



Prohibition of Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons on land owned/managed by Fernwood Parish Council

Adopted 16th July 2018

Background

1.1 In 2013 Defra commissioned a report: Sky lanterns and helium balloons: an assessment of impacts on livestock and the environment. A sky lantern is a small hot air balloon made of paper, with an opening at the bottom where a small fire is suspended – sometimes called *sky candles* or *fire balloons*. The report reached the following conclusions.

1.2 Risks to livestock and animal health

Anecdotal reports and media coverage suggest widespread concern from farming groups and others over the impacts of sky lanterns on the health and welfare of livestock and horses. However, the evidence reviewed indicates that the number of cases reported each year of animals affected through panic and fright and of ingestion of sky lantern debris is very small.

On the basis of the evidence presented, it is difficult to conclude that the overall impact is anything other than of minor significance.

The main concern regarding helium balloons is in relation to ingestion by animals. Whilst there may again be a significant level of under-reporting, the current evidence indicates that the impact is very small and confined to only isolated incidents.

1.3 Fire risk (sky lanterns only)

Incidents in which sky lanterns were said to be directly implicated in starting fires have been reported from a variety of sources, including the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA).

Given that any of these individual incidents has the potential to cause significant disruption, loss of property and risk to human and animal life, the project team has concluded that fire risk associated with the use of sky lanterns is significant.

1.4 Risks to aviation

The report also highlighted 48 incidents reported to be related to sky lanterns and helium balloons between 2001 and 2012. 40 of these incidents were related to sky

lanterns and 8 to helium balloons. CAA guidelines state that sky lanterns should not be released within 10 nautical miles of an airfield.

1.5 The Defra report states that across England, 15 local authorities have applied a voluntary ban on the release of helium balloons from council-owned land.

1.6 Since the above report was published all the local authorities in Wales have now banned helium balloons and sky lanterns and there are now more than 35 local authorities in England that have introduced bans. In many cases, this voluntary ban also includes sky lanterns. These controls are only active on council-owned land (i.e. recreation grounds and parks) and they are described by councils as being purely voluntary bans – they are not able to take legal action against infringements. Under current legislation set out in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (2005) or the Environmental Protection Act (1990), waste from balloons or sky lanterns is not classified as litter and as such, no specific legal action can be taken against releases.

1.7 In November 2017 the Nottinghamshire County Council adopted a policy to ban the use and sale of sky lanterns on land or property owned and/or controlled by the Council. In March 2018, Newark and Sherwood District Council adopted their own policy to ban the use and sale of sky lanterns and helium balloons on land or property owned and/or controlled by the Council.

Policy

2.1 Fernwood Parish Council bans the use and sale of sky lanterns and helium balloons on land or property owned and/or controlled by the Council.

Communication

3.1 This policy is included in the Terms and Conditions for all regular and ad hoc users.

3.2 Posters detailing this policy to be displayed in the hall at all times.

3.3 Policy to be promoted on the Council's electronic screens.