

**Boston Borough Council
Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)
Bird Feeding in Boston Town Centre
Consultation Report
Published**



Introduction to this consultation

1. This report details the responses received for the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) Bird Feeding in Boston Town Centre consultation undertaken between 1st May 2024 to 31st July 2024.
2. The exercise was performed to seek residents' views on Boston Borough Council introducing a Public Spaces Protection Order to deal with the issue of bird feeding in Boston town centre.

Methodology

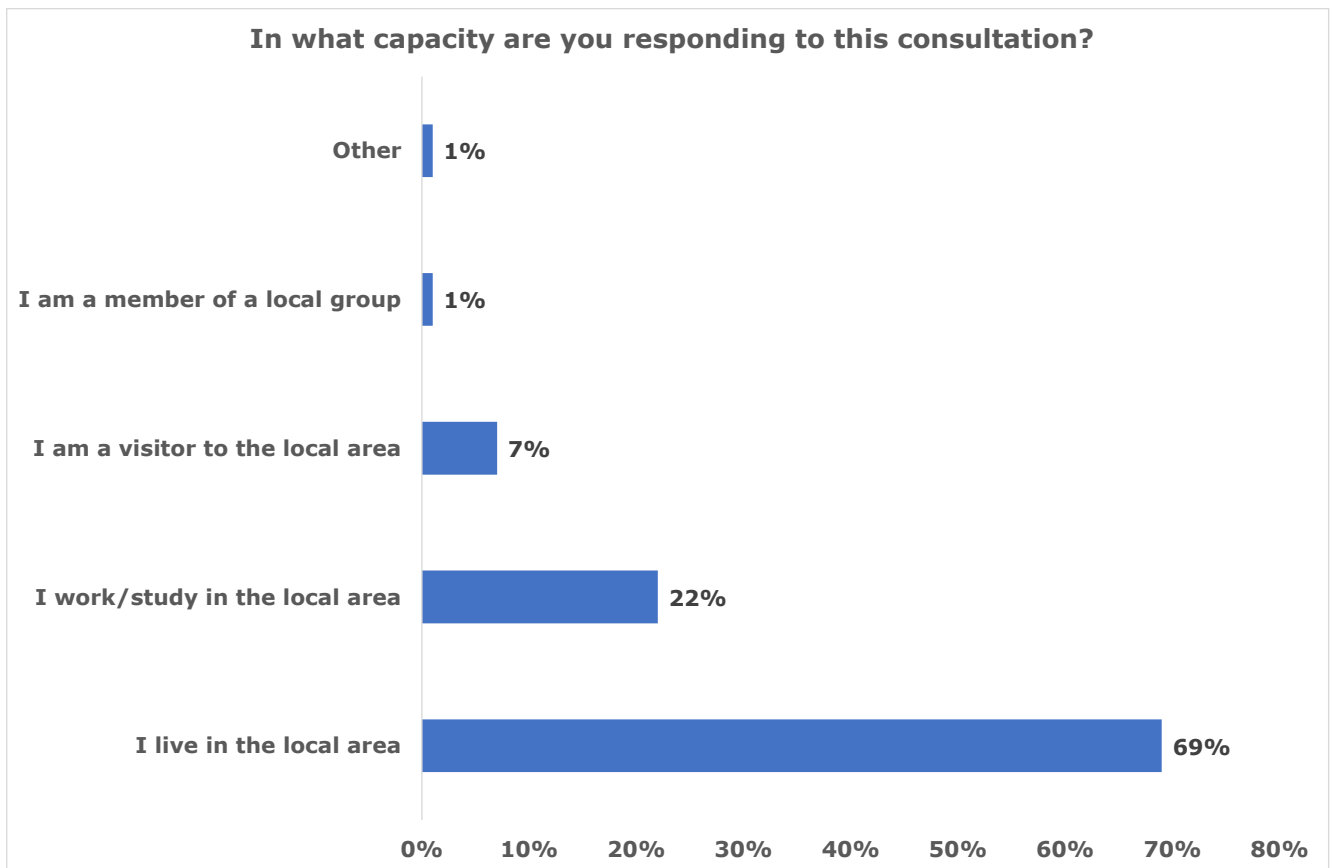
3. The consultation was promoted on social media with a link to the consultation throughout the consultation period.
4. A link to the electronic questionnaire was made available on Boston Borough Council's website. Paper copies of the questionnaire were distributed at a market stall in Boston town centre and were also available on request.
5. It should be noted that base data has been rounded to the nearest number (so may add up to between 99% and 101%).

Response Rate

6. 222 electronic and paper responses were received.

Results and Analysis

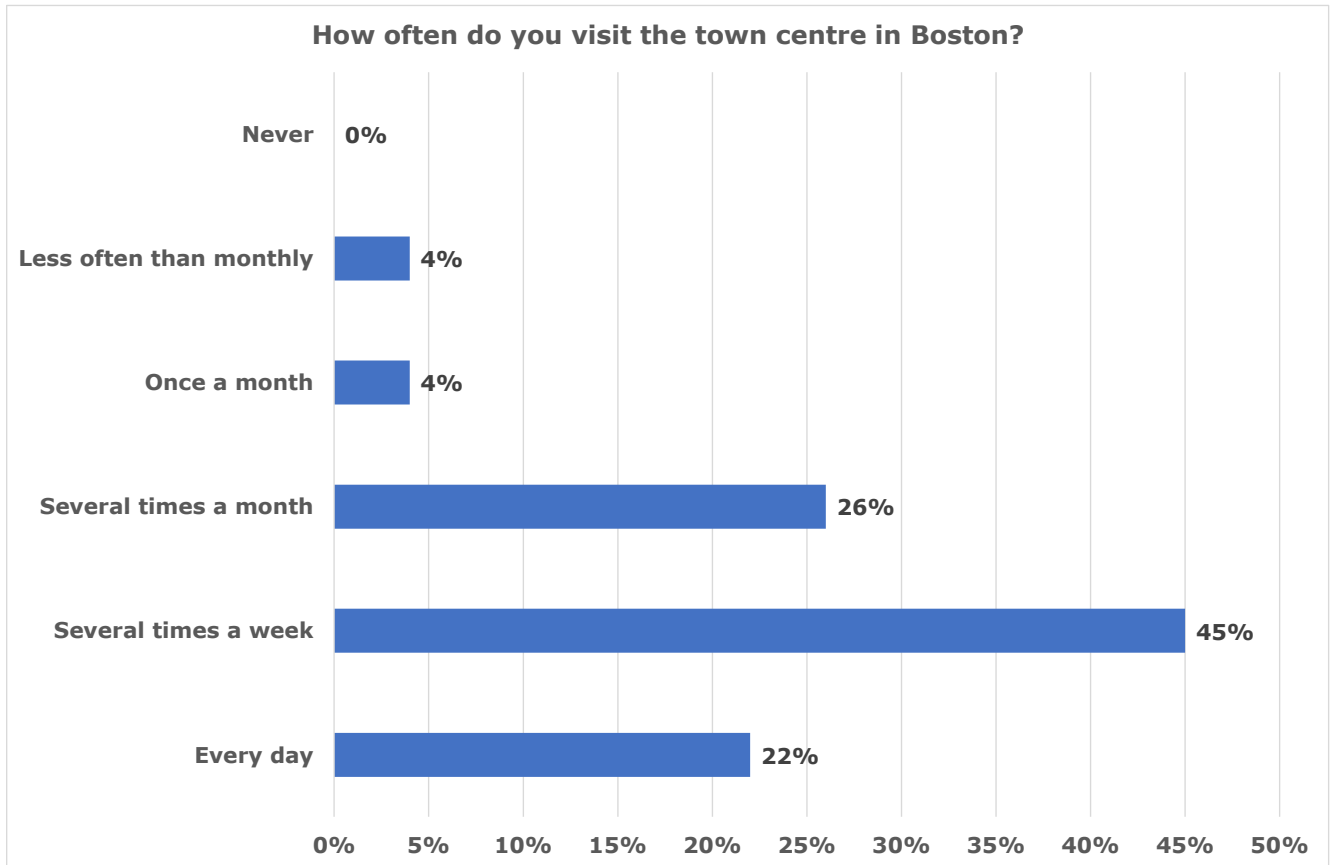
7. All respondents were asked in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. The chart below shows that 69% of all respondents 'lived in the local area', 22% 'worked/studied in the local area', 7% were 'visiting the local area', 1% were 'a member of a local group', with the remaining 1% of all respondents stating they responded to the consultation as 'Other'.



Those that responded as 'Other' were asked what they were responding as. All three respondents stated they were Councillors for Boston Borough Council.

8. All respondents were asked how often they visited the town centre in Boston. The chart below shows that:

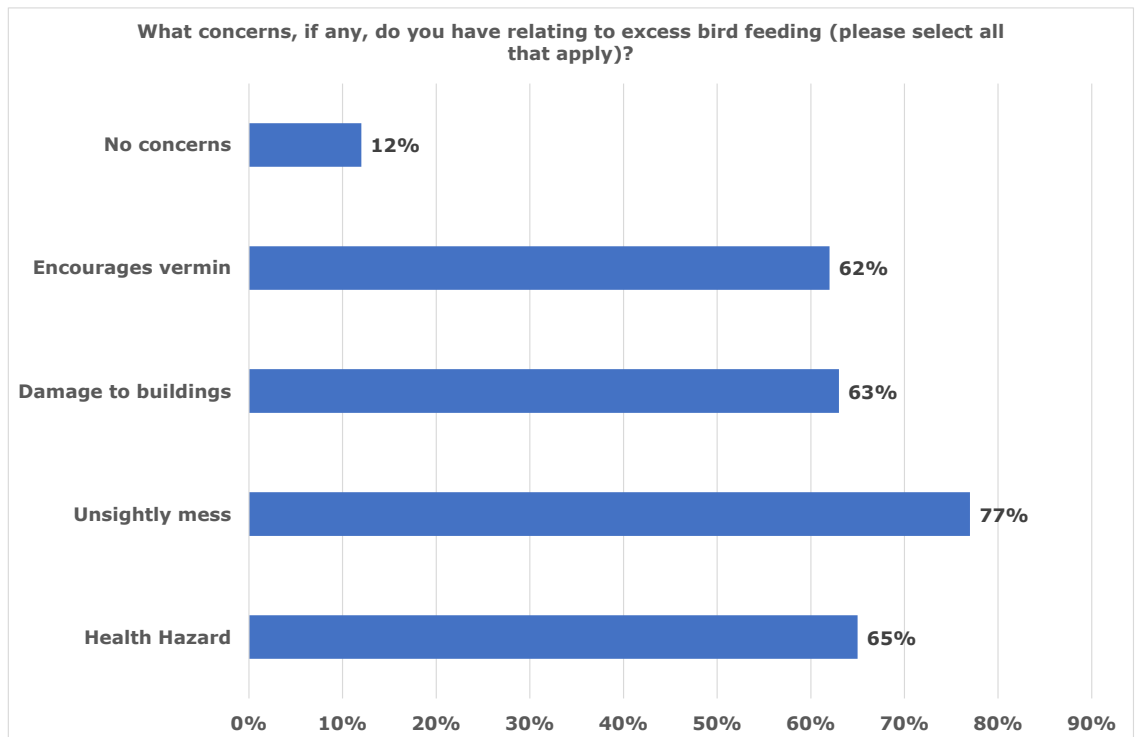
- Just under half (45%) of all respondents visited 'several times a week'.
- 26% visited 'several times a month'
- 22% visited 'every day'
- 4% visited 'once a month'
- 4% visited 'less often than once a month'
- No one said they 'never' visited the town centre of Boston.



