

Fly tipping sparks zero tolerance pledge

Fly tippers are being warned they will face zero tolerance in East Lothian after the number of incidents reported rose last year.

East Lothian Council has warned it will pursue rogue traders and residents who are caught dumping waste illegally in the county.

It comes after 226 incidents were reported over a three month period last year, up on the previous three months from 162 reports.

A number of high-profile fly-tipping incidents have taken place in recent months, including the dumping of wooden doors, shower screens, paint cans and plastic containers at the entrance to one of Scotland's biggest walled gardens Amisfield, on the outskirts of Haddington and a large pile of packaging and office waste at a footpath in Prestonpans.

East Lothian Council earmarked an additional £85,000 in its budget for the year ahead to help with the costs of disposing of fly tipping but has warned it will use the full force of the law to deal with those responsible.

Councillor Colin McGinn, cabinet spokesperson for community wellbeing, said: "Fly tipping is a crime and there is no excuse for it.

"Fly tippers demonstrate no regard for the damage caused to the environment, the costs incurred which put pressure on

public services, and the risk to public safety. That's why we are warning people that the council will take a zero tolerance approach. Anyone who is caught engaging in this antisocial offending will face punishment."

Councillor McGinn appealed to householders to ensure anyone they pay to take waste away is legitimate before using them warning they could also face action.

He said: "Traders who dump waste illegally are profiting at the expense of hard-working and legitimate businesses. They undercut other firms by not paying to deposit waste at approved disposal sites and therefore compete unfairly.

"Please check if you are planning any house or garden refurbishments that the contractor uses a licensed waste carrier. Householders should also be aware that they will be held responsible if they employ tradespeople and waste for their property is illegally dumped."

Those caught fly tipping face on the spot fines of £500 and can be taken to court if it is not paid where conviction can lead to a fine of up to £40,000 and imprisonment for up to 12 months.

The council has launched a new reporting service which will monitor where incidents are occurring. Fly-tippers can be reported on the East Lothian Council website.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter