

Argyll and Bute Council

Policy Statement: Policy on the ban of Sky lanterns and balloon releases on Council owned land and property

1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Argyll and Bute Council (hereinafter referred to as the "Council") unanimously agreed at Council on the 26 th January 2017 to ban the release of sky lanterns and balloons on Council owned land and property, in an effort to make the countryside safer for grazing animals; prevent harm to wildlife at sea and to protect the environment.
1.2	This policy details the actions taken by Argyll and Bute Council to implement this policy decision.
1.3	This policy statement sets out the legislative and other controls which are in place to implement this ban; the hazards associated with such releases, and promotes safe alternatives to balloon and lantern releases.
1.4	This policy statement covers all balloon and lantern releases on Argyll and Bute Council owned property and land, and at Argyll and Bute Council licensed endorsed or supported events.
1.5	Definitions within this policy, the terms: "release" refers to the intentional act of releasing a balloon or lantern into the general environment. "balloon" refers to any inflatable flexible bag filled with gas, such as helium, hydrogen, nitrous oxide, oxygen or hot air, made from materials such as rubber, latex, natural latex, paper, polychloroprene, foil, mylar or nylon fabric. This includes all biodegradable balloons. "Sky lantern or Chinese lantern" refers to a lantern made of paper or other materials; held by wire or a bamboo frame and lifted by heat from a naked flame. "Council owned land and property" includes properties such as schools (and playgrounds), office etc and Land includes car parks, roads verge, parks, play parks, amenity land
2. LEGISLATIVE & OTHER CONTROLS	
2.1	Under Section 87 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 it is an offence to throw down, drop or otherwise deposit, and then leave, litter. Argyll and Bute Council enforces this Act with the use of various enforcement actions, including fixed penalty notices, and has a responsibility to keep public open spaces free from litter.
2.2	To implement this policy decision and ban, the Council will Prohibit the release of sky lanterns and balloons on Council owned land and property. This will be achieved by the following condition, or a suitable adaptation of the condition where appropriate, being included within any lease, licence or hire agreement relating to Council land or property, namely "No person shall release any sky lanterns and balloons onto land, air or water from any Council owned property or land." (2) Insert a similar condition to the foregoing condition in the licence for any licensed events or as a condition of any endorsement of an event or as a condition of any financial support provided for such an event
2.3	Any contravention of such a condition shall be dealt with in an appropriate manner depending on the nature and extent of the breach and this by warning, breach of licence proceedings, irritancy proceedings in respect of leased property, or such other means as the Director of Development and Infrastructure Services may deem appropriate.

3. ALTERNATIVES	
	<p>Through this policy, Argyll and Bute Council recommends alternatives, as suggested by the Marine Conservation Society, for use;</p> <p>(a) Flags, banners and pop-ups. When budgets are tight many businesses are realising the benefits from reusable signage, Colourful streamer, flags, banners and other signage may save money and time over balloons, string, helium and lanterns.</p> <p>(b) Balloon sculpture – turn balloons into something with a hired-in balloon artist or try your own.</p> <p>(c) Virtual balloons and races – the RSPB have launched a virtual balloon race where you can design and personalise your balloon and track it on ‘google’ maps.</p> <p>(d) Pop-a-balloon:- put a raffle ticket in a few balloons, inflate them and let them go indoors. Ask people to pop them and the raffle ticket indicating a prize.</p> <p>(e) How many – fill a car/room with balloons and guess the number.</p>
4. POLICY ACTIONS	
4.1	<u>All sky lanterns and balloons releases on Council owned land and property are prohibited.</u>
4.2	Argyll and Bute Council, through their website, will raise the environmental consequences of such releases and promote alternatives.
4.3	It is the responsibility of all services to comply with and implement this policy.
4.4	All legal agreements, leases and hire agreements of Council land and property to be entered into following approval of this policy document will include the appropriate conditions detailed in 2.2
4.5	The responsibility of Council services differs depending on whether it is Council owned land or property. For operational premises such as schools (and playgrounds), office etc where there is likely to be a ‘responsible person’ for the asset. It should be their responsibility to ensure staff and users know the moratorium and suitably enforce the ban. For Operational Land like car parks, roads verge, play parks, amenity land there is unlikely to be a manned presence but the holding department or user should be made aware of the policy and identify a way to communicate this to users (much more challenging).
4.6	The aim is that the Council, in taking this responsible decision, will raise awareness of the risks to the environment and livestock, promote alternatives to the release of sky lanterns and balloons. Through increasing public awareness it is hoped that this may lead to a reduction in releases on other land and property outwith the Council control.


Executive Director Development and Infrastructure

Dated:

30/4/17