

DVLA information release in a fly tipping case

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DVLA staff refuse to identify fly-tipper

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A fly-tipper who dumped rubbish on a farm in Devon has escaped punishment after the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency refused to reveal his details on data protection grounds.

The incident took place on the Ashcombe estate, in south Devon, which has suffered a spate of incidents.

Staff from the local council have led prosecutions against a range of culprits but said that they had to close this case when the DVLA refused to help.

Ralph Rayner, who owns the Ashcombe estate, found a receipt from a fast food outlet that was less than an hour old when he was clearing up the rubbish strewn across a lay-by, near the peak of Luscombe Hill, which has views across Dartmoor and the sea.

He gave the receipt to staff from Teignbridge district council who looked at security video from a McDonald's in Newton Abbot. The footage identified a Vauxhall Corsa.

"We then contacted the DVLA but they would not provide any further details as 'there was not a strong enough link between the vehicle and litter found'," a council spokesman told *The Times*. "Due to there being no chain of evidence, we have therefore been unable to pursue this case any further."

Details of the case emerged when Anne Marie Morris, the independent MP for Newton Abbot, warned that fly-tipping was blighting "all the beautiful parts of the countryside".

"It would certainly help if the DVLA were prepared to work with local authorities to identify the cars, drivers and owners," she told parliament.

"We cannot rely solely on catching the villains in the act, which is extraordinarily difficult, particularly in rural areas. Installing cameras everywhere would be prohibitively expensive."

There were a million incidents of fly-tipping in England in the last financial year and this cost councils £57.7 million to clear up.

Mr Rayner said that he had dug trenches on his estate to stop fly-tipping but still had to clear up at least one case a month.

A spokeswoman for the DVLA said: "We have to ensure the release of information is lawful. When there is sufficient evidence to tie fly-tipping to a vehicle, we can supply that information and in the vast majority of cases when a local authority requests information, we are able to release it."