



Press Release

Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority**
Making Derbyshire Safer

6 JULY 2018

SKY LANTERNS FESTIVAL CANCELLED AFTER CONCERNS RAISED ABOUT FIRE RISK

A sky lanterns festival planned to take place in Buxton at the end of the month has been cancelled after concerns were raised about the fire risk it posed.

The Lights Fest would have seen potentially thousands of paper lanterns released into the sky and was due to take place at Buxton Raceway on July 28.

However a number of organisations and individuals raised concerns about the safety risk posed by the event, due to the fact that the lanterns could land anywhere in the surrounding land and cause fires and potentially injuries to people or animals.

For the past few weeks, the Derbyshire Events Safety Advisory Group (SAG) has been speaking with the event organisers and the owners of Buxton Raceway.

The SAG is made up of a number of organisations including Derbyshire police, Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, the county council, and local authorities such as High Peak Borough Council.

A decision has now been made by the venue to cancel the event.

Sergeant Darren Belfield said: "Our concern with this event was that potentially thousands of the paper lanterns could have carried naked flames across the Peak District, with no way of knowing where they would land.

"At the very base level, the countryside could have become littered with the remnants of these lanterns. But they also pose a real risk to wildlife and property, and could start fires in a countryside that is already extremely dry due to the hot weather.

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Terry McDermott MA
Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive



“The devastation caused with the recent moorland fires shows just how serious fires in the open can be and how quickly they can spread.

“We felt this event would have posed an unnecessary risk of fire and so, together with our partner agencies, we looked at ways that we could stop the event from taking place.

“I’m pleased the Buxton Raceway management has taken our concerns and advice on board and decided to cancel the event themselves.”

With the prolonged hot, dry spell of weather we’ve seen of late, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service has been extremely busy throughout this period, with the number of fires in the open attended more than tripling compared with the same time last year.

Add to this the large scale moorland fires that our fire service colleagues have been dealing with in the north of the county and it shows just how stretched the service has been due to the weather causing grass, trees and moorland to be tinder dry.

DFRS group manager, Steve Wells, said: “We’ve done a lot of prevention work throughout this dry spell and on the back of the moorland fires we are still dealing with to try and reduce the numbers of fires in the open happening.

“The increase in outdoor fires we’ve attended over the last couple of weeks and the scale of the ongoing moorland fires highlights just how easily fire can start and spread whilst everything is so dry.

“With this in mind, the idea of lighting and releasing fire lanterns on tinder dry moorland is extremely reckless, so it’s great news that this has been cancelled.”

DFRS has been inundated with messages of support from concerned members of the public and would like to thank people for sharing these concerns with us as we and our partner agencies within the Safety Advice Group put forward the reasons why the event should not go ahead.

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