
Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Stour Valley Partnership Position Statement
(July 2015)

Balloon and sky lantern releases in the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project area

Introduction

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the natural beauty of the finest landscapes in England and Wales is conserved and enhanced. The AONB Partnership produces occasional position statements outlining its position on specific issues.

The AONB staff team offers an AONB service to its wider project area, known as the Stour Valley.

Purpose

This Position Statement, endorsed by the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership¹, provides the view of the Partnership to local planning authorities, landowners and others interested in the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project area.

Background

The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2015-20 has topic 3:

The Plan seeks to encourage visitors and residents to enjoy the landscapes, natural heritage and historic nature of the area without compromising its special qualities for future generations.

Position

It is considered by the Partnership that balloon and sky lantern releases have the potential to adversely impact upon the special qualities of the area and are not supported by the Partnership.

The Partnership takes this position as:

1. There is a risk of harm or death to wildlife and livestock (ingestion, entanglement, entrapment, panic) from released balloons and sky lanterns.
2. Unexpired sky lanterns pose a significant fire hazard.
3. Both contribute to the defacement of land by litter and waste.

¹ Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership is made up of public, private and third sector organisations with an interest in the area. Details at: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/about-us/jac-and-partnership/

Views from other organisations

The Chief Fire Officers Association, National Farmers Union, Women's Farmers Union, Marine Conservation Society, Country Land Owners Association, Newmarket Stud Farmers Association and RSPCA are amongst those urging individuals to use alternatives to sky lanterns and to ask event planners and retailers to use alternatives as well. Fire and Rescue Groups, Master Thatchers and Wildlife Trusts have also noted their concerns or called for a ban.

District and Borough Councils often have policies to ban balloon and sky lantern releases from their land, see authority websites for up to date position.

For further information

Contact the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project on 01394 445225 or dedhamvale.project@suffolk.gov.uk

The Marine Conservation Society has a booklet on the potential harm balloon releases and sky lanterns can do. See http://www.mcsuk.org/what_we_do/Clean+seas+and+beaches/Campaigns+and+policy/Don't+let+go+-+balloons+and+sky+lanterns