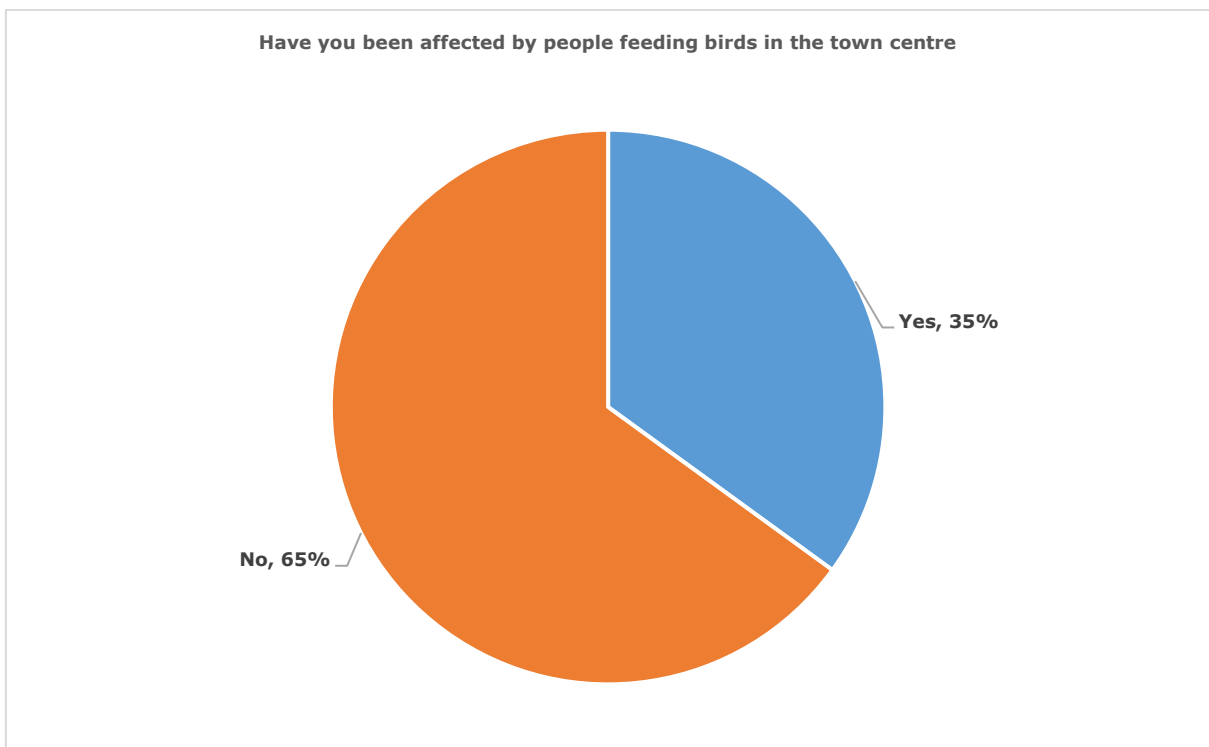
9. All respondents were asked what concerns, if any, they had relating to excess bird feeding and to select all that applied from a list of 5 options. *(It should be noted that the figures in the chart do not add up to 100% due to respondents selecting more than one option).* The chart below shows that:

- Over three quarters of all respondents were concerned about 'unsightly mess'.
- 65% of all respondents were concerned about 'Health Hazard'
- 63% of all respondents were concerned about 'Damage to buildings'
- 62% of all respondents were concerned that it 'encouraged vermin'

- 12% of all respondents had 'No concerns'



10. The pie chart below shows that 65% of all respondents had not been affected by people feeding birds in the town centre, with the remaining 35% stating they had been affected.



