

Midlothian residents given bonfire waste amnesty

A waste amnesty has been launched for residents in Midlothian who want to get rid of household items which could be used to start fires in the run up to Bonfire Night this year.

A team of convicted offenders will be used to carry out collections of flammable furniture, carpets and mattresses which need uplifted as well as anything dumped on public grounds which could pose a danger.

Midlothian Council said it is working with emergency services to carry out the initiative in areas which have been identified as trouble hotspots on the annual fireworks night.

The Unpaid Work Team will collect items in the week before the night and will be made up of people who have been issued a Community Payback Order from the court, giving them the chance to give back to local communities.

More than 100 additional slots for picking up items such as furniture, carpets and mattresses, are being offered on a first come basis to people seeking a free uplift.

The council is also asking people to report any dumped flammable items they are concerned about as the night approaches.

They said: "Unauthorised bonfires are not only a danger to

individuals, homes and communities, but can also unnecessarily divert the Fire and Rescue Service from dealing with other more pressing emergencies.”

The annual amnesty has seen a fall in bonfires and deliberate bin fires with the number of calls recorded in the first two weeks of November 2020 was seven compared to zero the following year.

However in November 2022 when violence broke out in a number of cities across Scotland including Edinburgh and Dundee the number of calls over bonfire night weekend in Midlothian to unauthorised fires rose again to five as police officers joined fire crews on patrol.

Booking for this year’s amnesty uplifts is now open and pick ups will be carried out between Monday October 28 and November 2 in three locations at Dalkeith and Woodburn, Mayfield and Easthouses and Gorebridge, which have been identified as at risk.

Anyone wanting to book a slot can call the council on 0131 561 5284.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter