

Pigeon Proofing the Walton on Thames Bridge in London

At A Glance

Location: Walton On Thames, London
Structure: Bridge over water

Problem: Pigeon Prevention
Solution: Weld Mesh Sheets, Bird Gel

Overview

The Walton on Thames Bridge is the newest bridge to be constructed over the Thames. The new bridge replaced an old bridge well past its useful life, but over the years had become a target for pigeons to roost on.

When this bridge was finally demolished, the pigeons simply moved over to the new bridge. Whilst it had been designed to stop pigeons roosting on it, they soon worked it out and the bridge was covered in hundreds of birds.

Several attempts had been made to re-proof the bridge with spikes occurred without success.

The Problem

Pigeons are a major problem in the area; with a long established and growing population due to the amount of food sources and public areas and car parks close by where the birds are regularly feed.

Having spent upwards of £20 million on building this impressive structure, the client was looking for an effective solution that would be unobtrusive and ensure pigeons did not make this a permanent home.

The Challenge

The challenges faced were:

- Installing a highly effective deterrent where such a large and persistent problem existed
- Working over flowing water – gaining access to the bridge underside safely.
- Providing a discrete solution that would blend in nicely with the bridge and appear unobtrusive
- Installing in a short window of opportunity – the contractor had to vacate the site as the contract was drawing to an end.
- Providing a low maintenance free solution as access is difficult and limited

Rapid Environmental Services are very familiar in dealing with the list of requirements above, so a solution using Bye Bird Gel – an effective European manufactured deterrent system, combined with weld mesh at the sides of the bridge, painted to match the bridge colour. Our experience in working with local authorities allowed us to execute a solution to meet the timeframes imposed.



The Solution

Working on such a challenging site is not easy, however our teams are used to dealing with unusual situations. Firstly, we needed to ensure the bridge edges were fully enclosed, so we had mesh sheets custom cut off site to speed up the installation time. These weld mesh sheets were then powder painted to the exact colour of the bridge to blend in as though they were part of the original structure.

Then we needed a long lasting and effective deterrent to retrain the birds not to perch on the many ledges – so we chose Bye Bird Gel as the correct solution. Having worked with the manufacturer before and been involved in testing, we knew this was the right solution for this environment.

Then providing access was the next problem, so again working with marine platform providers, we designed an access solution using barges with spud legs and a light-weight cherry picker which could be strapped onto the barge and manoeuvred into place easily as required. The land-based sides were reached using spider type cherry pickers due to the soft ground underneath the bridge ends.

The Result

From start to finish, the project went exactly to plan, completing on time and within budgets agreed. The bridge, once covered in pigeons, is now completely free from any activity – all pigeons have been re-educated and have moved off.

The Bye Bird gel has acted perfectly, even under extreme pressure from pigeons when first installed. This bridge is the largest structure in the UK to be proofed using this technique and has over 1,300 meters of inner beams protected using Bye Bird Gel and over 300 meters of edge protected using colour coordinated Weld Mesh.

We have completed several smaller projects for the same client over the last few months and continue to offer advice and design expertise to them; needless to say they are very happy with the solutions provided by Rapid ESL.



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