

Garden Bonfires

Please don't stop your
neighbours enjoying their gardens
by lighting a bonfire carelessly.



Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Consider Your Neighbours

Do you enjoy your garden?

Please don't stop your neighbours enjoying theirs by lighting a bonfire carelessly.

Remember that bonfire smoke can be very irritating and even harmful, particularly to people with chest or heart problems.

Garden Waste and Composting

Use your brown bin collection service to recycle your garden waste or alternatively if you haven't got enough space in your brown bin, it can be taken to the household waste recycling site at St Albans Road, Stafford or Beacon Road, Stone.

Try to compost as much garden rubbish as possible. A properly built compost heap can provide excellent fertiliser and soil conditioner.

A wide range of composters are available at www.getcomposting.com or you can order composters and get advice by calling the helpline 08445 714 444.

How to Prevent Smoke Nuisance

If you must light a fire ensure that only dry material is burnt. This will produce the minimum of smoke. Never add household rubbish or rubber tyres to the fire, or use sump oil to set it alight.

Do not light a fire when weather conditions will cause problems. Smoke hangs in the air on damp, windless days and in the evening around sunset. Do not light a fire just before sunset.

Do not burn when the wind will carry smoke over another property, or over roads.

Bonfires can be dangerous, should never be left unattended. Don't leave a fire to smoulder - douse it with soil or water.

Bonfires and the Law

By lighting a smoky bonfire, you could be breaking the law. Fires started within 50 feet of the centre of a road, which inconvenience passers-by or damage the highway are an offence under the Highways Act 1980. Under Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 it is an offence to cause a nuisance through the creation of smoke.

What Can the Council Do?

Once a complaint has been made to this service you can expect an initial response within three working days. Depending on the nature of the complaint this may be by telephone, letter or an officer may visit the person responsible for the smoke to advise them of the complaint and remedial action needed to prevent further nuisance.

In many cases this is sufficient to resolve the problem. If the investigating officer thinks that the smoke is a statutory nuisance, or that a statutory nuisance is likely to occur or recur, an abatement notice will be served on the person responsible for the nuisance.

If a person receives an abatement notice but carries on causing a nuisance without good reason, they will have committed an offence and can be prosecuted. Courts can impose fines of up to £5,000 for individuals and £20,000 for businesses.

Private Action

If, for whatever reason, the Council does not take any action, or you do not wish to involve the Council, you can complain about a smoke problem directly to the Magistrates Court. Before you start legal proceedings you are required to write to the smoke maker to explain that you intend to take legal action. When thinking about taking this course of action you can seek advice from the Clerk of the Court.

CONTACT

Operations
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If you need this information in **large print, Braille, other language** or in **audio format** please contact:
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