

Meeting of:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 16 September 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Update Report – No Flying Rings Campaign
Purpose of Report:	To update Committee on the progress of the No Flying Rings Campaign
Report Owner:	Miles Punter – Director of Environment and Housing
Responsible Officer:	Colin Smith – Head of Neighbourhood Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Committee Reports
Policy Framework:	This report is within the policy framework and budget
Executive Summary: • Full Council on 28th April 2025, discussed the UK Seal Alliance – “No Flying Rings Campaign” and agreed that this should be considered as part of a first task and finish group. • The Place Scrutiny Committee on 20th May 2025 discussed the proposal but determined that the campaign should be managed by service area officers, rather than any specific Scrutiny Committee task and finish group. • During May 2025, the UK Seal Alliance launched the ‘No Flying Rings Campaign’ with several objectives, but primarily to raise public awareness on the harm, flying rings cause, once lost or discarded around our coast and waterways. The purpose was to discourage shops/traders from stocking and selling the flying rings and to replace them with alternative solid flying discs. • As part of the Council’s commitment to the campaign the Neighbourhood Services team engaged with local businesses located at our main resorts across the Vale, the RNLI, Keep Wales Tidy as part of their summer beach campaign, and subscribers to the Council’s social media platforms, to promote the “No Flying Rings Campaign”. • The Neighbourhood Services team has made a pledge to keep promoting the campaign annually and incorporate the no flying rings message into all pre-season signage reviews, at designated beaches throughout the Vale.	

Recommendation

1. That Place Scrutiny Committee Members consider the content of the report and determine if the actions taken and proposed are proportionate and sufficient in this case.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To provide the Place Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to consider the details of this Report and to provide any other further recommendations, for officer action.

1. Background

- 1.1 At Full Council on 28th April 2025 following a notice of motion submitted by Councillors C. Stallard and E.J Goodjohn, Council resolved to:

- Promote a Voluntary Ban on the sale of “Flying Rings”, encouraging shops to sell alternatives instead and discouraging the use of “Flying Rings”.
- Write to both the Welsh and the UK Governments in support of the ban.
- Promote the campaign through its media channels so that the public and visitors to our coastline also support the action.

[25-04-28](#)

- 1.2 At Place Scrutiny Committee on 20th May 2025, it was discussed and agreed that a Task and Finish Group was not required, and the project would be managed by service area officers. The Committee therefore resolved:

T H A T the relevant Council officers be tasked to take away this Notice of Motion on a Voluntary Ban on the Sale and Use of “Flying Rings” throughout the Vale of Glamorgan, in order to address this issue with local traders, to help support the related national campaign with additional local publicity and then to report back to Committee in July about what actions had been taken to tackle this issue.

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Scrutiny-New-2025/Scrutiny-Place/2025/25-05-20/Ref-from-Council-Voluntary-Ban-on-Flying-Rings.pdf

- 1.3 The No Flying Rings Campaign which is being led by the UK Seal Alliance was presented on 6th February 2025 to the Council’s Vale Coastal Forum. During the presentation it emphasised the harsh reality of what can happen to seals and other marine life if the flying rings get into the water.

The objectives of the campaign are:

- To raise public awareness of the harm flying rings cause once lost or discarded around our coast and waterways.
- Galvanise all sections of the community including retailers, to act in a positive and supportive way by not using, purchasing or selling flying rings

- Secure government action by gaining sufficient public support by way of a national petition that urges the Government to stop the import and sale of flying rings in the UK.
- Urge the Government to encourage retailers to sell biodegradable solid discs as a safer alternative.
- Seek public support by choosing to buy a non-plastic (preferably biodegradable) flying disc as a safer alternative.
- Gain support amongst local authority councillors across the UK to vote on a voluntary ban on the use, purchase and sale of plastic flying rings within their local authority area.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The Neighbourhood Service team has been working with the UK Seal Alliance and local traders located at our resorts to promote the voluntary ban and to raise awareness of the negative impacts flying rings have on marine life.
- 2.2** The UK Seal Alliance 'Save our Seals from Flying Rings' Campaign 'Launch Information Pack' outlining the 2025 campaign was shared with the Council's Neighbourhood Services team (Appendix A). This was used to ensure that key information was consistently being shared by all organisations that have committed to promoting a voluntary ban, on flying rings, to protect seals and other marine life.
- 2.3** The service area Officers identified several shops that were located at our resorts/beaches that could potentially stock these rings and set about engaging with them, to understand how many were actively selling the flying rings. These were located at Penarth, Barry Island and Llantwit Major.
- 2.4** During the engagement, 4 out of 14 traders identified, had stock of these flying rings and were on display for visitors to purchase.
- 2.5** However, all 14 traders were consulted on a one-to-one basis, and the opportunity used to highlight the negative impact these rings have, if lost or discarded and allowed to enter our coastline, and the suffering they can cause to seals and other marine life. Although not all traders were selling the flying rings, the engagement was hopefully sufficient to prevent others from potentially stocking them in the future.
- 2.6** All traders were supplied with copies of the "Save our Seals" shop poster (Appendix B) and upon engagement, it was noted that some had already been supplied with posters and displaying them in their shop window, which was encouraging.
- 2.7** The team also engaged with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to inform them of the summer campaign and to request that beach lifeguards working on behalf of the Council, (Barry Island, Llantwit Major, Ogmere and

