

Resolution Date: 12 April 2020

Resolution Title: Wood Burners and Bonfires

This Branch notes the UK government's persistent failures to get to grips with air pollution. The Clean Air Strategy 2019 is, for the most part, a complete waste of time, as is the Environment Bill 2018, with MPs voting in March against World Health Organisation limits on 'particulate matter'. This is caused by polluting activities and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) admits that inhalation of the particulates can have adverse health impacts, with no safe threshold below which no adverse effects would be anticipated.

When Michael Gove was Secretary of State in DEFRA he very early on pledged to sort our woodstoves. Sadiq Khan is on record for saying he would ban woodstoves in London. Nothing came of it, as the Woodstoves Industry Alliance stepped in and changed their minds.

This Branch further notes that woodstoves have now gripped the imagination of many as a 'must have' accessory, but are a toxic craze, a 'silent killer' as Dr Gary Fuller from Kings College London called it. Garden bonfires are another toxic activity that pollutes entire neighbourhoods causing awful harm to our health. The current law is out date as we now know much more about smoke toxicity; it's no longer about washing on the line.

This Branch believes that the fact that successive UK governments have not banned bonfires and called a moratorium on woodstoves during the respiratory pandemic is an absolute dereliction of duty. What we all need now is air as clean as we can get it.

This Branch pledges to campaign through its industrial and political networks for:

- **In the short term**, an immediate moratorium on the use of domestic solid fuels and a permanent ban on bonfires. This will help to limit emergency hospital admissions for respiratory complications now and in the future and reduce demand for ventilators.
- **In the longer term:**
 - Enshrine in law a ban on bonfires as a completely avoidable pollution;
 - Outlaw the sale and use solid fuel domestic burning appliances;
 - Bring forward measures set out in 2020 Clean Air Act with no watering down of World Health Organisation limits on 'particulate matter'.

This motion, if passed, will be forwarded through the relevant bodies of Unite up to the Executive Council.