

Fire Scotland report fewer bonfires but increase in attacks on firefighters



Fire Scotland has reported a reduction in the number of bonfires attended by fire and rescue service personnel in the east of Scotland (the former Central, Lothian and Borders and Fife areas) but disappointingly there was an increase in attacks on firefighters.

Group Manager Steve Gourlay, Edinburgh City area said: “The work in advance of 5th November with our Council and Police Scotland colleagues ensured a large amount of combustibles were removed before they could be set alight and potentially cause disruption, impacting on the availability of our resources.

“The arrangements for the night itself involved the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Community Action Team for the City working in the local areas with Police Scotland and Council Environmental Warden colleagues to assess bonfire safety issues, give advice and where required request SFRS resources. Six dual crewed SFRS/Police Scotland teams covered the neighbourhood areas with further police resources also being deployed as required. Early indications are that this approach has lessened the burden on vital frontline SFRS resources and improved the safety of Edinburgh communities.

“Unfortunately our crews were subject to verbal and physical abuse, with bottles and stones being thrown at our vehicles, some equipment was also stolen from a locker of one of the appliances. Fortunately no one was hurt but this is totally unacceptable and we will work with police colleagues to identify those involved. A debrief will take place between

partner agencies to ensure our joint working approach is evaluated and also to log any lessons learned which will inform our planning for next year.”

Assistant Chief Officer Lewis Ramsay, Director of Prevention and Protection for SFRS, said: “This year we issued a call to action for everyone in our communities to Join Scotland’s Fight Against Fire.

“By acting safely and responsibly and attending organised displays, the public have made Scotland safer than ever before.

“SFRS front-line crews, control room and support staff have worked tirelessly over what is traditionally the busiest period of the year for the fire and rescue service.

“In addition the efforts of local authorities, Police Scotland, education, public and voluntary sector partners have been vital in ensuring the safety of the public, while our media partners have been essential in spreading potentially life-saving messages.”