

# Code of Practice for Bonfires on Allotment Sites

**BUILDING PRIDE** IN OUR CITY

## Environmental Health

### Bonfires and Smoke Guidance

There is no law against having bonfires, though it is an offence for the smoke, or the smell of the smoke, to cause a nuisance. Smoke from garden bonfires in a residential area can seriously affect the residential amenity and enjoyment of other premises. It can also contribute to local air pollution levels and, in some locations, reduce visibility on nearby roads.

If materials are dry and burn quickly creating little smoke, then there is usually little problem, providing the smoke does not blow directly towards occupied premises. Damp vegetation, however, does not burn well as it produces large volumes of smoke and smoulders for long periods of time. The burning of this type of waste causes most complaints and so it should be disposed of in other ways.

Our policy on bonfires is to seek the co-operation of members in avoiding nuisance from bonfires by asking that garden waste and other material that can be composted or recycled. If there is no alternative to having a bonfire then the burning should be carried out when the weather conditions are suitable.

A bonfire can be a convenient way of getting rid of a large amount of waste, or perhaps you want a bonfire just for fun - on Guy Fawkes Night for instance. If a bonfire is the most practicable and environmentally friendly way to dispose of dry garden waste (for example, diseased plant material that cannot be composted) warn your neighbours - they are much less likely to complain. Remember that bonfire and barbecue parties can cause noise as well as smoke.

If a bonfire is the best practicable option for disposing of garden waste, follow these guidelines and the chances are you won't annoy your neighbours or cause serious nuisance:

#### **Nuisance**

A single bonfire is unlikely to be a nuisance even though it may cause annoyance to one or more neighbours. In order to be a nuisance, there has to be evidence about the frequency of the bonfires, their duration, the locality and how the bonfire directly affects the complainant's enjoyment of their land.

[www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)



# Code of practice for bonfires on Cripsey Meadow

- Only burn dry material.
- Wherever possible, composting and/or shredders should be used in preference to burning.
- Never burn household rubbish, rubber tyres, or anything containing plastic, oil, foam or paint.
- Never use old engine oil, meths or petrol to light the fire or encourage it.
- Avoid lighting a fire in unsuitable weather conditions - smoke hangs in the air on damp, still days and in the evening and avoid if the wind will blow smoke on neighbouring buildings or other plots.
- Avoid burning when air pollution in your area is high or very high.
- Bonfires must be supervised and attended at all times either in the communal area by the shed or on the plot holder's own plot.
- Bonfires must be positioned away from any fencing, shed, other building or a path/roadway.
- Any plot holder found to have caused damage with a bonfire shall be liable for the full costs of repair or replacement.
- **There are to be no bonfires on Bank or Public Holidays**
- No bonfire shall cause a smoke nuisance to the surrounding residents' as stated in Section 79(1b) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Members may ask other members to put out a fire if it is causing them nuisance
- Any plot holder found to be causing a smoke nuisance by the Environmental Health Department or to be in **flagrant breach** of this Code of Practice risks their allotment membership.