



ALL- PARTY PARLIAMENTARY FIRE SAFETY & RESCUE GROUP

**Chairman: David Amess MP
Vice Chairman: Roger Williams MP
Secretary: Jim Fitzpatrick MP Treasurer: Peter Aldous MP**

**Hon Administrative Secretary: Ronnie King OBE
Hon.Group Officers: Andrew Lynch, Tony Lawson.**

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ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY FIRE SAFETY & RESCUE GROUP

**PRESENTATION TO FIRE INFORMATION GROUP UK – ON ITS 25TH
ANNIVERSARY – BY APPFSRG SECRETARY JIM FITZPATRICK MP**

Good afternoon, my name is Jim Fitzpatrick, and I have been the Member of Parliament for Poplar and Limehouse since May 2010 and the previous Poplar and Canning Town since May 1997. This is a vibrant East London constituency covering one half the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It includes the London landmarks of Docklands, Canary Wharf, St Katherine's Dock and the Tower of London.

I am a former firefighter with the London Fire Brigade, and was proudly decorated with my Long Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1994.

I very much appreciate the invitation from Sheila Pantry to speak with you today, and tell you a little about my own role in Parliament, and about the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety & Rescue Group.

In Parliament my career began when I was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury Alan Milburn.

After the 2001 General Election I became a member of the Tony Blair Government as an Assistant Government Whip, becoming a Lord Commissioner to the Treasury (Government Whip) in 2002. I was again promoted within the Whips Office in 2003 when I became the Vice-Chamberlain of HM's Household.

I was re-elected in the 2005 General Election, and was then appointed a junior minister in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with the role of Minister for London, a role I took with me on my subsequent move to the Department of Trade and Industry in May 2006.

On 29 June 2007 I moved to become the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, with Shipping amongst my responsibilities, and I was replaced as Minister for London by Tessa Jowell.

In 2008 during the Christmas period, myself and my wife visited Bangladesh, touring the development projects supported by the Canary Wharf Group. The purpose of the trip was to re-visit the country since 1999, and see the regeneration projects that this group supports. During this visit, we visited the Football Academy in Dhaka, also to Jagannathpur and Sylhet, where many Bangladeshis in the UK originate from including many in my constituency.

I was promoted to Minister of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the June 2009 reshuffle.

In addressing you here today, I feel quite privileged to be following in the footsteps of my good friend and former colleague Michael Clapham, who was a Member of Parliament for Barnsley until the last General Election, and he was also Secretary of the APPFSRG.

I will commence my presentation with a little bit of background about All-Party Groups in Parliament:

All-Party Groups (APGs) are informal cross-party groups that whilst having no official status in Parliament, they are recognised by Parliament, where registered under the 1985 Resolution of the House of Commons. This register is primarily to show which APG's are recognised by Parliament, who their officers are, and information about the source and extent of financial and material assistance received from outside Parliament. They are essentially run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, though ministers may also be officers or members of APG's. Many APGs involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities, to sustain current awareness in specialist topics.

The All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group's title is sufficiently explanatory to need no elaboration. There are formalities to be gone through before an APG receives Parliamentary recognition and official registration, and one condition is that an adequate number of Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords have signed up to support an APG's interest and existence, whilst maintaining the correct balance of Government and opposition in its make up. The Fire Safety and Rescue APG is appropriately supported and structured, with twenty qualifying Peers and MP's and five non-qualifying members.

Its present make up is as follows:

Register Of All-Party Groups [as at 29 April 2013] Fire Safety and Rescue

TITLE	All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group			
PURPOSE	To meet and discuss topical fire safety and rescue issues with appropriate specialists in these fields.			
OFFICERS				
Title	Name			Party
Joint Chairs	David Amess			Con
	Roger Williams			LD
Treasurer	Peter Aldous			Con
Secretary	Jim Fitzpatrick			Lab
TWENTY QUALIFYING MEMBERS				
Government Party		Main Opposition Party	Other	
1	David Amess – Con	Jim Fitzpatrick	Peter Wishart	SNP
2	Peter Aldous – Con	Chris Williamson		
3	Roger Williams – LD	Albert Owen		
4	Lord Tordoff - LD	Lord Brookman		
5	Nadhim Zahawi – Con	Graeme Morrice		
6	Karen Bradley – Con	Steve Rotheram		
7	Jeremy Lefroy – Con	Lord Harrison		

