



PR UPDATE September 2015



Welcome to our September newsletter. We hope you had a great summer and successful season! We have had another busy month here at the Press Office, speaking to many journalists and spreading the word on the lobbying campaign.

National activity:

< On the 6th September The Observer featured the lobbying campaign and the problems pigeon fanciers across the UK are facing.

< Following the exposure from The Observer, BBC 4 Farming Today interviewed Stewart

< In addition, The Telegraph ran a feature about the lobbying action on 7th September.

< This national coverage has resulted in comments from the RSPB - therefore it is imperative that we continue to push positive news stories out into the press about the lobbying action.

Pigeon fanciers take on RSPB over killer hawks

Traditional sport is under threat say owners as they back raptor cull



Pigeon racing is under threat from attacks by birds of prey say pigeon fanciers. Photograph: Christopher Thomond for the Guardian



PR UPDATE September 2015



Stop the pigeon – chilli gel could ward off pests

■ Spicy substance can 'burn' birds' feet and stop them returning

Emma Hobley

COULD electric shocks, birds of prey or gel which burns like chilli be the answer to Witham's pigeon problem?

Witham Town Council called in experts from Rentokil to hear options for slowing the growing numbers of birds, and their droppings, away from buildings in the town centre.

Solutions ranged from netting, electrical bird deterrents, special gel with an active ingredient found in chillis to "burn" pigeons' feet and culling, as a last resort.

The idea of footling pigeons with a contraceptive mixed with grain was also put forward.

The council's environment committee met on Monday to hear suggestions after complaints about slippery pigeon droppings regained the long-standing issue. Worst hit are the area outside Greaves in Newland Street and outside businesses in Gutherson Street, where pigeons roost on the rooftops.

Sean Byrne, specialist services consultant at Rentokil, said the committee: "The electric deterrent system, similar to an electric fence, gives them a short



and does not harm the birds, but it does work very well."

He also suggested spraying a protective gel onto buildings which causes a burning sensation on pigeons' feet when they land.

The gel sits at 9,000 SHU on the Scoville scale, making it roughly twice as hot as a jalapeno pepper.

Luke Roberts, local surveyor for Rentokil, added: "It gives the sensation of burning, but doesn't actually hurt."

As a bird brings up its legs, it

doesn't come back." Connellors also made reference to a story in a Barcelona newspaper, brought in by a resident, describing how authorities there had started footling pigeons with contraceptives to stop them breeding.

Mr Byrne said it was not a service Rentokil offered.

Despite taking advice from Rentokil, the issue is still an individual Witham businesses to protect their own buildings against the pest.

John Goodman, chairman of the committee, (inset left) said: "It's dangerous - I came out of the

fortunately this is not the sort of thing the council can do."

"All we can do is make strong recommendations via the Chamber of Commerce whose members need to meet their responsibility."

Tina Townsend, member of Witham Chamber of Commerce, said it would consider bringing businesses together to come up with a plan to ward off the pigeons.

Leo Fribbins, pigeon enthusiast and director of UK Belgica racing pigeon clinic in Colchester, warned there was only one way to move the birds on.

He said: "Ideally the only scientific approach that will work is to stop footling them and put signs up to tell people to stop."

"It's a bit disappointing when people use harmful things to stop pigeons roosting."

"We have had pigeons brought in that have sticky substances on their skin. Some have been stuck on window sills and have had to rip their toes off to move."

"Some have had their toes caught in wire mesh."

"The diseases they carry don't cause problems for humans at all."

"Pigeons get a bad reputation if you think what they have done for us in two world wars and they are a very important part of our history for 10,000 people, like myself."

SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION:

Witham Town Council called in Rentokil to learn what options are available to get rid of the pigeons.

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075 The Stop

Regional activity:

< Lee Fribbins was interviewed by the Braintree and Witham Times regarding Witham's feral pigeon problem.

We are still on the look out for people to interview for the media. If you have a story you'd like to share with us, please do get in touch:

jessica@voicecommunications.co.uk

01206 332110

We require pigeon fanciers from across the UK, so we'd be delighted to speak to you if you are willing to be interviewed.

This month we spoke to Peter Harwood, from Send near Woking, about the issues he is facing with raptors.

Its devastating to hear how much of an impact these attacks are having on pigeon fanciers - we need your help to make a difference!



PR UPDATE September 2015



DON'T FORGET!

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter for regular updates and coverage.
@RaptorAlliance

Our petition currently has 1,652 signatures but we need another 850 to reach our target of 2,500! Make a difference and sign and share our petition which is live on Change.org

https://www.change.org/p/pigeon-fanciers-we-need-you-to-help-change-the-law-to-protect-our-pigeons?recruiter=268976331&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive

WE NEED YOU!

As part of our lobbying campaign, we need as many of you as possible to speak to your MP. You could make a real difference to the campaign and by speaking up, you are helping us get one step closer to our aim.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.rpra.org/raptor-alliance/>

