

## ALUMNI – James Bye

James Bye is now enjoying a career as a Firefighter, he is married and has 2 children of his own. He has agreed to share in his own words how he made a successful application to work for the Fire Service in this highly competitive emergency service.

I left Kenilworth School in 2002 with relatively poor scores in my GCSEs, which is something I regret, as I had aspirations to become a plumber. I attended Warwickshire College but decided within my first year that this was something I didn't want to do and decided to leave.

I went into the construction trade working on various contracts and building sites and become quite well skilled in brick work which I carried on doing for a number of years. Having spent various winters on building sites and not enjoying the work and freezing to the bone, I decided that around 2010 I wanted to pursue a different career and considered the military and Fire Service.



I knew that I needed to brush up on literacy and numeracy skills as there are certain requirements to join services like the Fire Service, so I enrolled on some short courses.

In 2011 I applied to become a Firefighter for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. From minute one it was an assessment, when you apply you get asked questions on your application form which are known as "PQAs" which stands for personal qualities and attributes. They are scenario based questions assessing your suitability for the role and, if successful, the interview is based around these as well.

If you are successful with the application stage then you are invited to undertake psychometric testing. These include literacy and numerical assessments as well as aptitude tests which are often a lot harder than they need to be to enable the Fire Service to recruit the best of the best.

If successful with that stage then you are invited to undertake a physical assessment which is again a very demanding set of tests which are role related, these include a ladder extension, hose running, dummy drag, equipment carry and manual dexterity tests.

If you pass that then the final stage is an interview with senior officers where you will be asked PQAs and assessed on your suitability for the role. Coupled with that is a very intense medical examination by the brigade doctor. The whole process can take up to 8 months.

I was lucky enough to pass all the tests and join the Fire Service. The opportunities I have been given are amazing and I have done things I never thought I would ever do and I have become very skilled in my job. The most fulfilling moment is using my skills to assist members of the public in an emergency situation and providing a very good standard of service to the public. Also engaging in the community and helping and educating the community as much as we can.

I recommend this career to anyone who has a desire to help other people and anyone who enjoys a challenging but rewarding career.