

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Bonfires on public land

Introduction

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide an overview surrounding the seasonal demand on some frontline services during the end of October and beginning of November leading up to bonfire night each year. Historically we have previously experienced increases in seasonal crime and disorder mainly amongst young people within our communities and town centre areas.

Overview

Mischief Night in its modern-day format is an Americanism during which youths have historically engaged in tricks and low level anti-social behaviour. Here in Stockton on Tees, Mischief Night falls on the day prior to Halloween. For the past several years, this period has brought about a sharp increase in anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and disorder which is perpetrated by youths from the third week in October, until after Bonfire Night on the 5th November.

Multi-agency partners brought together under the umbrella of the Safer Stockton Partnership, jointly work together in a combined approach under the banner of the Bonfire Strategy, also known as Operation Trojan. This joint strategy is centred on a program of targeted interventions on the lead up to this period, with a focus on education and diversionary activities aimed at problem areas across Stockton on Tees.

This results in a dedicated response by all partners to crime and disorder, which historically has peaked on Mischief Night, Halloween, and Bonfire Night. The strategy each year usually commences on the 3rd week in October and runs until the end of the 1st week in November. Preparatory work around planning, education and diversionary activity commences as the schools go back following the summer term, in order to get a comprehensive program of intervention in place

Planning Considerations

In planning for the period, the statistics from the last bonfire period are considered alongside intelligence relating to current hotspots in our community for all partners. This data will be used to target resources during the period alongside reports from Elected Members, residents, and businesses. **Appendix 1** refers to the figures from the previous 3 years which is broken down into various formats including those of the top 5 ward areas. It is worth noting that the figures shown are those of SBC and Fire Brigade but exclude Cleveland Police. It also worth noting that the figures show both anti-social behaviour and deliberate fire setting such as bonfires, as the calls often relate to the behaviours around the bonfires rather than the bonfire itself.

The combined resources of Stockton Borough Council, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade and Thirteen Housing Group are brought together under Operation Trojan. It should be noted that Operation Trojan is the local Stockton response to this period of demand however Cleveland Police also have a force wide strategy under Operation Autumnus which also contributes to reducing incidents of crime, ASB and fire setting..

Youth Support Services contribute to the operation by working with partners within Youth Unite Stockton, which looks at increasing diversionary provision from young people such as Youth club, activity buses.

The Outreach Team has a yearlong presence within our communities and responds to need identified through information gathered locally. Information sharing and partnership working directs our teams where there is a need or concern, and they respond accordingly.

On occasions a small number of young people are identified by school, community safety or police and are then referred in to help and support for a more tailored educational intervention, to meet their needs with the aim of increasing awareness and understanding. Where we are unable to meet the need or identify more specialist support is required with have links with our partners within the fire service that we can work alongside.

Our Response

Following the Summer Holidays, the planning stage commences with partners which includes engagement with key schools and educational establishments within key areas has been taking place. This work, undertaken by School Liaison Officers from both Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade and Stockton Borough Council, has ensured that key messages surrounding the effects of ASB, deliberate fire setting and criminal damage are discussed including the consequences of such acts.

Further education work takes place, led by the Civic Enforcement Service, aimed at reducing the availability of combustible materials used in deliberate fire setting in the community. This approach which is supported by both Cleveland Fire Brigade and Thirteen Group uses the latest fire setting intelligence to target key areas which arson and deliberate fire setting is a concern. The education work is to ensure residents and businesses are aware of the correct channels to dispose of waste, working with Care for your Area, whilst also making clear the potential consequences of failing in their duty of care including tenancy enforcement action if appropriate.

Appendix 2 refers to an example letter which is issued to residents in areas of note.

The final element of this seasonal strategy surrounds the deployment of resources for the purpose of deterring, detecting and dealing with ASB, crime and disorder during the strategy period.

Care for you Area also support this strategy providing two loaders and two drivers for the period and work up to 2200hours (1700hours on 5th November) for partners to

report waste that can be used as missiles and combustible materials used in fire setting for immediate collection.

To better co-ordinate resources in Stockton on Tees, a closer level of information sharing through the likes of joint briefings and agenda items on the Joint Action Group (JAG) meeting will also take place. This will be further supplemented by initiatives such as a shared operation command room to ensure better joint working. Cleveland Police will be utilising a range of powers and tools if required, including dispersal orders on hotspot locations.

Finally, Cleveland Fire Brigade contribute to the wider seasonal approach by focusing resources on ensuring the deliberate fire setting and the factors, which contribute to this such as poor waste presentation, and dumped vehicles are reported following a special reporting arrangement. Alongside this contribution to the overall intelligence picture, Cleveland Fire Brigade have dedicated resources deployed to areas that have already been identified as having the potential to suffer from increased crime and disorder. This includes patrols by both fire crews and proactive intervention via dedicated community liaison officers.

Impact to services and damages and costs

Horticultural Services

Following this period, SBCs Horticultural services are deployed to reinstate and damages which have occurred. In terms of impacts and costs, the vast majority of it is replaced with edgings and cuttings which are collected throughout the year and therefore recycled into further use. The staffing element of the process is picked up in the day-to-day management.

Care for Your Area

The additional costs relate to the additional officers who work up until 10pm for the 2 week period of the operation. This consists of two loaders and two drivers each day.

In terms of tonnage, there is no notable increase of waste due to the other methods of disposal which is seen around this time of year.

Civic Enforcement Service

Additional costs relate to the additional resources required to staff two main evenings, Mischief Night and Bonfire Night.

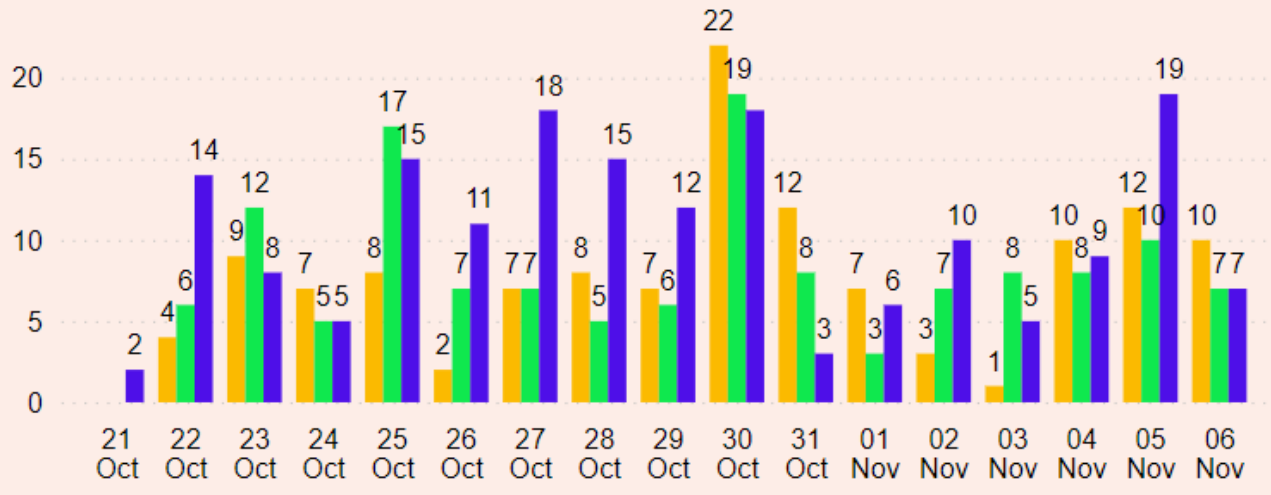
Environmental Health –

Appendix 3 and **4** relates to the complaints raised directly with environmental health. Environmental Health have the powers to deal with fires and smoke in a statutory nuisance capacity. The data shows that complaints for open burning drop within the month of November compared to October.

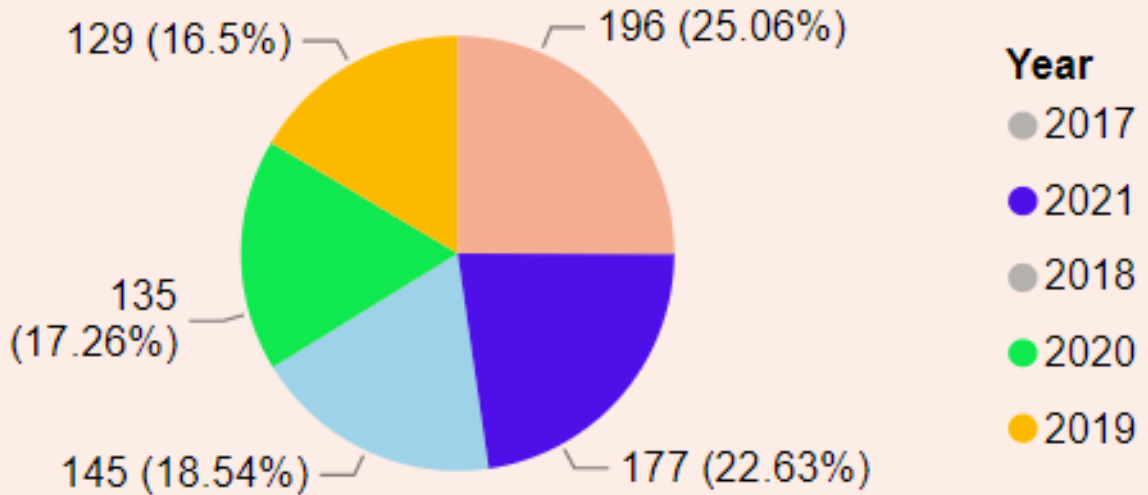
Appendix 1 – Incidents reported Civic Enforcement Service in the past 3 years

Number of Incidents by Date and Year

Year ● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021



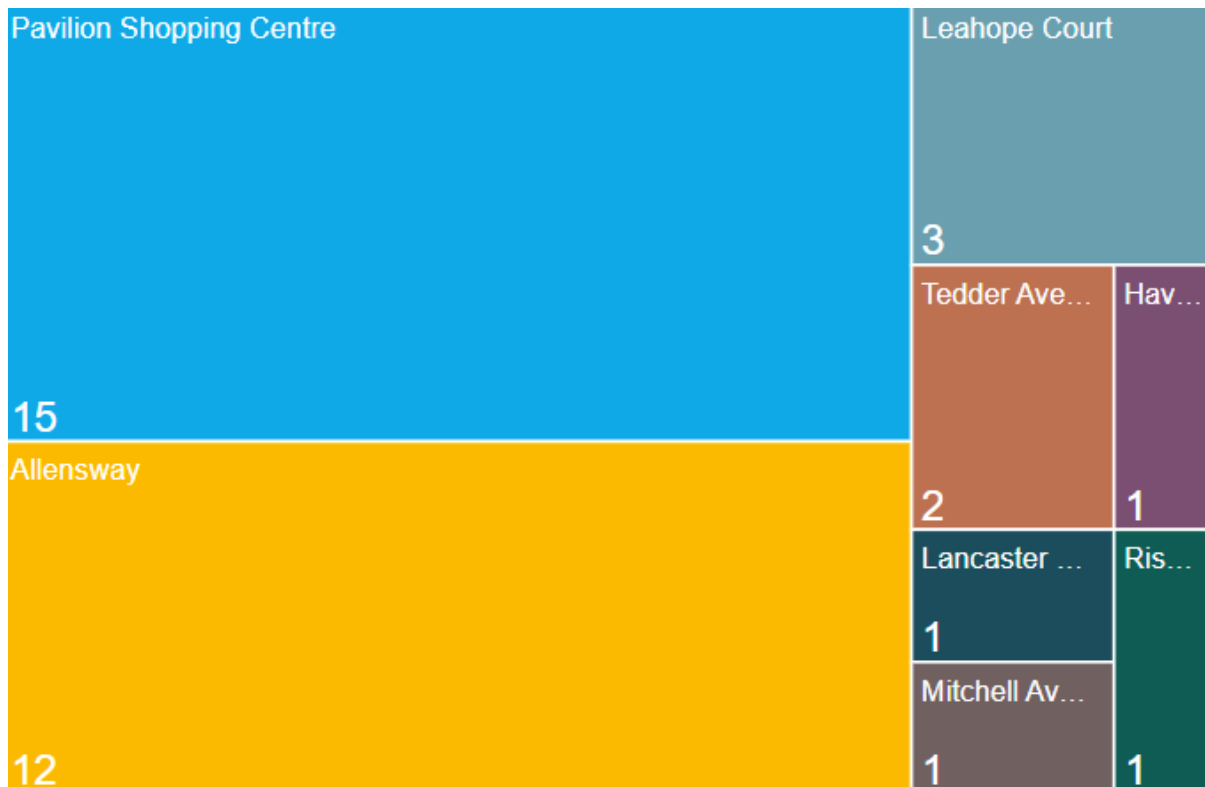
Number of Incidents by Year



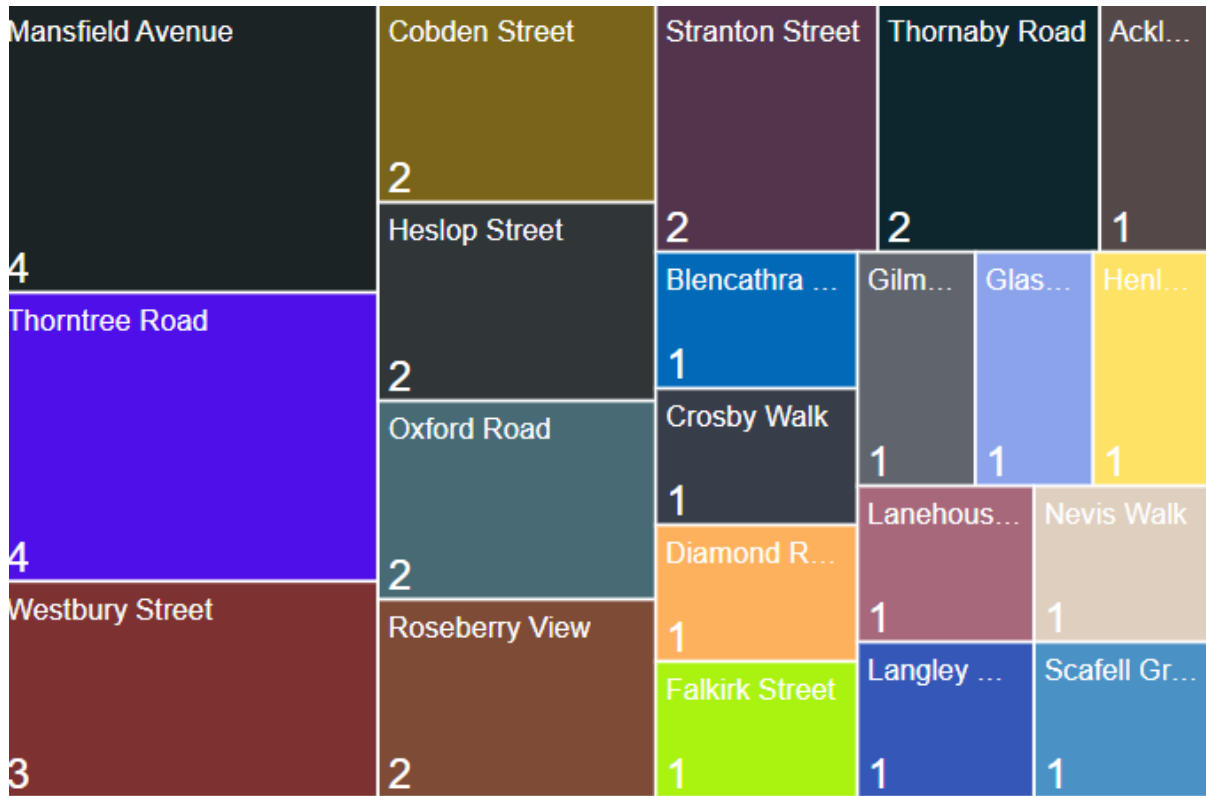
Stockton Town Centre Ward



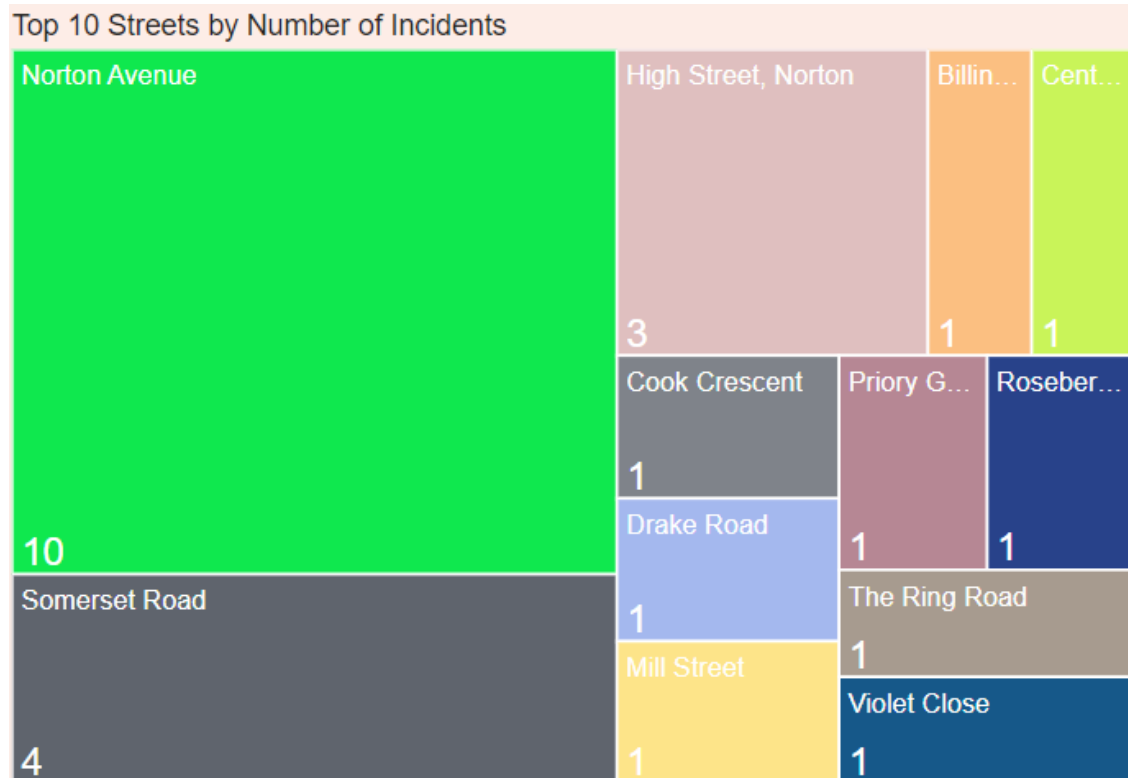
Stainsby Hill



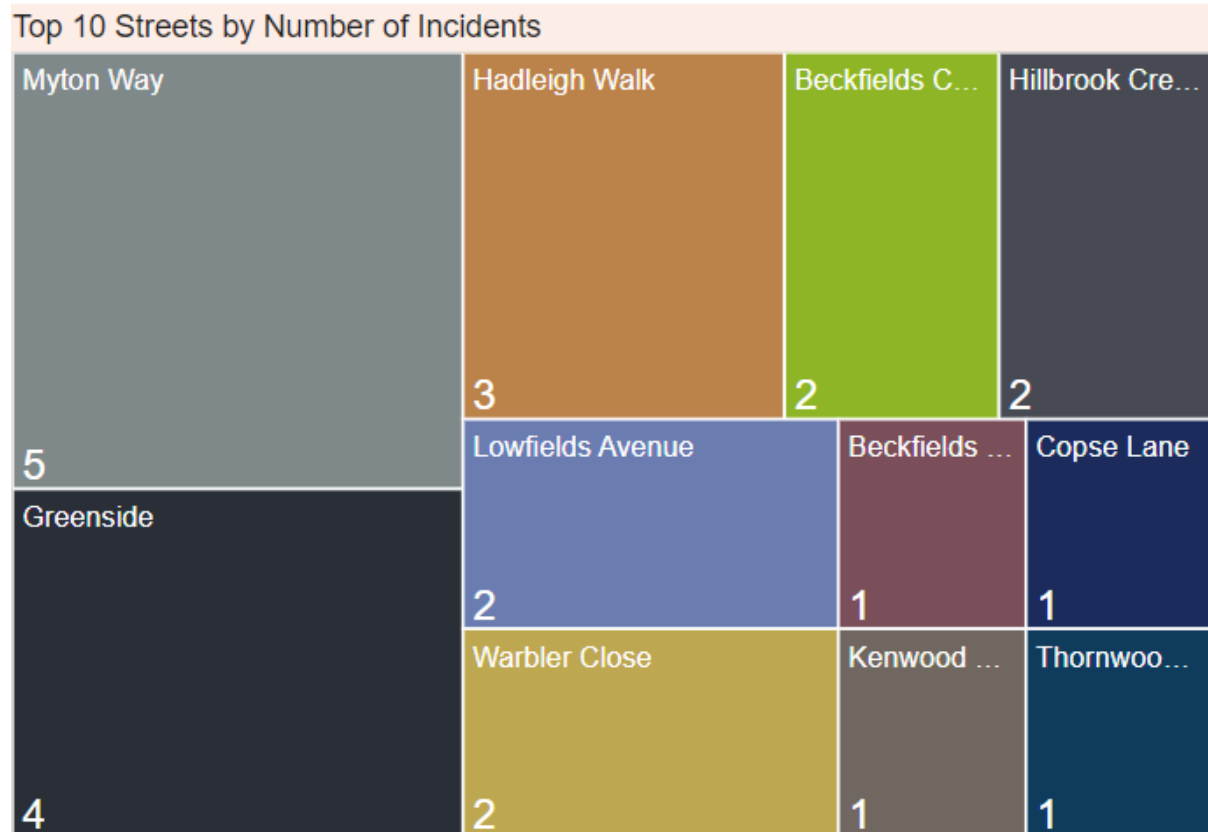
Mandale and Victoria



Norton North



Ingleby Barwick East



Appendix 2 – Partnership letter issued to residents.

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL



Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD
SAT NAV code: TS19 1UE

Tel: 01642 528439

Email: Civic.Enforcement@stockton.gov.uk

Date: 20/10/2021

Dear Resident,

Waste storage and Disposal

As we approach bonfire season, the Civic Enforcement Service want to take this opportunity to remind residents of the appropriate way to store and dispose waste lawfully.

Fly tipping costs the local authority millions of pounds each year to remove but it also has a detrimental impact on both our community and environment. You can help us tackle this problem.

Bonfire season creates a potential risk of people setting deliberate fires, which creates an added strain on our Emergency Services. Along with the additional pressures on services, fly tipping waste is a criminal offence and can leave you subject to a fine of an unlimited amount and imprisonment of up to 5 years.

What if I have waste to remove?

If you have waste that needs removing, we encourage residents to recycle where possible and utilise the facilities the council have to offer

- Care for your area offer a Bulky Waste collection service which can be arranged online at <https://www.stockton.gov.uk> or via telephone 01642 391959.
- Your local household Waste Recycling centre **SUEZ recycling and recovery UK**, is located on ~~.....~~ Haverton Hill Road, TS231PY. You can book a slot at your convenience using the following link - <https://digital.stockton.gov.uk/hwrc-bookings>
- Registered waste carriers can take your waste and dispose of it appropriately. You can find a registered waste carrier on the following government website. <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers> - but be sure to obtain a waste transfer note.

What checks do I need to make?

The relevant checks of waste carrier licences can be done online on the Environment Agency's website or waste carriers register at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>. If you do not have the waste licence registration number, searching for the business name or their commercial trading name is a useful alternative.

A waste carrier must have the correct waste licence to transport or remove any waste, and they must complete a waste transfer note. Be sure to check that the licence is in date and valid for the type of waste that you need removing.

How can I discharge my liability?

If the relevant checks aren't done, and subsequently your waste is fly tipped, the duty of care lands on you and you are liable to be investigated contrary to Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. You need to ensure that you obtain a signed waste transfer note from the person who is removing your waste and request to see their waste transfer licence. It is recommended you make a note of their waste carrier's number.

What should be on the waste transfer note?

A waste transfer note must be completed and signed by both the person handing over the waste and the person receiving it. The note must contain enough information about the waste for it to be handled safely and either recovered or disposed of legally.

The waste transfer note must include:

- A description of the waste.
- Any processes the waste has been through.
- How the waste is contained or packaged.
- The quantity of the waste.
- The place and date of transfer.
- The name and address of both parties.
- Details of the permit, licence or exemption of the person receiving the waste.
- The appropriate European Waste Catalogue (EWC) code for your waste.

How do I report Fly Tipping, waste accumulation or someone who I believe to not be a waste carrier?

We are working closely with Cleveland Fire Brigade to prevent any fly tipping occurring and subsequently being set alight for the purpose of this season and to prosecute those responsible. This residential area has been highlighted from the council's statistics and Cleveland Fire Brigade as a location where these incidents have previously taken place. Therefore, we urge anyone who witnesses fly tipping occurring or a waste accumulation in gardens to contact the Civic Enforcement Service on 01642 528439 or via email at Civic.Enforcement@stockton.gov.uk

Together we can work to prevent fly tipping and illegal bonfires which impact on our community. Let's enjoy this season responsibly and protect our neighbourhoods, emergency services and environment.

