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### **Council – Extraordinary Meeting**

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

### **Item 5 – GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS**

#### **QUESTIONS AND STATEMENT from Ms Linda Pelc, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“Dear Sirs,

Re: Extraordinary Council meeting 27/07/2021 Agenda item 5 - Gypsies and Travellers

I write to you to strongly object to the use of the land adjacent to the Agricultural Business Centre in Bakewell as a temporary traveller site.

Within 150m of the site there are 16 dwellings, many housing elderly and infirm people. There is a footpath crossing the site which used to be regularly used by dog walkers and there is an adjacent footpath in regular use by local people and visitors walking to the Monsal trail. The closeness of the site to the paths, the shouting, the loud music, car horns and hammering on the metal fence is intimidating especially to children, the elderly and the freedom of local people is being restricted.

The site is within the Peak District National Park.

The site has already been occupied since 20/06/2021 by one family (three caravans) with additional caravans present intermittently. As I write this tonight a fourth caravan with another family has arrived. The main gate to the site is unlocked this evening.

This leads me to ask these questions: (summarised)

- 1 When was planning permission obtained to use the area as a caravan site and at which council meeting was the area authorised as a temporary traveller site; If it was not authorised then how did the travellers gain access?
- 2 You say you have a duty of care to the travellers, but what duty of care do you have to local residents, towns people and local businesses, What happens when local people want to use the land for Bakewell events or when the ABC wants the land for overflow parking and Why was there no consultation with the town council or local residents

- 3 What provision are you making for when the site floods, why were concrete blocks placed in front of the secondary access gates and who is collating evidence of damage and disruption to the area, people and environment so that the site can be monitored?

Re: Recommendations in the report "Gypsies and Travellers"

Item 4: I disagree that the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell is a suitable site for a "negotiated stopping place" since it is in a residential area of Bakewell.

If it becomes council policy to offer this site then can we expect a review and reduction of council tax commensurate with our living next to a caravan site?

Re: Background document (part of report "Gypsies and Travellers")

Item 3.3: There should be a maximum time limit on the use of the negotiated stopping places (2 years?) to prevent this scheme carrying on for perpetuity and to ensure provision of a permanent site is expedited.

Item 3.4: It is useless specifying an 8-week maximum period without giving a term in which it applies. I would suggest a maximum of 8 weeks in any calendar year for ANY travellers to be on that site. It would minimise anxieties and uncertainties if the 8-week period was designated in advance and residents informed.

Item 3.5: The Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell has previously been used as a "temporary" traveller site and you state that it has been "previously managed successfully". What was successful about the fires, damage, abuse, intimidation, rubbish, crime, noise, disruption to the market and the cost of the court order to evict?"

## **REPSONSE**

- 1. At the present time there is no planning permission to use this site as a caravan site. However, because the Council owes a homelessness duty to the family group currently on site but has not identified a site to which they can be directed, it currently has no power to move them to a site that might be considered more suitable than where they are currently located. It is not known how the group obtained access to the site.**
- 2. One of the purposes of this report is to identify a number of sites that might be suitable for occupation for limited periods of time, whilst a permanent site is found and made ready. The recommendations of the report would allow for the family to be moved from one of these sites to another, thereby ensuring that the land does not become unavailable to others in the long term.**
- 3. If the site was subject to flooding it would be possible to move the caravans from the land to another of the identified sites. Concrete blocks were moved to the Coombs Road gates to prevent any further incursion and blocks were moved on the access road to allow for the construction of fencing. The site is visited at least twice weekly by Council officers who amongst other things collate any information about any damage to the site.**

## **QUESTIONS AND STATEMENT from Mr Richard Barraclough, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“Dear sirs,

I understand there will be an extraordinary meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> July to discuss the current situation regarding the currently illegal Travellers encampment on the Bakewell Showground.

I am sure the council will recall the events of 2020 when we had around 40 caravans arrive in Bakewell with the inevitable antisocial behaviour, abusive behaviours to residents, poaching, illegal destruction of wild bird nests on the river (all witnessed by myself). To date I have not seen any costs declared by the council for cleaning up the mess left behind by this. Sure the council cannot be considering making the ABC centre a LEGALISED site after such events. At the time we were assured by Sarah Dines that action was being taken to resolve the permanent site.

### **Q1. Please can the council explain what has been done over the last 12 months to secure this permanent site?**

With regard to the current encampment, I would like the Council to confirm exactly how the travellers have gained access to the Showground. All access points to the site have been secured by concrete blocks - their purpose to solely prevent access by Travellers. Yet the one gate, not protected has been breached. I have witnessed the Travellers using a key to lock and unlock the padlock on the said gate.

I have spoken with the Police, who have advised that the Council have GIVEN the travellers a key to the padlock and granted them access.

### **Q2. Has the Council granted the travellers access to the Bakewell Showground Please can the Council confirm the view of this Third Party and whether they are aware their land is occupied by Travellers?**

The areas of land currently occupied by the Travellers does not belong to the Showground. It has been cordoned off and I understand is owned by another third party.

In terms of the councils duty to provide these travellers with a site, it seems somewhat undemocratic that the wishes of the residents of Bakewell are being totally ignored by the council. It is my understanding that the Peak District National Park does not have any legal obligation to provide temporary sites for travellers.

### **Q3. Please can the council confirm the reason why they do not feel the views and wishes of the constituents matter (i.e. those currently paying Council tax)**

Finally, I would welcome a view from the council regarding the following, how does the Council propose to deal with the loss of value of properties along Coombes Road as a direct result of their negligent actions. Will the Travellers have the rules of common decency imposed upon them? Despite Council Payers funding toilets, I have on numerous occasions witnessed them urinating in the field, in open view of the public.

Will the Travellers be instructed to control the noise emanating from their encampment? This is a public nuisance. This issue has created much angst and frustration in the town and it is time for the Council to start telling the truth. If it is incapable of resolving this issue, or representing the wishes of its constituents it needs to admit to it without hiding.

I will be watching and look forward to hearing the outcome.”

