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INFORMATIVE

The quarterly bulletin of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service



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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 was the first time the full awards ceremony was held since 2019, before the pandemic.

The Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, Mr Edmund Seymore Bailey, presented Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and 30 and 40-years clasps to operational staff during the ceremony that was held in Rhyl in October.

Awards recognising 50 years of operational service, 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, Chief Fire Officer 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.

“I was also delighted this year that we were able to celebrate the community awards for the first time since the pandemic.”



“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 me 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.”





LAUNCH OF NEW WILDFIRE VIDEO - A GUIDE FOR LANDOWNERS

The three fire and rescue services in Wales launched a new video at the Winter Fair in Builth Wells in December to provide a step by step guide to landowners on how to safely conduct a controlled burn.

Every year in Wales, fire is responsible for damaging thousands of hectares of countryside, open space and wildlife habitats.

Fire crews across Wales want to continue to work with local communities, farmers and landowners to protect our precious Welsh landscape.

Tim Owen, Partnerships and Communities Manager East Area and Wildfire lead for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, explains:

“Wildfires tie up our resources which could be needed at another emergency – and we’ve seen how wildfires put lives at risk, the lives of our communities as well as those of our firefighters.



“In March 2022, the number of wildfires we attended in North Wales rose significantly – from a previous four-year average of around 27 fires to 100 fires for the month of March alone. That’s an increase of 264%. This picture is similar across the whole of Wales.

“That’s why working together to prevent these fires is more important than ever – and we work with a range of organisations, along with other fire and rescue services across Wales, to raise awareness of the damage that wildfires can cause to some of our most iconic upland landscapes.

“We’re also working with local landowners and farmers – many of the upland wildfires we saw in March last year were as a result of land management



techniques such as prescribed moor burning getting out of control or burning brash too close to moorland vegetation.

“As well as engaging with landowners at local farmers markets, we have also got together to produce this step by step video guide to conducting controlled burning responsibly which we hope will help ensure we do not have a repeat of March 2022 next year.”

The video supports information and advice available on burning management from the Welsh Government and from the three fire and rescue services in Wales. Farmers and landowners across Wales can burn heather, grass, bracken and gorse up until the 15 March (up to 31 March in Upland areas) but they must have a Burn Plan in place to ensure they are burning safely. It is against the law to burn outside of the burning season and can result in penalties of up to £1000.

Graham Berry, Moorland Field Officer with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Denbighshire, North Wales, said:

“The summer of 2022 saw record-breaking high temperatures, such that wildfire is now officially recognised as a major UK hazard in the National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies, and in the UK Health Effects of Climate Change report 2023.”

“The impact of wildfires can be devastating – damaging land and property, harming our wildlife and our environment, releasing CO2 and pollutants into the atmosphere and water courses, affecting local communities and businesses.

“Extinguishing a wildfire is very difficult and costly, requiring many people and specialist equipment working in dangerous and difficult conditions.

“The costs following a wildfire including restoration, land lost to farmers and businesses and disruption to communities is immense.

“Hopefully landowners will be able to follow the simple guidance in this video to help us limit the consequences of wildfires.”





DONATING A SECOND FIRE APPLIANCE TO THE UKRAINE

A second appliance from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service set off for eastern Europe in October to support firefighters working on the front line in the Ukraine.

The vehicle was donated as part of the fourth Fire Aid convoy to support the firefighters working on the front line in the Ukraine.

A team of three firefighters from the Service made the six-day journey from Rhyl to deliver the appliance to its destination in Poland.

The fire appliance also carried equipment that will be used to support firefighters, emergency services and volunteers who are battling together on the front line.

Stuart Millington, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, said: "Many fire stations and fire appliances have been destroyed in the war so were pleased to be able to provide much needed support by donating a fully functional fire appliance for the second time. The vehicle was about to be replaced here in North Wales.

