



Guidance on securing Local Authority/Council support

The UK Seal Alliance Executive, created a Flying Ring Strategy Group (FRSG) to lead the 2025 campaign to reduce the harm caused to seals.

It's an exciting time and one that we can all make a difference and celebrate our success later on this year.

The overall aim of the FRSG is to:

Aim

- To stop the unnecessary harm and suffering inflicted on seals and other marine mammals by entanglement in lost or discarded flying rings.

Objectives

- To raise public awareness of the harm flying rings cause once lost or discarded around our coast and waterways.
- Galvanise all sections of the community including retailers, to act in a positive and supportive way by not using, purchasing or selling flying rings
- Secure government action by gaining sufficient public support by way of a national petition that urges the Government to stop the import and sale of flying rings in the UK.
- Urge the Government to encourage retailers to sell biodegradable solid discs as a safer alternative.
- Seek public support by choosing to buy a non-plastic (preferably biodegradable) flying disc as a safer alternative.
- Gain support amongst local authority councillors across the UK to vote on a voluntary ban on the use, purchase and sale of plastic flying rings within their local authority area.

To achieve success will require a concerted effort across all sections of the community including retailers, suppliers, organisations (both public and private) and the general public to name but a few.

Gaining public support and traction is paramount as recently witnessed in the recent broadcasting of a television docudrama on the plight of the Post Office Sub-Postmasters.

Although this unfortunate situation was in the public domain for many years, it took a television programme to bring it to the fore winning over the hearts and minds of the public.

Public feeling is a powerful tool and can bring about change; we want to replicate that success.

Without you, we cannot protect our seals from the harm and suffering they are currently experiencing.

Councillors within your local authority including town, parish, community councillors are representatives of their respective wards and should express the views of their constituents.

This guidance is aimed at you seeking such support and we have included documentation which is general in detail and can be used minimising your administrative efforts and that of the recipient.

It is not a difficult process and even though you may reside within a land locked county, these rings are still sold there and brought to the coast by visitors. In essence this is a countrywide call to arms.

Initial Steps

Contact your local councillor or Council Group and highlight the problem that you as a local constituent are concerned about.

If you know any seal-friendly councillors that would be real coup, so consider using them to promote the campaign.

If not, check if your Council have councillors deemed as Marine Life Champions or with special responsibilities for marine life. If not, look for details of committees or panels with a remit for the environment.

The contact details of all Councillors will be on the Council website, call the first one up and follow up with an e-mail (or vice versa). If they don't respond positively contact the second etc. Explain the danger of flying ring toys to seals, the gist of the campaign and ask should you feel confident, to deliver a presentation to them or preferably an appropriate Council group/meeting.

One option once you have gained the support of your councillor/s is to invite them to speak or put forward a motion for the Council to take action to protect the seals. Emphasise that they will be locally leading an important national campaign to protect wildlife from harm.

Gather resources

- Please see the example flying rings presentation which is attached. Councillors are most interested and concerned about the area, people and nature they are responsible for, so do adapt it as you wish or make your own.
- Check the situation in your area: are flying rings being sold, are there beaches, parks or waterways where they may be thrown and get lost ending up in the sea? Highlight any local retailers who are supporting the campaign by not selling flying rings. Show that the public - their constituents - support seals and the campaign to swap flying rings for seal-safe solid discs.
- Print out any posters/leaflets you want to leave with the councillors or show as examples. We will soon be creating posters to reflect our current campaign.

Prepare and give the talk/presentation

- The example presentation is mainly images with a few prompts. If you're not used to talks prepare and practice what you will say, especially the key messages. (Images speak a thousand words, words are usually best kept succinct and passionate!). Listen to any comments and invite Q&A at the end. Rest assured there has been great support from councillors when they have seen the horrific images of the seals' plight, death and injuries.
- Include the typical costs wildlife rehabilitation centres such as the RSPCA have to cover in rehabilitating an adult seal with a flying ring injury. It's an astonishing cost of between £10,000 to £15,000 per seal bearing in mind each flying ring has cost the retailer just 33 pence each.
- Ensure you include the support you are seeking i.e. a total ban on the use and purchase of flying rings within their Local Authority area. You don't need to get involved in how this would be policed that is up to them. Councils have also visited and appealed to retailers to stop stocking flying rings and replace them with solid seal-safe disc toys
- Just securing time with the councillors is a big step forward. They may think of something we haven't come up with. Give them every encouragement and taking on board the dangers of flying ring toys to seals. Highlight the fact they will be joining other Councils in the UK who are supporting the campaign and banning the use of flying rings to protect unsuspecting wildlife.

Keeping in touch with the Council

- A councillor who would act as a single point of contact (SPOC) would be beneficial as it will save you sending out information and seeking updates from all and sundry.
- If you've attended a Council meeting there will be minutes written, check these and keep a copy of everything.
- E-mail a thank you to your contact and summarise briefly what you covered and the actions agreed.
- Councillors can take a long time to put things into action and they are pulled in many different directions. Keep in touch, chivvy and encourage actions agreed through your SPOC.

Flying Ring Petition

We intend to secure as many signatures on our petition so please promote as many people as possible to sign using this link <https://www.change.org/SaveOurSealsFromFlyingRings> or use the QR Code displayed within the sample PowerPoint.

Resources

We have included the following to assist you:

- A sample PowerPoint Presentation
- A sample briefing document to be used to secure Councillor support
- A sample 'Notion of Motion' submitted to Swansea Local Authority Council Meeting.
- Save Our Seals Posters

These documents can be adapted to suit local needs.

Should you require further information or guidance please contact the following FRSG members:

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