

Partnership Matters

Issue 4 October 2009

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

It is vital that we get our fire and road safety messages to as wide an audience as possible, and we could not do this without the help of our many partners across Wiltshire and Swindon. This edition tells you more about some of our recent success stories.

We are always looking for new ways of working, and our developing corporate partnerships for road safety are already paying dividends. Since the Arval seminar detailed below, we have delivered road safety talks at BP's Swindon office and also Dyson Ltd, in Malmesbury, and more are being booked across the Service area all the time.

I hope you find this newsletter helpful – if there is something you would like to know more about, please do let us know. Our contact details can be found on page 4.



Andy Goves
Chief Fire Officer and
Chief Executive

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Unique partnership focuses road safety at corporate drivers

Comments included "inspirational", "hard hitting" and "excellent", following a 'first of its kind' free event for businesses to promote road safety in the corporate arena.

The event was run in partnership between fleet management company Arval and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. Based on the Safe Drive Stay Alive initiative, which is aimed at young people who are on the verge of becoming drivers, this was the first time that the Service had worked with a corporate company to raise the profile of road safety amongst businesses.

Using real incidents, real victims, and emergency and healthcare professionals to reinforce the potentially shattering consequences of poor driving, the event included crucial information on the legal risks that companies and their drivers face. It also covered the road safety initiatives that Arval has pioneered, and the financial benefits of investing in road safety. Among those taking part were speakers from Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Police, and the Safety Camera Partnership.

Tracey Young, fleet and road safety manager at Arval, said: "We are delighted with how the event went and the response that we have had from attendees, many of whom said that they had never been to such a compelling and powerful seminar. It was designed to be hard hitting and, for some, the content had a greater impact on them than they could have imagined, which we hope will encourage them to take action within their own company."

Ian Hopkins, road safety development manager for Wiltshire FRS, was also delighted with the day's success: "This was the first time we had worked with a corporate partner, and it went brilliantly. My hope now is that other large employers will ask us to run similar events for their staff and customers, so that we can get our road safety message to as many people as possible."

Such was the success of this event that Arval is planning to hold another one early next year.



Operation Firestop - targeting Wiltshire's most vulnerable

Fire deaths are still relatively uncommon but, when they do happen, they often affect members of the community who have been identified as 'vulnerable'. Operation Firestop is a Wiltshire-wide multi-agency approach to gather information about the most vulnerable in our communities. By identifying those at greatest risk from accidental fire and related death or injury, we are able to put into place risk reducing interventions.

As a Fire & Rescue Service, we have a strategy to reduce the numbers of accidental dwelling fires and associated fire deaths through education and targeted interventions. These can range from fire safety information passed to the community through different media outlets to our staff giving talks and presentations to community groups and providing displays at public events.

When our fire crews attend a fire related incident within a neighbourhood, they will carry out what's known as a 'hot strike', providing residents within the immediate locality with information and advice about home fire safety. If there is a notable risk, they will also provide and fit free smoke alarms.

Following the fire death of a pensioner in an isolated rural part of North Wiltshire in early 2008, proactive community fire safety work was carried out in the village where the fire took place. Established Neighbourhood Watch schemes were used to circulate home fire safety information, while contact was also made with the local school, with pupils taking information home. This led to more than 40 home fire safety visits being made.

Building on this, the Malmesbury Area Firestop scheme went live in October 2008. This multi-agency project, led by Wiltshire FRS, was designed to get local service providers to identify and refer vulnerable people. Such 'community intelligence' then enabled us to put appropriate fire safety interventions into place. To achieve this, we worked with the local neighbourhood policing team; the then Wiltshire County Council Adult Care Team; NHS Community Health practitioners; the local authority housing department and the newly formed pilot Community Area Board.

In January 2009, another lone pensioner died as a result of an accidental fire at her home in West Lavington. As a consequence of this, a Devizes Firestop scheme was introduced, using the same model of partner organisations as had been involved in the Malmesbury scheme. However, on this occasion, engagement was also made with the largest registered social landlord in the locality and the Parish Council, both of whom supported the project.

We are now striving to roll out Firestop schemes across the whole of Wiltshire on a 'Community Area' risk assessed basis over the next two years. Critical to the project's success is the role of our four Case Managers, who will be promoting and managing the local schemes. They will be working closely with statutory and non-statutory agencies and the voluntary sector to provide that vital local link with the Fire & Rescue Service. They will, if required, provide staff briefings for participating organisations on the benefits of the project and explain how, by joint working, we can all keep our mutual clients safer. The referral system is quick, practical and flexible and was designed for those 'front-line' service providers who have little time to spare completing complex assessment forms.

Further information about Operation Firestop can be obtained by making contact with Partnership & Community Engagement Manager Mike Franklin on e-mail: michael.franklin@wiltsfire.gov.uk or with the Case Manager responsible for your locality.



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Working in and with the local community

The Service has been involved in several high profile events over the summer, promoting both community safety and career opportunities.

