

Neighbour links missing parcels to Airbnb in North Berwick

Claims visitors to a holiday let in North Berwick were behind the disappearance of more than 50 parcels delivered to the building in 10 months were branded 'incredible' at a meeting this week.

East Lothian's licensing chiefs heard a neighbour of the flat had said he believed guests were 'stealing' the parcels saying his family had lost more than 20 deliveries and others were affected.

But agent for the holiday let owner Ross Armstrong, from STL Solutions, pointed out Police Scotland had no record of any complaint of theft from the building and said an investigation carried out by the owner found no-one else saying they had missing packages.

Speaking on behalf of flat owner Jeremy Sparks, Mr Armstrong told a meeting of the council's licensing sub committee: "Nobody was forthcoming in saying that any item had gone missing so while I would never go as far as to say the objector is being disingenuous, clearly they are labouring under a misconception.

"I personally find it incredible that someone would book an

Airbnb, subject themselves to an ID check, pay a deposit, pay a substantial sum on a nightly rate to simply gain access to a building in the hopes they might be able to steal items that may or may not be present in common areas.

" If thefts were taking place on an opportunistic basis, again I would find it incredible that more than 50 items would go missing from the building without Police Scotland becoming, in some way, involved.

"The applicant's position is that there is no evidence and nothing to link it to their property."

The licensing subcommittee was told that the holiday let was one of six flats in the building with a communal stairwell.

It received an objection to an application for a licence to operate the short term let from neighbour Richard Montgomery who said his family had been subject to noise issues, incidents involving 'vicious' dogs staying in the property and missing parcels.

He said: "We believe some guests have been stealing our valuable delivered parcels. We as a family have lost over 20 items.

"In the last ten months the number of missing items has increased with each of the six apartments (over 50 items)."

The committee was told by its legal adviser that in regard to the theft allegations police had no record of any allegations adding "there is no actual proof as to who, if anyone, is responsible for the disappearance of any item of mail and in particular that it was at any time a resident of this particular flat."

Committee members heard Mr Sparks had installed a noise monitoring system in the flat which alerted him and his local management team when there was a disturbance allowing them to

respond quickly.

He acknowledged there had been an incident regarding a guest staying with dogs who were described as 'yappy' but said it was dealt with quickly and a pet ban was now in place for people staying at the flat.

He added neighbours in the building were sent hampers from Marks & Spencer as an apology for any disturbance.

Councillor Lachlan Bruce said the actions of the applicant in installing a noise monitor and addressing issues raised showed he took complaints seriously.

He said: "This is what we want to see in licensees in East Lothian and I am quite happy to grant the licence."

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By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter