

# Autumnus Update

## Arson Reduction Information November 2022



# Arson Reduction

## Autumn 2022 (Operation Autumnus)

Stockton Borough Council is committed to supporting the Arson Reduction Strategy in partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade. Information provided August 2022 indicates that the safer neighbourhood indicator of deliberate secondary fires in the borough has risen year on year to a figure of 438. This compares to 289 in 2021 and 247 in 2020. The figure for 2019, arguably a more comparable timeframe as it was prior to the pandemic and associated lockdowns, was 359.

In 2022, the proportion of the 438 incidents in Stockton Town Centre remains relatively consistent at 13% but there is a shift in the spread of incidents, which now occur across more wards. In 2019, Newtown accounted for 22% of the incidents and in 2022 only 8%. Billingham has emerged this year as a location of increased deliberate fires.

Stockton Community Safety Service has worked in close partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade, Cleveland Police, Thirteen and internal partners such as Children and Young People Services, for many years in order to address the drivers for deliberate fire setting. It is well known that the period leading up to Bonfire Night is a particularly busy time for this type of antisocial and criminal behaviour. Planning for the period began in August 2022.

Environmental Crime Coordinators met with colleagues from Cleveland Fire Brigade to share information and analyse data to identify 'hot spot' locations. Sixteen locations were identified, six of which were highlighted as 'high risk:'

- Northbourne Road, Stockton
- Dorset Crescent, Stockton
- High Newham Road, Stockton
- Roscoe Road, Stockton
- Neasham Avenue, Billingham
- Rosslare Road, Stockton

This information was used to plan patrols by Enforcement Officers and direct CCTV activity. The information was shared with Police and to plan intervention activities by Children and Young Peoples Services to divert activity. The team worked closely with Thirteen and the identified locations were patrolled 71 times in the relevant period. Patrols resulted in the recovery of several mattresses, doors, furniture, wood and carpets from addresses in the identified locations, much of which could (**and possibly would have) been used for bonfires.**

A campaign to improve the knowledge of local residents about the dangers of deliberate fire setting and illegal bonfires was launched by the team. Information about the dangers, consequences, potential costs and the likely penalties under section 33 of The Environmental Protection Act 1990 were outlined in letters sent to 453 properties on 17<sup>th</sup> October. The letters also highlighted the strain on our emergency services and informed householders how get combustible items removed correctly and minimise the risk of any waste being set alight. Details of how to report any waste accumulations they may see in the area to the Authority were included. In the period from the letter drop to 6<sup>th</sup> November, there were 13 waste accumulation incidents and 56 fly tips reported and investigated.

## Social Media

A joint social media campaign was run entitled '4 Ways You Can help Us'

- The Press Release had 150 views
- The Facebook post reached 3000 users
- The Tweet reached 2000 users through direct users and retweets
- The LinkedIn post reached 415 users
- The Instagram story had 700 views

We also shared Cleveland Fire Brigade's post;

- The Facebook share reached 8500 people
- The Retweet reached 900 users

On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022, a traditionally busy night of the year for criminal damage and deliberate fire setting, a joint operation took place with Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade and Stockton Borough Council. Police Officers were embedded in the Security Centre and the Community Safety Manager was based at Police Headquarters with Cleveland Fire Brigade also in the Command Room. Between 1600h and Midnight, there were 21 reported damages. Of these, 8 were in Thornaby and two dispersal orders were put in place. There were no reported fires although many groups were deterred by patrolling officers from doing so. Nine bonfires were located on Bonfire weekend, these were in Roseworth and Billingham in the main, with one large one in Hardwick.

The team will continue to collate information and statistics to inform prevention activity throughout the year and in the approach to Autumn 2023.