



Council – 5 September 2024

Notice of Motion - Voluntary Action on Flying Rings at Council Owned Beaches

Notice of Motion from Andrea Lewis, Rob Stewart, Andrew Stevens, Robert Francis-Davies, David Hopkins, Louise Gibbard, Cyril Anderson, Alyson Anthony, Hayley Gwilliam, Elliott King and Robert Smith

Flying Rings are cheap products derived from the solid disc frisbee, they are sold by many retailers at a price as little as £1 each and are often lost or discarded at beaches.

Seals (especially younger ones) are extremely curious animals and if they place their heads into the ring, they can quickly become entrapped, and it is almost always impossible for the seal to escape or dislodge themselves. Over time, the ring will start to cut into the animal's flesh causing unmeasurable pain, suffering, infection, and death.

The north Atlantic grey seal is the predominant seal species sighted on our Gower coast. The UK has around 38 percent of the global population and Gower has a small percentage of that number. Human disturbance is a particular issue for the seals that visit Gower and so the threat that flying rings pose is an additional compounding stressor for seals in Gower and beyond (these rings can travel great distances in the ocean).

The Gower Seal Group approached the Swansea Local Nature Partnership Coordinators to see if Swansea Council would implement a ban on flying rings at their beaches. No other authority in Wales has implemented a ban, so Swansea could be the first to take action to discourage the use of flying rings.

The proposed action would support the awareness raising and campaigning work that the Gower Seal Group has undertaken on this issue locally and nationally. Through the efforts of their passionate volunteer base they have undertaken beach cleans and recovered discarded flying rings, and engaged with the community and retailers to educate people and business on the dangers flying plastic rings pose. Local business that have ceased the sale of these items include Kennexstone Caravan and Camping Park at Llangennith, and Pitton Cross Caravan and Camping.

The issue of flying rings has also received attention nationally, being highlighted on ITV Wales Coast and Country, and being the focus of a UK campaign led by the UK Seal Alliance (of which the Gower Seal Group are a member) which will include a UK Government published petition. While Tesco, Pets at Home, CVS Vets and coastal

located Asda stores have banned their sale having seen their devastating consequences to unsuspecting marine wildlife. Additionally, other UK councils have banned the use of flying rings on their beaches including Kings Lynn, West Norfolk and North Norfolk.

As well as helping to protect seal populations, this voluntary action on discouraging flying rings at Swansea Council Owned beaches would help the council meet their Section 6 Biodiversity duty and commitments to nature recovery under the Swansea Local Nature Recovery Plan, plus the Swansea Local Well-being Plan and the Swansea Council Corporate Plan.

We propose that Council:-

Supports voluntary action on discouraging the use of flying rings at council owned beaches. This would cover the following:

- Swansea Bay
- Bracelet Bay
- Limeslade Bay
- Rotherslade Bay
- Langeland Bay
- Caswell Bay
- Port Eynon Beach

Supports the National Campaign to introduce a UK wide ban.

Asks the Leader to write to Welsh and UK Government in support of such a ban.

We further propose that Council:-

Promotes communications through our council media channels to encourage the public and visitors to our coastline to support this Swansea wide action.