

# A message from our local Fire Authority

## Don't risk it, don't light it!

Save your bonfire for cooler weather. It is simply too hot, too dry and too much of a fire risk. Don't risk it, don't light it!

You only have to look out of the window to know how dry the grassland, verges, hedgerows and fields are following the unusually hot dry weather. Unfortunately, this means that there is a real risk of fire starting from human behaviour and impacting on property and others.

Milton Keynes has the benefit of numerous parks and green space, the prolonged high temperatures have led to this becoming tinder dry, with the resulting impact being that any fire has the potential to spread really quickly. Sadly, areas such as the Blue Lagoon nature reserve have been impacted recently by discarded rubbish either catching light accidentally or being deliberately set light to. Glass bottles left in vegetation can focus sunlight, prompting smouldering. Coals in disposable barbecues take a long time to cool down and should not be left to burn out.



Blue Lagoon burnt out field

Since 1 June 2022, disposable barbecues have not been permitted on any of The Parks Trust sites due to the difficulty in safely disposing of them and the potential for them to burn the picnic tables they are placed on, or ignite dry grassland. Whilst landowners like The Parks Trust proactively manage their land, short grass and hedgerows can still burn when cigarettes or glass bottles are dropped on them.



Glass bottles left behind in burnt out field

Emberton Country Park is also a picnic only park, with barbecues only prohibited on site only for those in the camping area.

Since 1 July 2022, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has been called to 68 bonfires at a time when there has been a number of large-scale incidents, including a major incident being declared due to the exceptionally high demand.

## **From 1<sup>st</sup> July we have been called to 68 bonfires**

We are therefore asking you to not have bonfires during times of extreme heat. Consider the potential impact of bonfires, barbecues and discarded rubbish starting a fire that may spread and damage the area you were enjoying. Please consider:

- Taking a picnic not a barbecue on a day out and taking all rubbish home with you. If you can carry it there, you can carry it home
- Thinking twice before discarding cigarettes, especially from car windows where you cannot see what might develop. Ideally extinguish them in water.
- How tinder dry everything is. If you must have a barbecue, bonfire, or woodburner, don't do so on grass that can easily catch light
- If you choose to have a barbecue or bonfire at home, have a hose and buckets of water to hand – the water pressure from a standard hose may not be sufficient to extinguish a bonfire spreading to grass
- Not leaving a barbecue, bonfire or woodburner to burn out – when everything you want to burn has done so, extinguish the embers with water and turn them over to check that there is no potential for them to continue to smoulder.