# Man charged with 18 counts of arson after Dorset car fires causing £170,000 damage



A man has been charged with 18 counts of arson following a series of devastating car fires in Dorset, which caused considerable damage and left families in distress. David Giddins, 45, appeared at Poole Magistrates' Court, where he did not enter a plea. The alleged crimes occurred during the early hours of May 15, 2023, when emergency services received a barrage of calls reporting multiple vehicles ablaze in Broadstone, Wimborne, and Merley. The attacks resulted in an estimated £170,000 worth of damages across 18 vehicles and several properties.

The scene drew a swift response from local emergency services as residents were awakened by crackling flames and loud explosions. Witnesses remembered the night vividly, with one describing the town as resembling a "war zone" by daylight, littered with the charred remains of vehicles. Notably, the Willett Arms pub and an adjacent flat were among the properties affected; the costs incurred by the pub alone were reported to be around £11,000, while the flat's damage totalled £76,000.

Among the harrowing accounts of the incident, a local NHS nurse named Lisa Dodd was praised for her quick thinking, which likely saved a family from disaster. Upon noticing a flickering light from her bedroom, Dodd rushed outside to find a Ford Ka engulfed in flames near a flat occupied by a mother and her two daughters. Reacting swiftly, she banged on their window and alerted the family, enabling them to escape just moments before the fire spread further inside the property. "If I had been a minute later, the fire would have spread," she recounted, highlighting the near-tragic timing of her intervention.

In the aftermath, community support surged for those affected. Fundraising efforts aimed at helping the family displaced by the fire have already raised significant contributions as neighbours rallied to assist them in recovering their losses.

The investigation into the arson was met with heightened police presence in the area, leading local authorities to urge residents to remain vigilant. Appeals for information were widely circulated, encouraging anyone with CCTV or dashcam footage from the night of the fires to come forward and assist with the investigation. As the case progresses to Bournemouth Crown Court, where it has been referred for further proceedings, the community remains on edge, grappling with the impact of these attacks.

As Giddins awaits his next court appearance, the local population continues to rally together in the face of a crisis, demonstrating resilience in the wake of an unsettling event that has left a significant mark on the community of Dorset.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14746441/Man-accused-torching-cars-arson-attacks.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dorset.police.uk/news-article/74b95fb0-a9f4-ed11-9d56-6045bdd24049> - Dorset Police reported on May 15, 2023, that between 1am and 3am, multiple car fires occurred in Broadstone, Wimborne, and Merley areas, affecting 13 vehicles and two properties. A local man in his 40s was arrested on suspicion of arson. Chief Inspector Andy Edwards thanked the community for their patience during the investigation and assured that enhanced patrols would continue in the area. Residents were urged to report any suspicious activity and check their CCTV footage for relevant information.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/17/dorset-police-arrest-man-after-arson-attacks-on-cars> - The Guardian reported on May 17, 2023, that Dorset police arrested a man in his 40s on suspicion of arson after a series of vehicle fires in Wimborne Minster. Thirteen vehicles and two properties were damaged in the attacks, which took place over a three-hour period. Police reassured residents with increased patrols and appealed for witnesses, urging those with home CCTV or dashcam footage to come forward to assist the investigation.
4. <https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/24505529.man-still-police-bail-dorset-car-arson-attacks/> - The Bournemouth Echo reported on May 8, 2024, that a man arrested in connection with the May 2023 car arson attacks in Dorset remained on police bail. The attacks, which occurred in Broadstone, Wimborne, and Merley, involved 13 vehicles being set alight. Despite extensive investigations, no charges had been filed, and the arrested man’s bail had been extended multiple times. Dorset Police confirmed the investigation was ongoing, and residents were urged to remain vigilant and report any information.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/15/police-hunt-suspects-cars-set-alight-dorset> - The Guardian reported on May 15, 2023, that Dorset police were searching for suspects after 13 cars were set alight in Poole and Wimborne Minster. The arson attacks occurred over a three-hour period, leading to 65 calls to the fire service. Residents were awakened by the blazes, with some fleeing their homes in fear. Police appealed for witnesses and urged those with CCTV or dashcam footage to assist in identifying those responsible.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2023-05-15/multiple-cars-set-on-fire-in-wimborne-in-suspected-arson> - ITV News Meridian reported on May 15, 2023, that multiple cars were set on fire in Wimborne, Dorset, in suspected arson attacks. Between 11.30pm and 2.30am, Dorset Fire & Rescue Service received approximately 65 emergency calls about vehicle fires in the Wimborne and Poole areas. Residents reported seeing vehicles ablaze near the Coach and Horses pub on Poole Road. Police conducted house-to-house and CCTV inquiries, urging anyone with information to come forward.
7. <https://www.dorsetview.co.uk/arson-attacks-in-wimborne/> - Dorset View reported on May 15, 2023, that a series of arson attacks on cars took place between Wimborne and Broadstone in the early hours of May 15. Between 1am and 3am, multiple car fires were reported to police, affecting at least 12 vehicles and one property. The incidents occurred in areas including Wentworth Drive, Oakley Hill, Oakley Road, Merley Way, Stour Walk, New Borough Road, Grove Road, and Leigh Road. Dorset Police launched an investigation and appealed for witnesses or anyone with information to come forward.