# Homeowner challenges court threat over dog fouling complaint



A homeowner in Luton, Bedfordshire, has expressed her disbelief at receiving a court threat following a complaint about supposed excessive dog fouling in her garden. Mai Bufton, a 26-year-old customer service advisor and owner of three dogs, received an email from a Luton Borough Council investigations officer alleging a breach of clean environment standards. This situation arose after someone, possibly a neighbour or passerby, misidentified bark chippings in her garden as dog faeces.

The complaint, reported to the council, described the alleged issue as an environmental nuisance, citing the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which mandates that properties must be kept clean and free of dog fouling to prevent smells and attract flies. In a message received in June, the council's officer outlined that failure to comply could lead to prosecution.

“The whole situation felt quite bizarre,” Mai remarked. “I was genuinely shocked to receive that email; at first, I thought it was a scam.” She expressed frustration over the anonymity of the complainant, indicating that the council refused to disclose who had lodged the complaint. “To bypass me and go straight to the council is a bit petty,” she said.

Mai believes that her garden is adequately maintained, noting that she cleans it regularly and that any signs of fouling are minimal—“one or two” instances where she might not have been able to act promptly. Determined to defend her position, Mai shared a TikTok video detailing her experience, which gained significant attention, amassing over 1,300 views. In the video, she challenged the notion that dogs should be made to relieve themselves indoors, stating, “Tell me why my pups should be doing their business in my house?”

The correspondence from Luton Borough Council specifically requested that Mai organise a thorough clean-up of her garden, or alternatively, provide photographic proof of any existing clean-up efforts. Following this, she did send images showcasing the bark chips, after which the council dropped the complaint. She stated that once they understood the situation—believing that council officers had inaccurately assessed the garden—the matter was resolved without further communication.

Commenters on her TikTok video largely supported Mai’s stance, with various users denouncing the complainant as a "Karen" and agreeing that privacy should be respected in one’s own garden. However, some highlighted the potential environmental implications of dog fouling, suggesting that maintaining cleanliness is necessary, especially during warmer months.

The Luton Borough Council did not offer additional commentary on the situation when approached for a response, while Mai continues to advocate for the rights of homeowners when it comes to issues concerning their private property. As discussions surrounding dog ownership and environmental responsibility persist, her experience has sparked varied opinions across social media platforms.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.change.org/p/luton-borough-council-dog-fouling-at-the-vale-cemetery-and-crematorium> - This URL supports concerns about dog fouling in Luton by highlighting a petition focused on addressing the issue at the Vale Cemetery & Crematorium, which shows ongoing concerns about dog fouling in the area affecting public spaces and causing distress.
* <https://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/people/litter-bugs-in-luton-warned-they-face-on-the-spot-fines-of-ps150-4232309> - This URL corroborates Luton Council's enforcement of environmental cleanliness by mentioning their efforts to tackle litter and dog fouling through fines, reflecting their commitment to maintaining clean public spaces.
* <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/dog_fouling_prevalence_over_last_189> - This URL provides context for dog fouling concerns in Luton by referencing a Freedom of Information request aimed at understanding the prevalence of dog fouling complaints and enforcement actions taken by the council.
* <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43/section/79> - This URL supports the reference to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which provides the legal framework for maintaining cleanliness and preventing environmental nuisances like dog fouling.
* <https://www.luton.gov.uk> - This is the official website of Luton Borough Council, which provides general information about their services, policies, and contact details, relevant to understanding their role in handling environmental complaints.