

# Anger as council orders bin shed removal in Prestonpans

Residents living in a quiet East Lothian street are kicking up a stink after the council ordered them to remove bin sheds which they built at their end of their gardens.

At least four home owners in Pithead Heights, in Prestonpans, have installed the wooden storage units on thin strips of shrubbery on the outside of their garden gates over the last four years.

However a single complaint from another residents has led to years of wrangling with the local authority with the householders ordered to apply for planning permission for the shed, which was then refused.

Two residents currently have appeals lodged with Scottish Ministers against enforcement orders issued by the council last month, with a third missing out after lodging her paperwork a day after deadline.

Debbie Gray, who lives in the street and missed the appeal deadline, said: "It is extraordinary to me that the council is acting in this manner when there is nothing to stop us putting our bins outside our gates all the time. All we have done is put up a storage unit which makes it look tidy and stops recycling from being swept all over the street in windy weather."

Nurse Debbie added: "East Lothian Council is always banging on that it has no money, so why is it wasting public funds pursuing enforcement action, It is a huge waste of time and money over something which received a single complaint and is doing no harm."

She added: "Since the council introduced a three weekly household bin collection it has been impossible to keep the bins in the small back gardens because the stench makes it very unpleasant."

Neighbours Christine Klien and Susan Ralston have successfully lodged appeals against the enforcement notices against their sheds.

Christine, a business operations manager, said she was stunned when the council told her she had unlawfully "extended her garden".

She said: "They have no problem with the bins being left on the same strip of land all the time, other residents have put slabs down over the shrubbery to create a neat spot for them and not faced action.

"When councillors came to see the sheds they said they were very neat and tidy and seemed impressed but then refused our appeal because they said it 'set a precedent'.

"I can accept they are an issue of lots of our neighbour objected but it is one complaint. It seems a real waste of council resources over something which is just common sense."

And she said: "I have a dog and if I keep the household bin in the garden he goes straight to it because the three weekly collections mean it can smell. It ruins the garden for us."

East Lothian Council said appeals had been made to its own Local Review Body and dismissed.

A spokesperson said: "The loss of part of the area of

landscaped open space and the erection of the bin stores is a breach of planning control and is considered to be harmful to the visual amenity of this part of the residential area. "

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter