



Ms Kersten England,  
Chief Executive,  
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council,  
City Hall,  
Bradford,  
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By email to: [ceo.admin@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:ceo.admin@bradford.gov.uk)

8<sup>th</sup> June 2020

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Dear Ms England,

I am writing on behalf of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), the largest shooting organisation in the UK. We have a number of members in your region.

I would like to raise concerns about the behaviour of your council and your public comments about our organisation following an incident which occurred on Baildon Moor in late April when a tractor was filmed mowing at a critical time of the year for ground-nesting birds.

We have received a letter from your legal department (Michael Bowness, May 26, 2020) which threatened us with media exposure if we did not accede to the council's demands. We have also read recent comments in the *Yorkshire Post* and *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* this last weekend from your spokespeople which accuse BASC of being inaccurate and lying.

The letter from Mr Bowness raises a number of points and I thought it would be useful to address these here.

1. You (BASC) claim that the Council are responsible for a tractor mowing heather on Baildon Moor during the nesting season for ground nesting birds?

**BASC does not claim the above. We say the film 'reportedly showed a tractor mowing on a moor managed by Bradford City Council'.**

2. You (BASC) are critical of the Council's management of the moorland.

**Yes, we are. And rightfully so – we contacted Bradford City Council with our concerns by phone and email after the incident; our questions remain unanswered. The Council's press statements do not represent significant engagement with either BASC or the other rural organisations who have raised concerns about this incident.**

3. You (BASC) claim that a lack of gamekeepers was responsible for failure to prevent the arson attack on Ilkley Moor.

**We do not claim the above, instead we reference a Bradford Council paper titled 'Ilkley Moor Management Plan' that states "their [gamekeepers] presence on the moor, day and night, provides an additional level of protection to the moor".**

4. You (BASC) claim that by withdrawing shooting leases, the Council is lumbered with unprofitable business plans for moorland and limited expertise to manage them.

**We do claim the above. We will be happy to hear of how the £11,000 annual rent from grouse shooting is now being recouped from the moor. The claim of 'limited expertise' is dealt with in the paper referenced above.**

The legal letter and your media comment of this last weekend could be seen as an attempt by your council to intimidate an organisation that is simply trying to get to the bottom of an incident of apparent environmental abuse which occurred on 'your watch'.

We are today writing to both newspapers to correct their coverage and to give the facts as we have them.

We are sure that BASC and the council share the similar goals for maintaining and increasing biodiversity in the uplands and we would be particularly interested in exploring the questions originally posed by BASC and other rural organisations at the time video footage emerged on social media of the moor being mown.

As a first step, I would be delighted if I could put our Uplands Officer, Gareth Dockerty, in touch with one of your Countryside Officers to establish useful lines of dialogue and perhaps open up a productive working relationship.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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**Cc:** Cllr Mike Pollard, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.