

WHAT CAN THE COUNCIL DO TO ASSIST ME?

If you find that contact with your neighbour direct is unsuccessful or you do not feel comfortable with this approach then the Council maybe able to assist you.

We will write to your neighbours informing them that we have received a complaint. This letter explains the allegations and invites them to contact us to discuss the problem. For a bonfire to be a nuisance, it will have to be a continuing problem which substantially affects the comfort or enjoyment of your property. If it is only an occasional fire, it is unlikely to be considered a nuisance.

We will write to you, asking you to complete a monitoring log sheet for a period of up to 28 days. This log helps us assess whether the bonfire is likely to be causing a Statutory Nuisance. If an officer from this department witnesses the bonfire and considers it to be a nuisance then an abatement notice will be served. Non compliance of the notice can lead to prosecution at court.

IS THERE ANY LEGAL ACTION I CAN TAKE MYSELF?

If an officer is unable to witness the bonfire or does not consider it to be a nuisance, you can take private action in the Magistrates Court under Section 82 Environmental Protection Act 1990.



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BONFIRES



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WHAT'S WRONG WITH BONFIRES?

EVERY YEAR, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES RECEIVES A LARGE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS ABOUT BONFIRES

Even though garden bonfires can be a convenient and easy way of getting rid of waste, they can be a nuisance to people living nearby. Such nuisances need never arise if due consideration is shown to neighbours. Here are some problems caused by inconsiderate bonfires:

BONFIRE SMOKE could prevent your neighbours from opening their windows or ruin the enjoyment of their garden particularly in summer.

BONFIRES cause air pollution particularly if the garden waste is damp and smouldering rather than dry and blazing.

AIR POLLUTION can have a damaging health effect particularly on asthmatics, bronchitis sufferers or those with heart conditions.

BONFIRES could endanger neighbouring properties in the event that they get out of control.

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

- Composting is the best means of disposal of garden and food waste.
- Woody waste can be shredded to make composting or mulching. Alternatively place them in your brown council garden waste bin for collection.
- Recycle unwanted plastic bottles, cans and paper by either taking them to your nearest Council Amenity site or making use of the kerbside collection schemes operated by the council.
- Larger waste items including beds, carpets and household items can be taken to you nearest Council Amenity site or collected by the Council's bulky waste service (for further information and charges call 01473 433090) or by hiring a skip.



CAN I HAVE A BONFIRE?

If you do have a bonfire then it is important that you do not cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

- Warn your neighbours. They are much less likely to complain if they are given sufficient time to take some precautions such as closing windows and bringing in washing.
- Only burn dry material. Never burn rubber, treated wood, painted materials, plastics, damp garden waste or materials likely to create heavy smoke or toxic fumes. Never use petrol, paraffin or oil to light the fire.
- Choose a time that will cause the least inconvenience to your neighbours. Avoid burning at weekends or bank holidays.
- Where possible burn in a metal container such as a brazier and site the bonfire away from trees, fences and windows.
- Never leave a fire unattended or leave it to smoulder - put it out.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MY NEIGHBOURS HAVING BONFIRES?

It is a common misconception that there are specific byelaws prohibiting garden bonfires or specifying times they can be lit. This is not the case. However, if your neighbour's bonfire is affecting your comfort we would recommend that you either speak with them or write to them, as they may not be aware that they are causing you a nuisance.