"Our staff joined a convoy of vehicles from other fire and rescue services from across the UK to support this worthwhile effort that is coordinated by the Fire Aid charity and the National Fire Chiefs Council.

"We're immensely proud of our staff and would like to thank those who worked hard behind the scenes to prepare the vehicle and equipment for departure, and also of the crew who drove through Europe to Poland to deliver the vehicle."

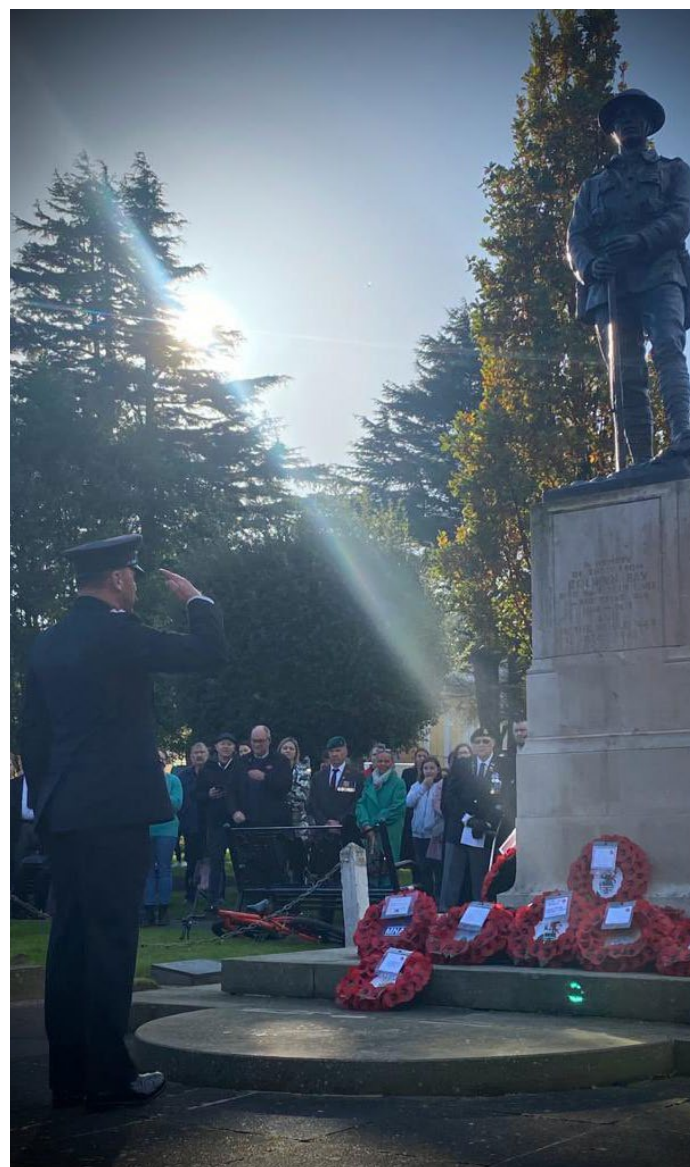




WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

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.

Sarah Royal, Apprentice Firefighter, was chosen to represent the Service at the Cenotaph in London and marched along with other firefighters and officers representing all of the 44 fire and rescue services of the United Kingdom.





FIREFIGHTER DAN'S EPIC JOURNEY TO GAMBIA

Wrexham Firefighter Daniel McNulty undertook an epic journey to Gambia, transporting a fire appliance donated by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service through Operation Zephyr, a charity expedition to help form an ambulance and fire service in rural Gambia.

Daniel, who is also a Special Inspector for North Wales Police, and Darren Armour, Temporary Special Chief Inspector, transported the appliance as well as rescue boats and personal protective equipment donated by the Service.

They joined emergency service personnel from around the UK and Europe to travel through France and Spain, the Northwest of the African continent, all the way to the capital of The Gambia, Banjul, in order to deliver twenty-five ambulances, fire engines and support vehicles, a journey of 4000 miles.

