

The Chief Fire Officers' Association

The professional voice of the UK fire and rescue service

Wildfires in the UK

When, Where and Why They Occur

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When Do They Occur?

- Obvious linkage to weather for propagation
- Dry Spring influence
- During peak periods of public activity



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Where?

- Not as obvious as one may expect
- Special Risk presented by urban grass/ bush fires
- Field fires
- Where they are very unusual



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Why?

- 3 main causes of wildfires
- What ignites first?
- Arson significant
- Early detection a factor, but not as influential as one may imagine



Solutions

- Seemingly obvious linkage to these 3 answers but.....
- Where? Is not likely to change, but vegetation types may
- When? – Shifting seasons, potentially more frequent
- Why? – what **can** change?



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Impacts

- Ecosystem damage
- Human Health
- Asset value of lost “property”
- Beneficial wildfires



Education (Public)

- Real likelihood
- Real risks
- Tolerance of fire
- The “right to roam” or is it “the right to damage?”
- Realistic expectations



Education (Land Managers)

- “It’s **your** problem”
- What Firefighting agencies can, and may, be able to do
- The pressures and vectors acting upon Fire and Rescue Services
- The competing nature of our challenges



Education (Fire Managers)

- Not all fires are bad
- Need to take advice from a range of sources when making assessments



What is Needed?

- Define *property* in English context for wildfire purposes
- Research e.g. impacts upon each type of ecosystem, what should (and should not) be allowed to burn, the potential effects of water additives
- A change in approach by all – what will be tolerable?

