

5 September 2024

FOI Ref 17098

Request - You asked us the following:

The number of arson investigations involving fires at public houses (pubs) for the following periods:

July 26 2019 – July 26 2020
July 26 2020 – July 26 2021
July 26 2021 – July 26 2022
July 26 2022 – July 26 2023
July 26 2023 – July 26 2024

Please include pubs that are both closed and open or unknown.

We received your request on 29/07/2024 and have processed this under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Please find below our response.

Staffordshire Police holds the following requested information.

- The number of arson investigations involving fires at public houses (pubs) for the following periods:
July 26 2019 – July 26 2020
July 26 2020 – July 26 2021
July 26 2021 – July 26 2022
July 26 2022 – July 26 2023
July 26 2023 – July 26 2024
Please include pubs that are both closed and open or unknown. – **Information held.**

Staffordshire Police discloses/withholds the following information.

- The number of arson investigations involving fires at public houses (pubs) for the following periods:
July 26 2019 – July 26 2020
July 26 2020 – July 26 2021
July 26 2021 – July 26 2022
July 26 2022 – July 26 2023
July 26 2023 – July 26 2024
Please include pubs that are both closed and open or unknown. – **Partially disclosed, please see accompanying file titled 'FOI 17098 Arson Investigations Involving Pubs Data.CSV'.**

The above information has been withheld for the following reasons:

There are several matters relating to arson offences with the locations listed as pubs that currently remain ongoing at this time. Disclosure of further details relating to these occurrences at this time would prejudice police activities both for ongoing and future investigations, and would be likely to cause significant harm to the law enforcement function of Staffordshire Police and the administration of justice.

The following exemptions have been applied:

- Section 30(1)(a)(b) – Criminal Investigations

Section 30 is qualified and prejudice-based and, as such, we are required to evidence the harm in disclosure and apply the public interest test.

Public Interest Test

Factors favouring disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of the information would improve the public's knowledge and understanding of the investigatory process and, as all police investigations are publicly funded, would show how public funds are being spent.

Factors favouring non-disclosure under Section 30(1)(a)(b)

Disclosure of the requested information would prejudice how investigations are carried out in the future. Staffordshire Police is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Any release of information relating to ongoing investigations could prejudice and undermine those investigations. The prevention and detection of such matters could therefore be hindered and therefore risk interference with evidence, which could have detrimental impact on future investigations. In addition, the right to a fair trial could be undermined.

Balance test

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release of information to the world in general and not an individual applicant. Having considered the public interest factors we are required to determine whether on balance the factors favouring disclosure outweigh those which are against disclosure. It is our view that the factors favouring disclosure do not outweigh those which favour non-disclosure.

Please note that this data has been provided to the best of our ability, subject to the limitation of current recording protocols and systems/software. Additional offences may have been recorded during these timescales but are awaiting finalisation and input onto these systems and would not be present within this dataset.

Every effort is made to ensure that the data presented is accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that this has been extracted from multiple sources, developed for specific policing purposes, for which data extraction methods have not been specifically designed to directly correlate with the



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terminology of this request. Therefore, the data presented is subject to the inaccuracies and idiosyncrasies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

As a consequence, care should be taken in the interpretation and presentation of this data, so as to not misrepresent the whole or any part of the data disclosed.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response.

If you would like us to carry out a review of our response, please let us know within two months of the date of receipt of this email, review requests should be addressed to:

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit