# Lightning strike ignites house fire amid severe thunderstorms in West Sussex



A house in Fittleworth, West Sussex, was engulfed in flames following a lightning strike amid severe thunderstorms that swept across southern England. The incident occurred shortly before 3pm, prompting an urgent response from local fire services, which dispatched multiple fire engines to tackle the blaze that had ignited the roof of the residential property on School Close. Aerial photographs captured the dramatic scene, showing thick smoke pouring from the building and fire crews deploying aerial ladders to combat the flames.

In a statement regarding the incident, a representative from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service confirmed that the house fire was indeed caused by a lightning strike. Firefighters, equipped with breathing apparatus, worked diligently to extinguish the fire that had taken hold in the roof space. Local authorities promptly closed School Lane to traffic and advised residents in the vicinity to close their windows and doors to mitigate exposure to smoke and debris.

This incident highlights the increasing frequency of severe weather events in the UK, which has recently been under a tornado warning from the Met Office. Forecasters noted that the stormy conditions follow an unusually dry start to spring, akin to weather records from the 1850s when the UK experienced its driest seasons. Meteorologist Alex Burkill indicated that funnel clouds could form, suggesting a possibility of tornadoes in the area. The Met Office’s warnings were echoed by observations across the country of turbulent weather, including thunder, lightning, and heavy rain.

Historically, lightning strikes have prompted significant damage to properties across the UK. For instance, in July 2021, two semi-detached homes in Andover suffered severe damage when struck by lightning, resulting in the roofs collapsing and fire spreading rapidly. Fortunately, injuries were minimal, but the incident highlighted the potential dangers associated with such storms. Similarly, there were reports in Dorset of homes set ablaze due to lightning strikes in September 2023, once again underscoring the risks posed by thunderstorms.

While the fire in Fittleworth is currently the focus of concern, weather patterns indicate upcoming changes. The Met Office anticipates a shift to wetter conditions by the weekend, with rain and escalating winds expected to affect various regions across the UK. Deputy Chief Meteorologist David Oliver warned of potential coastal gales, particularly in northern areas, as low-pressure systems move in from the Atlantic.

Professor Ed Hawkins from the National Centre for Atmospheric Science has highlighted the stark contrast in weather trends, noting that this spring has been remarkably dry, potentially ranking among the driest seasons recorded since 1836. As records show, rainfall totals have been significantly lower compared to previous years, which has prompted discussions around climate trends and patterns.

Looking ahead, the forecast suggests that while the immediate aftermath of these storms may involve damp and windy conditions, the longer-term climatic patterns remain subject to speculation, with experts closely monitoring developments. Thus, emergencies triggered by lightning and thunderstorms remain a pertinent concern, reminding the public of the unpredictable nature of the weather.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
2. Paragraph 4
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraph 6
5. Paragraph 7
6. Paragraph 8

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14736831/house-fire-caused-lightning-Met-Office-tornado.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/hampshire-house-partially-destroyed-after-being-hit-by-lightning-in-andover-12362604> - In July 2021, two semi-detached houses in Andover, Hampshire, were severely damaged after being struck by lightning during a thunderstorm. The roofs collapsed, and flames spread through the homes. A 70-year-old woman was checked over by paramedics at the scene but was not taken to hospital. Firefighters from seven surrounding areas responded to the incident. The Met Office had issued yellow thunderstorm warnings for the south coast and parts of Wales until midnight on Sunday. ([news.sky.com](https://news.sky.com/story/hampshire-house-partially-destroyed-after-being-hit-by-lightning-in-andover-12362604?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2023-09-18/frightening-moment-lightning-strike-sets-village-homes-on-fire-during-storm> - In September 2023, two houses in Corfe Mullen, Dorset, were struck by lightning, setting them on fire and causing severe damage. The incident occurred during a storm in the early hours of the morning. Firefighters from multiple stations responded to the scene, and fortunately, no one was injured. Crews remained at the scene to check for hotspots. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2023-09-18/frightening-moment-lightning-strike-sets-village-homes-on-fire-during-storm?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy9wj54q24o> - In September 2024, a house in Wrexham was set on fire following a suspected lightning strike during a large thunderstorm. Neighbours reported hearing a loud bang and seeing a bright flash of lightning. Firefighters attended the scene, and the cause of the blaze was yet to be determined. The incident occurred amid a yellow weather warning for thunderstorms across Wales. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy9wj54q24o?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c51yn6777jko> - In August 2024, a lightning strike is believed to have caused a house fire in Burntwood, Staffordshire. Fire crews were called to the scene in Springhill Road just after 6:00 BST. Upon arrival, firefighters found all occupants were out of the house and nobody had been injured. A bedroom in the loft of the semi-detached home was damaged in the fire. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c51yn6777jko?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/2021-07-24/uk-weather-houses-struck-by-lightning-in-hampshire-as-met-office-thunderstorm-warning-is-in-place> - In July 2021, two houses in Andover, Hampshire, were severely damaged after being struck by lightning during a thunderstorm. The roofs collapsed, and smoke was seen coming from the top of the buildings. A 70-year-old woman was assessed by paramedics at the scene and was not taken to hospital. The Met Office had issued yellow thunderstorm warnings for the south of the UK. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/2021-07-24/uk-weather-houses-struck-by-lightning-in-hampshire-as-met-office-thunderstorm-warning-is-in-place?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ceq599vyl19o> - In August 2024, two children and an adult escaped from a fire at their home in Aviemore after it was struck by lightning. Four fire engines and a height appliance were called to the scene in Grampian View at about 10:00 as storms hit the area. No one was reported to have been injured. Strong winds fanned the flames, and smoke could be seen for miles around. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ceq599vyl19o?utm_source=openai))