



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is informed by the Marine Conservation Society's campaign against balloon and sky lantern releases, recognising them as litter with environmental consequences. Supported by the RSPCA, NFU and other organisations, this policy aligns with the Council's environmental priorities and its powers under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011).

2. Purpose of the Policy

To prevent environmental harm and public nuisance caused by the release of balloons and sky lanterns, this policy prohibits such activities on all Town Council-owned land and premises. It reinforces our commitment to environmental protection and public safety.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals, organisations, and events on land or in buildings owned, leased, or managed by Gillingham Town Council.

4. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Localism Act 2011 (General Power of Competence)
- Environment Act 2021 (Environmental Principles)

5. Responsibilities

The Town Clerk will ensure compliance by including the policy in booking forms and promotional materials. Event organisers are responsible for ensuring all participants adhere to the policy.

6. Risk Management

Events held on Council premises must include compliance with this policy as part of their risk assessment. Breaches may be subject to enforcement.

7. Permitted Releases

Piloted hot air balloons are not covered by this policy. Helium balloons may also be permitted when used for research purposes, for example, weather balloons, if

supporting evidence is provided, identifying any risk and/or any hazards to the environment and with any appropriate mitigation.

8. Review

The Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy was presented to the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 16 June 2025, for approval and adoption minute no. 158c and ratified at the Full Council meeting on 23 June 2025.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when there are changes to legislation, whichever is the sooner.

The next review is scheduled for June 2026.

Signed:
Mayor of Gillingham

Date: