



Protecting local
communities

Stockton District F3 Fires

Introduction

This profile has been prepared to provide a concise report of F3 fires in Stockton district for time period 1st January to 21st October 2015. The report also goes on to look specifically at fires in Stockton Town Centre, Newtown, Norton North and Norton South wards for time period March to April 2015.

Incidents by Month

Year_Month	No: Incidents				Cost of Fire		
	2014	2015	Diff	% Diff	2014	2015	Diff
January	30	33	3	10.0	£60,000	£66,000	£6,000
February	28	47	19	67.9	£56,000	£94,000	£38,000
March	72	134	62	86.1	£144,000	£268,000	£124,000
April	67	111	44	65.7	£134,000	£222,000	£88,000
May	34	67	33	97.1	£68,000	£134,000	£66,000
June	46	67	21	45.7	£92,000	£134,000	£42,000
July	48	51	3	6.3	£96,000	£102,000	£6,000
August	55	48	-7	-12.7	£110,000	£96,000	-£14,000
September	66	51	-15	-22.7	£132,000	£102,000	-£30,000
October*	32	32	0	0.0	£64,000	£64,000	£0
TOTAL	478	641	163	34.1	£958,014	£1,284,015	£326,001

* up to 21st Oct 2015

The above table shows:

- March and April accounted for 245 (38.3%) of the total incidents in 2015.
- In 2014 there were 101 incidents (21.1%) of the total.
- March was the highest month in both years with an 86% rise year on year and 2015 was almost double the number in 2014.
- Incident levels have increased by 33.9% year on year for district;
- The cost of secondary fires (based on a figure of £2,000 per secondary fire) has increased by over £300,000 since the same time period during 2014 with the most significant increases by month experienced during March and April.

In order to analyse the reason for the increase in fires in 2015 the 2 months with the largest number of incidents has been examined.

