

## Please be considerate neighbours – bonfire and noise complaints are rising

Stroud District Council's Environmental Health officers have seen a huge increase in complaints about noise and smoke since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. Between 22 March and 20 April this year, 57 noise complaints were received compared to 14 in the same period last year, and 73 complaints about smoke compared to just 12 last year.

Dave Jackson, Stroud District Council's Environmental Protection Manager said: "Clearly, a lot of people are spending more time at home and so increasing the chances of either creating or suffering from a noise or smoke problem.

"Some people have more time on their hands than usual and have responded by tidying the garden and household, which has undoubtedly led to a significant increase in bonfires.

"Others also have the opportunity to play their music, perhaps moving equipment outside in the sunny weather we've been experiencing. Maybe they're keeping later hours as they don't need to rise early at the moment.

"Finally, many people are simply worried and fearful which is perhaps leading to actions that wouldn't normally arise, whether that be to create noise or smoke problems or to complain about things that wouldn't normally annoy them."

Legal powers exist to tackle these issues and, where necessary, the council will use them, however thinking of the effect your actions could have on your neighbours should lead to more pleasant neighbourhoods for everyone.

Stroud District Council Environment Committee Chair Simon Pickering said: "There is simply no need to light a garden bonfire, so please don't do it. The smoke will almost certainly create unnecessary problems for what is, at present a captive audience. Many who will be self-isolating, suffer from respiratory problems and may be anxious.

"Similarly, it is fine to enjoy music but you don't need to share that enthusiasm with all your neighbours. Keep the music at a level where it won't be audible beyond your own house and everyone will have one less problem to worry about.

"Please stop to think - if we can all be just a little bit more thoughtful and courteous, then we will all benefit."

Stroud District Council's priorities are to support residents and businesses, and co-ordinate our community response so those who need help will get it during the Coronavirus crisis. As a result, temporary changes have been made to some services in order to maintain essential council services, including waste and recycling.

If you have garden waste and don't subscribe to Stroud District Council's garden waste service, please store your waste until the Government advises that the household waste recycling centres can re-open.

For the 10,000 households who continue to have their garden waste collected, please don't overfill your bin. If you have too much for your bin, don't force it in, but wait for the next collection.

The county's emergency response to covid-19 is being coordinated and delivered by arrange of partners across the county, including NHS, county and district councils, police, hospitals, fire and rescue and south west ambulance service.