# Firefighters rescue kittiwake trapped in netting as Lowestoft grapples with urban seabird surge



Firefighters in Lowestoft responded to an unusual emergency around midday, rescuing a kittiwake trapped in netting at V & A Stores on London Road. Thankfully, the bird was freed with some aid, although it sustained damage to its feathers during the ordeal. This incident sheds light on the growing presence of kittiwakes in Lowestoft, which have been increasingly nesting on various buildings and shops in the town. As these seabirds return, shopkeepers have found themselves grappling with the challenges posed by their droppings, creating a mess on pavements and prompting lengthy clean-up efforts.

The kittiwakes hold significant cultural and ecological importance for Lowestoft. They first established colonies on the town’s piers in the 1950s, and today, Lowestoft boasts one of the UK's most successful urban colonies of these birds, despite their global decline. Kittiwakes are currently classified on the conservation 'red list', indicating their urgent need for protection; recent estimates suggest their numbers worldwide have plummeted by 40% since the 1970s.

To address the growing conflict between urban development and wildlife preservation, the Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership was formed. This initiative comprises the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, local councils, and other stakeholders. Its aim is to provide advice on safe nesting practices while facilitating the coexistence of kittiwakes and businesses. As mentioned by the RSPB, property owners are encouraged to remove restrictive netting that obstructs access to adequate nesting sites. The nets, used to protect buildings, inadvertently prevent these birds from raising their young.

The recent rescue was not an isolated incident. In fact, kittiwake rescues have become increasingly common. In addition to the work of the local firefighters, wildlife presenters like Chris Packham have advocated for the removal of netting, emphasising the need for properties to accommodate the nesting practices of these endangered birds. Following public pressure, companies such as BT have committed to removing netting from their premises, facilitating a more supportive environment for the kittiwakes.

The presence of these birds has also sparked various reactions within the community. For instance, at Our Lady Star of the Sea church, approximately 200 kittiwakes have nested on its tower. While some parishioners see the droppings as a nuisance, Deacon Steve Pomeroy perceives the birds as a blessing, demonstrating the varied perspectives on urban wildlife management.

As Lowestoft navigates the delicate balance between development and conservation, the plight of the kittiwakes serves as a poignant reminder of the need for cooperation among businesses, conservationists, and local communities to ensure that these beautiful seabirds continue to thrive in an increasingly urban landscape.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
2. Paragraph 2, 3, 5
3. Paragraph 3, 4
4. Paragraph 4
5. Paragraph 5
6. Paragraph 5, 6
7. Paragraph 4, 5

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25174614.fire-crew-called-free-trapped-kittiwake-lowestoft/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-57056408> - Firefighters in Lowestoft rescued a kittiwake trapped in netting on a building in Station Square. The RSPB criticized the netting, urging property owners to remove it to allow the endangered birds to access nesting sites. Kittiwakes are on the conservation 'red list', indicating they require urgent action due to declining numbers. The incident highlights the conflict between urban development and wildlife conservation in the area.
3. <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/news/lowestoft-kittiwake-partnership> - The Lowestoft Kittiwake Partnership was established to protect nesting kittiwakes while reducing conflicts with businesses and building owners. The partnership includes the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, local councils, and community members. It aims to provide advice on safe nesting practices and to ensure kittiwakes can continue to nest safely in Lowestoft, balancing conservation efforts with urban development.
4. <https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/lowestoft/rare-bird-rescued-from-building-after-charity-and-tv-present-9198689/> - A kittiwake was rescued from netting on a Lowestoft building after the RSPB and wildlife presenter Chris Packham urged property owners to remove nets. The RSPB highlighted the global decline of kittiwake numbers and called for building owners to allow the birds to access nesting sites. The incident underscores the challenges of balancing urban development with wildlife conservation in Lowestoft.
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/netting-lowestoft-kittiwakes-papa-johns-b1842463.html> - The RSPB criticized netting on buildings in Lowestoft, including those of Papa John’s and BT, which blocked kittiwakes from nesting. The organization called for the removal of nets to allow the rare birds to raise their young. Kittiwakes are on the conservation 'red list', and their numbers have declined by 40% globally since the 1970s. The situation highlights the tension between urban development and wildlife conservation.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-57862078> - In Lowestoft, about 200 kittiwakes have nested on the tower of Our Lady Star of the Sea church. While some parishioners find the bird droppings a nuisance, Deacon Steve Pomeroy considers the birds a 'blessing'. The church has been burning more incense to cover the smell of the droppings. The kittiwakes' presence highlights the challenges of urban wildlife management in Lowestoft.
7. <https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/lowestoft/company-agrees-to-remove-netting-following-calls-from-charit-9198250/> - BT agreed to remove netting from its Lowestoft premises after the RSPB and Chris Packham called on building owners to allow rare kittiwakes to access nesting sites. The RSPB highlighted the global decline of kittiwake numbers and urged property owners to remove nets to provide space for the birds to raise their young. The incident underscores the need for collaboration between conservationists and businesses to protect endangered species.