# Vandals cause serious damage in Stoke-on-Trent parks as fire risks rise



Significant damage was caused in Stoke-on-Trent this spring after vandals set fire to areas within several public parks, including Hanley Park and Fenton Park. Among the most serious incidents was a blaze at Hanley Park that destroyed a "dead" hedgerow, a feature deliberately introduced to enhance biodiversity. The fire not only damaged parkland but also threatened local wildlife habitats.

In response, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has issued a warning urging visitors to avoid lighting bonfires or barbecues in parks and open countryside, especially during warmer and drier weather conditions which increase the risk of fires. Station Manager Ant Ball highlighted the potential consequences: “Fires not only cause significant damage to our natural environment, but also place a considerable strain on emergency resources that may be needed elsewhere.”

He continued, “We are asking members of the public to refrain from lighting bonfires or barbecues in public spaces such as parks and open countryside. These activities can quickly become dangerous and get out of control, particularly in dry or windy conditions.” Visitors are also reminded to dispose of rubbish responsibly and fully extinguish cigarettes before discarding them. “We thank the public for their cooperation in keeping our communities and green spaces safe,” Mr Ball added.

Councillor Amjid Wazir OBE, Stoke-on-Trent City Council's cabinet member for city pride, enforcement, and sustainability, condemned the damage caused by the fires. Speaking about the impact on the community, he said: “This kind of reckless damage isn’t just dangerous, it undoes hours of hard work aimed at protecting and improving our local environment.”

Councillor Wazir emphasised the importance of parks as spaces for relaxation, exercise, and socialising. He also pointed to recent dry weather making the land more vulnerable to fires and urged residents to talk to children and others about responsibility: “Our Park’s Team work tirelessly in all weathers, year in and year out to ensure not only visitors have the best visit, but that nature is thriving. Let’s not undo that hard work.” He concluded with a clear appeal: “Bin your rubbish, make sure cigarettes are extinguished and binned and remember, absolutely no fires or barbecues in the parks.”

Staffordshire Police have also launched an investigation into the incidents in a bid to apprehend those responsible for the arson. Inspector Rebecca Price from the Stoke-on-Trent South local policing team stated, “Vandalism at parks in the city will not be tolerated and we are working hard to catch those responsible.” She noted that police community support officers regularly patrol the parks to ensure public safety and reminded residents that a weekly police surgery is held at Hanley Park every Saturday, encouraging the community to raise any concerns.

The recent spate of fires and damage has escalated concerns about safety and preservation of green spaces in Stoke-on-Trent, prompting coordinated warnings from the fire service, local council, and police to protect both people and the environment. Visitors are urged to report any illegal fires and to help safeguard the city’s parks and wildlife habitats.

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

## References

* <https://www.stoke.gov.uk/news/article/1775/no_fires_%E2%80%93_strict_warnings_for_all_city_parks> - This official Stoke-on-Trent City Council news release confirms the issue of strict warnings for no fires in all city parks following deliberate fires in Hanley Park, corroborating the article's information about vandalism and fire damage in local parks.
* <https://stoke.nub.news/news/local-news/warning-issued-after-spate-of-deliberate-fires-in-hanley-park-258070> - This news article details the deliberate fires in Hanley Park, including the destruction of a 'dead' hedgerow designed to enhance biodiversity, and includes quotes from Councillor Amjid Wazir OBE and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, supporting the statements about environmental impact and official warnings.
* <https://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/media/tiba1yry/sfrs-incident-data-april-2022.xlsx> - Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service incident data provide context on fire incidents in the region, supporting claims about the strain on emergency services and the importance of fire safety warnings in public spaces.
* <https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/news/staffordshire/news/2025/april/appeal-after-fires-break-out-in-field/> - This Staffordshire Police appeal describes investigations into deliberate fires in Stoke-on-Trent, including near public parks, corroborating the article's reference to police involvement, investigations, and community safety patrols.
* <https://www.stoke.gov.uk/news/article/1775/no_fires_%E2%80%93_strict_warnings_for_all_city_parks> - In addition to confirming fire damage, this page contains warnings from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service urging the public to avoid lighting bonfires or barbecues during dry conditions, matching the article's emphasis on safety advice and responsible behaviour in parks.