

Locals continue calls for action over anti-social behaviour

People in South Queensferry live in fear and dread of “boy racers” who congregate at the car park near Hawes Brae.

The drivers of both cars and motorbikes race up and down in the car park. They also drive on the two way stretch of Newhalls Road, and these meet-ups have become more frequent during the summer months.

Local MSP Alex Cole Hamilton will act as Chair at a public meeting on Wednesday at 7pm at South Queensferry Community Centre in School Lane. It is expected that representatives of Police Scotland and the council will also attend.

LOCAL RESIDENTS SPEAK OUT

Local residents talked to The Edinburgh Reporter ahead of the meeting to discuss their experiences and hopes for a solution.

Andy Scott, a local resident, said: “It disrupts our evenings. It usually starts around about seven or eight, and can continue till the early hours of the morning. It’s got worse in the summer. As the bright nights came in people started playing football in the street, even with cars going by and balls going into gardens and into local restaurants. Again, they just don’t seem to care – they leave a lot of mess.

“Whenever a police car comes along, they are good as gold, and we get silence for as long as the police are there, but as soon as the car goes away, it all starts off again. The police are stretched. We understand that and it’s very difficult for them to allocate a lot of resources here. They say they can’t use unmarked cars, which would be a lot more effective.

“One solution would be speed bumps in the road here and in the car park, which we think will make a difference. But it won’t stop them, the noise, the anti-social behaviour, and the only solution that we can see that would have a noticeable effect is to close the car park after 10 o’clock, say, and open it again at 6am.”

Another resident David Duncan said that one solution already tried was to install CCTV, but that was less than useful. He said: “Regrettably, we had a camera – CCTV – which was not readily accessible by the police. So in other words, it’s not really doing what we asked for.”

Anne Purcell who lives nearby said: “We see the same cars all the time. We hear them all the time. And it’s got to the point where I dread the evening’s coming, partly because I don’t know what’s coming, but I anticipate it’s going to be really unpleasant.”



L-R David Duncan, Andy Scott and Anne Purcell, local residents.

Alex Cole Hamilton, MSP, said: "It's a rare thing to bring about a public meeting like this. But because of the anger and frustration in the local community who have been bedevilled by this anti social car racing for years, we've reached a tipping point. I stand with the residents and don't think the council or the police understand the measure of that frustration.

"Tonight will be an opportunity for residents to air their concerns and for the police and the council to lay out a pathway to a solution. And we will keep meeting like this until the problem is fixed."

QUEENSFERRY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Terry Airlie, Secretary of Queensferry & District Community Council, said: "We've had a number of Microsoft team calls. We've had on site visits. Council officials have come up with

a design for speed restrictive measures, which the Community Council fully support, along with our ongoing and continuing police presence, both from local community policing and from the transport police's police section as well. We're fully supportive of that.

"Closing the car park would have an impact on local businesses, apart from the practicalities of how to close the car park and the ongoing costs. It is probably a non-starter.

"I am not convinced of the merits of a public meeting at this moment in time. While this kicked off with the residents of Newhalls Road and Hawes Brae area, there are other areas of the town which are certainly affected. My concern is that we apparently have an agreed solution for the ongoing issues but we could be opening up a can of worms. There are other areas in Queensferry where traffic calming measures have been awaited for a number of years now. As is always the case it is down to finance."

Earlier in the summer Police Scotland used a drone to try and survey what is going on in the town in the evenings.

The public meeting is on 18 September 2024 at Queensferry Community Centre on School Lane at 7pm.