They also spent time providing training and familiarisation around the equipment.

Dan said: "This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to help our emergency services family from another part of the world. All they want to do is help their

local communities just like we help ours. I knew straight away I needed to be involved and contribute. I have been on an amazing journey so far, showing some of the generosity of people out there, even in some of the toughest times we have faced.

“The Service was able to donate one of our old fire appliances through Fire Aid, and I drove it all the way. Whilst driving a fire engine across the Sahara Desert was a challenge, the reward was worth it!”

The intent of Operation Zephyr is to provide functioning, decommissioned emergency vehicles, radios, equipment, uniforms and training to this emerging but very poor African nation on the west coast of Africa. Organised by the UK's Emergency Services Aid Charity, and working with the International Police Association the operation aims to make a positive change to Gambia, and help our fellow emergency service staff give the best service they can.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Stuart Millington said: "This is an exciting and worthwhile project, and we are so proud of all the work Daniel has put in. We are thrilled that we have been able to donate equipment through Fire Aid who in turn have been able to support Daniel to help protect those in need."





RESPECT CAMPAIGN ADOPTED FOR BONFIRE NIGHT

Staff worked in partnership with North Wales Police and the Welsh Ambulance Service to support the annual safety campaign over the Halloween and bonfire period.

The campaign was aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour and making North Wales a safe place at this time of year.

This involved a plea to show some respect - respect the Firework Code, respect for emergency services and to respect for each other's neighbours, both people and their pets.

The Service funded a number of diversionary activities across North Wales, as well as supporting the work of firefighters to arrange or assist at organised bonfire displays throughout the region.

Kevin Jones, Chair of the Campaigns Steering Group, said:

“Safety at this time of year is the responsibility of us all. The best way to reduce the number of injuries during bonfire celebrations is by attending organised events not only are they safer but they offer the best facilities and value for money, and importantly significantly reduce the distress caused to senior citizens and pet owners.”

Dave Hughes, Head of Fire Safety and West Area, said: “Thankfully, the number of incidents involving fireworks and bonfires we attend has reduced dramatically as the public have listened to our plea to attend organised displays rather than setting off their own fireworks at home.

“I am pleased we were able to support so many local events this year.”





MARKING INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

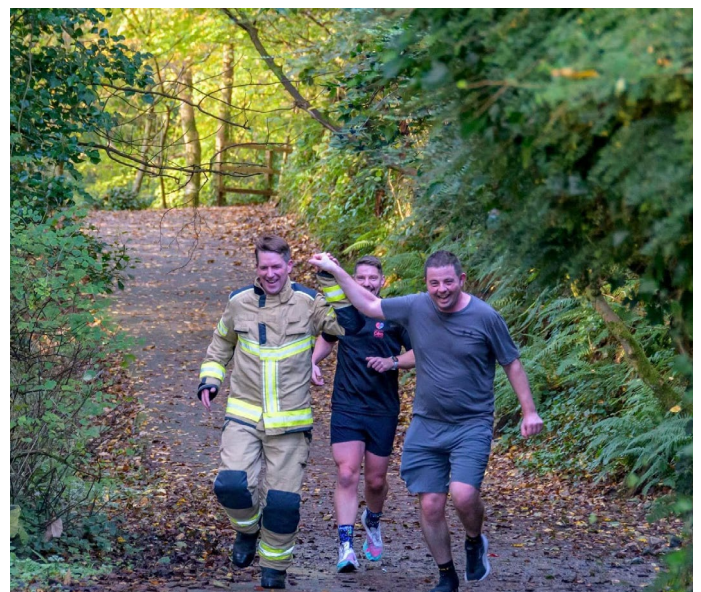
Staff from across the Service raised awareness of International Men's Day in November.

They took part in the Nant y Pandy Parkrun in Llangefni before meeting up at Llangefni Fire Station for a 'cuppa and catch up'.

