

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

East Ayrshire Council written submission, 17 April 2025

I am writing in response to the committee's request for information on the above petition to East Ayrshire Council on 4 April 2025. Please find below in respect of the particular areas of information sought:

- **Existing policies on the presence and behaviour of dogs in cemeteries;** East Ayrshire Council Bereavement Services, publishes and follows [East Ayrshire Council Information and Management Rules for Cemeteries](#). The document contains rules and frequently asked questions, including that dogs must be kept under proper control by either keeping the dog on a short lead or under close control. This booklet is available online and a paper copy is issued to lair right owners after a burial. The Council's Greener Communities Service maintains cemeteries and churchyards and conducts burials, working on a peripatetic basis. Where employees working in the cemetery witness dog fouling or a dog being out of control per the management rules, they will approach the dog owner to advise of the legal position. Given the peripatetic nature of the staff resource, it is not common for employees to encounter this behaviour.
- **the number of complaints received regarding the behaviour of dogs in cemeteries;** the Council's Environmental Crime Team has received two complaints about related matters, both of which are recent. As indicated Greener Communities are approached on site and also have received some requests for service by phone and email, rather than being in receipt of complaints. Recent discussions with local Muslim community representatives, which I note was an area of discussion at Committee have been in a similar vein, with representatives wanting action to prevent dogs walking over their graves. The Council has advised that additional signage will be considered, subject to resources for this being available.
- **the number of fines issued for dog fouling in cemeteries;** East Ayrshire Environmental Enforcement Officers have not issued any fines recently regarding dog fouling in cemeteries. These officers also work on a peripatetic basis, attending to widespread dog fouling reports across all of East Ayrshire. Our evidence is that the presence of Enforcement Officers or Greener Communities staff within the cemeteries results in adjusted behaviour by dog owners for the time that they are on site. Offences then take place while cemeteries are unsupervised. These services are looking at how to improve joint targeted interventions.
- **whether local cemeteries have any signage regarding the presence and behaviour of dogs;** The signage position varies, across our 45 cemeteries and churchyards, from no signage to relevant content on the information sign at the entrance to the site. This is currently under review to consider type of signage, appropriate wording, number of signs, locations etc and how this signage can be used to link with appropriate reporting systems, with installation being subject to financial and staff resource availability.

I hope the information supplied is helpful to the committee.