

ALLOTMENTS:

We have received complaints that bonfires are being lit on sites as early as 9am. We do not have Bye-laws in Tunbridge Wells to cover the lighting of bonfires but follow the Council's 'Advice to householders' which is self explanatory.

For further information and advice on bonfires, please contact:

**Environmental Protection Team
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Kent TN1 1RS**

Tel: 01622 602450

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If you require this information in large print, on audiotape or in any other format please contact us on 01892 526121

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BONFIRES

Advice for householders



Bonfires can cause real annoyance and nuisance to neighbours and we strongly discourage them. The environmental protection team receives many complaints every year from members of the public who are upset by smoke from bonfires thoughtlessly lit by their neighbours. Unpleasant smells and ash deposits can ruin your neighbours' washing and spoil their enjoyment of their houses and gardens. Smoke can also be very distressing, especially if the victim suffers from asthma or similar conditions.

Before lighting a bonfire, ask yourself is it really necessary? Most garden waste can be composted and will provide valuable humus for the garden. Waste material should be recycled or disposed of at your nearest civic amenity site (Northfarm household waste tip or placed in your brown bin if you have one).



If you are determined to have a bonfire, here are some guidelines to minimise the risk of it becoming a serious nuisance.

- Choose the site and time for your bonfire carefully, taking notice of those living nearby.
- Never light a bonfire unless you are satisfied that weather conditions and wind direction will mean that smoke will be carried away from your neighbour's windows and gardens – if its misty or damp, the bonfire will smoulder and producer excessive smoke; if its windy, smoke may blow into neighbouring properties and across roads; if the air is still, smoke will linger and lower levels.
- Make sure that there is no laundry in any neighbouring gardens. Only put dry material on the bonfire that will burn quickly and with the minimum of smoke.
- Compost or bury soft vegetable waste and grass cuttings, etc, which are difficult to dry.
- Never burn oily rags, rubber, plastics, foam, paint, or such materials as they will produce heavy or pungent smoke.
- Never use flammable liquids such as oil or petrol to help start your bonfire.
- **REMEMBER** – bonfires are dangerous; never leave them unattended. Do not even leave them when they are smouldering – douse them with water if necessary. Fire can spread to fences or buildings and scorch trees and plants.
- Let your neighbours enjoy their time off from work do not burn at weekends or on bank holidays.

Finally, bonfires may constitute a 'Statutory Nuisance' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and action may be taken against you in the Magistrates' Court which could result in a fine of up to £5,000.