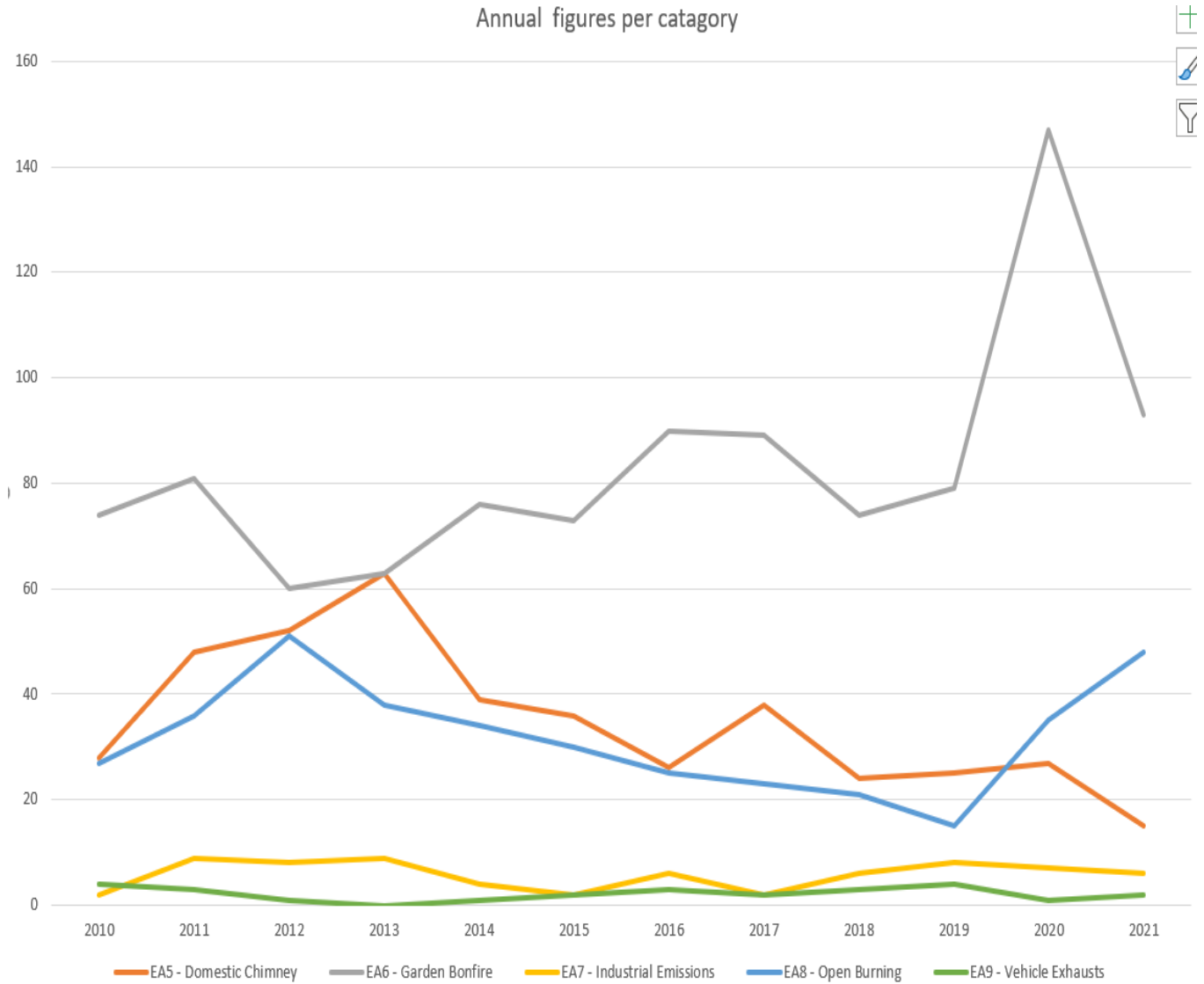
Yours Sincerely,

Civic Enforcement - Environmental Crime Co-ordinators.

In partnership with



Appendix 3 – Environmental Health 10 Year Annual Figures



Appendix 4 – Environmental Health Monthly Trends

