



National Parks England Statement on Sky Lanterns

National Parks England wishes to see the release of sky lanterns (also known as Chinese lanterns) classified as littering and therefore banned. These lanterns pose a significant fire risk which has the potential to cause major damage to England's finest landscapes and their internationally important habitats.

There is increasing concern about the use of sky lanterns and their potential impacts on the countryside, both in terms of the health and welfare risks for livestock and the risk of fires being ignited by lanterns. A recent review of evidence* carried out by Defra and the Welsh Government concluded that sky lanterns pose a significant fire risk.

Fire is a very real concern in England's National Parks, which contain many large and internationally important areas of heather moorland. Accidental fires can have a devastating impact on the special wildlife, vegetation and landscape of these areas. This was demonstrated by the accidental fire at Fylingdales in the North York Moors National Park 2003 which burned for five days, completely destroying 250 hectares of moorland. Such peat and heather moorlands are also significant stores for locking up carbon, which is then released when they catch fire. National Park Authorities work closely with fire services, landowners and other local partners in their efforts to minimise fire risks and take co-ordinated action to put out fires when they do happen.

The use of sky lanterns can also have damaging consequences for livestock, which can become entangled in the lanterns or ingest the frames, causing damage and distress. This is a further concern for us, as livestock farming is key to the fabric of many National Parks.

National Parks England wishes to see these risks recognised and the intentional release of sky lanterns classified as littering and therefore banned. We believe that action should be taken to raise public awareness of the hazards associated with the use of sky lanterns, and to encourage people to find more environmentally friendly ways to celebrate special events.

[*Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons: an assessment of impacts on livestock and the environment](#) (Defra / Welsh Government 2013)