

## Useful hints and tips to help you to protect your home

Please read these hints and tips carefully as the advice it contains could help to prevent damage to your home. We are committed to supporting you with practical solutions to help you avoid some of the most common causes of damage.

- \* Sparks are the most common cause of thatch fires.
- \* Chimney tops should be at least 1.8m above thatch (approximately 9 bricks & chimney pot), make sure there are no capping devices on your chimney as they deflect sparks downwards.
- \* Spark arrestors to chimneys should be removed, if it is not possible make sure they are cleaned thoroughly before Autumn and you start to use the chimney.
- \* A high level weatherproof vent should be provided in the chimney stack above the thatch, this will allow heated air to escape and stop the build up of heat within the brickwork of the chimney stack.
- \* Thatch should be sprayed with fire retardant spray at least every 4 years to a distance of 2 metres around each chimney where open fires, woodburning and other stoves are used.
- \* Use hard woods that have been seasoned for at least 2 years and have 20% moisture content or less, it is well worth investing in a moisture metre.
- \* Make sure all open fires and stoves are completely out before leaving the property unattended for any time & before going to bed.
- \* Do not burn paper on open fires or in stoves with the door open.
- \* Never burn unseasoned or soft wood.

Fires are devastating to all concerned. It takes a very long time to reinstate the property to a habitable state so it is in your interest to take these few simple steps to minimise the risk.