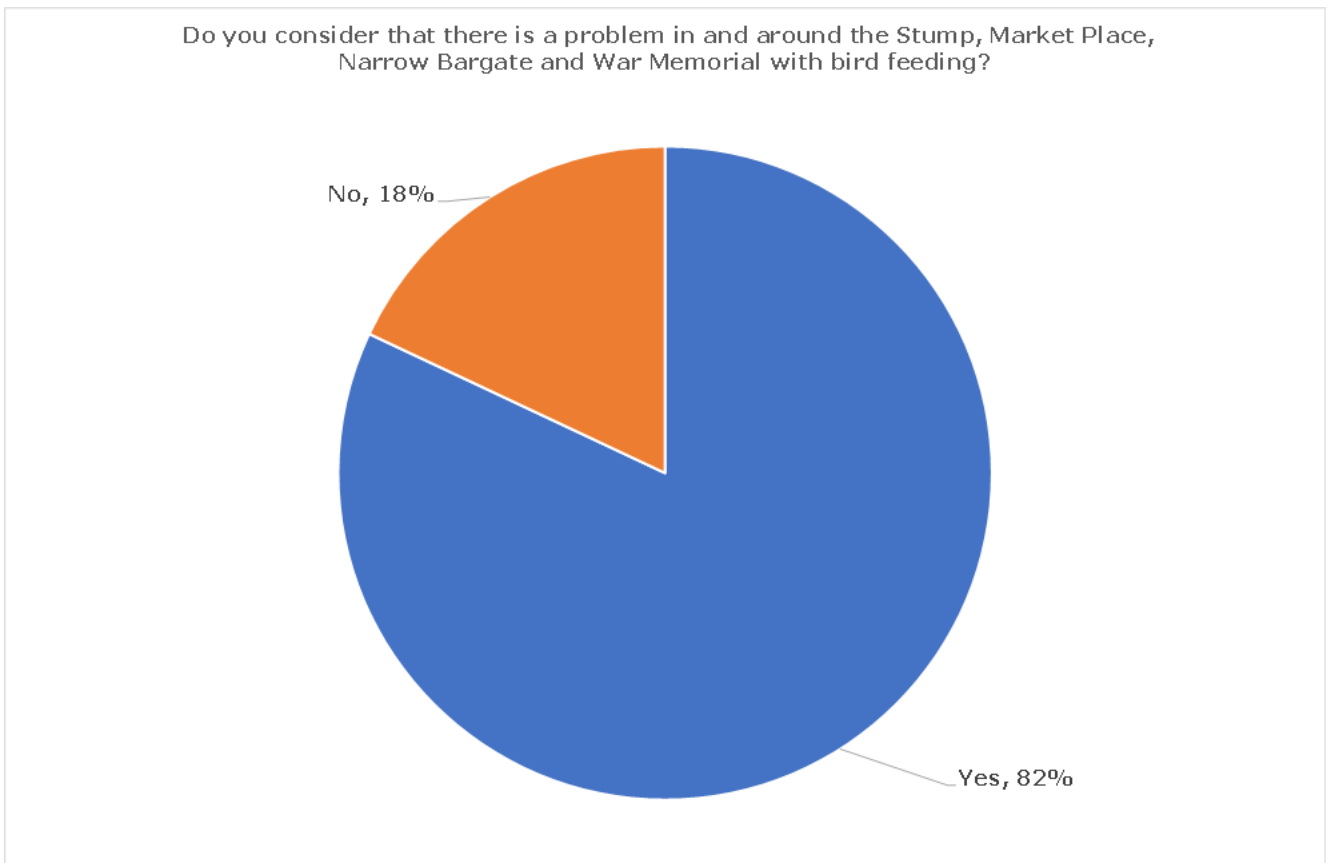
Those that stated they had been affected by people feeding the birds in the town centre were asked how they had been affected. Numerous comments were made; such as car paintwork being damaged by bird faeces, birds defecating on people and people stepping in faeces. Two respondents said that they had stock spoilt by birds defecating on it. Another said birds sometimes came into their shop. One respondent had slipped in bird faeces. Some respondents said that the birds wouldn't leave people alone especially if they were eating. They also said the birds could be aggressive. Two respondents mentioned that they had a bird phobia and a few people thought that it made the town look unsightly. There was also reference to there being rats.

- Lots of pigeons and faeces around the Ingram Memorial
- Birds flying at me.
- Bird mess everywhere especially down lanes, in town and near cash points.
- Birds swoop in to get the food narrowly missing public; the mess they leave is unsightly and hazardous
- Walking to the Stump people were feeding the pigeons and they swarmed down and I was alarmed as so many came so close so quickly. They are doing damage to the church; the droppings have to be cleaned up daily.
- People getting in my way as I try to walk past, makes a mess. Seen adults and children kicking birds, even seen one being caught and caged
- The pigeons walk into the shop where I work
- These birds' deposits are damaging to the paint on my car
- You cannot just sit on the benches and relax, pigeons just coming over, flapping their wings constantly, wouldn't even want to eat anything as would be swarmed by pigeons!
- Pigeons messed over me as they flew over
- Been covered in bird shite
- They have caused damage to my cars. They are intimidating and can put people off walking through the town due to the number of them. I have seen rodents in the town centre in areas where they are fed.
- Pigeons and Gulls frequently flying close by almost hitting you
- As a market trader I have had stock spoilt by bird droppings
- Encourages more and more birds, I have a phobia of birds and I know there are others like me
- Sighting of rats Birds flying close to me (have phobia) Damages to buildings
- Too many birds flying around me while walking through Ingram memorial also stepping in poo.
- Dirty Seating
- The birds flock to the feeder as a large aerial body. They then fly off again in a large group. This causes people to change the direction they are walking in in an attempt to avoid them. People collide and children fall which all ends in a confused mess.
- Bird mess everywhere
- Sometimes as I walk through the Ingram Memorial area there is a lot of birds being fed and they get startled and sometimes fly up into my face. I also don't like the mess they cause to the ground and buildings.
- An excessive amount of birds around Ingram Memorial, being poo'd on.
- By the rats and bird poo
- RATS!

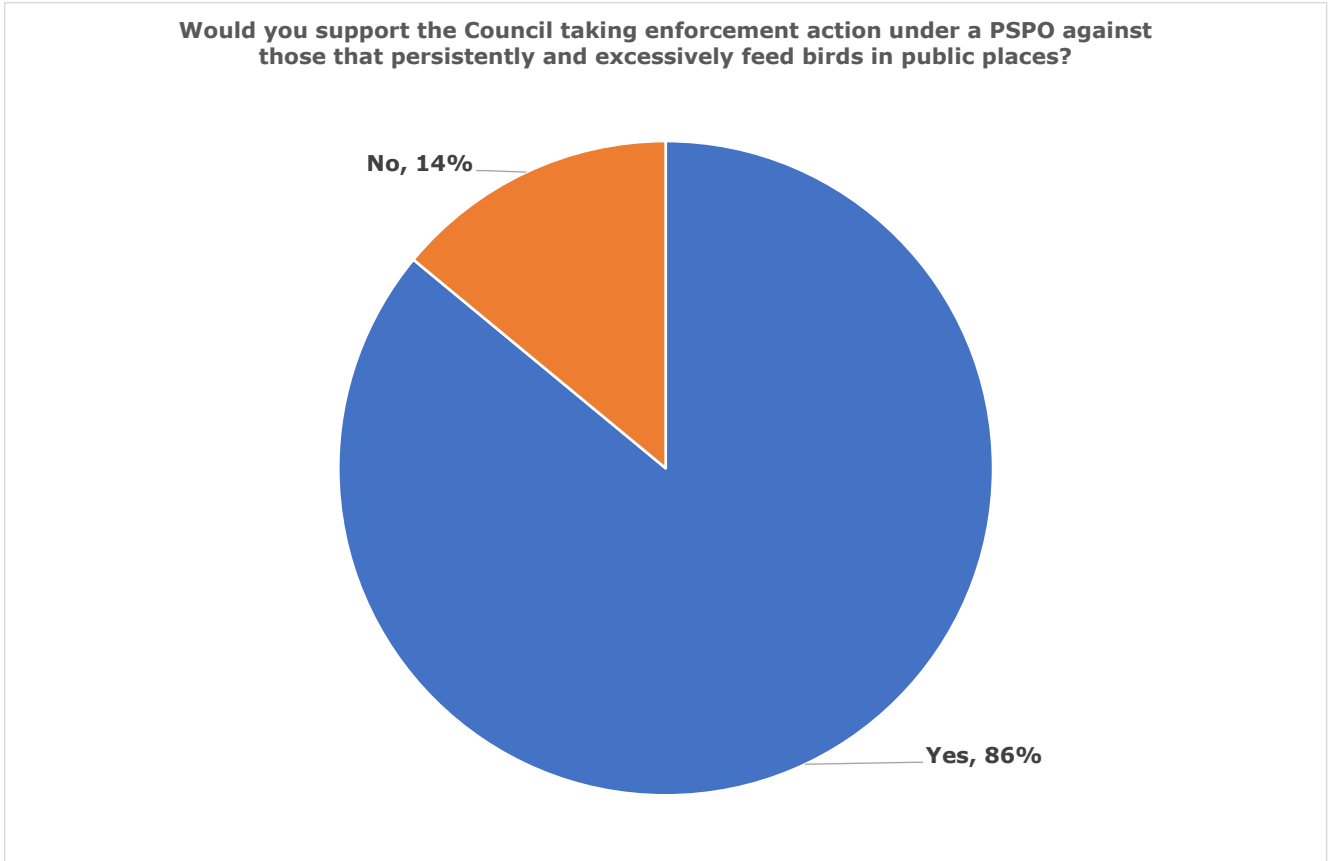
- Poo'd on head. Likes sandwich in peace.
- Dirty mess all round
- Been poo'd on
- Birds causing large mess down Stills/Grant Lane. Blocking footpath while feeding.
- Stepping in bird poo and people standing around and not moving being rude.
- Was told to shut up. They can do as they please as they just moved to UK.
- Almost land on you.
- Birds gather near the centre where they are fed, then drop on your clean car.
- Stand opposite Brandon Veg Stall. She feeds the pigeons. Asked her to stop as birds damaging my stock. She was rude and says she has permission from DEFRA.
- Birds flying near people and children.
- Birds approach you. Daughter frightened of them. May get pooped on.
- Bird poo on vehicle
- Been poo'd
- Stall holder
- Birds crapping on stock on the market
- I stand a food stall on a Wednesday market and people feed the birds opposite, very close to my stall. I regularly have to force the birds away from my stall as they foul on and around it.
- The feeding of pigeons in the town centre attracts large numbers of seagulls which also pose a health hazard, create a mess and can also be aggressive towards people.
- I have seen this activity attracting rats into areas. Food for birds is dropped.
- Pigeon entered stall. Defecated on stall sheeting.
- Walked in bird poo
- Constant mess around my store - Poundland. People feed the birds in the doorway creating mess.
- The pigeons at times have walked into our shop causing damage and mess to remove them.
- When eating they congregate around me.
- The birds can chase you.
- Don't leave you alone.
- Always approaching us when we are sat eating and swarming.
- Standing in bird poo is not nice when walking through.
- Don't like the mess that they leave - slipped on excess food and bird mess.
- Birds mess continually on tables and chairs outside the market snack bar.
- They fly into you as you walk past.
- Been messed on.
- In places the path becomes slippery and dangerous. Their mess blocks drainage on buildings such as the Stump.
- I have to remove nests and bird droppings from my place of work on a daily basis. It has increased since people congregate at Herbert Ingram. They throw seeds through church gates too encouraging all vermin.

- Unable to walk through the Ingram due to so many people feeding the birds.
- I am quite nervous of groups of birds and so when they are encouraged into areas - I don't like it. I also don't like to see them being chased by children which happens when birds congregate for food.
- When parking at rear of church, car often covered in bird poo.
- Constant cleaning required to protect historic fabric. People visiting the town, commenting on the impact of the vast number of birds.
- It makes the town look disgusting. I also have a phobia of birds.
- Unsightly to walk around.

11. The pie chart below shows that 82% of all respondents considered there was a problem in and around the Stump, Market Place, Narrow Bargate and War Memorial with bird feeding, with the remaining 18% considering there was not a problem.



12. The pie chart below shows that 86% of all respondents would support the Council taking enforcement action under a PSPO against those that persistently and excessively fed birds in public spaces, with the remaining 14% stating that they would not support the Council.



Those that stated they would not support the Council taking enforcement action under a PSPO were asked what they would like the Council to do to manage the issue. Several respondents said that the Council should do nothing as there was not a problem with bird feeding in Boston town centre. Some respondents thought that the Council should provide a designated place for people to feed the birds with a bird feeder being situated in said place. Two respondents felt that people were the problem as they were the ones that fed the birds. Two more respondents considered there were more important things that the Council needed to address such as public drinking, drug taking, litter picking etc. Others suggested displaying a sign telling people not to feed the birds. Reference was also made to the Council cleaning the area like it used to do. A full list of what respondents said the Council should do to manage the issue is included below:

- Instead of punishing the birds, stop people feeding them. All birds will go to where the food is. It's not their fault.
- Nothing, there's no problem. It's just people feeding birds and other people to find something else to moan about.
- There are a lot more important issues that need to be addressed other than this. Public drinking, drug taking, intimidation. Fixed penalty notice of £100 is disgraceful when so many other issues abound in Boston. This is a marketing knee jerk reaction that is a money-making issue. Clean up all the

fly posting, fly tipping, public drinking and drug taking, etc, before you worry about feeding some pigeons.

- There isn't an issue. I have seen the current EPO's actively look the other way, rather than dealing with the problem.
- I have not seen this a great problem at all as and when I have been to the town centre. The use of the police and not PCSOs should be introduced daily to reinsure local townspeople going about their daily business, the use of the other town security (very difficult to say what they represent) who in my opinion don't seem to leave the high street at all, without being disrespectful to them. I don't know what use they are they look scruffy and unsmart walking about in twos and on their personal/work phones.
- Get on with more important things, filling empty shops, more toilets, more police on foot, litter pickers just to name a few. Come on Council make Boston a safe and better place to shop in and leave the feeding of birds for when it has become better, with places designated to feeding if they wish to.
- Nothing
- Leave the birds alone
- Provide advice to the public on risks of over feeding wild birds, but nothing more.
- Put up signs!
- Nothing
- Nothing, leave them alone
- There is no issue. Let people feed birds, it's really not harming anyone.
- Warnings at most
- Nothing, I don't see a problem. The birds need food. We are a nation of animal lovers and people want to help them. Unless the Council want to put a feeding station so that they are limited to one area but still can get food.
- Put signs up, put a policeman patrol the area, giving verbal warnings
- Put up notices and get the enforcement officers to explain the problem to people to deter them from feeding the birds
- Create a specified space within Boston to feed pigeons
- Go back to having more cleaning vehicles like not so long ago. Cuts, cuts and more cuts over progressive Councils have left the whole town and surrounding area dirty and poorly maintained. There are weeds growing from the curbs just about everywhere, only the height of the weed varies. Bird mess is not really any worse. The new Council has had over a year to improve things and it seems even worse to me.
- Undecided. Every city in the country and the world has town pigeons. They can't all be removed.
- Signs
- Nothing - birds are entitled to live
- Buy a sparrow hawk
- Shoot them.
- Have a way of educating. Maybe an information sign. Regular cleaning.