

Search 

Go

## The Council

[Councillors and Wards](#)
[Committees](#)
[Forthcoming Meetings](#)
[Minutes](#)
[Planning Applications](#)
[Council Documents](#)
[Annual Town Meeting](#)
[Annual Reports](#)
[Policies & Procedures](#)
[Contracts & Payments](#)
[Financial Estimates](#)
[Community Plan For Truro](#)
[Past Mayors](#)
[Staffing Structure](#)
[Cemeteries and Churchyards](#)
[Map of Truro](#)
[Car Parking](#)
[Grant Scheme](#)
[Business Improvement District](#)
[Room Hire](#)
[Summer Planting Service](#)
[Opening Times](#)
[Seagull Control](#)
[Weddings](#)
[Vacancies](#)
[The Elliott Exhibition Foundation](#)
[Promoting Health Information Line](#)
[Furniss Coal Charity](#)

## Events Diary

There are no Council events currently listed.

[All Events](#)
[The Council](#) > [Seagull Control](#)

A A

## Seagull Control

Herring gulls now commonly rest on rooftops in many coastal towns and villages. Roof nesting by herring gulls is a fairly recent phenomenon. Since the 1970's the number of roof nesting gulls has steadily increased, as has the number of complaints received by the Council.

### Control of Food Sources

If gulls are fed regularly it will create an artificially high population and encourage further breeding pairs to take up residence in the area. A natural population level will be established only if the gulls are left to fend for themselves from natural food sources. You are strongly urged not to feed the seagulls as this will cause more harm in the long term and can also cause unnecessary annoyance to neighbours.

Gulls will also scavenge readily on poorly stored refuse. The Council would therefore urge you that if you are storing any domestic waste outside in black bags, they are stored in plastic or metal dustbins, with lids. Alternatively, they can be put in a metal cage or similar, but be aware that a mouse can get in if the grid of the cage is greater than say 8mm (3/4 inch).

Problems can also be experienced when black bags (not in dustbins) are put out on collection day. Placing an old carpet/blanket over the bag(s) will usually stop the seagulls and the refuse collector will usually leave this behind for further use. Please try not to leave black bags out overnight as these are not only attacked by gulls, but also by other animals including rats and mice, and result in litter being spilled and blown about. The provision of wheelie bins for refuse collection has been costed in the Carrick area and these are not a viable option in the cost of the service would increase dramatically. In addition wheelie bins encourage people to throw away more, at a time when we all need to be minimising the amount of rubbish we generate.

Many people who have gulls on their property find they cause a nuisance, commonly cited problems include:-

- Noise, caused by calling gulls and by their heavy footsteps.
- Mess, caused by their droppings, fouling washing, gardens and people
- Damage to property, caused by gulls picking at roofing materials and by nests, which block gutters or hold moisture against the building structure.
- Birds can dive and swoop on people and pets. This usually occurs when they feel their chicks are in danger or chicks have fallen from the nest and adult birds attempt to prevent them coming to harm by frightening away potential threats. Rarely, if ever, does the Herring Gull actually make physical contact. It is a disconcerting experience certainly, but even a raised arm will deter them.
- Blockage of gas flues, valley and parapet gutters by nesting materials. The former can have serious consequences if gas fumes are prevented from venting properly, or if flooding occurs as a result of blocked gutters.

### Proofing of Buildings

All owners/occupiers of buildings, which have, or may attract roof nesting herring gulls are strongly urged to provide the building with deterrent measures suitable to the individual building. If as many owners/occupiers as possible apply deterrent measures to their buildings, it may be possible to reduce or break-up the colonies of birds. Also, deterrence may well provide relief to individual occupiers. After the breeding season when the nest has been abandoned, it can be removed and the following deterrents for next season can be put into place.

**Please note it is illegal to disturb or remove nests or eggs during the breeding season (usually April – June see Seagull facts overleaf).**

The principal methods of deterrence are:-

- Fitting of wires or nets to prevent herring gulls landing.
- Fitting of short spikes, contained in a special plastic base, to nesting locations such as dormer roofs.
- Fitting of long spikes to nesting locations such as chimney stacks

### Gulls and the Law

Gulls are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – though licences are issued allowing landowners or occupiers to kill certain species or destroy their nests and eggs in order to:

- Prevent serious damage to agriculture
- Preserve public health or air safety
- Conserve other wild birds

But even in these circumstances, it is illegal to do anything that will cause suffering to gulls. Cornwall Council does not provide a service for this purpose; however, there are licensed Pest Control Companies who can offer assistance. **Please do not try to solve the problem yourself. Not only can this be dangerous, it is also illegal without a licence.** There are several companies who are able to offer advice on proofing and supply proofing products or a complete fixing service. A number of such companies are listed in the Pest and Vermin Control Section of the Yellow pages. Any arrangements you may make are strictly between the company and yourself.

### **Cornwall Council DOES NOT provide any service for proofing buildings against gulls or for the humane destruction of birds**

#### **Seagull facts**

There are several species of gulls which can be seen locally and to many people they are all just "seagulls", but in our area only the herring gull commonly nests on buildings. It should however be noted that occasionally other birds that might be mistaken for herring gulls can nest in built up areas.

- . Herring gulls are large birds. They are, in fact, about 55 cm (22") from bill to tail with a wingspan of about 85cm (34").
- . Breeding pairs court in April and commence nest building from early May onwards. In towns, the nest is constructed from straw and grass, twigs, paper and any other material the gull can conveniently use. The nest can be quite large and, if made of material accumulated over several years, very heavy.
- . Eggs are laid from early May onwards with two or three being the usual number. The eggs take about three weeks to hatch so the first chicks are generally seen about the beginning of June.

Whilst the gulls which nest on buildings are usually herring gulls there are several other gull species which occasionally nest on buildings. Lesser Black-Backed Gulls, may also nest on roofs in the South West of England. They are very similar in shape and size to herring gulls but darker in colour. Lesser Black-Backs can lawfully be moved in the same way as herring gulls. Some conservationists argue that they nest so rarely in towns that they should be left undisturbed. If you have any doubts about what kind of "gull" is nesting on your property ask someone who knows eg RSPB, Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

**Environmental Protection, Cornwall Council, Carrick House, Pydar Street, Truro, TR1 1EB**

TELEPHONE: 0300 1234 100 FAX: 01872 224559

WEBSITE: [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

**OTHER INFORMATION SHEETS ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE OR BY POST ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: ANTS, BEES, BED BUGS, BEETLES, BOOKLICE, CATERPILLARS, COCKROACH, CLUSTER FLIES, EARWIGS, FERAL PIGEONS, FLEAS, FOXES, MICE, RATS, SILVERFISH, SQUIRRELS, WOODLICE, WASPS & HORNET NESTS**

#### **Truro City Council**

Municipal Buildings, Boscawen Street, Truro, TR1 2NE

Tel: 01872 274766 [info@truro.gov.uk](mailto:info@truro.gov.uk)

[Accessibility](#) [Privacy](#) [Contact](#) [Copyright](#) [Sitemap](#) [Links](#) [Login](#)