

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024  
**REPORT OF:** HEAD OF PREVENTION AND PROTECTION  
**AUTHOR:** RYAN SWINDELLS

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**SUBJECT:** BONFIRE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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## Purpose of Report

1. The Bonfire Annual Report 2023 summarises the preventative and operational activities carried out by the Service and partners during the bonfire period, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023, inclusive (the Bonfire Period).

## Recommended: That Members

- [1] note the Bonfire Report 2023, in particular the recommendations contained in the document.

## Background

2. The Service, local authorities, Cheshire Police and other partners are committed to reducing incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) which affect the communities we serve. The deliberate fire-setting which constitutes a large part of the ASB during the Bonfire Period has a significant effect on the services Small Deliberate Fire figures. It can also have a significant financial impact on the local community and cause significant damage to the environment and amenities.

## Information

3. The Bonfire Report 2023 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
4. The Service attended 31 Small Deliberate Fires during the Bonfire Period, in comparison to 57 Small Deliberate Fires during the 2022 bonfire period. During the 2021 bonfire period the Service attended 56 Small Deliberate Fires.
5. The Service has seen a decrease in 2023 compared to 2022, the number of incidents is considerably lower than in 2022.

6. The Bonfire Report 2023 contains a number of recommendations in Section 11. The Prevention department will ensure that the recommendations are communicated to Service Delivery Managers and good practice is shared when planning initiatives for the 2024 bonfire period.

### **Financial Implications**

7. The recommendations of the report identify areas with financial implications for future years, such as the use of additional fire appliances, and details the effective and, efficient deployment of staff and resources that will be considered for the 2024 Bonfire Period.

### **Legal Implications**

8. The Bonfire Period initiatives are seen as a core function of the Service and there are no known legal implications in carrying out this work.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

9. The Bonfire Period initiatives are seen as a core function of the Service and there are no known Equality and Diversity implications in carrying out this work.

### **Environmental Implications**

10. It should be recognised that the activities conducted during the Bonfire Period provide a positive contribution to reducing waste (fly tipping), pollution and reducing carbon emissions from deliberate fires. The preventative work also supports a reduction of the number of movements of fire appliances which reduces emissions for Service vehicles.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: BONFIRE REPORT 2022**



# Bonfire Annual Report 2023

Produced by: SM Ryan Swindells

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[www.cheshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

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## 1. Introduction

The annual bonfire season represents a period of increased activity for Police and Fire & Rescue Services (FRS) in the UK. As such, plans for limiting deliberate fire activity and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) are put in place during this time.

ASB includes the setting of deliberate, and nuisance fires. This places pressure on the resources of Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (The Service) due to an increase in call levels to incidents classed as small deliberate fires (SDF).

Likewise, these uncontrolled SDF, can in turn spread to other property such as houses, commercial buildings, or vehicles, which can cause significant damage and financial loss as well as emotional distress for the owners.

The Service and its partners recognise the damage inflicted on communities by ASB during the bonfire season. Significant amounts of time, resources, and money are expended in efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, whilst allowing and encouraging people to celebrate the season safely.

It is also recognised, that the 'Bonfire Period' dates coincide with Halloween, and it is common that these dates are opportunities for ASB of all types, not just fire related ASB. There is also a period referred to as 'Mischief night' on the 30<sup>th</sup> October which also presents both Fire and Police staff with increased levels of ASB.

The Service's Bonfire Period recording dates align with dates also used by Cheshire Constabulary to record ASB so it is a more accurate method of comparing all types of ASB together. The data section in this report will explain this more fully.

**In summary, the alignment of Police and the Service dates (this started in 2017) changes the overall perceived trends when we align the data retrospectively. Although the Service Wide annual SDF trend continues downward year on year (2020 COVID pandemic has been excluded as figures were exceptionally low), there are some year on year increases in SDF activity in some station areas during the reporting period.**

## 2. Recording of Incidents

The bonfire reporting period 2023 captured data from 0800hrs 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to 0800hrs 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Data from these dates has also been examined for the preceding 4 years for all types of ASB.

As there is no specific bonfire reporting category within the Home Office regulated Incident Recording System (IRS) (this is the national method used to complete a fire report) this report relates to all small deliberate fires (SDF). The reason for this is that the difference between a bonfire and rubbish set on fire is a very subjective one for crews attending, so the inclusion of all SDF in this report will continue.

The following guidance was promulgated to operational crews, as in previous years, to outline reporting parameters during the bonfire period for use on the IRS system.

- If a Bonfire is lit prior to a planned celebration, i.e. as an act of ASB, and needs to be extinguished because it is a nuisance or dangerous, then this must be recorded as a **small deliberate fire**.
- If a Bonfire is lit for celebratory purposes and needs to be extinguished because it is dangerous, out of control or deemed a nuisance, then this will be recorded as an **accidental small fire**.
- If a Bonfire is lit for celebratory purposes and is allowed to burn, and we do not need to take any action other than give advice then this should be recorded as a **false alarm good intent**. Add to the stop message that a Dynamic Risk Assessment has been completed and advice has been given. When completing the IRS please note that there is a specific category for a Good Intent false alarm >> Fire >> Bonfire.
- Other small deliberate or accidental fires e.g. wheelie bins, refuse, hedgerows, must be recorded as normal, and the investigation recorded fully on the Police Notification Report.

### **3. Pre Planning, Partnership and Internal Activity**

The Service again promoted organised displays as the safest option for the public in this period due to the risks associated with people holding displays and bonfires in their gardens which could easily become out of control, causing possible injuries and damage to property.

The deliberate fire reduction manager and the business intelligence team produced and distributed a comprehensive intelligence document relating to deliberate fires and ASB activity pan Cheshire occurring within the preceding months and previous periods to support intelligence led targeted activity.

The Service's communications team and the deliberate fire reduction manager continually monitored daily incidents and addressed any emerging risk. Strategies and messages were developed and amended as national guidance altered so that we could attempt to change the public's knowledge, attitude, and behaviour regarding the holding of firework displays and bonfires.

A designated intranet page was established again prior to the start of the campaign and was updated as and when new information became available. Staff were encouraged in further weekly green articles to use this tool as a means of keeping up-to-date with key information from both the Service and the Government.

Stations and departments across the Service continue to support safety messages with some producing their own videos for social media. The Communications team supplied social media post wording and links that they could use throughout the period. The Digital team supported this, where needed, so that all station and department social media pages featured bonfire advice and information, prior to and during the bonfire period. The deliberate fire reduction manager and the digital team produced short reel videos which were used and distributed during the Bonfire period.

Service Delivery Teams were briefed to visit and create Site Specific Risk Information for any derelict buildings in their station areas and to liaise with partners to secure the premises where possible.

### **4. Bonfire Removal Schemes and Waste Management**

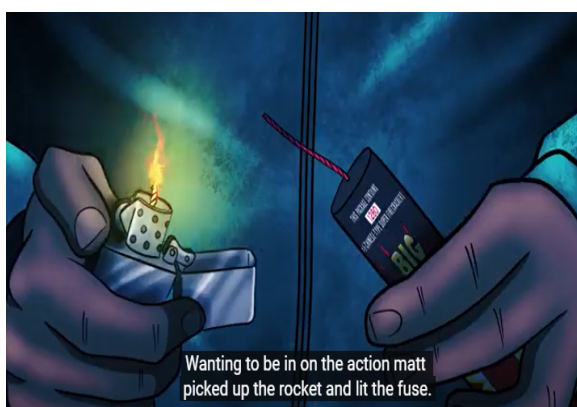
Across Cheshire arson routes are completed by all Service Delivery teams. Local authorities Street Scene programs are then informed of issues. There are some subtle differences across areas but essentially the public and The Service can access a free service to report the location of the waste and have it removed when on public land. The Street-scene details and contact numbers were promoted internally and externally via the Service's social media platforms, greens and on the designated Bonfire web page.

Service teams dependent on their location also had an email reporting system or web based system to ensure an efficient reporting system was available should the Local Authority's phone reporting systems face high numbers of calls.

## 5. Educational Events and Activities

A targeted approach to education is utilised by the Service, and this continued across all areas in 2023. Utilising the business intelligence team comprehensive intelligence documents, local intelligence, educational events were planned and delivered in specific locations based on fire related ASB and school catchment areas. Educational events were delivered by The Service's prevention team and operational staff in partnership with Cheshire Police at several schools, community centres and other locations. A consistent message promoting organised displays, ASB, and firework safety was delivered by our own staff using a presentation developed by Prevention staff.

The Service continues to use "Matt's story" created internally in 2020 and the newly developed KS4 Deliberate Fires & Bonfire night presentation. This media is utilised via our social media platforms and was also shared with all Cheshire schools.



### Cost to YOUR Community

- Each deliberate fire we attend in Cheshire costs approximately £2,500!
- If Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service did not have to spend this money on nuisance fires, it could be reinvested into bettering the community you live in, to make our Cheshire a safer, happier place to live.

The Service had concerns relating to fires going out of control at events held by the public which would put people and property at risk. Bespoke media was created including key safety messaging for the public, aimed at those who may have considered holding an event, this message advised the public not to hold "home displays". For those insistent on holding a display, relevant safety information for a safe event at home was also shared. Information relating to waste containers and their safe storage was also included.



Have a great weekend ...



Don't let your wheelie bi...



Get the message? 😊...



## 6. Diversionary Events, Activities and Enforcement

The term Diversionary Events and Activities refers to any activity intended to reduce opportunities for fire related ASB and which encourages residents to enjoy the celebrations in a safe manner. These include organised bonfire and firework displays, youth work and other events.

There are many organised displays held by local pubs, community groups, parish councils, PTAs etc. Encouraging people to attend organised displays continues to be Service policy, and these events are publicised on the Service website when we are notified of them.

Diversionary events and outputs vary across the local authority areas dependent on the needs of the area, a summary of some of the efforts undertaken are below.

### Cheshire East

Fire related ASB and deliberate fire activity in Cheshire East is still at a relatively low level in comparison to other unitary areas. All teams continue to also utilise social media effectively.

**Crewe** continue to monitor and adapt their arson routes from local knowledge and incident information.

**Wilmslow** continue to monitor and adapt their arson routes and working closely with the streetscape team to remove fly tipped items.

**Macclesfield** run several engagement events through the period covering fire setting and the dangers as well as reporting fires via the street scene teams.

### Cheshire West and Chester

**Winsford** continue efforts to reduce deliberate fire setting throughout the year and have a monthly meeting with partners to both review Police Notification Reports of deliberate fires and identify hotspot areas to for a joint targeted approach.

A key part of the activity is working with Winsford youth and Community forum. £500 of Unitary Performance Group (UPG) funding was approved to support a variety of diversionary events, during the Bonfire period one example of this was a pizza making evening at the local youth club where crews engaged with the local community. The types of diversionary activities carried out development greater relationships and understanding between the service and the community. This contributes to reducing ASB and deliberate fires throughout the summer months and the forthcoming bonfire period. Further promotion work of these activities was completed at local ASB hotspot locations - Winsford Town Park, Winsford Cross Shopping Centre and Weaver Park Way resulting in greater numbers now attending the sessions.

Winsford Service Delivery teams and Prevention teams along with Cheshire Police also completed targeted Ward Walks. Areas included Dart Walk, Esk Road, Wharton,

Vauxhall Way, Bedford Rise, Austin Close, Finsbury Walk, Dee Way and Severn Walk utilising leaflets on Dangerous and Nuisance bonfires. Advice was also given to residents on the safe storage of refuse containers.

[Ellesmere Port](#) held planning meetings prior to the bonfire period which saw an extra 9 Police officers on patrol over the bonfire period targeting know hotspot areas and locations. Regular arson route patrols were carried out by the station identifying fly tipping and requesting removal through LA.

Press releases were utilised by the Ellesmere Port Station Manager advising residents on relevant safety advice.

[Chester](#) delivered diversionary activities involving a funded bid from the UPG for £750. The activity involved the Service working with the Problem-Solving group where families were identified for specific related issues based around ASB, several tickets were secured and given to the families who would benefit from them. Electronic advertising was also used at the Chester Racecourse during the organised Bonfire event promoting prevention fire safety messages such as STOP, DROP, ROLL and the recent CRMP consultation paper.

[Northwich](#) distributed leaflets to the Weaverham Youth Club in advance of the Halloween and Bonfire period. They also continued there identified arson routes in the run up to the Bonfire period.

#### [Halton](#)

[Widnes](#) crews targeted wheelie bins with messaging aimed at communicating the risks of wheelie bins being used in ASB and deliberate fires. Whilst crews delivered Safe and well visits wheelie bin safety, bonfire and firework safety were included during this period. Social media outputs continued to be utilised by the crews signposting organised events and venues, regular arson routes were completed identifying fly tipping and their removal.

[Runcorn](#) crews continued with their targeted arson routes signposting residents to local authority services for removal of unwanted items. The station completeing targeted deliberate fire prevention sessions in Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy (Key Stage 4) discussing with classes the dangers of deliberate fires and the best things to do if you see someone setting fires.

Social media outputs continued to be utilised by the crews to engage with the public.

#### [Warrington](#)

[Warrington](#) teams completed targeted work with Cheshire Police in areas where increased incidents of ASB and small fires had occurred working with local PCSO's

Whilst crews delivered Safe and Well, visits wheelie bin safety, bonfire and firework safety were included during this period. Social media outputs continued to be utilised by the crews signposting organised events and venues, regular arson routes were completed identifying fly tipping and their removal.

Penketh shared the bonfire pre analysis data with all managers which assisted in them being able to identify areas of activity, arson routes were designed around these, and crews carried out regular drive rounds. Use of social media was utilised to promote how to report and have fly tipped items removed. Crews whilst delivering Safe & Well visits promoted firework safety and organised events for residents to attend.

Lymm and Birchwood continued with social media awareness campaigns to engage with public. The station reference holders monitored events in the lead up to and during the period and ensured content was relevant to the local issues.

