

# **Drivers 'ignore' double yellow lines in ancient town centre**

**Drivers ignore double yellow lines in the heart of Linlithgow and even park next to the historic Cross in the heart of the town, police have been told.**

Officers attending the town's local area committee were given several photographs showing parked cars and taxis surrounding the Burgh Halls, some even snubbing police "No Parking" cones.

It prompted a councillor's to call for daily patrols and better education for Police Scotland's call centres.

The latest problems came after police were called to speak to bus firms who used the centre of town to park up and use the Cross as a turning circle while visitors toured Linlithgow Palace.

Councillor Tom Conn handed Sgt Liam Arbuthnot and a colleague a series of photographs taken recently and described complaints he'd had from constituents living around the Cross.

Sgt Arbuthnot had described an increased presence by local community officers and regular ticketing in the wake of complaints and said officers were planning high profile patrols as part of a Christmas campaign.

Councillor Pauline Orr told officers that the double yellow lines in front of the Burgh Halls were used as a taxi rank "and the Cross is being used as a car park."

Councillor Orr that part of the problem was that staff in Police Scotland's control rooms took no notice of calls from Linlithgow, assuming that West Lothian, like some other areas, has Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) which means the police don't deal with parking issues. Council hired wardens do.

Councillor Conn said: "Issuing tickets doesn't seem to be deterring anybody."

"There also seems to be a situation that the Police Scotland call centre bounce it back and say its West Lothian council's responsibility."

He added that the council was going through the process of setting up decriminalised parking enforcement but suggested: "Let's scrap it and avoid any doubt that it is Police Scotland from here now in to do it, to enforce it.

"It looks like if we start to implement it we are going to be seen as the bad guys, enforcing something the police never did."

Councillor Conn said that practical steps were being taken to stop parking at the monument with benches from the front of the Burgh Halls moved to surround the Cross itself.

The councillor added: "I think we're just asking for a deterrent. For the police to be visible. I do accept that there's loads of other things happening in West Lothian, but this is something that just goes on and on like Groundhog Day.

"We need something done so the folk parking there realise that there's a very good chance that they're going to be caught and

on a regular basis.”

The councillor said the Police Scotland had caused problems for itself by scrapping traffic wardens, placing the responsibility onto officers when the force was unified. Until DPE is finalised the council has no jurisdiction to control parking enforcement.

Councillor Orr said that there was a need to educate call centre staff that not all councils have decriminalised parking.

Sgt Arbuthnot agreed that control rooms were “not necessarily aware of minutiae”. He said: “We’ll continue to do what we can.”

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter