



06/10/2014

Dear John Whittingdale,

As an amateur astronomer and one of your constituents I would like to draw your attention to the a problem which is an unacceptable waste of taxpayer's money, which wastes large amounts of energy which in turn increases greenhouse gas emissions, research has also shown it disrupts people's sleep patterns, while one study has suggested a link to breast cancer, it disrupts the migration of birds, the breeding patterns of nocturnal animals and insect populations have been affected and it has erased the night skies for professional and amateur astronomers and the public in general over a large part of the United Kingdom, I refer to LIGHT POLLUTION.

In less than ten years' time due to the spread of light pollution throughout the country, astronomy may be finished and we will no longer be able to share the wonders of the night sky with our children or children's children. Many stars are now no longer visible and more and more are fading, lost above an orange sky glow and to quote astronomy lecturer and author Bob Mizon MBE from a BBC news article *"It's illegal to dump rubbish in the street or the sea, so why isn't it illegal to dump rubbish into the sky? It's just about the only part of our environment that isn't already protected."*

At present the eastern section of the Dengie Peninsula is widely regarded as one of the best places for astronomy in the South East of England and one the of the only places with dark enough skies to see the Milky Way on a clear night. I would like to highlight the new housing developments being planned in and around Burnham-on-Crouch and Southminster, whilst I am not against the developments as I feel the towns need to grow i am very concerned that the increase of traditional street lamps will add to the light pollution and reduce the night skies visibility further, this would be a great loss of a beautiful part of our environment!

Poorly designed street and security lamps can be a real nuisance or even a danger to car drivers and home owners. Road deaths have occurred because of poorly sited glaring 'security' lamps but well-designed street light luminaires and security lamps do exist so that the problem can easily be rectified. Local government sometimes seems unwilling to fit these and continue to install older types that produce skyglow, glare and light trespass. Although Maldon District Council do currently operate a switch off policy where they turn off a large proportion of the street lights from 00:00, this does help a little but it does not really address or rectify the problem. The purpose of lighting is to light up the ground and not the locality for miles around or the starry heavens.

Something must be done to stop it! The Czech Republic introduced anti-light-pollution legislation in 2002. So 12 years on why haven't we? Surely DEFRA and the DTLR should be taking this more seriously. The fact that a Parliamentary Select Committee on Light Pollution was set up in February 2003 is good evidence that the astronomers' case is strong and widely heard.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Hutcheon