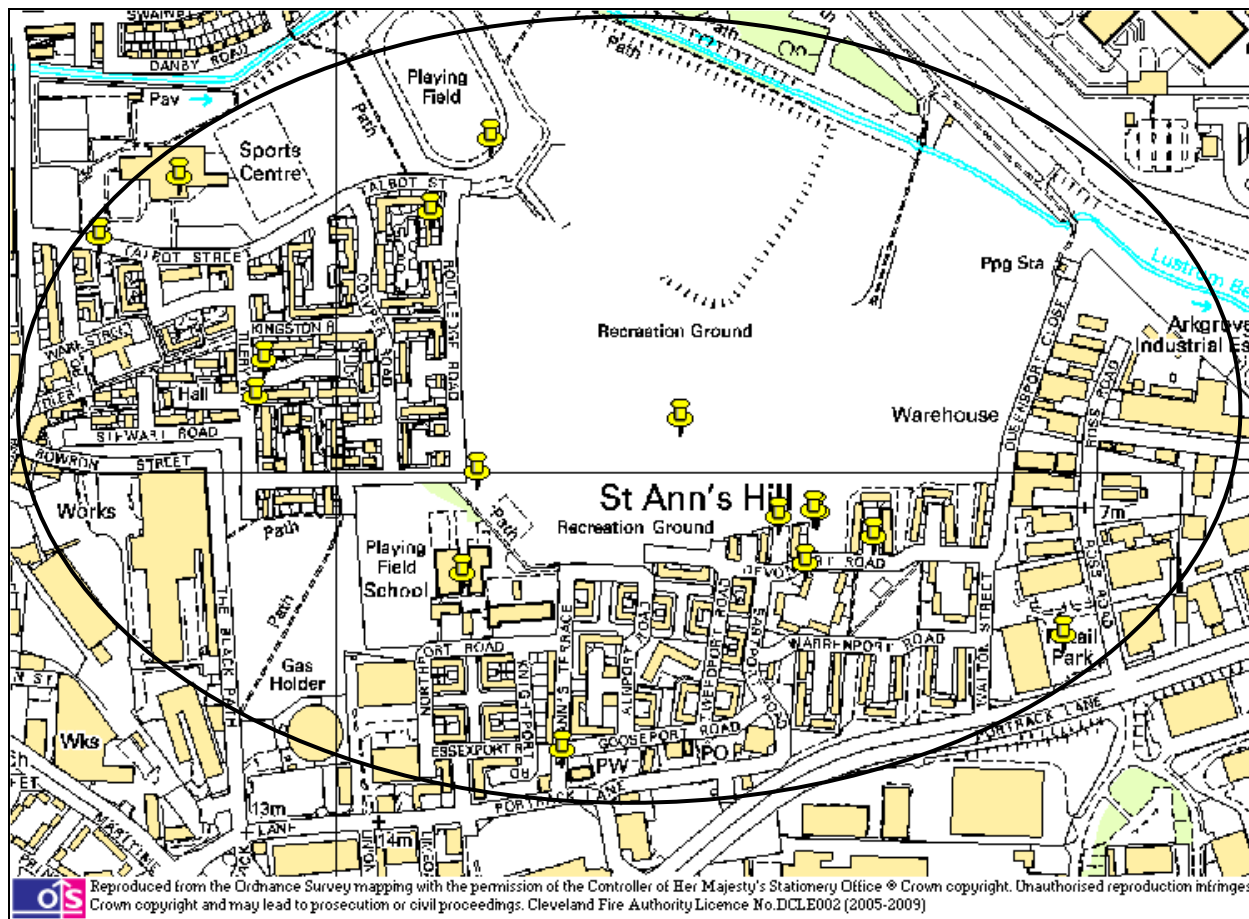
March/April 2015

Between 1st March and 30th April 2015 there were 245 F3 fires in Stockton District during this period the top wards were Stockton Town Centre with 47 incidents, Newtown with 35 incidents

and Norton South/Norton North with 19 each. These wards have been analysed in turn to show hotspot locations.

Stockton Town Centre

Between March and April there were 47 incidents with a hotspot around St. Ann's Hill/Tilery where 20 (42.5%) of the incidents occurred.



Location: x4 Kingsport Close, x4 Rutledge Rd, x3 Devonport Rd, x2 Talbot St, x2 Portrack Lane, x2 Tilery Way Mandale Retail Park, Stourport Cl, St Annes Tce

Sub-type: x12 grassland, x6 refuse, x1 single tree, x1 litter bin

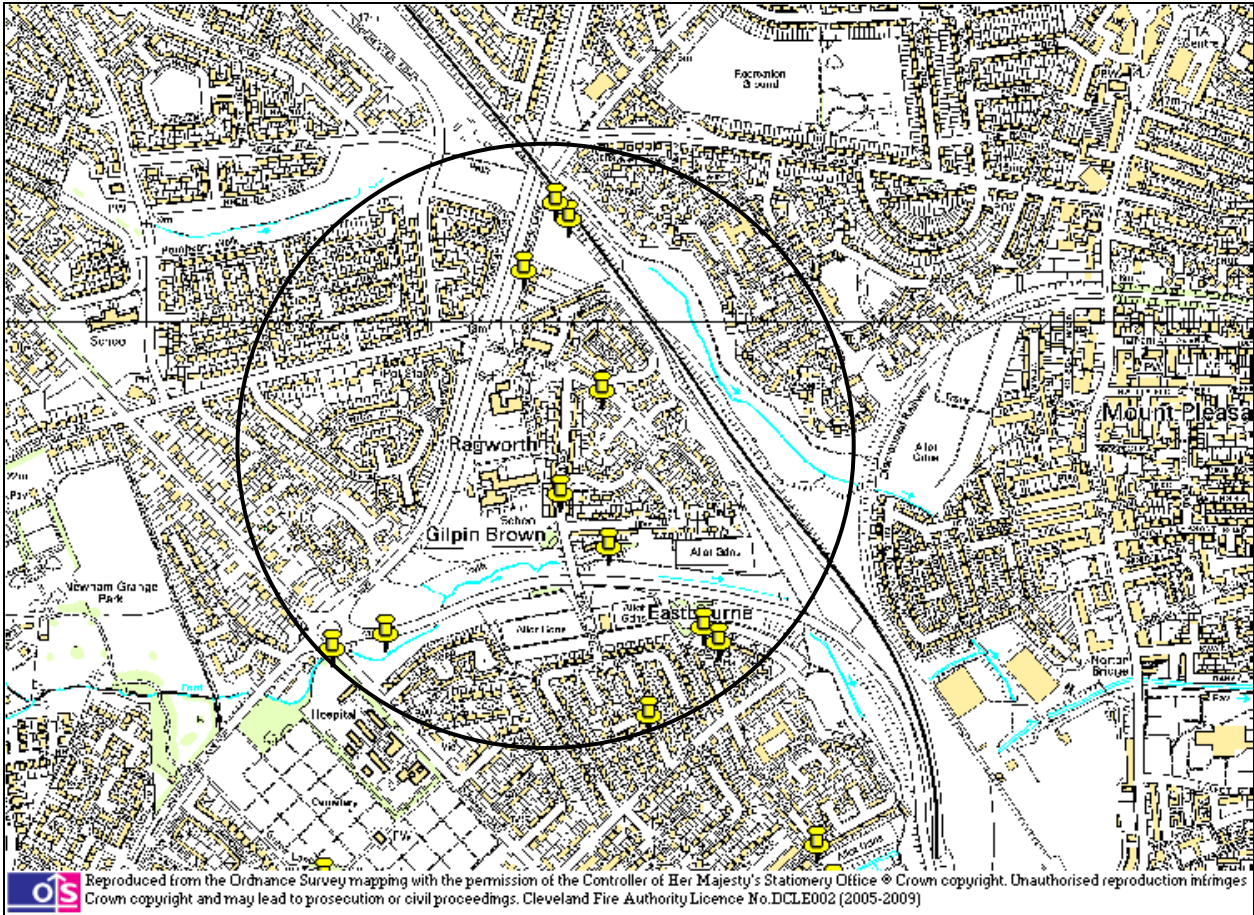
Cause: x19 deliberate, x1 adult accidental

