



Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Balloon & Sky Lantern Release Policy

Adopted Minute No: 38/18/TC April 2018

Reviewed:

Next Review: April 2020

Introduction

In recent years outdoor balloon and sky lantern releases have become a more common event at summer fairs, fundraising events, opening of new stores, or part of commemorative and celebratory occasions. However, what is less known is what happens once these items have been released and the potentially harmful consequences for wildlife and property that can occur as a result of this form of celebration.

Although others have also undertaken research on this issue The Marine Conservation Society (an internationally recognised charity for the protection of seas, shores and wildlife) has produced a thorough and detailed Pollution Policy and Position statement on Balloons and Sky Lanterns, asking UK Local Authorities to recognise balloons and sky lanterns as a form of littering and to ban all outdoor releases. This stance is actively supported by the RSPCA, the National Farmers Union and many other organisations.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to propose the intentional outdoor release of balloons and sky lanterns ("lanterns") as an act of littering, and thereby to discourage such activities in the Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council area and to prohibit releases from Council owned land and premises.

Parameters/Scope

This policy covers the release of balloons and lanterns within the Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council area and the Council's position in relation to the release of balloons and lanterns from Council owned land and premises.

The policy covers all types of balloon and lantern materials. The main types of balloon are latex (rubber) and foil (also known as mylar) and can include other materials. Latex balloons, whilst biodegradable, may still persist in the environment for several years and sky lanterns typically contain a metal frame.

Policy

This Council prohibits the release of balloons and lanterns from Council owned land and buildings. This applies to Council run events and events run by third parties.

Litter

Where balloons and lanterns are released intentionally outdoors and are not disposed of responsibly, they litter the environment and as such this could be considered to be a potential offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Permitted Releases

For the avoidance of doubt, piloted hot air balloons are not covered by this policy.

Helium balloons may also be permitted when used for research purposes, for example weather balloons, as long as supporting evidence is provided, identifying any risk and / or any hazards to the environment and with any appropriate mitigation.

Working with event organisers/ third parties/ lessees/ licencees

Once the Council is notified of potential releases within the area of Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council the Council will work with event organisers to suggest suitable alternatives to outdoor balloon and lantern releases and / or to provide advice and guidance on the potential disposal of these items.

Monitoring, Assessment and Review

The Council will inform event organisers of the Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy by means of including relevant information within booking forms and other promotional materials.

The Council will also at its own discretion and where appropriate include details of this policy within any new leases or licences of land and / or buildings where permitted events take place at those locations.

This Policy will be reviewed in two years' time.