

**Introduction:**

With AMBER Wildfire Alerts across England in place for a second week the wildfire at Little Marlow is one of the smaller sized incidents, but had a considerable impact on destruction and damage to residential and commercial properties, travel disruption, evacuation of residential homes and disruption to local businesses.

The incident occurred in fields being cut by a combine harvester near Winchbottom Lane, off the Marlow Road A4155. Fire spread was rapid in cut and standing crops and then transferred into resident and commercial property on Pump Lane, before crossing the A404 above the Marlow interchange.

Fire spread was stopped adjacent to a large residential area with houses siding onto the fields and large electricity substation.

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**FRS Resources:**

- Up to 20 Pumping appliances
- 4 Water Carriers
- 1 High Volume Pumping Unit

# Wildfire Impact Case Study: Marlow Buckinghamshire

## Weather:

Temperature: 28.5°C at Heathrow at 12:00

Relative Humidity: Unknown

Daily Hazard Assessment: AMBER Wildfire Alert

Met Office Fire Severity Index: Very High

EFFIS Fire Weather Index: Very High Danger

Wind direction: Easterly (Anecdotal) and North Easterly

Wind speed: approximately 9.3 - 12.4 mph (15 to 20 kph (Anecdotal) and 9 mph (14.5 kph) from at 12:00

**Source:** Met Office Daily Weather Summary - July 2018 taken from Heathrow airport.

## Impact:

- Area burnt: 30 hectares
- 1 x Residential property destroyed by fire
- 1 x Industrial property destroyed by fire
- 1 x Industrial property damaged by smoke
- 4 x Commercial vans destroyed by fire
- 1 x Boat destroyed by fire
- 1 x Power cable cut
- Evacuation of 12 residential properties in Stapleton Close by Thames Valley Police
- Threaten electric sub station near Marlow
- Closure of Wyevale Garden Centre, Marlow for several days
- Closure of Pumps Lane Farm
- Closure of the A404 for 2 hours.

## Cause and vegetation involved:

- Cause: Accidental, spark from combine harvester caused by flint sticking metal
- Item first ignited: Cut stubble

- Habitat: Initial arable, as well as forestry.
- Main fuel: Standing crop and fresh cut stubble
- Secondary fuel: forestry (coniferous and broadleaved) and hedgerow

## Incident Timeline and duration:

2 <sup>nd</sup> July 16:02	Time of call	0 mins
16:10	Time of first attendance	8 mins
16:30	Level 2 ICS Officer dispatched and Pumps 4	28 mins
16:40	Pumps made 8	38 mins
16:55	Pumps made 14 and fire reaches residential properties in farm (see photo)	52 mins
17:15	A404 closed, linking M4 and M40 during rush hour	1 hour and 13 mins
17:20	Fire reaches commercial property in farm	1 hour and 18 mins
17:25	Pumps made 20, Water Carriers 4 and High Volume Pumping 1 (National Asset).	1 hour and 23 mins
19:15	Pumps made 16	3 hours and 13 mins
20:30	Pumps made 12	4 hours and 28 mins
22:00	Pumps made 6	5 hours and 58 mins
3 <sup>rd</sup> July 19:08	Stop message	1 day, 3 hours and 6 mins
10 <sup>th</sup> July 17:16	Incident closed	8 days, 1 hour and 14 mins