Core Day/Time: Incidents occurred throughout the week with 4 on a Saturday and 5 on a Sunday. 1600 – 1800 saw 10 incidents.

Newtown

Between March and April there were 35 incidents with 2 hotspots around Ragworth with 19 (54.3%) and Bishopton Road with 11 (31.4%).

Ragworth (19)



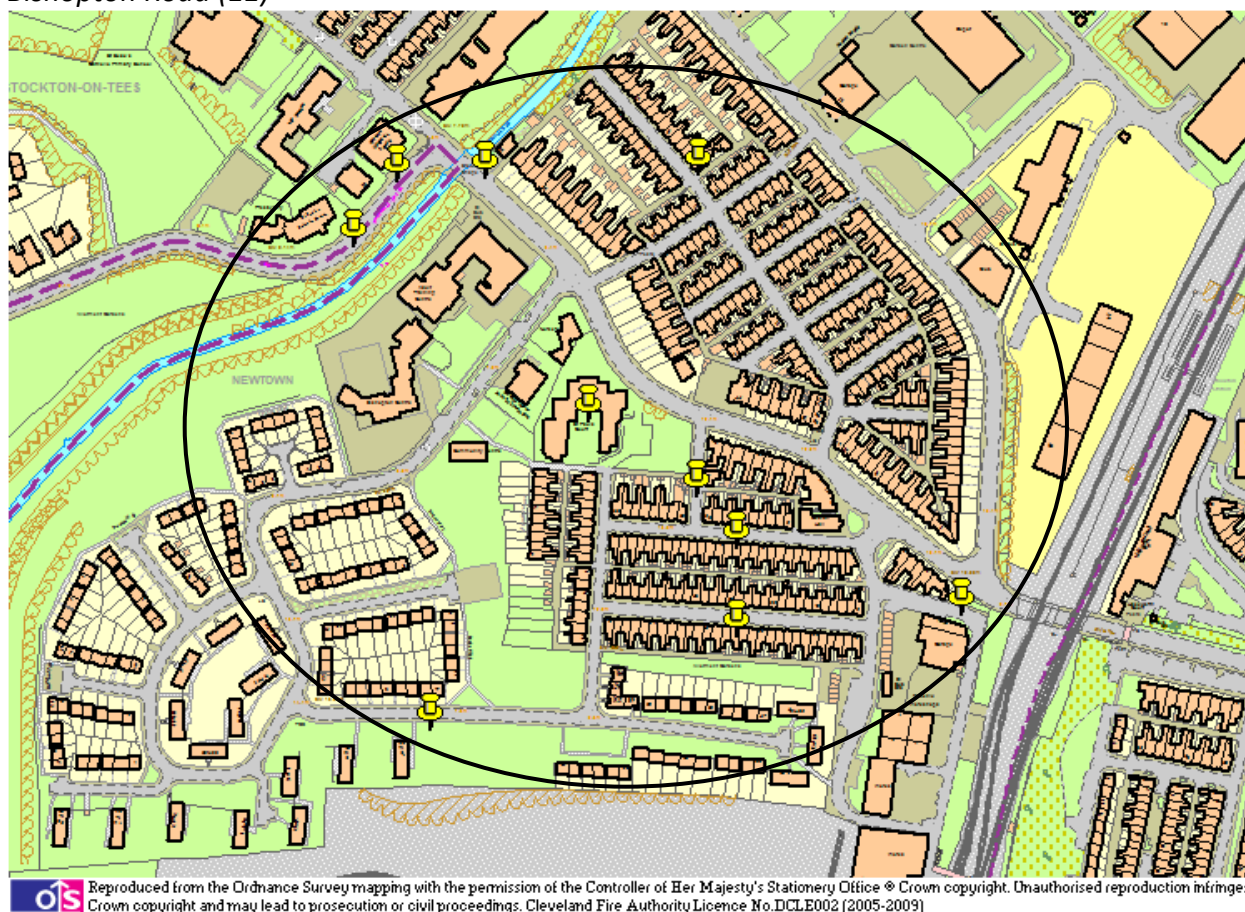
Location: x7 Durham Rd Bypass, x3 Northbourne Rd, x3 Doncaster Crescent, x2 Dover Rd
x1 Durham Rd, Darlington Lane, Hazel Road, Darlington Back Lane