## 7. Operational Response

Appliances have been deployed in the busier areas during the bonfire period for several years. The appliances used for these additional resources in 2023 were on-call appliances from Penketh, Runcorn, Winsford, Birchwood & Middlewich.

These appliances were deployed over key evenings, on the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October and the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of November between 16:00-22:00 hrs. Bonfire night and Mischief night fell on weekends, with Halloween falling on a Monday this year. Both periods involved a period of the weekend which did bring two weekends into contention for possible increased activity.

These appliances were programmed at NWFC so that they were prioritised for small incidents. There was an automatic override built into the mobilising system that they would also be sent to life risk incidents if they were the closest asset.

The Service's Deliberate Fire Reduction Manager attended North West Fire Control (NWFC) on the busiest evenings, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> October the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, & 6<sup>th</sup> of November to enable risk based mobilisation to take place to support and maintain operational cover levels across the county. Direct communication links with the relevant Police partners were established to enable direct and immediate discussion between the Service and Cheshire Police for operational support.

## 8. Northwest Fire Control

Extensive planning took place for the 2023 bonfire period in North West Fire Control (NWFC).

Many of the practices adopted across all four Services are based on procedures previously used only in Cheshire. Of particular note is the call challenging procedure adopted by NWFC in 2014; this originated in Cheshire and has resulted in risk based non attendance to incidents in all NWFC FRS areas. This call challenge has also been adopted by Cheshire Police Control so that bonfire incidents are assessed before referral to NWFC. The call challenge and 'tolerance' procedure was also communicated to all operational police staff in order to reduce the number of calls from patrols.

A call handling and mobilising procedure was operated during the period. NWFC staff were permitted to over-ride resources offered by the mobilising system and to leave certain calls unattended for a short period if appropriate. The mobilising decisions in each pod were the responsibility of a Station Manager (or higher) from each FRS.

## **9. Media and Corporate Communications**

The Communications team actively promoted several key messages for the Service over the bonfire period.

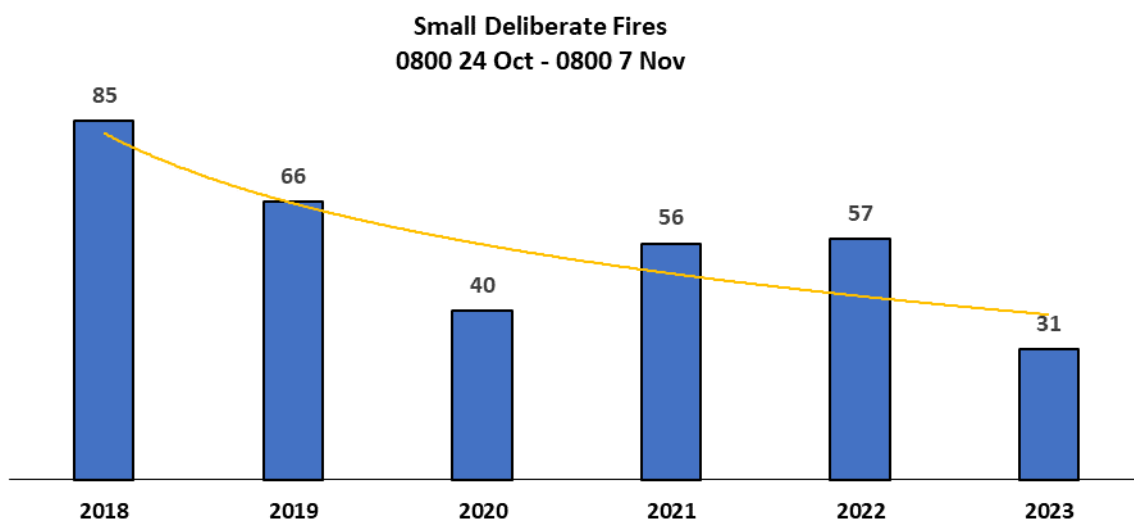
Communications for the campaign were promoted internally and externally via local press and by using our social media platforms, local radio stations.

Social media was used daily during the period to promote a range of messages and stations were encouraged to use their own accounts to promote to the public the dangers of lighting bonfires in their own gardens this year. Bonfire night the communications team provided a live blog updating residents of incidents being responded to.

## 10. Incident Data and Performance Summary

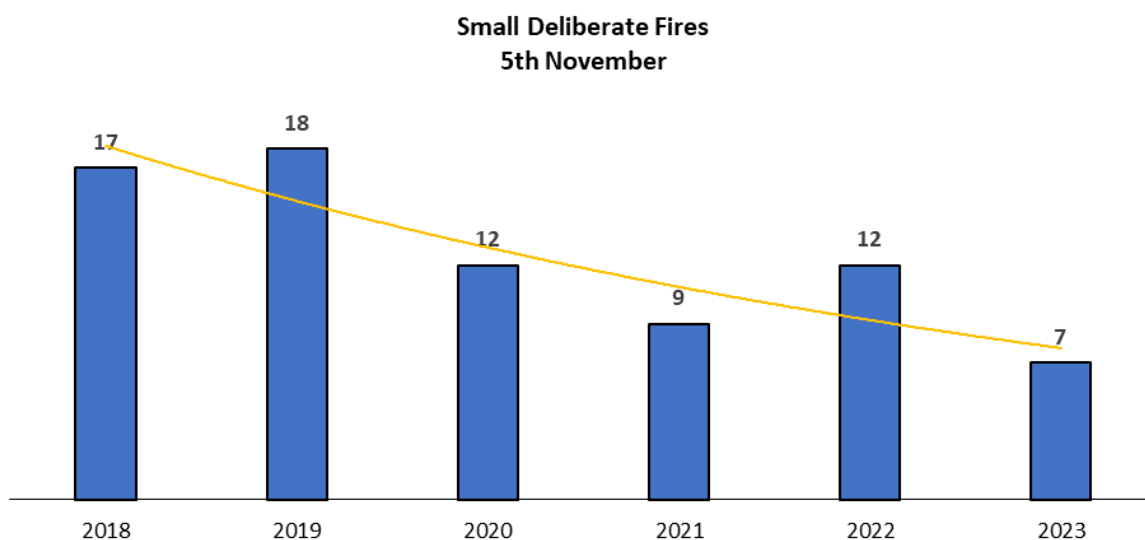
### Incidents recorded during the bonfire period

The following graph (Fig. 1) illustrates the overall trend of Small Deliberate Fires in Cheshire over recent years. The 2023 Bonfire Period saw 31 Small Deliberate Fires, showing a 64% reduction from 5 years ago. 2023 represents the lowest number of Small Deliberate Fires recorded over the last 6 years.



