
APPENDIX R ENVIRONMENT POLICY 5 DARK SKIES

Appendix R Environmental Policy 5 Dark Skies

Dark Skies - Objectives and Evidence

The skies over our head are every bit as crucial to Norfolk as the vistas and views of the land. During the day we are privileged to have around us views into the distance with the topography of the parish, the district and county laid out before us as we go about our daily industrious lives, effecting and experiencing change. As day turns to night our land begins to change both in form and colour. The intensity and significance of the night begins to emerge, eventually consuming the horizons and raising our sight lines up to the night sky. Our perspective and understanding of relevance changes as we are drawn to the infinity of the world of night. The views of the earth and human industry are drawn into stark contrast, and we are invited to place down our tools of labour, to draw upon the changing events of the day and spy the apparent unchanging night. The lighting process invites the nocturnal world, the animal and avian world of hunted and hunter, of scavenger and spy, protector and pillager to emerge from their habitats, take their opportunities of sustenance and, in so doing, enrich our personal world. The dark skies are where we gain a sense of space, place and timelessness, awe and wonderment. They are the means by which we remind ourselves of our own frailty and uniqueness and enable us to reflect on the past and perhaps see the world as the ancients once would. As the light changes, from sunlight, to twilight to the reduction and possible absence of natural light and artificial light it enables us understand and place ourselves within the natural world, as part of the natural world, rather than existing outside and beyond the natural world. It is a key component to rooting us all to the cycle of life and the cycle of nature. It improves wellbeing and the balance of our psyche.¹ Our dark skies are an important natural resource that needs to be protected for the benefit of all life within the parish.

The privilege of viewing the dark sky is one that should be available to all. We live in a society where currently dark skies can be a matter of economy. Those who have the opportunity to live away from community hubs can enjoy the dark skies whereas those who reside within the community have restrictions placed upon them; this policy should go some way to equalising this imbalance.

The Neighbourhood Plan policies should enable the parish to gain International Dark-Sky Association status. The IDA is now a recognised authority worldwide for the protection of the night sky. Its Dark Sky Places programme, which began in 2001, has since certified over 65 Dark Sky Places covering more than 58,000km² worldwide, awarding five different types of designations.

The benefits of a Dark Skies Policy

Energy efficiency and cost saving

By adopting a Dark Skies Policy, we will be reducing the consumption of energy by promoting efficient outdoor lighting technologies and practices. It will encourage appropriate lighting levels and warranting conditions (whether lights may be installed in certain areas and/or operated during particular hours of the day).

Protecting the ecology of the area

¹ <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing>

Wildlife is all around us, whether we live in one of the two villages, a hamlet, or in a more isolated spot. Choices made about outdoor lighting impact all species and are especially important for locations in or near sensitive habitats. Bad lighting can have lethal consequences for wildlife. There is clear evidence within the Parish that well-lit areas deter some of the rarer bats and at the same time drain the night skies of moths and other light attracted insects that would normally provide food for bat colonies. Good lighting practice can, on the other hand, help restore healthy ecosystems.

Public Safety

Poorly designed and/or installed outdoor lighting is a known hazard to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians in transit at night. By adopting a Dark Skies Policy that reduces glare and puts the right amount of light in the right place and at the right time, will ensure the safety of all.

Crime

Adopting a dark Skies Policy does not mean we compromise on security. Over-lighting outdoor spaces at night in the belief that lighting deters crime can conversely create favourable conditions for crimes of opportunity. Good policies that protect dark skies, enhance security by reducing glare, reducing harsh lighting that creates shadows, and retaining the element of surprise using adaptive lighting controls, can enhance security.

What a Dark Sky Parish means for residents?

Being in a Dark Sky Parish does not mean you have to turn lights off. Rather, it is about encouraging the use of high-quality eco-friendly lighting, which is not only more effective in shining light where it is needed, but also reduces light pollution and carbon emissions and is better for nocturnal wildlife.

To ensure we minimise light pollution and retain the Parish's rural character a Lighting Management Plan (LMP) will need to be produced.

The Lighting Management Plan (LMP) is not a legal document, but is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan and should therefore be used by the planning authorities as guidance when considering domestic, public and commercial planning applications within the Parish. When developers apply to build new developments, or an individual wants to build new premises, or expand existing buildings, they will need to consider whether, and to what extent, external lighting is needed. If the decision is that external lighting is required, then it will need to be dark sky friendly. That means using lighting which is suited to the job and which is fully shielded. Such lighting is invariably less expensive to operate over the long term and requires less maintenance than older lighting technologies.

The parish of Dickleburgh and Rushall encompasses wilder remoter areas, hamlets and villages. As a result of this the Lighting Management Plan includes different guidelines for different areas.

