

West Lothian Council receive rise in complaints about grass dragged onto footpaths

A rise in complaints about grass dragged onto footpaths is as regular as the change of the clocks for West Lothian Council.

With acres of open space to cut using mowing machines it's hard to avoid- but climate change may be adding to the problem.

This year it seems to have been much worse than last year – much like the summer itself.

Council grounds teams have struggled to keep soaking wet grass in top condition and found the soggy summer has caused a spurt in growth with no mid-season respite of a hot dry few weeks that Scotland used to see in late July and early August

“It's been quite a soggy summer, “councillors heard this week.

Andy Johnston, a countryside manager with the Neighbourhood Environment Teams (NETs) told councillors in Linlithgow: “It was probably the most challenging summer I have experienced in my 39 years with the council in terms of ground maintenance.

“We do have a wet climate but generally we have spells of hot weather in between. This year it has been predominantly wet right the way through. The rise in complaints has been either due to damage to the grass areas or because grass has been

dragged by the machines onto the footpaths and hard surfaces.

“If you take your own experience from your own garden you’ll have cut grass a lot less because of the wet conditions.”

Mr Johnston said: “We had to cut the grass cutting programme short because the water table was high, it was doing more harm than good, turning grassed areas into mud.”

Councillors in Bathgate and Linlithgow told NETs officers about the growing number of complaints they had received about shrubbery overhanging footpaths and obscuring road signs.

Mr Johnston agreed that the weather conditions had seen shrubbery growing more quickly right through the season making it difficult for teams to keep up.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter