

## CNL Dark Skies Survey – RUPC response – Dec 2022

### 1. What is the name of Parish/Town Council or Parish Meeting you are responding on behalf of?

Ratley & Upton Parish Council

### 2. Your name

### 3. Your email address

This is so that we can contact you to follow up on any answers you have provided

### 4. How important does your Parish/Town Council consider dark skies to be?

Very important

Somewhat important

Somewhat not important

Not important

### 5. Does your Parish/Town Council support the conservation/protection of dark skies?

Yes

No

### 6. Does your Parish/Town Council have a dark skies policy?

This may be a dark sky policy within your neighbourhood plan

Yes

No - not that I'm aware

### 7. Do you think your Parish/Town Council does enough for dark skies?

Yes

No

### 8. What are the barriers to conserving/protecting dark skies?

1. Few formal experts in the field qualified to advise.
2. Not aware of any UK government legislation to control light pollution, unlike some other countries like for example France.
3. Planning powers are restricted to new developments as opposed to retrofitting of older premises and development under residential permitted development.

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4. The rise in rural crime (which during lockdown increased in some areas), does increase concerns over the need for the security of property and lighting is part of the solution that many people consider first.
5. Increased spread of new housing developments (as we are seeing around the Banbury area ) with mandatory lighting. As Banbury started spreading out our way we wrote to them asking for assurances that they would take steps to prevent light pollution. We got a reply saying they would be enforcing the standards, but light pollution has continued to increase.
6. General lack of awareness amongst residents and local businesses.
7. Low availability/awareness of lighting products specifically designed and promoted to minimise light pollution.
8. Where products are available, costs can be prohibitive as we have found in our own Parish. RUPC has been proactive in replacing all 6 of our old streetlights that blasted out light downwards, sideways and upwards with more modern compact fluorescent lamps that have a more controlled, downwards focused pattern. However, we were unable to afford the top of the range LED upgrade at that time.

### **9. Does your Parish/Town Council implement good dark sky practices on its estates?**

(village halls, playing fields etc.)

Yes

No

### **10. Do you think that the district/borough/county/unitary authority do enough to protect and enhance dark skies?**

Yes

No

### **11. Is there anything more the district/borough/county/unitary authority could/should be doing for dark skies?**

1. Having a readily accessible plan: Having a specific dark skies plan in place can be used as a focal point to help stimulate better engagement with local authorities/stakeholders/partners.
2. Some parts of the country (eg North Yorkshire Moors National Park who have recently gained International Dark Skies Reserve Status through the IDSA) are proactively encouraging the maintenance and where possible enhancement of their dark skies. As one of only 19 such designated areas, their plan sets out that all new development will be expected to minimise light spillage through good design and lighting management. The National Park agreed a set of principles in their 2020 local plan to help this, including no external lighting will be permitted in remote areas, and proposals that involve

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external lighting in open countryside will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the lighting is essential for safety or security reasons.

3. Celebrate success: Perhaps more importantly than simply relying on plans and regulations, North Yorkshire Moors NP is also doing an awful lot to promote their Darks Skies Status through events and festivals. This raises awareness, pride and better local appreciation and buy-in with the communities. <https://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/visiting/whats-on/dark-skies-festival>
4. Measuring success: Monitoring of dark skies levels to help provide a yardstick to measure compliance/success/progress.
5. Improving advice: this could include providing accessible guidance and advice and tips on lighting solutions and products which can be adopted and implemented by local communities etc.

### 12. Does your Parish/Town Council receive public complaints about light trespass/obtrusive light or similar?

Yes, quiet often

Yes, occasionally

No

### 13. Would your Parish/Town Council, at least in principle, be willing to support:

Promoting dark skies advice & guidance

Yes

No

Maybe

Already doing this  
Dark sky and lighting surveys

Reduction in light pollution

### 14. What Dark Skies information/guidance/support would be useful to help your Parish/Town Council help improve dark skies?

See response to question 11 above

### 15. Are you aware of CNLs\* "Cotswolds Dark Skies & Artificial Light Position Statement"?

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\*Cotswolds National Landscape is the new name for Cotswolds Conservation Board, and the Cotswolds AONB, so you may know it as Cotswolds Conservation Board's "Cotswolds Dark Skies & Artificial Light Position Statement"

Yes

No

### 16. What could the Cotswolds National Landscape team do to help?

See response to question 11

In addition, do come and speak to local communities about your plans and offer simple tips on what local residents and businesses can do to help.

### 17. Depending on the results of sample Dark Sky Quality surveys, would you support the development of an application for the darkest area of the Cotswolds AONB to become a Dark Skies Reserve?

Yes

No

Maybe

### 18. Is there anything else you'd like to say about dark skies in the Cotswolds National Landscape?

RUPC feel that many of our residents move to the local area because of the sense of darkness and the quality of light. Being able to observe the night sky is important to help us connect with nature and our environment. The majority would be supportive of maintaining that quality and it's an important feature of our small community.

### 19. Would you like us to keep you informed of the outcomes of this survey and dark sky network activities?

Yes