

# **Urban Gulls Scrutiny Inquiry Day**

**27 November 2013**

# **Welcome**

**Cllr Marie Longstaff  
Chair**

# **Why gulls?**

**Kirsten Elliott, local resident**





# Public Statements

## **Coffee break**

**Please return to your seats by 10:45**

# **Current situation**

**Introduced by Cllr David Dixon  
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods**

# Urban Gulls



**Cathryn Humphries**

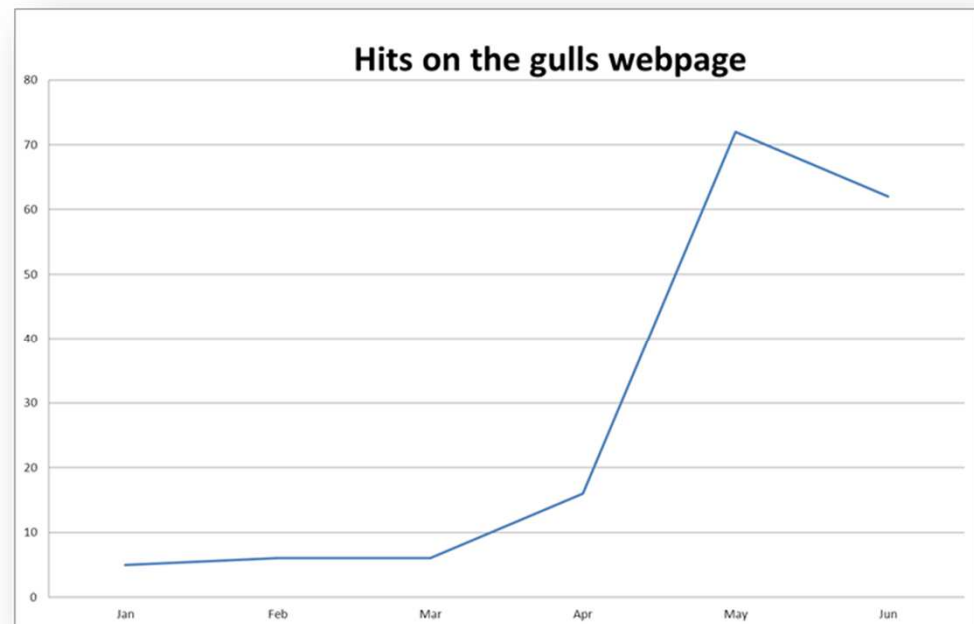
Bath and North East Somerset Council

## **How can we engage better so...**

- a) that our customers understand what we are able to achieve within the resources we have
- b) we can work better together on mitigating the impacts of gulls

## What have we done to get the message out about gulls?

- » Reviewed our webpages and produced new guidance
- » Local media campaign





## **Egg replacement service**

- » **8** buildings in city centre
- » **21** nests
- » **42** eggs replaced
- » Poor response-why?



## Bird free gel

- » Being trialled by a number of Councils
- » Aim to deter gulls from using buildings



Bath News and Media Group

# Commercial Waste enforcement

- » **112** warning letters
- » **31** legal notices
- » **12** Fixed Penalty Notices
- » **3** prosecutions



Before



After

Making Bath & North East Somerset an **even** better place to live, work & visit

## **Domestic Waste enforcement**

- » New King Street initiative
- » **50** letters
- » **8** legal notices
- » **80%** improvement in compliance





# Feeding gulls

- » Challenge the public who are blatantly feeding gulls
- » Consider littering offences if in public interest



# Gull-proof waste sacks

» Currently  
issued to **2500**  
households



Bath News and Media Group

Making Bath & North East Somerset an **even** better place to live, work & visit

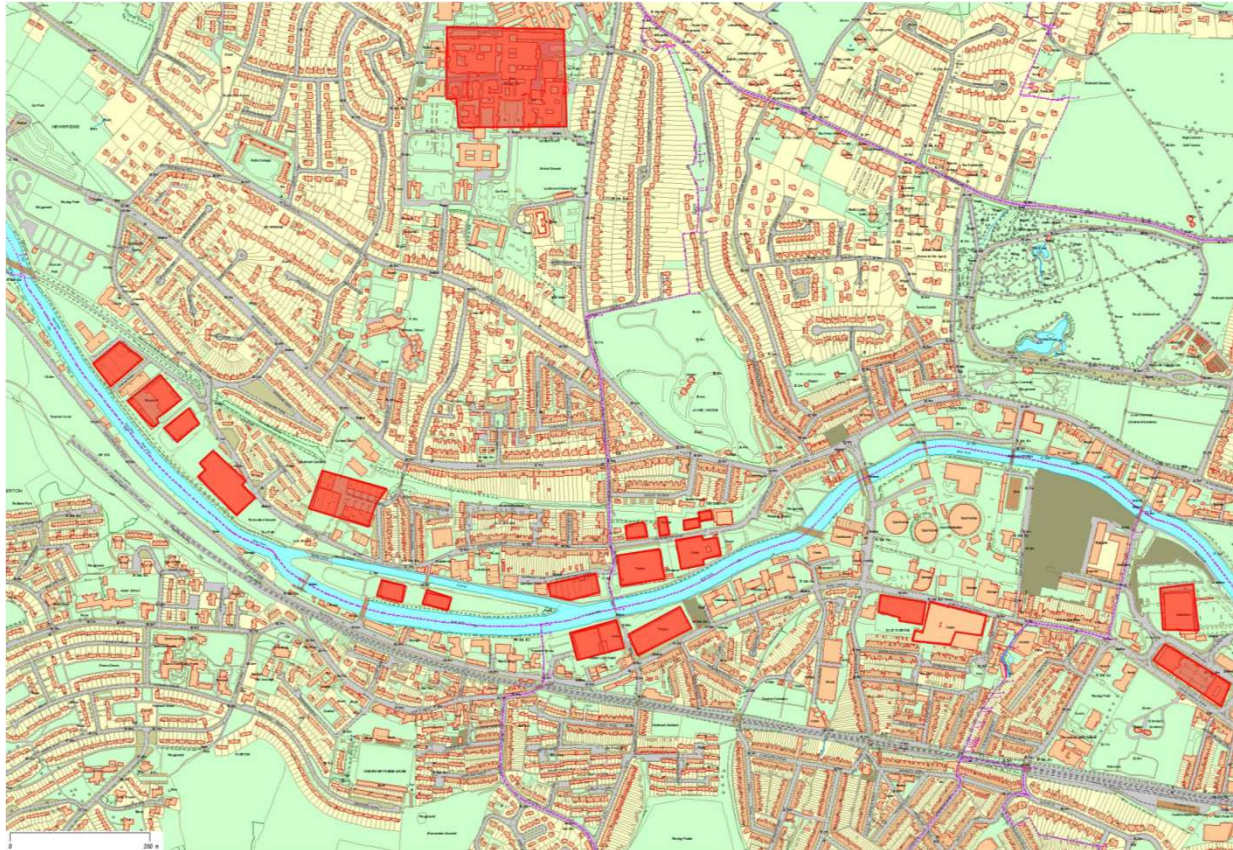


## **Solar compacting bins**

- » 55 bins now installed
- » Much better at containing waste and preventing access to gulls



# Future actions?



Making Bath & North East Somerset an **even** better place to live, work & visit



# Urban Gulls in Bath

Peter Rock



Scrutiny Inquiry Day, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2013

The Bath population:

■ 1,100 pairs in 2012.

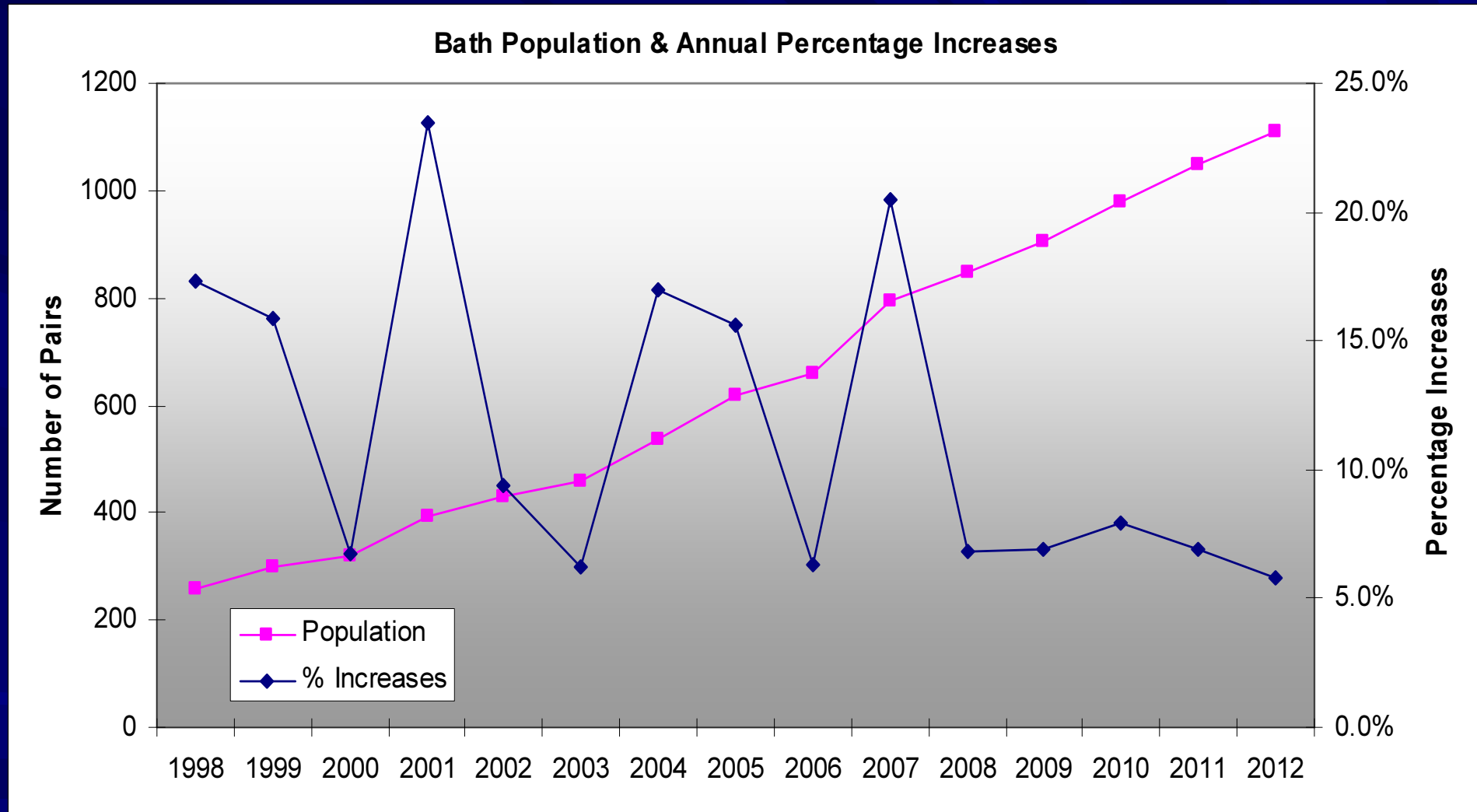


■ Lesser Black-backed  
Gull = 790 Pairs



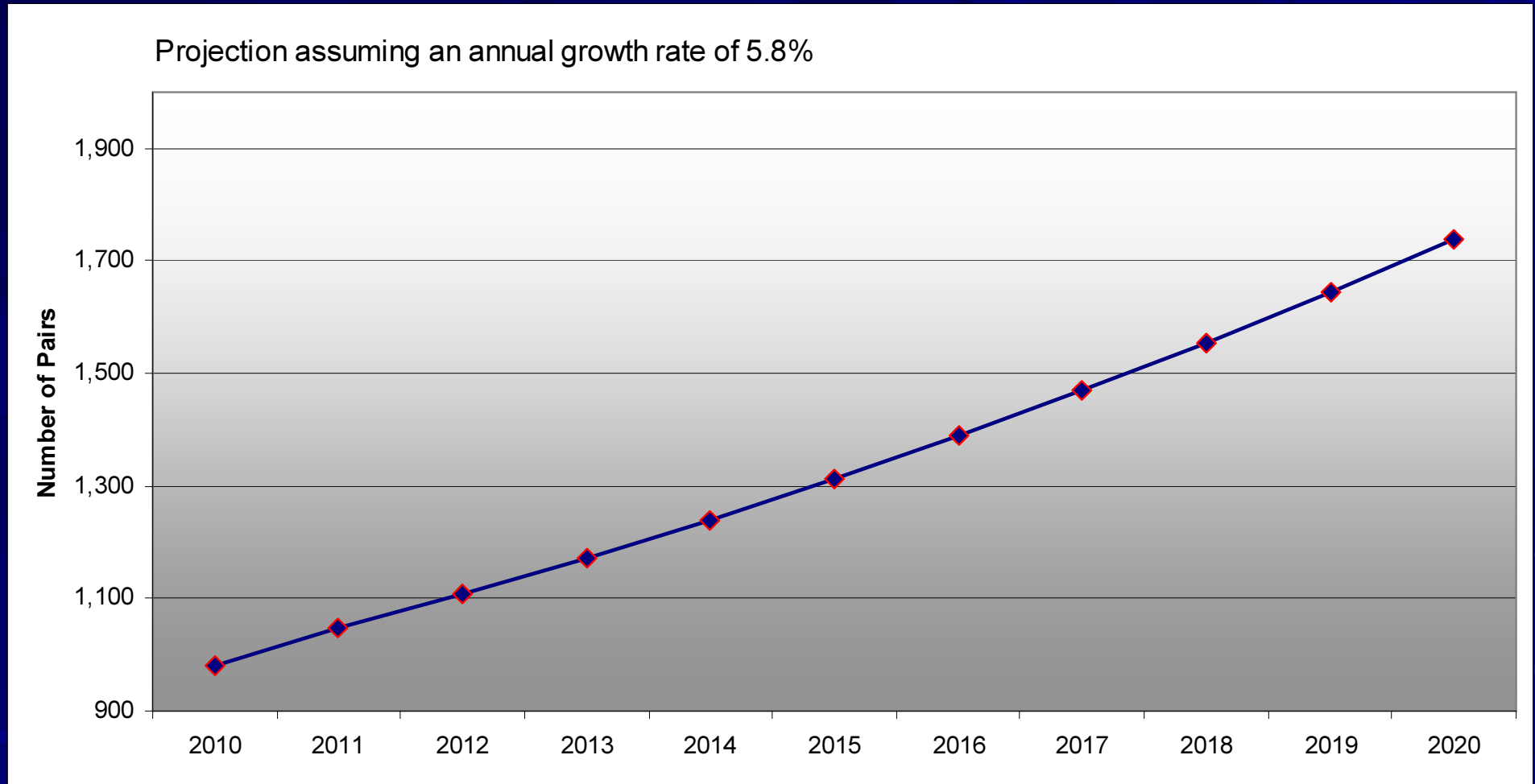
■ Herring Gull  
= 310 Pairs

## ■ How the population has developed



■ But, since 2008 increases have been small.

