

MOTION TO WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

That WPBC bans the release of helium balloons and sky lanterns from any land or premises in its ownership.

The release of balloon and sky lanterns from Council owned land or premises is to be regarded as littering and enforced accordingly.

Many organisations have drawn attention to the problem of lantern and balloon releases which end up as litter on land or sea and pose a risk to livestock and marine animals which mistake balloons in particular for food. Balloons have been found ingested in endangered turtles, dolphins, whales and seabirds. Livestock have died after eating degraded lanterns, which are accidentally picked up by harvesting machinery and put into winter feeds.

Lanterns also pose a fire risk to crops in the summer months, to thatched roof properties, and are causing a number of false alarm call outs on the coast as people mistake them for distress flares. In April 2016 a sky lantern landed on a Dorset Nature reserve near Wareham starting a major gorse fire.

The call to ban balloon and sky lantern releases nationally is supported by the Marine Conservation Society, RSPCA, RSPB and the National Farmers' Union.

Graham Duggan confirms that concerns have been raised before but these activities are not yet covered by any litter policy.

This committee proposes that WPBC should advise any group organising an event on land owned by the Council that no such releases will be permitted.