

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF MOTION - 26 APRIL 2022

This Council notes that:

- Fireworks can be a source of significant problems, fear and distress for many animals. They can cause psychological distress and injuries as animals attempt to run away or hide from the noise.
- The noise generated by fireworks has been found to be the most common cause for fear responses in dogs. The loud and sudden noise can also be a trigger for PTSD-related symptoms in humans. The debris can also pose a hazard to other animals.
- The short-lived nature of firework noise can make it difficult for the police or local authority officers to pinpoint locations and take action.
- Between 2015 and 2020, the RSPCA received 120 reports of live animals given as prizes and many more cases may go unreported each year. Whilst most of the reports were goldfish given as prizes, other animals, including dogs, ducklings and horses, were also reported.
- Animals often do not have their welfare needs met before, during and after being given as a prize. They are kept and transported in conditions that do not meet their welfare needs, and many die before their new owners even get them home.
- In England and Wales, it is an offence to give an animal as a prize to anyone under 16 (except within the family context). However, despite the current law, many are given to individuals under 16, which highlights potential issues surrounding enforcement of existing provisions.
- An estimated 200,000 sky lanterns are released every year in the UK. As the popularity of sky lanterns increases, so too does the risk to animals and the environment.
- Sky lanterns are a danger to animals, a fire risk, an aviation hazard and a litter nuisance. When ingested, sharp parts can cause internal bleeding in animals. Animals can become entangled in fallen frames and suffer from injury or stress trying to free themselves, and sometimes starve to death from being trapped. Marine life is also endangered by lanterns falling into the sea.
- In Wales, sky lantern releases are banned on Council-owned land and property. In other countries, sky lantern release is considered environmentally irresponsible and classed as a crime. In England, although almost 200 councils have voluntarily banned sky lanterns on Council-owned land, it remains legal to release paper lanterns.

This Council resolves:

- To amend the licence conditions for events on council land to include
 - A requirement to advertise all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries well in advance of the event.
 - A recommendation that organisers investigate the use of 'quieter' fireworks.
- To actively promote a public awareness campaign for organisers of events on private land and the owners of that land in respect of the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people and measures to mitigate the risks; and to encourage them to adopt the principles of this motion
- To encourage local firework suppliers to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.
- To reaffirm the ban in the licence conditions for events on council land, of:
 - The giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Waverley Borough Council land.

- The release of sky lanterns on Waverley Borough Council land.
- To engage with Town and Parish Councils to encourage them to adopt the motion and introduce bans on the use of animals as prizes and on the release of sky lanterns and helium balloons from their land, if they have not already done so.
- To write to the UK Government and urge them:
 - To introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays, and,
 - To ban:
 - The giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land, and,
 - The release of sky lanterns on public and private land.

Proposer: Councillor Nick Palmer

Secunder: Councillor Kika Mirylees