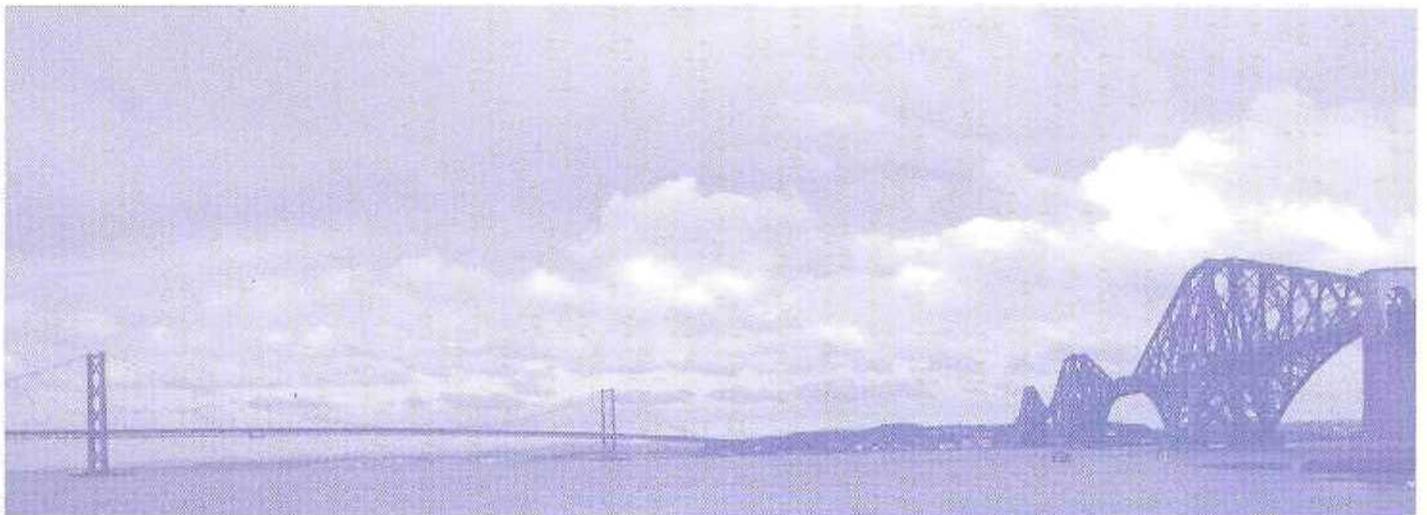


FIFE CONSTABULARY
Glenrothes'
Burning Ambition



Compiled by PC Mark Anderson



GLENROTHES' BURNING AMBITION

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INTRODUCTION

Glenrothes is a New Town situated in the middle of the Kingdom of Fife with a population of approximately 45,000. It comprises of numerous precincts which are individually named. One precinct in particular, Macedonia, has become infamous over the years as the bonfire capital of Glenrothes and indeed Fife.

Macedonia is a densely populated area situated in the centre of Glenrothes. Due to its location it is easily accessible from neighbouring precincts. The main arterial road encircles Macedonia giving access to all the roads. Each road is a cul-de-sac which in turn provides access to the main common grass area in the centre. The geographical location and the composition of this area is such that it is perfect for those wishing to commit offences to enter and leave with relative ease with a virtual guarantee that they will remain undetected.

BACKGROUND

Over the past number of years Macedonia has been plagued by an annual problem, which has almost become tradition. Children and youths, both resident in the area and from neighbouring precincts have decreed that the bonfire season in Macedonia extends from mid August to mid November.

The illegal bonfires are set by using local materials gained as a result of various criminal acts such as vandalism, whereby fences, sheds and garages are broken apart or dismantled, or theft from private property such as wheelie bins, wood and any other combustible material is stolen from gardens. Even refuse left for Council uplifts is removed and set alight or indeed set on fire wherever it is found.

The net effect of this is that local residents have an increased risk of becoming victims of a criminal act, and the general appearance of the area becomes tarnished. Residents property becomes defaced or destroyed, and the common grass area becomes a 'no go' area for children, dog walkers and all other residents alike as it becomes littered with scorched and burnt rubbish.

