



CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES IN THE HARROGATE DISTRICT

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SAFETY CAMPAIGN HAILED A SUCCESS

MISCHIEF night and November the 5th were enjoyed this year in relative peace and harmony in Harrogate with fewer reported incidences and with no physical injuries.

North Yorkshire's Police, Ambulance and Fire and Rescue Services joined forces with the Harrogate District Safer Communities Partnership to take the safety message directly into schools. They also worked with local retailers to help control the sale of fireworks.

Councillor Mike Gardner, Chairman of the Safer Communities Partnership, said: "We are very pleased with the impact our combined work has had this year. The initiative in schools, the responsible approach from retailers and the publicity given to the dangers of fireworks and bonfires saw the number of firework related incidents dropping significantly. Only 16 incidences were reported this year compared to 38 in 2003.

"We hope this means everyone had the chance to enjoy the fun but without too much inconvenience being caused to others. We must also remember that it was our own Harrogate resident, Marjorie Johnson, whose dogged determination persuaded the government to introduce this new legislation. We have a lot to thank Marjorie for and it is sad that she did not live to see the changes she campaigned for being so successfully implemented."

The Fireworks Act 2004 has brought in a fireworks' curfew, banned dangerous air bombs and put greater responsibility on retailers to ensure they do not sell fireworks to young people under 18 years of age.

Harrogate Police mounted a high visibility policing operation to deter anti-social behaviour and misuse of fireworks and the campaign has been hailed a major success.

Inspector Steve Harris who managed the operation for North Yorkshire Police, said: "The changes under the new Act have been very effectively publicised. In the Harrogate area we only had two reported incidents where the fireworks' curfew was broken and in one case we were able to identify the exact source of the breach and officers deployed specifically for this period immediately dealt with it. We also only made one seizure of fireworks from juveniles.

"Each year, we monitor reported incidences between 25 October and 5 November. As well as a big drop in the number of firework related incidents, there was also a significant drop in egg throwing over this period. This dropped from 18 last year to 14 this year. And when you consider that this was over a 12 night period, it amounts to just about one a day. The reduction in the total number of incidents has to reflect the success of this high visibility joint operation which we hope to build on next year."
ENDS

FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Mike Gardner is available for comment on 01423 816774 and Inspector Steve Harris on 01423 539344.