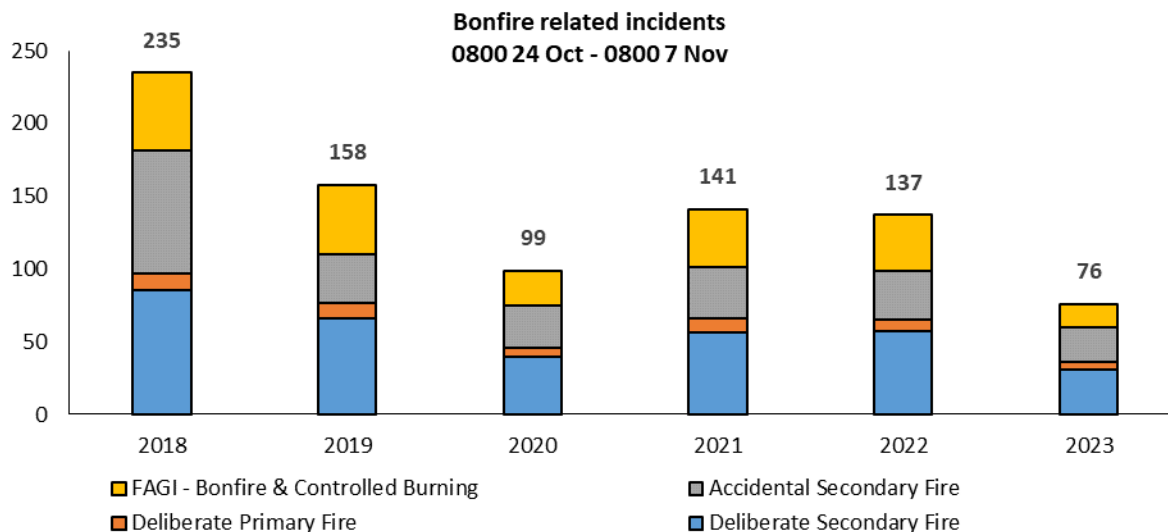
7 Small Deliberate Fires were recorded on the 5<sup>th</sup> November (Bonfire Night). This is traditionally when the highest number of bonfire related incidents are within the Bonfire period. 2023 represents the lowest number of small deliberate fires recorded on the 5<sup>th</sup> November over the last 6 years.

**Fig. 1 – Small Deliberate Fires in bonfire period by financial year**



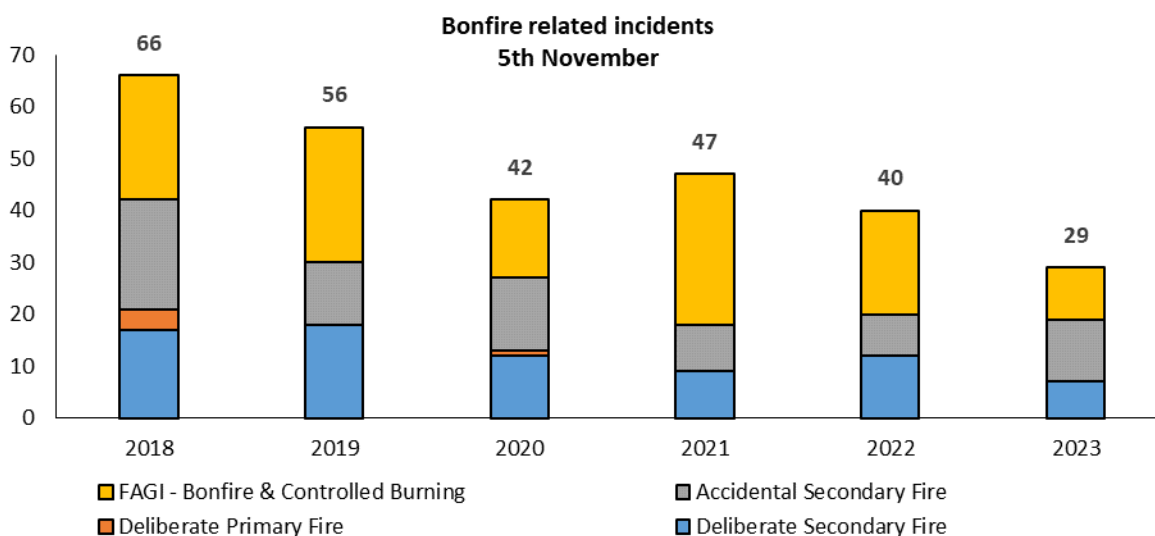
**Fig. 2 – Bonfire related incidents in bonfire period by financial year**

The 2023 Bonfire Period saw 76 bonfire related incidents, showing a 68% reduction from 5 years ago. 2023 represents the lowest number of bonfire related incidents recorded over the last 6 years.

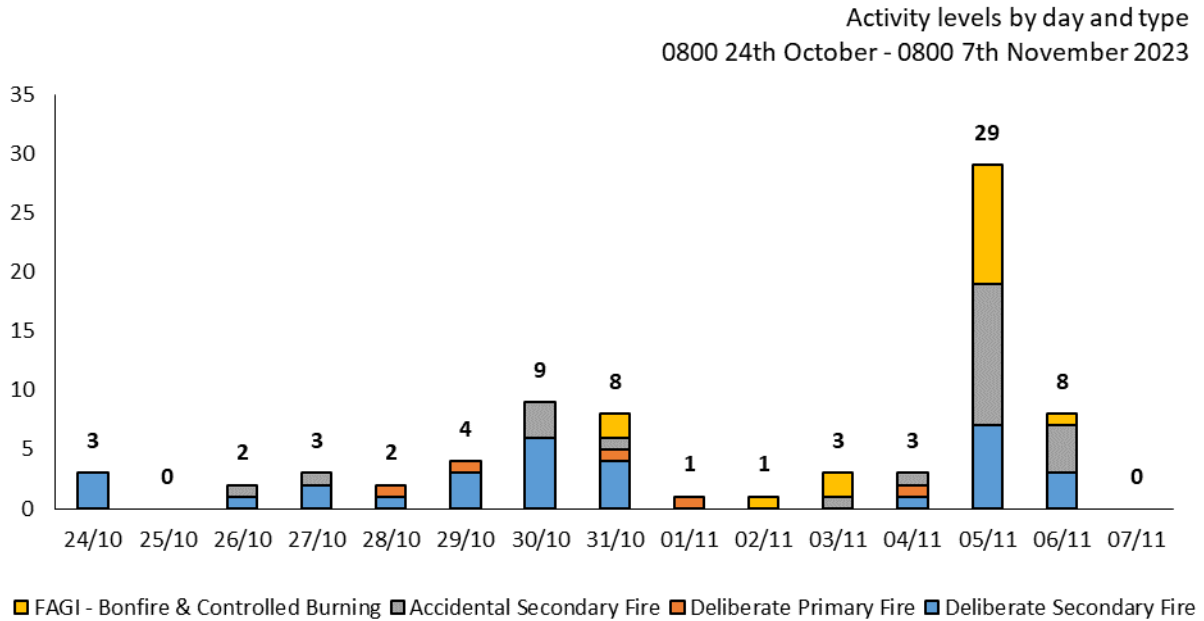


**Fig. 3 – Small Deliberate Fires on 5<sup>th</sup> November by financial year**

29 bonfire related incidents were recorded on the 5<sup>th</sup> November (Bonfire Night). 2023 represents the lowest number of bonfire related incidents recorded on the 5<sup>th</sup> November over the last 6 years.

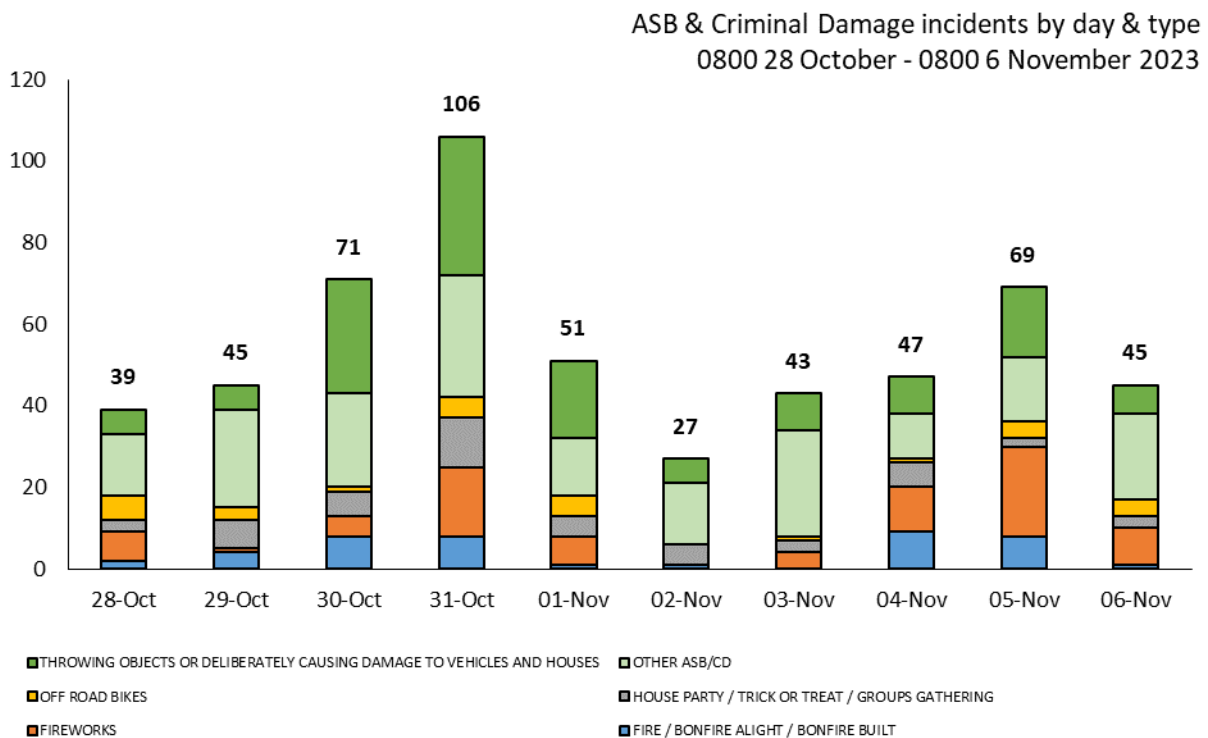


**Fig. 4 – CFRS bonfire related incidents by day in 2023 bonfire period**



Figures 5 and 6 illustrate both Fire & Police activity levels by day and incident type, showing comparisons between bonfire related activity and ASB/Criminal Damage reported to the Police during their respective analysis periods.

**Fig. 5 – Cheshire Constabulary selected incident activity by day**



**Fig. 6 – Temporal Chart of Bonfire Related & ASB/Criminal Damage incidents**

Small Deliberate Fires								
Hour	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
0	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%
1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%
2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
7	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%
11	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
13	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%
14	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
15	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	3.2%	6.5%
16	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
17	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%
18	9.7%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	19.4%
19	6.5%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.5%	16.1%
20	3.2%	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%	16.1%
21	6.5%	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	0.0%	3.2%	19.4%
22	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
23	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.2%	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

n = 31

Bonfire related activity								
Hour	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
0	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	2.6%
1	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	2.6%
2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
7	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
9	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
10	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	2.6%
11	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
13	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
14	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%
15	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	5.3%
16	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	2.6%	6.6%
17	2.6%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	3.9%	10.5%
18	3.9%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	9.2%	17.1%
19	5.3%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	6.6%	17.1%
20	1.3%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	3.9%	9.2%
21	2.6%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	2.6%	9.2%
22	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	6.6%	9.2%
23	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

n = 76

ASB & Criminal Damage Activity								
Hour	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
0	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.7%	2.0%
1	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%	2.0%
2	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	1.5%
3	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	1.1%
4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%
5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
7	0.7%	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.4%	0.2%	2.2%
8	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	2.4%
9	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.7%	0.2%	0.2%	2.8%
10	0.4%	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	2.6%
11	0.9%	0.6%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	2.4%
12	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%	3.5%
13	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%	1.3%	1.1%	4.4%
14	1.5%	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	1.8%	7.0%
15	0.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%	2.2%	1.3%	5.5%
16	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	1.7%	5.2%
17	1.7%	1.1%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	1.7%	7.0%
18	2.6%	2.2%	0.4%	0.2%	1.1%	1.1%	1.8%	9.4%
19	2.6%	3.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.6%	2.0%	1.7%	11.2%
20	2.8%	3.9%	0.7%	0.6%	0.2%	0.9%	1.5%	10.5%
21	2.2%	1.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	1.8%	7.6%
22	1.1%	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%	1.1%	1.7%	5.3%
23	1.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.7%	0.9%	3.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

n=543

The 3 temporal charts show the day and time when peak activity was recorded in small deliberate fires, bonfire related activity and ASB & Criminal Damage.

The majority of small deliberate fires occurred on a Sunday (32.3%), Monday (29.0%) and Tuesday (22.6%).

This coincides with the days that Bonfire night (Sunday), Mischief night (Monday) and Halloween (Tuesday) fell on this year.

The majority of ASB & Criminal Damage incidents occurred on a Monday (21.4%), Sunday (21.0%) and Tuesday (19.5%).

The majority of small deliberate fires occurred between the hours of 6pm – 10pm (71%).

This time period also accounted for the highest proportion of ASB & Criminal Damage incidents (39%).