The problem also began to take hold and have a detrimental effect on numerous agencies including Fife Fire and Rescue Service, Fife Constabulary and Fife Council alike. In short, this tradition had to be broken before it spiralled out of control.

SCANNING / ANALYSIS

In the summer of 2001 it was decided that the bonfire issue could not be resolved merely by using policing methods alone and that a multi agency approach was required. As such a joint meeting was arranged by Glenrothes Community Team at Glenrothes Police station. All in all 9 separate agencies were present:

- Fife Constabulary
- Fife Fire and Rescue Service
- Community services (Ground Maintenance)
- Locality Manager
- Education
- Trading Standards
- Community Support Worker
- Macedonia Tenants and Residents Association
- Media

Each member had a particular strength and agreed that this particular problem could be tackled in a structured manner.

Following lengthy discussions each partner was allocated specific tasks to undertake in order to meet the common objective, which was simply,

To significantly reduce the number of bonfires and related crimes in Macedonia.

Although the combined resources and efforts of all concerned met with a degree of success in our first year, it was felt that the reduction of fires from 83 to 60 was far short of the target. As such the problem was re-analysed and a varied and more intense approach was adopted.

RESPONSE

This is how we proceeded in 2002 ;

We again held a meeting with all the partners, but on this occasion the meeting was held in June allowing us to implement our actions immediately after the summer holidays.

Our partners undertook the following tasks:

Fife Constabulary

Glenrothes Community Team, assisted by Fife Fire and Rescue Service, conducted talks at the three local schools, Southwood and Tanshall Primary, and Glenwood High School. Every P4 - P7 pupil and S1 - S2 pupil was addressed, totalling approximately 800 children.

The talks were designed to deter the youngsters from setting bonfires or being in any way associated with them. They were also intended to instil community spirit and responsibility.

They utilised the 'Making the Connections' double-decker bus (*appendix 1*) which was effectively transformed into two mobile classrooms. They devised a quiz and presented a video in order to reinforce the message that bonfires in Macedonia would not be tolerated.

However, the back to basics approach was also adopted with numerous high visibility and plain-clothes patrols, both on foot and on cycles, being undertaken. This resulted in several arrests and warnings being recorded.

Fife Fire and Rescue Service

Fife Fire and Rescue Service, as previously stated, addressed the local schools with the Community Team. They supplied a Fire Tender and a full crew who allowed the children to view all their fire fighting equipment. They also reiterated the dangers of playing with fire both by speaking to them and by showing them a video.

Their main role of course was to attend and extinguish any reported bonfires as well as maintaining a detailed log of all the relevant incidents they dealt with. This proved invaluable for evaluation purposes.

Community Services

Ground Maintenance, under the umbrella of Community Services provided a 'pick up' service. In 2001 they agreed to have a dedicated team set aside to prioritise any calls from residents in Macedonia. Their remit was to attend and uplift any combustible material reported by residents concerned that it could be used to fuel a bonfire. However this could only operate Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

In 2002 they agreed to provide a budget for this scheme so that the team could operate a 24-hour call out service. This made a huge difference as the fuel for the bonfires was effectively removed and taken out of harms way.

Locality Manager

The Locality Managers role was to provide an invaluable link to Fife Council and all the relevant agencies within it, and as a source of information with regards to relevant issues and concerns raised by local residents.

Education

The head teachers of the three local schools were instrumental in devising timetables and allocating classrooms for the school talks. They also ran competitions for the children on the theme of bonfires and firework safety, and draughted letters for their pupils to take home reinforcing the message that the bonfires would no longer be tolerated.

Trading Standards

Trading Standards provided countless posters, videos and leaflets for the school talks. They also provided relevant documents and information packs to be allocated within local council properties, shops and other amenities within the community.

They organised a Fife wide poster competition open to several age categories within all the primary schools. One of the winning entries was designed by a local pupil (*appendix 2*). This particular entry was thereafter displayed at the main shopping centre where it took pride of place, itself illustrating the initiatives emanating from the community.

