

## Contemporaneous notes Julian Spooner (██████5D) Grenfell Tower fire

0600hrs - morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> June was heading into work for a 9 hour duty shift when radio 4 provided a news bulletin of the incident clearly stating that 40 appliances were in attendance..  
Phoned BCC to offer being available to attend or provide officer cover as necessary

Paged to attend at approx. 0730hrs, arrived and tasked by AC Roe to take over Sector Safety from GM O'Neill due to USAR Advisor qualification. Walked the incident ground with GM O' Neill confirming safety officers and their briefs. I remember being struck with the level of detail the safety officers provided. At that time parts of the building were still falling to the ground with external risk/ hazards constant, however they clearly understood their roles.

0800hrs approx- briefed by AC Roe that offensive firefighting operations were continuing until crews had cleared the top floors of saveable life.

Understood and personally accepted that this was an unprecedented incident and working within polices would not be able to bring this incident to a successful conclusion re saving saveable life..

0900hrs approx. I was informed by GM Cane that an additional safety officer had been placed at the bridgehead. At this stage I understood the role of the safety officers I had met, I then went to the bridgehead to confirm the role of that specific safety officer (SM Frisby). He had been placed there to confirm the general health of the BA crews who might be re-wearing BA as a final check before committing.

Information from BA crews was they were finding it difficult to take equipment (Hose and branches) up the tower and have any air left for firefighting. They also reported that conditions up to the 13<sup>th</sup> floor were reasonable in the stairwell however the floors from the 8<sup>th</sup> were still alight. Gas could not be isolated.

As Sector Safety I asked the Fire Sector (I believe GM Graham) to allow me to get a team of firefighters and place hose and branches up to approx. the 13<sup>th</sup> floor not under air. As Sector Safety I then took a team of approx. 6 volunteers to carry this out, briefing the fire sector that this had been completed before withdrawing from the building with the crew..

1000hrs approx. I rechecked the brief/ progress of the the safety officers in Sector Lobby, 1,2 and 4 which now had Surreys ALP in use before going back to the CU (I think AC Roe had been relieved by AC Ellis) . Discussions were had on stability of the building and a Drone from Kent USAR had been offered and accepted and mobile to incident. I met the responsible person from the gas board who was tasked with making a plan to isolate supply. I arranged to meet them again at approx. 1200hrs to confirm. An electrical substation in the basement had been identified, however after discussion it was agreed this should trip out if compromised by water, given the circumstances little more could be practically done to reduce the risk of the substation.

1130hrs approx. Information had been received by principle officers that a bariatric casualty had collapsed and died on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor stairwell. This was causing the BA crews distress as stepping over was difficult. As Sector Safety I offered/ was asked to try and clear the casualty for the stairwell to the landing. I took the lead DVI officer (Allister Hutchins) and an EDBA crew from Croydon to the bridgehead. Info then came back that the casualty had been already moved with Croydon's EDBA

crew asked to remain at the bridgehead. After clearing/ briefing GM Graham I took the DVI lead to the 9<sup>th</sup> floor where he took details of deceased for ID purposes. We then exited the tower

1300hrs approx. Myself and DAC Odgen (who stayed at the Bridgehead) re-entered the tower with the building surveyor to try and determine the structural damage to the lower fire floors, mainly columns and floors. Significant damage to floors we could access was visible. We then left the building and discussed findings with AC Ellis. Building surveyor had concerns that after 15 hrs approx. of building being on fire structural integrity could be compromised.

1400hrs approx Re- entered the tower with GM/DAC Odgen and GM Simpson and made our way to the bridgehead. Discussed with him, GM Chisolm and GM Simpson the viability of continuing offensive operations, At approx. 1500hrs. Feedback from crews at this stage was they had reached the top floors, no viable life left to rescue, floors were still alight though staircase was clear. To make the assessment we started walking up through the tower. At approx. 16<sup>th</sup> floor, it was apparent that multiple seats of fire remained on each floor (gas mains alight in flats) with a strong smell of gas in the stairwell and deep bangs could be heard from above us. All officers agreed it was time for a tactical withdrawal. This was communicated to the Bridgehead and we all exited the building.

1600hrs approx. Discussed options with AC Ellis as we had also had the initial Drone footage showing the damage from outside the building. The building surveyor had been in contact with a Dr Lane (building specialist) who was concerned that the fire had started a sequence of events that could lead to collapse / or partial collapse of the tower. AC Ellis asked if I could facilitate her attendance. I did this through BCC. When she attended I was about to go onto the CU to take part in the briefing however was required to check cordons in case of imminent collapse.

On my return to the CU the briefing had concluded and she seemed unable to provide further expert advice and left the scene.

Relieved at approx 1900hrs- at this stage the tactical withdrawal was still in place the immediate plan going forward was to continue to keep the cordons back in case of collapse and isolate the gas from outside the tower to extinguish burning gas mains in flats before reassessing in the morning.