

Environmental Pollution Control

GARDEN BONFIRES – HOW NOT TO ANNOY YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Garden bonfires, if burned in an uncontrolled manner, may give off smoke which will annoy and be a nuisance to nearby neighbours. Smoke problems from garden bonfires can be minimised by following these simple guidance notes:

1. Compost as much garden rubbish as possible and keep any burning to a minimum.
2. Hedge clippings and other woody cuttings which are unsuitable for composting should be thoroughly dried before being burnt. A quick, hot fire will produce a minimum of smoke.
3. Do not light a bonfire if the wind is going to cause the smoke or smuts to be a nuisance to anyone.
4. Avoid lighting a fire within an hour of sunset or leaving it alight later than one hour after sunset when weather conditions often cause smoke to hang in the air.
5. Do not leave the bonfire unattended as burning conditions may change quickly with the possibility of either heavy smoke emissions or risk to the safety of nearby structures.
6. Never allow a bonfire to smoulder – extinguish it with soil or water before leaving it.
7. For safety's sake, never add household rubbish to a garden bonfire, particularly items such as aerosol cans or plastics, as explosions or acrid, chemical smoke may result.
8. Be aware of the law concerning smoke nuisance.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 gives a local authority the power to serve an Abatement Notice where it is satisfied that a nuisance has occurred, or is likely to occur or recur, which effectively prohibits further nuisance. If such an Abatement Notice is then contravened, it can result in a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (currently £5000).

9. As an alternative to garden bonfires, there is the WLDC Garden Waste Collection Service. Or you may choose to take your garden rubbish to your local house waste recycling centre (tip).

Your co-operation in avoiding nuisance from smoke and ash will, I am sure, be appreciated by all your neighbours.

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