

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 7

MEETING: 16th December 2013

SUBJECT: FIREWORKS AND BONFIRE INCIDENTS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the incident activity levels, intervention programmes and instances of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) within the Service area over the Bonfire period, 1st to 6th November 2013.

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.

Creating the Safest Community

- 3.3 Following on from the success of the 2012 bonfire safety DVD which told the story of local girl India Redhead, two new educational DVD's were utilised for the 2013 campaign. For the main element of the diversionary campaign a new DVD entitled 'Don't Lose the Plot' was produced and was delivered to 11 -14 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. These sessions utilised the ASB DVD produced following the Wetherby Grove incident in Gateshead. 343 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 an educational DVD, posters, an e-communications campaign and proactive and reactive media work, including five journalists riding appliances with operational crews, on 5th November. This resulted in 40 press articles in print and online, one radio interview and two TV interviews. In addition, further coverage was gained as a result of a press briefing to promote safety messages in advance of a strike by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on 1st and 4th November.
- 3.6 The Service's e-communications campaign involved dedicated pages on the Service's website which were viewed on 127,123 occasions, incorporating 32,706 unique visits. 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 2013, Local Authorities and partners carried out 1058 uplifts. This represents a significant increase on the 2012 figure of 595.
- 3.8 Furthermore the Service registered 141 retailers for the storage and sale of fireworks and issued 22 licences. All new applicants for registrations or licences and a sample of independent retailers were inspected by Fire Safety personnel.

4 INCIDENT STATISTICS

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

- 7% reduction in the total number of calls received by Service control (from 1027 in 2012 to 952 in 2013).

- 6% reduction in the total number of incidents attended (from 597 in 2012 to 561 in 2013).
- 3% reduction in the number of deliberate ASB secondary fires (from 284 in 2012 to 275 in 2013).
- There was 1 firework related property fire in 2013, compared to 0 in 2012.
- Northumbria Police reported a 38% decrease in the number of firework/bonfire related incidents attended. There were only 2 bonfire/firework related arrests in 2013, compared to 11 in 2012.

4.2 Hospital A&E departments reported that 11 people were treated in A&E departments for firework or bonfire-related injuries on 5th November, which is an increase from 5 in 2012. There were a total of 14 injuries over the bonfire period, 1st – 6th of November, compared to 6 in 2012.

4.3 Over 2nd – 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 33 incidents and requested an appliance to attend on 15 occasions, therefore preventing 18 appliance mobilisations.

5 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

5.1 The number of reported attacks on firefighters remained the same (9) as in 2012; no injuries were sustained by firefighters over the 2013 bonfire period.

6 CONCLUSION

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

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

6.3 The increase in 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 2013, there were 9 attacks on firefighters, the same number as in 2012. Thankfully no resultant injuries were sustained by firefighters. TWFRS regards any attacks on our staff as unacceptable and we continue to work with the Police and other partners to ensure such occurrences are driven down. Where offenders are apprehended they are dealt with by the full force of the law.
- 6.5 The number of people who attended A&E departments with firework or bonfire-related injuries over the bonfire period, increased to 14 in 2013 from 6 in 2012.

7 LOOK FORWARD: FUTURE SAFETY INITIATIVES

- 7.1 The Prevention & Education team continue to deliver locally devised intelligent led initiatives, whilst utilising the national 'Fire Kills' campaign to ensure maximum impact of our local safety messages.
- 7.2 Our Christmas campaign will include press and media releases and fire safety visits to encourage residents and business owners to be vigilant with the increased risks at this time of year.
- 7.3 Looking towards 2014, 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.

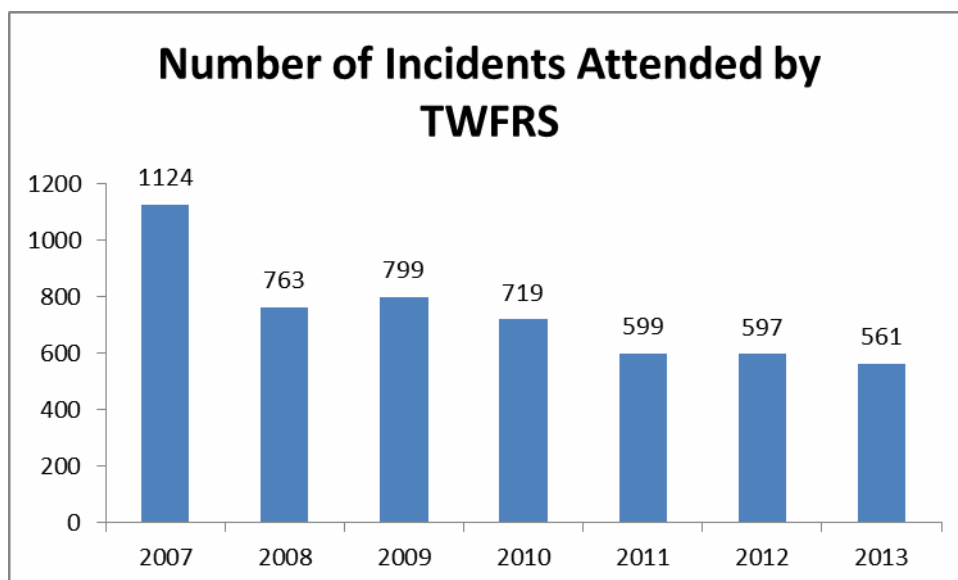
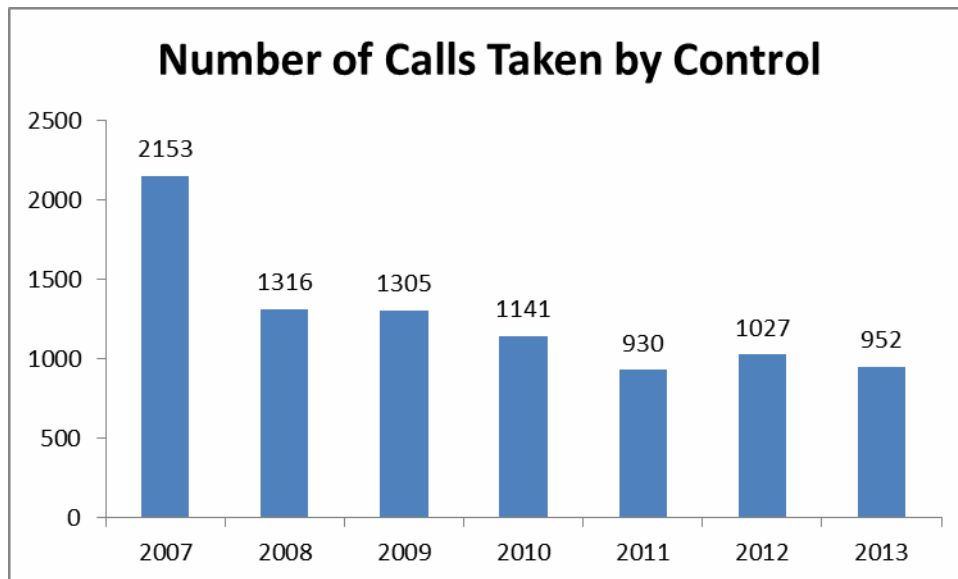
BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

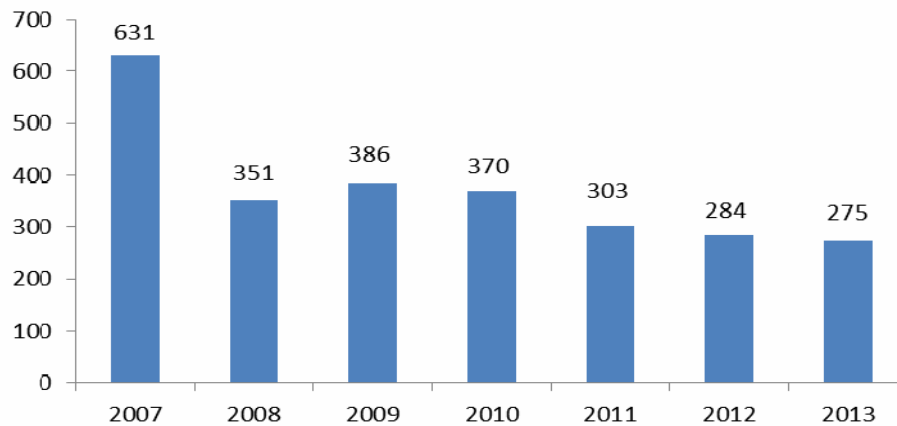
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2012 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2011 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2010 Report” TWFRS
- “Bonfire and Fireworks Campaign, 2009 Report” TWFRS
- “Fireworks and Bonfires Ruin Lives in a Flash” reports of 2008 and 2007, TWFRS
- “Get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

