

Dark Skies Herefordshire: Useful information for Parish and Town Councils

Dark Skies Herefordshire aims to conserve and enhance dark skies across the rural landscape of Herefordshire, raise people's awareness of Artificial Light At Night (ALAN) and the need for Responsible Outdoor Lighting At Night (ROLAN). It is a volunteer-led initiative that is supported by Herefordshire CPRE (HCPRE). For more information, please contact volunteer@cpreherefordshire.org.uk.

What can Parish and Town Councils do to conserve and enhance dark skies?

Parish and town councils are well placed to make a positive difference in reducing light pollution in their communities and enhance dark skies. They can:

- comment on every planning application by asking Herefordshire Council to consider no external lighting or request dark skies compliant lighting
- have a specific dark skies policy in their Neighbourhood Development Plan. For example: Eardisland Parish Council Neighbourhood Development Plan has a specific Dark Skies Policy (E6, p. 22) that states:

"To minimise light pollution and to maintain the views of our night time skies, planning proposals that include external lighting and significant openings that would allow internal lighting to be seen externally will have to demonstrate the following:

(a) They have undertaken an assessment of the need for lighting and can demonstrate need; and (b) The nature of the proposed lighting is appropriate for its use and location. The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) has provided guidance on acceptable levels of illumination for specific areas. Applicants will be required to assess the need for lighting, whether the benefits of the lighting outweigh any harm caused and any alternative measures available. It is recognised that many traditional buildings may have 'significant openings' where internal lighting will be a natural consequence"

- include the following clause in their statutory Biodiversity Plan
"Where external lighting is required it should be appropriate to its purpose and supported by a lighting plan that demonstrates that it will not have an adverse effect through unnecessary glare, light trespass, scenic intrusion or sky glow"
- encourage residents and businesses to:
 - switch off unnecessary lights: internally and externally
 - consider the impact of glare when building a new home or extension
- share 'what residents can do' in their parish newsletters
- host a community event that focuses on light pollution
- map light pollution across the parish

Dark Skies Herefordshire offers practical hands-on help and support to parish and town councils in Herefordshire.