Southerndown beaches) assisted with the promotion of the campaign by approaching visitors using or bringing flying rings, to one of our beaches.

- 2.8** In terms of media promotions, the Council shared posts on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Facebook page and Instagram account (and the equivalent Welsh Language pages) throughout the school holidays. The post appeared in news feeds and asked beach users, to ditch the flying rings this summer and choose safer alternatives instead (like solid frisbees). It also highlighted that flying rings can seriously injure or even kill seals if they end up in the sea, and around a seal's neck.
- 2.9** The post which was shared had 9,666 views (which is an average number of views compared to other content on the page), with 75 reactions (likes, angry faces etc), 56 comments and 15 shares.
- 2.10** Also, a follow up visit was coordinated during August 2025 to the 4 businesses (3 located at Barry Island, 1 at Llantwit Major beach) which were identified in June 2025, as having stock of flying rings for purchase. All 4 businesses still have a small stock, but they have verbally committed to not replacing them in the future. The service area will revisit these premises, early next Spring 2026.
- 2.11** The service area has also worked in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) this summer, who are running a litter engagement campaign at Barry Island resort during the school holidays. Keep Wales Tidy officers and volunteers will have a presence on the resort and aim to encourage people to "Make memories not mess" and to simply put their litter in a bin or take it home with them.
- 2.12** They will be sharing this detail on social media in support of the partnership with the Council this summer, and that will include using several banners, posters, a pop-up stand at Barry Island and stickers on bins bearing the campaign slogan 'Make Memories not Mess' over a picture of a clean and tidy Barry Island beach.
- 2.13** Their summer litter campaign will also include link to the UK Seal Alliance flying rings campaign.
- 2.14** The service area has also engaged with our Resort Supervisor who has been tasked with monitoring Barry Island's seaside equipment recycling box and to look for any flying rings with a view to removing them for disposal, should any be placed in the box for reuse.
- 2.15** It is important that the campaign momentum continues, so the Council's Neighbourhood Services team will be incorporating the no flying rings campaign into their annual pre-season work, and by resharing the campaign with the RNLI and local traders each year. This will also be supported by sharing posts regarding the voluntary ban on the Council's social media platforms.
- 2.16** As the 2025 beach signage was finalised before the Council's commitment to the no flying rings campaign, it has been noted for the 2026 bathing season to include artwork promoting the campaign and our commitment onto beach signage at all our designated bathing water beaches.
- 2.17** Additionally, at the end of this summer, the service area will seek a suitable method most likely through Wales Coast Forum, to write to the Welsh and UK Governments to present the work undertaken this summer and to express

