

Partnership Matters

Issue 8 January 2011

Welcome to the latest edition of Partnership Matters! This is Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service's regular newsletter for our partners.

As you will see, the Service continues to work with a range of agencies to tackle issues such as fire safety, road safety and anti-social behaviour, amongst others.

Many of you will know our Partnership Managers, Mike Franklin and Graham Weller - if you don't, and you think the Service can help you with a project that you're involved in, please don't hesitate to contact them.

Equally, if you would like to know more about anything referred to in this newsletter, or if there is something you would like to see covered in a future edition, please get in touch - contacts are on the last page.



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New partner for Salisbury Salamander course

A group of young people spent the week with Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service in early January, thanks to funding from the Youth Inclusion Programme.

The five day course, known as Salamander, encourages participants to work as a team, while building up confidence and self-esteem – it involves firefighting skills with hose, pumping appliances and hydrants; abseiling; ladder climbing; search and rescue; casualty care; road traffic collision rescue skills; and water rescue.

At the end of the week, the 15 participants - all aged between 13 and 18, and nominated for the scheme by the Youth Inclusion Programme - put on a display of their new found skills for family, friends and senior Fire & Rescue Service officers.



Case Manager Martyn Jones (martyn.jones@wiltsfire.gov.uk), who organised the course, said: "This was the first time that we'd worked with the Youth Inclusion Programme, and we hope that further courses will be funded in the future. Salamander is aimed at young people who need a steer in life, and we use the sessions to highlight the consequences of certain behaviours. There is also a very strong focus on self-esteem, confidence and teamwork, where the young people learn new skills and also how to work with others to achieve their aims."

He added: "Previous Salamander courses, here in Salisbury and also in Trowbridge and Swindon, have had a really positive effect on the young people involved, and we hope that our partner agencies will be able to continue funding the scheme in the future."

Partnership Managers lead on working together

Graham Weller and Mike Franklin lead the Service's partnership working in Swindon and Wiltshire respectively.

Graham spent 28 years as an operational firefighter, before retiring in 2005. However, he was only away for a year before returning in his current corporate role as partnership manager for Swindon, based at Drove Road fire station.

He said: "The job has evolved during the five years I have been in post, and I often represent the Service at meetings, both inside the Borough Council and elsewhere. Swindon is arranged into seven clusters, to give residents a voice in their own area, and I attend these as well."

Graham spends much of his time liaising with community groups, who are often amazed by the breadth of activity that the Service is involved in. "Most people have no idea about the work we do in technical fire safety, or our community safety projects, such as Safe Drive Stay Alive and Salamander. I was proud to be a firefighter and I am still proud to be a part of such a good service."

Contact Graham on 01793 401216 / 07809 548054 or email graham.weller@wiltsfire.gov.uk



Mike Franklin (left) and Graham Weller

Mike joined the Service five years ago following a long career with Wiltshire Police. Based at Service HQ in Potterne, his primary role is to manage existing partnerships and joint working and to develop new opportunities for similar working arrangements within the Wiltshire Council area.

He said: "Since the formation of the new council, I have been working closely with the 18 Community Area Boards, attending meetings and maintaining personal contact with councillors, board managers and council officers. I also represent the Service on the 20 Community Area Partnerships, plus groups including the Wiltshire Compact Board and the Resilient Communities Partnership."

Contact Mike on 07919 306037 or email michael.franklin@wiltsfire.gov.uk

Exercise tests procedures for high rise buildings

An exercise was held at Upavon Court, Penhill in September as a joint initiative between the Service and Swindon Borough Council.

The day was organised by the Council's property team, with the aim of testing the ventilation within the stairwells, should there be a fire or large amounts of smoke.

Fire crews from Cricklade, Swindon, Stratton and Westlea took part in the exercise, which assumed a fire on the fourth floor of the ten storey building.

Following on from the exercise, neighbourhood wardens from the Borough Council surveyed three and four storey blocks of flats within Swindon to check that stairwells and communal areas were clear of furniture, rubbish and personal items.



Gritters come to the rescue!

Wiltshire Council gritting lorries were called upon by the Service several times during the pre-Christmas snow.

