

Organising a Community-Led Bonfire and/or Fireworks Event

(Updated May 2026)

The Policy

The Council has agreed a policy that provides a clear framework that supports community-led bonfire/firework public events, whilst ensuring oversight of such events taking place on Council and private land through Wirral Event Safety Advisory Group (WESAG). The policy also provides the basis for enforcement action to be taken against those organisers not engaging or complying with the process. Whilst the burning of bonfires and lighting of fireworks have environmental impacts, the policy has been adopted in the interests of public safety.

Role of the Event Organiser

To apply the guiding principles of this policy, to enter into and comply with the terms and conditions set out in the Land Use Agreement (if the event is on Council land) and to comply with all relevant laws, to deliver a safe event that minimises the impact on both the local community and the environment.

The Process



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Council services, co-ordinated by the Community Safety service, will work with and support organisers of community bonfire/firework events on both private and Council land that agree to undertake the following:

Formal event notification

Organisers should complete the [notification of event form](#) at least 12 weeks prior to the event (ideally 16 weeks before).

An officer from Community Safety will contact the organiser to discuss the event proposal and provide further advice. Once there has been an agreement in principle to progress the application, then the next steps can be followed.

Production of necessary documentation

The organiser is required to produce documentation related to the proposed event. This will include but is not limited to:

- Public Liability Insurance (minimum £10million);
- Proof of permission to use the land (if Council land – agreement in principle);
- Site Plan;
- Event Plan (including details of site layout, crowd management, stewarding, first aid provision, safeguarding, traffic management and emergency contingencies);
- Risk Assessment(s);
- Licences and Permits (as required).

Compliance with Explosive Industry Group guidance

The organiser will be required to comply with advice contained within the [Explosive Industry Group guidance](#) in relation to firework displays (if relevant to the event).

Compliance with local agency guidance

The organiser must comply with guidance provided (including but not limited to the Council, Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service).

Guidance may include, but is not limited to, advice on:

- Type of event;
- Scale - National guidance states that community organised bonfires should not exceed a 4m square base and be no more than 3 metres in height.
- Build timescale will be limited to reduce the time available to stockpile material and minimise the impact on wildlife. A date will be agreed with organisers which is likely to be no more than 7 days prior to the event.
- Location;
- Permitted hours;
- Safety measures;
- Traffic and crowd management;

- Noise levels;
- Waste management;
- Safeguarding;
- Licensing requirements;
- Considering the needs of persons with protected characteristics.
- Suitable controls to minimise smoke emissions after the event has ended;
- Proactive engagement with nearby households to give practical advice in terms of noise, emissions, etc.

Work with the Council and other agencies to minimise the environmental impact

The organiser must work with the Council and other agencies to minimise the impact of the event on the natural environment in line with existing Council policies and legislation. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Preparatory actions such as ground works, siting of bonfire etc. to prevent damage to property;
- Minimise stockpiling of bonfire material, to avoid creating a fire hazard and attracting rodents;
- Ensuring only dry untreated wood is burnt;
- Limiting the time between build and burn;
- Preventing fly tipping at the location. There will be an expectation that the event organiser will take the lead and be proactive in taking steps to stop others using the site to dispose of waste;
- Check for wildlife in bonfires prior to lighting;
- Post-event clean up. Event plans should contain sufficient detail regarding how the site is going to be cleansed and returned to an acceptable condition.

Attendance at Wirral Event Safety Advisory Group (WESAG) to present plans

The organiser must present their plans to WESAG, which consists of relevant representatives including Wirral Council, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, North West Ambulance Service, NHS and HM Coastguard. Organisers should abide by their decisions and recommendations.

Further guidance can be found here:

- [Celebrating with bonfires and fireworks - A Community Guide to Organising Bonfires and Fireworks \(Home Office\)](#)
- [Fireworks: the law \(GOV.UK\)](#)
- [Firework safety \(RoSPA\)](#)

For additional information or advice, please contact engage@wirral.gov.uk.