this by the General Secretary. All the trading names must also pass the audit and may then use the logo.



Associate membership – this may be granted to a company who has been trading for less than 12 months and has no voting rights. Once an associate member company has been trading for twelve months, it will then, following a satisfactory audit, be automatically ratified as a full member and may then use the *Consortium* logo.

Honorary membership – this may be granted to an individual at the discretion of Council at any time and has no voting rights. Continued honorary membership will be reviewed bi-annually by Council. Members cannot use the *Consortium* logo.

Continuation of membership

Members who are in contravention of the *Constitution* or appear to have acted in any other way to the detriment of the *Consortium*, bringing it into disrepute, may, at the discretion of Council be subject to an enquiry, which could result in withdrawal of benefits and termination of membership. No refund of membership fees will be made in such circumstances

Members must be insured for the business it conducts. Council reserve the right to request proof of insurance cover, if and when necessary.

Members will be encouraged to take out efficacy insurance and/or professional indemnity insurance wherever appropriate.

All members subject to takeover change of ownership/directors/partners or name change must notify the General Secretary in writing. Such changes are subject to approval by Council and may require a fresh application.

Members Leaving

Members leaving the *Consortium* must remove all *Consortium* logos (which are registered trademarks) from their paperwork within three months of cessation of membership.

Members leaving, who have service labels containing the *Consortium* logo (which is a registered trademark) in the field, must replace all such labels with ones not containing the *Consortium* logo (which is a registered trademark) over the twelve months following cessation of membership.

Audits

All joining members will be audited. If the member has ISO 9001 accreditation, which is recognised by the EA (or a higher Quality Management System), subsequent audits will be carried out by e-mail, to enable continued membership, every year, with no charge. For all other members subsequent audits will be carried out by the *Consortium* to enable continued membership, approximately every three years, these audits will be charged at the rate set by Council.



Membership Applications

The following information shall be provided as an aid to processing the membership application for discussion by Council:

- Company details on the company letterhead
- Brief company history
- Names of directors(s), sole traders or partnerships, if applicable
- Details of all products and services offered
- Copies of all qualifications, accreditations and approvals
- Proof of insurance appertaining to business activities.
- Other interests in the fire trade, i.e. directorships, etc.
- Contact e-mail address, which will be the primary route for all routine communications
- Application fee

Notification of names and addresses of all applicants previously accepted by Council will be circulated to all members by e-mail for comment.

If any member has an objection to an applicant being accepted as a member, then they must present their reason for the objection by e-mail or in writing to the General Secretary and this will be investigated by Council. Any information received from a member is to be treated as confidential.

Council will make the final decision in all cases and there is no right of appeal by the applicant if the decision is to reject the application. The complainant will be notified of the Council's decision and he has a further seven days to contest it.

Membership Fees

The level of membership fee will be determined at the Annual General Meeting at the recommendation of Council. For members with multiple trading names, the member will pay the membership fee and the trading names will pay 50% of the full membership fee.

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 April. Members who have not renewed their annual subscription by 31 May will be deemed to have terminated their membership.

Membership Certificate

Certificates showing their status within the *Consortium* will be issued annually to all members upon payment of any monies due and submission of any requested documentation.



Quality, Technical, and Training

Members must ensure that, where applicable, employees and any sub-contractors used must have proven competency, by holding a recognised qualification in the discipline in which they undertake work. A list of qualifications recognised by the *Consortium* is held by the General Secretary.

Management Structure and Election of Officers

The Council

The Council shall consist of:

- President (if available)
- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Treasurer
- Training Officer
- Maximum of five other members (six if no President available)

A nomination for the position of President may be proposed by the Council, should a suitable Councillor be available. The President shall serve for the remainder of his term.

The General Secretary manages the business of the *Consortium* in accordance with the Constitution and as instructed by the Council.

The members holding the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman Treasurer and Training Officer are selected by Council. Councillors may only serve for a maximum one term unless a motion is passed by Council to override this rule allowing a sitting Councillor to offer himself for re-election.

A term is three years.

For a member of Council to remain on Council for a full term, the following conditions must apply:

- The Councillor's employer must be a full member
- The Councillor must remain employed by the full member

If these conditions are not met at any time during a Councillors term of office then the Councillor must resign his position on Council immediately.

Council members are expected to attend 75% of meetings during their term of office.



Election of Councillors

Nominations for Council must be proposed, seconded and submitted in writing to the General Secretary at least thirty days prior to the Annual General Meeting, along with a short resumé. This will then be circulated by e-mail to all members.

If the number of nominees is insufficient to fill the number of vacancies on Council, no election will take place.

The General Secretary will send postal ballot forms to all full members twenty eight days before the Annual General Meeting.

The General Secretary will bring all postal ballot envelopes of votes cast, unopened, to the Annual General Meeting. The General Secretary will count all the votes and two scrutineers from the Annual General Meeting will witness this process.

If the compliment of Council is not filled by the election or reduced by resignation, the Council may co-opt a Councillor, who will then offer himself for election at the next Annual General Meeting subject to a motion passed by Council allowing him so to do.

One third of the Council shall annually be available for election.

Once elected/co-opted onto Council, Councillors accept that all Council business is treated confidentially within Council.

Procedures for General Meetings

The *Consortium* will hold at least four meetings a year for the members and one of these will be the Annual General Meeting.

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, an acting Chairman can be appointed by the members present. For a meeting to continue it must be quorate, which shall consist of at least 15 full members.

Attendance at all meetings will ideally be by prior registration. Any non-attendance by registered delegates will be chargeable at the delegate rate at the time.

Meetings are for the benefit of the members and therefore the meeting and lunch for a representative of each member attending will be free of charge. Additional delegates of members or their approved guests will be charged at the delegate rate at that time.

All proposals for resolutions shall be sent in writing to the General Secretary at least seven days before a meeting.

All information exchanged between members and visiting speakers shall be confidential to the meeting.



Additional requirements for the Annual General Meeting

Any proposal, which must be seconded, for a change in the Constitution must be submitted at least thirty days before the Annual General Meeting, in order for the proposal to be circulated to the membership, for consideration at the Annual General Meeting. A postal ballot will be arranged for non-attending members. No changes to any such proposal may be made at the Annual General Meeting.

The annual dinner and dance, normally held after the Annual General Meeting will be free of charge for a representative of each member company and his/her partner. Additional attendees will be charged at the applicable rate.

Voting

At any General Meeting, a resolution put to a vote shall be decided by a show of hands, unless ten full members present request a ballot.

The President or General Secretary will occupy the Chair and preside over a ballot allowed if this Agenda item concerns the office of Chairman or Vice Chairman.

In the case of any resolution or proposal to change the constitution not achieving more than 60% of the votes cast, whether on a show of hands or by ballot, will fail and the Chairman of the meeting shall use his deciding vote, which he shall exercise in favour of the status quo.

The Chairman of the meeting may, with the consent of the meeting, adjourn the meeting. No other business shall be transacted at the subsequent meeting, other than the business that would have been transacted from the point at which the adjournment took place.

Visitors and Guests

Unless otherwise sanctioned by the Council, attendance at meetings is restricted to two delegates from each member and to visiting speakers. Guests of members will not be admitted without approval, granted by the Council, prior to the meeting and ratified by the members present at the meeting.

A guest is defined as anyone who is not directly employed by a member.

Complaints Procedure

In the event of a complaint against a *Consortium* member, by a fellow member, a customer or other organisation, the complaint will be referred to the Council for investigation. Complaints will only be considered if substantiated and in writing. If, in the Council's opinion, the complaint is justified, the Council will take appropriate action (subject to the severity of the complaint). This may be in the form of a warning or termination of membership. The Council reserves the right to terminate the membership of any member considered as acting in a manner that could bring the *Consortium* into disrepute.



Any member or individual owing monies to a fellow member outside agreed terms, could face disciplinary action, if a complaint is received from a member.

Remuneration of Council Members

All Council members will receive free membership for as long as they serve on Council. The *Consortium* will also pay reasonable expenses to members (whether Council or Non-Council members) incurred on behalf of the *Consortium*, with prior Council consent. Certain responsibilities may receive an honorarium, per annum, commensurate with the duties performed.

The Treasurer will be responsible for monitoring the *Consortium* expenses, collecting all dues and presenting an independently audited financial account at the Annual General Meeting.

Interpretation of the Constitution Rules

The decision upon any questions of the interpretation of these rules or upon matters affecting the *Consortium* and not provided for by these rules shall be the responsibility of the Council.

Chairman

List of Recognised Qualifications

Technician Refresher Courses

All courses carried out by any of the three organizations listed in the BS 5306 – 3 : 2009

Jacqui Teale
General Secretary