# Homeowner faces council complaint over alleged dog fouling in garden



A homeowner in Luton, Bedfordshire, has found herself in a contentious situation following a complaint that has led to a potential threat of prosecution over alleged excessive dog fouling in her private garden. Mai Bufton, a 26-year-old customer service advisor and owner of two French bulldogs and a Frenchie-Pei, received an email from an investigations officer at Luton Borough Council. The message indicated that a complaint had been made about the state of her garden, specifically mentioning 'excessive' dog fouling.

Bufton suspects that the complaint may have originated from a neighbour or a passing individual who looked into her garden and either observed some mess before she had a chance to clean it up or mistakenly identified bark chippings in her garden as dog excrement. Speaking about the complaint, Mai expressed her disbelief, saying, “It was all a bit weird. I was shocked to receive that email and at first I thought it was a scam.” She also highlighted her regular cleaning routine, stating, “I didn't realise you could go to the council for those types of things.”

In the email from the council, the officer referenced The Environmental Protection Act 1990, which establishes rules regarding the maintenance of properties free from dog fouling. The email stated that failure to comply could result in a statutory nuisance notice and potential prosecution if the issue continued. The officer asked Bufton to conduct a thorough clean-up of her rear yard and even requested photographic evidence of the clean-up.

After Bufton provided images of her garden, which mainly showed bark and no significant evidence of dog fouling, the council dropped the complaint. Bufton expressed her concern regarding the privacy of her garden, stating, “I wasn't happy they were taking photos of my garden, it's my private space.”

As the incident unfolded, Mai took to social media, sharing a video that garnered more than 1,300 views, where she questioned the rationale behind the complaint. Many users responded to her video, supporting her claims and criticising the complainant as a “Karen.” However, some users acknowledged the potential environmental health issues associated with dog fouling, reminding others that it can lead to unpleasant smells, particularly in warmer weather.

While Bufton maintains that her dogs are well-trained and only defecate outside, the interaction with the council has raised questions about the extent to which local authorities can intervene in private gardens. Luton Borough Council has declined to comment on the specifics of this case.

This unusual complaint exemplifies ongoing tensions between residents regarding pet ownership and local regulations, highlighting the challenges that can arise when expectations of community standards intersect with personal freedoms in private spaces.

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

## References

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcPFKjIqFkY> - This URL supports the story of Mai Bufton facing accusations for excessive dog fouling due to the mistaken identification of bark chippings for dog poop in her garden. It provides details on the complaint and her reaction on social media.
* <https://omricon.net/article/nosy-neighbours-report-dog-owner-mistaking-bark-chip-for-dog-poo-in-own-garden> - This article corroborates the incident involving Mai Bufton and the confusion of bark chippings for dog poop. It also discusses the community's reaction to the complaint and the implications for pet owners in private gardens.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVO2TQK97ek> - This video further details Mai Bufton's situation, highlighting the complaint filed against her and how the confusion of bark chippings for dog waste led to a contentious situation.
* <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/43> - This URL refers to the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which is cited in the complaint against Mai Bufton. It provides legal context for why dog fouling is a concern for local authorities.
* <https://www.luton.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-tax-and-benefits/environmental-protection> - This page from Luton Borough Council discusses environmental protection services which include addressing dog fouling issues. It supports the context of Mai Bufton's situation with the council.