



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-385  
Ein cyf/Our ref AD-/01131/13

William Powell AM  
AM for Mid & West Wales  
Chair Petitions committee  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

15 October 2013

Dear Bill,

### Sky Lanterns

Thank you for your letter of 23 July asking whether there will be a change of approach in managing the risks associated with sky lanterns following the fire in Smethwick.

In my letter of 30 June and the written statement of 18 July I set out a series of proposed actions following the publication of the research report on the impact of sky lanterns and helium balloons. The fire in Smethwick was clearly a very serious incident and consequently officials in UK Government are reviewing carefully the emerging evidence on the fire risks associated with sky lanterns.

As I explained in my previous letter and written statement, Welsh Government will continue to work with our partners and with the UK Government and will follow closely the progress of their review. I will also be monitoring the progress of their work with retailers, manufacturers and others to improve public awareness of how to use these products responsibly.

I shall be writing to local authorities to encourage them to consider the risks from sky lanterns and helium balloon releases in their areas and I will also raise the issue with charitable organisations to ensure that they consider the wider impacts of releasing sky lanterns at their events. My Chief Veterinary Officer Dr Christianne Glossop will shortly issue advice to raise awareness of the possible impacts on livestock health and welfare and the risks to livestock buildings. From a fire risk perspective, the Fire and Rescue Authorities are already active in discouraging the use of sky lanterns.

It is understandable that the fire in Smethwick has led to renewed concern about the risks associated with lanterns. Clearly the response by Welsh Government should be proportionate and grounded in firm evidence, which is why I have taken the course of action set out above.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Local Government and Government Business as she is responsible for fire safety in Wales.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yus' followed by a flourish, and a second signature below it that appears to be 'Alun'.

**Alun Davies AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol a Bwyd  
Minister for Natural Resources and Food