

Floating Lanterns

Following Two incidents that have occurred in Northamptonshire UK we have issued the following press release to our communities. We are monitoring incidents in our county, we have requested information nationally about the problem, and our Trading Standards Department are investigating the problem with us. The first incident occurred when a lantern fell from the sky & burnt the roof of a vehicle resulting in minor paint damage, the second set fire to some garden furniture & was extinguished by the occupier; the third is anecdotal from a member of our fire control whose friend had her washing on a rotary dryer set on fire. NF&RS did not attend any of these incidents. Also below are the various response emails from FINDS & IAAI etc that we have received on the subject. We do have serious concerns over the use of these lanterns but need the evidence to effectively have them banned in UK at this stage.



Northamptonshire Arson Task Force



10-06-09

Press Release

Floating Lanterns/Magic Flying Lanterns

Warning – Northamptonshire Arson Task Force would like to issue a warning regarding the use of floating lanterns. These lanterns are miniature hot air balloons constructed of paper with a fuel cell attached and hung beneath the paper balloon. When the fuel cell is lit the hot air inflates the balloon and it floats into the sky. The idea is you write a wish on the paper balloon & it is sent into the atmosphere. Some balloons carry a safety warning saying do not release within 5 miles of an airport

but also use the 15 mile travel distance as a selling point. The Lanterns were withdrawn from sale in Finland in January 2009 due to fire safety issues.

These lanterns have the potential to damage, injure or kill . The lanterns have been known to fall from the sky in flames & obviously can ignite any combustible material e.g. Thatched Roof, Crops etc. Following an incident in Northampton last Wednesday we strongly advise our communities to act responsibly & to stop using them. Whilst we do not wish to be Killjoys, members of the public must understand the dangers associated with this practise. If you have been affected by one of these lanterns damaging your property please send an email to:-

mick.rodden@northantsfire.org.uk

Northamptonshire Arson Task Force is a Partnership between Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire County Council Fire & Rescue Service working together with other agencies to ensure your safety & resolve this issue.

Mick Rodden Arson Task Force Fire Service

Shaun Johnson Arson Task Force Police