



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	RC/13/5
MEETING	RESOURCES COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	16 MAY 2013
SUBJECT OF REPORT	ANNUAL GRANT TO SERVICE CEREMONIAL UNIT 2013/14
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That a grant of £8,000 be made to the Ceremonial Unit for the 2013/14 financial year as a contribution towards those costs highlighted in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4 below</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>For a number of years the Ceremonial Unit has represented the Service at the Ypres Remembrance parade and other more local events and has received appropriate financial support from the Service to do so.</p> <p>This paper now seeks approval, in accordance with Financial Regulations, to the making of a grant to the Unit for the 2013/14 financial year.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Any grant made to the Unit will be contained from within existing resources.
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Not applicable
APPENDICES	Nil.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Ceremonial Unit Memorandum of Understanding

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Ceremonial Unit. The Unit comprises a Corp and Pipe section and is a voluntary organisation open to existing and retired officers of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, together with the former Devon and Somerset fire and rescue services. The Unit has a stated aim of projecting the good image of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and the British fire service generally. Its President is the Chief Fire Officer, with the current Authority Chairman (Mark Healey) as Patron and former Authority Chairman, Councillor Bernard Hughes OBE, Honorary Life Vice-Patron.
- 1.2 Through its public appearances the Ceremonial Unit significantly promotes the fire service, and in particular, Devon & Somerset, in the eyes of the general public and the special interest groups for whom they display.
- 1.3 In particular, the Unit has, for a number of years, represented the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (and the former Devon fire and rescue service, prior to combination), at the internationally-recognised Armistice Day Commemoration held in Ypres, Belgium, in November of each year. This culminates in a special Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial, one of four British and Commonwealth memorials to the missing in the battlefield area of the Ypres Salient in Belgian Flanders. The memorial bears the names of 54,389 officers and men from United Kingdom and Commonwealth Forces (except New Zealand and Newfoundland) who fell in the Ypres Salient before 16 August 1917 and who have no known grave.
- 1.4 The ceremony is attended by representatives of the United Kingdom, Belgian and other nations' Armed Forces, local dignitaries, ambassadors, members of the clergy, representatives of United Kingdom fire brigades, Royal British Legion Standard bearers, ex-Service organizations, Friends of the Last Post Association and invited guests.
- 1.5 Additionally, the Unit also represents the Service at the annual UK Firefighters' Memorial Service (usually held in London in September) and up to a maximum of six other occasions each year at the request of either the Chief Fire Officer or the Chairman of the Authority.

2. FUNDING IN 2013-14

- 2.1 As mentioned, the Unit is voluntary and as such is dependent on grants, sponsorship etc. for the majority of the funding it needs to operate. In particular, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Service and the Unit provides that the Service will provide annual funding of £5,000 each financial year to the Unit. This is subject to annual review by the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Authority but the intention is that, when made, the grant will provide for an increase of no less than the rate of inflation measured over the preceding 12 months. The primary purpose of this funding is to support expenses incurred by attendance at the Ypres Remembrance Ceremony.
- 2.2 The Unit has costed attendance at this event in 2013 at £5,325. This relates to travel only – other costs associated with attendance are borne by the individuals in the Unit attending the event.
- 2.3 As previously indicated, however, attendance at Ypres represents only one such event attended by the Unit during the course of the year. The Unit also attends the annual Firefighters Memorial Trust ceremony which takes place at the Fire-fighters memorial situated outside St Pauls Cathedral, London, and is due to take the lead at this event in 2013. The unit has costed coach transport to this event at £1,000.

2.4 Additionally, the Unit has requested a contribution of £1,000 towards meeting the costs of:

ITEM	COST (£)
replacement of music titles used by the Band	600
purchase of additional banners	500
repair/refurbishment of drum kit	100
replenishment to uniform to include Red Ties and epaulets embellished with the Service logo	200
TOTAL	1,400

2.5 The Unit has indicated that it will meet the additional £400 associated with the above items from its existing funding.

2.6 There are also ancillary costs that have been identified during the course of the year associated with events such as concerts performed by the Band. These costs involve the printing of programmes and postage that has been borne by the Service to date but should, perhaps be included within the grant to the Band. These costs are in the region of £500 per year.

2.7 In view of the above, it is suggested that the Committee may wish to award a grant of £8,000 in the current financial year towards the costs identified in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.6 above and leave a small surplus by way of a contribution to the costs of other events.

2.8 Financial Regulations require the making of any grant in excess of £5,000 to be approved by this Committee. Any grant made to the Unit for the current financial year will be contained from within existing resources. The approved revenue budget contains provision of £10,900 for the making of grants to outside organisations. Historically, the Service has supported both the Ceremonial Unit and the Fire Service Sports and Athletics Association from this provision.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Unit has an exemplary record of meeting its stated aim of projecting the good image of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and the British fire service generally. This is particularly the case in relation to the Ypres Remembrance Ceremony for which the Unit has achieved well-deserved international recognition.

3.2 As such, the Committee is asked to approve – in accordance with Financial Regulations – the making of a grant to the Unit of £8,000 to support its activities in the current financial year and particularly attendance at the Ypres Remembrance Ceremony.

LEE HOWELL
Chief Fire Officer