

What's wrong with a good old fashioned bonfire?

Many people like having bonfires but they can be very irritating to neighbours - the smoke, smuts and smell result in many complaints to the Council.

Smoke prevents your neighbours from enjoying their gardens, opening windows or hanging out washing and can reduce visibility in the neighbourhood and on roads.

Bonfires cause air pollution. Burning garden waste produces smoke, especially if it is damp and smouldering rather than dry and blazing. Like tobacco smoke, this will contain the poisonous gas carbon monoxide and other noxious or irritating compounds. Burning plastic, rubber or painted materials not only creates an unpleasant smell but also produces a range of poisonous compounds. These compounds can damage health. Problems may be caused for asthmatics, bronchitis sufferers or those with heart conditions and children. Even if the immediate health risk is small, your bonfire will be adding to the general background level of air pollution. Air pollution in the UK often hits the official 'poor' level - do you really want to make it worse?

Weather conditions affect air pollution. If the air is still, particularly in the late afternoon or evening, smoke will linger. A dry blazing bonfire will lift smoke and fumes upwards. If it is too windy, smoke may blow into neighbours' properties and across roads causing annoyance or danger. If bonfire smoke is allowed to drift across a road, reducing visibility for drivers, call the Police.

Remember, bonfires are dangerous. Fire can spread to fences or buildings and scorch trees and plants.

If you have a problem with a neighbour's bonfire, talk to them first. If that doesn't work, you can register a complaint by contacting the Customer Service Centre by telephone (01923 776611) or e-mail enquiries@threerivers.gov.uk. Always give an indication of when you can be found at home, or where you can be contacted during the day. Try to give a precise location of the source of the problem.