



DECEMBER 2023

INFORMATIVE

The quarterly bulletin of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service



**AWARDS CEREMONY
CELEBRATES STAFF
ACHIEVEMENTS**

**STORM BABET BROUGHT
MULTI AGENCIES TOGETHER
TO PROTECT RESIDENTS**

**CELEBRATING
INTERNATIONAL CONTROL
ROOM WEEK**



AWARDS CEREMONY CELEBRATES STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

The annual awards ceremony is always one of the highlights of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service calendar and this autumn it was held at Venue Cymru, Llandudno.

The Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd, Mr Harry George Fetherstonehaugh OBE, presented Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and 30-years clasps to operational staff during the ceremony.

Certificates recognising control room firefighters that have completed their initial training as well as Community Awards to recognise members of staff and the community who have worked hard to improve community safety in North Wales were also presented by Dawn Docx, Chief Fire Officer and Councillor Dylan Rees, Chair of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Dawn Docx said: "Receiving a medal or clasp is an important occasion for every firefighter and this ceremony demonstrates the degree of commitment and dedication each one of the recipients has given to the fire and rescue service in North Wales. All recipients can take pride and satisfaction in receiving their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals or clasps."



"My heartfelt congratulations go to all those who attended, as well as to the staff who opted to receive their medals or recognition privately. Your service is truly appreciated, both by myself as Chief Fire Officer, your colleagues and by the communities we all serve."



Councillor Dylan Rees, Chair of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, said: "On behalf of Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority I would like to congratulate everyone who received a medal, clasp or award. Many thanks to you all for your dedication."

STORM BABET BROUGHT MULTI AGENCIES TOGETHER TO PROTECT RESIDENTS



October's Storm Babet brought severe weather to North Wales with multi agencies working together to safeguard communities.

Control room staff, crews and officers across the region working tirelessly to offer advice and comfort to communities during distressing scenes of flooding.

Justin Evans, Area Manager for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, explained:

“At the peak of activity we had flood warnings and alerts across the Service area including alerts from Natural Resources Wales for the River Alyn, Clwyd, Gele, Elwy, Upper Dee and Mawddach and Wnion Catchment.

“There was significant disruption on the road network, particularly in the Flintshire areas and we had pockets of residential properties that had been affected by the ingress of flood water.

“Additional staff resources were brought into our control room to assist with the management of the volume of calls - there were over 200 incident events logged on our incident management system with attendance of officers and appliance resources to 44 incidents and officer only attendance to a further 56 incidents. Many of these calls for assistance occurred

simultaneously and were challenging to access with many roads and access routes impassable. Our special water incident unit attended 19 incidents with approximately 60 people rescued or evacuated during this period.

“Calls peaked on the Friday evening of the storm and dropped off as we moved to nightfall - this aligned with the anticipated movement of people, and despite repeated requests from ourselves and



partner agencies, drivers were still entering flooded areas, even as conditions worsened. We responded to around 25 vehicles that were involved in flood water, assisting with various rescues and evacuations from areas affected.

“Many of these incidents involved the redeployment of the same specialist resources over a prolonged period of time - so it was quite a feat for those involved.

“The Control Room managed the flow of information and key decision making with a calm sense of urgency - it is quite timely that their work is being celebrated this week through International Control Room Week.

“Regular advice and reassurance messages were shared through our social media channels, as well as officers taking part in broadcast interviews for the BBC. We communicated regularly with partners through the Tactical Coordination Group, with clear and coherent messaging being issued and shared by partners involved.

“There were of course some occasions where people wished that we could do more. A key element in

our response was the empathy demonstrated by our staff, and making sure that our resources were deployed where they would make a real difference.

“Our own premises were also affected by the flooding, with the impacts of flood water ingress at Colwyn Bay Fire Station. The impact of the flooding at the Station was mitigated by off duty staff members and we worked with the local authority to clear debris from a drainage gulley running alongside the station.

“In addition to the pressures from the weather impacts, we also responded to a number of other incidents.

“Thanks to our staff and all our multi agency partners across North Wales who worked with us to safeguard our communities.”



CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL CONTROL ROOM WEEK

International Control Room Week took place in October providing an excellent opportunity to recognise the life-saving and life-changing work of control room employees alongside other emergency services across the UK, and to acknowledge their strength and resilience in providing 24/7 cover responding to emergency calls.

Ros Thomas, Head of Control, said: “This initiative celebrates and raises awareness of the vital role played by control room teams in dealing with traumatic and distressing situations and in supporting wider service delivery.”

Visit our website www.northwalesfire.gov.wales for more details on how you could become a part of our team working as a control operator at the Joint Communications Centre in St Asaph.





WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Various members of staff and Fire Cadets from across the Service took part in Remembrance Day events throughout the region in November to pay tribute to those who have died in conflict.



RGC HELPS KICK OFF CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN TO LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER



Staff from the Service joined forces with our emergency service partners and Rygbi Gogledd Cymru (RGC) to launch a festive safety campaign at Eirias Park in November.

The appeal was for everyone to help keep communities safe by following some basic fire safety tips and looking after each other this Christmas.

The campaign was launched at a Blue Light Day held at Eirias Park in Colwyn Bay where the emergency services attended and ran a range of activities to connect with their communities.

Kevin Jones, Head of Prevention for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, explained: "Working together and looking out for one another is what we do on a daily basis with our emergency services colleagues – and on the rugby pitch, the RGC players work as a team, always keeping an eye on their teammates as well as the ball.

"That is why we felt the Blue Light Day at Parc Eirias was the perfect place to launch our 2023 Christmas fire safety campaign.

"The build up to Christmas and New Year is often a really busy time – so my appeal to you is to take just a few moments to consider fire safety and

think about how you could help family, friends or neighbours stay safe from fire this Christmas, and ensure they have working smoke alarms fitted in their home.

"The event was a great success and we were able to speak to hundred of families and safety this Christmas and Sbarc, our mascot, made a special guest appearance on the day."

Alun Pritchard, RGC General Manager added: "We were thrilled to be supporting the launch of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Christmas Safety Campaign and would encourage all our fans to help protect friends, family and neighbours by looking out for each other this Christmas."



‘SBARC’ PAYS A VISIT TO YSGOL PENYCAE



Pupils at Ysgol Penycae, Wrexham helped to launch a bonfire and firework safety colouring competition in October as well as to promote the new free bilingual learning platform, ‘StayWiseCymru’.

StayWiseCymru (www.staywisecymru.co.uk) is a free, bilingual platform that brings together educational resources of blue light emergency services and organisations designed to which have been designed to align with the curriculum in Wales.

The site offers free lesson plans, videos, and activity sheets to help educators teach young people about potentially lifesaving advice within the curriculum areas of learning and experience. It also offers resources for households to use and teachers are able to set work from the site as part of a remote learning plan for parents and carers.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) leads on the partnership behind StayWiseCymru. Partners include the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS UK), the Royal National Lifeguard Institute (RNLI), HM Coastguard, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the National Police Chiefs Council, Education, National Resource Wales, and Network Rail.

The colouring competition was aimed at promoting bonfire and firework safety, with activity sheets sent out to primary schools across the region to help stimulate conversations around staying safe.

Stuart Millington, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, said: “It was great to accompany Sbarc, our fire safety mascot, on a visit to the school. Staywise is an exciting development providing a fantastic new resource for everyone to use.

“It offers teachers, parents, carers and the emergency services consistent and effective educational materials to help young people learn about a range of safety topics.”

“Its so important that the resource is tried and tested, and we can’t thank the staff at Ysgol Penycae enough for all their work in helping us ensure that the platform is user friendly and effective.”

Lesley Bassett, Project Manager for StayWiseCymru added: “StayWiseCymru is committed to saving lives through education. By getting partners working together, we have produced a consistent learning resource that educators from across the community can use with confidence, whether they’re teachers, home-schooling, or emergency service staff and volunteers.

Laura McGee, Deputy Head at Ysgol Penycae said: “The StayWiseCymru website is a great platform, with a wide range of resources available.”

SHINING A LIGHT ON SAFETY DURING SPECTACULAR BONFIRE CELEBRATIONS



Staff from fire stations across North Wales assisted in the smooth running of bonfire and fireworks displays in the region on the weekend of bonfire celebrations in November.

Paul Kay, Head of Fire Safety for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, said: “The number of incidents involving fireworks and bonfires we attend has reduced dramatically and we thank the public for listening to our plea to attend organised displays rather than setting off their own fireworks at home.

“It’s great to see so many fire stations involved in their local display and thousands of people being able to enjoy bonfire celebrations in a safe and cheaper way.”



CONNECTING WITH FLINTSHIRE’S COMMUNITY ON OLDER PERSON’S DAY

Staff from the East Area’s community safety team recently attended an Older Person’s event in Connah’s Quay and took the opportunity to spread the word on fire safety to vulnerable local residents.