participating Council's support behind a permanent ban on the supply of plastic flying rings.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about sustainable development. The Act sets out a 'sustainable development principle' which specifies that the public bodies listed in the Act must act in a manner which seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In meeting their sustainability duty, each body must set objectives that highlight the work the body will undertake to contribute to meeting the seven Well-being Goals for Wales.
- 3.2** The activities in this Report will contribute to the national well-being goals and help ensure we have a resilient Wales. The five ways of working are embedded within this campaign to ensure the work undertaken is sustainable not just for this summer but also for future years working in collaboration with others.
- 3.3** **Long term** – The approach to this campaign ensures that this work is sustainable and considers future years to avoid any detrimental impact on our marine life now and for the long term.
- 3.4** **Integration** – The campaign has been developed making specific references to traders and third-party organisations, so there is commitment and understanding to the actions, and what it means to others and primarily prevention of harm to our marine life.
- 3.5** **Involvement** - The Service will have regular annual communication and engagement with stakeholders to ensure involvement in this ongoing campaign.
- 3.6** **Collaboration** - We continue to work in collaboration with other organisations as part of the commitment to this campaign.
- 3.7** **Prevention** – Our aim is to prevent flying rings from entering our coastline and waterways to minimise the impact on our marine life.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** Climate change is one of the key drivers of nature-loss around the world. As well as placing new pressures of wildlife and habitats, it exacerbates already existing ones.
- 4.2** Flying rings pose significant threat to seals and wider marine life and can contribute to broader environmental concerns relating to plastic pollution and climate changes.
- 4.3** Flying rings when discarded or lost flying rings at sea can entangle marine life causing injure, suffering and even kill marine life.

- 4.4** The plastic composition also contributes to the growing problem of plastic pollution, which has a far-reaching consequence for the ecosystem and climate.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Employment

- 5.2** There are no employment implications associated with this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** There are no legal implications associated with this report.

6. Background Papers

None

Flying Ring Campaign 2025



Supported by UK Seal Alliance Executive

Why this Campaign?

2025 is an exciting year for the conservation and protection of seals, and we want you to play a big part as we officially launch a really important campaign.

For some time now, the UK has been flooded with imported flying rings.

These items are usually plastic in construction and resemble a ring often with a strengthen insert. They are purchased in their 1000's from many retail outlets across the country and used similar to a solid disc frisbee.

They are cheap to purchase (£1 to £2 on average) and are often lost or discarded on our beaches or near waterways.

Ultimately, they will end up floating in our seas where seals, who have a natural curiosity, will start to investigate and play with them. They are seen as a toy or plaything and this natural curiosity will soon turn into a nightmare when the ring goes over their heads and gets stuck fast.



Despite the efforts of the seal to untangle itself, it will fail. As the seal moves and grows, the ring will soon start to cut into its skin causing immense suffering and pain.

In time, infection will set in and many will needlessly die.

We recognise that nobody purchases or sells a flying ring with the intention of harming wildlife however, the reality is that many are lost or discarded ending up in the sea posing a danger to seals.

Therefore, immediate action needs to be taken.

The Reality

A seal entrapped by a flying ring is unlikely to be rescued and released from its nightmare.

There are many reasons why an effective rescue cannot be attempted such as the geographical location being unsuitable, the danger to the rescuers or the animal or other animals in the vicinity to name but a few reasons.

There are some rescues that have been successful, but these are rare.

For those successful ones, and due to the injuries sustained, many will require a many months of rehabilitation at a specialist Wildlife Centre.

The RSPCA, an animal welfare charity, has estimated the cost of rehabilitating an adult seal entangled by a flying ring will cost them between **£10,000 to £15,000** per animal.

Putting that into context, a flying ring (on average) costs a retailer the wholesale price of **33p** to purchase, but will cost a charity up to 45,455 times more than one flying ring actually costs.



What are we hoping to achieve?

Our overall aim is to

- To stop the unnecessary harm and suffering inflicted on seals and other marine mammals by entanglement in lost or discarded flying rings.

Our Objectives are to:

- To raise public awareness of the harm flying rings cause once lost or discarded around our coast and waterways.
- Galvanise all sections of the community including retailers, to act in a positive and supportive way by not using, purchasing or selling flying rings
- Secure government action by gaining sufficient public support by way of a national petition that urges the Government to stop the import and sale of flying rings in the UK.
- Urge the Government to encourage retailers to sell biodegradable solid discs as a safer alternative.
- Seek public support by choosing to buy a non-plastic (preferably biodegradable) flying disc as a safer alternative.
- Gain support amongst local authority councillors across the UK to vote on a voluntary ban on the use, purchase and sale of plastic flying rings within their local authority area.

Where do you fit in?

To achieve success will require a concerted effort across all sections of the community including retailers, suppliers, organisations (both public and private) and the general public to name but a few.

Gaining public support and traction is paramount as recently witnessed in the recent broadcasting of a television docudrama on the plight of the Post Office Sub-Postmasters.

Although this unfortunate situation was in the public domain for many years, it took a television programme to bring it to the fore winning over the hearts and minds of the public.

Public feeling is a powerful tool and can bring about change; we want to replicate that success.

Without you, we cannot protect our seals from the harm and suffering they are currently experiencing.

We recognise that nobody purchases or sells a flying ring with the intention of harming wildlife however, the reality is that many are lost or discarded ending up in the sea posing a danger to seals.

Campaign Launch

Over the last few months our UK Seal Alliance Flying Ring Strategy Group have worked on what is required to achieve our aims and objectives.

On Monday 26th May 2025 (Spring Bank Holiday) the 'Save Our Seals from Flying Rings' Campaign 2025 will be launched.

Jennie Hobson (Chair Flying Ring Strategy Group) said ***"We are pleased to launch this campaign in an effort to raise awareness and bring about important changes that will ultimately protect our precious seals from harm"*** she continued ***"Flying rings pose an unnecessary and avoidable threat to seals. By simply swapping to seal-safe beach toys such as a solid disc frisbee, preferably non-plastic, everyone can help protect our beautiful and iconic seals"***

Supported by the UK Seal Alliance Executive, the campaign logo will be displayed on all resources.



The **Save Our Seals from Flying Rings** campaign petition has been created and accessed via the following link or by scanning this QR Code:

<https://www.change.org/SaveOurSealsFromFlyingRings>



'We want you to consider the harm caused and the affect of not doing anything that could make a positive difference'.

Simple Steps to Success

This Campaign is not asking anyone to make significant changes to their lives but merely small changes that will have significant outcomes.

Neither is the campaign out to stop people having fun or retailers losing out financially.

Quite the opposite in fact as there is an immediate solution to the dangers of flying rings...that is the solid disc frisbee preferably one made of non-plastic.

Solid disc frisbees have been around since the 1930's and are still readily available in many shops to buy.

We are asking people to only purchase solid disc frisbees and retailers to only sell solid disc frisbees.

The campaign team has created a **Guide to Seeking Shop Owners Support** that provides advice and guidance to anyone who sees a shop selling flying rings and wants to approach the shop staff to raise awareness of these items.

Major retailers such as Tesco, Pets at Home, Halfords and Sainsburys support the campaign and no longer sell flying rings. Many smaller retailers have also supported us and stopped selling them.

These retailers will be able to show their support by prominently displaying a poster stating '**We Do Not Sell Flying Rings**'

A growing number of local Councils in England and Wales have entered into a voluntary ban on flying rings after constituents have contacted Councillors. This action is a positive step towards galvanising a community against animal suffering.

The campaign team has also created a **Guide to Seeking Local Authority Support** that provides advice and guidance to anyone wishing to seek the potential of their Council seeking a motion entering into a voluntary ban on flying rings.

It also includes a sample PowerPoint presentation to compliment such an approach to their local council.

Posters created for the public and for children are available together with the main **Save Our Seals** campaign logo. These can be accessed via: [Save Our Seals from Flying Rings - Google Drive](#)

What does success look like?

We are realistic enough to realise that this is not a short term campaign...change takes time but we are confident that collectively we can raise sufficient awareness and support that the selling, purchasing or possession of flying rings becomes unacceptable.

It is achievable for the UK to become the first country in the world to become flying ring free, but it needs us all to **make it happen**.

Are you willing to help us achieve this?

Should you require further information then please contact Jenny Hobson or Gareth Richards at jennifer.hobson1@btinternet.com gareth.richards6@virginmedia.com

Thank you.

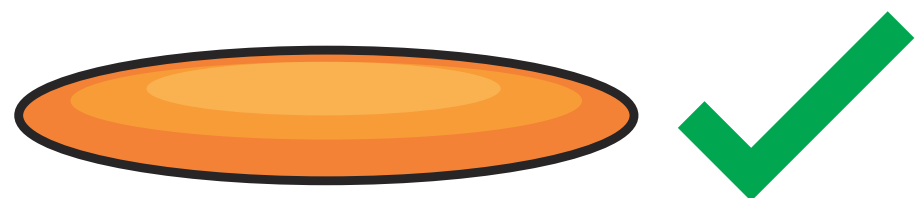


WE DO NOT SELL FLYING RINGS

Thank you
for helping us



SOLID DISC FRISBEE
(PREFERABLY NON-PLASTIC)



FLYING RING
(HARMFUL TO SEALS)



Photo by Craig Morris

Please sign our petition

www.change.org/SaveOurSealsFromFlyingRings