They also carried out joint visits with Police Officers to all the retail outlets selling fireworks.

Community Support Worker

The Community Support Worker was responsible for the publication of the 'Kill That Bonfire' poster (*appendix 3*). Its purpose was to list all the major agencies, outline their role and remit and provide contact telephone numbers.

Macedonia Tenants and Residents Association.

This group comprises of local residents who take an active role in representing the community and its residents through their committee. Their primary role was to provide relevant feedback from the residents and enable the partners to evaluate the success of the project in terms of quality of life, and not just in monetary terms.

They also volunteered to deliver the 'Kill That Bonfire' leaflet to all 1000 households in Macedonia.

Media

The local media arranged press releases highlighting the local initiatives undertaken by the various partners and following the success met by the venture, printed the results and offers of thanks to all concerned.

ASSESSMENT

There are several ways to evaluate the success of this venture, the most obvious being to count the number of bonfires and compare the figures with the previous year's totals.

The attached graph (*appendix 4*) and the table illustrated below show that over a three year period the number of bonfires has fallen from a total of 83 in 2000 to 10 in 2002. These figures speak for themselves, however the final figure was only achieved by reassessing the efforts undertaken in 2001.

Although there was a reduction in reported bonfires by 23 in 2001, this fell well short of our expectations. The main reason for this appeared to be that we had not fully implemented the project until half way through September which proved to have been too late. In 2002 we realised that it was imperative to implement the project immediately after the schools summer holidays if we were to prevent the fires starting. The previous year's figures indicated that the fires were starting earlier in the year and in greater numbers. As a result of our revised actions however in 2002, there were no bonfires reported in August at all, and the number of bonfires set in September was reduced from 46 to 5.

By closely monitoring the figures collated by Fife Fire and Rescue Service we quickly established that the message was getting across and the children were no longer keen to carry on the bonfire tradition. Consequently the combined and sustained efforts of all concerned reduced the total number of bonfires in 2002 to 10.

Year	August	September	October	November	Total
2000	0	12	60	11	83
2001	5	46	3	6	60
2002	0	5	2	3	10

To illustrate the success in monetary terms:

In 2001 Fife Fire and Rescue Service spent over £17,000 on call outs, and £24,900 in 2000. Last year this was reduced to £3,000.

In 2001 Fife Council spent £1,000 replacing wheelie bins which had been stolen and set on fire. Last year they spent £90.

The Police can measure the success of the project simply by the reduction in hours spent responding to calls, noting complaints, compiling reports and carrying out patrols. In 2001 there were 60 reports to respond to compared with 10 last year. That equates to 50 less vandalism, thefts and other related incidents.

The real measure of success could be calculated by measuring the rise in the standard of living for the local residents. Last year they experienced peace and quiet in their precinct coupled with a greater sense of security. They were able to inject some pride back into their community and their surroundings. This is after all why the partners joined forces in the first place.

Given the geographical location of Macedonia and the relatively young population, it was unrealistic to attempt to eradicate the bonfire problem completely. Fires are set at all times of the year, and pose a problem for other areas in Glenrothes. However, to have reduced them from 83 to 10 in just two years shows a marked improvement and that if the efforts are maintained by the partners, it is anticipated that these figures will be sustained for years to come.

Last year Fife Constabulary Headquarters hosted its first Fife wide Problem Oriented Policing awards. It was designed not only to recognise the most innovative or successful venture, but to highlight just how many Police led and partnership led initiatives had been undertaken with positive effect.

All in all 12 projects were chosen, 5 of which were nominated to take part in a final presentation. This took place in front of invited guests who represented a broad spectrum of professions and agencies. They listened to each presentation and marked them all out of 5 categories.

The chosen winner was the Glenrothes' Burning Ambition Project. PC Anderson was presented with a cheque for £500 which he accepted on behalf of Glenrothes Community Team and the agencies listed in this presentation (*appendix 5*). The money was thereafter put into a fund to be used for local projects for children and residents of Macedonia.

