



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Report to Falkirk Council Scrutiny Committee

SUBJECT: SFRS Activity Within The Falkirk Area During The 2013
Bonfire/Firework Period

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides members of the Falkirk Council Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the preventative and operational response activities conducted by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) resources within the Falkirk area during the Bonfire/Firework Period from the 31st of October to the 6th of November 2013.

1.2 SFRS adopts a partnership approach to dealing with the Bonfire Period. Consistent with the approach in previous years, pre planning for the Bonfire Period involved Operation Alamo led by Police Scotland. Operation Alamo is a partnership operation with two specific objectives:

- Unauthorised bonfires are identified and removed before being lit.
- To prevent fireworks access to young people and diverting people away from hazardous and anti-social behaviour.

The Operation Alamo partnership comprises of Police Scotland, Falkirk Council Emergency Planning, SFRS, Falkirk Area Estates and Trading Standards.

2. PREVENTATIVE ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 A number of preventative activities were employed to raise awareness of the potential dangers of fireworks and bonfires. SFRS and partners were involved in the following initiatives:

Demand reduction education plan

- Targeted educational inputs were offered/delivered to all secondary schools focusing on deliberate fire setting,
- All primary schools were provided with interactive educational resources through GLOW,
- Delivery of educational inputs to schools within areas known to be problematic, (identified through the analytical data),
- Supply of awareness raising leaflets & posters to all schools.

Community engagement

- Visitation to youth clubs and drop in centers,
- Contribution towards multi-agency press release,
- Provision of safety advice through twitter @scotfire_FlkWL,
- Safety advice through SFRS website www.firescotland.gov.uk ,
- Provision of safety posters & leaflets to all Community Planning Partners including elected members,
- National TV and radio campaign.

3. OPERATIONAL RESPONSE ACTIVITY

- 3.1 The following tables provide a comparison of operational response activity over the period 31st October- 6th November and the 24 hour period on the 5th of November:

31st of Oct – 6th Nov

Year	2012	2013
Dangerous Bonfires*	49	29
Total incidents	115	92

5th November

Year	2012	2013
Dangerous Bonfires*	35	27
Bonfires Allowed to Burn	7	7
Total Incidents	64	45

**Dangerous Bonfire: A Bonfire, which is not under adult supervision and has the potential to cause damage to other surrounding property or injury if there is no intervention.*

3.2 The table below provides a breakdown of incidents by ward.

Wards	Allowed to Burn	Dangerous bonfires
Denny/Banknock	2	5
Boness/Blackness	1	5
Upper Braes	1	1
Lower Braes	1	
Falkirk South	1	3
Falkirk North	1	3
Bonnybridge/Larbert		2
Grangemouth		5
Carse/kin/Tryst		2

3.3 Over the 8-day period from 31st October to 6th November 2013, the number of dangerous bonfires dealt with by operational crews decreased by 41%, when compared to 2012.

3.4 On 5 November 2013 the number of dangerous bonfire incidents dealt with by operational crews decreased by 23%, when compared to 2012.

3.5 The weather on 5 November 2013 was relatively clear, with only light showers of rain in places and therefore cannot be considered as a significant contributory factor in the decrease in the number of bonfire related incidents.

4. VIOLENCE TO CREWS

4.1 There were 4 reports of violence to crews at incidents during the period 31st October to 6th November 2013, all of which occurred on 5 November. No fire fighters received any physical injuries from these attacks.

4.2 The table below provides a breakdown of acts of violence by ward

Wards	Act of Violence
Denny/Banknock	
Boness/Blackness	1
Upper Braes	
Lower Braes	
Falkirk South	2
Falkirk North	
Bonnybridge/Larbert	
Grangemouth	1
Carse/kin/Tryst	

** Act of violence includes verbal or physical abuse directed towards crews.*

4.3 The Service has a zero tolerance to violence to crews and as such, reports all incidents to Police Scotland for further investigation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 There has been a continued reduction in emergency calls over the period 31st October to 6th November 2013 to bonfires and firework related incidents. Activity on 5 November 2013 has shown a decrease compared to last year, continuing a downward trend.

5.2 The continued partnership working through Operation Alamo and education programmes appears to have had a positive impact on public awareness and the approach to bonfire celebrations.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 Falkirk Council Scrutiny Committee is invited to:

Consider and make any comment in relation to this report.

Gary Laing
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Falkirk and West Lothian
January 2013