



# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>RC/14/9</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>RESOURCES COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>16 MAY 2014</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>ANNUAL GRANT TO SERVICE CEREMONIAL UNIT 2014/15</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Chief Fire Officer</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That a grant of £7000.00 be made to the Ceremonial Unit for the 2014-15 financial year as a contribution towards those costs highlighted in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3 below</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<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 2014/15 financial year.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Any grant made to the Unit will be contained from within existing resources.
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	Not applicable
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Nil.
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	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 & 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.
- 2.2 For the previous financial year, this Committee made a grant totalling £8,000 to the Unit – in the main to cover attendance at Ypres and the Firefighters Memorial Trust ceremony on London (£6,500) but also to cover costs associated with the replacement of music titles, repair and refurbishment of drum kit, purchase of additional banners and replenishment of uniform and a contribution to advertising and publication costs incurred during the year (Minute \*RC/22 of the meeting held on 16 May 2013 refers).

### **FUNDING IN 2014-15**

- 3.1 As previously indicated, the primary purpose of the grant funding is to support expenses incurred by attendance at the Ypres Remembrance Ceremony. The Unit has costed attendance at this event in 2014 at £5,000. This relates to travel only – other costs associated with attendance are borne by the individuals in the Unit attending the event.
- 3.2 For 2014, the Unit will not be leading the annual Firefighters Memorial Trust ceremony in London and as such has indicated it will not require any associated funding assistance.
- 3.3 For the forthcoming financial year, the Concert Band has indicated that it is seeking funding of £1,350 for the forthcoming financial year as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Replenishment of Music (note: titles need to be refreshed annually)	600.00
Replenishment of uniform incl. red ties and epaulets with Service logo	450.00
Ancillary costs for advertising and publicity materials	300.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,350.00</b>

- 3.4 While there is an ongoing annual need to replenish music titles and uniform and meet publicity costs, the Concert Band is nonetheless cognisant of the difficult financial climate the Service is operating in and as such is seeking total funding of £1,350 for the forthcoming financial year as against the £1,500 awarded in the previous year.
- 3.5 In view of the above, it is suggested that the Committee may wish to award a grant of £7,000 in the current financial year towards the costs identified in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3 above and leave a small surplus by way of a contribution to the costs of other events.
- 3.6 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 £11,200 for the making of grants to outside organisations in 2014-15. Historically, the Service has supported both the Ceremonial Unit and the Fire Service Sports and Athletics Association (FSSAA) from this provision, albeit that the FSSAA has not requested a grant for the last two financial years.

### **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 As such, the Committee is asked to approve – in accordance with Financial Regulations – the making of a grant to the Unit of £7,000 to support its activities in the current financial year and particularly attendance at the Ypres Remembrance Ceremony.

**LEE HOWELL**  
**Chief Fire Officer**