

Holiday guests 'thoroughly irritating' say neighbours

Holiday guests at a seaside flat in North Berwick have been described as "thoroughly irritating" and "frightening" by neighbours in the block.

The owners of the three bedroom property, known as Apartment Sula Bassana, appealed to Scottish Ministers after East Lothian Council refused to allow them to keep operating.

But while they argued that the use of the property had not changed after they turned it into a short term let, the Scottish Government Reporter heard claims by neighbours of disturbances, confrontations and a lack of security.

One neighbour, speaking on behalf of seven other residents, said on one occasion the cleaners sent in when guests had left had thrown the keys to their van at a resident who returned from work to find it in their space.

And they said although the property is advertised as accommodating six guests a group of eight American golfers had turned up and tried to park their 10-seater minibus in the flat's sole car park space until they were 'dissuaded'.

They added: "People arrive at all times of day and night and are prone to wakening residents when they don't understand how to get into the property.

"It can be thoroughly irritating, indeed frightening, to be treated this way by strangers."

The Reporter rejected the appeal against the council's decision not to issue a certificate of lawfulness for the holiday let, which would mean it did not need planning permission.

And he acknowledged that guests in short term lets could behave badly towards neighbours.

He said: "Guests in a short-term let have little immediate incentive to get on with their neighbours, other than their own good manners.

"They will often be on holiday, and in relaxed mood, while residents may be working or otherwise following their everyday routine.

"Permanent residents tend to have greater incentive to maintain reciprocal good relations with neighbours.

"The different attitudes and routines of guests and residents can compound disturbance to neighbours from a short-term let, particularly when let properties can accommodate larger groups."

Agents for the applicant said the flat, which can accommodate six people tended to be used by families, golfers and walkers and a notice was displayed asking them to be considerate of neighbours and banning any parties.

They said: "North Berwick is not a preferred destination for guests seeking a party atmosphere."

The Reporter concluded: ", I find that the authority's reason for refusal is well-founded and conclude that the certificate should not be granted."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter