

Don't let go!

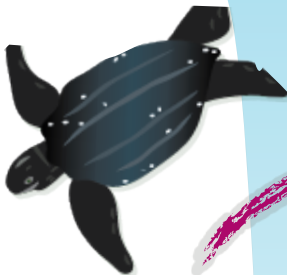
Subject/Topic:

Marine litter, human impacts, conservation, community action,

Suitable for ages: Older Years

1 Background

Balloons and sky lanterns may look pretty while they are going up, but when they come down as litter they pose a real danger to marine life, particularly sea birds who can become entangled in the string, and turtles who may ingest balloons mistaking them for food. Join our Don't Let Go campaign with your class to help reduce their impact in your area.



2 Set the Scene

Introduce students to the issue using the *Don't Let Go Animation* - Discuss the types of events to which releases are commonly linked and the environmental impacts. Introduce the *Don't let go booklet*. Note some children may find images of injured wildlife distressing. Please warn students.

3 ReSourceS

Worksheets: *Don't Let Go Booklet* (separate download) and animation (<http://bit.ly/IUNKYxW>) *Think Sheet*, *Hope Community School Case Study*

5 Apply

Groups should consider ways that they can help to reduce this problem and begin to map out a campaign they can run in their local community. Each group should decide on the best way to present and publicise their campaign.

4 Investigate

In small groups, investigate the problem of balloon litter using the *Think Sheet and Don't let go booklet* as a guide. A google search of the topic will return many useful sites which may also be used to gain an understanding of the problem. Review and discuss as a class the *Hope Community School Case Study*.

6 Extend

As a class, decide on which group's campaign you are going to run, or choose the best bits of everyone's. Now put your campaign into action. Advertise it in your school newsletter and on social media and even put posters up in your local community to gain support. Don't forget to keep MCS posted with the progress of your campaign. You can send any information and photos of your work to education@mcsuk.org.

7 Reflect

Review your campaign. How successful were you? Is there anything else you can do? Think about other ways you can help your environment locally. Together we can make a difference.



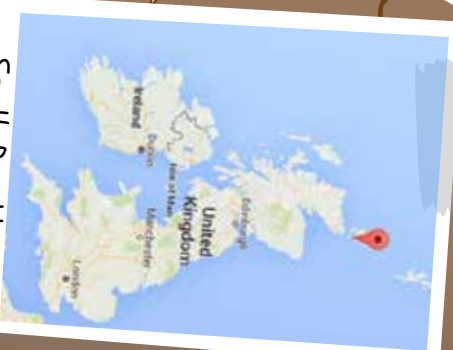
Hope Community School

A case study of community action

Hope Community School are a small school in Orkney with around 86 children. The school is in St Margaret's Hope in South Ronaldsay, one of the South Orkney Isles. Many of the children come from families that farm or earn their living from the sea. If you live in Orkney you cannot help but spend time on or around the sea; playing on

beaches, travelling on ferries, looking for shells and fishing.

South Ronaldsay,
Orkney



picked up and were curious as to how something like a balloon could survive for so long.



Children from the school regularly take part in a locally organised 'Bag the Bruck' litter clearing campaign with other local groups. In 2013 they joined the Eco-Schools Litterless Campaign, and, helped by a local campaign; 'Pick-up Three', the children spent a day on one of their favourite local beaches doing a beach clean. They were helped by parents, Burray School and the local minister. Nearby residents who saw what they were doing came down to pitch in too. The children were struck by the story of some of the litter they

When the next Eco-Committee formed, two of the members felt that they would like to campaign to reduce beach litter on a larger scale. They started to research campaigns linked to marine litter and two members of the committee found the MCS 'Don't Let Go!' campaign. They knew straight away that this was something which made sense and they felt passionately that they could make a difference.

"If Councillor Drever didn't know about it then the world would just get worse but then if we told him then he could do something about it."
Sophie, P5

The Primary 3, 4, and 5 class (ages 6-9), were doing a topic about Orkney, learning about democracy and our representatives; the MP, the MSP, the MEPs and the councillors who look after their interests. When they needed to learn how to write persuasive texts, the children were very clear about who they wanted to persuade and what they wanted to persuade them to do. Letters were written to their local MP, MSP, MEPs and local councillor. Andrew Drever, their local councillor, visited to talk about his work.

Persuading Andrew Drever, local
councillor, to support the campaign.



was presented with a selection of letters from the class asking that Orkney should become one of the Local Authorities in Scotland who banned the release of sky lanterns and helium balloons.



Visiting the Council Chambers for the debate.

Cllr Drever then asked one of the local government officers to prepare a report for the Council. Thanks to the hard work of the Council Officers and support of Cllr Drever, the report was prepared in time for the children to see it presented at full council by the end of the school year.

"I just thought we needed to do something because the governments were focussing on the Referendum rather than wildlife." Thorfinn, P6

The Council debated and passed a policy that sky lantern release and balloon releases should be banned on all Council land. They have now also asked that reports be prepared so that byelaws can be created banning them all over Orkney.

"Going to the Council chamber was exciting and scary and interesting because you got to see everything happening!" Brogen, P5

The Councillors said lots of nice things about the children during the debate and even changed the running order of the meeting so that they wouldn't have to listen to the 'boring bits'. They praised the children for taking an interest in, and responsibility for, their environment. They also said that they hadn't realised that this kind of litter was a problem until the children drew their attention to it.

Taking part in this campaign involved the whole school and was driven by the interests of the children. They have connected a variety of different aspects of their learning and made a difference to their community. They have now made links with other campaigns in different parts of the world including Balloons Blow in the US.

MCS would like to thank the teachers and students at Hope Community School for the amazing work they have done to get a sky lantern and helium balloon release ban in their local area, and for sharing their inspiring story with us.



Sky lanterns like this kill and injure marine and terrestrial wildlife.

What could you do to make a difference?

Don't Let Go!

Think Sheet

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graph TD; A[What's the problem?] --- B[Who/what does it affect?]; B --- C[How does it affect them?]; C --- D[What needs to be done to solve it?]; D --- E[What could you do to help?]; A --- F[What causes it?]; F --- G[What stops people from solving it?]; G --- H[What happens if it isn't solved?];
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What's the problem?

Who/what does it affect?

How does it affect them?

What causes it?

What needs to be done to solve it?

What stops people from solving it?

What happens if it isn't solved?

What could you do to help?