APPENDIX A

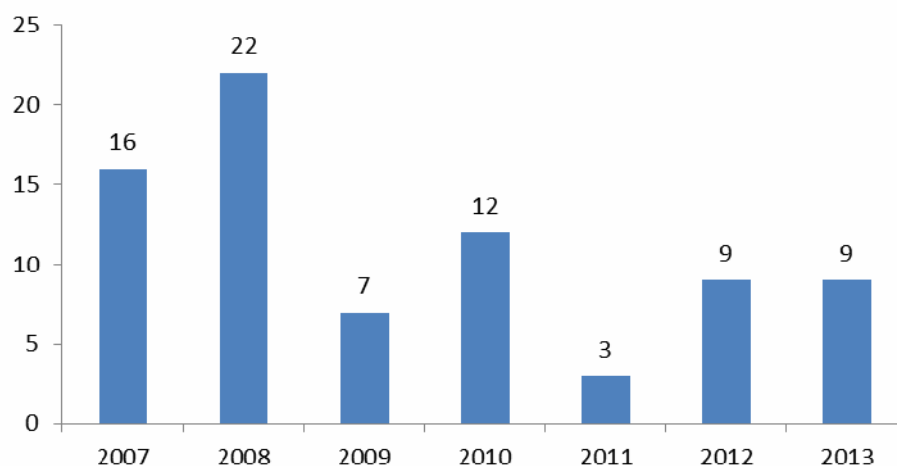
INCIDENT STATISTICS 1st – 6th NOVEMBER



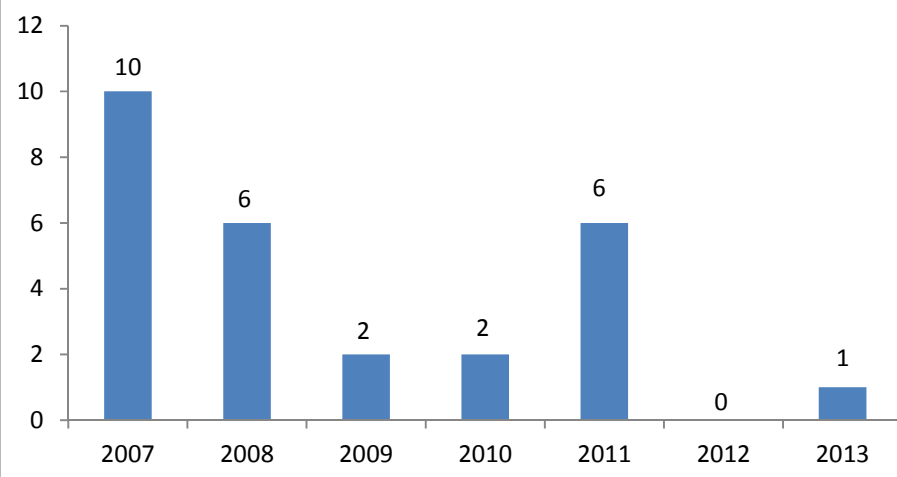
Deliberate Secondary Fires

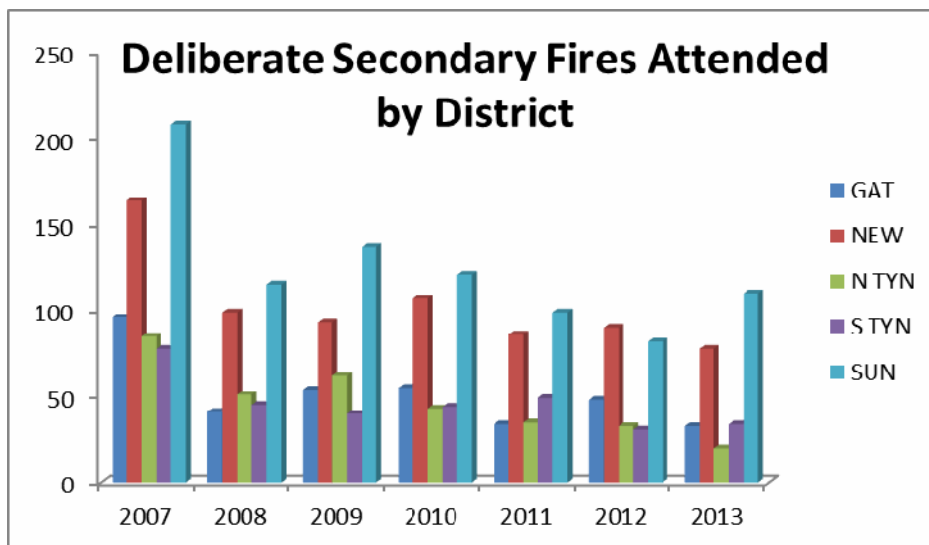
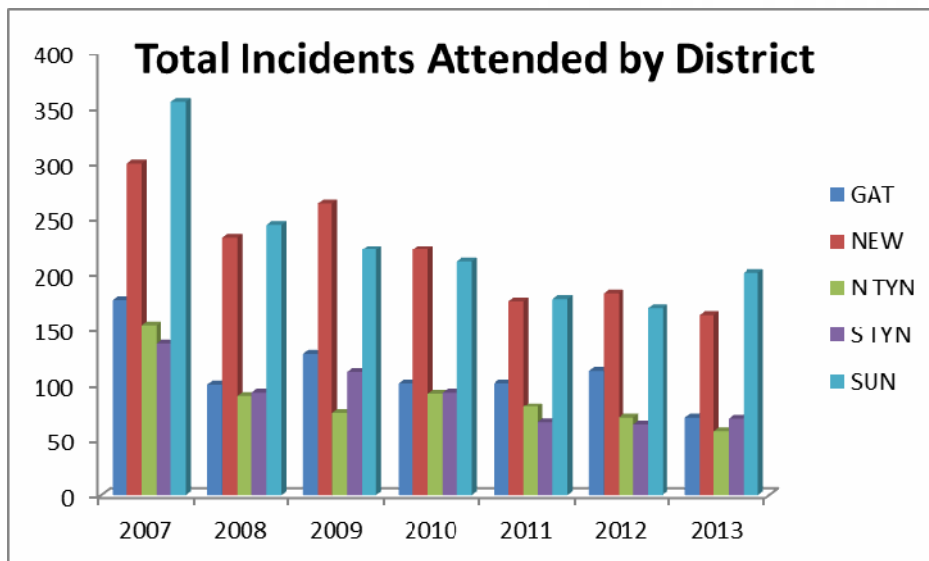


Attacks on Operational FF's



Firework Related Primary Fires





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

Organisation/Hospital	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	8	5	3	0	5	1	4
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust:	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust:	Unavail	1	3	0	3	0	1
South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust:	1	1	1	0	0	2	2
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust:		1	4	3	1	1	2
TOTAL	10	8	11	2	9	5	11

There were a total of 14 injuries over the bonfire period, 1st – 6th of November, compared to 6 in 2012.

Number of uplifts of illegal bonfires and bonfire related materials

Table 1	Number of Uplifts				
Local Authority Area	2010	2011	2012	2013	Duration of Uplifts (2013)
Gateshead	33	35	16	74	01/11 – 05/11
Sunderland	63	148	48	121	28/10 – 05/11
Newcastle	620	562	426	769	26/09 – 05/11
South Tyneside	322	288	63	66	01/11 – 05/11
North Tyneside	71	49	42	28	28/10 – 05/11
TOTAL	1109	1082	595	1058	

