# Three arrested after suspected arson fire devastates Dunelm and Pets at Home in Northampton



A significant fire erupted at the Dunelm store in St James Retail Park, Northampton, yesterday afternoon, leading to dramatic scenes as flames engulfed the building and spread to the adjacent Pets at Home store. The incident, which began around 3pm, has since been classified as a suspected arson, resulting in the arrest of three individuals on suspicion of starting the blaze.

Witness accounts and photographs captured the towering inferno visible from miles away, as staff and customers were hurriedly evacuated. Fortunately, all animals housed at the Pets at Home store were safely rescued, and no casualties have been reported, although the fire prompted a large-scale emergency response comprising 11 fire crews and aerial teams from Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, and Lincolnshire. A fire service spokesperson noted that while the blaze was largely contained, small pockets of fire persisted, and crews expected to continue damping down throughout the day.

The local fire station commander, Rich Walding, described the situation as a "very protracted incident" that necessitated extensive resources, advising residents to avoid the area while the smoke from the fire drifted toward the town centre. Road closures were enacted, particularly on Towcester Road, which are anticipated to remain in place until at least the following morning.

Detective Chief Inspector Andrew Tuff confirmed the deliberate nature of the fire, urging the public for assistance in their investigation, especially appealing for information from an eyewitness who reported observing individuals starting a fire in the Dunelm store's toilets shortly before the flames were noticed. Tuff highlighted the disruption caused by the fire, underscoring its serious impact on the wellbeing of local employees and businesses.

This incident is not the first to involve Dunelm and its surrounding area. A similar occurrence happened in July 2021 when a fire was deliberately set in a shopping trolley outside the store, resulting in smoke-filled conditions that required an evacuation. Such repeated incidents raise concerns within the community regarding safety and vandalism in the retail park.

In response to the ongoing situation, Northamptonshire Police have set up channels for witnesses to provide information, emphasising the importance of community support in resolving such crimes.

The retail park itself has seen various developments recently, including new openings and expansions amidst a changing commercial landscape. Notably, Pets at Home is part of broader efforts to enhance pet care services across the region, planning relocations and significant renovations for their stores, while new retailers are also setting up shop in the vicinity, contributing to the local economy.

As the investigation continues, the community awaits further updates on potential charges stemming from this alarming incident which has cast a shadow over the retail park, a hub of activity in Northampton.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769863/Three-people-arrested-huge-fire-Dunelm-Pets-Home-stores-Northampton-St-James-Retail-Park.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/crime/shoppers-flee-smoke-filled-dunelm-store-after-yobs-set-fire-to-trolley-3315531)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769863/Three-people-arrested-huge-fire-Dunelm-Pets-Home-stores-Northampton-St-James-Retail-Park.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/business/free-goodie-bags-for-first-100-customers-as-huge-new-pet-shop-opens-in-northampton-this-week-4601534)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769863/Three-people-arrested-huge-fire-Dunelm-Pets-Home-stores-Northampton-St-James-Retail-Park.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/politics/massive-retail-unit-serving-northampton-for-decades-is-demolished-to-make-way-for-the-future-4380030)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.northantslife.co.uk/home-bargains-to-open-new-store-in-northampton-creating-142-jobs-with-1m-investment)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769863/Three-people-arrested-huge-fire-Dunelm-Pets-Home-stores-Northampton-St-James-Retail-Park.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/crime/shoppers-flee-smoke-filled-dunelm-store-after-yobs-set-fire-to-trolley-3315531)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769863/Three-people-arrested-huge-fire-Dunelm-Pets-Home-stores-Northampton-St-James-Retail-Park.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/business/pets-at-home-opens-new-pet-care-centre-in-kettering-shopping-park-4873903)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769863/Three-people-arrested-huge-fire-Dunelm-Pets-Home-stores-Northampton-St-James-Retail-Park.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769863/Three-people-arrested-huge-fire-Dunelm-Pets-Home-stores-Northampton-St-James-Retail-Park.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/crime/shoppers-flee-smoke-filled-dunelm-store-after-yobs-set-fire-to-trolley-3315531> - In July 2021, a fire was set in a shopping trolley outside the Dunelm store in St James Retail Park, Northampton. The fire caused damage to the building's exterior and filled the store with smoke, leading to an evacuation. Northamptonshire Police appealed for witnesses to assist in their investigation into the incident.
3. <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/business/free-goodie-bags-for-first-100-customers-as-huge-new-pet-shop-opens-in-northampton-this-week-4601534> - In April 2024, Jollyes, a national pet store chain, opened a new branch in Northampton's St James Retail Park. The store, located in the former Furniture Warehouse unit, offered free goodie bags to the first 100 customers. The opening event featured animal-themed stilt walkers, the Jollyes mascot, and live entertainment, including the 'Wheel of Fur-tune' and balloon modelling for children.
4. <https://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/business/pets-at-home-opens-new-pet-care-centre-in-kettering-shopping-park-4873903> - In November 2024, Pets at Home opened a new Pet Care Centre in Kettering Shopping Park, Northamptonshire. The centre, a relocation and expansion of the previous store, offers a comprehensive range of pet care services, including a dedicated Nutrition Hub, expanded Health Centre, and a pet adoption centre. The refurbishment was part of an ongoing programme to enhance pet care facilities across the UK.
5. <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/politics/massive-retail-unit-serving-northampton-for-decades-is-demolished-to-make-way-for-the-future-4380030> - In October 2023, the former Just For Pets building in St Peter’s Way Retail Park, Northampton, was demolished. Plans were announced to redevelop the site into a large electric vehicle charging station with 22 charging bays and two substations. The redevelopment aligns with West Northamptonshire Council's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.
6. <https://www.northantslife.co.uk/home-bargains-to-open-new-store-in-northampton-creating-142-jobs-with-1m-investment> - In November 2023, Home Bargains announced the opening of a new store, 'Northampton 2', at St James Retail Park. The store, which opened in November 2023, created 142 new jobs in the local community and was part of a £1 million investment. The new store complemented the existing Northampton location and was among over 600 outlets across the UK.
7. <https://www.petbusinessworld.co.uk/trade-news/retailers/pets-at-home-opens-larger-store-in-kettering.html> - In November 2024, Pets at Home opened a new, larger store in Kettering, Northamptonshire. The new store, more than double the size of the previous one, features a dedicated Nutrition Hub, expanded Health Centre, small animal pet village, and a pet adoption centre. The relocation and expansion were part of Pets at Home's ongoing programme to enhance pet care services across the UK.