A thatch fire in Bulford in early December led to a gritting lorry being called out in the early hours as the water run-off was freezing and making the road dangerous; similar problems arose when fire broke out at Lime Kiln Leisure Centre, Wootton Bassett later in the month.

Then, on 20 December, a gritting lorry helped Mere firefighters to safely reach a chimney fire in East Knoyle. At the time, snow was falling heavily and the road conditions were extremely hazardous.

Watch Manager Richard Pester explained: "As we turned off the A303 onto the A350, we could see that the traffic coming up the hill was really struggling with the conditions. Fortunately for us, a gritting lorry was there and I asked the driver if he would go to the incident, with us following on behind. He kindly did so, and I'm not sure we would have got there without him as the roads were far worse than we'd realised."



Having arrived safely in East Knoyle, the firefighters were able to deal with the chimney fire, but then learned that the A350 was by now impassable - stranding the crew. Luckily, WM Pester knew who to call: "My brother-in-law works for Wiltshire Council on the gritting lorries so I rang him to ask what the situation was. He confirmed the road was closed, but he managed to get back to the council yard by getting a lift from a helpful Police 4x4 driver and then brought a gritter out to us and reopened the road."

While waiting for the road to be cleared, the firefighters were looked after by the landlord of the Seymour Arms in East Knoyle, who opened up early and provided some much needed hot refreshments. WM Pester said: "This was real community spirit, with everyone working together. Our thanks go to the council, the police and the pub for their help."

Hotel scheme helps residents in their hour of need

The Hotel Scheme, set up by Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, provides a night's free accommodation at local hotels for people who are forced out of their homes due to various emergencies.

A total of 18 hotels have signed up to support the initiative from across the borough, and are ready to take in residents in their hour of need.

The scheme operates thanks to close liaison between the Service and the Council's housing team. Following emergencies where a property is badly damaged, firefighters will call the Council, who will then arrange hotel accommodation.

Group Manager Perry Payne said: "All too often, we have seen families affected by fire or flood, trying to find somewhere to stay in the middle of the night. It is therefore a great relief to see the hotel scheme back in place, as it can make such a difference to people who have suffered a disaster. We are very grateful to Swindon Borough Council, and especially to the hotels, for getting behind this idea."

Work is now underway to establish a similar scheme in Wiltshire.

Fire station hosts senior well-being day

Swindon Borough Council's trading standards department held one of its regular Senior Well Being Days at Drove Road fire station in October.

The events have been running since 2007 and have been held in a variety of venues, including Swindon Town Football Club, Freshbrook Church, the Punjabi Centre and Park South Community Centre.

A large number of agencies and charities attended the day to provide Swindon's senior citizens with advice, products and information, including the Service's own community safety department. The stands were set up in the appliance bay, while Swindon Community Safety Partnership's double decker bus was parked in the yard.



This free event was paid for by Swindon Borough Council's trading standards department and sponsored by KeebAble Hearing and Mobility.

Pest control officers support Operation Firestop

Wiltshire residents who are at greater risk from accidental fires are being helped by a new joint working arrangement.

Wiltshire Council is now supporting the Fire & Rescue Service's Operation Firestop - when visiting people's homes, its pest control officers will be looking for fire hazards such as over-loaded plugs, piles of papers, evidence of smoking and how well people can hear.

If the officer believes there could be a risk, they will ask permission to pass the homeowner's details onto the Fire & Rescue Service for a home safety visit.

Based on national and local statistics, the members of communities who are at greatest risk from accidental fires include lone pensioners, single parent families, homes with children under five, and homes where an occupant has a long-term illness or a physical or mental impairment.

Operation Firestop has been running for three years in Wiltshire with the help of other bodies like the NHS, police and community-based groups who regularly visit vulnerable households.

Wilton House used for stately home exercise

The challenge of saving valuable artwork and artefacts from fire at one of the county's stately homes was tested on 1 December when an exercise was carried out at Wilton House.

