



Sharon Lacey
CEO
Crystal Palace Football Club

1 September 2026

Dear Ms Lacey:

I hope this message finds you well. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals – PETA entities have more than 10 million members and supporters globally – to urge Crystal Palace FC to protect wildlife by retiring its bald eagle mascot, Phoenix, immediately.

A bright stadium filled with boisterous fans is no place for animals. Under such conditions, birds easily become frightened, disoriented, and panicked – placing themselves and others at risk. PETA has detailed records of incidents involving birds used as mascots at other stadia – including an owl who died after being hit by a ball, eagles who crashed into walls or glass windows, and a falcon who landed on a fan's head, sinking his talons into the man's scalp. In another incident, a rowdy football fan punched his rival team's eagle mascot.

In nature, these magnificent birds fly over vast territories, spend most of their time high in the tree line, and would naturally avoid humans. Their wild instincts are retained even when raised in captivity. When eagles are used for displays and entertainment, they are denied the opportunity to engage in their natural behaviour, resulting in frustration and stress. Wildlife doesn't belong in a football stadium.

Many professional sports teams use only willing humans as mascots, and the club already has Pete the Eagle to excite the crowd. Tottenham Hotspur FC retired its live cockerel years ago, and Barnsley FC its exploited donkey. Numerous venues, including Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Butlin's Resorts, and Moulin Rouge, have left animal shows where they belong, in the past. Wild animal circus performances are prohibited in the UK, and the new legislation for falconry zoos recognises the many welfare concerns of bird-of-prey displays.

Bald eagles are widely recognised as symbols of freedom. They deserve better than to be used as an entertainment "prop" to amuse The Eagles' fans.

PETA urges Crystal Palace FC to protect animals by **retiring Phoenix and committing never to use a live animal mascot again.**

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Carys Bennett
Senior Corporate Projects Manager
PETA

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

PO Box 70315
London N1P 2RG
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 7837 6327
+44 (0) 20 7923 6242 (fax)

Info@peta.org.uk

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT OF ANIMALS (PETA)
FOUNDATION – a charitable
company limited by guarantee,
with its registered office at
Cannon Place, 78 Cannon Street,
London EC4N 6AF.
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