Neil Jones, Fire Safety Watch Manager for Flintshire and Wrexham, said: “This was a great event and I was able to meet and talk to older people in the community to let them know more about what we can offer them as a fire and rescue service in order to help them stay safe in their homes.

“We want to engage with as many older residents as we can and this event was a good opportunity to be able to do this under one roof in Connah’s Quay.”





WALES-WIDE TRAINING EXERCISE TESTS OPERATIONAL FLOODING RESPONSE

With firefighters being called to attend more and more flooding related incidents, staff took part in a Wales-wide exercise focusing on flooding.

Crews from Bangor, Deeside and Ruthin as well as officers from Service attended the Cardiff based event, utilising Ruthin's water rescue incident unit and boat to simulate a national deployment to severe flooding in the South Wales area.

Mark Jat, Incident Command and Driving School Manager, attended as Water Incident Manager to manage the North Wales Team, with Eilian Roberts, West Area Training Manager and water safety training lead, acting as Flood Tactical Advisor. They assisted South Wales crews in mobilising assets to various exercise locations around the Cardiff area.

Eilian explained: "The exercise was in two parts - one to simulate a national deployment conducted by National Resilience Wales, and the other to support our partners in South Wales in simulating a large-scale flooding exercise in the area.

"The exercises ranged from vehicles submerged in water or persons trapped in flooded houses to searching large volumes of water for missing persons.

"The exercises were carried out during in daylight and at night-time to simulate a flooding incident over a 48-hour period.

"A number of water assets from across the UK were mobilised as part of the exercise, with services from Merseyside, London and Devon taking part, as well as volunteer services such as Mountain Rescue, Surf GB and SERA.

"This was an excellent learning opportunity, working with colleagues from across the UK as part of our programme of water safety training events.



BRIGHT SPARKS LEARN ABOUT FIRE SAFETY

University term time started with a valuable lesson in fire safety for North Wales students when staff attended freshers' fairs at Bangor and Wrexham Glyndwr.

Students were tested on their knowledge with a short fire safety quiz which then entered them into a competition to win £30 Amazon voucher.

The winner of the competition was a student from Bangor University who was presented with her prize by Home Safety Support Worker Tracey Williams.

Gemma Brook, Partnership Manager for the West Area, said: "The university freshers fairs were extremely busy and we spoke to hundreds of students about the importance of fire safety, sharing our tips to keep them safe.

"We've also been giving advice on how to avoid false alarms at the halls of residence – in fact we have been working in partnership with both universities on this issue for a number of years and have seen considerable progress.



"Many of these young people are living away from home and their parents for the first time and are potentially very vulnerable.

"We will continue to work with staff at the universities throughout the year to promote fire safety at various events at their sites."



DELIVERING ROAD SAFETY TO WELSH WATER



Staff from the Prevention Team recently shared important road safety advice with Welsh Water employees.

Fire Safety Watch Managers Neil Jones and Pam Roberts delivered the powerful road safety presentation about 'Olivia's Story' to 25 field staff from Welsh Water.

Pam Roberts said: "We had great feedback from the staff, with them commenting that the presentation was very impactful and that it made them all think about the consequences of their actions."

"Members of the Prevention Team are looking at other opportunities to deliver impactful road safety interventions to other work forces in North Wales. If you would like us to attend your organisation please contact the community safety department on 01745 535 250 or email cfs@northwalesfire.gov.wales"

STAFF MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH GWYNEDD DEMENTIA GROUP

Partnerships Managers Gemma Brook and James Roberts visited a dementia support group based in Gwynedd to help strengthen connections with local partners and share advice and information.

Gemma, based in Gwynedd and Môn, said: "The Gwynedd Dementia Swper Grwp meets quarterly in Penrhyndeudraeth, and brings together a variety of people working within the industry supporting those living with Dementia.



and information sharing networks to ensure the best care possible is provided within the county.

"Ranging from members of Gwynedd Council, Bangor University and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, through to carers, and even those living with Dementia themselves, the group aims to create better working practices,

"We discussed fire safety, and specifically the installation of Stove Guards, and how useful they can be for these most vulnerable members of the community."



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Carolau Carol Service

Gwasanaethau Brys Gyfun
Combined Emergency Services

Cadeirlan Bangor / Bangor Cathedral
11.12.23 – 7.30pm

Arwyn Tudur Jones
Seindorf Beaumaris Band
Côr Ieuencid Môn

Bydd yr holl elw'n mynd i Gymdeithas Achub Mynydd Gogledd Cymru
All proceeds will go to the North Wales Mountain Rescue Association

