



East Suffolk Council's Policy on Barbecues and Open Fires on Council land

Version 1.2 August 2024

Introduction

- 1.1. The policy is to prohibit the use of portable BBQs (including “disposable” barbecues) and naked flames on land owned by East Suffolk Council, unless specific permission has been granted (and fee paid) through an application to the Council's Events Team.
- 1.2. This directly relates to *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) Schedule 2* which prohibits activities including that “a person cannot light or tend a fire or undertake any act which is likely to cause a fire.”
- 1.3. It also acknowledges bye-laws and Public Spaces Protection Orders in place in East Suffolk relating to beaches and seafronts which state that ‘no person shall on the seashore light a fire, or place, throw or drop a lighted match or any other thing likely to cause a fire.’
- 1.4. It reinforces and expands upon the council's ban on the release of any sky lanterns whatsoever, that is included within the terms for leasing council land for all events.
- 1.5. The Policy will be used by the Council to reinforce the clear and consistent message relating to portable BBQ's and the use of naked flames.
- 1.6. This includes (but is not constraint to) parks, gardens, open spaces, beaches, the Promenades, woodland and playgrounds owned and maintained by East Suffolk Council.
- 1.7. The policy relates to:
 - 1.7.1. BBQs
 - 1.7.2. Sky lanterns
 - 1.7.3. Open Fires / beacons
 - 1.7.4. Fireworks
 - 1.7.5. Candles
 - 1.7.6. Any other naked flame

The Issue

2. With increased temperatures during the summer months there is an increased risk of wildfires. The better weather means that more people are spending more time eating outdoors and with the price and availability of portable BBQ's it has meant that there has been a huge increase in their use. This has led to a significant increase in fires related to portable BBQs generally in the UK; evidence of these impacts is included in the appendix. This also relates to other types of naked flames, such as sky lanterns, set off for events.

- 2.1. The risks from portable BBQ's and other naked flames not being disposed of correctly or not being extinguished correctly include:
 - 2.1.1. Fire risk to properties and infrastructure near places that are considered high risk.
 - 2.1.2. Risk to life from wildfire.
 - 2.1.3. Risk to staff that's not necessarily life threatening, such as burns and smoke inhalation.
 - 2.1.4. Risks to rescue services when having to deal with wildfires.
 - 2.1.5. Fire risk damaging habitats and species.
 - 2.1.6. Risks through waste disposal, including bin and refuse lorry fires.
 - 2.1.7. Risks to livestock and animal (wild and domestic) health and wellbeing through fire risk and disturbance
 - 2.1.8. Impacts on the environment e.g. littering on land, discarded coals in the soil and in waterways and risk of consequent physical harm to livestock and wildlife
 - 2.1.9. Impact to other users of the sites, such as the smoke generated by BBQs.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Appendix 1.

Recent incidents attributed to disposable barbecues:

- 24 June 2024, Borrowdale. 400 m² of grassland in National Park damaged by blaze blamed on disposable BBQ. [Borrowdale wildfire caused by 'discarded barbecue' - BBC News](#)
- 10 June 2024. Overton Cliff Nature Reserve. Disposable BBQ caused one acre of nature reserve to catch fire. Site used for coastal nesting birds and reptiles. [Disposable barbecue causes damage to nature reserve \(nation.cymru\)](#)
- 6 May 2024. Falmouth. Disposable BBQ sets fire to a bin. [Warning disposable BBQ bin fire at a Falmouth beauty spot | Falmouth Packet](#)
- 6 July 2023. Cannock Chase. Disposable BBQ set fire to greenery in woodland. [Discarded disposable barbeque leads to woodland fire \(staffordshirefire.gov.uk\)](#)
- 7 June 2023 Stratford-upon-Avon. Disposable BBQ sets fire to recycling lorry. Over 4 tonnes of recycling then had to be tipped in the road where the firefighters extinguished it. [Urgent warning after disposable BBQ starts blaze in recycling lorry | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)
- 20 June 2023. Santon Downham. Unattended BBQ set surrounding plant life alight, took just under an hour to extinguish. [Firefighters from Thetford, Newmarket and Brandon called to forest fire in Santon Downham \(suffolknews.co.uk\)](#)
- 2 June 2023. Pitsea. Fire at recycling centre caused by disposable BBQ. [Disposable barbeque sparks blaze at Essex recycling centre as people urged to dispose of them properly - Essex Live](#)
- 29 August 2022. Baggy Point. People had set a disposable barbecue on a rocky area along the coast. However, the wind picked up the lightweight barbecue and blew it up to the gorse land above. Some 8 hectares of gorse land was burned, destroying the habitats and nesting sites of a number of species. Baggy Point is a site of special scientific interest, and it could take decades to recover to its former glory. The fire took significant resources at a busy time for our services. It took 70 firefighters a full day to put out. [Baggy Point: Wildfire started by disposable barbecue destroys habitats - BBC News](#)
- 13 August 2022. Studland Heath. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) said almost five hectares of National Trust nature reserve, an internationally important example of lowland heath, had been destroyed by fire thought to have been caused by a disposable barbecue and campfire. [Studland Heath: Fire at nature reserve extinguished - BBC News](#)

- 18 July 2022. Lickey Hills. 5 hectares of country park burnt in fire requiring attendance by 12 fire crews and evacuation of 15 local residents. [Disposable barbecue probable cause of fires last week on Lickey Hills, says HWFRS | Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service \(hwfire.org.uk\)](#) [Huge fire breaks out at Lickey Hills Country Park | ITV News Central](#)
- 21 July 2020. Toddler's feet burnt by disposable BBQ in Devon. [Toddler's feet burned by disposable barbecue on Exmouth beach | ITV News West Country](#)
- 21 May 2020. Wareham Forest. Around 190 hectares damaged by fire believed to have been caused by disposable BBQs. One third of the forest is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is home to rare birds, plants and invertebrates. [Wareham Forest blaze 'started by disposable barbecue or camp-fire' - BBC News](#)
- 27 April 2020. Puddletown Forest. Fire crews from Poole, Weymouth, Bere Regis, Dorchester, Blandford, Wimbourne and Hamworthy attended fire damaging heathland believed to have been ignited by a disposable BBQ. [Puddletown Forest fire 'caused by disposable barbecue' - BBC News](#)
- 20 April 2019. Marsden Moor, West Yorkshire. Disposable BBQ led to the destruction of over 280 hectares of moor land. The National Trust, which owns the moorland, said the area was a “special place” for wildlife and it was likely that mountain hares and nesting birds, such as merlins, skylarks and curlews, died in the flames. [Huge area of Yorkshire moorland destroyed by fire | Yorkshire | The Guardian](#)