

Cranham Parish Council Dark Skies Policy

Purpose

Cranham Parish Council recognises that artificial lighting can provide important benefits for safety, security and accessibility. However, excessive or poorly designed lighting can harm the rural character of the parish, diminish enjoyment of the night sky, adversely affect human wellbeing, and disrupt wildlife, particularly nocturnal species such as bats, owls and insects.

Dark skies are an important feature of the parish's natural environment, contributing to landscape character, tranquillity, biodiversity and residents' quality of life. The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing dark skies and reducing light pollution wherever practicable.

Policy Objectives

The Council will:

- Consider the impact of artificial lighting in all planning applications on which it is consulted and in projects or activities it undertakes.
- Support national and local planning policies that seek to avoid, minimise and reduce light pollution.
- Encourage the use of lighting only where necessary and ensure that its intensity, duration and extent are minimised.
- Protect sensitive habitats, wildlife corridors and intrinsically dark landscapes from the adverse effects of artificial lighting.
- Support opportunities to reduce existing light pollution through improved design, technology and management.
- Promote awareness of dark skies within the local community and encourage good lighting practices.
- Recognise dark skies and tranquillity as important components of the area's natural beauty, biodiversity, cultural heritage and wellbeing.
- Support initiatives that enhance appreciation of the night sky and contribute to wider dark sky projects within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Planning and Development

When considering planning applications, the Council will assess the impact of proposed lighting on local amenity, landscape character, biodiversity and the night sky.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- The necessity, location, scale and design of lighting.
- Brightness, colour temperature and hours of operation.
- Potential for light spill beyond site boundaries.
- Cumulative impacts from multiple developments.
- Effects on wildlife, particularly bats and other nocturnal species.
- Impacts on tranquillity and the rural character of the parish.

The Council will encourage lighting that:

- Is the minimum required for safety and operational purposes.
- Is fully shielded and directed downward.
- Avoids upward light emission and excessive light spill.

- Uses warm-coloured lighting with low blue-light content.
- Incorporates timers, dimmers, motion sensors or curfews to minimise unnecessary operation.
- Avoids illumination of hedgerows, woodland edges, watercourses and wildlife corridors.
- External lighting should be restricted to essential purposes, particularly within open countryside, conservation areas, tranquil landscapes and other environmentally sensitive locations.

For developments involving significant external lighting, the Council may request a Lighting Impact Assessment demonstrating the need for lighting, measures to minimise light pollution, impacts on landscape and biodiversity, and compliance with recognised standards and best practice.

For all planning applications, the following agreed wording will be added to all Cranham Parish Council comments to emphasise the importance of this policy within the Parish:

As an overriding comment, we would require the Council to question what steps are being taken to ensure that the plans comply with a Dark Skies Policy. Should Officers be minded to grant this application we would request that conditions are imposed regarding the use of external lighting, as this Council supports the Dark Skies initiative and the proposed site is adjacent to OR {in close proximity to} open fields nearby SSS1 and NNR Cranham Common.

Policy Framework

This policy supports the objectives of:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires planning decisions to “*limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*”.
[National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030, particularly Policy CE6 (Dark Skies), which seeks to conserve and enhance dark skies, minimise light pollution, reduce existing sources of artificial light where possible, and recognise dark skies as a special quality of the National Landscape.
[CNL-MANAGEMENT-PLAN 2025-30-FINAL.pdf](#)
- The Cotswolds National Landscape Dark Skies and Artificial Light Guidance.
[Dark Skies - Cotswolds National Landscape](#)

Community and Council Action

The Council will encourage residents, businesses, community organisations and sports facilities to adopt good lighting practices by:

- Switching off unnecessary lighting when not required.
- Using motion sensors instead of permanent security lighting where appropriate.
- Replacing older fittings with dark-sky-friendly alternatives.
- Supporting activities that promote awareness and appreciation of dark skies.

If the Council needs to install lighting on its own land, or assets, it will seek to follow best practice by using energy-efficient lighting, minimising unnecessary illumination, and considering impacts on wildlife, neighbouring properties and the wider landscape.

Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains consistent with current legislation, the National Planning Policy Framework, the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan, and evolving best practice relating to dark skies and light pollution

Policy Adopted Tuesday 7th July 2026