

Bonfires

As we look forward to summer barbecues and time spent enjoying our gardens please spare a thought for others before you light up a bonfire.

Why do people have to light dirty smelly bonfires on a lovely sunny day when the air is still and the smoke drifts in through open windows meaning that you have to do your laundry all over again. So much for a greener society!

West Oxfordshire Council have a leaflet, *The Environmental Protection Act 1990*, which states; 'It is an offence to cause a smoke nuisance to other residents.' In such cases the Council has the legal duty to act to ensure that nuisance is abated. Persistent offenders could be liable, on conviction, for a substantial fine.

Guidelines

If you do have to light a bonfire please only burn dry material and never burn household rubbish, rubber tyres, or anything containing plastic, foam or paint. Never use old engine oil, meths, petrol or paraffin to light the fire or to



encourage it and avoid lighting a fire in unsuitable weather conditions. Avoid burning when the wind will carry the smoke over the roads or into other people's properties at the weekends and on Bank Holidays, when people want to enjoy their gardens. Avoid burning when the air quality in your area is 'poor' or 'very poor'. You can check this by ringing: 0800 556677 or looking at Ceefax page 401. Never leave a fire unattended or smouldering.

The leaflet gives alternatives to lighting bonfires such as composting, recycling, civic amenity sites and collection.

Increased air pollution may cause long-term problems for children, asthmatics or bronchitis sufferers. Smoke can contain cancer-causing substances.

So, please think of others before lighting a bonfire.

Karen Perry

How Smart is Your Driving?

Most car drivers could be travelling a lot further on a tank of fuel. No new car required, just a change to smarter driving. Try these tips:

Shift up the gears earlier (between 2,000 and 2,500 rpm). Cruising comfortably in fifth gear is the best place to be. Cut your top speed. Wind resistance increases significantly with speed. The optimum speed for fuel efficiency is 45 to 50 mph. Avoid unnecessary braking by anticipating the traffic ahead. Fluid motion is better than stop/start.

When slowing down, stay in gear and take your foot off the accelerator as early as possible. This reduces fuel consumption to near zero.

Plan your route to avoid congestion or getting lost.

Smarter driving could save you the equivalent of about one month's worth of fuel each year. For more money-saving tips contact the Energy Saving Trust on: 0800 512 012.

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