Total bonfire related activity was most prevalent between 5pm – 9pm (54%)



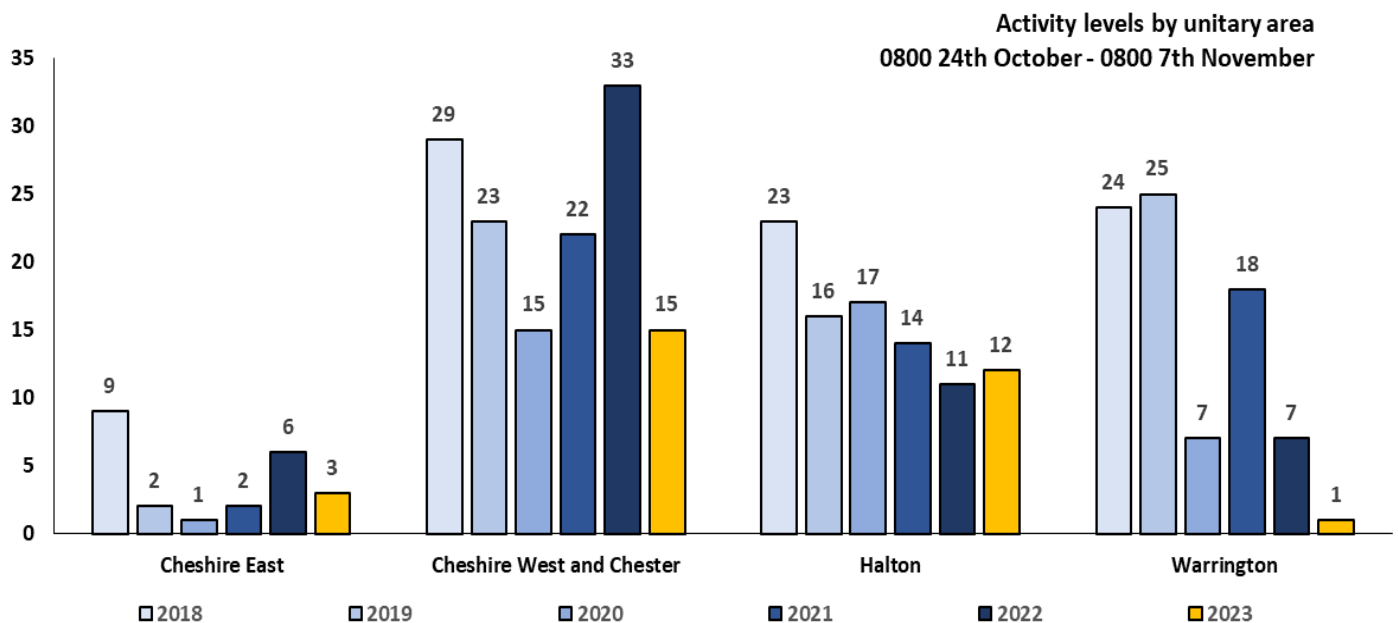
## Unitary Performance

Three out of four unitary areas recorded decreases in small deliberate fires in the 2023 Bonfire Period compared to 2022. Halton unitary area recorded a small increase over the same comparison period. However, all four unitary areas saw a reduction from 2018.

**Fig.7 - Small Deliberate fires by unitary area**

Unitary Area	2022	2023	Year on year	2018	6 Year change
Cheshire East	6	3	-3	9	-6
Cheshire West and Chester	33	15	-18	29	-14
Halton	11	12	1	23	-11
Warrington	7	1	-6	24	-23

**Fig.8 - Small Deliberate fires by unitary area and bonfire period year**



## Station Performance

In total, there were 10 station areas which recorded any small deliberate fires during the 2023 Bonfire Period, with 4 of these reporting 1 incident each.

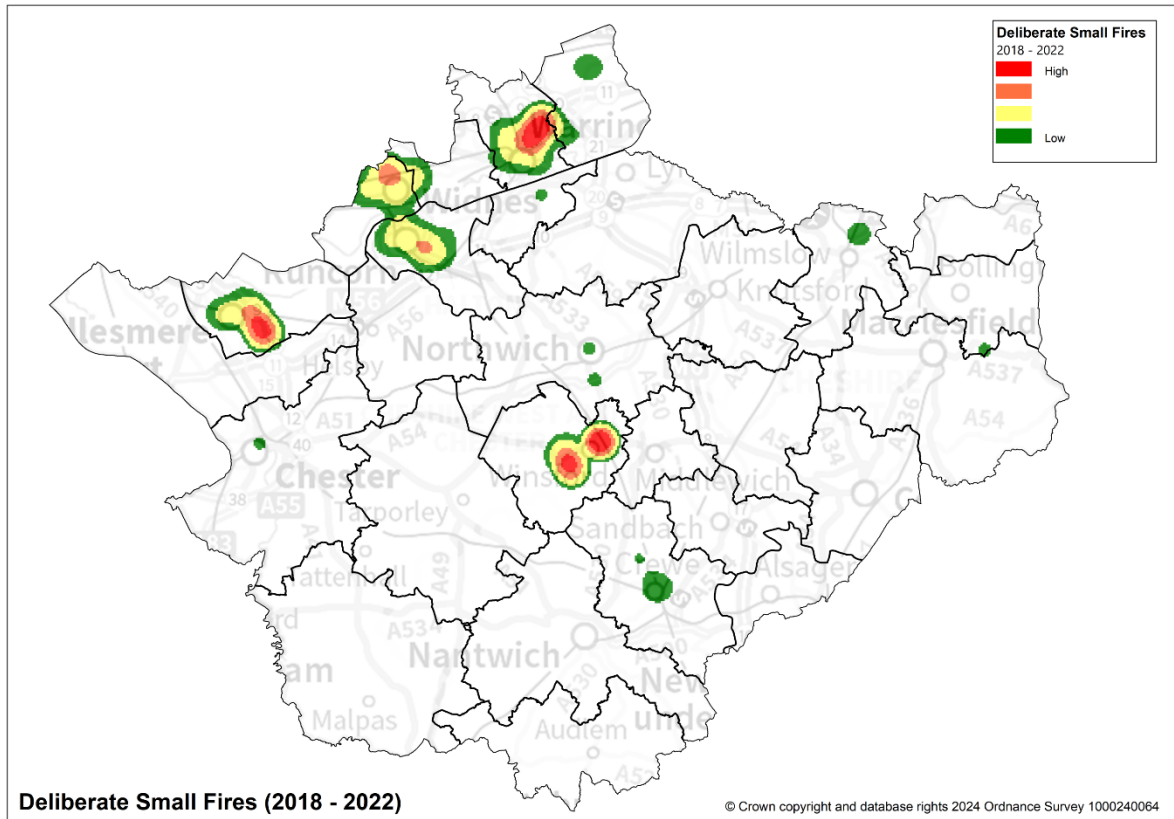
The following table (Fig. 9) summarises activity in station areas where small deliberate fires were recorded in the 2023 bonfire period, with comparisons over one and five years.

Winford and Runcorn recorded the highest number of small deliberate fires. These 2 areas accounted for 58% of all small deliberate fire activity recorded during the period.

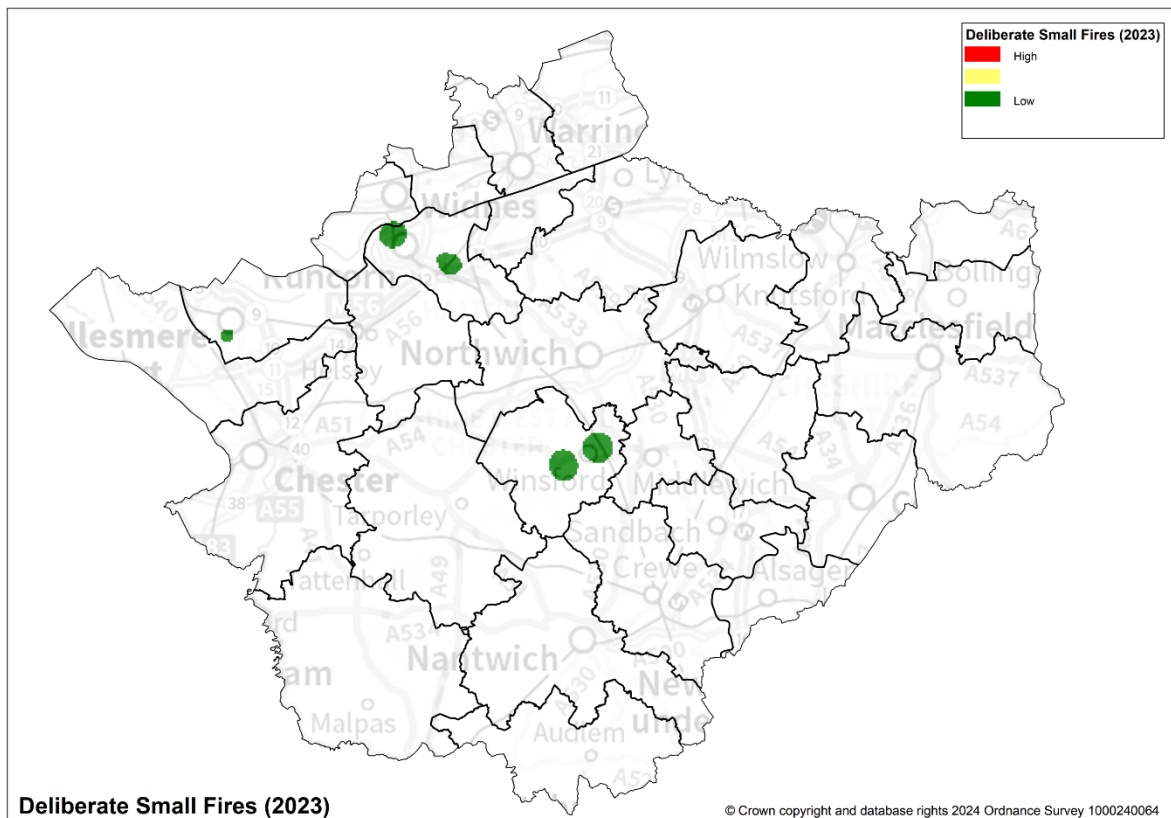
**Fig.9 Small Deliberate fires by station area and bonfire period year**

Station Area	2022	2023	Year on year	2018	5 year change
Winsford	26	10	-16	12	-2
Runcorn	6	8	+2	10	-2
Ellesmere Port	6	3	-3	15	-12
Widnes	4	2	-2	12	-10
Penketh	1	2	+1	1	+1
Crewe	1	2	+1	5	-3
Warrington	5	1	-4	18	-17
Congleton	1	1	0	0	+1
Chester	0	1	+1	1	0
Northwich	0	1	+1	1	0

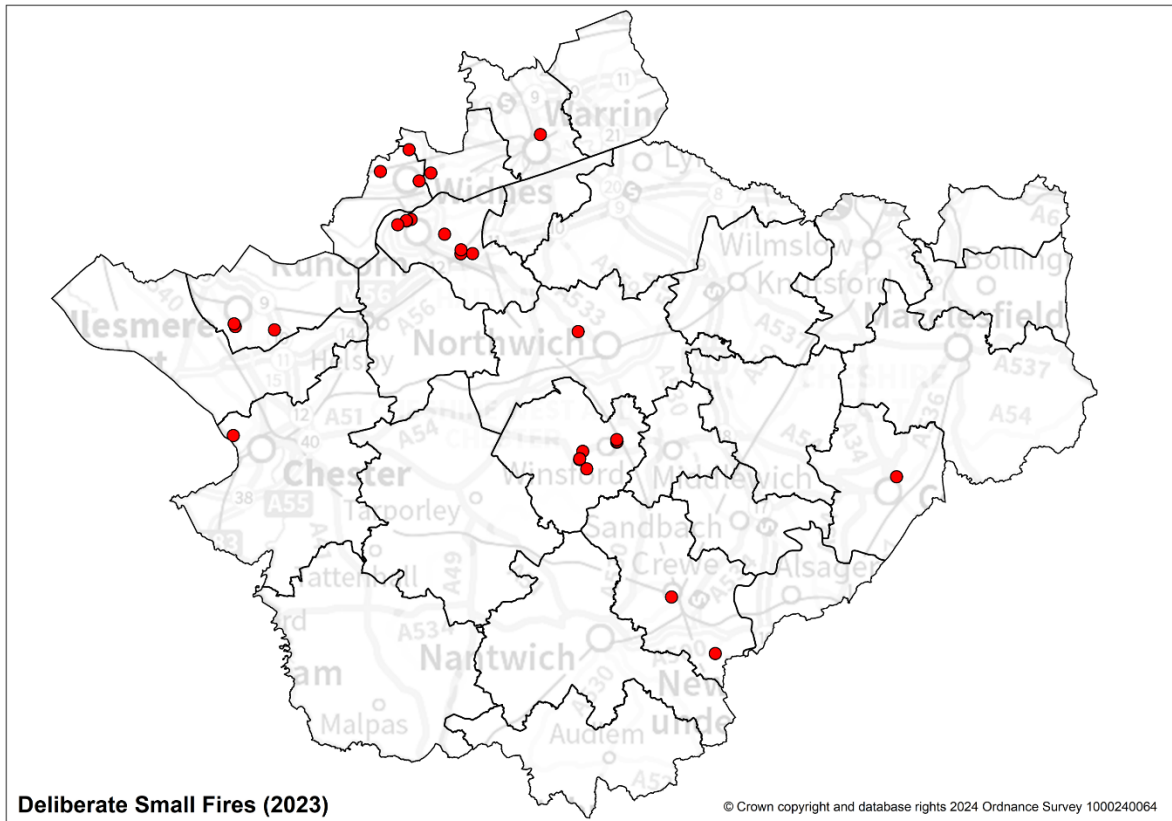
The map below shows Bonfire Period Small Deliberate Fire hotspot areas from 2018 – 2022 (08:00 24<sup>th</sup> Oct – 08:00 7<sup>th</sup> Nov).



