

Spitting feathers over feeding birds

A BIRD enthusiast has branded Sutton Council "absurd" after she was issued an £80 fine for feeding injured pigeons.

Sarah Argrave, of Wallington, was accused of littering after scattering a small amount of seeds in Trinity Square, High Street.

The 39-year-old, who runs Surrey animal rescue shelter Starlight Trust, scattered the food on the pavement so she could capture and help pigeons that were injured.

But she was slapped with the fine by a council litter cop who saw her feeding the birds on July 12, which she claimed showed the authority wanted to "wage a war on pigeons".

She said: "It's absolutely absurd. We're a little rescue charity and campaign for animal welfare. I'm the last person who would litter.

"There was no uneaten food. How can something which isn't there be litter?"

She added: "I can understand if I dropped a loaf on down and every time I explained to them what I was doing they weren't interested in what I had to say. They said to me that I could put it all in writing.

"I feel the council wants to wage a war against the pigeons and that they want to gentrify the high street."

The fine was later rescinded after the Sutton Guardian contacted the council for a statement on Thursday, July 14.

In a letter to Mrs Argrave on Tuesday, Jan Gransden, group manager of enforcement at the council, said: "In Sutton High Street pigeons have become a nuisance caused by excessive droppings which are not only unsightly, but can cause problems by making pavements slippery, particularly in wet weather and result in increased street cleansing costs for the council.

"I have reviewed the circumstances



Animal welfare: Sarah Argrave who was feeding injured pigeons

of this case and on this occasion the Council is prepared to cancel the fixed penalty notice."

She added: "However I must stress that this a 'one off' cancellation and any future fixed penalty notices issued to anyone for feeding pigeons by dropping bird feed on the ground will not be rescinded.

"The council would urge any people undertaking welfare or rescue work and using feeding to attract injured birds, to contact either the council or Success Sutton beforehand in order to prevent further fixed penalty notices being issued under similar circumstances."