



West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service



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Dear Kersten

Public Space Protection Order – Bradford moorland areas

It has come to my attention that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which prohibits the use of barbecues, fires, Chinese lanterns, fireworks, and anything else which could cause a fire on specified areas of publicly accessible moorland within the Bradford District is due to expire in the summer of 2022.

The purpose of my letter is to ask that the BMDC Regulatory and Appeals Committee renews the order when it is considered at their March 2022 meeting.

Whilst, fortunately, we have not seen a repeat of the Easter 2019 fire on Ilkley Moor which had such devastating consequences, the risk remains of future similar fires. It is, of course, worthy of note that pandemic related lockdowns have had some impact on the use of outdoor spaces in the last two years.

The undeniable impact of climate change has resulted in recent summers being both hot and dry, conditions which are conducive to both high risk use of BBQ and fire in outdoor spaces, as well as being the exact conditions which lead to rapid and uncontrollable spread of fire. You have only to look across to Kirklees to see the consequences of the significant wildfire on Marsden Moor in April 2021 which recently resulted in the handing down of a 12-month prison sentence to an individual who set off a firework which led to a mile long fire front which required on excess of 100 firefighters to control and extinguish.

PSPO's are not, in themselves, the answer to the problem, but they are an integral part of it. I readily accept the need for continuing publicity such as the '#BeMoorAware' campaign, and the engagement of local 'friends of' groups to act as our joint eyes and ears on the ground. We are also beginning to see a more responsible approach to the sale of portable BBQs in some high-risk areas from some retailers, and I hope that this approach will become more popular.

Recognising the difficulties in patrolling such extended and remote areas, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service has also committed to responding to calls from the public in respect of 'controlled' BBQs and fires in areas covered by PSPOs when crews are not otherwise engaged in emergency activities. We will adopt an approach of education, and mutually agreed extinguishing when possible.