

## **Prohibition of Fireworks, Bonfires, Chinese Lanterns, and Helium Balloons Policy**

### **1. Aim**

The aim of this policy is to ensure public safety, environmental protection, and the enjoyment of Kidderminster Town Council's public parks by prohibiting the use of fireworks, the release of Chinese lanterns, and the organised release of helium balloons. This policy seeks to mitigate risks to wildlife, reduce pollution, and safeguard public health.

### **2. Introduction**

Fireworks, Chinese lanterns, and helium balloons pose significant risks to public safety, wildlife, and the environment. Fireworks can disturb animals, pollute air and water, and create litter. Chinese lanterns present fire hazards and entanglement risks, while helium balloons contribute to environmental pollution and the depletion of a valuable resource. To address these concerns, Kidderminster Town Council has implemented this policy across its public parks.

### **3. Policy Scope**

This policy applies to all visitors, residents, and event organisers within parks owned and managed by Kidderminster Town Council, including Broadwaters Mill Park, Baxter Gardens, and St Georges Park. The prohibitions outlined in this policy always apply and cover all events and private activities.

#### **Fireworks**

*Wildlife Disturbance:* Fireworks cause loud noises and bright lights that can distress and disorient wildlife, particularly nocturnal species such as bats, owls, and small mammals. Birds may abandon nests, impacting breeding success, while other animals may flee, disrupting local ecosystems.

*Pollution:* Fireworks release harmful chemicals and heavy metals such as lead, copper, and barium into the air, soil, and water, posing risks to both human and animal health.

*Litter:* Firework debris, including casings, wires, and plastic fragments, can accumulate in parks, creating hazards for wildlife that may ingest or become entangled in the waste.

#### **Bonfires**

*Pollution:* Release of gases, for example Carbon Dioxide.

*Soil and water pollution:* Ash can contain harmful substances that leach into the soil. Rain can wash pollutants from ash into nearby water sources.

*Wildlife and Habitat to Wildlife:* Animal may get caught in or near bonfires. Large fires can destroy vegetation and soil quality. The light and smoke can interfere with nocturnal wildlife behaviour.

*Fire Hazards and Climate Effects:* Uncontrolled fires can spread to forests or dry grassland, causing wildfires.

Methane release, Incomplete burning of organic matter can produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

*Waste Management Issues:* Burning waste materials instead of proper disposal can release hazardous pollutions.

If plastic is burned, it can release microplastics and persistent pollutants.

## **Chinese Lanterns**

*Fire Hazard:* Once released, Chinese lanterns can drift unpredictably and ignite dry grass, trees, or wooden structures, posing significant fire risks.

*Wildlife Risk:* The wire frames and components of lanterns can entangle or injure animals, particularly birds. Lantern debris can also be mistaken for food, causing internal injuries or death.

*Environmental Pollution:* Lantern remnants can persist in the environment for long periods, littering natural habitats and posing ongoing hazards.

## **Helium Balloons**

*Litter and Ingestion Hazard:* Deflated helium balloons can litter parks and water bodies. Wildlife, particularly marine animals, may mistake balloon fragments for food, leading to choking, internal damage, or death.

*Entanglement:* Balloon strings pose a risk to birds and other animals, which can become trapped, leading to injury or death.

*Non-Biodegradable Materials:* Many balloons are made from latex or Mylar, materials that do not break down easily, contributing to long-term environmental pollution.

*Helium Resource Depletion:* Helium is a limited resource with critical applications in medicine and science. The release of helium balloons leads to unnecessary waste of this essential gas.

## **4. Conclusion**

**Fireworks Prohibition:** The use, possession, or setting off fireworks in Broadwaters Mill Park, Baxter Gardens, and St Georges Park is strictly prohibited. This applies to private individuals, public events, and organised displays, unless explicitly authorised in writing by the Town Council under exceptional circumstances.

**Chinese Lantern Ban:** The release of Chinese lanterns within any of the three parks is strictly prohibited. This ban applies to individuals, groups, and event organisers, regardless of the occasion.

**Helium Balloon Ban:** The release of helium-filled balloons in Broadwaters Mill Park, Baxter Gardens, and St Georges Park is prohibited. Additionally, the sale or distribution of helium balloons for events taking place in these parks is not permitted.

**Exceptions:** Any exceptions to the above prohibitions must be requested in writing to Kidderminster Town Council at least 90 days before the proposed event. Exceptions will be granted only in rare and controlled circumstances, with strict environmental safeguards in place.

This policy is designed to protect the natural environment, wildlife, and public safety while ensuring that Kidderminster's parks remain clean and enjoyable for all visitors.