### **REPSONSE**

- 1. The first part of the report explains the work that has been done to progress the potential permanent site previously identified by Council.**
- 2. The Council has not granted access to the land currently occupied by the Traveller family. The owners of the land have been notified of the encampment and have not as yet come back to the Council with any comments.**
- 3. The Council believes that the views of its constituents do matter. The report suggests a way in which the current encampments of the Travellers to whom the Council owes a homelessness duty may be managed to reduce the time period for which an encampment would be sited in one place.**

### **QUESTIONS AND STATEMENT and QUESTION from Ms Jackie Starbuck, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“Dear Sirs,

Please be aware that this email will be circulated amongst my neighbours and any reply will also be circulated amongst my neighbours.

I am extremely hopeful that we have misread your intentions and that what is currently being considered is not the back door way of gaining a legal temporary or permanent traveller encampment site on a public showground in a residential area.

I am under the belief that the DDDC has leased the parcel of land in front of our houses and provided the travellers with keys to gain access, without any planning permissions, thereby fueling the belief that this area is seen as a resolution to the traveller problem you have.

I would be grateful for written confirmation if any of this is not the case.

RE: Item 5

I write in objection to the proposal of travellers location - Agricultural Business Centre Bakewell.

**We have rights too you know!**

Here are my comments/questions:

**The traveller location - Agricultural Business Centre Bakewell.**

The current location of the travellers who have been in situ for the last 5 weeks is not acceptable by any stretch of the imagination. DDDC have located the travellers right in front of our houses on the Bakewell Showground. The other proposed sites mentioned in the report in our neighbouring towns are either rural or car parks, not residential.

There has been no consultation or agreement with residents to allow DDDC to put the site so close to our properties.

I cannot understand why this is even a consideration after the experiences suffered by residents, during the 6 months before the travellers were evicted, last year. The memories are still too raw. Now to bring them back, right under our noses is a disgraceful lack of respect and total disregard for the residents. Last year we were subjected to fires, abuse, swearing, fighting, rubbish piles, constant horn beeping early hours of the morning, and urination in public. My 80 year mother was subjected to one of them dropping his trousers and urinating right in front of her, yards from where we live.

For the last 5 weeks we have once again been subjected to a fire on the showground, 6 more vans turning up, shouting, screaming, swearing, horn beeping, (last Sunday was the worst, shouting all day and into the evening) waste and mess.

We work and have worked very hard to be able to live where we live and currently our houses are unsaleable due to the location of the travellers site, would you pay up to 1 million for a house within yards of a travellers site? Consider the value of the properties you are messing with and consider the circa 50-60,000 council tax revenue you are currently getting from the houses you are messing with within 200 yards of this site.

Last year caused a lot of stress and mental anguish to a lot of people who have given their time and lives to Bakewell either in business or service.

## **We have rights too you know!**

### **Security**

What protection do we or our properties get from your security budget? what about vulnerable people and property? Last year neither the fire service or police were interested. Attached 3 images of what we were subjected to yards from our houses.

### **Visibility**

The visibility of the current site will, in no doubt, attract other travellers. Please don't say it won't or they cannot get access, last year hedgerows were broken through and damaged, gates lifted and concrete blocks moved to one side.

### **Knabhall Lane**

My only comment re: Knabhall Lane after reading though all of the traveller living requirements, research work, permissions, utilities needed, looking after the badgers and cost, would be that it is unlikely to happen this century if at all!!!

## **Stopping Places**

Comment - Absolutely pointless.

If we were given a chance, yes us the taxpaying residents, to be fair to Matlock, Tansley, Rowsley, Ashbourne, Wirksworth to only have the travellers in situ for 8 weeks a year, work with the other sites, in a controlled time limited rotation, with no risk of other travellers joining the site, and they were moved more away from our houses into the showground where there is space, it could be very slightly workable.

## **BUT BECAUSE**

the DDDC has no permanent site

the DDDC has no temporary site

the DDDC has no negotiated stopping place

the DDDC has extremely limited ability to control the location

the DDDC officers cannot redirect them

the DDDC will be directing all homeless families our way! How many homeless families are there?

the DDDC recommend 8 week stay, with consideration to health and welfare of the travellers and can stay in situ at will ? - what about the health and welfare of residents, when is this taken into consideration?

the DDDC has no control over the length of stay or where the travellers choose to reside or who suffers as a result.

the DDDC officer consultation of movement is agreed between themselves, when is the residents consultation to take place?

**WE HAVE TO SUFFER WITH THE CONSEQUENCES AND UNDOUBTABLY THERE WILL BE**

**POINTLESS**, there is no authorised control and the travellers could just stay where they are for how ever long they wish. Another DDDC disregard for residents.

In no way was last years encampment on the ABC managed successfully - or if you consider, as mentioned above, residents suffering from abuse, swearing, fires, devaluation of property, mental anguish, security issues, etc etc, as successful, I dread to think what an unsuccessfully managed encampment would be.

## **Vulnerable Car Parks**

More attention is being paid to 'vulnerable car parks' than people, what about vulnerable people, people who are retired and in some cases ill who reside within yards of the site? What about their vulnerability?

## **Budgets**

I can see there is not enough money to resolve this issue in the immediate future, this could take years - oh and it has done already. Someone needs to remember where

the money is coming from and who is picking up the tab for all of this! The taxpaying residents!

The DDDC is truly out of order, to even consider this site so close to our homes after being the victims of the events of 2020.

**We have rights too you know!"**

**RESPONSE:**

**Derbyshire Dales District Council has not located the encampment on this site, the Travellers moved there of their own accord without the prior knowledge of the Council. However, as the group is owed a homelessness duty by the Council and because no alternative sites have been identified, the Council is not able to evict the group. The report suggests a way whereby a number of sites may be used to site the 2 groups, thereby minimising any nuisance experienced by any one community.**

**QUESTION from Mr Alex Lane, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

"Derbyshire has many disused quarry sites, can't these be used?"

**RESPONSE:**

**Derbyshire Dales District Council does not own disused quarry sites and therefore has no ability to use these sites.**

**STATEMENT from Bill Storey, Bakewell Local Resident**

*As a long-time resident of Bakewell, I object most strongly at the proposal for a stop off site for Travellers, in Bakewell.*

*The proposed site is not owned by DDDC AND is in a National Park.*

*The land is on the flood plain and any development would increase the risk of flooding in Bakewell and down river residences.*

*This would be the thin end of the wedge. Allow this and the next step would be a permanent site.*

*The filth and rubbish left on previous occasions is unacceptable.*

*The threats to shop owners by some travellers, are totally unacceptable.*

*The lack of a Police presence in Bakewell has raised the level of fear for many residents already. This will make their lives more miserable.*

*The present traveller family have been offered housing which they refused. They should not now be classed as homeless. It is of their doing, their choice.*

*It's about time DDDC stood up for residents rather than give in to travellers. This decision will not be forgotten by the electorate of Bakewell for a long time.*

**STATEMENT from Carole Dean, Town Clerk, Ashbourne Town Council**

*Ashbourne Town Council object to Fishpond Meadow being used as a traveller site; temporary or otherwise. Trade in the Town has suffered immensely during the Covid pandemic and a travellers site so close to the Town Centre will certainly have a negative impact on visitors, tourists, local people shopping in the Town, and traders. The close proximity to the residential areas of Lakeside and Shaw Croft flats will have a detrimental impact on the residents, many of whom are elderly or vulnerable.*

*The area needs to be opened up for its original intended use, which is a car park. Ashbourne is already in desperate need of the additional parking that Fishpond Meadow provides, particularly during the summer season. Ashbourne Town Council are concerned about the ongoing costs associated with the maintenance and continual clean-up of the areas inhabited by travellers. The cost of a temporary traveller site will no doubt be paid for by the residents of the Town.*

*Ashbourne Town Council respectfully ask DDDC to consider the loss of revenue they will suffer from the car park not being used for parking, the cost of the clean-up, the visual impact of the site, the loss of the recreational amenity of the Fishpond itself, the surrounding playing fields and footpaths along with the inevitable loss of trade on an already struggling Town. The area is also unsafe at the moment for public and travellers alike, with areas already fenced off for safety.*

**STATEMENT from John Rowe, Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, Bakewell Town Council**

*I have been instructed to write to you to strongly object to the proposal to establish or a temporary traveller site in within the Peak District National Park at Bakewell.*

*Views received include the following:*

- *“Object to the proposal to legitimise any type of temporary site within Derbyshire Dales and especially in Bakewell Parish which is in a National Park”*
- *“Members have been approached by residents who do not want the creation of the temporary site in this town ever.”*
- *“It should not even be considered as an option.”*
- *“Wouldn't want a 'temporary' site on the [Agricultural Business Centre/] Showground and thought that this location had been dropped from the sites available.*
- *“This family have been offered several houses to live in and have declined them all. To keep calling them homeless is wrong, and just plays into their hands. It's about time the DDDC gave them an ultimatum. Accept what's offered or leave.”*
- *“Ask anyone and they'll say they don't want gypsies/travellers setting up camp on their doorstep.*

*Unfortunately legislation requires DDDC to make provision for them. It is encouraging to read that the permanent site at Tansley is making progress which should provide a solution.*

*As I understand it, the big problem is that the law intended to provide for genuine gypsies is being swamped by 'travellers' climbing on to the bandwagon. That lifestyle is not compatible with modern society and legislation should not encourage it - as it does at present - by granting special rights. This is a national problem that parliament needs to address.*

*Yes we want to oppose the use of the ABC as a negotiated stopping place, but I can understand the DDDC officers' position. What we need reassurance that if it is agreed, that any use of that land will be short-lived and for but a few vans."*

*I would be grateful if the foregoing could be drawn to the attention of the meeting.*

#### **STATEMENT from Mr Mark Pickford, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

"Dear Sirs

Whilst I fully accept that everyone has to be somewhere, the proposed site in Bakewell is completely unacceptable. The recent history of encampments in the town has been a travesty putting residents and businesses at risk. The lack of any additional police to meet the influx was very frightening.

The town is in the Peak District National Park, therefore encampments are illegal whilst it has been made quite clear by your representative that the policies of PDNP are held in low regard I believe that you are legally bound by them.

To be in breach of your lease, overnight parking is a breach of your own regulations to wilfully allow environmental laws to be broken (business cannot burn trade waste), unsociable behaviour to be tolerated, yet uphold complaints made by the travellers puts you in a very poor light.

The residents and businesses of Bakewell have been generally very tolerant and polite as this situation was supposed to have been dealt with.

I believe that the electorate will show their contempt at the inefficiency of the council and the officers of the DDDC need bringing to account."

#### **STATEMENT from Mrs Lynda King, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

"If the site on the ABC in Bakewell is allowed it should be moved onto the car park near the river on the left of Agriculture Way, not on the showground/meadows where the 3 caravans are currently situated.

This site on the car park is away from residential properties and the travellers access would be on Agricultural Way. Not coming down Coombs Road.

As a resident of Coombs Road, in Bakewell, in 2020, when forty or so travellers broke down fences on Coombs Road, to access the meadows, causing criminal damage and where they stayed for months, we had to endure their aggressive and threatening

behaviour, speeding vans on a residential road and all the noise and mess associated with the travellers.

This site should be temporary for a period of eight weeks, when they should be moved onto another negotiated site until the permanent site at Tansley is ready.

My understanding of the Gypsy/Traveller community is their way of life is moving from area to area so how they can describe themselves as homeless is baffling, their caravan surely is their home. My worry is that once these sites are negotiated that will become the status quo, as I believe they don't want a permanent site."

**STATEMENT from Mrs Debra Evans, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

"Dear Sir, I wish to register my objection to the proposal to make the ABC centre a stop over site for travellers - I pay my council tax for services that you provide to me - I object in the strongest terms to my money being used to finance people who do not contribute in any fashion. The proposed site is not owned by DDDC AND is in a National Park.

The land is on the flood plain and any development would increase the risk of flooding in Bakewell and down river residences.

This would be the thin end of the wedge. Allow this and the next step would be a permanent site.