A number of volunteers from across the Service supported the Swindon Mela on 25 July. Hundreds of people showed an interest in the fire engine, the equipment, fire safety advice and career opportunities.

The West Wilts Show in Trowbridge on 23-25 July was a chance for the Service to focus on a range of areas, including road safety.

A crashed car involved in a fatal road traffic collision provided a dramatic display, while technical fire safety staff took the opportunity to highlight their work to protect local businesses.

Retained firefighters, Control operators and Corporate staff took part in Swindon Pride on 15 August, where we had a stall alongside Wiltshire Police, Swindon Borough Council, Swindon NHS and many others.

Many people of varying sexualities were interested in the work of Wiltshire FRS and received fire safety advice.



Partnership approach leads to product recall

A product recall of Electrolux cookers was prompted by investigative work by Service personnel within Swindon earlier this year.

On 29 March, Watch Manager Mark Evans raised concerns with Bob Tabel, Swindon Case Manager, that his watch had attended three fires involving cookers on the same housing development over a period of one year.

Further investigations revealed that, in all three cases, the same make and model of cooker were involved. Two of the cookers were recovered, although the third had been stolen from outside of the owners' home.

Technical fire safety enforcement manager Rob Wallbridge then liaised with the manufacturer, Electrolux, and the local trading standards department were informed.

After a lengthy investigation by Electrolux, they discovered a fault with the thermostat and issued a product recall. Thousands of these cookers have been fitted in homes all over the country and, nationally, there have been over 40 incidents involving the same make and model of cooker.

This was excellent work by all those involved and highlights what can be achieved when we work together to improve public safety.

999 Show 'great success'

Thousands of people flocked to Hullavington airfield on 13 September to enjoy this year's Emergency Services Show, which was the most successful yet!

The Show, which puts the spotlight on all three 'blue light' services, is organised by volunteers from Wiltshire FRS, Wiltshire Police and Great Western Ambulance Service.

As well as the main emergency services, the event also gives a stage to other organisations that provide an emergency response, such as search and rescue, the air ambulance, First Responders and blood bikes.

Committee chairman Chris Harvey said: "This was the Show's fifth anniversary, and it was easily the most successful day we have had so far. The crowds were bigger than ever before, so much so we had to allocate a second car parking area, and the queue for fire engine rides never seemed to get shorter. We are so grateful to everyone who came and helped on the day, in whatever capacity – without the goodwill of our colleagues, we wouldn't be able to put on such a good event."

Although the accounts have yet to be finalised, the amount of money available to donate to charity is guaranteed to be the most yet.

To find out more about the Show, visit www.emergencyservicesshow.com

Have your say on the Service's future

Local people are being asked to have their say on how Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service operates over the next three years.

The Service is consulting on its draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), which sets out what resources will be made available in what areas to protect the local community.

The plan highlights 12 areas where the Service will focus its attention between 2010 and 2013:

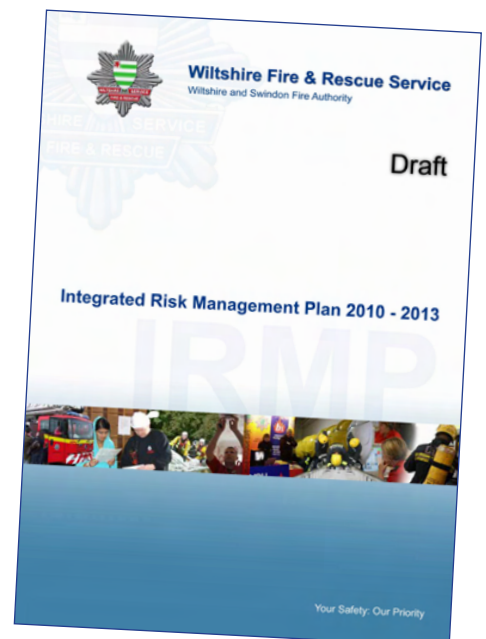
- Helping people to stay safe from fire
- Helping people to stay safe on our roads
- Ensuring a high quality response to emergencies
- Ensuring our emergency response vehicles meet our needs
- Planning for the future
- Demonstrating community leadership
- Protecting the business community
- Continuing to assess ways we can be more efficient
- Responding positively to climate change
- Providing resilient duty systems
- Continuing to improve our equality and diversity standards
- Developing our staff to meet changing risks in the community

The formal consultation period will run for 12 weeks, from Monday 21 September until Friday 11 December.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Simon Routh Jones said: "During this time, we will be presenting the draft plan throughout the Service area, by attending community meetings across Wiltshire and Swindon. We also want to hold focus groups in November, so we are asking people to register as stakeholders."

He added: "The draft plan has been developed following intensive staff consultation, which means its direction has come from the people who are already delivering our fire and rescue service within our communities. We now need to know whether what we are proposing is what people want and expect from us."

To comment on the plan and to register as a stakeholder, visit www.wiltsfire.gov.uk



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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