

## **Item No. 6**

**Public Domain Overview of Halloween 2017 – Patrick Smith, Acting Public Domain officer.**

### **Preparations and activities prior to Halloween:**

- Preparations for Halloween commenced in September. Approximately 1,600 Information Leaflets outlining the dangers of Bonfires and listing DCC contact details were distributed to householders by Public Domain and Housing staff in the vicinity of locations where bonfires are usually held.
- Businesses in the industrial estates in the NWA had a visit by the Litter Warden and a member of the Public Domain team, given a leaflet and advised on the need to secure flammables in the weeks prior to Halloween.
- Waste Enforcement staff visited garages and industrial units on our behalf. They also set up a number of check points around the North West Area over the Halloween weekend.
- Regular inspections of voids and green areas were conducted by Public Domain Staff throughout the NWA to check for the presence of stockpiling.
- Co-ordinating conferences were held with the Gardaí in the Finglas/Cabra and Ballymun areas and attended by DCC Public Domain, Waste Management, Housing and Parks staff. This ensured a high level of communication and co-operation in the lead up to and over the Halloween period.
- Flammables were collected by Waste Management, Parks and Public Domain Crews as located or reported.
- Approximately 650 tyres, 500 pallets and large quantities of wood were removed prior to the Halloween weekend.
- Additional grab Lorries were provided through DCC Waste Management, Housing and Parks Departments for use in the NWA over the Halloween Period.



*Photo Ballyboggin Industrial Estate*

### **Actions over the Halloween Weekend:**

- On call and out of hours services were provided by:
  - Area Offices
  - Housing Department
  - Waste Management
  - Waste Enforcement
  - Parks and Landscapes Services
- In co-operation with the Gardaí, Waste Management, Parks and Housing 60 tonnes of wood, tyres and other flammable material was removed from over 40 locations over the 3 days of the Halloween weekend. In all, this constituted 3 grab trucks, several open back vans and several trailer loads of bonfire materials removed throughout the NWA over the 3 days.
- On 31<sup>st</sup> October, the Public Domain Office also hired an open back lorry with 3 operatives specifically assigned to the NWA.
- The assistance of the Gardaí was required at many locations in the removal of stock piles or built bonfires.
- The NWA Public Domain Office was staffed from 9am-4pm from 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> October. This was of particular benefit as calls from members of the public reporting bonfire material were passed to crews and several stock piles removed as a result. In addition, Public Domain staff worked from 7.00am on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct, directing Contractors, Waste Management and Housing staff to locations containing stock piles for removal.
- There were a number of incidents throughout the day. For the second year in a row a large bonfire was reported at St. Joseph's Hill, Ballymun with over 150 youths attending. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the community groups and the City Council, some people choose to behave in a negative fashion, and it fell to the Gardaí to deal with this.
- Another serious incident was when a firework was aimed and fired at Contractors cleaning bonfire material from Blackhorse Grove. The firework missed the Contractors by a matter of inches.
- There was also another serious incident reported in Berryfield, Finglas South, when a number of youths barricaded the road to stop DCC, Fire Brigade and Gardaí entering the estate to remove bonfire materials.



*Photo Blackhorse Grove*



*Photo Griffith Close @ 3.30pm*



*Photo Church of the Annunciation.*

*This was the staging point for Contractors throughout the day.*

### **Post Halloween Clean Up**

The Public Domain team investigated and collated a list of all bonfire locations in the North West Area and sent it to the clean up co-ordinator to carry out this work.

- Clean ups were ongoing in the NWA in conjunction with DCC Waste Management, Parks and Housing for a number of days after Halloween.
- It should be noted the number of bonfire locations was down from last year's 39 to 33 this year, this shows the work carried out and the two Halloween Festivals contributed to the success in reducing the number of Bonfires year on year.
- The Parks Department have noted the approximate cost of reinstating the damaged green areas is as follows:

There were 33 green areas damaged due to bonfires in the North West Area.

The estimated cost of reinstating this damage is calculated as follows:

- Re-sodding, replacing of soil to a depth of 200/250ml & labour cost = €30sq metre.
- Average bonfire size = 15sq metres
- 33 bonfires x 15 sq m = 495sq metres x €30 = **€14,850**



### **Public Domain Officer Observations/Recommendations**

Over the Halloween weekend we received good intelligence on locations of bonfire materials that young people had collected over a period of time. Although these large stock piles of tyres, pallets and flammable materials were removed it was noticed that a large number of households used the Halloween weekend as an opportunity to dump unwanted furniture and other household flammable materials.

I recommend Dublin City Council should consider having a once off household junk collection in September/October to alleviate this issue. Another option would be to open our bring centres, as did Fingal County Council, over the weekends in the month of October for householders to bring any unwanted furniture etc., free of charge.

The cooperation between Dublin City Council and An Garda Siochana is crucial to the success of the range of initiatives undertaken from the removal of bonfire materials to the support of events throughout the city.

It should also be noted that the Halloween Fright Night Festival in Finglas and the Ballymun Otherworld Festivals were very successful in diverting young people from bonfires and contributed to reducing the number of fires in the area.