

**Report To:** Liz Grieve

**Date of Report:** 27 November 2017

**Report by:** Gareth Watson – Team Leader Communications and Campaign Management, Updated Action Plan

**Title:** Seagulls – Public Awareness campaign

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## 1. Background Information

It is generally accepted that “seagulls” represent something of a nuisance, not just along the coast, but also in our main towns. There are limitations to what actions are open to the Council to control/manage the “seagull” population. The Senior Management Team (SLT) of the Council has considered what appropriate, affordable and proportionate actions could be implemented.

They include:

- The introduction of a variety of methods to “scare”birds in certain problem areas
- The introduction of netting/ bunting over public spaces
- To discourage birds from perching on street furniture such as lamp-posts
- To adapt existing Council buildings to help make them seagull proof
- To reduce availability of waste food through the Council refuse collection

Following discussions at Communities Scrutiny Committee, it has been agreed to arrange a public awareness campaign, to raise the issues around feeding seagulls and to try and address a growing demand for further action from the Council.

## **2. Communications Objectives**

- To raise the profile of the 'nuisance' caused by seagulls in our communities
- To ask the public not to feed seagulls (in a fun, bright and humorous way).
- To engage with local businesses to introduce measures to reduce issues with seagulls.
- To ensure that partners and local groups understand what we are trying to achieve and support us in doing so through their own communications.
- To ensure that residents know that we are trying to resolve the issue.

## **3. Communications Outcomes**

- Residents know about the dangers posed by seagulls and act upon that information
- Residents are aware of the law around feeding seagulls and act upon that information.
- Residents are confident about the Council's efforts to reduce problems with seagulls and understand the constraints which limit the level of action we can take.

## **4. Key Message development**

Key messages are developed initially based on the known facts and the current status of the service.

The mechanism to review and develop new messages for the media include a quarterly update from the project manager and the Communications lead.

### *The key messages*

*Seagulls are seen as a nuisance* that can cause public safety, noise, damage and littering issues

- Explanation of what the Council is doing, techniques that are being used and how they will work.
- The Council is responding positively to increasing demands from the public and key stakeholders.
- Feeding seagulls is actually illegal and encourages seagulls to search for food.
- The Council wants businesses to take action to reduce opportunities for seagulls to nest.
- Food waste being left uncovered is a real issue.
- The problem is not unique to Denbighshire, with many councils across the UK running similar campaigns.

Again, all of this should be delivered as part of a fun, light hearted campaign.

### *The supplementary messages*

- *We want to actively encourage people to visit our county and need to ensure that our activity does not discourage people from doing so.*

### *The local message*

- Denbighshire will work with its partner agencies and with communities to protect the health and well-being of residents and visitors through a proactive approach to try and manage the activity of seagulls.

Interesting facts around seagulls can be found in Appendix 1.

<b>Audience</b>	<b>• Mechanisms</b>	<b>Key messages</b>
Residents (including our own tenants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media (fun facts)</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• County Voice</li> <li>• Infographics</li> <li>• Video content</li> <li>• Direct mail to properties in key problem areas.</li> <li>• Promotional banners</li> <li>• Presence at key events (Rhyl Air Show and others)</li> <li>• Seagull costume (for promotional activity)</li> <li>• Tenant communications (through Housing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denbighshire is responding positively to the problem.</li> <li>• Feeding seagulls is illegal.</li> <li>• Enforcement action will be taken against those that persist to feed gulls.</li> </ul>
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Mail.</li> <li>• Visits from EBD/ Public Protection team.</li> <li>• Communication through business groups/ associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all food waste is securely covered and only put out on collection day.</li> <li>• Encourage customers to use bins to discard any unwanted food.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stickers to place on food wrappers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take steps to help discourage seagulls from nesting on your property.</li> <li>• Help the Council by displaying promotional materials</li> </ul>
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage in the community</li> <li>• Posters in shops.</li> <li>• Wraps around refuse bins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging people to dispose of their food waste responsibly.</li> </ul>
City, Town and Community Councils	<p>Presentations E-mail communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCC and city, town and community councils need to work together to help reduce problems with seagulls.</li> <li>• We all have a role to play to make our streets clean and tidy.</li> <li>• Encourage councils to support the campaign and help us cascade information to residents.</li> </ul>
Media	<p>Press releases Infographics Video content (including interviews for web/ social media use)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeding seagulls is illegal.</li> <li>• Encourage people not to feed them.</li> <li>• Denbighshire is committed to having clean and tidy streets, but needs the support of communities.</li> <li>• Reducing problems with seagulls will have a positive effect on people's experience of living in coastal communities, and for visitors.</li> </ul>
Schools	<p>Direct messages to schools Articles for school newsletters Social media messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denbighshire is responding positively to the problem.</li> <li>• Feeding seagulls is illegal.</li> <li>• Enforcement action will be taken against those that persist to feed gulls.</li> </ul>

## **5. Communications Plan**

The following activities are recommended over the next 12 months.

- Creation of a brand/ strapline for the campaign
- Social media campaign involving infographics and short videos
- Signage/ poster campaign – signs for lamp-posts and other street furniture. Posters for local businesses to place in their windows
- Proactively engaging with local businesses to introduce measures to discourage seagulls from nesting on their property (in a fun way)
- Work with food businesses to dispose of waste effectively and reduce opportunities for seagulls to target food – stickers for food wrappers
- Regular programme of media activity to highlight the issues around seagulls, promoting the Council's proactive approach
- Production of a briefing document for Members
- Regular articles in County Voice.
- Unique publicity opportunities ('stunts') – procurement of seagull costume for photo shoots/ PR opportunities
- Purchase of promotional goods 'freebies' for handing out at key events.
- Engagement with local schools through a competition (through the DCC Enrichment programme)

## **6. Measurement and evaluation**

- The success of the campaign will be measured through media coverage and tone of coverage

- A reduction in the number of complaints coming in from the public.
- Cleaner streets as a result of the campaign. (Consideration will need to be given as to how this can be evaluated)

## 7. Governance

Public Protection will identify a project manager to liaise directly with the Communications team through regular contact and quarterly updates..

The communications element of the campaign will be managed by a member of the Communications Team, with the Action Plan monitored on a monthly basis.

## 8. Action plan

<b>Next steps – pre site acquisition</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Who</b>
Communications team to brainstorm ideas.	<b>November 2017</b>	<b>Communications</b>
Complete proposal for the campaign and agree	<b>November 2017</b>	<b>Gareth Watson</b>
<i>Contact Tourism Business ' to ask for suggestions</i>	<b>December 2017</b>	<b>Peter McDermott</b>
Working with schools to engage them in the campaign	<b>January 2018</b>	<b>Sarah Dixon</b>

Set up quarterly communications briefing/ message development meetings	<b>January 2018 onwards</b>	<b>Communications</b>
Cost up the production of leaflets, short videos and infographic / posters/ mailshots/ banners	<b>January 2018</b>	<b>Gareth Watson</b>
Draft initial launch press release	<b>End of January 2018</b>	<b>Gareth Watson</b>
Draft text for posters/ flyers	<b>End of January 2018</b>	<b>Gareth Watson</b>
Draft updated intranet copy	<b>End of January 2018</b>	<b>Gareth Watson</b>
Provide information sheet for new Members (post election)	<b>Mid February 2018</b>	<b>Communications Account Manager</b>
Production of infographic	<b>End of February 2018</b>	<b>Angie Platt</b>
Creation of information pages on the corporate website, with links to relevant campaign information	<b>End of February 2018</b>	<b>Web Team</b>
Quarterly feed of news stories from the service to the Communications team	<b>March 2018 onwards</b>	<b>Angie Platt</b>
Monthly feed of social media activity	<b>March 2018 onwards</b>	<b>Communications team</b>
Articles in County Voice	<b>March 2018 June 2018 September 2018 December 2018</b>	<b>Catrin Hughes</b>
Quarterly review meetings	<b>March 2018 June 2018 September 2018</b>	<b>Communications team</b>



	<b>December 2018</b>	
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## Appendix 1

### Key facts about seagulls

- Seagulls are very clever. They learn, remember and even pass on behaviours, such as stamping their feet in a group to imitate rainfall and trick earthworms to come to the surface.
- Seagulls' intelligence is clearly demonstrated by a range of different feeding behaviours, such as dropping hard-shelled molluscs onto rocks so that they break open so they can eat them, and following ploughs in fields where they know upturned grubs and other food sources will be plentiful.
- Seagulls are attentive and caring parents. The male and female pair for life and they take turns incubating the eggs, and feeding and protecting the chicks.
- Gulls have a complex and highly developed repertoire for communication which includes a range of vocalisations and body movements.
- Seagulls can drink both fresh and salt water. Most animals are unable to do this, but seagulls have a special pair of glands right above their eyes which is specifically designed to flush the salt from their systems through openings in the bill.

There is a great deal of diversity between different gull species, with the smallest being the Little Gull (120 g and 29 cm) and the largest being the Great Black-beaked Gull (1.75 kg and 75 cm).

- A small claw halfway up their lower leg enables them to sit and roost on high ledges without being blown off.
- Young gulls form nursery flocks where they will play and learn vital skills for adulthood. Nursery flocks are watched over by a few adult

males and these flocks will remain together until the birds are old enough to breed.

- In Native American symbolism, the seagull represents a carefree attitude, versatility, and freedom.
- Many seagulls have learned to conserve energy by hovering over bridges in order to absorb raising heat from paved roadways.