

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
COUNCIL HELD ON 27 April 2022

STATEMENT from Mr John Youatt, on behalf of the owners of the Woodyard at Homesford.

Application for 8 travellers pitches at the Woodyard Homesford.

The first thing I learned from my clients, a few years ago, was that the Council had adopted the Woodyard (after thorough checks and due process) to provide permanent pitches, when the then need was for 6 pitches. It was a majority vote.

Since then that decision has been serially subverted. The Woodyard approval is for 3, not 6 pitches and for three years, not permanent. Since then several compromised sites have been adopted. None have worked. Many encampments have cost the taxpayer a lot of money (FOI to follow); and cost the travellers and neighbours stress.

On behalf of the owners, my re-application to approve 8 permanent pitches at the Woodyard is registered and on the portal.

Please

- accept the officers' recommendation to not pursue the Tansley site
- re-adopt the Woodyard and support the new application
- seek the Government grant for a 'shovel-ready' site.

STATEMENT and QUESTIONS from Mr Mark Gwynne Johnson, Local Resident.

In view of the huge expense associated with developing the site at Knabhall Lane, and the fact that badgers are returning to a traditional homeland - would the Council now consider earmarking the site as a wildlife habitat? Which was the Council's intention in the 1990's, when the site's walls were rebuilt with badger runs and further trees were planted within. In 1999, the Secretary of State for the Environment approved the site for the release of Barn Owls. This was successful and Barn Owls still frequent the box in the tall scots pines alongside the site. Habitats everywhere are under increasing pressure. Would the Council agree that now more than ever we need to provide for wildlife and if this site is unsuitable for development would they please consider returning it to what it had become: a home for little owls, barn owls, willow warblers and badgers, to name but a few?

RESPONSE:

The Council is keen to establish the extent of badger activity on the site and will make available the information to the local badger group. The constraints identified in the report significantly limit the future use of the site.

If Council resolves not to continue with the proposal to develop the land as a Traveller site then it will be necessary to consider what future use the land might be put to. In

those circumstances we would be happy to consider your suggestion alongside any others that might come forward.