

North Luffenham Parish Council

23 November 2015

Parish Councillors

Parish Clerk

**POST EVENT REPORT – BONFIRE NIGHT / FIREWORKS**

**THURSDAY 5th NOVEMBER 2015**

References:

A. Bonfire Night Activities Report to NLPC dated Jul 15.

B. Health and Safety Executive direction – “Giving your own firework display” (HSG 124). (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg124.htm>)

C. EON insurance letter dated 15 Oct 13.

**AIM**

1. The aim of this report is identify the lessons learnt from the Bonfire Night Activities held on 5th November 2015.

**BACKGROUND**

2. During the Summer of 2015 a Working Group reviewed the organisation and safety aspects relating to the annual bonfire event . The findings were incorporated into a Report (Reference A) that was endorsed by the Parish Council at its meeting on 20th Jul 15. The Report included a Risk Assessment and made a number of recommendations, namely:

1. The size of the bonfire should be reduced compared to that in 2013/ 14.
2. Rockets should not be used in the display.
3. The length of the display should be reviewed and should be less drawn out. The display should conclude by 8pm.
4. Better fencing should be utilized to secure the safety area around the fire and firework launch site.
5. Lighting should be provided in the area of the pavilion and access points
6. Consideration should be given regarding how best to manage traffic attending the event.
7. The requirements laid down at References B and C and issues noted at Para 11 above must be met in full.

With the exception of traffic management (Para f.), which within the limitations of resources available to NLPC was considered unmanageable, the recommendations of the report were successfully implemented.

3. The HSE guidance at Reference B provides clear direction and sound advice and should be read by all concerned with the future running of the event.

**OVERVIEW**

4. The event took place on Thu 5th Nov 15 on the Oval. I would estimate that 250 people attended the event, a reduction in numbers from those attending in 2014. Note, the weather during the day leading up to the event was wet and miserable and doubtless considerable numbers stayed indoors. The weather was monitored continuously in the period leading up to the event. By 1700hrs the weather had improved significantly and the Wind was estimated to be no more than Force 3 (8 – 12 mph). No change in wind direction or force was noted during the display period. The bonfire was lit at about 1820 hrs and the display commenced at circa 1840 hrs.

**SAFETY**

5. There was one incident reported of a member of the public being struck on the head by wadding falling from a firework (no injury sustained). There were no incidents reported relating to the bonfire or to fireworks. It is recommended that the safety zone be extended to 35m from the firework launch site to prevent a repetition in future years.

**PREPARATION**

6. Police and Fire Services were notified two weeks prior to the event, the local Beat Officer contacted the undersigned in advance of the event to confirm details. No incidents were reported to the emergency services.

7. As in years Charles Cade purchased the fireworks in advance of the event and stored them in a locked garage. The storage arrangements were entirely satisfactory. During the event the fireworks were held in a secure container (Van) and managed by a nominated individual with 2 x assistants.

8. The safety zone was bounded by a picket fence, bailer twine and hazard tape and proved to be both secure and resilient. No spectators were allowed in the area to the North of the bonfire bounded by Edith Weston Road and the established, marked safety zone. No ‘live’ elements of fireworks fell outside the safety zone.

**BONFIRE**

9. The bonfire was made entirely of wooden pallets – with the exception of straw for lighting no further extraneous material was introduced to the fire itself. A reduced quantity of pallets was provided which created an entirely appropriate and safe fire. The fire was built with a broad base, which ensured no risk of collapse. The fire was checked in advance of lighting for people/animals in line with HSE recommendations. It was lit with a blowtorch using suitable kindling materials. The fire caught immediately and spread throughout the base evenly.

10. The pallets burned very cleanly, resulting in little if any burning debris, beyond the inevitable column of fine embers. The previous damp conditions inevitably reduced the rate of burn of the fire however it remained an appropriate spectacle.

**FIREWORKS**

11. No rockets were included in the display which meant that there may have been a lack of variety in the display. This will be reviewed for future events where additional styles of firework may be included. The fireworks provided a spectacular display which lasted for some 30 minutes – a good pace was maintained. All spent fireworks were secured after the event and safely disposed of the following day. Sufficient portfires were available for lighting fireworks. There were safety incidents relating to fireworks.

**LIGHTING**

12. 2 x mobile lighting units were procured for the event at a reasonable cost. These were broadly well received and had little impact upon the visual impact of the bonfire and fireworks. The lighting provided resulted in a more secure and safer environment for spectators.

**STAFFING**

13. Individuals were nominated for specific tasks in advance of the event. The list of those nominated for specific tasks is attached. It was noted that Stewards were required to be ‘on duty’ from 1730 hrs – 20130 hrs without a break or refreshments this will be reviewed. Sufficient Staff for all tasks were on duty throughout and were briefed in advance. Safety jackets and Radios were provided to all Stewards.

**FIRST AID**

14. CO 2 Medical Regiment kindly provided a qualified uniformed First Aid trained SNCO. First Aid back up was provided by Tim Smith and Paul Cummings. One minor casualty was treated for a cut.

**REFRESHMENTS**

15. NLPC had decided in advance of the event to maintain a ‘No Alcohol’ policy, this did not appear to unduly affect the event. There was no evidence of alcohol being consummed during the event, though alcohol was consumed around the fir after the event. Due to the weather which resulted in a reduction in the number of people attending the event some stock was not used resulting in a decreased profit margin.

**CLEAR UP**

16. A small team of volunteers cleared the area completely by 1200 hrs the following day. Some work remains to remove debris and re-instate the burned grass.

**SUMMARY**

17. A safe and very well organised event. It does require considerable planning and resources in terms of staffing, however sufficient volunteers came forward to ensure its success. The members of the PC all made a concerted positive effort to ensure the success of the event. I recommend that the PC review the event in Jun 16 including a detailed review of the Risk Assessment. There is only specific recommendation regarding safety:

* It is recommended that the safety zone be extended to 35m from the firework launch site to the public viewing area.

PBG CUMMINGS

Safety Officer

Enclosure:

Bonfire Night Staffing List