

# Review ePetition

**Title:** Ban BBQs in Waterlow Park permanently

**Statement:**

We the undersigned petition the council to Permanently ban charcoal barbecues in Waterlow Park [see signatories document from [change.org](https://www.change.org/p/ban-bbqs-in-waterlow-park?source_location=search)]

The link to the petition is here: [https://www.change.org/p/ban-bbqs-in-waterlow-park?source\\_location=search](https://www.change.org/p/ban-bbqs-in-waterlow-park?source_location=search)

**Justification:**

We are concerned by issues relating to the combustion of Charcoal in the Park, including:

Air particle pollution, Smell pollution, Smoke pollution, the consequent Impact of Charcoal Smoke on Human Health, and the Environmental Damage to trees, grass and wildlife and the long term impact upon bio-diversity.

Camden is the only London Borough supporting use of charcoal barbecues in their open spaces; we ask Camden to withdraw this policy so that they are in-line with every other London Borough and also in line with their own policies under Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026. (1) <http://www.Camden.gov.uk/air-quality>

Charcoal combustion releases particulate matter alongside other pollutants like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and PAHs which, even at low concentrations, can adversely impact human health and the environment. (1)(2b)(4)

The issue can be likened to cigarette smoking which is banned in public and work places where it is considered others in proximity can be negatively affected. While smokers themselves may derive enjoyment, the passive smokers in the immediate area are also exposed to toxins. The 'passive smoking' from burning charcoal is no different and the barbecues in the park are not just detrimental to the health of the children playing in the adjacent

play areas, but to the many local residents who, during summer, feel they have no choice but to avoid the park and also feel forced to keep their windows closed because of the barbecue smoke from Waterlow Park. This is a particular problem for asthmatics who report that barbecue smoke aggravates their condition and is in direct conflict with Camden policy. (2a)

Smoke pollution doesn't stop when the barbecuers leave - during the last week ash bins have been smoking like chimneys overnight and through into the next day and on one occasion a large log campfire [on the grassed area] smouldered into the following day.

In addition to the smoke pollution, the flora is affected: the grass is scorched in multiple areas and this takes a minimum of a year to recover; smoke also adversely affects the trees by clogging leaf stomata and preventing respiration, disrupting photosynthesis, and degrading the leaf surfaces, thereby impacting negatively on the general health of trees, the wider environment and biodiversity.

Smoke inhalation can and does kill birds. It impairs their ability to breathe and that in turn impairs their ability to forage and sustain themselves; it also impairs their ability to vocalise which is vital for their self protection and reproduction.

Taking a global perspective, the demand for charcoal is causing deforestation. Nearly 60 percent of the world's charcoal is produced in Africa, followed by the Americas (mainly in South America) and Asia. Traditional charcoal is produced by cutting down trees and burning them in kilns. In addition to accelerating biodiversity loss, the charcoal industry releases planet-warming greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Camden is the only London Borough supporting use of charcoal barbecues in their open spaces - all other boroughs have banned them on the grounds of having a negative impact on human health and the environment.

In summary we ask you to enact your own policies and follow required legislation regarding human health and protection of the environment and to this end we call on Camden Council to introduce a total ban on charcoal barbecues. (2a)(3)

(1) With regard to human health, more information on the hazards of smoke pollutants can be found in a document on Camden's own website at this link [pp 24 & 25]: ?? Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023–2026 (PDF);

<https://democracy.camden.gov.uk/documents/s108863/14a%20Appendix%201%20-%20Camden%20Clean%20Air%20Action%20Plan%202023-2026%20and%20Camden%20Clean%20Air%20Strategy%202019-2034.pdf>

(2) The executive summary of the Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023–2026 states :

(2a) “So it is in everyone’s interest to work together to improve air quality and to realise Camden’s vision for a borough with clean air, where nobody experiences poor health as a result of the air they breathe.”

(2b) And “we need to go beyond our statutory requirements if we are to realise the vision above because air pollution can still damage our health even at very low concentrations.”

(3) With regard to protection of the Environment, the Camden Clean Air Action Plan states: “Local authorities have a legal duty to measure and improve air quality in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1995.” The text of this Act Chapter 1A, para 5: opens with the words: “General functions with respect to pollution control: [F1An appropriate agency's] pollution control powers shall be exercisable for the purpose of preventing or minimising, or remedying or mitigating the effects of, pollution of the environment.”

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/25/section/5>

(4) Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are a group of persistent organic pollutants; they can be found in air, water, soil, and dust. They can contaminate food through environmental exposure or during food processing, especially when using high temperatures (e.g., grilling, smoking, roasting). Some are known to be carcinogenic [cancer causing]; additionally they can be associated with lung and heart disease. ([Show truncated justification text](#))