

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

East Lothian Council written submission, 14 April 2025

I am writing on behalf of East Lothian Council in response to the correspondence dated 4th April 2025 requesting information on the management of dog presence and behaviour in cemeteries. Please see below the Council's feedback on the points raised.

1. Existing policies on the presence and behaviour of dogs in cemeteries.

The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 establishes a statutory right of responsible access to most land and inland water in Scotland, including open spaces and cemeteries. While the Act grants general access rights, specific rules and regulations can apply to cemeteries. The East Lothian Council Burial regulations under point 16 states that dogs except those specifically designated as assistance should not be taken into a burial ground.

2. The number of complaints received regarding the behaviour of dogs in cemeteries.

The Council does not record complaints in the detail required to explicitly extract the number relating to behaviour of dogs in cemeteries.

3. The number of fines issued for dog fouling in cemeteries.

There have been no fines issues for dog fouling in cemeteries since 1/1/22. As East Lothian Council cemeteries are not staffed at all operational times, enforcement of the local burial regulations is challenging to implement.

4. Whether local cemeteries have any signage regarding the presence and behaviour of dogs.

Information relating to the local burial regulations point 16 is displayed in some but not all cemeteries. The presence of signage requires to be reviewed locally and would be renewed subject to any updated national legislation passed.

I trust that the information contained within this letter will support the Committee's review of the petition.