

Emergency Response and Recovery

Plan For The Evening

Hearing from our colleagues from:

- Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Health and Safety Executive
- British Geological Survey
- Bedfordshire Police
- Bedford Borough Council

Please reserve your questions for the partners until after all of the updates



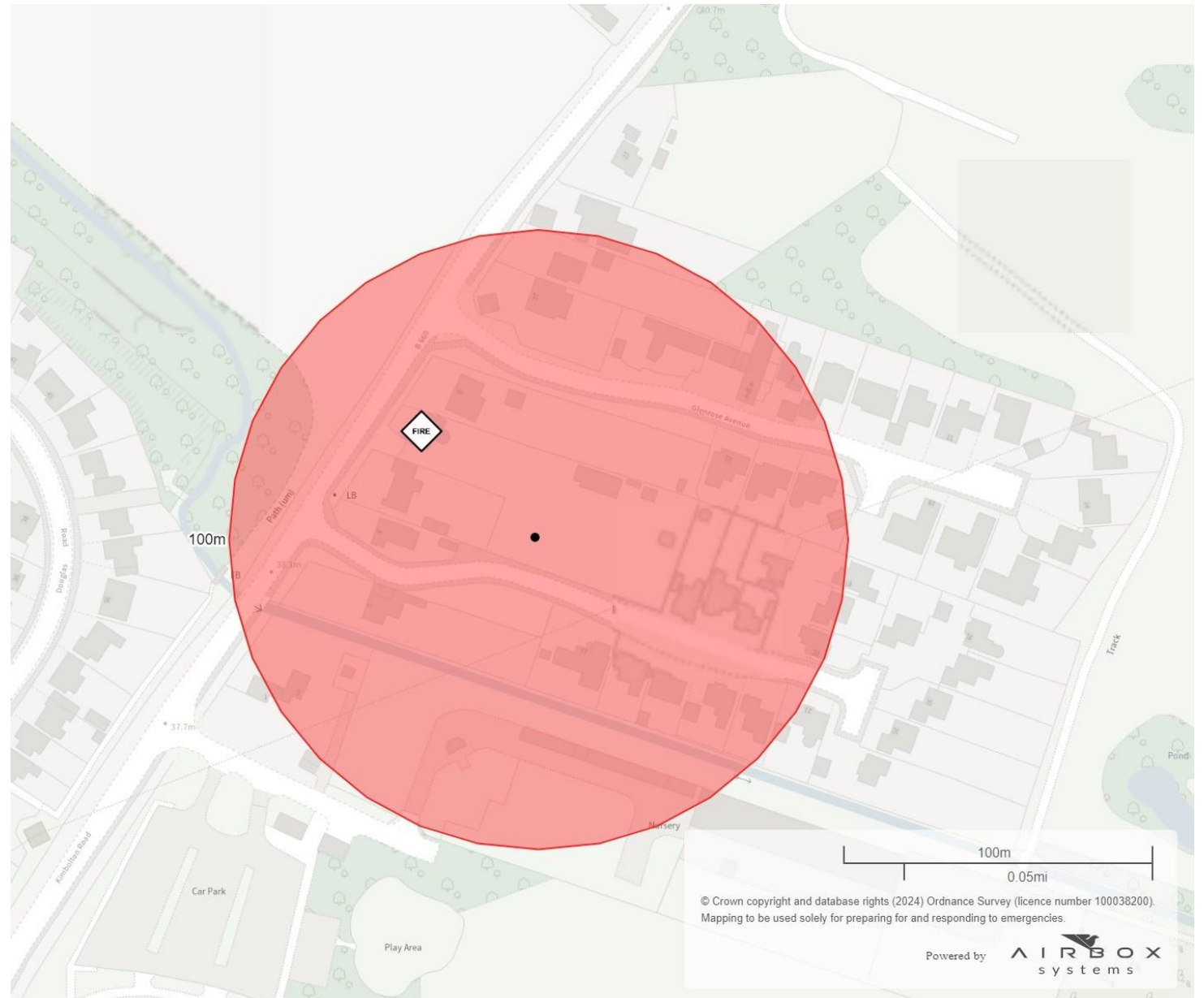
Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Current Situation

- **Incident:** Explosion and subsequent fire at a residential property in Cleat Hill on Saturday 19 October 2024.
- **Casualties:** One fatality confirmed, and a second individual seriously injured.
- **Cordon:** A cordon remains in place around the affected area to ensure public safety and allow investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- **Ongoing Investigation:** HSE, Bedfordshire Police, and BFRS are actively investigating the cause of the explosion.
- **Resident Access:** Controlled access for residents to collect essential belongings is being facilitated while ensuring safety.

The Cordon

This is the affected area. Residents have been evacuated from Glenrose Avenue, Cleat Hill, and Wagstaffe Close.





Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Actions Taken

- **Initial Response:**

- First emergency call received at 07:37hrs; first BFRS appliance arrived within 6 minutes.
- 4 Rescue Pumps, an Aerial Platform, Hazmats Unit, and specialist officers deployed.
- Firefighters tackled the fire and contained it to prevent further damage.
- Worked alongside police and ambulance services to manage the scene.

- **Managing the Cordon:**

- BFRS is maintaining the cordon to protect the public and responders, ensuring the safety of the area while investigations continue.

- **Support to Investigators:**

- BFRS is actively working with HSE and other agencies, providing technical expertise and facilitating safe conditions for their work.

- **Facilitating Resident Access:**

- Coordinating a safe process for residents to retrieve essential items from their homes in a controlled and supervised manner.

British Geological Survey

Dr Jonathan Chambers

BGS chief scientist, multihazard and resilience

British Geological Survey - Prof Jonathan Chambers

The British Geological Survey (BGS) provides impartial and authoritative geological data and expertise, enabling governments, industry and the public to make informed decisions regarding the subsurface.

Current:

BGS is working with emergency services in Bedfordshire to provide geological data in support of their response to this incident.

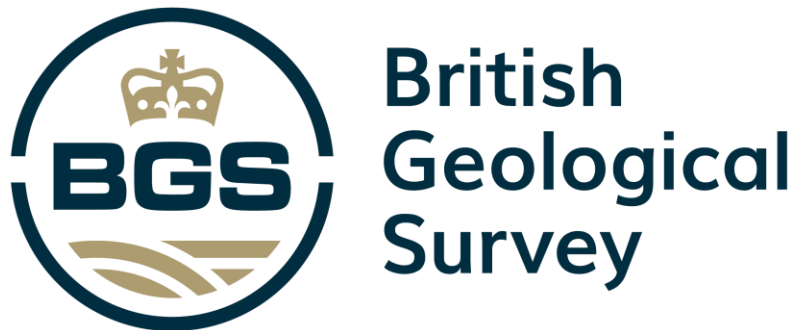
BGS have been on site – undertaking soil gas monitoring within the cordon.

Actions Taken:

Deployed BGS soil gas team and have been on site since Tuesday afternoon.

Working to provide first pass soil gas survey to determine concentrations of gas in soil and flux of soil gas (soil to atmosphere)

This will need to be repeated to understand the dynamic system



Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Initial Response

- HSE provided immediate response and technical support to the incident on 19th October. (multi-agency)
- The gas network was subsequently ruled out as the source of the gas.
- Attention turned to the geothermal borehole, which is subject to an ongoing HSE investigation and remediation works to permanently seal it.
- The borehole hit methane gas at a depth of 103m on 2nd July 2024 and was being vented to atmosphere in a controlled manner.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Current Situation

- Survey in progress, drill rig and crew are onsite – this has determined that the borehole is blocked at -10.7metres below ground level.
- Gas pressure is at 0.95 bar and there is some percolation past the blockage, but closing the valve shows correlating build up at the adjacent property.
- Controlled sequence of operations.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Next Steps

1. Clear the blockage with the drill rig.
2. Clean / ream the borehole and camera survey assess the condition and determine a suitable position (both strata & depth) for deployment of a packer.
3. Test gas tightness and cement borehole.
4. Continuous monitoring and checks.

Bedfordshire Police

- We are continuing to work with partners to conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the explosion. This includes reviewing any previous issues reported in the local area and ensuring sufficient resource of any post incident demand
- We have and will continue to support the partnership response by staffing the cordons and maintaining a police presence in the area to ensure empty properties are secure
- In coordination with partners, we will also support with efforts to escort people inside the cordon to attend the properties when it is safe to do so

Bedford Borough Council

- Officers are liaising with residents to provide **ongoing advice and support**, and to establish how the Council can best assist with their needs.
- We have also opened an advice and support centre at St Marks' Church, set up an 24/7 emergency helpline for residents, and send text updates to residents throughout each day.
- We have made progress while working with partners to allow secure access to properties within a certain radius and continue to work towards all residents being able to access their homes to collect belongings and essentials that you would need over the next 4 weeks.
- We are making direct contact with residents by phone where it is identified addresses are safe to access.

Housing:

- 25 households accommodated

Welfare Assistance:

- 39 households, (79 individuals) paid
- 80 clothing payments through our financial support package

Emergency Helpline:

- 134 calls answered
- Average waiting time on line 2mins

St Marks' Church Advice and Support Centre (open 9am - 8pm):

- Opened Tuesday 12.00
- Customer services, housing, citizens advice presence and social service support.
- Digital assistance, PC and free Wi-Fi available on site
- Appx 20 customers a day (total 80 so far)

Professional Security Firm

We have employed a professional security firm to patrol the areas that back on to Mowsbury Park Golf Club

NHS have contacted all local GPs to ensure that prescriptions are prioritised. A Multi-agency 4-week priority plan is being developed with the aim to have this in place by the week

Q & A