Salisbury Watch Manager Lee Glyde said: "It was useful for us to visit the house and refresh our knowledge on access, building layout and water supplies. A priority for the estate in the event of an incident after rescuing staff, public or any guests would be salvage, so this was also an opportunity for us to fully understand their needs and work with them as best we can."

The exercise scenario was based on fire breaking out in the north tower of Wilton House, with two members of staff unaccounted for. Artificial smoke was used to make the simulation as real as possible for firefighters.



Another successful year for Safe Drive Stay Alive

Safe Drive Stay Alive is a local road safety partnership between Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, Wiltshire Police, SWIFT Medics, Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council.

The roadshow is based on powerful personal testimonies, designed to make the audience aware of the nature and extent of the personal tragedy and suffering that a road traffic collision can and does cause.

Now in its fourth year, the scheme has continued to go from strength to strength and is now reaching more high risk drivers than ever before, both through schools (Year 11) and the Ministry of Defence.

Since the scheme's first full year in 2007, there has been a reduction in the number of road traffic collisions involving the target age group. Between 2007 and 2009, there were 189 less casualties at road traffic collisions involving drivers under the age of 25.

This reduction in the number of casualties relating to the target age group amounts to more than £13 million reduced cost to the economy (based on Department for Transport figures), through reduced emergency services call-outs, hospital admissions, road closures, and the pain and grief suffered by victims, families and friends.

Safe Drive by numbers - Autumn 2010

Number of shows	41
Number of students	7,620
Number of MOD personnel	1,900
Number of schools and colleges	51
Number of MOD regiments	6
Number of coach journeys	230
Number of agencies involved	5
Number of venues	11



To find out more about Safe Drive Stay Alive, or to ensure your school takes part in the 2011 programme, contact Ian Hopkins, road safety development manager, on 01380 732970 or email ian.hopkins@wiltsfire.gov.uk

Roadshow highlights dangers of drink driving

The Service joined forces with Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police before Christmas to highlight the dangers of drink driving.

A series of roadshows were held across the county, in Salisbury, Chippenham, Trowbridge, Tidworth and Devizes, to focus on safe driving and taking care.

The display at Tidworth army barracks on 14 December corresponded with a Safe Drive Stay Alive presentation to personnel of 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh.



The Service also supported Swindon Community Safety Partnership's Christmas campaign, which focused on all areas of safety during the festive season.

Raising awareness on large animal rescues

Some 40 vets and other animal care specialists took part in a series of awareness raising days organised by Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service at the end of last year.

As well as local vets, representatives from the RSPCA and British Horse Society were invited to the sessions, which combined theory with practice.

Watch Manager Tom Brolan, from the rural safety team, explained: "We are often called to incidents where large animals, such as horses or cows, are in trouble and need to be extricated from a ditch or somewhere similar. We therefore invited animal care specialists who may also be called to such incidents to come in, see what equipment and training we have, find out what we need from them, and hopefully further improve the way we work together."



Tackling the challenges of underground fires

A table top exercise was held in November to test the multi-agency response to an incident at the Corsham military mines.

The aim of the event was to assist in providing information for DFRMO (Defence Fire Risk Management Organisation) and DE&S (Defence Estates) in updating the contingency plan for a major incident underground.

Amongst those taking part were DFRMO, DE&S, MOD Military Guard, Wiltshire FRS, Wiltshire Police, the Environment Agency, HM Mines Inspectorate, NHS Public Health and the Health Protection Agency.



Tenant 'at risk' identified by partnership working

Partnership working between the Service and Swindon Borough Council has improved the safety of a sheltered housing tenant.

The Council contacted the technical fire safety team for advice as they had a tenant with multiple medical conditions who was, at the time, bedbound. The woman was also very

heavy, making it difficult for her to be easily evacuated in the event of a fire.

As a result of this information, the address was 'flagged' on the Service's mobilisation system, so that fire crews would know immediately of the risk if a fire was reported in any part of the sheltered housing complex.

Contact Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service

You may visit Wiltshire FRS headquarters at Manor House, Potterne, Devizes, SN10 5PP during normal office hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Our switchboard number is **01380 723601** – if you know the extension or name of the person you wish to speak to, an automated system will put you straight through, otherwise you will go through to an operator.

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