

I was forced to pay £500 fine & had bailiffs knocking on the door after council's number plate mix-up – it's a sham

A MAN was hit with a £500 fine and woken by bailiffs knocking at the door after his council made a number plate mix-up.

Steven Ward, 41, was shocked to receive a letter from Council in June 2022, asking him to pay an £86 clean air zone fine.



Steve Ward ended up with a £500 fine after a number plate mix-upCredit: swns



The photo sent to Steven shows a silver Vauxhall Corsa with the number plate ending either AMO or AHO Credit: swns

The HGV driver from Oldham called and sent evidence that his vehicle had been in Oldham - not Birmingham - at the time of the alleged offence.

The council hadn't contacted him, so he thought the matter was closed.

Shockingly, he got a second letter - an extended penalty notice - last December asking for more money, this time from CDER Group.

Steven then called up and was sent CCTV of a silver Vauxhall Corsa with the number plate ending AMO or AHO.

But he sent back a picture of his Peugeot 206 with the number plate ending AWO.

He was told no further action would be taken after pointing out the error.

Steve was then left in shock after bailiffs came to his door on the morning of January 13 - asking for £499.

Steve said: "It's just not right. I had no choice but to pay.

"It was awful and so degrading, having all the neighbours seeing two people coming to take the money I really didn't owe.

He said workers from the enforcement firm CDER group disturbed him after a night shift.

Steve continued: "I could see them taking photos in my drive so I went down to find the letter.

"Someone or some machine must have just mistaken the registration of the Vauxhall Corsa with my Peugeot registration.

"I had worried this might happen, and I checked with them but they said it was all sorted."

Steven claims he was told he had to pay or his second car - a blue Vauxhall Astra - would be taken away within the hour.

The bailiffs also said they'd also take a red and black Citroen belonging to his partner Danielle Clarke, 28, he alleges.

Steve added: "On the phone, I had explained what they told me before, and they said I didn't have to pay.

"But when I told the bailiffs, they just said I had to pay or they'd take the cars.

"They said there was nothing they could do because it's gone through court. I couldn't let them take that Astra because it's precious to me."

Steven says he has since been refunded, and a screenshot of his bank account shows a payment of £499 from CDER Group on January 26.

Birmingham City Council said: "The Council follows the statutory enforcement process for the issuing and enforcement of penalty charge notices.

"This process provides a number of opportunities to appeal or challenge a penalty charge.

"The opportunities for a challenge are also set out at each stage of the process so that anyone issued with a penalty charge notice understands how they can pay or challenge it.

"ANPR cameras provide a high level of accuracy when capturing vehicle registration numbers.

"However, misreads do occur on occasions due to dirty, damaged or altered number plates or the position of number plate fixings.