

# Overnight parking at a popular East Lothian beauty spot to be removed

Overnight parking at a popular East Lothian beauty spot will be removed after councillors admitted they did not have the resources to stop it being abused.

The three spaces at Shore Road, Belhaven, brought in over £3,500 in revenue for East Lothian Council last year but also sparked a wave of complaints from local residents who said visitors urinated in public and left their sewage and litter behind them.

A meeting of East Lothian Council's Labour administration cabinet today approved a proposal to remove the bays with council leader Norman Hampshire saying the local authority would continue to look for alternative places for motor homes to stop..

The bays were introduced two years ago alongside three overnight bays at Yellowcraig car park near North Berwick as a trial. The Yellowcraig bays will remain and be made permanent.

Councillor Hampshire said the views of the local community in Belhaven had been listened to by the local authority.

He said: "Although Shore Road is a very popular site, we don't have the facilities or staff to manage it when somebody is abusing the site, so for that reason we can't continue there."

Mr Hampshire pointed out there is a private caravan site a short distance from Shore Road which was available to visitors.

However, he added: "I agree there is a need for more. The number of camper vans visiting our coastal areas is greatly increasing and it would be wrong of us to say we don't want camper vans. We need to accommodate them either as the council ourselves as a landowner or there may be some private landowners who may wish to accommodate them."

Councillors also agreed to make permanent an overnight ban on parking across all coastal car parks between the hours of 11pm and 4am.

Initial plans to bar parking from 10pm to 6am were reduced after protests from early morning swimmers, dog walkers and photographers who use it at dusk and dawn.

Anger over the impact of the Shore Road overnight bays has had on residents living in the area was compounded, local community councils said by the lack of 'policing' of the site.

In their objections they said promises the situation would be reviewed after a 'summer trial' were not met by the council and claims the bays would be monitored by a pre-booking system did not happen with people paying the £10 nightly charge through the Ringo app or at cash machines onsite.

Several residents claimed up to ten motor homes could be found in the car park on any given night with people also parking in cars and vans.

One said: "I have witnessed people using the dunes as a toilet, lots of different rubbish being left and barbecues being lit in the long grass/dunes even when signs are up saying not to in dry weather."

Another added: "They are arriving at all hours and some of

them are not self-sufficient as in having toilets in them, so can imagine they are doing the toilet in surrounding grass area.

“There is no one around to police the camper vans and they seem to do as they like.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter