

Car access to Calton Hill attracting 'litter and anti-social behaviour'

A failure to stop cars entering Calton Hill is attracting anti-social behaviour and having an "unacceptable" impact on pedestrians, the council has been warned

Calton Hill Conservation Trust (CHCT) have "strong concerns" about drivers ignoring 'authorised vehicles only' signage and accessing the historic viewpoint "at all hours".

They are calling on the council to take action by closing a barrier already installed at the gate by October to ensure only authorised vehicles, such as maintenance staff and those with accessibility needs, are granted entry.

An increase in littering of food packaging and gas cylinders on the hill was blamed on the lack of any functioning barrier "for many years" now.



Calton Gate. Image: Friends of Calton Hill.

And some of those who drive up in their cars bring electric generators, set off fireworks and play loud music which disturbs the locals, the Trust's chair Simon Holledge and vice chair Susan Poupard said in a statement.

It was reported 93 cars were parked on Calton Hill as people descended on the beauty spot to catch a glimpse of the Northern Lights when they appeared above the capital in May.

Some online hit out at the rule-breaking drivers for being "parked with engines running and lights on", which one said made it difficult to properly see the spectacle in the night sky.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, CHCT called the situation "out of control".

In their latest statement, they pointed out allowing general

traffic in parks was against council policy that “our parks should be public spaces for all to enjoy,” and the presence of cars was not consistent with that.

“As indicated by [council] notices at the entrance, Calton Hill Drive is *only* open to authorised vehicles; yet the barrier at the gate has been let open for many years, and general traffic is free to drive up the hill at all hours,” they said.

“The access barrier entry mechanism dates back to around 2017. As far as we know, it has almost never been operational. It was repaired on 20 February 2024, and we understand that CEC have already costed additional features to ensure maintenance staff, local businesses and people with accessibility needs can access the hill as necessary.

“The current unlimited vehicle access poses an unacceptable danger to pedestrians, particularly children, and wheelers. The lack of a safe footpath and limited space for passing vehicles further compounds these risks.

“Accordingly: The Calton Hill Conservation Trust ask the City of Edinburgh to take action to set a date for closing the barrier to general unauthorised traffic of no later than 1 October 2024.”

Edinburgh Council was contacted for comment.

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter