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
Where?

- Not as obvious as one may expect
- Special Risk presented by urban grass/bush fires
- Field fires
- Where they are very unusual
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?
The Chief Fire Officers’ Association
The professional voice of the UK fire and rescue service

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?