

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 5

REPORT TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS AND BONFIRE INCIDENTS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the incident activity levels, diversionary and intervention programmes and instances of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) within the Service area over the Bonfire period, 1st to 6th November 2015.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 As Members will be aware, the bonfire period is traditionally the busiest time of the year for the Service and this year was no exception. As in the past, measures were taken to ensure that the Service had the capability and resources to deal with the increase in calls to bonfires, whilst also maintaining the operational capability to respond effectively to life threatening incidents.

2.2 In addition to the operational planning, a proactive Darker Nights Campaign was undertaken during the weeks prior to the 5th November. The campaign was developed in conjunction with local partners and incorporated educational activities, publicity and media messages, bonfire uplift schemes and operational Command and Control arrangements.

2.3 The key objectives of the campaign were to:

- Raise awareness of the dangers and consequences of the misuse/abuse of bonfires and fireworks.
- Encourage people to attend organised displays.
- Reinforce the detrimental effects of anti-social behaviour and impact of attacks against emergency workers.

3 DARKER NIGHTS CAMPAIGN

3.1 Local area meetings were established within each District, with representatives from Northumbria Police and Local Authority's to ensure effective delivery of the objectives within each community.

- 3.2 To influence young people in the target age group (11-14 year olds), Prevention and Education (P&E) staff developed a risk based education programme to target primary and secondary schools within Tyne and Wear.
- 3.3 Following on from the success of the 2014 bonfire safety DVD "Jacks Story", a new educational DVD was utilised for the 2015 campaign. "Ryan's Regret" was produced using a case study from 2014. This was delivered to 11 -16 year olds in all targeted secondary schools. Educational resource packs were also sent to all primary schools in Tyne and Wear. Approximately 20,000 young people across Tyne and Wear received input as part of the diversionary education programme.
- 3.4 For those young people outside of mainstream education, sessions were delivered to Pupil Referral Units (PRU's) and to Special Educational Needs Schools (SEN's), at SafetyWorks, 289 young people from outside of mainstream education attended SafetyWorks and received this specific, targeted education.
- 3.5 A Service-wide communications campaign was launched to encourage residents to stay safe and have an enjoyable Bonfire period. The campaign included the educational DVD, e-communications campaign, and proactive and reactive media work, including 6 journalists riding on appliances and TRV's with operational crews on 5th November and 2 members of the press in service control. In total, the media campaign, delivered - 39 newspaper and on-line articles; 3 TV bulletins; and 5 radio pieces.
- 3.6 The Service's e-communications campaign involved dedicated pages on the Service's website which were viewed on 53,892 occasions. Safety messages were also promoted using Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.
- 3.7 Local Authority bonfire uplift schemes were in operation throughout the bonfire period. These involved the removal of fuel such as refuse, furniture, and wheelie bins. The uplifting of illegal bonfires prior to ignition clearly reduces the risks to the community and to operational firefighters. In 2015, Local Authorities and partners carried out 713 uplifts. This represents an increase when compared to the 2014 figure of 643.
- 3.8 Furthermore the Service registered and issued 147 licences to retailers for the storage and sale of fireworks. All applications, except large supermarkets, received an audit by the Fire Safety Department prior to the issue of any License. There was one Firework seizure and a number of reported 'Facebook' sellers, one of which was visited by the Fire Safety Department and the Police.

4 INCIDENT STATISTICS

- 4.1 For the period 1st to 6th November, the following data has been validated.

- 4.7 % reduction in the total number of calls received by Service control (from 715 in 2014 to 682 in 2015).
- 3.7 % increase in the total number of incidents attended (from 433 in 2014 to 449 in 2015).
- 12.3 % increase in the number of deliberate ASB secondary fires (from 179 in 2014 to 201 in 2015).
- There were 3 attacks on fire-fighters in 2015, 2014 there were 0 attacks on firefighters.
- There were 3 firework related property fires in 2015, compared to 2 in 2014.

4.2 Hospital A&E departments reported that 10 people were treated in A&E departments for firework or bonfire-related injuries on 5th November, which is an increase from 7 in 2014. This figure (10) remained the same over the bonfire period 1st – 6th of November, compared to 9 in 2014.

4.3 On 5th November, in order to reduce the demand on operational fire appliances, arrangements were made to place an 'incident assessment team' in each district. Each team consisted of a duty Group Manager and a Station Manager. Their role was to attend reported bonfires and assess whether an appliance was required to attend. In total, the teams were mobilised to 21 incidents and requested an appliance to attend on 10 occasions, therefore preventing 11 appliance mobilisations.

5 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

5.1 There were 3 reported attacks on firefighters in 2015, which sees an increase of 3 in comparison to 2014; no injuries were sustained by firefighters over the 2015 bonfire period. TWFRS continue to work with Police and partners to prevent such incidents.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 A partnership approach to the bonfire period has again proven to be extremely successful in managing the risk to the community.

6.2 It can be seen that the total number of calls received decreased, however, the total number of incidents attended and the number of ASB secondary incidents attended increased. Indeed, activity levels in terms of calls received and incidents attended over the bonfire period, still stand at roughly half the levels experienced in 2007 (Appendix A also refers).

- 6.3 The number of bonfire and refuse uplifts undoubtedly prevented many more incidents and further reduced the risk to members of the community and fire fighters alike.
- 6.4 In 2015, there were 3 attacks on firefighters which represents an increase from 2014, P&E teams will continue to use the bonfire educational campaign to educate young people of the consequences.
- 6.5 The number of people who attended A&E departments with firework or bonfire-related injuries over the bonfire period, increased to 10 in 2015 from 9 in 2014.

7 LOOK FORWARD: FUTURE SAFETY INITIATIVES

- 7.1 The Prevention & Education team continue to deliver locally devised intelligence led initiatives, whilst utilising the national 'Fire Kills' campaign to ensure maximum impact of our local safety messages.
- 7.2 Our Christmas campaign will be highlighting the issues around cooking and fires within the kitchen, 12 days of Christmas cooking DVD will be produced, this will be communicated via social media and include press and media releases.
- 7.3 Looking towards 2016, our next focus is on the period April to June. This period has in the past observed heightened levels of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) fires; an increase which is also experienced in ASB activity by Police and Local Authority's. We will be working with multi-agency partners to deliver a Lighter Nights Campaign targeted at young people across Tyne and Wear. Our intelligence led approach will seek to mirror the successful Darker Nights Campaign, with the aim of reducing the amount of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents across all five Local Authority Areas.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

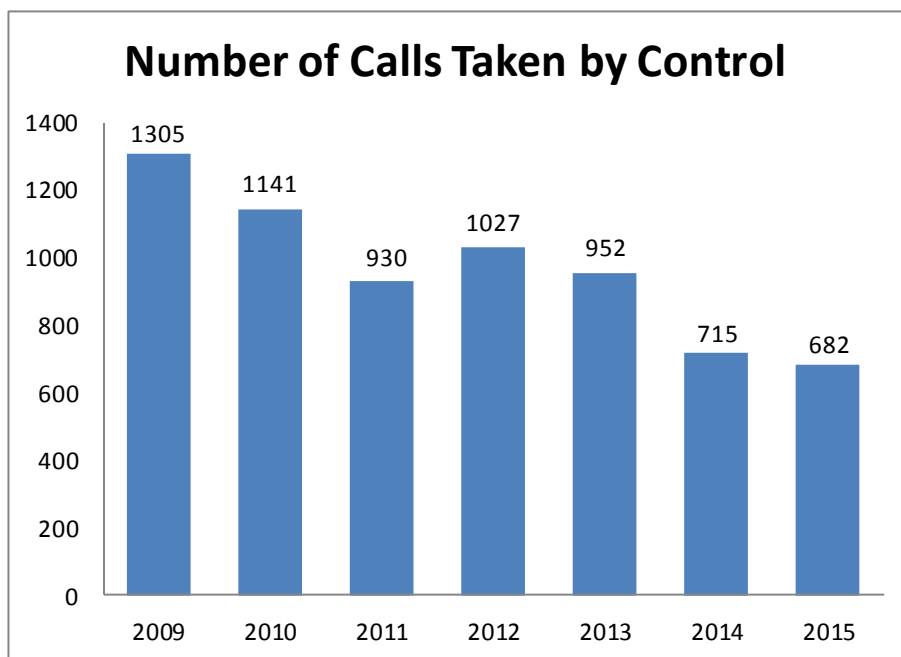
- a) Note the content of the report.
 - b) Receive further reports as necessary.
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

