

Partnership Matters

Issue 1 September 2008

Welcome to this first edition of Partnership Matters, Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service's quarterly newsletter for our partners.

We work with a wide range of organisations and agencies across Wiltshire and Swindon to deliver the best possible service to our communities. However, we find that many people are surprised when they hear we do more than put out fires and rescue people from road traffic collisions.

This newsletter has two aims, to keep you – our partners – informed of key developments within the Fire & Rescue Service, and to give a snapshot of the types of partnerships we are involved with. We also want to hear from you if there's something you would like us to share with others – contact details can be found on P4.



Andy Goves
Chief Fire Officer

External praise for service

Wiltshire FRS is a top performer in how it runs its operations, including how it responds to emergencies.

Following an assessment by the Audit Commission, we received a top score of four for service delivery – meaning that we are performing strongly and well above minimum requirements. A score of three – performing well and consistently above minimum requirements – was given for use of resources.

The report highlighted that prevention work is well organised and we work effectively with partners to meet the needs of its community. The overall finding was that we are performing well and demonstrate strength in our approach to partnership and inter-agency working.

In addition, we retained our Charter Mark status for the fourth successive year this summer. To be successful, we had to meet key criteria based on public expectations, including listening to the public, consulting and reacting to feedback, and giving the community a say in the way their fire service operates.

Our new strategic aims

A total of 21 corporate priorities were identified for the Service when we developed our Business Plan for 2006-2010. While these are still relevant, we realise we need a sharper focus on what we do.

As such, our new Annual Plan is based on five 'strategic aims', which underpin everything that we do and all we want to achieve:

- Providing a resilient response to fires and other emergencies
- Creating stronger, safer and more resilient communities
- Developing a healthy, safe, well-trained workforce that is representative of the community
- Protecting our environment and heritage
- Resourcing our key aims to ensure maximum efficiency



Working with... young people

Salamander success highlighted at national seminar

Salamander is aimed at young people between 13 and 17 who are potentially at risk of committing crimes, have some sort of care responsibility at home, or are at risk of social exclusion, such as being suspended from school or not being in work, education or training.

The week-long course runs regularly at Trowbridge, Salisbury and Swindon fire stations, organised by Wiltshire FRS in partnership with Connexions and the Youth Development Service.

An extended Salamander also ran for ten weeks earlier this year, funded by the High Sheriff's Crimebeat scheme. This supported a group of young people in Calne and was a great success.

On 25 June, Group Manager Steve Williams gave a presentation on Salamander at the National Youth Engagement Seminar. Two young people who have benefited from the scheme also took to the stage to give first-hand accounts of their experiences.

Fire Watch at Stratton

We have been working with Kingsdown School in Stratton St Margaret to pilot an arson prevention scheme.

'Fire Watch' involves twelve 14-15 year old students taking on responsibility for monthly checks of the school premises, with the aim of uncovering potential arson hotspots.

The inspections cover basic checks such as waste management, perimeter fencing security, and notification of incidents of graffiti, vandalism and signs of arson.

The volunteers are being supported by firefighters from Stratton Fire Station's Blue watch and the Service's education officer.



Salamander in action



Safe Drive - stay alive!

Nearly 8,000 young people experienced the Safe Drive, Stay Alive roadshow in 2007. Based around personal testimonies, it makes the audience aware of the extent of the suffering caused by road traffic collisions.

The show is led and primarily co-ordinated by Wiltshire FRS, working in partnership with Wiltshire Police, Great Western Ambulance Service, Wiltshire County Council, Swindon Borough Council, Roadpeace and Brake.

2008 has seen Safe Drive, Stay Alive rated as 'compliance plus' by Charter Mark, which means it is commended as best practice to other organisations.

The roadshow has also been rolled out to target young soldiers at military camps across Wiltshire, with sessions held at or planned for Tidworth, Bulford, Warminster and Larkhill.



Working for... safer communities

National award for work with migrant workers

A partnership set up by Wiltshire FRS has won a national award from the Government for its initiatives to safeguard migrant workers.

Equality and diversity advisor Rex Webb received the Fire and Rescue Services Equality and Diversity Award for partnership working from Fire Minister Parmjit Dhanda at a ceremony in May.

In early 2006, a number of serious fires in houses of multiple occupancy raised concerns amongst firefighters, as they were home to migrant workers who were unable to communicate in English when an emergency arose.

Following a multi-agency meeting of representatives from the two local diversity partnerships, Rex took the lead on developing a joint approach and organised a conference on migrant workers that attracted national

speakers. As a result of this, two Migrant Worker Forums were set up, one in Salisbury and one in Kennet. These have since contributed to a number of initiatives, including a Welcome to Wiltshire information pack.

Chief Fire Officer Andy Goves said he was very proud of Rex's achievement. "This award is very special, as it recognises how well we work in partnership with others. From the initial life-threatening fires that drew our attention to an emerging problem, through to contributing to resolving these issues at local, regional and national levels, Wiltshire FRS has been proactive with our partners in helping to make our communities safer. The recognition of this work by the CLG, which is very much a team effort, puts Wiltshire FRS firmly in the national spotlight and can only encourage us all to redouble our efforts with our partners working within Wiltshire and Swindon."

Partnership approach to sprinkler installations

Wiltshire FRS actively lobbies for the inclusion of sprinkler systems in domestic and commercial properties.

Successful partnerships already include Wiltshire County Council agreeing to install sprinklers in Melksham's new secondary school, Swindon Borough Council including sprinklers in seven new schools, plus numerous schemes in residential homes and housing association properties.

On 27 June, we were visited by Mike Larking, Senior Policy Advisor to the Fire Minister. He was keen to see the work undertaken in Wiltshire to achieve the installation of sprinklers in premises where they wouldn't normally be required by law. We have been particularly successful in this area and can boast some ground-breaking work.

Mike has now arranged for us to provide a presentation on sprinklers to an All Party Seminar at the Houses of Parliament in February 2009.



Group Manager Julian Parsons explains the new sprinkler system at Nova Hreed Park School, Swindon

Helping us to help you

Most firefighters in Wiltshire are retained – that is, they are ‘on call’ to respond to emergencies but hold down other jobs and commitments.

Retained firefighters might be builders, shop assistants, farmers, plumbers, typists, factory workers, managers or parents at home. Regardless of the job they do, they are self-reliant, confident and ready for anything.

We recruit men and women from the local community, and the main thing is that you live or work close to the fire station as you need to be able to respond to a call within a few minutes. You will also need to be at least 18, with good levels of fitness, enthusiasm and a sense of humour.

Retained firefighters are hugely important to Wiltshire FRS. We are hugely grateful to those employers who allow their staff to provide this essential fire cover in their communities. To find out more, visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk or call 01380 731144.



Contact the Fire Authority

Wiltshire and Swindon Combined Fire Authority comprises of nine Wiltshire county councillors and Swindon borough councillors. It sets the budget, decides on policy and oversees the day-to-day activities of the Fire & Rescue Service.

Jerry Willmott (chair)	01380 730115	Nick Martin	01793 870705
David Wren (vice chair)	01793 337591	Tony Molland	01380 727716
Paul Batchelor	07887 947925	Derique Montaut	01793 343507
Mike Bawden	01793 521158	Jeff Osborn	01225 765504
Bobbie Chettleburgh	01722 338346	Pat Rugg	01380 722677
Peter Davis	01225 705935	Margaret White	01225 708767
Brig. Robert Hall	01672 563427		

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.

Email: enquiries@wiltshire.gov.uk

Website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk