



Traditionally in the fire service, it used to be that August was a relatively quiet month; particularly for meetings, emails and associated management issues.

It was a month when people took family holidays, the roads were quieter and you could spend some time catching up on administrative tasks—answering those emails that needed concentration and time to answer; to paraphrase Mark Twain, ‘I would have written you a short letter but I didn’t have time’ was not a problem during August. This year, the work in August didn’t seem to go away, and this year it was even more noticeable, perhaps in part as a consequence of the Grenfell tragedy.

Throughout August the identification and visiting of buildings aligned to the large-scale testing of cladding systems has gone on undiminished, as has the work of the Expert and Technical panels within DCLG’s Building Safety programme; and quite rightly too.

Alongside this we have had the announcement and publication of the terms of reference for both the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry (chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick) and the Independent Review of Building Regulation and Fire Safety (chaired by Dame Judith Hackitt).

NFCC has submitted its views on matters the inquiry and review should cover and it is willing – and able – to make a significant contribution to both. The work of many members of NFCC throughout this time, especially the Protection and Business Safety Committee, chaired by Mark Hardingham, has been significant and will continue for months, if not years to come.

But the Grenfell work is far from the only important issue to need attention during this time. At the very beginning of August, I represented NFCC at a seminar for Police and Crime Commissioners who were seriously considering taking on the role of the fire authority.

We discussed the importance of a professional fire and rescue service and how one works within the different governance regimes across the UK. Closely linked to this was a meeting called the Fire Implementers Group, where I supported Adam Eckley in articulating the importance of the role of the Chief Fire Officer and also Integrated Risk Management Planning. I must say we were supported in this by the PCC offices from Essex and Avon and Somerset.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August I was able to spend the day with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. I was impressed by what I saw and it is something I want to do more of; visiting fire and rescue services to ensure that your views, concerns and priorities are driving the work of the NFCC.

Ensuring fire and rescue services are effectively represented is why we created the National Fire Chiefs Council. We have made an excellent start and I am looking forward to meeting people at next week’s AGM and conference so we can share views and learning in order to grow together.