

Explore the Dark Side of Buriton

Buriton is a great place to enjoy the best free light show there is, with twinkling stars, whizzing shooting stars and bright planets scattered across the sky.

Less than 10% of the UK population can see the beauty of a natural night sky full of stars and the south east of England is the worst part of the country.

But Buriton is a special place in this busy region – and is now part of an International Dark Sky Reserve (one of only 11 in the whole world).

We are part of an impressive area where you can see the Milky Way, the Andromeda galaxy and the Orion Nebula with the naked eye and binoculars

And night-time is important for all the animals, birds and insects that thrive at night.

All our lighting affects the dark night skies.

The light from the universe takes hundreds of years to reach our eyes. What a pity to lose it in the last few seconds of its journey!

This leaflet will help explain why our dark skies are important and what you can do to help protect them.

Importance to our wildlife

Dark night skies are not only good for stargazing, they are important for many animals, birds and insects.

Lights at night can have a bad effect on nocturnal wildlife that has evolved to take advantage of darkness (eg. bats, moths, hedgehogs etc) and can also affect daytime creatures (such as birds) by keeping them awake at night and depriving them of rest and energy.

Nearly a third of vertebrates (and two thirds of invertebrates) are nocturnal and many depend on darkness for survival.

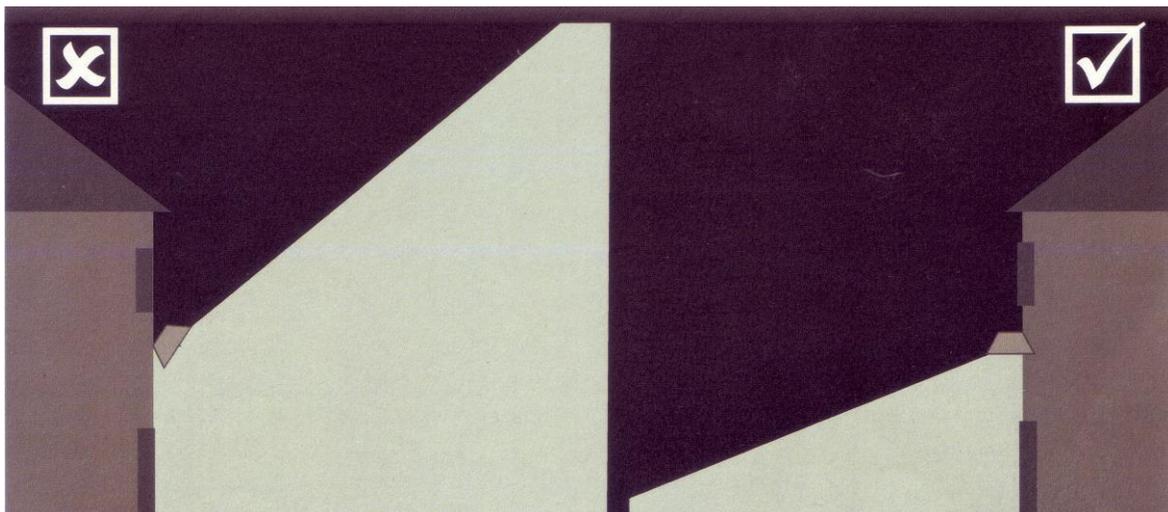
Light pollution can cause them to become disoriented, resulting in decreased reproduction and reduced foraging for food

Unnecessary, poorly-aimed and overly bright lights can affect the day-night cycles, behaviour and mating patterns of bats, birds, moths, glow-worms and many other species.

Nocturnal wildlife in your garden

Here are a few tips on how you can encourage more night-time wildlife into your garden:

- turn off lights when not needed
- buy lamps under 500 lumens
- plant paler flowers to attract night-time insects
- install a bat box.



Should we put all our lights out?

Of course not, we need light at night for many reasons - but ...

- lights should only shine *where* needed: downwards and shielded from neighbouring homes etc
- lights should only shine *when* needed: often lighting is simply not needed for most of the night
- use *sensible wattages*: a 40W light will adequately illuminate the average driveway and garden; 150W is probably the maximum required for any typical domestic or small-scale commercial premises
- *wasted light is wasted money*: about £1 billion is wasted by inefficient lighting in the UK every year.

Powerful lighting is generally not required on family homes or businesses and:

- can be expensive to run
- can hide criminal activity and assist burglars in what would otherwise be unfamiliar territory
- can blind car drivers and cause fatal accidents.

Government Crime Prevention advice says that “other forms of lighting could make for a better choice.”

Top tips for protecting our dark skies:

- use lower wattage light bulbs
- use light bulbs that are 500 lumens or less (it will say on the box)
- use the right amount - don't over-light the area needlessly
- use timers
- use proximity sensors
- turn lights off when not needed
- angle all lamps so all the light falls down, eliminating side spill
- close curtains.

What can you do to help?

Check the outdoor lighting around your home. Is it really needed?

If not, turn it off, or if it is, make sure that it is fully shielded so light is directed down on to the ground.

Buy lamps of under 500 lumens to reduce light pollution.

Spread the word: tell your family, friends and neighbours about why dark sky friendly lighting is important.

The more people that know, the better protected our dark skies will be.

More information about star-gazing

There are a number of apps for Apple and Android devices:

- [SkyView Free](#) (Android, Free)
- [SkyView Free](#) (Apple, Free)
- [Sky Map](#) (Android, Free)
- [Star Walk 2](#) (Android, Free)
- [Star Walk](#) (Apple, £4.99, or [a free one with adverts](#))

There are also some great resources online, here are just a few:

www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/science/space

www.astronomy.swin.edu.au/cosmos

www.nasa.gov

www.fourmilab.ch/earthview/vplanet.html

www.fourmilab.ch/yoursky

www.sagasonline.org

www.esa.int

Better lighting helps us to keep the wonderful dark skies that people have enjoyed for ages – and helps everyone appreciate the beauty of the night sky.

The International Dark Sky Association works to protect the night skies for present and future generations. To find out more visit www.darksky.org.

To find out more about the South Downs Dark Sky Reserve visit www.southdowns.gov.uk/darkskies