

### Goose Management

The presence of large numbers of wild geese in the centre of York creates a number of operational and safety problems, these include large amounts of droppings in paved areas, parks and gardens making these sites unwelcoming and usable; damage to vegetation through grazing, intimidation of children and animals.

There are two main species of geese within the York – Greylag and Canada. There are a small number of Barnacle geese to be found at the University, and very occasionally elsewhere, and a resident population of domestic farm geese to be found, in the main, at Castle Mills.

#### Sites

Geese can usually be found at Rowntree Park, in and along the River Ouse between Scarborough Bridge and Rowntree Park (including War Memorial Gardens, Kings Staith, Tower Gardens and Eye of York), River Foss between Yearsley Bridge and Foss Basin, Hull Road Park, Chapman's Pond, Hogg's Pond, Rawcliffe Lake, University of York campus, Wigginton Pond, other remote ponds and lakes in York.

#### Council consideration

- Leisure Services Committee 10<sup>th</sup> October 1996 – reported problems in Rowntree park – agree that signs should be installed asking the public not to feed the geese.
- Leisure Services Committee 11<sup>th</sup> November 1999 – petition received seeking the removal of the geese from Rowntree Park, report requested on possible measures
- Leisure Services Committee 9<sup>th</sup> December 1999 – specific report on the management of waterfowl, cull and egg treatment approved subject to licences
- Leisure Services Committee 16<sup>th</sup> March 2000 – reported on counter petition

#### The Law

The geese, like all wild birds in Britain, are protected under the EC Wild Birds Directive implemented in Great Britain through the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. This Act makes it an offence to capture, kill or injure birds, or to damage or take their nests or eggs. There are exceptions, the most important of which relate to the open (hunting) season (between September 1st and January 31<sup>st</sup>) and to actions licensed under Section 16 of the Act.

#### Licences

Following the recommendation of the LSC a licence is sought annually to treat the eggs of birds at City Council owned sites. The LSC in 1999 also asked for a cull which was licensed but not carried out. Since 2005 a specific annual licence is now only required for Greylag geese

