

Stress to Bath Residents Caused by Colonies of Nesting Gulls – Constructive and Cheap Proposals to Enhance Current Anti-Gull Measures.

Gulls in Bath are the source of unbearable noise during the nesting season, which lasts 6 months of the year. In summer this noise starts at 4:30 in the morning. Sleep deprivation, attacks, mobbing and gull excrement seriously degrade living conditions for residents and visitors. Businesses are adversely affected.

I live in the Crest Nicholson Bath Riverside development. This is in a zone including Homebase and other buildings constructed with flat-topped roofs – perfect nesting sites for lesser black-backed gulls. Last year I saw dozens of healthy chicks fledge from their nests in the area.

Gulls are smart and tenacious. They return to their nest sites year after year. RSPB data shows that the population of urban gulls is rising in the UK.

Some older buildings are hot-spots with mature breeding colonies.

More and more buildings with flat-topped roofs are being constructed in the riverside area - we are constructing superb nest sites. Why? What are developers doing to help?

At Bath Riverside the only contribution I am aware of is a hawk, which is flown once a week. This has the effect of making the noise even more unbearable for an hour until the hawk is removed.

Councillor Bob Goodman kindly met me to discuss current anti-gull measures. The egg removal programme helps but overall these measures are not working in the riverside area. The gull problem there is serious and getting worse.

I propose:

Developers to implement measures for genuinely dealing with nesting gulls on their sites. Hold them accountable. Current measures at Bath Riverside are weak and don't work.

New buildings to be designed so that nesting is not possible. Architects are talented; I have no doubt that this can be done with no material impact on cost or aesthetics (despite what developers may say). Future-proof the build.

Hot-spots. Where older existing buildings have a serious gull problem, council to advise and work with the owners to ensure effective anti-gull measures are taken.

Enforce and extend the gull-proof bag initiative. Make it a clear offence to feed gulls. Extend signage beyond the city centre.

The noise and impact of gulls is unbearable in the Bath riverside area. Strong additional action is needed, including holding developers and large businesses to account for their part in causing this distressing problem.