



The Rt Hon Chris Philp MP, Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire
Home Office

By email

24 May 2024

Dear Chris,

As you may know, catapult offences across Kent are on the rise.

There have been awful stories recently of family pets being targeted – including a peacock named River – killed in Boughton Monchelsea. River was killed by a group of teenagers using catapults, and CCTV shows the peacock was shot at twenty times.

You will know that I raised this issue with you last year after a spate of similar attacks. Sadly, River's killing is not the first nor will it be the last catapult attack in Kent. Data from Kent Police shows that the number of recorded catapult incidents across Kent have increased from 145 in 2018 to 201 in 2022. This number has risen every year apart from 2020.

Local newspapers have published 3 articles in last month alone about catapult crime across Maidstone, Ashford, and Canterbury. It's an issue in rural and urban areas and Kent Police need more power to deal with catapult offenders.

As Kent MPs we are asking the Home Office to:

- Explore how existing legal deterrents can be reinforced, for instance with tougher sentencing;
- Consider the re-categorisation of catapults as offensive weapons, to allow police a right of confiscation – with exemptions for those used for legitimate purposes like angling or too small to cause harm.

Cracking down on catapults would be an important step as we work to tackle anti-social behaviour across Kent.

Best wishes

Helen Whately MP*

Greg Clark MP

Tracey Crouch MP



R. Gale

Roger Gale MP

Helen

Helen Grant MP

Damian Green

Damian Green MP

Gordon Henderson

Gordon Henderson
MP

Gareth Johnson

Gareth Johnson MP

Kelly Tolhurst

Kelly Tolhurst MP

Tom Tugendhat

Tom Tugendhat MP*

*Signed in their capacity as a Member of Parliament and not as a Government Minister.