Sub-type: x10 grassland, x6 refuse, x1 scrub, x1 hedge, x1 litter bin

Cause: x16 deliberate, x3 adult accidental

Core Day/Time: Incidents occurred throughout the week with 4 on a Saturday and 6 on a Sunday. 1800 – 2100 saw 13 incidents.

Bishopton Road (11)



Location: x5 Bishopton Rd, x2 Vicarage Ave, Dunmail Road, St Pauls Ct, St Pauls Rd, Vicarage St

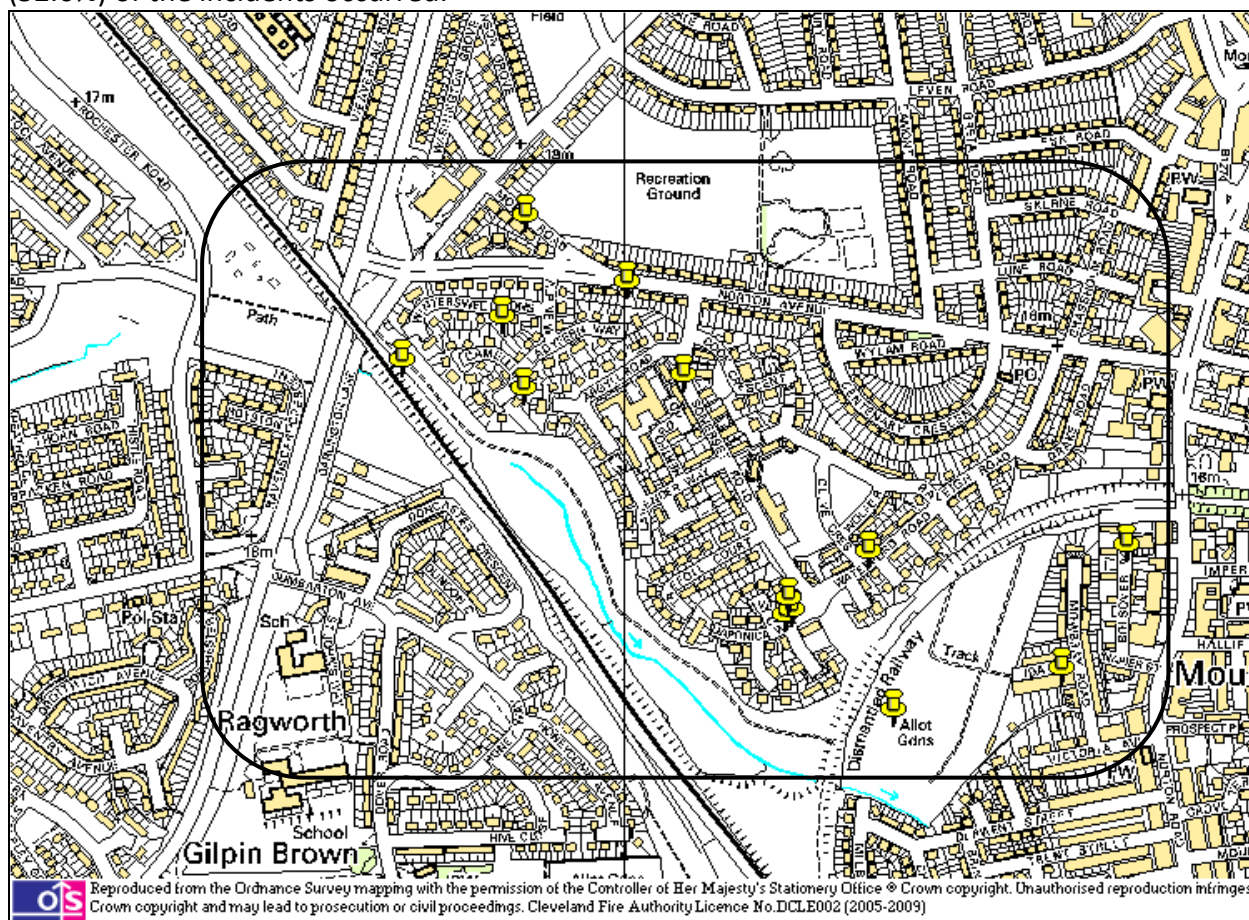
Sub-type: x8 refuse, x1 scrub, x1 fence, x1 wheelie bin

Cause: x9 deliberate, x2 adult accidental

Core Day/Time: Incidents occurred throughout the week. 1500 – 1600 saw 4 of the 11 incidents.

Norton North/South

Between March and April there were 38 incidents with a hotspot around Norton Avenue where 20 (52.6%) of the incidents occurred.



Location: x5 Norton Ave, x3 Japonica Way, x2 Somerset Rd, Bolsover Rd, Camelia Cres, The Heath, Ida Street, Milburn Cres, Moray Road, Orange Gr, Waterford Road, Wintersweet Gdns, Great North Park

Sub-type: x16 grassland, x2 refuse, x1 scrub, x1 fence

Cause: x20 deliberate

Core Day/Time: Incidents occurred throughout the week with 9 on a Thursday and 6 on a Sunday. 1900 – 2100 saw 10 incidents.

Incidents by Ward

The following table shows the number of incidents by ward for the reporting period.

Ward	No: Incidents			
	2014	2015	Diff	% Diff
Stockton Town Centre	117	126	9	7.7
Newtown	40	107	67	167.5
Mandale and Victoria	54	50	-4	-7.4
Hardwick	30	45	15	50.0
Billingham South	25	41	16	64.0
Norton South	28	38	10	35.7
Norton North	16	33	17	106.3
Parkfield and Oxbridge	32	30	-2	-6.3
Billingham East	20	26	6	30.0
Ingleby Barwick East	13	17	4	30.8
Roseworth	7	16	9	128.6
Billingham Central	5	16	11	220.0
Eaglescliffe	5	14	9	180.0
Village	14	13	-1	-7.1
Northern Parishes	10	11	1	10.0
Norton West	2	10	8	400.0
Ingleby Barwick West	8	9	1	12.5
Hartburn	6	7	1	16.7
Billingham West	2	7	5	250.0
Stainsby Hill	9	6	-3	-33.3
Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree	8	6	-2	-25.0
Yarm	6	5	-1	-16.7
Billingham North	5	3	-2	-40.0
Fairfield	5	2	-3	-60.0
Western Parishes	4	2	-2	-50.0
Grangefield	7	1	-6	-85.7
TOTAL	478	641	163	34.1

* up to 21st Oct 2015

As the above table shows:

- Of the 26 wards in Stockton District 16 increased year on year.

- All 4 of the wards highlighted in the hotspot analysis increased, the largest being Newtown which increased from 40 in 2014 to 107 in 2015, 35 of which occurred between March and April.
- The number of incidents in the district as a whole increased from 478 to 640 (33.9%)

If the two highest months are excluded (March – April) the following table shows the incident levels by ward.

Ward	No: Incidents			
	2014	2015	Diff	% Diff
Stockton Town Centre	85	79	-6	-7.6
Newtown	28	72	44	61.1
Mandale and Victoria	39	32	-7	-21.9
Hardwick	18	30	12	40.0
Billingham South	16	30	14	46.7
Parkfield and Oxbridge	23	21	-2	-9.5
Norton South	23	19	-4	-21.1
Billingham East	9	17	8	47.1
Norton North	9	14	5	35.7
Roseworth	7	10	3	30.0
Eaglescliffe	5	10	5	50.0
Billingham Central	5	8	3	37.5
Village	13	8	-5	-62.5
Ingleby Barwick East	9	6	-3	-50.0
Northern Parishes	6	5	-1	-20.0
Hartburn	5	5	0	0.0
Stainsby Hill	4	5	1	20.0
Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree	6	5	-1	-20.0
Ingleby Barwick West	3	4	1	25.0
Billingham West	2	4	2	50.0
Yarm	6	4	-2	-50.0
Billingham North	4	3	-1	-33.3
Fairfield	4	2	-2	-100.0
Western Parishes	3	2	-1	-50.0
Norton West	1	1	0	0.0
Grangefield	6	0	-6	
TOTAL	339	396	57	14.4

As the above table shows:

- Incident levels increased by 14.4% year on year which is 19.5% lower than the previous table;
- 2 of the 4 wards highlighted as hotspots in March and April saw decreases (Stockton Town Centre with a reduction of 7.6% and Norton South which reduced by 21.1%)

Discussion

Clearly the figures highlight large increases in the number of secondary fires occurring within Stockton this calendar year. The month on month comparison has shown that each month January to July has shown an increase when compared to the same month in 2014.

Fly-tipping

There has been a 20% increase in reported incidents of fly tipping in Stockton district during the last year resulting in more fuel available to be ignited. The Borough recorded 2,431 incidents of fly tipping which will no doubt have contributed to the rise in F3 fires. While these figures have been released to the public (reported by the Evening Gazette) more publicity would be beneficial in highlighting successful prosecutions as a message to would be fly tippers.

While the issue of fly tipping will never go away means to combat this must be investigated, whether it be removal of fees for large item removal, community skips re-introduced or a scheme where people can work together to share costs for refuse removal instead of all paying the charge.

Local Youths

In addition, some of this increase, notably the period around March and April, can be attributed to the targeting of Norton West and Newtown by local youths for a significant period of time. This also spread into Tilery and Norton South.

While this was a problem of large scale arson, consisting mainly of grassland and refuse and across a vast geographical area, limited evidence was available regarding any potential culprits.

Action

The CLO initiated a multi-agency meeting to attempt to combat the issue, identify culprits and take action as necessary. Partners were keen to assist in resolving the issue and included SBC Enforcement, SBC ASB team, Thirteen group, Police, SBC Youth Services and British Transport police.

Approx. 20 youths were listed who had either been identified by other children or were known to the agencies attending the meeting. It was agreed that all Thirteen residents would be visited by a Thirteen ASB officer and a PCSO. Parents would be warned by the PCSO about the criminal side of their children's actions and the Thirteen ASB Officer would explain that their child's actions would constitute a breach of tenancy with subsequent action being taken.

Children of non-Thirteen residents would be visited by a PCSO and ASB Officer, where again the PCSO would inform of the criminal aspect and the ASB officer would explain that actions may lead to civil action being instigated by the local authority.

The resource required to undertake the visits was distributed between all agencies. At each visit parents were provided with the opportunity to make use of Brigade's voluntary fire setter intervention scheme. This took approx. two weeks to complete (due to a number of resource commitments as well as availability of parents).

Results

The large number of fires reduced as soon as the visits commenced.

One issue was established that may have contributed to the ease of setting fires as children accessing local youth clubs were not expected to sign in or sign out, and this was highlighted as poor practice resulting in children potentially leaving a youth club, starting a fire and returning with no proof of their leaving the building; this also had more serious implications should a fire starter light a fire at the youth club there would be no confirmation that the building was cleared.

This process was immediately changed so that children had to sign in or sign out with a youth worker. This served to assist investigations into fires as known fire starters were either in the building or not at the time the fire was reported. In addition, should a fire begin at the centre, all children can be accounted for.

Conclusion

The evidence suggests the success of this multi-agency approach to problem solving with the demonstration of both dramatic and efficient results. While the whole episode lasted approx. six weeks it was felt that this time period would have been longer without the collaborative work of all agencies.

Appreciation of this approach and successful resolution is extended to all agencies involved in the exercise.

Partners have established a successful working practice model for future use should it ever be needed again. Arson awareness needs to continue to be increased and this must be provided from all agencies. This is commencing with the establishment of joint initiatives with social landlords. The biggest factor however in reducing levels of arson will be ultimately down to funding.