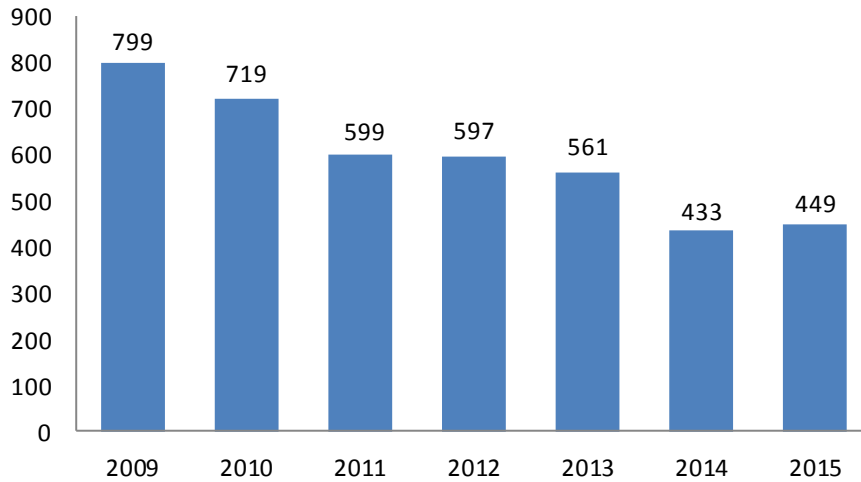
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2014 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2013 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2012 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2011 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2010 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2009 Report” TWFRS
- “Fireworks and Bonfires Ruin Lives in a Flash” reports of 2008 and 2007, TWFRS
- “Get Wise” campaign report 2006, Northumbria Police

APPENDIX A – SERVICE INCIDENT STATISTICS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER

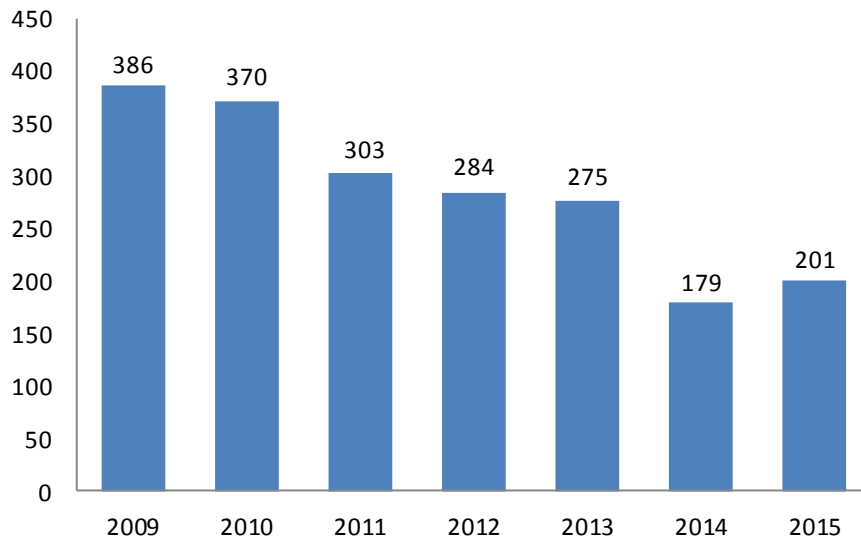




Number of Incidents Attended by TWFRS

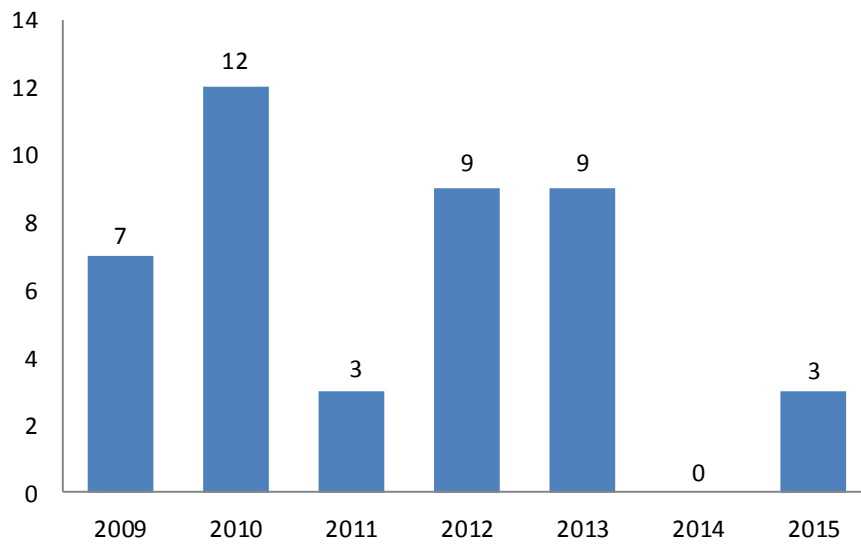


Deliberate Secondary Fires

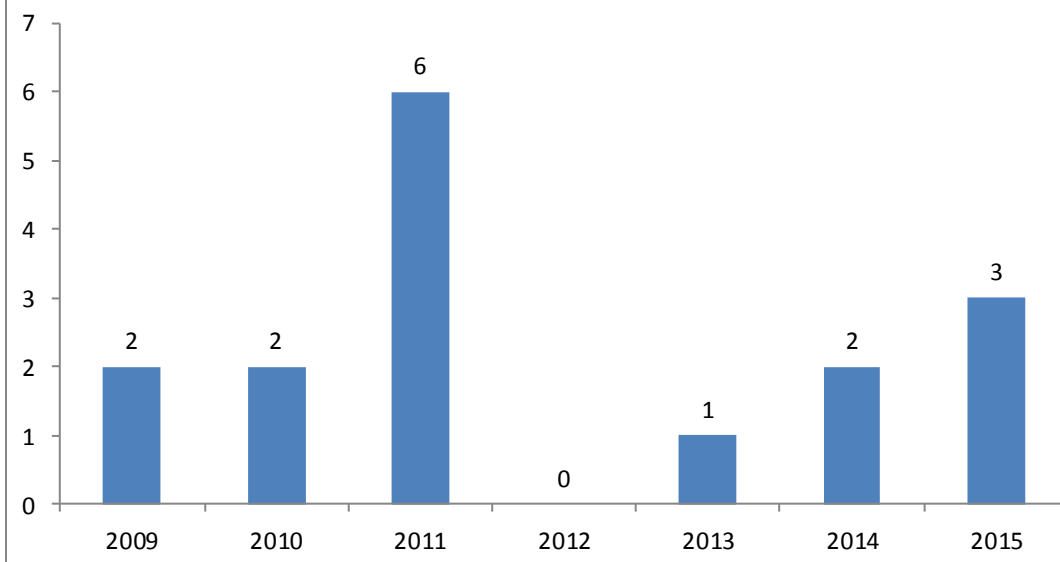




Attacks on Operational FF's



Firework Related Primary Fires





Bonfire/firework related injuries in A&E departments (5th November)

Organisation/Hospital	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	3	0	5	1	4	2	4
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:	0	0	0	1	2	1	0
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust:	3	0	3	0	1	Unav	3
South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust:	1	0	0	2	2	1	0
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust:	4	3	1	1	2	5	3
TOTAL	11	3	9	5	11	9	10