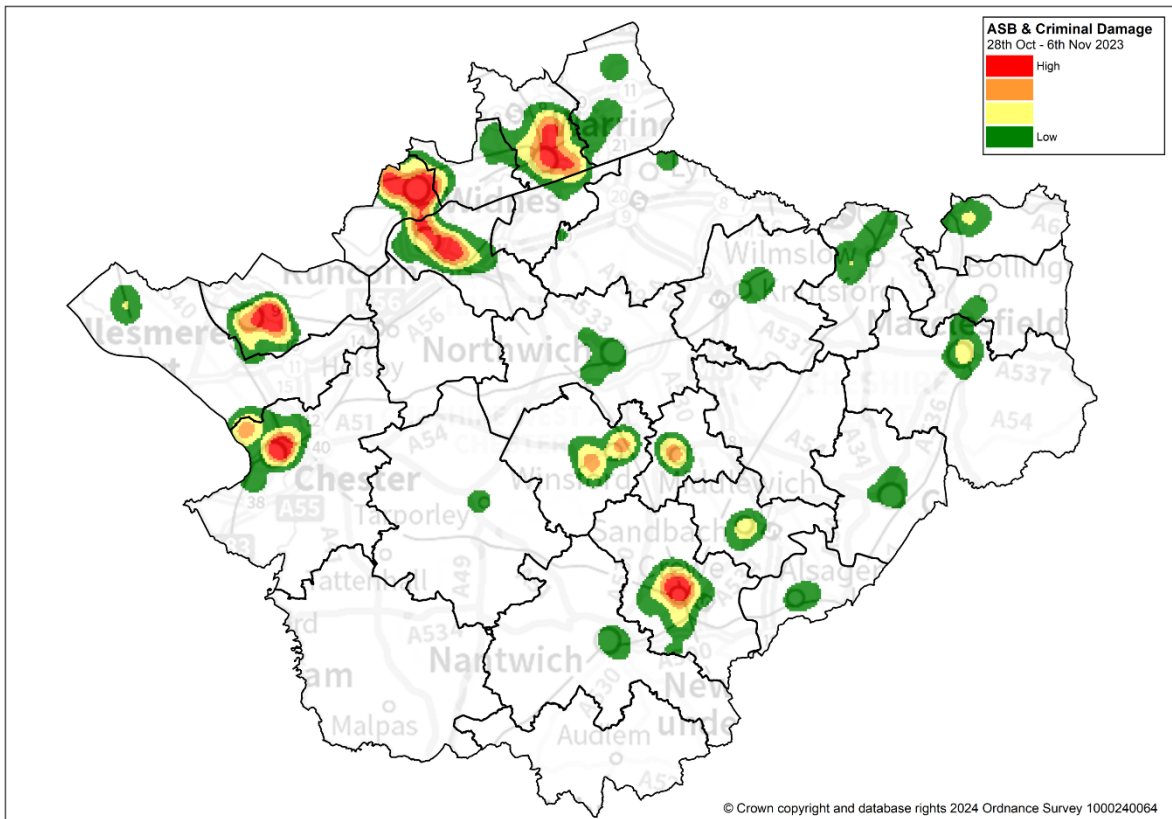
The map below shows Bonfire Period Small Deliberate Fire hotspot areas in 2023 (08:00 24<sup>th</sup> Oct – 08:00 7<sup>th</sup> Nov).



The map below shows Bonfire Period Small Deliberate Fire hotspot by location in 2023, 31 incidents (08:00 24<sup>th</sup> Oct – 08:00 7<sup>th</sup> Nov).



The map below shows recorded ASB and Criminal Damage hotspot areas in 2023 (28<sup>th</sup> Oct – 6<sup>th</sup> Nov) by Cheshire Police.



## 11. Accidents, Near Misses and Attacks on Staff

There was one reported incident in Winsford of youths attacking crews or appliances during the Bonfire period. No injuries were recorded from this incident.

Recorded attacks on crews broken down consisted of,

1 incident involved objects being thrown and the use of laser pens. Compared to 2022 where there were 6 reported incidents recorded involving objects being thrown, laser pens, physical abuse, and acts of aggression.

Due to pre-planning and having established direct links to Cheshire Police whilst at NWFC we were able to mobilise police teams with no delay to this incident.

Through collaborative work with Cheshire Police and The Service was able to secure police resources to escort operational crews from 16:00 – 23:00 from the 30<sup>th</sup> October to the 31<sup>st</sup> October and the 4<sup>th</sup> & the 5<sup>th</sup> of November. This resulted in the crews feeling safer and able to carry out the roles safely.

## 12. Recommendations

**It is recommended That:**

- A. the delivery of targeted and timely education to schools in all Service Delivery areas should continue when permitted (this should be attempted in collaboration with other partner);
- B. increased use of different communications methods occurs including the talking-head videos, radio interviews that have worked well to express key safety messages;
- C. the delivery of targeted and timely education to schools in all Service Delivery areas should continue when permitted (this should be attempted in collaboration with other partner);
- D. increased use of different communications methods occurs including the talking-head videos, radio interviews that have worked well to express key safety messages;

- E. the delivery of targeted and timely education to schools in all Service Delivery areas should continue when permitted (this should be attempted in collaboration with other partner);
- F. increased use of different communications methods occurs including the talking-head videos, radio interviews that have worked well to express key safety messages;
- G. bonfire strategy groups should plan well in advance of the period and encourage safe, organised displays as the primary advice to allow people to celebrate bonfire night safely. This should be promoted through local partner groups;
- H. use of on call Service Delivery resources and appliances should continue to be used over an appropriate number of evenings to cover the known risk areas;
- I. the Service and partner agency resources and efforts should be focused and coordinated in areas where intelligence suggests that high incident volumes may occur;
- J. where possible, partner agencies should be encouraged to continue the free removal schemes for the removal of large items (normally a chargeable service). This will continue to be “championed” at Bonfire Strategy Group planning meetings;
- K. the tolerant approach adopted by the Service has proven successful and should continue;
- L. targeted youth activities should be co-ordinated with the Prevention department ‘On the Streets Team’, utilising data provided by the Business Intelligence Unit;
- M. the involvement of Communications department providing relevant and timely social media updates throughout the bonfire period should continue;
- N. having direct communications with Cheshire Police (LPU Inspectors) in known hotspot station areas should be further developed after the evaluation of the findings of Winsford 2023 and;
- O. consideration should be given to working with partners to further promote diversionary activities in areas of high deliberate fire activity utilising UPG funding bids; and
- P. consideration should be given to reviewing Bonfire On call cover resources for 2024.

## **13. Summary and conclusions**

The total number of small deliberate fires (SDF) attended during the 2023 period (31) was lower than the previous year 2022 of (56).

The 2023 figures were 64% lower than figures from 2018 (85).

### **Engagement**

This was achieved with direct engagement and by the public utilising the Service's main social media accounts and station accounts which allowed content to be directed at a level that is relevant; local issues for local residents which is proven to be effective. This resulted in consistent, timely and targeted delivery of bonfire and firework safety messages.

### **Fuel removal**

Bonfire removal schemes continue to be an effective means of reducing the numbers of SDF.

### **Incident recording**

The tolerant, risk-based approach to dealing with incidents and recording will have impacted on the number of incidents recorded as SDF.

### **Weather**

It has been found that weather conditions experienced over the bonfire period have an impact on incident volumes. There were periods of rain over the first weekend and the second weekend during the bonfire period which could have had a direct effect on reported incidents.

### **Cross Departmental Work**

Departments throughout the Service were proactive during the run up to and including the bonfire period. Without the efforts of staff and partners it is likely that the number of SDF would have been much greater.