# Aberdeen couple ordered to remove garden structures from disputed public land



In Aberdeen, a couple has been directed by the local council to dismantle a timber fence and other structures they had established around an area of public land behind their property in Bridge of Don. The dispute, which reflects broader tensions between private enjoyment and public space, began when Pamela Horne and her husband took it upon themselves to adopt a seemingly neglected plot adjacent to their home on Middleton Circle four years ago. The couple argued that their efforts to improve the land—removing hazardous vegetation and introducing wildlife-friendly features such as bat boxes and birdhouses—were in service of better biodiversity and community enhancement. They claimed to have consulted various parties, asserting that they had received no objections regarding their actions.

However, the stance of Aberdeen City Council tells a different story. Officials contended that the couple's actions resulted in the loss of valuable open space, essential for maintaining the character of the suburban area. During a recent local review, Planner Lucy Greene indicated that the council did not officially own the land and was uncertain about the actual ownership status. Opinions from local authority planners revealed a clear concern regarding the implications of the couple's unauthorised alterations, which they believed contributed to a discordant boundary that could detract from the appearance of the neighbourhood.

Councillor Neil Copland voiced strong opposition to the couple's application, warning against the potential precedent such a case could set. He referred to the couple's actions as a “land grab” and stressed the dangers of allowing individuals to encroach upon and modify public land for private use. His comments reflect a growing sensitivity among councils in Scotland about encroachments that could jeopardise communal spaces, a situation highlighted by several recent disputes across the country.

For instance, in a separate case involving Cafe 52, Aberdeen City Council ordered the demolition of a beloved outdoor eating terrace, which had been an integral part of the city’s café culture for over 20 years. This decision was met with significant public outcry, illustrating how local authorities are defending public spaces amidst ongoing development pressures. Similarly, in Greenock, a couple faced the demolition of a garden shed built without planning permission, showcasing the common thread of stringent enforcement where local councils seek to clarify property boundaries and preserve communal integrity.

This case in Bridge of Don is part of a tapestry of local disputes that highlight the delicate balance between private aspiration and public responsibility. With councils across Scotland increasingly vigilant in enforcing planning regulations, the Horne’s situation serves not only as a cautionary tale but also reflects an ongoing dialogue about land use, community values, and the preservation of public amenities. As the local council remains resolute in having the couple restore the land to its original state, it invites further scrutiny into how public spaces are maintained and protected in the face of individual pursuits.

In a region where the importance of community spaces is increasingly recognised, the outcome of this case may well serve as a benchmark for future disputes of a similar nature, potentially reshaping the landscape of local governance around private land use in Scotland.

Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/), [[2]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/), [[3]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/joyful-outdoor-eating-terrace-demolished-on-orders-of-council-4734572)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/), [[4]](https://easyreader.org/article/page/dailyrecord/news/scottish-news/scots-couple-raging-after-council-34327399)
* Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/), [[3]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/joyful-outdoor-eating-terrace-demolished-on-orders-of-council-4734572)
* Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6760319/bridge-of-don-garden/> - An Aberdeen couple, Pamela Horne and her husband, were ordered by Aberdeen City Council to remove a timber fence and other structures they had installed around a piece of public land behind their home in Bridge of Don. The council argued that the unauthorised extension resulted in the loss of a valued area of open space and negatively impacted the suburban area's character. Councillor Neil Copland expressed concerns about setting a dangerous precedent for other gardens, stating that allowing someone to take over public land and build on it would not be permitted.
3. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/joyful-outdoor-eating-terrace-demolished-on-orders-of-council-4734572> - The owner of Cafe 52 in Aberdeen, Steve Bothwell, faced the demolition of his outdoor eating terrace, a feature that had been part of the city's cafe culture for over 20 years. Aberdeen City Council ordered the removal to make way for construction vehicles for the nearby £75 million Aberdeen Market development. Despite having permanent planning permission from the Scottish Government's planning reporter, the council insisted on the demolition, leading to a legal battle and public outcry over the loss of a cherished community space.
4. <https://easyreader.org/article/page/dailyrecord/news/scottish-news/scots-couple-raging-after-council-34327399> - Catherine Curran and Martin Keyes from Greenock were ordered by Inverclyde Council to demolish their £20,000 garden shed, built three years prior without planning permission. The council claimed the structure had a detrimental impact on a neighboring property. The couple, who had used the shed for gatherings and personal use, vowed to fight the decision, expressing shock at learning about the order through the local newspaper rather than direct communication from the council.
5. <https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/23631761.couple-replaced-20ft-hedge-6ft-fence-now-battle-keep/> - Ronald and Jennifer Anderson replaced a 20ft-high hedge with a 6ft fence at their East Lothian home to ensure their garden remained safe for their dog. East Lothian Council planning officers required them to apply for planning permission for the new fence, which was subsequently rejected. The couple appealed the decision, highlighting that they had planted climbers in front of the fence to cover it quickly and criticized the planning officer's conduct during the site visit.
6. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/1255417/woman-ordered-to-chop-down-trees-after-they-blocked-neighbours-tv-reception/> - Alice Rowan was ordered to cut down leylandii trees in her Portsoy garden after neighbors complained they blocked sunlight and TV reception. Despite initial inaction from Aberdeenshire Council, an appeal by neighbor Ian Dawson led to the Scottish Government reversing the council's decision, mandating the trees be reduced to 19ft. The case highlighted the impact of overgrown hedges on neighboring properties and the importance of maintaining them.
7. <https://news.stv.tv/north/oil-and-gas-boss-ordered-to-remove-vandal-proof-fencing-from-property-by-aberdeen-city-council> - David Lawrie, former director of BP Exploration (Delta), was ordered by Aberdeen City Council to remove a 1.8m timber fence he installed around a patch of land behind his home in Countesswells. Lawrie argued the fence was necessary to prevent vandalism, as the area had previously suffered from damage, fires, and littering. Despite informing the council of his plans, he proceeded with the installation, leading to the enforcement order for removal.