

Fire at Dimmer Landfill Site Monday 28th August 2017

Castle Cary Town Council would like to share the following information received from Viridor in response to a request for details of the fire and the response by Viridor.

What happened at Dimmer – Bank Holiday weekend

Summary of incident from fire service:

Fire control were alerted at 16.35 (28 August) after reports of smoke issuing from the area.

Fire measuring approximately 100m by 100m in landfill site extinguished by using 6 mains jets by 14.44 (29 August). Crew utilised on site machinery to remove overspill, water supplies secured from the River Alford using the high volume pump. Various hydrants around Castle Cary were used throughout the incident using 2 water carriers and fire appliances to shuttle water.

<https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/News/Newsdesk/IncidentDetail.cfm?IncidentID=44420&siteCategoryId=3&T1ID=26&T2ID=41>

Viridor's summary:

- Material collected from households comes to landfill sites in massive quantities – Somerset Waste Partnership collects 250,000 tonnes of recycling and other waste each year.
- It is, therefore, impossible to identify individual items known to be fire hazards as part of this process. It truly is a needle in a haystack which is why they must not enter rubbish bins. Consider the example of an electronic cigarette immersed in tonnes of waste.
- When such objects are not safely disposed of this creates dangerous situations: for the householder when they have these items in their own bins, the refuse collectors transporting the waste and finally the landfill site which is accepting that waste.
- The Somerset Waste Partnership contract excludes such items coming to our landfill sites which is why the partnership and Viridor are committed to educating the public on this issue (see media coverage above).
- Our industry has a saying: Right waste, right place.
- The unsafe disposal of items puts everyone at risk so we must stop the problem at the source.
- Dimmer, like all landfill sites, is strictly regulated in terms of its permit and the site operates under the highest quality, environmental, energy efficiency and health and safety standards. EA Permits <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/index>
- When a landfill site closes, Viridor aftercare carries on for a further 60 years.

- The site team works closely with the Environment Agency and fires on site are immediately reported to the EA.
- Dimmer is a 200-hectare site and when the site is unmanned security patrols are in place so that should there be an incident the site is able to respond quickly.
- Natural soil fire breaks are built into the site to prevent the spread of any fires.
- Site staff spread what is called inert material, such as soil, over any fires to cut off oxygen and extinguish fires before the fire service comes on to site to douse with water.
- Due to the process of smothering fires with soil and extinguishing them with water it is sometimes difficult to isolate the cause of fire. All fires are investigated but unless they are observed in the early stages it is often difficult to isolate the exact cause.
- The site has a controlled drainage system so any liquid - including that used to extinguish a fire – can be collected and treated before being safely disposed of.