# Birmingham’s bin strike inspires ‘King of rats’ crochet protest amid mounting rubbish crisis



Residents of Birmingham have recently witnessed a strikingly humorous and creative response to the ongoing bin strikes in the city. A crocheted topper, styled as the 'King of rats,' adorned with a crown and sceptre, has been placed atop a pile of rubbish bags and pizza boxes. This lively installation was spotted at the junction of Alcester Road and Chantry Road in Moseley on Tuesday, May 6. Alongside the royal rat, a collection of knitted rats and a chalkboard proclaiming "rats the size of cats" have also added to the scene, reflecting local sentiments regarding the current waste management issues.

The backdrop to this amusing sight is a serious ongoing dispute involving Birmingham's bin workers, who have been on all-out strike since March 11. The decision to strike followed the announcement of pay cuts for around 200 large wagon drivers, who have been informed their jobs may be downgraded as part of a review related to equal pay. Unite the union has stated that these proposed cuts could amount to a loss of approximately £8,000 per annum for affected workers.

Speaking about the situation, a representative from Unite described the potential pay cuts as "unjustified" and an "escalation of dispute." They asserted that "no worker should be expected to lose these eye-watering amounts of money from their pay packet." The union has indicated a strong resolve among the workforce, with some bin workers suggesting they could remain on strike through the summer months if a satisfactory resolution is not reached with Birmingham City Council.

The council has responded to these disputes by asserting that the job evaluation process, which they describe as fair and transparent, was conducted with joint agreement from trade unions. A spokesperson noted that this review is crucial for compliance with equal pay laws and emphasized that the grading of drivers is only "indicative" and open to further discussion.

The situation has led to significant waste accumulation across Birmingham, with residents reporting instances of rats among the uncollected rubbish. The visibility of the crocheted 'King of rats' postbox topper echoes the frustrations of the public, who have been living amid these unresolved waste management challenges for nearly nine weeks. The council has reiterated its commitment to negotiating a fair deal for drivers and collectors, with discussions scheduled to continue later this week.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/mar/11/bin-strike-birmingham-rubbish-workers-council> - This article reports on the initiation of the Birmingham bin strike on March 11, 2025, due to disputes over pay cuts and job downgrades, leading to overflowing bins and rat infestations across the city.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/mar/21/as-rubbish-piles-up-tempers-fray-amid-birmingham-bin-strike> - This piece discusses the escalating tensions during the strike, highlighting the council's plans to eliminate the Waste Recycling and Collection Officer role, which workers argue is crucial for safety and pay progression.
3. <https://news.sky.com/story/rats-and-other-rodents-posing-huge-public-health-risk-amid-birmingham-bin-strikes-13328936> - This article highlights the public health risks posed by the accumulation of uncollected waste during the strike, leading to increased rodent activity and health concerns among residents.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c205z19rn52o> - This BBC News article details the vote by over 350 Birmingham bin workers to strike over pay and working conditions, following the council's decision to downgrade roles, potentially costing staff an average of £8,000 annually.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdjg07xvnnjo> - This article explains the reasons behind the Birmingham bin strikes, focusing on the council's decision to remove the Waste Recycling and Collection Officer role, which the union claims is safety-critical and essential for workers' pay progression.
6. <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20009/waste_and_recycling/3020/waste_and_recycling_industrial_action_-_faq_for_residents> - This official Birmingham City Council page provides information on the ongoing waste and recycling industrial action, including details on affected services and advice for residents during the strike period.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMingFBVV95cUxQeU8taGlGdWdzQWxSVzg0MUFKWHlwUVJjeTR3dkR2RXQwYXJfeDBYbm5lWUVtejFsWURNUEFaYjhSQ3RISGJDQm9JM1NEaGdnc2NwOFlpNEZyMnkxWUNxNW02bkxsaTVWYlJWT29vS3JGaG90QU5tOXBFRDJiNDN2cElpWHh5NGNVZUJRdUVMT1FKdVpNY3B5ZmhOZ3RyZ9IBowFBVV95cUxQUkVNUUI3TFN2QXJtTTY0WHJfempPQ1Q0VGczS0pTdkxrN2htRGp0V204akNfMDR5dDdIVEFxLUJLTGs1TkVrWDdkdjZwWjBnekRCQjgyUmxIbzJram04V1FHTF8ybHJUTUtVN0hGN1pLZy1ja3kxSVdXR3dQRHEwUlZ3YUdWcVVseXhacTRSMjRuZ2VZT0FORnc0QzU1MmxwZFI4?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data