



The Reverend Dan Tyndall
Vicar of St Mary Redcliffe

21 April 2020

Via e-mail: dan.tyndall@stmaryredcliffe.co.uk

Dear Mr Tyndall,

I am writing on behalf of PETA and our more than 1.2 million members and supporters. We were disheartened to learn that St Mary Redcliffe Church is planning to use electric-shock devices to stop pigeons roosting on the building. The dove – a close relative of the pigeon – brought Noah the message of hope and peace, and all of God's creatures deserve to be treated with compassion when they visit His house. We therefore hope you will reconsider and address the perceived problem in a humane and compassionate manner instead.

In addition to causing pain, electric shocks provoke distress, anxiety, and confusion in animals. And while electric-shock systems aren't intended to kill the target species, the [Pigeon Control Advisory Service \(PiCAS\)](#) notes that manufacturers are unable to guarantee that an electric shock intended to deter a pigeon won't kill a smaller bird, such as a robin or a sparrow. It is not known how the system will function in wet conditions, as water is a powerful conductor of electricity. With so many different bird species likely to seek refuge on the church walls or roof, even protected species could be killed – in which case, church leaders might face prosecution for causing unnecessary suffering.

Pigeons are nesting at St Mary Redcliffe because it's their home – they were born and bred there. They're entitled to be treated with kindness and respect, just as all parishioners are. We owe it to these gentle, intelligent, family-orientated birds to embrace a live-and-let-live outlook – and to employ civilised, humane management practices when necessary. To this end, dovecotes or nesting boxes could be installed nearby for a low, one-off cost. Once the pigeons have been encouraged to roost there with food and nesting materials, their eggs can be collected regularly and destroyed, with hatchlings left alone. This strategy has succeeded elsewhere. In less than a year, the pigeon population at Nottingham City Hospital was reduced by 50%, and the cost of cleaning fouling was also reduced significantly.

PETA would be willing to provide St Mary Redcliffe with a beautiful dovecote – or a donation towards one – which would no doubt delight churchgoers while encouraging them to respect *all* of God's creatures.

I hope to hear from you soon regarding this matter and can be reached on 020 7837 6327 or at TheodoraIona@peta.org.uk. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,

Theodora Iona

Theodora Iona
Campaigns Officer

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