8	Stephen Phillips – Con	Lord Howie		
9	Nigel Evans – Con	Mary Glendon		
10	Lord Naseby –Con			
Non-Qualifying Members: Cathy Jamieson MP - Lord Evans of Parkside - Baroness Sue Garden - Baroness Sal Brinton - Lord Davies of Coity -				
CONTACT DETAILS FOR CORRESPONDENCE AND GENERAL ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE GROUP				
Mr David Amess MP, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Tel: 020 7219 3452				
BENEFITS RECEIVED BY GROUP FROM SOURCES OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT				
Parliamentary Perceptions Ltd (a consultancy) acts as the group's secretariat.				
NAME OF ANY STAFF TO THE GROUP WHO HOLD AN APG PASS				
Ronnie King.				
DATE OF GROUP'S LAST REGISTERED ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING				
11 July 2012				
CATEGORY OF GROUP				
All-Party Parliamentary Subject Group.				

The APPFSRG seeks to hold three seminars a year on topics related to its interest in fire safety and rescue matters. At its AGM in July 2012 it was noted that, despite an extremely busy political year, the Group had maintained its reputation for activity in Parliament by holding three seminars, which were well attended by public and private sector fire safety interests.

The Group additionally holds business meetings, either to consider FIRE related issues itself, or to meet as a smaller group, with other MP's or outside organisations to discuss matters which are appropriate to its work. These matters are frequently brought to the attention of Government Ministers or Secretaries of State. The Group held seven such meetings in the last Parliamentary year, with some Group members tabling Parliamentary Questions (both written and oral) as well as an adjournment debate and a private members' bill.

The All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group can be a significant route to influencing the political viewpoint, drawing matters of importance to the attention of Government Ministers in Departments outside Fire & Rescue.

Since last year's AGM the Group has been particularly active with a number of meetings with:

**representatives from Basildon Council,
the Eastern Alliance,
the World Road Association,
the Royal Institute of British Architects,
the Fire Sector Federation
the Association of British Insurers
the Loss Adjusters.**

**Office of Harriet Harman MP QC re Lakanal House Tragedy Inquest.
Sir Neil Thorne OBE re Fire Service Parliamentary Scheme.**

together with three Parliamentary Seminars on:

- 1. Enforcement**
- 2. Fire Safety in the Built Environment**
- 3. Schools and Arson.**

There has additionally been numerous items of correspondence between myself and the Secretary of State for Education and his Minister of State, over the Priority Schools Building Programme, and with Defra Minister Richard Benyon MP over Water related issues and in particular the 'Water for Life' proposals.

Further correspondence took place between those involved with the Sony Warehouse rebuild in Enfield after its destruction by fire during the Riots, and with the London Fire Brigade, when it was decided to re-build the warehouse without automatic sprinkler protection.

Members of the Group have also asked important Parliamentary Questions (PQs) on fire safety matters, but since the resignation of the Rt. Hon. Alun Michael MP, to take up a post as Police and Crime Commissioner in South Wales, the Lord Harrison's Building Regulations (Review) Bill, has not been further taken up in the House of Commons.

In summary, during the past year we have been an active and successful Group, whilst ensuring a properly balanced membership which reflects that of the Coalition Government.

Sadly Douglas Smith (former Hon. Admin. Secretary of the Group) passed away over the Christmas period whilst on holiday in the West Indies. The Chairman, Lord Naseby and Lord Howie together with Ronnie King attended the funeral service in Mortlake.

As we look ahead, the key issues facing the Group will be one of considering the Funding issues, following Sir Ken Knight's Efficiency Review, and the impact this might have on maintaining an efficient and effective Fire & Rescue Service. Scotland now has just one Fire & Rescue Service, and there will undoubtedly be pressure to look at the potential benefits and cost savings of collaborative working and mergers in England, arising from the Scottish and previously the 'Welsh' experience.

The Accreditation and Compliance issues relating to those involved with the Risk Assessment process, together with matters arising from the Coroner's Rule 43 letters following the tragic incidents at Lakanal House in Camberwell and Shirley Towers in Southampton, will be closely monitored by the All-Party Group.

There are also significant challenges in the Built environment from new methods of Construction and new Building Materials, which as yet are untried and unknown so far as their behaviour in Fire is concerned. Dr Jim Glockling may well have covered these issues in his presentation earlier in the programme.

Finally the Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Measure will have Regulations in place by September 2013, which will see all new Domestic Dwellings, Sheltered Housing, Care Homes, and Student Accommodation in Wales fitted with automatic fire sprinkler protection. The consultation on Implementing the Measure closed on the 17th June. The Measure was enshrined in law in 2012. Wales is the first Country in the world to implement this Legislation, which will provide valuable evidence to 'inform' decision making elsewhere.

THANK YOU - I AM HAPPY TO TAKE QUESTIONS.