

Health and Safety Bulletin (No1)

Issued 23rd May, 2016

Bonfire Safety Tips

Dear Father,

Sadly, we experienced a serious fire at St Thomas More Church in Hartley Wintney last Tuesday 17th May which resulted in the complete loss of the Church roof. The accident occurred when an uncontrolled bonfire within the Church grounds ignited a shed located next to the Church. The burning shed acted like a chimney flue and in turn ignited the Church roof. We were very fortunate that there were no serious injuries and/or loss of life.

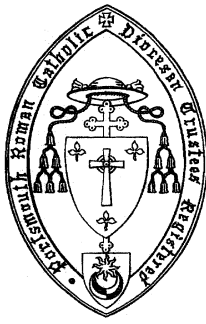
The Church fire could have been avoided if a few simple precautions had been taken. Please can you ensure that the following guidance is followed if on the rare occasion you need to light a bonfire?

If you have a bonfire, follow these simple guidelines:

- Bonfires can only be held on private land with the owners permission
- Warn your neighbours beforehand - so they are aware and can make necessary preparations
- Only burn dry material, do not burn anything which is wet or damp, this causes more smoke
- Check there are no cables (telephone wires etc.) above the bonfire
- Build the bonfire well away from buildings, sheds, fences and trees
- Do not use petrol or paraffin to start the fire it can get out of control quickly

Once the bonfire is lit, make sure you:

- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby - in case of emergencies
- Do not leave the bonfire unattended



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- Keep children and pets away from the bonfire
- Do not throw any fireworks into the fire
- Do not burn aerosols, tyres, canisters or anything containing foam or paint - this could produce toxic fumes and some containers may explode, causing injury
- Once the bonfire has died down, spray the embers with water to stop it reigniting and ensure it is completely extinguished.

Alternatives to having a garden bonfire

We encourage the Parish to look at the alternatives wherever possible including:

- Composting your garden waste
- Making leaf mould from the autumn leaf fall
- Reusing branches from trees to make a log pile or use as stakes for climbing plants
- Taking large amounts of garden waste to your nearest Community Recycling Centre

If you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me.

Kind Regards

Graham

Graham Palethorpe

Parish Support/Health and Safety Coordinator

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