



Safer, Cleaner, Greener: Falmouth Town Council explains why beach fires are a bad idea

Would you light a fire in the middle of your living room? No? Then don't light a fire on one of the town's beautiful beaches.

This is Falmouth Town Council's message for May as part of its year-long **Safer, Cleaner, Greener** public information campaign.

An essential part of local life, Falmouth's beaches offer a spectacular environment for recreation and support the town's tourist economy. Problems affect residents, visitors and marine life.

BIFFA clean our beaches under a Cornwall Council contract – daily, from May to September and weekly, from October to April. The required standards are high.

“Whilst BIFFA diligently undertake this task for the benefit and safety of all, our beaches would be even cleaner were it not for the irresponsible few who thoughtlessly damage and pollute them by lighting fires,” explains **Councillor Tony Parker**, Chairman of the Falmouth Beaches Management Group.

Burning material can cause serious health issues beyond the inhalation of smoke. Nails and screws embedded in timber can cause injury. Embers can lead to burns, especially when buried. Ash affects the colour and composition of sand, which could lead to the loss of Falmouth's prized 'Blue Flag' status.

Environmentalists report an increase in plastic 'pebbles' – a combination of melted plastic, sand, shingle and seaweed – on Cornwall's coastline. Thought to originate from bottles being melted on beach bonfires and barbecues, they enter the food chain with devastating consequences for sea creatures.

By-laws render it illegal to light an open fire on any of Falmouth's beaches. Offences are prosecuted in the Magistrates Court and attract fines of up to £500.

So how can you help?

- Never light a fire on any of Falmouth's beaches
- Whilst barbecues may be permissible on some beaches, please check local signage first to check if and where they are allowed
- If a designated area for barbecues is provided – like on Gyllyngvase, to the east of the beach – metal waste bins are provided, but please ensure that only cold disposable barbecues are deposited in them

- Never place disposable barbecues in plastic litter bins elsewhere
- Dispose of other litter responsibly.

Who to contact:

Please report any concerns about environmental crime on our beaches to Cornwall Council:

- Email: publicprotection@cornwall.gov.uk
- Online: Cornwall.gov.uk/report-it
- Phone: 0300 1234 212

Beach fires are sometimes accompanied by other forms of anti-social behaviour, which the Police and Cornwall Council are empowered to deal with. Please report it as follows:

- If an offence is taking place and immediate action is required, please report it to the Police by dialling 999
- If an offence is taking place and it is not an emergency, please report it to the Police by dialling 101 or emailing 101@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Please also report it to Cornwall Council:

- Email communitysafety@cornwall.gov.uk
- Online at Cornwall.gov.uk/report-it
- Phone: 0300 1234 232

“Beach fires and the irresponsible use of barbecues cause a nuisance, present dangerous hazards and scar the natural environment,” adds **Town Clerk, Mark Williams**. “Please report any concerns you have about environmental crime on our beautiful beaches and aim to leave only your footprints behind.”