



RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

SUBJECT: The Release of Sky Lanterns in Rhondda Cynon Taff

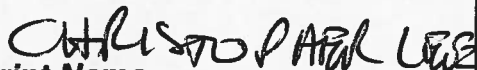
PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The purpose of the report is to consider the introduction of a prohibition on the release of Sky Lanterns from Council owned land.

DELEGATED DECISION (Date):

- That the Council prohibits the release of sky lanterns from all Council land, including Schools, with immediate effect.
- That the prohibition on the use of sky lanterns would also apply to events organised by third parties which are held on Council property.


Chief Officer Signature


Print Name

Date 25/6/15

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

A. Morgan

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

25/6/2015

DATE

C. Lee

OFFICER CONSULTEE SIGNATURE

25/6/15

DATE

Directorate:	Corporate & Frontline Services
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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015-16

**REPORT TO ACCOMPANY THE DECISION OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,
CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES.**

Part 1
Non confidential
The Release of Sky Lanterns in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the introduction of a prohibition on the release of Sky Lanterns from Council owned land.

2. BACKGROUND

The Council currently prevents the release of sky lantern from land it owns by declining to grant consent for any such activity. In so far as it can do so, the Council therefore manages this activity already. It has been suggested however, that a more formal policy would assist in clarifying the Council's views and present a clear position statement.

In recent years local authorities, charities and other agencies have lobbied the Government calling for the ban of sky lanterns in the UK.

The Government decided not to prohibit sky lanterns, but in August 2014 the Trading Standards Institute, following discussions between Government and industry, issued an industry code of practice to provide guidance for manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers of sky lanterns, covering their manufacture, and warnings and instructions that must be provided

Several Local Authorities in Wales including Conwy, Caerphilly, Vale of Glamorgan and Pembroke already have bans in place prohibiting the use of sky lanterns on their land.

Certain leading retailers have now stopped the sale of sky lanterns in their stores.

3. ISSUES RAISED BY SKY LANTERNS

Sky lanterns do present a significant fire hazard especially where the lantern is unable to stay upright in the air due to obstacles or the wind; the paper may ignite

and become a fire hazard. The lantern may then travel to the ground whilst still lit and become a risk to crops, woodland and property. In a nationwide survey in 2011, a third of Britain's fire brigades said they had received emergency callouts to extinguish lanterns. Damage has included scorched gardens and roofs. The Fire Service has also received a number of false alarms as the lanterns had burned themselves out en route to site wasting valuable resources. The worst related fire dealt with by the Fire Service was on the 1st July 2013 when a serious fire in the West Midlands of England, involving 100,000 tonnes of recycling material and causing an estimated six million pounds worth of damage, was started by a sky lantern which landed at a plastics recycling plant in Smethwick.

In relation to Animal Welfare, after contact with the ground the leftover thin wire frame will rust away very slowly, remaining a hazard to pets, wild animals and livestock that may ingest the material. The frames may in some cases be cut up with hay and fed unintentionally to horses causing a ruptured stomach leading to an agonising death. Cases of this have unfortunately been documented where in 2010, a cow died from eating a piece of a lantern's wire frame, which ruptured it's stomach, and a foal had to be destroyed after it injured itself on a fence because it was startled by two lights that landed in its field. Additionally many smaller animals may become entangled in the debris left on the ground.

There are also other impacts on the environment: The littering left as a result of the lantern will impact the environment on both land and sea. In 2012 the Marine Conservation Society raised concerns after a survey of beaches found an increase in rubber, paper and pieces of metal. The charity requested that the lanterns should be classed as litter so people releasing them could be fined as much as £2,500, arguing that they are a danger to marine life, amongst other things. 'Biodegradable' lanterns such as Bamboo can also take decades to degrade and still pose the same risk of fire.

Aviation is also at risk and Sky Lanterns are a concern. According to Civil Aviation Authorities, there is a danger of lanterns being sucked into engines while airborne. On the ground, lantern debris has the potential to cause damage to aircraft engines, tires and fuselage. In 2012, the Civil Aviation Authority in Donegal warned against the use of lanterns after one landed near a container packed with thousands of gallons of aviation fuel. Endangering an aircraft is punishable with up to 2 years imprisonment and a £5,000 fine. Organisers of events that are ten miles or less from any aerodrome, or where significant numbers of lanterns are being released at any one time, need to be aware of the potential risks to aircraft, and are urged to refer to the CAA online guidance and then, if necessary, contact either the CAA or local aerodrome with details of the event.

Finally there are significant risks to Consumer Safety as the product when lit shows a naked flame which could conceivably lead to injuries if used incorrectly or if obtained by children.

There is no national legislation available to control this problem and therefore it is up to each organisation to consider the issue for themselves. As discussed above some

major retailers and local authorities have already acted to address the risk from Sky Lanterns. It is proposed therefore that the Council introduces a ban on the release of Sky Lanterns from all its land, including schools premises.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The prohibition is not enforceable by law but can be included in Council policies and permission agreements for the use of Council land. The prohibition would have limited other legal implications.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Council prohibits the release of sky lanterns from all Council land, including schools, with immediate effect.
- That the prohibition on the use of sky lanterns would also apply to events organised by third parties which are held on Council property.