Designations of D&R DSL (Dickleburgh and Rushall Dark Skies Lighting):

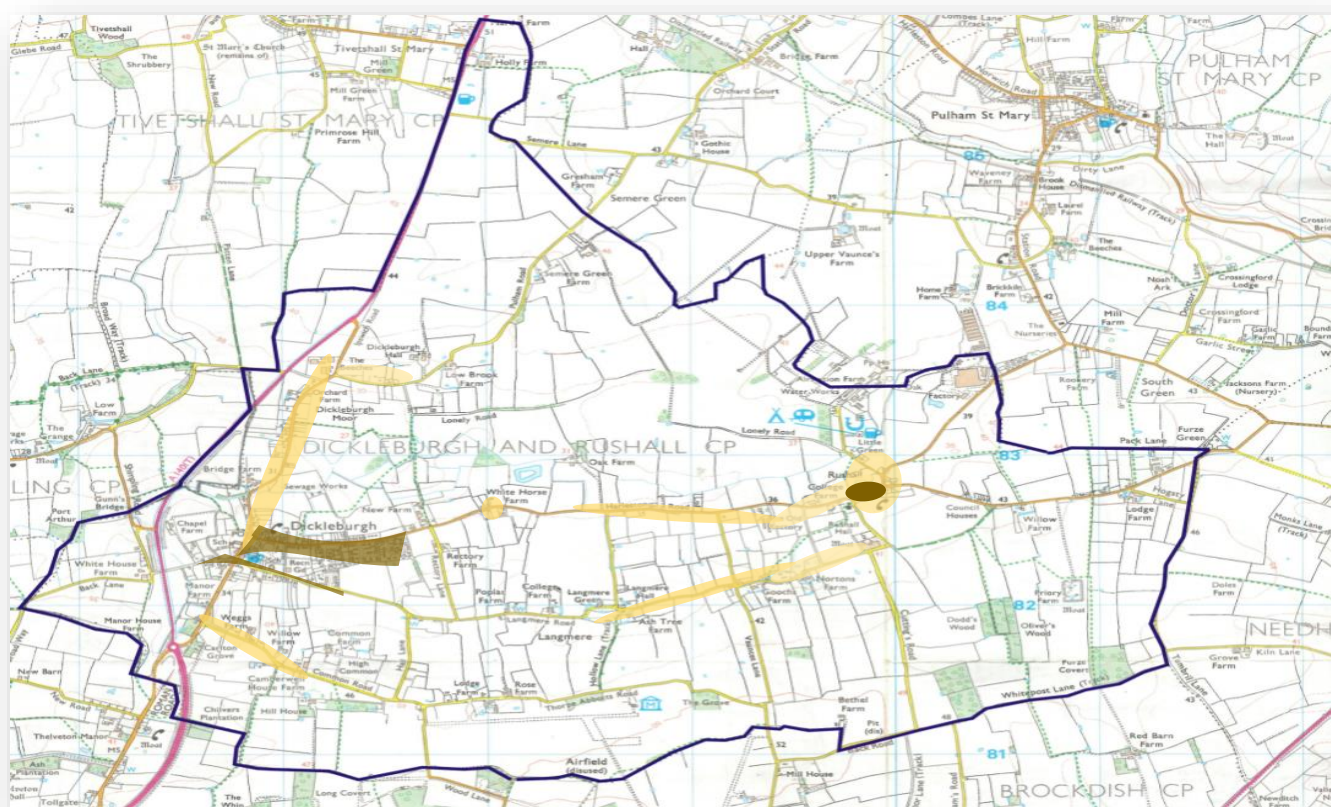
All of the Parish should be considered as area 1 unless specifically identified as 2 or 3
D&R DSL 1 Areas where there should be no permanent or fixed external lighting unless for safety reasons and must be within the red spectrum. This designated area is a protected natural area where a commitment to protecting the quality of the night sky and access to starlight is established. Its function is to preserve the quality of the night sky and the

different associated values, whether cultural, scientific, astronomical, or the natural landscape. Mainly open fields with some farm buildings or housing (all areas are DSL 1 unless specified). It is the intention through this process to support DSL1 to becoming a Starlight Reserve²

D&R DSL 2 Areas of conurbation that may have some / minimal external lighting at individual properties where light pollution should not exist. No street lighting.

D&R DSL 3 Areas of conurbation that may have low wattage low emission street lighting, in exceptional circumstances, that is dark sky friendly. Individual properties may have non-polluting external lighting.

This map is indicative



For a full list of Street lights managed by Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish Council see Appendix I Lighting Management Plan

² <https://www.fundacionstarlight.org/en/section/starlight-reserves--definition/288.html>