

MOTION TO EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

27 October 2020

Recognising and Supporting East Lothian's Dedicated Countryside Ranger Service

East Lothian Council:

1. Notes that East Lothian's coastline is the busiest, by visits per kilometre, in Scotland; yet virtually all of it is subject to national, European and international designations to protect natural heritage.
2. Recognises the huge pressures East Lothian Council's Countryside Ranger Service, Police Scotland and other agencies have been placed under as a result of a significant increase in the numbers of people visiting and camping in East Lothian during the Covid-19 crisis.
3. Notes an unprecedented level of camping near to beaches and other countryside locations and recognises the distinction between legitimate and responsible wild camping, which is sensitive to rural and coastal areas, and so called 'dirty camping', which threatens natural habitats.
4. Commends and thanks East Lothian Council's Countryside Ranger Service for their commitment and dedication during this extraordinary period and praises the service for their daily and intensive face-to-face engagement with campers, which largely prevented a dirty camping problem developing in East Lothian
5. Recognises the likelihood of similar pressures in 2021, and calls on East Lothian Council to:
 - Request an officer report outlining estimated numbers of all campers, including those in caravans and mobile homes, within East Lothian during the 2020 summer season, detailing problems and lessons to be learned from this experience.
 - Request officers to present options to:
 - ensure future funding to provide adequate ongoing staff provision.
 - develop new policies and approaches to resolve problems faced by the Countryside Ranger Service within East Lothian.
 - Ask officers to write to the Scottish Government and NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) to highlight the experience of the Ranger Service in East Lothian; and to press for a further review of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code to deliver a more proscriptive and robust framework.
 - Ask officers to take forward initiatives, such as public awareness campaigns, including engagement with local camping equipment suppliers and other retailers to offer point-of-sale information about the rules and regulations surrounding camping within East Lothian.

Proposed by (name): Councillor Craig Hoy
Date: 15 October 2020

Seconded by (name): Councillor Lachlan Bruce
Date: 15 October 2020

Received by (name of officer): Jill Totney, Team Manager, Democratic & Licensing
Date: 15 October 2020