



PRESS RELEASE

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Recycling worker is fire hero

A Wiltshire recycling worker has been hailed a hero after putting out a kitchen fire while out on his rounds.

Denis Jasper works for Hills Waste Solutions Ltd and was delivering Black Box recycling leaflets on behalf of Wiltshire County Council when the drama occurred.

Mr Jasper, aged 48, was working in Cockhill, Trowbridge, when mum Jo Browne asked him for help.

Her gas cooker had accidentally caught alight, setting fire to the kitchen and blowing out the glass in the door of her house.

Mrs Browne was at home with her eldest daughter Alice, aged 29, her youngest daughter Violet, aged three, and Alice's daughter Esme at the time. All three had been in the back garden when the fire took hold and had to run past it to escape.

Mr Jasper, first confirmed they had called the fire brigade then ran to the property. He found the cooker, tea towels and the kitchen floor on fire.

Mr Jasper wasted no time. He pulled the items which could catch fire, such as the bin, out of the kitchen. He then grabbed a fire extinguisher from the pantry and used that on the flames.

Just as he had made everything was safe two fire crews from Trowbridge arrived.

The father of five didn't hang around though as he had to catch up with his workmates who were continuing on their rounds.

"I didn't really think about what I was doing," said Mr Jasper, who has worked for Hills for a year and is a kerbside loader based at the company's Materials Recycling Facility at Lower Compton near Devizes.

"I have got fire training from my previous job. I just had this instant reaction when I saw the lady and her baby both in tears.

"The air was thick with acrid, black smoke so I had to come out into the fresh air several times to catch my breath before going back in and damping down the flames.

"My biggest regret was that in all the excitement I forgot to give out my recycling leaflet."

Mrs Browne said she didn't even have time to thank Mr Jasper but is grateful for his swift actions which prevented a serious incident.

Monique Hayes, communication officer at Hills, said: "We are very proud that Denis's swift actions helped avert what could have been a serious incident.

"We are just pleased that no-one was hurt and wish Mrs Browne and her family all the best.

“Denis is very modest and his work colleagues have been having a little fun at his expense but we all know he is a real hero.”

The fire brigade later discovered that the fire extinguisher which Mr Jasper used dated from the 1950s – but it did the job.

The incident, which occurred around 1.30pm on Wednesday November 26, comes as Wiltshire Fire and Rescue issue a reminder to people about how easily kitchen fires can occur. Since October 1 there have been 23 such incidents in the county.

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