As a reward for the children's endeavours, they were asked what they would like the partners to arrange for them. Almost unanimously they asked for a disco! The two local primary schools provided the venue and the Police funded refreshments. On the night the opportunity was taken to reiterate the success of the project to the children, and to demonstrate that as a result of a marked improvement in their behaviour, a substantial amount of money and resources had been saved, allowing the partners to provide something positive for them.

Appendix 1. Pupils from Southwood and Tanshall Primary Schools giving the thumbs up to our 'Burning Ambition'....



Children warned of bonfires danger

YOUNGSTERS IN the Macedonia area of Glenrothes are being warned of the dangers of bonfires.

"As part of this we have circulated 1000 leaflets around the area outlining this important message," said community constable PC Mark Anderson.

The project is also receiving input from the fire and Rescue Service, Trading Standards, and tenants' and residents' associations.

"We will continue high profile patrolling of the area and as well as visiting local primary schools to give talks to pupils,"



Police and fire service personnel at Tanshall Primary in Glenrothes.

said PC Anderson, "We will also involve the local secondary, Glenwood High, in an all-out effort to nip this potentially

dangerous problem in the bud."

In past years Macedonia has been hit by a bonfire

problem in the build-up to Guy Fawkes Night and the campaign was designed to prevent a recurrence in 2022.

"Certainly it already seems to have had an impact and our hope is that this can continue."

Appendix 2 and the certificate awarded to Southwood Primary School for their award winning entry in the poster competition.



KILL THAT FIRE!

POLICE—01592 418800

- WILL CARRY OUT REGULAR PATROLS THROUGHOUT THE LOCAL AREA
- WILL ARREST AND REPORT ANYONE INVOLVED IN LEGAL BONFIRES
- WILL RESPOND TO ANY CALLS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO REPORT SEEING THE BUILDING OF BONFIRES

TENANTS & RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

- WOULD ENCOURAGE LOCAL RESIDENTS TO REPORT SEEING ANYONE BUILDING OR GETTING HER TO BONFIRE
- ASK RESIDENTS TO PUT OUT THEIR WHIPPLE BINS ON THE MORNING OF THE DAY OF COLLECTION
- ASK RESIDENTS TO RETURN WHEELIE BINS TO THEIR GARDENS, AND THEIR NEIGHBOUR'S GARDEN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER REFUSE COLLECTION
- ASK RESIDENTS TO SECURE WHEELIE BINS WITHIN THEIR GARDEN

FIRE— 999

- ACCIDENTS CAN EXPLODE, KILL AND INJURE WHEN INVOLVED IN FIRE
- SMOKE CONTAINS TOXIC FUMES
- RUBBISH TIES **WASTE** FIRE SERVICE TIME

TRADING STANDARDS— 01592 416277

- IT IS ILLEGAL TO SELL FIREWORKS TO ANYONE UNDER 18 YEARS OLD
- IF YOU SEE CHILDREN BUYING FIREWORKS FROM A SHOP PLEASE PASS ANY INFO TO THE POLICE OR TRADING STANDARDS
- CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO GET INJURED THAN ADULTS
- REMEMBER FIREWORKS ARE EXPLOSIVES. THEY SHOULD BE HANDLED VERY CAREFULLY BY ADULTS

COMMUNITY SERVICES—01592 414100

- CAN BE CONTACTED TO ARRANGE THE REMOVAL OF COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL WHICH MAY BE USED FOR ILLEGAL BONFIRES (E PILES OF WOOD, RUBBISH, ETC)

OUT OF HOURS NUMBERS:

- BETWEEN 26.10.02—1.11.02—01337 828363 OR 07900607107
- BETWEEN 2.11.02—8.11.02—01592 301558 OR 07900607121
- BETWEEN 9.11.02—15.11.02—01592 759439 OR 07900607117

For further information please contact:
The Community, Fire & Environment Centre, 101, The Old Station, 5, Walsley, Leicestershire LE12 0JH



Appendix 4

EORIFESINMACEDONIA

