

PE2087/D: Pass a law making exercising a dog in a cemetery an offence

West Lothian Council written submission, 10 April 2025

On behalf of West Lothian Council in response to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee request for information, the following relates to how the council manages dog presence and behaviour in cemeteries.

- existing policies on the presence and behaviour of dogs in cemeteries

The council has no formal policy related to dogs in cemeteries. However, the council's cemetery management rules ask that the public do not 'Walk any dog without a lead or on a lead that is longer than 2 meters in length'. In addition, the public can report dog fouling to the council and the council can investigate and utilise enforcement powers. The council can also investigate concerns regarding out of control dogs.

- the number of complaints received regarding the behaviour of dogs in cemeteries

The council has received 27 complaints related to dog behavior in cemeteries since 1st Jan 2016. These predominately relate to fouling. These can also relate to dogs disturbing memorial items, aggressive dogs, and the public closing cemetery gates to exercise and train dogs within an enclosed area. The total reported includes enquiries submitted that were not classified as formal complaints but do include the public highlighting negative dog behavior.

- the number of fines issued for dog fouling in cemeteries

The council has no record of any fine issued for dog fouling in cemeteries.

- whether local cemeteries have any signage regarding the presence and behaviour of dogs

The council post signage asking cemetery users to keep dogs on leads. Where dog fouling has been highlighted as an issue in individual cemeteries, the council may add supplementary signage related to dogs or stencil footpaths with signage reminding users to pick up dog foul.