The filth and rubbish left on previous occasions is unacceptable.

The threats to shop owners by some travellers, are totally unacceptable.

The lack of a Police presence in Bakewell has raised the level of fear for many residents already. This will make their lives more miserable.

The present traveller family have been offered housing which they refused. They should not now be classed as homeless. It is of their doing, their choice.

It's about time DDDC stood up for residents rather than give in to travellers. This decision will not be forgotten by the electorate of Bakewell for a long time.

**STATEMENT from Mr Hugh Wright, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

"Please note that planning policies as enacted by Derbyshire Dales District Council are not applicable to be considered by the Peak District National Park Authority. Hence, any potential travellers sites, whether permanent or temporary, considered inside the national park boundary will be considered ultra vires by the National Park Authority for DDDC exceeding its powers."

**STATEMENT from Ms Vicky Hewitt-Smith, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident and secretary for FORRG (Friends of Rutland Recreation Ground)**

"I am writing to strongly object to the DDDC proposal to establish a temporary negotiated stopping place on the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell, for the following reasons.

For many years the Gypsy and Traveller community have used this site and/or surrounding fields to set up camp illegally.

Once in town, members from these communities have created many problems for residents, shop keepers and the local environment.

Anti-social behaviour is common, children in particular are rude and unruly. Some individuals have been aggressive and confrontational. One of my neighbours was spat at!

There have been incidents in town with intimidating behaviour towards shop workers and customers alike and an increase in thefts, from bikes to the illegal poaching of fish from the river Wye.

Dogs are often tethered and left to bark incessantly, not to mention laundry strung up between trees, open fires and a regular build-up of refuse which is not only an eyesore but no doubt attracting local wildlife. This general disregard of the wider community and the local environment is both unpleasant and disrespectful.

The recent and significant investment to prevent further illegal access has been made a mockery of with criminal damage inflicted to gain access, with no consequence from the police or Council authorities.

There is no evidence to suggest that by the granting of the ABC, Bakewell as a temporary negotiated stopping place, that the afore mentioned incidents and behaviours will improve. In fact, it is more likely that we will see increased numbers of Gypsy and Traveller families arriving and therefore a proportionate increase in these issues and a growing friction between Travellers and local residents.

Aside from the negative impact on local residents, the encampment is visible from Rutland Recreation Ground where many visitors share their sympathies and comment on what an eyesore the site is. Over the long term it is feasible that the ongoing presence of travellers will have an adverse effect on the reputation of the town, its charm and the reasons why people visit Bakewell. This in turn puts pressure on the townspeople, local business owners, the tourist industry and ultimately the local economy.

Similarly, would you want to purchase a property next to/near to a gypsy site? Surely you can recognise the potential impact on the local housing market?

Furthermore, unlike residents, Travellers camping illegally do not contribute to the local authority by means of Council Tax and therefore unfairly benefit from local services and resources, effectively being paid for by those who do contribute i.e. residents.

- Realistically, how would an authorised site be policed, managed, controlled any differently than it is today?
- What would be the costs of effectively managing the site?
- Who will monitor the number of weeks stay and the validity of family connections?
- How will extraordinary circumstances, used to extend a stay beyond the suggested 8 week limit be verified?
- What would happen when a family refuse to be directed to another site?
- How does legalising a site prevent any future and protracted legal proceedings that are both costly and funded from the public purse?
- How is temporary being defined e.g is this for a specific period of elapsed time and if so what period has been proposed?
- How do DDDC propose to ensure that 'temporary' would not become permanent?
- Is a regular review period being considered to manage any potential extension to the temporary period?
- How will an authorised temporary negotiated stopping place change the behaviours of the traveller community, as described above?

The idea that the ABC site has previously been managed successfully as a Traveller site is ludicrous. Police have failed to attend and/or take appropriate action when in attendance and ongoing complaints to DDDC have fallen on deaf ears.

It is also astonishing that nominated personnel within the Council who have no first hand experience of living with Gypsies and Travellers on their doorstep, are being tasked with identifying sites for negotiated stopping places. In the case of Bakewell, it would seem that the ABC has made the list based on the continued illegal use of the site and an inability to control the stem of Travellers, rather than the suitability of the site or recognising the genuine concerns and impact on the people of Bakewell.

The weight on the Committee to find a solution is not unrecognised however, I would be grateful if the afore mentioned representation could be drawn to the attention of the meeting.”

### **On behalf of FORRG**

I am the secretary for FORRG (Friends of Rutland Recreation Ground) and I represent over 100 members who have instructed me to register our objections to a Traveller site being authorised in the Peak District National Park.

### **STATEMENT from Mr Nicholas Branch, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“Once again we find that travellers have found their way onto the showground.

It should be of note that had the Bakewell Show been on, then this would create significant difficulty for the Show organisation. This area is a tourist hotspot, for parking access to the town and a hub of activities annually outside of the remit of the Show. Therefore this is not and should never be a site of permanence for the travelling community. I appreciate that a site is currently being prepared elsewhere, yet as you will be aware more travellers are likely to arrive in the future. In conclusion the measures taken to protect the Showground are not sufficient and will require further consideration, planning and cost to prevent such activity in the future.”

**STATEMENT from Mr Robert Merriman and Mrs Linda Merriman, Derbyshire Dales Local Residents**

“Having read the background paper to inform discussion of item 5 on the agenda for the extraordinary committee meeting of the 27.07.21 we would like to raise the following issues;

- The paper commences with reference to ‘a homeless family with connections to the local area’ and on initial reading the paper implies that the ‘establishment of a negotiated stopping place’ on Bakewell Show Ground is solely for this family. However, having established such sites it is unclear how access to these sites would be restricted to this one family. It is apparent that the Council are well aware of this as by item 3.2 and 3.3 the term family has been changed to ‘homeless families’. It, therefore, appears that the Council are wishing to establish permanent ‘negotiated stopping places’ for any homeless family to address the problem of having no permanent traveller site within its borders.
- We object strongly to the establishment of such a site on Bakewell Showground on the following grounds;- the site is far too close to residential dwellings, the noise pollution in particular foul language, relentless shouting, dog barking and generator noise is unacceptable (primarily because the site is too close to local houses). There is a footpath that runs straight through the site – local residents and visitors are prevented from using the footpath due to the erection of metal fencing around the site. In addition any person attempting to walk on the footpath through the site would be subject to the ongoing abuse and shouting an issue that the Council is all too familiar with. We wonder whether the Council is within its rights to prevent access to a local footpath?
- An internet search of ‘negotiated stopping places’ reveals that the relatively few local authorities with such sites have very clear guidance as to management arrangements for such sites. For example, Northumbria ([www.northumbria.gov.uk/housing](http://www.northumbria.gov.uk/housing) - 27th May 2021) states that such sites should be more than 200 metres away from local housing. The proposed site at Bakewell is a road width away from the nearest houses. In addition there is a footpath (in frequent daily use by walkers) right through the proposed site. It would appear that the Council have complete disregard for local residents albeit other councils in their management plans clearly state ‘equal consideration will be given to the rights of travellers and the settled community’ and have instigated minimum distances for such sites from local houses
- Northumbria and Leeds councils have a ruling regarding ‘keeping noise pollution from persons, animals and generators to a minimum’ at their ‘negotiated stopping place’. If this requirement is not observed the council have

the right to evict the travellers. The Council is well aware, from previous experiences of travellers on Bakewell Showground, that this has been an ongoing issue, local residents and visitors to our town are subjected to relentless shouting and swearing, barking dog and noise from generators. The fact that the site the Council chooses to place the travellers on the Showground is so near to local residents and people walking through the showground is the cause of this.

- In Leeds (gypsy-traveller.org 2018) the length of stay at a 'negotiated stopping place' cannot be for longer than 28 days. Why has the Council chosen to make the length of stay at the proposed sites 8 weeks and which could be considerably longer if there are health and other issues? The residents of the Bakewell are well aware of the impact of this due to the very lengthy previous stay by travellers on the showground site."

**STATEMENT from Mr Nick Murphy and Mrs Suzanne Murphy, Derbyshire Dales Local Residents**

"We strongly disagree with any decision to allow travellers to stay in Bakewell.

One time when they came last autumn, for just one night, our garage was broken into (from over the river) and £6,000 worth of bikes were stolen. They left early the next morning.

Previously, in the summer, the children noisily waded down the river several times, playing around directly in front of our garden, and on one occasion (that we know of) entered our garden and were peering in our garage windows.

Co-incidence? Maybe. But there seems to be a lot of "co-incidences" in town when they are here.

When the 25/30 caravans were here last summer the Agricultural Way was almost a no-go area to walk as it felt quite threatening. They raced horse & carts up and down the streets and they also left it in a disgusting state when they were eventually moved on.

If they are allowed "temporary" residence for up to 8 weeks I do not believe they will leave. Or if they leave they'll be straight back again for another 8 weeks, or different ones will move in. Who will count who's been here for 8 weeks?

Once a site is established it will become a magnet for other travellers and that will lead to a very different image of Bakewell, which I am sure nobody wants."

**STATEMENT from Ms Ali Payne, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

"It has been brought to my attention that there is a proposal to allow gypsies and travellers to stay on Bakewell Showground for 8 weeks prior to a proposed site being ready in Tansley.

From previous experience the gypsies and travellers cause damage to gates, they urinate and defecate the local area and also leave mountains of rubbish.

Bakewell is a place of beauty that will be detrimentally affected by any agreement to inhabit gypsies and travellers. I therefore do not agree that this should be allowed and wish to register my opposition to this proposal.”

**STATEMENT from Mr Mark Payne, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“I am aware that it’s being discussed to make Bakewell show ground a temporary site for travellers

I must wholeheartedly object to this, Bakewell is not suitable for this type of community which seems to use anywhere for a toilet and leave lots of mess for others to pay to be removed

I also know they do work for vulnerable elderly residents ripped them off and butchering trees to which if I did I’d be fined by the Peak Park

I feel a more suitable site needs to be found outside the beautiful Peak Park and not in the heart of the jewel of the Peaks”

**STATEMENT from Mr Alan Nowill, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“I would like to object to the proposal that the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell be used as a "Negotiated Stopping Place" for the above mentioned community.

Item 3.5 of your report states "The list below has been compiled from officers' knowledge of District Council owned sites where encampments comprising of homeless families have been successfully managed". To my knowledge there was no management by the Council, there was a rise in crime rates in Bakewell, the whole ABC was covered in litter, fire debris, broken glass and worst of all human excreta all over the ditches, footpaths and walkways. There were drunken travellers in various pubs in Bakewell. By allowing these "homeless" people to camp in the ABC the whole area was made a "no go area" too dangerous to walk through or go near. They also poached fish out of the river using lures. Could I also point out that these people are not homeless but choose to live in a mobile home.

I also think that there should be no "Negotiated Stopping Place" in the Peak Park.”

**STATEMENT from Mr John Brocklehurst, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“Just get rid of these noisy abusive people from a highly rated area and give more consideration to those who are paying you their hard earned money annually.

Are you within Peak Park Planning rules to make the above area a holding area for these people? I don’t think so.

Why has money from rate payers been used on barriers, fencing, and concrete blocks to deter these people only to have an official come and open the gates to let them in, it beggars belief!!

I understand the travellers website or whatever they use refers to DDDC as a soft touch, I like many other rate payers have our views on the people who we hand over our hard earned money to annually.

A good idea might be to sell my house and present myself at DDDC with caravan as homeless, no rates I will even be provided with a toilet and waste bin.

Not that you will interested but today Sunday the shouting and radio commenced at 5-45am or that's when I was woken up, and as continued all day, 4-25pm an argument is going on mostly with words which aren't in the dictionary, knowing how our council officials seem to think led by Paul Wilson that it has entertainment value, all I say is come and live next to it, minds may be changed and something done about it."

### **STATEMENT from Ms Jean Slater, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

"What is the legal definition of a "traveller"?????

It is totally unacceptable to place and KNOWINGLY allow the so called group of "travellers" situated on the Showground at the junction with Coombs Road.

What is the Legal definition of "A Traveller"?

On what legal grounds are this group of people regarded outside the Legal system?

Are non "travellers" allowed to park on non-planning permission land within the Peak park. Are Travellers allowed to decide which land they opt to park on? If so WHY?????

What financial contribution do they pay to the facilities and amenities of the local communities?

Is it a legal status and if so how do they prove such? What paperwork have they to demonstrate this fact as a legal status? If they are allowed to park on that ground within the boundaries of Bakewell they Must abide by the laws both of the Land AND all the local by-laws too. If as has happened again in the last 2 weeks they are found to display Anti-social behaviour they should be arrested and charged as every other citizen would be. Having been found Guilty they should be permanently banned from returning to that site. Why has that not happened? Why are you allowing them to be exempt from the laws of the land?

I presume that as there are many so called Travellers parked in the large car park in Matlock we are unable to pay cash for our parking ticket I wonder why??? It is not hard to find a MOST unacceptable answer. They stay for free, we must and do pay for our time. Why is this? This situation is just the tip of the problem.

What would the DDDC response be if WE withheld our rates etc? How would you justify that situation?

WE heartily endorse ALL the points so clearly made by Mrs Jackie Starbuck. We shall demand full and legal answers to all her very important points made. At the previous meeting you avoided making any decision or even allowed any TIME for a

democratic discussion to resolve this most important question Why?? Are you not capable of making a clear and democratic decision??? If you had NO aim to openly discuss the point included on the published agenda of "Travellers" why was it placed on the agenda?? Did you EVER think that time would allow a meaningful discussion and expression of public opinion to take place?

Chairmen are there to structure the meetings so allot time for open discussion on every item on the submitted agenda. When Time allotted used, the Chair then calls for a legal decision to be placed for a democratic vote and if passed that decision must be acted upon in an acceptable timeframe so the wishes of the PAYING local population are carried out. Will this EVER be achieved???? Do you even wish to reflect the wishes of the local population in your action, what prevents you from achieving that?

It would appear that so called Travellers can and do operate OUTSIDE the law. How can that be???????

### **STATEMENT from Vicki Raynes, Chair Tansley Parish Council**

"Tansley Parish Council OBJECT strongly to the proposal of DDDC to spend £25k of tax payers money on assessments of Enclosure Award Land at Knabhall Lane Tansley.

This land was originally gifted to the people of Tansley for the quarrying of road stone, after which the land was used as a village tip.

The land which is subject to a legal dispute, was transferred through the generations to Derbyshire County Council as the council responsible for highways, DDDC have yet to provide evidential proof that the land was legally transferred to them by DCC.

It is highly likely that the land is contaminated and unstable because of previous uses, we therefore consider the land unsuitable for human habitation.

The Constitution of DDDC states that any new project brought before the Council should have a financial assessment. We are not aware your Constitution has been changed to enable this Council to make new decisions without adhering to the Constitution? To ignore the legality of your own Constitution gives little credibility or confidence in the integrity of this Council.

Please can Officers' inform us all of the total cost of this proposed project, to include road widening, provision of fresh water, disposal of sewage, provision of power, cost of building works and rental expectation from the residents.

We are also informed that guarantees have been given to the Travellers that the access roads to Knabhall Lane will be gritted during the winter months to ensure safe access for welfare support.

Bearing in mind DCC only grit primary routes, have DCC given this assurance? Or has this 'promise' been made by the Local Authority?

Either way, ALL homes in Tansley will be expecting the same treatment, which will reassure many of our residents, who in snowy weather are unable to access the main primary routes.

Additional sites have been put forward in the recent 'call for sites' two sites put forward by TPC are close to primary routes have hard standing and services, both are vacant.

It would appear that the choice of Knabhall was purely political, a choice by majority councillors who are prepared to put travellers anywhere other than their own back yard. With no thought to the social welfare of the travelling family, and their apparent medical needs, to even consider 'housing' anyone on a contaminated tip, on a remote lane without services of any kind beggars' belief.

The lack of a financial assessment – and the apparent lack of concern related to cost, is worrying for the tax payer.

DDDC obviously are not providing value for money for its residents, as no comparisons related to cost of this proposal are available to the public.”

#### **STATEMENT from Ms Angela Gregson, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“I would like to register my strong objection to the proposal that the Agricultural Business Centre land in Bakewell be recognised as a designated temporary stopping place for gypsies and travellers. The family that have been on this site - illegally as I understand- for the last five weeks are creating considerable problems for local residents. The anti-social behaviour and noise levels are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. This site is clearly unsuitable as a potential traveller site and the considerable efforts that were made to evict them and the other traveller groups a year ago seems to have been in vain. Designating this site as a temporary stopping place will generate a great deal of opposition and ill feeling from local residents. The council seem prepared to go to any lengths to condone the travellers at the expense of law abiding, tax paying local residents and it is time the council took account of local residents views. Thank you, Angela Gregson.”

#### **STATEMENT from Ms Moira Locke, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“Having spent many hours helping to clear the river banks of disgusting rubbish left by travellers last year including used nappies. I am horrified that the showground area is again being used by travellers. I understand we have to make land available to them but surely not prime riverbank and Bakewell centre. Having been caravaners ourselves, we had to book and pay for sites in advance of travelling. Why do these travellers not do the same? They cannot be allowed to just take whatever they want and turn our beautiful park and town to squalor. I had some sympathy with them early last year with COVID restrictions, but they took advantage and abused us. Can a farmer's field not be used and charges for services like refuse collection and sanitary services be paid by them as the rest of us have to do.”

## **STATEMENT from Mr Mike Pindar, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“Dear Sirs

Further to the forthcoming debate, is that the provision of additional traveller sites is largely unwanted by the majority of the community.

Besides the anecdotal evidence, of which it is not hard to find, it cannot be ignored that often crime and anti-social behaviour increases when travelling communities arrive. However unpalatable this is, I understand it to be a statistical and recorded fact.

How do people defend themselves from a community that largely distances itself from the police preferring to sort disputes in its own ways. Policing is hardly reassuring in terms of easy access, availability and presence; particularly during the night!

The premise that these people are homeless is not surely in accord with the spirit of a law that was passed to help genuine homeless people. It is a life style from a tradition that like others now gone, at odds with a changed world and the organisation of mainstream society. In days of old with horse drawn caravans settled on the wide verges of sleepy lanes, and in their limited numbers and interaction with the locals undertaking country practices it was a sustainable way of life. Today with Lorries, plant, industrial waste, modern service requirements it is unrealistic to expect local people to put up with the inconvenience and imposition of large travelling groups living outside of the community requirements the rest of us have to live within. Subsidising this way of life against in a modern environment is unsustainable and surely it is not unreasonable for people who are hard pressed to sustain mainstream community services to be unhappy at providing the funds many travellers being wealthier than those struggling to pay their community rates. It is widely known that many of those travelling actually have homes in Ireland or other parts of the UK

It all very well for highly principal led people living safe in their urban enclaves to pronounce worthily on the needs of travellers but it is ordinary folk who take the strain and they should be listened to.

The council is I realise between ‘a rock and a hard place’ over this but for the sake of the community generally I think it should not be bounced into giving in to these demands and listen to the people at large.”

## **STATEMENT from Ms Paula Hunt, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

“It has been brought to my attention that there is a proposal to allow gypsies & travellers to stay on Bakewell Showground for 8 weeks prior to going to the proposed site being ready in Tansley.

Last year the gypsies were on the showground much longer than eight weeks, and it took a long time to move them on.

They cause damage to gates, without being prosecuted, they urinate in the field, even with a toilet provided and leave lots of rubbish behind.

The people that live down Coombs Road pay the highest rates of Council Tax and it must be very disheartening for them to look at all this mess. Bakewell is meant to be a place of beauty, but if they are allowed to stay for any length of time, the area will look like the slums. I therefore do not agree that this should be allowed.”

**STATEMENT from Mr Richard Chaplin and Mrs Mary Chaplin, Derbyshire Dales Local Residents**

We live in Wyebank Grove opposite the Showground in Bakewell and have 350 metres of river frontage onto the River Wye. There are seven houses in Wyebank/Wyebank Grove that adjoin the river. Bar one all the houses are occupied by people over the age of 70 years.

It is proposed that the land opposite which is leased from the Guiton Family Trust by DDDC becomes an approved temporary site for the Group of Travellers, known as REDACTED. Also the application says that it might well be for longer than 8 weeks 'with respect to issues such as health and welfare'.

This family has a very long history of encamping on the lands in this area. I understand they have been offered housing but have declined therefore they cannot be considered homeless. It is appreciated that they are recognised as a separate ethnic group but the only way they can live their lifestyle is by owning a piece of land themselves - it is not reasonable for them to expect other groups to fund their life style.

This family occupied adjoining land for many, many months before and during Covid. The Judge allowed them to stay as the senior member of family was ill. He subsequently died and they were evicted. In light of the above statement regarding 'welfare' it could well mean that they could be reside here for many months as they have an elderly relative in the family and could well use that lady as a bargaining tool. They ignored all the lockdown rules by regularly leaving the site, having guests and did not practise social distancing between them and their guests. They have no respect for the rules by which everyone else lives.

The matter to be discussed is to agree if the area might become one of seven tolerated sites for them. This is unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. The site is located in the Peak District National Park and it is their policy not to have recognised Travellers sites in the Park. It would need planning permission for it to be even a temporary site.
2. The area is used for parking on Market Days by farmers but then there would be nowhere else for them to park as the Car Parks on the Show Ground have restricting head bars.
3. The REDACTED have REDACTED who lives with them who REDACTED who has REDACTED. REDACTED shouts and swears most of the time sometimes starting at first light and going onto sunset and on occasions REDACTED for a wire cage to be erected to REDACTED. A loud radio is also played which can be heard in our houses. When REDACTED enters the local Co-Op store (our only supermarket in the town) people move away from the aisle in fear from the aisle where REDACTED

is standing. Bakewell has 60% of its population over 60 years of age. There have also been incidents when the REDACTED have gone into stores and demanded free food and the shop keepers are scared to report them as they are told if they do 'their shop will trashed'.

4. The site at Tansley was suggested at a Council Meeting over two years ago it would seem no progress has been to evaluate if this is suitable for them to reside on either temporarily or permanently. Why has it taken so long?

5. The Bakewell Show Ground runs many events - dog shows, horse events, athletics, cycling, farm animal events, charity runs and so on. Surely it is unreasonable for people participating or watching such events to have to be adjacent to Travellers who choose to live in a different way than the rest of society. They are provided with toilet and showers at the our expense but often prefer to use the land for excretion rather than the toilets. They have no respect in relation to rubbish which they just throw on to the surrounding areas.

6. All the recent prosecutions for illegal fishing along the river have been against Travellers! This area of the River Wye is internationally known as one of the best fishing rivers for trout and grayling. They also bring their cars/vans to the river to wash them polluting the river. Not even the River Bailiff is permitted to enter the river for fear of pollution. In the past they have dumped tree branches in the river from their work. On one occasion a crane had to be used to remove the branches.

7. It is wrong in a democratic society for Officers to be given the power to decide where the Travellers should live. If it is decided to go ahead an elected member from each of the areas should be involved in the decisions.

#### **STATEMENT from Mr Andrew Howard, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

I strongly object to the use of the ABC for itinerants.

They have used that location for years on short time stops, and have always brought problems, rubbish etc etc.

Why pander to them?

We have to pay our taxes, and rates, and car tax, and for the car parking, and to use the toilets, and we have to take our rubbish home or be prosecuted.

I know by law they must have a site, but if they do have one designated, it must be made clear that they will have to stay on that site and they will not be tolerated anywhere else, including fishpond, ABC etc.

No I do not support this.

#### **STATEMENT from Ms Patricia Lunn, Derbyshire Dales Local Resident**

I would be obliged if the following comments were drawn to the attention of the Council.

The proposal to designate land at Coombs Road, Bakewell, (known as The 20 Acre/Showground), not in the ownership of DDDC but subject to an agreement with the owner for use as additional parking facility when the livestock market is in operation

is totally unacceptable. It is pasture/grazing land. Any change of use would surely be subject to planning approval. To designate the site as a temporary, tolerated one, for gypsies/travellers for any period is totally unacceptable. Temporary can become permanent.

I accept the Council has a major problem on its hands being in contravention of its statutory duties. It must find a solution elsewhere other than Bakewell whose residents have had enough. It is rumoured that the homeless family have over the years been offered accommodation which they have declined. Surely that should be the end of your duty towards them.

For over a decade there have been illegal encampments, by the current homeless family, it's extended family and others, on land between Coombs Road and the River Wye, access obtained via Meadan Bridge from the A6 causing nuisance to residents of properties surrounding the area, damage to site and leaving considerable amounts of litter. Encampment on the car parking area adjoining the Old Show Office also contravened the lease and planning consent for the car park.

During 2000 gypsies/travellers occupied a large portion of that land area for several months. They broke through the boundary hedge on Coombs Road and an adjoining gateway to provide access onto and off the site for living vans and vehicles. The internal roadway was used as a race track and they moved trailers and vehicles across the site at will. That internal roadway leads on the stock field adjoining my property and another gate onto Coombs Road which they broke through to provide access for living vans. Having lived in my property for over 50 years I suddenly felt insecure and vulnerable, having 4 living trailers in less than 100 yards from the back of my property and constant movement around it.

#### **STATEMENT from Mr John Rowe, Bakewell Town Clerk**

I have been instructed to write to you to strongly object to the proposal to establish or a temporary traveller site in within the Peak District National Park at Bakewell.

Views received include the following:

- “Object to the proposal to legitimise any type of temporary site within Derbyshire Dales and especially in Bakewell Parish which is in a National Park”
- “Members have been approached by residents who do not want the creation of the temporary site in this town ever.”
- “It should not even be considered as an option.”
- “Wouldn't want a 'temporary' site on the [Agricultural Business Centre/] Showground and thought that this location had been dropped from the sites available.
- “This family have been offered several houses to live in and have declined them all. To keep calling them homeless is wrong, and just plays into their hands.

It's about time the DDDC gave them an ultimatum. Accept what's offered or leave.”

•“Ask anyone and they'll say they don't want gypsies/travellers setting up camp on their doorstep.

Unfortunately legislation requires DDDC to make provision for them.

It is encouraging to read that the permanent site at Tansley is making progress which should provide a solution.

As I understand it, the big problem is that the law intended to provide for genuine gypsies is being swamped by 'travellers' climbing on to the bandwagon. That lifestyle is not compatible with modern society and legislation should not encourage it - as it does at present - by granting special rights. This is a national problem that parliament needs to address.

Yes we want to oppose the use of the ABC as a negotiated stopping place, but I can understand the DDDC officers' position. What we need reassurance that if it is agreed, that any use of that land will be short-lived and for but a few vans.”

**STATEMENT from Mrs Kirstin Sykes and Mr I Sykes, Derbyshire Dales Local Residents**

We are local residents and are aware that the issue of Traveller Encampments has been a continuing problem for a number of years. Whilst we accept the Council has a legal duty of care to assist these families, they also have a duty of care to the local, tax paying residents, and to protect the local area. This, unfortunately, appears to be lacking as you have identified a number of key local sites as potential stopping places.

Please note our objection to the proposed 'negotiated stopping places' identified by the Council, most specifically the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell.

Our objection is based on the following:-

1. By creating a legitimate stopping place for the travellers, you will be issuing an open invite for many more travellers to stay by attaching themselves to the so called 'homeless family'.
2. If the ABC became a designated stopping place, I would imagine costs (to the tax payer) would be associated with developing the site, plus a considerable cost of 'clean up' after their 8 week stay.
3. The lack of any police presence in Bakewell means that any potential anti-social behaviour or crime associated with the encampment could go unchecked.
4. It is highly unlikely that the Traveller families will happily move on after 8 weeks, this will lead to further expensive court action and their stay will undoubtedly be much longer.
5. 2 officers from the Corporate Leadership Team should not be making decisions that have a massive impact on local residents – they have not been elected to do this.

6. The proposed site is on a flood plain, development of this site will risk further flood issues for local residents who have already suffered due to the lack of maintenance of the river and its banks.
7. This site is a significant pedestrian Gateway in to our town. It is the first point of contact for many tourists & visitors arriving in Bakewell. Their arrival point will now be a Traveller Encampment, they are unlikely to be impressed with their welcome. You will see a decline in tourists visiting the area if you choose to build stopping places in key gateway areas of the Peak District. Our local economy has suffered already, this will cause a further decline in visitor footfall and therefore local income and investment.

Overall, please consider your Duty of Care to your tax paying residents. You have allowed this situation to continue over the years by being reactive rather than proactive and it just gets worse. This proposal is one step closer to a permanent site and we are astounded that the Council are even considering this. Please listen to your voters, this is not an appropriate solution.

**STATEMENT from Mrs Jo Wildgoose, Derbyshire Dales Local Residents**

I wish to strongly register my objection to Rowsley old station car park being used as a temporary traveller site or a 'negotiated stopping place' as per item 5 in the agenda for the meeting on 27th July. This site has not been 'negotiated' with anyone.

The travellers leave a horrendous mess, exhibit anti-social behaviour, pollute the river Derwent and openly defecate on the cycle track. They cause problems for the businesses on Station Close and cause parking problems for the said businesses.

The planning has now lapsed on the car park for any traveller to be there, the family which used the site have previously rejected the site, and use of the site has not been 'negotiated' with anyone.

I feel 'slipping' this in on the agenda is very underhand by DDDC, all publications for this meeting are weighted heavily to make people believe this meeting is only to discuss the waste issue currently being faced locally.

I look forward to your comments

**STATEMENT from Dr Siobhan Spencer, Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group**

If you could add to further comments I made from last meeting would be grateful

It is very urgent that a site comes to fruition as quickly possible due to deteriorating health needs, it is extremely urgent that electricity and water are now provided