

YFA News

November 2019



The Young Firefighters Association

The Young Firefighters Association (YFA) helps 13-17 year olds to challenge themselves, make new friends, learn exciting firefighting skills and to help their communities. A lot of their time is spent on the training yard, practising firefighting drills, but they also get involved in plenty of other exciting and challenging activities. Whether these young people go on to become firefighters or not, they will undoubtedly learn a range of vital skills that will help them in their everyday lives.

This newsletter gives an overview of the activities of the last few months which have been undertaken by members of the YFA.



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YFA get on their bikes

Droitwich YFA spent an enjoyable, if slightly wet, day biking in the Forest of Dean.

The Young Firefighters, some of whom had never ridden off road before, put in a great effort and had huge fun exploring the trails in Gloucestershire with Pedalabikeaway.



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Heading for the hills

Activities with Young Firefighters are not just confined to the local area. The group took a trip across to the Welsh border during the summer and enjoyed a great day's walking in the Black Mountains.



Reminder of a useful skill

Even in the days of satellite navigation systems, being able to read a map is still a useful skill to have and Droitwich Young Firefighters took the opportunity to try out their talents.

The group enjoyed an orienteering session at Worcester countryside centre, enjoying the challenge of using their skills and fitness to find the way around the course. Well done to all for having a go.



Assisting at events is part of the fun

The Young Firefighters have been playing their part this summer with the wider firefighting community.

They have given assistance at a number of the station open days as well as other events and also spent some time helping at an under-17 young drivers' event for the Pathfinders association at the Three Counties Showground in Malvern.

"Parents and students alike commented on how professional you and your Young Firefighters were," said Rob Newnham of Pathfinders in an email of thanks to instructor Ade Taylor.

"And I know that the experience of seeing/sitting in/driving a fire engine was a key highlight of the week (mostly for the parents!)."



Turning out to help at open days

The Young Firefighters have been much in evidence at Station Open Days throughout the summer.

That was particularly the case at Malvern where they had a stream of young customers at their popular facepainting stand and were also assisted by Blaze Bear, who patrolled the station to greet the visitors.



Hannah is top Young Firefighter

This year's top Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Young Firefighter is Hannah Sinclair-Elechi. The award is nominated annually by the leader of the Young Firefighters Association.

Hannah received her award from Worcestershire's High Sheriff Edward Holloway at the annual HWFRS Worcestershire awards ceremony at Worcester Guild Hall.

In announcing the award, Group Commander Rob Allen commented that those making the nomination said this was the easiest decision they had ever had to make and that Hannah's enthusiasm has shone through in everything that she does.

"The YFA is special to me because, before, I struggled with my confidence and it has really helped me with that," said Hannah.

"I didn't know too many people before and it's been helpful to have this family outside of where I usually am in Worcester. Being a member of the YFA gives us plenty of scope to do things, for example to go to open



days around the fire stations, while I have even had the chance to drive cars and fire trucks which has been really exciting as well.

"I have worked really hard so it's nice to have been recognised. I feel quite proud of myself and I know that my family are proud of me, too."

Sue and Ade's wonderful service to YFA recognised



Ade and Sue Taylor's immense contribution to Droitwich YFA over two decades has been honoured at the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Worcestershire Medal & Award Ceremony.

Ade and Sue received the Chairman's Certificate of Commendation from Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority chairman Roger Phillips at the awards ceremony at Worcester Guildhall.

In announcing the award, Group Commander Rob Allen said that Sue and Ade had volunteered their time from the inception of the Droitwich Young Firefighters branch in 1999 and their work had been pivotal in the development of hundreds of young people.

"For me the magic of the YFA is the young people," said Sue, who was celebrating her birthday on the night of the awards and was presented with a bouquet of flowers in addition to her award.

"It's watching the young people develop, succeed and become more disciplined and confident."

"Over the 20 years, we have 13 or 14 of our Young Firefighters who have gone on and are now serving in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, either wholetime or retained," said Ade.

"Some have gone on to be with other Services and a lot have gone on to other uniformed services, as paramedics or in the military.

"It's nice to be recognised but that's not what we're doing it for. We do it for the young people and we're accepting this award on behalf of those young people and of the other instructors who assist us – we couldn't do it without them.

"The association is going from strength to strength. It's not just young people from Droitwich, we have some who come from Bromyard, Worcester, Bromsgrove, Kidderminster – they come from quite a way to take part."

If you have any comments regarding this newsletter or would like to find out more, please visit www.hwfire.org.uk/yfa
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