## ■ The future?

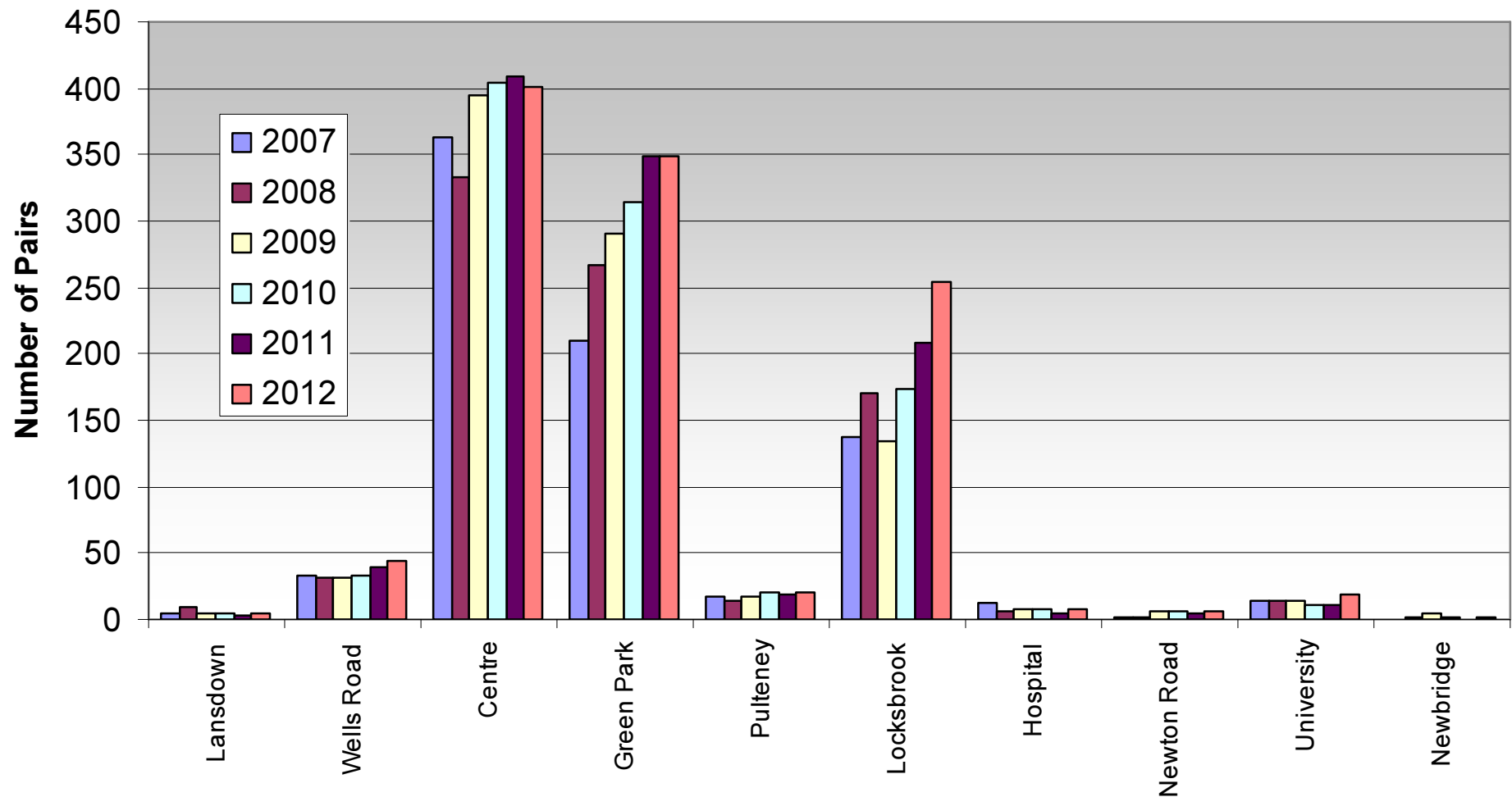


■ Just over 1,700 pairs by 2020.



■ And Southgate?

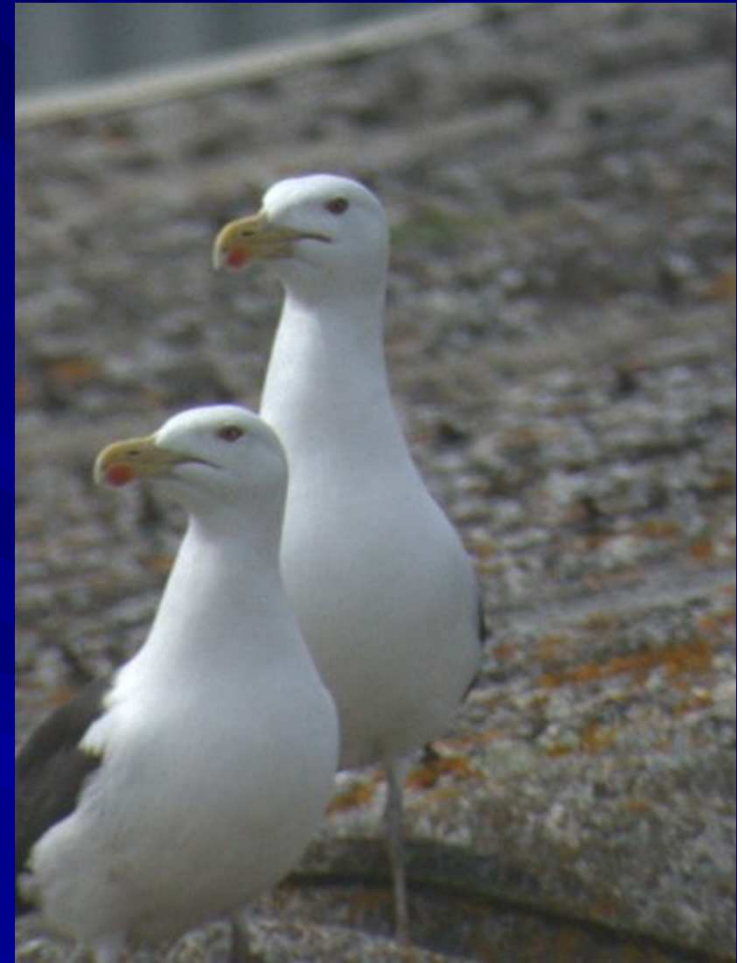




- 3 sectors support 91% of the birds.
- Top 3: Widcombe = 130 pairs, Kingsmead = 290 prs  
Abbey = 450 prs.

## Severn Estuary Region colonies larger than 500 pairs

Colony	No of Pairs	Year	GBB
Cardiff	3,300	2011	3
Gloucester	2,900	2009	4
Bristol	2,500	2010	
<b>Bath</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>2012</b>	
Ashchurch	940	2011	
Newport	800	2004	
Barry	750	2005	
Bridgend	590	2005	1
Bridgwater	565	2005	



■ Register. SER has minimum 78 urban colonies.





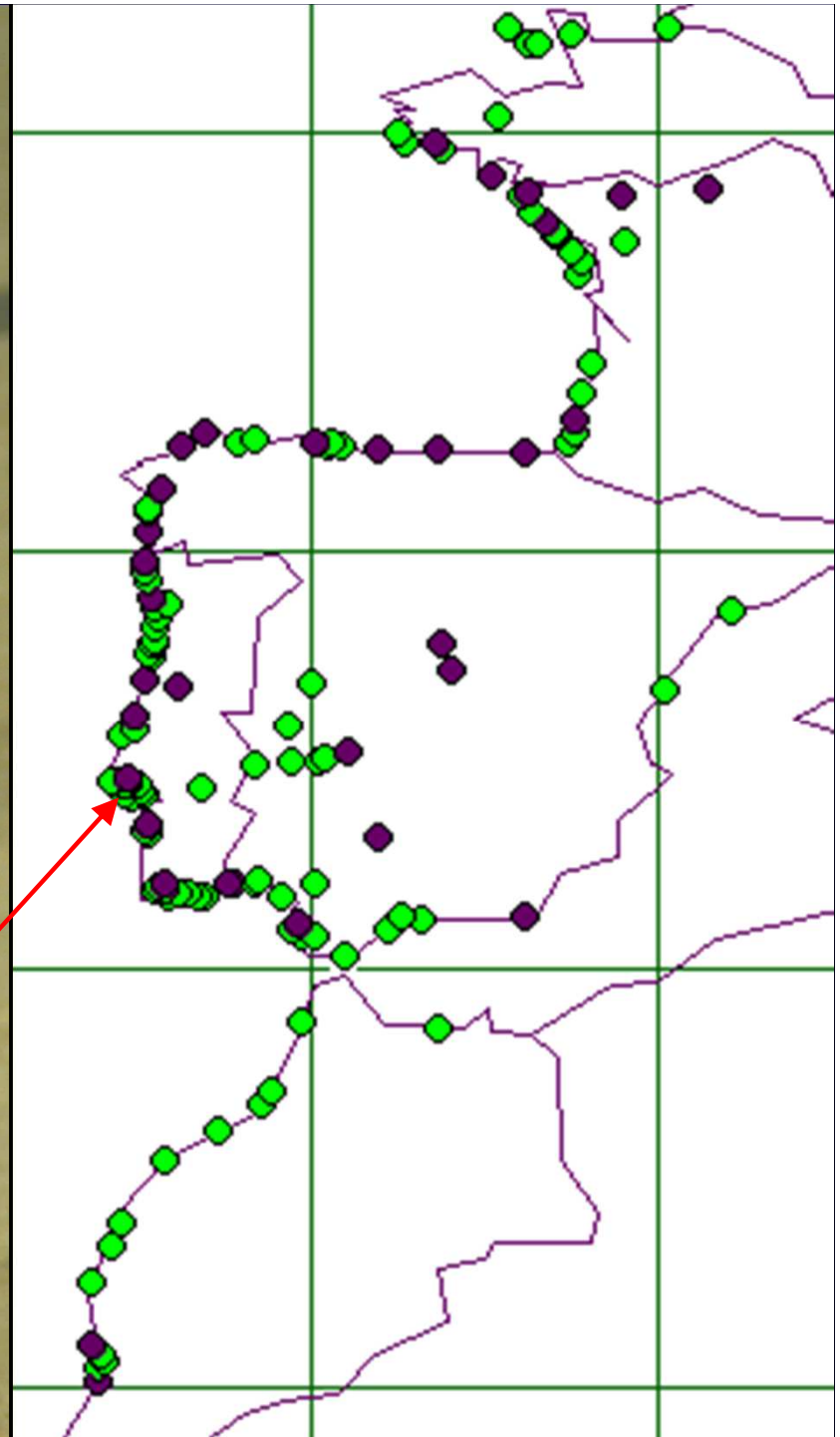
- 41 SER colonies = 19,000 pairs.
- Estimate 25,000+ pairs in SER.
- S2000 proposed 31,000 pairs in 239 colonies.
- Register (so far) = 443 colonies.
- 100,000+ pairs in UK & Ireland?
- Do we have a problem?
- **We will have...**

## Research (so far) in Bath

- More than 500 nestlings have been colour-ringed in Bath since 2001.
- It's the only science on urban gulls in UK.

■ Many of Bath's gulls spend more time in the sun than in Bath!

■ This one was near Lisbon two weeks ago.





# Origins of Bath Gulls

1995-2012	Individuals
<b>Urban Gulls</b>	
Bath	78
Bristol	74
Cardiff	1
Gloucester	4
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Rural Gulls</b>	
Flat Holm	1
Skomer Island	1
<b>Unknown Origin</b>	
North Thames	1
SEGG	16
Spain	1
<b>Bath Grand Total</b>	<b>177</b>

- Just two wild gulls.
- (Wild gulls don't recruit into urban any more).
- Bath-ringed gulls found in 10 other urban colonies.
- This is NOT a local issue...



- Breeding Bath 2007, ringed Bristol 1984...
- 23 years old...
- Springwatch bird in Bristol 24 yrs old.
- Record = 35...
- Implications?



Deterrence?



■ But they are useful.





- At ground level all you see is a few flying birds and a few on the edges.
- The truth is somewhat different...





■ An insult to the gulls' intelligence, don't you think?











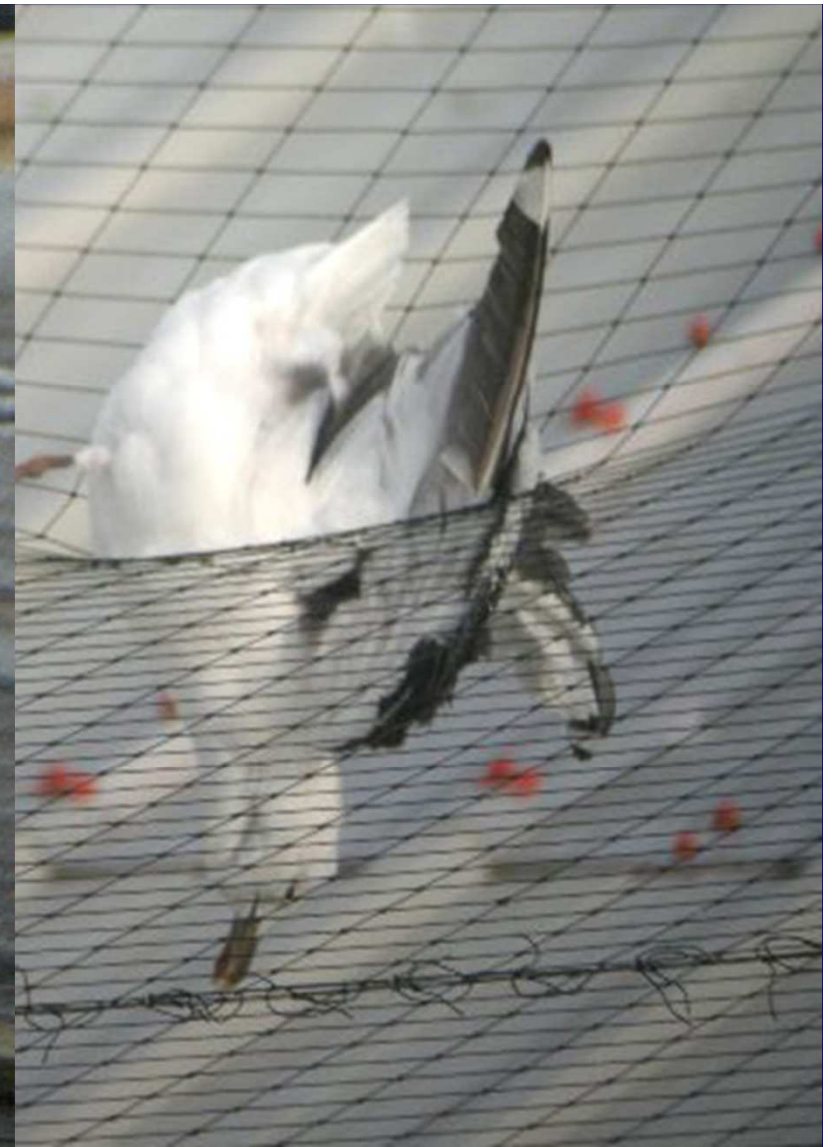
Fine those who waste food?





- Bristol city centre...
- £250,000's worth of netting alone.
- **Many £millions spent nationally.**





■ Just another death in town...



## ■ And Bath's World Heritage status?



But...

Do we want our towns  
and cities to look like  
this?





- Birds accept these fake eggs.
- After some years, some birds will vacate the area.
- Some Maths.....
- Bristol is replacing 1,000-1,500 eggs per year.
- But, Bristol = 2,500 pairs = 7,500 eggs per year...
- Possibly **NOT** the answer.





- It's to do with survival from egg to adult.
- Replacing 100 eggs doesn't mean 100 birds fewer.
- If you're very lucky, it'll be 15.
- Import-Export
- Probably **NOT** the answer.
- By the way, £300,000.

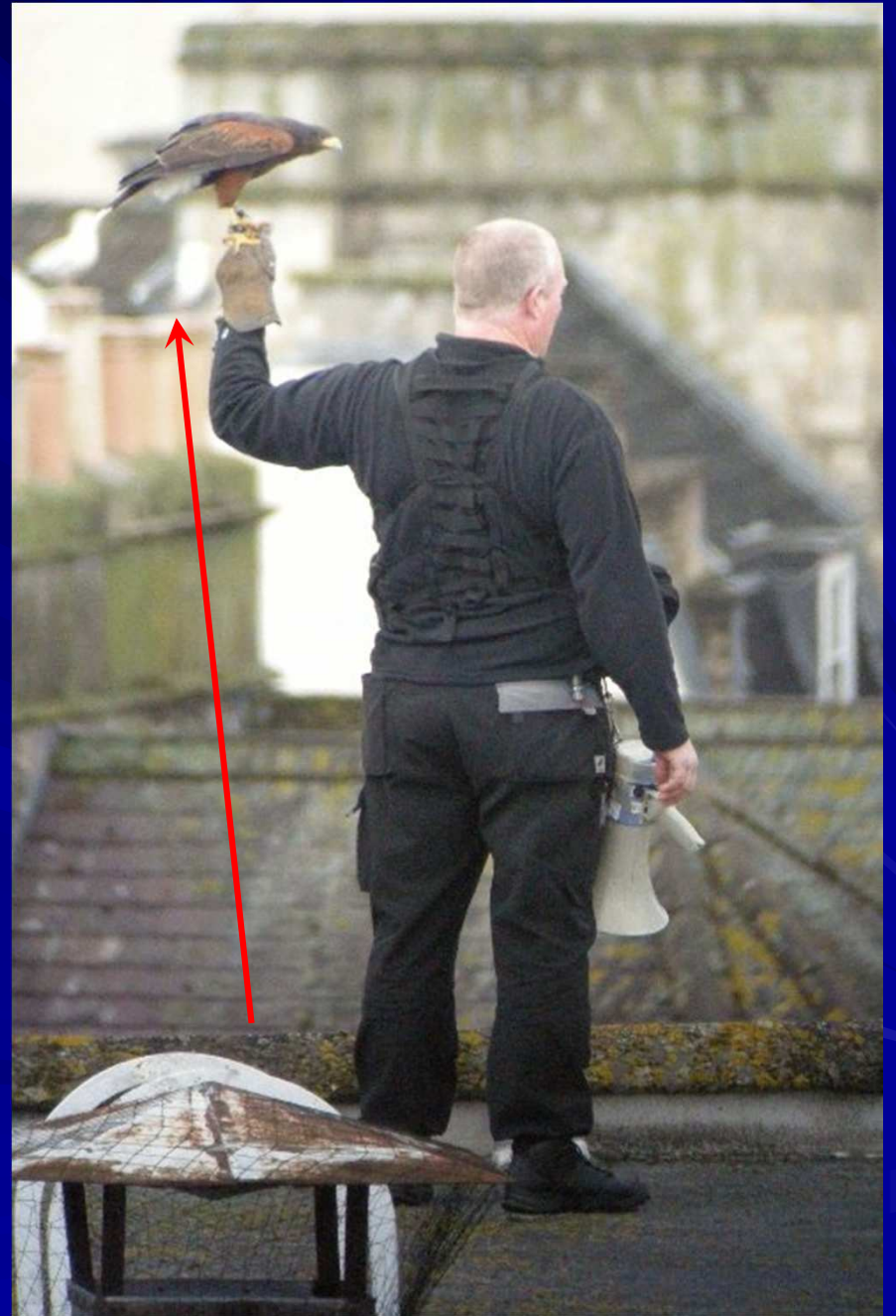
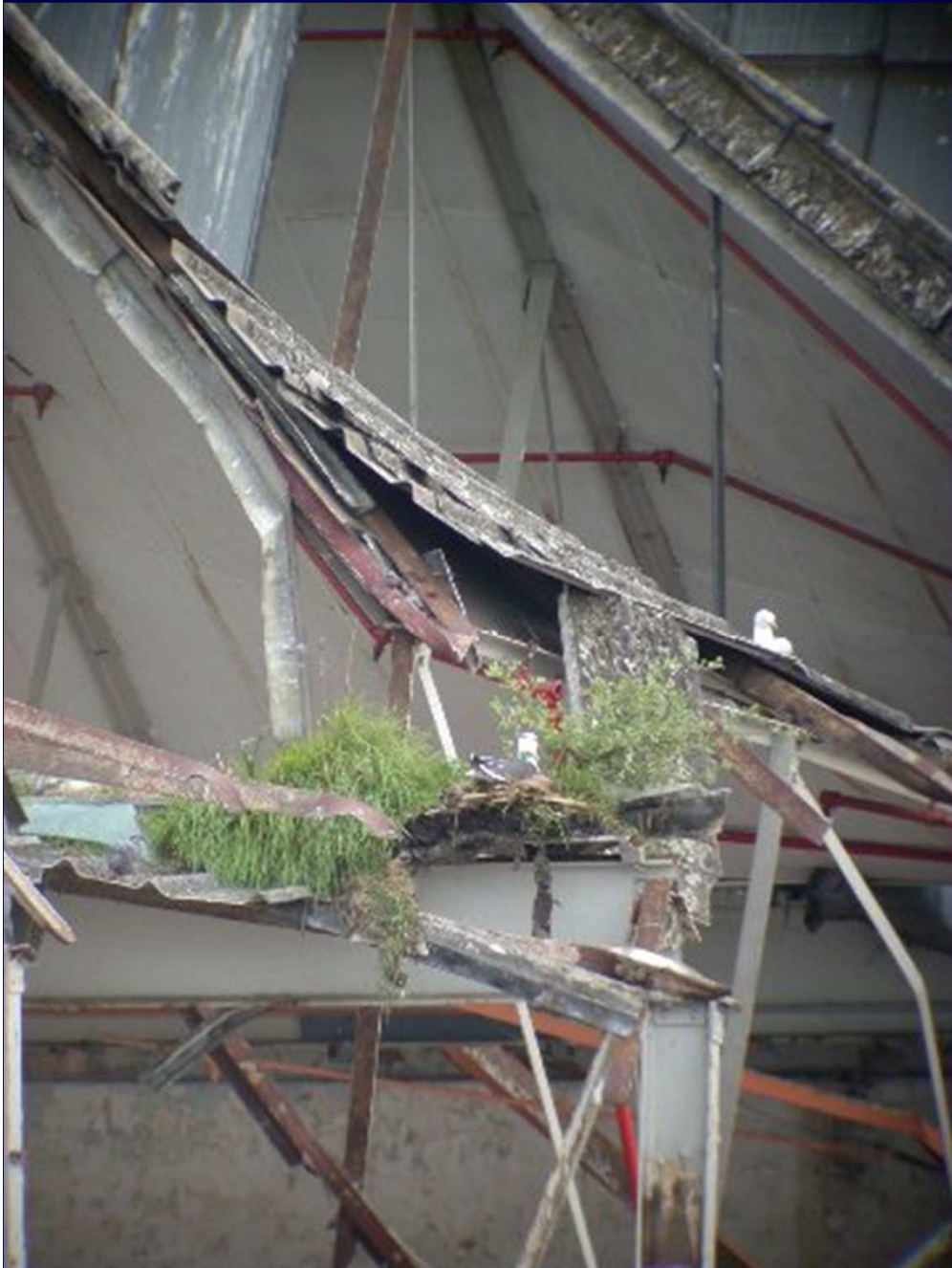


■ So, there's no problem, then...









But, what about culling?

- Really, only two ways.
- Poisoning or Shooting.
- I can't think of a single council that would sanction either.
- Here's why:
- Prosecution, Litigation, All over the News.

- Yes, intervention can prevent gulls nesting on your roof.
- It doesn't stop them nesting on the roof next door, nor on other roofs in Bath, nor in other towns...
- A result?
- But what about those who collect the problems?
- Here's one...





■ They won't go back to the wild.



- As a solution, this is no worse than any of the other guesses!
- This picture was taken in 1983.
- Seems we haven't moved on at all...
- Research will lead to sensible management strategies.



- Of course, it's all about food.
- But what is it and where and how do they get it?

■ Many opinions, but few hard facts...



- Thanks for this picture, Geoff!





- Gloucester Landfill was closed to gulls
- 2013 one of the best breeding seasons
- He was doing science...





■ Satellite Telemetry (amongst other things).

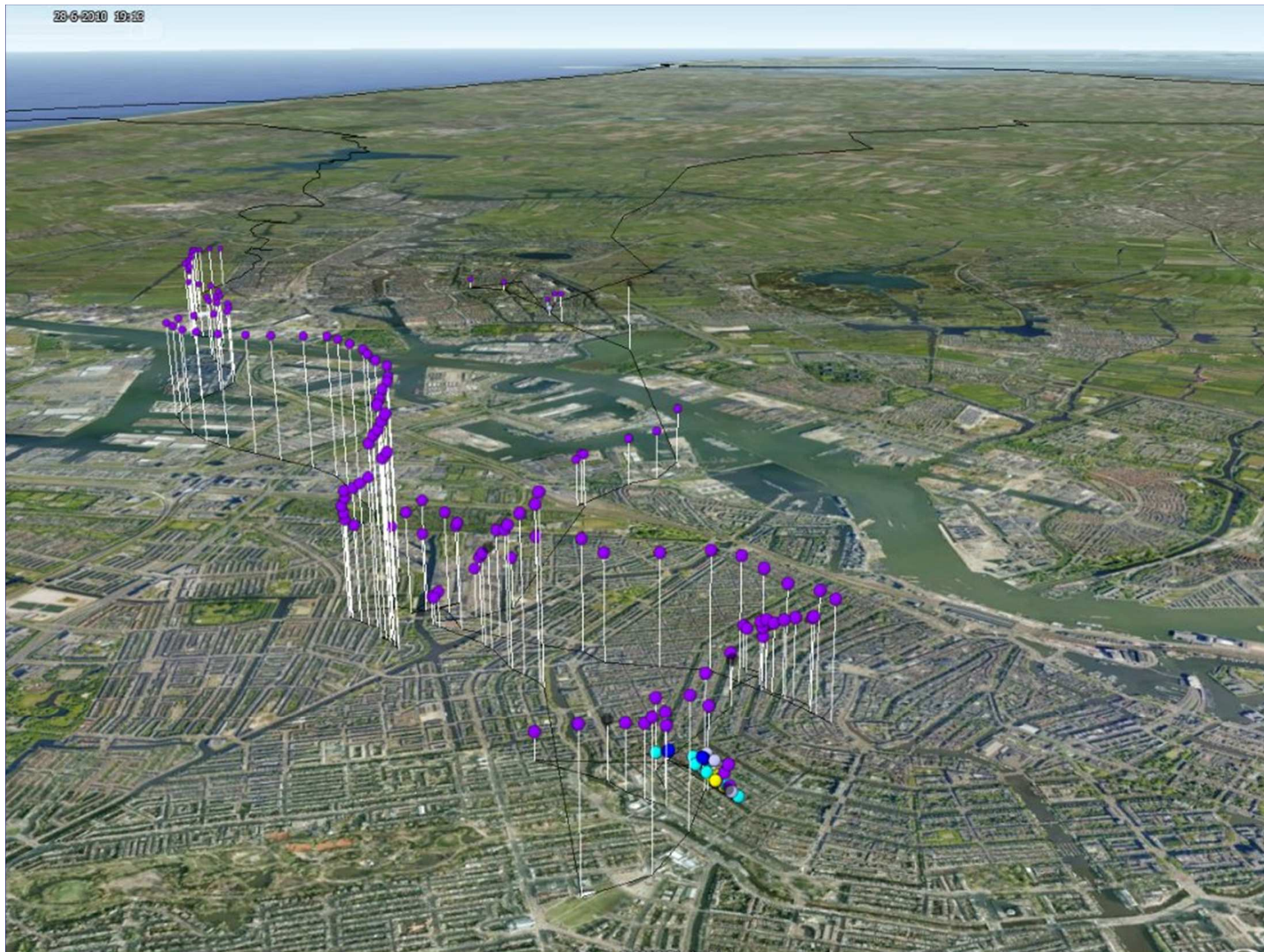
A satellite map of Texel island, a coastal area with green fields and some urban development. Overlaid on the map are several tracks of colored dots connected by lines, representing bird migration paths. A prominent track of purple dots runs along the western coast. Other tracks of cyan, blue, red, and black dots are scattered across the island and its surrounding waters.

LBB breeding  
on Texel.

380 km in a  
single day.



28-6-2010 19:12









■ But are little, old ladies really supporting gull populations?



■ A Crime Prevention Injunction (ASBO) for little, old ladies?





- But, here's a metaphor for the urban gull issue...
- The scales of Justice are not quite level.
- The sword of Truth is bent.
- The book of Law is covered in shit.
- And, as ever, the gull is on top...
- Together we can change this situation.

- The major question is this:
- When did we ever solve any problem without first finding out exactly what we're dealing with?

The gulls are trying to tell us, but they need to be listened to...



■ Finally...

■ The 2014 season has already started...



# **Urban Gulls in Bath**

## **Cllr Geoff Ward CFCIEH**

# **Urban Gulls in Bath**

Andrew Cooper, Manager  
Bath Improvement District





# Seagull Summit



Managing, Promoting & Saving for business in the centre of Bath



Count the Seagulls in this clip

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5w9sdMqhnw>

Managing, Promoting & Saving for business in the centre of Bath

- ☐ **A problem left in the hard to do box**
- ☐ **Businesses have a responsibility**
- ☐ **Wastage on spend**
  - ☐ i.e. lots of landlords/facilities managers working in silos with pest controllers, each spending sums to move birds off their area/around.
  - ☐ Sharing knowledge and in some cases spend would be a big step forward
  - ☐ No silver bullet solution
- ☐ **Trade Waste Co-ordination – Seagulls are all year round.**
- ☐ **Bath BID Seagull Proof Sacks**
- ☐ **Role of Enforcement**
- ☐ **Residents / Business / Council / Community - Collaboration**

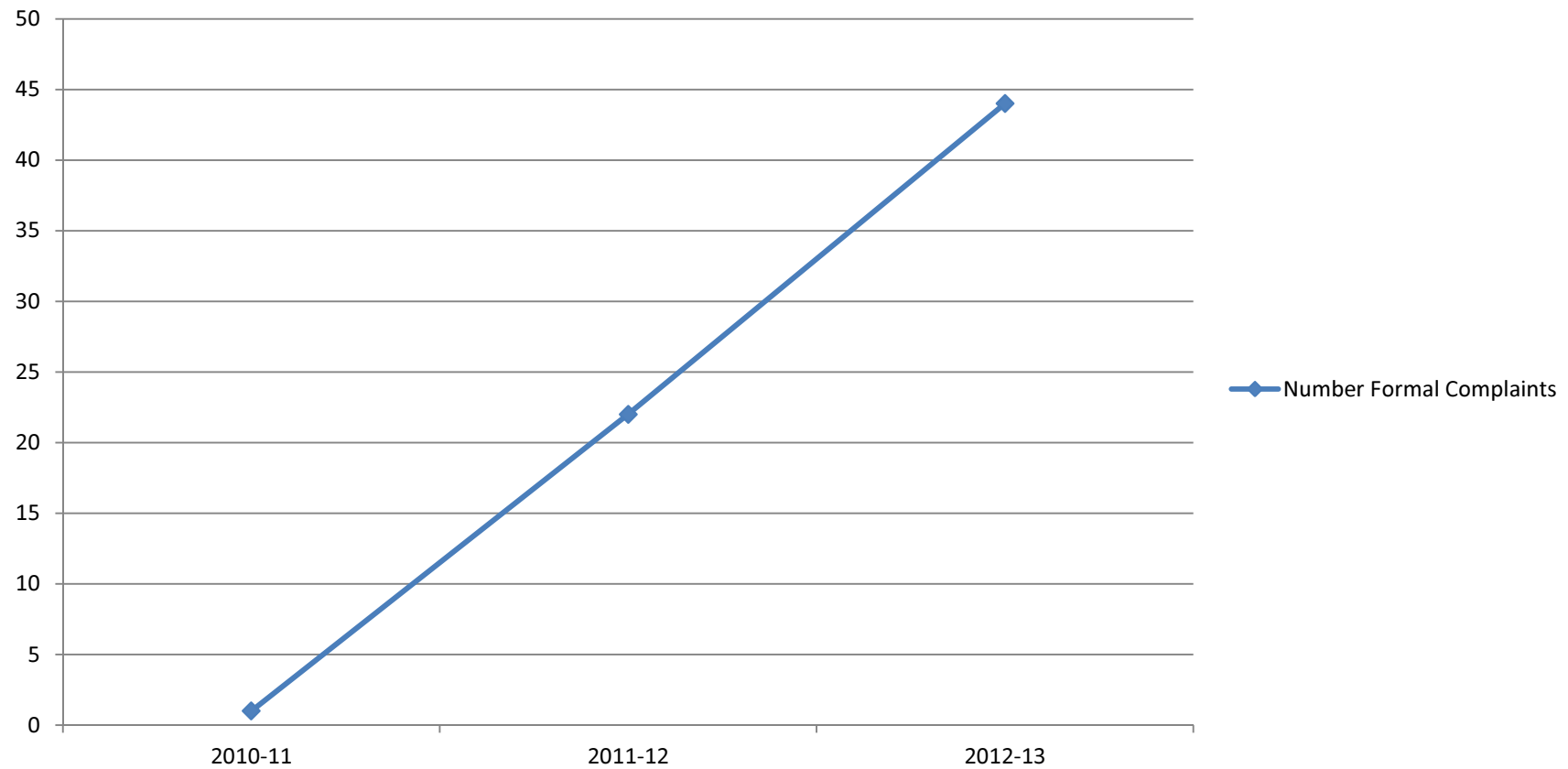


# Urban Gulls Carlisle

The effect of gulls in Carlisle and the  
attempts made to help mitigate the  
problem

# Gull numbers

**Number of Formal Gull Complaints**



# Policy for controlling gulls

- *Dissuade the public from feeding birds in the town centre (followed by Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution)*
- *Encourage businesses to take action to proof their buildings against nesting gulls.*
- *Encourage businesses to cull or take other action to reduce or maintain gull numbers (In accordance with Natural England's Guidance)*
- *Maintain a high quality street cleaning service.*
- *To keep under observation the number of complaints received regarding gulls.*



## *Dissuade the public from feeding birds in the town centre*



1. Posters
2. Radio conversations
3. Articles in the press
4. Enforcement

# *Encourage businesses to take action to proof their buildings against nesting gulls.*


- Assess problem locations
- Produce gull leaflet
- Letter drop with leaflet
- Visit problem premises


### The Problem

The large, white headed gulls, which cause the most concern in Carlisle, are the Herring Gull (pink legs) and the Lesser Blacked Backed Gull (yellow legs).

- The droppings they make can spoil and damage property.
- The nests they make can block gutters and be a source of mites.
- The noise they create can disturb people.
- Gulls can be dangerous when they dive to get at food.
- Gulls will seek out food and are known to rip plastic bin bags open.

April to June is the mating and nesting period for the gulls. During this time the gulls can become territorial. In July, the young birds are leaving the nests, so these months are usually the peak period for problems.





This leaflet is just a pocket guide and can only serve as a guide to the law. It does not give legal advice and may be misleading if relied on as a complete explanation of the legal issues involved.

**For more information please contact:**  
Environmental Health, Carlisle City Council  
Tel: 01228 817559  
Email [lovewhereyoulive@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:lovewhereyoulive@carlisle.gov.uk)

**CARLISLE CITY-COUNCIL**  
[www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)

**Love where you Live**  
Carlisle

## Gulls and the law

A guide for the public

**CARLISLE CITY-COUNCIL**  
[www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)

# Next steps in relation to business premises and land owners

- Letter to problem premises with guidance and requesting response.
- Statutory notices where businesses take no action



## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990 SECTIONS 80 & 81

### Abatement Notice in respect of Statutory Nuisance for which more than one person is responsible

To: Mr Smith, 1 High Street, Anytown, Cumbria

**TAKE NOTICE** that under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the **CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL**

being satisfied of the likely recurrence of statutory nuisance under section 79(1)(a) of that Act at the premises known as **The offending premise** within the district of the said Council arising from the nesting and roosting of lesser black backed gulls and/or herring gulls

**HEREBY REQUIRE YOU** as one of the persons responsible for the said nuisance to comply with item 1 within 60 calendar days from the service of this notice to

**HEREBY RESTRICT** the recurrence of the same and for that purpose require you to:

1. Produce and provide a written method statement on how you will proof your building and/or how you will reduce and prevent gulls nesting and roosting on your premises. The methods employed must be legal and comply with Natural England's guidance on bird control.
2. The method statement must be agreed in writing by Environmental Health before works commence.

*IF without reasonable excuse you contravene or fail to comply with any requirement of this notice you will be guilty of an offence under section 80(4) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and on summary conviction will be liable to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the Standard Scale (currently £5000 subject to alteration by Order) together with a further fine of an amount equal to one tenth of that level for each day on which the offence continues after conviction. A person who commits an offence on industrial, trade or business premises will be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £20,000.*

*The Council may also take proceedings in the High Court for securing the abatement, prohibition or restriction of the nuisance. Further, if you fail to execute all or any of the works in accordance with this notice, the Council may execute the works and recover from you the necessary expenditure incurred.*

SIGNED

DATED 13 November 2013

**The Officer**  
**PRINCIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER**

Environmental Health  
Local Environment  
Carlisle City Council  
Civic Centre  
CARLISLE  
CA3 8QG

**N.B.** The person served with this notice may appeal against the notice to a magistrates court within twenty one days beginning with the date of service of the notice. See notes on the reverse of this form.



- . Maintain a high quality street cleaning service*



*Bin bags ripped open*

*Encourage people to put out  
waste just before collection.*

*Place as many properties as  
possible on wheelie bins*

*Replace black sacks with Gull  
sacks.*

***To keep under observation the number of complaints  
received regarding gulls.***

- To be aware of new areas of gull colonisation
- To ensure businesses are continuing to carry out treatments as agreed.
- To assess the effectiveness of business action.
- To assess the effectiveness of council changes in refuse collection methods.
- To locate areas that require more clean up or litter enforcement
- To identify the reasons why the gull population is high in a location and take appropriate action.

# Further action

- Encourage developers to design out gull friendly roofs
- Joint working with other services (waste Planners etc)
- Multi agency working (EA, FSA etc)
- Take action as necessary
- Keep up to date with guidance from Natural England



# **Experiences of other authorities**

**Julie Wright, Gloucester City Council**  
**Representing the Severn Estuary**  
**Gull Group**



# The Severn Estuary Gull Group





# Gull species



Lesser Black  
Backed Gull



Herring Gull

- Food
- Habitat
- Nesting sites
- Lack of predators

# National Picture

- Increasing numbers inland
- Debated in Parliament
- Issues:-
  - Noise
  - Behaviour
  - Mess and damage





# What are we doing

- Surveys
- Egg treatment
- Proofing of roof tops
- Scaring from land fill sites
- Sharing practice with other councils
- Response to complaints

# Poorly maintained proofing





# The future

- National integrated approach
- National Survey
- Funding to continue our programmes
- Standardised method of counting breeding populations
- Government guidance on best practice
- Clearer guidance on licensing provisions

## **Lunch break**

**Please return to your seats by 13:45**

# **Workshop**

Please sit at the table indicated on  
the back of your badge



# **Close**

## **Cllr Marie Longstaff**

**Thank you. Have a safe journey.**

Please leave badges and completed  
evaluation forms on your tables