

Fly-tippers hit West Lothian cemeteries

The latest fly-tipping report reveals cemeteries have become the latest target in West Lothian, with the clear-up costing £32k for the last quarter of 2023

The council's Neighbourhood Environment Team (NET) have been using recently acquired mobile cameras on council grounds to try and trap tippers.

David Lees from the NETs team revealed that cemeteries had become targets for tippers when providing the latest fly-tipping figures to a meeting of Livingston South Local Area Committee.

He said mobile cameras have now had software updates and will be rolled out to known hot spots across the county.

One councillor asked why Fixed Penalty Notices hadn't been issued in the ward in the last two years

Fly-tipping clear up across West Lothian cost the council £32,390 in the last three months of 2023. This was up from £30,613 in the same period of 2022.

The figures for the last three months of 2023 coincide with the change in hours at the recycling centres. Widespread public belief was that the alterations to hours would see an immediate surge in fly-tipping, however David Lees reports the change in figures from last year was minimal but "it is something we are keeping an eye on".

A report to the committee showed that there had been 143 reports of fly-tipping in the last three months of 2023, compared with 115 for the same period in 2022. However the county wide tonnage of fly-tipped waste lifted was 66.34, only marginally up on the 66 tons lifted in the last three months of 2022.

Depute Provost Councillor Peter Heggie asked why there were no Fixed Penalty Notices issued for fly-tipping or for the same period the previous year. Mr Lees replied: "The Fixed Penalty Notices come down to the evidence we find within the fly-tipping. We need two pieces of evidence and unless we've got evidence of them actually dumping it as well and details in it, we're unable to issue a Fixed Penalty.

"In a lot of cases they're making sure that there's nothing with any details that we can follow up.

"That's one of the reasons we're using mobile CCTV cameras and we've just had the software upgraded in them. I'm hoping to get them deployed in the next couple of weeks in various areas.

"We've tried them on our grounds and a couple of cemeteries where we've had fly-tipping issues."

Councillor Maria MacAulay said many constituents still did not know how to report fly-tipping and asked what was being done to spread the word.

Mr Lees said the council had an ongoing campaign but that a new promotion was about to be launched online and in the council's newsletter. Word is also being spread by West Lothian Litter Pickers and other groups which take part in clean up operations.

Chairing the meeting, council leader Lawrence Fitzpatrick criticised the increase councils are able to charge for fly tipping fines from £200 to only £500 and said the fines should

be unlimited.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter



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