

Cleaner & Greener

Balloon and Sky Lantern release policy

2016

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Author	Warwick Neale
Sponsor	David Sutton
Owner	Warwick Neale
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3.0	24/05/2016	Version 3.0
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1. Introduction

Outdoor balloon and sky lantern releases have become a traditional and common event at summer fairs, fundraising events, opening of new stores, or part of commemorative occasions; but few people are aware of what happens once they are released and the potentially harmful consequences for wildlife and property that can occur as a result of this form of celebration.

The Marine Conservation Society, an internationally recognised charity for the protection of seas, shores and wildlife, has produced a Pollution Policy & 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 and National Farmers Union.

2. Aim

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to classify the intentional outdoor release of balloons and sky lanterns ("lanterns") as an act of littering, to discourage such activities in Worcester and to prohibit releases from City Council owned land.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers the release of balloons and lanterns within Worcester City and the Council's position in respect of the release of balloons/lanterns from City Council owned land
- 3.2 This policy covers all different types of balloon and lantern materials. The main types of balloon are latex (rubber) and foil (also known as mylar). Latex balloons, whilst biodegradable, may still persist in the environment for up to four years. Lanterns typically contain a metal frame.

4. Policy

- 4.1 The Council prohibits the release of balloons/lanterns from Council owned land and buildings. This applies to Council run events and events run by third parties.
- 4.2 The Council considers the release of balloons and lanterns from any land or buildings as littering and will take action under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 where appropriate.

5. Litter

5.1 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 an offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Where the Council receives evidence of littering through the release of balloon and lanterns which are not disposed of responsibly, the Council will consider exercising its powers under the above legislation.

6. Permitted /responsible releases.

- 6.1 For the avoidance of doubt, piloted hot air balloons are not covered by this policy.
- 6.2 Helium balloons may also be used for research purposes, for example weather balloons, as long as supporting evidence is provided, identifying any risk and/or hazard to the environment and with appropriate mitigation.

7. Working with event organisers

7.1 Once the Council is notified of potential releases within the City, 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 disposal of balloons and/or lanterns.

8. Monitoring, Assessment & Review

- 8.1 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 appropriate promotional materials.
- 8.2 This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

ENDS