# West Lothian council to consider cost-effective wheelie bin lid straps to combat windblown litter



West Lothian is considering the introduction of straps for wheelie bin lids, a move aimed at addressing the persistent issue of windblown litter affecting local communities and natural landscapes. Following a series of severe winter storms, bins across the area have been overturned, contributing to an increase in visible waste scattered across streets and countryside. The West Lothian Litter Pickers, a dedicated volunteer group, has been advocating for the use of bin straps as a straightforward, cost-effective solution to mitigate this growing problem.

During a recent council meeting, Linlithgow SNP councillor Pauline Orr proposed a motion to explore the feasibility of implementing these bin straps. This initiative comes as a direct response to feedback from local litter-picking groups who have been actively engaging in efforts to keep their environment tidy. Councillor Orr highlighted the particular challenges posed by unsecured bins filled with lightweight recyclable materials, stating that such designs are inadequate in strong winds, leading to increased litter across the region.

A spokesperson for the West Lothian Litter Pickers expressed satisfaction at the council's decision to review the motion, noting their ongoing efforts to trial bin straps funded by the group's members. The spokesperson stated, “During high winds and weather warnings, a significant amount of litter is blown around the county due to the poor design of the bins.” They underscored the crucial partnership between the group and the council, which has become increasingly essential due to budget cuts affecting the council’s environmental services.

The proposed bin straps are estimated to range in cost between £4.59 to £7.99. However, Labour's Tom Conn, who chairs the Environment and Sustainability PDSP, raised concerns about the financial implications of supplying these straps to every resident, suggesting that the potential costs could total between £720,000 and £1.256 million, a significant figure without designated budgetary support. In light of these concerns, Councillor Orr clarified that the initiative would not involve free provisions; instead, residents could purchase bin straps through local libraries and council buildings.

This approach aligns with broader efforts by West Lothian Council to combat littering across the region. The council has previously invested in innovative solutions such as 72 solar compactor bins to enhance waste management efficiency and curb litter in public spaces. These bins, equipped with sensors and powered by solar energy, ensure that waste is compacted when full, maximising capacity and minimising overflow.

The local community has shown a strong commitment to maintaining cleanliness, as evidenced by West Lothian's ranking third in Scotland during the recent Keep Scotland Beautiful Spring Clean campaign. With 2,323 volunteers participating in 285 events, including collaborations with schools and local businesses, the region demonstrates a robust collective effort against littering. The contributions of groups like West Lothian Litter Pickers are invaluable in this context, as they play a critical role in supporting municipal efforts and encouraging local stewardship of the environment.

As the council prepares to review the motion in detail and discuss the implementation of bin straps, it remains to be seen how this practical measure might reduce the litter impact and enhance the visual appeal of West Lothian's communities. Councillor Orr expressed her hope that the discussions would yield actionable steps to protect the local environment, asserting the need to safeguard neighbourhoods, wildlife, and livestock from the adverse effects of litter.

With community support and council backing, the initiative represents a promising step towards a cleaner and more sustainable West Lothian, fostering collaboration to effectively manage waste and protect the natural landscape.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/wheelie-bin-lid-locks-could-31726536), [[2]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/72374/Litter-Prevention-and-Education)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/wheelie-bin-lid-locks-could-31726536), [[2]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/72374/Litter-Prevention-and-Education)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/wheelie-bin-lid-locks-could-31726536), [[5]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/83064/West-Lothian-sweeps-up-third-spot-in-spring-clean)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/wheelie-bin-lid-locks-could-31726536), [[3]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/72376/Litter-Bins)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/71824/Public-invited-to-take-part-in-solar-compactor-bin-trial), [[5]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/83064/West-Lothian-sweeps-up-third-spot-in-spring-clean)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/83064/West-Lothian-sweeps-up-third-spot-in-spring-clean), [[2]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/72374/Litter-Prevention-and-Education)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/wheelie-bin-lid-locks-could-31726536), [[6]](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/81445/Brown-Bin-Recycling)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/wheelie-bin-lid-locks-could-31726536> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/72374/Litter-Prevention-and-Education> - West Lothian Council's Litter Prevention and Education page outlines the council's efforts to maintain clean streets, towns, and villages. It highlights the role of the Street Cleansing Team in managing and emptying litter bins, as well as removing litter from roads, footpaths, town centres, and rural roadside verges. The page also discusses the involvement of volunteers and community groups in litter picking activities, emphasizing the importance of collective action to tackle littering issues in the area.
3. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/72376/Litter-Bins> - The Litter Bins page on West Lothian Council's website provides information about the council's litter bin infrastructure. It mentions the introduction of 72 SMART bins, also known as Solar Compactor Bins, designed to improve service efficiency and reduce litter in public spaces. These bins feature solar-powered compactors that increase capacity and sensors that provide real-time updates to operatives, ensuring bins are emptied only when necessary. The page also discusses the benefits of these bins, including reduced overflow and enhanced cleanliness in public areas.
4. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/71824/Public-invited-to-take-part-in-solar-compactor-bin-trial> - This article announces a trial of solar compactor bins in West Lothian, aiming to reduce litter in public spaces. The bins monitor waste levels and self-compact when full, utilizing solar power to maximize storage capacity. The trial is part of the council's 'Litter Policy and Litter Bin Plan' and seeks public participation through surveys to assess the effectiveness of the technology. The bins have been installed at various locations, including Linlithgow Loch and Beecraigs VC, with the goal of improving waste management and reducing littering.
5. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/83064/West-Lothian-sweeps-up-third-spot-in-spring-clean> - West Lothian Council's article highlights the community's active participation in the Keep Scotland Beautiful annual Spring Clean campaign. The region ranked third in Scotland, with 285 events and 2,323 volunteers, including 36 schools and 19 local businesses. The article emphasizes the collective effort to maintain cleanliness and the council's commitment to reducing littering. It also acknowledges the significant role of local volunteers, such as the West Lothian Litter Pickers, in organizing regular community clean-ups and supporting the council's environmental initiatives.
6. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/81445/Brown-Bin-Recycling> - The Brown Bin Recycling page on West Lothian Council's website provides guidelines on disposing of garden and food waste. It specifies that a permit is required for garden waste disposal, which can be purchased online. The page advises residents to place bins at the kerbside by 7 am with the lid fully closed and to remove any straps, locks, or weights before presenting the bin. It also outlines acceptable and unacceptable items for the brown bin, emphasizing the importance of proper waste segregation for recycling purposes.
7. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/72374/Litter-Prevention-and-Education> - West Lothian Council's Litter Prevention and Education page outlines the council's efforts to maintain clean streets, towns, and villages. It highlights the role of the Street Cleansing Team in managing and emptying litter bins, as well as removing litter from roads, footpaths, town centres, and rural roadside verges. The page also discusses the involvement of volunteers and community groups in litter picking activities, emphasizing the importance of collective action to tackle littering issues in the area.