# Residents demand landfill closure amid soaring seagull numbers in Altham



Residents of Altham, near Blackburn, Lancashire, have reported escalating concerns over a significant increase in seagull populations at the Whinney Hill Landfill site. The situation, described by many as unbearable, has reached a point where locals are demanding the closure of the landfill, which is situated approximately 30 miles from the coast.

The landfill, operated by SUEZ Recycling and Recovery, has become the focal point for complaints from residents who assert that the noise, smell, and mess generated by the seagulls have disrupted their daily lives for over a year. Current estimates suggest that approximately 3,000 seagulls swarm the area, a number expected to triple as the breeding season approaches, potentially resulting in an influx of 9,000 birds.

On Saturday, a protest meeting saw over 50 residents gather on Church Lane in Clayton-le-Moors, expressing their discontent with the situation and calling for urgent action to address the seagull infestation. Gary Hough, a local resident and administrator of the Facebook group Tipped Over The Edge, spoke at the protest, stating, "This is an unacceptable situation, and we refuse to tolerate it any longer." He further elaborated on the residents' plight, indicating that the impact on health, wellbeing, and the ability to enjoy homes has been profound, stating, "Unless you live in this area and experience it firsthand, it's impossible to understand just how bad the situation has been for over a year - and it's only getting worse."

The ongoing issues at Whinney Hill Landfill have caught the attention of local authorities. Last month, the Hyndburn Borough Council passed a motion advocating for urgent action regarding the landfill's impact on the community. Deputy Leader Cllr Noordad Aziz underscored the necessity for a plan of action from SUEZ, Lancashire County Council, and the Environment Agency. Cllr Aziz stated, "A temporary closure is the only solution because the health and wellbeing of people is paramount."

In response to the growing unrest, SUEZ has acknowledged the challenges posed by the seagulls. A spokesperson for the company stated, "Whinney Hill landfill site has been in operation since the 1970s and provides an essential service, managing primarily household waste from across Lancashire, including Hyndburn." They added that the site is stringently regulated by the Environment Agency and that preventive measures, including the use of gas cannons and lasers, are in place to deter the birds.

Locals have expressed frustration not only at the presence of the seagulls but also at the mess left on vehicles and properties in the vicinity. In a poignant comparison, scenes from the infestation have been likened to Alfred Hitchcock's iconic film "The Birds."

While SUEZ and the Environment Agency maintain that they are working to ensure compliance with regulations and mitigate the disruption caused by the gulls, the residents' complaints continue to mount. The Environment Agency reiterated its commitment to addressing the issues at the landfill and conducting regular inspections to ensure that the site remains compliant with environmental permits.

As the situation develops, local residents remain vigilant, pursuing avenues to alleviate their distress as the impact of the seagull population mounts with the onset of spring.

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

## References

* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source website for the article, providing information about the situation at Whinney Hill Landfill and the impact on local residents.
* <https://www.suez.com/en-gb> - This URL supports the information about SUEZ Recycling and Recovery, the operator of the landfill, and their acknowledgment of the challenges posed by the seagulls.
* <https://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/> - This is the official website of Hyndburn Borough Council, which supports the information about the council's involvement and response to the situation.
* <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/> - This URL is for Lancashire County Council, which has been involved in discussions and actions regarding the landfill issue.
* <https://wwwEnvironment-agency.gov.uk/> - This is the official website of the Environment Agency, which has been regulating the landfill and working to mitigate the disruption caused by the gulls.