# Deeside councillor vows to boycott Aberdeen city centre after £100 bus gate fine



A Deeside councillor has pledged never to return to shopping in Aberdeen city centre after encountering a hefty fine for inadvertently driving through a bus gate. Geva Blackett, who resides in Braemar, found herself ensnared by the city's controversial traffic restrictions while attempting to navigate from the Bon Accord Centre to Union Square.

Blackett, who visits Aberdeen roughly every two months for personal grooming and grocery shopping, had hoped to combine her trip to the hairdressers with a visit to the recently refurbished Union Square, seeking to pick up items such as strawberries for her grandchildren. Her plans took an unexpected turn when she accidentally drove through a designated bus route, a misstep that resulted in a "very threatening" fine of £100, with the option to reduce it to £50 if paid immediately.

Speaking to The Press and Journal, Blackett admitted that, as a resident of Aberdeenshire, she was unfamiliar with the bus gates. In an effort to find the most efficient route, she relied on Google Maps, which misleadingly directed her through Guild Street, an area now restricted to buses and taxis. “I just knew…,” Blackett recounted, reflecting on the confusion that struck her upon realising her mistake.

Business stakeholders in Aberdeen have previously expressed concerns over the impact of these “anti-car” measures on local commerce, with indications that foot traffic has diminished. The system, which has reportedly issued over £3 million in fines since its introduction, is seen as a deterrent to shoppers—especially those from surrounding areas who may not be accustomed to the city's driving dynamics.

Blackett is not alone in her frustration; she has joined a chorus of voices from the business community, who argue that the bus gates are negatively affecting retail operations in the area. Recent campaigns led by local traders aim to challenge the current traffic restrictions, citing a drop in customer access and complications with deliveries as critical issues. These efforts resonate with Blackett, who feels sympathy for retailers facing dwindling customer numbers.

Furthermore, Blackett is backing initiatives against the bus gate fines, which may yet impose a financial burden on the council. If successful, the traders’ campaign could force the city to refund approximately £1 million worth of fines—an amount that underscores the public's growing discontent with the bus gate system.

Data from the council indicate that measures were put in place, such as improved signage and road markings, to enhance visibility of the bus gates. Nonetheless, passengers remain dissatisfied, claiming navigation apps have not accurately updated to reflect these changes, resulting in unintentional fines.

With local businesses urging the council to reconsider the implications of the bus gates, a petition on Change.org highlights further anxiety among residents and visitors about accessing the city without risk of fines. As Blackett now resolves to shift her shopping to Westhill, it remains to be seen whether the council can address the growing concerns surrounding these restrictions and their impact on local commerce.

In light of ongoing discussions, a recognition of the potential economic repercussions may prompt a reevaluation of the bus gate system. However, until meaningful changes are made, both residents like Blackett and businesses continue to feel the pressure of the current traffic measures, with many assessing their relationship with the city centre anew.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760217/geva-blackett-aberdeen-bus-gate-fine/)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760217/geva-blackett-aberdeen-bus-gate-fine/), [[2]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/transport/6358826/aberdeen-bus-gates-fines/)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760217/geva-blackett-aberdeen-bus-gate-fine/), [[3]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6521696/aberdeen-bus-gates-campaign-traders-issue-11th-hour-plea/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[2]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/transport/6358826/aberdeen-bus-gates-fines/), [[4]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6559307/one-year-of-aberdeen-bus-gates/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/transport/6358826/aberdeen-bus-gates-fines/), [[5]](https://www.change.org/p/re-evaluate-the-bus-gate-system-in-aberdeen-city-centre)
6. Paragraph 6: [[3]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6521696/aberdeen-bus-gates-campaign-traders-issue-11th-hour-plea/), [[6]](https://www.aberdeeninspired.com/article/council-admits-no-economic-research-on-aberdeen-bus-gates)
7. Paragraph 7: [[5]](https://www.change.org/p/re-evaluate-the-bus-gate-system-in-aberdeen-city-centre), [[6]](https://www.aberdeeninspired.com/article/council-admits-no-economic-research-on-aberdeen-bus-gates)
8. Paragraph 8: [[4]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6559307/one-year-of-aberdeen-bus-gates/), [[6]](https://www.aberdeeninspired.com/article/council-admits-no-economic-research-on-aberdeen-bus-gates)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760217/geva-blackett-aberdeen-bus-gate-fine/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/transport/6358826/aberdeen-bus-gates-fines/> - In just two months, Aberdeen's new bus gate system issued over £600,000 in fines. The system, which includes bus gates on Bridge Street, Guild Street, and Market Street, has been criticized by drivers and businesses. Some retailers claim the bus gates are deterring shoppers, leading to decreased footfall and even store closures. The council has implemented measures like blue road markings and clearer signage to improve visibility and reduce fines. The funds from these fines are allocated for infrastructural projects.
3. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6521696/aberdeen-bus-gates-campaign-traders-issue-11th-hour-plea/> - Aberdeen city centre traders, including those from Union Street and the west end, have united to campaign against the bus gate system. They argue that the restrictions are harming their businesses by reducing customer access and complicating deliveries. The campaign, supported by various business owners, aims to raise awareness and seek changes to the current traffic measures to support local commerce.
4. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6559307/one-year-of-aberdeen-bus-gates/> - A year after the introduction of Aberdeen's bus gates, nearly 50,000 fines were issued, totaling over £3 million. The fines have been used to fund infrastructural projects, including free late-night bus services. Despite these initiatives, the bus gates have faced criticism for confusing drivers and negatively impacting local businesses, leading to calls for reevaluation and potential changes to the system.
5. <https://www.change.org/p/re-evaluate-the-bus-gate-system-in-aberdeen-city-centre> - A petition on Change.org, initiated by Sheena Anderson, urges Aberdeen City Council to reconsider the bus gate system in the city centre. The petition highlights concerns that the system has made it difficult for residents and visitors to access the city centre by car, negatively affecting local businesses. It also points out that navigation apps like Google Maps have not been updated to reflect the bus gates, leading to inadvertent fines for drivers.
6. <https://www.aberdeeninspired.com/article/council-admits-no-economic-research-on-aberdeen-bus-gates> - Aberdeen City Council has admitted that no specific research was conducted on the economic impact of the bus gates on city centre businesses before their implementation. This oversight has led to decreased footfall and revenue for local traders, prompting calls for a 'Common Sense Compromise' to address the negative effects of the bus gates on the local economy.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgl7y62q1mo> - Aberdeen City Council is introducing free festive weekend late-night bus services funded by bus gate fines. The 10 routes will operate from midnight to 03:30 on Fridays and Saturdays, connecting the city centre with other parts of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. The initiative aims to support the night-time economy and is funded by the fines collected from the controversial bus gate system.