



Alarm over air pollution from allotment bonfires

By David Melsome

Last March, *The Archer* published a Soapbox column written by Trisha and Peter Portinari pointing out the hazards of air pollution caused, they said, by bonfires on the allotments to the rear of their home in Creighton Avenue, N2.

We've now been contacted by a resident of one of the tower blocks in Prospect Ring raising the same concern. The resident accompanied his email with photos looking out across East Finchley from his flat, showing bonfires burning on allotment land off the High Road. The resident, who asked to remain

to April.

Compost preferred to fires

Cathy said: "Reminders are issued to plot holders to have as few fires as possible. Only dry vegetation should be burned and everyone is encouraged to compost material as much as possible.

"If a plot holder has a



Smoke signals: A photo taken from Prospect Ring shows an allotment bonfire burning

anonymous, urged allotment holders to have more consideration for the potential smoke and particulate pollution they could be causing by burning waste so close to homes and the neighbouring Martin Primary School.

He wrote: "I see fires and smoke on a daily basis. I get the impression that they have absolutely no regard for the well-being of the surrounding population, particularly children. It's fortunate that Martin School has a limited number of pupils attending due to Covid restrictions."

Lease regulations

We asked Cathy Schling, Secretary of the East Finchley Allotment Holders' Association, for a comment. She told us that the allotment committee was very aware of the need to keep pollution from bonfires to a minimum and had been discussing the best way to limit their number.

According to the allotment site lease, bonfires are allowed one specified day a month from May to September and at any time on any day during October

bonfire on the wrong day, which happens very rarely, or is burning the wrong type of material, someone from the committee will speak to them and ask them to extinguish the bonfire.

"If a local resident complains about smoke I will try to contact the plot holder and ask them to put it out. If local residents are bothered by the smoke they often ring me and I do try to respond to their complaints."

Judith Ryan, secretary of the neighbouring Fuel Land Allotments, told us fires and barbecues were prohibited between 1 May and 30 September, except on the first Wednesday of July, August and September. The management committee encouraged composting of green waste, rather than burning.

Judith added: "Our rules are also mindful that smoke should not cause a nuisance to others, and in particular, to our close neighbours in Chandos Road. If smoke is blowing that way the rules state that the fire should be extinguished."



Light and shade: Christine Watson's pastels are on show online

Pictures at an exhibition

East Finchley artist Christine Watson has an image in the Royal Over-Seas League Incognito Exhibition, which is online at rosl.org.uk until Monday 15 February. Christine also has three pastels selected for the Pastel Society Annual Exhibition 2021, which can be seen online at www.mallgalleries.org.uk

Plastics campaign group takes battle to the Lords

Ann Inglis, of No2PlasticsN2, updates us on the latest legal moves against single-use plastics and issues a plea.

We at No2PlasticsN2 are, as many of you know, an East Finchley-based group who, by a complete fluke, have been gifted the opportunity with the Environment Bill going through Parliament of influencing legislation in this country.

The Bill has finished its passage through the Commons and is just about to go to the Lords. We want it amended to ban single-use plastic carrier bags outright. We want to demonstrate that there is such a groundswell of opinion in the country on this issue that Zac Goldsmith (Minister of State for DEFRA, and so the most powerful person in the Lords on the environment) will be persuaded to table this amendment.

We will get as many organisations as possible to sign a petition to be launched just before the Bill goes to the Lords. We are doing our utmost to generate a tsunami of support!

We ask for as many people as possible to share the campaign petition we have joined. More than 17,000 people have done so already. To find it, go to change.org and search 'ban all disposable single use plastic'.

Unfortunately, during the passage of the Bill through the Commons, George Eustice MP the DEFRA Minister announced that the cost of single-use plastic carrier bags will be raised from 5p to 10p, which we regard as derisory. He thus publicly nailed his colours firmly to the mast, making it much more difficult for him to change course.

Advice and support wanted

Inexperienced campaigners, we failed to get the Bill amended while it was in the Commons. We would be grateful for advice from anyone with experience of getting a proposal such as ours across to members of the House of Lords.

Currently we have a petition that calls on Zac Goldsmith to table the amendment and summarises the reasons to ban

single-use plastics outright. Find the petition on our website at No2PlasticsN2.com. We are about to launch on the Change.org platform. Please sign it if you can.

Additionally, Muswell Hill Sustainability Group (MHSG) has promised their full support. Could everyone who cares about reducing and possibly even eliminating single use plastics, approach their own favourite organisations and ask them to support the petition?

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