Jamie Lewis, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Adviser, organised the event. He said: "The morning started with a 5k parkrun, with a good effort by everyone with some of staff Nick McCormick taking overall third and Michaela Lauder being first woman over the line.

"Great effort also by Jody McEachern, Recruitment and Availability Manager, for doing the whole run wearing fire kit and boots.

"We all then went over to Llangefni Fire Station to enjoy a 'Cuppa and Catch Up'. It was a lovely morning, bringing staff members together to engage with each other and raise awareness of concerns affecting men, and celebrating how people can work together to overcome adversity and improve wellbeing.



NEW TEXT NUMBER PRIORITISES YOUR SAFETY



Just a quick text to the fire and rescue service could be the key to ensuring your safety.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has relaunched its text service to enable people to register quickly and easily for a potentially life saving free safe and well check.

It was launched on Older People's Day in October to encourage busy North Wales residents to take advantage of the new service to register themselves or older parents, family or friends for a check.

International Older People's Day is a day created by the United Nations over 30 years ago to celebrate older people.

Kevin Jones, Partnership and Communities Manager for the Central area, explains: "We're all so busy, it's

sometimes hard to find the time to do those jobs we've been meaning to do for weeks.

"Now you can prioritise your safety and the safety of your loved ones with a quick text to 07507303678 - just pop their name and details on a text to us and we'll do the rest."

"We relaunched this service on Older People's Day as most of us know someone who may be older or vulnerable and could do with a helping hand – so our appeal is to take a few seconds out of your day to send a quick text to help keep them safe in their homes."

SUPPORTING WORLD ALZHEIMER'S MONTH

Many families struggle with support after a diagnosis with dementia and each September, people unite to raise awareness and to challenge the stigma that persists around Alzheimer's disease and all types of dementia.

As part of this year's World Alzheimer's month, staff from the Service spent the afternoon in Bodnant Gardens with a group of individuals living with dementia, together with their carers.

Gemma Brook, Partnership Manager for Gwynedd and Mon, said: "The walk around Bodnant Gardens and the refreshments which followed gave us the chance to talk to the group about staying safe from fire, letting us discuss some fire safety advice in a relaxed and informal setting.

"It was also great for everyone's mental health and wellbeing, and provided an opportunity for carers to talk to others in a similar situation, and know that there is plenty of support to be had. A really beneficial day for all involved."





CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL CONTROL ROOM WEEK

If you ring 999 to report a fire, someone trapped in water, or even a chemical incident anywhere in North Wales you will no doubt speak to one of the operators in the Service's control room.

International Control Room Week (19-25 October) was an 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.

"Last year, we saw a 16.32% increase in emergency calls and our control operators handled 12,465 emergency calls, and we met our target of answering 92% of 999 calls within seven seconds."

Visit the [North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website](https://www.northwalesfire.gov.wales) for more details on being part of our team working as a control operator at the Joint Communications Centre.



STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT FIRE SAFETY



Tim Owen, Partnership and Communities Manager for the East Area, said: “The 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.”

University term time started with a lesson in fire safety for North Wales students.

Fire and rescue service staff attended freshers fairs at Bangor and Wrexham Glyndwr Universities as well as at Coleg Cambria.

Students were tested on their knowledge with a short fire safety quiz which then entered them into a competition to win £50 supermarket vouchers.

“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.”

COMMUNITY SAFETY EVENT IN RHYL

Staff from the Community Safety teams hosted a Community Safety and Wellbeing Day at a Community Centre in Rhyl in September.

Nia Bache, Partnership Manager for Conwy and Denbighshire, said: “The day was held in partnership with SP Energy Networks and Welsh Water, and gave staff the opportunity to talk to residents about staying safe while our partners were also able to talk to them about fuel poverty and maximising income.

“It was a great success and we informed people of what is available for them and how to make sure that they stay safe whilst keeping warm this winter.”

