

LANDOWNERS ARE PREPARED FOR WILDFIRE RISKS

UK farmers and landowners in Northumberland are now better prepared to deal with the risk of wildfire incidents, and keeping land and businesses safe from wildfires, following an information session, recently organised by Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of Northumberland Fire Group.



Farmers, land managers, landowners and gamekeepers in Northumberland are now better equipped to plan for wildfires, and to recognise the impacts and dangers of wildfires and prescribed burning.

They were given expert advice by representatives from Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS), Northumbrian Water, Northern Powergrid, the Forestry Commission, Natural England, Northumberland National Park and Northumberland County Council during a recent information session.

Paul Hedley, chief fire officer at Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, said: "In rural areas like Northumberland, wildfires are a potential risk and they can have devastating effects.

"Events like these are vital to reduce the risk of wildfires but also to better prepare landowners and businesses for potential incidents and reduce the impact these may have on local communities, businesses and the natural environment."

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The NFG delivers a number of activities to help to prevent, prepare for and respond to wildfires in Northumberland and to improve partnership working between the public and private sectors when responding to wildfires.

Andrew Miller, head of programmes and conservation at Northumberland National Park Authority, said: "The NFG once again provided an opportunity to share knowledge and experience of the risks of wildfire.

"No one knows their land better than the farmers, shepherds and gamekeepers who manage it every day and by combining their experience with developing good practice from across the country through the work of other partner agencies, we hope to prevent serious incidents from occurring in the future."

Angus Collingwood Cameron, chair of the Northumberland Fire Group, said it was particularly pleasing to see so many farmers and land managers alongside the NFRS and other agencies. "In the remoter areas of Northumberland, wildfires can only be prevented and efficiently controlled by all parties working together," he added.

College Valley and Lilburn Estates also presented vehicles and equipment which have been modified to work more effectively for burning and fire fighting in the Northumberland countryside.

The session ended on East Todholes Farm near Harwood Forest with live demonstrations of equipment that can be used to cut grass, heather and other vegetation to reduce the chance of wildfire spread and to ensure effective controlled burning.

For further information contact Robert Stacey, Secretary of Northumberland Fire Group and Project Officer by email robert.stacey@northumberland.gov.uk or Angus Collingwood Cameron, Chair of the Northumberland Fire Group at aecc@nrpg.co.uk

To find out more about Northumberland Fire Group visit firegroup.northumberland.gov.uk